Committed to Democracy?

A Discourse Analysis of the European Parliament

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IV
Abstract

The European Union is facing a triple crisis: an institutional crisis, an economic crisis and a democratic crisis. This thesis takes the democratic crisis and the democratic deficit of the European Union as its starting point. With the goal of examining what kind of democracy the Members of the European Parliament commit themselves to in the plenary debates and the implications this would have for European integration, I here examine debates on treaty change in the fifth and sixth European parliaments (1999-2009). Using a combination of grounded theory method and quantitative text analysis I conduct an analysis of the discourses on democracy present. The main result of this is that the MEPs in their plenary speeches commit to one of two main models: EU as an intergovernmental organisation or EU as a federal state. In addition to the main dimensions, there are a number of sub-discourses present which have here been used to illustrate the space found between the two end-points of the discursive spectrum.
Acknowledgements

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Hanna Karv
Oslo, May 2012
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1 The State of the Union and the State of Democracy

Throughout its existence the European Union (EU) has been faced with one crisis after the other, but so far each crisis has been followed by further integration. For instance the empty chair crisis in 1965 was followed by the Merger Treaty in 1967 and the accession of the UK, Ireland and Denmark 1973, or the Santer crisis in 1999 was later followed by both enlargement in 2004 and 2007 and deepening integration in form of both the Nice and Lisbon Treaties. Since the beginning of the new millennium the crisis discourse seems to have become more acute. There are many accounts of what problems the European Union is facing and what the roots of these problems are. However, many seem to point in three directions (see e.g. Ágh, 2010; Menéndez, 2011): (1) the economic crisis – the PIIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain) crisis – which begun with the sub-prime bubble bursting in the USA in the fall of 2008 and whose latest twist is the bailouts of Greece, Portugal and Ireland, with speculations on the state of the Italian and Spanish state debts increasing on an almost daily basis; (2) the post-enlargement state of the Union, which both includes an enlargement fatigue and problems with the decision-making processes as well as the institutional make up. The inefficiency of the decision-making in an EU composed of 27 states was an important driving force behind the EU’s attempt to create a constitution for itself. However, as is well known by now, this attempt failed and the outcome is the oft-regarded sub-optimal Lisbon Treaty, which left many of the institutional problems that the European Union faced before the reform unresolved, including; (3) the democratic deficit.

The accusation of a democratic deficit implies that the European Union is to some extent lacking democracy. The reason given for this is first and foremost its complicated nature, which makes it hard for ordinary citizens to understand how it works and makes them less motivated to participate in the election process, as seen by the low and sinking turn-out for the European elections. The allegations of a democratic deficit are also made with regards to the institutional make-up of the European Union, referring to the weak position of the European Parliament (EP) and the lack of control by the national parliaments, both in relation to the European Council and the Commission. The democratic deficit is thus a combination of a lack of interest and a lack of accountability on the part of the citizens.
In his 2011 ‘State of the Union’ address, Commission President José Manuel Barroso called the current crisis ‘the biggest challenge in the history of our Union’. At the time of writing, the challenge has been all but resolved. The current economic and institutional crises combined with the democratic deficit debate constitute the background for my thesis. I will be focusing on the perspective of one institution, the European Parliament, or more precisely the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). The task of this thesis is to answer the question: *What kind of democracy do the members of the European Parliament commit themselves to?* I will answer this question by conducting a discourse analysis of the concept of democracy in two European Parliaments: 1999-2004 and 2004-2009.

1.1 Research Question

In my thesis I will focus on the problem of the democratic deficit through analysing the concept of democracy in plenary debates in the European Parliament from 1999 to 2009, a period spanning two different parliaments: 1999-2004 and 2004-2009. The European Parliament is the only directly elected institution in the European Union. Thereby it is also the only institution entrusted with the task of directly representing the European citizens in the EU system. According to the ideals of representative democracy (arguably applicable to the EU in case of the Parliament), the Members of the European Parliament should represent the views and interests of their constituents. However, studies find that the MEPs are not representative of their constituents, neither in their views nor in their socio-economic background (Hooghe, 2003; Norris and Franklin, 1997). The MEPs, due to their position in the EU system of powers, can be considered part of the euro-elite, but unlike the other members of the elite, they are directly responsible to the public. In view of this unique position in the system, studying the MEPs and their views on democracy becomes even more important.

Why then study plenary debates and argumentation? The underlying assumption in this study is that the mere aggregation of votes does not tell the whole story when it comes to investigating how opinions are translated to actions in the Parliament, i.e. voting behaviour, as can be proven by for instance Kenneth Arrow’s impossibility theorem (Arrow, 1951). The roll-call vote can rather easily result in sub-optimal solutions. It thus becomes important to investigate what the debate foregoing the actual voting can contribute with in terms of explaining why the outcome of the vote is what it is. Another argument for investigating the
parliamentary debates is that debates provide justification and are essential components of any democratic system. Even in the Schumpeterian elite model of democracy (cf. Schumpeter, 1994), where the role of the citizen has been reduced to a voter at elections, in order for the voters to be able to hold their representatives accountable at elections they have to understand the policy outcomes and how the representatives have contributed to this. In order for them to understand the policy outcomes they have to have some reasons given to them for the decisions made. Hence, even in the most minimalist model of democracy the right to be given justification is important.

Parliamentary debates thus fulfil the important democratic function of providing justification of decisions to be made to the subjects of these decisions. Rainer Forst (2007) has argued that democratic legitimacy presupposes that every individual has a right to justification for the decision/law to be binding to him/her. He, in fact, constructs the right to justification as the most basic of rights: every person has the right to be given a reason for the way they are treated and only that person can decide on the validity of the reason provided. A similar conclusion is reached by Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson (1996) regarding the importance of reason-giving for democratic legitimacy in what they term ‘the principle of reciprocity’. They find that making moral claims based on pre-deliberative generality are insufficient for making binding political decisions. Rather, in order to make a binding decision the claim must be justifiable to the public and the reasons whereby it is justifiable ‘must be mutually acceptable in the sense that they can be acknowledged by each citizen in circumstances of equal advantage (even by citizens who disagree with the conclusions that the reasons are intended to justify)’ (Gutmann and Thompson, 1996: 54). Providing justification of decisions made to the public is thus one of the key democratic functions of the parliamentary debate.

In my thesis I intend to examine what kind of democracy the Members of the European Parliament commit themselves to through analysing what conception of democracy they use in the plenary debates. The underlying assumption is that the MEPs’ behaviour will in part be determined by their ideas, an assumption that will be discussed more in-depth in Chapter 3. Hence uncovering the democratic commitments they make to the public in the plenary debates makes it possible to say something about the possible direction(s) of the European project in the future. Another important mechanism here is the claiming of responsibility at elections. If the MEPs commit themselves to a certain position they can also be expected to
act according to it as to appear worthy of the mandate entrusted with them by the voters, who will be able to claim responsibility for the choices made at the next election. By determining how the MEPs view European democracy and what kind of commitments they make, it becomes possible to make a contribution to the wider debate on what kind of political animal the European Union is and what it can become.

The importance of ideas as determinants of behaviour has already been noted by Max Weber, who, talking about what he termed ‘collective concepts’, such as state, nation, family, etc., finds that the concepts, i.e. the ideas, ‘have a meaning in the minds of individual persons, partly as of something actually existing, partly as something with normative authority. [...] Actors thus in part orient their action to them, and in this role such ideas have a powerful, often a decisive, causal significance on the course of action of real individuals.’ (Weber, 1968: 14) Ideas determine action, thus by determining how the MEPs view the European project it becomes possible to uncover in what direction the European Union will develop if the European Parliament is to decide. The overarching goal of the thesis is thus to, through analysing how the MEPs argue for European democracy, find (at least a partial) answer to the question what the European Union is and by answering this question, to contribute to the ongoing discussion on the nature and future of European democracy.

1.2 The Way Ahead

During the course of the last years, the crisis of the European Union seems to have deepened. Agustín José Menéndez’ analysis of the last five years is that ‘the European Union has mutated and moved in an undemocratic, unprogressive and imperialistic direction’ (Menéndez, 2011: 2). Whether or not one agrees with that analysis, it is clear that – to paraphrase Shakespeare – something is rotten in the state of Brussels and this something is causing the European people to question the legitimacy, and even the existence, of the EU. The European Union has not only to deal with the economic crisis but also with its democratic deficit; otherwise these crises are bound to repeat themselves in the future.

A first step on the way to solving the problems with democracy in Europe is for the European Union to decide what it is and what it should be, as that makes it possible to develop proper standards against which the performance of the Union can be measured, and here this thesis makes its thrust. Through analysing what kind of European democracy the MEPs commit
themselves to, it becomes possible to find one answer to the question of how the EU is perceived and shine some light on where European project might be heading. Will the outcome of also this crisis be more integration or has the EU reached its breaking point?

The work proceeds as follows: In Chapter 2 I will outline the democratic role of the European Parliament in the EU institutional system with a special focus on the working of the plenary debates as that is the area of study here. I will also provide a more in-depth discussion on the role of the European Parliament in the debate on the democratic deficit and provide the background and outcomes of the treaty revision processes analysed here from the perspective of the European Parliament. Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical assumptions underlying the research and presents the methodology used in this project. Chapter 4 contains a presentation of the debates as well as an outline of the framing used to define the problem at hand. In Chapter 5 I present my analysis of the debates and on the basis of the findings develop two models for European democracy. Chapter 6 summarises and concludes.
2 The Democratic Role of the European Parliament

Democratic politics is ‘a process by which citizens construct interpretations of collective difficulties, their causes and their remediation, and by which they achieve reasoned discussion of purposes, ends, and identities’ (March and Olsen, 1995: 84). The main arena for this today is the parliament. The word ‘parliament’ derives from the French verb ‘parler’ meaning ‘to talk’ and that is what is done in a parliament – it is a place where the representatives of the people come together to discuss and decide on the matters of the state. The citizens of the area under the parliament’s jurisdiction select their representatives with regular intervals and if the citizens are dissatisfied with how the representative has behaved, they have the chance to claim responsibility. This model of democracy, representative democracy, is the most common way to organise a democratic state today.

The Lisbon Treaty says that ‘the functioning of the Union shall be founded on representative democracy’ (Art. 10.1 TEU). Through this statement, the European Union has committed itself to democracy and set representative democracy as the underlying democratic principle upon which it will operate. Systems of representative governments are institutional frameworks designed for ‘realizing the democratic ideal of giving kratos to the demos, power to the people’ (Pettit, 2009: 61). In the EU institutional framework, the task of representing the citizens has been assigned to the European Parliament (Art. 10.2 TEU). The European Parliament therefore becomes the only European institution directly responsible to the citizens in the EU system of government (see Figure 2.1 below for an overview of the system of representation at the European level). There is also indirect representation of the citizens through the national governments who are represented in the Council and who also nominate the commissioners. The citizens can also be represented through interest groups who will lobby the national governments and the European institutions on their behalf, but the only direct representation is the European Parliament.
The European Parliament works very much like the national parliaments do. In this chapter I will discuss the role of the European Parliament in the European Union institutional system. I begin with an outline how the European Parliament operates, especially focusing on the plenary debates, as this is relevant for the task ahead. The goal is to provide an overview of how the EP works while also critically examining its methods of operation. This will be followed by a discussion on what the democratic deficit is and how it is related to the European Parliament (2.2). The section examines the role of the EP in the democratic deficit debate and how the EP is contributing or can help alleviate the problem, thereby providing a background for my research. The final section (2.3) provides an overview of the treaty revision process from the perspective of the European Parliament. This provides the context in which the debates analysed here are held.

## 2.1 The Working of the European Parliament

The European Parliament is the only EU institution to directly represent the citizens in the EU system. It has a long history of evolving powers and the powers it has today would not have been possible without a continuous re-defining of its own role and a subsequent claim of power with each treaty revision. That which today is the European Parliament begun in 1952 as the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community. In 1958 it was renamed the European Parliamentary Assembly, and finally the European Parliament in 1962. The first direct elections to the Parliament were held in 1979 and have been held every five
years since then. The European Parliament is elected for a five-year term by direct election in all EU member states. The current parliament was elected in 2009 and will serve until 2014. The number of seats has grown with each enlargement, starting from 410 in 1979 until today’s 754 representatives. The Lisbon Treaty sets the number of seats to a maximum of 750 plus the president taking effect in 2014. The seats are allocated on the basis of state population size, weighted in favour of the smaller states. Germany as the largest state has 99 seats in the parliament and Malta, as the smallest has five.

In order to organise the discussion, the work in the parliament is focused around political groups or euro-parties. After an election has been held, the representatives elected from each member state group together along party rather than national lines, roughly corresponding to the political parties of the member states. Once elected, the MEPs are therefore expected to represent the interests of all Europeans rather than only the point of view of the member state from which the MEP has been elected. The supranational character of the EP can be seen in the increased politicisation of the European Parliament whereby the differences are structured more along political than national lines (Hix, 2008). However, there is also evidence suggesting that once MEPs do break group discipline they do so along national lines (Hix, 2002). The largest groups in the Parliament have traditionally been either the Christian Democrats (EPP) or the Social Democrat and Socialist (P&S) group. In the current parliament the Christian Democrats are the biggest with 271 seats, followed by the Socialists with 190 seats and the Liberals (ALDE) with 84 seats (for an overview of the distribution of seats in the EP over the last three parliaments, see Table 2.1). The amount and names of groups vary between parliaments as new groups are formed after each election. In order to form a parliamentary group, 25 MEPs representing six different member states are required.

The parliament convenes one week every month in Strasbourg, with meetings outside of that week held in Brussels. Plenary debates are usually built around a prepared report relating to current events in the European Union, such as Council meetings or the shift of Council presidency, or follow-up of certain topics, like democracy and human rights in third countries. Debates are also held on issues on which the EP does not have any formal powers, such as foreign policy. Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan Slapin (2009: 591) found that there were

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1 ‘Members of the European Parliament shall exercise their mandate independently. They shall not be bound by any instructions and shall not receive a binding mandate.’ (Article 2, Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament).
more than 2,000 different agenda items in the debates in the 1999-2004 Parliament, and the agenda is not likely to decrease with the increasing powers of the EP after the treaty revisions. Studies have also found the quality of the parliamentary deliberation to be high with the MEPs showing high levels of respect towards one another (Lord and Tamvaki, 2011) and voting behaviour to be increasingly determined by a traditional left-right division (Hix, Noury and Roland, 2007) thereby making it resemble national parliaments more and more.

Table 2.1  Distribution of seats in the European Parliament 1999-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPP - European People's Party (Christian Democrats)</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S&amp;D - Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in Europe (center-left)</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALDE - Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (liberal)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greens/EFA - Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens and regionalists/nationalists)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUE/NGL - European United Left-Nordic Green Left (left-wing)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECR - European Conservatives and Reformists Group (right-wing)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFD - Europe of Freedom and Democracy (Eurosceptic)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEN - Union for Europe of the Nations Group (national conservative)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDI - Technical Group of Independent Members (mixed group)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA - Non-attached</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total seats</strong></td>
<td><strong>626</strong></td>
<td><strong>732</strong></td>
<td><strong>754</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once in session, the work in the parliament is regulated by the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, a document updated with every parliament, and with the latest edition (January 2012) stretching over 297 pages. It is fair to say that the room for manoeuvre in the Parliament is strictly limited. Due to the size of the Parliament it is not possible for every

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2 I have here used the names of the groups present in the 2009-2014 Parliament. The party groups often reform after election and also during the term, but the larger groups tend to be more stable than the smaller ones. S&D were previously named PES (Party of European Socialists) and in the 5th and 6th parliaments the EPP grouped together with the European Democrats (ED) forming EPP-ED group. ALDE was in the 5th term ELDR (Group of the European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party). The Greens grouped together with the EFA in the 5th and 6th terms. EFD grew out of the IND/DEM (Independence/Democracy) group in the 6th parliament and the EDD (Group for a Europe of Democracies and Diversities) group in the 5th parliament.
MEPs to have their say on every matter, therefore speaking time is allocated between the euro-
parties, the rapporteurs, authors of motions for resolutions and the representatives of other
institutions (if attending the session). The Rules of Procedure state that speaking time during
plenary sessions will, after the initial round when every group receives an equal amount of
time, be allocated on the basis of the size of the group, hence the larger party groups get more
floor time. Although the speaking time has no official limit on most matters, it is often set to
a maximum of three minutes (Judge and Earnshaw, 2003: 239), meaning that the time the
MEPs have for stating their matters is very limited. The president of the parliament, or one of
the vice-presidents if the first is unable to attend, leads the plenary debate. The leader of the
debates has the right to interrupt the speaker should he or she go off topic or behave
inappropriately, and in ‘exceptionally serious cases of disorder or disruption’ (Article 153
Rules of Procedure) the president can be asked to reprimand the MEPs. It is stipulated that:

*Members' conduct shall be characterised by mutual respect, be based on the values and
principles laid down in the basic texts on which the European Union is founded, respect
the dignity of Parliament and not compromise the smooth conduct of parliamentary
business or disturb the peace and quiet of any of Parliament's premises.*

Article 9.2, Rules of Procedure

Reprimands by the president for inappropriate behaviour are a rare occasion and the MEPs
generally show high standards of respect and of argumentation during the plenary sessions.
Despite the strict regulation by the Rules of Procedure, the President and the party discipline
of the euro-parties, the Rules also state that: ‘The application of this Rule shall in no way
detract from the liveliness of parliamentary debates nor undermine Members’ freedom of
speech’ (Article 9.3). The goal is thus a free debate where MEPs are able to express their
opinions and state their arguments. Considering the strict regulation of the debates, is it
possible to say that the parliamentary debates are free and fair?

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3 The rules of procedure Article 149 state that: ‘(2) Members may not speak unless called upon to do so by the
President. […] (3) The President may draw up […] a list of speakers that includes one or more rounds of
speakers from each political group wishing to speak, in the order of their size, and one non-attached Member. (4)
Speaking time for this part of a debate shall be allocated in accordance with the following criteria: (a) a first
fraction of speaking time shall be divided equally among all the political groups; (b) a further fraction shall be
divided among the political groups in proportion to the total number of their members; (c) the non-attached
Members shall be allocated an overall speaking time based on the fractions allocated to each political group
under points (a) and (b). (5) Where a total speaking time is allocated for several items on the agenda, the political
groups shall inform the President of the fraction of their speaking time to be used for each individual item. […]’.
See Appendix I for the complete article on the allocation of speaking time.
2.1.1 How Free Are the Parliamentary Debates?

Due to the strict regulation of the plenary debates, criticism of a lack of ‘real’ debate in the Parliament has been raised. As the party groups allocate the speaking time within the group beforehand and most statements are prepared, what happens during the plenary session is only a reading out of these opinions to put certain views on the record rather than an attempt to actually try to persuade your opponent to see the other point of view (Scully, 2007: 182). This does, however, have an important function as having their views on record serves the double function of explaining themselves to the party group, thus avoiding punishment by the party group for possible dissent, and providing an opportunity of creating ‘a record of positive activity for their national party’ which improves the chances of re-election in the next European election (Slapin and Proksch, 2010: 334).

It can be argued that the plenary debate is not a real debate as most of the things presented before the parliament are, at least in part, prepared beforehand. Hence there is a loss of the element of spontaneity, as the emphasis of the various speeches may be coordinated within the groups beforehand as to avoid overlap between the speakers. However, the leaders of the political groups do also tend to allow political dissidents to state their opinion in order to make re-election of the candidates more likely and not weaken the group in numbers in the future elections (Slapin and Proksch, 2010: 334). It can therefore be expected to find some dissenting individual opinions in the debates although the extent to which internal differences are allowed to show depends on the group leader who is in charge of the allocation of speaking time. The differing opinions not allowed to be expressed in the plenary debates can therefore be found in the explanation of votes that MEPs are allowed to submit after each vote. Again, one mechanism for putting your opinion on record.

