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The Missing Dimension of Democracy

Institutional Patterns in 25 EU Member States between 1997 and 2006

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ABSTRACT

By compiling data on 12 politico-institutional variables for 25 member states of the European Union over the years 1997–2006, we were able to investigate the emerging patterns of democracy in the European Union. The study addresses the questions of how direct democracy can be incorporated into Lijphart's (1999) typology of consensus and majoritarian democracy and how empirical democratic patterns are affected by this extension. For the western democracies, three dimensions of democracy were extracted using principal component analysis, with two resembling those found by Lijphart (1999) and a third one being shaped by the interplay between direct democracy and cabinet type. East European democracies tend to have a lower degree of interest group corporatism, weaker central banks, stronger judicial review and stronger direct democracy.

KEY WORDS

- consensual and majoritarian democracy
- direct democracy
- Eastern Europe
- EU member states
- patterns of democracy

Introduction

Nearly a decade after its publication, Lijphart's (1999) comparative work on the patterns of democracy in 36 countries continues to arouse criticism (e.g. Ganghof, 2005), to provoke replications (e.g. Shikano, 2006) and to encourage follow-up studies covering different levels of government (e.g. Vatter, 2007; Freitag and Vatter, 2008) and different groups of countries (e.g. Roberts, 2006). These studies reflect the enormous impact of Lijphart's monograph within – and beyond – political science (Mainwaring, 2001; Grofman, 2000).

In this tradition, the study at hand seeks to build on Lijphart's (1999) groundbreaking typology of consensus and majoritarian democracy by applying a theoretically broader version to 25 European democracies. Our primary research focus is to address the question of how direct democracy fits into Lijphart's typology. We attempt to close the gap left by Lijphart when he excluded direct democracy from his selection of political institutions (Jung, 1996). We perceive direct democracy as a central element and one of the most democratic mechanisms of decision-making. Direct democracy is continuously gaining in importance, reflected by the fact that important issues are being decided by referendums, such as constitutional changes in Australia, Denmark, Ireland and Italy, as well as the ratification of international treaties in several European (EU) Union member states. Simultaneously, constitutions in many countries are being amended to include institutional provisions for referendums (Hug, 2004; LeDuc, 2003; Qvortrup, 2002).

The EU influences the institutional architecture of its member states, for example regarding judicial review or central bank independence (Anderson, 2002). Conversely, the rise of direct democracy in the EU member states establishes additional veto players who directly influence the EU level. The Irish 'No' to the Reform Treaty, for instance, demonstrates this link. The connection between referendums and the supranational policy-making level has been the subject of recent research (Garry et al., 2005; Lubbers, 2008; Steenbergen et al., 2007). Besides this primary goal of amending Lijphart's (1999) contribution, we debate whether Lijphart's patterns can be found in the East European countries (Roberts, 2006; Fortin, 2005). We applied Lijphart's method to a sample of 25 European democracies, including 10 new democracies established after the fall of the Soviet Union.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows. First, Lijphart's (1999) typology is briefly summarized, moving on to the criticism it has received and the innovations of the study at hand. The subsequent section discusses the measurement of the politico-institutional variables to be investigated. Next, we will move to empirical evidence derived from correlation and principal components analyses. Finally, we discuss the deviations both from Lijphart's (1999) findings and from our modified version of the typology.

Thinking about consensus, majoritarian and direct democracy

Until the late 1960s, political science deemed the 'majoritarian, winner-take-all' Westminster model with its parliamentary character to be the most highly developed form of democracy (Powell, 1982). By the end of the decade, however, the consociational theory was introduced in parallel by Lehmbruch (1967) and Lijphart (1968, 1977, 1984). The further development of this theory by Lijphart (1999) through the comparison and systematic evaluation of two ideal types of democracy – majoritarian and consensus democracy – continues to be seen as one of the most innovative contributions in comparative political research (Mainwaring, 2001: 171). Ideally, the two models of democracy are diametrically opposed, primarily with regard to the central issue of the distribution of political power. Lijphart (1999) also makes a distinction between horizontal (executives–parties) and vertical (federal–unitary) power-sharing dimensions. In a majoritarian democracy – characterized by a one-party cabinet, dominance of the executive over the legislative, a plurality or majority electoral system, a unitary state structure, a unicameral system, central bank dependence on the executive and a number of other elements – the concentration of power is the core principle. In contrast, consensus democracy emphasizes the diffusion of power (power-sharing) through a number of structural features such as a multi-party government, balance of power between the executive and the legislative, a proportional electoral system, a federal structure, bicameralism and an autonomous central bank.

Attesting to its prominence and enabled by its transparency, Lijphart's (1999) work has attracted much criticism based on theoretical, methodological and empirical grounds (see Bogaards, 2000; Ganghof, 2005; Grofman, 2000; Kaiser, 1997; Schmidt, 2000; Shikano, 2006; Taagepera, 2003; Tsebelis, 2002; Freitag and Vatter, 2008). Additionally, numerous authors discuss single measurement aspects (see De Winter, 2005; Kaiser et al., 2002; Ganghof, 2005; Lijphart, 2003; Schnapp and Harfst, 2005; Keman, 2000; Flinders, 2005). Another stream of criticism questions the very foundations of the approach. Ganghof (2005) argues that Lijphart fails to distinguish between institutions and behaviour. Shikano (2006: 76–7) replicates Lijphart's analysis by using 2000 bootstrap samples and finds that three dimensions, rather than two, should have been taken into account. Other, less fundamental, reservations address the selection of countries (Schmidt, 2000: 348) and the exclusion of direct democracy.

