How to refuse a vote on the EU?
The case against the referendum in the House of Commons
(1974 – 2010)

Aude Bicquelet
London School of Economics

&

Helen Addison
London School of Economics

Abstract

Existing studies of EU referendums have mainly focused on voter perceptions rather than on the views that elites express. This paper presents a summative content analysis of parliamentary debates that traces British MPs' arguments against the use of referendums on EU affairs from 1974 to 2010. Our results indicate that the range of claims made by MPs in the House of Commons against the use of referendums on European matters has narrowed over time, although oppositional claims made in recent years continue to fall within the same set of argumentative strategies.

1. Introduction

The literature on direct participation identifies several important reasons regarding why governments decide to hold EU referendums where there is no constitutional prerequisite (see Bjørklund, 1982; Lijphart, 1984; Closa, 2007; Hug, 2002, 2004; Morel, 2001, 2007; Qvortrup, 2002; Tridimas, 2007; King, 2007; Schneider and Cederman 1996; Dür and Matteo 2011). Lijphart, for instance, argues that governments only submit issues to referendums if they are certain that they will win (1984: 204). King suggests that referendums are held only when a government believes that it is likely to provide a useful *ad hoc* solution to a particular political problem – i.e. to resolve internal divisions within a party (2007: 279). For Morel (2001) and Hug (2002), referendums may be used to pass treaties that would otherwise not be ratified or they may be *de facto* obligatory even when they are not constitutionally required (as in Norway in 1994 and in France in 2005). Schneider and Weitsman (1996) argue that governments may hold referendums to reinforce their bargaining position in the EU.

Although attention has been given to reasons explaining why governments or political parties commit themselves to holding referendums on matters associated with the EU (Butler and Ranney 1994, Bogdanor 1994, Qvortrup 2006, 2013; Morel 1993, 2001, Finke and König 2009) very few studies have looked at reasons for *not* deferring decision-making to the people. Of course, one could explain why referendums are *not* held whenever the conditions outlined above do not apply. Yet this would fail to capture the qualitative elements involved in the argumentation process against direct participation by political elites. Assessing this qualitative element is however crucial, especially where one seeks to understand whether, and (if so) how, the case against participation on EU matters has evolved over time.

While much has been written about how voters approach referendums on European matters (see Hug and Sciarini 2000; Gary et al. 2005; Widfeldt 2004) there is little research examining how political representatives themselves conceive the issue, or at least, what stances on the subject they might make explicit (see Binzer Holbot 2006). This is a significant absence because;
(a) One of the main obstacles to the legitimisation of the European Union has often been linked to political representatives' reluctance to let national citizens involve themselves in, or simply express themselves on, the European project (see Wallace and Smith, 1995).
(b) The ways in which political representatives perceive their own roles, and those of the people, are crucial to our understanding of the construction and development of the European Union (see Magnette 2003; Chadwick and May 2003).

Rather than offering normative insights into these issues (see Qvortrup 2002; 2007; LeDuc 2003; Kaufman and Waters 2004), we look at them empirically by examining the rhetorical strategies deployed by politicians to argue against direct participation on European matters. The cases considered here focus on successive parliamentary debates in the UK concerning the possible use of

the referendum in ratifying key European treaties or dealing with the issue of the relationship between the UK and the EU more broadly from 1974 to 2010.

Our results show that over time the range of claims used by political representatives to argue against the use of the referendum has narrowed whilst they have consistently fallen into four key argumentation types, which we have coined *institutional, practical, political arguments* and *manipulation issues*. They also reveal the domination of *institutional arguments* over the 3 other types of argumentative strategies.

The paper proceeds as follows; in the remainder of the introduction we look at the case against direct participation on European questions and we justify the use of parliamentary debates as a source of data. In Section 2, we lay out our method of analysis and briefly describe our corpus. Section 3 presents the main results. Section 4 offers a reflection on the findings. In conclusion, we draw on the typology of arguments and the analytical framework developed in this study to propose some additional avenues for research.

Political Elites and case against direct participation on the EU: Evolution or inertia?

The case *for* the referendum in UK parliamentary settings is rather clear and straightforward; if a proposed reform is thought to involve constitutional changes of great magnitude, the decision to adopt it (or not) should be given over to the people. This is in line with a *Lockean* rather *Burkean* view of democracy, according to which — the establishment of a representative democracy does not imply that the people have given up their rights in absolute terms, but that they have simply transferred the execution of their rights legitimately to another body: when matters of great importance arise, deferring decision-making to the people is a duty (see Locke 1690, Second Treatise, Art.242).

The case against the referendum, by contrast, is a lot more subtle. Of course, the political tradition invests representatives in Britain with the duty to represent the best interests of the country rather than act as representatives in the sense of popular delegates; a distinction touched upon by Edmund Burke in his now famous speech to his Bristol electorate on November 3rd, 1774. In this light, direct or participatory forms of democracy would appear to be at odds with representative democracy. But, denying the people the right to express themselves on a fundamental issue is quite a difficult exercise for political representatives — especially in a context where (a) citizens are better educated and informed on political issues than ever before (see, Barber, 1984; Budge, 1996; Grossman 1995) and (b) parliamentary prerogatives themselves are being steadily eroded 'from below' (e.g., through the process of devolution to regional parliaments) and 'from above' (i.e., through the transfer of sovereignty to supranational institutions such as the EU).

Up until the 1990s, it was not particularly controversial for politicians to publicly embrace or express the view that giving a say to people on European matters would roll back the cumulative political and economic achievements of the wider European project. For a long time, the choice between realising participatory ideals and advancing the European project raised a serious political dilemma, to which Lord Holme of Cheltenham gave expression in the debate regarding the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty:

'As one who supports referenda but who even more anxiously supports the EU, I say, in the words of Isaiah Berlin, that not all good things are compatible and that for me, and perhaps for some of my noble friends, progress towards the EU matters more[1]'.

The prevailing view was that citizen input on the EU project would forestall progress towards EU integration. Accordingly, support for European integration often mattered more than support for participatory ideals. In addition, despite agreeing to defer decision making to the people in 1975, political representatives had not intended to set a precedent. For a long time, the referendum continued to be viewed with suspicion as being both 'un-British and unconstitutional'— many observers suggesting that the first (and, so far, only national referendum) was held more for reasons of internal party politics than by commitment to the principle of popular sovereignty or the perception that citizen participation is of value (Bogdanor 1994, Butler and Ranney 1994).

In more recent times, however, several factors indicate that the perceptions of political representatives concerning direct participation appear to have changed. Since the end of the so-called *permissive consensus* in the 1990s (Lindbergh and Scheingold, 1970) there has been a growing recognition of the need to involve national citizens in EU decision-making on a more regular basis (Wallace and Smith, 1995). Such recognitions have been associated with a shift from *output legitimacy* — the ability of EU institutions to deliver policy outcomes, to *input legitimacy* — the ability of citizens to contribute to decisions (see Scharpf, 1999; Lindgren and Persson 2010). Moreover, studies of the election manifestos of major political parties in England, Germany and France since the late 1990s have also shown a dramatic change in politicians' perceptions regarding popular participation and the role of the people in the EU (Kittilson and Scarrow, 2003; Allen and Mirwaldt, 2010) — the latest example being David Cameron's pledge to hold a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU by 2017.

