

The Knowledge-Trust Nexus

Europe's Democratic Deficit

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Submitted to Dr. Sabine Sedlacek

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AFFIDAVIT

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ABSTRACT

The European Union is vehemently criticized for its presumed '*democratic deficit*'. Its fierce critics mainly anathematize this political system for lacking democratic legitimacy. However, this paper argues that much of the animadversion is actually untenable. In fact, democracy is experiencing a process of abstraction, in which political authority is gradually shifting from the national to the supra-national level. Thus, it follows that the European Union is characterized by a complex multi-governance structure, which is ineffable to the average citizen in Europe. It follows, therefore, that people merely consider this political system to be excessively remote and are apathetic towards the wheeling and dealing of supra-national politics. To make matters worse, national politicians are inclined to use "*the EU*" as a scapegoat for unpopular decisions. Hence, the preposterous debacle of the European Union.

This paper employs an explanatory sequential mixed methods research design, which consists of a survey with eighty-eight Austrian graduate students (i.e. quantitative phase) and expert interviews with six Austrian members of the European Parliament (i.e. qualitative phase). The results of the survey reveal that young people are oblivious to the structure and functioning of the European Union, whereas the findings of the interviews bespeak the urgency to educate citizens through enhanced civic education in the member states. Finally, the author develops a conceptual framework - **knowledge-trust nexus** - in order to equip the responsible entities in the member states with the theoretical foundation necessary to embark on a crusade against ignorance ultimately meant to revive democracy in Europe.

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“Gratitude is the memory of the heart”
(Jean-Baptiste Massieu)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AT	Austria
BMFWF	Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy
CAQDAS	Computer-Aided Qualitative Data-Analysis Software
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
ECA	European Court of Auditors
ECB	European Central Bank
EC	European Commission
ECJ	European Court of Justice
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MLG	Multi-Level Governance
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
QDA	Qualitative Data Analysis
TTIP	Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
WTO	World Trade Organization

1 INTRODUCTION

*"I write it because there is some lie that I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw attention, and **my initial concern is to get a hearing.**"*

(George Orwell)

The European Union is unjustly criticized for its supposed 'democratic deficit'. Its vociferous opponents condemn this political system for lacking democratic legitimacy. In contrast, this paper argues that much of this obloquy is actually unsustainable in that the antagonists of the European Union are normally all bark and no bites. In order to prove the meaninglessness of the orthodox criticisms against this political entity, this paper scrutinizes the relationship between the citizens' conversance with the structure and functioning of the European Union and their faith in its institutions. In more detail, the research question reads as follows:

What influence does knowledge of the structure and functioning of the European Union among Austrian students in Vienna have on their trust in its institutions?

It is important to point out that the academic contribution of this research is intended to be exploratory in that the data-driven analysis essentially endeavours ascertaining whether increased knowledge about the structure and functioning of the European Union translates into 'eurosceptic' or 'europhile' attitudes. Moreover, it only seems fair to concisely review the underlying rationale of the research question in order to ensure the reader's thorough understanding of the author's reasoning. In this respect, Booth et al. (2008) recommend researchers to identify a matter of interest to them, restrict its scope, develop a question, and challenge the cruciality of the inquiry. In other words, *"So what? Beyond your own interest in its answer, why would others think it is a question worth asking?"* (Booth et al., 2008, p. 45). Luckily enough, it is maintained that such conundrum might be solved through the adoption of a three-step process, in which the researcher ought to state the subject (*topic*), point out what needs to be uncovered (*question*), and provide the *raison d'être* for the query (*significance*). The third point is particularly decisive in that it is meant to capture the attention of the audience (Booth et al., 2008). In the present study, this procedure is carried out as follows:

- **Topic:** *I am studying the knowledge Austrian students in Vienna have about the European Union...*
- **Question:** *because I want to find out whether the degree of knowledge about the EU exerts an influence on their trust in its institutions...*
- **Significance:** *to help my reader understand how the perception of the European Union's democraticness might be enhanced.*

At this point, the reader might still be wondering why one should lose sleep over this question. To begin, democracy is currently on top of the political agenda in Europe. In fact, it is one of the ten prime concerns set by the newly elected president of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker. Interestingly enough, this political persona is expected to bring a breath of fresh air to the European Union, which, shall be *“led by a Commission that is political; transparent but also visible; and accountable - opening the door to a Union of democratic change”* (European Union, 2015, p. 4). Moreover, it seems reasonable to assume that one should in principle be concerned about democracy in that it constitutes an inalienable human right. To be more precise, article 21/3 of the United Nations General Assembly states:

“The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.” (United Nations, 2016)

Furthermore, the world of arts testifies to humanity's valuation of democracy. For instance, the Musée du Louvre (n.a.) states that Delacroix's painting *“La liberté guidant le peuple”* depicts the revolution in Paris between July 27 - 29, 1830. The insurrection was led by the republicans, who were appalled by the government's constitutional infringement. The insurgence culminated in the dethronement of Charles X and the appointment of Louis Philippe as king of France. Most importantly, this painting is considered to be a deed of patriotism by a painter, whose work used to be determined by monarchic sovereigns. In more detail, it is maintained that *“Delacroix's historical and political painting [...] bears witness to the death throes of the Ancien Régime”* (Musée du Louvre, n.a.). Even though such artistic reference might at first be perceived as a Pindaric flight, on second thought it is crystal clear that such historical anecdote bespeaks the strenuous efforts of humanity to reify democracy.



FIGURE 1: LIBERTY LEADING THE PEOPLE
(ARTBLE, 2016)

Finally, it is probably worth spending a few words on the structure of this paper. To begin, the literature review is going to provide the reader with the theoretical foundation necessary to the appreciation of the subsequent empirical research. In more detail, the first section elucidates the underlying principles of democracy, chronicles the sinuous evolution of democracy throughout history, ruminates on its current state of affairs, and catches a glimpse into the future of modern-day democracy. The second section investigates the concept of 'multi-level governance' and assesses the impact of the European Union on the sovereignty of its member states. The third section presents the main institutions as well as the legislative process of the European Union, sheds some light on the vague concept of 'democratic deficit', and gives an account of both sides of the heated debate. The fourth section evaluates the trust of Austrian citizens in the European Union. Afterwards, the methodology is going to spell out the mixed methods research design of this paper. Put briefly, it consists of a survey with eighty-eight Austrian master students at the University of Vienna (*quantitative*) and expert interviews with six Austrian members of the European Parliament (*qualitative*). Subsequently, the results of the survey and the findings of the interviews are presented. In the end, the author 'connects the dots' and puts forward a conceptual framework for the revival of democracy in Europe.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Democracy

2.1.1 Definitional Aspects

“Democracy is a device that ensures we shall be governed no better than we deserve.”

(George Bernard Shaw)

It goes without saying that the above-mentioned quote does not represent the definition of democracy, which is going to be adopted for the purposes of this paper. Nonetheless, such cynical interpretation is forceful insofar as it first conjures up a smile on the audience’s face and then - as one comes to realize the ounce of truth it contains - leaves them with a bad taste in their mouth. Why that is so will only be intelligible at the end of this paper. For the time being, it is necessary to endeavour identifying a clear-cut definition of this notion. From an etymological perspective, the Oxford Dictionaries maintains that it stems from the Greek term ‘*dēmokratia*’, which in itself consists of two elements: ‘*demos* (i.e. the people) and ‘*-kratia*’ (i.e. power, rule). Thus, democracy is defined as “*a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state*” (Oxford University Press, 2016). Since looking up only one dictionary would be synonymous with an idle attitude, it is worth exploring other lexicons as well. For instance, the Macmillan Dictionary defines democracy as “*a system of government in which people vote in elections to choose the people who will govern them*” (Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2016), whereas the Collins Dictionary as a “*government by the people or their elected representatives*” (Collins, 2016).

Even though the succinctness of these definitions may make them dangerously seductive in the first place, limiting the interpretation of democracy to such level of analysis would without doubt be an overly simplistic approach. Moreover, these interpretations do not accurately epitomize the essence of this notion. In fact, they commit the elementary mistake of confusing the core of the idea with its concretization in real life. Therefore, it is imperative to scratch beneath the surface and dig deeper in order to grasp the true meaning of democracy.

2.1.2 Fundamental Concepts

It goes without saying that the thorough understanding of democracy presupposes the cognizance of its underlying principles. Therefore, in what follows its main conceptual pillars are explained in order to ensure an unambiguous interpretation of this multifaceted notion.

To begin, Beetham (1999) refuses to classify it as an unintelligible concept and denounces some of the typical faux pas committed in the process of defining democracy. For instance, the issues of its advisability and practicability tend to be mistaken for the substance of the concept. In addition, democracy is also likely to be erroneously confounded with political elections, which *“is to elevate a means into an end, to confuse an instrument with its purpose”* (Beetham, 1999, p. 3). In fact, in order to judge the extent to which democracy realizes itself in political institutions, one should fully comprehend its elemental principles in the first place. It is further maintained that the scrutiny of democracy will inevitably be subject to some sort of criticism due to the fact that *“its principles can rarely be completely attained in an imperfect world”* (Beetham, 1999, p. 4).

Hence, one is left wondering what these principles are. In this regard, Beetham (1999) claims that **‘popular control’** and **‘political equality’** constitute the bedrock of democracy. Even though these two concepts are densely intertwined, they ought to be analysed separately in order to prevent any potential misconception. Considering that they complement each other, an ideal political system should strive for a balance between these two principles. In fact, excessive focus on either aspect would be too much of a good thing. Moreover, the thorough understanding of these concepts requires giving some thought to the reasons backing them up. In this context, the belief of ‘autonomy’ is thought to lie at the heart of any whys and wherefores. In essence, it refers to *“being in control of decisions about one’s life, rather than subject to another”* (Beetham, 1999, p. 7). It is further argued that self-determination realizes itself by reckoning with the opinion of each single citizen when reaching resolutions. It follows, therefore, that such considerate decisions are apt to adequately address the concerns of the general public and that people are inclined to willingly comply with the resulting rules and regulations (Beetham, 1999).

Moreover, Beetham (1999) points out that such line of reasoning is palpably at odds with the conservative conviction that some people are unable to recognize what is beneficial to themselves as well as society. In other words, the latter stance maintains that certain persons are simply not capable of self-government. In this regard, a slightly more sophisticated version of

this belief asserts that such ineptitude only pertains to the political realm. In a similar way, another - slightly different - version of this point of view argues that only selected individuals of the upper class are able to take charge of political matters by virtue of some indefinite trait. However, it is also acknowledged that such immaculate representation of the statesman *“is far from the reputation that in practice politicians currently enjoy”* (Beetham, 1999, p. 9). Another perspective holds that while the ‘public good’ is in fact intelligible, it is enshrined in some sort of peculiar cognizance, whose access is exclusively granted to a limited number of people. To make matters worse, such reasoning is further reinforced by humanity’s blind faith in science, which is thought to apodictly determine what is of service to society (Beetham, 1999).

Furthermore, Beetham (1999) directs the attention of the reader to the democratic counter-argument, which maintains that the citizens alone are aware of what is advantageous to them. Put differently, the public good is au fond established by the people through an equitable decision-making process. In this regard, it stands to reason that availability of relevant documentation as well as sufficient time to make up their minds are sine qua non for ponderate resolution. Consequently, it then becomes reasonable to assume that *“each person is the best judge of his or her own interests”* (Beetham, 1999, p. 12). Once the veracity of such assumption is recognized, the black-and-white distinction between the above-mentioned arguments - autonomy and public good - begins to blur and eventually fades out. Thus, on the grounds of such reasoning it is concluded that:

*“Democracy, then, becomes a **means to realize the public good** because it allows the people to define what that good is, as well as to control the process whereby it is effected in practice.”* (Beetham, 1999, p. 13)

Interestingly enough, Held (2006) attributes the seductiveness of democracy to the fact that the public good is solely determined by the citizens by means of impartial decision-making procedures. However, democracy should not be mistaken for the magic wand humanity can effortlessly wave as needed to sort out problems as they arise. Instead, it paves the way for constructive discussions and limits itself to safeguarding the overarching framework in which these occur. Moreover, particular emphasis is placed on the concept of autonomy during the exposition of democracy. More precisely, self-determination is believed to syncretize the objective of both the liberal and socialist ideology. Indeed, it enables people to reify the pearl of wisdom capsulized by the Latin locution *‘homo faber fortunae suae’*, or - in layman’s terms - gives them the chance to be masters of their own destiny (Held, 2006).

Needless to say, the thorough understanding of such principle requires further exploration of its constituent features. In this respect, Held (2006) investigates five aspects. First, people ought to benefit from the same capacity for personal sovereignty. Second, their rights come with responsibilities insofar as someone's freedom should not be thwarted by another person's doing. Third, everyone should be in a position to engage in the discourse on public affairs. Importantly, the resulting resolution will reflect the contribution - not necessarily the preference - of every citizen (*'majority rule'*). Fourth, the political liberties of a single person as well as those of the few ought to be defended by governmental entities. Fifth, individual needs and wants should be prioritized over collective ones. However, this should by no means be mistaken for a permission to neglect the latter. Hence, in view of such disquisition on autonomy it is asserted that *"this principle ought to be regarded as an essential premiss of all traditions of modern democratic thought"* (Held, 2006, p. 266).

Moreover, Held (2006) points out that it is of utmost importance to focus on the effectuation of such abstract concept for otherwise it is like a ship without a rudder - it will simply be floating aimlessly in the grip to the untamed streams of the ocean. In other words, it is crucial to concentrate on the concrete aspects of its implementation as well in order to give this principle an actual purpose. Hence, the dual approach to self-determination. It is also maintained that politics exerts a significant influence on several aspects of the life of citizens. It follows, therefore, that forcing it into one category would not do justice to its polyhedral nature. Rather, it ought to be regarded as an inclusive subject that deserves to be explored from an interdisciplinary perspective. Considering that *"politics creates and conditions all aspects of our lives"* (Held, 2006, p. 270), the principal requirement for the successful realization of autonomy consists of the educated engagement of the citizen (Held, 2006).

Furthermore, Held (2006) borrows the necessary conditions for a regime to be classified as democratic from R. A. Dahl (1979, 1985, 1989 cited by Held, 2006) - illustrious theoretician on democracy. In more detail, it is argued that citizens should enjoy the same chances to engage in political activities and should be granted access to sufficiently adequate information on the issues at stake in order to make reasoned decisions. In addition, each and every vote ought to be attributed the same importance and what issues are to be decided upon by the means of such procedure should ultimately be determined by the citizen. What is more, people involved in their country's political life ought to be conferred the rights arising out of that state's membership. Hence, it should come as no surprise that to realize such system *"a complex programme of democratic institution-building is required"* (Held, 2006, p. 274).

In this context, Held (2006) draws a clear line between state and civil society. Indeed, a quick look at each dimension alone should suffice to notice the dual nature of the issue: the framework of the former fails to control society, whereas the organization of the latter inhibits the establishment of the features of a democratic system. It follows, therefore, that both areas stand in need of 'democratization'. However, even though their advancement should occur separately, it is essential to remain mindful of their interlinkages. In essence, concretizing the concept of self-determination "*requires us to rethink the forms and limits of state action and the forms and limits of civil society*" (Held, 2006, p. 276).

As one might expect, certain features of such system demand further clarification. Thus, it only seems fair to give them some thought. For instance, Held (2006) claims that the capacity of citizens to have a say in issues of public concern does not necessarily mean that they must do so all the time. Put differently, political engagement is not an obligation. Also, the extent to which politics cuts into the lives of the people ought to be limited so that their personal privacy is preserved. Interestingly enough, the reification of such type of democracy calls for the abolishment of social injustice. To this end, the impuissant circumstances of some are to be mitigated and the undivided prerogatives of others diminished due to the fact that such imbalances cripple the citizens' capacity for self-determination. Hence, it follows that individual freedom must be subject to some restrictions. To put it in a nutshell, "*the liberty of some individuals must not be allowed at the expense of others*" (Held, 2006, p. 287).

In this regard, Beetham (1999) adopts a perspective that transcends the nation state and claims that democracy's underlying reasons should be deemed valid in any place. Having said that, the concept of equality is not synonymous with the one of sameness. In contrast, the principle of autonomy entitles communities to be unlike and ensures the due regard for their diversity from others. At the same time, however, it is also misleading to infer that democracy's theoretical underpinnings encourage selfish attitudes. On the contrary, these notions concentrate on the cooperation between people necessary to the achievement of goals that were mutually agreed upon in the first place. Indeed, it is probably worth recalling that it is the exchange of views on public issues between citizen that ultimately constitutes the sum and substance of a self-governing society. Consequently, since individual citizens do not exist in a vacuum, their entitlements only make sense when considered in the wider context of their social environment. On the grounds of such reasoning, it is asserted that "*democracy, then, is perfectly compatible with variety and difference*" (Beetham, 1999, p. 18).

Moreover, Beetham (1999) devotes particular attention to the two main obstacles encountered in the implementation of democracy's principles. First, citizens normally do not have enough time to adequately inform themselves about every twist and turn of the issues of public concern. Second, the majority rule violates the concept of political equality in that the will of the slightly more than half of the population is imposed on all the remaining citizens. Hence, it should come as no surprise that it is also referred to as a "*winner-take-all device*" (Beetham, 1999, p. 19). Funnily enough, this decision-making procedure thus contradicts the concept usually employed to substantiate it. Another criticism of the majority rule holds that giving people more than two voting alternatives may inhibit their capacity of merging their favourite options, which, in turn, results in inconsistent and whimsical choices (Beetham, 1999).

In this regard, Dahl (1989) also acknowledges that the rigorous execution of the majority rule is easier said than done due to the fact that its underlying principles do not hold true in all real life situations. That being so, a less stringent version of such procedure might be enacted in those cases. What is more, three circumstances encouraging the realization of the majority rule are identified. First, uniformity among the population reduces the chance that the many will not develop a political agenda of damage to the few, which, in turn, promotes the acceptance of this procedure. Second, bright prospects of becoming part of the leading party in the near future encourages politicians of the opposition to embrace the majority rule. Additionally, it decreases their desire for the right of blocking votes as they realize that such power will recoil on them once they will have switched sides. Third, the blind faith in the legitimacy of joint resolutions fosters their inclination to favourably receive such procedure. Thus, it follows that in default of these prerequisites the majority rule is withstood and its resulting conclusions are considered to be unjustified. Needless to say, only rarely these requirements are met. Hence, it is found that "*the quest for a single rule to specify how collective decisions must be made in a system governed by democratic process is destined to fail*" (Dahl, 1989, p. 162). Even though the majority rule is evidently far from perfect, it would also be inappropriate to opt for any of the other options since these have their own critical shortcomings. In short, it is sensible to reflect on society's state of affairs before establishing which decisional procedure is best suited to govern its political life (Dahl, 1989).

2.1.3 Historical Excursus

Having reviewed the conceptual pillars of democracy, it is now time to explore its anfractuous evolution through history by means of a comprehensive historical excursus. In fact, there can be no doubt that the awareness of past developments fosters the comprehension of its contemporary manifestation.

2.1.3.1 The First Transformation

To begin, Dahl (1989) considers present-day democracy to be a concoction of partly irreconcilable features, which justifies its occasional lack of coherence. From a historical perspective, democracy dates back to the political thought of Ancient Greece. Funnily enough, however, its documentation is rather exiguous. Therefore, knowledge about the conceptualization of democracy by Greek philosophers - such as Aristotle and Plato - is mainly derived from literary exegeses of the bits and pieces left over from the original scripts. Hence, even though the entirety of their political thought will never be unearthed, the available records suffice to build up a picture of Greek democracy. In this regard, the popular belief held that people could only unleash their full potential in the context of 'the polis', whose distinguishing features will emerge throughout this sub-section. It is further specified that the people stand in need of a 'good polis', which improves its their life satisfaction, spurs their upright behaviour and prompts them to strive for the greater good of society. In essence, "*in the best polis, citizens are at once virtuous, just and happy*" (Dahl, 1989, p. 15).

However, Dahl (1989) points out that such best-case scenario should not be mistaken for faithful depiction of daily life in Ancient Greece. Rather, it is intended to be an ideal against which the (de-)merits of cities are measured. Moreover, the citizens' commitment to the pursuit of what is beneficial to society is not meant to be synonymous with an utter lack of variety in the population. In fact, it is precisely the diversity of its citizenry that enables a city to prosper. At the same time, however, it is of utmost importance to maintain a shared understanding of the 'common good'. In addition, the polis should ideally be small in order to ensure everyone's engagement in its political life, which consists of being involved in decision-making processes as well as being employed by the authorities. In this sense, the exchange of views between citizen is considered to be a prerequisite for any sensible resolution. Hence, it is maintained that "*political life is only an extension of, and harmonious with, oneself*" (Dahl, 1989, p. 18).

To sum up, Dahl (1989) argues that Greek democracy is based on six pillars. First, people have to agree on the content of the 'common good', to which their private affairs must be subordinated. Second, they have to live in similar socio-economic circumstances, or else the resulting inequalities lead to conflict of interests. Third, the city has to consist of a limited number of citizen in order to prevent excessive diversity in the population, to allow people to interact with others and develop a feeling for the greater good of society, and to let them gather for reaching decisions on issues of public concern. Fourth, people have to be given the chance to get together and determine the rules and regulations of the city's political agenda. Fifth, their engagement has to go beyond simple gatherings and ought to involve governmental incumbency. Sixth and last, the polis has to stay independent in every aspect of life. It is evident that the every one of these six characteristics "*stands in stark contradiction to the realities of every modern democracy located in a nation-state*" (Dahl, 1989, p. 19).

However, all that glitters is not gold - not even in Ancient Greece. In this respect, Dahl (1989) maintains that even though information about this time period is meagre, there is reason to believe that politics did not measure up to the democratic standards of the polis. In fact, the political landscape was dominated by the conflicts between households, public concerns were secondary to individual matters, and dissidents were excluded from administration for ten years. In addition, just a small part of the population took part in the decision-making gatherings, which would consist of a few influential politicians and their devoted supporters. Even more importantly, the idea of democracy itself was conceptually flawed in Ancient Greece. In fact, a great number of people - such as women, foreigners and slaves - were not granted the status of citizen and were thus debarred from politics. Moreover, inviolable human rights did not exist by themselves. As a matter of fact, they were nothing more than a benefit of being citizen of a given polis. It is also unfortunate that democracy could only be realized within the boundaries of a city and not in larger contexts as well. Indeed, later on "*the limitation of democracy to small-scale systems was seen as an irremediable defect*" (Dahl, 1989, p. 23).

2.1.3.2 The Second Transformation

In view of such imperfections, it should come as no surprise that democracy underwent profound changes throughout the subsequent epochs. In this regard, Dahl (1989) identifies a 'second transformation' driven by republican and representative administration. Interestingly enough, the former system has some aspects in common with the notion of democracy found in Ancient Greece: people are naturally inclined to participate in politics, they need to be part of a community in order to thrive, they ought to behave in a righteously, and should not be

discriminated against. Howbeit, the republican theory did not simply copy and paste the ideas of the Greek. Indeed, it took into consideration the pliability of moral standards insofar as it acknowledged the fact that bribery could easily deprave statesmen, and considered society to be a melting pot of “*the one, the few, and the many*” (Dahl, 1989, p. 25).

In addition, Dahl (1989) identifies two oppugnant schools of thought within the republican ideology. The conservative one argues for restricted political participation of the citizen and for a bureaucratic system that represses the instincts the masses. Even though it is beyond doubt that officials act in the spirit of the common good, this is not the only determinant of their decisions. Thus, it follows that the political life is characterized by continuous endeavours to harmonize conflicting objectives. On the other hand, the liberal one is rather worried about the noble elite and believes that the greater good of society essentially consists in the well-being of the population. As a result, politics ought to grapple with the natural propensity to prioritize the wants of the wealthy over the needs of the common people (Dahl, 1989).

Interestingly enough, Dahl (1989) argues that the impracticability of the conservative agenda surfaced during the establishment of the Constitution in the United States towards the end of the 18th century. In fact, the lack of a blue-blooded nobility led to the confusion about who ought to be ruling in its place. Hence, the concept of a diversified administration was supplanted by the political thought of Montesquieu, who advocated the “*separation of powers into three main branches: legislative, executive, and judicial*” (Dahl, 1989, p. 27). Indeed, republican theorists came to realize that the aggregation of such competences into one person alone is actually the distinguishing feature of despotism and therefore ought to be avoided. At the same time, however, the republican thought failed to attend to some important issues. First, the variegated composition of society makes it difficult to ascertain the nature of its common good. Second, it was necessary to devise a republic that would be able to cope with the social tensions arising from clashing concerns. Third, the viability of such political system was questioned per se. Fourth and last, the question whether the republican concept of democracy could be extended to an entire country was left unanswered. Needless to say, the resolution of these critical aspects became a responsibility of scholars on representative democracy (Dahl, 1989).

Curiously enough, Dahl (1989) points out that the republican concept was out of the question across several epochs. For instance, in Ancient Greece such government was not worthwhile due to the fact that politics was limited to the city-state. In addition, the Roman state did also not implement such political system, notwithstanding the continuous expansion of both its

area and population. From a theoretical perspective, the Civil War in England brought a breath of fresh air. Indeed, while trying to find a surrogate for monarchy the Puritans anticipated the inevitable need of a representative government. From a practical point of view, such political system emerged during the Middle Ages, where emissaries from the provinces of the realm attended meetings convened by the king in order to speak on behalf of their people. However, it is only in the 18th century that democracy would be revolutionized with astounding success. In fact, in his encomium of the Constitution of England Montesquieu argued that *“since it is impossible in a large state for the people to meet as a legislative body, they must choose representatives to do what they could not do themselves”* (Dahl, 1989, p. 29).

Moreover, Dahl (1989) argues that thereupon the idea of a representative government was favourably received by democratic theorists insofar as it was deemed to be the conceptual means for the extension of democracy to the sovereign state. It stands to reason that such far-reaching change had repercussions on the political life. In particular, dismantling the boundaries of democracy lead to a revision of civil entitlements, found answers to previously insoluble issues, and enhanced the autonomy of the population. However, the transition to a representative system posed new challenges as well. In more detail, the political landscape was now characterized by an intricate web of densely interconnected entities, which were perceived to be too distant from the citizen. In addition, wars of words resulting from the heterogeneity of the population was now reckoned an indispensable element of democracy. Thus, it follows that the subordination of private concerns to the public good was beyond the bounds of possibility (Dahl, 1989).

In sum, Dahl (1989) maintains that the transposition of democracy from the city- to the nation-state comes with eight consequences. First and foremost, the concept of representation was introduced in order to preserve the principle of equality. Luckily enough, the process of democratization did not have to start from scratch. Put differently, *“the design for a “representative” legislature did not have to be spun from gossamer fibers of abstract democratic ideas”* (Dahl, 1989, p. 215) insofar as the necessary institutional framework was already in place. At the same time, however, regarding such transformation solely as an adjustment of existing political entities would be an overly reductionist approach. In fact, the citizens’ right of unmediated participation was sacrificed for the one of political representation. Second, from a theoretical perspective the democratic state became virtually limitless in terms of size. Curiously enough, no boundary to its extension has been identified until now. Third, the people’s ability to engage in politics is inversely proportional to the size of their country. Fourth, the degree to

which citizens manifest their heterogeneity (e.g. ethnic belonging, religious conviction, etc...) is proportional to the magnitude of the population. Fifth, societal disagreement and the resulting social friction not only turned into the distinguishing feature of a democratic state, but also raised doubt about the pertinence of the 'common good'. Sixth, the extension of democracy lead to the evolution of what is referred to as 'polyarchy'. In view of the polysemy of this term, it is necessary to specify that in this context it indicates "*a set of institutions necessary to the democratic process on a large scale*" (Dahl, 1989, p. 219). Seventh, the presence of independent associations - also known as 'pluralism' - became a distinctive feature of such political system. Eighth and last, people obtained more liberties and the status of citizen was granted to those who were previously excluded from decision-making processes - such as the metics in ancient Greece for instance (Dahl, 1989).

In addition, Dahl (1989) claims that in a mixed society characterized by alienness and strife, political entitlements were necessary to safeguard the human right of self-determination. Therefore, in a true polyarchy citizens not only have the chance to choose their politicians through recurring elections by universal franchise, but can also put themselves forward as candidates. In addition, they are allowed to voice their opinion without reservations, look for news from different sources, and set up self-governing organizations. It is further argued that countries ought to be measured against this ideal conception of democracy insofar as "*all the institutions of polyarchy are necessary to the highest feasible attainment of the democratic process in the government of a country*" (Dahl, 1989, p. 222).

Furthermore, Dahl (1989) maintains that the desirability of such system stems from the importance attributed to individual autonomy. As a result, polyarchy also reduces the probability that a country's political agenda will fail to satisfy its population and protects the citizen from subjugation to the authorities by endowing them with a limited veto power. On the grounds of such reasoning - on a Churchillian note - it is argued that in spite of its flaws "*compared with its alternatives, historical and actual, polyarchy is one of the most extraordinary of all human artifacts*" (Dahl, 1989, p. 223). Interestingly enough, the works of other scholars are imbued with such disillusioned perception of democracy well. For instance, Rose (2009) realizes that democracy will continue to exist in spite of its flaws because "*the current regime is preferable to all the country's historical or political alternatives*" (Rose, 2009, p. 22).

2.1.3.3 Waves and Conjectures

Having reviewed the unfolding of democracy in rather ancient times, it only seemf fair to re-view its developments in more recent times. To this end, it is worth reviewing the work of Berg-Schlosser (2009) in that it narrates the tortuous development of democracy through the theoretical framework of Samuel P. Huntington (1991 cited in Berg-Schlosser, 2009), which breaks down its evolution of into ‘waves’ and ‘conjectures’. In more detail, the former word indicates long phases of gradual progress, whereas the latter term denotes short phases of dangerous disorder. In essence, the democratic development of the last two centuries is conceptualized as follows:

First, long wave:	1828–1926
First reverse wave:	1922–1942
Second, short wave:	1943–1962
Second reverse wave:	1958–1975
Third wave:	1974–

TABLE 1: WAVES AND CONJUNCTURES
(BERG-SCHLOSSER, 2009, P. 41)

To begin, Berg-Schlosser (2009) argues that the ‘second transformation’ mentioned earlier lays the conceptual foundation for the ‘first long wave’ (1776 - 1914). Indeed, the rise of the republican thought enabled citizen to choose their own leaders, the introduction of the concept of representation enabled the extension of democracy, and the rebellions in America as well as France fostered the principle of equality. In the latter case, the Anci en Regime was overthrown and the battle cry ‘libert ,  galit  et fraternit ’ the emblem of the entitlements of the people. Afterwards, organized labour, left-wing factions and feminist activists championed universal franchise. In addition, during this period more and more people learned to read and write, a large number of people moved from rural to metropolitan areas, and technological progress made social intercourse between remote people easier. Rather importantly, the “*sovereign state became the universally accepted model*” (Berg-Schlosser, 2009, p. 45 - 46).

However, Berg-Schlosser (2009) points out that soon after the longing for supremacy of countries in Europe resulted in the mayhem of World War I. The latter, in turn, engendered the 'first positive conjuncture' (1918 - 1919). During this period the cessation of hostilities brought about change in politics. Indeed, some countries gained independence (e.g. Poland), others underwent the process of democratization (e.g. Austria), and others widened the franchise (e.g. Belgium). Nevertheless, one should not be blinded by such great achievements. In fact, the terms and conditions of the peace agreements were detrimental to the vanquished, which were forced to give up some areas of their dominion (e.g. Hungary). Needless to say, the resulting sense of rancour lead to the emergence of revenge movements in those countries. As a result, the hard-fought political stability of the international arena was still on the razor's edge. In addition, only some nation-states managed to establish a rock-solid democracy (Berg-Schlosser, 2009).

In this regard, Berg-Schlosser (2009) claims that the process of democratization in Europe would be eased by the following conditions: the presence of basic democratic rudiments prior to armed conflict, the lack of a puissant elite, a strong economic growth, societal uniformity, a political tradition imbued with democratic principles, limited civil disorder, the subservience of the army to political entities, and due regard for individual entitlements as well as rules and regulations. Luckily enough, empirical evidence corroborates these theoretical postulates insofar as established countries were more resistant to external turbulences than freshly instituted ones (e.g. Spain). Indeed, the latter broke down in a short time and eventually reversed into oppressive systems of government. Besides, in certain countries the above-mentioned requirements were only partially met. In some of these cases, the severe repercussions of the Great Depression contributed to the rise of nationalist factions (e.g. Germany). Subsequently, two *casi belli* - the invasion of Poland in 1939 and the assault on Pearl Harbor in 1941 - triggered an unprecedented bloodshed, namely World War II. Following the end of such atrocious butchery, in the continent under scrutiny "*people's democracies' emerged, which, as this oxymoron already suggests, were democratic by name only*" (Berg-Schlosser, 2009, p. 48).

Moreover, Berg-Schlosser (2009) maintains that during the 'second long wave' (1945 - 1988) remote territories of European countries gained independence and turned into sovereign states (e.g. India and South Africa). Not surprisingly, the democracies they established were inspired by the political system of the country that ruled over them hitherto. In any case, just some of these nation-states managed to strengthen their administration enough to actually maintain it. It is also worth mentioning that the United Nations was established in 1945. Three

years later, in 1948, the principles of democracy were capsulized in a milestone document of human development - the UN Charter. Having said that, it did not take them long to sink into oblivion. In fact, during the Cold War and later armed conflicts (e.g. Vietnam) tactical decisions were determined more by an action's contribution to the fulfilment of national objectives than its compliance with the spirit of the previously signed charter. Be that as it may, overall more and more countries turned into democratic nation-states (Berg-Schlosser, 2009).

Furthermore, Berg-Schlosser (2009) argues that the 'latest conjuncture' (1989 - 1990) saw the establishment of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which marked an important step in the official assertion of universal entitlements. In addition, the socialist countries collapsed one by one after the disintegration of the Berlin Wall in 1989, thereby "*exhibiting the economic 'implosion' and lack of legitimacy of these systems*" (Berg-Schlosser, 2009, p. 50). What is more, the dissolution of the Soviet Union resulted in the creation of new nation-states - some of which were more or less democratic (e.g. Baltic Region). Hence, all evidence seems to suggest that such form of government became de rigueur in most parts of the globe (Berg-Schlosser, 2009).

Finally, Berg-Schlosser (2009) points out that the recently increasing dissatisfaction with politics - indicated by the rising abstention rates - shifted the attention on the worth of democracy. Besides, the recent escalation of terrorist attacks auspicates a bleak future. Funnily enough, certain counterterrorist provisions are at odds with the very same principles they ought to protect (e.g. liberty of speech). Hence, it is argued that "*the latest wave has not come to an end, but shows some signs of weakening and possible reversals*" (Berg-Schlosser, 2009, p. 52). At the same time, however, it is not possible to vaticinate the future of democracy insofar as its sinuous evolution will be determined by a multitude of forces, whose complex interplay remains unintelligible to the theoretical frameworks existing to date (Berg-Schlosser, 2009).

Curiously enough, a linguistic analogy testifies to the wavy development of democracy. Hence, it only seems fair to open a brief parenthesis in this regard. The Collins Dictionary offers the users of its website the opportunity to track the usage of this term over time. Rather interestingly, there is a certain correspondence between the theoretical framework of its evolution and the actual popularity of the word itself (Fig. 2). In fact, the frequency peaks occurred in the years 1918 (5,43), 1942 (7,88) and 2008 (8,67), which roughly coincide with the above-mentioned waves and conjunctures. Also, an upward rising trend in the use of the term 'democracy' can be observed in the last century in spite of some ups and downs (Collins, 2016).



FIGURE 2: USAGE OF 'DEMOCRACY'
(COLLINS, 2016)

Furthermore, the open-endedness of the third wave creates some uncertainty about the current state of affairs. In this regard, one author wonders: "*is the third wave over?*" (Diamond, 1999, p. 60). The answer is positive - as all evidence seems to suggest. Indeed, the global spread of democracy witnessed during the past few decades recently stopped and the number of countries ready for democratization is simply not large enough to ensure the survival of the present wave. Hence, the present time is characterized by a democratic standstill. Since the amassment of irresolvable issues, malversation of political entities, continuous increase of their decision-making authority, widespread discontent with the government are antecedents to coup d'états, the status quo might appear unpropitious to the future development of democracy (Diamond, 1999).

At the same time, Diamond (1999) argues that seizures of power are averted by three factors. First, armed forces are subject to civilian control. Second, society is not interested in the restoration of autocracy. Third, democracy remains the prevailing doctrine. Even though democracies are not collapsing, they are being emptied of their substance insofar as governments tend to do make the bare minimum in order to be granted the status of democratic regime. Hence, the enhancement and fortification of existing nation-states is believed to pave the way for another wave of development. In this regard, it is argued that the countries in need of democratization are governed by oppressive rulers (e.g. North Korea). It follows that their only chance to become democracies consists in removing the respective tyrant from power. Considering that the future of such regimes is already hanging by a thread, further pressures from the world's political arena will put their sustenance at serious risk (Diamond, 1999).

Moreover, Diamond (1999) points out that in spite of these seemingly obvious aspects, one ought to bear in mind that the evolution of political systems is not a linear process and should therefore always reckon with the unexpected. Thus, it follows that any prophecy of democracy is perforce fraught with danger. In addition, another mistake to be avoided is “*to think that the world is necessarily moving towards some natural democratic state*” (Diamond, 1999, p. 273). In fact, the existence of democracy cannot be accepted as given insofar as it emanates from mankind - and not from some sort of superior force. As a result, the occurrence of the fourth wave stands in need of human action. In more detail, developed countries ought to set the example by involving the population in their political life, improving the conditions of the marginalized groups, and eradicating social inequalities. Additionally, it is necessary to stimulate economic growth through the expansion of free trade - as is the case in the Europe, which is considered to be “*the single greatest and most important community of democracies in the history of the world*” (Diamond, 1999, p. 275). In essence, a regression of democracy can only be avoided through the reinforcement of existing democratic nation-states. Indeed, it is believed that the fundamental principles underlying their system of government will experience a contagious diffusion across the globe, thereby galvanizing other countries to embark on the journey of democratization (Diamond, 1999).

2.1.4 The Status Quo

Having scrutinized the tortuous evolution of democracy in the previous section, it is now time to spend a few words on the characteristics of such system of government. In this regard, Przeworski et al. (2000) take up a simple - yet powerful - approach to identify the distinguishing features of a democratic system. Indeed, their comprehensive examination of the influence political systems exert on the economic well-being of citizens begins with the categorization of countries into two groups: ‘democracy’ or ‘dictatorship’. Instead of analysing the typical characteristics of a democratic system (e.g. principle of equality, right of representation, etc...), they focus their attention on the connection between such features and define democracy as “*a regime in which those who govern are selected through contested elections*” (Przeworski et al., 2000, p. 15). Hence, the concept of ‘contestation’, which indicates a party’s possibility to seize power through elections, is used as a yardstick against which political systems are measured (Przeworski et al., 2000).

In more detail, Przeworski et al. (2000) argue that such notion consists of three elements. First, *'ex-ante uncertainty'* refers to the odds that a candidate of the ruling party is outvoted by another contestant. However, the fact that the results of the elections are uncertain does not necessarily mean that they are unforeseeable as well. Second, *'ex-post irreversibility'* denotes the peremptory nature of electoral outcomes. Put simply, the person obtaining the most votes ought to be put into power. Third, *'repeatability'* points to the regular recurrence of elections, which, in turn, signals the ad interim nature of politics. Thus, the essence of contestation is ingeminated by stating that *"only if losers are allowed to compete, win, and assume office is a regime democratic"* (Przeworski et al., 2000, p. 18).

In view of the conceptual nature of the distinction between democracy and dictatorship, Przeworski et al. (2000) put forward some practical rules in order to empirically differentiate the two above-mentioned regimes from one another. Thus, a system is considered to be democratic when the head of government as well as the legislative body are elected, and there is more than one political faction. For the sake of completeness, it is also worth mentioning that the latter condition is supplemented by the concept of *'consolidation'* and that the principle of *'alternation'* is introduced into the bargain (Przeworski et al., 2000). However, exploring them in further detail would exceed the scope of this paper. To be sure, it is more relevant to inspect the main findings of the empirical research of Przeworski et al. (2000), which consists of the analysis of the political systems of 141 states in the time period between 1950 and 1990. To put it briefly, it is found that democracies were shorter than dictatorship and that the leadership's rate of replacement was found to be higher in the former than in the latter system of government. Be that as it may, the major take-home from these authors remains the operational definition of democracy, which *"is a system in which incumbents lose elections and leave office when the rules so dictate"* (Przeworski et al., 2000, p. 54).

In a similar way, Rose (2009) engages in the dichotomous classification of countries. Even though this is also an excessively simplistic approach, which enshrouds the subtle nuances of political systems, the work of this author includes an interesting approach to the functional definition of democracy. Indeed, it is asserted that such polysemous concept ought to be linked to the institutional framework of a nation-state in order to be properly concretized. In this regard, the most distinguishing feature of modern democracy is believed to be the *'rule of law'*, which essentially refers to the fact that the authority of political entities is subordinated to their country's legislation. Moreover, it also forms the rationale for political responsibility insofar as it guarantees that officials answer to the general public. Hence, such principle *"is not*

just a desirable addition to democratic governance but a necessary precondition for a fully democratic state" (Rose, 2009, p. 12).

Moreover, Rose (2009) points out that a seemingly irresolvable lack of consensus on the universal meaning of democracy continues, nonetheless, to dominate the democratic debate. On one hand, some focus on the prerequisites of democracy and claim that only when every grown-up is allowed to vote, elections involve more than one political faction, and incumbencies are determined by the people a state can be deemed to be democratic. On the other hand, others concentrate on participation and argue that such concept goes beyond the mere right to cast one's vote to the extent that it also entitles people to be directly involved in their country's political life. At the same time, however, neither perspective is believed to help explain the shortcomings of contemporary democracies, which are attributed to the imperfect implementation of the rule of law instead. In this regard, it is maintained that *"since the European Union requires its members to adhere to the rule of law, it provides a benchmark standing for labeling regimes as law-abiding"* (Rose, 2009, p. 16).

Furthermore, Rose (2009) maintains that the thorough enactment of such principle constitutes the most onerous obstacle to the successful completion of the democratization process - as historical evidence of the intricate twist and turns of democracy clearly suggests. It is also important that nation-states fortify their system of government in order to increase the resilience of their institutions. With regard to the future, the survival of democratic nation-states is ensured *"on the Churchillian principle that, however bad they are, the current regime is preferable to all the country's historical or prospective alternatives"* (Rose, 2009, p. 22).

