

# **Debating Europe in the French Socialist Party: the 2004 internal referendum on the EU Constitution**

## **Abstract**

This paper assesses the views on European integration in the French Socialist Party (PS) expressed before the internal referendum on the European Constitutional Treaty on 1 December 2004. Using content analysis of 112 public statements that formed part of the preceding debate, I establish the ideological characteristics of support and opposition to the EU in the PS. This paper has three main aims. First, it considers the extent and nature of opposition to the Constitution in the PS. Second, it places the ratification debate within the context of wider ideological conflicts that oppose social democracy, socialism and left-liberalism (Kitschelt, 1994). Third, it examines ideological differences within the 'no' camp in the PS.

## **Key words**

Constitutional Treaty, Euroscepticism, Factionalism, Referendums, Socialist Party, Social Democracy

On 1 December 2004, the members of the Socialist Party (PS) in France voted to support the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. The result of the internal referendum was clear, with 58.6 per cent casting a ‘yes’ vote and 83.2 per cent of members participating in the poll. The vote came after several months of public and internal discussion, including in over 400 local meetings (Duseigneur, 2005: 82), and most high-profile members of the PS took a clear position on the issue of the Constitution. Such a focussed and open debate on the European Union (EU) is extremely rare, especially given the EU’s low general salience in national politics and media (Mair, 2000, Norris, 2000). The position of the PS and its supporters was to be a key factor in the eventual national referendum result, with internal splits among Socialist politicians and voters a main reason for the Constitution’s defeat (Marthaler, 2005, Ivaldi 2006, Qvortrup 2006).

The Socialists’ debate on the Treaty thus gives a unique insight into the party’s position on European integration and sheds light on two key areas of research into European political parties. First, the debate provides us with a detailed picture of the type and extent of Euroscepticism prevalent in a large Socialist party and relates to broader analyses of party opposition to European integration. Second, the discussion of the Constitution is connected to the more complex ideological changes within the European Centre-Left that combine and oppose socialism, social democracy and left-liberalism (Kitschelt, 1994).<sup>1</sup>

Using as evidence a wide range of speeches, newspaper opinion pieces and position papers, I argue that Euroscepticism in the French Socialist Party is ‘soft’, policy-focused and ideologically socialist. However, even the supporters of the Constitution are overwhelmingly socialist rather than social democratic and advocate a strategy of ‘voice’ rather than ‘loyalty’ vis-à-vis the EU. Moreover, the ‘no’ camp itself showed internal diversity in terms of the extremity of both its opposition to the EU and its overall ideology.

In the following section, I briefly connect the literature on party-based Euroscepticism

and ideological discourse in left-wing politics to the PS' debate on the Constitution. I then state three research hypotheses and outline the methods and data used to test them. Next, I present in detail the results of my analysis of political statements by PS politicians before examining the consequences for the 2005 national referendum.

### **Euroscepticism in the Socialist Party**

Opposition to general EU treaties such as the Constitution can be seen as an expression of broader Euroscepticism (Taggart, 1998: 368f.). It was clear that rejection of the Constitution, in particular in a large founding member state such as France, would at least temporarily create significant problems for the process of integration. Moreover, due to the continuing low public interest and political salience of European issues, the debate surrounding the Constitution was one of the few possibilities for Euroscepticism to find public expression and attention.

#### *'Soft Voice': the strategy of Socialist Euroscepticism*

It is possible to distinguish different subgroups among those who oppose further European integration. Thus, Taggart (1998) differentiates between 'hard' and 'soft' Euroscepticism: the former term describes principled opposition to 'the very idea of European integration and as a consequence [to] the EU' (Taggart, 1998: 365), while the latter implies only opposition to the EU in its current form and is compatible with a general pro-European attitude. Furthermore, soft Euroscepticism can be subdivided into 'policy' and 'national-interest' Euroscepticism (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2001). Policy Eurosceptics oppose specific areas of integration, while national-interest Eurosceptics oppose certain aspects of the EU because membership is seen as a limitation on sovereignty. Policy and national-interest Euroscepticism are not mutually exclusive categories.

Aust (2004) uses Hirshman's (1970) differentiation between strategies of 'exit', 'voice' and 'loyalty' to describe the stances of Social Democratic parties towards European integration. 'Exit' is a strategic equivalent to Taggart's hard Euroscepticism, while 'voice', like soft Euroscepticism, accepts integration but attempts to create a more 'social' Europe. The 'loyalty' strategy argues that integration needs to be seen as a necessity that requires rethinking Social Democratic policies and priorities.

The PS' relationship to European integration has been characterised by a shift away from outright Euroscepticism (Guérot, 1996, Hooghe et al., 2002). Given the general acceptance of some form of European integration in the party, today's French Socialists are however unlikely to contain 'hard' Eurosceptics within their ranks. Overall, we should expect opponents of ratification in the PS to advocate a strategy of 'soft voice' rather than of 'hard exit', with supporters of the Constitution arguing for 'loyalty'.

