tions, have nothing to win by politicising the issue. They are well aware that a large part of their potential electorate is not with them on this issue and therefore they have nothing to win and much to lose by politicising it.

For a very long time the major political parties managed to keep the issue of European unification off the political agenda. However, this is obviously changing, not only in the Netherlands but all over Europe. Populist parties on both sides of the left-right dimension successfully take advantage of people’s fear of the effects of globalisation and manage to link the issue of European integration to issues of globalisation like immigration, the loss of jobs to cheap labour countries and the loss of national identity. Since the major established political parties, being on the pro-globalisation and pro-European side of this dimension, have nothing to win by politicising these issues, they are inclined to leave the battlefield to the – so far mostly small – parties on the anti-globalisation/anti-European integration side of the dimension. Given the big gap between the major political parties and a large part of the mass public on the issue of European integration, this one-sided politicisation can only lead to a mobilisation of euroscepticism. Also, the more successful populist parties are – and they are very successful in the Netherlands – the more the major political parties see themselves forced to move in the same direction and become more eurosceptical. And this is exactly what has been happening since the referendum.

Whether this is good or bad depends on one’s perspective. Apparently, there is a tension between an ever closer and wider Union and a stronger involvement of the people. Involving the people in major decisions on the European project will almost certainly slow down and probably even set back the process of European integration. Yet, as long as political elites will not accept that it is not only for them to decide what is good for the European people, the European Union will never become a Union of the people.


Amitai Etzioni*

EU: Closing the Community Deficit

The main challenge currently facing the EU is a community deficit: the low valuation the majority of its citizens accord the evolving collectivity. The EU is challenged by the mismatch between its increasing supranational decision-making and the strong loyalties of its citizens to their respective nation states. To deal with this community deficit, the EU must either introduce strong measures of community building or else significantly scale back its plans for action in unison.

I first briefly cite illustrative data to show that there is a considerable level of disaffection from the EU project and the EU institutions. I then turn to examine the first set of measures needed to reduce the strain on the EU by scaling back for the near future those provisions that alienate many citizens. A second set of measures is needed to build up citizens’ commitment to the EU, by fostering public dialogues, developing a common European media and language, and holding EU-wide elections.

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1 On supranational communities see Amitai Etzioni: From Empire to Community, New York 2004, Palgrave Macmillan.

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Signs of Disaffection

Given that it is widely agreed that there is a considerable level of disaffection from the EU project and the EU authorities, I merely provide a few illustrative pieces of evidence rather than review the considerable literature on the subject. 2

A 2002 study shows that "a majority of West Europeans does not believe that the EU represents them; these perceptions not only increase dissatisfaction with the current EU-framework but also lower support for a future, EU-wide government." 3 Those few nations in which the majority felt well-represented by the EU are small and possess limited political clout, such as Luxembourg, Belgium and Ireland. (Notably, Ireland recently endangered the movement toward deepening by voting down the Lisbon Treaty in 2008.) The largest and most powerful nations such as France, Germany and the UK had much lower rates. 4 More recently, a study has shown that "the largest group of Europeans remains hesitant about European integration, either expressing support or opposition for either deepening or widening." 5

This "Euro-skepticism," as it is commonly referred to, seems to be on the rise and is reported to be tied to national identities that have become stronger and more exclusive. 6 This trend is especially significant in Germany, in which people had long shied away from national identification after WWII, preferring to see themselves as European. True, citizens of several EU member states with weak, corrupt or inefficient national institutions - Italy for instance - are more likely to favor EU institutions, viewing them as less corrupt and more efficient. 7 This, however, is not the case for the majority of EU citizens. 8 True, many Europeans would like the EU to do more in matters concerning foreign policy; for instance some suggest that a majority of Europeans would likely favor the creation of a Common EU diplomatic service, a European FBI, and common EU representation in international organizations to speak with one voice. However, support for such moves might quickly recede if "Brussels" were to take specific steps in these matters, for instance by ruling that EU involvement in Afghanistan must be doubled and demanding that each member nation commit a given number of troops to the effort, or by confronting Russia regarding its intervention in Georgia, or by substantially increasing defense spending.