Then there is also the element of language. The European Parliament operates in the 23 official EU languages, with simultaneous interpretation from all languages during the plenary. This means that there are 506 possible combinations of languages with 800 to 1 000 interpreters present during any one session (European Parliament website). As it is difficult to find direct interpretation between all the languages, the established practice is to use English, French and German, as ‘relay languages’. That is, the English, French and German languages are the translations used unless direct translation is available. The effect of this is that there is a danger of losing the subtleties of meaning, the passion of the speeches and also
misunderstandings in case of mistranslation (Scully, 2007: 182). This further adds to the critique of the debates being un-free.

A general critique of parliamentary work is that the representatives do not really represent the views of their electorate but rather drive their own interests, as any rational actor would. The members of parliament would hence pass laws and regulations that father their own (material) interests. This does of course not mean that they would not follow social norms and act in a utilitarian manner, but they are only expected to do so as long as it is in their personal interest. Although this is to some extent true, democratic decision-making as is seen in the representative democracies today require that the representatives justify their decisions to the citizens and at the basis of that justification is the ideal of the ‘unforced force of the better argument’ (Habermas, 1996: 306), whereby citizens and their representatives engage in a reasoned dialogue, which serves the purpose of solving the problems of the society in a way that is acceptable to most citizens. This is the spirit in which the rules of parliamentary procedure, whether national or international, have evolved (March and Olsen, 1995: 85). The goal of parliamentary work is thus ‘to express the mean spirits of interpersonal and inter-group conflict in the form of cooperative, collective problem-solving’ (ibid.). This leads to a situation where ‘political enemies address each other with elaborate forms of politeness; the rules of debate assure that a variety of voices will (at least in principle) be heard and […] even the most obvious appeals to prejudice and self-interest will be expressed in terms of service to the commonweal’ (ibid.).

I will not here go further into whether or not, or to what extent, the debates are free and fair or representative of the opinions of the MEPs. The effects of the ‘civilizing of democratic conflict through procedural and linguistic constraints on discourse’ (ibid.) as well as the limits set by the rules of procedures is something that has to be kept in mind further in the work. These are, however, the realities of the debates in the European Parliament, and as they are given their possible effects on the outcome of the analysis will have to be taken into consideration in this project but cannot be altered. The value in the debates for this purpose lies in that this is the only forum where there is a truly public debate on EU matters by the parliamentarians. Even if the only function should be to ‘put your views in the protocol’ this is still of value as what is of interest here are exactly those views. This is where the MEPs justify their actions to the public, and those justifications, even if allocated within the group and prepared beforehand, with no prospect of actually changing someone’s mind, have an
intrinsic value in themselves in that they form the basis of the discussion with the citizens. It is on the basis of this the MEPs are judged and even if the MEPs are assumed to be acting according to the premises set by rational choice theory it is in their interest to be seen to act for the good of their voters, defend their actions and explain their point of view in a way acceptable to the people that have the power to dismiss or re-elect them at the end of the term.

### 2.2 The European Parliament and the Democratic Deficit

The debate on EU democracy and the democratic deficit has been going on for some time already, and views diverge on whether or not there even is a democratic deficit in the first place. Some say there is no such thing as a democratic deficit, as the EU does not need to be legitimated in the same way as the nation state (cp. Majone, 1998, 2005; Moravcsik, 2002) whereas others say that it is not a democratic deficit but rather a *legitimacy* deficit (Mény, 2002) or a *community* deficit (Etzioni, 2008). Thomas Jensen (2009) draws a parallel between the debate on the democratic deficit and the old Indian children’s tale of the blind men and the elephant. In the tale, the blind men want to know what kind of animal an elephant is, but since they cannot see they feel it with their hands in order to get a picture of what it looks like. However, each man feels a different part of the elephant and once they discuss their discoveries they come to very different conclusions on the characteristics of an elephant. This situation is very similar to the debate on the democratic deficit, where, in the midst of the sheer heterogeneity and range of views, it sometimes seems that one is describing the trunk while the other is describing the ear. Is there then a democratic deficit? And if there is, what does that mean?

The term ‘democratic deficit’ has often been attributed to David Marquand (1979) who in his description of the state of the then European Communities made an argument for more power to the European Parliament. After the implementation of the Single European Act in 1989, and especially after the Maastricht Treaty 1993, the debate has gained momentum, reaching a peak around the time of the Constitutional Treaty in 2004. There is no single definition of the democratic deficit, but the ‘standard version’ (Weiler et al., 1995; Føllesdal and Hix, 2006) usually contains: (1) the increase in supranational executive power combined with a decrease of national parliamentary power and control, which has not been matched by (2) a strengthening of the European Parliament to compensate for this transfer. In relation to this,
(3) the lack of a European ‘demos’ as well as (4) the lack of truly European elections are included. European elections are often regarded as ‘second order elections’, as election campaigns are often conducted on national issues, citizens vote for national parties and generally the election turnout is low. The European Union is also (5) seen to be distant, diffuse and complicated. These factors combined create the foundations for the claim of a democratic deficit.

The democratic deficit is one of the most pressing problems the EU has faced over the last two decades. For the four first decades of its existence, the EU rested on a permissive consensus, a silent agreement given by the EU member states to further integration, which broke down with the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty (Chrysochoou, 2007: 360). After this the European Union has been in search for a way of legitimising itself to its citizens. The permissive consensus has been replaced by a constraining dissensus (Hooghe and Marks, 2009), especially visible after the Constitutional Treaty and the French and Dutch no-votes. Although the EU has tried to tone down the discussion about the democratic deficit it is now too late – the genie is out of the bottle.

As more power has been moved from the national to the supranational level, allegations have been made of a lack of democratic control of the decision-making process and the execution of the decisions made. The role of the European Parliament here, as the only directly elected institution and the institution directly responsible to the citizens, would be to safeguard the democratic qualities of the process. Hence voices have been raised, especially within the EP itself, for increasing the powers of the EP to supervise and to hold the Commission and Council accountable. The EP would constitute the democratic guardian and the source legitimacy input in the process, thereby alleviating the democratic deficit.

How has the European Parliament then managed to fulfil the largely self-proclaimed role as democratic guardian? Through the continuous process of treaty revision, the European Parliament has managed to take more powers for itself, especially with the later treaties. However, despite the increasing power of the Parliament the EU still remains largely dependent on the intergovernmental power of the Council and the EU does not obtain higher levels of trust today than before the increase in the power of the Parliament. As Farrell and Scully points out: ‘While the EP might be the ostensible voice of the people in the EU, giving that body greater powers does nothing to enhance the public legitimacy of the Union’ (Farrell and Scully, 2007: 8). In order for the EU and the Parliament to get more legitimacy in the
eyes of the citizens they will have to earn it. Increasing the supranational powers of the
Parliament does not automatically correspond to an increase in trust levels and legitimacy by
the citizens.

There are also those who say that instead of a democratic deficit there is a legitimacy deficit
(Føllesdal, 2006) or a representation deficit (Farrell and Scully, 2007). A representation
deficit: ‘a mismatch between the growth of the EP’s powers and the representative
capabilities of MEP’s’ as a result of the promotion of party rather than voter preferences in
the electoral system in most member states (Farrell and Scully, 2007: 9). According to this
perspective, the democratic deficit is instead a deficit in the representative capabilities of the
parliament.

Whether or not one finds the argument of a democratic deficit convincing, both proponents
and opponents seem to agree that what the EU is and should be, and by extension whether or
not there is a democratic deficit, is a question of what standards the EU is to measure up to in
the first place. For instance Andrew Moravcsik, one of the most prominent critics of the
democratic deficit thesis, puts it like this: ‘[T]he use of idealistic standards no modern
government can meet, obscures the social context of contemporary European policy-making’,
but ‘if we adopt reasonable criteria for judging democratic governance, then the widespread
criticism of the EU as democratic illegitimate is unsupported by existing empirical evidence’
(Moravcsik, 2002: 605). If European democracy is a question of standards, then what
standards are there for the European Union to measure against?

There is for each democratic state a minimum or core standards that need to be met. Meeting
this minimum means fulfilling a minimum of political equality and democratic control. This
has been in this way defined by James Bohman: ‘democracy is that set of institutions by
which individuals are empowered as free and equal citizens to form and change the conditions
of their common life together, including democracy itself’ (Bohman, 2007: 66, emphasis
added). Given this democratic minimum, how can these standards be defined? One simple
answer here is that the EU needs to be measured against the standards it sets for itself.

The European Union of today begun in 1951 as the European Coal and Steel Community, but
with the Rome Treaty of 1957 the European Economic Communities (EEC) was founded in
order to create ‘an ever-closer union of the peoples of Europe’. However, the first treaties
focused more or less exclusively on the economic aspects of integration and any transfer of
sovereign power to the supranational level was done as a means to promoting the integration of the markets. The Single European Act (SEA) 1986 was the first Treaty to mention democracy. The Maastricht Treaty of 1992 re-affirmed the European Union’s commitment to democracy although at the time it was seen as based on the member states, ‘whose systems of government are founded on the principles of democracy’ (Art. F para. 1 Maastricht Treaty). With the following treaty revisions, the principle of democracy rose on the list of official priorities of the Union, with the consolidated version of the Lisbon Treaty stating already among the first articles that:

The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

(Art. 2 TEU)

The Union’s aim is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples.

(Art. 3.1 TEU)

There have also been a number of EU documents acknowledging the need for more democratic practices, including the White Paper on Governance (2001) and the Commission contribution to the reflection period, Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate (2005). In 2008, the European Parliament Committee on Constitutional Affairs rapporteur Andrzej Wielowieyski found that:

The EU cannot claim to have any traditional sources of legitimacy [...] and has had to claim legitimacy from the integration process itself. The EU claims ‘output legitimacy’ by stressing its role in the creation of a space of peace and shared prosperity and the initiation of concrete projects [...] Yet this claim is now at the point of exhaustion, and is threatened by ideological and moral vacuity. This situation calls for a new source of legitimacy that renews the link between the European Union and its citizens.

(European Parliament, 2008: 2; emphasis original)

The EU itself states that its goal is to promote its values. Through including democracy as number three on the list of values on which the Union is founded and is to promote, it is clear that the EU is committed to democracy. As the Union has committed itself to democratic standards, while recognising that it might not be meeting the same, it becomes important to find out what standards of democracy it is to meet and identify ways of meeting them. Thus, it is not only reasonable but necessary to judge the European Union by the same standards that
it sets for itself. One indicator of how the EU is measuring up to the standard of democracy in the eyes of its subjects can be found in the Eurobarometer surveys. According to the figures of the last Eurobarometer, only 20 per cent of respondents associated the EU with ‘democracy’ and 22 per cent with ‘peace’ compared to 24 per cent that associated it with ‘a waste of money’ and 21 percent with ‘bureaucracy’, just to mention a few examples (European Commission, 2011a: 31-32). Clearly in the eyes of the people, the EU can hardly be said to be a champion of democracy.

The democratic deficit is intimately linked with a perceived lack of legitimacy. Legitimacy is synonymous with the acceptance of the ruled of the rulers and is seen to be a crucial component of democracy and just rule. As can be seen from Figure 2.2, there has been a decrease in the trust in European institutions, with a marked drop since autumn 2010. There are more people distrusting the EU than trusting it. The EU as a whole is only trusted by 42 per cent of the respondents compared to 47 per cent stating that they do not trust the EU.

Figure 2.2 Trust in the European institutions indicated as percent of all respondents from EU member states

Source: Eurobarometer survey (European Commission, 2011b). Question wording: ‘For each of the following bodies, tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?’ Answer ‘tend to trust’.

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4 The most popular associations of the EU were freedom to travel, study and work within the EU with 45 per cent having that association and the euro with 38 per cent.
(European Commission, 2011a: 40-45). The inability of the EU to legitimate its existence to its subjects is threatening the project itself. If the Union does not perform the functions entrusted with it according to an acceptable standard, or if the outcomes of the integration process is not what the public wants, then why should the Europeans subscribe to something that is seen as distant, difficult and bureaucratic? The EU citizens do not want \textit{la bureaucratie pour la bureaucratie}, so in order to achieve legitimacy, the EU needs to be seen as having a role in the lives of citizens, or rather for the citizens to see themselves as having a role in the European Union – be this function economic, social, humanitarian, democratic, etc. The European Union needs to find its role and to do so quickly.

2.3 Treaty Revision: The Changing Role of the European Parliament

This section will provide the background to the debates to be analysed. In order to understand the issues debated, it is important to understand the larger context of the debates held. What have the three last treaties brought with them then in terms of changes to the democratic deficit? How has the Parliament viewed the treaties? What have the debates in the EP focused on?

2.3.1 The Treaty of Nice

The Treaty of Nice was agreed at the meeting of the European Council in Nice in December 2000 and entered into force on 1 February 2003. The goal of treaty change was to prepare the European Union for the accession of the post-communist states of Central and Eastern Europe, and also to address the increasing critique of a lack of legitimacy and democracy. The previous treaty, the Treaty of Amsterdam, which had been signed in 1997, had failed to resolve several institutional reform issues and the Nice Treaty was meant to address these ‘Amsterdam leftovers’.\footnote{The Amsterdam leftovers concerned three main things: the voting rules in the Council of Ministers, mainly the weighing of votes; which policy areas should remain within the scope of unanimity and which should be subjected to qualified majority voting (QMV) decision-making in the Council; the composition of the Commission, especially whether each member state should have their own commissioner in the future (Phinnemore, 2007: 39).} Facing a big enlargement wave,\footnote{The Amsterdam leftovers concerned three main things: the voting rules in the Council of Ministers, mainly the weighing of votes; which policy areas should remain within the scope of unanimity and which should be subjected to qualified majority voting (QMV) decision-making in the Council; the composition of the Commission, especially whether each member state should have their own commissioner in the future (Phinnemore, 2007: 39).} the unresolved institutional issues became more pressing than before.
The Nice Treaty is often seen to be a sub-optimal solution and it failed to permanently resolve the issues regarding the institutional composition (Phinnemore, 2007: 40). It did, however, bring some changes to the working of the Union, among which were:

- An extension of the use of QMV in the Council and removed national veto rights to 39 new provisions. It also capped the number of future Commissioners and MEPs, while also extending the number of MEPs from 626 to 732.

- The voting powers were also adjusted through a reweighing, which were seen to mostly favour the larger member states. The Treaty introduced the so-called double majority decision-making in the Council which besides a majority of the countries represented introduced a requirement of the same countries to represent at least 62 per cent of the population.

- Finally, the Nice Treaty enhanced the principle of ‘enhanced cooperation’, allowing for a less uniform integration in the future. For instance, it required now eight member states instead of a majority of member states to form an enhanced cooperation area and it had also been extended to more areas, including CFSP.

One of the most important outcomes of the Nice Treaty turned out to be the Declaration on the Future of the European Union, which was annexed to the Treaty. It paved way for the next intergovernmental conference with a mandate to draft a constitution for Europe.

The European Parliament played no major part in the drafting of the Nice Treaty other than issuing its opinions on the matters brought before it. Generally, the Parliament was very critical of the IGC method and wanted to be more involved in the revision process itself, accusing the IGCs of not being democratic and transparent enough. In the debates concerning the Nice Treaty there was a sense of urgency to prepare the EU for enlargement. Many of the issues debated focused on resolving both the institutional problems, such as getting a more prominent role for the Parliament in decision-making through increasing co-decision and use of QMV. Other themes that frequently arose were the critique of the opaque and undemocratic treaty revision method used and the role of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

6 1998 saw accession negotiations taking place with the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia, and in 2000 the negotiations were extended to another six countries, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania and Slovakia. Turkey had also been given candidate status at the Helsinki Council meeting in 1999.
The European Parliament did not find the final treaty very satisfying. In its resolution on the Nice Treaty it points out that although the reformed treaty removes the formal obstacles standing in the way of enlargement it is still ‘a half-hearted and in some cases inadequate response to the matters encompassed within the already modest Intergovernmental Conference agenda’ and therefore it sets two measures for the future success of treaty reform: the creation of instruments ‘which fully guarantee the ability of an enlarged Union to take action, and a significant reduction in the democratic deficit’ (European Parliament, 2001). In the same resolution, it also criticises that the co-decision procedure was not extended enough, that the Charter of Fundamental Rights was not incorporated into the final document and the treaty revision method, demanding that a new method is implemented for the coming constitutional process and that a European Constitution is the outcome of that process.

2.3.2 A Constitution for Europe

The Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe, or in short the Constitution, grew out of the Declaration on the Future of the European Union. The Declaration identified four key challenges for the Union in the near future: (1) to clarify the delimitation of powers between the European institutions; (2) to define the status of the Charter of Fundamental Rights; (3) to simplify the Treaties to make them more accessible and easily understandable to the citizens; and (4) to define the role of the national parliaments in the European system. The European Council in Laeken 2001 seized on these matters and in the meeting declaration a mandate for a new treaty revision process was given. After criticism by the Parliament, the traditional IGC method of treaty revision was abandoned and a new more open method introduced. The body in charge of drafting the constitution was The Convention on the Future of Europe. Made up of 105 members, the Convention worked for more than a year under the lead of former French President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing to produce the Draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe in June 2003.

The Constitution was signed by the heads of state or government on 29 October 2004 and was then passed on to be ratified by the member states. However, after the French and Dutch citizens voted it down in referendums held in the spring of 2005, the process of ratification was abruptly stopped, sending the European Union into what can only be described as state of shock. The eurosceptics saw the no-votes as proof that the gap between the will of the people and the euro-elites had finally become too wide. The more europositive explanation was that
the French and Dutch had voted ‘no’ on the basis of national politics and that the citizens would have approved the Constitution if they had been better informed. At the time of the no-votes, the document had been ratified by nine member states, and the discrepancy between the ‘no’ from the Dutch and French therefore forced the European Union into a ‘period of reflection’ where it tried to find a way out of this conundrum and see if the Constitution could be saved or what parts of it could be saved. However, it quickly became clear that the Constitution was not to be given up so easily. Already on the 17 of June, only two weeks after the second referendum, a press release from then Council President Jean-Claude Juncker said:

*We [The Council and the Presidents of the Commission and the Parliament] think that the Constitutional Treaty is the right answer to many questions posed by people in Europe. We feel, therefore, that the ratification process must continue. This Treaty is the best one, which means that its renegotiation cannot even be envisaged.*

European Council (2005b)

Had it not been haltered by the referendums, the Constitution would have brought with it many changes to the European Union. First of all, despite the fact that it still remained a ‘governance treaty’ written in a ‘legalistic, obscure, technical, and wide ranging’ language (Church and Phinnemore, 2007: 47), it would for the first time have been one single document combining all EU treaties into one. Second, it would have brought with it many changes to the institutional framework of the European Union.7 Third, it would have incorporated the Charter of Fundamental Rights into the EU legal framework, making it part of EU law. Fourth, the Constitution would have introduced several symbols of a common Europe, such as a hymn, a flag and a national day. However, especially the symbols together with the actual term constitution were much criticised and in the end it did not pass the national referendum, thereby forcing the European Union to take a step back and consider which way to go from there.

The European Parliament was much more satisfied with the Constitutional Treaty and the way that it came about than it was with the Nice Treaty. In its resolution on the Treaty, it stated

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7 For instance, the pillar structure would be abandoned, the division of competences between the EU and its member states would have been made clearer, the number of MEPs would have been capped at 750 while the number of commissioners would have been reduced so that only two thirds of the member states would have a commissioner at one time. Co-decision, now named the ordinary legislative procedure, would become the norm for decision-making, thereby extending the Parliament’s powers to many more areas. A permanent president of the Council would have been installed as well as a permanent representative for the foreign relations Council, that is a ‘president’ and a ‘foreign minister’.
that it was ‘a vast improvement’ which would have benefited the citizens and the states, and made the functioning of the European Union more efficient (European Parliament, 2005). Particularly it found that it would bring more clarity, efficiency, and democracy to the citizens. The resolution on Constitutional Treaty was passed on 12 January 2005 with a majority of 73.7 per cent. 20.4 per cent of MEPs voted against the resolution and 5.9 per cent abstained (VoteWatch). The debate on the Constitutional Treaty focused much on the improvements it would bring in terms of efficiency and democracy. Finally the citizens would grant the EU the legitimacy it needed. There were also voices raised from the more eurosceptic camps that the Constitution was just a mere way of creating a European superstate and would counter to what was said only further undermine European Democracy.

