

OPENING PANDORA'S BOX

David Cameron's Referendum Gamble on EU Membership



Credit: *The Economist*.

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April 21, 2014

Abstract

This essay examines the driving factors behind UK Prime Minister David Cameron's decision to call a referendum if the Conservative Party is re-elected in 2015. It addresses the persistence of Euroskepticism in the United Kingdom and the tendency of Euroskeptics to generate intra-party conflict that often has dire consequences for Prime Ministers. Through an analysis of the relative impact of political strategy, the power of the media, and British public opinion, the essay argues that addressing party management and electoral concerns has been the primary influence on David Cameron's decision and contends that Cameron has unwittingly unleashed a Pandora's box that could pave the way for a British exit from the European Union.

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank the Bates Summer Research Fellowship, without which I would not have had the opportunity to complete my research in London. To Professor Peter Swenson and the members of The Senior Colloquium, Gabe Botelho, Josh Kalla, Gabe Levine, Mary Shi, and Joel Sircus, who provided excellent advice and criticism. To Professor David Cameron, without whom I never would have discovered my interest in European politics. To David Fayngor, who flew halfway across the world to keep me company during my summer research. To my mom for her unwavering support and my dad for his careful proofreading. And finally, to my adviser Professor Jolyon Howorth, who worked with me on this project for over a year and a half. Thank you for all your guidance and for never doubting my repeated assertions that I could translate what was in my head into a complete senior essay.

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I. Introduction

At midnight on January 1, 1973, the Union Jack was raised at the headquarters of the European Economic Community (EEC) in Brussels, marking the accession of the United Kingdom to the Common Market. In Brussels, there were festivities honoring the new member states, which also included Ireland and Denmark. One of the UK's newly chosen European Commissioners joined in the celebrations, walking in a torch-lit parade.¹ For the United Kingdom, the road to EEC accession had been fraught with adversity, as French President Charles de Gaulle had denied two previous applications for membership in 1963 and 1967. The raising of the Union Jack in Brussels should have marked a moment of triumph for Britain, but, as one headline from *The Guardian* noted, “We’re in—but without the fireworks.” In contrast to all the celebration in Brussels, the United Kingdom had a barely measurable reaction to finally achieving membership in the EEC. An opinion poll held the previous day showed that 38 percent of British people felt positively about membership in the EEC, 39 percent would rather not have joined, and 23 percent had no opinion.² What should have been a day of revelry marking a new beginning for the United Kingdom as a fully integrated partner in the EEC foreshadowed the persistence of an age-old struggle between the UK and Europe, a legacy that has continued to be a problem for Prime Ministers from Winston Churchill to David Cameron.

Britain has historically expressed an ongoing reticence with regards to the European project. Following World War II, Churchill declared, “We have our own independent task...We are with Europe but not *of* it.”³ The UK has always been a proud nation accustomed to having a position at the forefront of major world affairs but has not, as Churchill maintained, seen itself as a part of

¹ “Britain joins the EEC.” *BBC On This Day—1 January*. Web.

² McKie, David and Barker, Dennis. “We’re in - but without the fireworks.” *The Guardian*. 1 Jan 1973. Print.

³ Winston Churchill as quoted in Young, Hugo. *This Blessed Plot*. New York: MacMillan Publishers, 1998. Print. 13.

Europe. Through its imperial legacy, its ‘special relationship’ with the United States, and its avid participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the United Kingdom has achieved and maintained a prominent role in history. United States Secretary of State Dean Acheson famously once said, “Great Britain has lost an empire and not yet found a role.”⁴ For much of the twentieth century, Britain saw its global role fulfilled as the steadfast American ally in the U.S.-dominated Western world order. In the twenty-first century, as the forces of globalization and the rise of new powers have challenged the Western world order, Britain once again finds itself without a coherent role. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair believed that in order to be “a major global player,” the UK needed to define its leadership position “at the centre of Europe.”⁵ A major problem with Blair’s approach is that the UK, while constantly asserting that it needs to lead within Europe, has been perpetually reluctant to actually take an active role in the European enterprise.

In 2012, the issue of Britain’s membership in the European Union exploded in the media, becoming a hot political issue in the wake of the Eurozone crisis and the rise of Euroskepticism. Europe has suddenly come to the forefront of the mainstream political discussion in Britain, a position that it has seldom held in recent history. The issue of EU membership has divided Prime Minister David Cameron’s Conservative Party, alienated his Liberal Democrat coalition partners, and threatened to undermine the role of Britain in the EU. Consequently, Cameron has made the executive decision to renegotiate the UK’s membership terms and to call for an in/out referendum on the updated terms of EU membership that will be presented to British voters in 2017. The issue at hand is why, given the ongoing political reluctance to be a part of ‘Europe,’ the current Prime Minister has decided to call a referendum on EU membership while the majority of his predecessors sought to keep the European question on the sidelines.

⁴ Dean Acheson as quoted in Brinkley, Douglas. *Dean Acheson: The Cold War Years 1953-71*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992. Print. 176.

⁵ Tony Blair as quoted in Young, Hugo. 485.

In order to attempt to answer this question, there will be an examination of the trilateral interaction between the British political scene, media, and public opinion, factors that can scarcely be disentangled from one another. It will be argued that the primary driving force behind Prime Minister Cameron's decision to call a referendum is intra-party strife and electoral concerns, issues that have haunted many of his prime ministerial predecessors. Furthermore, it will be maintained that in addressing these political concerns Cameron has opened a Pandora's box, unleashing Euroskeptic chaos that could have far-reaching consequences for the United Kingdom. To assess Cameron's decision, it will first be necessary to place his position in historical context by examining how the European question, although rarely the main political question of the day, has been a persistent driver of intra-party conflicts. Then, there will be an examination of David Cameron's specific political situation with attention to his coalition government, potential electoral threats from the far right, and the upcoming general election in 2015. Next, the essay will address the media and public opinion factors to illustrate how the rise of Euroskepticism has been catalyzed by Cameron's actions. Finally, it will be relevant to briefly consider the implications and potential repercussions in the event that the British people decide to leave the European Union in 2017.

II. Case-by-Case: Prime Ministers and Europe

In his book *This Blessed Plot*, Hugo Young describes British sentiment toward the EU as a zero sum formula in which Prime Ministers feel as though further transfer of powers to Brussels is an uncontestable loss for the United Kingdom. Consequently, Britain does not act based on what will provide the greatest benefit to the European interest but rather prefers to use EU summits as an opportunity to forward Britain's national interest. As Young notes, no Prime Minister ever returns from an EU summit claiming that his support for a particular decision was based on what he

believed to be “best for the future of ‘Europe.’”⁶ Since the interests of the United Kingdom are evidently not synonymous with the interests of Europe, it is unsurprising that Europe is often not seen as a key issue to the British public. Prime Ministers refrain from making clear statements about Europe because they often do not want to make or break their political careers on an issue that does not strike a chord with the British people. Young illustrates that, for much of the past 50 years, Europe has not been a topic on which either of the two major parties wanted to campaign. While the Conservative Party has historically been against European integration, the Labour Party only showed mild interest in Europe as a reaction to Conservative passions.