#### *The PS, the EU and ideological change in European Social Democracy*

Party positions on European integration are not separate from more general ideological debates: as Marks and Wilson (2000: 433) argue, 'the new issue of European integration is assimilated into pre-existing ideologies of party leaders, activists and constituencies that reflect long-standing commitments on fundamental domestic issues'. Thus, Hooghe et al. (2002) have shown that the broader Left/Right and New Politics dimensions structure party politics in relation to the EU. They conclude that ideological position on the traditional Left/Right dimension predicts opposition to the EU, with parties at either extreme most likely to be Eurosceptic. In particular, radical Left parties remain most likely to take Eurosceptic positions, while Social Democratic or Centre-Left parties have become more pro-European as regulated capitalism has come onto the EU agenda. However, significant Eurosceptic factions still exist within these parties (Hooghe et al., 2002). The New Politics dimension is even more

powerful in incorporating Euroscepticism. Traditional, authoritarian and nationalist (TAN) parties are thus generally strongly Eurosceptical. This is, however, not mirrored by clear support for integration from green, alternative and libertarian (GAL) parties, which remain uncommitted to the EU despite becoming more integrationist in recent years.

Since the EU issue is merged into existing ideological cleavages, the arguments used in debating Europe reflect general divisions within the European Left. Kitschelt (1994: ch.6) provides a broad framework of left-wing discourse types: social democracy, socialism and left-liberalism. First, social democratic arguments are pragmatic, combine liberalism and socialism and take a flexible approach to managing the economy. Hooghe et al. (2002: 975) argue that Centre-Left and Social Democratic parties see European integration as providing a way of 'projecting social democratic goals in a liberalising world economy'. In particular, the Centre-Left is in favour of moves that increase the place of restrained and regulated capitalism in the EU's remit. 'Loyalty' is the corresponding strategy for this type of reasoning (Aust, 2004: 182).

Second, socialist argumentation shows less willingness to compromise on its key tenets and argues for regulation and collective choice over markets and liberty (Kitschelt, 1994). Hooghe et al. (2002) argue that radical Left groups will attack the EU as capitalist, neo-liberal and irreparably pro-market. While Left parties see the EU as a potential instrument of radical change (Dunphy, 2004), they also present the EU in its current form as an unsuitable means of realising their goals, which are based on Keynesian economic policy and workers' rights.

Third, left-liberals are more communitarian and seek to protect nature and enhance participatory democracy (Kitschelt, 1994). Similarly, Dunphy (2004), building on Bomberg (1998), states five broad elements of the Green vision of Europe: decentralisation, ecological sustainability, grassroots democracy, diversity and a minimal state. GAL parties tend to be

torn between criticism of the EU's democratic deficit and support for its environment policy (Hooghe et al., 2002).

To the extent that these three groups of arguments – social democracy, socialism and left-libertarianism – capture the internal debate within left-wing parties, we should expect a similar pattern of arguments in the debate on the EU. It is worth noting that analyses of the political discourse of the PS consistently point out the clear gap between what the party says and what it does. Although the party may implement quite pragmatic policies while in government, party discourse remains undeniably radical. Thus, Lionel Jospin used a 'legitimising discourse that place[d] his government in a historical continuum with previous socialist experiences' (Ladrech, 2002: 377). As Hazareesingh (1994) argues, the PS has always had a 'tendency towards discursive radicalism'. This tendency will only have been increased by the fact that this was an internal referendum: PS politicians had to orient their rhetorical appeals towards their party members rather than the general population.

### **Factions, *présidentiabiles* and ideology: the context of the 2004 internal referendum**

Although there was significant opposition to ratification of the Constitution, the supporters of the document won the vote by a relatively clear margin. As a result, the PS clearly cannot be described, to use Taggart's (1998) terms, as an established party with a Eurosceptical stance. Nevertheless, it has clear Eurosceptical factions.

#### *The organisational basis of Socialist Euroscepticism*

Factionalism is the key organisational characteristic of the PS (Crespy, 2008:26). The party's *courants* (factions) are 'the very stuff of the internal life of the PS' (Knapp, 2004: 167). Before each party congress, different *courants* present policy motions that are voted on in party federation meetings, with each motion with more than 5 per cent support receiving

representation in the national executive. Membership of a *courant* is generally necessary to achieve any kind of political post within the PS (Desmeuliers, 2005: 301).

The PS factions are ideologically distinct, with the current minority factions consistently advocating a form of Euroscepticism.<sup>2</sup> Prior to the last congress before the internal referendum, held in Dijon in May 2003, five motions were presented, with only motion A, by party leader François Hollande, clearly in favour of European integration on the current model.<sup>3</sup> Its federalist, integrationist vision of the future of the EU was coupled with a generally positive assessment of the current state of the Union. The other main (though smaller) motions took clearly Eurosceptic positions in their campaign documents. Thus, motion C described European integration as ‘a Trojan horse of capitalism’; motion D presented the EU as a mere ‘free-trade area without political or diplomatic power, without a social project’; and motion E simply stated that ‘we do not want that kind of Europe’ if it is to be dominated by José Maria Aznar, Silvio Berlusconi and Tony Blair. With its system of *courants*, the PS thus has an institutional base for the expression of opposition to the EU and is clearly a party with Eurosceptical factions. Even though the internal democracy enshrined in the *courants* also provide a forum for pure intra-party struggle for political power (Clift, 1998: 219), it is clear that the differences between factions currently go beyond personalities and elections (Crum, 2007: 73).