But, despite these positive indications, referendums on EU issues are still used rather sparingly (see Schmitter, 2000), not least because so many of them have returned undesired results (i.e.; the Danish electorate's reluctance to ratify the Treaty of Maastricht, the initial Irish *no* to the Nice and Lisbon Treaties and, the negative Dutch and French referendums on the Constitutional Treaty). More

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[1] HL Deb 14 July 1993 c267

recently, the 2015 UK general election campaign saw Labour leaders making it clear that they would be reluctant to hold a referendum on EU membership should their party win a majority. There are thus good reasons to believe that (at least some) politicians still do not trust the average citizen and their ability to make sensible decisions on EU matters.

Parliamentary deliberations as data

Tackling the question of how political representatives conceive popular participation is no easy task. MPs could be invited to participate in opinion surveys and/or interviews but, in addition to well-known issues linked with elite interviews (i.e.; access), it would be near impossible to gauge their views over time. Parliamentary debates offer a much more promising vein of analysis.

Despite the centrality of parliamentary institutions, speeches made by political representatives are often dismissed on the grounds of substance, or sometimes the lack of it, in that they fail to capture 'real interests'. Rational choice institutionalists, amongst others, typically argue that political actors have a set of preferences or tastes and behave instrumentally so as to maximise the attainment of these preferences (see Hall and Taylor, 1996: 942). In rational choice terms, it follows that the behaviour of political actors is likely to be driven primarily, if not solely, by strategic calculation and affected by actors' expectations about how others are likely to behave (Shepsle and Weingast 1987). One might therefore consider deliberative assemblies as political institutions wherein office seekers use language instrumentally (i.e. to pass a bill or to be re-elected).

Following this line of reasoning, the 'language' used by political representatives to defend their stance hardly matters insofar as it only reflects strategic calculations and does not represent the genuine beliefs of politicians. Since true beliefs are not expressed in Parliament and since rhetorical manoeuvres seem to prevail, why study parliamentary discourse? This converges with the argument that since referendums are controlled and 'pro-hegemonic'[2], then it makes little sense *a priori* to study what political representatives have to say on the issue.

Yet, the fact that political representatives resort to certain kinds of arguments (and dismiss others) is in itself an important point which deserves to be examined closely. The choice to resort to particular 'rhetorical strategies', as it were, shows – at the very least – which arguments might be considered legitimate in the context of political debates and which are not. This harks back to the distinction made by Quentin Skinner between empirical and conceptual reasons for studying parliamentary debates. At the empirical level, Skinner argues, disputes tend to revolve around the question as to whether the 'speech-acts' of political representatives are sincere. Yet this is not the most important question insofar as we cannot know with absolute certainty whether politicians are being sincere or

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[2] Referendums are said to be 'pro-hegemonic' when they are used by the ruling elites to only strengthen their power (See Qvortrup, 2002).

not, nor what their real motives are. More interesting, rather, is to focus on what representatives are actually doing; that is, to consider their intentions in light of what is actually said or actioned on their part (Skinner, 2002: 145-150). To summarise this point, one could say that transitory beliefs become important in political debates, only if they find expression. In that sense, the legitimating role of language is more important than a representative's real beliefs.

2. Methods of Analysis and Corpus

Our approach to analysing parliamentary debates is to use summative content analysis (see Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Unlike conventional approaches to qualitative content analysis, summative content analysis typically begins by identifying and quantifying words with the purpose of understanding their distribution within a corpus. After quantification of the manifest content of the text (which can be regarded as an exploratory phase) the analysis moves on to a second phase to include latent content analysis —that is, the interpretation of the underlying meanings of words and themes. To assist in this task, we use two types of computer assisted data analysis software; (a) an exploratory approach to textual analysis relying on automatic descending classification: the Alceste package; (b) a traditional inductive approach relying on manual coding and indexing: NVivo.

The Alceste[3] software utilised in the first stage of analysis relies upon co-occurrence analysis, which is the statistical analysis of frequent word pairs in a text or corpus (in our case parliamentary debates). Within this corpus, homogeneous subsets of words are automatically selected by the algorithm on the basis of their occurrence and co-occurrence in sentence segments (Brugidou, 2003: 418). The programme identifies statistical similarities and dissimilarities of words in order to classify repetitive language patterns. Technically, such patterns are represented by a matrix relating relevant words in columns and contextual units (sentence statements) in rows. The technical procedure then leads to the selection of clusters (or classes). The program generates a classification of text units according to the pattern of co-occurrences of words within sentence segments. Alceste is not a technique for a-priori hypothesis testing but for exploration and description. Unlike manual methods of qualitative analysis it is insensitive to meaning and context. Its advantage is that within a short time the researcher can gain an impression of a voluminous data corpus (for more information about Alceste see Guerin-Pace 1998; Bara, Weale, Bicquelet 2007; Bicquelet, Weale, Bara 2012, Schonhardt-Bailey, 2005).

In the second stage of analysis, we use a traditional qualitative data analysis software, NVivo, to manually highlight and systematically code latent themes (see Lewins and Silver 2007). Like other

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[3] ALCESTE stands for *Analyse des Lexèmes Co-occurents dans les Énnoncés Simples d'un texte* (Analysis of the co-occurring lexemes within the simple statements of a text). Its algorithm, based on Benzecri's contributions in textual statistics, was created by Max Reinert.

similar computer assisted qualitative data analysis software such as QDA Miner, ATLAS-ti or MAXqda, NVivo assists in managing data analysis by enabling thematic coding and allowing the assessment of relationships between variables and themes (in our case, relationships between the occurrence of a particular argument and the year in which it was expressed)[4].

Ours is thus a 'hybrid' approach to qualitative content analysis. Codes and themes are not purely generated inductively from the raw data. Instead, our coding strategy is guided by a structured process based on initial quantification of the corpus by Alceste. This approach offers several advantages. First, codes do not emerge as an *artefact* guided either by intuition or by endless iterations between the researcher and corpus construction. Instead, the coding frame is generated by unobtrusive data elicitation based on word frequencies and co-occurrences. Second, automatic data generation is checked against careful tagging and manual coding of the data under consideration to avoid hasty interpretations. This helps to assess the internal consistency and applicability of *a priori* codes but also enables the development of new codes (or categories) overlooked by the automatic approach.

Corpus

Our corpus comprises seven House of Commons debates from 1974 to 2010 concerning the possible use of the referendum either to ratify key European treaties, or to determine the relationship between the UK and the EU. While we would have liked to select one key debate per decade, this was not possible because debates about the referendum in each decade did not have analogous salience. For instance, discussions about the use of referendums faded into the background in the 1980s due to discontent generated by the experience of the 1975 referendum. In a similar manner, debate over submitting the Single European Act to popular decision-making did not achieve the same prominence as discussions about the method to be used to ratify, for instance, the Maastricht Treaty or the EU Constitutional Treaty.[5] To maintain a balance between the amount of data for each decade, we included two debates from the 1980s. We did the same for the 2000s, but for different reasons. At second reading, the debate on the Ratification of the EU Constitutional Treaty Bill, introduced by John Maples in April 2004, did not assess the intrinsic value of the referendum in great detail. As a result, we added the discussions following the introduction of the Bill in 2003 as well.

[Table 1 about here]

3. Results

We begin our analysis by looking at the results produced by Alceste for what we term the *Integrated*

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[4] The full Alceste and NVivo reports produced for this research, the original dataset and the coding scheme are available on a webpage dedicated to this study.