This section will chart the complex political relationships that successive UK Prime Ministers have had with different iterations of the European project, beginning with the EEC and ending with the EU. By analyzing the examples of five Prime Ministers, the case will be made that the issue of Europe has been internally divisive for the mainstream parties. The five Prime Ministers considered are as follows: Harold Macmillan (1957-1963) who oversaw the UK’s first EEC membership application, Harold Wilson (1964-1970, 1974-1976) who oversaw the second application and held a 1975 referendum on the terms of EEC membership, Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990) who took the UK into the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM), John Major (1990-1997) who lost his premiership over Europe, and Tony Blair (1997-2007) who always talked about leading Europe but never managed to do so. While each Prime Minister has had his or her own personal reasons for shrouding Britain’s relationship with the EU in ambiguity and for shying away from further European integration, history shows that Europe is a sensitive topic that tends to create intra-party divisions, ultimately resulting in votes of no confidence for several Governments.

⁶ Young, Hugo. 488.

Harold Macmillan and the First Application for EEC Membership

In 1958 during the second year of Macmillan's premiership, the European Economic Community, with its six original member states, was fully realized. The EEC, or the Six as it came to be known in the UK, was made up of France, Belgium, Luxembourg, West Germany, and the Netherlands. Macmillan had come into office as "a European only of his time and place, which is to say a tormented and indecisive one."⁷ The European project was not wholly undesirable to Macmillan, but, much like Churchill, he did not see the need for the United Kingdom to be a part of the enterprise. Following World War II, there was a sense that "accession would be a sign of failure and of Britain's diminished status in the world."⁸ Upon realizing that the EEC was doing better than anticipated, the UK sought to create a separate bloc known as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which was made up of Austria, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The goal of EFTA was to have all of the free trade benefits of the Common Market without the homogenized policies. It was only a matter of time, however, before the British government came to realize that EFTA could not function as a counterweight to the power of the six in the EEC.⁹

After a few years, it was difficult to deny the economic power of the Six. As James Marjoribanks, an economics embassy minister noted, "The consequences for [the Six] of the United Kingdom being excluded are far less than the consequences for the United Kingdom of being shut out of Europe."¹⁰ It was not long before other government officials began to recognize the reality of Britain's economic impotence outside the EEC, particularly since the Suez Crisis of 1956 had generated tension in the UK's 'special relationship' with the United States. Furthermore, President John F. Kennedy had "called for an Atlantic partnership between the USA and the EC...and wanted

⁷ Young, Hugo. 114.

⁸ Geddes, Andrew. *Britain and the European Union*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Print. 54.

⁹ Young, Hugo. 118.

¹⁰ Ibid. 119.

Britain to be part of it.”¹¹ These factors led Macmillan to conclude that the UK had no viable options outside Europe, and he began to take steps to preclude the accession application from being met with internal political resistance, the first of which was a Cabinet reshuffle to ensure that “he had the right people in place.”¹² The reshuffle led Macmillan to appoint the pro-European Edward Heath as the Lord Privy Seal, a position in the Foreign Office that would deal with relations with the Common Market.¹³ Heath would later be appointed as the chief negotiator in the discussions with the EEC. However, Heath’s position under the Macmillan Government was merely the beginning of his pro-European endeavors, and it was the third application for membership under the Heath Government that finally led to UK accession in 1973.

For his part, Macmillan was hesitant about the European project and only submitted the application because there were no other economically advantageous routes for the United Kingdom. In the wake of the EFTA debacle, economics were considered the most important component of the UK’s accession agreement. It is worth noting that there were apparently fewer concerns regarding the potential transfer of national sovereignty during the Macmillan Government because the EU did not exist in its present supranational form.¹⁴ As an arrangement between states that were only tied together by the market, the EEC lacked the level of power possessed by the current EU, which possesses influence in a number of policy areas once reserved for national governments as a consequence of regulatory spillover. From both a geo-political and an economic perspective, Macmillan was worried about Britain’s position on the global stage and feared marginalization in Europe. In order to secure support for the negotiations, Macmillan avoided aggressively committing to accession, instead preferring to treat the application for membership with a “defensive spirit” and

¹¹ Geddes, Andrew. *Britain and the European Union*. 55.

¹² Young, Hugo. 124.

¹³ Ibid. 124.

¹⁴ Ibid. 126.

to determine if the other member states could come up with terms that were satisfactory for Britain.¹⁵

Unfortunately for Macmillan, the accession negotiations were not long-lived because, although five of the six member states were in favor of British accession, General Charles de Gaulle of France exercised his veto to prevent the UK from joining the EEC. De Gaulle envisioned Europe as a counterweight to the United States and the Soviet Union and believed that the French should lead a strong Europe without the interference of the British, whose prioritization of the UK-U.S. special relationship could undermine the European project.¹⁶ In a press conference following his veto, de Gaulle stated, “England in effect is insular, she is maritime...she pursues essentially industrial and commercial activities, and only slight agricultural ones.”¹⁷ For de Gaulle, UK’s demonstrated preferences, combined with distance from the continent, established that Britain’s economy was incompatible with those of the Six.

The unfavorable end to Britain’s application led the Prime Minister to give a broadcasted speech in which he stated, “France and her government are looking backwards. They seem to think that one nation can dominate Europe, and equally wrong, that Europe can or ought to stand alone.”¹⁸ Macmillan’s statement reflects the Churchillian worldview in which Britain is outside of Europe but can serve as an example for the continental countries. At the end of Macmillan’s premiership, however, it was Britain that stood alone, not Europe. The failure of the membership application was politically devastating for Harold Macmillan, yet Young notes that Macmillan’s position on British membership in the EEC “dictated the way every subsequent leader presented every move towards Europe” as being in the UK’s national interest without interfering with the

¹⁵ Young, Hugo. 128.

¹⁶ Geddes, Andrew. 54.

¹⁷ De Gaulle, Charles. “The Common Market.” Press Conference in Paris. 14 Jan 1963. Print.

¹⁸ Harold Macmillan as quoted in Young, Hugo. 144.

British government or lifestyle.¹⁹ Moreover, Macmillan distinguished himself as “the first in a long line of Conservative politicians whose careers were broken on the wheel of Europe,”²⁰ a legacy that continued to plague the Tories through the Thatcher and Major governments, which will be detailed further below.