Hence, it only seems fair to explore the reasons underlying the widespread acceptance of democracy in more detail. In this regard, one author wonders *"why democracy?"* (Diamond, 1999, p. 2). In response to such venturesome question, it is argued that democracy tends to be more desirable than other forms of government insofar as it is the likeliest one to foster individual freedom. Indeed, it endows citizens with certain civil and political entitlements, it increases their chances of sovereignty, and eases their ethical independence. Thus, it follows that *"the democratic process promotes human development"* (Diamond, 1999, p. 3). What is more, democracy ensures the respect of human rights, enables marginalized groups of people to voice their opinion, reduces the likelihood of both armed conflicts between as well as social friction within countries, and promotes the preservation of the natural ecosystem. It is therefore reasonable to infer that it in comparison with its alternatives such form of government is *"better suited to achieve steady progress in human well-being"* (Diamond, 1999, p. 7).

Interestingly enough, Haerpfer et al. (2009) agree with such panegyric of democracy. Indeed, they also maintain that it enhances the quality of life of the citizenry by showing consideration for human rights and minimizing the chances of military and terrorist action. In addition, democracies encourage equitable economic growth, promote the eradication of indigence and support the conservation of the natural ecosystem. It stands to reason that the more consolidated the sovereign state, the better its performance in the above-mentioned areas. At the same time, however, one should not be blinded by the merits of democracy due to the fact that *“these are statistical tendencies rather than iron laws”* (Haerpfer et al., 2009, p. 1). In fact, even though democracy is believed to be the most desirable form of government, it is necessary to bear in mind that in reality the majority of nation-states is severely flawed insofar as they enact fundamental principles - such as the rule of law for instance - in an imperfect way (Haerpfer et al., 2009).

In contrast, an extremely critical review of democracy can be found in the work of Dunn (2006), which investigates the fountainhead of its resounding success. Following a meticulous excursus of its historical development, it is argued that in this day and age democracy is subservient to the self-interest of public servants. In other words, it is an instrument for officials to pursue their personal objectives. On this account, the common denominator of the various versions of democratic governance is *“the expediency of deriving authority to rule, in a minimally credible way, from the entire citizen body over whom it must apply”* (Dunn, 2006, p. 164). Hence, the malversation of politicians ultimately results in the public mistrust of national leadership. In addition, the enticement of democracy is attributed to its apparent commitment to democratize each and every aspect of human life. Needless to say, such pledge is clearly delusional insofar as today’s societies are increasingly characterized *“by the radicalization and intensification of inequalities”* (Dunn, 2006, p. 170).

Moreover, Dunn (2006) argues that citizens are estranged from the decision-making processes of their own government. Indeed, its activities remain largely unintelligible to the majority of the population insofar as public authorities continue to operate behind closed doors. Even though referenda might theoretically be regarded as a reinforcement of personal sovereignty, in reality they are nothing more than an implement for politicians to gain popularity among potential voters. Following a careful examination of deliberative and representative democracy as well as the exploration of ways to improve the current state of affairs, it is - funnily enough - found that *“democracy has won its global monopoly as basis for legitimate rule in a setting which largely contradicts its own pretensions”* (Dunn, 2006, p. 187). In addition, the

principles governing the functioning of the single nation-state are merely being altered in order to be applicable to international politics. To be sure, such transposition is undoubtedly beyond reason. Hence, it is strongly recommended to mend national democracy, because otherwise its extension to the supranational sphere is a preposterous undertaking (Dunn, 2006).

Last but not least, in view of its pervasive influence on several authors - some of whom are mentioned in this paper - it only seems fair to pay respect to Sir Winston Churchill by explicitly mentioning his original formulation of the rationale underlying the desirability of democracy. Enounced at the House of Commons on the 11th of November 1947, it reads as follows:

*“Many forms of Government have been tried and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. **Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.**”* (UK Parliament, n.a.)

2.1.5 A Future Glimpse

In the previous section the characteristics of modern democracy have been thoroughly described. Bearing in mind that the latter is a dynamic phenomenon, it only seems fair to envision the potential evolution of such form of government in the future. Moreover, considering the continuously increasing intetwinement of politics and economics, it only seems fair to give some thought to the market economy in the envisagement of the times to come.

In this regard, Dahl (1989) envisions the possibility of a ‘third transformation’, which might result from the democratization of autocratic regimes, the extension of democracy to a larger context, and the enhancement of existing democratic countries. The second case is of particular relevance to the purposes of this paper. Indeed, it is probably worth to concisely recapitulate the two transformations mentioned earlier. To begin, democracy used to be restricted to the boundaries of the ‘polis’ in Ancient Greece. In this setting, citizens enjoyed large degrees of involvement in the political life of their city. Subsequently, democracy shifted to the nation-state. Needless to say, such increase in size came with both positive and negative consequences: while it inhibited the citizen’s ability to personally take part in politics, it also extended civil and political rights - such as the one of political engagement for instance - to previously excluded groups of people (e.g. ‘metics’) through the establishment of new institutions. Nowadays, however, countries are increasingly subject to a wide variety external forces, which transcend the nation-state. Consequently, the ability of citizens to be the masters of their own

destiny is remarkably constrained. Hence, it is argued that *“transnational forces will continue to erode national autonomy”* (Dahl, 1989, p. 319).

Having said that, Dahl (1989) points out that the implementation of the principle of self-determination is easier said than done. For instance, neither the city of Athens nor the republic of Rome were able to enforce it without fault. At present, it might be tempting to think of the current transformation as nothing more than a replica of the second one - only bigger. It is beyond doubt that this would be a fallacious approach. In fact, in the last evolution the necessary institutional framework was already in place, whereas at the moment *“only the European Community shows much sign of harboring a supranational growth gene”* (Dahl, 1989, p. 320). Thus, it should come as no surprise that resolutions are still going to be reached by the politicians of nation-states in the near future. It follows, therefore, that their political entities ought to be enhanced in order to preserve the strength of national democracy (Dahl, 1989).

Furthermore, the transcendence of democracy beyond the nation-state is also acknowledged by Held (2006), who argues that hitherto only limited attention has been paid to the repercussions of international politics on the democracy of nation-states. To begin, the majority rule actually proves troublesome in today's context. Indeed, the activities of one country are often likely to exert an influence on other states as well - such as the construction of a nuclear power plant for instance. In spite of the possible consequences, such sort of resolutions tends to be reached without any consideration of the opinion of the interested countries. In addition, the authority of trans- and supranational organizations (e.g. EU) increases the complexity of modern democracy even more. Thus, it follows that the embeddedness of sovereign states in the Gordian knot of international relations calls into question the adequacy of the orthodox principles of democracy. In this line of thought, it is asserted that *“the very process of governance seems to ‘be escaping the categories’ of the nation-state”* (Held, 2006, p. 292). Indeed, in this day and age, politics occurs in the context of globalization, which essentially refers to the transposition of public affairs into the international arena and the expansion of the institutional framework necessary to this end. More precisely, it indicates the extension of the breadth of socio-economic activities as well as the deepening of degree of intertwinement between countries (Held, 2006).

At the same time, Held (2006) argues that such multi-faceted phenomenon does not necessarily lead to the homogenization of states across the planet. Interestingly enough, the impact of globalization on national sovereignty becomes glaringly obvious through the scrutiny of ‘external disjunctures’, which basically signal the tension between the state's capacity for self-

determination and the constraints imposed by international forces. In this regard, it is pointed out that *“sovereignty is eroded only when it is displaced by forms of ‘higher’ and/or independent authority which curtail the basis of decision-making within a national framework”* (Held, 2006, p. 295). It is also necessary to heed the distinction between self-government and independence. In fact, the former concept indicates the right to preside over a certain area of land, whereas the latter one denotes the liberty of a country to set its own objectives. Being aware of such differences, one can ascertain the influence exerted by globalization on the structure and functioning of national administration (Held, 2006).

In more detail, Held (2006) investigates four major disjunctures. First, the economic system extends beyond national boundaries. Indeed, multinational companies operate all over the globe in the pursuit of profit maximization, which goes hand in hand with the continuous increase in international trade over the last few decades. In addition, technological progress is blurring the lines between market economies, which in most - yet not every - case results in the futility of industrial policies at national level. Second, the emergence of trans- and supranational organizations shows the ubiquitous yearning for a new type of governance. To be sure, the establishment of such entities significantly altered the political decision-making processes. In this regard, it is necessary to differentiate between the smaller ones dealing with concrete matters (e.g. International Telecommunications Union) and the larger ones attending to more intangible issues (e.g. IMF, UN, WTO, etc...). In particular, the latter are often in the public eye in virtue of some causes célèbres. For instance, the imposition of economic measures - such as the reduction of public spending - on individual countries by the IMF is met with skepticism due to the fact that such actions are believed to erode national self-determination. On a brighter note, the European Union represents the most successful realization of a supranational government in that it not only enjoys the right to emanate rules and regulations, but also has the authority to ensure their execution in the member states. In this regard, it is specified that *“the EU’s powers were gained by the ‘willing surrender’ of aspects of sovereignty of member states”* (Held, 2006, p. 299). Hence, this turn of events gave rise to modern modes of governance, which are increasingly removed from the nation-state (Held, 2006).

Third, Held (2006) maintains that international law rises above national legislation. In this context, the ‘European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms’ in 1950 marks an important break with tradition insofar as it entitled citizens to take the administration of their countries to court for breach of human rights. Additionally, the resolution of the ‘International Tribunal of Nuremberg’ represents another milestone in legal history.

Indeed, the latter stated that whenever international legislation on human rights is at odds with national laws, people have to disobey the latter. Thus, even though the self-determination of the state is still preserved by certain legal principles, the perspective of international law is moving from the national to the transnational level. Fourth, culture too is no longer limited by national boundaries. For instance, English is the language of choice in a wide variety of disciplines, which is in line with the meteoric rise in communication between distant people through the use of information technology. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that colossal media empires came into being as well. It also follows that the maintenance of a local culture is a more and more challenging endeavour. Furthermore, the cohesion of people in the tackling of ecological issues (e.g. global warming) puts a strain on the effectiveness of national policies and the reasonableness of the sovereign state. Hence, all evidence seems to suggest that the latter is increasingly embedded in an intricate web of dense interrelations, which changes the very nature of the nation-state by changing its independence and wearing away its capacity for self-determination. Finally, it is concluded that:

“the meaning of democracy, and of the model of democratic autonomy in particular, has to be rethought in relation to a series of overlapping local, regional and global structures and processes” (Held, 2006, p. 304).

To sum up, this section reviewed the sinuous evolution of democracy throughout history. Interestingly enough, its tortuous development is characterized by a continuous process of detachment from the citizenry as a result of the increase of its scale (Fig. 3). At present, democracy is gently shifting from the national to the supra-national level. Bearing in mind the implications of the previous extension of democracy - from the city- to the nation-state - it should come as no surprise that the current transformation is not a bed of roses. In view of such momentous change, the next section scrutinizes multi-level governance in the European Union.

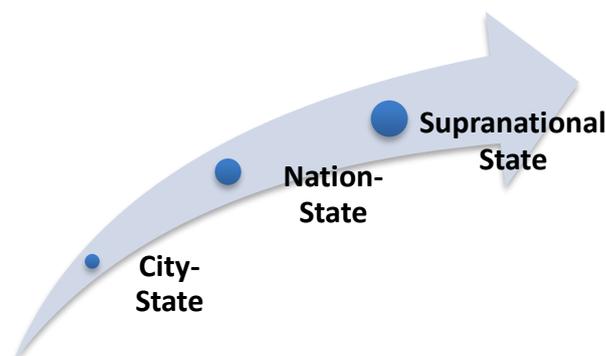


FIGURE 3: THE ABSTRACTION OF DEMOCRACY
(CREATED BY THE AUTHOR)

2.2 Multi-Level Governance

2.2.1 Concept Definition

Before exploring the twist and turns of multi-level governance in the European Union, it is necessary to define the concept of governance. To begin, the Oxford Dictionary argues that it stems from the French verb *'gouverner'*, which, in turn, originates both from the Latin verb *'gubernare'* (to rule) and the Greek verb *'kubernan'* (to steer), and defines it as *"the action or manner of governing a state, organization"* (Oxford University Press, 2016a). Moreover, the Collins Dictionary comes up with a fairly concise explanation, which reads as follows: *"the action, manner, or system of governing"* (Collins, 2016a). In a similar way, the MacMillan Dictionary puts it as *"the process of governing a country or organization"* (MacMillan Publishers Limited, 2016a). Even though none of these definitions do justice to the complexity of this concept, they all share a common thread. Indeed, they consider governance to be separate from government. With this in mind, it is now time to explore relevant academic literature to provide a thorough interpretation of such abstract concept. In fact, it is beyond doubt that limiting the analysis to such elementary definitions would be an unduly reductionist approach.

In this regard, it is probably true to say that the most influential definition of governance is the one put forward by Rhodes (2003), who claims that this term is superseding the traditional notion of government. Hence, it reads as follows:

*"governance signifies a change in the meaning of government, referring to **a new process of governing**, or a changed condition of ordered rule; or the new method by which society is governed"* (Rhodes, 2003, p. 46).

In addition, this concept may be interpreted in six different ways. First of all, it might denote the intellectual proclivity for limited power of the government and the concomitant reliance on the market to satisfy the needs and wants of the population (*minimalist state*). Second, it could indicate the culture of an organization - be it private or public - which encourages transparency, rectitude and responsibility (*corporate governance*). Third, it might refer to the increased emphasis placed on the active process of steering the country in the right direction instead of passively administering its bureaucracy (*new public management*). Fourth, it could represent a high-quality way of ruling over a state, in which executive authorities are larger in scope than the government, are democratically elected by the citizens, and are effective enough to put adequate policies into action (*good governance*). Fifth, it could stand for the recognition that the strategic action plans of a country actually result from the complex inter-

action of several actors, which complement each other. Thus, it follows that the orthodox concept of government is taken off the pedestal insofar as its competence is now to allow for such sort of interplay. Rather importantly, such interpretation of governance applies to the international level as well and *“highlights the limits to governing by a central actor, claiming there is no longer a single sovereign authority”* (Rhodes, 2003, p. 51). Instead, numerous interconnected agents work together in a variety of different ways towards the achievement of their common goal (*socio-cybernetic system*). Sixth and last, it could indicate the supervision of self-contained systems consisting of a multitude of interrelated actors coming from various sectors (*self-organizing network*). Hence, in spite of the perplexing polysemy of this term, *“the concept can be rescued by stipulating one meaning”* (Rhodes, 2003, p. 52). In this regard, the fifth interpretation - socio-cybernetic systems - is best-suited to the purposes of this paper.

Furthermore, Kjaer (2007) maintains that governance used to be synonymous with government and only recently captured the attention of researchers. Nowadays it is used across several disciplines and therefore remains an ambiguous concept. At the same time, however, the review of the definitions of governance by some of the most influential authors in this field - Rhodes (1997 cited in Kjaer, 2007), Rosenau (1995 cited in Kjaer, 2007), Hyden (1999 cited in Kjaer, 2007) - shows that their common denominator is the extension of this notion beyond the conventional boundaries of the nation-state insofar as they tend to zero in on the function of complex systems in the quest for shared objectives. To be sure, the distinction between national and international affairs is antediluvian in view of the globalized financial system. In fact, the traditional conception of the sovereign state is called into question by the drastic evolution of the society as well as the economy. To be more precise, the nation-state is increasingly influenced by events occurring outside of its territory. Thus, it only seems reasonable to infer that governance is gaining momentum as a result of the rising intricacy of the real world. In brief, it *“refers to something broader than government, and it is about steering and the rules of the game”* (Kjaer, 2007, p. 7).

Moreover, Kjaer (2007) places the principles underlying such neoteric concept under scrutiny. To begin, regulations ought to be justifiable in order to be peacefully accepted by the population. It is necessary to differentiate between input- and output-oriented legitimacy. The former emanates from the acceptance of the people to be subject to certain laws (democracy), whereas the latter springs from the capacity of laws to yield substantial benefits (efficiency). Even though these aspects might appear to be at odds with each other, they enjoy a mutually reinforcing relationship and are ultimately both indispensable to the realization of full legiti-

macy. In this regard, two frameworks of democratic governance are presented. In the aggregative one elected officials can influence the behaviour of citizens, as their wants are derived externally and thought to be stable. In the integrative one public servants create an environment that enables the citizens to realize the common good, as their wants are derived internally and thought to be unstable. Once again, even though these perspectives may seem to be irreconcilable, this does not always have to be the case (Kjaer, 2007).

Furthermore, Kjaer (2007) argues that in its current state democracy is ill-suited to ensure that politicians are held liable for their actions. In fact, the straightforward chains of representation present in past epochs (e.g. Ancient Greece) are clearly out of the question in this day and age due to the complexity of the political reality. Hence, the concept of governance endeavours enhancing the responsibility of representative democracy without undermining its fundamental principles (e.g. majority rule). Considering the emergence of networks, the growing unaccountability of political actors might be compensated by increased engagement on the part of the population. At the same time, however, participation should by no means considered to be a surrogate of responsibility. In contrast, it is crucial to maintain a balance between these two aspects. In essence, it is asserted that *“governance is about managing the rules of the game in order to enhance the legitimacy of the public realm”* (Kjaer, 2007, p. 15).

Once again, a linguistic analogy confirms the recency of the concept of governance. Indeed, the frequency of the usage of this word shows a vertiginously upward-rising trend in the last two decades (Fig. 4). In more detail, in 1988 - the turning point in the history of regional policy in the European Union - the usage of this word was merely 0.51 and by 2008 it had staggeringly soared to 8.78. Put differently, this corresponds to an astonishing increase of 1621.57% over just twenty years (Collins, 2016a).

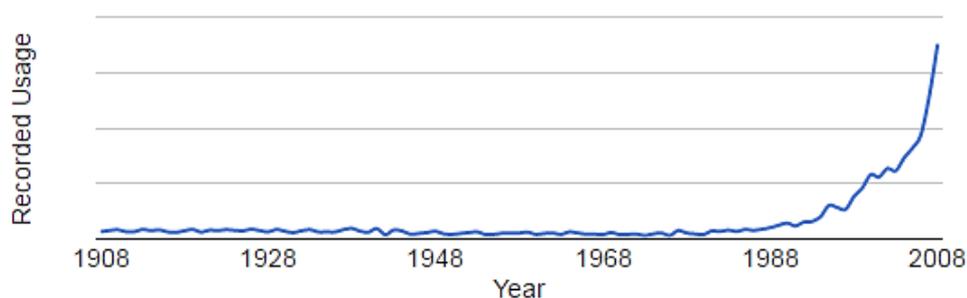


FIGURE 4: USAGE OF 'GOVERNANCE'
(COLLINS, 2016A)

2.2.2 Notion of Multi-Level Governance

Having argued that governance is a polysemous concept, it is necessary to specify which one of its versions is going to be relevant for the purposes of this paper. Bearing in mind that this study investigates the democratic deficit of the European Union, it only seems fair to focus on the type of governance which is believed to be most suitable one for the conceptualization of such supranational entity: '*multi-level governance*'. According to Bache and Flinders (2005) this term dates back to 1988, in which year, the European Union experienced a major revolution in its regional policy. Until then, conceptual studies of this polity were conducted in the field of international relations, which consists two schools of thought: intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism. The former claims that the sovereign state would be strong enough to be left untouched by the evolution of the European Union, whereas the latter argues that supra-national entities could easily influence the development of countries insofar as national authorities got stuck in extremely complex systems. In this regard, instead of focusing its attention on the unfolding of the European Union, multi-level governance zeroes in on its structure and functioning (Bache and Flinders, 2005).

Moreover, Bache and Flinders (2005) concisely point out what happened in 1988. Indeed, in this year member states opted for a twofold increase in the donations to indigent countries, which received financial resources in view of the envisioned repercussions the single market would have on their economies. In this context, national authorities acquiesced to the suggestion of the European Commission to have the grants managed by intranational associations. In essence, this momentous milestone in the history of economic policy represented a break with tradition and thereby marked the birth of multi-national governance. Interestingly enough, this term is made up of two elements. First, 'multi-level' denotes the interrelation of executives with distinct duties. Second, 'governance' indicates the rising interconnection between public and private entities with separate responsibilities. It is also worth noticing that this concept has something in common with the previously mentioned neofunctionalist movement. Indeed, it not only recognizes that agents beyond the nation-state may mould the development of the European Union, but mainly includes regional actors in the analysis (Bache and Flinders, 2005).

In view of the momentousness of such event, it only seems fair to examine the structural funds reform of 1988 in more detail. In this regard, Allen (2005) argues that the way in which they were implemented is crucial to multi-level governance. Put briefly, the intensified cooperation between the Commission and subnational actors ultimately put a strain on the role of national executives as '*gatekeepers*' to the European Union. In more detail, the Commission set up four

guidelines for the allocation of financial resources, and endeavoured improving its independence through closer cooperation with regional entities across member states. First of all, this institution identified certain 'objectives' in order to prioritize the disbursement of funds on the most indigent regions of the European Union (**concentration**). To be more precise, '*objective 1*' dealt with the areas in which the gross domestic product per head was below seventy-five percent of the mean of the EU, '*objective 2*' with areas suffering from a downturn in commerce and trade in which the number of citizens without a job is higher than the mean of the EU, '*objective 3*' with the idleness of the workforce in the long run, '*objective 4*' with the adjustment of employees to advancements in the industry, '*objective 5*' with support to farming and forestry (*5a*) as well as with the evolution of the countryside (*5b*), and '*objective 6*' with the buildout of almost uninhabited northern areas. It stands to reason that there is continuous friction between the aspiration of the Commission to converge the cluster the funds and the anxiety of the member states to acquire the lion's share of the funds (Allen, 2005). A detailed overview of the objective regions between 1989 and 1993 can be found in Appendix 2.

Second, Allen (2005) maintains that such financial resources were mainly assigned to wide strategies - and not to narrow undertakings - which might be set in motion by national as well as supranational actors (**programming**). Even though at the outset the Commission managed to shift the focus of attention to this type of schemes, soon after it was compelled to surrender some of its authority to the executives of the member states. Third, these funds were meant to supplement - not supplant - the financial resources of the countries (**additionality**). The Commission succeeded in ensuring the compliance of nation states to this precept. In fact, it alarmed national executives that if they did not objectively substantiate their need for further financing, it would simply retain funds. However, it should be noted that this institution had a hard time checking the actual activities of member states. Fourth, the Commission cooperated closely with subnational entities in the administration of these funds (**partnership**). Hence, the fons et origo of '*multi-level governance*'. Put simply, the main purpose was to empower regions to participate in the policy-making process. It stands to reason that the achievement of this target were met with resistance from national executives. In any case, it is maintained that "*the manner in which the structural funds have been implemented has had a significant impact on the development of multi-level governance*" (Allen, 2005, p. 239).

Having elucidated the structural funds reform, it is now time to explore the notion of multi-level governance in more detail. In this regard, an interesting approach to the definition of this concept can be found in the work of Peters and Pierre (2005), who not only point out what it

is, but also specify what it is not in order to clear the reader's mind from any potential misinterpretation. To begin, it is maintained that the thorough comprehension of this notion entails the grasp of its four underlying elements. First, governance goes beyond the conventional conception of national government and indicates the way in which funds - public and private - are organized and manoeuvred. Hence, the ordinary understanding of governance emphasizes the cooperation of several actors, but neglects the influence such joint efforts exert on established national entities. In this regard, it would also be interesting to take into consideration the function national authorities play in this new scenario. In brief, while governance deals with processes between entities with separate spheres of authority, it is still important to give some thought to the actual institutions themselves insofar as they represent the key players of today's political arena (Peters and Pierre, 2005).

Second, Peters and Pierre (2005) argue that the complexity of the interactions - vertical as well as horizontal - between elements in multi-level governance subverts the orthodox hierarchy of politics. Even though it enables the cooperation of intra- and supra-national actors, it does not obliterate the customary pecking order. In this sense, the latter is to a certain degree supplanted by what is referred to as 'stratarchy', which denotes "*an organizational model in where each level of the organization operates to a large extent independently of other organizational levels*" (Peters and Pierre, 2005, p. 79). In this regard, political institutions serve as a bridge between agents located at distinct levels. In brief, even though subnational actors are increasingly gaining momentum, it is essential to bear in mind that their substance stays unaltered (Peters and Pierre, 2005).

Third, Peters and Pierre (2005) maintain that the organization set up by multi-level governance does not emanate from instructions enforced by rules and regulations, but results from the wheeling and dealing of politicians - especially in the case of evolving political systems. For instance, the evolvement of the European Union entailed continuous confabulation insofar as such supra-national entity initially lacked an entire statutory framework. Fourth, multi-level governance is often considered to be as a sort of entertainment due to the fact that the moderation of the rules gives political actors free rein to act independently. It naturally follows that it is crucial to identify the players of such divertimento. Bearing in mind the old proverbial saying 'it is not the winning but the taking part that counts', it should come as no surprise that agents will most likely strive to stay in the race. In addition, the political players pursue their own objectives. As a result, such lack of strategic alignment leads - at one point or another - to a conflict of interests (Peters and Pierre, 2005).

As mentioned earlier, Peters and Pierre (2005) also draw the reader's attention to what multi-governance is not. To this end, they present four arguments. First, it should not be considered to be synonymous with intergovernmentalism due to the fact that it takes into consideration a wide variety of different agents, which could stem from the public (e.g. government) as well as private (e.g. companies) sector. Needless to say, the resulting heterogeneity raises the intricacy of the political landscape even more. Second, it is essential to embrace the fact that multi-level governance transcends the established chain of command insofar as sub- and supra-national entities can interact with state interference. Thus, the lack of a formal structure "*creates institutional exchanges that are typical ad hoc and designed differently for each specific matter*" (Peters and Pierre, 2005, p. 83). At the same, however, the reduction of national authority might yield benefits for the nation-state. In fact, the continuous discussions between various entities are thought to raise public awareness on the current state of affairs, which is characterized by regional and national actors being more and more contingent on one another. Third, multi-level governance is occasionally regarded as 'extra-constitutional' due to the fact that the unofficial interactions between entities are not controlled by rules and regulations. Fourth, it is maintained that "*a defining feature of multi-level governance is that it is a model of governing which largely defies, or ignores, structure*" (Peters and Pierre, 2005, p. 84).

2.2.3 Types of Multi-Level Governance

Furthermore, a distinction between different types of multi-level governance is made by Marks and Hooghe (2005). In view of the multiplicity of jurisdictions, they identify two categories of multi-level governance, which are simply referred to as Type I and Type II. Although their most salient features are summarized in Table 2, there can be no doubt that a more elaborate discourse is necessary to entirely appreciate the conceptual endeavour of these authors.

Type I	Type II
General-purpose jurisdictions	Task-specific jurisdictions
Non-intersecting memberships	Intersecting memberships
Jurisdictions at a limited number of levels	No limit to the number of jurisdictional levels
System-wide architecture	Flexible design

TABLE 2: TYPES OF GOVERNANCE
(MARKS AND HOOGHE, P. 17)

To begin, Type I multi-level governance is conceptually grounded in federalism, which is essentially concerned with the distribution of authority among national entities. At the same time, however, it goes a step further insofar as its scope goes well beyond the one of the nation-state. In this framework, the functions of the jurisdictions are not specific and their memberships never cross. Thus, “every citizen is located in a **Russian Doll set of nested jurisdictions**, where there is one and only one relevant jurisdiction at any particular scale” (Marks and Hooghe, 2005, p. 16). In light of the intellectual brilliance of such ingenious metaphor, it only seems fair to further elucidate it by means of a visual representation (Fig. 5).



FIGURE 5: MATRYOSHKA
(LEGOMENON, 2016)

More specifically, Marks and Hooghe, (2005) argue that this type of governance possesses two distinguishing features. First, there is only a restricted amount of jurisdictions ranging from the sub- to the supra-national setting. Despite being merely statistical instruments, the well-defined levels of the territorial classification used by the European Union (NUTS) would be a very good example in this case. Second, the overarching institutional structure pertains to each and every one of the long-lasting jurisdictions. In fact, even though their complexity may somewhat vary, their constitution remains characterized by the orthodox division of powers into legislative, executive and judicial branches. Interestingly enough, this type of governance is relevant to the anfractuous evolution of the European Union insofar as its “*integration and regionalization are viewed as complementary processes in which central state authority is dispersed above and below the national state*” (Marks and Hooghe, 2005, p. 19). Nevertheless, the sovereign state maintains its supremacy over the interactions between sub- and supra-national political entities. On the other hand, Type II is the antipode of the previous type of multi-level governance. Indeed, in this context jurisdictions perform a specific function - such as the ‘*Zweckverbände*’ in Switzerland for instance. In addition, their memberships may cross

at some point in time. Once again, two core features are identified. First, there is a wide variety of different jurisdictions. Second, their structure can be adjusted in response to changing circumstances (Marks and Hooghe, 2005).

Furthermore, it seems reasonable to assume that concrete examples of these types of multi-level governance would enable the reader to gain a better understanding. Luckily enough, Marks and Hooghe (2005) investigate the concretization of both Type I and Type II in the real world. For the purposes of this paper, only the ones relevant to the European Union are going to be mentioned. To start, such supranational entity epitomizes the first type: more and more power is granted to subnational entities, the overarching framework is easily understandable, and - as mentioned earlier - there is a finite number of territorial levels (NUTS). Importantly, it is further pointed out that the European Union is an exception as it *“bundles together policy competencies that in other parts of the world are handled by numerous, overlapping and functionally specific jurisdictions”* (Marks and Hooghe, 2005, p. 23). Moreover, the second type can only be detected to a limited extent in the EU: jurisdictions set up to manage regions that cut across national borders (e.g. Upper Rhine Valley) or to deal with issues at the neighbourhood level (e.g. Canton of Zurich). The latter instance, however, is peculiar to Switzerland and not particularly popular in the European Union (Marks and Hooghe, 2005).

It goes without saying that neither type of multi-level governance is completely flawless. In this regard, Marks and Hooghe (2005) examine the shortcomings of each approach. The results of their analysis are summarized in Table 3.

Type I	Type II
Intrinsic community	Extrinsic community
Voice	Exit
Conflict articulation	Conflict avoidance

TABLE 3: BIASES OF GOVERNANCE TYPES
(MARKS AND HOOGHE, P. 27)

Nonetheless, it only seems fair to spend a few more words on the drawback of each perspective. In this regard, Marks and Hooghe (2005) maintain that the first type of jurisdiction pertains to self-ruling groups of people in the same geographical area or with the same collective identity (e.g. religion). Considering that it is very difficult to leave such communities, those who want to withdraw tend to see themselves forced to relocate or alter their personality

respectively. In addition, they are so structured that even their rules are regulated. Thus, it follows that in these contexts the political war of words is immensely ordered as well. On the other hand, the second type of jurisdiction bears on collectivities residing in the same place or performing the same function (e.g. parents). Since their membership is discretionary, people can easily retreat from such associations. What is more, the absence of a strict structure results in the tendency to stay away from disputes. It is further argued that these two approaches are not separate instruments to reach the same objective. In fact, they encapsulate distinct perspectives on deliberative processes in the aggregate: while Type I gives thought to the will of the people, Type II concentrates on the resolution of problems. Interestingly enough, even though their shortcomings are essentially the opposite of each other, these two perspectives share the same strength. Of course, each one manifests it in its own way. More precisely, it is argued that *“the main benefit of multi-level governance lies in its scale flexibility”* (Marks and Hooghe, 2005, p. 29).

2.2.4 Critical Perspectives

So far, multi-level governance has been put on a pedestal. However, a well-rounded argumentation ought to take into consideration critical views on this phenomenon as well. In this regard, it is worth reviewing the work of George (2005). Indeed, this author uses the animadversion against multi-level governance of Andrew Jordan (2001 cited in George, 2005), which consists of seven arguments, to organize his own study. For the purposes of this paper, however, only two of these are going to be reviewed in detail. To begin, the first one holds that such type of governance is merely a mixture of extant concepts. In this regard, in response to the claim that multi-level governance overcame the chasm between the intergovernmentalism and supranationalism, it is argued that *“multi-level governance does not escape the dichotomy, but is simply a more sophisticated restatement of one side of it”* (George, 2005, p. 108).

In more detail, George (2005) traces back the origin of such schism to the explanations of the evolution of the European Union provided by two contrasting schools of thought: neo-functionalism inter-governmentalism. The chief argument of the former perspective consists of the notion of *‘functional spillover’*, which essentially holds that the progress of one part of the economic system perforce leads to the development of other areas due to the fact that these are densely intertwined. In addition, this approach emphasizes the role played by supranational entities in the unfolding of the European Union. In this regard, the Commission is thought of as an independent actor, which not only exert a significant influence on national executives, but also cooperates with certain subnational associations by acting in their best interest. In

fact, these agents profit from being incorporated in the European Union and are therefore incline to prevent national authorities from forsaking the political unification. On the other hand, the latter perspective censures such mosaic conception of the political landscape. More precisely, national leadership does not exclusively answer to interest groups, but is also accountable to its citizenry. In addition, the political arena is limited to the boundaries of the nation-state. Hence, subnational actors do not secretly collaborate with the European Commission. In brief, the recent evolution of the European Union continuously added fuel to the fire and thereby managed to keep the duel between these two school of thought going. Indeed, their theoretical frameworks were alternatively used to interpret the process of integration. Hence the exchange of views is by no means dying out. On the contrary, it is moving forward. In this sense, multi-level governance brings a breath of fresh air insofar as it restores the interaction between the European Commission and entities operating in the public sector below the national level. Even though some scholars of such type of governance did not completely grasp its connection with the neofunctionalist tradition, it would be beyond reason to consider these two perspectives to be totally unrelated. On the contrary, they are so similar that one actually supersedes the other. More precisely, *“multi-level governance has effectively taken the place of neofunctionalism as the alternative theory to intergovernmentalism”* (George, 2005, p. 112).

Furthermore, the second criticism of Andrew Jordan (2001 cited in George, 2005) holds that multi-level governance manages to explain the European Union, but fails to conceptualize such political entity into a theoretical framework. In this regard, George (2005) claims that it is necessary to understand why national executives agreed to surrender some of their influence to supranational entities. In essence, there could be three reasons for their consent to such transfer of authority. First, it might increase their bargaining power in the wheeling and dealing occurring at the national as well as at the international level. Second, they might want to set limits to the room for manoeuvre of future administrations. In fact, the resolutions reached for the European Union outlive national legislatures. Thus, the liberty of every government is unavoidably constrained by the actions of its antecedents. Third, politicians might be willing to circumvent tough decisions insofar as they could lead to the end of their political career. Interestingly enough, such transfer of authority may also occur against the will of national executives - such as when it is indispensable to the achievement of national objectives and simultaneously the least expensive alternative, or when they simply cannot impede it. In essence, however, multi-level governance is the shift of power - be it voluntary or not - from the national to the supranational level. In addition, it seems reasonable to assume that such process

may not only exceed the scope initially envisioned by statesmen, but also escalate beyond their control. Needless to say, the loss of jurisdiction is one of the common denominators between multi-level governance and neo-functionalism. Moreover, the similarity between these two schools of thought is emphasized on a more abstract note as well. Indeed, it is argued that “*multi-level is identical to neofunctionalism in the hypothesis that it generates, because it is nothing more than a partial restatement of neofunctionalism without the functionalism*” (George, 2005, p. 116). Put simply, it is a more elaborate version of it. Even though it would be interesting to further explore the relationship between this type of governance and institutionalism, and examine the other five arguments of the critique of Jordan (2001 cited in George, 2005), this would most likely only result in a superfluous theoretical digression. Therefore, it is enough to point out that the first one analysed in this paper is actually just an objective observation, while the second one is contested in that multi-level governance does provide a rudimentary hypothetical framework for studying the European Union (George, 2005).

Another critical perspective on multi-level governance can be found in the previously mentioned work of Peters and Pierre (2005), who argue that the seductiveness of such type of governance stems from the informal nature of the interactions between entities and the absence of rules and regulations. Consequently, they wonder whether it might be a ‘*Faustian Bargain*’, which subverts the principles of modern democracy. Indeed, at first multi-level governance might seem to be an impeccably virtuous phenomenon insofar as it allows the participation of numerous actors and enables them to reach resolutions without strife. Bearing in mind the old proverbial saying ‘not all that glitters is gold’, it is worth scratching beneath the surface in order to go beyond appearances. For instance, it would clearly be unreasonable to assume that there is no conflict of interest between entities operating in the European Union. Indeed, evidence from this fiercely competitive political arena suggests that national agents are struggling to achieve the objectives of their own country. Thus, scholars of multi-level governance eventually realized that negotiation constitutes the essence of politics in the European Union. At the same time, however, such sort of decision-making is not entirely flawless. In fact, it tends to reduce the authority of subnational entities and complicates the process of guiding the citizens in a certain direction. In addition, the lack of a regulatory framework puts a strain on the ability of actors to settle disputes between opposing entities. Thus, it follows that the results of such wheeling and dealing could be either incomplete contentions or spurious resolutions reached in order to increase the popularity of some politician, but that do not really grapple with the issue at stake. Moreover, the non-existence of a formal structure might easily enable powerful agents to easily gain the upper hand over the powerless ones. Hence, the

political landscape would essentially be subject to the 'law of the strongest'. In a similar way, the informal nature of interactions between entities severely undermines the principle of equality due to the fact that the players choose who can join their game. It is further argued that multi-level governance is a nebulous concept insofar as it could virtually relate to any involute political landscape. In addition, it is unable to interpret the results of current - let alone future - negotiations. In sum, this type of governance is deemed to be a 'Faustian Bargain', because:

“the capacity to govern has been sold, or at least been downgraded, in an attempt to achieve more open and inclusive bargaining, and in order to circumvent formal structures that have been central to intergovernmental allocations in many systems.” (Peters and Pierre, 2005, p. 88)

To put it briefly, the political landscape of the European Union grew incredibly complex over the past few decades and is now characterized by a complex web of interactions among a wide variety of different actors operating at the sub-national, the national, and the supra-national level. Hence, the European Union represent the quintessential apotheosis of multi-level governance. However, such mode of governance is not an unmitigated blessing. In fact, the democratization of the supra-national decision-making process occurs to the detriment of the authority of sub-national as well as national entities. Therefore, the next subsection scrutinizes the impact of the European Union on the structure and functioning of its member states.

2.2.5 European Integration

Having reviewed the concept of multi-level governance in the European Union, it is now time to examine the influence - direct and indirect - exerted by such supranational entity on the sovereignty of the state (*'Europeanization'*). To begin, Holzacker and Albaek (2007) analyze the effects of integration on national democracies. To this end, they focus their attention on the alteration of national decision-making processes resulting from the emergence of multi-level governance and examine the compatibility of such change with the preservation of democracy in the nation-state. In this sense, their dynamic approach represents a break with tradition insofar as the most scholars argued for the existence of a 'democratic deficit' in the European Union simply by means of a static analysis of its institutions. In contrast, these authors recognize the complexity of the political landscape and firmly *“believe that democratic governance must be sought in linking processes between different levels of decision-making”* (Holzacker and Albaek, 2007, p. 3).

Moreover, Holzhaecker and Albaek (2007) point out that multi-level governance possesses three distinguishing features. First, decision-making power is distributed to entities operating at different levels. Second, shared resolutions inevitably reduce the authority of national executives. Third, the interrelation of political spheres leads to the development of transnational realms. Subsequently, they introduce a conceptual framework that not only identifies the wide variety of different actors involved in the decision-making processes of the European Union, but also points out the mechanisms they use to reach common resolutions (Fig. 6). In other words, it *“shows the linked societal and state processes in the multi-level political system incorporating the EU and the member states”* (Holzhaecker and Albaek, 2007, p. 9).

More precisely, Holzhaecker and Albaek (2007) argue that at first sight it seems that there are two ways in which citizens could exert their democratic right of political representation. On one hand, the right side of the graph shows that people cast their vote for the European Parliament, which ought to act in their best interest. Even though this institution is involved in the legislative process of the European Union, its authority over the institutions of the executive branch - Commission and Council - is relatively meagre. Thus, the relative impotence of the legislative branch suspends such chain of representation. On the other hand, the left side of the graph shows that people elect the member of their national parliament, which determines the constitution of the country's government. In turn, the latter participates in the votes of the Council of Ministers. In essence, the national parliament exerts an influence over the national government by continuously reviewing its standpoint on issues that are going to be discussed during the summits of the Council of Ministers in Brussels (Holzhaecker and Albaek, 2007).