While in principle keeping with Lijphart's (1999) approach, we tackle the question of direct democracy. It is widely acknowledged that there may be more than two dimensions of consensus democracy (Jung, 2001; Grofman, 2000). Arguably, direct democracy is a form of power-sharing in its own right (Jung, 1996, 2001; Vatter, 2000). Lijphart (1984: 34; 1999) contends that direct

democracy cannot be systematically linked to either of his two dimensions, calling it an instrument 'foreign' to his typology. Recent research (Budge, 1996; Gallagher and Uleri, 1996; Hug and Tsebelis, 2002; LeDuc, 2003; Qvortrup, 2002; Setälä, 2006; Suksi, 1993; but see Eder and Magin, 2008) fails to connect direct democracy to Lijphart's (1999) models of democracy. On the other hand, Grofman (2000: 53) provides empirical evidence for an independent third aspect of democracy: '[T]he remaining variable, the use of direct elections, does not fit either of the first two dimensions. What we find is that this last variable defines a direct versus indirect democracy dimension that is essentially orthogonal to the first two.'

Building on this observation, we included forms and use of direct democracy as a full-fledged institutional variable in the analysis of patterns of democracy in European countries. Clearly, direct democracy can take many forms, of which some are more majoritarian and others more consensual. Most of the existing classifications of direct democracy (e.g. Qvortrup, 2002; Setälä, 2006; Suksi, 1993; Uleri, 1996) are based on Smith's (1976) simple distinction. Accordingly, we can identify two basic types of referendum: the controlled (passive) referendum, which the government or a parliamentary majority is entitled to launch, and the uncontrolled (active) referendum, which can be initiated by non-governmental actors, a minority of voters or a parliamentary minority. Given this basic distinction, we establish an initial connection with Lijphart's (1999) two concepts of democracy. Since the ruling majority has the exclusive right to trigger plebiscites, these instruments can be thought of as having the typical features of majoritarian democracy.¹ By contrast, there are popular initiatives and optional referendums: these can be launched from the bottom by a small minority of voters or parliamentarians, either to overturn decisions made by the parliamentary majority (optional referendums) or to refer to voters' propositions for laws or constitutional reforms (popular initiatives). The mandatory referendum, which is constitutionally required for particular decisions, is located between these two types of direct democracy: whereas the government can control the agenda of the mandatory referendum, it does not have much control over its initiation. In line with Setälä (2006: 711), we can thus place the different forms of direct democracy on a continuum from high 'governmental control' (plebiscites) to medium control (mandatory referendums) to low control (optional referendums and popular initiatives).

In addition to the stage of initiation, we have to consider the rights of majorities and minorities during the final stage of decision-making. Jung (1996: 633) and Vatter (2000: 174) stress the difference between referendum decisions requiring qualified majorities and those requiring simple majorities. Whereas plebiscites with simple majority rules belong to the majoritarian type of democracy, optional referendums and popular initiatives requiring

super-majorities display distinct consensus characteristics. Meanwhile, initiatives and optional referendums to which a simple majority rule applies are intermediate forms: at the crucial stage of initiation, these instruments display typical consensus features, but final decisions are made according to a simple majority principle.

How and in which ways do we expect the additional institutional variable to interact with the other variables included in Lijphart's (1999) two-dimensional concept of democracy? Because 'consensual' forms of direct democracy introduce an additional veto player, a rational strategy for parties would be to widen the executive formula in order to prevent opposition parties from using the referendum to block or counter government legislation (Neidhart, 1970; Jung, 2001; Papadopoulos, 2001). We hypothesize a strong relationship between the consensual strength of direct democracy and the type of government cabinet. Contrary to Lijphart's (1984, 1999) and Grofman's (2000) assumptions, we postulate that direct democracy does *not* form a third, entirely independent dimension of democracy alongside the first and second dimensions. Instead, the individual forms of direct democracy, in accordance with their majoritarian or consensual characteristics, should exhibit a systematic relationship with the type of cabinet, a variable included in Lijphart's (1999) first, executives–parties, dimension of democracy (which also encompasses aspects of the party system, executive–legislative relations, the electoral system and interest groups). On the other hand, we do not anticipate any connections between direct democracy and Lijphart's (1999) second, federal–unitary, dimension of democracy (which touches aspects of federalism, bicameralism, constitutional rigidity, judicial review and central bank independence). In the following section, we will examine this hypothesis.

Research design and measurement of variables

The sample selected consists of 25 of the 27 democracies comprising the European Union. This strategy allows newer democracies to be contrasted with older ones, while controlling for other factors stemming from EU membership, in particular the influence of the EU on central bank independence, judicial review and economic citizenship rights (Anderson, 2002). The two smallest new EU member states, Cyprus and Malta, were excluded owing to severe problems of data availability. The period examined ranges from 1997 to 2006, the recent decade not covered by Lijphart (1999). Where possible, information on the 12 politico-institutional variables of interest has been coded yearly. For the subsequent cross-sectional multivariate analysis, mean values for the time period were calculated when applicable. Table 1 provides an overview of the included variables, their measurement and the data sources consulted.