Harold Wilson’s 1975 Referendum

In 1967, during Harold Wilson’s first premiership, he stated his government’s intention to submit a second application for membership and declared, “The unity of Europe is going to be forged, and geography and history and interest and sentiment alike demand that we play our part in forging it, and in working it.”²¹ Wilson’s strong statement about British membership in the EEC highlighted his enduring commitment to British participation in the European project. After Wilson lost the 1970 election to Edward Heath, he noticed his party moving increasingly to the left, seeing “Europe as a ready stick with which to beat the Government.”^{22, 23}

Wilson became acutely aware of the very real possibility that the Labour Party could be fundamentally divided on the issue of membership in the EEC. The Labour Party recognized that it could not support EEC accession under the Conservatives, but even though Labour formally stood in opposition to accession, “over sixty-nine Labour MPs, over a third of the parliamentary party, had put their support for membership before loyalty to the party.”²⁴ The actions of the rebellious MPs underscored the divisive nature of the European question and further illustrated that Wilson would have to tread carefully in order to avoid alienating either side of the party. By April 1972, Wilson

¹⁹ Young, Hugo. 129.

²⁰ Ibid. 144.

²¹ Harold Wilson as quoted in Butler, David, and Uwe W. Kitzinger. *The 1975 Referendum*. 2nd ed. London: Macmillan, 1996. Print. 6.

²² Wall, Stephen. *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*. Vol. 2. London: Routledge, 2013. Print. 414.

²³ Mullen, Andrew. *The British Left's 'Great Debate' on Europe*. New York: Continuum, 2007. Print. 97.

²⁴ Forster, Anthony. *Euroskepticism in Contemporary British Politics: Opposition to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour Parties since 1945*. London: Routledge, 2002. Print. 49.

had determined that there should be a renegotiation of the accession terms to which Heath's Conservative Government had agreed, but he did not support a referendum on British withdrawal.²⁵

Wilson was able to keep his party together by launching an attack on the Conservatives, yet despite Labour's criticisms, Britain entered the EEC in 1973 on Conservative terms. When Britain finally joined the Community, the global economy was in recession, and many countries, including the United Kingdom, were suffering from exorbitant balance of payments deficits. A poll conducted by *The Times* and ITN in June 1973, found that only 23 percent of Britons wanted to stay in the Common Market on the terms negotiated by Heath, while 41 percent believed Britain should pull out of the EEC altogether.²⁶ Heath's Conservative Government became a scapegoat for the British people who believed that Community membership was the root of their domestic problems.

By the time of the 1974 General Election, the Labour Party had in part consented to Wilson's terms and proposed a renegotiation of the terms of membership in its election manifesto. Labour claimed that the Heath Government made "a profound political mistake...to accept the terms of entry to the Common Market, and to take us in without the consent of the British people."²⁷ Labour called for a "fundamental renegotiation of the terms of entry" and asserted that the new terms would be put to the British people via a "General Election or a Consultative Referendum."²⁸ After the election resulted in a hung parliament, Wilson became Prime Minister once again and formed a minority Labour Government. However, it was difficult for Wilson to carry out the promises for renegotiation from the February manifesto because he did not have a working majority.

²⁵ Forster, Anthony. 48.

²⁶ As quoted in Shore, Peter. "Labour, Europe and the World." *The Round Table* 63.252 (1973): 425-35 Print. 430.

²⁷ Labour Election Manifesto February 1974. Print.

²⁸ Ibid.

As a consequence, the Prime Minister was forced to call another election in October 1974. The Labour Party's October 1974 manifesto boldly declared, "Only the Labour Party is committed to the right of the men and women of this country to make this unique decision."²⁹ In order to win the election, Labour emphasized how different it was from its Tory counterpart, noting, "Our genuine concern for democratic rights is in sharp contrast to the Tory attitude."³⁰ For Wilson, the manifesto claims served to delegitimize the Conservative Party in the eyes of the electorate and to allow the people to make their own decision on membership, without the Labour Party having to take a firm stance beyond renegotiation. The new manifesto placed the burden of proof for EEC membership in the hands of the British people, effectively allowing Wilson to avert further crisis within his party ranks.

Following the election on 10 October 1974, Wilson was reelected with a narrow majority, but a second general election had not eased the public's hostility towards the terms of British membership in the Community, particularly because the economic situation had not improved significantly since the Labour Government was instated.³¹ Moreover, the Labour Party was completely split "with one-third of its MPs anti-Market, one-third neutral and one-third pro-membership,"³² and the general election had done little to repair the divisions within Wilson's own Cabinet. A referendum, then, was the only logical solution to remedy Wilson's problems because no member of the parliamentary party could argue with a popular mandate for the Labour Government's renegotiated terms. The British people would be given the opportunity to vote 'Yes' or 'No' on the question 'Do you think the UK should stay in the European Community (Common Market)?' By proposing a referendum, Wilson was able to reign in the anti-Marketees, most of whom supported a referendum, firmly believing that the British people would vote 'No'.

²⁹ Labour Election Manifesto October 1974.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Butler, David, and Uwe W. Kitzinger. 2.

³² Forster, Anthony. 46.

Wilson saw an opportunity to preserve the Labour Party by forgoing an internal decision on membership in the EEC, and he was pleased that the party could defer establishing an official position in terms of the ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ campaign.³³ In addition, Labour could claim supremacy to the Conservative Party by demonstrating to the people that only the Labour Party would truly uphold democratic tenets, as stated in the February 1974 manifesto. Suddenly the debate had left the confined parliamentary sphere and entered the popular consciousness, and “the issue now had to be addressed through a plebiscite in language and arguments accessible to all.”³⁴ Instead of holding long-winded debates and private meetings on the issue, parties would have to actively campaign in order to secure the support of the British people for either a ‘Yes’ or a ‘No’ vote. When it came time to declare a formal stance on the issue, the Labour Party campaigned for a ‘Yes,’ deeming its renegotiations to be successful and maintaining the Britain’s proper place was as a member of the European Community.

The referendum campaign saw party allegiances in both the Conservative and Labour parties being challenged as those who were anti-Market came out in favor of the ‘No’ campaign while those who were pro-Market maintained the party lines. In the end, on 5 June 1975, the British people supported the referendum with seventeen million voting in favor of membership and only eight million voting against.³⁵ The Labour Party was salvaged for the time being, but Euroskepticism continued to plague both Labour and the Conservatives. A mere six years after the referendum, a group of pro-Market Labour Party members broke away, fracturing the party and contributing to the ensuing Conservative-dominated era in British politics.³⁶

³³ Forster, Anthony. 49.

³⁴ Ibid. 52.

³⁵ Ibid. 48.

³⁶ Butler, David, and Uwe W. Kitzinger. vii.