[5] The Amsterdam and Nice Treaties also generated fewer discussions about the use of the referendum.

Debate. This is a compilation of all seven debates within a single corpus. Six classes of key terms automatically selected on the basis of their frequency and co-occurrences were selected by the software. Those six classes were sub-divided into three clusters made up of two classes each (see figure 1 and table 2).

[Figure 1 about here]

[Table 2 about here]

The first cluster comprises of class 1 and 4. Class 1 displays words such as *power, law, court, transfer, sovereign, clause, competence* and *justice*. Class 4 comprises of the following key terms: *treaty, qualified, voting, pillar, Rome, foreign* (see table 2). Those two classes deal respectively with the judicial and constitutional issues at stake when considering the transfer of sovereignty from Parliament to supranational institutions.

A second cluster is composed of class 5 and class 6. Class 5 is made up of procedural terms employed by MPs to address each other and structure their speeches in the House of Commons, i.e. *Hon, friend, member, Mr, gentlemen*. Closely linked to class 5, class 6 specifically focuses on the issue of the referendum, displaying key terms such as *elect, referendum, people, electorate, question, general, issue*. The content of this class will be dealt with in greater detail at a later stage. For the present, it suffices to note that the close link between procedural vocabulary (class 5) and the referendum issue (class 6) reflects, as one might have expected, the centrality of the latter theme within the debates.

The last cluster is made up of class 2 and 3. With key terms such as *community, world, operations, trade, country and budget,* class 2 relates to economic concerns associated with the EU. Class 3 distinguishes issues pertaining to agricultural policies with key terms such as *food, manufacture, price, agriculture, industry* and *farm*.

The naming and interpretation of the classes produced by Alceste is not (and cannot be) simply based on the reading of the most frequent key terms produced for each class. Doing so would cause well-known problems of validity, where extracting key words from their context presents a high risk of misinterpretation. In order to interpret the software output soundly, we referred back to the Elemental Context Units (ECUs) from which key terms were extracted. This exercise not only guards against the risk of misinterpreting the data; it also provides a snapshot of the most recurrent arguments (or sentences) expressed on each issue in a debate.

Looking at the ECUs selected for class 6, we paid particular attention to the arguments expressed against the use of the referendum. The list of ECUs with the highest X^2 value suggested that four main categories of arguments dominated the debates across time (see table 3).

[Table 3 about here]

1. *Institutional arguments* point to the danger of introducing referendums in Britain because they would alter the UK tradition of parliamentary sovereignty, the Constitution, and (or) the role that representatives have been elected to perform. Institutional arguments were best exemplified in our results by the following ECU:

uce n° 208 Chi2 = 16: I regard a referendum as being difficult to reconcile, even on a matter of this unique character, with responsible parliamentary government as we have it in this country.

2. *Political arguments* refer to the danger of introducing referendums in Britain because they might jeopardise party politics or the government in place, e.g.:

uce n° 10 Chi2 = 28: in 1972, the Norwegian referendum was held, but the result went against the labour government, who resigned.

3. *Practical arguments* concern the difficulty of organising or funding a referendum, mobilising the electorate and/or framing a 'Yes or No' question to be answered by the voters, e.g.:

uce n° 2365 Chi2 = 27: even on such an apparently simple issue as in or out of the Community, could the wording of the question sufficiently affect the answer.

4. *Manipulation issues* imply that results of a referendum could easily be manipulated by politicians, the media or by the people themselves, for example:

uce n° 2742 Chi2 = 19: this referendum has nothing to do with asking the British people what they think about this issue but with getting the Prime Minister and his skin through the next general election.

By providing lists of occurrences and co-occurrences of most frequent key terms associated with our issue of interest, this 'exploratory phase' enabled us to reduce the large amount of information pertaining to the case against the use of the referendum in the debates to four major lines of argumentation.

We proceed now to the results of the analysis using NVivo to assess the diversity and the saliency of the arguments voiced by political representatives. Within the 4 categories described above we identified 29 sub-categories of arguments summarised in Table 4 below. This table also provides the number of instances of each argument by sub-category and main category as well as the distribution of codes across debates.

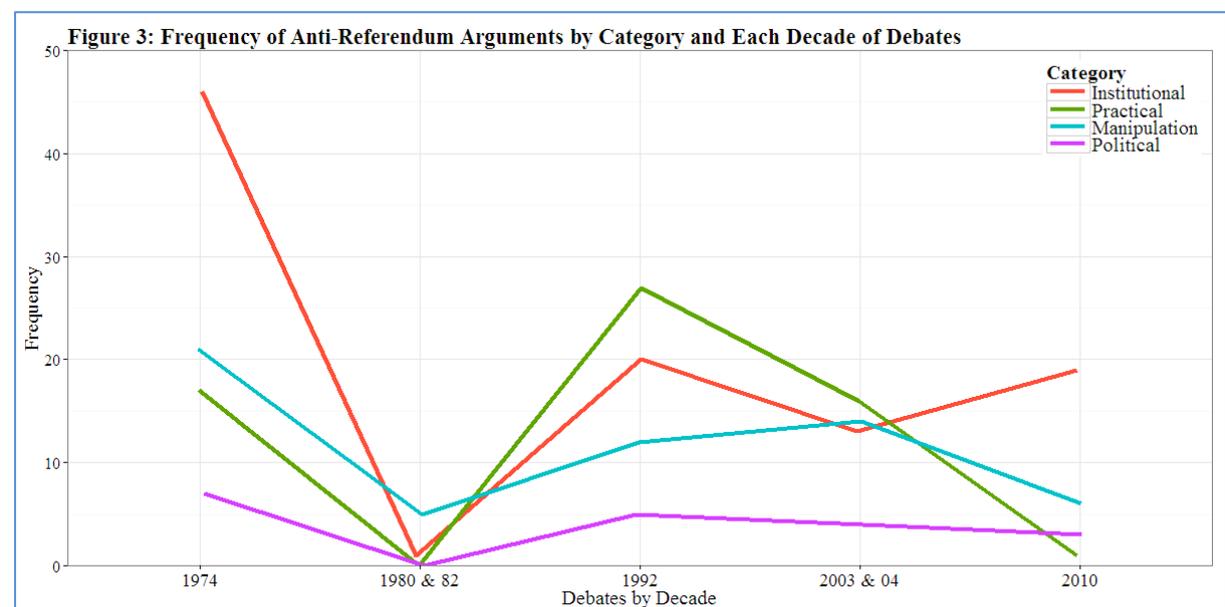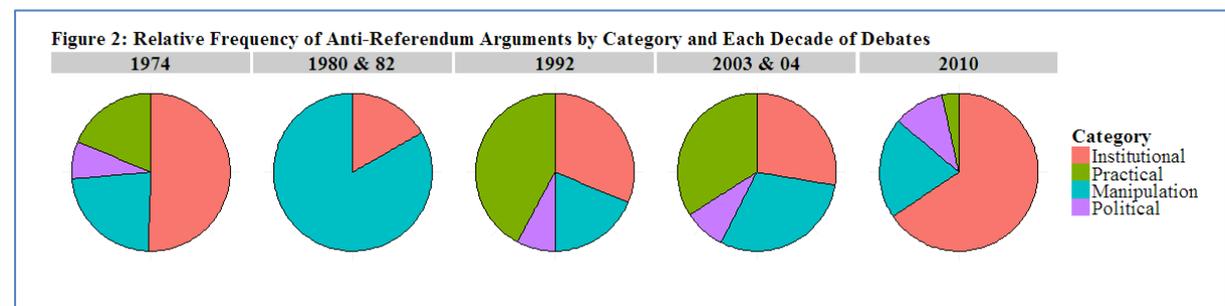**Table 4. Categories and Sub-categories of arguments[6]**