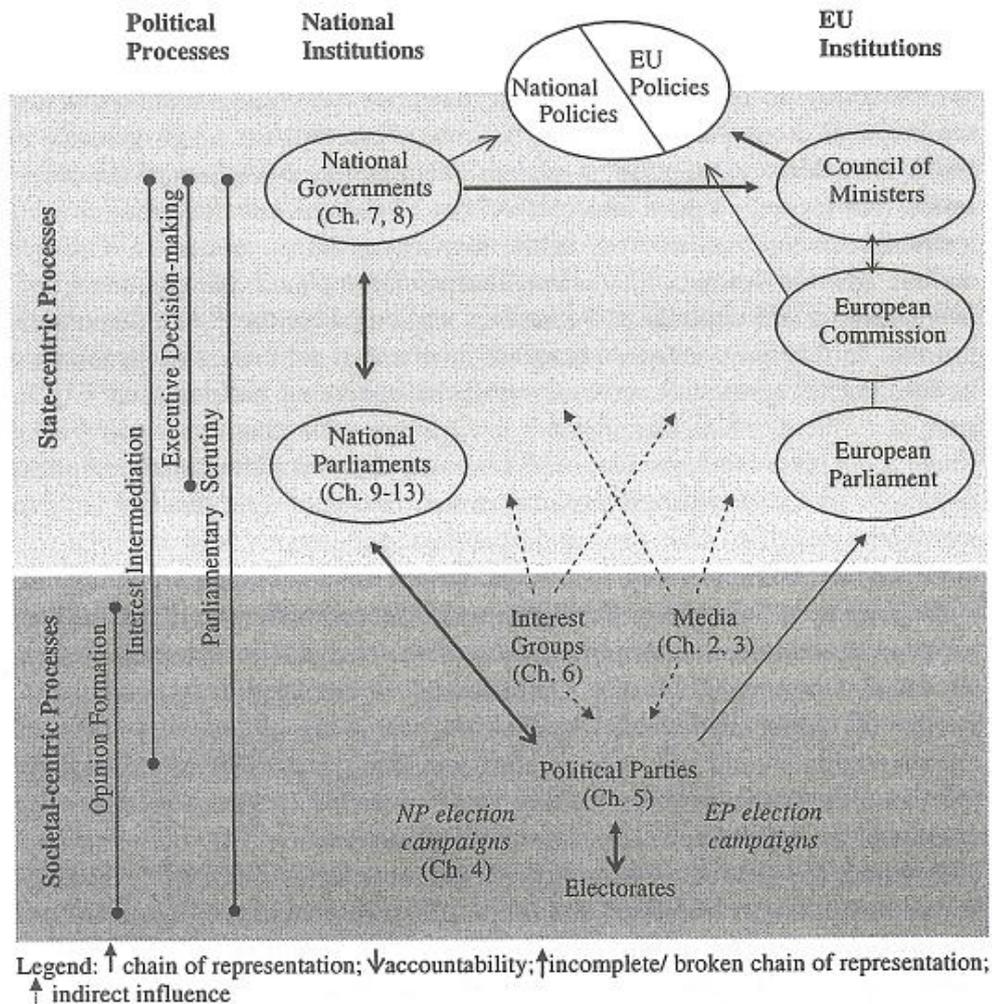


FIGURE 6: DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN THE EU
(HOLZHACKER AND ALBAEK, 2007, P. 10)

Having concisely conceptualized the relationship between the member states and the European Union, it is important to investigate whether such supranational entity actually erodes national democracy. To this end, it is worth reviewing the work of Börzel and Sprungk (2007), who examine the consequences of integration on national deliberative processes. In this regard, it is found that such phenomenon subverts the horizontal as well as vertical separation of powers. To begin, this fundamental principle constitutes the bedrock of nation-state democracy insofar as it prevents the misuse of authority. Indeed, it allocates certain competences to the legislative, executive and judicial powers, which perform the assigned duties on their own. Hence, each sphere can examine and - where necessary - criticize the work of the others. In the national context, parliaments select the members of the executive, play an important role in legislative procedures, supervise the activities of the government, and continuously interact with the citizens of their country. In the framework of the European Union, however, each of these competences is subject to substantial constraints. In fact, parliaments cannot appoint

every member of the executive branch. In addition, their participation in the supranational legislative process is limited to the signature of treaties and the enactment of laws and their input is restricted to the exertion of influence on politicians attending the summits of the Council of Ministers. Moreover, the process of obtaining facts and figures on current topics is rather onerous and simultaneously dealing with a large number of reports on various subjects puts a strain on the structure of national entities. Considering that their capacity to respond to the acquired documents is also limited, parliaments can only express their point of view on certain issues. Last, there is still considerable room for improvement in the interaction between the European Parliament and the citizens of the European Union. Hence, the evidence clearly suggests that integration reduces some and eliminates other competences of national parliaments and thereby cripples *“the equal standing of each branch of government in the decision-making processes”* (Börzel and Sprungk, 2007, p. 119).

Moreover, Börzel and Sprungk (2007) point out that several procedures were established to counteract such erosion of authority. In essence, they are meant to enhance the ability of national parliaments to receive, process, and reply to information on issues of public concern. Having said that, it is necessary to bear in mind that they continue to rely on the executive branch for the receipt of timely and accurate documentation. Additionally, national parliaments are by no means able to ensure that their perspective is going to be given some thought by the decision-making authorities. Needless to say, such lack of power requires parliaments to collaborate closer with their respective governments. Funnily enough, the evidence shows that restoring the authority of the nation-state’s legislative power blurs *“the clear distinction and separation of the different branches of government”* (Börzel and Sprungk, 2007, p. 121).

Furthermore, Börzel and Sprungk (2007) argue that integration also affects the relationship between the state and the regions. Even though they both sacrifice some of their competences to the institutions of the European Union, the latter bear the brunt of such process. In fact, regions are by no means able to sway the decision-making processes occurring at the supranational level (*‘say’*), whereas governments can exert some influence insofar as their members take part in the summits of the Council of Ministers. At the same time, however, the regions usually put the policies of the European Union into effect (*‘pay’*). Ironically enough, they foot the bill for the execution of resolutions reached beyond their back (*‘pay without say’*). Moreover, considering the excessive reliance of governments on regions for the effectuation of strategies, it should come as no surprise that the former constrain the authority of the latter by introducing national rules on the enactment of policies. Hence, the evidence suggests that *“the*

central state has been increasingly seeking the cooperation of the regions in the formal and practical implementation of European policies” (Börzel and Sprungk, 2007, p. 123). Conversely, regions must rely on governments for the exertion of influence on the decision-making processes of the European Union. It follows that integration intensifies the interrelationship between these two actors. Moreover, even though the extension of the participatory of regions might counterbalance their substantial erosion of power, it ultimately reinforces the supremacy of the executive branch. In fact, regional governments - not parliaments - are entitled to bring pressure to bear on national administrations. Thus, the mitigation of the consequences of integration on the vertical separation of powers *“reinforced the erosion of the horizontal division of power between executive and legislature”* (Börzel and Sprungk, 2007, p. 124). Even though it is beyond doubt that ‘Europeanization’ occurs at the expense of nation-state democracy, the European Union’s steadfast dedication to the protection of democratic principles - on which its institutions are based - suggests that such supranational entity also encouraged the improvement of national democracy. Therefore, these authors finally reach the conclusion that *“there appears to be a ‘dark side’ of Europeanization that has not been sufficiently paid attention to”* (Börzel and Sprungk, 2007, p. 131).

Considering that the integration process strengthens national governments, it is important to examine its consequences on the structure and functioning of the executive branch. To this end, it is necessary to briefly review the study of Molina and Colino (2007), who contribute to the fierce debate on integration by investigating its equivocal repercussions on the capacity of national executives to rule their countries. To begin, it is pointed out that governments are the most powerful actors in the multi-level governance framework. In fact, they bear the responsibility for the execution of policies and act as intermediaries between the nation-states and the European Union. Therefore, it is worth spending a few more words on their points of contact. Needless to say, the interaction between the national and supranational level varies from country to country. Nonetheless, it is still possible to identify several aspects. For instance, member states could allocate the administration of European Policy to the minister of foreign affairs (e.g. Spain), or to the one of the economy (e.g. Germany), or to the office of the prime minister (e.g. United Kingdom). In addition, ‘interministerial committees’ are established in each capital city. It is necessary to point out that their aspirations usually exceed their capabilities. Interestingly enough, the ineffectiveness of such committees is attributed to two aspects. First, they are divided by the protectiveness of the various ministries. Second, their narrow focus on specific topics causes them to lose sight of the bigger picture, which is detrimental to the cohesion of their country’s standpoint in the European Union. Also, every member state

has an 'permanent representation' in Brussels, which keep abreast of the activities of the Council, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER), and the working groups of the Commission. In essence, they are entitled to interact with the institutions of the European Union as they *"attempt to ensure unity of action, functional hierarchy and coordination with the rest of the executive"* (Molina and Colino, 2007, p. 142). Hence, the committees and the delegations are considered to be two-headed beasts, because they constitute an essential element of their country's government and at the same time represent an important piece of the Europe Puzzle. In view of the heterogeneity of the member states as well as the intricacy of the decision-making processes at the supranational level, the ways in which nation-states interact with the European Union are essentially country-specific mechanisms (Molina and Colino, 2007).

Following such excursus, Molina and Colino (2007) analyze the effects of integration on national governments and argue that such phenomenon *"has produced important effects on executives, but it has not diluted their characteristic feature"* (Molina and Colino, 2007, p. 145). In fact, even though the executive branch was strengthened, the wide range of different issues under scrutiny at the supranational level allowed ministries to become more and more engaged in the decision-making processes of the European Union. Indeed, the standpoint of a member state on a particular issue is ultimately determined by the relevant minister. Moreover, nearly every department of the executive eventually attends to matters of international concern. Thus, the structure and functioning of national governments needs to undergo some changes in order to be more congruous with the European Union. First, new ministries are established from scratch and existing ones are organized in a different way. Second, departments are restructured in order to be deal with the policies of the EU in a more effective way. Third, important elements of the ministry of economics gain independence - such as the central banks in view of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). At the same time, however, the mechanisms of the European Union do not significantly alter the administrative procedures of the member states. Hence, the overall impact of integration is considered to be rather marginal and it is further argued that *"the political position of the executive in the more general domestic opportunity structure has hardly altered"* (Molina and Colino, 2007, p. 147).

Moreover, Molina and Colino (2007) claim that national governments are increasingly growing apart insofar as each one sets up its own entities and develops its own mechanisms in response to 'Europeanization'. Interestingly enough, considering the specificity of the reactions of the member states to such phenomenon, it might actually be more accurate to refer to it as

the 'domestication' of the executive branch. In fact, the effects of integration are more profound in member states located in Central Eastern and Southern Europe. More precisely, the capacity to govern of these countries is remarkably improved by the European Union by virtue of two aspects. First, since their entities are not compliant with supranational rules and regulations, it is self-evident that substantial structural change is needed. Second, the tactical manoeuvres of statesmen ought to be given some thought as well. Bearing in mind that the political landscape of these countries is characterized by apathy and boycott, integration might be the magic wand that enables them to grapple with their stagnant state of affairs. However, its seductiveness is also attributed to less virtuous reasons - such as the prospect of obtaining financial resources or the possibility of laying the blame for tough decisions on the European Union. Thus, the consequences of 'Europeanization' are deemed to be ambiguous: while it enhances the capacity of governments to rule by equipping them with the necessary means, it also enfeebles nation-state democracy by undermining the separation of powers. Thus, the implications of integration are not at all trivial. In other words, *"it is indeed undeniable that EU membership has facilitated some fundamental changes in the operation of the executives in some countries"* (Molina and Colino, 2007, p. 150).

Finally, Molina and Colino (2007) maintain that it is not possible to reach a universally valid conclusion on the equivocal repercussions of 'Europeanization' on the member states. In fact, some organs of national governments experience radical change in view of their relevance to certain policies (e.g. central banks because of EMU), whereas other departments merely rearrange their structure in the wake of integration. It would also be unreasonable to compare its effects across countries insofar as each member state executes democracy in its own way (e.g. Scandinavian ≠ Mediterranean). In this regard, integration weakens the authority of the legislative and strengthens the power to govern of the executive branch. Last but not least, any inference on the empowerment of governments *"must be qualified by stressing that the extent of this effect will vary depending on national variables"* (Molina and Colino, 2007, p. 152).

Having examined the impact of integration on the executive branch of member states, it only seems fair to investigate its effects on the legislative one as well. Therefore, it is necessary to spend a few words on the study of Auel (2007), which analyzes the reforms of the following national parliaments: the House of Commons (United Kingdom), the Assemblée Nationale (France), the Bundestag (Germany), and the Folketing (Denmark). Since country-specific evidence would exceed the purpose of this paper, only the theoretical elements of this analysis are going to be taken into consideration. To begin, parliaments bear the brunt of integration

insofar as they surrender their authority to the European Union as well as to the governments of their respective countries. Since they do not let themselves get pushed around, however, they vigorously react to such erosion of power. In light of these circumstances, it is necessary to elucidate the meaning of 'Europeanization', which could either indicate the consequences of integration on the standing of the parliaments (passive), or their response to such course of things (active). The former essentially denotes the insignificance of the functions they perform in the context of the European Union. To be more precise, they sign treaties developed without their direct participation and convert supranational rules and regulations - on which they can exert an indirect effect at the most - into national legislation. Therefore, "*national parliaments were and are still losing a growing part of their sovereignty*" (Auel, 2007, p. 158).

At the same time, Auel (2007) points out that national parliaments are resilient and can easily adjust to new circumstances. Hence, the reorganization of their structure ('institutional Europeanization') was expected to achieve three goals. First, it would allow them to receive extensive facts and figures on matters of international concern from the executive branch. Second, it would improve their ability to process such sort of documentation. Third, it would grant them participatory rights in relation to national governments. Bearing in mind that the evolution of parliaments is influenced by the actions of their ancestors, the effectiveness of these measures differed from country to country. In essence, even though it did not entirely offset the loss of power of national parliaments, such structural reform empowered parliaments to manage the stance of their governments on issues under scrutiny in the European Union. Curiously enough, it is further argued that "*stronger participation rights of national parliaments do not inevitably contribute to advancing parliamentary control and democratic accountability of national governments*" (Auel, 2007, p. 165). On the contrary, it would result in a difficult conundrum. In fact, the imposition of a particular standpoint on the government by the parliament would inhibit the ability of the executive to fulfill the will of the citizens in the bargaining processes at the supranational level. Hence, it looks like 'institutional Europeanization' would fail on all fronts: it either does not really solve the issue or it comes with severe side-effects (Auel, 2007).

Having said that, Auel (2007) argues that the members of national parliaments are cognizant of the imperfections of such reform and therefore strive to establish an action plans that overcome such imperfections. In this regard, four alternatives are identified. First, governments could be directly answerable to the population instead of being subject to the influence of parliaments. In this way, they would be responsible for their actions, while their liberty to ne-

gotiate would not be restricted. Second, parliaments could try to exert an influence on governments by means of collective debate on issues of public concern. Third, members of parliaments could unofficially collaborate with the members of governments. Fourth and last, parliamentarians might also go round ministers and autonomously communicate with the institutions of the European Union. It is worth mentioning that the choice of strategy depends on the relationship between the executive and legislative branches. More precisely, weak parliaments tend to become the middleman between the electorate and the European Union, whereas strong parliaments are inclined to collaborate with governments to strengthen their position. Needless to say, none of these strategies is entirely flawless. Thus, *“in order to guarantee democratic legitimacy in European policy-making, national parliaments may have to re-evaluate their roles and search for a combination of different strategies”* (Auel, 2007, p. 174).

To sum up, national institutions seem to be overwhelmed by the complexity of the European Union. Bearing in mind that integration is an ongoing process, it only seems fair to give them some more time to acclimatize to the new political environment. Moreover, even though the phenomenon of *‘Europeanization’* did not revolutionize the sum and substance of national entities, it brought about change in the relations among them. Indeed, it increased the power of national governments (*executive*) at the expense of national parliaments (*legislative*). Having assessed the impact of the European Union on its member states, the following section is going to present the European institutions of relevance to the purposes of this paper, and to review the conceptualizations of the European Union by some of the most eminent scholars in the field of European politics in order to prepare the reader for the debate about the presumed *‘democratic deficit’* of this unique political system.

2.3 The European Union

2.3.1 The Structure

Before delving into the debate about the ‘democratic deficit’, it is necessary to briefly explain the main institutions as well as the legislative process of the European Union in order to ensure the reader’s thorough appreciation of the arguments presented afterwards.

To begin, the **European Parliament (EP)** represents the legislative branch of the EU. This institution consists of 751 politicians, who are elected by the citizens of the member states every five years. The number of parliamentarians assigned to each country is based on its respective population. Therefore, Malta only has six MEPs, while Germany has ninety-six MEPs. In addition, they are grouped according to their political affiliation (Fig. 7). Even though the EP is officially based in Strasbourg, this institution also operates in Brussels and Luxembourg (European Union, 2014).

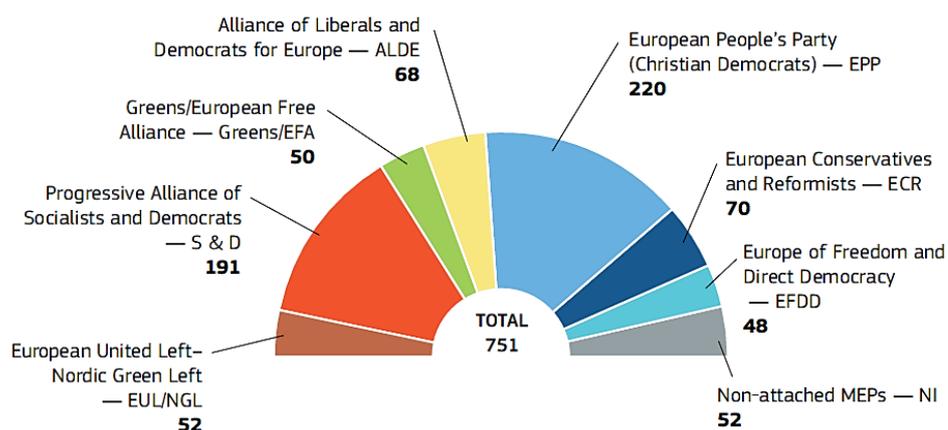


FIGURE 7: COMPOSITION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
(EUROPEAN UNION, 2014, P. 10)

This institution performs three main functions. First, it is involved in the ‘co-decision procedure’ insofar as it is at eye level with the Council. Second, it oversees other organizations. For instance, it controls the activities of the Commission and can - if circumstances so require - demand its dissolution. Third, it also has a say in the determination of the budget. Moreover, the president of the EP (**Martin Schulz**) stays in office for a period of two and a half years and is essentially the face of this institution. The parliament holds twelve ordinary ‘plenary sessions’ per year, which last for one week and occur once every month in Strasbourg. During these meetings the parliamentarians usually revise legislative proposals. It is worth mentioning that resolutions can - with some exceptions - only be reached when no less than one-third of the members cast their vote (European Union, 2014).

The **European Council** is at the wheel of the European Union. Not to be confused with the Council of Ministers or the Council of Europe, this institution consists of the chief representatives of the member states, and sets the direction and establishes the prime concerns of the EU. Consequently, it *“represents the highest level of political cooperation between the Member States”* (European Union, 2014, p. 12). Even though the members of this institution gather two times every six months in order to mould the evolution of the European Union, extra meetings can - where necessary - be organized as well. In addition, representatives of the countries belonging to the Eurozone also get together two times every year in order to talk about monetary issues. The president of the European Council (**Donald Tusk**) stays in charge for two and a half years and can be re-elected only one time. It should also be noted that resolutions are mostly reached by unanimity (European Union, 2014).

The **Council (of Ministers)** plays an extremely important role in the decision making process of the European Union. It consists of the members of national governments, who can as a matter of fact compel the executives of their own countries to comply with the resolutions reached by this institution. The composition of each meeting rests on the topic under scrutiny. Based on the talking points, each member state sends the respectively competent minister. Moreover, the leadership of the Council changes every six months in that member states take turns in presiding over its meetings. This institution performs five functions. First, it is on par with the Parliament in the legislative process. Second, it concert national policies. Third, it establishes the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the EU. Fourth, it strikes deals with foreign countries and international entities. Fifth, it has a say in the determination of the budget of the European Union. It is important to specify the voting procedures of the Council. The concept of unanimity requirement is self-explanatory, whereas the one of ‘qualified majority’ needs some clarification. Briefly, it requires the votes for a certain resolution to represent 55% of the countries, whose citizens need to constitute more than 65% of the citizenry of the EU. Conversely, the obstruction of a resolution requires the votes to represent four countries, whose citizens need to constitute more than 35% of the citizenry of the European Union. Hence, the power of the member states is weighted according to their size. For instance, the inhabitants of Malta amount to 0.08% and the ones of Germany to 15.93% of the continent’s population (European Union, 2014).

The **European Commission (EC)** represents the executive branch of the EU. It enjoys political autonomy and acts in the best interest of the European Union. It is considered to be the engine of the European Union in that it not only initiates laws and policies, but is also liable for

their enactment. This institution consists of core team (i.e. 'college') and administrative personnel (e.g. interpreters). It ought to be emphasized that even though the former are usually ex-politicians of the member states, they are expected to pursue the greater good of the EU. Each one of these twenty-eight 'commissioners' is in charge of a particular policy area. They meet every Wednesday in Brussels in order to reach joint decisions. The members of this institution are designated every five years in no more than half a year after the elections of the EP. In brief, the executives of each member state put someone forward as head of the Commission (**Jean-Claude Juncker**), who needs to be voted for by the Parliament. The suggested president selects the members of the Commission, who need to be accepted by the Parliament. Moreover, it performs four functions. First and foremost, it is the only institution of the European Union that is allowed to commence legislation. Put differently, "*the Commission has the 'right of initiative'*" (European Union, 2014, p. 20). It is important to point out that a proposal is only presented if, and only if, there is an issue that needs to be resolved and it was ascertained that the problem cannot be dealt with by national legislation (i.e. 'subsidiarity principle'). Second, it manages the execution of the policies and the budget of the EU. Third, it ensures the correct enactment of supranational legislation. Put differently, "*the Commission acts as a 'guardian of the treaties'*" (European Union, 2014, p. 21). In the case that a member state fails to comply with the laws of the EU, it starts an 'infringement procedure', which essentially sets a time limit within which the errors must be rectified. Should the country not act on such warning, the Court of Justice steps in and imposes sanctions. Fourth, this institution speaks for the EU with the rest of the world (European Union, 2014).

The **Court of Justice (ECJ)** ensures the equal understanding of supranational legislation across the member states. To achieve such objective, it verifies the lawfulness of the activities of the other institutions, guarantees that member states abide by their commitments and that - if so requested - they resort to the law of the European Union. In view of the heavy workload, this institution is actually divided into two entities: the Court of Justice and the General Court. Both bodies consist of twenty-eight experienced and unbiased judges, who stay in charge for six years, as well as a president, who stays in office for three years. Overall, it performs four functions. First, it provides guidance to national tribunals, which are uncertain about the actual meaning of a certain law. Second, it levies penalties on countries that continue to pay no heed to their responsibilities after a warning from the Commission. Third, it nullifies any unlawful legislation of the EU on request of a private person, a member-state, or an institution of the European Union. Fourth, it registers the negligence of the Parliament, Council, and Commission (European Union, 2014).

The **European Central Bank (ECB)** was established in 1998 and is meant to sustain financial stability through constant prices and a stable inflation rate (+/- 2% p.a.) in that these two are deemed to be essential prerequisites for economic prosperity. It is important to point out that this institution is entirely autonomous. Consequently, it reaches resolutions free from the influence of national executives or supranational institutions. In addition, *“the European Central Bank is an institution of economic and monetary union”* (European Union, 2014, p. 27). In this regard, it should be noted that the euro is only one aspect of such fiscal union. In fact, not every country in Europe belongs to the Eurozone (Fig. 8). Moreover, this institution coordinates the central banks of the member states and supervises the activities of banks in Europe (European Union, 2014).

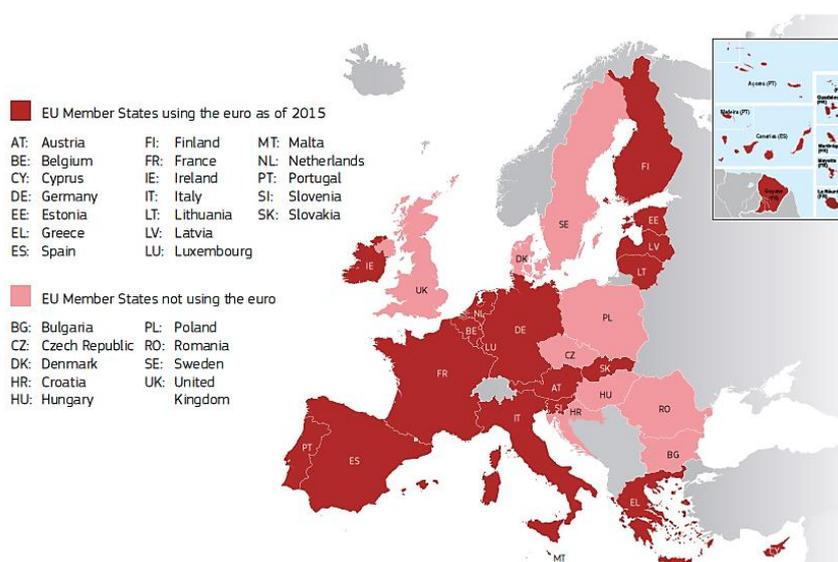


FIGURE 8: EUROZONE COUNTRIES
(EUROPEAN UNION, 2014, P. 27)

The **Court of Auditors (ECA)** is an autonomous entity, which inspects the correct usage of the financial resources of the European Union. It consists of twenty-eight members, who are selected by virtue of their expertise and autonomy. They stay in charge for six years and choose their president, who stays in office for three years. The primary responsibility of this institution is to verify the correct usage of its budget. In essence, it ensures that the revenues and the expenses of the EU are lawful. To this end, it places monetary activities under scrutiny and issues a yearly *compte rendu*, which brings the results of its investigations to public attention. It should also be noted that this report is of assistance to the Parliament and the Council in the establishment of the budget of the European Union. Moreover, this institution expresses its perspective on rules with economic consequences - if so demanded by other entities. Finally, it

is important to emphasize that in order to perform its functions successfully it “*must remain independent of the institutions and bodies it audits*” (European Union, 2014, p. 30).

Last but not least, one institution deserves an honorable mention in view of its relevance to the purposes of this paper. The **European Ombudsman (Emily O’Reilly)** examines charges of malfeasance brought against the institutions of the European Union by citizens, companies, and other entities. This person is selected by the Parliament and stays in office for a period of five years. In substance, “*the Ombudsman helps to uncover maladministration in the European institutions and other EU bodies*” (European Union, 2014, p. 34).

2.3.2 The Functioning

Having briefly described the main institutions, it is now time to spend a few words on the legislative process of the European Union. To begin, it should be noted that different types of resolutions can be reached at the supranational level. In more detail, **regulations** are legally binding without being transposed into national legislation, **directives** only enter in force when they are implemented into the national system of laws, **decisions** are binding on the whole, and **recommendations** and **opinions** are not legally binding (European Union, 2014). Moreover, it is necessary to review the ‘ordinary legislative procedure’ of the European Union. Its essence is encapsulated in Art. 289/1 TFEU, which reads as follows:

“The ordinary legislative procedure shall consist in the joint adoption by the European Parliament and the Council of a regulation, directive or decision on proposal from the Commission” (European Union, 2012, p. 172).

As mentioned earlier, the executive branch enjoys the ‘right of initiative’. Indeed, Art. 294/1 states that “*the Commission shall submit a proposal to the European Parliament and the Council*” (European Union, 2012, p. 173). The Parliament takes a stance on the suggested legislation and reports it to the Council, which can either accept or refuse the perspective of the Parliament. In the latter case, it needs to send back an edited version of the draft with the reasons for dissent (*‘first reading’*). The Parliament has three months to either accept or refuse the perspective of the Council. In the latter case, it needs to send back an emended version of the draft. Now, the Council has three months to either accept or refuse the perspective of the Parliament. In the latter case, a Conciliation Committee needs to be summoned (*‘second reading’*). This entity consists of members of the Council as well as the Parliament, whose objective is to come to terms on a common version of the legislative proposal. Should they fail to reach a compromise, the act is not adopted. Should they manage to come to an understanding, the

Council and the Parliament have six weeks to accept the text of the Conciliation Committee (*'third reading'*). The above-mentioned time frames may be prolonged at the request of either of the two institutions (European Union, 2012). The detailed step-by-step procedure of such legislative process can be found in Appendix 1.

2.3.3 A (Partial) Polity

Having scrutinized the structure and functioning of the European Union, it only seems fair to review certain conceptualizations of this political system. In fact, hitherto it has simply been referred to as a supranational entity. Thus, in what follows the nature of the beast is investigated through the contemplation of the European Union as a (partial) polity. However, before diving into such conceptual analysis of the EU, it is imperative to provide a clear definition of the word 'polity' in order to prevent the reader from confounding it with other technical terms - such as 'policy' or 'politics' for instance. In fact, the unambiguous understanding of this word is crucial to the appreciation of the subsequent reflections on the European Union. Interestingly enough, the explanations of 'polity' are relatively similar across various dictionaries and generally refer to the configuration of a community. Indeed, this concept is defined as "*an organized society*" (Oxford University Press, 2016b), "*a politically organized society*" (Collins, 2016b), and "*a society that is organized in a political way and that has its own form of government*" (MacMillan Publishers Limited, 2016b). Keeping this in mind, in what follows the works of several renowned authors - Wallace (2005), Hix (2006), Jachtenfuchs (2005) - are reviewed to offer the reader a richer picture of the structure and functioning of the European Union.

In this regard, Wallace (2005) considers it to be a *'partial polity'*. To begin, the European Union is invariable and changeable the same time. On one hand, its institutional framework is well-established and the policy-making process subject to engrained mechanisms. On the other hand, its composition and the scope of the policies are continuously altered. Since modifying entrenched operating procedures is simpler than creating new ones from scratch, the evolution of the European Union turns out to be path-dependent. Hence, the strength of this political union can be observed in the rising engagement of national executives in the policy-making processes, whereas its weakness can be detected in the ongoing conflict for power between the national and supranational levels. Moreover, despite being subject to numerous rules and regulation, the functioning of the European Union remains extremely complex due to the wide variety of entities involved in the decision-making processes. Thus, it follows that resolutions are ultimately the result of bargaining between several actors (Wallace, 2005).

Nevertheless, it is maintained that “*policy-making in the EU is not unique in its character*” (Wallace, 2005, p. 489), because governance is generally deemed to be a Daedalian maze. To make matters more complicated, Wallace (2005) argues that policy-making in the European Union is also influenced by its surrounding circumstances. For instance, the termination of the Cold War put a strain on the integration process insofar as member states had to somehow cope with the aspiration of post-soviet countries to join the political union. Moreover, the interpretation of resolutions by national governments is inevitably influenced the mindset of their politicians. Thus, in Europe policies tend to be developed in accordance with the dominant ideology - as is the case in the nation-states. In contrast to the national setting, however, the public debate in Europe is rather moribund. In fact, dialogues and discussions only occur between politicians in elite networks. It follows, therefore, that the current belief is determined by the interactions of a restricted number of extremely powerful people. In addition, these people are unlikely to change as they are continuously recycled into different positions. For instance, the members of the European Commission tend to be selected from the governments of member-states and the chair of the European Council is usually held by national politicians (Wallace, 2005).

Furthermore, it is argued that “*the EU is a collective political system, not an intergovernmental regime*” (Wallace, 2005, p. 491) insofar as its member states maintain their sovereignty in the process of integration. In this respect, Wallace (2005) maintains that - contrary to all expectations - the European Union shows to what extent the authority to govern can be distributed. In fact, the co-existence of several ideologies and level governance result in a rather complex political landscape. Additionally, conflicts of interest between the wide variety of different actors as well as an excessive bureaucracy put the brakes on the progress of the European Union. ‘*E pur si muove!*’ as Galileo Galilei once said. Put simply, it is moving forward - even if only at a snail’s pace - in spite of these stumbling blocks. Moreover, the consideration of the concerns of each and every member state - irrespective of size - in the process of reaching resolutions testifies to the strength of this supranational system. Interestingly enough, governance in the European Union is referred to as ‘post-sovereign’, because it cuts across national borders and profoundly impacts national politics, allows countries to control each other, and relies on reciprocal faith and common consensus. Nation-states continue playing an important role, but are not the only players in the game. Indeed, their activities are limited by the supranational institutions (Wallace, 2005).

Nonetheless, the European Union is merely classified as *“a partial polity, without many of the features which one might expect to find within a fully-developed democratic political system”* (Wallace, 2005, p. 494). In this sense, Wallace (2005) maintains that the legitimacy of its resolutions hinges on their success in reaching shared objectives rather than on the political responsibility of the public servants. As a result, policies turn into the ideal means to the creation of sufficiently good results. Since they are generally meant to regulate certain aspects of life, they end up being excessively technocratic. This, in turn, directly leads to the previously mentioned argument that the supranational policy-making process lies in the hands of an elite network. In this regard, it is worth pointing out that the matters under public scrutiny usually involve normative judgements (e.g. environment, immigration, etc...). In essence, the European Union is regarded as *“a post-sovereign political system in which the outcomes agreed justify the continuing collective input”* (Wallace, 2005, p. 495). Moreover, evidence suggests that the implementation of policies by the member states has been considerably degenerating. For instance, France did not impose the regulation about fisheries on its piscators and - together with Germany - infringed the Stability and Growth Pact between 2003 and 2004. In addition, the European Union does not sufficiently communicate with the citizens of the member states and national officials tend to focus their attention on state politics. Needless to say, such combination constitutes a severe shortcoming of this political system (Wallace, 2005).

Furthermore, Wallace (2005) analyses the European Union in the global context as well. Even though it might seem interesting to explore the external forces (e.g. technological progress) as well as actors (e.g. United States) influencing its policy-making process, such investigation would clearly exceed the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say, this political system does not operate in a vacuum. On the contrary, it is densely embedded in an intricate web of international relations and it is unavoidably affected by events occurring outside the continent. In sum, the European Union remains characterized by equivocal goals, consent to dissent, and the procrastination of tough resolutions. Even though it is able to adjust to changing circumstances, the adjustment process is usually sluggish. Moreover, the traditional framework in which political authority is simply transferred from national governments to the European Commission is already behind the times. In fact, there is a wide variety of different policy-making mechanisms. It is important to bear in mind that that forcing such process into one conceptual model is an overly simplistic approach, which neglects the complexity inherent to the post-sovereign governance of the European Union. Finally, it is concluded that:

*“The EU is a **partial polity**, with a profoundly political process of policy-making: a stable structure of collective governance, which continues to serve the mixed purposes of its constituent member states relatively well”* (Wallace, 2005, p. 503)

Interestingly enough, other scholars leave out the adjective ‘partial’ and simply refer to it as polity. Hix (2006) defines the European Union as a ‘supranational polity’, in which countries willingly transfer some of their authority to several institutions. Bearing in mind that every political entity is special, this one cannot be considered unique and is therefore deemed to be *“just another polity”* (Hix, 2006, p. 141). Moreover, such conception of the European Union gave a significant impetus to the research community insofar as it allowed for further exploration of this political entity. In this context, the above-mentioned author investigates the twists and turns of the European Union. To begin, policy-making authority needs to be distributed in such multi-level system. Even though *en principe* authority ought to be equally divided among various levels, *en pratique* its distribution is the outcome of negotiations. Even so, an inclination towards the concentration of policy-making power at the supranational level can be observed. It is necessary to point out that such policies mainly control the single market. Hence, issues of real relevance to citizens and politicians (taxation, security, etc...) are actually dealt with by the nation-states. It follows, therefore, that *“democratic politics is ‘upside-down’ compared to most other multi-level polities”* (Hix, 2006, p. 144). However, certain supranational resolutions exert an indirect impact on member states. Indeed, market and competition policies reduces the capacity of countries to influence the economic system. For instance, several sectors of the economy were deregulated (e.g. transport, energy, etc...) by the European Union. In sum, even though most policies are relevant neither to voters nor to representatives, they still restrict their capacity to reach socio-economic resolutions (Hix, 2006).

Furthermore, Hix (2006) places the policy-making process of the European Union under scrutiny as well. Curiously enough, it is maintained that this political entity is *“perhaps more consensus-oriented in its design than any polity in the history of democratic government!”* (Hix, 2006, p. 145). In this context, the authority to start strategies is divided between the European Council and the European Commission. In more detail, the former has the final word on changes to the treaties, whereas the latter has the exclusive right to present legislative proposals. It should also be noted that the European Commission consists of members of national governments and is therefore influenced by nation-state politics. Since the political views of national politicians tend to be moderate, it seems reasonable to assume that the proposals of this institution are not going to be extreme. Moreover, the law-making procedure of the Euro-

pean Union is subject to a well-defined procedure (i.e. 'co-decision'), whose current state is the result of a continuous evolution process. Indeed, the authority of the legislative branch has been strengthened at the expense of the executive branch by several treaties (Maastricht 1993, Amsterdam 1999, Nice 2003). In essence, the Commission puts forward a proposal, which can be modified by the European Parliament and the European Council. It stands to reason that the increased complexity of such procedure complicates the adoption of laws. The European Court of Justice has also increasingly gained authority and is now responsible for the lawfulness of policies. Hence, "*it is remarkable that the EU is able to do anything!*" (Hix, 2006, p. 147). Needless to say, such legislative procedure entails positive as well as negative consequences. On the bright side, resolutions cannot be reached without widespread agreement. This, in turn, ensures that no one can impose its own interests on other actors. On the gloomy side, there are three downsides. First, entities responsible for the enactment of laws enjoy considerable freedom in this regard. Second, minorities can easily obstruct suggestions to change existing policies. Third, considering the significant loss of power of the Commission and the rotating chair of the Council, the European Union requires firm guidance (Hix, 2006).

In order to substantiate his theoretical claims, Hix (2006) also examines recent developments of the politics in Europe. The inclusion of such review would exceed the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say, the analysis bespeaks "*the difficulty of making policy in the EU's hyper-consensual polity*" (Hix, 2006, p. 152). Even more importantly, the European Union supposedly suffers from a 'democratic deficit'. In this context, three objections are raised to its legitimacy. First, the integration process lead to an imbalance between the executive and the legislative branch in the member states. More precisely, the political landscape in the European Union is dominated by the institutions of the executive branch (Commission and Council). Consequently, national governments gained power to the detriment of national parliaments. Second, their loss of authority was not offset by the establishment of a stronger European Parliament. In fact, even though its position was enhanced by the treaties mentioned earlier, this institution continues to be relatively impotent. Third, the European Union is perceived to be excessively remote and unintelligible. Indeed, the nature of the Commission is not clear, the resolutions of the Council are reached behind closed doors, and the discussions of the Parliament are difficult to understand as they involve the simultaneous use of several languages (Hix, 2006).

It goes without saying that there also arguments against the presumed 'democratic deficit'. In this regard, Hix (2006) maintains that the policy-making process of the European Union ought to be independent, because it strives to reach pareto-optimal resolutions. From this perspec-

tive, it is necessary to improve the legitimacy of the decision-making procedures instead of strengthening the European Parliament. Interestingly enough, a counterargument is developed for every reason supporting the existence of such deficit. The debate is not explored any further at this point, because an extensive review is going to be performed later on (Section 2.3). In any case, the further democratization of the European Union would have three major advantages. First, it would ensure that politicians represent the will of the citizens. Second, it would encourage the exchange of views and thereby enable people to develop their own stance on issues of public concern. Third, elections foster the citizens' sense of belonging to the European Union. Having said that, it is rather improbable that such democratization takes place in the near future. In conclusion, clouds of ambivalence continue to linger around this 'supranational polity'. In fact, even though it brought about substantial benefits (e.g. economic growth, political stability, etc...), it cannot be denied that "*judged by the standards of modern democratic polities, the EU has some serious problems*" (Hix, 2006, p. 154).

Another interesting investigation on the structure and functioning of the European Union can be found in the work of Jachtenfuchs (2006), which analyzes this political system through the lens of multi-level governance. To begin, even though it might share certain characteristics of the nation-state, it is clearly pointed out that the European Union should not be regarded as such. In fact, it lacks two critical elements, which are considered to be the distinguishing features of the nation-state: the use of force and the collection of taxes. In fact, this political system is not in charge of any armed forces - be it military or police - and cannot levy taxes on its citizens. On the other hand, the European Union boasts a sophisticated legal framework, which somewhat counteracts the above-mentioned shortcomings. In this regard, it is worth mentioning two technical concepts: 'direct effect' and 'supremacy'. Put simply, the former holds that in certain cases supranational laws establish rights and duties for citizens without being transposed in national legislation, whereas the latter holds that supranational rules and regulations prevail over national ones. In essence, these two legal principles are the means used by this political system to ensure the enactment of its legislation. In other words, "*decision-making and implementation thus take place under the shadow of legal hierarchy*" (Jachtenfuchs, 2006, p. 163). Interestingly enough, even though there is some resemblance between national and supranational politics, factions play a minor role in the context of the European Union. The whys and wherefores of their relative unimportance are given some thought. To start, the elections of the European Parliament are only of marginal importance to the citizens - as can easily be observed in their decreasing political participation. Moreover, this institution is only a

cog in the in the supranational law-making machinery, which is characterized by negotiation and executive dominance (Jachtenfuchs, 2006).

On another note, Jachtenfuchs (2006) maintains that the multi-level conceptualization of the European Union could easily be misinterpreted and therefore ought to be taken with a grain of salt, because the two levels of governance - national and supranational - are not as independent from one another as the theory might seem to suggest. For instance, the European Union hinges on national governments for the enforcement of its resolutions. In spite of their interdependence, these two levels of governance are not closely connected. In more detail it is maintained that *"negotiating positions of governmental representatives in the EU Council are not linked to an overall struggle at the EU level"* (Jachtenfuchs, 2006, p. 165). Needless to say, the above-mentioned characteristics mould the decision-making processes of this polity. In this regard, voting is actually not the most suitable mechanism for reaching resolutions, because it subjugates a certain minority to the will of the majority. Bearing in mind that the European Union is extremely diverse and unable to resort to the use of force for the enactment of legislation, it should come as no surprise that its institutions strive for consensus. Hence, resolutions tend to be reached either through negotiation or by means of deliberation. In the former method the disputing parties meet each other halfway in order to come to an agreement. Since each side needs to make certain concessions, the outcome is merely a compromise. In the latter procedure the parties come to an understanding by persuading each other of a certain strategy. Given that each side agrees on the resolution, its enforcement is not met with any resistance. In essence, the decision-making process of this political system consists of a mixture of these two approaches (Jachtenfuchs, 2006).

Moreover, Jachtenfuchs (2006) devotes some attention to the types of policies developed by the European Union. In this regard, a distinction is drawn between two categories: regulatory and redistributive. Put simply, the former controls the activities of certain players in the market in order to improve efficiency, whereas the latter reallocates resources between actors so as to achieve a more equitable balance in society. Even though the European Union undertook some redistribution (e.g. agriculture), its main focus lies on regulation (e.g. market). In addition, the impossibility of developing redistributive strategies is ascribed to the setup of this polity. More precisely, *"the main reason lies in lack of democratic legitimacy of the European Union"* (Jachtenfuchs, 2006, p. 168). In fact, these policies move resources from one actor to another. Hence, cohesion between the member states is an essential prerequisite for their favourable receipt. Sadly, enough, the citizens of the European Union do not possess the sense

of community necessary to the legitimation of such resolutions. Furthermore, the capacity of policies to resolve problems is placed under scrutiny as well. Intriguingly enough, the opinion is deeply divided on this issue. On one hand, there are those who claim that European policies yield suboptimal results due to the excessively stringent consensus desiderata of the decision-making processes. Put simply, the condition of unanimity inhibits the passing of resolutions. On the other hand, there are those who are against the argument that supranational policies are worse than their national counterparts. In this perspective, their effectiveness in dealing with problems is credited to the organization of the European Union. For instance, the insignificance of political factions prevents the politicization of issues and the clear division of competences enhances the performance of institutions. Hence, it is concluded that *“while in the field of market regulation the balance is rather positive, the EU is still rather ineffective in areas requiring strong legitimation”* (Jachtenfuchs, 2006, p. 169).