Table 1 The 12 political-institutional variables, their measurement and data sources

<i>Variable: majoritarian vs. consensual extreme</i>	<i>Measurement (range)</i>	<i>Sources</i>
1. <i>Party system: two-party systems vs. multi-party systems</i>	Effective number of legislative parties: Laakso and Taagepera (1979) index (1–∞)	Armingeon et al. (2006); Armingeon and Careja (2004); our own calculations based on online databases ^a
2. <i>Cabinet type: one-party cabinets and minimal winning coalitions vs. oversized and minority coalitions</i>	Share of oversized and minority cabinets (0–1)	Armingeon et al. (2006); Armingeon and Careja (2004); our own calculations based on online databases
3. <i>Executive–legislative relationship: executive dominance vs. executive–legislative power balance</i>	Modified version of Siaroff's (2003) index of executive dominance (0–18)	Siaroff (2003); our own calculations based on documentary analysis ^b
4. <i>Electoral system: disproportional vs. proportional electoral systems</i>	Gallagher index of disproportionality (0–100)	Armingeon et al. (2006); Armingeon and Careja (2004); our own calculations based on online databases
5. <i>Interest groups: pluralism vs. corporatism</i>	Index of corporatism: sum of standardized scores of centralization of wage-setting arrangements (1–3), trade union density (0–100) and collective bargaining coverage rate (0–100)	Schroeder (2003); Driffill (2006); OECD (2004)
6. <i>Federalism: unitarism vs. federalism</i>	Degree of constitutional federalism (0–2)	Armingeon et al. (2006); Armingeon and Careja (2004)
7. <i>Decentralization: centralization vs. decentralization</i>	Share of state and local taxes in total tax revenue (0–1)	Data from Eurostat ^c

Table 1 continued

Variable: majoritarian vs. consensual extreme bicameralism	Measurement (range)	Sources
8. Bicameralism: unicameralism vs. bicameralism	Scale of dispersion of legislative power (1–4)	West: Vatter (2005); Flinders (2005); East: Armingeon and Careja (2004); our own calculations for Poland, Slovenia and Czech Republic
9. Constitutional rigidity: constitutional flexibility vs. constitutional rigidity	Scale of the majority required for constitutional amendment (1–5)	Lundell and Karvonen (2003)
10. Judicial review: absence of judicial review vs. strong judicial review	Scale of the degree to which laws can be reviewed by a constitutional court (1–4)	Lundell and Karvonen (2003); Roberts (2006)
11. Central bank independence: absence of central banks vs. independent central banks	Cukierman index of central bank independence, incl. ECB (1–9)	Cukierman (1992); Cukierman et al. (2002); Sadeh (2005, 2006)
12. Direct democracy: absence of consensual direct democracy vs. pronounced consensual direct democracy	Scale of the forms and use of consensual direct democracy (0–9.5)	Our own calculations based on data from the Centre for Research on Direct Democracy, Zürich ^d

Notes:

- a. Additional online sources for election results and composition of governments: <http://psephos.adam-carr.net> and <http://www.parties-and-elections.de> (accessed repeatedly between May and August 2007).
- b. Sources for executive–legislative relations: (1) standing orders of parliaments and constitutions as e.g. published or linked on the assemblies' websites (directory provided by the Inter-Parliamentary Union: <http://www.ipu.org>); (2) specialized literature, in particular contributions to the *World Encyclopedia of Parliaments and Legislatures* edited by Kurian (1997), the contributions to the book *Parliamente und Systemtransformation im postsozialistischen Europa*, edited by Kraatz and von Steinsdorff (2002), the special issue of the *Journal of Legislative Studies* of 2007 on post-communist parliaments, edited by Philip Norton and David M. Olson, and Ismayr's (2004) edition on the political systems in Eastern Europe.
- c. <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu> (accessed May 2007).
- d. <http://www.c2d.ch/>, accessed repeatedly May–August 2007.

Party system

In line with Lijphart (1999), the Laakso–Taagepera index (Laakso and Taagepera, 1979) was used to measure the effective number of parliamentary parties. The index N is computed by taking the inverse of the sum of the squared seat shares s of the parties i in parliament:

$$N = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^n s_i^2}.$$

It therefore weights the parties according to their strength in terms of seats. Conceptually, with an increase in the number of effective parties in parliament, the degree of consensus democracy rises.

Cabinets

Lijphart (1999: 91) describes single-party minimal winning cabinets as the most majoritarian type and oversized multi-party cabinets as the most consensual. In between those two forms of government, there are multi-party minority cabinets, multi-party minimal winning cabinets and one-party minority cabinets. Taking into account the criticism of Lijphart's (1999) decision to treat single-party minority cabinets as a majoritarian trait (Taagepera, 2003: 5), the proportion of governments during the period under investigation that were either oversized multi-party coalitions, minority coalitions or single-party minority cabinets was used to measure consensus in the government. The question of the correct classification of single-party minority cabinets refers to the fact that all minority governments, whether coalitions or not, must share power with the opposition in order to remain in office (De Winter, 2005: 10).

Executive–legislative relationships

Lijphart's (1999) measurement of executive dominance vis-à-vis the legislative branch of government, using the average cabinet duration in days, has received much criticism (De Winter, 2005; Ganghof, 2005; Tsebelis, 2002: 109–11). Lijphart (2003: 20) himself expresses serious reservations about the appropriateness of the indicator. Cabinet stability can follow from mere loyalty of the government to the parliamentary parties supporting it and, although a strong parliament may provoke short-lived cabinets, it is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition (De Winter, 2005: 11).