Categories	Sub-categories	Coded segments
	Referendums go against the tradition of parliamentary democracy	59
	Referendum are only justified by substantial changes in the Constitution	11
	Holding a referendum would set a precedent	10
	Referendums were not held on other matters of crucial importance	9
	Referendum are binding	8
	Referendums jeopardise relationship constituents and elected representatives	2
	Other Institutional Arguments	0
Institutional Arguments (aggregate coding)		**99**
	Complex issues cannot be reduced to yes/no answers	13
	Timing	9
	People do not want or care about referendums	7
	Referendum are expensive	6
Practical Arguments	Referendums only provide a snapshot of public opinion	6
	People are not informed enough to make decisions	5
	Referendums do not provide clear cut answers	5
	Complex issues require expertise	2
	Other practical arguments	8
Practical Arguments (aggregate coding)		**61**
	The framing of the question would influence the vote	19
	Referendums are advocated by party leaders to keep their party together	8
	Referendums are tools of dictators	6
Manipulation Issues	Referendums are used by people as a vote of confidence	5
	Referendums are only advocated by those who want to take the UK at of the EU	4
	The media would influence the vote	3
	Referendums reinforce the status-quo	2
	Other manipulation issues	11
Manipulation Issues (aggregate coding)		**58**
	Referendums put the Government at risk	7
	Referendums put political parties at risk	6
Political Arguments	Referendums would increase the power of the executive	1
	Referendums would open demands for devolution	1
	Other political arguments	4
Political Arguments (aggregate coding)		**19**
***Total* sentence segments coded with NVivo:**		**237**

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[6] A detailed version of our codebook displaying examples for each sub-category of argument is provided in the appendix (Table 5).

Distribution of *coded* sentence segments per debate[7]:

1974 Debate:	**182**
1980 Debate:	**6**
1982 Debate:	**6**
1992 Debate:	**128**
2003 Debate:	**30**
2004 Debate:	**64**
2010 Debate:	**58**

Our results indicate that the bulk of the arguments against the use of the referendum have not changed much since the 1970s. The main four categories of rhetorical strategies identified above continue to frame the case against direct participation (see figures 2 and 3).

Figure 2: Relative Frequency of Anti-Referendum Arguments by Category and Each Decade of Debates

Figure 3: Frequency of Anti-Referendum Arguments by Category and Each Decade of Debates

What has changed, however, is the array of arguments available to elected representatives to argue against citizens' participation within those categories. While an average of 25 different reasons was

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[7] Sentence segments are coded in NVivo both under their sub-category (child node) and category (parent node). For instance, a sentence segment falling under the sub-category 'Timing' would also be coded under 'Practical Arguments'. This explains why the total number of *coded* sentence segments distributed across debates is double the number of *total* sentence segments.

invoked to counter the use of the referendum in parliamentary debates in the 1970s, this dropped to an average of 10 reasons in 2010 (see figure 4).

[Figure 4 about here]

Institutional arguments have been, and continue to be, the most common arguments voiced against direct participation on EU matters by British MPs. In the 1970s, the case against the referendum was structured around two main institutional issues: (1) the claim that referendums weaken the role of Parliament, (2) the fear that they would set a precedent if they were introduced to the British political system. Also common was the belief that direct decision-making might jeopardise relationships between constituents and their elected representatives. In the 1980s, one of the main recurring points expressed in the House of Common was simply that Parliament is responsible for making decisions on behalf of the electorate. The very same argument also came top of the list in the 1990s. Critics of the referendum typically argued that if Parliament, after debating the question of the Maastricht ratification at length, was to refer the decision to the people, this would entail, as Conservative MP Tristan Garel-Jones put it, a 'dereliction' of duty on the part of political representatives.

In the 2000s, debates (2003-2004), the institutional case against the referendum underwent a slight shift with two arguments coming to prominence: (1) the claim that referendums are only justified by substantial changes in the Constitution and (2) the claim that referendums were not held on previous matters of crucial importance. Labour MPs Sir Stuart Bell and Marc Lazarowicz, for example, emphasised that the decision by Labour not to call a referendum on the EU Constitutional Treaty was perfectly legitimate given that former Conservative Governments did not submit earlier European Treaties (such as Maastricht) to a referendum. Labour MPs, such as Chris Bryant, also emphasised that a referendum on the EU Constitution was unnecessary because the Treaty did not entail substantial changes to the way in which Britain would be governed. The same argument was also commonly expressed in 2010. Even for referendum supporters like William Hague, some issues, such as future enlargement of the EU, were too mundane to deserve a referendum. All in all, the three paradigmatic institutional arguments identified here – namely, that referendums weaken the role of Parliament, that they undermine the responsibility vested in political representatives and that they go against the UK tradition of parliamentary sovereignty - were echoed in 2010. By contrast, the claim that a referendum would jeopardise relationships between constituents and elected representatives, had disappeared from the repertoire of the opponents to direct participation.

Over time, *Practical arguments* have been the second most prominent category of arguments expressed by MPs to argue against the use of the referendum. In the 1970s, critics of direct participation objected that people did not want or care about referendums, preferring elected representatives to make decisions on their behalf. This view was often associated with the claim that

complex issues require expertise and are not amenable to a Yes or No answer. Difficulty in finding an appropriate time to hold a referendum in addition to the organisational question and cost were also mentioned. Absent from the debates in the 1980s, practical arguments reappeared in the 1990s. For referendum opponents such as Anthony Nelson, referendums are often defective not only because intricate political matters cannot be decided by reducing them to a Yes or No question, but also because they are only 'snapshots' of public opinion, which is susceptible to change. Issues pertaining to citizens' lack of expertise and their willingness to let elected representatives decide on their behalf were also mentioned along with the difficulty of finding an appropriate time to call a referendum. In the two sets of debates analysed for the 2000s, the question of whether or not acceptance of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe could be determined by a 'Yes/No' answer was raised and was established as an essential precondition for deferring decision-making to the people. Furthermore, arguments about the 'complexity of the text' put forward in the two sets of debates were at times complemented by concerns about the ability of voters to make informed political choices. Though rare, the argument that the people lack the requisite knowledge to adequately take part in decision-making was still made in 2003-2004. For Labour MP Chris Bryant, for instance: 'Although a referendum might be appropriate for Pop Idol when deciding whether Gareth Gates or Will Young should win, it is unsuitable for examining a treaty[8].' A further technical issue raised by representatives was that of the 'timing' of a referendum. During the second reading of the Bill, critics typically argued that the organisation of a referendum would delay the ratification process considerably. In 2010, except for very occasional issues pertaining to the cost and organisation of a referendum, practical arguments were rarely invoked in the debate analysed.