To put it briefly, the European Union is a considerably complex machinery, whose administration is remarkably bureaucratic. It follows, therefore, that the mills of politics grind slowly. In addition, the fact that this political system is extraordinarily oriented towards consensus slows down the speed of its policy-making process even more. Considering that the European Union still needs to be espoused by the citizens of Europe, it should come as no surprise that most of its policies thus far are merely regulatory. This subsection gave the reader a foretaste of the fierce discussion about the presumed ‘democratic deficit’ of the European Union. Hence, the following section is going to elucidate this ill-defined concept and concisely present the main arguments of both sides of the heated debate.

2.4 The Democratic Deficit

2.4.1 Concept Definition

Having extensively reviewed the structure and functioning of the European Union, the reader should now be able to appreciate the debate about the supposed ‘democratic deficit’ of this political system. Before presenting the contrasting views on this topic, it only seems fair to elucidate the true meaning of such vague concept.

To begin, the Collins Dictionary defines it as *“any situation in which there is believed to be a lack of democratic accountability and control over the decision-making process”* (Collins, 2016c). Needless to say, confining the analysis to such elementary interpretation would clearly be an overly simplistic approach. Hence, further investigation is required. For instance, Clohesy (2001) explores this concept in the framework of the European Union and argues that it *“normally refers to the lack of TRANSPARENCY and ACCOUNTABILITY of the central political institutions of the European Union”* (Clohesy, 2001, p. 182). To be more precise, the citizens’ distrust in the institutions of the European Union dates back to the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, which put a considerable number of domains under the jurisdiction of supranational legislation. In addition, the secretive bargaining for the ‘economic and monetary union’ occurred behind closed doors. What is more, the mechanisms - direct and indirect - that allow the citizens to mould the decision-making process of the European Union are severely flawed. In fact, endeavours to gain more influence through national executives are ineffective in that international affairs are relatively insignificant to domestic politics. On the other hand, attempts to increase the authority of the European Parliament are met with resistance and run the risk of politicizing issues of public concern (Clohesy, 2001).

Moreover, Clohesy (2001) argues that even though the concept essentially pertains to the established framework of the European Union, it *“is not characterized simply as an objective reality that can be easily identified or measured”* (Clohesy, 2001, p. 183). Indeed, the perception of the democratic deficit is shaped by a wide variety of different factors - such as one’s ideological orientation for instance. It follows, therefore, that any judgement on this subject will inevitably be value-laden and that it is simply beyond the bounds of possibility to ascertain the existence of a democratic deficit. Furthermore, this concept is analyzed against the backdrop of globalization. In fact, the shift of authority from national executives to worldwide socio-economic forces undermines the autonomy of modern countries. Once again, any conclusion on this topic is a normative judgement in that it is based on one’s conception of what the competences of the nation-state ought to be. In fine, it is maintained that *“although there can be no agreement on what constitutes a democratic deficit, at least the parameters of the debate are clear”* (Clohesy, 2001, p. 184).

For the purposes of this paper, the definition of democratic deficit by Berthold Rittberger in the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics is adopted. It emphasizes the essentially psychological nature of this concept in that it refers to the citizens’ subjective perception of the discrepancy between the ideal and actual functioning of the European Union. It reads as follows:

“The term denotes a **perceived deficiency** in the way a particular political arrangement works in practice against a benchmark as to how it is supposed to work in theory. [...] The use of the term mirrors a general, yet **multifaceted dissatisfaction** with the way democracy works at the EU level.” (Oxford University Press, 2016c)

Interestingly enough, a linguistic analogy substantiates - once again - the recency of the concept of ‘democratic deficit’. Indeed, the usage frequency of this expression shows an upward-trending trend over the last two decades (Fig. 9). In more detail, in 1998 the usage of this term was only 0.06, whereas by 2008 it had already climbed to 0.19. Put differently, this corresponds to an increase of 216.66% over just twenty years (Collins, 2016c).

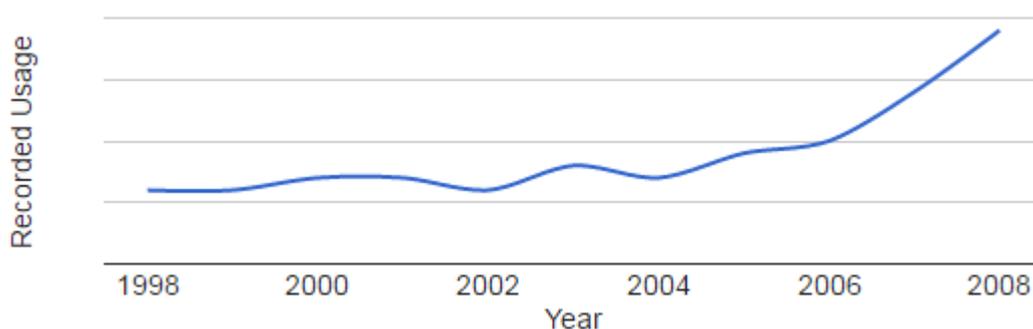


FIGURE 9: USAGE OF ‘DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT’
(COLLINS, 2016C)

2.4.2 The Heated Debate

Having shed some light on the concept of democratic deficit, it is now time to concisely review the two opposing sides of the debate on this topic. It should be noted that only the most salient arguments of each perspective are presented here.

To begin, Follesdal and Hix (2006) acknowledge that one universally valid interpretation of ‘democratic deficit’ does not exist. Nevertheless, they identify five common elements of such concept. First, the process of integration led to the increase of the executive at the expense of the legislative branch. Hence, the decision-making processes are governed by the Council and the Commission, which per se does not give reason for concern. Instead, the unwarranted independence of the members of these institutions is worrying. In fact, their activities are not subject to review by the members of the legislative branch. Hence, “*governments can effectively ignore their parliaments when making decisions in Brussels*” (Follesdal and Hix, 2006, p. 535). Second, even though its authority was increased on several occasions by subsequent

treaties, the Parliament continues to be relatively powerless in contrast with the institutions of the executive branch. Third, the elections of neither the national nor the European Parliament revolve around the European Union. In the former, politicians avoid foreign affairs, whereas in the latter they politicize them. Since the topic of the EU is not presented in either of the two elections, supranational resolutions are moulded only to a limited extent by the will of the citizens. Fourth, the European Union is excessively removed from the electorate. Indeed, neither the members of the Commission nor the ones of the Council are actually elected and the institutions of the EU are separate from the national entities people are acquainted with. On this account, citizens are unable to comprehend and relate to them. Fifth, policies developed by the European Union contravene the will of the people in that national executives seize the opportunity of pushing forward policies that would be met with resistance in their own countries. Also, considering the weakness of the legislative branch, interest groups - such as international corporations for instance - have an easy time moulding the policy-making process of the European Union. Besides reviewing the orthodox arguments supporting the existence of a democratic deficit in the Europe, these authors argue that *“there is no electoral contest for political leadership at the European level or the basic direction of the EU policy agenda”* (Follesdal and Hix, 2006, p. 552).

Furthermore, Bonde (2011) acknowledges the existence of a democratic deficit as well and criticizes the institutions involved in the legislative process of the European Union. To begin, the members of the Commission are generally politicians, who are appointed by their national executives and merely accepted by the Parliament. In addition, the preponderant majority of resolutions are reached outside its official premises in Brussels and most legislative proposals are actually created by the working groups of this institution, whose operations are cloaked in secrecy. In a similar way, the vast majority of supranational legislation is settled on in the working groups of the Council, whose operations occur behind closed doors as well. It follows, therefore, that the Parliament exerts a limited influence in the law-making of the European Union - with the exclusion of the previously mentioned Conciliation Committee (*‘third reading’*). In fact, it is oblivious to the preparatory work of the Commission and the Council. Therefore, the members of the Parliament need to rely on unofficial informants to learn more about the wheeling and dealing of such surreptitious entities. In addition, this institution is also inclined to give the green light to the adoption of supranational legislation on first reading, when parliamentarians - let alone the citizens they represent - have almost no knowledge of the actual content of the respective law. Hence, the evidence seems to suggest that the Parlia-

ment “has a common interest with the Commission, so that there is little threat of complete rejection” (Bonde, 2011, p. 151).

In this regard, it is interesting to examine the activity report of the last legislature of the European Parliament in more detail. In fact, the number of laws passed on first reading soared over the last legislative periods (Fig. 10). In more detail, 29% of ordinary legislation in the fifth legislature (1999-2004), 72% in the sixth legislature (2004-2009), and 85% in the seventh legislature (2009-2014) were adopted at first reading. Conversely, the number of legal acts passed on other readings declined considerably (European Parliament, 2014).

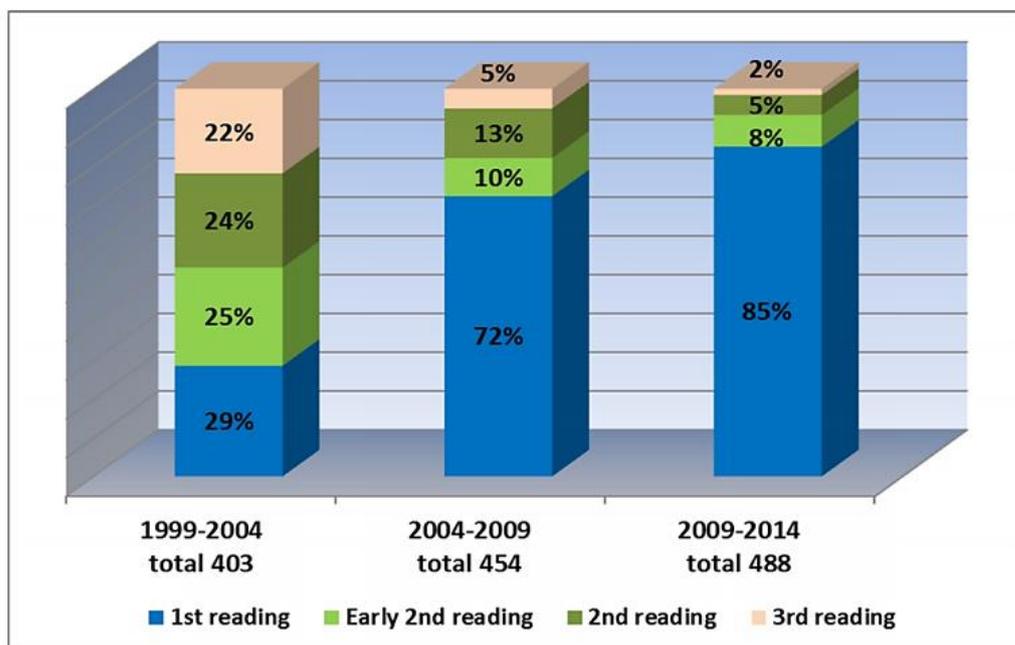


FIGURE 10: DISTRIBUTION OF READINGS
(EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2014, P. 8)

Moreover, it is interesting to observe another feature of this institution. The number of legal acts adopted by the Parliament is subject to cyclicity (Fig. 11). Curiously enough, the majority of laws are passed during the last year of the legislature (European Parliament, 2014). Needless to say, one might wonder what are the reason for such peculiar pattern. For instance, it might be ascribed to the tardy realization of parliamentarians that they need to deliver concrete results in order to ensure their re-election in the ensuing legislature. However, these would be merely unscientific speculations and should therefore be taken with a grain of salt.

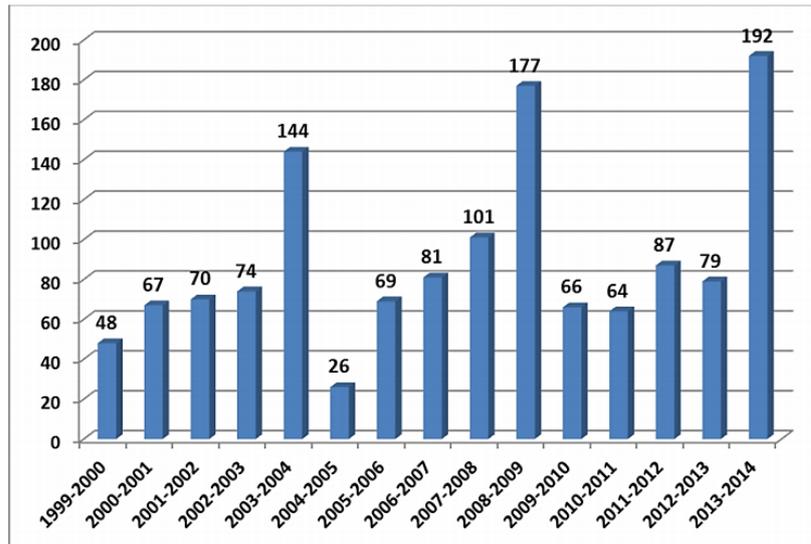


FIGURE 11: CYCLICALITY OF LEGISLATURES
(EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2014, P. 5)

Moreover, Bonde (2011) argues that the legislative process of the European Union is excessively restrictive in that the adoption of legal acts requires the approval of the Commission (simple majority) as well as of the Council (qualified majority). In view of such constraints, the legislative procedure is controlled by member states that gather in order to establish a blocking minority. In essence, the authority over such process rests “*on obtaining the support of the Commission until a grand coalition can be formed for an alternative view*” (Bonde, 2011, p. 153). It follows, therefore, that citizens are unable to make alterations to established rules and regulations. The electorate’s realization of its impotence translates into continuously declining participation rates in the elections of the European Parliament. In truth, the democratic deficit is only endured in that such union enables national political leaders to exert an impact on other member states. It is also inextricably linked to an ‘information deficit’, which indicates an insufficient newspaper coverage of the European Union (Bonde, 2011).

Furthermore, bearing in mind that “*you can’t beat something with nothing*” (Goodwin, 2001, p. 335), the above-mentioned authors also come up with some suggestions for the improvement of democracy in Europe. Indeed, Follesdal and Hix (2006) argue that the activities of the Council have to be subject to public scrutiny so that citizens are au courant with the negotiations between public servants. Also, the election of the president of the Commission should be reformed. For instance, the incumbent of this position could be chosen by the electorate of the European Union. In addition, the authority of the national and European Parliament ought to be strengthened so as to increase political competition and animate the public debate. To be sure, increasing the authority of the legislative branch inevitably comes with negative con-

sequences on the efficiency of supranational resolutions. However, such side-effect would not eclipse the substantial advantages of political contestation. In consequence, the institutions of the European Union ought to create an enabling environment for citizens to form their opinion on issues of public concern, and should adopt policies that effectuate the will of the people. To this end, *“all that may be needed is for the political elites to make a commitment to open the door to more politicization of the EU agenda”* (Follesdal and Hix, 2006, p. 557).

Furthermore, Bonde (2011) comes up with four suggestions. First, citizens of each country ought to select their own members of the Commission in concurrence with the elections of the Parliament. Second, rules and regulations should only be adopted when they are approved by the greater number of parliamentarians. Third, surreptitious gatherings of public servants ought to be subject to public scrutiny. Fourth, citizens should be engaged in the law-making procedure from the outset. In any case, these changes *“would not fully resolve the democratic deficit, but they would at least reduce it in the EU decision-making”* (Bonde, 2011, p. 161).

It is important to emphasize that these were only the traditional arguments in favour of the existence of a democratic deficit in Europe. In fact, scholars scrutinize this subject from a wide variety of different perspectives. For instance, they examine the legitimacy of the Commission (Featherstone, 1994), evaluate the suitability of its members to be public servants (Page and Wouters, 1994), criticize the undue influence of lobbyists on the institutions of the European Union (Wesselius, 2005), agnize its democratic achievements (Menéndez, 2009), evaluate its ability to over-power the economic crisis (Offe, 2013), and investigate the relationship between the monetary and the political union (Majone, 2014). It is necessary to point out - once more - that these are just some of the many aspects of the democratic deficit. Since it is virtually impossible to do justice to all of them, it only seems reasonable to give some thought to the other side of the debate.

Among the various works arguing against the existence of a democratic deficit in the European Union, the ones of one particular academic stand out for the vehemence of their arguments. For the purposes of this paper, two of these are reviewed in what follows. To begin, Moravcsik (2008) argues that much of the animadversion against the European Union is based on a superficial conception of the ‘democratic deficit’, disregards the reality of citizens, and judges this political system against a utopian vision of democracy. Interestingly enough, it is asserted that *“across nearly every measurable dimension, the EU is at least as democratic, and generally more so, than its member states”* (Moravcsik, 2008, p. 332).

Remarkably enough, Moravcsik (2008) drives a coach and horses through the literature supporting the actuality of the democratic deficit. In more detail, six myths are debunked. First, the European Union is considered to be a 'superstate', which impinges on national sovereignty through the extensive centralization of policy-making in Brussels. In reality, only the smaller number of policies are actually adopted by the EU. In addition, subjects of relevance to the citizens (e.g. immigration, taxation, etc...) remain under the jurisdiction of the member-states. Second, the European Union is regarded as a 'technocracy', which is managed by unbridled politicians. In actual fact, it does not enjoy the competences of a nation-state: it is unable to levy taxes on the citizens and not allowed to resort to the use of force. Moreover, even though it can adopt regulatory policies, it rests on national governments for their implementation. Also, the ordinary legislative procedure is subject to restrictive consensus requirements (e.g. qualified majority), and its outcomes are made available to public scrutiny. Third, supranational resolutions are thought to be reached by functionaries, who are neither elected nor held responsible for their deeds. In reality, both the Council and the Parliament - two key institutions in the legislative process - consist of elected members. Indeed, the former comprises members of national governments, whereas the latter includes directly selected politicians. It follows, therefore, that the only the members of the Commission are not elected. Nevertheless, the authority of this institution decreased to the benefit of the Parliament. Thus, supranational policies deal with issues of public concern (e.g. energy, environment, etc...). In addition, the independence of the Central Bank and the Court of Justice is not peculiar to the European Union in that national administrations also protect their audit activities from undue influence (Moravcsik, 2008).

Fourth, Moravcsik (2008) maintains that the unfavourable outcomes of some referendums (e.g. France, Ireland, etc...) are believed to indicate the discontent of citizens with or their distrust of the European Union. In actual fact, their results scarcely reflect the public opinion on the current state of affairs, because voters are either un- or mis-informed about the issue at stake and simply select 'no', and regard such plebiscites as an opportunity to complain about domestic politics. Fifth, an increased engagement of the citizens is expected to increase their trust in the institutions of the European Union, which are too removed from the electorate. In reality, statistical findings (i.e. Eurobarometer) show that people place nearly equal faith in national and supranational entities. Moreover, "*participation in democratic institutions does not foster public trust*" (Moravcsik, 2008, p. 338). To be sure, engagement and confidence are inversely related. Hence, people are inclined to have more faith in neutral (e.g. military) than factional (e.g. press) organizations. It also follows that increasing the involvement of citizens in

politics might eventually encourage the rise of populism. Sixth, supra-national institutions of the European Union are believed to discourage citizens from engaging in public affairs in that they do not offer them enough chances to become involved in this regard. In actual fact, capacity does not automatically translate into contribution - as testified by the unfortunate voter turnout in the elections of the European Parliament. Instead, the political inertia of the people is ascribed to their perceived unimportance of the policies of the European Union. Bearing in mind that citizens are mainly concerned about issues that are dealt with at the national level (e.g. pensions, education, etc...), it should come as no surprise that they prefer to devote their attention to domestic politics. Curiously enough, *"efforts to mobilize voters around European issues will be counterproductive"* (Moravcsik, 2008, p. 339) in that they would most likely result in the aggrandizement of populist factions, which beguile an informed electorate with their vociferous enthusiasm (Moravcsik, 2008).

In sum, Moravcsik (2008) asserts that the European Union does not suffer from any 'democratic deficit'. Quite the opposite - it boasts remarkable achievements (e.g. Single Market, Schengen, etc...). Hence, instead of entertaining the possibility of enhancing democracy, it would be in every-one's interest to espouse the current type of governance. To this end, it is crucial to *"stop holding the European Union to a democratic double standard, a standard no nation-state can meet, on the basis of innuendo"* (Moravcsik, 2008, p. 340).

Interestingly enough, the very same author expatiates on some of the above-mentioned arguments elsewhere. In this respect, Moravcsik (2002) argues that much of the literature supporting the existence of a democratic deficit in the European Union is unsubstantiated in that scholars erroneously tend to believe that this political system operates in a vacuum and are inclined to judge it against unrealistic standards of democracy - wherefore they jump to hasty conclusions about the EU. To begin, the misconception of the 'superstate' is exposed. In fact, supranational policies mostly regulate commercial undertakings between member states and do not deal with issues that entail significant investments (e.g. social welfare). Indeed, the economic capabilities of this political system are considerably constrained, mainly because it is not allowed to collect taxes from the citizens. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that national entities ultimately bear the responsibility for enacting the rules and regulations of the European Union. What is more, the supranational decision-making process is subject to unusually restrictive conditions (e.g. unanimous consent), which to all intents and purposes increase the authority of blocking minorities. It follows, therefore, that such prohibitive qualifi-

cations put a strain on the legislative process of the EU. In addition, member states can exploit loopholes to circumvent their compliance with supra-national laws (Moravcsik, 2002).

Moreover, Moravcsik (2002) uncovers the misbelief of the 'technocracy'. In fact, there are two democratic chains of political responsibility - direct and indirect - in the European Union: the members of the Parliament are elected by the citizens of each country and the members of the Council are elected officials of national administrations. The former can be voted out of office by the electorate of Europe, whereas the latter can easily be ordered back by their own governments. In consequence, the policy-making process of the EU is relatively open and the activities of these public servants are constantly in the public eye. In addition, supra-national actors enjoy considerable independence only in the domains in which nation-states protect the respectively competent authority from undue influence as well (e.g. central banking). Even though several reasons for such concession of autonomy are explored, suffice it to say - for the purposes of this paper - that certain policies deal with extremely specific problems, whose resolution goes beyond the competence and interest of the average citizen (Moravcsik, 2002).

Furthermore, Moravcsik (2002) reveals the misapprehension of 'more participation'. In fact, expanding the political engagement of the citizens does not perforce increase their sense of belonging to the European Union. There are various explanations for this. For instance, autonomous entities tend to be held in high regard by the society in spite of their democratic shortcomings - such as the European Court of Justice and Human Rights. As mentioned earlier, supranational policies are relatively unimportant to the electorate in that they do not attend to the prime concerns of the population (e.g. education, taxation, etc...). In this regard, it is also argued that the policy-making process of the European Union is predisposed towards economic liberalism, because it intentionally omits certain topics (e.g. social welfare) and consciously promotes others (e.g. free trade). Since investigating such sophistry in more detail would exceed the scope of this paper, suffice it to say that these allegations are not backed up by empirical evidence. In essence, worries about the existence of a democratic deficit in the European Union are ascribed to the following fallacy:

"Most critics compare the EU to an ideal plebiscitary or parliamentary democracy, standing alone, rather than the actual functioning of national democracies adjusted for its multi-level context" (Moravcsik, 2002, p. 621).

In essence, it is not possible to objectively ascertain whether or not the European Union is infected with a poisonous 'democratic deficit' in that the determination of the democraticness of this political system is ultimately an inherently subjective judgement. Even though the European Union is far from perfect, one ought to bear in mind that after all it is still a relatively recent political entity and give it enough time to unleash its democratic potential. In addition, citizens are inclined to judge the European Union in an excessively harsh way and seem to exclusively focus their attention on its shortcomings. However, the same people who are quick to criticize this polity turn out to be astonishingly ignorant of its structure and functioning - as the empirical part of this paper will demonstrate (section 4).

2.5 Austria in the European Union

Bearing in mind that the democratic deficit is an essentially psychological concept, it only seems fair to concisely review the attitude of the Austrians towards the European Union before diving into the empirical analysis. To this end, their trust in the institutions involved in the supranational legislative process - Commission, Parliament, and Council - is closely inspected.

In this regard, it is necessary to point out that the information comes from the 'good governance' database of Eurostat. In more detail, the indicator 'level of citizens' confidence in EU institutions' is used for the purposes of this section. The subsequent graphs compare the trust of **Austrians (AT)** against the trust of **Europeans (EU)** in these institutions over the last decade. It should also be noted that the data about the confidence of Europeans reflects the changing configuration of the European Union. The vertical axis represents the trust in the respective institution (percentage), whereas the horizontal axis indicates the time (years). The detailed figures on which these graphs are based can be found in Appendix 3.

Level of citizens' confidence in EU institutions

%

European Commission

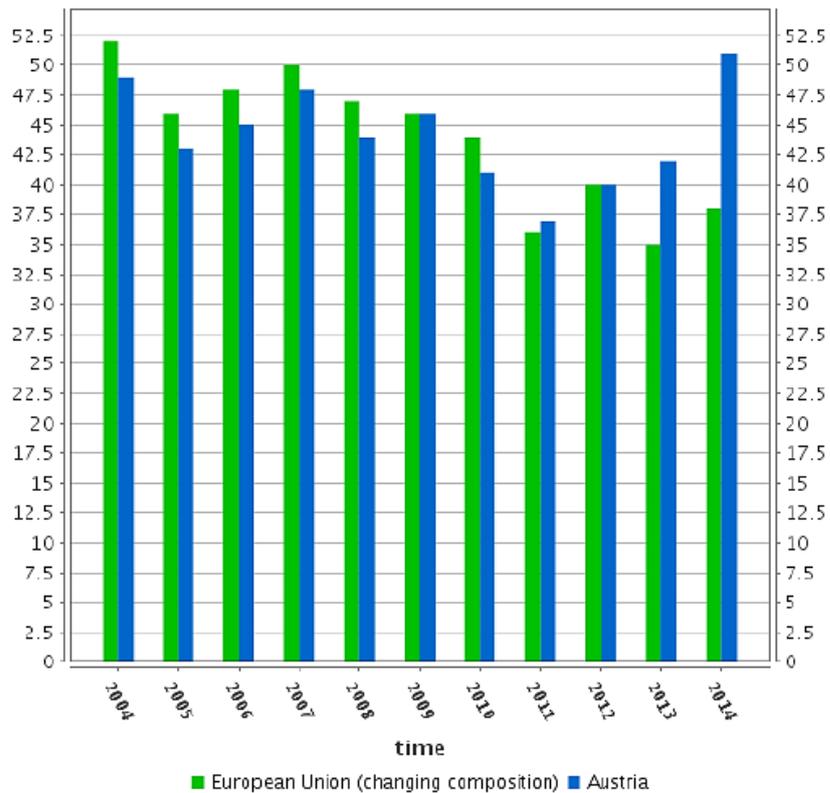


FIGURE 12: TRUST IN THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
(EUROSTAT, 2016)

First, Figure 12 shows the level of citizens' confidence in the European Commission between 2004 and 2014. It can easily be seen that European citizens placed more trust in this institution than Austrian citizens until 2009 (**AT: 46%** vs **EU: 46%**). Following an isolated reversal in 2010 (**AT: 41** vs **EU: 44**) this continued to be the case in the subsequent years - with the sole exception of 2012 (**AT: 41** vs **EU: 44**). In addition, it is worth drawing the reader's attention to the massive discrepancy in 2015 (**AT: 51%** vs **EU: 38%**).

Level of citizens' confidence in EU institutions

%
European Parliament

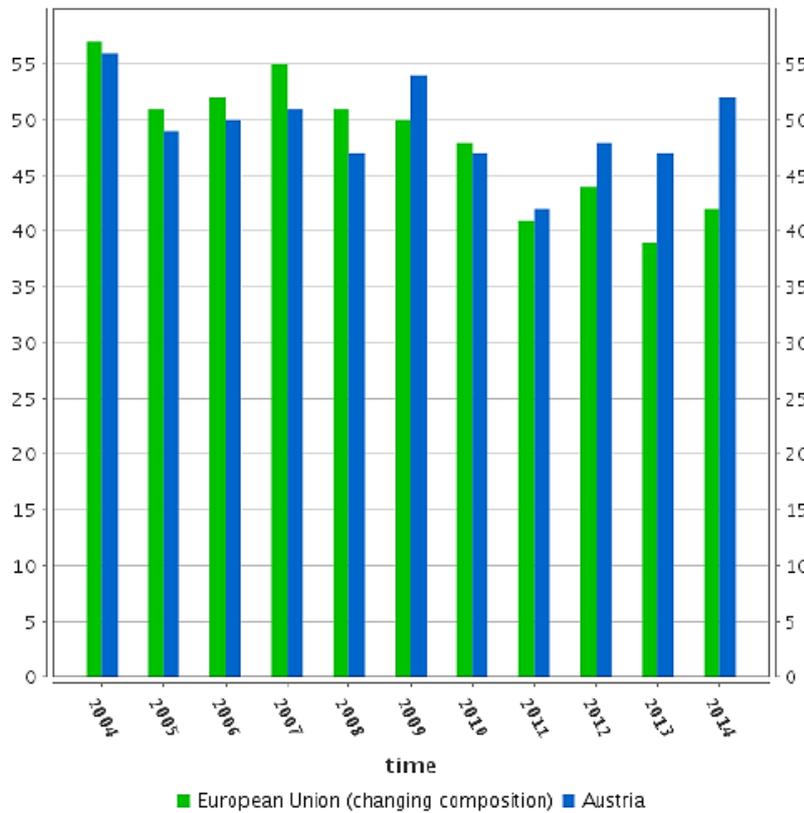


FIGURE 13: TRUST IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
(EUROSTAT, 2016)

Second, Figure 13 shows the level of citizens' confidence in the European Parliament between 2004 and 2014. It can easily be noticed that Austrian citizens had more faith in this institution than European citizens until 2009 (**AT: 54%** vs **EU: 50%**). This continued to be the case in the following years - with the exclusion of one single rowback in 2010 (**AT: 47%** vs **EU: 48%**). Moreover, it is worth noticing the massive gap in 2015 (**AT: 52%** vs **EU: 42%**).

Level of citizens' confidence in EU institutions

%

Council of the European Union

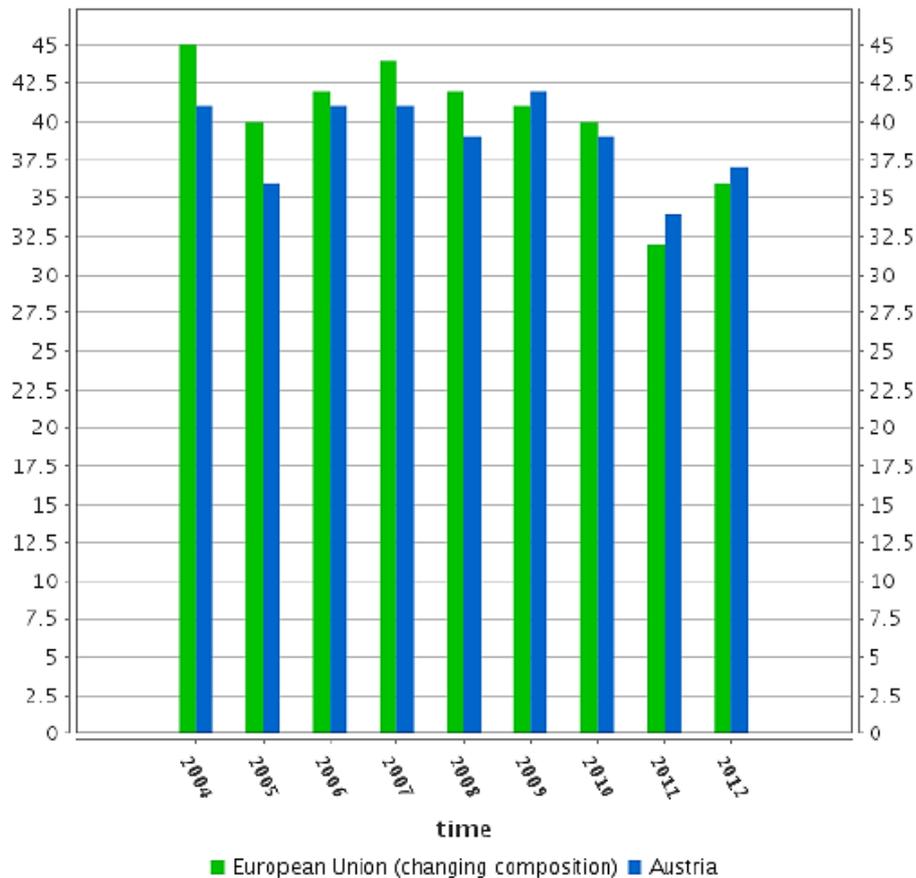


FIGURE 14: TRUST IN THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
(EUROSTAT, 2016)

Third, Figure 14 shows the level of citizens' confidence in the Council of the European Union between 2004 and 2012. In fact, no data was available for 2013 - 2014. Interestingly enough, the evolution of trust in the institutions follows a similar pattern to the one in the above-mentioned entities. Indeed, Austrian citizens confided more in the Council than European citizens until 2009 (AT: 42% vs EU: 41%). Once again, this continued to be the case - with the omission of an exceptional change of heart in 2010 (AT: 39 vs EU: 40).

Moreover, it is worth exploring the results of the 'Standard Eurobarometer 82' as well as the ones of the 'Flash Eurobarometer 407' relevant to the purposes of this paper. To begin, the European Commission (2014) argues that - contrary to all expectations - the level of the citizens' trust in the Parliament, Commission, and Central Bank experienced a downturn in the spring of 2014. In spite of such critical contraction, their confidence in these institutions was already on the way of recovery in the autumn of the same year and is currently above the average of the other member states (EU-28). Indeed, Figure 15 shows that Austrians put consid-

erably more trust than Europeans in the Parliament (AT: 52% vs EU: 42%), in the Commission (AT: 51% vs EU: 38%), and in the Central Bank (AT: 50% vs EU: 34%). Nevertheless, Austrian citizens place significantly more confidence than European citizens in their national institutions - especially in the judiciary (AT: 70% vs EU: 49%) and in the public authorities (AT: 65% vs EU: 43%).

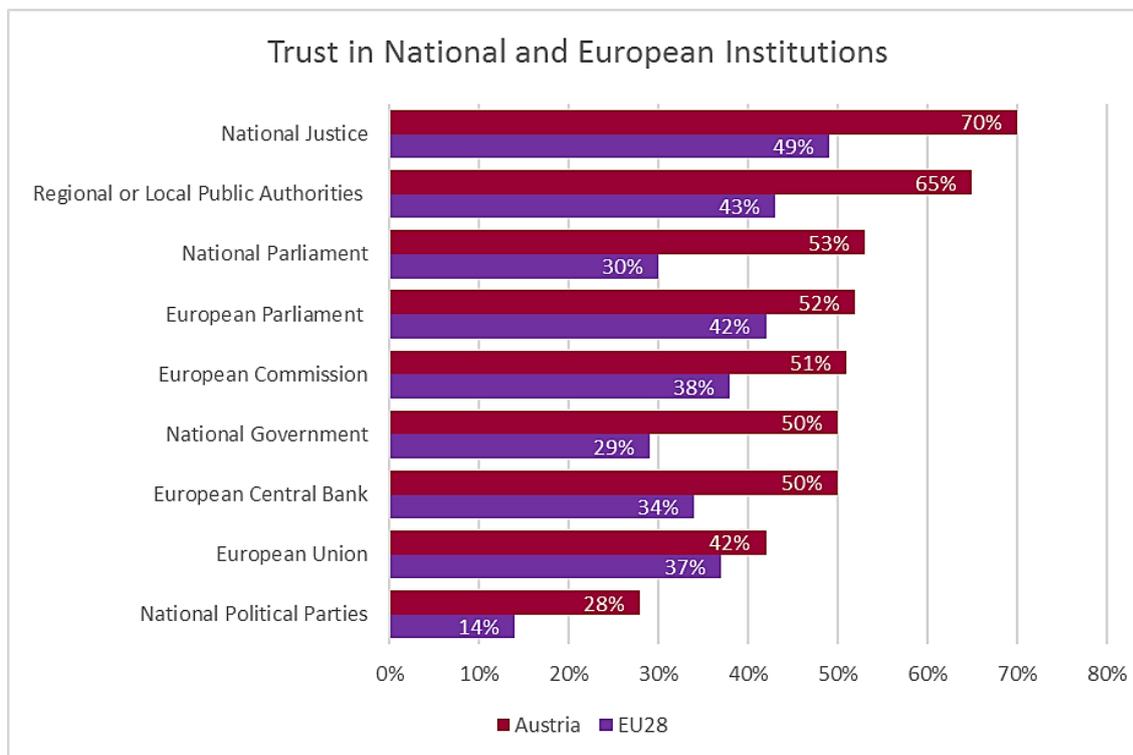


FIGURE 15: TRUST IN NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS
(SOURCE: EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2014, P. 7)

Furthermore, it only seems fair to briefly explore the citizens' awareness about the current state of affairs. Indeed, slightly more than half of Austrian citizens (57%) considers themselves to be relatively well-informed about issues of public concern in the European Union. It should be pointed out that the result of this subjective self-evaluation marks a considerable increase (+13%) in comparison to the previous year. Moreover, they are also highly interested in the politics of the European Union - yet not as much as in their national public affairs: 28% of Austrian citizens speak often and 62% occasionally about domestic politics with their set of acquaintances, whereas 19% of them talk often and 64% occasionally about supranational politics with their circle of acquaintances. Also, their sense of belonging (*'Zugehörigkeitsgefühl'*) is one of the highest in Europe: 73% of Austrians consider themselves to be - to a certain extent - citizens of the EU. On the other hand, the sense of connection (*'Verbundenheitsgefühl'*) is less pronounced: only 41% of Austrians feel related to the EU (European Commission, 2014).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

It goes without saying that scientific investigations are - nolens volens - influenced by the subjectivity of the scholar. In this respect, Creswell (2014) develops an overarching framework (Fig. 17), which does justice to the complexity of academic research. Indeed, it recognizes that the scholar's personal perception of the world (e.g. pragmatism) exerts an influence on the research design (e.g. mixed methods), as well as the actual technique (e.g. survey, interview, etc...). Interestingly enough, the development of a *Weltanschauung* is moulded by one's field of studies, academic supervisor, and previous exposure to scientific inquiry (Creswell, 2014).

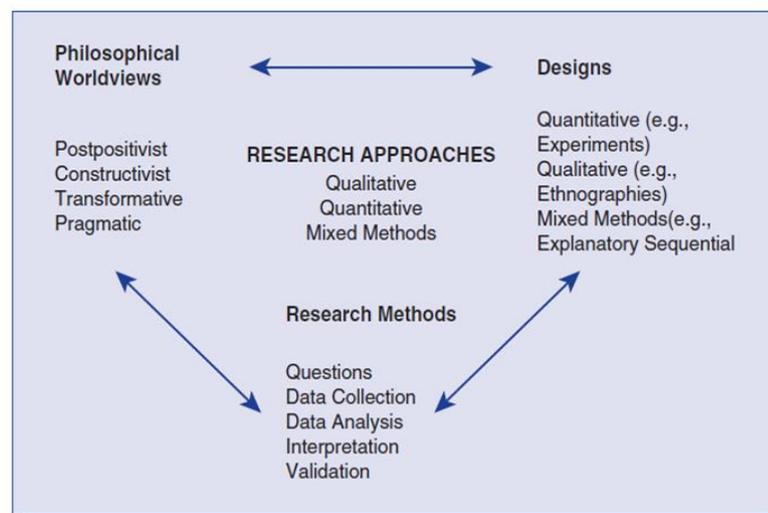


FIGURE 17: RESEARCH FRAMEWORK
(CRESWELL, 2014, P. 5)

In the present case, the author identifies with the **pragmatic worldview**, which is briefly described in what follows. The main characteristics of the other ones can be found in Appendix 4. Creswell (2014) argues that this worldview constitutes the theoretical foundation of mixed methods. In essence, researchers with such mindset employ several methods in order to entirely comprehend the issue under scrutiny in lieu of playing with methodological considerations. It follows, therefore, that these scholars select elements from quantitative as well as qualitative techniques as they see fit instead of swearing allegiance to one single method. Moreover, 'truth' is considered to be a fluid concept in that it changes according to the circumstances. As a result, researchers employ various methods to offer an inclusive grasp of the matter in question. In this regard, it is important that they justify the integration of quantitative and qualitative techniques. Additionally, these scholars are aware that their investigations

take place against the backdrop of a constantly changing environment. In essence, the pragmatic worldview enables researcher to adopt a wide variety of different conceptual approaches and empirical techniques (Creswell, 2014).

Furthermore, it only seems fair to specify the design of the present study. In this respect, the author opted for the '**mixed methods**' approach, whose distinguishing features are concisely reviewed in what follows. The main characteristics of the other research designs can be found in Appendix 4. Creswell (2014) argues that this approach entails the gathering and scrutiny of quantitative as well as qualitative information through the meticulous execution of scientific techniques. The emergence of mixed methods dates back to the end of the '80s and the beginning of the '90s, in which period, it was used across several disciplines (e.g. education, sociology, etc...). It continued evolving during the subsequent years and is now increasingly gaining momentum. Interestingly enough, the strength of mixed methods is ascribed to three aspects. First, the use of separate techniques - quantitative and qualitative - allows scholars to reduce the shortcomings of each method. Second, this approach equips avant-garde academics with pioneering strategies of scientific inquiry. Third, it enables researchers to exhaustively grasp the twists and turns of the issue under scrutiny. In view of its numerous permutations - basic and advanced - it only seems fair to specify that the '**explanatory sequential mixed methods**' design is employed for the purposes of the present study. It is defined as follows:

*"...one in which the researcher **first** conducts quantitative research, analyzes the results **and then** builds on the results to explain them in more detail with qualitative research"* (Creswell, 2014, p. 15)

Interestingly enough, a better understanding of this approach can easily be achieved by decomposing it into its constituent elements. Indeed, Creswell (2014) argues that it is 'explanatory' in that the qualitative data elucidates the quantitative data, and 'sequential' in that the groundwork occurs in two consecutive stages (Fig. 18). For instance, the researcher could carry out a survey (i.e. quantitative) and subsequently conduct interviews (i.e. qualitative) to expand on its findings. In this respect, it should be pointed out that the outcomes of the quantitative stage usually prescribe the information to be obtained from the respondents of the qualitative stage. Additionally, even though the two types of data are gathered and inspected in two separate time periods, it is important to eventually explain the contribution of the qualitative information to the comprehension of the quantitative findings. Finally, besides the threats to validity inherent to each method, negligence in the linkage of the quantitative and qualitative phases might jeopardize the soundness of the conclusions (Creswell, 2014).