2.3.3 L’Europe ne fait plus rêver:8 The Period of Reflection and the Lisbon Treaty

The ‘period of reflection’ was proclaimed by the European Council in June 2005, with the goal of enabling ‘a broad debate to take place in each of [the member states], involving citizens, civil society, social partners, national parliaments and political parties’ (European Council, 2005a). The EU had not prepared a plan B in case the Constitutional Treaty failed to be ratified and was hence forced to pause and regroup. However, already in the proclamation of the period of reflection, the Council stated that it did not want to give up on the failed document: ‘the recent developments do not call into question the validity of continuing with the ratification processes’ and that they were to ‘come back to this matter in the first half of 2006 to make an overall assessment of the national debates and agree on how to proceed’ (ibid.). Although the format of the Constitution might have been defeated, the European Union was not to give up on its content without a fight. During the time-out, the European Parliament, which had pushed for the Constitution, kept ‘confirming its commitment’ to the same and vowing for the Council to move forward with the process (European Parliament, 2006).

In January 2007, the German presidency declared the period of reflection over. The Berlin declaration (European Council, 2007a) called for a renewed commitment to Europe as the ‘common future’ and set the goal of having a new treaty before the next elections to the

8 Quote by then Council President Jean Claude Juncker, 2 June 2005, after the second ‘no’ vote by the Dutch. Available at: <http://www.euractiv.com/future-eu/juncker-europe-ne-fait-plus-rver/article-140265>. 
European Parliament in 2009. Going back to the old method of treaty revision, an Intergovernmental Conference was called to see to the details of the new treaty but without losing too much of the already negotiated content of the Constitution. The goal was to quickly revise the Constitutional Treaty but to remove any constitutional references\(^9\) and then have it pass in the member states in good time before the 2009 elections. The IGC finished its work in October 2007 and at the meeting of the Heads of State or Government in Lisbon on 13 December, the Reform Treaty was signed.

The Lisbon Treaty is the last major treaty revision. Although there have been some amendments to it in the light of the financial crisis,\(^10\) there have not been any IGCs or Conventions since. What is then the difference between the Constitution and the Lisbon Treaty? The main difference between the two is the form. The Constitution would have been a whole new document whereas the Lisbon Treaty only amends the existing treaties. The Lisbon Treaty has also dropped all references to any symbols that could be associated with the creation of a European state, like references to the hymn, the motto, and the flag. These symbols still exist, they are just left out of the Treaty. Another major difference is that the Charter of Fundamental Rights is now left out. The Charter is still made binding through reference, but it is not part of the Treaty itself.\(^11\) However, the key changes from the Constitution are still kept in the Lisbon Treaty: the granting of a legal persona for the European Union; the creation of a permanent president of the European Council and a High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy; the redistribution of the voting weights, i.e., the double majority of 55 per cent of member states representing 65 per cent of the EU’s population; the upgrade of co-decision to be the standard mode of decision-making in the EU, thereby increasing the powers of the Parliament; national vetoes were removed in many areas of EU competence regarding issues such as climate change and energy security. National vetoes were still kept in areas such as social security, taxation, defence and foreign policy. The national parliaments were also given more power through the early warning

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\(^9\) ‘The IGC is asked to draw up a Treaty (hereinafter called the ”Reform Treaty”) amending the existing Treaties with a view to enhancing the efficiency and democratic legitimacy of the enlarged Union, as well as the coherence of its external action. The constitutional concept, which consisted in repealing all existing Treaties and replacing them by a single text called ”Constitution”, is abandoned.’ (European Council, 2007b: 15).

\(^10\) In December 2010 the member states decided on a treaty revision to introduce the financial stability mechanism in response to the financial crisis which had hit (especially but not exclusively) southern Europe.

\(^11\) Three states, the UK, Poland and the Czech Republic, have secured opt-outs from the Charter on different grounds, but for the other member states it is now made binding.
mechanism which gave them more insight and power to affect the EU legislative processes. The Lisbon Treaty was originally to cap the number of commissioners at two thirds of member states, but after the Irish voted down the Treaty in a referendum in June 2008, the right of every country to have a commissioner was kept. The Irish then voted for the Treaty in another referendum in October 2009 enabling it to enter into force on 1 December 2009.

In the European Parliament the debate about the Lisbon Treaty was mainly focused around the way in which the Lisbon Treaty was pushed through, with many of the critics saying that the European Union had disregarded the citizens’ wishes for referendums and that it was just a way of getting the Constitution passed by in the clothes of another treaty. The proponents admitted that many of the qualities were shared but instead emphasised the improvements that the new treaty would bring to the working of the Union and to enhancing the democratic qualities of the same. In its resolution on the Lisbon Treaty (European Parliament, 2008), the EP concluded that:

\textit{taken as a whole, the Treaty of Lisbon is a substantial improvement on the existing Treaties, which will bring more democratic accountability to the Union and enhance its decision-making (through a strengthening of the roles of the European Parliament and the national parliaments), enhance the rights of European citizens vis-à-vis the Union and improve the effective functioning of the Union's institutions.}

The resolution was adopted by a majority of 78,3 per cent in favour, 17,4 per cent against and 4,3 per cent abstentions among the 674 MEPs present for the vote. The groups where a majority of members voted for were ALDE, Greens/EFA, PPE-DE and PSE, while the
resolution on accepting the treaty was voted down in GUE-NGL, UEN and IND/DEM, the last of which did not have a single MEP voting for the resolution.

In this chapter I have discussed the role of the European Parliament as the representative of the citizens in the European Union and also introduced the way in which the European Parliament works, with a special focus on the plenary sessions. The democratic deficit and the role of the European Parliament were presented as the wider analytical background of this thesis and in the last section I introduced the background and outcomes of the treaties which were discussed in the debates analysed in this study. After the context of the debates has been defined, I will move to the theoretical and methodological discussion on how the task of investigating the commitments of the MEPs is to be accomplished.
3 Theory and Methodology

Now that the topic of this thesis – democracy in the European Parliament – has been introduced, the next task is to outline the theory and the methodology for approaching the problem. Within this topic, the more specific task is to examine what kind of view or views of European democracy the MEPs commit themselves to in their plenary speeches. Through an investigation of the views of democracy present in the European Parliament, the goal is to connect the democratic discourses to a larger theory on the possible development of democracy in the European Union, at least if the European Parliament was to decide. The end result of this examination will be an empirically grounded overview of the democratic discourse(s) in the European Parliament and the commitments that the MEPs make to European democracy. The findings will then be fitted into a bigger discursive context of the debate on European democracy.

In this chapter I will introduce the theoretical approach and the methodology used for this investigation. I will begin by outlining the philosophical background on how language limits the way decisions can be made through an examination of the link between idea and action. This will be followed by an overview of the research design, beginning with an introduction to grounded theory method (3.2.1), which will be followed by a discussion on sampling (3.2.2), coding (3.2.3) and theory formation (3.2.4). The final section discusses the reliability and validity measures taken to ensure the quality of the study.

3.1 How Ideas Become Action: On the Power of Language

In recent decades, there has been a noticeable increase in interest in the role of language and text in the social sciences. Language is a determinant of thought and action, as discussing issues, thoughts and actions becomes impossible outside the frame of language. Language therefore sets boundaries to how and what we think and argue. Ludwig Wittgenstein found language to be a determinant of the world, essentially arguing that if it is not found in the language it does not exist. This is summed up in his famous conclusion: ‘whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent’ (Wittgenstein, 1922: 90). Also, for instance Göran Bergström and Kristina Boréus (2005: 12) share this view and find ‘language [to be] the
ultimate delimitator of thought and action’. French deconstructionist Jacques Derrida took this to the extreme when he stated: ‘there is nothing outside the text’. In this thesis, however, the more moderate view is taken that the use of language matters for how we perceive the world, its problems and their solutions. However, it does not make any sense to analyse discourses ‘if one believes that politics is essentially about the realization of structurally determined economic interests’ (Diez, 2001: 18). Thus the underlying assumption in this thesis is that the use of language affects both how we view the world and our actions and also conversely that language can be used as a tool to reveal something about our thoughts and actions.

One essential feature of society is that it is structured, composed of rules and regulations on how things are and ought to be. These rules determine the behaviour of actors and institutions, but in order for there to be rules, regulations and institutions they have to be recognised as having that function. Language here is the means through which society and its institutions are reproduced and thus the use of language becomes important for the development of society. One champion for the philosophy of how language affects the development in society is John Searle. Searle’s theory builds on the claim that ‘all of human institutional reality is created and maintained in existence by (representations that have the same logical form as) [Status Function] Declarations, including the cases that are not speech acts in the explicit form of Declarations’ (Searle, 2009: 13). This is done through the human capacity to ‘impose functions on objects and people where the objects and the people cannot perform the function solely in virtue of their physical structure’ (ibid.: 7) It is through the recognition of functions constructed by language that institutions come to be.

In the social sciences, even ‘discourse’ itself is a much debated word. I here see discourses as the combined outcome of interrelated individual speech acts, which in a specific social setting produce and re-produce the social norms and meanings that govern possible action and

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12 All translations of works not in English are my own and I take responsibility for any mistakes or misrepresentations due to translation errors.

13 Searle defines Status Function Declarations as ‘cases where we create an institutional reality of status functions by representing them as existing [as such] even in cases where there is no explicit speech act of Declaration’ (Searle, 2009: 13).

14 Although I use the word ‘speech act’ to denote the individual inputs to the discourse, a speech act does not have to be said out loud but can also be written or visual as long as it is an utterance that uses language to convey a meaning, opinion or idea to a public in a given setting operating under a set of norms and rules.
the further development of the discourse itself. Speech acts, and in this I am building on Searle (2009: 69), come in five types: (1) assertives, which are representations of how things are; (2) directives, which try to get other people to do things; (3) commissives, which commit the speaker to a certain course of action; (4) expressives, which express the speaker’s feelings about a state of affairs; and (5) declarations, which make something the case by declaring it to be so. Declarations are here especially interesting because unlike the other four types, declarations have the deontological power to simultaneously make a statement about something and through that act also making it be so. It creates the institutions through the very act of representing them. Searle uses the example of money. A twenty dollar bill is essentially a piece of paper, but through declaration, and the recognition of the validity of that declaration, the paper becomes money and thereby has a value. Linking speech acts to discourses then: through the continuous use of a certain vocabulary the institution linked to it is reinforced, as Searle puts it: ‘the continued usage of such institutions […] reinforces the institutions, but the “usage” requires talk, and that talk functions to maintain and reinforce both institution and institutional facts within that institution’ (Searle, 2009: 104). Each speech act thereby reinforces the institution and the discourse.

Discourses, hence, are not static but constantly evolving with each speech act. However, as each previous speech act shapes the next one, the speech acts follow a limited number of patterns. The discourse therefore evolves along a limited number of paths. It is important to note that not all statements in a discourse are equally possible and ‘if less likely statements are uttered, the chances of them being taken seriously are minimal’ (Braun, 2008: 400). Hence, the discourse becomes ‘a system that regulates the formation of statements’ (Wæver, cited in Braun, 2008: 400). If a statement that is not coherent with the discursive context within which it is uttered is produced, the statement will be disregarded. Thus, once institutionalised, discourses will affect the patterns of argumentation and thought in certain directions and also determine to some extent what kind of alternatives seem feasible: ‘power can be exercised by restricting the range of apparent choices available to the agent over whom the power is being exercised’ (Searle, 2009: 149). In this way the discourses steer the debate and there are certain hierarchies of what is possible within the frames of a discourse.

Vivien Schmidt (2008: 310) differentiates between two types of discourses: coordinative discourses where groups in the political centre ‘are involved in the creation, elaboration, and justification of policy and programmatic ideas’; and communicative discourses, which,
building on Habermas, involves the groups and individuals ‘involved in the presentation, deliberation, and legitimation of political ideas to the general public’. Although both are present in the context of the European Parliament, what is seen in the plenary sessions is an example of the latter as the plenary is more an arena for justifying the decisions made to the public than actually hammering out political differences, which, as known, is often done behind closed doors.

Establishing how political ideas turn into political action has been one of the tasks of political science for a long time. For instance the research method process-tracing does just that – investigate how ideas become action. In order for a political action to be deemed successful it needs to have some foundation in the normative ideals of the people that are affected by its consequences and one important arena where the ideals are reflected is in the political discourses. Knowledge and awareness of the political ideals of both citizens and political actors thus becomes imperative both for understanding the political development as well as tracing the political processes.

Tracing the processes also require an understanding of how the system operates. Institutionalism is a theoretical perspective that emphasises the role of institutional structures, rather than that of individuals, on decision-making. Institutions are seen as guiding the decision-making process in a certain direction due to patterns which have been established over time, institutional habits. In short, ‘political institutions define the framework within which politics takes place’ (March and Olsen, 1989: 18). Organisations follow rules and much of the behaviour in an organisation is specified by standard operating procedures laid out by these rules (ibid.: 21). The rules determine how an organisation responds to a problem, what is acceptable and what is not acceptable, guide the processes and handling of various situations. The rules determine action but what determines the rules?

Discursive institutionalism (Schmidt, 2006; 2008) takes as its point of departure that discourses and ideas matter for the functioning of an organisation. The role of political science is to investigate ‘how, when, where, and why ideas and discourse matter’ for institutions and decision-making (Schmidt, 2008: 305). Vivien A. Schmidt emphasises in her work how institutions frame the discourse while the discourse in turn shape the institutions: ‘discourse as an interactive process is what enables agents to change institutions, because the deliberative nature of discourse allows them to conceive of and talk about institutions as objects at a distance, and dissociate themselves from them even as they continue to use them’
(ibid.: 316). Departing from this perspective, it thus becomes important to investigate the
democratic discourses present in order to find what kind of alternatives the MEPs see for the
future development of the European Union.

There is a vast academic literature on European democracy, democracy in the European
Parliament and other EU institutions (see e.g. Chryssochoou, 2000; Rittberger, 2005; Hix et
al., 2007; Eriksen and Fossum, 2012) and some of it has also involved discourse analysis (see
e.g. Diez, 1999; 2001). However, most of these investigations take a more descriptive or a
normative stance on the democratic deficit debate; discussing what the democratic credentials
of the EU are or which standards the EU is to measure up against rather than empirically
investigating the realities of the functioning of the European Union. Many also find it fit to
come with various prescriptions on how to fix whatever they identify as broken. My goal here
is not to take part in the normative debate on EU democracy but rather to empirically examine
what kind of discourses on democracy exist in one of the European institutions – the
European Parliament. Whether or not democracy in the European Union is broken, in order to
‘mend’ it, it is important to know what options there are for doing so. The options for
repairing the broken EU democracy are laid out and defined in the discourses on democracy.
Hence, through identifying the discourses and their various prescriptions for the future of EU
democracy, a number of recipes on how best to solve the problem of the democratic deficit
evolve. Despite the vast amount of normative works discussing these issues, there has as of
yet not been any extensive studies of the specific discourses on democracy in the European
Parliament, especially not using the real speeches during plenary sessions. Studies have been
conducted on discourses on the European Union (see e.g. Schlesinger, 1999; Sifft et al., 2007)
or on discourses within certain institutions or policies,15 but none of these focus specifically
on the democracy discourse within the EU institutions.

I will here take a grounded theory approach to the problem of analysing discourses on
European democracy. Rather than trying to fit the discourses in the Parliament into a set of
ready-made models, the approach here will be to try to examine the discourses as such and on
the basis of the findings in the material show what discourses exist and how they fit into the
wider debate on European democracy. Grounded theory is a method well suited to this as it
through an abductive rather than a deductive perspective has theory development as its

15 See e.g. Erjavec and Erjavec (2009) on the food policy discourse in the Commission; Baker-Beall (2009) on
the counter terrorism policy discourse; Larsen (2004) on the foreign policy discourse.
ultimate goal. As the goal here is to investigate the discourses rather than test an already developed theory of democracy, this method is well suited to the aim of my thesis. In the following section I will discuss the grounded theory method and its application to this study.

### 3.2 Research Design

I will conduct my analysis of what kind of democracy the MEPs are committing themselves to and the discourses on democracy in the European Parliament through an examination of the verbatim report of proceedings (also known as CRE after the French abbreviation of *compte rendu in extenso*) of parliamentary sittings. The CRE are a word-to-word recording of what was said in plenum, giving the exact statements made by the members of parliament. One point to consider here is that the European Parliament operates in all 23 official EU languages. The debate is conducted in all languages with simultaneous interpretation into each of the other languages. The verbatim report is afterwards translated into all the working languages according to Article 181 of the Rules of Procedure and published in the Official Journal. In order to avoid mistranslations caused by myself and due to the fact that I do not have knowledge of all of the EU’s official languages, I will use the English translations of the verbatim reports. English, along with French and German, functions today as a ‘relay language’, meaning that in case direct translation between any two of the working languages are unavailable, they will use the English, French or German translation when translating into the third language. The benefit of using the English verbatim reports is that the danger of mistranslation from having to be translated twice is significantly smaller than that of a single translation.

The goal of grounded theory is the creation of a theory which is generalisable and applicable also to other settings. However, it needs to be remembered that the findings here are only a first step and therefore the theory needs to be tested on a wider material. It also needs to be kept in mind that the justifications and commitments identified do not say anything about the share of MEPs having these opinions. Because of the way in which the Parliament operates, there may be an over- or underrepresentation of certain views due to the allocation of speaking time within the party groups as discussed in Chapter 2.

In order to shed some light on the prevalence of views on European integration and to counter any potential misrepresentations I will also use data gathered by the European Parliament.
Research Group (EPRG) under the supervision of Simon Hix to examine the attitudes of the MEPs to European democracy. The EPRG is a consortium of researchers examining the European Parliament. To date, there have been three waves of data gathering, in 2000, 2006 and 2010. I will here use data from the 2000 and 2006 waves, as that means I have one survey wave covering each of the parliamentary terms analysed here. Data is gathered via a survey of the MEPs and the number of respondents was 200 in the 2000 wave and 272 in 2006. It is not on the basis of this possible to see if the view on European democracy and integration corresponds to the position taken in plenary as the survey data is anonymous. The data will therefore only be used here to shed some light on the views on integration of the MEPs as a collective to improve the reliability of the discourse analysis.

3.2.1 Grounded Theory Method

Grounded theory method (GTM), despite its name, is not a theory but a research method. The term is often used to refer both to an inductive research method and to its theoretical outcome, which has caused some confusion. For this purpose, grounded theory is the result of the research process and grounded theory method is the method used in the research process (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007: 2-3).

Building on the works of Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, especially their milestone work The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research (1967), GTM is a method designed for theory creation through the constant revision of data, comprising ‘a systematic, inductive, and comparative approach for conducting inquiry for the purpose of constructing theory’ (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007: 1). In this sentence there are four keywords that describe the method: systematic, inductive, comparative, and theory-constructing. It is systematic in the sense that the method involves a constant analysis and re-analysis, an iterative move, of the material in the light of new findings. It is inductive rather than deductive, meaning that it takes a bottom-up approach to the data, creating theory on the basis on the findings and then specifying it in the light of the data rather than testing a theory on the data, which is also confirmed in the third keyword, theory-constructing. Finally, it is

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16 For more information on the European Parliament Research Group and the research that has come out of this, see <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/government/research/resgroups/EPRG/home.aspx> (last accessed 4 May 2012).

17 It has in later years become common to describe GTM as being abductive, that is move between induction and deduction rather than merely inductive (see e.g. Reichertz, 2007).
comparative in that it uses a constant comparison and revision of the material in the light of new findings. Combining these four, you get an approach where the method, the data and the theory eventually developed are closely connected.