Manipulation issues constitute the third most frequent category of arguments against the referendum invoked over time by MPs. In the 1970s, parliamentarians worried that the framing of the question would have a considerable influence on the results. Drawing on the French experience with direct democracy, they also feared that people would not answer the question; but would instead use the referendum as a means of evaluating the performance of the government of the day. In addition, critics emphasised that dictators often utilised referendums with perverted effects. Understandably, perhaps, an important claim in the 1970s was that the use of the referendum was only advocated by the leader of the Labour party to resolve internal divisions and keep the party together. The range of potential manipulation issues extended to at least two important concerns during that decade, namely that referendums reinforce the status-quo and that the media would influence the results.

The 1980s saw an upsurge of criticisms pertaining to the potential manipulative effect that discrepancies in funding could have on the results of a referendum (coded as *other manipulation issues* in our transcripts). Some critics were eager to point out that the 1975 campaign in favour of the

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[8] HC Deb 12 Nov 2003 c 310.

referendum led by the Labour Government had benefitted from more important sources of funding than the partisans of the 'no'. Others pointed out that the public had been misled by the nature of the 'deal' Britain was signing up to in accepting continued membership of the EU, asking that the result of the 1975 referendum be reconsidered. While some MPs were demanding that a new referendum be held, opponents countered that this was simply a Eurosceptic manoeuvre to take the UK out of the EU.

In the 1990s, the claim that the framing of the question would influence the results reappeared in the debates, along with the claims that the media may influence the outcome of the vote. In the 2000s debates an important point of contention between advocates and opponents of the referendum pertained to the wording of the question to be put to the electorate. During the Second Reading of the Referendum Bill introduced by John Maples on 23rd April 2004, a major objection voiced by Labour MPs was that the Bill remained unclear as to who would be charged with devising the wording of the question to be issued to the people. In the same debates, referendum critics often alleged that advocates simply instrumentalise the device so as to appeal to the people; not only to pressure the government of the day, but also to utilise a 'no' in the referendum, to occasion a British withdrawal from the EU. Perhaps less frequently than in previous decades, manipulation issues were still being mentioned in 2010. Critics of the referendum here were keen to re-emphasise that supporters of the device sought a withdrawal from the EU. Interestingly, the old claim that referendums are tools for dictators still found resonance in this last debate.

Political Arguments expressed against the use of the referendum were especially popular in early discussions about the method to be used to ratify key European treaties or settle the question of continued membership of the EU, but they faded away during subsequent debates. In the 1970s, MPs were particularly concerned that deferring decision-making to the people might put the Government at risk if the electorate cast a vote opposing the governmental line. Drawing on the Norwegian case, Conservative MP Tim Renton warned that if the result of a referendum was to go against the Government, it would have to resign. Often expressed, as well, was the fear that referendums put political parties at risk. Drawing again on the example of Norway, Tim Renton maintained that direct participation diminishes the authority of political elites, leads to a lack of decisiveness by political leaders through fear of public reaction, and causes alienation between political parties and the public. An important concern at the time – and one which would prove provident – was that holding referendums would open demand for devolution from Scottish and Welsh nationals.

Absent from the 1980s debates, political arguments reappeared in the 1990s. Once again, the fear that a referendum might put the Government at risk was expressed, albeit less recurrently than in the 1970s. An important political argument that emerged in the 1990s (coded as *other political argument*) was that a referendum would be redundant because the manifestos of the main parties in 1992 had

clearly stated their commitment to ratify the Maastricht treaty, providing sufficient information on the matter for voters to understand and make up their minds. Over the last two decades, the claim that referendums put Governments at risk was made episodically in Parliament; all the other political arguments identified above were almost never expressed.

4. Discussion

Overall, our results suggest that the rhetorical tools available to elected representatives to argue against direct participation on European matters are becoming scarcer, although they continue to be structured around the same four argumentative strategies. An important aspect of the case against the referendum is that many political representatives still perceive their own role as one of making decisions on behalf of the people and are deeply influenced by the view that politics is characterised by a division of labour. Indeed, it is precisely because an issue is of paradigmatic importance that, according to the critics, Parliament should remain the locus of decision-making. This has important implications for the academic debate on direct participation and the use of the referendum.

First, one noticeable feature of the academic debate on the referendum is that the issue is now discussed on technical rather than normative grounds. Seeking to address the traditional criticism levelled against the referendum, recent scholarly studies have intended to assess whether or not people were sufficiently informed to make political decisions (Haskell, 2001; Magleby, 1984; Lupia, 1994). They have also sought to assess whether people would be willing to participate on a more regular basis (Dalton, Burklin and Drummond, 2001). Crucially, they have focused on how new technologies could help with implementing certain forms of direct participation (Grossman, 1995; Barber, 1984; Toffler 1995). While in 1996 Ian Budge argued that 'the *new* challenge of direct democracy lies in the fact that it is now *technically* possible to bring citizens together to discuss public policy'—which, according to Budge— 'destroys the killer argument habitually used to knock direct democracy on the head ' (1996: 1), our results suggest that the 'killer argument' typically advanced by representatives is indeed that elections put them (i.e., representatives) in a legitimate position to make political decisions on behalf of the people. Hence, even if the existence of electronic communications means that physical proximity is no longer required for people to partake in decisions, this does not necessarily imply that representatives would encourage them to do so.

Second, a recurring argument for using the referendum as a supplement to representative institutions is based on studies showing how most people tend to regard referendums to be the least mediated of all possible expressions of the popular will (Jahn & Storsved, 1995: 25). Contemporary advocates of the referendum argue that the direct process of popular decision-making via referendums has a legitimacy that indirect decisions made by elected representatives cannot match (Grande, 2000;

Weiler, 1997). However, the debates analysed here show that the referendum is often considered a strategic instrument to achieve political ends rather than being perceived as a device for strengthening democracy. Even if parliamentarians accept the legitimacy of the decisions arrived at via referendums, they repeatedly raise concerns about the legitimacy of the *process* itself (coded under *manipulation issues* in our study). This finding is consistent with rationalist/strategic accounts of direct participation, which perceive the use of referendums as a tool of party political competition (Bogdanor 1994; Dur and Mateo 2011; Putnam 1988; Pierson 2000) and/or a means of escaping responsibility on a burning political matter (King, 2007).

The claim that referendums are used primarily as a strategic political device is also in line with recent interpretations of why Prime Minister David Cameron promised a referendum on the UK's renegotiated membership of the EU, a move often perceived less as an endorsement of participatory values by the political elite and more as a political manoeuvre made to silence Eurosceptic backbenchers within the Conservative Party (Emerson, 2013; Grant 2013; Priestley, 2013). From a less cynical perspective, however, one could argue that, consistent with the decline of the case against the referendum in Parliament identified in this study, David Cameron's decision is actually reminiscent to the *Lockean* view of democracy which informs British political culture.

If we endorse Samuel Beer's approach to and definition of political culture as a 'dialectic' between opposing bodies of thought (1965:11), in Britain, this dialectic can be characterised in terms of Burke *versus* Locke – whereby the thoughts of the former on the issue of representation still resonate in arguments issued against direct participation while those of the latter on sovereignty (more precisely, on the transfer of sovereignty) continue to be inherent in arguments made for direct decision-making by the people.

Since 1992, the differences between the *Burkean* and *Lockean* views on representation and sovereignty would appear to have evolved in favour of the latter. Two inter-related findings in our study support this assessment. First, it is proving increasingly difficult for critics of the referendum to argue that EU matters (such as the transfer of new competences from the UK to Brussels and the signing of new treaties) are too mundane to justify deferring decision-making to the people. Rather, partially transferring British sovereignty to the EU without popular consultation is now more and more perceived as a being disloyal to the people. Second, despite the prominence and recurrence of *Institutional Arguments*, referendums are no longer perceived as threatening the traditional relationships between constituents and elected representatives.