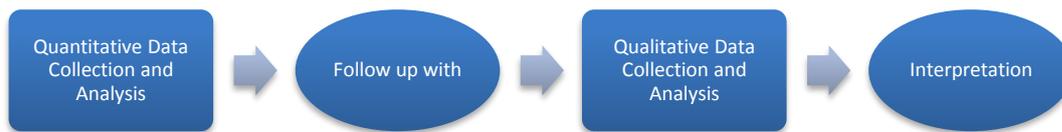


FIGURE 18: SEQUENTIAL MIXED METHODS DESIGN
(SOURCE: CRESWELL, 2014, P. 220)

Moreover, Creswell (2014) maintains that mixed methods is a considerably demanding approach. In fact, it requires the researcher to gather large amounts of data, to invest time in its examination, and to be well versed in quantitative as well as qualitative methods. Even though this strategy of inquiry puts the academic under substantial strain, it was selected in that the author of this paper firmly believes that *“the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of the research problem than either approach alone”* (Creswell, 2014, p. 4).

In the present study, the author first carried out a survey with eighty-eight Austrian master students at the University of Vienna in order to assess their knowledge about the structure and functioning of the European Union as well as their trust in its institutions (i.e. quantitative). Subsequently the author conducted interviews with six Austrian members of the European Parliament in order to confront them with the statistically significant results of the questionnaire (i.e. qualitative). In what follows, each phase is described separately in detail.

3.2 Quantitative Phase

“Statistics is the grammar of science.”
(Karl Pearson)

3.2.1 Sampling

To begin, it is necessary to explain the rationale underlying the selection of the respondents. The **‘purposive sampling’** method was adopted. Put simply, *“you decide the purpose you want informants (or communities) to serve, and you go out to find some”* (Bernard, 2013, p. 164). It is beyond doubt that confining this subsection to such concise interpretation would be an overly simplistic approach. Hence, it is necessary to explore some relevant terminology before going into further detail. In this respect, Trochim and Donnelly (2007) maintain that the *‘theoretical population’* indicates the group of people one would like to draw inferences about, the

'study population' denotes the individuals one can approach, the 'sampling frame' represents the register one uses to select the participants, and the 'sample' consists of the persons one chooses to include in the investigation (Fig. 19). Bearing in mind that some respondents might either refuse from the outset or cease at some point to participate in the study, the actual respondents are only a portion of the sample (Trochim and Donnelly, 2007).

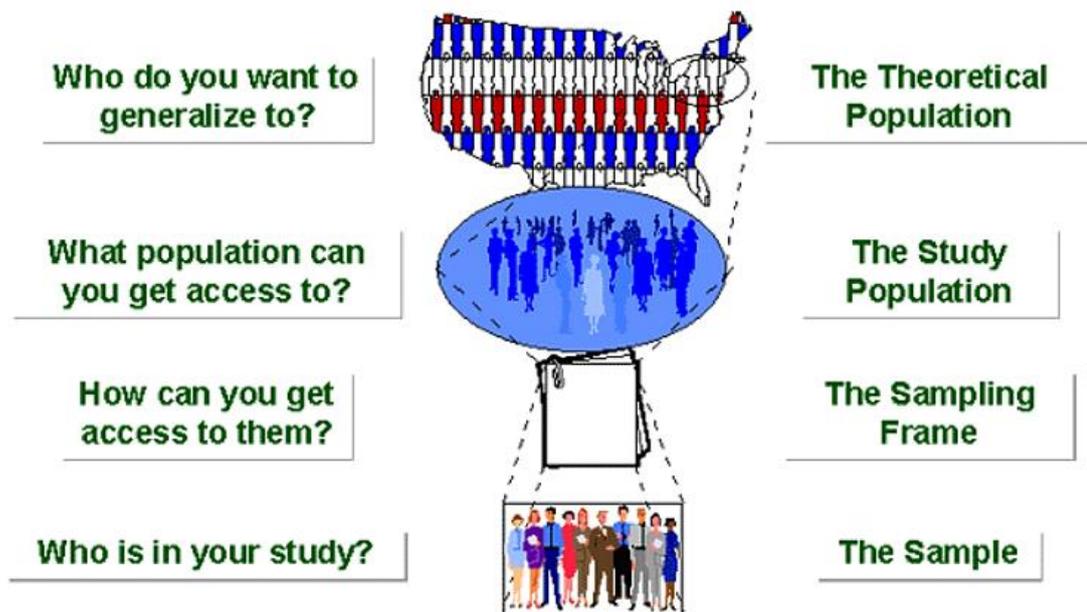


FIGURE 19: SAMPLING FUNDAMENTALS
(TROCHIM, 2006)

In the present study, the theoretical population consists of Austrian students in Vienna, the study population of Austrian master students at the University of Vienna, the sampling frame of the course catalog of this educational institution, and the actual sample of Austrian political science and psychology master students. It stands to reason that one might be wondering about the whys and wherefores of such choice. The author would like to strongly emphasize that - contrary to what the reader might easily be tempted to think - students were not chosen merely in virtue of convenience. Thus, it is of utmost importance to explain the reasons for the choice of the educational level as well as the field of study of the respondents. With respect to the former, it is reasonable to assume that highly educated individuals are likely to be holding the reins of this country in the near future. With reference to the latter, it is reasonable to assume that political science students (*target group*) are more acquainted with the structure and functioning of the European Union than psychology students (*control group*).

Moreover, it is necessary to point out why the empirical groundwork of the quantitative phase was carried out at the University of Vienna. The justification for such choice could be summed up in two words: size matters. In fact, Statistik Austria (2015) states that 31.87% (88.441) of the country's entire student population (277.508) was enrolled in this educational institution in 2014/2015. In addition, 73.50% (65.006) of these students were citizens of Austria, while 26.50% (23.435) were citizens of other countries (Statistik Austria, 2015). Moreover, the University of Vienna offers 19.13% (110) of the country's entire master programmes (575) in the fall semester 2014 (BMWf, 2015). It follows, therefore, that this educational institution constitutes the ideal setting to target Austrian master students.

Returning to the actual sampling method, it is necessary to specify which variant of the purposive sampling technique was used in the present study. In this respect, Trochim and Donnelly (2007) argue that this type of technique falls into the category of 'nonprobability sampling'. Put briefly, it is not grounded in probability - wherefore it is usually a less preferable approach than probability sampling. Yet, in certain cases the latter is either impracticable or ill-suited to the given research. In any case, the sampling method used in this investigation is the '**nonproportional quota sampling**', which is defined as follows:

*"a sampling method in which you sample until you achieve a specific number of sampled units for each subgroup of a population, **where the proportions in each group are not the same**"* (Trochim and Donnelly, 2007, p. 50)

The original sample of the present study consists of 154 master students, of which 70.1% (108) study political science and 29.9% (46) psychology. Even though, these figures are clearly not representative, it is interesting to observe that the gender distribution in the sample bears some resemblance to the one in the master programmes (Table 3). On one hand, in the sample 75.60% (34)¹ of the psychology students are female and 24.40% (11)¹ are male, whereas in the actual master programme 76.60% (661) are female and 23.40% (198) are male. Hence, females are marginally under- and male over-represented. On the other hand, in the sample 55.70% (59)² of the political science students are female and 44.30% (47)² are male, whereas in the actual master programme 48.13% (502) are female and 51.87% (541) are male. Hence, females are somewhat over- and male under-represented. Nevertheless, the gender distribution in the two subgroups is considerably similar to the one in the entire master degrees.

ID Number	Study Program	Total	Male	Female
A 066 840 UG2002	Master in Psychology	859 (100%)	198 (23.40%)	661 (76.60%)
A 066 824 UG2002	Master in Political Science	1.043 (100%)	541 (51.87%)	502 (48.13%)

TABLE 3: STUDENT POPULATION
(SOURCE: UNIVERSITÄT WIEN, 2016)

Bearing in mind that the research question focuses exclusively on master students native of Austria, both the EU and Non-EU respondents were not taken into consideration in the analysis. Hence, the sample was reduced to eighty-eight master students, of which 67.0% (59) study political science and 33% (29) study psychology. Interestingly enough, the similarity between the gender distribution in the sample and the actual master degree changes only slightly. In more detail, 78.60% (22)³ of the psychology students are female and 21.40% (06)³ are male, whereas 58.60% (34)⁴ of the political science students are female and 41.40% (24)⁴ male. It follows, therefore, that males are under- and females over-represented in both subgroups.

3.2.2 The Survey

3.2.2.1.1 Structure

The rationale underlying the structure of the questionnaire needs to be elucidated. In this respect, it should be noted that the author followed the guidelines of Dillman et al. (2014), who argue that the questions of a survey do not exist in a vacuum. On the contrary, they exert an influence on each other - whence their responses should be assessed in the wider framework of the investigation. Therefore, their organization is crucial to the overall success of the questionnaire. To begin, questions about the same matter ought to be clustered together in order to facilitate the answers of the participants. In fact, jumping from one subject to another tends to elicit impromptu responses and gives the impression that little effort was put in the design of the survey (Dillman et al., 2014). In the present study, the questions are categorized according to two major topics: **knowledge** about the organization and functioning of the EU and **trust** in the institutions of the EU. The questions of the former section are classified into basic (e.g. number of member states), intermediate (e.g. competences of the institutions), and advanced (e.g. seat allocation in the European Parliament) knowledge, whereas the ones of the latter

¹: one non-respondent (psychology)

²: two non-respondents (political science)

³: one non-respondent (psychology)

⁴: one non-respondent (political science)

section are categorized into confidence in the institutions (e.g. European Central Bank) and stance on certain aspects thereof (e.g. secrecy of the activities of the Council).

In this regard, it only seems fair to spend a few words on the hypothesis underlying the present inquiry. It is important to point out that the hypothesis is two-tailed in that the author is not yet sure whether increased knowledge about the structure and functioning of the European Union (explanatory variable) exerts a positive or negative influence on the trust in its institutions (explained variable). Thus, the hypothesis reads as follows:

- **H0:** *Knowledge about the structure and functioning of the European Union does not have any significant influence on the students' trust in the European institutions.*

- **H1:** *Knowledge about the structure and functioning of the European Union does have a significant influence on the students' trust in the European institutions (**two-tailed**).*

Concerning the structure of the questionnaire, Dillman et al. (2014) argue that it is of utmost importance to begin the survey with the proper questions, because they determine one's decision to get involved in the research project. Hence, they should be short, interesting and easily intelligible so as to avoid people being deterred from taking part in the questionnaire. For instance, they could ascertain the eligibility of the respondent (Dillman et al., 2014). In the present study, the opening questions perform exactly this function in that they establish the current course of studies and academic level of the potential participant.

Moreover, delicate and rebarbative questions ought to be posited in the conclusion in order to prevent people from abandoning the survey (Dillman et al., 2014). In the present study, the questions about the actual participation in the last election and intended participation in the upcoming election to the European Parliament are consciously put on the last page of the questionnaire. It is also emphasized that the question in which respondents are requested to indicate the political party voted for in the last election to the European Parliament is not obligatory so that the respondents are not taken aback by its intrusiveness.

In addition, special attention should be paid to filter and follow-up questions in that - once they grasp the mechanism - people are inclined to respond to the former in a way that does not set off the latter (i.e. *motivated underreporting*) (Dillman et al., 2014). Bearing in mind that in the present study nearly every questionnaire was carried out in pen and paper form, the 'interleafed' configuration was adopted. To be more precise, the above-mentioned question is preceded by one in which respondents are asked whether they cast a vote in the last election to

the European Parliament, and the question about the awareness of the functions performed by the European Ombudsman is preceded by one in which respondents are asked whether they actually know what this institution represents.

Furthermore, it is also maintained that questions about past experiences ought to be posed in the sequence of their actual occurrence in view of the fact that memories of people are usually organized in chronological order (Dillman et al., 2014). In the present study, respondents are asked whether they took part in the last and only afterwards whether they intend to participate in the next election to the EP. Even though it would be interesting to study the psychological order effects of survey questions (cognitive- and normative-based) explored by Dillman et al. (2014), such in-depth analysis would clearly exceed the scope of this section.

Also, Dillman et al. (2014) point out that it is crucial to carry out trials on questionnaires before submitting them to the real sample units in that unanticipated complications arise on every occasion. In essence, preliminary testing follows the precautionary principle 'prevention is better than cure'. In this respect, there are several mutually non-exclusive methods - each one serving a particular purpose. For instance, the researcher could have the survey inspected by a specialist in the subject under scrutiny in order to receive feedback on its construct validity as well as on the wording of the questions (Dillman et al., 2014). In the present study, the questionnaire was appraised by the author's direct supervisor - Dr. Sedlacek - who provided not only constructive criticism on the topics addressed by the questions, but also assistance in the unambiguous use of political phraseology in German (e.g. *'Zugehörigkeitsgefühl'*).

Moreover, pilot studies give researchers one last chance to unearth any remaining shortcomings in their enquiry in that test subjects provide feedback on their own experience with the completion of the survey (e.g. user-friendliness) (Dillman et al., 2014). In the present investigation, a pilot study was carried out with a few master students of the author's cohort. The criticism obtained from this preliminary trial was in line with the expectations. Put briefly, the test persons considered the questionnaire to be really tough and claimed that answering the questions require in-depth knowledge about the European Union. In more detail, one test respondent deemed its length to be adequate and pointed out that its execution took nine minutes - which is quite in tune with the expected duration of the survey completion (i.e. 7 - 9 minutes).

3.2.2.2 Distribution

Bearing in mind that *“a collection of the best written questions will likely do poorly if respondents are not **motivated** to answer them”* (Dillman et al., 2014, p. 256), it only seems fair to concisely review the strategies used to maximize the response rate to the survey. In this respect, Dillman et al. (2014) explain reactions to questionnaires by means of the ‘social exchange’ theory, which essentially holds that people are more inclined to agree to a demand from another person when they are convinced that the benefits outweigh the disadvantages. It is important to point out that the terms and conditions of such agreement are not carved in stone. Instead, each party simply confides in the other one meeting its promises. In addition, the sum and substance of the benefits to be conveyed is ill-defined. Put simply, it can be referred to as a ‘gentlemen’s agreement’. Moreover, the elements of such interaction - mutuality, confidence, selflessness - extend beyond the boundaries of rationality. Hence, the choice of people to participate in a survey results from the contemplation of numerous aspects. To make matters more complicated, such resolutions are usually reached in a heartbeat - wherefore they tend to rest on impulsive reactions to several characteristics of the invitation to take part in a questionnaire. Interestingly enough, in this day and age the exchange of information is nearly instantaneous as well as anonymous by virtue of modern technology and people are constantly faced with tough choices. Consequently, ‘social exchange’ theory plays a critical role in the explanation of survey responses against the backdrop of a society whose impersonal members communicate with one another at the speed of light (Dillman et al., 2014).

In view of the above-mentioned considerations, Dillman et al. (2014) recommend raising the advantages of participating in a questionnaire. In this respect, it is important to bear in mind that people naturally experience a sense of gratification from lending a hand to others, that they value the recipient’s oral expression of gratitude, and that they are inclined to return favours. Of course, the arrangement of a questionnaire could easily exploit such innate tendencies of human beings. In fact, it suffices to implement certain mutually non-exclusive mechanisms. For instance, the researcher ought to elucidate the practical significance of the questionnaire’s findings, request assistance from the respondents, pose intriguing questions in a playful way, highlight that chances to participate are restricted, communicate that other people already answered, and have the survey advocated by an authoritative entity (Dillman et al., 2014).

In the present study, potential respondents were informed that the results of the survey are essential to the successful completion of this paper and special emphasis was placed on their benevolent contribution to the present research project. The survey was structured as a quiz

so that people would consider it as an entertaining opportunity to test their knowledge of the structure and functioning of the European Union. In addition, they were explicitly told that the investigation was solely targeted at political science and psychology master students. They were also invited not to fill out the questionnaire in case they had already done so in another setting - which was an indirect way of indicating that some of their peers already participated in the project. Most importantly, the survey was conducted at the University of Vienna, which means that the professors - who agreed to the execution of the questionnaire in class - politely 'invited' their students to 'voluntarily' contribute to the research of a fellow master student through the completion of the survey. As one might expect, the majority of them obeyed their instructor. It is also worth mentioning that the emblem of Modul University Vienna - renowned educational institution - was placed in the header of the questionnaire.

Moreover, Dillman et al. (2014) suggest to reduce the disadvantages of participating in a questionnaire. In this respect, it should be noted that the sacrifices involved in contributing to a research project tend to be given more weight than the respective benefits. In more detail, the typical deterrents are lengthy surveys, questions whose answers either extend beyond the competence of the respondent or require the exposure of sensitive information, and insistent invitations to take part in one's research. Once again, the organization of the questionnaires could easily capitalize on these innate inclinations of human beings. It is enough to apply certain techniques. For instance, the extent of the survey ought to be curtailed in order to prevent people from refusing to complete the questionnaire from the outset, abandoning it half-way through, or omitting some questions. Moreover, the complexity of the survey should be relaxed. In fact, the eagerness of researchers to squeeze exhaustive information out of the respondents eventually results in low response rates as well as poor data quality. Funnily enough, the supplementary information secured from such overly in-depth questions is normally superfluous in that it is either not included in the study or combined with other information because of resource constraints. Additionally, the survey ought to be aesthetically appealing, refrain from subjugating phraseology, ease the response process, reduce the solicitation of private information, and adopt an overall orthodox approach (Dillman et al., 2014).

In the present study, the survey consists of only thirty-three straightforward questions in total. Even though they might be perceived to be fairly tough at first sight, for all intents and purposes they do not scrutinize the twist and turn of the European Union. Moreover, enough space is left between the questions so that the respondent is not sensory overwhelmed by too much text on one page. Bearing in mind that surveys were mostly conducted on-site, respond-

ents could submit the completed questionnaire directly to the author. As mentioned earlier, sensitive information was only requested on the last page and it was specified that the revelation of such confidential details was optional. In addition, respondents were introduced to the survey with a concise letter on the cover page and were also thanked for their participation at the bottom of the very last page.

Furthermore, Dillman et al. (2014) argue that in this day and age trust is a critical determinant of a person's resolution to participate in a survey in that technology created an enabling environment for illegal activities (e.g. identity theft). Thus, it should come as no surprise that nowadays people are more and more cynical about invitations to answer questionnaires. It should be pointed out that the importance of trust not only pertains to online surveys. In fact, it extends to each and every type of questionnaire (e.g. telephone). Luckily enough, there are techniques to overcome the initial circumspection of potential respondents. For instance, the entities that support the survey should - as mentioned earlier - be authoritative (e.g. universities) and open to be immediately recognizable. Additionally, the researcher ought to capitalize on existing relationships to increase the response rate, promise - yet not overstate - that the collected information will be treated confidentially, and customize the questionnaire so as to enhance its authenticity. At the same time, the researcher needs to ensure that the use of these techniques does not distort the constitution of the sample (Dillman et al., 2014).

In the present study, the survey was backed up by a trustworthy educational institution: Modul University Vienna. In addition, the researcher carried out the empirical groundwork in person so that students could approach him to clear up any doubts. It is also worth mentioning that access to the psychology students was gained through the author's former statistics professors - Dr. Ponocny. Finally, the cover page of the survey consisted of an introductory letter, which reassured potential respondents that the gathered information will not be disclosed to third parties. To recapitulate briefly, the strategy adopted to encourage people to participate in this research project is encapsulated in what follows:

*“obtaining a response will be most likely if sample members can trust that the promised benefits will come to fruition and if the perceived costs have been minimized such that **the benefits outweigh the costs**”* (Dillman et al., 2014, p. 42)

Interestingly enough, Dillman et al. (2014) champion the adoption of 'mixed-method' surveys in that they give equal thought to the necessities of researchers as well as the worries of respondents. In this respect, questionnaires ought to be distributed across various channels (e.g.

mail, email, etc...) in order to overcome the shortcomings of 'single-method' surveys. In fact, a comprehensive approach gives researchers more chances to establish a relationship with potential participants. In addition, people should be offered the opportunity to submit their responses in several ways (e.g. web, post, etc...) so as to enhance response rates. In fact, varying survey styles may capture the attention of various people (Dillman et al., 2014). In the present study, the questionnaire was distributed on-site as well as in select facebook groups of students of the University of Vienna. In this regard, it is worth pointing out that the response rate online was extremely low - merely seven students (of which only four were Austrians) completed the survey on the Internet.

3.2.2.3 Analysis

Having concisely reviewed the structure and distribution of the survey, it is now time to spend a few words on the statistical techniques employed to analyze the collected information. Following the manual input of the data into SPSS, the questions about knowledge were analysed through **crosstabulation**, whereas the ones about trust through **group testing**.

To begin, Field (2005) argues that the former technique is suited to the analysis of 'categorical variables', which consist of certain groups of items. It is worth pointing out that they are commonly referred to as 'grouping variables' (e.g. gender). Since computing the average of this type of data is pointless, the attention is devoted to the recurrence of elements in each group. To be more precise, in order to ascertain the association between two such variables, the analyst utilizes **Pearson's Chi Square (χ^2)**. In short, this pleasingly simple statistical test contrasts the noticed occurrence (i.e. 'observed count') of an item with the occurrence anticipated by hazard (i.e. 'expected count') in a given group. The exact formula reads as follows:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(\text{Observed}_{ij} - \text{Model}_{ij})^2}{\text{Model}_{ij}}$$

EQUATION 1: PEARSON'S CHI-SQUARE
(FIELD, 2005, P. 683)

In addition, Field (2005) notes that the chi-square is inclined to yield statistically significant results in 2x2 crosstabulations (i.e. 'Type I error'). Consequently, the original formula was slightly adjusted in order to compensate for such inclination (i.e. 'Yates's continuity correction'). Put simply, the analyst calculates the divergence, neglects the plus-minus sign, deducts 0.5 from the numerical amount and then raises it to the power of two. Having said that, such algebraic adjustment is excessively restrictive. It follows, therefore, that "*although it's worth knowing*

about, it's probably best ignored!" (Field, 2005, p. 686). In this respect, it only seems fair to point out that statistical tests assessing the strength of the connection between the variables (e.g. 'Phi and Cramer's V') are not included in analysis of the present study.

Moreover, Field (2005) maintains that the chi-square test rests on two assumptions. First, each and every object in the groups under scrutiny must relate to one cell only. Second, the 'expected counts' of the cross-tabulation have to be higher than five. For the purposes of this paper, the chi-square test was conducted as follows in SPSS: Analyze → Descriptive Statistics → Crosstabs... → Statistics... Chi Square → Cells... Counts: Observed and Expected, Percentages: Column → Residuals: Adjusted Standardized (Field, 2005). The output consists of three tables. The first provides a concise overview of the analysis, the second an accurate comparison of the items in the two groups, and the third the salient statistics. If, and only if, the significance value of the chi-square test is significant (i.e. < .05), the null hypothesis can be rejected. In that case, one might as well establish the magnitude of the effect through the computation of 'odds ratios', which are deemed to facilitate the understanding of contingency tables. Indeed, they present the results of the analysis in an ingeniously simple way (Field, 2005).

It only seems fair to provide an instance thereof in order to enhance the reader's comprehension. The following example is based on the question of the survey asking the respondents to indicate the current number of member states in the European Union. In essence, the odds ratio shows that political science students are 10.48 times more likely than psychology students to answer this question correctly. It is computed as follows:

$$odds_{correct\ studying\ political\ science} = \frac{correct\ answers\ (40)}{wrong\ answers\ (18)} = 2.2$$

$$odds_{correct\ studying\ psychology} = \frac{correct\ answers\ (5)}{wrong\ answers\ (24)} = 0.21$$

$$odds\ ratio = \frac{odds_{correct\ studying\ political\ science}\ (2.2)}{odds_{correct\ studying\ psychology}\ (0.21)} = \mathbf{10.48}$$

EQUATION 2: ODDS RATIO
(SOURCE: FIELD, 2005)

Furthermore, the questions about trust were - as mentioned earlier - analyzed by means of group testing procedures. In this respect, Field (2005) makes a distinction between parametric (e.g. 'Independent T-Test') and non-parametric (e.g. 'Mann-Whitney U-Test') tests. In essence, the former rest on certain assumptions. It is extremely important to concisely review them in that choosing the inappropriate test eventually invalidates the results of the statistical analysis.

Even though one might consider this section to be excessively in-depth, suffice it to say that “*if you are going through the agony of doing statistics, you may as well do them properly*” (Field, 2005, p. 64). In more detail, the assumptions of parametric tests are:

- ✓ Normal Distribution
- ✓ Homogeneous Variances
- ✓ Interval Data
- ✓ Independence

In what follows, the procedures for verifying these assumptions are presented. Each technique is accompanied by an example so as to ensure a thorough understanding. The one and only interval-scaled variable of the current dataset - age of the respondent - is used for demonstrative purposes, because it is the sole one that might potentially satisfy all the assumptions.

To begin, normal distribution can easily be checked by visually inspecting the data, which is done as follows in SPSS: Graphs → Legacy Dialogs → Histogram... → Display normal curve (Field, 2005). In our case, it can immediately be grasped that the data is not normally distributed in that the histogram is not at all bell-shaped (Fig. 21).

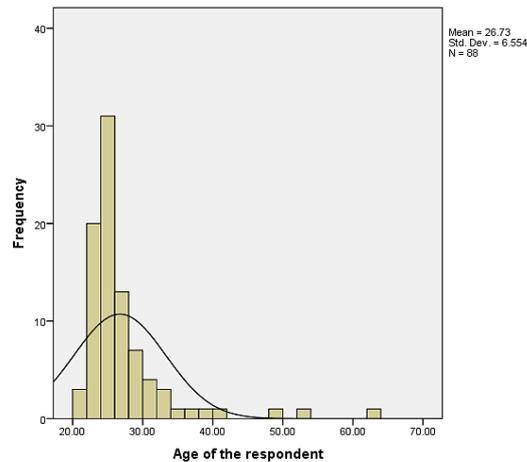


FIGURE 20: NORMAL DISTRIBUTION TEST I

However, Field (2005) argues that a visual inspection of the data is an overly subjective approach and that simply having a look at the histograms does not provide any information on the magnitude of the divergence from the normal distribution. Hence, it is necessary to resort to objective techniques for testing the normality of the data: the *Kolmogorov-Smirnov* and *Saphiro-Wilk* test. Should the result be significant ($p\text{-value} < .05$), the assumption of normal distribution is violated. Conversely, should the result not be significant ($p\text{-value} > .05$), the assumption of normal distribution holds. In SPSS these tests are conducted as follows: Analyze

→ Descriptive Statistics → Explore → Plots → Normality plots with tests (Field, 2005). In our case, it can immediately be noticed that both tests produce a highly significant result (Table 4) - whereby the assumption of normal distribution is evidently violated.

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Age of the respondent	.249	88	.000	.637	88	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

TABLE 4: NORMAL DISTRIBUTION TEST II

In addition, SPSS also generates what is referred to as the 'normal Q-Q plot', which essentially visualizes the actual (i.e. dots) and anticipated (i.e. diagonal) values. Should the distribution be normal, the points are situated exactly on the ascending line. Conversely, should the distribution not be normal, the points are scattered across the graph (Field, 2005). In our case, it can immediately be seen that the dots and the diagonal are by no means aligned.

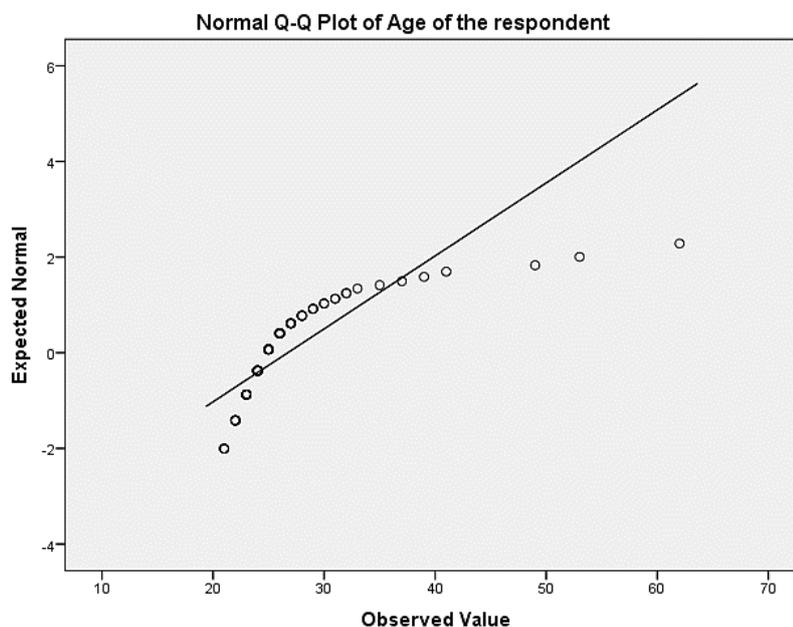


FIGURE 21: NORMAL DISTRIBUTION III

Nevertheless, Field (2005) points out that the reader shall not be deceived by the striking simplicity of these tests. In fact, samples of considerable size easily generate significant outcomes. Therefore, it is recommended to "use these tests, but plot your data as well and try to make an informed decision about the extent of non-normality" (Field, 2005, p. 93).

Moreover, Field (2005) maintains that the next assumption - homogeneity of variances - can be checked through the **Levene's test**. In a similar way to the previously mentioned K-S test, should the result of this examination be significant (p -value $< .05$), the assumption of homogeneous variances is contravened. Conversely, should the outcome not be significant (p -value $> .05$), the assumption of homogeneous variances remains. Also, vast samples easily lead to significant result. This test is conducted as follows in SPSS: Analyze \rightarrow Descriptive Statistics \rightarrow Explore... \rightarrow Plots \rightarrow Spread vs Level with Levene Test: Transformed - Power: Natural log (Field, 2015). In our case, it can be noticed that variances are actually heterogeneous (Table 5).

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Age of the respondent	Based on Mean	2.228	1	86	.139
	Based on Median	1.329	1	86	.252
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.329	1	82.504	.252
	Based on trimmed mean	1.797	1	86	.184

TABLE 5: HOMOGENEITY OF VARIANCES

Last but not least, Field (2005) claims that the verification of the other two assumptions - interval and independent data - ultimately depends on the sound judgement of the analyst. The former supposition holds that the items of the variable are equidistant from one another, whereas the latter supposition holds that the details collected from various sources is unrelated (Field, 2005). In our case, the data is both independent and interval-scaled. Since the first two assumptions are violated, parametric testing is non-viable.

On another note, Field (2005) argues that non-parametric tests cleverly sequence the data in order to circumvent the above-mentioned assumptions. However, such mechanism comes at a certain price. In fact, the ordered arrangement of the data disregards the size of the disparity between the values. Therefore, non-parametric tests are - statistically speaking - less 'powerful' than their parametric counterparts. Nevertheless, one ought to bear in mind that the latter tests are more 'powerful', "*only if the assumptions of the parametric test are met*" (Field, 2005, p. 533). Since diving into the twists and turns of the ranking procedure of the Mann-Whitney U-Test would only result in a tedious digression from the topic of this section, suffice it to say that this test is conducted as follows in SPSS: Analyze \rightarrow Non-Parametric Tests \rightarrow Legacy Dialogs \rightarrow 2 Independent Samples... \rightarrow Test Variable List: Insert Items \rightarrow Grouping Variable: Define Groups Test Type: Mann-Whitney U (Field, 2005).

Moreover, Field (2005) maintains that the output of this test consists of two tables. The first one provides an overview of the ranked information, while the second one delivers the concrete statistics. It should be noted that the significance value is by default two-tailed - wherefore it might have to be divided by two in order to be used for the interpretation of directional hypotheses (Field, 2005). In our case, it can be seen that the mean ranks of political science (45.26) are quite similar to the ones psychology students (42.95). Also, the two-tailed significance value (.687) is highly insignificant as well. From this, it can be inferred that no significant difference in age could be detected between the two groups of students.

	Field of studies	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Age of the respondent	Political Science	59	45.26	2670.50
	Psychology	29	42.95	1245.50
	Total	88		

	Age of the respondent
Mann-Whitney U	810.500
Wilcoxon W	1245.500
Z	-.403
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.687

a. Grouping Variable: Field of studies

TABLE 6: MANN WHITNEY TEST

Furthermore, Field (2005) suggests to compute the magnitude of the effects so as to provide other analysts with comparable results. Even though this figure is not given by SPSS, its computation is relatively simple (Field, 2005). In our case, the value indicates a very small effect. In more detail, the mathematical determination of this statistic reads as follows:

$$r = \frac{Z(-.403)}{\sqrt{N}(88)} = -.043$$

EQUATION 3: SIZE OF EFFECT
(FIELD, 2005, P. 532)

Finally, it is necessary to examine the ‘**reliability**’ of the questionnaire through Cronbach’s alpha (α), which was initially developed to compensate for the shortcomings of another measure of reliability (*‘split-half’*). Put simply, this method divides the data set into two distinct parts in every conceivable manner, and subsequently calculates the strength of the relationship of each single division. Thus, the mean of these numbers is ultimately Cronbach’s alpha (α). In more detail, the formula of this statistical figure reads as follows:

$$\alpha = \frac{N^2 \overline{Cov}}{\sum s_{item}^2 + \sum Cov_{item}}$$

EQUATION 4: CRONBACH ALPHA
(FIELD, 2005, P. 667)

Moreover, Field (2005) argues that even though one might be scared by the apparent complexity of such computation, in reality it is rather simple. On one hand, in the numerator the amount of objects raised to the power of two is multiplied by the mean of the inter-object covariance. On the other hand, in the denominator the intra-object variance and the inter-object covariance are added together. It is generally agreed that Cronbach’s alpha (α) must range between 0.7 and 0.8 in order to be satisfactory. Even so, such iron laws ought to be taken with a grain of salt due to the fact that such measure of reliability could be easily biased in different ways. To begin, it rests on the total objects under scrutiny in that the numerator contains - as mentioned earlier - the count of object ‘ N^2 ’. Thus, Cronbach’s alpha (α) is directly proportional to the number of objects in the study. In addition, inter-relationships between objects of various aspects also raise the value of this figure. Hence, it ought to be employed for each feature separately. Moreover, negatively phrased objects distort this figure as well in that they alter the mean of the inter-object covariance in the numerator. To be more precise, they decrease the upper part of the fraction and thereby the overall Cronbach’s alpha (α). Luckily enough, SPSS offers a procedure to overcome this problem (Field, 2005). However, including it here would exceed the scope of this section. Suffice it to say that this figure is computed as follows in SPSS: Analyze → Scale → Reliability Analysis → Model: Alpha → Statistics... → Descriptives for: Scale if item deleted → Inter-Item: Correlations (Field, 2005).

With regard to the output, Field (2005) argues that it is important to examine the ‘*Corrected Item-Total Correlation*’ as well as the ‘*Cronbach’s Alpha if Item Deleted*’ columns. In essence, the former measures the strength of relationship between an object and the overall survey and ought to be above 0.03, whereas the latter determines the value Cronbach alpha’s (α)

would assume in case one specific object was excluded from the computation - thereby pointing out whether it is dis-/advantageous to the global reliability of the survey (Field, 2005).

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.786	.703	32

TABLE 7: CRONBACH'S ALPHA I

In the present study, Cronbach's alpha (α) was calculated individually for the section on knowledge and for the one on trust. Since none of the questions in the survey was negatively formulated, no additional adjustment was required. It can easily be noticed that both values are remarkably positive in that they exceed the above-mentioned threshold of acceptability (0.7). Indeed, the Cronbach's alpha (α) for knowledge is **.786** (Table 7), whereas the one for trust is **.916** (Table 8). In the case of knowledge, most values - with the exception of the questions about the city of the institutions - in the '*Corrected Item-Total Correlation*' column are above the previously mentioned threshold (0.03). Moreover, the values in the '*Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted*' column show that the deletion of certain questions would only improve the survey's reliability in an insignificant way. In fact, the greatest improvement would correspond to an increase in alpha of +.008 (Appendix 5). In the case of trust, every in the '*Corrected Item-Total Correlation*' column is above the given threshold (0.03) and just one of the values in the '*Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted*' shows that the deletion of one question would improve the reliability of the survey in a negligible manner. In fact, the greatest refinement would merely correspond to an increment in alpha of +0.001 (Appendix 5).

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.916	.918	11

TABLE 8: CRONBACH'S ALPHA II

3.2.3 Limitations

Having emphasized the strengths of this research, it only seems fair to spotlight its weaknesses as well. In this respect, the student survey on which the expert interviews are built lacks **external validity**. Put simply, this concept is defined as “*the degree to which the conclusions in your study would hold for other persons in other place at other times*” (Trochim and Donnelly, 2007). In more detail, the sample of the present study only comprises eighty-eight Austrian master students at the University of Vienna. As a result, it would be beyond the shadow of a doubt be unreasonable to extend the inferences of this research to the population of Austrian students in Vienna, which consists of 119,420 individuals (Statistik Austria, 2015). Even though - as mentioned earlier - the gender distribution within the sample approximately reflects the one of the general population, the size of the sample is excessively meagre in that it merely represents 0.074% of the total population. Therefore, the results of this research ought to be interpreted with due caution. On a brighter note, Bernard (2013) reviews the various types of validity and reaches the conclusion that truth is not a definitive concept - wherefore scientists can only endeavour overcoming such inherent uncertainty and approximating the actual reality through continuously improving assessments. So, it is maintained that:

“In the end, we are left to deal with the effects of our judgements, which is just as it should be. Valid measurement makes valid data, but validity itself depends on the collective opinion of researcher.” (Bernard, 2013, p. 51)

3.3 Qualitative Phase

“Wisdom begins in wonder”
(Socrates)

3.3.1 Selection of Participants

To begin, it is important to elucidate the rationale underlying the selection of the interviewees. Once again, the author opted for ‘*purposeful sampling*’. In this regard, Patton (2002) argues that this approach encapsulates the fundamental dissimilarity between qualitative and quantitative research. In fact, the former zeroes in on a few carefully chosen participants, whereas the latter rests on a great number of casual respondents. Curiously enough, the weak point of quantitative investigation comes to be the strong point of qualitative exploration (i.e. narrow concentration). Hence, the merit of the above-mentioned sampling method consists in the choice of ‘*information-rich cases*’, which essentially provides substantial particulars on the

subject under scrutiny. Moreover, it is necessary to specify which variant of purposeful sampling was adopted in the current research project. The author decided '*sampling politically important cases*' (Patton, 2002, p. 241) for the purposes of the present study. In essence, this technique allows the resource-constrained researcher to pick the most salient cases so as to enhance the significance of the empirical details. It should be noted that this technique is a variant of '*critical case sampling*' (Patton, 2002, p. 236), which consists in the allocation of limited resources to the most notable cases only. In addition, the cruciality of participants ought to be ascertained by the researcher on the basis of certain aspects (Patton, 2002).

Finally, it only seems fair to spend a few words on the size of the sample in qualitative analysis. In this respect, Patton (2002) claims that there are no iron laws for the minimum number of respondents to be included in such type of study in that this is ultimately determined by a wide variety of different factors - such as the content of the research for instance. It is also worth pointing out that the amplitude of the examination is inversely related to its profundity. Put differently, the scholar might - *ceteris paribus* - include several people and superficially explore a certain topic or concentrate on just a few persons and thoroughly investigate a given subject. To be sure, the choice of the approach rests on the purpose of the study. However, in lieu of considering whether the number of respondents is adequate to the overarching objective of the enquiry, people are inclined to erroneously measure the validity of such samples against the yardstick of statistical probability theory. In consequence, it is vehemently asserted that:

*"the validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the **information richness** of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher than with sample size"* (Patton, 2002, p. 245)

Thus, Patton (2002) strongly recommends to first define the least number of participants necessary to explore the subject under scrutiny and then - in case of need - include other respondents in the course of the investigation. In essence, the researcher ought to be easy-going and open-minded in this regard (Patton, 2002). In the present study, the author selected Austrian MEPs as interview participants by virtue of their expertise in the field of supranational politics. In total, Austria has eighteen MEPs, which belong to five different national parties (European Union, 2016). Therefore, the required number of participants was set at five - ideally one from each faction. In total, six Austrian MEPs were interviewed. The list of participants can be found in Appendix 6. Thereafter, the appalling ignorance of the survey respondents about the role of the European Ombudsman (77 out of 86 students \approx 89.53%) spurred the author to set

up an interview with the press officer of this institution. On a personal note, the leader of the UK Independent Party - Nigel Farage - was also invited to an interview in that this political figure constitutes the original source of inspiration for the author to deal with the democratic deficit of the European Union. Even though the latter was unable to accept the invitation, one of his colleagues - Raymond Finch - agreed to being interviewed. Sadly enough, the findings of these two interviews could not be included in this paper due to resource constraints.

Having described the rationale underlying the sampling procedure, it only seems fair to spend a few words on the establishment of contact with potential participants. In this respect, the author invited the Austrian MEPs to participate in an interview on the democratic deficit of the European Union in February 2016 well in advance (10. December 2015) in order to give them enough time to find a free spot in their hectic schedules. In more detail, the author concisely introduced himself as a graduate student of Modul University Vienna and specified that the interview would take place in the framework of the master thesis. In addition, the author briefly explained the mixed methods research design so that the potential participant could easily grasp the gist of the project. Bearing in mind that elite are usually pressed for time, the author offered to conduct the interview at the politician's convenience either in person (Vienna) or through telephone (Brussels) in order to smooth the way for their agreement to be interviewed. Moreover, the author strongly emphasized that an ounce of their precious time would make a remarkable contribution to the research project. Finally, the author provided his personal mobile phone number in the signature of the email in order to ease the communication of their response to the interview invitation. It should also be noted that reminders were sent to those who did not react to the email towards end of the same month (26. December 2015), in the middle of the following month (17. January 2016), and in the second half of the month after (22. February 2016). Finally, follow-up calls were made on certain occasions as well.

3.3.2 The Interviews

3.3.2.1 Conceptualization

Before diving into the exploration of the elite interviews, it only seems fair to concisely review the author's stance on such qualitative approach. In this respect, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) argue that an interview is essentially an interlocution between two people, which results in the creation of intelligence. Hence, such tête-à-têtes are to all intents and purposes *inter views*, in which the researcher and the respondent confer about a certain subject. Interestingly enough, such perspective is elucidated by means of an allusion to Rubin's Vase (Fig. 22). In fact, one could either focus on the grey profile silhouettes on the sides or concentrate on the white

amphora in the middle. In the current context, the former stands for the scholar and the participant, whereas the latter indicates the intelligence brought into being by their interplay. In essence, *“there is an alternation between the knowers and the known, between the constructors of knowledge and the knowledge constructed”* (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 2).