In the 2004 European Parliament Elections, anti-EU parties had their strongest showing yet. The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), which demands Britain's full withdrawal from the EU, took 12 seats in the parliament, while the mainstream but largely eurosceptical Conservatives took 27. In Poland, the anti-EU League of Polish Families took more seats than all parties but one. The Movement for France, which rejects both the euro and France's EU membership, held onto its three seats, and the Swedish anti-EU June Movement won 3 seats. 9

True, the treaties that were rejected first by the French and the Dutch and later by the Irish, lost by a small margin. But one cannot ignore that, in 2008, 26 out of 27 national governments did not allow their citizens to vote on the Lisbon treaty, presumably fearing their rejection - including 11 governments that had previously committed to doing so. Most recently, the Danish government decided to defer "indefinitely" a referendum on 3 measures that would have deepened Danish involvement in the EU. 10

Others have reached similar conclusions. Andrew Moravcik, of Harvard University, writes "For the first time in a generation, European elites and public outside the extreme Right and Left expressed fundamental doubts about the desirability of major steps toward

7. R. Rhorscher, op. cit.
8. Ibid.
European Integration ... The polarization of public and elite opinion appears to be eroding the broad consensus that supported integration for the past three decades.\textsuperscript{11}

And he concludes that, "There is considerable evidence that [European voters] oppose integration today. Hence, in the short term, democratization is almost certain to undermine integration."\textsuperscript{12}

Some argue that popular alienation from the EU stems in large part from political cues given by national elites who see the rise of the EU as a threat to their power.\textsuperscript{13} Others propose that economic factors are key in explaining popular opinion.\textsuperscript{14} Such explanations speak not to the end state but merely to the causes of disaffection, of which there are clearly several. The fact, though, remains that a substantial and seemingly growing number of European citizens are alienated from the EU project and the EU institutions.

To reiterate, the evidence presented here is intended merely to illustrate the point at issue, which, in any case, seems to be fairly well established.

**Measures that Reduce Strain and Alienation: a Grand EU Pause**

To treat this disaffection, the EU needs to adopt the following measures, amounting to a consolidation period or a grand "pause," before further steps can be taken that significantly diminish national sovereignty.

(a) *Defer enlargement:* The EU needs to defer additional enlargement for a decade to allow for consolidation. Given that the negotiations for new membership strain the EU long before the members are actually admitted, such considerations also need to be suspended. Enlargement strains the community in two significant ways: (i) increasing the sheer numbers of any group renders collective decision-making more difficult,\textsuperscript{15} and (ii) given the cultural, historical, political and linguistic differences between the current and potential members, further enlargement would increase the already high level of heterogeneity of the EU, which, as Communitarians have long shown, is antithetical to community building.\textsuperscript{16} Only after reducing the current high level of heterogeneity can more members be added – or even considered – without further undermining community building.

Many scholars and public officials who favor enlargement point to the several commendable effects that the offer of potential EU membership has on the countries that are keen to join and expect to become members of the EU. Some have shown that the prospect and/or conditions of accession to the EU provide sufficient incentives for significant democratization and liberalization.\textsuperscript{17} However, it is far from obvious that the EU should endanger its future in order to advance reforms in other countries. Moreover, saving the EU from its own altruism by introducing a temporary pause on enlargement is needed not merely for the sake of its current members, but also to nurture the community which these other countries seek to join. While it may be, in some sense, noble to tear down the pillars that uphold your house in order to provide logs for a new friend's fireplace, this is hardly the case if you have just invited him to move into the same house.

(b) *Delay deepening:* Several analysts and leaders have correctly identified a need for significant increases in the scope and import of supranational decision-making.\textsuperscript{18} They seek a state of affairs wherein EU organs could speak in one voice for the whole community and could render more important decisions on the basis of majority rule, rather than requiring the unanimous consent of all the member states. However, the significant reduction in the sovereignty of the member nations that such changes entail requires a


\textsuperscript{12} Ibid, p. 50.