Hence, although many political representatives still perceive their own roles as one of making decision on behalf of the people they may, at the same time, view the referendum as a constitutional check necessary to ensure that fundamental legislation is not passed against the will of the people.

This modest role for direct participation is reminiscent to Liberal Constitutionalists in the classical vein who did not regard parliament to be all-powerful. John Locke, for instance, in defending representative government, argued that power was indeed given to parliament, but that this was in the form of a *concessio imperii*: a temporary and limited delegation of power. Although representatives have a vested authority, their delegative responsibility is ultimately owed back to the people. It is inconceivable to give greater weight to parliamentary sovereignty than to popular sovereignty, since the former can only function once the latter is granted. As Locke elaborated:

'If a Controversie [sic] arise betwixt a Prince and some of the People, in a matter where the Law is silent, or doubtful, and the thing be of great Consequence, I think the proper *Umpire* in such case should be the Body of the *People*' (Second Treatise, Art.242).

The view that referendums are important supplements to representative democracy is also in line with A.V Dicey's famous stance on the topic[9]. Influenced by Locke and championing popular decision-making in his seminal 1890 article 'Ought the Referendum to Be introduced into England?' Dicey argued that the referendum was 'the best, if not the only possible, check upon ill-considered alterations in the fundamental institutions of the country' (1890: 505-507). His arguments –and those of other important theorists such as James Hobson– fell on deaf ears at the time, but while the *Burkean* view of democracy dominated British politics for decades (if not centuries) the *Lockean* view might be on the rise.

5. Conclusion and further avenues for research

Using a summative approach to content analysis our study captures the variety of arguments in the UK Parliament levelled against direct participation on EU matters over the last 4 decades and reveals (1) a steady decrease in the range of arguments used and (2) a constant framing of the case against referendums around four key argumentative strategies.

The typology of arguments developed here could be used in a classical (quantitative) content analysis to test whether specific variables (i.e. party affiliation, affiliated party in opposition or government, constituency location in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, etc) are associated with the types of argument expressed by speakers. Drawing on a larger sample of data and using techniques such as document scaling, for instance, would open possibilities for predicting (rather than describing) the arguments likely to be espoused by political representatives in political debates (See Lowe et. al 2011; Herzog and Benoit, 2013).

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[9] Dicey feared both Home Rule in Ireland and the dominance of party politics over the prerogative of Parliament. He believed that then-Prime Minister Gladstone's support for Irish Home Rule would lead inevitably to the break-up of the United Kingdom, which he believed ran contrary to the wishes of the majority of the British electorate.

Our taxonomy of arguments could also be tested and elaborated upon in a comparative perspective. While in the UK, sovereignty has traditionally been based upon the role of Parliament, this is not the case in other EU countries such as France, for instance, which has a political tradition where the people are the source of sovereignty. Using a form of directed content analysis (see Hsieh and Shannon, 2005), further research could assess how direct participation on European matters is considered according to different democratic traditions. Another important question that could be addressed comparatively is whether the case against direct participation on EU matters differs from that on *non*-EU matters. After all, opponents of local or devolution referendums have gradually (and almost totally) lost ground in the UK Parliament. As suggested above, the problem might be less with direct participation *itself*, but more with direct participation on EU issues *specifically*.

Finally, an important body of work is now devoted to the analysis of deliberative practices in democratic institutions (see Steiner et al., 2004; Bächtiger, 2005; Weale et al., 2012). A central question raised in these studies is whether political debates are consistent with the principle of reciprocity, or, whether partisans talk past one another in parliament. Using argumentation analysis (see in particular the model developed by Toulmin, 1969), further studies could assess whether partisans and opponents of EU referendums 'speak the same language', or whether their arguments are irreconcilable.

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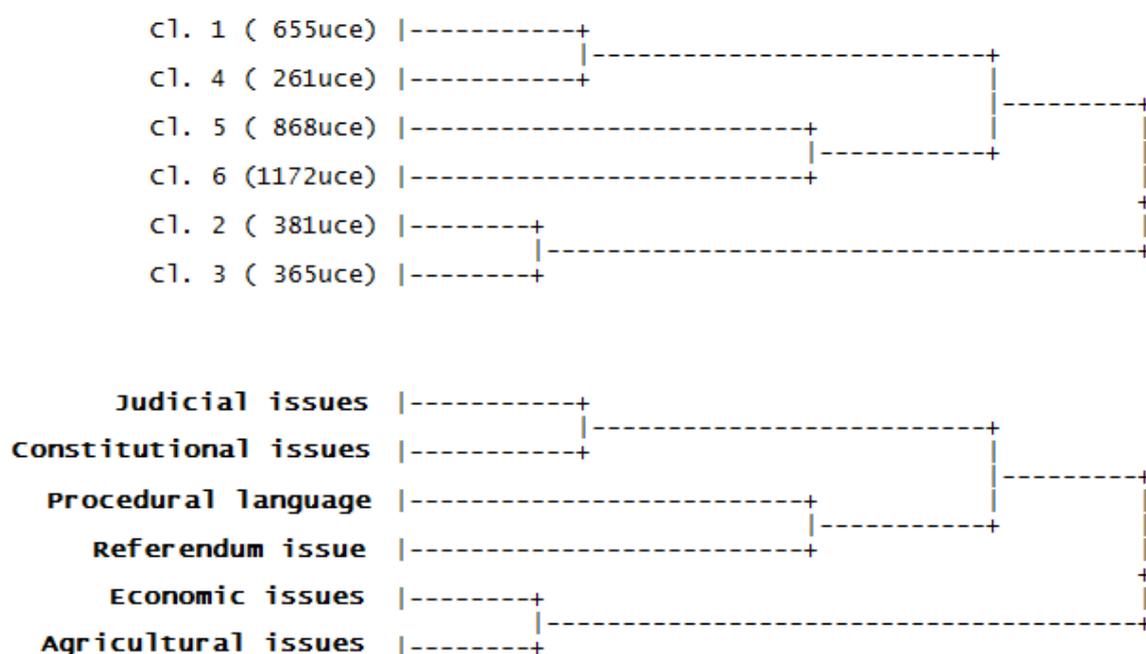
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Appendix

Table 1. Commons Debates included in Analysis

Date	Hansard reference	Initiator	Government	Topic
22 November 1974	HC Deb 22 November 1974 vol 881 cc1687-771	Tim Renton (Conservative)	Labour (Wilson)	Continued Membership to the EU
21 May 1980	HC Deb 21 May 1980 vol 985 cc507-15	Dennis Canavan (Labour)	Conservative (Thatcher)	Continued Membership to the EU
12 November 1982	HC Deb 12 November 1982 vol 31 cc769-828	Malcolm Rifkind (Conservative)	Conservative (Thatcher)	Continued Membership to the EU
21 February 1992	HC Deb 21 February 1992 vol 204 cc581-650	Richard Shepherd (Conservative)	Conservative (Major)	Ratification of the Maastricht Treaty
12 November 2003	HC Deb 12 November 2003 vol 413 cc307	John Maples (Conservative)	Labour (Blair)	Ratification of the EU Constitution
23 April 2004	HC Deb 23 April 2004 vol 420 cc565-608	John Maples (Conservative)	Labour (Blair)	Ratification of the EU Constitution
7 December 2010	HC Deb 7 December 2010 vol 517 cc191-273	William Hague (Conservative)	Conservative /Lib Dem (Cameron)	Transfer of National Power to the EU