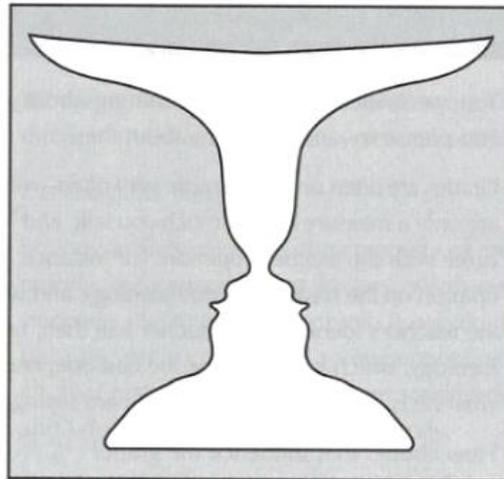


FIGURE 22: RUBIN'S VASE
(KVALE AND BRINKMANN, 2009, P. 3)

Moreover, academic interviews are set side by side with the reasoned conversation of Socrates. In this regard, such sort of conversation should not be regarded as a system of iron laws, whose meticulous application leads to the achievement of an objective. Instead, it ought to be considered as a strategy to gain comprehension. In more detail, the curious thinker came in contact with participants, invited them to provide an explanation of the notion under scrutiny, made inferences about the given interpretation, and directed the attention of the respondents towards potential contradictions with one of their other convictions. Normally, the person would eventually dismiss the initial statement as inadequate and come up with another elucidation - at which point the entire process starts over again. In essence, such colloquy *“is a harsh form of interaction that seeks true knowledge through the unrelenting rigor of a discursive argumentation”* (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 35). Needless to say, in this day and age interviews are not as pugnacious. In fact, they are conceived as a constructive synergy - not a fierce war of words - between the researcher and the respondent. In addition, the intelligence generated by these dialogues usually consists more of personal standpoints of participants (*doxa*) and less of reasonably justified viewpoints (*episteme*). It is important to point out that these two types of knowledge are not mutually exclusive - wherefore interviews not only evoke past memories and future aspirations of respondents, but also constitute a mechanism to rationalize their own reasoning (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

Furthermore, the researcher can - metaphorically speaking - be conceived as a miner or as a traveler. In the former case, the scholar needs to unearth the pristine information shrouded in the mind of the participant. The interview is considered to be an ideal setting to gather facts and figures, which can subsequently be analyzed. Thus, this perspective presumes that the concealed information simply needs to be brought to the surface. In the latter case, the scholar strolls around and engages in conversations with individuals met by chance. The interview is regarded as an essential stage in the process of creating wisdom. Thus, this perspective presupposes that intelligence ought to be built (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). In the present study, the author identifies with the miner metaphor in that the participants - Austrian MEPs - are already endowed with the knowledge of the subject under scrutiny - the democratic deficit of the European Union. It follows, therefore, that the author simply needs to uncover such latent information by confronting them with an array of reasonably exigent questions.

3.3.2.2 Design and Conduction

Having briefly presented the author's stance on qualitative inquiry, it only seems fair to specify that '**elite interviews**' were conducted. In this respect, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) argue they are conversations with highly influential - and often quite inaccessible - individuals, who are selected on the basis of their proficiency in a particular field. Thus, it should come as no surprise that there might be an unequal distribution of power between the researcher and the respondent. Therefore, the scholar ought to be well versed in the subject under scrutiny, conversant with the specialized terms of the subject, and acquainted with the profile of the participant. In fact, exhibiting the mastery of the talking point allows the researcher to earn the esteem of the respondents from the outset. To this end, an academic might emphasize the own awareness of the potential participants' professional development and pose specific questions to intimate that extensive research was already carried out in advance. In fact, this would give them the perception that it is worth dedicating their precious time to the interview request. Moreover, since specialists often participate in interviews, they tend to develop a standardized line of reasoning to convey their stance on certain talking points. Of course, the researcher ought to be remarkably talented to overcome such inclination and scratch beneath the surface. In fact, an established academic could call into question the perspective of the elite respondent and might thus "*approximate the intense questioning of a Socratic dialogue, ideally leading to knowledge in the sense of **episteme***" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 147).

In the present study, the author explored substantial literature on the democratic deficit of the European Union before beginning with the - quantitative as well as qualitative - empirical groundwork in order to develop sensible questions in the survey and in the subsequent interviews. In addition, the author included a brief description of the research design in the invitation email sent to the potential participants in order to intimate the own conversance with the subject under scrutiny. This, in turn, was intended to convince them that it would be worthwhile agreeing to the request.

Naturally, a researcher might encounter several other issues in the process of conducting an elite interview. In this respect, Flick (2006) consider this type of qualitative inquiry to be a particular version of semi-structured dialogues. In any case, participants are chosen by virtue of their expertise in a given discipline rather than their personality. Since the scope of the interview is considerably narrow, the researcher needs to steer the conversation in the right direction in order to avoid otiose digressions. In more detail, the scholar could encounter four complications. First, the respondent might unexpectedly turn out not to be a specialist in the subject matter. Second, the participant might zero in on technical aspects of the profession and deviate from the actual point in question. Third, the respondent might jump back and forth between civilian and savant - whence more personal than professional particulars are provided. Fourth, the participant might hold forth on the own understanding of the issue under scrutiny in lieu of tailoring the answer to the question of the scholar. It follows, therefore, that the researcher should not only come across as a professional dialogue partner, but also avoid that the expert strays from the subject of the interview (Flick, 2006).

In the present study, the participants were required to comment on the statistically significant findings of the quantitative phase (i.e. student survey). As a result, the author did not have to make strenuous efforts to hold the reins of the dialogue. However, certain respondents were particularly loquacious - whence some interviews lasted longer than expected (e.g. 47 minutes and 26 seconds). In these cases, the author simply allowed them to speak freely and subsequently processed only the relevant information. Even though this approach considerably increased the workload of the author, in retrospect the marginal details were worth the additional effort. Luckily enough, each of the respondents revealed her- or him-self as remarkably proficient in the field of supranational politics and acted as elected officials during the interview. In this regard, it should be mentioned that a few participants strongly emphasized the stance of their political party towards the European Union. Bearing in mind that the relationship between national and supranational politics is a recurring theme in much of the academic

writings about the EU as well as an important part of the literature review of this paper, it seemed reasonable - within limits - to allow the experts to express the political perspective of their faction. Thus, when the author noticed that the interview started taking the form of a soliloquy, the participant's attention was politely directed to the results of the survey.

3.3.2.3 Analysis

Having briefly described the nature of the elite interviews, it is now time to elucidate the method used to analyze them. Before diving into the actual technique, it is necessary to spend a few words on its conceptual foundation - 'grounded theory'. In this respect, Patton (2002) argues that this perspective zeroes in on the procedural aspects of the - mainly inductive - origination of principled explanations. Thus, abstract concepts are built on the scrutiny of empirical data. In more detail, certain techniques are used to bring order to the chaos of the enormous amount of data, which the researcher examines with the intention of generating intellectual conceptualizations. Moreover, the increasing acceptance of this approach is ascribed to its stress on methodological accuracy as well as to its accent on the impartiality of the scientist. In more detail, the distinguishing features of such type of researcher are thought to be their capacity for detached observation, realization of prejudiced dispositions, conceptual thought, acceptance of constructive feedback, reactivity to the comments of participants, and steadfast dedication to the research project. The analytical process starts with the illustration of the data, continues with the methodical arrangement of the various notions, and finishes with the creation of a theoretical framework. It follows, therefore, that the investigative complexity increases with the progress of the inquiry. However, it is unfortunate that researchers tend to limit their exploration to the most basic level of analysis. In fact, they merely collect well-formulated pieces of information and do not go any further (Patton, 2002).

At this point, it is time to explain the actual analysis of the interview. Flick (2006) argues that 'theoretical coding' is rooted in grounded theory. In this respect, it should be noted that researchers may adopt various - not mutually exclusive - coding techniques (i.e. open, axial, selective) in order to analyze written works. Put simply, coding is considered to be the course of action to create abstract concepts on the basis of empirical information. To be more precise, *"the process of coding leads to the development of theories through a process of abstraction"* (Flick, 2006, p. 296). In fact, the researcher creates codes that are increasingly detached from the original words of the narrative under scrutiny, places them into conceptual classes, and explores the connections among these groups (Flick, 2006).

In what follows, the complementary coding methods mentioned earlier are concisely reviewed. First of all, Flick (2006) argues that ‘open coding’ essentially endeavours conceptualizing the data in order to enhance the sound grasp of the narrative. Being an extremely thorough procedure, it should only be employed for the analysis of either remarkably useful or excessively equivocal sections of the document. Thus, it should come as no surprise that such technique gives rise to myriads of codes, which are subsequently grouped according to salient topics in the text. In addition, these codes could be tagged either with terms used in relevant publications (*‘constructed’*) or terms used by the participants (*‘in vivo’*). Then, each category is assigned specific characteristics - such as colour for instance. The final outcome of this procedure consists of a directory of codes and groups connected to the written work. These ought to be accompanied by elucidations of their meaning (*‘notes’*) as well as comments on interesting quotations pertinent to the ensuing generation of abstract concepts (*‘memos’*). Second, ‘axial coding’ essentially adjusts the previously established groups. It should be noted that only the groups of relevance to answering the initial research question are taken into consideration. The researcher identifies the interconnections among them on the basis of the ‘paradigm model’ (Fig. 23), which provides a multifaceted understanding of given aspects. Having said that, it should be mentioned that such exploratory approach identifies potential - not actual - associations among the various groups. The established connections are then repeatedly checked against the empirical information so as to be definitively validated. Third, ‘selective coding’ carries on with the inspection of the previous stage in an even more theoretical way. The whole analysis proceeds ad nauseam and only comes to a stop when the researcher achieves what is referred to as ‘theoretical saturation’ (Flick, 2006).

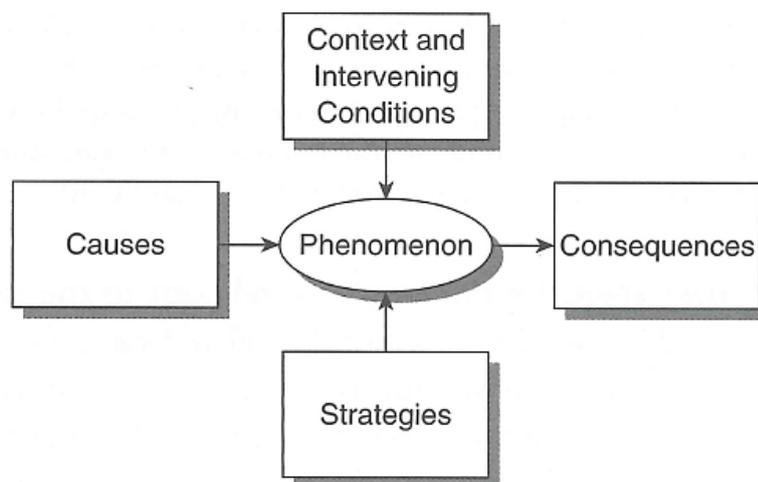


FIGURE 23: THE PARADIGM MODEL
(FLICK, 2006, P. 301)

In sum, Flick (2006) argues that this analytical approach essentially decomposes qualitative documents into its constituent elements. It should be noted that this procedure is actually a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the researcher enjoys considerable freedom in the design of the study and integrates various coding techniques in order to gain an abstract comprehension of the material, which ultimately transcends the text. On the other hand, the researcher might easily get lost in a maze of countless codes, extensive development of groups, and untold contrasts among sections of the document. Also, the conclusive resolution of coming to an end eventually rests on the sound judgement of the researcher (Flick, 2006).

Furthermore, technological evolution is revolutionizing the sum and substance of qualitative inquiry. In this respect, Flick (2006) concentrates on the qualitative data analysis computer programs, which are often referred to as 'QDA' or 'CAQDAS'. It is important to point out that - unlike quantitative software products such as SPSS - qualitative programs do not mechanically examine raw data. In fact, they simply assist the researcher in the process of crunching the data. In more detail, these software solutions are - inter alia - employed for side comments, interview transcription, coding procedure, virtual depository, ruminative records, and data visualization. It should be noted that this list is by no means exhaustive (Flick, 2006).

Interestingly enough, Flick (2006) argues that researchers place their faith in such programs for various reasons. Indeed, such software are believed to accelerate the analytical process and thereby allow for significant time savings. Bearing in mind that a considerable amount of time is usually invested in the selection of the program, this advantage only pertains to large-scale research undertakings. In addition, such software are thought to enhance the quality of the inquiry in virtue of the coherence and precision of their systematic methods and to ease the administration of vast amounts of data through the use of convenient functions - such as the recuperation of quotations for instance. It stands to reason that each particular program comes with its own features. This, in turn, raises the issue of which one to select. In fact, since there is a wide variety of different software products - each one with its own (de-)merits, it is worth spending some time investigating possible alternatives in order to make an informed decision. Therefore, the researcher ought - among other things - to consider the intended purpose and investigative capacity of the software, as well as its requirements on the computer (e.g. graphic card) and the user (e.g. programming language). Once again, it should be noted that this list is in no way comprehensive. In fact, other aspects - such as costs and benefits - must be thought of as well (Flick, 2006).

For the purposes of this study, the program 'Atlas.ti 7' was employed. In this regard, Flick (2006) points out that it is classified as a 'code-based theory building' software in that it allows the researcher to carry out an abstract analysis that extends beyond the mere narrative. Moreover, the program is user-friendly, able to deal with text as well as audio and image material, and offers a wide variety of functions (Flick, 2006). In the present study, the author created a new 'hermeneutic unit' in Atlas.ti 7 (Project → New Hermeneutic Unit) and subsequently put the transcripts of the interviews into Atlas.ti 7 (Documents → New → Add Document). Afterwards, each document was coded. In this regard, it should be pointed out that the codes were not established a priori and that the author got acquainted with the keyboard shortcuts of the software in order to speed up the coding process. In more detail, sometimes new codes were created (Ctrl + Shift + O) and other times pre-existing ones were assigned to relevant quotations (Ctrl + Shift + L). It is also worth mentioning that the output of such activity was extracted as a rich text file to be printed out later on (Codes → Output → All Codes with Quotations → File). Finally, the codes were grouped into so-called 'code families' to establish overarching conceptual categories (Codes → Code Manager: Codes → Families → Open Family Manager: Families → New Families). In sum, even though much more analysis could be carried out with this software, the above-mentioned investigation meets the purposes of this paper.

4 FRUITS OF RESEARCH

4.1 Quantitative

This section is going to present only the statistically significant results of the survey, which are the ones where the significance value of Pearson's Chi-Square (χ^2) is below the conventional significance threshold (p -value < .05). It is probably worth placing special emphasis on the fact that this part is intended to be purely descriptive in that the actual interpretation of the findings is carried out later (section 4.2) The sequence in which the results are presented follows the structure of the survey. Hence, the first subsection concentrates on the respondents' knowledge of the structure and functioning of the European Union, whereas the second one focuses its attention on their trust in its institutions.

Before diving into the description of the graphs, it is only seems fair to spend a few words on the methodology used to generate them. In fact, the responses to the multiple-choice questions were classified as either wrong or correct answers by recoding the original variables into dichotomous variables (0 = wrong, 1 = correct) in SPSS. Even though for each question - with

the exception of #10 - there was only one right option, replies were also considered to be wrong when the respondent selected more than one option at the same time. In addition, the odds ratio for each question is mentioned as well. Finally, it is necessary to point out that while the results are only presented by means of clustered bar charts in this section, the cross-tabulation of every single graph can be found in Appendix 7.

4.1.1 Basic Knowledge

To begin, a significant difference between the two groups of students in the basic section of the survey could only be detected in the question about the current number of member states in the European Union (#4). It is worth mentioning that the multiple-choice options available to the students - 15, 25, 27, 28 - reflect the consecutive enlargements of the European Union. In more detail, 69.0% (40/58) of the political science and 17.2% (5/29) of the psychology students answered this question correctly (Fig. 24). In this case, it is interesting to examine the wrong answers as well. In fact, 29.3% (17/58) of the political science and 58.6% (17/29) of the psychology students erroneously thought that there would be only 27 member states. Therefore, it only seems reasonable to infer that these respondents are not aware of Croatia's accession to the European Union in 2013. Based on the odds ratio political science students are 10.67 times more likely to answer this question correctly than psychology students.

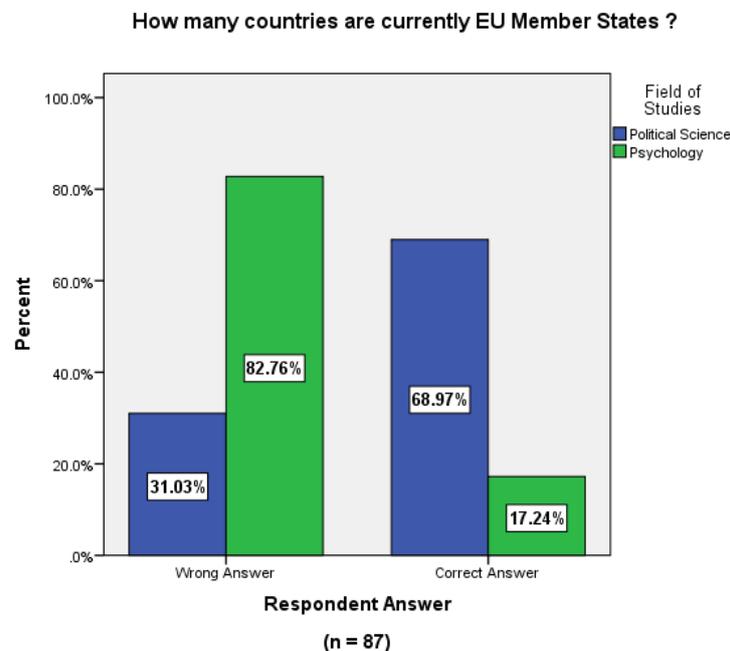


FIGURE 24: NUMBER OF MEMBER STATES
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

4.1.2 Intermediate Knowledge

In the intermediate subsection, significant differences between the two groups of students could be detected in various questions. For instance, this was the case in the one that requires respondents to match certain institutions of the EU with their respective presidents (#9).

First, 67.2% (39/58) of the political science and 25.0% (7/28) of the psychology students were able to associate Jean-Claude Juncker with the European Commission (Fig. 25). It should also be noted that 50.0% (14/28) of psychology students selected the “Don’t Know” option, which was counted as wrong answer as well. Based on the odd ratio political science students are 6.16 times more likely to answer this question correctly than psychology students.

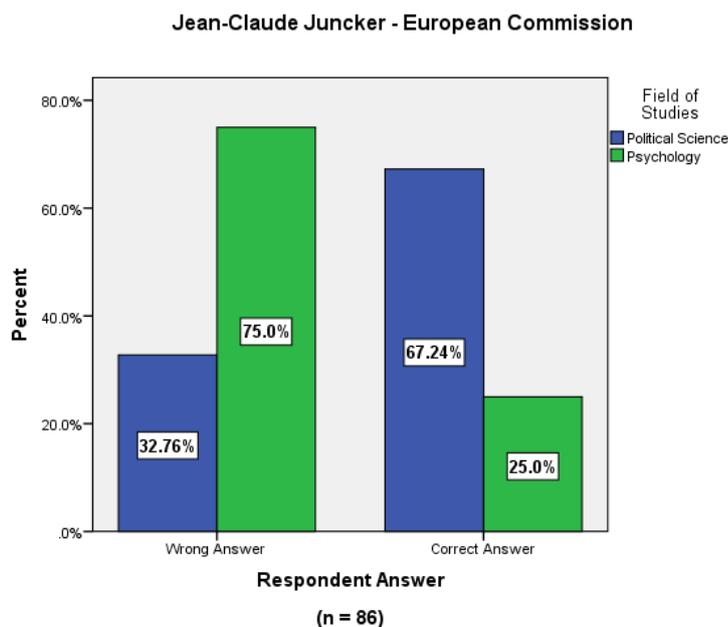


FIGURE 25: PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

Second, 73.7% (42/57) of the political science and only 17.9% (05/28) of the psychology students managed to identify Martin Schulz as the president of the European Parliament (Fig. 26). It should be noted that once again the share of “Don’t Know” responses was extremely high among students of the latter group. Indeed, this option was selected by 71.4% (20/28) of them. Based on the odds ratio political science students are 32.20 times more likely to answer this question correctly than psychology students.

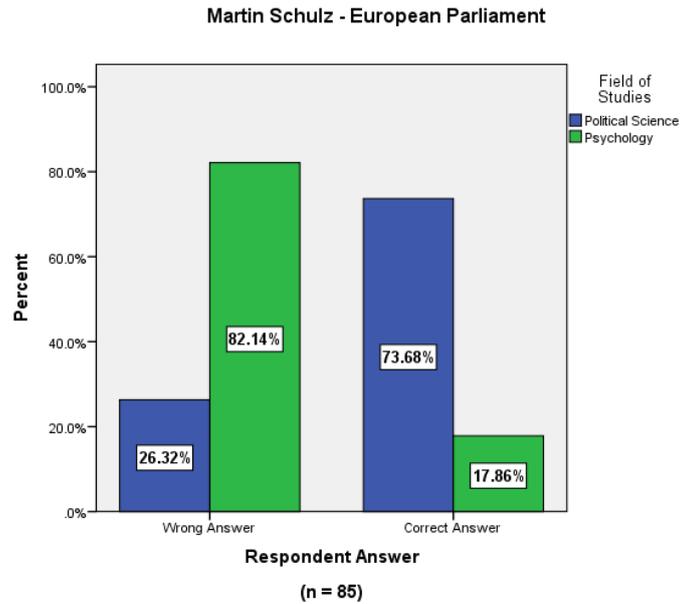


FIGURE 26: PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

Third, 66.1% (37/56) of the political science and 25.0% (07/28) of the psychology students managed to link Mario Draghi to the European Central Bank (Fig. 27). It should be noted that once again the majority of students of the latter group selected the “Don’t Know” alternative. In fact, 67.9% (19/28) of them ticked this option. Based on the odds ratio political science students are 5.84 times more likely to answer this question correctly than psychology students.

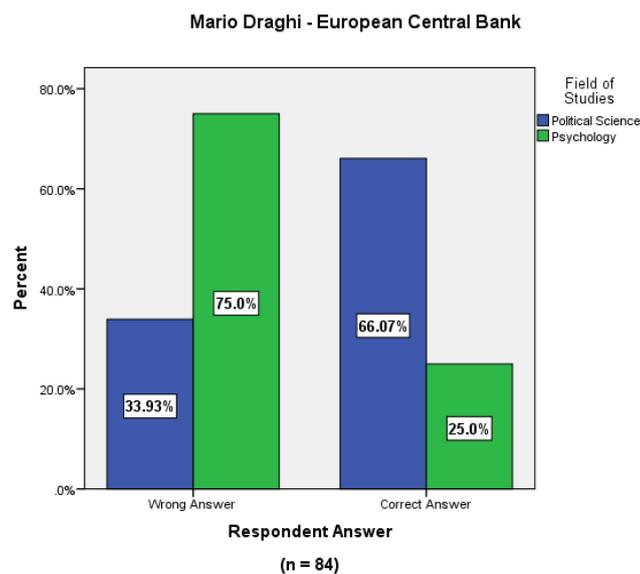


FIGURE 27: PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

Fourth, 57.9% (33/57) of the political science and 0% (0/27) of the psychology students were aware of the fact that Donald Tusk is the head of the European Council (Fig. 28). It should be noted that the proportion of “Don’t Know” replies was relatively high among respondents of both groups. Indeed, 22.8% (13/57) of students of the former and 74.1% (20/27) of students of the latter group selected this option. Since none of the psychology students answered this question correctly, it is not possible to calculate the odds ratio for this question.

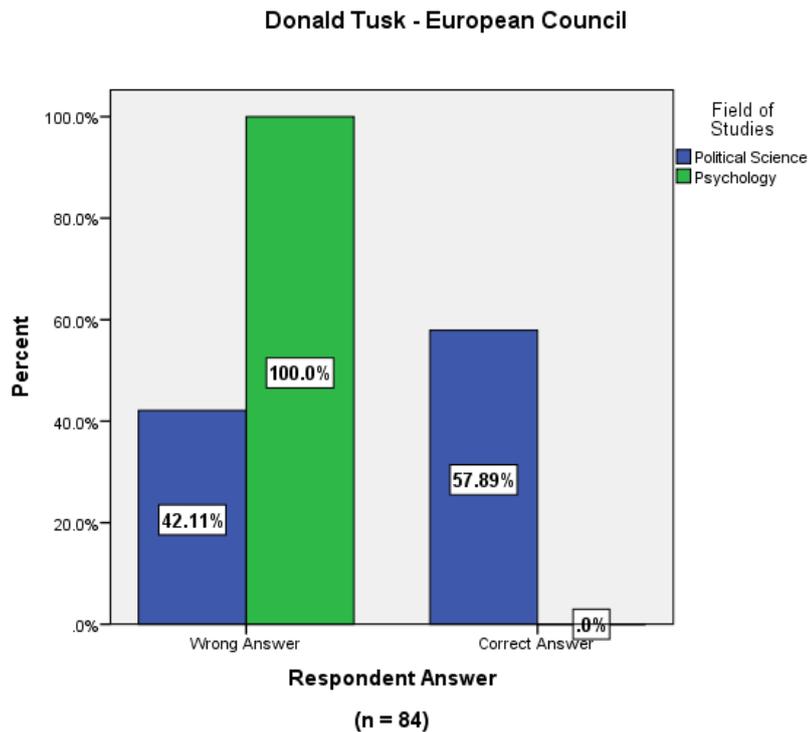


FIGURE 28: PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

Fifth, 53.6% (30/56) of the political science and only 3.6% (1/28) of the psychology students are aware of the fact that Vitor Manuel Da Silva Caldeira is leading the European Court of Auditors (Fig. 29). It should be noted that once again the number of students picking the “Don’t Know” alternative is considerably high among respondents of both groups. Indeed, 37.5 % (21/56) of students of the former and 78.6% (22/28) of students of the latter student group chose this alternative. Based on the odds ratio political science students are 31.15 times more likely to answer this question correctly than psychology students.

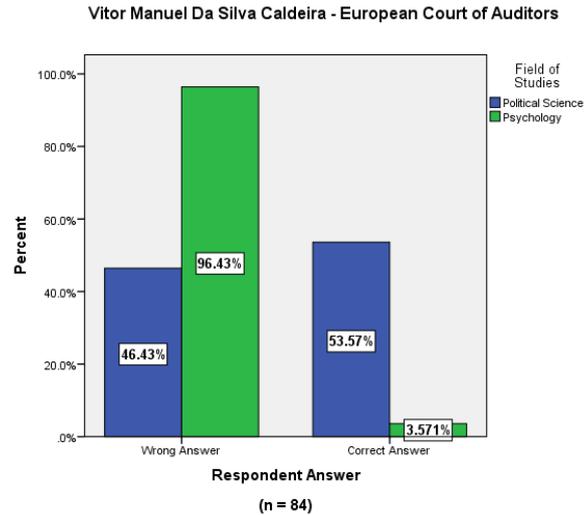


FIGURE 29: PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

Moreover, a significant difference between the two group of students could also be detected in the question that required respondents match certain institutions with their core competences (#11). First, 89.7% (52/58) of the political science and 50.0% (14/28) of the psychology students recognized that the following description captures the essence of the European Parliament: ‘directly-elected EU body with legislative, supervisory, and budgetary responsibilities’ (Fig. 30). Based on the odds ratio political science students are 8.67 times more likely to answer this question correctly than psychology students.

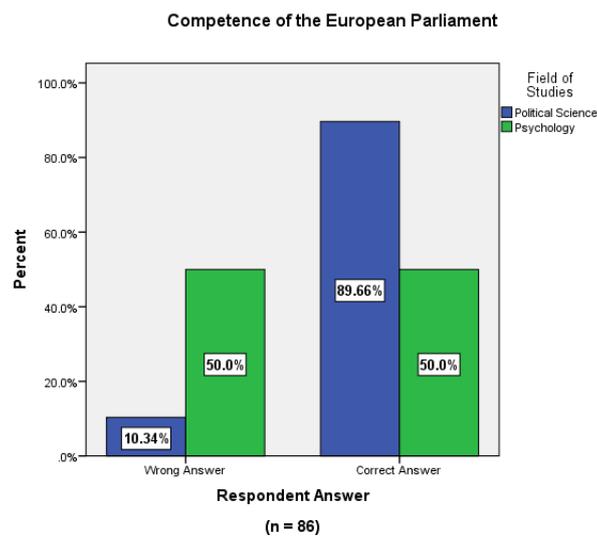


FIGURE 30: COMPETENCE OF THE PARLIAMENT
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

Second, 48.2% (27/56) of the political science and 6.9% (2/29) of the psychology students recognize that the following statement essentially summarizes the competences of the European Commission: ‘promotes the general interest of the EU by proposing and enforcing legislation as well as by implementing policies and the EU budget’ (Fig. 31). It should be noted that 27.6% (8/29) of students of the latter group ticked the “Don’t Know” option. In this case, it is interesting to examine the other wrong answers as well. In fact, 26.8% (15/56) of the political science and 34.5% (10/29) of the psychology students erroneously ascribed this competence to the European Council. Based on the odds ratio political science students are 12.57 times more likely to answer this question correctly than psychology students.

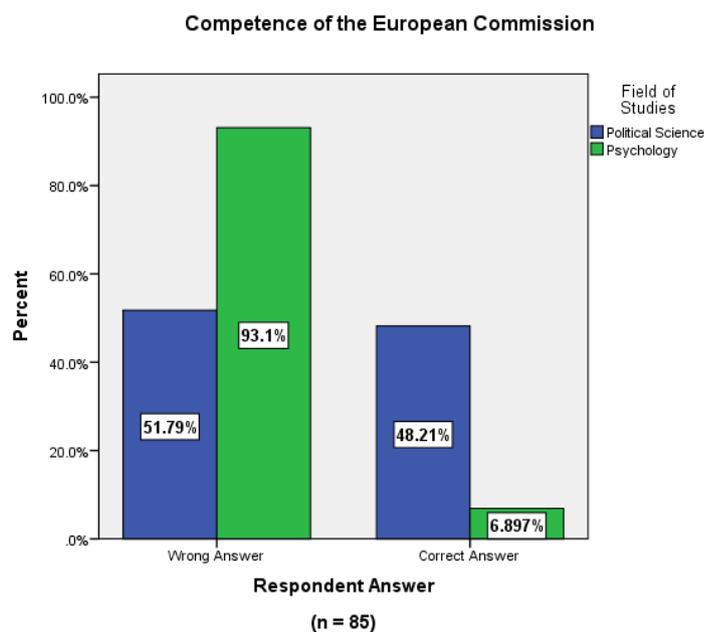


FIGURE 31: COMPETENCE OF THE COMMISSION
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

Third, 45.6% (26/57) of the political science and 20.7% (6/29) of the psychology students are aware of the fact that the European Council ‘defines the general political direction and priorities of the European Union’ (Fig. 32). It should be noted that the share of “Don’t Know” replies among students of the latter group - 27.6% (8/29) - is the same as in the previous question. In this case, it is interesting to examine the other wrong answers as well. In fact, 24.6% (14/57) of political science and 20.7% (6/29) of psychology students erroneously ascribe this competence to the Council of the European Union. Based on the odds ratio political science students are 3.22 times more likely to answer this question correctly than psychology students.

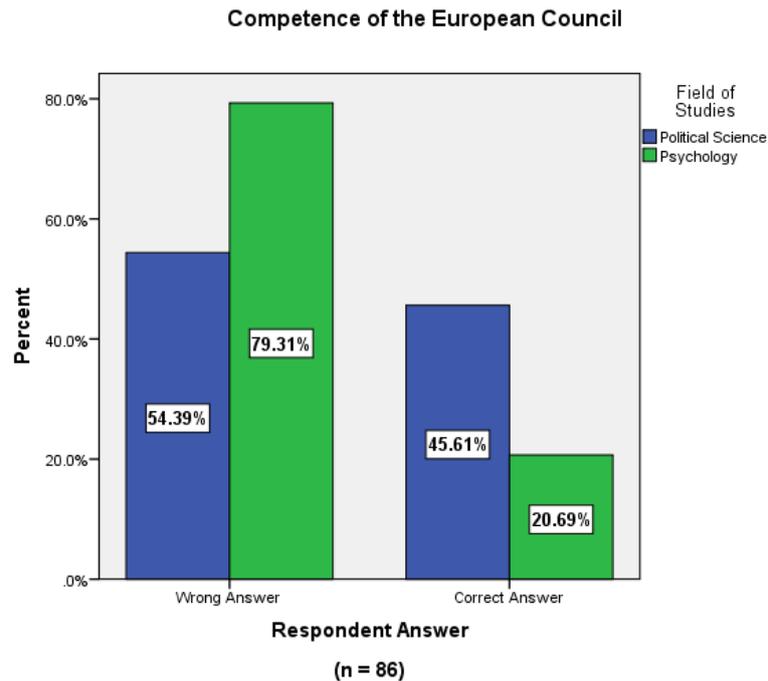


FIGURE 32: COMPETENCE OF THE COUNCIL
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

4.1.3 Advanced Knowledge

In this subsection, significant differences between the two groups of students could be detected in several questions. For instance, this was the case in the question about the seat allocation in the European Parliament (#12). The multiple-choice options available to the students were: **population**, **gross domestic product**, **area**, **debt**. 94.9% (56/59) of the political science and 62.1% (18/29) of the psychology students are aware of the fact that the number of members of parliament is assigned to each member states according to the size of the country's population (Fig. 33). It is worth noticing that 20.7% (6/29) of students of the latter group thinks that this figure would actually be determined on the basis of the country's gross domestic product. Based on the odds ratio political science students are 11.41 times more likely to answer this question correctly than psychology students.

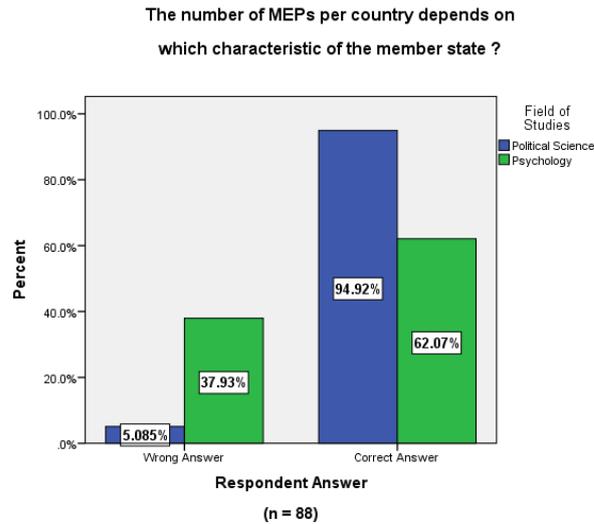


FIGURE 33: NUMBER OF MEPS
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

Moreover, a significant difference could also be detected in the question about the mechanism used to group politicians in the European Parliament (#13). The multiple-choice options available to the students were: **nationality**, **political affiliation**, **tenure**, and **gender**. 91.5% (54/59) of the political science and 37.9% (11/29) of the psychology students are aware of the fact that ‘political affiliation’ is the decisive characteristic in this regard (Fig. 34). It is worth noticing that almost half of the students of the latter group - 48.3% (14/29) - erroneously consider the determinant feature to be ‘nationality’. Based on the odds ratio political science students are 17.67 times more likely to answer this question correctly than psychology students.

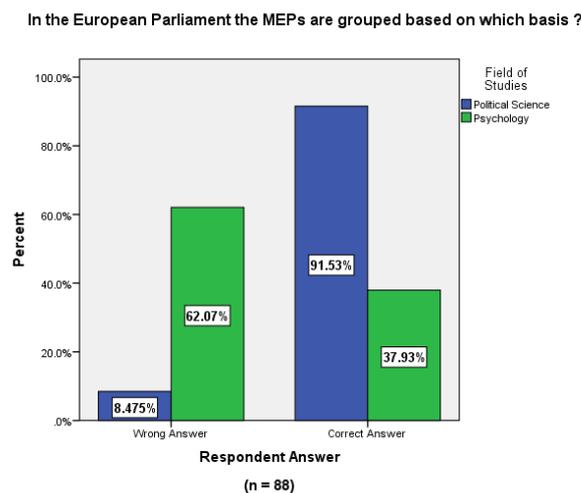


FIGURE 34: GROUPING OF MEPS
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

In addition, a significant difference between the two groups of students could be detected in the question about the frequency of the elections to the European Parliament (#15). The multiple-choice answers available to the students were: **every year**, **every three years**, **every five years**, and **every seven years**. 91.5% (54/59) of the political science and 48.3% (14/29) of the psychology students were aware of the fact that the European elections take place every five years (Fig. 35). Based on the odds ratio political science students are 11.57 times more likely to answer this question correctly than psychology students.

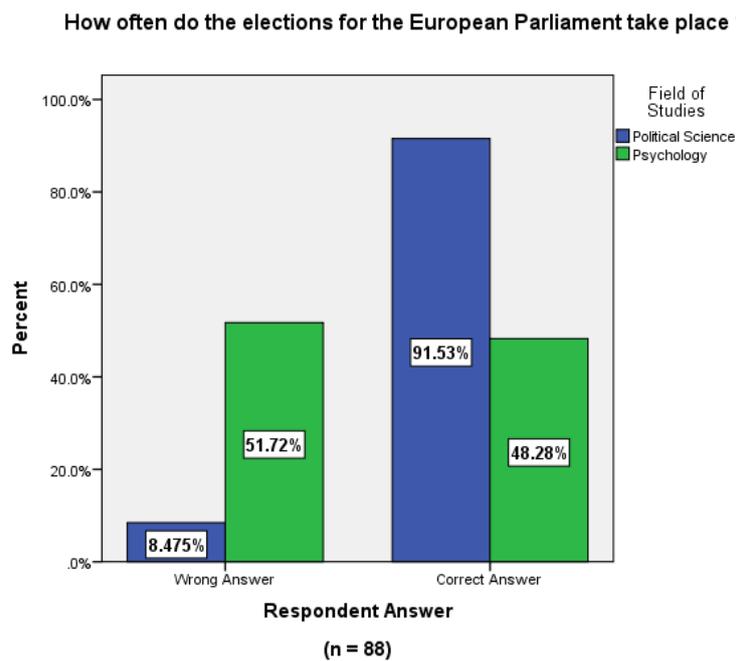


FIGURE 35: FREQUENCY OF EUROPEAN ELECTIONS
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

Furthermore, a significant difference could be detected in the question that required respondents to indicate which institution holds the exclusive right of initiative (#16). The multiple-choice options available to the students were: **European Parliament**, **European Council**, **Council of the European Union**, and **European Commission**. 78% (46/59) of the political science and 7.1% (2/28) of the psychology students were aware of the fact that this privilege is held by the European Commission (Fig. 36). It should also be noted that 35.7% (10/28) of the students of the latter group ticked the “Don’t Know” option and that 25% (7/28) of them erroneously ascribed this prerogative to the European Council. Based on the odds ratio political science students are 46.00 times more likely to answer this question correctly than psychology students.

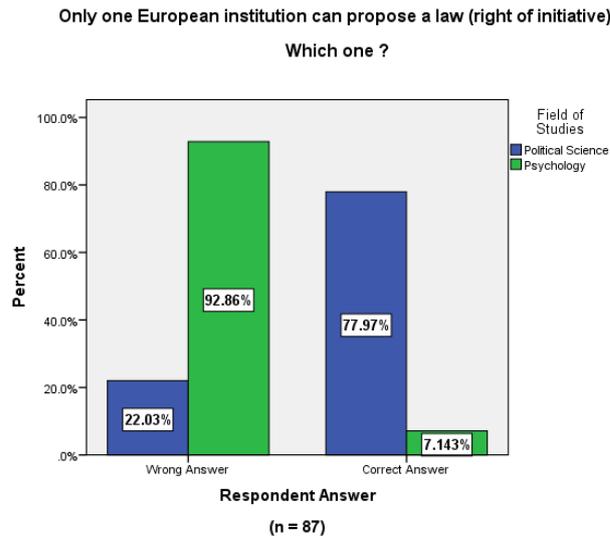


FIGURE 36: RIGHT OF INITIATIVE
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

Finally, the author assessed the surveys as if they were university exams. The students could achieve a total of 31 points (100%) and the passing threshold was set at 18.6 points (60%). The results of such evaluation are extremely disappointing. In fact, only 52.5% (31/59) of the political science and 0% (0/29) of the psychology students would have passed the test (Fig. 37). Since none of the psychology students managed to pass the exam, it is mathematically not possible to calculate the odds ratio.

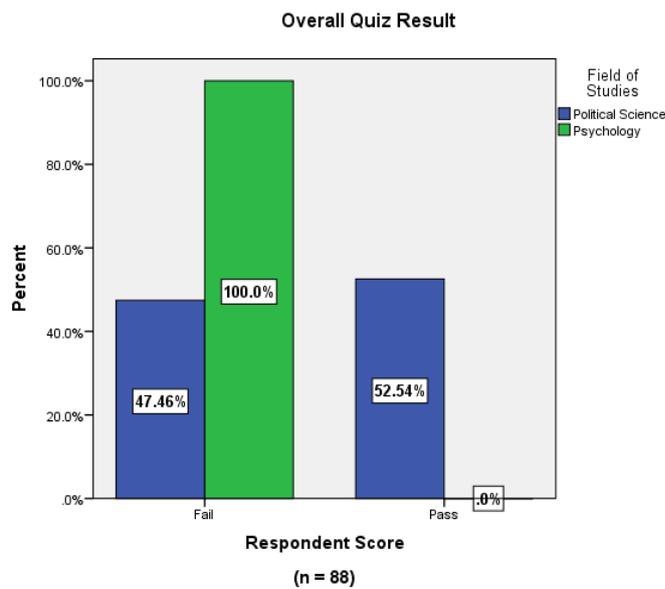


FIGURE 37: TEST SCORE
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

Furthermore, in view of the democratic importance of this institution it only seems fair to present the results of the question about the awareness of the European Ombudsman (#17). It needs to be pointed out the results are based on the answers of students of both groups. The pie chart shows that the great majority of respondents does not know what this entity stands for (Fig. 38). Indeed, only 10.5% (9/86) of them is acquainted with this institution. In more detail, merely 15.8% (9/57) of political science and 0% (0/29) of psychology students is informed about the European Ombudsman.