To avoid the severe shortcomings of cabinet durability, an index of formal executive dominance developed by Siaroff (2003) has been used. The index

originally consisted of 11 items grouped together based on a factor analysis of 27 characteristics of parliamentary democracies (Siaroff, 2003: 452). It is derived from the concept of the agenda-setting power of governments (Tsebelis, 2002: 111–14; Döring, 2001). Consequently, the index of executive dominance encompasses agenda-setting prerogatives of the government, such as the setting of the plenary agenda itself and restrictions on members' initiatives. The cohesion of the government is approximated by the power of the prime minister. Additionally, rights of the plenum and the committees are incorporated in the index, e.g. the ability of committees to rewrite legislation, the influence of committee members on party positions and the prerogative of the plenum to first determine the principles of a bill. Finally, a single-member electoral system is considered as providing power to the executive branch of government. For each item, the values 0, 1 or 2 were assigned, with higher values indicating more majoritarian traits.

Out of the 11 items of the index, 9 were included in the actual calculations. The item covering characteristics of the electoral system was omitted owing to the risk of endogeneity because the disproportionality of the electoral system is a separate variable in our analysis. For influence of committee members on party positions, we were unable to collect reliable information for the East European countries. The scores for the West European countries were adjusted accordingly, dropping this piece of information.² For the western countries, values were taken directly from Siaroff's (2003: 456–7) calculations. Executive–legislative relations in East European countries were coded drawing on information from specialized literature, constitutions and standing orders of parliaments (see Table 1).

Electoral system

One standard operational indicator to assess consensual or majoritarian characteristics of electoral systems is the index developed by Gallagher (1991):

$$G = \sqrt{\left(\frac{1}{2} \sum (v_i - s_i)^2 \right)},$$

where v_i is the electoral vote share for party i , s_i its seat share in parliament. The index of electoral disproportionality, G , compares the vote and seat shares of legislative parties, punishing wider margins progressively. The index provides an output measurement of the electoral system. Although a more complex input measurement of electoral rules is a viable alternative to the Gallagher index, the appropriateness of the latter is widely acknowledged (Taagepera, 2003; Lijphart, 2003: 21).

Interest groups

For the empirical assessment of interest group corporatism, Lijphart (1999) draws on an index developed by Siaroff (1999). The index covers formal and informal rules, such as the recognition of peak organizations as coordination partners, and economic outcomes of these rules, such as the strike rate. Critics argue that Lijphart (1999) runs into problems of endogeneity when he uses this index as a part of the executives–parties dimension to assess the impact of consensualism on economic outcomes such as the strike rate (De Winter, 2005: 11). To avoid such confusion, we propose a different approach to the measurement of interest group corporatism by focusing on formal and informal institutions instead of outcomes (Kenworthy, 2003). The resulting index of interest group corporatism sums the standardized scores of the centralization of wage-setting arrangements, trade union density and the collective bargaining coverage rate (sources are Driffill, 2006; OECD, 2004; Schroeder, 2003).

Constitutional division of territorial power

Lijphart's (1999: 185–7) index of the territorial division of power provides a rank ordering of constitutional federalism and degree of decentralization. Accordingly, the primary criterion is the presence of a formally federal constitution. Federal and unitary democracies are further separated into decentralized and centralized subclasses, with Lijphart (1999) regarding federal but centralized countries as more consensual than unitary but decentralized countries. Based on the distinction between the 'right to act', represented by federalism, and the 'right to decide', represented by decentralization (Keman, 2000: 199), we departed from this hierarchy and reevaluated federalism and decentralization as equal aspects in their own right. In doing so, the key issues in the debate on the correct measurement of the territorial division of power were taken into account (Castles, 1999; Keman, 2000; Rodden, 2004). The first aspect, constitutional federalism, was measured on a scale ranging from 0 (no federalism) to 2 (strong federalism).

Fiscal division of territorial power

While constitutional federalism is one variant of the territorial division of power, similar effects are expected from decentralization, which is frequently measured in financial terms (Lijphart, 1984: 178; Armingeon, 2004; Castles, 1999; Keman, 2000). When state and local governments (as opposed to federal governments) can spend their own money, there is a high probability that

they also have some leeway in decision-making. The indicator used sums the share of state and local taxes in total tax revenue. As with federalism, higher values indicate a more consensual form of democracy. For the 25 countries in our sample, both indicators are correlated with each other at $r = .41$ (significant at the 5% level), which indicates that they represent related but still distinct features.

Parliaments and congresses

A further sign of consensus democracy is pronounced bicameralism. Lijphart (1999: 211–13) first distinguishes unicameral from bicameral systems, then assesses the power symmetry between the two chambers and finally their partisan congruence as a sign of a more or less considerable veto player constituted by the second chamber. The index ranges from a majoritarian 1, for unicameral systems, to a consensual 4, assigned to democracies with equally powerful chambers showing partisan incongruence.