### *The three camps in the 2004 debate*

The debate in the run-up to the internal referendum was not structured solely around these explicit factional divisions. While prominent politicians from the minority *courants* uniformly opposed ratification, the majority faction headed by Hollande was internally divided. Laurent Fabius, the former Prime Minister, led a group of Socialists within that *courant* who decided to advocate a ‘no’ vote. Six politicians close to Fabius formed an independent group to

publicise their position on the Constitution, *Ambition socialiste pour l'Europe*. With a founding document published in *Le Monde* on 6 August 2004 and its own website, this group created a clear public presence and associated itself implicitly with Fabius' stance.

This division within the majority faction stems from an internal tension in the organisation of the PS. While the *courants* are a form of internal democracy and reflect ideological divisions, they also function as an 'organised system of presidential candidate selection' (Crespy, 2008: 27). The personal power of the *présidentiables* has an impact on the role of *courants*, whose ideological role is mixed with office-seeking considerations. Fabius had led his own *courant* in the past and was a strong possible candidate for the next presidential election in 2007, but was threatened by Hollande's own ambitions. His opposition to the Constitution thus could have allowed him to ensure the support a majority of PS members by eventually rallying the minority factions to his candidature (Grunberg, 2005: 131f.). Thus, the 2004 debate split the PS into three identifiable camps: the minority factions, opponents of the Constitution within the majority *courant* and supporters of the Constitution.

The balance of power within the party elite was clearly in favour of ratification. However, opposition to the Constitution was not marginal. In total, a third of national and European deputies and 37 of the 72 members of the party's national bureau came out against ratification (Duseigneur, 2005: 84). The party scrupulously treated each side equally, with subsidies, local meetings and contributions in the party newspaper divided equally between those in favour and those opposing ratification.

### **Hypotheses on Euroscepticism in the Parti Socialiste**

Based on the above discussion, we can suggest three hypotheses concerning Euroscepticism in the French PS.

## **Level of Euroscepticism**

*Socialist Euroscepticism is soft and policy-based, and as a consequence, 'voice' is its preferred strategy.* During the debate on the Constitution, opponents of the Treaty did not advocate leaving the EU but argued that it needed to incorporate a social(ist) agenda and drop its neo-liberal tendencies. Thus, they suggested specific reforms rather than a complete re-organisation and re-founding of the EU. A 'no' vote was presented as a way to push the EU into the preferred political direction rather than as outright rejection of integration. Supporters of the Constitution, meanwhile, advocated a strategy of 'loyalty'.

## **The ideology of Euroscepticism**

*The arguments used to justify both support and opposition to the Constitution are mainly socialist with few elements of left-liberalism and nationalism.* Both sides of the debate referred mainly to economic concerns in arguing for and against the document. Nevertheless, advocates of ratification should show a definite tendency towards more centrist rhetoric. GAL issues were raised to a lesser degree and were present in similar amounts in the rhetoric of each side. TAN arguments played an insignificant role.

## **Euroscepticism and factionalism**

*Eurosceptics from the minority factions are more radical than Eurosceptics from the majority faction.* In terms of the level of Euroscepticism, minority *courant* members will take a harder line in their opposition to the EU. Their ideology will also be more clearly socialist than that of anti-ratification members of the majority faction.

## **Methodology**

Content analysis is a method that can effectively classify types of argumentation in order to systematically compare texts. I thus designed a coding frame to analyse the selected documents (see appendix). The coding scheme contains categories relating to four broad topics: the EU and the Constitution, economic ideology, GAL arguments and TAN arguments. A fifth group of categories contains miscellaneous codes. The design of the coding frame is loosely based on that developed by the Manifesto Research Group (MRG, Budge et al., 2001)). However, the coding categories were determined by using examples found in the literature on Euroscepticism (e.g., Kitschelt, 1994, Hooghe et al., 2002) and the texts of the 2003 motions. Two further differences to the MRG's coding approach should be highlighted. First, the unit of analysis is each document and not each sentence, with the presence of each argument coded for each document. Second, the coding scheme contains information on position *and* salience. For most arguments, a coding category was created for each side of the argument; these could then be collapsed to provide salience information. A sample of 13 documents was recoded as a reliability check by a different coder; over 85% of coding decisions were identical.

The following steps were taken to test the first hypothesis. First, the presence of 'loyalty' as a strategy was examined: proponents of this strategy should describe the EU positively, see integration as necessary, warn of the negative consequences of exit and non-ratification, and see the institutional reforms as positive. Then, the presence of hard 'exit' and soft 'voice' Euroscepticism was assessed. The line between hard and soft Euroscepticism is hard to define and problematic (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002: 300). Both hard and soft Eurosceptics are likely to argue that the EU's current state is negative, integration is optional, non-ratification would have positive consequences and institutional reforms are negative. However, only hard Eurosceptics should openly suggest leaving the EU, so this is treated as a sufficient indicator of this type of argumentation. In contrast, only soft Eurosceptics should

argue explicitly against exit, suggest specific changes and advocate that the EU should be more ambitious in pursuing integration. Finally, categories for policy and national-interest Euroscepticism were included. Policy Eurosceptics want less European integration of member state policy prerogatives, while national-interest Eurosceptics should use TAN arguments as well as criticise integration for reasons of national interest.