\textsuperscript{13} Liebet Hooge, Gary Marks, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{14} Lauren McLaren: Explaining Mass-Level Euroskepticism, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{15} Sociologists/political scientists?


\textsuperscript{18} I use the term "supranationality" to characterize a political body that has acquired some of the attributes usually associated with a nation, such as political loyalty and decision-making power – based not on an aggregate of national decisions or those made by representatives of the member states, but rather on those made by the supranational bodies themselves. It is useful to think about supranationality as a composite of several elements. For more discussion, see Amitai Etzioni: From Empire to Community, ch. 12.
higher level of citizen commitment to the EU than currently exists.\(^{19}\)

Deepening entails exacting considerable sacrifices by some members of the collectivity which predominantly benefit others. Thus, for example, if stronger EU-wide measures were adopted to slow down inflation, some members would as a result likely experience much slower growth while others, whose growth was slower to begin with, might not be much affected. If stronger anti-terrorism measures were introduced across the EU, some member nations would have to adopt considerable changes to their domestic laws and in the way authorities conduct themselves – changes that nations with strong civil rights traditions are likely to find very troubling – while other nations that had already recalibrated their anti-terrorism regimes would be relatively unaffected. Moreover, for EU-wide programs, financial costs and benefits will also be unequally distributed; some nations will mostly pay while other member nations mostly benefit from EU-wide income and wealth transfer.

Such inequalities of burdens and benefits are routinely accepted within well established nations. Thus, in the United States, few complain that southern states contribute less to federal revenues while gaining a disproportional share of federal outlays. After reunification, Germany’s western states contributed very large amounts to the “new lands,” the eastern states. However, if the beneficiaries are not considered part of one’s community, there is a much lower tolerance for such reallocations and wealth transfers. Given that the majority of the EU citizens seem not ready to make such sacrifices on a growing scale, deepening has to be delayed until community commitments are enhanced.

(c) Slow down the Commission: The EU institutions, especially the Commission, have acted on a significant number of occasions in ways that alienate the citizens from the EU project, including:

- Negotiations about major additions and changes to EU treaties and institutions have often been conducted in off the record meetings, employing highly legalistic and technical terms or obfuscating language. French President Nicolas Sarkozy expressed the preceding point well when he interpret-

ed the 2008 Irish “no” vote on the Lisbon treaty as a rejection of a “… certain Europe that is too technocratic, too abstract, too distant.”\(^{20}\) To reduce citizen alienation, important decisions are best preceded by consensus-building (discussed below). Granted, this democratization would substantially reduce the speed and scope of the actions that the Commission can undertake. This tradeoff, though, can no longer be avoided.

- The EU Commission has often acted below the radar, introducing numerous EU-wide measures with little or no prior public notification, consensus-building, or even public disclosure after the fact. To reduce alienation the Commission will have to become more transparent, through measures such as conducting more open meetings; posting advance notice; granting time for public commentary; and laying out its plan for action in terms readily understood by the public.

- Enforcement of the measures already in place has been highly uneven (sometimes referred to as the “compliance gap”).\(^{21}\) Hence, citizens of nations with relatively high compliance levels feel exploited. To reduce citizen alienation, the EU best dedicate more resources to reduce the compliance gap. This, in turn, may entail reducing the number of regulations, instructions and other measures the Commission can issue each year – again, a tradeoff that it seems cannot long be avoided.

- EU officials, as well as national leaders who support the EU project, have shown by word and deed a disrespect for the people – and the democratic process.\(^{22}\) I already referred to the broken promises of submitting new treaties to referendums. The same disrespectful attitude is revealed when a treaty is resubmitted for a vote soon after being voted down, with only minor modifications, if any. One gets the impression that some EU officials would like to repeatedly submit the same measures to the electorate time and again until they get the desired result. Four weeks after Ireland’s voters had rejected the Lisbon Treaty, French president Nicolas Sarkozy privately...