Grounded theory method is today one of the most widely used qualitative methods for creating theory in the social sciences (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2008: 127; Strauss and Corbin, 1997: vii). One of the reasons for this is that it is applicable to many fields of study and also that it is very well-suited to theory development, which is also the main purpose of this thesis. In grounded theory, the final goal of theory is achieved through a stringent, iterative process whereby there is a constant movement between data and analysis throughout the process. See Figure 3.1 above for an illustration of the grounded theory process.
I will here take a constructivist approach to grounded theory and thereby follow the non-postivist tradition lead by Kathy Charmaz (2008). Constructivism is a research paradigm that denies the existence of an objective reality, ‘asserting instead that realities are social constructions of the mind, and that there exist as many such constructions as there are individuals (although clearly many constructions will be shared)’ (Guba and Lincoln, cited by Miller et al., 2006: 26). In this way, it is not only reality that is constructed through the use of language, but it is also the theory itself. In this line of thinking, ‘Discourse and interaction are topics in their own right, and language use is constructive action with specific rhetorical characteristics’ (Nikander, 2008: 416). Grounded theory method here becomes a method for constructing rather than discovering theory. In the following sections I will go through the steps taken in the research to reach the final stage of theory construction, beginning with sampling.

### 3.2.2 Sampling

In a quantitative study, the sampling is done in order to draw a representative sample from a clearly defined population in order on the basis of this be able to generalise the findings to the whole population with a certain statistical certainty (Skog, 2005: 99-100). In qualitative studies, this approach is rarely fruitful as the aim of the study is often to have an initial investigation into a field that is less well-researched and therefore harder to hypothesise about. Grounded theory method uses a form of purposive sampling called theoretical sampling, which is a form of purposive sampling. When using a method of purposive sampling, as opposed to non-probability or random sampling, the researcher conducts the sampling with the research question in mind so that the cases are relevant to the question posed. Random sampling is here unsuitable as not all samples will contain as much relevant information for the formation of categories. It is an iterative process, involving a constant movement between data and theory, which grow together as the theory takes shape. This means that the researcher on the basis of the findings decide how far the data collection process will go on.

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18 Glaser and Strauss define theoretical sampling as ‘the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 45).
Theoretical sampling can raise some issues with regard to the reliability of the research. Reliability concerns the consistency and replicability of the study, i.e. would another researcher come to the same conclusions given the same setting. By choosing the cases based on theory, it is possible that the cases are selected in order to confirm the theory investigated. Rejection of theory thus becomes impossible. However, this is not a concern here as the purpose of the method is to create theory from data rather than test theory on the data. Non-probability sampling is thus more suited to theory testing than to theory formation: ‘theoretical sampling is done in order to discover categories and their properties and to suggest the interrelationships into a theory’ whereas ‘statistical sampling is done to obtain accurate evidence on distributions of people among categories to be used in descriptions and verifications’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 62).

There is a plethora of debates on a wide range of topics within the jurisdiction of the Parliament. As analysing all debates is neither possible nor fruitful for this project, a selection has to be made. In order to narrow down the number of debates to be analysed, I will here only focus on debates on constitutional matters. Constitutional debates are debates where the Parliament discusses issues relating to the fundamental principles underlying the European Union, treaty reform, the relationships between the institutions and the citizens, and the functioning of the Union. I will here specifically focus on debates on treaty reform, as these are more likely to show the range of democratic discourses than debates on e.g. fishery policies or debates on relations to third countries. Through using this narrow definition, the universe of potential data is reduced to a more manageable extent.

I will also limit the study in time, as it is not possible within the scope of this work to analyse all debates since the start of the European Union. Here, I will analyse debates from the two most recent completed mandate periods: 1999-2004 and 2004-2009. I will not examine plenary debates from the current European Parliament mandate period as there have not during this time been any substantial treaty revisions undertaken. Through this I will also be able to gain a longitudinal perspective on how the discourse has evolved over recent years. This time period is also relevant as the debate on the democratic quality of the EU only really took off after the Maastricht Treaty and thus the Parliamentary terms chosen here will not necessarily reflect the initial evolution of the discourses but rather how they have developed in the Parliament through the Nice Treaty, the Constitutional Treaty, the period of reflection, and, most recently, the Lisbon Treaty.
For this study, 16 debates on three treaties have been selected in accordance with the selection criterion outlined above.\textsuperscript{19} The debates have been found using knowledge on the history of European integration combined with a search for debates on the Parliament website using key words such as ‘democracy’, ‘treaty’, ‘constitution’, ‘Nice’, ‘Lisbon’, ‘reform’, etc. The bias caused by selection will be small due to the fact that I in this study cover a majority of available debates on this particular topic. A more in-depth discussion on the reliability of the study is conducted in Section 3.1.5. As for data collection, the verbatim reports of all debates are available at the European Parliament website\textsuperscript{20} making accessibility a non-issue.

### 3.2.3 Coding: The Development of Categories and Concepts

On the basis of the data gathered, concepts are developed. Concepts are ‘an abstract representation of an event, object, or action/interaction that a researcher identifies as being significant in the data’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 103) and constitute ‘the building blocks of theory’ (ibid.: 101). After breaking down the data, concepts are created through labelling phenomena observed in the data in a first stage of coding, open coding. This allows for a re-interpretation and generalisation of the data in the next phases. At the next stage, groups of concepts are put together in accordance with their properties and traits, creating categories. A category is a concept ‘derived from data, that stand for phenomena’ (ibid.: 114) which consists of concepts that share certain attributes or characteristics, properties. Categories are abstractions, which, although derived from specific cases, should be applicable to the data at large and not be identifiable with only part of the data. Forming a hypothesis then involves examining how the categories are related. Once the hypothesis have been formed, the data collection goes on until the categories have reached a point of theoretical saturation, whereby the addition of a further source does not generate any new insights and changes to the category: ‘no additional data are being found whereby [the researcher] can develop properties of the category’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 61).

One of the underlying ideas of grounded theory is for the researcher to approach the material with an open mind and let the findings guide the study. However, this might present some problems, as Udo Kelle (2007: 192) stated: ‘The most basic challenge in grounded category building is to reconcile the need of letting categories emerge from the material of research

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\textsuperscript{19} For a full list of debates, see Appendix II.

\textsuperscript{20} Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu>.
(instead of forcing preconceived theoretical terms on the data) with the impossibility of abandoning previous theoretical knowledge’. In later years, many grounded theorists have moved away from the stringent requirement of abandoning all previous knowledge, but have rather attempted to find ways of restricting its influence on the analysis (e.g. Charmz, 2008: 402). This challenge is in grounded theory dealt with through the process of coding. Unlike other research methods, grounded theory does not use a pre-defined coding scheme but the codes should emerge from the material through a process of constant comparison (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 104-106). Following this, I will not create a coding scheme beforehand, but an example of how the coding has been conducted is provided in Appendix IV.

In order to improve the accuracy of the categories in the initial phase, I will also be using quantitative content analysis. For the initial development of the categories, I will analyse the speeches in the qualitative content analysis programme NVivo, which is dedicated to the organisation and analysis of both written text and pictures. The benefit of using technical aids is that they allow for a testing of the coding by an other source and that they also are able to go through a large set of data in a much shorter time. They also increase transparency and efficiency in the analysis process (Hoover and Koerber, 2011). Unlike a quantitative analysis, the benefit of using the programme is biggest in the early stages of the research process where the programme allows for quickly constructing an overview of the material as well as investigating the relationships (ibid.: 76). Using the quantitative data analysis programmes is not a substitute for manual coding and analysis but rather a supplement to make the reliability of the research higher through improving the accuracy of the coding and the subsequent development of categories.

3.2.4 Theory Formation

One of the main benefits of the grounded theory method is that it allows for the continuous collection of data on the basis of previous findings; data collection is not confined to one-time sampling but can rather be extended according to the needs of the researcher to achieve the final goal of theoretical saturation. After the categories have been formed, hypotheses have been stated and the relationships between the concepts have been investigated according to the hypotheses, a theory can take form. A theory, for this purpose, is ‘a set of well-developed categories […] that are systematically related through statements of relationship to form a
theoretical framework that explains some relevant social [...] or other phenomenon” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 22).

In their work, Glaser and Strauss distinguish between formal grounded theory and substantive grounded theory. Substantive grounded theory implies that the researcher develops concepts and hypotheses based on one study, whereas formal grounded theory can be created when the substantive theory is tested on other cases and in other settings. The substantive grounded theory can become a formal grounded theory if it passes the test of generalisability. As for other methods, the researcher aims for results that are generalisable beyond the scope of the study: the goal with grounded theory is to create a ‘conceptual generality’ which is ‘abstract of time, place, and people, yet can be applied’ (Glaser, 2007: 105). Despite the temptation of ‘grand theorising’, this work will aim at creating a substantive grounded theory, as only focusing on the discourses of one institution is insufficient to deduce something about the discourses of institutions not studied here yet has the potential to be tested in other settings in further studies.

I will here take a constructivist approach to grounded theory, following the recommendations by Kathy Charmaz (2008). This means that when it comes to the end product of grounded theory, the theory is not seen to be ‘discovered’ in the material but constructed from the categories and codes created. In order for theory to be formed, I will here build on the quantitative text analysis and on the in-depth analysis of the debates whereby key words and concepts had previously been located. Through an examination of the key words and categories, I will saturate the categories and examine the relationships between the key categories with each other. After it through this has become clear how the categories are interrelated, the theory has been constructed.

### 3.2.5 Reliability and Validity

In order to ensure a high degree of reliability and validity, I will in this study draw on the recommendations of Bryman (2008), Yin (2003) and Peräkylä (2004). Reliability is concerned with ‘demonstrating that the operations of a study [...] can be repeated with the same results’ (Yin, 2003: 34). The reliability of this study is secured through the ensuring a transparency in the data gathering and coding processes. The transcripts of the European Parliament are, as discussed above, readily available at the EP website. Their accuracy is verifiable through the availability of video and audio recordings of the sessions. Although
these media have not been used for this study at a risk of loosing the non-verbal messages of the debates, transcribing the debates myself, apart from being very time-consuming, may also reduce the replicability of the study. One advantage of working with transcripts is that they ‘provide highly detailed and accessible representations of social interaction’ (Peräkylä, 2004: 285). The accuracy of the representations also improves the accuracy of the analysis and also allow for the empirical grounding of the claims necessary in order for the researcher to persuade the audience that the research findings are worth paying attention to and also accurate (Golafshani, 2003: 601). The anchoring of the findings in the empirical data is a rigorous requirement for any description to be accepted as valid (Peräkylä, 2004: 285). Hence, the analysis will provide for rich empirical anchoring in order to improve the reliability of the study. This will be done through including quotes from the debates in the analysis as an illustration of my arguments. The quotes will function as an illustration of the commitments made by the speakers during the plenary session and will be selected on the basis of the quantitative analysis of key words in order to improve their representativity of the claims made. It is important when conducting analyses of discourses to ‘allow for the readers and fellow researchers to make their own checks and judgements’ and by doing so improve the ‘rhetorical persuasiveness’ of the research through a process of analytic grounding, that is to persuade the reader of the validity of the research (Nikander, 2008: 423). This will here be done through providing rich empirical grounding and also through providing a coding sample in Appendix IV in order to increase the transparency of the process. This also adds to improving the replicability of the study.

Validity, on the other hand, concerns the accuracy of the measures. Anssi Perämäki (2004: 289), citing Kirk and Miller, states that validity concerns ‘whether or not the researcher calls what is measured by the right name’. According to one standard definition, validity can be divided into (1) internal validity, which concerns the establishing of causal relationships; (2) external validity, the generalisability of the study, and; (3) construct validity, establishing the correct operational measures for a study (Yin, 2003: 34). Bryman, citing Lincoln and Guba (1985), introduces an alternative standard for assessing qualitative studies. According to this standard the primary criteria should be trustworthiness and authenticity. Trustworthiness is here made up of credibility, which parallels internal validity, transferability, which parallels external validity, dependability, which parallels reliability, and confirmability, which parallels objectivity (Bryman, 2008: 377-380). Here, following the appeal of Caroline Stenbacka
(2001) for qualitative studies to develop its own quality concepts, I rely more on the alternative version of validity for this study.

Credibility, the corresponding quality criteria to internal validity, means ensuring that the research is carried out according to good practice and through making it available to peer-review, which is done through dissemination of results (Bryman, 2008: 377). Through producing this report of the study, I thus contribute to increasing the credibility of the same. Another way to improve the credibility is through is secured through triangulation, that is by combining research techniques to study a phenomenon. This is done here through both the use of quantitative data to examine the attitudes and through the use of quantitative text analysis in the initial coding phase of the study.

The study may also be compromised through the introduction of a selection bias in the sampling process. A selection bias would mean that the sample analysed is not representative and the results are not generalisable, which would result in a low transferability, or external validity, for the study, at least according to classical quantitative thinking. Generalisability in qualitative studies is different from generalisability in quantitative studies. Whereas quantitative studies focus on statistical generalisation, qualitative studies focus on analytical generalisation (Yin, 2003). Analytical generalisation means that the empirical material analysed can be taken to a general level from where it can be applied to other cases or integrated into a theory, whereas statistical generalisability comes from the selection process and representativity of the data. As qualitative studies, as this one, rely on a smaller material than statistical studies, statistical generalisation is not the goal. The goal here is to explore the material in order to arrive at an explanation and understanding of the phenomena at hand.

Coming back again to the selection of debates for this study, as it is not feasible to analyse all debates, and there is reason to believe that the debates on treaty change are of more relevance to the research question, a selection has been made on the grounds of theoretical relevance to the research question. There is a possibility that the findings of the study may be affected by this and that some potentially enlightening speech acts will not be covered, a danger always present when a selection is made. In this category I will, due to the small number of debates held, be able to go through a majority debates on this topic, hence reducing the bias.
4 Presentation of Debates

For my thesis, I have analysed 16 debates, together consisting of 872 speech acts (see Appendix II for a list of debates analysed). This would mean that an average debate analysed here consisted of 54 speech acts. The debates all have their topic – treaty change – in common. I have here analysed debates on the Nice Treaty, the Constitutional Treaty, the period of reflection and the Lisbon Treaty. A more in-depth presentation of the contents of the treaties and of the general setting was already given in Chapter 2, so the discussion in this section will focus on providing the setting for the analysis as well as presenting some initial data on the debates as to enable an understanding of the analysis in the following chapter. I will begin with a presentation of the debates and the initial stages of the analysis which helped with the development of the codes (4.1). In the second section (4.2) I will provide an initial analysis of what kind of problems the MEPs identify in the debates and combine this with an examination of how the MEPs frame them. Framing refers to the contextualisation of issues. The way in which things are framed contribute to how they are perceived and thus also to what kind of responses are triggered. After providing the broad overview of the debates and the framing context, the stage is set for moving to the analysis of the discourses on democracy in the following chapter.

4.1 Description of Debates

In order to get an overview of the debates, I used Nvivo to aid me with the initial, broad-brush coding of the material. One way of getting perspective on the comprehensive body of material is to use a word cloud to illustrate the frequency of words relative to each other. Figure 4.1. is a representation of the word cloud obtained for the debates analysed here. As can be seen from the figure, certain words appear more often than others and are therefore represented in a larger font than the less frequent words. ‘Europe’ and ‘European’ appear very frequently, 2 987 and 1 778 times respectively, as well as ‘treaty’ (1 428 times) and ‘constitution’ (1 444 times). This gives an indication of that the debates selected for analysis really are about treaty change. Other frequent words indicating important themes in the debates are citizens,
commission, countries, debate, people, parliament, constitution, democracy, national, rights, social, and state.\textsuperscript{21}

![Figure 4.1](image1.png)

Word cloud describing the most frequent words in the debates analysed.

This broad brush way of coding does by no means replace a more thorough manual coding, which was conducted following this initial analysis, but it can be of help with getting the wider picture and be of use for the development of categories in the next steps of the analysis. From this can be seen that important words and topics to explore further in the analysis concern, among others, democracy, Europe, citizens, rights and states. In the initial examination of the debates, I also examined the consistency of the use of language. No major differences between the debates, the words used and the terminology in general appeared in this part of the analysis, indicating that the use of language is similar across debates also over time.

After this initial exploration of the material, I proceeded with an analysis of the framing of the debates. In the following section I will present the results of the examination of the frames that the MEPs use for defining the problems of the European Union, because how an issue is framed also contributes to how it can be resolved.

\textsuperscript{21} For a full overview of the most frequent words, see Appendix III.
4.2 Framing the Problem

People approach the world not as naïve, blank-slate receptacles who take in stimuli as they exist in some independent and objective way, but rather as experienced and sophisticated veterans of perceptions [...] who see events and objects in the world in relation to each other and in relation to their prior experience [which then] takes the form of expectations about the world [...] these expectations make it possible to perceive and interpret objects and events in the world, they shape those perceptions to the model of the world provided by them.

Tannen (1993: 20-21)

Framing is a process whereby ‘people develop a particular conceptualisation of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue’ (Chong and Druckman, 2007: 104). A frame of thought affects how people perceive things and organise the perceptions about everyday situations. These perceptions then contribute to how the person handles the situation they are faced with. In order to be able to answer the question of what kind of European democracy the MEPs commit themselves to, it is important to uncover how they frame the problem because that will affect the outcome of the analysis.

In the analysed speeches it quickly became clear that the MEPs tend to stress three things as especially important for the EU to achieve by the treaty revision process: democracy, efficiency, transparency. It is repeated by MEPs from varying political camps, countries and in all debates analysed. This formula comes in various forms, sometimes they will also include security or simplification, but the goal to be obtained for the EU is most often set to be these three. Here are two examples:

I do not believe that the European Union essentially needs new powers but, in connection with the powers it has, it needs the tools really to avail itself of these. Only then would we be in a position to combine transparency, efficiency and democracy, for these three things combined are the conditions of acceptance by the population of Europe.


Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I believe that today the Constitutional Treaty – the European Constitution – is becoming a reality. The result of the Convention’s work, on which we are to vote tomorrow, shows the will to introduce more democracy, transparency and efficiency into the European Institutions, strengthening them and
making the decision-making process more efficient. The citizens are the real winners, since the Constitution consolidates our common values and principles.

Antonio De Poli (PPE-DE) – 11 January 2005 – Constitution for Europe

The goals democracy, transparency and efficiency were originally part of the Laeken declaration. By proclaiming that ‘The European Union derives its legitimacy from the democratic values it projects, the aims it pursues and the powers and instruments it possesses’ and also ‘from democratic, transparent and efficient institutions’ the Laeken declaration set the standards for the future treaty revision process and this has clearly been embraced by the parliament long after its initial proclamation.

Democracy, transparency and efficiency are here often referred to in the context of European decision-making. The MEPs tend to commit themselves to a reformation of the institutions to make them more capable of handling matters in a more efficient and transparent way, which would then worked as a remedy for the democratic deficit. It is often coupled with a conception of rights in that the working of the EU in a manner corresponding to these goals is seen to be a right of the citizens. Through committing themselves to obtaining these three goals the MEPs aim for a stronger input legitimacy for the EU. The term input legitimacy was originally used by Fritz Scharpf (1999) to describe a legitimacy types whereby ‘political choices are legitimate if and because they reflect the will of the people’ (Scharpf, 1999: 6). The citizens need to have a real democratic choice, an input in the system, which is then reflected in the output. The participation of the citizen in the political system and taking the preferences of the same into account in the decision-making process therefore becomes important.

Efficiency is here referring to the working of the EU institutions. The institutions must be efficient in their performing the tasks entrusted with them and must also deliver the wanted outcomes. Efficiency is here therefore a means for obtaining output legitimacy. Output legitimacy is interest based. Decisions that are reflecting this type of legitimacy are legitimate ‘if and because they effectively promote the common welfare of the constituency in question’ (Scharpf, 1999: 6). Although efficiency is set as a standard of operation to be reached by the EU institutions, it is not here linked directly to the outcome of the process. Efficiency is not directly discussed in terms of the efficiency of the internal market. Although the internal market and the economy are occasionally brought up in the debates, these instances are quite
rare. The internal market, despite being the most integrated and arguably most successful area of European integration, and the area often thought by even the most eurosceptic voices as legitimate to integrate in order to advance the interests of the member states, is largely a topic that is absent from the debates analysed here. The most likely explanation for the absence of the economy in the debates is that the topics selected here are not covering economic issues but treaty change and thus any considerations for the workings of the inner market would be raised in other debates. However, its absence is interesting in the sense that this is the most important function of the EU and it is disregarded in favour of a discourse focusing more on citizens, democracy and legitimacy.