Thatcherism and the Conservative Transformation

The Conservative-led epoch began in 1979 when Margaret Thatcher took office and lasted until the landslide election of Tony Blair in 1997. For nearly 20 years, the Conservative Party was directing Britain's European policy, and it was during this period that Euroskepticism began to take root within the Conservative Party's own ranks. During the 1975 referendum campaign, Thatcher and the Conservatives had been in the 'Yes' camp, and Margaret Thatcher had even gone so far as to wear a sweater adorned with all the flags of Europe. At the time of Thatcher's election to the premiership in 1979, "the Conservatives were seen as a pro-European party."³⁷ After all, the previous Conservative Prime Minister, Edward Heath, had negotiated Britain's initial terms of entry into the EEC. However, by the end of the Thatcher Government, Euroskepticism was on the rise, gaining traction from the Thatcherite ideals of liberal markets and deregulation.

Throughout her time as Prime Minister, Thatcher claimed that she wanted Britain to remain an active part of Europe because leaving could damage the British economy and would result in the loss of countless jobs.³⁸ Once again, as during the Macmillan Government, the European question boiled down to a pure cost-benefit analysis. Europe did not become a heated political issue until the late 1980s, and the only contentious European issue during the early Thatcher years was the amount of money Britain contributed to the EC budget.³⁹ According to the government, Britain was contributing more than its fair share of money to the EC budget, and Thatcher sought to rectify the injustice. Thatcher's persistence in the EC budget arena was rewarded with breaks for the British, and she succeeded in reclaiming British money but lost a great deal of support from her European

³⁷ Geddes, Andrew. 67.

³⁸ Ibid. 67.

³⁹ Ibid. 67.

partners in the process, particularly since Britain was aware of the budget commitments when it entered the Community.⁴⁰

Thatcherism placed great emphasis on the free market and the open transfer of goods and services between nations, a goal that the Conservatives believed could come to fruition through the creation of the European single market. The Single European Act (SEA) of 1986, which called for the completion of the single market by 1992, was a step in the right direction for the British Conservatives. There was, however, a significant difference between the goals of the Thatcherites and those of their European counterparts. Thatcherites viewed the single market as “an end in itself” that would be completed through the SEA.⁴¹ In 1988, Margaret Thatcher launched the “Europe Open for Business” campaign, which promised British businesses “a single market without barriers...giving you direct and unhindered access to the purchasing power of over 300 million of the world’s wealthiest and most prosperous people.”⁴² Other member states, namely France and West Germany, viewed the SEA as “a means to an end, that end being deeper economic and political integration” and recognized the need for reform of the existing European institutions.⁴³ The diverging perspectives on SEA highlight the reason behind British resistance to European political integration—the British signed up for an economic, not a political union.

A sharp divide over Europe plagued the Thatcher Government, and Margaret Thatcher integrated Britain further into Europe while continuously “stok[ing] the fire of those who opposed this every step of the way.”⁴⁴ During her time as Prime Minister, Thatcher ended up taking Britain into the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM), which fixed the range within which European currencies could fluctuate based on the German Deutschmark. ERM was established to prevent

⁴⁰ Geddes, Andrew. 78.

⁴¹ Ibid. 70.

⁴² Thatcher, Margaret. “Speech opening Single Market Campaign.” Lancaster House, London. 18 Apr 1988. Web.

⁴³ Geddes, Andrew. 70.

⁴⁴ Young, Hugo. 306.

countries from arbitrarily devaluating their currency, a practice that could adversely affect trade and other operations in the single market. Unfortunately for Thatcher, her Cabinet was split over the ERM decision, and Chancellor of the Exchequer Nigel Lawson, Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe, and Secretary of State for Defence Michael Heseltine resigned because of the internal division over the European issue.⁴⁵ In order to manage her party, Thatcher ended up having to concede to demands to join ERM despite her own reservations about the enterprise. Furthermore, when the ERM endeavor went poorly for the British, who were just recovering from a recession, Thatcher and the Conservative Party were blamed for the high interest rates and ensuing economic problems.

The primary question raised by the Government's internal problems was how long the UK could "stand a leader whose Europe policy, founded on aggression, became totally divisive," alluding to the Conservatives' damaging intra-party division.⁴⁶ It was the issue of Europe that ultimately brought about the end of Margaret Thatcher's longstanding leadership of the Conservative Party because further political integration in Europe resulted in the Conservative Party fracturing along pro- and anti-Europe lines. As a consequence, during her last few years as Prime Minister, Thatcher was constantly struggling against further integration, trying to reign in the Euroskeptic factions in her party, and engaging in increasingly strong rhetoric concerning the repatriation of British sovereignty from Europe.⁴⁷

In October 1990, following a summit in Berlin, she gave a speech to the House of Commons in which she stated, "The President of the Commission, Mr. Delors, said at a press conference the other day that he wanted the EP [European Parliament] to be the democratic body of the Community, he wanted the Commission to be the Executive, and he wanted the Council of

⁴⁵ Geddes, Andrew. 74.

⁴⁶ Young, Hugo. 374.

⁴⁷ Geddes, Andrew. 71.

Ministers to be the Senate. No. No. No.”⁴⁸ Thatcher’s statement belies her fear that further political integration would lead to a supranational beast that would encroach on fundamental Westminster powers, threatening the power of the House of Commons. Following Thatcher’s Berlin speech, Sir Geoffrey Howe former Chancellor of the Exchequer and Foreign Secretary criticized Thatcher’s style of leadership and approach to Europe, stating, “the Prime Minister’s perceived attitude towards Europe is running increasingly serious risks for the future of our nation. It risks minimizing our influence and maximizing once again our chances of being once again shut out.”⁴⁹ Howe likened Thatcher’s handling of the ERM to a cricket game in which a team sends its “opening batsmen to the crease only for them to find, the moment the first balls are bowled, that their bats have been broken before the game by the team captain.”⁵⁰ Thus, as Thatcher came to be seen “as an electoral liability”⁵¹ the challenge to her leadership came from within her own Cabinet, with Michael Heseltine standing in opposition to her leadership. Recognizing that she could not win, Thatcher decided not to stand for the leadership contest, and when it was finally decided, John Major found himself the new bearer of the Thatcherite legacy.

John Major and the End of the Conservative Era

History has tended to view John Major as a relatively weak leader because the strength and aggressiveness of Margaret Thatcher was a tough act to follow. After the Conservative Party chose Major as the leader in 1990, it became clear that the intra-party cleavages on the question of Britain’s place in Europe were “merely forgotten as a pre-electoral act of convenience” as many Tories regarded British independence from Europe as “uncompromisable.”⁵² Unlike the Thatcher Government, the Major Government was more susceptible to dissidence within the Cabinet, and

⁴⁸ Margaret Thatcher as quoted in Geddes, Andrew. 71.

⁴⁹ Howe, Sir Geoffrey. Resignation Speech in House of Commons. 1 Nov 1990. Web.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Geddes, Andrew. 72.