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stated that the Irish would have to vote again.²² Lest one think the recent Irish vote is a singular occurrence, the same treatment was given to Irish voters when they rejected the Nice treaty in 2001 and to Danish voters when they rejected the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992.²⁴ Beyond the often cited democratic deficit,²⁵ an attitude of superiority among some officials and leaders is hurting the EU project. Following Ireland’s recent vote against the Lisbon treaty, German interior minister Wolfgang Schäuble grumbled publicly about “letting a few million Irish make decisions for 450 million Europeans.”²⁶ The Commission and other EU authorities best not promote policies and changes in institutions that the majority of the citizens of the EU have shown they reject.

At the same time, if leaders feel that the public sentiments are untutored and antithetical to the common good, they need not simply yield to these preferences. EU officials can work to gain the support of the citizens to the courses of action they believe ought to be followed. If, at the end of the day, these officials fail to be persuasive, they best give way. Although extended EU-building requires greatly reducing the democratic deficit through the measures listed above, these by themselves will not suffice unless the community deficit is curtailed.²⁷

**Measures that Build Community**

(a) Foster EU-wide public dialogues. Societies, even ones as large as the United States, engage in dialogues about public policies. Typically, just one or two topics top the public dialogue agenda, for instance whether or not to allow gay marriages or whether the death penalty should be tolerated. These dialogues mainly concern values and are not dominated by consideration of facts. They often seem endless and imp-


²³ Ibid.


The fact that the majority of EU citizens feel ill informed about the EU and the actions of its various institutions only enhances the need to promote dialogues.²⁹

Referendums have long been criticized as anti-democratic for, among other concerns, their tendency to express the passion of the moment rather than the results of deliberations.³⁰ Hence the need to allow for dialogues that provide periods during which people can consult with each other and their leaders before referendums take place. Announcing that a given matter will be subject to a binding vote a number of months down the road is an effective way to trigger dialogues.

Public dialogues and some referendums do take place in Europe, but they are, as a rule, conducted within each nation. This is in part because people still see themselves as primarily citizens of this or that nation rather than as Europeans, and in part because the points of closure – the endpoints or changes in public policy that these dialogues lead to or support – often are on the national level rather than EU-wide. To build the support needed for enhanced supranational institutions and decision-making of the EU, public dialogues and referendums best take place in all member nations at the same time and be tied to decisions to be made on the EU and not the national level.

The issues to be dialogued and voted on at an EU-wide level need to be salient enough to draw the people into participating. Suggested changes in immigration policies are an obvious example. Finally, to succeed, participating citizens must be able to trust that the results of these referendums will be fully bind-

³⁰ EU Barometer Future of Europe 2006; Barometer "Parliament".
ing, that the EU officials will heed them rather than seek to work their way around them.

(b) Develop EU-wide media and language. Citizens see the EU largely through their respective national and cultural lenses. For a shift in orientation to occur, for more people to adopt a community-wide perspective, some form of a shared media is needed, which can be accessed by citizens in different parts of the EU. Unfortunately, various attempts to fashion a European newspaper have not truly taken off. The same holds for other media, such as television and radio. The Internet fragments the public more than it builds up one shared audience. The EU should create a sort of European Broadcasting Agency, modeled on the BBC, which would draw on public budgets but have autonomous control of the content of the broadcasts. Its mission would be to provide news and interpret it from a European perspective. (From this viewpoint it might be of interest to compare Foreign Affairs, which is published from an American perspective, to Foreign Policy, which deliberately recast itself to adopt a global perspective.) It would also include brief items about what is happening in the various member states, as if they were parts of the same country, somewhat the way the American newspaper USA Today provides news about the fifty American states.31

Initially, EU-wide broadcasts may well have to be translated into the 23 languages that are spoken by the EU citizens. However, if the EU is to move toward becoming more of a community, it would be much assisted if all the citizens would learn the same language. Historically, coming to share a language has played a key role in many community building endeavors. In the EU, though, reference is not to developing one primary tongue, but to one in addition to it, in other words, a common second language. English is the only serious candidate for this position, but so far France, Germany and Italy, among others, have strongly opposed this development, thus slowing down the development of a shared European second language.32

(c) EU-wide voting. As EU consensus solidifies, the EU should move toward EU-wide voting on EU candi-


dates, rather than the current system in which votes for the EU Parliament are still conducted largely for national candidates, on national bases. Currently, most candidates running for a seat in the European Parliament are put up by national parties, and campaign only in their home country. In the European Parliament, most "European parties" are largely made of alliances among pre-existing national parties; they function less like political parties and more like international coalitions. A switch to European parties and candidates raises numerous issues concerning whether different weights should be assigned to the voters of various countries and ways to protect minorities, two complex points that require a separate treatment.