The Members of the European Parliament are in their speeches very much concerned about the state of democracy in the European Union and it is one recurring theme in the plenary sessions. This can be seen from the mere fact that the word ‘democracy’ was mentioned 324 times in the debates. Regardless if they want more or less Europe, the MEPs will, as a rule, frame their argument so that whatever it is that they are arguing for is the most democratic way, and particularly the most democratic way in relation to the citizens.

It is clear that the debate on the democratic deficit has reached the European Parliament. It visible in the debates analysed as a reoccurring theme, often being portrayed as a problem relating to the perception of the EU by the citizens. Democratic deficit as a term is used occasionally in the debate on both sides of the integration debate as the examples below show:

_In our view, the results of Nice are not sufficient to create the institutional conditions for enlargement. We regret that precisely because we want enlargement and want it as quickly as possible. We have reservations in particular about the complicated voting procedure in the Council of Ministers, but also about the number of MPs and the composition of the European Parliament; that this should not be settled until 2009 is completely unsatisfactory, will create legal problems in the meantime, create injustices for some candidate countries and also cement the continuing democratic deficit because it fails to link the codecision process to majority voting in the Council of Ministers._

_Ursula Schleicher – 30 May 2001 – Treaty of Nice_

_In our view, the results of Nice are not sufficient to create the institutional conditions for enlargement. We regret that precisely because we want enlargement and want it as quickly as possible. We have reservations in particular about the complicated voting procedure in the Council of Ministers, but also about the number of MPs and the composition of the European Parliament; that this should not be settled until 2009 is completely unsatisfactory, will create legal problems in the meantime, create injustices for some candidate countries and also cement the continuing democratic deficit because it fails to link the codecision process to majority voting in the Council of Ministers._

_Ursula Schleicher – 30 May 2001 – Treaty of Nice_
be strengthened. We unite people, not states. We therefore need the Europe of citizens and not just a Europe of governments!

Jo Leinen (PSE) – 30 May 2001 – Treaty of Nice

From the quotes above it can be seen how the debate on democracy is framed. The quotes presented above are by pro-integrationists, who argue for more integration on the basis of a lack of democracy in the European Union. In a common line of argument, the democratic deficit is linked to the lack of control of the Commission by the Parliament and to the weak position of the Parliament in the EU system. Without the Parliament being able to participate on equal footing with the Council and Commission in the treaty revision procedure, there is no claim of democratic legitimacy for the European Union. This quotes presented here are from the debate on the Nice Treaty and it needs to be noted that the EP has with the subsequent treaty revisions gotten more powers, but the argument is still present in other debates where the role of the Parliament as the only democratic institution is often emphasised. More integration of the European Union is here seen as the solution to the problem, more power for the European Parliament and more supranational decision-making.

The democratic deficit discourse can also be used to argue for the opposite development of the European Union. The democratic deficit is then used to portray a situation where it is important to sustain and possibly strengthen the role of the member states in the EU institutional system.

In actual fact, the pursuit of a superstate justifies almost all the provisions of the Treaty of Nice, which are devoted to strengthening the institutions and the supranational procedures by extending majority voting to the crucial issues of sovereignty. One of these, which is the appointment of the Commission by qualified majority voting, would eventually transform the college into a government of Europe and would thus cause a radical upheaval of the philosophy of the European institutions that we know. The move towards the superstate relies on the belief, which the federalists hold dear, that we must react to the growing diversity within Europe by stepping up centralisation. In our view, this belief will make enlargement more difficult and, at the same time, it will increase the democratic deficit within today’s European Union.

Georges Berthu (NI) – 30 May 2001 – Treaty of Nice

Interestingly, the democratic deficit as a term disappears from the later treaty revision debates. While all in all being mentioned 27 times in the debates analysed, it only occurs in those exact
words in the earlier debates. For instance in the debate on the Nice Treaty it was mentioned nine times while it was not mentioned a single time in the debate on the Lisbon Treaty. Of the later debates analysed, there was only one mentioning of the democratic deficit.

There are two potential explanations for this: either the debate has shifted away from the democratic deficit because it as an issue either is not salient anymore or it has been resolved, which is suggested by the quote above, or there has been a shift in discourse on the topic during the same time. An investigation into the use of the term democracy shows that there appears to have been a change in saliency of the democratic deficit. Whereas democracy and the working of the European Union were important in face of the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, the prospect of a similar broadening of the Union is not an issue for the later debates both due to the enlargement fatigue that struck the EU and to the fact that there are not that many candidate countries left to join and the progress of the candidate countries is varied, making such a big enlargement wave improbable. As an illustration, it can be pointed out that the word ‘enlargement’ occurred 52 times in the debate on the Treaty Change in 1999 and 55 times in the debate on the Nice Treaty 2001 compared to nine times in the debate on the Constitution 2005 and two times in the debate on the Lisbon Treaty 2008. The word ‘democracy’ and ‘democratic’ occur frequently and there is no decrease or change in the frequency apart from peaks in debates on the actual treaties as can be seen from Table 4.1.22

22 See also Appendix III for an overview of the most frequent words.
Table 4.1. Word frequency for key words in the debates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Debate</th>
<th>Democracy</th>
<th>Legitimacy</th>
<th>Rights</th>
<th>Citizens</th>
<th>Member states</th>
<th>National Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999.11.17 - Treaty reform - next IGC</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001.05.30 - Treaty of Nice and the future of the EU</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001.11.28 - Future of the European Union</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003.09.24 - European Constitution and IGC</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004.01.28 - The programme of the Irish presidency and the European Constitution</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004.05.04 - Towards a European constitution</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005.01.11 - Constitution for Europe</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005.01.11 - Constitution for Europe (continuation)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005.06.08 - Preparations for the European Council, including the future of the Union after the referenda on the European constitution</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006.01.18 - The period of reflection - structure, subjects and context for an assessment of the debate on the EU</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006.11.29 - Debate on the future of Europe</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007.03.14 - Berlin Declaration</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007.06.06 - Roadmap for the European Union's constitutional process</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007.07.11 - Convening of the Intergovernmental Conference - opinion of the European Parliament</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007.10.10 - Preparation of the informal summit of heads of state and government (Lisbon, 18-19 October 2007)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008.02.20 - Treaty of Lisbon</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Text search for exact wording in all debates analysed.
Although the topic of democracy is still present in the debate, the nature with which it is handled has changed. The saliency of the democratic deficit has decreased after enlargement and there is a spirit of treaty revision fatigue, which can be seen also in the following quotes:

*Of course there are also many of us who are not wholly satisfied with what the Lisbon Treaty entails. At the same time, we have to say that the time is ripe – after the Lisbon Treaty has been ratified – for an era in which we can put the new Europe, this new structure that the Lisbon Treaty creates, into action. In other words, we need a stronger Europe and a calm period of consolidation in the years ahead.*


*With the unsuccessful process of ratification of the Constitutional Treaty constantly in mind, I feel that it is better to posit smaller but stable steps than to attempt leaps that are always associated with the risk of a fall. The reality of our changing will come very quickly. It is therefore certain that in a few years’ time we shall be debating a new text, a new treaty, one that is more appropriate to the realities that are to come. It is important for us to be able to discern them in time, and for the European Union to retain the capacity to adapt to new challenges.*


The Nice Treaty was seen as a failure for democracy and the changes accomplished there were portrayed as insufficient. Democracy thus is present as a theme throughout the debates, but after the Lisbon Treaty the discourse has changed more towards having a ‘period of consolidation’ after which further discussions on the form of integration can be had. The Lisbon Treaty, like the other treaties before it, is not the last revision foreseen even at the moment of its creation.

A related argument to the democratic deficit is the framing of the EU as an elite-driven project. The discourse around this portrays a growing gap between the public and the elites in their attitudes towards the EU. They portray the EU as living a life of its own under the rule of eurocrats and euro-elites that are disconnected from the people they are to serve. It is often put in confrontational terms implying that the wishes of the people and the wishes of the leaders are irreconcilable. It needs to be noted that this is an argument often presented by more eurosceptic MEPs.

There is another version present of the elite *problematique* and that is often framed as a lack of understanding by the people of the European project. The eurocrats are seen to be distant from the people and the people in turn are seen as not understanding the European Union.
There is a wide-spread concern that the people no longer neither see the positive outcomes of the European project nor approve of it.

As an MEP for Hungary, the first country to ratify the Reform Treaty, I am well aware that ratification alone is not enough. It has already been mentioned in this Chamber that we need to explain to people – to the citizens of Europe – in what ways this document provides more than national constitutions, to explain the added value of this Reform Treaty.

Csaba Sándor Tabajdi (PSE) – 20 February 2008 – Treaty of Lisbon

In sum, the democratic, or legitimacy, deficit is the context in which the treaty reforms are discussed. The MEPs tend to stress three things that need to be obtained in order to bridge the gap between the EU and its citizens: efficiency, transparency and democracy. Through this proclamation, the MEPs commit themselves to resolving this issue and in the debate two alternatives emerged: more or less integration. This is the topic of the next chapter.
5 Analysis

In the last chapter I introduced the debates analysed and presented the way in which the MEPs frame the problems in the debate. In this chapter I move on to developing the democratic models as they were constructed in the process of analysing the plenary debates. It needs to be noted that when the MEPs discuss during the plenary sessions, they are not outlining exact models of what European democracy should look like. This means that although there are a number of discourses on democracy and European integration present, if asked to specify their view further, the MEPs’ specifications may be different from the models developed here. As a reminder, the question this thesis is to answer is: *What kind of view of democracy are Members of the European Parliament committing themselves to in their plenary speeches?*

This said, on the basis of the commitments made by the MEPs in the analysed plenary debates it is possible to construct two general models of European democracy: intergovernmental Europe and federal Europe.

The discussion will now focus on the two main dimensions of democratic discourse. I will begin by presenting data on the attitudes of the MEPs to European integration, as that will assist with the initial process of outlining how the MEPs place themselves on the map integration scale (5.1). After this, I will move on to the analysis of the first model – the intergovernmental model (5.2.1.) – which will be followed by an analysis of the model found at the other end of the scale – the federal model (5.2.2). Section 5.3 outlines the sub-discourses on democracy identified in the analysis and how they can be used to place the MEPs on a spectrum from less to more integration. The chapter will be concluded with a discussion on the implications of the models developed here.

**5.1 MEPs’ Attitudes to European Integration**

In order to find how the MEPs themselves view integration, I have used data gathered by the European Parliament Research Group (EPRG). The EPRG is a consortium of researchers who under the lead of Simon Hix have gathered survey data on the opinions of MEPs. I have here used the data from the 2000 and 2006 waves as that covers the same periods as the debates analysed here. Some developments took place in the European Union between 2000 and 2006. For instance, the Nice Treaty was drafted and entered in to force, as was the Constitution, the EU was in 2006 in the middle of the period of reflection, the European
Union got ten new member states, and there was a European election. All these things, not counting any external events and general social developments, could affect the results and create a difference between the two surveys. However, as these are factors that cannot be manipulated in the processing of the data, they will only have to be kept in mind in the further analysis.

How, then, do the MEPs place themselves on the integration scale? When reading the plenary transcripts, the impression is that there are more proponents for a development in the direction of more integration than for turning the EU back to a mere intergovernmental organisation. The impression from the plenary sessions is supported by the EPRG data. From Figure 5.1 can be seen that there is a clear bias towards more integration among the MEPs in the European Parliament. If defined as attitudes ranging from values five to ten on the integration scale, 71.2 per cent of MEPs asked in 2000 and 65.4 per cent of the ones asked in 2006 place themselves on the side of integration towards a federal state. However, only a few place themselves at the far end of that scale, indicating a bias towards more integration but not necessarily towards full federalism. It can hence be stated that a majority of MEPs support more integration and a development towards a federal state, but the great majority of MEPs are found on the middle of the scale, albeit more on the integration side. The figures between the parliaments analysed here are also similar, with the fifth parliament being somewhat more on the integration-positive side than the sixth parliament.
In Table 5.1 below I have broken down some key questions from the survey on how the MEPs view the relationship between the EP and other EU institutions and how they want it to develop. Generally it can from this be seen that the EP favours a transfer of more powers to itself in relation to the other institutions as also found in the qualitative analysis. The MEPs want more powers for the European Parliament. On all items in the table asked in both waves – the right to imitate legislation, equal law-making powers with the Council, power to amend budget, power to nominate the Commission President and remove individual commissioners from office – a majority of MEPs answered that they tend to agree or strongly agree. The only question on which the MEPs tended to disagree was the question on whether the member states should remain the central pillars of the EU, a question which could be expected to have a negative value as that would imply a move in the more intergovernmental direction and not in the direction of more supranational decision-making and power.
Table 5.1  Attitudes of MEPs towards European integration – the institutional perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The European Parliament should have the right to initiate legislation</td>
<td>33,2</td>
<td>37,4</td>
<td>44,4</td>
<td>37,4</td>
<td>11,1</td>
<td>9,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The European Parliament should have equal legislative power with the</td>
<td>33,9</td>
<td>39,9</td>
<td>38,0</td>
<td>32,4</td>
<td>14,5</td>
<td>10,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council in all areas of EU policy-making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The EP should be able to amend all areas of expenditure in the EU budget</td>
<td>36,4</td>
<td>45,7</td>
<td>48,7</td>
<td>33,5</td>
<td>6,8</td>
<td>8,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Commission President should be nominated by the EP, rather than the</td>
<td>31,1</td>
<td>31,9</td>
<td>36,8</td>
<td>26,6</td>
<td>5,1</td>
<td>19,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>national governments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The EP should be able to remove individual Commissioners from office</td>
<td>30,8</td>
<td>38,9</td>
<td>41,0</td>
<td>33,2</td>
<td>4,2</td>
<td>11,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The member states, not the Commission nor the European Parliament,</td>
<td>13,2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>18,9</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>11,1</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ought to remain the central pillars of the EU*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is imperative that the European Commission becomes the true</td>
<td>8,1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>40,9</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>14,5</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government of the European Union*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QMV should be used in all legislative decisions in the Council*</td>
<td>17,2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>42,2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>6,8</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * item not asked in 2006 wave. Answers given in per cent. Question phrased as ‘To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the powers of the European Parliament?’.
In order to see if the answers given were consistent over issues, that is, if the MEPs who e.g. wanted more legislative rights were the same as the ones who wanted more budget powers, I tested the correlation across questions. The results are presented in Table 5.2. Generally, there were small to medium strong positive correlations, meaning that if the MEPs tended to be consistent in their answers – a wish for more power in one area corresponds for a wish for more power in another area. The correlation coefficients were all statistically significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Right to initiate legislation</th>
<th>Equal with Council in all law-making</th>
<th>Equal budget powers</th>
<th>Nominate president of Commission</th>
<th>Remove Commissioners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Right to initiate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>legislation</td>
<td></td>
<td>.418**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal with Council in</td>
<td>.587**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.675**</td>
<td>.527**</td>
<td>.274**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all law-making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal budget powers</td>
<td>.532**</td>
<td>.652**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.547**</td>
<td>.290**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominate president of</td>
<td>.559**</td>
<td>.701**</td>
<td>.592**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.333**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove Commissioners</td>
<td>.418**</td>
<td>.249**</td>
<td>.349**</td>
<td>.342**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Below the dashed line correlation coefficients for the 2000 wave, above the dashed line correlation coefficients for the 2006 wave.

The results from this small number crunching exercise show that the initial picture from the debates is accurate – the MEPs want more European integration and more European democracy, and that trend is similar between the two parliaments. After exploring the attitudes of the MEPs, I will in the following sections take the existing knowledge and apply it in the analysis of the plenary debates. Although it is not possible to directly compare the findings between the quantitative and the qualitative data to see if the MEP’s self placement corresponds to the views expressed in their plenary speeches for the simple reason that we do not know who placed themselves where in the survey data, comparing the general trends is still of value to the study. The examination of the attitudes is also of help in the subsequent development of a theory of European democracy and integration.
5.2 Discourses on European Democracy: More or less Europe?

Democracy has been identified by the MEPs as one of the major problems facing the European Union. The main discourse on democracy, and the main dividing line in the discussions, is whether there should be more or less Europe, that is should more decision-making powers be transferred from the national to the supranational level. At the one end of the spectrum we find the MEPs wanting less Europe, viewing the European Union as an international organisation on line with others. At the other end, we find the parliamentarians arguing for more Europe, possibly even taking it as far as a federal state. I have here chosen to call these end points intergovernmental Europe and federal Europe, building partly on existing literature on the subject (for an overview, see e.g. Cini, 2008; Wiener and Diez, 2009) and partly on the terminology used by the MEPs in the plenary debates. These are the end points of a scale rather than uniform visions and there are many nuances and dimensions to these end points. These dimensions, or sub-discourses, are additional ways in which the MEPs position them on the scale from more to less Europe.

5.2.1 A Union of States: The Intergovernmental Model

At the one end of the scale we find the intergovernmental model for the future of the European Union. Intergovernmentalism literally means ‘between governments’. It is a model where an organisation is composed of sovereign states bound by an agreement drawn up for a specific goal. The organisation is here a means to an end and often that end is to promote the national interests of the member states. The agreement signed delimits the mandate of the organisation and the organisation is not to take on any tasks beyond those assigned to it. This is the traditional model for international organisations, one example of which is the United Nations. This was also the organisational model upon which the European Union was founded, but with the growing powers of the European Parliament and the shift of ever more policy areas away from the national to the supranational arena it is doubtful if the EU can today be called an intergovernmental organisation (Føllesdal and Hix, 2006; Eriksen, 2009; Eriksen and Fossum, 2012) and many are now looking for new ways of describing the EU. Despite the academic conundrum of how to classify the EU, the intergovernmental terminology is much present in discourses in the EP plenary debates.
In an intergovernmental organisational model, decisions are made by the governments of the member states. The governments get their mandate from their respective citizens and in the negotiations the governments are responsible to the same. The democratic function is here fulfilled by the control of the national legislative of the national executive. The way and extent to which democracy is seen to function here depends on the quality of the national system of democracy. In the EU system, the governments are represented in the European Council. A strong European Council with national veto rights is hence important from an intergovernmental point of view. The role for the European Parliament would in a pure intergovernmental system be very limited. There is, as does not come as a surprise considering the object of study, no demands expressed for a reduction of the power of the European Parliament in the debates, which would be required in a pure intergovernmental system. Regarding the institutional balance, the discussion in the debates analysed focus more on voting weights and the preservation of national veto rights than on reducing the role of the Parliament to a spectator, or at most a supervisory body trusted with powers of supervision of the other institutions and guarding the interests of the member states, which would be required if the EU was to work as a purely intergovernmental organisation.

Proponents of this model will argue against transfer of more power from the national to the supranational level as that is seen to remove power from the states, and by extension the citizens, to the supranational institutions. The nation state is seen to be the only arena for democracy and any transfer of decision-making power away from the national arena therefore becomes undemocratic. The member states know what is in the best interest of their citizens. This can be illustrated by the following quote:

*I want my country to have the freedom to take decisions in the best interests of our people. I want all Member States, large and small, to enjoy that right equally. Collectively and democratically, we can bring about positive change, delivering for our people and delivering for the global village. We need to reform the European Union to enable us to achieve these things, to create the Europe that our people want and deserve. The Lisbon Treaty is a bad deal for Ireland, it is a bad deal for Europe and it is a bad deal for the wider world.*

Mary Lou McDonald (GUE/NGL) – 20 February 2008 – Treaty of Lisbon

This model promotes the equality of states rather than the equality of citizens. The goal for the European Union is to be a union of sovereign states rather than a union of peoples. The role of the citizen becomes confined to the national democratic arena. There is no need for
direct citizen involvement at the EU level as it is through participation in the political system at national level, such as through voting, that the citizens exercise their power and therefore many proponents of more national democratic control have in the analysed debates argued for national referendums on treaty change.

The rights of the citizens should be guarded at the national level, especially social rights, whereas the European Union should only take upon itself matters delegated to it by the member states. This can be found in the debates as an emphasis on the efficient working of the institutions. The institutions should produce the output desired and do so in an efficient matter. Through this reasoning, the legitimacy of the Union becomes dependent on it providing the member states with the goods assigned to it, or in the terminology of Fritz Scharpf (1999), output legitimacy.