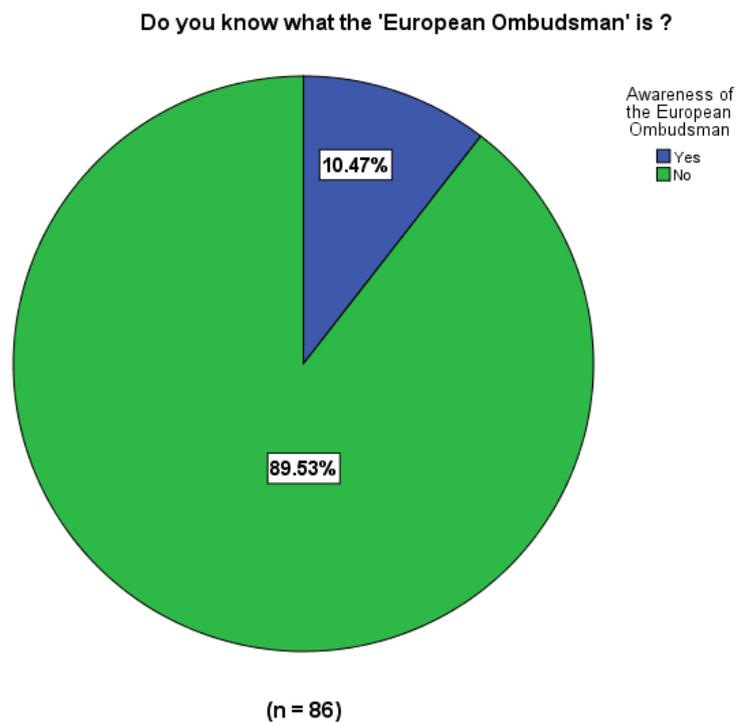


FIGURE 38: EUROPEAN OMBUDSMAN
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

In addition, respondents were also required to jot down the first four words that spring to their minds when they hear the expression 'democratic deficit'. The responses of both student groups to this questions were aggregated and condensed into a word cloud, which essentially adjusts the font of the words to the frequency with which they occur. Interestingly enough, some of the terms that are most commonly associated with 'democratic deficit' are actually the fundamental elements of democracy (elections, democracy, parliament, politician, etc...) (Fig. 39). It is worth pointing out that the content of this tag cloud was critically assessed by several interview participants. Therefore, it is going to be reviewed in more detail in the discussion of the qualitative findings (section 4.2).



FIGURE 39: WORLD CLOUD
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

Last but not least, it is necessary to spend a few words on the respondents’ actual past and intended future participation in the elections to the European Parliament. Concerning the former, 79.5% (70/88) of all the students indicated that they did cast their vote in the last European elections (Fig. 40). In more detail, 94.9% (56/59) of political science and 48.3% (14/29) of the psychology students claim to have voted on this occasion.

Did you participate in the last election to the European Parliament ?

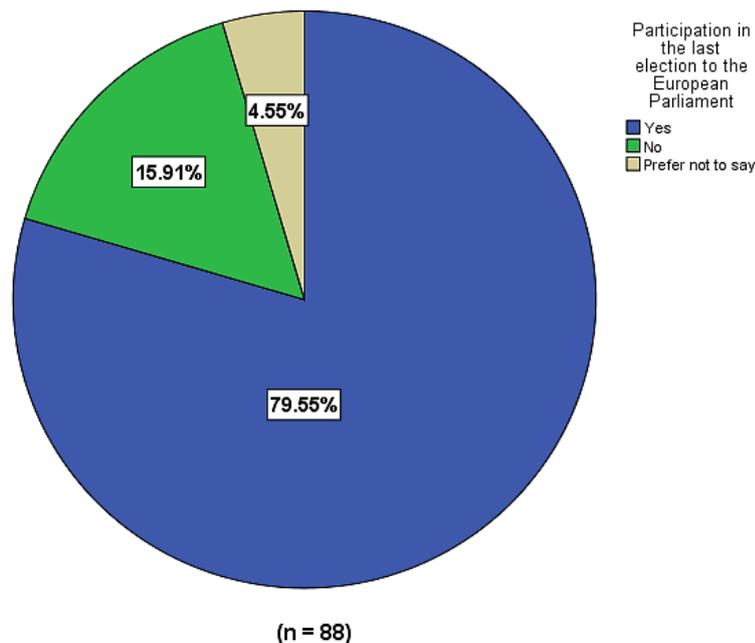


FIGURE 40: PAST PARTICIPATION IN EUROPEAN ELECTIONS
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

Concerning the latter, 87.4% (76/87) of all the students pointed out that they do intend to cast their vote in the next election to the European Parliament (Fig. 41). In more detail, 94.8% (55/58) of political science and 72.4% (21/29) of psychology students stated their intention to take part in the upcoming poll. It is interesting to notice that the intended future participation of psychology students is greatly higher than their actual past involvement. Indeed, there is a discrepancy of +21.4% (7/29). Curiously enough, the intended future participation of political science students is neglectably lower than their actual past involvement. Indeed, there is only a discrepancy of -0.1 (1/59). Hence, it seems reasonable to infer that the intention-behaviour gap is more pronounced among people who do not closely deal with the European Union.

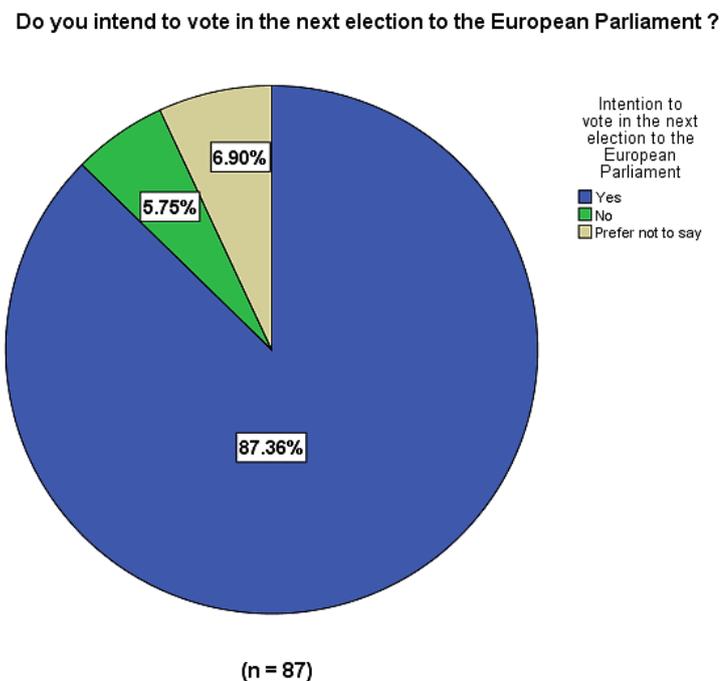


FIGURE 41: FUTURE PARTICIPATION IN EUROPEAN ELECTIONS
(SOURCE : SURVEY)

4.1.4 Trust in the European Union

The respondents were also required to indicate their trust in the institutions of the European Union on a scale from one (i.e. 'no trust') to seven (i.e. 'full trust'). Since the ordinal data does not meet the assumption of normal distribution mentioned earlier, the author opted for the non-parametric alternative to the independent t-test - namely the '**Mann-Whitney U-Test**'. Interestingly enough, the results of this statistical test detects a significant difference in the

level of trust between the two student groups in the case of the European Parliament (.007), the European Court of Justice (.005), and the European Central Bank (.006). Moreover, a significant difference between the two student groups could be observed in the perceived sense of belonging to the European Union (.000).

With regard to the trust in the European Parliament, the mean rank of political science students is 49.05 ($n = 58$), whereas the one of psychology students is 33.90 ($n = 29$). It should be noted that the effect size is small ($r = -0.29$). In addition, the interquartile range of the former group lies between 4 ('neutral') and 6 ('very high trust'), whereas the one of the latter group lies between 3 ('low trust') and 5 ('high trust'). The fact that the median of political science students (5) is greater than the one of psychology students (4) suggests that the former trust the Parliament more than the latter (Fig. 42).

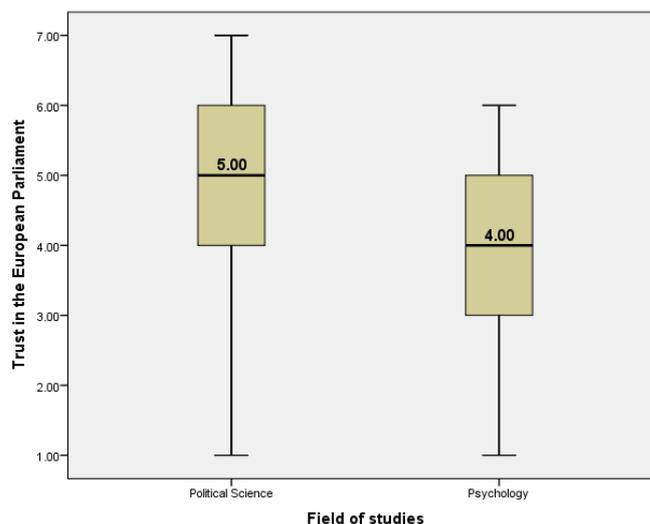


FIGURE 42: TRUST IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

With regard to the trust in the Court of Justice, the mean rank of political science students is 47.83 ($n = 55$), whereas the one of psychology students is 32.40 ($n = 29$). In this case, the size effect is medium ($r = -0.31$). In addition, the interquartile range of the former group lies between 4 - 5 ('neutral' - 'high trust') and 6 ('very high trust'), whereas the one of the latter group lies between 4 ('neutral') and 5 ('high trust'). The fact that the median of political science students (5) is higher than the one of psychology students (4) suggests that the former trust the Court of Justice more than the latter. It is also worth mentioning that in both student groups there are a few outliers and that in the case of psychology students the median corresponds with the lower quartile (Fig. 43).

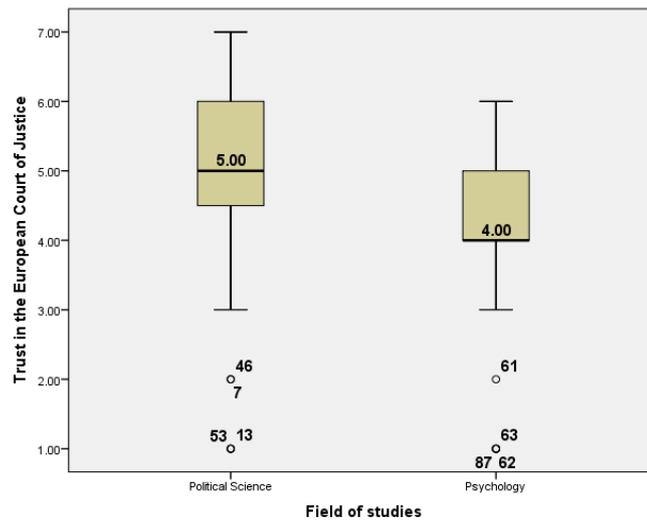


FIGURE 43: TRUST IN THE COURT OF JUSTICE
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

With regard to the trust in the Central Bank, the the mean rank of political science students is 38.39 ($n = 57$), whereas the one of psychology students is 53.53 ($n = 29$). It should be noted that the effect size is small ($r = -0.29$). In addition, the interquartile range of the former group lies between 2 ('very low trust') and 4 ('neutral'), whereas the one of the latter group lies between 3 ('low trust') and 4 ('neutral'). The fact that the median of political science students (3) is lower than the one of psychology students (4) suggests that the former distrust the Central Bank more than the latter. It is also worth mentioning that in the case of psychology students there are a few outliers and that the median corresponds with the upper quartile (Fig. 44).

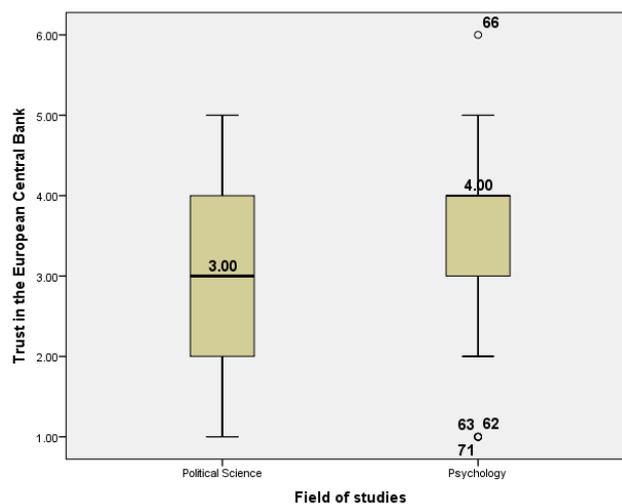


FIGURE 44: TRUST IN THE CENTRAL BANK
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

With regard to the perceived sense of belonging to the European Union, the mean rank of political science students is 50.74 ($n = 58$), whereas the one of psychology students is only 30.52 ($n = 29$). In this case, the size effect is medium ($r = -0.39$). In addition, the interquartile range of the former group lies between 5 ('high sense of belonging') and 6 ('very high sense of belonging'), whereas the one of the latter group lies between 2 ('very low sense of belonging') and 5 ('high sense of belonging'). The fact that the median of political science students (5) is greater than the one of psychology students (4) suggests that the former associate themselves more with the European Union than the latter. It is also worth mentioning that in the case of political science students there are a few outliers and that the median corresponds with the lower quartile (Fig. 45).

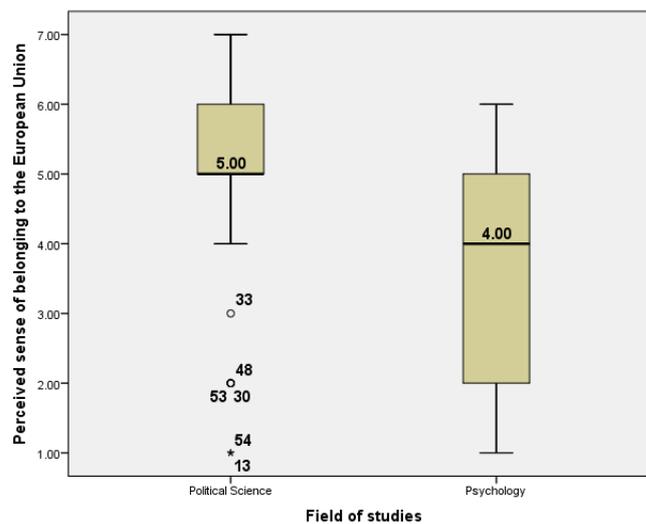


FIGURE 45: SENSE OF BELONGING TO THE EUROPEAN UNION
(SOURCE: SURVEY)

In sum, the results of the survey show that the knowledge of the structure and functioning of the European Union is alarmingly insufficient in both student groups. Interestingly enough, political science students achieved better scores in the advanced rather than in the basic questions. Moreover, even though the surveyed students are utterly uninformed about the organization and working of the European Union, they nonetheless intend to participate in the next European elections. Most importantly, the results suggest that - with the inexplicable exception of the Central Bank - increased political knowledge translates into higher trust in political institutions. However, answering the research question at this point would only result in an excessively hasty conclusion. Hence, the next section presents the qualitative findings of the expert interviews with six Austrian MEPs, which pleasantly complement and remarkably enrich the above-described statistical evidence.

4.2 Qualitative

This section is going to present the most insightful findings of the interviews with the Austrian MEPs. It is important to point out that the comments are going to be kept anonymous in order to avoid the ‘politicization’ of the arguments. In this regard, each participant is simply assigned a specific code (e.g. MEP 1, MEP 2, etc...). It should also be noted that the discussion of the findings is structured along the conceptual codes developed by the author in the previously conducted analysis of the transcripts.

4.2.1 Remarks on the Survey

To begin, some participants commented on the complexity of the survey. MEP 1 considers the time estimate for the completion of the survey (i.e. 7 - 9 minutes) to be quite challenging and maintains that certain questions are rather tricky. MEP 3 points out that that the questions of the survey were grouped according their level of difficulty and claims that answering the advanced questions requires an extensive engagement with the subject. MEP 4 argues that the author developed an array of uncomfortable questions, which for many people are naturally difficult to answer.

On the other hand, MEP 1 also points out that the way in which some of them were posed actually facilitated the identification of the correct answer. In fact, specifying that only one item per row should be ticked allows the students to resort to the process of elimination to find the right answer to a certain question. To be more precise, this is considered to be the case for the ones that required the respondents to associate each institution with its respective president. Indeed, the percentage of political science students that connected Vitor Manuel Da Silva Caldeira with the European Court of Auditors (53.6%) is strangely close to the one that connected Donald Tusk with the European Council (57.95%), although the former political figure is by no means as present in the media as the latter one. In a similar way, the multiple-choice alternatives of the question about the frequency of the elections for the European Parliament (options = 1, 3, 5, 7 years) are thought to make the life of students easier. In fact, it suffices to think about national elections in order to realize that the only sensible answer is ‘every five years’. In addition, MEP 2 argues that the question about the seat allocation in the European Parliament could be answered without necessarily being conversant with the functioning of the European Union.

Moreover, some participants commented on the significance of the inquiry. MEP 2 argues that there is a clear leitmotif in the survey - namely the fact that knowledge about the European Union is insufficient and that the more the engagement on grounds of professional activities the better the results. In view of the importance of the EU to Austria, this investigation is deemed to be an excellent piece of workmanship and ought to be considered as a wake-up call. MEP 3 was delighted that there is some interest in the European Union. MEP 4 regarded this research as very interesting and extremely valuable to politics, and MEP 6 appreciated that the author selected the EU as the topic of the master thesis, was very interested in the results, and surprised by some of the findings. In this respect, it only seems fair to mention that some participants were rather appalled by the results of the survey. The most vociferous interviewee - MEP 1 - expressed the astonishment about the ignorance of the respondents by means of repeated colloquial expressions - such as 'wicked!' - and claimed to be awestruck by such results on several occasions. MEP 2 considered the results to be shocking, and MEP 3 was really astonished by some findings in particular (i.e. trust).

4.2.2 The European Union

Moreover, it is interesting to notice that several characteristics of the European Union were identified across the various surveys. It should be noted that only the most salient ones are concisely reviewed in what follows.

To begin, participants consider the European Union as a **complex** political system, which is to some extent in line with the intricacy of governance (Rhodes, 2003 and Kjaer, 2007), of multi-level governance (Bache and Flinders, 2005), of the interactions among the numerous heterogeneous actors in this framework (Peters and Pierre, 2005), of the political landscape of the European Union (Holzhacker and Albaek, 2007), of its decision-making processes (Molina and Colino, 2007), of the wide variety of different actors involved in them (Wallace, 2005), and of the legislative procedure in the European Union (Hix, 2006).

In this respect, MEP 1 argues that the structure of the EU is relatively complicated in relation to the national model of government. It is maintained that this might explain - yet in no way excuse - the poor results in the intermediate section of the survey. For example, the Commission is considered to be in an ambiguous position in that it is not really a government, but still safeguards the treaties and initiates legislation. It is maintained that such entity does not exist at the national level. Therefore, it is pointed out that young people - who still have in mind the orthodox separation of powers - struggle to categorize the Commission. In addition, this partic-

ipant claims that the terminology of the European Union is confusing. For instance, it is deemed tricky to distinguish between the European Council and the Council of the European Union. It is also maintained that - to make matters even more complicated - the latter institution is often referred to as the 'EU Summit', which is now considered to be the unofficial definition of this entity. In addition, MEP 6 maintains that the European Union is a rather complex system, which consists of twenty-eight states, several institutions, as well as a legislative procedure that differs from the one in Austria.

In addition, the European Union is perceived to be **distant** by the people, which is in line with the perceived remoteness of the new political entities that emerged during the transition to representative democracy at the outset of the 'second transformation' (Dahl, 1989), with the claim that the authority of the European Union essentially stems from the member states' voluntary sacrifice of certain elements of their sovereignty (Held, 2006), and with the criticism that this political system is excessively removed from its electorate (Follesdal and Hix, 2006). For instance, in commenting on the content of the tag cloud, MEP 2 argues that the European Union is not considered to be a part of the citizens' lives, but is rather regarded as something remote - wherefore it creates a certain sense of anxiety. Also, MEP 6 imagines that respondents were unable to associate each institution with its core competence in the intermediate section of the survey due to the fact that '*the EU*' and '*Brussels*' are regarded as distant organizations, on which nation-states can only exert a minimal influence.

Moreover, the European Union is regarded as **impersonal**. In this respect, MEP 1 starts the explanation of the unsatisfactory scores in the basic section of the survey by citing Henrik Kissinger's renowned quote: "*Who do I call if I want to call Europe?*". It is maintained that the European Union made strenuous efforts the recent election campaign for the European Parliament to find a political figure that would be naturally associated with this political system ('*Mr. EU*'). However, it is argued that the results of the survey clearly suggest that it did not succeed in this endeavor. The participant also points out that while this might be understandable in the case of the elder people - for whom domestic politicians continue to be the reference persons - it is rather disappointing in the case of the younger people, who ought to jump at such model of governance. Moreover, MEP 3 notices that community politics is much closer to the citizens and mentions the meagre voter turnout in the European elections in the own state of origin as a reflection of the perceived remoteness of the European Union.

4.2.2.1 (Supra-)National Friction

It is also worth spending a few words on the relationship between national and supranational politics. Interestingly enough, their arguments are to some extent in line with the ascription of the seductiveness of 'Europeanization' to the possibility for national politicians to blame tough decisions on the European Union (Molina and Colino, 2007).

In this respect, MEP 4 argues that the results of the survey show that the two pillars of democracy - governments and media - failed to equip the people with the knowledge that mature and responsible citizens normally ought to have. It is argued that national executives stand in an almost naturally dysfunctional relation to all the institutions of the European Union. In fact, it is maintained that they consider the supranational dimension responsible for every negative development and make themselves out to be responsible for every positive advancement. It is found that the image of the EU was ruined over the decades due to the fact that this political system is unfairly blamed for everything. This participant also points out that in reality governments sign every resolution. It is further stated that since citizens are not aware of it, national executives managed to deceive their own country-men. In a similar way, MEP 6 claims that domestic politicians often sell successes as their "own" achievements and failures as the accomplishments of "those in Brussels". What is more, MEP 2 wonders whether in dealing with the issue of the refugees solidarity or renationalization is stronger. It is argued that when one is neither aware of the activities nor of the obligations of the community, one leans towards the latter in this case and weakens the community. This person thinks that at present renationalization and finger-pointing - not resolution and joint responsibility - are centre stage of the political landscape.

4.2.2.2 Media Presence

In addition, some respondents commented on the media of the European Union. Curiously enough, some of their arguments are to certain extent in line with the insufficient newspaper coverage of the European Union referred to as 'information deficit' (Bonde, 2011).

In this regard, MEP 4 considers - as mentioned earlier - the media to be the second pillar of democracy and argues that they did not contribute anything to change the image of the European Union in that they are not willing to make it clear that it is not national executives, but exclusively supra-national institutions (Commission and Parliament) that reach resolutions. It is also maintained that the Council is always innocent and never agreed to anything. This participant also holds that chief executives forget everything as soon as they get off their plane from

Brussels ('Brussels Amnesia'). It is pointed out even though the ministries of each country deal with subject matters several times before adopting resolutions, at the end they did not know anything about it - not even that they decided themselves. Moreover, although MEP 3 associates the meagre voter turnout in the own region of origin with the dis-interest of citizens or their sensation that resolution reached in Brussels do not affect them, this participant holds that things are headed in the right direction. In fact, it is maintained that people are - as a result of media coverage and topics such as the problem of refugees - noticing that the decisions made by European Union indeed do impact them. Nevertheless, it is also recognized that there is still a long way to go until citizens are well-informed. In commenting on the results of the basic questions, this interviewee would have expected better scores in certain sub-questions of the task in which students were asked to associate each institution with its president. In fact, it is maintained that Juncker, Schulz, and Tusk are names that one hears over and over again. In view of the unsatisfactory performance of the students in the basic section of the survey, it is considered important to push more media coverage. Indeed, it is pointed out that the media only a small amount of all the press releases of the European Union are represented in the media. Since certain topics inevitably capture the attention of the citizens (e.g. problem of refugees) and are consequently often present in the media, it is considered necessary to bring topics closer to the people.

In remarking on the results of the basic section of the survey, MEP 1 would expect political science students to keep abreast of the political articles in the newspapers semi-regularly. It is maintained that looking through the media, Juncker would be the most present person in the news - followed by Schulz and Tusk. This participant was particularly surprised by the result of the sub-question about Draghi in that the signature of this public figure is on every 10€ bank-note. Also, the handwriting of Draghi is deemed to be neat in contrast to the unreadable ones of his predecessors (Fig. 46) and is compared to the hand-writing of a primary school teacher.



Willem F. Duisenberg



Jean-Claude Trichet



Mario Draghi

FIGURE 46: SIGNATURES ON BANKNOTES
(EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK, 2016)

In commenting on the advanced section of the survey, this interviewee was surprised by the fact that the average citizen - represented by psychology students - is not aware of the number of seats allocated to Austria in the European Parliament in that national media extensively dealt with the fact that the country lost one seat between the last and the present legislature. It is also pointed out that in the debate about the accession of Turkey opponents often bring forward the argument that such new state would almost have as many representatives as Germany, and that in order to participate in the discussion one needs to know the actual number of MEPs. In addition, this participant is awestruck by the results of the question about students' awareness of the European Ombudsman. It is claimed that the public ombudsman in Austria ('Volksanwalt') is very well-known and enjoys widespread acceptance among the population. Thus, it is stated that media about European topics are underrepresented and that it would be a great thing to have a monthly broadcast in which the European Ombudsman presents tricky cases to the audience in that this would raise awareness about this institution.

4.2.2.3 Transparency

It is interesting to notice that the opinion of the participants is deeply divided on the openness of the European Union. On one hand, there are those who consider the EU to be remarkably unreserved, which is in line with Jean-Claude Juncker's aspiration of a more transparent political system (European Union, 2015).

For instance, in commenting on the content of the tag cloud, MEP 2 argues that in Europe there is no parliament which is more transparent than the European one in that its decision-making and opinion-building process is public. Moreover, MEP 6 attributes the overall good results in the questions about the European Parliament, inter alia, to the fact that this institution offers a good service with regard to visiting groups and visitors. This participant also points out that the European Union places great value on transparency. Indeed, it is maintained that several documents are available in all three official languages and downloadable on the website of the Commission. Also, the European Parliament is regarded as the forerunner in this respect and is considered to be one of the most transparent parliaments of the world. In fact, it is mentioned that all the documents and speeches of the parliamentarians are translated into all the official languages of the European Union, each representative is allowed to speak their mother tongue, citizens are entitled to obtain information in their native language, and several plenary sessions are even broadcasted through live stream.

In a similar way, MEP 1 argues that the website of the European Union is set up in such way that an interested person can easily answer one's question. In commenting on the content of the tag cloud, the availability of the plenary sessions on the Internet is brought forwards as an instance of transparency. Curiously enough, this participant develops an interesting proposition against the apparent openness of the EU. It is maintained that the European Union publishes a great amount of material so as to overwhelm citizens and give them a hard time finding the desired information. It is also stated that the EU makes the haystack so huge that people cannot find the needle (Fig. 47).



FIGURE 47: NEEDLE IN THE HAYSTACK
(STEEL MEDIA LTD., 2016)

On the other hand, one participant argued that there is still considerable room for improvement with regard to openness, which is to some extent in line with the core of the 'democratic deficit' - the perceived lack of transparency of the European Union (Clohesy, 2001) - and with the criticism against the privateness of the decision-making process of the Council (Hix, 2006), as well as the secrecy of the working groups of the Commission (Bonde, 2011). In more detail, in commenting on the content of the tag cloud, MEP 3 hold that the political faction to which this person belongs continuously advocates more information and more transparency. In fact, it is maintained that in the case of the commercial agreements (e.g. TTIP), people notice that decisions are made behind closed doors, and that such lack of transparency is considered to be one of the reasons for the perceived sense of impotence of the citizens.

4.2.2.4 Legitimacy

What is more, some participants champion the **legitimacy** of the European Union. This topic is particularly important in view of the centrality of this aspect to governance (Kjaer, 2007) as well as to the actual concept of 'democratic deficit' (Clohesy, 2001). On the one hand, some of the arguments of the participants stand in stark contrast to the objections raised against the

legitimacy of this political system (Hix, 2006), and the claim that the European Union is insufficiently legitimate to develop redistributive policies (Jachtenfuchs, 2006). On the other hand, some of them are in line with the assertion that the European Union is to all intents and purposes a democratic political entity (Moravcsik, 2002 and Moravcsik, 2008).

For instance, in commenting on the content of the tag cloud MEP 2 claims that the own personal freedom is larger in the European than in the Austrian Parliament. It is also maintained that the decision-making and opinion-building process in Europe differs from the national one, but is not less democratic. This participant would argue that it is even more democratic in that the opinion of the individual prevails over the one of the political factions. Indeed, it is pointed out that the opinion-building processes cut across parties and countries. MEP 6 points out that national politicians and EU opponents impute a democratic deficit to the European Union, which this person does not agree with. In fact, it is stated that the European Parliament, Commission, Council, and Council of the EU consist of directly elected representatives or ministers elected by parliaments or in part directly elected heads of state (e.g. federal president). It is further argued that the European Union created several instruments to enable citizens to express their personal opinions about subjects in a non-bureaucratic manner (e.g. green and white papers). In addition, it is stated that in the European Parliament - unlike in the national ones - the majority of legislative proposals from the Commission and the Council are changed, and that this institution has a say in the appointment of the Commission. This participant acknowledges that it is a challenge to work on democratic co-determination, to find instruments of participation, and to involve the citizens, but does neither think that the EU suffers from a democratic deficit nor that it is less democratic than national committees.

4.2.3 The Citizens

4.2.3.1 Popular Ignorance

Furthermore, the aspect that seized the attention of the participants the most was the severe ignorance of the students about the structure and functioning of the European Union. In this regard, it is interesting to observe that the objective results of the survey stand in stark contrast to the subjective self-evaluation of Austrian citizens in the 'Standard Eurobarometer 82', where more than half of the surveyed respondents consider themselves to be well-informed about issue of public concern in the European Union (European Commission, 2014).

For instance, MEP 1 argues that people tend to mistakenly tar all supranational entities with the same brush - 'the EU' - and do not distinguish between the various institutions of the European Union. In addition, 'Brussels' is also considered to be a synonym for the entire political system. MEP 3 points out that quite often people talk about 'the EU' without exactly being aware of which institution (e.g. Council, Commission, Parliament) they are actually talking about. MEP 2 maintains that students of political science are insufficiently knowledgeable about the subject of the survey in that the proportion of them answering the questions correctly does generally not rise above two thirds. What is more, it is pointed out that it is reasonable to assume that students have a higher basic understanding than the average of the Austrian population. Therefore, the knowledge gap between political science and psychology students could be directly transposed to the difference in knowledge between psychology students and high school students, and between the latter and the average citizen in Austria. Later on, it is maintained that the results should not be merely confined to the two student groups. Instead, they ought to be regarded as the reflection of the state of knowledge of the population. In a similar way, MEP 4 argues that the political awareness of the general population is a complete catastrophe in that the overall population - considered as a statistical unit - has absolutely no idea about politics. In more detail, it is argued that citizens are not aware of the interaction between national and supra-national entities. Finally, it is maintained that people ought to grasp the mechanisms of politics in order to be mature and responsible citizens, and that political knowledge constitutes the essential pre-requisite for political trust, simply due to the fact that citizens cannot place their faith in entities which they do not understand.

Surprisingly enough, political science students score - as mentioned earlier - better in questions of the advanced than in the ones of the basic and intermediate sub-section. In commenting on the results of the advanced section of the survey, MEP 1 holds that this could be ascribed to the curriculum of their study program in that it concentrates on detailed features and neglects the basic aspects of the EU. It is also maintained that this might actually be interesting feedback for the master program. In this regard, MEP 3 claims that people who delve deeply in a certain matter are incline to take simple facets for granted. The good scores of political science students in the advanced knowledge are attributed to the curriculum of the master program in political science as well.

Interestingly enough, the ignorance of the students about the European Union manifested itself in the question that required them to write down the first four words which spring to their mind when they hear the term 'democratic deficit'. In this regard, MEP 1 was - in view of

the miserable score the respondents - under the impression that they are all mouth and no trousers in that they are quick to criticize the European Union (e.g. *politician, populism, etc...*) in spite of their ignorance about this political system. It is stated that this is a 'chutzpah' and such absurd associations with 'democratic deficit' are regarded as an emanation of either the non- or the mis-information about the political system in which one lives. In isolation, the tag cloud is considered to be an accurate overview of the catchwords wandering around, whereas in the context of the study it is thought to recoil on the students. Interestingly enough, it is also maintained that when you point a finger at someone, three fingers point back to you (Fig. 48), and such image is - regrettably - believed to be well-suited to the surveyed students. Finally, this is considered to be severe in that uninformed people cannot raise their voices - which constitutes the sum and substance of parliamentary democracy. In this respect, MEP 4 argues that the tag cloud contains some surprises in that certain words are rather bizarre and illogical (e.g. *elections*). This participant is also amazed by the small font of one particular term (i.e. *political apathy*) due to the fact that the democratic deficit arises from such condition.

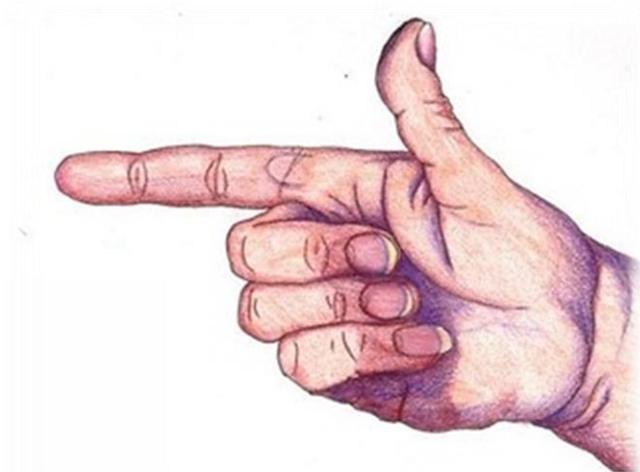


FIGURE 48: HANDGUN
(MITCHELL, 2013)

Interestingly enough, MEP 1 points out that politics tends to misjudge the political knowledge of the citizens. In fact, it is argued that officials are normally in touch with young people, who are extremely interested in the European Union and who might have already had some work experience in the Commission or the Parliament. For example, it is stated that when at panel discussions statesmen notice that students pose very interesting questions, they think that youngsters are very well-informed. Thus, this participant holds that politicians erroneously project these instances on the youth of the entire country.

4.2.3.2 Civic Education

Moreover, the participants emphasized the crucial importance of civic education in Austria, which is in line with the claim that the principal requirement for the successful realization of political autonomy is educated engagement (Held, 2006), and the argument that the citizens' capacity to gain access to sufficiently adequate information on issues at stake in order to make reasoned decisions is one of the necessary conditions for a political system to be classified as democratic (Dahl 1979, 1985, 1989 cited in Held, 2006).

In commenting on the basic questions of the survey, MEP 2 argues that the results of the survey clearly show the importance of educational policy to the understanding of the membership in the European Union. They are also considered to be an expression of the scarce communication of the role of Austria in Europe, of the nature of the European Union, and unfortunately also of the way in which national politics and the media deal with the European Union. It is maintained that the European Union did not arrive in Austria, and that the information about the European Union is insufficient. In commenting on the intermediate questions of the survey, this participant points out that the educational level should not be a crucial factor for one's political knowledge, if politics, the media, and the educational policy of a country met their responsibilities of member-state of the European Union. It is asserted that the results reflect the political contestation as well as the handling of the European Union, and at the same time a uniquely dramatic and probably unprecedented form of civic education deficit in the educational system. In commenting on the results of the question about the awareness of the European Ombudsman, it is argued that the findings are a reflection of the role - virtually none - played by the European Union in the educational policy of the general school system in Austria. In commenting on the results of the questions about political participation, it is pointed out the way in which one talks about the EU, stands to the own responsibilities, communicates the role of Austria in the EU as well as the added value of the EU, and the way in which politics and media deal with the EU comes with consequences - failure of the educational policy. However, it is argued that educational policy is not only the responsibility of schools, but also of social partners and municipalities. Thus, this participant argues that the results demonstrate that the available potential is greater than thought and not used to its full extent, and holds that the entities in charge of democracy and able to disseminate information in this country are held co-responsible for the exploitation of the potential.

Moreover, MEP 4 argues that civic education does not take place - wherefore it should not come as a surprise that people are so ignorant about the European Union. In remarking on the question that required students to associate each institution with its core competence, this participant claims that political education does - seriously judged - not exist in Austria, and claims that it inevitably needs to become obligatory. This is supposed to be in the interest of the citizens and not in the one of politicians in that they manifestly seem to be quite happy with the ignorance of their citizens. In addition, political parties are vehemently reproached for having failed to establish an educational policy, which gives people the opportunity to be mature and responsible citizens and to vote. In fact, it is pointed out that now populists reproach elections for becoming an undemocratic element in that an ignorant eighty effectively decides over an informed - yet hopeless - twenty percent. In commenting on the questions about political participation, this interviewee asserts that should civic education not be achieved, people will get the shock of their lives. The fact that governments and media are not accomplishing it is deemed to be nothing new, and those who are making some efforts (e.g. Standard, Presse, etc...) are only doing it for already interested citizens.

4.2.3.3 Political Apathy

Furthermore, participants extensively commented on the attitude of the citizens towards the European Union. On the one hand, certain arguments are in line with the centrality of political engagement in the history of democracy (Dahl, 1989). On the other hand, some stand in stark contrast with the claim that political engagement and confidence are actually inversely related (Moravcsik, 2008) and to the assertion that more political participation of the citizens does not necessarily increase their sense of belonging to the European Union (Moravcsik, 2002).

For instance, in commenting on the results of the European Ombudsman MEP 3 argues that people feel that they simply have to accept what is being decided, that they cannot defend themselves, and that there is not enough exchange of information to get such opportunity. It is maintained that citizens have a feeling of helplessness. Indeed, this participant holds that people believe that they cannot really co-determine much and that since their vote does not count anyway they might as well not go to the polls, and that they have a feeling of powerlessness.

On the other hand, in remarking on the results of the questions in the basic section of the survey MEP 1 claims - as mentioned earlier - that people lump everything together in the all-embracing synonym "*the EU*", and are not interested in any more detail. In addition, in commenting on the content of the tag cloud MEP 4 argues that even though the European Parliament broadcasts every plenary session, few people watch them. It is maintained that this opportunity to acquire knowledge on certain topics is used to an extremely limited extent. In fact, it is suggested that most probably journalists, politicians, and students in communication sciences take advantage of such offer.

Moreover, MEP 2 argues that the results of the survey clearly show that the more one deals with the political environment of the European Union, the higher the level of knowledge (and vice-versa). This participant maintains that political awareness is essentially basic civic knowledge and regards the scores of the questionnaire as a confirmation of the fact that the lack of political engagement leads to different outcomes. It is assumed that political science students talk more about and are more interested in this subject - wherefore the level of knowledge is higher. The results of psychology students are considered to correspond to the knowledge of the general population. In addition, this participant points out that political engagement is connected with political participation. In fact, it is pointed out that when someone does not deal with a certain matter, one does not consider it to be important to occupy oneself with it - whence the topic is deemed to be uninteresting. Therefore, it is maintained that information does not only raise awareness, but also fortifies democracy. In addition, this participant considers the scores of psychology students in the advanced questions to be an expression of the fact that they never concerned themselves with such subject, and claims that the results of this section are similar to the ones in the previous sections. With regard to the question about the awareness of the European Ombudsman, it is stated that one does not need to study political science in order to be aware of the right of petition in the European Union. Later on, in commenting on the content of the tag cloud it is maintained that when someone is not informed and does not engage, one simply conveys perceived impressions. It is also pointed out that the lack of occupation leads to the reinforcement of prejudices - such as the non-transparency of the European Parliament. Bearing in mind that the lack of engagement leads to a judgement that does not correspond to reality, this participant maintains that everyone is encouraged to examine the author's survey, summarize the results, and develop a work programme. This is thought to show that national politicians made mistakes in dealing with the European Union and failed to engage the citizens. It is also found that there is a verifiable lack of political will in Austria. In fact, the way in which this country copes with the flows

of refugees is not seeking understanding and solidarity for community resolutions, but rather to turn the European Union into a community of losers and take self-defense measures - which is thought to bring about significant damage.

Furthermore, the opinion of the participants is divided on the topic of political participation. On the one hand, MEP 3 considers - as mentioned earlier - the meagre voter turnout in the own region of origin as an expression of the fact that citizens are more interested in domestic politics. In commenting on the demographic questions of the survey, this participant argues that political participation should generally improve in that people are realizing that they can exert an influence by selecting their representatives in the European Parliament. Indeed, this is expected to motivate citizens to cast their vote. In this context, MEP 4 holds that the lower the level of education and knowledge, the faster the decision not to vote is made. It is also maintained that emotions are playing an increasingly important role in this regard, because people are more and more reaching the resolution to vote on the basis of their anger (i.e. *'protest voters'*). It is stated that this is exacerbated by the fact that radical, populist, and extreme forces influence elections even more. Leaving aside the citizens who are not au courant with the state of affairs as well as the fierce opponents of the established system, only very few well-informed people actually care about making a constructive contribution to democracy, carrying out their civic duty, and seizing the opportunity of co-determination. Thus, this participant holds that populists are turning elections - unless they triumph - into a farce, and brings forward the anecdote that Hitler was in fact democratically elected in order to stress the severity of the situation.

On the other hand, MEP 5 was put in a good mood by the fact that a high proportion of the respondents gave their vote in the election to the European Parliament in 2014 as well as by the fact that an even higher proportion intends to cast their vote in the next election. It is maintained that this shows that there is a general interest in the institutions of the European Union and that they are highly regarded. MEP 2 argues that the percentage of people who declare their intention to vote is always lower than the actual degree of participation. The answer to this question gives this participant hope in that the intention to participate reflects a basic understanding of democratic responsibility and involvement. In fact, the handling of the EU, the specification of the election, the party politicization as well as the nationalization of electoral competitions are considered to be reducing the number of citizens who - in democratic terms - principally want to go to the polls. Finally, MEP 6 considers it pleasant that eighty percent of the respondents participated in the last European election and even better that

eighty-eight percent of them intends to take part in the next election to the European Parliament. It is claimed that this demonstrates that the interest in the European Union and the European Parliament is rising. The reason for this is ascribed to the fact that the “*European Union*” took centre stage in the global challenges of the last months as well as to the realization that while nation-states may perhaps implement something in the short term, only European solutions can be successful in the long term.

4.2.4 Trust in the European Union

Not unexpectedly, most respondents were surprised by the fact that psychology students trust more - or better said, distrust less - the European Central Bank than political science students.