(d) Functionalism and symbolism are lagging factors. Two factors that some hypothesized would serve as community-builders have carried little weight so far, but are likely to carry more as EU-wide shared public understanding, dialogues, media, language and voting evolve.

First, some expected the shift of decision-making power to "Brussels" to lead to a shift in people's commitment to the EU (a thesis referred to sometimes as neofunctionalism).33 So far, though, when functions were shifted to EU-wide institutions without first building up consensus and legitimacy, these shifts generated more alienation than enhanced commitment to the community. If the ground was properly prepared, neofunctionalism would be much more likely to succeed. Neofunctionalism, thus, turns out to be a lagging rather than a leading factor.

The same holds for symbolism. The EU has tried to build community by promoting symbols that express the new collectivity, such as the EU flag, a European hymn, EU markings on motor vehicle license plates, the marking of cultural and historical sites, and others.34 So far these symbols have not carried much


34 For a collection of scholarly essays on various issues raised by efforts to construct a European identity not based on Christianity and anti-Islamic sentiments, cf. Marion Demossier (ed.): The European Puzzle, op. cit.
weight in terms of building a commitment to the EU.³⁰ Such symbols can express commitments once they are in place, and even enhance them to some extent once they are evolving. They cannot engender such commitment when the basic underlying public support is lacking.

Jurgen Habermas has argued that forming a constitution would lead to a crystallization of Europe in the sense of developing a unified identity and culture.³⁶ Others have pointed to the unifying, identity building power of "constitutional moments," of the kind the American colonies experienced in Philadelphia in 1787. Reference is to historical occasions in which different segments of a new collectivity rose to find a common cause and institutionalize an evolving core of shared values. Such "moments" do not occur in a vacuum, but typically reflect the culmination of long social and political developments that preceded them. Moreover, much of the consolidation often follows later. When neither the preparatory nor after-the-act developments are present, constitution-writing does not possess some kind of magical power to build new shared identity. The persistence of political strife and inter-tribal violence after the ratification of new constitutions in Iraq and Afghanistan, two long-established nations, is evidence for this point.

(e) Unprecedented but ... Many doubt that the EU can be turned into a collectivity that has many of the elements of a national community – into a United States of Europe. There are strong reasons to expect that this opinion is a valid one. All previous attempts to form supranational communities have failed, including those of the United Arab Republic, the Federation of the West Indies, and even a much less ambitious coming together, the Nordic Council.³⁷ When nations were forced into a federation, for instance by Russia in the Soviet era, the federation came apart and the member nations were restored to full autonomy as soon as the coercive vise was broken. The same holds for Yugoslavia.

³⁵ Demossiier writes, "The European Union has, over the years, put increasing emphasis on the cultural construction of the mythical figure of the European through a range of cultural policies, but it has largely failed in its attempt to construct a shared sense of Europeanness." Marion Demossiier: The Political Structuring of Cultural Identities, in: Marion Demossiier (ed.): The European Puzzle, op. cit., p. 90; cf. also C. Shore: Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration, London 2000, Routledge.


³⁷ For a comparative analysis of these three failed unions, cf. Amitai Etzioni: Political Unification Revisited, op. cit.

One may suggest that history is rich with cases in which previously autonomous communities merged, one way or another, to form more encompassing ones. Germany was formed by the unification of some 39 independent states; Italy, by the unification of numerous provinces and areas. The United States itself was composed of thirteen colonies (though its two regions did not coalesce into one society until after the Civil War). However, all these instances of community building took place before nationalism took root and before the masses became actively involved in the political process. That is, before the sense of self and the identity of the citizens became deeply associated with their nation state. Indeed, it is the building of nations, largely in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which allowed the integration of pre-national communities into the new, national one.