National cultures are associated with the intergovernmental model and it is a recurring theme in the debates, especially among MEPs from the more eurosceptic groups. The national cultures are seen as being threatened by the European integration process where they are becoming submerged into the pan-European cultural mash up in which they lose their distinctiveness. Cultural distinctiveness here becomes one argument against European integration along supranational lines as that would fail to take into consideration the variations of national ways and threaten minority cultures.

*Within the framework of the current configuration of Europe, Member States and nations must have a guarantee for the preservation of their sovereignty. They also need a sense of their cultural identity, community of faith and tradition.*

Adam Biela (NI) – 4 May 2004 – Towards a European Constitution

*We will continue to fight for an alternative Europe that respects the inalienable rights of the people of each Member State to shape their own future, one that respects national constitutions and one that is in keeping with the principle that States are sovereign and have equal rights.*

Iida Figueiredo (GUE/NGL) – 4 May 2004 – Towards a European Constitution

The lack of a common culture is also expressed in terms of a lack of a European people, a *demos*, without which there cannot be democracy:
We do not want to see a United States of Europe, but a Community. We do not want a federation of nation states, but a Union made up of the nation states that we are. Nothing more and nothing less. [...] Drafting a European constitution is another perverse fantasy. If there is no single European people, there can be no legitimate constituent European power. If there is no constituent European power, there can be no European constitution. Treaties can only be reformed by Treaties.

José Ribeiro e Castro (UEN) – 30 May 2001 – Treaty of Nice and the future of the EU

Mr President, I love the word 'democracy' because it puts the word 'people' in front of the word 'rule' – government by the people, of the people, for the people. [...] However, the word is empty without the reality. I see little evidence of democracy in the strategies being designed to guarantee a positive outcome to the Constitution. In the committee we are told that it is our job to 'sell the Treaty', that we should restrict the debate in our home countries, that referendums should be scheduled to maximise the 'yes' vote.

Kathy Sinnott (IND/DEM) – 15 September 2004 – Ratification of the Constitutional Treaty

In order to be a pure intergovernmental organisation, many of the EU’s powers per today would have to be transferred back to the national level. A rolling-back of the EU is, however, something that is rarely found in the debate. The proponents of a more intergovernmental EU tend to focus more on hindering new powers from being transferred to the supranational level than on actually regaining national control over areas already uploaded to the EU. There therefore seems to be a certain degree of acceptance of the system as it is with more weight on preventing further integration than on reclaiming power from the EU.

What kind of democracy do the MEPs on the more intergovernmental side of the spectrum commit themselves to then? The MEPs arguing for a more restrictive integration are putting the rights and the interests of the citizens and the national cultures in focus. They view the nation state as the guardian of the rights of its citizens and the one arena best equipped to further the interests of the citizens. Although common denominators in terms of classical models of democracy are hard to find among this diverse group of people, many arguments come from a liberal perspective in that they do not want a European ‘superstate’. The use of the term superstate as a criticism of the direction of integration points to a fear of big government, a classic concern for liberal democratic theory. They emphasise the rights of the citizens in terms of negative freedom, the freedom of the people to not have excessive involvement in their lives from the state – they do not want the despotic domination of the European bureaucracy and the elites. This can be compared to the classical liberal conception of a good law and the principle of freedom. Thomas Hobbes found that ‘a good law is that,
which is needful for the good of the people, and withal perspicuous. For the use of laws […] is not to bind the people from all voluntary actions, but to direct and keep them in such a motion as not to hurt themselves by their own impetuous desires, rashness, or indiscretion […] therefore a law that is not needful, having not the true end of a law, is not good’ (Hobbes, 2011: 294). A good law in liberal tradition is thus a law which allows the citizens to freely realise their ambitions while hindering them from doing so at the expense of the freedom of others. Emphasis on the rights of the individual citizen as well as of the individual member state here, the freedom from the dominance of excessive legislation, and the emphasis on the pursuit of the goods of the individual and the state, not necessarily the common good, are all traditional liberal values and they are reflected in the debate on the intergovernmentalist side of the spectrum. Although calling many of the MEPs who argue for intergovernmentalism liberal in any other sense than a democratic one might be going too far, many of them argue along liberal democratic lines.

5.2.2 A Union of Peoples: The Federal Model

At the other end of the spectrum we find the discourse on the development of the European Union into a federal state, a United States of Europe. A federal state is a union of self-governing units that to some extent have power to determine their own affairs but still have to adhere to a minimum of common laws. It is a system of governing in which there are several levels of authority with the federal level as the highest one. Federations, to date, are not international organisations but states. The classical examples here are countries such as USA, Australia or Germany and a move in a federal direction would mean that the EU would become something more of a state in itself rather than a union of sovereign states. Although a federal state comparable to that of the United States probably requires more integration than most are prepared for, the discourse on further European integration is very much present and there are MEPs who argue for an EU which is comparable to a federal union.

Before exploring this discourse further, I will make a short remark regarding the use of the word ‘federal’. It must be pointed out that the word itself is more often used by the people who want less Europe than the ones actually arguing for more Europe. It is more often presented as a critique of the development of the Union than a model for development. Federalism has more negative than positive connotations in the context of the European Parliament. One possible reason is the concern of the MEPs with having their opinion on
record, and as has been stated earlier, there is a mismatch between MEP and citizen opinions on the matter of European integration. Hence, the MEPs sceptic to integration might grab the opportunity offered by the plenary forum to publicly brand themselves as being against integration along federal lines. Federalism creates too many associations to nation building and as could be seen from the failure of the Constitutional Treaty, that was not a very successful approach. However, there are a few who actually argue for a federal state using the term federal as can be seen from the example below:

There is no doubt that the agenda of the Intergovernmental Conference must go much further than the fine words of Amsterdam, even though they are very important. I talked before of constitutionalisation and, personally, I believe in a federal perspective. The Treaties should also include that Charter of Fundamental Rights which is to be drawn up in the coming months; lay down majority decision making – as a general rule – and, logically, and simultaneously, the codecision procedure. It should also increase the powers of the European Parliament, […], and, of course, ensure that the coming reforms are carried out according to a method which is much more open, transparent, democratic and participatory than the current one.

Carnero González (PSE) – Treaty reform/next IGC

Others try to define what they mean by federalism, putting their own values into the word as can be seen from this example:

Let me give a couple of examples: in some political parties and countries the word "federalism" is mistakenly equated with centralism and they talk of creating a centralised super-state in the way that Mr Farage spoke earlier. That is not what anybody wants and if you define federalism as different levels of governance, as decentralised as possible but centralised where necessary with each level democratically structured, then we already have the beginnings of a federal-type system and I am happy, under that definition, to proclaim myself a federalist.

Richard Corbett (PSE) – 28 November – Future of the European Union

Generally references to federalism and a European superstate are made not by the supporters of such a development, but of the critics. Federalism thus is seen to have negative connotations and only in the rare case there will be MEPs openly arguing for full-fledged federation. More common is that the MEPs argue for more integration, integration which could go as far as resembling federalism but not using the F-word.

What then would be required for the EU to become a federal union and what elements for this can be found in the debates? First of all, a federal union requires several levels of government.
If the EU was to become a federal union the powers of the European Parliament would have to be increased to match that of the national parliaments at the national level. That would require a great increase in co-decision, making the Parliament a true legislative power alongside the Council. The supervisory powers of the EP would also have to be increased in order for it to be able to exercise the function of controlling the executive, which in the EU system is the Commission. The relationship between the national parliaments and the European Parliament would also have to be changed so that the national parliaments have more power in the European decision-making. The discourse in the European Parliament is very much in line with this in that increasing its powers vis-à-vis the Council and Commission is a topic brought up repeatedly in the debates. Generally, the EP wants more power for itself. This is as a rule justified with respect to it being the democratic institution, the representation of the citizens, in the EU system.

The second point that I would like to mention here, [...] is that it is clear that this Treaty closes a democratic loophole in the European Union. Full codecision rights for the European Parliament, the election of the Commission President by the European Parliament, the obligation for international treaties to be ratified by the European Parliament, the strengthening of the national parliaments – I do not want to go into detail. What we are doing here in the European Union is unique, as we no longer resolve the different interests of our peoples and among our peoples, which will always be present, with tanks and guns, as used to happen, but with debates and democratic voting.

Elmar Brok (PPE-DE) – 20 February 2008 – Treaty of Lisbon

One classic definition of a state requires a state to have a people, a territory, a government, and sovereignty. With respect to the European Union, even the first criterion is debated. Is there or can there ever be a European people or will the national, regional or local identities continue to take precedence? How can there be a federal European state without a demos? The citizen and the will of the European people are frequent arguments and points of reference in the plenary debates analysed here. This can be seen in the mere fact that the word ‘citizens’ occur 822 times in the debates and ‘people’ 728 times, with ‘peoples’ plural only occurring 119 times. This distinction between people singular and peoples plural is also an indicator of pan-European thinking. Rather than seeing Europe as consisting of several peoples, the MEPs more often see the people as one, as a united entity of a European citizenry. The approval of this citizenry is very important to the MEPs, who often point to treaties as improving the understanding of the EU by the citizens, improving democratic control of the institutions by
the citizens and by extension thereby legitimising the European project and closing the gap between what is and what is wanted from the EU.

The continuing referencing to a European people would mean that the MEPs see that there is one. What would then constitute the people? In order for there to be a people they must share some common features. The European Union consists of 27 member states and the states themselves are very heterogeneous, meaning that when combined finding common features to define a people is even harder. In the debates analysed the defining feature brought up is not language or even culture, but values. These values are seen to be arising from a particular shared history and a conception of rights. The commonality of values is often brought up in the discourse, for example like this:

*Mr President, I would briefly like to say that we have all come to the European Union because we share the same constitutional values. Whilst there is nothing essentially new in the Constitution, apart from greater legal and political integration of the Member States, it heralds a new political era, by making it clear that Europe is more than just an economic area or a market. It is an area of values, a constitutional area, where the guiding principle is human dignity.*


*I also believe that our Europe must be based on values. The Charter of Fundamental Rights is an essential component as far as Parliament is concerned. [...] The EU’s success story is based on our being a common body of law in the fields in which we have powers and responsibilities, and on our use of the Monnet method. The intergovernmental approach has always failed. The EFTA has failed, whilst the EU has been a winner thanks to the Monnet method. That is why we should not now fall back on methods that have failed in the past.*

Elmar Brok (PPE-DE) – 6 June 2007 – Roadmap for the European Union’s constitutional process

Important values that are often stressed in the debates relate to human rights, peace, prosperity, freedom, solidarity, justice, and democracy. These are the values that are defining the European Union and its citizens. Citizenship can also be defined through rights and obligations. Obligations that citizens have towards the EU are another matter left out from the debate. There is no discussion of what the EU requires from its citizens in return, but there is a focus on rights. As this is the time period when the European Charter of Fundamental Rights was being discussed, one would expect to find references to rights in the debates. The
Charter is brought out as a democratic achievement and a document that captures the value foundation upon which the European Union is built.

It cannot be denied that citizens matter and are an important part of the discourse. What is the role for the citizen in the EU system? The role envisaged for the European citizens tend to be described in a more passive than active language, more top-down than bottom-up, indicating that although the citizens matter the role envisaged for them is as passive enablers rather than active participants. It is important to the MEPs that they have the approval of their citizens, as it should be in a parliamentary system where the ultimate source of power is the voters, and they are repeatedly bringing up the need to gain the trust of the citizens and the acceptance of the citizens of the European project. The problem of a lack of legitimacy in the eyes of the citizens is identified as partly stemming from a lack of information. It thus becomes the task of the EU institutions, as well as of the national governments and parliaments, to inform the citizens, who will, once they understand what the Union can provide them with, endorse it. The citizen here becomes the passive receiver of information, who will on the basis of the received information give his or her approval so that integration can continue, which is in the interest of the citizens. It is a top-down dominated discourse on the role of the citizens as can be seen from the following quotes:

After all, when one compares the arguments in favour of this constitution with the arguments against, one will not take long to conclude that the constitution has much more that is good in it than bad and it merits the support of the European citizens. There is no doubt that if we explain to the people what the constitution means, the people will be more in favour than against it, because they understand how logical is the unification of Europe, that it makes sense and that it is in their interest. Therefore it is of utmost importance that whoever is in this room, whoever in this Parliament is in favour of this constitution, has to commit himself or herself directly with the people to see that they understand it and support it.

Simon Busuttil (PPE-DE) – 11 January 2005 – Constitution for Europe

That is why I am confident that the Irish people, when this is explained to them properly in the coming months, will guarantee that we will ratify this Treaty.

Brian Crowley (UEN) – 15 September 2004 – Ratification of the Constitutional Treaty

Although the MEPs want both input and output legitimacy, they see the former as dependent on the latter, i.e. they have to deliver the desired goods in order for the people to be receptive for arguments about the good of European integration. In addition to actually delivering
whatever goods the citizens request, they also have to be seen as doing it. Part of the problem today would therefore consist of the work of the MEPs and the EU not being visible enough. Hence, the strategy to increase the EU’s legitimacy would be to increase visibility of what the EU does for the citizens. This suggestion is found in the debates.

In a federal system there is representation at several levels, local, regional and federal. In the debates, part of the discourse on democracy also focuses on representation and specifically on the role of the regions in the EU system and on the use of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity is the EU principle whereby decisions are to be made and implemented at the lowest possible level of government, that is, as close to the people as it can be, and in a federal EU system it would form the basis for how decisions are to be made. The subsidiarity principle was originally introduced with the Maastricht Treaty as a way of ensuring that member states would not be arbitrarily dominated by Brussels. Subsidiarity is a recurring feature of the EP debates analysed. In total, subsidiarity as a term is mentioned 84 times in the debates but subsidiarity is also emerging in more indirect ways. When subsidiarity is brought up it often is so together with a mentioning of the role of the regions. In the debate there is a push for including the regions further in the decision-making system. Often the parliamentarians from large regions without representation in the European Parliament, such as Catalonia to name one, are the ones bringing up the topic of regionalism.

First, yes to the constituent convention, but it also needs to represent the regional level. Secondly, we need a federalist constitution based on subsidiarity from Union to Member State and from Member State to regional community. The third argument is the trickiest: we need a sort of pyramid-shaped constitution of European citizens with us, the powers and institutions of the Union, at the top, the logic of the states, at least those that remain, at the second level and the regional constitutions taking up the most space.

Luciano Caveri (ELDR) – 30 May 2001 – Treaty of Nice and the future of the EU

I particularly regret that [the Constitution] reflects a virtual Europe, a Europe that is not the real Europe, a Europe that does not exist in political terms, where everything that lies between individual citizens and states is just ignored. Peoples in Europe, regions, and their political role in the construction of a diverse and plural Europe have simply been neglected, have been passed over in silence in this text. But this is just not the reality of the Europe we are all building here together. What is worse, some languages, such as my own – Catalan – which are stronger than acknowledged officially at European Union level, are blindly ignored in this Constitution.

Guardans Cambó (ALDE) – 11 January 2005 – Constitution for Europe
The regional discourse focuses on European integration as a good thing for the regions, an opportunity to get more direct influence in the Union. Especially large, powerful regions that see themselves as not getting enough influence through their national governments can see an opportunity to get direct influence by way of bypassing the governments and further their own interests directly to the European institutions.

From the debates it is clear that the lack of inclusion of the regions is perceived as a problem, but it is not equally clear how they should be included. One solution, illustrated by Luciano Caveri above, is that the regions should be included as one level in a federal system with subsidiarity as the founding principle. Generally it can be said that the discourse on regionalism has the proponents arguing for more powers for the regions in the EU system and more subsidiarity; they do not want more centralised power to the European institutions without a corresponding control of the institutions from a regional level. This they share with the intergovernmentalists.

An issue related to subsidiarity is the role of the national parliaments. The national parliaments’ role is not a big part of the discourse in the debates analysed here. Other than brought up as another guardian of democracy, the role of the national parliaments in the European Union is not a very prominent theme of the debates analysed here. However, as said, the EP hailed the new powers of the national parliaments towards the European Union as a great achievement and improvement of EU democracy:

_The text we are to adopt strengthens the democratic legitimacy of the European Institutions and brings them closer to the 450 million men and women who belong to the Union. Indeed, the Constitution confers greater powers on national parliaments and on the European Parliament, in both legislative and political terms: our citizens will also have a greater say in the democratic process thanks to the closer bond between Community institutions and local communities, the social partners and associations. Our duty, as elected representatives, is to make this participation real, productive and tangible. Europe will thereby consolidate its role as a global player._

Armando Dionisi (PPE-DE) – 11 January 2005 – Constitution for Europe

The increased presence of national parliaments on the EU arena can be seen as a further move towards a more federal system, but the European Parliament does not debate the issue in those terms and barely touches upon the role of the national parliaments other than in reference to improved democracy. It is, however, clear that the EP does recognise the improved democratic qualities of the Union with the increased powers of the national parliaments in the
EP. Regarding the relationship between the national and the European parliament, the discourse tends to focus much on cooperation. The European Parliament is together with the national parliaments seen as needing to cooperate in order to further the interests of the citizens, implying a multi-level democratic structure. The word tree below (Figure 5.2) illustrates the discourse on the relationship between the EP and its national counterparts. From this it can be seen that there is a discourse on deepening the relationships between the two as well as enhancing the powers for them.

![Figure 5.2 Word tree illustrating the discourse on the relationship between the European Parliament and the national parliaments.](image)

From the debates, it is not clear what kind of relationship the EP sees itself having with the national parliaments. Although there is the mentioning of cooperation, there are no concrete proposals as to how they are to cooperate. Despite this, the EP regards the national parliaments as co-guardians of democracy and is glad to include them more in the European power structure.

The federal model, like the intergovernmental model, is an ideal type and as it is outlined here is not encompassing all nuances but rather the broad common traits found in the debates. This said, the federal model, when compared to the classical democratic models, is most reminiscent of the republican one. The republican democratic tradition rests on the idea of positive freedom, freedom through the law. This has however in later years been redefined by people such as Philip Pettit (1997) as freedom of non-domination. The law is here seen as a means of controlling the power and preventing its arbitrary and despotic use, thus enabling the people to enjoy their freedom. Freedom here does not mean that the lives of the citizens cannot be restricted through the use of law, but that the ways in which restrictions are imposed are predictable and transparent. This has in the debates been reflected in an emphasis

23 As opposed to the liberal freedom which Pettit refers to as freedom of non-interference.
in constitutionalisation as a means of defining the limits of the EU power. Through setting boundaries for the EU mandate the citizens are aware how far the EU’s powers stretch and are in that way protected from arbitrary domination through the EU taking on various functions beyond this. The treaties here fulfil the function of protection from arbitrary domination and also as a guardian against one of the great evils in the republican tradition – corruption.

Corruption in the republican tradition is the opposite of civic virtue. Civic virtue has to do with collective responsibility and with promoting the good of society rather than of the good of only the individual whereas corruption is the opposite, i.e. the pursuit of individual gain and power at the expense of neglecting one’s civic duties (Dagger, 1997: 13-15). These are not necessarily opposites, but good of society as a whole should take precedence, and power needs to be constrained to inhibit the growth of corruption. One part of civic virtue the active participation of the citizens in the political life of a society. The call for the involvement of citizens found in the plenary debates is very much in line with this argumentation. The MEPs argue for reaching out to the citizens and involving them in the process. Although the direction in some cases is more for a top-down approach, ‘we have to explain things to them’, there is a clear desire to get the citizens involved and have them understand and participate in the running of the society of which they are part. The argumentation for active participation of citizens and by extension input legitimacy is a reflection of this republican ideal in the discourse.

In this section I have on the basis of the disourses present and using grounded theory method created two ideal types for European democracy. The federal and the intergovernmental models are here depicted as end points of a scale. What is found in between the two poles and how do the MEPs differ across issues in the spectrum in-between?