Constitutional amendments

Lijphart (1999) employs a four-point scale to measure the rigidity of constitutions, which categorizes them according to the majorities and referendums required for amendments. An analogical, five-point scale was used (Lundell and Karvonen, 2003). It takes the value of 1 if a simple parliamentary majority is sufficient for a constitutional amendment. For additional measures, such as a referendum or an election, the score increases to 2. The higher scores, up to 5, are assigned to qualified majorities in combination with referendums and more restrictive variants of these two provisions. Although the data are only cross-sectional, their use seems justified given the stability of rules for constitutional amendments (Lijphart, 1999: 221).

Judicial review

To measure the strength of judicial review, data gathered through a two-step classification were adopted from Armingeon et al. (2006). The lowest score was assigned for the absence of judicial review. Where it does exist, a further, three-category distinction was made, relating to the courts' degree of activism. This results in a range from 1 to 4, with higher values indicating stronger judicial review, a consensual trait. For East European countries, values following the same logic provided by Roberts (2006) were used. The scale corresponds to the one used by Lijphart (1999: 226). For the eastern EU member states, the values were cross-checked with the specialized literature

(Prochazka, 2002; Sadurski, 2003; Schwartz, 2000; Ishiyama Smithey and Ishiyama, 2000).

Central bank independence

To assess central bank independence, Cukierman's (1992) index method was adopted, which incorporates variables on limitations on lending, CEO aspects, policy formulation and central bank objectives. The values for East European countries and updates for West European countries were taken from Sadeh (2005, 2006). Necessary amendments concern the rise of the European Central Bank (ECB), which is the decisive institution for the members of the Monetary Union. Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain have been members of the European Monetary Union since 1999. Greece has been a member since 2001, and Slovenia since 2007. For these states, the ECB's score was used, beginning with the year of accession (Sadeh, 2005, 2006).

Direct democracy

As discussed above, we measured direct democracy in the 25 countries under consideration, focusing on the consensual character of direct democratic institutions. The index compiled contains points for the degree of consensualism in the direct democratic provisions in the constitution and embodied in the decision rules as well as for the actual use of direct democracy. For those that we have labelled 'uncontrolled' referendums, i.e. optional referendums and initiatives, 1 point each was awarded if prescribed by the constitution. No points were counted for plebiscites (ad hoc referendums), which are subject to the discretion of the head of government. As an intermediate form, 0.5 points were given for mandatory referendums. Turning to decision rules, 0.5 points were awarded for each variant of direct democracy when a quorum of participation is required and 1 point when a qualified majority is required. Finally, 1 point was awarded for the actual use of mandatory referendums, optional referendums and popular initiatives, but not for plebiscites.

Among the countries that scored high (3 or more points) on our index of direct democracy are the western democracies of Denmark and Italy (see web appendix). Strikingly, the East European democracies, in particular Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia, have frequently introduced strong consensual direct democratic institutions in their constitutions. Only Bulgaria and the Czech Republic scored low on our index. A handful of western countries (Belgium, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom) had no consensual direct democratic provisions, at least not at the national

level. As for the use of direct democracy, our sources (see Table 1) indicate that the East European countries are leading with regard to mandatory referendums but not regarding the generally less used popular initiative.

Empirical analysis

The analytical strategy to investigate democratic patterns includes the computation of correlation coefficients between institutional variables, factor or principal components analysis and the visualization of the results on a multidimensional 'map of democracy' (Lijphart, 1999). The correlation matrix of 12 institutional variables in 25 European democracies is displayed in Table 2.³ Statistically significant and negative correlations are observed between the effective number of parliamentary parties and executive dominance as well as electoral disproportionality. Cabinet type is correlated to decentralization and approaches a statistically significant correlation with direct democracy ($r = .31$). Executive dominance also covariates with electoral disproportionality and – surprisingly – inversely with decentralization and constitutional rigidity. Electoral disproportionality is additionally negatively correlated with interest group corporatism and constitutional rigidity. Interest group corporatism inversely covariates with the strength of judicial review. As expected, the degree of constitutional federalism correlates with fiscal decentralization as well as with the strength of bicameralism. Finally, the strength of judicial review is correlated with the strength of direct democracy. Central bank independence fails to show any statistically significant correlations.

In a further step, the data were structured using a principal component analysis (PCA) of the 12 variables for 25 countries. PCA presents the correlated variables as linear combinations of latent, uncorrelated components, which are then interpreted as 'dimensions of democracy'.⁴ The results are presented in Table 3, where the factor scores can be understood as correlations between the variables and the specified factor.

The method generated four unrelated factors with an eigenvalue above 1.0. A screeplot, not reported here, showed a clear and sharp bend after the fourth factor, which supports the decision to keep these four factors for further analysis. Three variables exhibit high loadings on the first factor: the effective number of parliamentary parties, executive dominance vis-à-vis the parliament and electoral disproportionality – the loadings for the latter two are negative. Therefore, fragmented legislatures, non-dominant executives and proportional electoral systems coincide. The second factor encompasses the degree of federalism, decentralization and bicameralism. On the third component, interest group corporatism loads highly and negatively, whereas

Table 2 Correlation matrix (Pearson's *r*) of 12 politico-institutional variables in 25 EU member states, 1997–2006