⁵² Young, Hugo. 435.

those who were against Europe “remained inside, free to argue and corrode, challenge and dissent from within the portals of power.”⁵³ Consequently, Major was always trying to reign in the various factions within the Conservative Party, not only on the backbenches but also at the Cabinet level.

In 1992, only two years after the British entry into ERM, the twelve member states of the European Community met to sign the Maastricht Treaty, which ultimately led to the European Union in its current form. The Maastricht Treaty was threatening for British Euroskeptics because it established further policy integration by creating the three pillars of the EU: economics, defense, and justice affairs. Since EU treaties require the signatures of all members to go into effect, the British were able to secure some concessions. Arguably, the most important provision secured by the Major Government was ensuring that Parliament retained the right to determine whether or not Britain would participate in the final stage of European Monetary Union (EMU), the introduction of the single currency.⁵⁴ The Maastricht Treaty was signed in February 1992, shortly before Major called another election to confirm his leadership mandate with the British public.

Luckily for Major, the negotiations at Maastricht provided some relief from the deep-set Conservative fragmentation over Europe and helped Major to secure a majority in the April 1992 election. However, Andrew Geddes notes that the election campaign was marked by “a lack of debate about Britain’s place in the EU” and argues that the absence of discussion was due to a silent agreement between Conservative and Labour Party managers who recognized that both major parties were experiencing internal division over Europe.⁵⁵ The basic problem, according to Hugo Young, was that none of the British politicians considered EMU as a serious endeavor, which

⁵³ Young, Hugo. 436.

⁵⁴ Geddes, Andrew. 75.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 75.

alienated their European partners and prevented Major from fulfilling his romanticized idea of Britain being “at the heart of Europe.”⁵⁶

Even though Major won his electoral majority in 1992, his triumph was short-lived as anti-European tendencies rapidly resurfaced as the Euroskeptics criticized the two major parties for ignoring the Europe issue during the election and called for a referendum. Following the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, the Danish held a referendum, and Euroskeptics in the UK claimed that the British public deserved nothing less. Major had a small majority, which was frequently at the mercy of its Euroskeptic faction. In July 1993, Conservative Euroskeptics rebelled against their leader and “contributed to a government defeat on a Labour amendment incorporating the Social Chapter into the Maastricht Treaty,”⁵⁷ thus illustrating the dramatic rift between the pro- and anti-European factions. Due to fragmentation within his party, Major spent a significant amount of time attempting to keep his party together, which inhibited “a clear or effective policy towards European integration.”⁵⁸ The inability to manage the Tories and to form a coherent position on European issues contributed to Tony Blair’s success in the 1997 general election, which the Labour Party, now rebranded as New Labour, won in an unprecedented landslide.

New Labour in the European Union

After divisions over Europe had toppled the Thatcher Government, and the Major Government had reneged on its promise to pursue more pro-European policies, it was clear to Tony Blair that the Europe issue was contentious enough to create intra-party problems. Since Labour had been Euroskeptic during a portion of Blair’s political career, it would have been only too easy for the party to split into pro-Europe and Euroskeptic camps if Blair made an unpopular decision on EMU. In fact, the Labour Party had, as recently as the 1992 election, been split into pro-Europe

⁵⁶ Young, Hugo. 470.

⁵⁷ Geddes, Andrew. 76.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 75.

and anti-Europe camps. As Young emphasizes, “the traditional posture...remained palpably present in the consciousness of politics, an emanation the Prime Minister did not desire instantly to ignore.”⁵⁹ Even though Blair’s predecessors had taken Britain further into the European Union, the new Prime Minister could not escape a British history rife with Euroskepticism that could easily create problems for his own Government.

Tony Blair was often criticized for inconsistency because, as a young Labour politician, he followed the party line on Europe; however, when he began the New Labour movement, he asserted that he wanted to be a leader in the European Union.⁶⁰ Blair’s altered opinion of the EU is probably attributable to political posturing and the realization that the British people were tiring of the lengthy Euroskeptic-plagued Conservative regime. Blair was relatively noncommittal on the issue of Europe, preferring to advocate “watchful EMU readiness, moderate Euro-enthusiasm, [and] a worldly-wise absence of zeal on either side of the question.”⁶¹ Tony Blair’s approach stood in stark contrast to the impassioned anti-European feelings of many of those in the Conservative Party, providing an alternative for the British people without making any strong commitments on the Europe issue.

Tony Blair attempted to exploit one of the weaknesses of a divided Conservative Party, recognizing that the issue of Europe, while not politically salient to the people, can often create intra-party divisions and even result in a vote of no confidence for a Government.⁶² For this reason, even Tony Blair, who had a stable majority in the House of Commons, knew that it would be wise not to take a firm stance on Europe, which ultimately led him to preside over the autumn 1997 proceedings for the European Monetary Union without signing the agreement.⁶³

⁵⁹ Young, Hugo. 492.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 494.

⁶¹ Ibid. 511.

⁶² Ibid. 374.

⁶³ Ibid. 493.

While Blair asserted that Europe was important to Britain, he wanted the UK to have a leadership role rather than a mere partnership with the other EU countries. Tony Blair even went so far as to attempt to spread the doctrine of New Labour to the continent by preaching “the notorious Anglo-Saxon economic model the continentals were supposed to learn from” and effectively demonstrating the extent of British feelings of superiority.⁶⁴ Blair, like his predecessors, ended up alienating the European Union and many of his continental partners in his attempts to back the United States on the Iraq War, thus undermining the British leadership position in Europe that he so coveted.

While each British Prime Minister has dealt with the Europe issue in a different manner, there is a common thread of inconsistency and ambiguity on Britain’s role in Europe that has manifested in the premierships of successive British leaders. Such reticence has been driven by recognition that firmly supporting Europe often results in intra-party unrest. Prime Ministers from Macmillan to Blair and more recently, David Cameron, have used the issue of Europe as a political tool, making claims about Europe depending on public sentiment and electoral gains. EU membership and Britain’s role in Europe has, for the United Kingdom, always been an issue of marginal importance, only becoming noteworthy when Brussels encroaches on a Westminster power or encourages further integration at the expense of British national interest. David Cameron has inherited a paradoxical legacy in which British Prime Ministers have pursued a leadership role in Europe only to realize that economic benefits necessitate political spillover and further European integration generates bitter intra-party divisions. The following sections will examine how the current political situation, in keeping with the previously established pattern, has left the Prime Minister with few options, causing him to call referendum in a feeble attempt to rein in his Euroskeptic backbenchers and counter electoral threats from the other parties.

⁶⁴ Young, Hugo. 490.