In order to test the second hypothesis, indicators for socialist, social democratic, GAL and TAN arguments were created. The empirical line between social democratic and socialist discourse can be very fluid and thus hard to draw satisfactorily; indeed, both groups are likely to have similar policy priorities. However, social democratic arguments are most clearly characterised by political and economic pragmatism, while socialists should show unwillingness to compromise. In addition, categories 201 to 230 were counted as indicators of socialist economic priorities, that is, the extent to which the Constitution allows socialist aims to be achieved. Finally, foreign policy and secularism, two arguments that are hard to classify as Left/Right or New Politics, were also coded, as were three control categories that refer to political considerations: support for party notables and factions or more general electoral tactics.

## **Data**

I analysed public pronouncements and opinion pieces concerning the Constitution made in the period between the signing of the Treaty on 18 June and the internal referendum on 1 December 2004. The documents were gathered from publicly accessible websites, and all texts that expressed a clear opinion on the Constitution were included.<sup>4</sup> In order to include only high-level party members, the study was limited to documents by four types of authors: members of the National Council; deputies, senators and members of the European Parliament; prominent PS politicians outside party structures (such as Lionel Jospin, Claude

Allègre and Jacques Delors); and official PS groups (such as NPS and Nouveau Monde). Originally, the documents were either published in news sources, such as *Le Monde*, *Libération* or *Le Figaro*, or were public speeches and official documents published on party websites, such as position papers, campaign material and opinion pieces. Documents were also classified according to the *courant* the author represented. Membership was ascertained through publicly available information, such as the websites of the party and the factions.

In total, 112 documents were studied; of these, 57 opposed and 53 favoured ratification, with two texts proclaiming abstention. Laurent Fabius (six documents), François Hollande (six) and the NPS (five) are the most highly represented in the sample. The longest document contains 6847 words; the shortest is 260 words long. The average length is approximately 1347 words, and most documents contain between 800 and 2000 words.<sup>5</sup> As this was an internal debate, there was little official campaign material, and public discussion was at a lower level than before a national referendum. However, as far as can be assessed, this collection of material is comprehensive, as it contains a large proportion of electronically available documents generated during the debate.

(Table 1 about here)

## **Findings**

### *Level of Euroscepticism*

While supporters of the Constitution in the PS consistently advocated a strategy of loyalty, opponents exclusively argued for a soft, policy-based form of Euroscepticism, endorsing ‘voice’ rather than ‘exit’. I will first examine the nature of the arguments used by supporters of ratification and then consider the exact categorisation of PS opposition to the EU.

Table 2 shows that over 70 per cent of pro-ratification documents mention that EU integration is necessary and that rejection of the Constitution would have negative

consequences. Over 65 per cent of these documents include arguments that the proposed reforms of EU institutions are positive, and only 5 per cent propose specific improvements they would endorse.

However, 12 per cent of pro-ratification texts argue that some of the institutional reforms have been negative. Moreover, only 40 per cent explicitly describe the current state of the EU as positive, while over 20 per cent actually describe the EU's situation in a negative light. Thus, while pro-Europeans were clearly loyal, they refrained from painting too positive a picture of recent developments in the EU. At least in their rhetoric, pro-Constitution PS politicians only advocated 'loyalty' to a limited degree, preferring to underline that they want to have a 'voice' in EU affairs.

There is no evidence of openly hard Euroscepticism in the PS: exit from the EU is not addressed at all, let alone endorsed. Moreover, around 66 per cent of anti-ratification documents maintain that integration is necessary, with almost none arguing that it could be an optional process.

Euroscepticism in the PS is also policy-based rather than national-interest-based. Opposition to some fields of current or proposed policy integration is an argument employed in about 70 per cent of anti-ratification documents. In addition, almost as many opponents as supporters of the Constitution say that further integration in new policy areas would be beneficial, thus proving that they have nothing against integration per se. In fact, a frequently used argument is that the EU should be criticised for not integrating *enough*. Around a third of documents also point precisely to parts of the Constitution they disagree with and propose specific changes.

(Table 2 about here)

On the other hand, national interest arguments were hardly used: only around 9 per cent of documents clearly state that they oppose the Treaty because it diminishes national

sovereignty. However, this figure may be deceptively low, as there are undercurrents of nationalist arguments in many of the economic reasons given for opposition. Thus, concerns with national priorities and traditions are contained in the claims that the Constitution will make it harder to combat off-shoring and fiscal and social dumping as well as implement state-based economic intervention. Nevertheless, the first hypothesis has proved to be correct: while supporters of the Constitution consistently argued for a strategy of ‘loyalty’, opponents of ratification were soft, policy-based Eurosceptics who advocated using their ‘voice’ in EU affairs.