### 5.3 Locating the Inbetweeners on the Discursive Spectrum: A Union of States and Peoples

After having analysed the main dividing line of democracy in the European Parliament plenary debates, I will in this section define the features that distinguish the MEPs on the spectrum from intergovernmentalism to federalism, because this is where most place themselves on the integration scale as shown above. Few MEPs argue solely for one model and many are on the fence of if integration has reached its final stage or what the finalité of
integration should be. It therefore becomes possible to find categories that can describe the differences though which the MEPs can be separated. A few examples of placing themselves in the middle can be seen in the quote below:

[The task of European integration has brought about the world’s largest area of law and economic freedom, but the organisation of our continent cannot stop there. Europe must become a political player, a political unit endowed with democratic power and diplomatic clout. We want a Europe of states and peoples and, consequently, we wish to strengthen people’s confidence in the European Union. That is indeed what is proposed by the Constitution signed in Rome.]

Jacques Toubon (PPE-DE) – 11 January 2005 – Constitution for Europe

In the EU, there are several areas in which the integration could deepen and also various ways in which this could be done. In the following sections I analyse three identified sub-discourses on European democracy and their implications for integration according to the view of Europe as either an intergovernmental organisation or a federal union. This is to uncover the middle ground and see how the MEPs can be differentiated across other dimensions than the intergovernmental and the federal models as a way of locating them on the spectrum of European democracy and integration through the discourses present.

5.3.1 **Differentiated Integration: Two-Speed Europe**

One of the first sub-discourses identifies was that of differentiated integration. Differentiated integration as a model for the European Union builds on the thought of developing concentric circles where the centre of the circle is more integrated than the outer parts. In this way, member states can pick and choose where to integrate and where not to. There can be several circles existing at the same time and they do not have to overlap but they can. This could potentially mean that there would be a core of closely integrated countries with a periphery with countries only taking part in some of the initiatives. One example of this existing already today is the euro area, which consisting of 17 states form an area that has taken integration further than the rest of the Union or the recently signed fiscal compact, or the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union.

As a model, differentiated integration is often described as undesirable by the MEPs. Differentiated integration would counter the goal of uniform integration where every country moves forward together; therefore would the negative attitudes towards this correspond to the
positive attitudes towards moving in the direction of European federation as shown in the proceeding section. MEPs prefer the Union to integrate all in the same pace than just a few at the time. In the debates, the MEPs that bring up the potential for a two- or multi-speed Europe tend to link the idea to danger. Danger is seen to arise from possibly being left-out from integration and from the potential domination of a few, more integrated (big) member states over (smaller) less integrated member states. This can be seen from the following quotations:

*Fourthly, on the sensitive issue of flexibility, for which, in my view, appropriate arrangements were made by the Amsterdam European Council, a consensual solution is being sought through amendments. However, I would like to appeal to Parliament to tread cautiously here. Experience shows that the sole, or even the main, danger for the European Union is not from dissenting Member States blocking actions, but from the lax regulation of this flexibility which can lead to a two-speed Europe or worse.*

Dimitris Tsatsos (PSE) – 17 November 1999 – Treaty reform-next IGC

*Some of the views expressed in the course of this debate have caused concern. There seems to be an attempt to create a two-speed Europe and to forge deeper alliances within the framework of the European Union. We cannot go along with this. There has been an attempt to establish false standards of what being European means. These are not good omens. They reinforce the political strength of the Euro-sceptics which is most certainly not our intention.*

Zbigniew Chrzanowski (PPE-DE) – 4 May 2004 – Towards a European Constitution

There are of course those who are more positive to a system of concentric circles, but statements like this are not common in the plenary debates:

*[...] the conflict between EU expansion and deepening could only be solved by the internal reorganisation of the Union on the onion skin model, or a system of concentric circles. I proposed that the whole Union should develop as an association of states, but its core should develop into a full-fledged federation. I proposed that the outer circle of cooperation and integration would be the European Council, to which we could give new duties.*

Paavo Väyrynen (ELDR) – 17 November 1999 – Treaty reform-next IGC

The MEPs who bring up the multi-speed model tend to be in favour of more pro-integration along federal lines. From a democratic perspective, a two-speed Europe if more compatible with an intergovernmental model, as it does not require all states to integrate at the same pace. However, if the imagined goal of European integration is a federal union then the concentric
circles of integration can be seen as obstructing development as it would mean that some states are left out while others move forward, going against the principles of equality for all.

The model of differentiated integration is one element that exists in the debates and although not one of the main dividing lines, it re-surfaces in all the debates. There clearly is an idea that the EU could also develop in this direction, but it is a direction more suited to the intergovernmental minded than to the federal minded.

5.3.2 Social and Political Union

Another way in which the discourse on European democracy and integration is differentiated is through the talk about a social and political union. The themes appear in the debate both together and separately but will here be treated together as they are linked together in many of the analysed speeches.

Social affairs is a policy area that traditionally has been located at the national level and the EU has to date not been granted many powers in this area. The salience of this issue for the citizens is traditionally high and eurobarometers show that there is desire for the EU to take on more responsibility for this in the future, with social equality and solidarity being on top of the list of items to for the EU to emphasise in the face of globalisation (Eurobarometer, 2011c).

Currently there are as many social models as there are member states in the EU and there is no clear definition of what kind of social union and what that would mean for the EU emerging from the plenary debates analysed here. The social union is often coupled with an idea of a union of rights, indicating that there is an understanding of a minimum set of also social rights being desirable for the European Union. This is argued for as being in the interests of the citizens and as one way of protecting their rights. One model is therefore vaguely detectable whereby the EU sets minimum standards for social issues, a model that has largely been followed until now in other areas. It must be pointed out that the EU has over the later years also been engaging in more social policy themes, such as maternity leave, but so far these issues are more often framed through labour market efficiency and competitiveness than through social rights.
Coupled with the social union is also the idea of a political union. A political union would arise from the coordination of policies at the European level as well as from the politicisation of issues and the emergence of a truly European parliamentary democracy. The politicisation of social issues at the EU level is one step in this direction, but this may also refer to more coordination of e.g. the foreign and security policy. The foreign and security policy and the possibility of the EU turning into a military union is also surfacing throughout the debate, but unlike the social policy the development into a military union is often brought up as being undesirable. This in spite of the fact that security is an important issue also being emphasised in the debates by the MEPs.

Despite not clearly defined in the debates, this is a topic which is one dividing line between the MEPs. Some see a social and political union of rights as a future goal for the European Union, while others view it as an attempt to move the EU in an undesirable (federal) direction. Below are a few examples on the discourse on the social and political union in the direction of more integration:

*The Constitution reinforces the rights of citizens; it makes the EU distinctly more democratic, above all, indeed, presenting new opportunities to create a social Europe. The Constitution substantially advances European integration, making the European Union as a whole better prepared to face the future. The Constitution is significantly better than the Treaty of Nice, by which the Union is at present held together in law. [...] I would like to see a peaceful, democratic and social European Union and to see Europe united [...]*.  

*Sylvia-Yvonne Kaufmann (GUE/NGL) – 11 January 2005 – Constitution for Europe*

*The foundation is being laid for the first supranational treaty in history. The most up-to-date and most comprehensive code of fundamental rights is becoming European law. The anchoring of social objectives and rights is pointing the way to the next task: the creation and construction of a European social union. With its own legal personality, the Union is changing from a forum of loosely cooperating states to a historic, independent player. If we want to succeed in reviving this treaty, political unity will need to cease being a project of elites and state chancelleries and become a res publica.*

*Johannes Voggenhuber (Verts/ALE) – 20 February 2008 – Treaty of Lisbon*

There are also MEPs who do not want more integration and see the formation of a social and political union as a danger to national democracy, much along the lines described in the section on intergovernmentalism. Social policy is and should remain the privilege of the nation states and any transfer of powers in this area is a move away from national sovereignty.
and the interests of the citizens. It can also be argued on the basis of subsidiarity that this is a policy area that should remain at the member state level as it is there closest to the citizens. One example of how social policy issues are discussed from a more sceptical point of view is found below:

This Treaty is an attempt to pave the way for neo-liberal policies which run counter to social rights and advances gained, serving the interests of the large multinationals. Federalism is being imposed under the domination of the major powers within a framework which grants legal personality to the Union, where the States are deprived of their powers and the European Union is regarded as a pillar of NATO; that is in order to favour meddling and interventionism in accordance with the interests of the major powers. It is a Treaty which aims to set up an economic, politico-military bloc with imperialist ambitions. It is a Treaty which will not overcome the deep and irremediable contradictions of this European integration, but which will, on the contrary, tend to accentuate them.

Pedro Guerreiro (GUE/NGL) – 10 October 2007 – Preparation of the informal summit of heads of state and government

Developing the social union would require more policy areas to be uploaded to the supranational arena. Whether or not this is feasible remains to be seen, but the discussion on the progression into this field is present in the European Parliament.

5.3.3 Global Role Model and the Military Union

The last of the sub-discourses significantly present in the debates analysed is a debate on the role of the EU in the world and how the EU is to face the consequences of globalisation. Globalisation is one of the most debated words in academia over the last years and there is probably more disagreement on what it is not than agreement on what it is. Any definition, however, usually contains economic, cultural, legal and political elements. It is a process of increasing interactions across nations and cultures which is seen to diminish the importance of national borders and create connections across areas of interests rather than geographical areas.

In the plenary debates analysed, globalisation is portrayed as bringing with it many threats to the Union, such as terrorism, immigration, environmental change, and also threaten the competitive powers of the EU. Globalisation is in the debates seen as bringing with it more
danger than goods to the EU, thus the EU needs to get ready to face the challenges. This is a discourse more along negative than positive lines, but with the understanding that the negative consequences can be combatted through strengthening the position of the EU in the world through integration.

*We must talk about the future of Europe, and that is what this debate is about. I believe that the future of Europe, Mr President, will involve overcoming five challenges: completing enlargement, creating more efficient and democratic European institutions, effectively combating terrorism inside and outside Europe, providing the Union with the financial resources it needs to implement financial policies and, finally, to turn the Union into a factor for peace and development at global level.*

Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado (PPE-DE) – 4 May 2004 – Towards a European constitution

*Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, Lisbon and Rome are departure points for a humanity without borders. The dream of global justice and cosmopolitan law is at the heart of the history of the European Union. It is the history of how moral will took root in the institutions and transformed the old political paradigms. The method followed was sharing, the criterion applied was reason, the goal set was human dignity and sovereignty of rights took precedence over sovereignty of borders; those factors all served to make Europe the home of enlightenment.*

Maria da Assunção Esteves (PPE-DE) – 20 February 2008 – Treaty of Lisbon

Common in these debates is the notion of the European Union presenting itself as a role model for the rest of the world. The EU should set the standard in questions such as human rights, the fight against climate change and also promote the European social model in the rest of the world.

Globalisation is also seen to be bringing with it other threats, including threats to the security of the EU such as international terrorism. One of the responses brought up in relation to globalisation is the idea of the EU as a military union. The military union is often brought up in relation to globalisation and as one reply to that debate. Increased security is often presented as a good outcome of the treaty changes debates here, regardless of the MEPs want more or less integration. The term ‘security’ is brought up 217 times in the debates but from an examination of the term it became clear that security is discussed both in terms of social security and military security. The external security of the EU is brought up as one of the goals of the European Union to pursue.
Hungary’s interest, and the Union’s objective, is that we should safeguard peace and our fundamental interests, and promote the welfare of the citizens of the Union, already approximately 500 million in number. Europe has changed, and the world has changed. The new security threats must be responded to with new strategies and new policies. Europe must prepare for change in all areas. [...] The objective of the summit is to adopt the text of the Reform Treaty, thus reinforcing the effectiveness of the enlarged European Union, and to increase the role of the European Parliament, the only elected body, and also the Union’s external action.

Alexandra Dobolyi (PSE) – 10 October 2007 – Preparation of the informal summit of heads of state and government

However, although more security is often brought up in positive terms, not all agree with the development of the EU capacities in the direction of more military powers. The MEPs arguing using the formulation of military union or just the word ‘military’ tend to bring it up in a more negative context than positive, that is, it is the opposition to a military union who bring it up using those terms.

I would also like to say in unmistakeable terms that I reject all those provisions intended to develop the European Union as a military and interventionist power. That is not Europe’s way of emancipating itself from American hegemony; it will be by way of civil conflict resolution and civil conflict prevention that the European Union will become a respected partner on the international stage.

Sylvia-Yvonne Kaufmann (GUE/NGL) – 24 September 2003 – European Constitution and IGC

Now, the clear aim is to increase the EU’s military striking power. From disarmament, we are now moving towards rearmament. If we combine this with the wording to the effect that ‘[I]n its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and interests’, we see a return to a 500 year-old colonial policy. This may cause anxiety in the wider world, which remembers the last time we wanted to spread our civilisation with the help of the army. It might perhaps create peace between ourselves, but in the world it will create anxiety. This is not a document for the future. It is a return to old-style imperialism and colonialism. It is something I reject.

Carl Schlyter (Verts/ALE) – 11 January 2005 – Constitution for Europe

The MEPs on the negative side to developing the military capacities of the EU tend to emphasise that the EU instead of developing forces for conflict management instead should develop their capabilities in conflict prevention, that is to use more soft than hard power. This again feeds in to the debate of the role of the EU as a role model and a global power.
What kind of implications does that then have for integration and democracy? This is a question that creates a new dimension on how European integration and democracy is seen. Generally, there is agreement that increased security is good for the EU but the way in which this is to be obtained varies. You will find pro- and anti-integrationists on both sides of this dimension and on the basis of the debates it becomes difficult to find a clear-cut division and it would require a more in-depth examination of this discourse in relation to European integration to say more than this at this point.

### 5.4 Discussion on Findings and Their Implications

In this chapter I have analysed the plenary debates on treaty change and I will in this section discuss my findings as well as their theoretical implications. I begun by identifying the ways in which the MEPs frame the problem in Chapter 4. This was done because the way the problem is framed contributes to how it can be solved. I identified three ways of framing the problem and defining the ‘state of the union’: (1) as a democratic deficit and legitimacy issue; (2) as a problem with democracy, efficiency and transparency, that is as a problem of the functions of the institutions; and, (3) as an elite domination issue. After it became clear that in all three cases, the MEPs to some extent identified the problem as a democracy problem, which was important as otherwise my research question would have been invalidated, I proceeded with an analysis of how they saw the EU resolving this issue.

The EPRG data was discussed in the beginning of the analysis and from this data it became clear that the attitudes of the MEPs are leaning towards more integration and more power to the European Parliament, transforming it along the lines of powers that a national parliament would have in a federal system. Building on the findings of the EPRG surveys and with the framing of the problem uncovered, I proceeded with the analysis of the debates. The main finding has been that that the MEPs commit in their plenary speeches to one of two models – the EU as an intergovernmental organisation or the EU as a federal state. These intergovernmental and federal models are found at each end of a spectrum, with few truly arguing for the extremes but with the majority of speakers arguing for more integration towards the more federal model. This perception was also confirmed by the EPRG data, showing an overwhelming majority in both the fifth and the sixth European Parliaments for
more integration towards a federal state but with few supporting the idea that the EU should become a federal state now.

What are the implications of these findings? First, my findings here correspond to previous studies conducted of the voting behaviour in the European Parliament and the political dimensions. Other studies (see, for instance, Hix et al., 2006; Hix and Noury, 2009; Proksch and Slapin, 2009) have found that in addition to a classical left-right dimension, where the voting behaviour in the European Parliament is determined by the left-right placement of the national party group and the European party group, there is a dimension on European integration which affects the voting patterns and a government-opposition dynamics. The plenary debates thus confirm the existence of an integration divide in the European Parliament, a divide that is reflected not only in the voting patterns but also in the speeches made by the MEPs.

Second, the findings here also to some extent correspond to the most common models on European integration existing today, indicating that the gap between normative theoretical discussion and the parliamentary debate is not so wide after all. These models, although developed from the parliamentary debates, are also ideal types and there will seldom be MEPs who will follow one ideal to the full extent. This is the reason for describing the models as end-points of a scale rather than static, fully separate visions for European democracy and integration.

In Figure 5.3 I have illustrated the relationships between the EU, the member states, and the citizens in the two models developed from the parliamentary discourses. According to the intergovernmental model (Model 1), the relationship between the citizens and the European Union is intermediated by the states. The single arrows going from the states to the EU level represent the idea that it is ultimately the states that are the masters of the organisation. The states are in control of the organisation and not vice versa. Any power delegated up is dependent on the performance of the organisation and if the organisation fails to fulfil the given tasks the power can be revoked. The organisation is therefore dependent on producing outcomes wanted by its masters in order to legitimate its existence. Model 1 depicts the dual relationship that exists between the state and the citizens as a symbiosis of power going up and power coming down, but there is no direct relationship between the highest and the lowest level. The citizens control the states, which in turn control the organisation, but the only downward control towards the citizens is by the state.
In Model 2, EU as a federal union, the EU has a direct relationship with its citizens and the citizens, in turn, with the EU, represented here by the red arrows. The power is shared between the levels and the levels are all in direct relation with one another as indicated by the double arrows in the figure. There is no longer a mediated relationship where the member states have to act on behalf of citizens living in their territory as there are means of direct control between the highest and the lowest level of the hierarchy. The citizens are in power of the institutions both at the member state level and at the European Union level, while the laws and regulations of the state and the European Union have a direct impact on the citizens. This leads to a situation in which the citizens become a people as the supranational regulations have a direct impact on their lives regardless of which state they live in and they can bypass the member state level in terms of demands for rights.

Model 1: EU as an intergovernmental organisation – A union of states

Model 2: EU as a federal union – A union of peoples

Figure 5.3 Two models of democracy for the European Union

In the debates analysed for this purpose, there were many discourses present. The most important discourses were those on the role of the citizen, the rights of the citizens, the institutional workings of the EU under the goal of transparency, efficiency and democracy, especially the functioning and role of the EU after enlargement and in the face of globalisation, as well as what the role of the regions and the principle of subsidiarity should be in the EU system. Additionally, there were some other sub-discourses emerging as the analysis processed. These were the discourses on the social and political union, the role of the
EU in a globalising world and the challenges this brings, including the security dimension, and the possible development of differentiated integration.

Differentiated integration is often seen as a bad thing by both people who argue for more and people who argue for less integration. On the pro-integration side of the spectrum, differentiated integration is seen as a threat to the more uniform integration that would be required for the EU to develop in the federal direction. On the anti-integration side, differentiated integration is brought up as leading to a situation in which the whole project is dominated by an elite of (large) closely-integrated states. There are a few who portrayed differentiated integration as a solution rather than as a problem in itself, but this was rather uncommon in the debates analysed here.

There is a demand for the EU to develop in the direction of a social and political union present in the debates under the pretext of the EU becoming more the kind of organisation that the citizens want. The social and political union would be better equipped to guard the interests of its citizens and to grant them their rights, according to the more pro-integration side of the discourse. Conversely, as can be expected, the MEPs placed towards the intergovernmental organisation side of the scale argue against transfer of more social policy to the EU level. This is an area that traditionally has been the prerogative of the nation states, and there are many models for taking care of the social responsibilities of the state. On the basis of the debates analysed here it remains unclear how a European social policy would be designed and implementated, but on the basis of the discussions there is a desire by part of the MEPs of a move in this direction.

The same goes for the discussion on a regional Europe. Regional Europe is more a part of the federal debate and hence it was treated as a part of the federal debate in the analysis. The regionalism discourse emphasises the role of the European regions in the EU system, with the emphasis in the discourse being on the regions getting more direct access to the European institutions and to be incorporated as a level of decision making whose opinion is to be taken into account when decisions are made. Despite the urging of the regions to achieve this, there is little mentioning of a clear way in which this is to be obtained. It would require some form of multi-level governance or federal system taking the regions as one level of decision-making. Arguments for this are present, but no concrete proposals of how it is to be accomplished can be distilled from the debates. It is, however, clear that the subsidiarity principle is of essence here. The subsidiarity principle is also used by the
intergovernmentalists, then arguing against a more federal development on the grounds of the EU abiding by its own principles. If decision-making and implementation is to be placed on the closest possible level to the citizens, then the nation state is the natural choice for this. The role of the regions is largely neglected in the more intergovernmental discourse, as the status of the regions would remain a national rather than a supranational matter.