III. The General Election of 2010: An Unlikely Coalition Forms

Coalition Government

On 11 May 2010, for the first time since World War II, a coalition government was formed in the United Kingdom. It came as a surprise to many that the centrist Liberal Democrats did not form a progressive coalition with the Labour Party but rather chose to sign an agreement with the right-of-center Conservative Party.⁶⁵ Although the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives had divergent policy goals, the dire economic situation in the United Kingdom facilitated a coalition agreement, in which the Government largely adopted entire policies from either the Conservative or Liberal Democrat election manifestos.⁶⁶ The UK's relationship with Europe has been a historic point of contention between the two parties, with the Lib Dems being a staunch pro-Europe party and the Conservatives largely Euroskeptic.

Nevertheless, in light of the ever-growing deficit, the two parties decided to put aside their differences over Europe and seek a solution to Britain's economic situation. In the four years that the UK Coalition has been in power under the leadership of Prime Minister David Cameron, the Eurozone crisis has escalated, making it clear that the question of Europe is connected to the issue of the United Kingdom's economy. What promised to be a divisive issue for the two coalition parties has actually become much more of an internal problem for the Conservatives, causing tension between the Prime Minister and the right-wing backbenchers that have repeatedly rebelled in votes on UK relations with Europe.⁶⁷ Cameron is currently torn between his position as leader of the Conservative Party and leader of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition. The outcome of the next election could be decided on whether or not Cameron is willing to appease the right wing in

⁶⁵ Wintour, Patrick. "Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition hopes end in recriminations." *The Guardian*. 11 May 2010. Web.

⁶⁶ The Coalition: Our Programme for Government 2010.

⁶⁷ Hazell, Robert and Yong, Ben. *The Politics of Coalition*. Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2012. Print. 110.

his own party. The Conservatives have the most to lose in the 2015 election, and pandering to the right wing of the Tory Party has potentially alienated not only the pro-Europe Liberal Democrats but also key actors in the European Union.

In order to examine the obstacles facing the coalition, it will be necessary to outline the position taken on Europe in the Conservative and Liberal Democrat general election manifestos as well as the final coalition agreement signed by the two parties. Then, it will be helpful to examine the extent to which the topic of Europe influenced negotiations between the three major parties in the days leading up to the final coalition agreement. Such an examination will facilitate a better understanding of how the escalation of the Eurozone crisis caused a reexamination of the UK-EU relationship among both political elites and the general British public, providing an opportunity for right wing Euroskeptic Tories to call for changes in the UK's policies toward the EU.

The 2010 General Election

The Conservative 2010 General Election Manifesto highlights the Party's typically Euroskeptic stance on Britain's relationship with the European Union. The manifesto emphasizes that a Conservative Government "will ensure by law that no government can hand over areas of power to the EU or join the euro without a referendum of the British people."⁶⁸ In addition, the Tories call for the repatriation of powers in the areas of "legal rights, criminal justice and social and employment legislation,"⁶⁹ in order to prevent the European Union from infringing on the lives of British citizens and potentially damaging British national interests. The Conservatives believe that the United Kingdom should not continue to transfer powers to the EU without the consent of the people and that it should only do so in situations where it serves British national interest. In fact, the Tories intended to reclaim powers from the EU and even pass a United Kingdom Sovereignty

⁶⁸ Conservative General Election Manifesto 2010. 113.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 113.

Bill to remind the EU that parliamentary sovereignty is the dominant principle in UK politics.⁷⁰ Such statements effectively amount to an assertion of the importance of British interests over those of the European Union.

Conversely, the pro-European Liberal Democrats “believe that European co-operation is the best way for Britain to be strong, safe and influential in the future.”⁷¹ In other words, British national interests are in line with European interests, a perspective that is directly opposed to the position outlined in the Conservative manifesto. Although the Liberal Democrats consider British participation in the EU to be of the utmost importance, the manifesto calls for an “in/out referendum the next time a British government signs up for fundamental change in the relationship between the UK and the EU.”⁷² The Lib Dems also maintain that while the party is confident that Britain should eventually join the euro, it should not do so unless a referendum confirms popular support of the endeavor. Consequently, though they disagreed on the extent of the change, both the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats recognized the need for democratic accountability via referendums on issues involving the UK’s relationship with the EU. The major difference between the two manifestos lies in the perception of the connection (or lack thereof) between British national interests and European interests.

Due to the divergent opinions held by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats on issues such as Europe, a coalition of the two parties seemed unlikely up to the day of the 2010 general election. After the election results came in, however, it was clear that no party had managed to secure an outright majority in the House of Commons with the Conservatives winning 307 seats, Labour winning 258, and the Liberal Democrats securing 57 seats.⁷³ In order for there to be anything other than a Conservative minority government, it was clear that the Liberal Democrats

⁷⁰ Conservative General Election Manifesto 2010. 114.

⁷¹ Liberal Democrat General Election Manifesto 2010. 66.

⁷² Ibid. 67.

⁷³ BBC Election 2010 Results.

would have to either offer a confidence and supply agreement or arrange for a coalition with Labour or the Conservatives. However, a Labour-Liberal Democrat (Lib-Lab) arrangement would be short of a majority government and would have to form a “rainbow coalition” with members of the smaller parties.⁷⁴

Negotiating a Compromise on Europe

Even though Europe was not one of the most important issues on which the parties’ election campaigns were fought, David Cameron made a speech on election day categorizing Europe as a “red line” issue and was unwilling to concede much to the Liberal Democrats during negotiations.⁷⁵ On the night of the election, the Labour Party approached the Liberal Democrats to discuss the possibility of a Lib-Lab coalition. Prime Minister Gordon Brown phoned Nick Clegg, leader of the Liberal Democrats, and was certain to emphasize that a Lib-Lab coalition would “be a pro-Europe government” with “progressive economic policy,” an offer he assumed Clegg could not refuse.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, Clegg had promised to begin negotiations with whichever party won the most seats and maintained that he needed to consult with the Conservative Party before the current Labour Government. Consequently, although the parties campaigned on domestic issues, Europe was understood to be a fundamental point of difference and thereby a potential point of weakness in Conservative and Liberal Democrat negotiations.

Europe, however, was arguably more important to the Conservatives than the Lib Dems. In his account of the negotiations between the two parties, David Laws, a member of the Liberal Democrat negotiating team and former Chief Secretary of the Treasury, emphasizes that the Lib Dems wanted to secure an opportunity for voting reform as well as objectives in four policy areas:

⁷⁴ Laws, David. *22 Days in May: The Birth of the Lib Dem-Conservative Coalition*. London: Biteback, 2010. Print. 73.

⁷⁵ David Cameron as quoted in Laws, David. 52.