### *Euroscepticism and socialist ideology*

Most of the debate within the PS took place on the well-trodden ground of socialist discourse: there were few clearly declared ventures into the territories of social democracy, left-liberalism or nationalism. If we look at the ideological arguments that were emphasised most strongly (Table 3), we find that classic socialist topics feature heavily. Thus, it is debated whether the Constitution allows for better or worse regulation of market forces within France and Europe. Aspects of this that are also frequently mentioned include the control of social and fiscal dumping, the harmonisation of social rights and political control of the ECB.

The most frequently and prominently used argument is that the Constitution enables or hinders the creation of a Social Europe, a topic that came to define the debate in the run-up to the national referendum in May 2005 (Wagner, 2005). This was not, however, a new concern of the PS: in the June 2004 European elections, the slogan of the PS had already been ‘Et maintenant l’Europe sociale’ (And now, a Social Europe). The dominance of this concept is arguably due to its overwhelmingly positive connotations and limited clear practical implications. It is thus vague and unrestricting enough to be used by any politician. Another frequent argument concerns the necessity of economic compromise in the EU.

Considering each side of the debate separately, we can see that the ‘yes’ camp frequently used two non-economic arguments: foreign policy and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Here, the Constitution provides clear changes that also find generally broad agreement within the PS, so it is not surprising that defenders of the Constitution would stress these topics. Meanwhile, opponents of ratification emphasised economic arguments more strongly, with fiscal and social dumping and the need for a Social Europe playing an especially frequent role.

(Table 3 about here)

Table 4 shows the presence of non-economic lines of reasoning within the debate and confirms that New Politics arguments played a relatively small role in the discussion. Thus, overt TAN argumentation is hardly present and employed only as frequently than the topic of the protection of France’s secularist tradition. It was mainly the opponents of ratification who referred to TAN arguments, mentioning either the threat to national sovereignty or the negative influence of cosmopolitan elites. It is nevertheless worth noting that economic arguments often have nationalist undercurrents, especially those concerning fiscal and social dumping or out-sourcing and off-shoring. While nationalism was not overtly part of the Socialist debate, its presence should not be underestimated.

(Table 4 about here)

At first sight, GAL arguments seem to be used more strongly by supporters of ratification, and not, as expected, equally by both sides. This is due mainly to their frequent reference to the Charter of Fundamental Rights. However, the Charter was not presented as a way to protect human rights; rather, the significance of the economic and social rights contained within the Charter was underlined, so the relative strength of the GAL score is deceptive. Indeed, it is quite surprising how little reference there is to transparency, the environment, European citizenship or participatory democracy.

Thus, most of the arguments were economic and part of the traditional Left/Right political spectrum. To what extent, however, was the terrain of the debate socialist rather than social democratic? I have pinpointed two aspects of social democratic rhetoric: first, a tendency explicitly to endorse political and economic compromise; second, an absence of socialist economic concerns.

Opponents of ratification frequently argued that the PS should not compromise its political aims on the European stage and often opposed the idea that the PS need water down its economic programme (Table 5). Their discourse, then, seems clearly socialist. However, PS Eurosceptics were not opposed by Third Way social democrats. While many documents include the explicit argument that political compromise is a necessity in the EU, supporters of ratification were split, as many did not present the Constitution as a compromise on the economic level. In fact, they insisted that PS priorities would and could be pursued under the framework of the new Treaty.

(Table 5 about here)

This conclusion is supported if we compare the emphasis on socialist economic arguments on each side of the debate (Table 4). Even supporters of ratification mention socialist concerns frequently: instead of denying the validity of leftist economic policies, they argue that the Constitution will not hinder their pursuit. Interestingly, the EU is also never criticised for regulating too much, a frequent source of opposition to Brussels in other European countries. Nonetheless, total emphasis of socialist arguments is still stronger in the 'no' camp, lending support to the hypothesis that advocates of ratification used more centrist rhetoric without clearly falling into the social democratic category. While New Labour in Britain often argues against the red-tape culture of Brussels, the French PS still unanimously endorses the more traditional socialist concerns of market regulation, social rights, worker protection and public services.

### *Ideological differences among opponents of ratification*

The opponents of ratification were not a homogenous group, and this was evident in their rhetoric as well (Table 6). A comparison of opponents within the majority and the minority factions shows that the former were less radical in their Euroscepticism. For example, they were more likely to paint a negative picture of the current state of the EU. Though the differences do not reach statistical significance, there are indications that majority faction members were more likely to mention specific changes and describe integration as necessary.

(Table 6 about here)

On economic policy, the members of the minority factions were more socialist: they more strongly emphasised left-wing concerns and more frequently rejected political compromise than their fellow opponents of ratification from the majority faction.<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, they were also clearly more nationalist in their argumentation, with two thirds of documents mentioning TAN topics compared to almost none from the majority faction. On GAL arguments, no difference is detectable. Overall, we have strong evidence that the minority factions are more intransigent in their opposition to the EU, and that this opposition is ideologically distinct even from anti-ratification members of the majority faction. This is in keeping with our third hypothesis.

### Consequences for the 2005 referendum

For the PS, there were two difficulties in defending a unified pro-ratification position vis-à-vis the Constitution: one strategic, one ideological. Strategically, it is tempting for an opposition party to use the opportunity of a referendum to mobilise against the government (Crum, 2007). If it decides to take the same position as the government, then it runs the danger of

blurring its distinctive political identity and ideological clarity. Ideologically, the French extreme Left, strong in the 2004 elections, had incorporated Eurosceptic rhetoric into its anti-globalisation agenda (Crespy, 2008). This had also had an effect on the discourse of the minority factions within the PS.