Figure 1: Hierarchical Descending Classification - Cluster analysis of Classes produced by Alceste.

```
cl. 1 ( 655uce) |-----------+
                            |------------------------------+
cl. 4 ( 261uce) |-----------+                              |
                                                           |---------+
cl. 5 ( 868uce) |-----------------------------------+      |         |
                                                     |------------+   |
cl. 6 (1172uce) |-----------------------------------+            |    |
                                                                 +
cl. 2 ( 381uce) |--------+                                       |
                         |---------------------------------------+
cl. 3 ( 365uce) |--------+
```

```
    Judicial issues |-----------+
                                |------------------------+
Constitutional issues |-----------+                      |
                                                         |---------+
  Procedural language |-----------------------------+    |         |
                                                     |-----------+  |
      Referendum issue |----------------------------+            |  |
                                                                 +  |
        Economic issues |--------+                               |  |
                                 |-------------------------------+  |
     Agricultural issues |--------+
```

Table 2: 'Integrated Debate' (1974 – 2010): First Ten χ^2 Values for Key words per Class.

Classes	Key Terms
Class 1 **Judicial issues** **18%**	power (χ^2 452); law ($\chi^2$353); court ($\chi^2$287); EU ($\chi^2$224); transfer ($\chi^2$213); sovereign ($\chi^2$162); clause ($\chi^2$159); competence ($\chi^2$149); justice ($\chi^2$143); bill ($\chi^2$135).
Class 4 **Constitutional issues** **7%**	treaty ($\chi^2$290); qualified ($\chi^2$290);voting ($\chi^2$285); pillar ($\chi^2$225); rome ($\chi^2$192); foreign ($\chi^2$185); union ($\chi^2$183);maastricht ($\chi^2$177); superstate ($\chi^2$145); majority ($\chi^2$130).
Class 5 **Procedural language** **23%**	hon ($\chi^2$970) friend ($\chi^2$470) member ($\chi^2$466) mr ($\chi^2$424) gentleman ($\chi^2$142) I ($\chi^2$140) avon ($\chi^2$135) stratford ($\chi^2$135) he ($\chi^2$119) speech ($\chi^2$118).
Class 6 **Referendum issue**	election ($\chi^2$285); referendum ($\chi^2$191); people ($\chi^2$185); electoral ($\chi^2$163); question ($\chi^2$131); general ($\chi^2$104); issue ($\chi^2$96); referenda ($\chi^2$96); part

32%	$(\chi^2 95)$; answer $(\chi^2 93)$.
Class 2 **Economic issues** **10%**	community $(\chi^2 348)$; operation $(\chi^2 192)$; trade $(\chi^2 188)$; countries $(\chi^2 184)$; trade $(\chi^2 140)$; budget $(\chi^2 140)$; develop $(\chi^2 125)$; fund $(\chi^2 122)$; economic $(\chi^2 115)$;currency $(\chi^2 94)$.
Class 3 **Agricultural issues** **10%**	food $(\chi^2 359)$; manufacture $(\chi^2 304)$; price $(\chi^2 283)$; agricultural $(\chi^2 258)$; industry $(\chi^2 257)$; farm $(\chi^2 247)$; cheap $\chi^2 (193)$; cost $(\chi^2 179)$; market $(\chi^2 173)$; export $(\chi^2 156)$.

Table 3: Class 6 – Arguments against the use of the referendum.

First Ten χ^2 Values per sentences Key words in Bold

uce n° 10 χ^2= 28 uci n° 1 : *name_TRenton *year_1974 *party_CON

the **norwegian** parliament **decided** against it because the **issue** was too **complicated**. In 1972, the **norwegian referendum** was held, but the **result** went against the **labour government**, who **resigned**.

uce n° 116 χ^2= 27 uci n° 14 : *name_DJay *year_1974 *party_LAB

I am **going on** to set out my **argument**, which I want to do briefly, which **answers** the hon. gentleman' s **question**. however, we **have** just had a **general election** which, in **part**, **asked** the **electorate** whether it wished this **issue** to be **decided** in the **ballot box**.

uce n° 2365 χ^2 = 27 uci n° 298 : *name_TGJones *year_1992 *party_CON

even on such an **apparently simple issue** as in or out of the community, could the **wording** of the **question** sufficiently affect the answer. **Opinion polls** were **held** prior to the **referendum** to **try** to **find out** whether that was so.

uce n° 57 χ^2 = 23 uci n° 7 : *name_TRenton *year_1974 *party_CON

in the end, as we **know**, the **referendum proved** de_gaulle_s own undoing, as he **went** to the **country on** an issue of senate and **local government reform.**

uce n° 8 χ^2 = 21 uci n° 1 : *name_TRenton *year_1974 *party_CON

In 1972 the **labour government** in **norway** made it **plain** that, although the **referendum** they **held on european_economic_community** membership was officially **consultative** only, they would **accept** the result as **binding**.

uce n° 609 χ^2 = 21 uci n° 75 : *name_WHamilton *year1974 *party_LAB

they may be wrong in that, but that is the **view** of some **people**. the **scottish** and **welsh situations** are in the same category. once the **precedent** of a **referendum** on a **constitutional matter** is **decided**, **wales** and **scotland** could **ask** for a **referendum** and why not durham, too?

uce n° 727 χ^2 = 21 uci n° 91 : *name_ELuard *year_1974 *party_LAB

fourthly, there have been **objections** on the **grounds** I **accept** that there is some **validity** in these of

difficulty in formulating the **question** in an **objective**, unpartisan **way.**

uce n° 2333 χ^2 = 16 uci n° 294 : *name_TGJones *year_1992 *party_CON

I shall analyse that **referendum** and some of the **questions**, problems and **difficulties** that **arise** from it. one **matter** is how to make sure that the **electorate** is **fully informed** when **asked** to judge, in the **simple yes no,** in out **way**, a **complex** nexus of **issues**.

uce n° 303 χ^2 = 14 uci n° 45 : *name_NRidley *year_1974 *party_CON

the third **objection** is that the **referendum** will **bind** successor **governments** or even successor **parliaments**.

uce n° 1924 χ^2 = 14 uci n° 224 : *name_ANelson *year_1992 *party_CON

I **repeat** what has been **said** over and over again. we are **committed** as a **party** to the **opportunity** of making a decision in a **general election**.