⁷⁶ Gordon Brown as quoted in Laws, David. 60.

fair taxes, political reform, the pupil premium, and the green economy.⁷⁷ At the same time, Laws illustrates how high of a priority Europe was for the Conservative Party, indicating that party members such as Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, held a firm line on the possibility of further EU integration and the referendum lock.⁷⁸ The Conservatives, therefore, were unwilling to concede to the Lib Dems on Europe while the Labour Party wished to forge a pro-Europe coalition, which has led many to wonder why the Lib Dems did not form a government with Labour instead.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown was desperate to secure a deal with the Liberal Democrats even though many argued that he had lost his mandate to lead the nation.⁷⁹ The numbers to secure a parliamentary majority, however, were not in Brown's favor, and the Conservatives were willing to give the Liberal Democrats nearly everything they had asked for, including the chance for a referendum on the alternative voting system, which could greatly improve Liberal Democrat chances of seat gains in the 2015 general election. Furthermore, Nick Clegg believed that the illegitimacy of a Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition would negatively affect the markets and result in "higher interest rates and the UK being targeted...in the same way as Greece, Portugal and the other high debt countries."⁸⁰ Clegg's statement highlights the Lib Dems' commitment to solving the UK's economic problems. Both the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives supported a solution to the UK's deficit problem through further spending cuts in order to boost the British economy. Once the deal was done between the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives, the Labour Party accused the Lib Dem party leaders of having predetermined that they would like to enter a coalition with the Conservatives. Contrary to Labour's belief, Laws asserts, "[D]ecisions...were based on judgements

⁷⁷ "Conservative-Lib Dem confidence and supply agreement" in Appendix 2. Laws, David. *22 Days in May*. 294.

⁷⁸ Laws, David. 184.

⁷⁹ Henessy, Patrick. "General Election 2010: Labour pressure for Gordon Brown to quit as leader 'soon'." *The Telegraph*. 8 May 2010. Web.

⁸⁰ Nick Clegg as quoted in Laws, David. 43.

about how best to deliver on [Liberal Democrat] key policy priorities [and] how to deliver a government which could act strongly in the national interest.⁸¹” The influence of the Liberal Democrats in a Conservative-led majority government would be much more significant than in a rainbow coalition under Labour.

When the final coalition agreement was signed on 11 May 2010, Europe was one of the few policy areas in which the coalition did not choose between the Conservative and the Liberal Democrat policy. Instead, the coalition’s policy on Europe was a combination of the policies outlined in both parties’ manifestos and “led to a rejection of both further integration and of an active antagonism toward the European Union,” which Laws claims “reflects rather well the independent-minded but pragmatic position of the British people.”⁸² Although the coalition agreement acknowledged the importance of Britain’s role in the EU, it also asserted the primacy of national sovereignty. In addition, the agreement: 1. Stated that there would be no transfer of powers to the EU level and placed a referendum lock on any such changes, 2. Asserted that Britain would not join the Euro, 3. Restated the principle of parliamentary sovereignty, and 4. Maintained that British national interests would be paramount in criminal justice measures and negotiations of the EU budget.⁸³

All four of the major points outlined were almost directly from the Conservative Election Manifesto. In fact, it seems that the Liberal Democrats were merely able to mildly restrain the Conservative pledges in the coalition agreement. The two measures (not joining the Euro and monitoring the EU budget) that were present in the Lib Dem manifesto are stated in terms more similar to the language of the Conservative manifesto, further exemplifying that Europe really was a

⁸¹ Laws, David. *22 Days in May*. 263.

⁸² *Ibid.* 277.

⁸³ *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government*. 19.

“red line” issue for the Conservatives.⁸⁴ Even though Laws himself considered the coalition agreement to be full of compromises, he recognized that the section on Europe should not be “the last section which our MPs, and particularly our strongly, pro-EU peers, would read before deciding whether they wanted to support the coalition.”⁸⁵ By allowing the coalition agreement’s treatment of Europe to be closer to the Conservative perspective, negotiators unwittingly provided a justification for the Government to oppose various EU measures, which has further distanced Britain from the rest of the EU member states.

The UK Deficit and the Eurozone Crisis

During coalition negotiations, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats both recognized how important it would be to solve Britain’s deficit predicament during the 2010-2015 Parliament, and in the coalition agreement, the Government indicates that “deficit reduction, and continuing to ensure economic recovery, is the most urgent issue facing Britain.”⁸⁶ With this goal in mind, Chancellor George Osborne set out to make spending cuts in order to reduce the national deficit and prevent the UK from going down the path of Eurozone countries like Greece and Spain. Osborne claimed that the fiscal austerity measures would produce five difficult years but would end up being helpful in the long run.⁸⁷ Unfortunately for Osborne, the plans did not pan out quite as he hoped, and the past four years have shown that the British government overestimated the amount of growth the UK economy would experience, leading to a disparity between the predicted deficit and the actual one. The UK has only been able to avoid going the route of Greece because it controls its own monetary policy and currency, and the markets still have confidence in the Chancellor’s

⁸⁴ Liberal Democrat General Election Manifesto 2010. 66-67; Conservative General Election Manifesto 2010. 113-114.

⁸⁵ Laws, David. *22 Days in May*. 185.

⁸⁶ The Coalition: Our Programme for Government. 15.

⁸⁷ Warner, Jeremy. “Will George Osborne still be smiling on Wednesday?” *The Telegraph*. 3 Dec 2012. Web

balanced budget commitments.^{88,89} Since the Eurozone countries do not have the ability to control their monetary policy, they cannot devalue their currency in order to accommodate structural changes in spending.

During the current parliament, the escalation of the Eurozone crisis has caused tension between Britain and its partners in the European Union, with many member states fearing the creation of a two-tier system of member states within the Eurozone and those outside the single currency area. As the global economic crisis worsened, the UK expressed concern about how the Eurozone crisis would affect its own economy. Graeme Leach, the chief economist at the Institute of Directors, stated that continued instability in the Eurozone area would have a negative impact on the United Kingdom, and he asserted that the Chancellor must continue to attempt deficit reduction.⁹⁰ Over the course of the current parliament, the effects of the crisis have become more manifest. According to Tom Lawton the head of manufacturing at BDO, UK manufacturing exports have been negatively impacted by both “the turmoil in the Eurozone” and the effect the crisis has had on exports to emerging markets.⁹¹ Manufacturing is an important component of the UK economy, and the shockwaves from the Eurozone crisis have arguably made it difficult for the UK to solve its own issues, particularly given that the majority of UK trade is with the other European Union member states.

In addition to the British deficit predicament, recent discussions within the European Union have confirmed the right wing Tory fear that the Eurozone crisis could potentially be a threat to the City of London’s status as the uncontested financial capital of Europe. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte claims that the UK is essential to the European Union because of its “banking and financial

⁸⁸ Warner, Jeremy. “Why the IMF has got it so hopelessly wrong on the euro crisis.” *The Telegraph*. 10 Oct 2012. Web.

⁸⁹ Warner, Jeremy. “Will George Osborne still be smiling on Wednesday?”

⁹⁰ Sparkes, Matthew. “Debt crisis: as it happened—November 30, 2012.” *The Telegraph*. 30 Nov 2012. Web.