If Hollande believed that the internal referendum would settle these strategic and ideological tensions, then he was mistaken: any such hope proved to be a ‘false dawn’ (Marthaler, 2005: 230). The divisions within the party continued, with Fabius and representatives of the minority factions campaigning for a ‘no’ vote in the referendum of 29 May 2005. These divisions are one of the factors that led to the popular rejection of the Constitution. The cues provided by parties have a powerful effect on voting behaviour in referendums; however, such cues are far weaker if the party is visibly divided (LeDuc, 2002; deVreese, 2006). As it was, PS supporters, 56 per cent of whom voted ‘no’ in the 2005 referendum, made up almost 30 per cent of the total number of ‘no’ votes (Marthaler, 2005: 234f.).

The internal referendum in 2004 foreshadowed the rhetoric that would dominate the popular debate in the run-up to the vote. As in the discussion preceding the PS referendum, the emphasis would be on the economic consequences of European integration. For example, the services directive and the ‘Polish plumber’ became key topics in the debate (Wagner, 2005). In a post-referendum Eurobarometer survey, four out of the top five reasons for voting ‘no’ concerned the French economy and social model (Taggart, 2006: 16). We have also seen that pro-ratification politicians stressed most heavily non-economic arguments such as foreign policy and the Charter of Fundamental Rights: in a climate focused on the economy, the concentration on such topics already indicated the difficulties pro-Constitution politicians would have in making the case for ratification.

## **Conclusion**

During the debate preceding the 2004 internal referendum, Euroscepticism in the French PS presented itself in terms that were overwhelmingly soft and policy-based; a strategy of ‘voice’ was advocated. Pro-ratification politicians focused on consensual issues such as foreign policy and the Charter of Fundamental Rights and advocated ‘voice’ as well as ‘loyalty’.

Ideologically, the debate focussed overwhelmingly on economic policy and the extent to which European integration helped or hindered the pursuit of socialist policies. Opponents of ratification were consistently more left-wing economically than supporters of the Constitution. A clear differentiation was also visible within the ‘no’ camp itself, with majority faction members more economically centrist and more positive about the EU than politicians from the minority factions. Overall, this supports Hooghe et al.’s (2002) thesis that Euroscepticism can largely be integrated within the traditional Left/Right political spectrum. Yet, the specificity of the PS is also clear, as even supporters of ratification presented themselves in socialist terms. At least rhetorically, the PS is still faithful to its socialist traditions.

The EU and the Constitution continue to divide the PS. When, on 5 February 2008, the *Congrès* in Versailles adopted the constitutional changes necessary to adopt the Lisbon Treaty, the Socialists were notably split.<sup>7</sup> Though the party leadership had recommended abstention, only 142 parliamentarians followed this advice, while 121 voted against and 32 in favour of the constitutional revision. In the PS, the issue of Europe remains far from settled.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> 'Socialist' refers to the French PS, whereas 'socialist' refers to ideology.

<sup>2</sup> **Opposition to European integration has historically also found fertile ground in PS factions, for example in Jean-Pierre Chevènement's CERES faction, which in 1993 became the basis for his republican (and anti-Maastricht) party, *Mouvement des citoyens***

**(Duseigneur, 2005: 82).**

<sup>3</sup> For the complete text of each motion, see

[www.psinfo.net/documents/congres/dijon/motions](http://www.psinfo.net/documents/congres/dijon/motions).

<sup>4</sup> Most of these documents were taken from [www.psinfo.net](http://www.psinfo.net). Other sources include

[www.ouisocialiste.net](http://www.ouisocialiste.net), [www.nonsocialiste.net](http://www.nonsocialiste.net), the websites of the various courants, as well as federation websites.

<sup>5</sup> **There is no statistically significant difference in the length of pro- and anti-ratification documents.**

<sup>6</sup> **Majority faction members who opposed ratification are also ideologically distinct from their fellow faction members in favour of the Constitution. For example, the difference in the emphasis on Socialist topics remains significant at  $p < 0.5$  (one-sided t-test).**

<sup>7</sup> Roger, P. 'La révision constitutionnelle adoptée en congrès par 540 voix contre 181', *Le Monde*, 5 February 2008, [http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2008/02/05/la-revision-constitutionnelle-adoptee-en-congres-par-540-voix-contre-181\\_1007512\\_823448.html#ens\\_id=958156](http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2008/02/05/la-revision-constitutionnelle-adoptee-en-congres-par-540-voix-contre-181_1007512_823448.html#ens_id=958156).

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## **Appendix: Coding frame**

### **Domain 1: Current state of EU, Euroscepticism and stance on Constitution**

101/102: Current state of EU – positive/negative

The current state of the EU is positive (101) / negative(102).

103/104: Integration – Necessary/optional

EU integration is a necessity (103) / an optional process (104).

105/106: Exit – positive/negative

The consequences of leaving the EU would be positive (105) / negative (106).