	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]	[10]	[11]	[12]	[13]
[1]	1.00												
[2]	.27	1.00											
[3]	-.62**	-.29	1.00										
[4]	-.42*	.04	.64**	1.00									
[5]	.26	.21	-.22	-.49**	1.00								
[6]	.24	-.26	-.04	-.22	.22	1.00							
[7]	.07	.37*	-.36*	-.33	.13	.41*	1.00						
[8]	.07	.17	-.02	.13	-.02	.52**	.23	1.00					
[9]	.20	-.30	-.44*	-.48**	.05	.20	-.05	-.15	1.00				
[10]	-.09	-.10	-.19	.05	-.44*	.22	.31	.25	.11	1.00			
[11]	-.23	-.17	.21	.17	.11	.29	-.03	.13	-.11	-.05	1.00		
[12]	.24	.31	-.25	-.01	-.23	-.27	.14	-.08	-.20	.42*	-.19	1.00	
[13]	.11	-.03	-.30	.02	-.54**	-.34	-.09	-.15	.25	.54**	-.61**	.42*	1.00

Notes:

- Variable 1: Effective number of legislative parties
- Variable 2: Share of oversized and minority cabinets
- Variable 3: Executive dominance
- Variable 4: Electoral disproportionality
- Variable 5: Interest group corporatism
- Variable 6: Federalism
- Variable 7: Decentralization
- Variable 8: Bicameralism
- Variable 9: Constitutional rigidity
- Variable 10: Judicial review
- Variable 11: Central bank independence
- Variable 12: Consensual direct democracy
- Variable 13: Dummy for post-communist countries

* statistically significant at the 5% level (one-tailed test); ** statistically significant at the 1% level (one-tailed test).

Table 3 Varimax orthogonal rotated component matrix of 12 politico-institutional variables in 25 EU member states, 1997–2006

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Factor I</i>	<i>Factor II</i>	<i>Factor III</i>	<i>Factor IV</i>
Effective number of legislative parties	.71			
Oversized and minority cabinets				.88
Executive dominance	-.88			
Electoral disproportionality	-.84			
Interest group corporatism	.40		-.75	
Federalism		.86		
Decentralization	.37	.57		
Bicameralism		.76		
Constitutional rigidity	.56			-.67
Judicial review			.85	
Central bank independence	-.35	.44		
Consensual direct democracy			.61	.48

Note: Principal component analysis with eigenvalues over 1.0 extracted; only factor scores above .35 are reported.

judicial review and direct democracy load positively. In general, where interest group corporatism is weak, judicial review and direct democracy are pronounced. The fourth and final factor is constituted by cabinet type and constitutional rigidity. A high percentage of oversized and minority cabinets coincides with flexible constitutions. As the correlation matrix has already indicated, the variable measuring central bank independence has no strong attachment to any factor; a weak attachment to the second factor, however, is found (factor score = .44). Some other variables also load on more than one component. In particular, constitutional rigidity shows some attachment to the first factor and direct democracy to the fourth. The four-dimensional pattern found does not correspond to Lijphart's (1999) two-dimensional solution. Because we included direct democracy, a more refined three-dimensional solution was expected; however, this also remains unconfirmed.

The core variables of Lijphart's (1999) executives–parties and federalism–unitarism dimension load on the first two factors as expected. Regarding the first factor, the effective number of parties, executive–legislative relations and the electoral system resemble the executives–parties dimension. Interest group corporatism is not connected to the other variables of the first factor. This is in line with Taagepera's (2003) appraisal that no logical connection exists between interest group corporatism and the other variables of Lijphart's first dimension. The isolation of cabinet type, on the other hand, matches our

expectations regarding the impact of the inclusion of direct democracy, which we hypothesize to interact with cabinet type.

Turning to the second factor, some strong relationships between core variables of the federal–unitary dimension appear. Federalism, decentralization and bicameralism coincide. Judicial review, constitutional rigidity and central bank independence do not follow these patterns and are detached from the second factor. Again, this fits into Taagepera's (2003) assessment of weak logical connections between the variables of Lijphart's second dimension.

The dislocated variables – namely interest group corporatism, cabinet type, judicial review, constitutional rigidity and central bank independence, together with the new variable, direct democracy – form two further factors. The third factor encompasses the organized interest variable, judicial review and direct democracy. This observation is contrary to our expectations, which were to find either strong constitutional courts or strong direct democracy.

Compared with the third factor, it is relatively easy to interpret the relations between the variables forming the fourth factor. Direct democracy has the strongest ties to the third dimension (factor loading .61); however, with a factor loading of .48, it is still notably associated with the fourth factor. The coincidence of pronounced consensual direct democracy and consensual cabinet types matches our theoretical expectation. There is some empirical evidence supporting our hypotheses postulating a relationship between direct democracy and oversized or minority cabinets. The presence of non-rigid constitutions partially fits into this explanation. Direct democracy requires amendable constitutions, at least when constitutional amendments are the subject of a referendum.

Admittedly, the patterns are all but unequivocal for the entire sample of 25 democracies. If the subsample of the 15 West European countries is used to perform a principal component analysis, the three-dimensional structure is found nearly without exception (see Table 4).