For instance, MEP 1 is not particularly surprised by the fact that political science students place their trust in the European Parliament (‘legislative’) in that they are republican democrats, and also regards it as logical that they hold the Court of Justice (‘judiciary’) in high esteem in that this institution enjoys a good reputation among these students. However, this participant is a little bit surprised by the fact that in this day and age normal people place their faith in the Central Bank, and brings forward a comparison with West Balkan states - where Austrian banks (e.g. Raiffeisen, Erste Bank, etc...) enjoy the highest public trust. In fact, it is hypothesized that in these countries citizens think that since they are backed by the European Union, it must be safe to give their money to these financial institutions. MEP 2 considers the results of the questions about trust to be interesting and claims that it is necessary to get to the bottom of such findings. It is maintained that when psychology students do not occupy themselves with this subject, they only grasp the public perception and get the impression that the politics of the Eurozone create problems and that the Central Bank stabilizes the currency. Thus, this participant holds that the conveyed psychology beats the information, and - despite being surprised by the results - claims that they can be elucidated.

MEP 4 cannot really explain the results of the questions about trust. The high confidence in the European Central Bank is deemed to be the product of the really resolved financial crisis of the last years. It is argued that banks and states were on the verge of collapse in the economic and Euro-crisis, and that the Central Bank impeccably supervised the situation - if not even actively enabled an enormous amount of solutions. Thus, this interviewee cannot explain why psychology students are more aware of such success story - the overcoming of the world economic and financial crisis in 2008 - than political science students. In fact, it is pointed out that the results ought to be the other way round. MEP 6 holds that the results about trust are very

interesting, that the difference between the student groups are noteworthy, and that the fact that psychology students have more faith in the ECB than political science students is highly interesting. The potential reasons of such finding are attributed to the fact that the ECB is the institution in charge of monetary stability and is also presented as such, and to the fact that political science students recognize that the Euro is an extremely stable currency, but also acknowledge that the ECB is exposed to the influence of member-states. In relation to the independence of the Central Bank, MEP 1 claims that the autonomy of this institution was already questioned during the Greek crisis, and wonders whether or not Draghi calls Merkel and Schäuble before making decisions - especially with regard to resolutions about Greece.

4.2.5 Room for Improvement

Lastly, the participants also presented their own suggestions for the improvement of democracy in the European Union. It is interesting to notice that some of their arguments are in line with the suggestion to reform the elections of the president of the European Commission and to strengthen the authority of the European Parliament (Follesdal and Hix, 2006) as well as with the recommendation to involve citizens from the outset in the legislative process of the European Union (Bonde, 2011).

For instance, MEP 2 advocates plebiscitary European elections and champions the development of the Council into a senate, whose members are directly elected. This interviewee also encourages to place the focus on European matters so that the European elections do not become a surrogate for general elections in the nation-state. To this end, the support and agreement of each and every member state is considered necessary in that changing the landscape of competences requires unanimous consent among countries. In spite of the extension of the co-decision procedure established the Treaty of Lisbon, MEP 3 suggests a right of initiative for the European Parliament in order to put an end to the monopoly held by the Commission, which, in turn, ought to enhance its transparency and intensify its cooperation with other institutions. Bearing in mind that the right to vote varies from country to country, this participant pleads for the standardization of such entitlement. It is also deemed desirable that the presidents of the Commission and the Council would be directly elected so as to enable people to have a say in decisions. In addition, one of the most important aspects is considered to be the involvement of civil society. It is thought to be crucial to improve political contestation and

to maintain the interest of the citizens in the decision-making process so that people do not have the feeling that decisions are made over their heads.

Moreover, MEP 4 demands a change in the regulations for information activities in the member states. In fact, this interviewee argues that the representative offices of the European Parliament in each country - not national governments - ought to receive the funds for such sort of undertaking in virtue of the fact that this institution is the only directly elected one in the European Union as well as the fact that the efforts of national executives proved unsuccessful. Thus, it is claimed that the citizens shall be informed by the European Parliament. In view of the results, MEP 6 holds that knowledge and information about the European Union can be still significantly improved and argues that this will be a challenge the educational system, politics, associations, and families will have to face.

In short, the expert interviews turned out to be extremely valuable to the present research in that they not only confirmed the positive relationship between political knowledge and trust in institutions, but also intimated that there is much more to this than meets the eye. Therefore, it is now time to reflect on the complexity of such connection and consider its implications for the development of democracy in the European Union in the conclusion of this paper.

5 CONCLUSIVE THOUGHTS

It is probably worth concisely reviewing the main points of this paper before presenting its conclusions. To begin, it is necessary to bear in mind that the author ultimately endeavoured answering the following research question:

What influence does knowledge of the structure and functioning of the European Union among Austrian students in Vienna have on their trust in its institutions?

It goes without saying that the process of answering this question starts with the review of relevant academic literature. The first section explains the underlying principles of democracy (*'popular control'* and *'political equality'*), chronicles the several ups and downs of its sinuous development throughout the centuries (*'waves'* and *'conjunctures'*), contemplates the current state of affairs, and ventures a glimpse into the future of modern democracy. In short, the evolution of democracy consists of a continuous process of abstraction, which results from the extension of the concept (*'city-state'* --> *'nation-state'* --> *'supranational-state'*). The second section elucidates the notion of multi-level governance, gives a description of its two variants (*'Type I'* and *'Type II'*), critically reviews this concept, and questions the compatibility of modern governance with democracy (*'Faustian Bargain'*). It also investigates the impact of the European Union on the sovereignty of the member-states (*'Europeanization'*) and ascertains an increase in the power of the executive to the detriment of the legislative branch. The third section presents the main institutions and explains the legislative process of the European Union, and offers critical perspectives on the structure and functioning of such polity. The fourth section introduces the concept of *'democratic deficit'* and argues that the judgement about the democraticness of the European Union is ultimately in the eye of the beholder. It also gives an account of the opposing views of the heated debate about this conundrum. The fifth section compares the trust of Austrian citizens in the European Union with the average trust of the other European citizens, and finds out that the former place more faith in the European Union than the latter in spite of being relatively attached to their national institutions.

Moreover, the methodology presents the research design of the paper. Put briefly, the author adopted an *'explanatory sequential mixed methods' approach*, which consists of a survey with eighty-eight Austrian master students in political science (n = 59) and psychology (n = 29) at the University of Vienna (*quantitative phase*), and elite interviews with six Austrian members of the European Parliament (*qualitative phase*). Each stage is explained separately in order to ensure the reader's unambiguous understanding of the author's research design.

Furthermore, the results of the survey and the findings of the interviews are severally presented. The scores of the questionnaire demonstrate that the respondents are excessively ignorant of the structure and functioning of the European Union. In fact, if this survey was a university exam with a passing threshold of 60% (i.e. 18.6/31.0 points), only 52.5% (31/59) of the political science and 0% (0/29) of the psychology students would have passed through the test. What is more, the results of the survey show that political science students place more trust in the European Parliament and in the European Court of Justice than psychology students, who place more trust than the others in the European Central Bank. Even though the quantitative research clearly suggests that increased political knowledge leads to more trust in political institutions, it is too early to conclusively answer the initial research question at this point.

In fact, the valuable insights gained during the elite interviews lend weight to the statistical findings of the student survey and reveal that there is actually much more to this than meets the eye. Indeed, most interview participants are appalled by the ignorance of the respondents and consider the results to be dramatic in that political awareness is considered to be the essential precondition for political trust. Moreover, the guilt for such deplorable state of affairs is ascribed to the indolence of two national entities - politics and media - who repeatedly fail to educate their citizens about the European Union. Instead, they comfortably make the European Union the scapegoat for unpopular decisions. Therefore people perceive "*the EU*" as an excessively remote and anonymous political entity, remain stubbornly faithful to the national institutions they are familiar with, have no interest whatsoever in grasping the structure and functioning of the European Union, do not engage themselves with the wheeling and dealing of supranational politics, and sabotage elections - the backbone of democracy - through protest votes. Bearing in mind that political knowledge constitutes an indispensable prerequisite for political trust, it stands to reason that such unconscious citizens are unable to trust the institutions of the European Union.

Luckily enough, the integration of the quantitative results and the qualitative findings enable the reader to answer the initial research question. Indeed, the evidence shows that knowledge of the structure and functioning of the European Union among Austrian students in Vienna is directly related to their trust in its institutions. Hence, increased political knowledge leads to higher trust in political institutions - and vice versa. However, reducing the conclusion to the answer of the research question would not do justice to the richness of the information collected during the empirical groundwork. In fact, the relationship between knowledge and trust is - as mentioned earlier - considerably more complex than what one might think at first sight.

Therefore, the author investigated the details of such compound connection and eventually developed a conceptual framework, which encapsulates the findings of this paper in an ingeniously straightforward manner: “**the knowledge-trust nexus**” (Fig. 49). In essence, this model postulates that political education, political engagement, and trust in political institutions should not merely be considered as cogs in the gargantuan machinery of the European Union. Instead, they ought to be regarded as densely interrelated and mutually interdependent elements, which are crucial to the continued survival of this avant-garde political system. In more detail, civic education in the nation-state allows citizens to get acquainted with the structure and functioning of the European Union (*extrinsic*), whereas political engagement enables them to scratch beneath the surface and dig deeper in order to ferret out the wheeling and dealing of politics (*intrinsic*). It is important to point out that such sort of engaged involvement is ultimately conducive to the enlightened participation in the political life of Europe. Last but not least, the trust in the institutions of the European Union results from their capacity to effectively achieve the promised results - which intimates that this political entity is not immaculate and consequently remains to be enhanced in the near future.

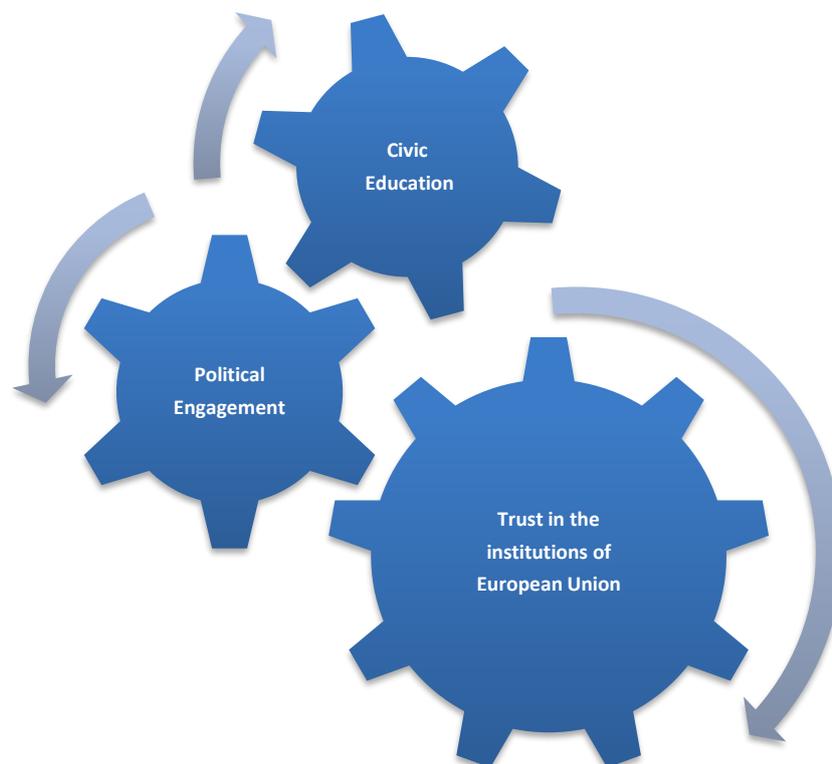


FIGURE 49: THE KNOWLEDGE-TRUST NEXUS
(CREATED BY THE AUTHOR)

In the end, it only seems fair to spend a few words on the implications of such momentous conclusion. It is beyond doubt that *'the knowledge-trust nexus'* calls for more research. Indeed, it is necessary to investigate the elements of this model as well as the relationships among them in more detail in order to develop it further. It would also be interesting to adopt this conceptual framework for political research in other member states in order to detect cross-country similarities and differences.

For the time being, however, it is imperative to set the wheels in motion *toute de suite* in order to ensure a prosperous future for - or better said, avoid the debacle of - the European Union. In this respect, the author is firmly convinced that the execution of this model is not an option. It is a necessity. In fact, it suffices to envision what the future of the EU will look like, should its citizens continue to be so appallingly ignorant of their political environment. To be sure, considering it to be catastrophic would merely be a euphemistic understatement. Hence, the author vehemently advocates the responsible authorities in the Republic of Austria to start such arduous journey against ignorance with the execution of a countrywide educational policy, which essentially adopts an interdisciplinary approach to the education of children about the European Union by implementing this topic as a cross-cutting theme in the country's school system (*civic education*). Thus, young people would start cultivating an interest in this political system and delve deeper into supra-national politics (*political engagement*). Once they reach the age of majority, they would then actively participate in the political life of Europe inasmuch as they would be mature and responsible citizens. If, and only if, the institutions of the European Union succeed in maintaining their promises, people will eventually trust them (*political trust*). On a more metaphorical note, it is imperative to weigh anchor and set sail on such strenuous crusade against ignorance right away, for time is not on our side and soon it will be too late to bring democracy in Europe back to life. In such ambitious endeavour, the words of Lord Tennyson should always echo in the minds of the templars of knowledge:

***"To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought."***

(Ulysses by Tennyson)

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7 APPENDICES

7.1 Appendix 1

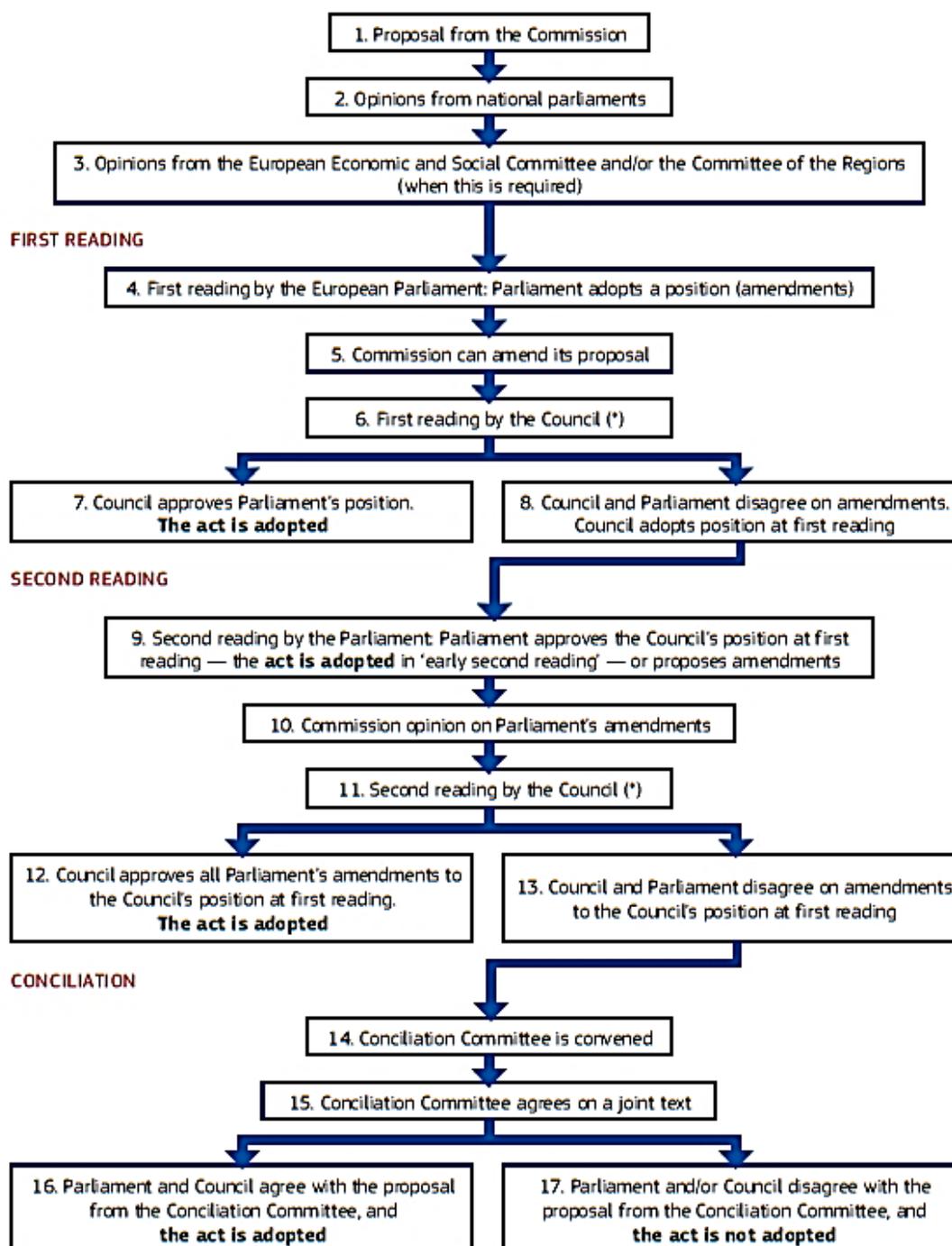


FIGURE 50: ORDINARY LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURE
(EUROPEAN UNION, 2014, P. 6)

7.2 Appendix 2

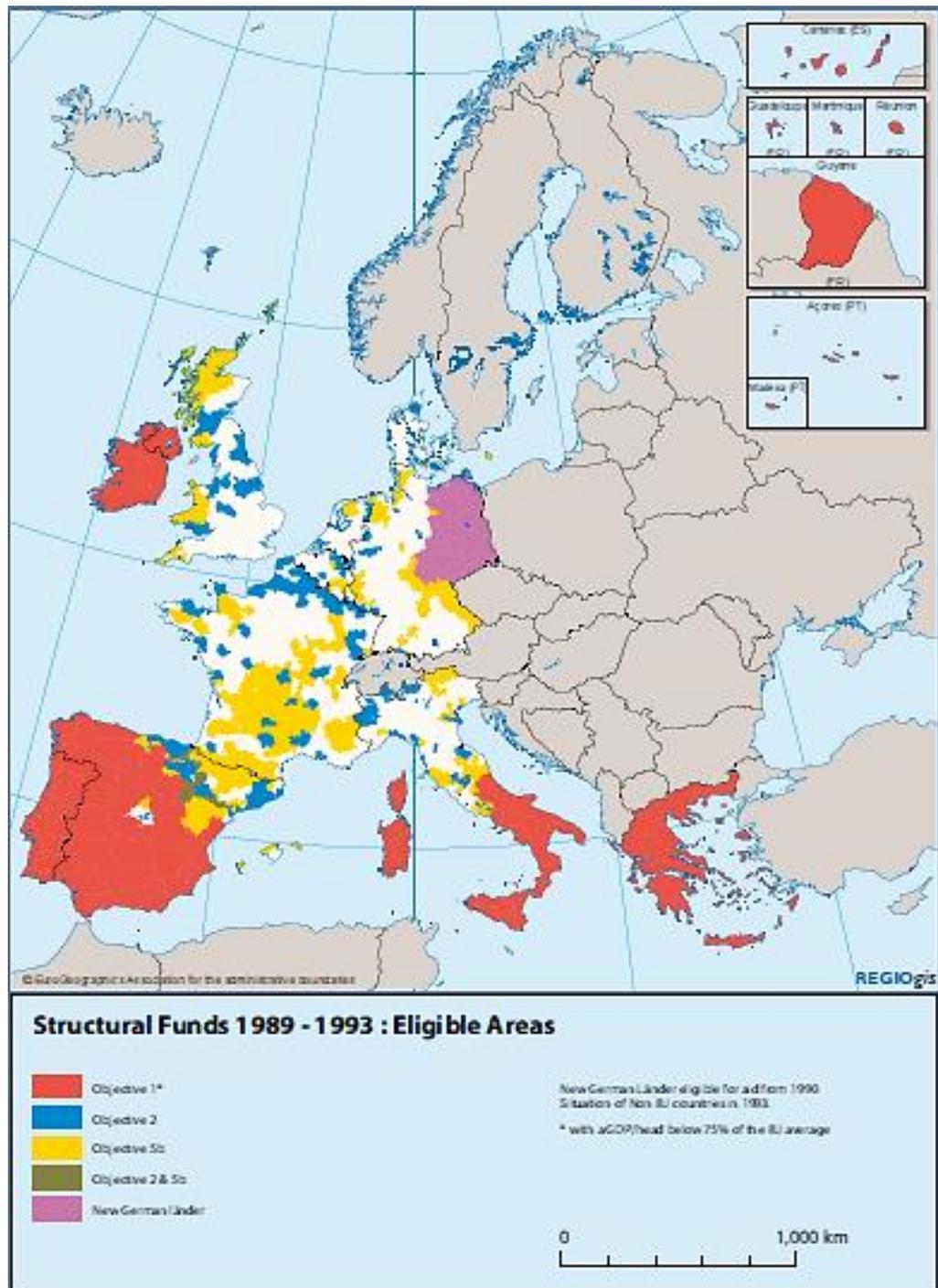


FIGURE 51: STRUCTURAL FUNDS 1989 - 1993
 (EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, 2008, P. 3)

7.3 Appendix 3

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Trust (EU)	53	57	59	54	57	51	52	55	51	50	48	41	44	39	42
Trust (AT)	46	55	58	50	56	49	50	51	47	54	47	52	48	47	52

TABLE 9: CONFIDENCE IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
(SOURCE: EUROSTAT, 2016)

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Trust (EU)	39	43	45	38	45	40	42	44	42	41	40	32	36
Trust (AT)	35	43	47	38	41	36	41	41	39	42	39	34	37

TABLE 10: CONFIDENCE IN THE COUNCIL
(SOURCE: EUROSTAT, 2016)

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Trust (EU)	46	50	53	46	52	46	48	50	47	46	44	36	40	35	38
Trust (AT)	41	48	51	42	49	43	45	48	44	46	41	37	40	42	51

TABLE 11: CONFIDENCE IN THE COMMISSION
(SOURCE: EUROSTAT, 2016)

7.4 Appendix 4

Postpositivism	Constructivism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determination • Reductionism • Empirical observation and measurement • Theory verification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding • Multiple participant meanings • Social and historical construction • Theory generation
Transformative	Pragmatism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political • Power and justice oriented • Collaborative • Change-oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consequences of actions • Problem-centered • Pluralistic • Real-world practice oriented

TABLE 12: PHILOSOPHICAL WORLDVIEWS
(CRESWELL, 2014, P. 6)

Quantitative Methods	Mixed Methods	Qualitative Methods
Pre-determined	Both predetermined and emerging methods	Emerging methods
Instrument based questions	Both open- and closed-ended questions	Open-ended questions
Performance data, attitude data, observational data, and census data	Multiple forms of data drawing on all possibilities	Interview data, observation data, document data, and audiovisual data
Statistical analysis	Statistical and text analysis	Text and image analysis
Statistical interpretation	Across databases interpretation	Themes, patterns interpretation

TABLE 13: RESEARCH METHODS
(CRESWELL, 2014, P. 17)

7.5 Appendix 5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Number of Member States	87.4203	198.659	.077	.548	.787
Stars on the flag of the European Union	87.9565	191.395	.202	.471	.784
Composer of the European Anthem	87.7971	198.782	.063	.457	.787
Date of Europe Day	88.1304	180.939	.400	.634	.774
Number of Eurozone Countries	88.2754	181.497	.487	.635	.771
Jean-Claude Juncker	87.5362	178.811	.444	.549	.772
Martin Schulz	87.9855	163.456	.523	.841	.766
Mario Draghi	86.2899	180.650	.569	.822	.768
Donald Tusk	87.0435	172.660	.481	.758	.769
Vitor Manuel da Silva Caldeira	85.6087	189.006	.378	.571	.777
City of the European Parliament	89.7101	204.738	-.233	.477	.794
City of the European Council	90.4638	204.811	-.307	.635	.793
City of the Council of the European Union	90.4928	205.518	-.357	.737	.794
City of the European Commission	90.3768	205.591	-.361	.695	.794
City of the Court of Justice of the European Union	90.6812	203.691	-.260	.573	.791

City of the European Central Bank	90.2319	205.622	-.390	.640	.794
City of the European Court of Auditors	90.6667	203.608	-.249	.537	.791
Competence of the European Court of Justice	86.2464	183.071	.442	.652	.773
Competence of the European Central Bank	84.8986	193.651	.343	.532	.780
Competence of the European Parliament	89.0000	186.706	.194	.581	.789
Competence of the European Commission	87.2899	176.856	.457	.750	.771
Competence of the European Council	87.8551	174.420	.459	.737	.770
Competence of the Council of the European Union	88.0725	183.833	.288	.420	.782
Competence of the European Court of Auditors	84.1159	192.104	.253	.613	.782
Seat allocation of the MEPs	89.6087	182.918	.646	.694	.768
Grouping of the MEPs	88.9275	191.715	.354	.445	.779
Current number of MEPs	87.3478	188.436	.334	.461	.778
Frequency of the elections for the European Parliament	87.7246	187.085	.644	.803	.772
Institution with the Right of Initiative	87.3333	186.137	.388	.669	.776
Awareness of the European Ombudsman	89.0580	198.526	.211	.350	.785
Date of Austria's entry in the European Union	86.9420	195.850	.349	.566	.782

Current number of Austrian MEPs	87.6667	176.843	.508	.618	.768
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TABLE 14: ITEM-TOTAL STATISTICS I

Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Trust in the European Parliament	36.6316	107.649	.738	.814	.905
Trust in the European Council	37.4605	107.585	.815	.796	.901
Trust in the Council of the EU	37.4868	109.133	.767	.735	.904
Trust in the European Commission	37.4342	105.316	.738	.716	.904
Trust in the European Court of Justice	36.3421	103.935	.758	.696	.903
Trust in the European Central Bank	37.9868	110.466	.675	.729	.908
Trust in the European Court of Auditors	37.1579	106.135	.664	.692	.909
Perceived accountability of the Members of the European Parliament	36.8816	113.599	.612	.588	.911
Perceived transparency of the activities of the European Council	37.9605	116.198	.570	.413	.913

Perceived legitimacy of the appointment process of the Commissioners	37.5000	113.987	.597	.497	.912
Perceived sense of belonging to the European Union	36.3684	109.462	.532	.531	.917

TABLE 15: ITEM-TOTAL STATISTICS II

7.6 Appendix 6

Picture*	Name	Political Entity	Place and Time	Interview Duration
	Ulrike Lunacek (Wolfgang Machreich)	Die Grüne Alternative (Die Grünen)	Vienna, 15 th February 2016	47 min 26 sec
	Othmar Karas	Österreichische Volkspartei (ÖVP)	Vienna, 19 th February 2016	44 min 13 sec
	Karoline Graswander-Hainz	Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs (SPÖ)	Brussels (Skype), 1 st March 2016	32 min 10 sec
	Heinz Kurt Becker	Österreichische Volkspartei (ÖVP)	Brussels (Skype), 9 th March 2016	34 min 58 sec
	Karin Kadenbach (Sarah Gugerell)	Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs (SPÖ)	Via Email, 21 st March 2016	n.a.
	Paul Rübiger (Stefan Haböck)	Österreichische Volkspartei (ÖVP)	Via Email, 7 th April 2016	n.a.

TABLE 16: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

7.7 Appendix 7

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Number of European Member States * Field of Studies	87	98.9%	1	1.1%	88	100.0%

Number of European Member States * Field of Studies Crosstabulation

		Field of Studies		Total
		Political Science	Psychology	
Number of European Member States	Wrong Answer Count	18	24	42
	Expected Count	28.0	14.0	42.0
	% within Field of Studies	31.0%	82.8%	48.3%
	Adjusted Residual	-4.6	4.6	
Correct Answer	Count	40	5	45
	Expected Count	30.0	15.0	45.0
	% within Field of Studies	69.0%	17.2%	51.7%
	Adjusted Residual	4.6	-4.6	
Total	Count	58	29	87
	Expected Count	58.0	29.0	87.0
	% within Field of Studies	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.714 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	18.695	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	21.994	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	20.476	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	87				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 14.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Jean-Claude Juncker * Field of Studies	86	97.7%	2	2.3%	88	100.0%

Jean-Claude Juncker * Field of Studies Crosstabulation

			Field of Studies		Total
			Political Science	Psychology	
Jean-Claude Juncker	Wrong Answer	Count	19	21	40
		Expected Count	27.0	13.0	40.0
		% within Field of Studies	32.8%	75.0%	46.5%
		Adjusted Residual	-3.7	3.7	
	Correct Answer	Count	39	7	46
		Expected Count	31.0	15.0	46.0
		% within Field of Studies	67.2%	25.0%	53.5%
		Adjusted Residual	3.7	-3.7	
Total	Count	58	28	86	
	Expected Count	58.0	28.0	86.0	
	% within Field of Studies	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.544 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	11.899	1	.001		
Likelihood Ratio	13.947	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.386	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	86				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 13.02.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Matin Schulz * Field of Studies	85	96.6%	3	3.4%	88	100.0%

Matin Schulz * Field of Studies Crosstabulation

			Field of Studies		Total
			Political Science	Psychology	
Matin Schulz	Wrong Answer	Count	15	23	38
		Expected Count	25.5	12.5	38.0
		% within Field of Studies	26.3%	82.1%	44.7%
		Adjusted Residual	-4.9	4.9	
	Correct Answer	Count	42	5	47
		Expected Count	31.5	15.5	47.0
		% within Field of Studies	73.7%	17.9%	55.3%
		Adjusted Residual	4.9	-4.9	
Total		Count	57	28	85
		Expected Count	57.0	28.0	85.0
		% within Field of Studies	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.673 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	21.469	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	24.902	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	23.395	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	85				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 12.52.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Mario Draghi * Field of Studies	84	95.5%	4	4.5%	88	100.0%

Mario Draghi * Field of Studies Crosstabulation

			Field of Studies		Total
			Political Science	Psychology	
Mario Draghi	Wrong Answer	Count	19	21	40
		Expected Count	26.7	13.3	40.0
		% within Field of Studies	33.9%	75.0%	47.6%
		Adjusted Residual	-3.6	3.6	
	Correct Answer	Count	37	7	44
		Expected Count	29.3	14.7	44.0
		% within Field of Studies	66.1%	25.0%	52.4%
		Adjusted Residual	3.6	-3.6	
Total	Count	56	28	84	
	Expected Count	56.0	28.0	84.0	
	% within Field of Studies	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.624 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	11.031	1	.001		
Likelihood Ratio	13.025	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.474	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	84				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 13.33.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Donald Tusk * Field of Studies	84	95.5%	4	4.5%	88	100.0%

Donald Tusk * Field of Studies Crosstabulation

			Field of Studies		Total
			Political Science	Psychology	
Donald Tusk	Wrong Answer	Count	24	27	51
		Expected Count	34.6	16.4	51.0
		% within Field of Studies	42.1%	100.0%	60.7%
		Adjusted Residual	-5.1	5.1	
	Correct Answer	Count	33	0	33
		Expected Count	22.4	10.6	33.0
		% within Field of Studies	57.9%	0.0%	39.3%
		Adjusted Residual	5.1	-5.1	
Total	Count	57	27	84	
	Expected Count	57.0	27.0	84.0	
	% within Field of Studies	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.746 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	23.376	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	34.970	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	25.440	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	84				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.61.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Vitor Manuel Da Silva Caldeira * Field of Studies	84	95.5%	4	4.5%	88	100.0%

Vitor Manuel Da Silva Caldeira * Field of Studies Crosstabulation

			Field of Studies		Total
			Political Science	Psychology	
Vitor Manuel Da Silva Caldeira	Wrong Answer	Count	26	27	53
		Expected Count	35.3	17.7	53.0
		% within Field of Studies	46.4%	96.4%	63.1%
		Adjusted Residual	-4.5	4.5	
	Correct Answer	Count	30	1	31
		Expected Count	20.7	10.3	31.0
		% within Field of Studies	53.6%	3.6%	36.9%
		Adjusted Residual	4.5	-4.5	
Total		Count	56	28	84
		Expected Count	56.0	28.0	84.0
		% within Field of Studies	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Sig- nificance (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.041 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	17.952	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	24.644	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	19.803	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	84				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.33.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Core Competence of the European Parliament * Field of Studies	86	97.7%	2	2.3%	88	100.0%

Core Competence of the European Parliament * Field of Studies Crosstabulation

			Field of Studies		Total
			Political Science	Psychology	
Core Competence of the European Parliament	Wrong Answer	Count	6	14	20
		Expected Count	13.5	6.5	20.0
		% within Field of Studies	10.3%	50.0%	23.3%
		Adjusted Residual	-4.1	4.1	
	Correct Answer	Count	52	14	66
		Expected Count	44.5	21.5	66.0
		% within Field of Studies	89.7%	50.0%	76.7%
		Adjusted Residual	4.1	-4.1	
Total		Count	58	28	86
		Expected Count	58.0	28.0	86.0
		% within Field of Studies	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.638 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	14.491	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	15.887	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	16.445	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	86				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.51.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Core Competence of the European Commission * Field of Studies	85	96.6%	3	3.4%	88	100.0%

Core Competence of the European Commission * Field of Studies Crosstabulation

			Field of Studies		Total
			Political Science	Psychology	
Core Competence of the European Commission	Wrong Answer	Count	29	27	56
		Expected Count	36.9	19.1	56.0
		% within Field of Studies	51.8%	93.1%	65.9%
		Adjusted Residual	-3.8	3.8	
	Correct Answer	Count	27	2	29
		Expected Count	19.1	9.9	29.0
		% within Field of Studies	48.2%	6.9%	34.1%
		Adjusted Residual	3.8	-3.8	
Total		Count	56	29	85
		Expected Count	56.0	29.0	85.0
		% within Field of Studies	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.511 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	12.731	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	16.992	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.340	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	85				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.89.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Core Competence of the European Council * Field of Studies	86	97.7%	2	2.3%	88	100.0%

Core Competence of the European Council * Field of Studies Crosstabulation

			Field of Studies		Total
			Political Science	Psychology	
Core Competence of the European Council	Wrong Answer	Count	31	23	54
		Expected Count	35.8	18.2	54.0
		% within Field of Studies	54.4%	79.3%	62.8%
		Adjusted Residual	-2.3	2.3	
	Correct Answer	Count	26	6	32
		Expected Count	21.2	10.8	32.0
		% within Field of Studies	45.6%	20.7%	37.2%
		Adjusted Residual	2.3	-2.3	
Total	Count	57	29	86	
	Expected Count	57.0	29.0	86.0	
	% within Field of Studies	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.111 ^a	1	.024		
Continuity Correction ^b	4.100	1	.043		
Likelihood Ratio	5.381	1	.020		
Fisher's Exact Test				.033	.020
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.051	1	.025		
N of Valid Cases	86				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.79.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Seat Allocation in the European Parliament * Field of Studies	88	100.0%	0	0.0%	88	100.0%

Seat Allocation in the European Parliament * Field of Studies Crosstabulation

			Field of Studies		Total
			Political Science	Psychology	
Seat Allocation in the European Parliament	Wrong Answer	Count	3	11	14
		Expected Count	9.4	4.6	14.0
		% within Field of Studies	5.1%	37.9%	15.9%
		Adjusted Residual	-4.0	4.0	
	Correct Answer	Count	56	18	74
		Expected Count	49.6	24.4	74.0
		% within Field of Studies	94.9%	62.1%	84.1%
		Adjusted Residual	4.0	-4.0	
Total	Count	59	29	88	
	Expected Count	59.0	29.0	88.0	
	% within Field of Studies	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.680 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	13.321	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	14.902	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	15.502	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	88				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.61.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Grouping of MEPs in the European Parliament * Field of Studies	88	100.0%	0	0.0%	88	100.0%

Grouping of MEPs in the European Parliament * Field of Studies Crosstabulation

			Field of Studies		Total
			Political Science	Psychology	
Grouping of MEPs in the European Parliament	Wrong Answer	Count	5	18	23
		Expected Count	15.4	7.6	23.0
		% within Field of Studies	8.5%	62.1%	26.1%
		Adjusted Residual	-5.4	5.4	
	Correct Answer	Count	54	11	65
		Expected Count	43.6	21.4	65.0
		% within Field of Studies	91.5%	37.9%	73.9%
		Adjusted Residual	5.4	-5.4	
Total		Count	59	29	88
		Expected Count	59.0	29.0	88.0
		% within Field of Studies	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	28.929 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	26.219	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	28.367	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	28.600	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	88				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.58.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Frequency of European Elections * Field of Studies	88	100.0%	0	0.0%	88	100.0%

Frequency of European Elections * Field of Studies Crosstabulation

			Field of Studies		Total
			Political Science	Psychology	
Frequency of European Elections	Wrong Answer	Count	5	15	20
		Expected Count	13.4	6.6	20.0
		% within Field of Studies	8.5%	51.7%	22.7%
		Adjusted Residual	-4.6	4.6	
	Correct Answer	Count	54	14	68
		Expected Count	45.6	22.4	68.0
		% within Field of Studies	91.5%	48.3%	77.3%
		Adjusted Residual	4.6	-4.6	
Total		Count	59	29	88
		Expected Count	59.0	29.0	88.0
		% within Field of Studies	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.709 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	18.319	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	19.916	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	20.474	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	88				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.59.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Right of Initiative * Field of Studies	87	98.9%	1	1.1%	88	100.0%

Right of Initiative * Field of Studies Crosstabulation

			Field of Studies		Total
			Political Science	Psychology	
Right of Initiative	Wrong Answer	Count	13	26	39
		Expected Count	26.4	12.6	39.0
		% within Field of Studies	22.0%	92.9%	44.8%
		Adjusted Residual	-6.2	6.2	
	Correct Answer	Count	46	2	48
		Expected Count	32.6	15.4	48.0
		% within Field of Studies	78.0%	7.1%	55.2%
		Adjusted Residual	6.2	-6.2	
Total		Count	59	28	87
		Expected Count	59.0	28.0	87.0
		% within Field of Studies	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	38.510 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	35.700	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	43.039	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	38.067	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	87				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 12.55.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Overall Test Score * Field of studies	88	100.0%	0	0.0%	88	100.0%

Overall Test Score * Field of studies Crosstabulation

			Field of studies		Total
			Political Science	Psychology	
Overall Test Score Fail	Count		28	29	57
	Expected Count		38.2	18.8	57.0
	% within Field of studies		47.5%	100.0%	64.8%
	Adjusted Residual		-4.9	4.9	
Pass	Count		31	0	31
	Expected Count		20.8	10.2	31.0
	% within Field of studies		52.5%	0.0%	35.2%
	Adjusted Residual		4.9	-4.9	
Total	Count		59	29	88
	Expected Count		59.0	29.0	88.0
	% within Field of studies		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.524 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	21.278	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	32.557	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	23.257	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	88				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.22.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Awareness of the European Ombudsman * Field of studies	86	97.7%	2	2.3%	88	100.0%

Awareness of the European Ombudsman * Field of studies Crosstabulation

			Field of studies		Total
			Political Science	Psychology	
Awareness of the European Ombudsman	Yes	Count	9	0	9
		Expected Count	6.0	3.0	9.0
		% within Field of studies	15.8%	0.0%	10.5%
		Adjusted Residual	2.3	-2.3	
No	Count	48	29	77	
	Expected Count	51.0	26.0	77.0	
	% within Field of studies	84.2%	100.0%	89.5%	
	Adjusted Residual	-2.3	2.3		
Total	Count	57	29	86	
	Expected Count	57.0	29.0	86.0	
	% within Field of studies	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.114 ^a	1	.024		
Continuity Correction ^b	3.568	1	.059		
Likelihood Ratio	7.929	1	.005		
Fisher's Exact Test				.026	.020
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.055	1	.025		
N of Valid Cases	86				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.03.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Participation in the last election for the European Parliament * Field of studies	88	100.0%	0	0.0%	88	100.0%

Participation in the last election for the European Parliament * Field of studies Crosstabulation

			Field of studies		Total
			Political Science	Psychology	
Participation in the last election for the European Parliament	Yes	Count	56	14	70
		Expected Count	46.9	23.1	70.0
		% within Field of studies	94.9%	48.3%	79.5%
		Adjusted Residual	5.1	-5.1	
	No	Count	1	13	14
		Expected Count	9.4	4.6	14.0
		% within Field of studies	1.7%	44.8%	15.9%
		Adjusted Residual	-5.2	5.2	
	Prefer not to say	Count	2	2	4
		Expected Count	2.7	1.3	4.0
		% within Field of studies	3.4%	6.9%	4.5%
		Adjusted Residual	-.7	.7	
Total	Count	59	29	88	
	Expected Count	59.0	29.0	88.0	
	% within Field of studies	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	28.580 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	28.752	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	17.362	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	88		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.32.

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Intention to vote in the next election for the European Parliament * Field of studies	87	98.9%	1	1.1%	88	100.0%

Intention to vote in the next election for the European Parliament * Field of studies Crosstabulation

			Field of studies		Total
			Political Science	Psychology	
Intention to vote in the next election for the European Parliament	Yes	Count	55	21	76
		Expected Count	50.7	25.3	76.0
		% within Field of studies	94.8%	72.4%	87.4%
		Adjusted Residual	3.0	-3.0	
	No	Count	1	4	5
		Expected Count	3.3	1.7	5.0
		% within Field of studies	1.7%	13.8%	5.7%
		Adjusted Residual	-2.3	2.3	
	Prefer not to say	Count	2	4	6
		Expected Count	4.0	2.0	6.0
		% within Field of studies	3.4%	13.8%	6.9%
		Adjusted Residual	-1.8	1.8	
Total	Count	58	29	87	
	Expected Count	58.0	29.0	87.0	
	% within Field of studies	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.012 ^a	2	.011
Likelihood Ratio	8.516	2	.014
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.949	1	.008
N of Valid Cases	87		

a. 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.67.

Mann-Whitney Test

Ranks				
	Field of studies	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Trust in the European Parliament	Political Science	58	49.05	2845.00
	Psychology	29	33.90	983.00
	Total	87		
Trust in the European Court of Justice	Political Science	55	47.83	2630.50
	Psychology	29	32.40	939.50
	Total	84		
Trust in the European Central Bank	Political Science	57	38.39	2188.50
	Psychology	29	53.53	1552.50
	Total	86		
Perceived sense of belonging to the European Union	Political Science	58	50.74	2943.00
	Psychology	29	30.52	885.00
	Total	87		

Test Statistics ^a				
	Trust in the European Parliament	Trust in the European Court of Justice	Trust in the European Central Bank	Perceived sense of belonging to the European Union
Mann-Whitney U	548.000	504.500	535.500	450.000
Wilcoxon W	983.000	939.500	2188.500	885.000
Z	-2.716	-2.832	-2.726	-3.603
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.005	.006	.000

a. Grouping Variable: Field of studies