The globalisation discourse and the discourse on the development in the direction of more military powers show an additional dimension along which the MEPs are split. However, unlike the social political dimension and the regional and subsidiarity dimension, this dimension appears to divide the MEPs along other lines than the more/less European integration dimension. There are, for instance, those who argue for more integration and for the EU to take a more prominent role in world affairs and open for the EU to develop capabilities for military intervention. Then there are also those who argue for more integration but instead than the EU developing as a military power, they argue for the EU to develop more as a soft power. You also find the opposite, with MEPs who do not want to see the EU integrate more but still are rather content with the development of more security and military capabilities.

What about the longitudinal aspects of the study? Were there any notable differences between debates? The answer is that the debates analysed here and the discussion is surprisingly similar. Generally speaking, the MEPs tend to bring up the same kind of arguments throughout all the treaty debates analysed for this purpose. There are some lines of argumentation that appear to have become more prominent across the debates, such as the impact of globalisation on the EU, specifically on security, the environment and economy, but when it comes to the commitment to democracy and to the interests of the citizens is prevalence of the lines of argumentation very similar between 1999 and 2009 in the plenary debates on treaty change. Some lines of argumentation have disappeared though, most notably the concept of democratic deficit, but also enlargement, the salience of which has probably been reduced for more logical reasons in the post-enlargement Europe.

The EU is seen as being the ultimate outcome of a long process of integration and peace-building in Europe. The question is whether this process has come to an end or, if integration is still continuing, when does it stop. There are no arguments for stopping the European train. The MEPs argue for change in one direction or another but there are no arguments for status quo other than as a halt on the way to more integration. The ‘status quo union’ does not exist
in these debates. Rolling back the process is also largely absent from the debates, meaning that even though some MEPs according to the attitudes found in the EPRG data may be willing to roll back the process, there are very few directly arguing for this in the debates. Rather than rolling back the focus is on hitting the emergency breaks and stopping the process than actively trying to get it to move backwards.

In sum, the debate on democracy is surprisingly constant across time. There main debate is focused around the issue of more or less integration, with the majority of MEPs locating themselves on the more integration part of the spectrum. There are several identifiable discourses on democracy present but the MEPs are neither consistent nor precise in their argumentation for the democracy models they argue for.
6 Concluding Discussion

I began this thesis by asking what view of democracy MEPs commit themselves to in the debates on the treaty changes of the European Union 1999-2009. I have found that in their plenary speeches the MEPs commit themselves to two main views of democracy, the intergovernmental view and the federal view. In this final chapter I will discuss these findings and the way in which these can be taken into consideration in further research.

To measure democracy you need a set of standards because the answer regarding the status and quality of democracy will depend on the standards you measure it by. When it comes to the European Union, it has often been measured against the democratic standards set by the nation states of representative democracy. But, as the democratic deficit debate shows, it can hardly be said to measure up to the democratic standards when compared to the nation states (cf. e.g. Decker, 2002). One explanation for this, as Moravcsik and Majone argued, may be that the EU is simply not meant to be measured against the nation states in the first place, because the EU is, and should remain, an international organisation; a means to an end in order to promote the interests of the member states. If seen as nothing more than an international organisation, the EU does not require democratic standards because the democratic credentials rest safely with its member states and should continue to do so.

Why should the European Union then be judged by a different set of standards than other international organisations? The straightforward answer to the question is because the EU, unlike most other international organisations, has set democracy as a standard for itself. In numerous declarations, statements, and also in the Treaties the EU has committed itself to democracy. For instance the preamble of the Lisbon Treaty the signatories confirm ‘their attachment to the principles of liberty, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and of the rule of law’ and desire ‘to enhance further the democratic and efficient functioning of the institutions’. It also sets a model for democracy for the EU – representative democracy – a model in which the European Parliament becomes the direct representative of the citizens in the European Union. Through committing itself to democracy in this way, the European Union has set its own standards and should hence be measured against these standards.
The European Parliament is the institution responsible for representing the citizens in the EU system. Although it can be discussed how much power the Parliament really has in EU decision-making, its importance has increased with the increase of powers with the last waves of treaty revision. Today the EP resembles more and more a national parliament in a multi-layer governance system. Because the EP is the only institution directly responsible to the citizens, and because of its larger role in the EU decision-making system, the EP was chosen as the institution of study for this thesis. The task has here been to examine what kind of European democracy the members of the European parliament commit themselves to in their plenary speeches. The goal was to develop a theory of European democracy on the basis of the findings of the discourse analysis.

In this thesis, I used a combination of grounded theory method and discourse analysis to tackle the problem set. Grounded theory was here used as a method here in order to conduct the discourse analysis. This was combined with quantitative data and quantitative contents analysis as to obtain high degrees of reliability and validity of the study. This methodological triangulation proved very useful and has further deepened the empirical support for the models subsequently developed. Through the use of discourse analysis, I have been able to shed some light on the way the MEPs argue and what they argue for in the plenary debates. This provides further and deeper insights into the workings of the European Parliament as an institution. Previous analyses of voting behaviour and of attitudes have had results that correspond to mine, but through analysing the discourses I have been able to uncover the way in which the MEPs argue and also what kind of European democracy they are committing themselves to thereby adding further depth to previous studies.

Before I could start with the analysis of the conceptions of democracy, I needed to find out how the MEPs view the problem. If the MEPs did not see a problem with democracy then this exercise would not be relevant as they would have been committing themselves to something else. Through an analysis of the framing of the problem, I found that the MEPs were discussing democracy as one problem that the EU is facing and in the debates they set the goal of treaty reform to be three things: efficiency, transparency, and democracy. These goals were set in relation to the way in which the EU institutions work. The MEPs want the institutions to be more efficient in the way they operate and produce the policy outcomes for the citizens, transparent so that the citizens can see and understand the process at all stages,
and this will then contribute, together with more decision-making powers for the EP and more control by the national parliaments, to increase the level of democracy in the European Union.

Through an analysis of the transcripts of 16 plenary debates on treaty change combined with survey data from the EPRG, I have created a scale on integration along which the MEPs place themselves in their speeches and commitments. In doing this I have taken the data gathered by the EPRG and further investigated the substantial dimension of one of the aspects examined there – the attitudes of the MEPs towards integration. At the one end of the scale I have located the intergovernmental model, and at the other the federal model. The relationship between the two was described as a scale rather than as a dichotomy as that had a better fit with the material analysed. Developing a pure dichotomous model of European democracy on the basis of the commitments of the MEPs would also have resulted in two catch-all models, which would not have been usable for further studies. Through the representation of the models as located on a scale, the degrees of difference between the MEPs are better captured.

The intergovernmental model sees the EU remaining an intergovernmental organisation or rolling back integration to fit a more traditional model of international organisation. The key concept used for capturing this model is a Europe of states, and this largely corresponds to the view Majone and Moravcsik have of the European Union. The EU should remain an organisation for cooperation between states and should not take on more powers unless specifically assigned to it by the member states. The primary arena for decision-making and politics should be the national one, and as an extension of this the primary identity of the citizens should be the national one. Intergovernmentalists also often bring up the importance of the preservation of national cultural identities and often also emphasise the plurality of cultures as an intrinsic value.

The other model developed here – the federal model – emphasises that the European Union should develop as a Europe of peoples. Key here is an emphasis on the role of the European citizens in the system, not just at the member state level but also as a direct relationship between the federal level and the citizens. Citizens should have rights at both levels and also be able to exercise them, unlike the intergovernmental model where citizens only should have rights at the member state level. Europeans are bound together by rights and by common values. The foundation for the European Union is here seen to be shared values and a shared history. For instance is the enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe is seen as the re-unification of a long-divided continent, the peak of a long common history.
The intergovernmental and federal models are ideal types created through analysing the debates. However, as reality is hardly black and white, I have differentiated the two end points of the integration scale through three sub-discourses on democracy: a debate on a social and political Europe, a debate on differentiated integration and on the view on the role of the EU in a globalising world. The MEPs leaning towards more integration tend to argue for more social and political integration, against differentiated integration and for the EU to take up a more prominent role in the global community in terms of setting a standard of human rights, justice and democracy. The converse was found for the more intergovernmental side. Here they tended to support the keeping of social issues at national level as the nation states are best equipped to deal with matters in the interest of their citizens. Some intergovernmentalists open for the possibility of differentiated integration for the states that should want to but many argue against this kind of development. In case they argue against it they often refer to the danger of domination of a few core states should there be more differentiation. As for globalisation and the role of EU in the face of globalisation, the intergovernmentalists emphasise the competitive abilities of the European Union. The EU thus is here to fulfil its function as the guardian of the interests delegated to it by the member states.

Regardless of how the European project is seen – as an intergovernmental union, a federal state or as something in-between the two – the EU can hardly be said to measure up to the standards of democracy and the MEPs are agreeing with this statement in the plenary debates. The permissive consensus has been withdrawn and the EU is in the midst of the deepest crisis in its history. If the European Union fails to resolve the crisis, or crises, what comes out on the other end of the process might not be more integration, at least not along the lines we have seen until now.

Agustín José Menéndez (2011: 1) uses the metaphor of a crossroads to describe the situation of the EU today: ‘The European Union is at a crossroads, but the choice is not what kind of democratic European Union we will have in the coming years, but whether we will have a democratic European Union at all in ten years time’ (emphasis original). The European Union is facing a range of different crises that are causing speculation on whether or not the Union can even stay together as one anymore. Amidst the current chaos, what can be done to rescue the European project? And how can this be done without sacrificing democracy?
Through analysing the commitments of the MEPs, this study has provided some further insight into this dilemma. Although it is by no means possible to on the basis of the present material state something definite on how the EU is to proceed with its crisis management efforts, I can only state that if there MEPs would have been asked between 1999 and 2009, they would have said that the EU could go in one of two directions: more integration or halting, possibly even rolling back, integration. A majority of MEPs in these two parliaments wanted more integration. It would be interesting to conduct further studies into the commitments of the EU today, when the crisis has worsened as to see whether this relationship has changed and if the MEPs today envision different things for European democracy and integration and if they commit themselves to other things than found in this study.

One general insight emerged from the study and that was the strong commitment of the MEPs to the citizens and to democracy. Despite widely differing opinions on what this means in practical terms, which ever the way the EU develops, if the MEPs are asked democracy comes first.
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Appendix I: Rule 149 – Allocation of speaking time and list of speakers

1. The Conference of Presidents may propose to Parliament that speaking time be allocated for a particular debate. Parliament shall decide on this proposal without debate.

2. Members may not speak unless called upon to do so by the President. Members shall speak from their places and shall address the President. If speakers depart from the subject, the President shall call them to order.

3. The President may draw up, for the first part of a particular debate, a list of speakers that includes one or more rounds of speakers from each political group wishing to speak, in the order of their size, and one non-attached Member.

4. Speaking time for this part of a debate shall be allocated in accordance with the following criteria:
   a) a first fraction of speaking time shall be divided equally among all the political groups;
   b) a further fraction shall be divided among the political groups in proportion to the total number of their members;
   c) the non-attached Members shall be allocated an overall speaking time based on the fractions allocated to each political group under points (a) and (b).

5. Where a total speaking time is allocated for several items on the agenda, the political groups shall inform the President of the fraction of their speaking time to be used for each individual item. The President shall ensure that these speaking times are respected.

6. The remaining part of the time for a debate shall not be specifically allocated in advance. Instead, the President shall call on Members to speak, as a general rule for no more than one minute. The President shall ensure – as far as possible – that speakers holding different political views and from different Member States are heard in turn.
7. On request priority may be given to the Chair or rapporteur of the committee responsible and to the Chairs of political groups who wish to speak on their groups' behalf, or to speakers deputising for them.

8. The President may give the floor to Members who indicate, by raising a blue card, their wish to put to another Member, during that Member's speech, a question of no longer than half a minute's duration, if the speaker agrees and if the President is satisfied that this will not lead to a disruption of the debate.

9. No Member may speak for more than one minute on any of the following: the minutes of the sitting, procedural motions, or amendments to the final draft agenda or the agenda.

10. Without prejudice to his other disciplinary powers, the President may cause to be deleted from the verbatim reports of debates of sittings the speeches of Members who have not been called upon to speak or who continue to speak beyond the time allotted to them.

11. In the debate on a report the Commission and the Council shall as a rule be heard immediately after its presentation by the rapporteur. The Commission, the Council and the rapporteur may be heard again, in particular in order to respond to the statements made by Members.

12. Members who have not spoken in a debate may, at most once per partsession, hand in a written statement of not more than 200 words, which shall be appended to the verbatim report of the debate.

13. Without prejudice to Article 230 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the President shall seek to reach an understanding with the Commission, the Council and the President of the European Council on the appropriate allocation of speaking time for them.
Appendix II: List of debates

Debates on the Nice Treaty:

- 1999.11.17: Treaty reform – Next IGC
- 2001.05.30: Treaty of Nice and the future of the EU
- 2001.11.28: Future of the European Union

Debates on the Constitutional Treaty:

- 2003.09.24: European Constitution and IGC
- 2004.01.28: The programme of the Irish presidency and the European Constitution
- 2004.05.04: Towards a European constitution
- 2004.09.15: Ratification of the Constitutional Treaty
- 2005.01.11: Constitution for Europe

Debates on the Period of Reflection:

- 2005.06.08: Preparations for the European Council, including the future of the Union after the referenda on the European constitution
- 2006.01.18: The period of reflection – Structure, subjects and context for an assessment of the debate on the EU
- 2006.11.29: Debate on the future of Europe
- 2007.03.14: Berlin Declaration

Debates on the Lisbon Treaty:

- 2007.06.06: Roadmap for the European Union's constitutional process
- 2007.10.10: Preparation of the informal summit of heads of state and government (Lisbon, 18-19 October 2007)
- 2008.02.20: Treaty of Lisbon
Appendix III: Word frequency

List of the 90 most frequent words used in the debates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<td>Say</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
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<td>Europe</td>
<td>1,778</td>
<td>Today</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitution</td>
<td>1,444</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>380</td>
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<td>Democratic</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1,413</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>369</td>
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<td>President</td>
<td>1,378</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>1,268</td>
<td>Believe</td>
<td>364</td>
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<td>Presidency</td>
<td>354</td>
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<td>First</td>
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<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>1,016</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>Being</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
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<td>States</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>Conference</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Can</td>
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<td>New</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>307</td>
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<td>608</td>
<td>Nice</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>Just</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
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<td>About</td>
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<td>Public</td>
<td>298</td>
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<td>Like</td>
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<td>Think</td>
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<td>Constitutional</td>
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<td>Debate</td>
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<td>Said</td>
<td>287</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>Even</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>Group</td>
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<td>National</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>Fact</td>
<td>279</td>
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<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>Part</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>Here</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>Too</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>Fundamental</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>Why</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>Cannot</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>Does</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
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<td>Work</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>Members</td>
<td>268</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rights</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>Making</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries</td>
<td>401</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Appendix IV: Coding Sample**

**Excerpt from Treaty of Nice Debate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patakis (GUE/NGL). – (EL)</th>
<th>Mr President, the basic philosophy behind the Treaty of Nice is how to strengthen the unifying policy of integration and do more for European monopolies. This endeavour is still encountering problems, including among the very people who inspired it, as to who will have the upper hand in Europe following enlargement. The pitiful bartering on qualified majority voting which took place in Nice, and which almost blew the Summit apart, confirms this and anyone who talks of a European family is guilty of hypocrisy. The report under discussion today applauds the anti-democratic and reactionary provisions of the Treaty of Nice and lobbies for even more anti-democratic arrangements, such as the abolition of the veto and various other issues, the integration of foreign policy and defence and security policy, the inclusion of fundamental anti-grass roots rights in the Treaty and the facility to circumvent national parliaments by creating a special convention to table a proposal for a constitution. This is an unacceptable proposal; the people of Europe are already fighting against the thrust of it and will continue to do so.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bodrato (PPE-DE). – (IT)</td>
<td>Mr President, I approve of the Méndez de Vigo-Seguro report, which represents an excellent summary of the work of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs. The reunification of Europe is indeed a historic turning point, but a turning point which calls for a far-reaching reform of the institutions of the Union. The Nice Summit exhausted the intergovernmental method which necessarily involves difficult mediation between national interests. What is needed now is a constituent convention to define, before the European elections, a model capable of guaranteeing democracy and efficiency in Union action. The report avoids exacerbating the argument about the Treaty of Nice, but clearly condemns its limitations. However, we cannot remain silent, waiting for Laeken, at a time when influential spokesmen of national governments are addressing issues fundamental to the future of the Union. Chancellor Schröder has spoken of a European federation, Prime Minister Jospin of a Europe of nations. I do not know what Aznar and Berlusconi will say, but I do know that the specific problems of the Community and the reform of the institutions are two sides of the same coin, and I do know that Europe must become a political area with a democratic soul. Parliament cannot stand on the sidelines of this debate. The future of Europe cannot be left entirely to market forces and confrontation between national governments. Parliament must promote a debate going beyond the pragmatism that ties the hands of the national governments. Because of the things we have heard, that debate also tells us we must be braver and more forward-looking if we claim to be realists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leinen (PSE). – (DE)</td>
<td>I should also like to note, however, that this is the first time the European Parliament is not saying a clear yes to a European treaty. This is something new and different from Maastricht and Amsterdam. I think it should sound an alarm to the governments that negotiated this treaty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nice only gains monopolies and strengthen the unifying integration (negative tone)</td>
<td>Less integration and less power to monopolies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-democratic and reactionary; anti-grassroot</td>
<td>Anti-democratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Role of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypocrisy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-democratic (circumvent national parliaments)</td>
<td>Democratic soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People against this</td>
<td>EP to promote democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunification</td>
<td>Political union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need a new model</td>
<td>More than market forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political area</td>
<td>Parliament must promote a debate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention</td>
<td>Need political union with a democratic soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The future of Europe cannot be left entirely to market forces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New: EP says no to a treaty</td>
<td>Union of Peoples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of action and</td>
<td>EP role as representative of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We are not saying a clear yes because we are not satisfied with the results and because we believe neither freedom of action nor, of course, democratic control are guaranteed in a Union that is now being extended to 20 or 25 states.

The formal obstacles have been removed, but there are still material problems of efficiency and transparency. This is a cause for concern. It is why we cannot say a clear yes.

We want something to be done about what happened in Nice. I can only agree that there must now be a convention to prepare for the next European treaty. It must have a clear mandate to produce a treaty that the citizens, too, can read and understand. It must be a mandate for a constitutional treaty, a document that will create the basis for this enlarged Union.

I should like to confine myself to a core subject for this convention, namely removing the democratic deficit in the Union. We all talk about it, but we still have different ideas about how it should be done. I believe the most important institution for the citizens is the European Parliament, not the Council of Ministers. This Parliament must therefore be strengthened. We unite people, not states. We therefore need the Europe of citizens and not just a Europe of governments!

Caveri (ELDR). – (FR) Mr President, five arguments. First, yes to the constituent convention, but it also needs to represent the regional level. Secondly, we need a federalist constitution based on subsidiarity from Union to Member State and from Member State to regional community. The third argument is the trickiest: we need a sort of pyramid-shaped constitution of European citizens with us, the powers and institutions of the Union, at the top, the logic of the states, at least those that remain, at the second level and the regional constitutions taking up the most space. That brings me to the fourth argument, which is that the Treaty of Nice will only be swallowed if we have already done this groundwork. Finally, the constitution must offer an international guarantee to the minority populations of Europe.

Alavanos (GUE/NGL). – (EL) Mr President, basically, my views have been covered in the initial position taken by Mr Kaufmann and my other fellow Members on behalf of our group. I should just like to say briefly that the Nice Summit was held against a background of total indifference on the part of the citizens of Europe, despite the fact that it has serious repercussions for them, and total indifference on the part of the governments towards the citizens of Europe. This is clear from both the content and the fate of the Charter of Human Rights. Yet again we witnessed the crudest form of bartering, in contrast to the grand declarations being made by the German chancellor, the French Prime Minister and so on. The point is, where was this attitude, where were Mr Schröder's and Mr Fischler's dreams when negotiations were taking place in Nice?

Having said which, here we are, post Nice, and I think that the European Parliament can help take us in a new direction; one step could be making up the huge democratic deficit and taking part in constitutional procedures and another could be moving towards certain policies to benefit the citizens of Europe.