As central bank independence obviously loses its discriminatory power owing to policy convergence (see Tables 2 and 3), particularly in the West European countries, we omitted this variable in the re-analysis. The procedure initially yielded four factors. A closer look at the eigenvalue of the fourth factor (1.06) revealed that it was only marginally above the critical value of 1.0. Furthermore, a screeplot showed a clear bend after the third factor. Therefore, three factors were kept for further analysis. The first closely resembles Lijphart's (1999) original executives–parties dimension, the second the federal–unitary dimension. The exception is that cabinet type, together with direct democracy, forms a third factor – as expected. The unclear attachment of constitutional rigidity, which has its loading split between the first and the

Table 4 Varimax orthogonal rotated component matrix of 11 politico-institutional variables in 15 western EU member states, 1997–2006

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Factor I</i>	<i>Factor II</i>	<i>Factor III</i>
Effective number of legislative parties	.68		
Oversized and minority cabinets			.84
Executive dominance	-.86		
Electoral disproportionality	-.86		
Interest group corporatism	.82		
Federalism		.81	-.40
Decentralization	.41	.57	.38
Bicameralism		.85	
Constitutional rigidity	.65		-.60
Judicial review		.88	
Consensual direct democracy			.86

Note: Principal component analysis with three factors extracted; only factor scores above .35 are reported.

third factor, must be regarded with some reservations. In sum, our line of argumentation is well suited to the West European democracies. To visualize the three-dimensional concept of democracy for the western democracies, we have provided a so-called ‘bubble plot’ of these countries (Figure 1).

On the *x*-axis, the values of the variables forming the first factor are represented, which we have labelled ‘parties–interest groups dimension’. The original scores of the effective number of parties, executive dominance, electoral disproportionality and interest group corporatism were standardized, the signs of executive dominance and electoral disproportionality were reversed to guarantee that high values always represent consensus democracy, and the adjusted scores were summed and finally standardized once again so that one unit on the axis represents one standard deviation. The variables loading on the second factor – federalism, decentralization, bicameralism and judicial review – were subjected to the same procedure that yields the values for the ‘federal–unitary dimension’ shown on the *y*-axis. Again, high values indicate consensus democracy. Constitutional rigidity was left out of the calculations because it did not attach clearly to either factor. A third dimension of ‘cabinets–direct democracy’ was introduced using hollow circles of different sizes. These values were computed analogously to those of the other dimensions, but with scores for oversized and minority cabinets and consensual direct democracy. Bigger circles indicate more consensual traits in the cabinets–direct democracy dimension.

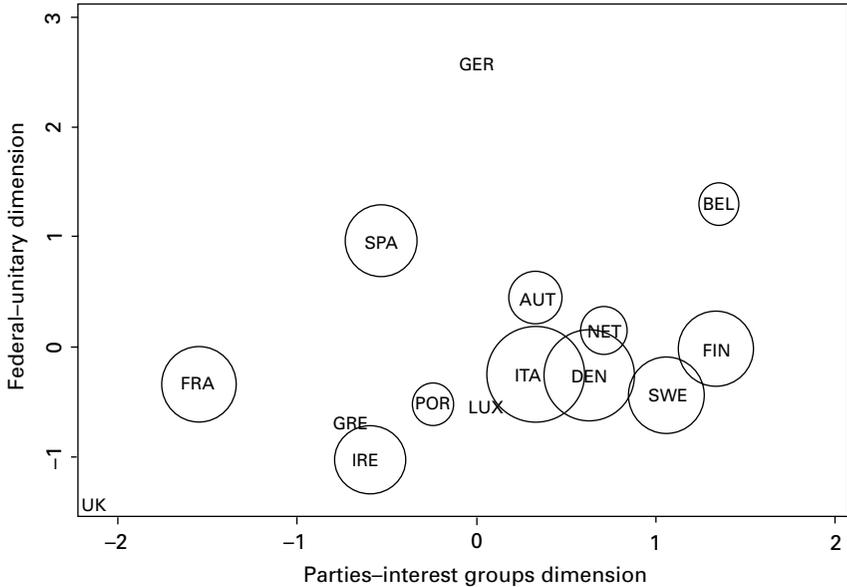


Figure 1 Three-dimensional conceptual map of democracy for 15 western EU member states.

Notes: High values indicate consensus democracy. Bigger circles indicate stronger consensual traits on the third (cabinets–direct democracy) dimension. AUT = Austria; BEL = Belgium; DEN = Denmark; FIN = Finland; FRA = France; GER = Germany; GRE = Greece; IRE = Ireland; ITA = Italy; LUX = Luxembourg; NET = Netherlands; POR = Portugal; SPA = Spain; SWE = Sweden; UK = United Kingdom.

The three-dimensional map enables the assessment of how the inclusion of direct democracy into Lijphart's (1999) typology affects the perception of democratic patterns. These results are partially driven by cabinet type and partially by direct democracy. Several countries would appear more majoritarian if the cabinets–direct democracy dimension were disregarded. In particular, France and Ireland score low on the first two dimensions but obtain medium to high values on the third. Remarkably, it was precisely these countries that rejected EU treaties in the past through referendums. Italy is a similar case. Denmark, Sweden and Finland, which already appear rather consensual on the parties–interest groups dimension, become even more consensual once the cabinets–direct democracy dimension is considered. At the other end of the spectrum, the new dimension makes several democracies look more majoritarian than they would if only the first two dimensions were accounted for, particularly Germany. The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Austria also gain in majoritarianism. The

majoritarian character of the United Kingdom (lower left corner), Portugal and Greece is mirrored proportionally by their scores on the third dimension.