107/108: Non-ratification – positive/negative

Rejecting the Constitution would have positive consequences, such as a “crise salutaire” and effective renegotiation of the document (107) / negative consequences, such as a crisis in EU.

Renegotiation would not lead to a better document (108).

109: Changes

Specific changes should be made to the Constitution.

110: Policy integration – positive

Further European integration of policy areas is a good thing.

111: Policy integration – policy-based opposition

Integration of a specific policy area is opposed. The Constitution extends EU integration into an area that should not become an EU concern.

112: Policy integration – national-interest opposition

Integration is opposed in order to protect the national interest.

113/114: Institutions – positive/negative

The reforms of the EU institutions in the Constitution are positive (113) / negative (114).

115: Political pragmatism – positive

In European politics, it is necessary to compromise. The Constitution is the result of detailed negotiations. The party cannot change the outcome on its own.

116: Political pragmatism – negative

The party should not compromise its priorities in order to achieve European integration.

## **Domain 2: Economic Left/Right**

201/202: Social Europe – positive/negative

The Constitution will increase or not affect negatively the ability to create a ‘Social Europe’ (201) / decrease the ability to create a ‘Social Europe’ (202).

203/204: Globalisation – positive/negative

The Constitution will increase or not affect negatively (203) / decrease (204) the ability to control the negative economic effects of globalisation.

205/206: Off-shoring – positive/negative

The Constitution will increase or not affect negatively (205) / decrease (206) the ability to control off-shoring.

207/208: Social dumping – positive

The Constitution will increase or not affect negatively (207) / decrease (208) the ability to control social dumping.

209/210: Fiscal dumping – positive/negative

The Constitution will increase or not affect negatively (209) / decrease (210) the ability to control fiscal dumping.

211/212: ECB – positive/negative

The Constitution’s effect on the ability to exert political control over the ECB is positive (211) / negative (212).

213/214: Harmonisation of social rights – positive/negative

The Constitution will increase or not affect negatively (213) / decrease (214) the ability to harmonise social rights.

215/216: Market forces – positive

The Constitution will increase or not affect negatively (215) / decrease (216) the ability to control market forces.

217/218: Public control of capital flows – positive/negative

The Constitution's effect on the ability to increase public control of capital flows is positive (217) / negative (218).

219/220: public investment – positive

The Constitution's effect on the ability to increase public investment is positive (219) / negative (220).

221/220: right to work – positive/negative

The Constitution's effect on the creation of a right to work is positive (221) / negative (222).

223/224: European minimum wage – positive/negative

The Constitution's effect on the creation of a European minimum wage is positive (223) / negative (224).

225/226: Unions – positive/negative

The Constitution helps protect (225) / does not help or weakens (226) the power and influence of unions.

227/228: Full employment – positive

The Constitution makes it easier (227) / does not make it easier (228) to attain the goal of full employment.

229/230: Public services – positive/negative

The Constitution helps protect (229) / harms the ability to protect (230) public services from the demands of the market.

231: Socialist policies – unnecessary

Socialist policies should not or need not be pursued to achieve desired political aims

232: Regulation

Regulation needs to be reduced; the Constitution can help reduce regulation; the Constitution

makes it harder to reduce regulation, increases regulation.

233: Economic pragmatism – positive

In economic policy, it is necessary to compromise. There are boundaries to the ability to set autonomous economic policy.

234: Economic pragmatism – negative

The party should not compromise on its policy priorities.

### **Domain 3: GAL arguments**

301/302: Charter of Fundamental Rights – positive/negative

The Charter of Fundamental Rights is a good thing (301) / does not go far enough (302).

303/304: Transparency – positive/negative

The Constitution increases (303) / does not increase (304) EU transparency.

305/306: Environment – positive/negative

The Constitution makes it easier (305) / harder (306) to protect the environment.

307/308: Participatory democracy – positive/negative

The Constitution increases (307) / does not increase significantly (308) the scope for participatory democracy.

309/310: European citizenship – positive/negative

The Constitution has a positive (309) / negative (310) effect on the evolution of European citizenship.

311/312: Decentralisation – positive/negative

The Constitution increases (311) / decreases (312) possibilities for decentralisation.

313/314: Diversity – positive/negative

The Constitution has a positive (313) / negative (314) effect on protecting and increasing diversity.

315/316: Minorities – positive/negative

The Constitution has a positive (315) / negative (316) effect on the protection of minority rights (e.g., racism, sexism, xenophobia, asylum-seekers)

317: North-South relations – positive/negative

The Constitution will have a positive (317) / negative (318) effect on the ability of aid the development of the Global South and improve trade justice.

#### **Domain 4: TAN arguments**

401/402: National sovereignty – positive/negative

The Constitution's effect on national sovereignty is positive (401) / negative. National sovereignty is undermined (402).

403/404: International agencies – positive/negative

The Constitution decreases or does not increase (403) / increases (404) the role of anonymous, unelected, distant international agencies.

405/406: Cosmopolitan elites – positive/negative

The Constitution decreases or does not increase (405) / increases (406) the influence of cosmopolitan elites.