To reiterate, there is no precedent for the citizens of a fully formed nation to consent to its being absorbed into a more encompassing community, or for allowing loyalty to the new community to take precedent (in cases of conflict) over current national loyalties which are deeply held. One scholar's observation about Northern Ireland applies much more widely: "... national identities so dominate the cultural identifications of border people, of all people ... that, to the extent that it is acknowledged as a possible alternative, European identity is often scoffed at as little more than a tactic to get funding, or to support the European stance of a local political party".³⁸

That communities with weak identity and shared sense of self often jell only around negative causes, for instance in opposition to some real or imaginary enemy or outsider is a regrettable but undeniable sociological fact. Many new nations jelled in opposition to colonial powers. Hence, it is revealing that when the majority of the European citizens strongly opposed the course the United States followed in Iraq in 2003 and in the years that followed, the EU was still unable to build on this consensus to speak in one voice, to form a shared identity and policy.

One may suggest, again with regret, that the European identity is largely Christian and anti-Muslim. Soledad Garcia put it as follows: "The increasing consensus on what is considered dangerous in Western Europe (terrorism, pollution, drugs consumption, ur-

ban crime, on one side, and Islamic fundamentalism, uncontrolled immigration from certain parts of the world on the other) constitutes a substantial common ground for sharing perceptions of what we need to be protected from, not only as individuals but also as Europeans."36

As Professor Ralph Grillo of the University of Sussex notes, "Already by the early 1990s, fundamentalism had become 'Europe's latest 'other' ... Islamism is constructed as what Europe is not, and an exclusionary European identity is projected as its opposite."40 Margaret Thatcher even went so far as to refer to fundamentalism as the "new Bolshevism."41 So far, however, such consensus has served mainly those who wish to exclude Turkey from the EU, limit immigration, and other such policies, but has not provided a new normative foundation for building a more communal EU.

If the EU is unable to engage in much stronger and more affirmative community building, if there is no significantly greater transfer of commitments and loyalties from the citizens of the member nations to the new evolving political community, the EU will be unable to sustain the kind of encompassing, significant, and salient collective public policies and endeavors it seeks to advance. The EU needs either to move up to a higher level of community or retreat to being a free trade zone enriched by numerous legal and administrative shared arrangements, but not much more.

The world is watching both because of the importance of the EU per se, and because several other regional bodies, in much earlier states of supranational development, want to learn the best ways to engage in community building when the members of the community are nation states.

Andrew Moravcsik*

The Myth of Europe’s “Democratic Deficit”

O ne hears everywhere today that the European Union suffers from a “democratic deficit.” It is unaccountable and illegitimate. It is a distant technocratic superstate run by powerful officials who collude with national governments to circumvent national political processes, with regrettable consequences for national democracy. Some critics focus on the extent to which EU institutions fail to provide for objective democratic controls, as measured by transparency, checks and balances, national oversight, and electoral accountability. Others focus on the extent to which EU institutions generate a subjective sense of democratic legitimacy, as measured by public trust, popularity and broad public acceptance. The two are linked. Lack of opportunity to participate in EU politics, it is said, generates disillusionment, distrust and dislike of the EU, which further reinforces ignorance and unwillingness to participate in EU politics. The EU is caught in a vicious circle that may be fatal unless major reforms are undertaken to expand popular participation.

This perception has dominated EU politics for the last decade. The belief that the EU’s “democratic deficit” must be redressed was among the primary justifications advanced by Joschka Fischer and other “founding fathers” for launching the EU’s recent and ill-fated constitutional project.1 That is why it was designed with a symbolic “convention”, inspirational rhetoric and a major public relations push – all explicitly aimed at securing the involvement of disillusioned Europeans.2 Rejection of the constitution (cum treaty) in referendums in France, the Netherlands and Ireland has only bolstered such perceptions. Commentators and politicians lined up to intone that “the people have spoken”. Deliberative democrat Jürgen Habermas, who previously called on fellow citizens to find a com-

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