The different patterns found by principal component analysis for the complete sample (Table 3) and for the western subsample (Table 4) await further explanation. A separate principal component analysis for the post-communist democracies was hindered by the small number of cases (10) in that category. Alternatively, useful information was revealed when a dummy variable for East European countries was correlated with all other variables (see Table 2).⁵ This procedure revealed the main differences between eastern and western democracies (Roberts, 2006: 48). Accordingly, East European countries tend to have a lower degree of interest group corporatism ($r = .54$), weaker central banks ($r = .61$), stronger judicial review ($r = .54$) and stronger consensual direct democracy ($r = .42$). These findings are in line with the observations of the literature on Eastern Europe regarding interest group corporatism (Ost, 2000), direct democracy (Auer and Bützer, 2001) and judicial courts (Schwartz, 2000; Prochazka, 2002; Sadurski, 2003; Zielonka, 2001; Roberts, 2006).

Conclusion

This article builds on Lijphart's (1999) distinction between majoritarian and consensus democracy. We follow the logic of the original typology in terms of its overarching poles of consensualism and majoritarianism. But, instead of theorizing two sub-dimensions, we incorporate direct democratic institutions and expect them to vary in combination with cabinet type, resulting in a total of three sub-dimensions. Relying on self-conducted data compilation covering information on 12 politico-institutional variables in 25 EU member states between 1997 and 2006, correlation and principal component analyses revealed that the three-dimensional solution cannot be observed for the full sample of 25 EU democracies. However, the pattern was found for the subsample of the 15 western EU countries.

The first dimension observed in the western subsample is very similar to Lijphart's executives–parties dimension, save for the detachment of cabinet type. The federal–unitary dimension is equivalent to Lijphart's second dimension, minus central bank independence (which we excluded from the analysis owing to a lack of variance) and constitutional rigidity, which showed no clear attachment to any dimension. The third dimension, the 'top-to-bottom' dimension of democracy, which has no counterpart in Lijphart's results, encompasses cabinet type and direct democracy. Where consensual direct

democracy institutions were strong in the 15 western EU member states, oversized multi-party or minority cabinets were more frequent. This indicates, in contrast to previous research (Lijphart, 1984, 1999), that direct democracy does not have the status of an institution independent of all other democratic features.

However, for the full sample of 25 EU countries, four dimensions of democracy emerged. Whereas the core variables of Lijphart's (1999) executives-parties and federalism-unitarism dimensions loaded on the first two factors as expected, interest group corporatism, cabinet type, judicial review, constitutional rigidity and central bank independence, together with direct democracy, formed two more factors. Again, there is some empirical evidence supporting our hypothesis that, where consensual direct democracy is strong, governments react by forming broad multi-party coalitions in anticipation of popular opposition.

The conjunction between direct democracy and cabinet type can be interpreted as an additional variant of consensus democracy, with a power-sharing strategy different from the parliamentary-representative type of consensus democracy. Whereas the former is characterized by the broad integration of political forces into the government, the latter is influenced by the search for compromise in the parliamentary arena. Therefore, we agree with Kaiser's (1997) concept of multidimensional veto-point democracy, which distinguishes different dimensions of veto points, as well as his critique of Huber et al. (1993) and Schmidt's (2000) one-dimensional concepts. Instead of simply summing veto points, it seems more feasible to account for different dimensions of power-sharing. An aspect we could not consider in detail concerns the origins of the patterns observed. Does the constitutional choice of consensual direct democracy always precede the emergence of consensual cabinet types, as we have postulated? Or do some countries introduce direct democracy to counterbalance the general character of their political institutions?

In conclusion, our results underline, for the most recent period, the continuing theoretical and empirical relevance of the horizontal and vertical power-sharing dimensions in established democracies as described by Lijphart (1999). At the same time, our study clearly illustrates that the inclusion of direct democracy can lead to an extension and differentiation of Lijphart's concept of representative majoritarian and consensus democracy. Since the democratic institutions of member states have a clear impact on the development of the EU political system and because this influence is increasingly felt by means of referendums, direct democracy cannot continue to be ignored.

Notes

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- 1 The use of the term 'plebiscite' varies in the literature. The following explanations are based on Suksi's (1993: 10) definition: '[A plebiscite] . . . may be an "ad hoc referendum" for which there exist no permanent provisions in the constitution or in ordinary legislation.' Mandatory (or compulsory) referendums are those acts that have to be referred to the voters by the majority in government and parliament as required by the constitution or other legally prescribed norms. The optional (or facultative) referendum refers to a popular vote on a government proposal (e.g. a law) that is held because a number of citizens or an agent in the representative government (e.g. parliamentary minorities) has demanded it (Gallagher and Uleri, 1996: 7; Setälä, 2006: 705). 'Popular initiatives mean that a certain number of citizens can demand a referendum by signing a petition for a referendum on a legislative change promoted by the sponsors of the initiative' (Setälä, 2006: 706). Only initiatives provide citizens with the opportunity to raise their own issues on the political agenda.
- 2 The rank order of the countries does not change as a result of this manipulation.
- 3 Product-moment correlations are used for all variables.
- 4 In line with Lijphart (1999), we chose principal component analysis with orthogonal, rotated factor loadings in accordance with the varimax criterion.
- 5 A review of institutional development over time reveals that there are few major politico-institutional changes. It is in line with the findings of Armingeon and Careja (2008) that the post-communist democracies adhere to their initially selected institutions. A cross-sectional focus therefore seems justified.

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