407/408: Immigration – positive/negative

The Constitution will help limit (407) / will not limit (408) immigration and/or asylum.

409/410: Foreign cultural influences – positive/negative

The Constitution will help limit (409) / will not help limit (410) foreign cultural influences.

#### **Domain 5: Other**

501/502: Foreign policy – positive/negative

The Constitution will have a positive (501) / negative (502) effect on the EU's ability to be a stronger international actor and be independent of the USA.

503/504: Secularism – positive/negative

The Constitution will not attack (503) / will damage (504) the French principle of *laïcité*.

505: Political personalities

Support/opposition to the Constitution advocated because specific politicians support/oppose it.

506: Party faction

Support/opposition to the Constitution advocated because specific party factions support/oppose it.

507: Electoral tactics

Support/opposition to the Constitution advocated because it is a good electoral tactic and will increase electoral success

Table 1: Information on document sample (n=112).

Stance	n	Authors	n	Source	n
Pro-ratification	53	Individuals (48)	79	News sources	40
Anti-ratification	57	Groups (17)	33	Speeches	28
Abstention	2			Public documents	43

Table 2: Euroscepticism in the Constitution debate

Arguments	Presence of arguments (in per cent of documents)		Sig.
	Pro-ratification (n=53)	Anti-ratification (n=57)	
<i>Pro-European arguments</i>			
EU: positive	40	0	***
Integration: necessary	81	67	*
Non-ratification: negative consequences	74	2	***
Institutional reforms: positive	66	7	***
Further policy integration: positive	64	61	-
<i>Eurosceptic arguments</i>			
EU: negative	23	56	***
Integration: optional	2	2	-
Non-ratification: positive consequences	8	68	***
Institutional reforms: negative	15	72	***
Proposal of specific changes	6	32	***
<i>Policy-based Euroscepticism</i>			
Policy-based criticism	11	70	***
<i>National-interest Euroscepticism</i>			
National-interest-based criticism	0	9	-
TAN topics (Domain 4)	0	37	***
<i>Hard Euroscepticism</i>			
Exit: positive consequences	0	0	-
Exit: negative consequences	0	0	-

Note: Significance levels are the p-values of the Chi-square test of independence. \*: p<.1, \*\*: p<.05, \*\*\*: p<.01

p<.05, \*\*\*: p<.01

Table 3: Top 10 arguments in the Constitution debate (excluding Domain 1 arguments)

most emphasised arguments	Presence (in % of documents)			Sig.
	All documents	Pro-ratification	Anti-ratification	
Social Europe	54	47	60	-
Market forces	54	43	67	**
Economic compromise	53	49	54	-
Public services	49	49	51	-
Fiscal dumping	48	26	67	***
Harmonisation of social rights	48	34	63	***
Foreign policy	48	51	47	-
Charter of Fundamental Rights	43	55	33	***
Social dumping	42	26	56	***
Political control of the ECB	38	30	47	*

Note: Significance levels are the p-values of the Chi-square test of independence for pro- and anti-ratification documents. \*: p<.1, \*\*: p<.05, \*\*\*: p<.01

Table 4: Presence of non-Left/Right arguments in the Constitution debate

	All documents		Pro-ratification		Anti-ratification		Sig.
	% of docs	Mean number of arguments	% of docs	Mean number of arguments	% of docs	Mean number of arguments	
Socialism	90	4.7	87	3.8	95	5.5	***
GAL	54	1.2	68	1.8	42	0.6	***
TAN	28	0.3	19	0.3	37	0.4	-
Foreign Policy	47		51		46		
Secularism	28		25		32		
Party Politics	30		32		30		

Note: Significance levels are the one-sided p-values of the two-sample t-test for the

comparison of means; the means of pro- and anti-ratification documents are compared \*:

p<.1, \*\*: p<.05, \*\*\*: p<.01

Table 5: Presence of social democratic arguments in the Constitution debate

Presence of argument (in %)	Pro-ratification	Anti-ratification	Sig.
political compromise (positive)	58	7	***
political compromise (negative)	26	77	***
economic compromise (positive)	26	2	***
economic compromise (negative)	28	54	***

Note: Significance levels are the p-values of the Chi-square test of independence. \*: p<.1, \*\*: p<.05, \*\*\*: p<.01

Table 6: Comparison of majority and minority faction opponents of ratification

	Majority faction (n=25)	Minority faction (n=24)	Sig.
<i>Level of Euroscepticism</i>	Presence of arguments (in %)		
EU: negative	44	83	***
Proposal of specific changes	44	29	-
Integration necessary	72	58	-
Policy-based criticism	76	75	-
<i>Ideology of Euroscepticism</i>			
TAN topics (negative)	8	58	***
GAL topics (negative)	32	46	-
political compromise (negative)	64	88	*
economic compromise (negative)	40	63	-
<i>Ideological emphasis</i>	Mean number of arguments		
Socialist	4.9	6.3	**
GAL	0.7	0.6	-
TAN	0.1	0.6	***

Note: Significance levels are the p-values of the Chi-square test of independence (for the presence of arguments) and the one-sided p-values two-sample t-test (for the comparison of mean number of arguments). \*: p<.1, \*\*: p<.05, \*\*\*: p<.01