Table 5: Codebook – Categories and Sub-categories of argument coded with NVivo

Categories	Sub-categories	Examples	Reference
Institutional Arguments	Referendums are binding	*The referendum will bind successor Governments or even successor Parliaments.*	*name_NRidley *year_1974 *party_CON
	Referendums are only justified by substantial changes in the Constitution.	*Referenda should be advanced only when a substantial change in how we are to be governed is being proposed. If the ink is not yet dry on the document, how can the Conservatives already call for a referendum? They do not know whether the constitution will involve a substantial change.*	*name_CBryant *year_2003 *party_LAB
	Referendums were not held on other matters of crucial importance.	*The treaty about which we are concerned is more profound than others. It provides for legislation in all the national Parliaments, but it is no more terrifying for that. It flows from the original Stuttgart declaration and the Single European Act when there was no question of a referendum.*	*name_HDykes *year_1992 *party_CON
	Holding a referendum would set a precedent.	*Once the principle of holding a national referendum had been introduced it would be abundantly plain that pressure groups, from within parliament and from without, would demand further referenda from successive governments.*	*name_TRenton *year_1974 *party_CON
	Referendums go against the tradition of Parliamentary democracy.	*The holding of national referenda to decide issues of importance runs contrary to the principle of British parliamentary democracy.*	*name_TRenton *year_1974 *party_CON
	Referendums jeopardize relationship between constituents and elected representatives.	*If these [referenda] are introduced in our country they will have a profound and lasting effect on the relationship between Members of Parliament and the*	*name_TRenton *year_1974 *party_CON

		electorate.	
	Other Institutional Arguments	*What are the implications of holding a referendum? Will two kinds of law be developed, on the one hand laws that are ratified by the people and, on the other, laws that are made only by Parliament?*	*name_JMoore *year_1974 *party_CON
Practical Arguments	Referendums are expensive.	*We must recognise that the cost of and the organisation for a referendum are not inconsiderable factors. It is as well to be open about this and not to pretend that there are no liabilities and that a referendum is just an asset.*	*name_GFowler *year_1974 *party_LAB
	Complex issues cannot be reduced to yes/no answers	*We demean the people in supposing that we can devise a question which merits a yes or no answer. The people's attitudes and views on the Common Market are far too complex to merit a simple "Yes" or "No".*	*name_JMoore *year_1974 *party_CON
	Referendums do not provide clear/cut answers	*If the referendum is held, it will still not settle the question of membership, because decision in such a matter will continue to have to be reviewed, month after month and year after year. Some Governments will want to stay in, whilst others will be doubtful. Some will want to renegotiate, some will not.*	*name_DWeitzman *year_1974 *party_LAB
	People do not want or care about referendums.	*Do the British people really want that? The only pool figures that I have seen, taken in the middle of 1974, showed that a majority of the electorate sampled certainly wanted a referendum, although even more would have preferred the decision to be taken at a General Election.*	*name_TRenton *year_1974 *party_CON
	Timing	*I deplore the timing of the proposed referendum on the question of our staying in the European Economic Community ...) I regret that the Labour Party has tied itself quite so closely in the timing that it has put forward for a*	*name_PGoodhart *year_1974 *party_CON

		decision through the ballot box by saying that the decision must be reached within 12 months from last October.	
	People are not informed enough to make decisions	*(75 per cent of the electors) sampled said that they did not feel that they were well enough informed to vote in a referendum on the European Economic Community. Only 18 per cent felt that they were.*	*name_TRenton *year_1974 *party_CON
	Referendums only provide a snapshot of public opinion	*Referendums are often defective because they are snapshots of public opinion and public opinion moves on. I believe that, on the EC and its development, opinions have changed not just among the public but in the House.*	*name_ANelson *year_1992 *party_CON
	Complex issues require expertise	*The larger the magnitude of the question, the more reason for its being decided by members of parliament who are elected to take these decisions and who, through weeks of poring over documents and studying issues, become expert on the subject, who listen and participate in debates, and who finally cast their vote.*	*name_TRenton *year_1974 *party_CON
	Other practical arguments	*Someone from Ireland might end up having two votes. They could be registered in Ireland to vote in domestic Irish elections. They would therefore have a vote in the Irish referendum, but they could be registered here for European elections because they lived here and paid taxes. They could therefore vote in two referendums and, although that might be a good thing, it is a bit odd.*	*name_DCairns *year_2004 *party_LAB
Manipulation Issues	The framing of the question would influence the vote.	*It is highly significant that in all the debate that is now developing on the subject of a referendum on our continued membership of the European Economic Community the question is not whether we should have the referendum but on how the question should be framed in order to obtain the answer that the executive wants.*	*name_WHamilton *year1974 *party_LAB

	Referendums reinforce status-quo.	*If my hon. Friends will look at the historical precedents they will find that the referendum has been shown in the past to be an instrument of conservatism at best a mechanism to maintain the status quo and at worst to put the clock back.*	*name_WHamilton *year1974 *party_LAB
	Referendums are only advocated by those who want to take the UK at out the EU.	*I imagine that many of those who support the Bill hope that, if the matter were put to a referendum, the British public would say a firm no. Do they really believe that by going it alone and not taking part in the economic and political development of the European Community we shall enhance our sovereignty? What sort of world are we living in?*	*name_ANelson *year_1992 *party_CON
	Referendums are advocated by party leaders to keep their party together.	*The referendum proposal by the Labour Party is a transparent attempt to preserve party unity at whatever costs, including the cost of prejudicing Britain's proper role in Europe through prolonged uncertainty.*	*name_DLane *year_1974 *party_CON
	Referendums are used by people as a vote of confidence.	*The referendum is a fallible instrument. We cannot be sure that people will vote on the merits of the issue. We cannot be sure that they will not be swayed by other Considerations, whether party political allegiances or the popularity or unpopularity of the Government, or whatever else it may be. So there is the possibility of a perverse answer.*	*name_DLane *year_1974 *party_CON
	Referendums are tools of dictators.	*On the very day that Hitler announced Germany's withdrawal from the league of nations, he said that he would subject his decision to a plebiscite, using the semblance of democracy to thwart the democratic nations. A total of 96 per cent. of the electorate went to the poll, and 95 per cent approved Hitler's policy.*	*name_TRenton *year_1974 *party_CON
		I do not wish to refer to Hitler or Stalin,	*name_JMoore

	The Media would influence the vote.	*but there is no question in my mind that, given the means of control of the media in a modern Western style democracy, one can utilise the media to get the answer one wants. That is one of the awesome realities of Western society.*	*year_1974 *party_CON
	Other manipulation issues	*Does my right hon. Friend accept that the referendum will not be a defence unless there are clear rules to prevent one side from pouring millions of pounds into its campaign, which in 1975 resulted in a prejudiced, biased, unfair provision of information for people to make a judgment?*	*name_DStoddart *year_1982 *party_LAB
Political Arguments	Referendums put the Government at risk.	*In 1972, the Norwegian referendum was held, but the results went against the Labour Government, who resigned.*	*name_TRenton *year_1974 *party_CON
	Referendums would open demand for devolution.	*There are many labour members who feel, as I do, that the next demand for a referendum would come from the Scottish nationals, who would seek it on the subject of independence for Scotland, followed, perhaps, by one for wales.*	*name_NRidley *year_1974 *party_CON
	Referendums would increase the power of the executive.	*(...) in our country, without any written constitution, there are limitless opportunities for further referenda and each would place more power in the hands of the government of the day.*	*name_HDykes *year_1992 *party_CON
	Referendums put political parties at risk.	*As Norwegians today accept, it [the referendum] diminished the authority of political leaders, it has led to a lack of decisiveness by their political leaders through fear of public reaction, and it has led to a growing alienation between the political parties and the public.*	*name_TRenton *year_1974 *party_CON
	Other political arguments	*In a general election, people have an opportunity to consider all Government policies, while in a referendum people have an opportunity to consider only one, but one that might have implications*	*name_RShepherd *year_1992 *party_CON

		for the rest of the Government policy. That is why there should generally be a self-denying ordinance exercised in respect of referendums.	

Figure 4:

Figure 4: Frequency of Anti-Referendum Arguments by Type in Each Decade of Debates