⁹¹ Tom Lawton as quoted in Wearden, Graeme. “UK manufacturing exports hit by eurozone crisis.” *The Guardian*. 2 Dec 2012. Web.

system which is indispensable to the prosperity of the EU.”⁹² The Dutch perspective, however, is different from the dominant voices in the Eurozone, which are calling for greater fiscal consolidation among the states on the euro and a resistance to London as Europe’s capital of finance. In the words of Christian Noyer, governor of the French central bank, “We’re not against some business being done in London, but the bulk of the business should be under [Eurozone] control. That’s the consequence of the choice by the UK to remain outside the euro area.”⁹³ Noyer’s statement supports fears of an emerging two-tier system with the United Kingdom firmly on the periphery of decisions on banking union and issues of finance. Reactions such as Noyer’s, combined with the ever-growing deficit, have galvanized Euroskeptic members of the Conservative Party and encouraged the continuation of a dialogue concerning the reevaluation of the UK’s place in the European Union.

The Eurozone crisis and the deficit problem have challenged the fundamental assumptions of the Coalition by subverting the beliefs that deficit reduction would be on track for the general election in 2015 and that the “divisions over Europe had been contained by the Coalition agreement.”⁹⁴ The deficit reduction strategy is expected to extend to 2017 and beyond, past the current Parliament, and the divide over Europe is growing ever more prominent.

IV. Cameron’s Divided Tories

The Impact of the Tory Euroskeptics

David Cameron has increasingly been under pressure from far right members of his party to declare the primacy of the UK’s national interests in relations with the EU, which begs the question of whether or not the Government’s approaches to European issues have been in line with the

⁹² Mark Rutte as quoted in Sparkes, Matthew. “Debt crisis: as it happened—November 30, 2012.”

⁹³ Christian Noyer as quoted in Noble, Josh and Barker, Alex. “UK’s euro trade supremacy under attack.” *Financial Times*. 2 Dec 2012. Web.

⁹⁴ Hazell, Robert and Yong, Ben. *The Politics of Coalition*. 149.

program outlined in the coalition agreement. As stated above, the wording of the coalition agreement on the subject of Europe was much closer to the plan outlined in the Conservative manifesto and has consequently given the Prime Minister a legitimate mandate to tackle the issue of Europe. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister is still attempting to balance his duties as leader of a coalition government and leader of the Conservative Party, which has engendered many rebellions on the part of Euroskeptic backbenchers. Increased pressure from his own party and the fear of a vote of no confidence in the Government have led Cameron to be more amenable to the wishes of the Euroskeptics. In examining a few EU measures, which the UK has challenged or vetoed in defense of its national interests, it will become clear that although the Government is operating within the confines of the coalition agreement, its tendency to act on behalf of Euroskepticism has alienated the Liberal Democrats.

Hazell and Yong note that, of the Conservative rebellions in the House of Commons, “one in five...was on Europe, and they were double the average size of other Conservative rebellions.”⁹⁵ Euroskeptic backbenchers from David Cameron’s own party have repeatedly rebelled against the Government in order to remind the Prime Minister that, for the Tories, Europe is indeed a “red line” issue. When the European Union Bill was debated, the debate in the House of Commons was “dominated by Euroskeptic Conservative MPs trying to strengthen the sovereignty clause and tighten the referendum lock” while the Liberal Democrats “remained largely silent, but in divisions supported the Government” because of the whip.⁹⁶ The Liberal Democrats’ complacency on the European Union Bill reflects the concessions they made to the Conservatives upon the signing of the coalition agreement. However, members of Parliament’s upper chamber are much harder to control, and in the House of Lords, there was a “strain on Lib Dem loyalties,” resulting in a defeat

⁹⁵ Hazell, Robert and Yong, Ben. 110.

⁹⁶ Ibid. 166.

of the Government on four of the amendments.⁹⁷ In the end, though, the Commons has primacy over the Lords, and the European Union Bill was passed without any problems. The easy passage of the bill is due to the degree to which it was in line with the goals outlined by the coalition agreement—it provided the referendum lock and asserted the supremacy of UK sovereignty over the European Union.

In December 2011 Cameron refused to sign an EU agreement that involved limiting the borrowing capacity of member states, an action that “was seen as heavily influenced by well coordinated Conservative Euroskeptics.”⁹⁸ During the same month, there was to be an EU summit, and Nick Clegg had once again conceded to Cameron’s desire to frame Britain’s negotiating terms with a view to the protection of British financial interests from increased regulation from Brussels. At the actual summit, the Prime Minister ended up exercising the UK’s veto to block an EU treaty designed “to advance economic and political integration and forestall future crises over the euro,” a decision that he cleared with the Chancellor but not the Deputy Prime Minister.⁹⁹ Yet again, Cameron’s decision was perceived to be a response to the largest Conservative rebellion during the current Parliament, which occurred in the weeks leading up to the summit.

Recognizing that the Liberal Democrats might be tiring of their coalition partners and hoping that a Conservative minority would be short-lived, the Labour Party approached the Lib Dems following Cameron’s veto of the treaty and urged the junior coalition partners to “break with the Conservatives over Europe.”¹⁰⁰ Labour’s advances emphasize the growing perception that Cameron’s tendency to go along with his far right Tory colleagues has increased the scope of the divide between Conservatives and Liberal Democrats over Europe.

⁹⁷ Hazell, Robert and Yong, Ben. 166.

⁹⁸ Ibid. 123.

⁹⁹ Ibid. 150.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 133.

In October 2012, Britain announced that it would opt out of 130 measures of law and policing, a decision that was consistent with the Government's stance on justice measures outlined in the coalition agreement.^{101,102} The "opt out" powers were granted to the UK government during negotiations of the Lisbon Treaty. During discussions about the opt-out, Home Secretary Theresa May assured MPs that "the government could subsequently opt back in to some of the measures" as long as the EU consented.¹⁰³ Members of the Conservative Party applauded the government's decision, but it was noted that the decision to opt out of the European Arrest Warrant might cause some tension with the Liberal Democrats, who had maintained in their manifesto that the UK should continue to participate in EU policing measures.¹⁰⁴ The idea of repatriation of powers from the EU is in line with the position of the Conservative Party, which was transposed from the Conservative General Election Manifesto to the coalition agreement with the Liberal Democrats.

At the EU summit the following week, the Prime Minister supported further fiscal integration of the Eurozone, asserting that if the Eurozone countries contributed more to the main EU budget, Britain could lessen its contribution.¹⁰⁵ Cameron's position prompted Finland's Europe minister, Alex Stubb to state, "It's almost as if it's 26 plus 1, to be very honest."¹⁰⁶ Stubb's statement reflects the attitude of the European states that see Britain as facilitating the creation of a two-tier system so that it can pursue the Conservative agenda of having a looser relationship with the European Union. Shortly after the UK's opt-out on crime and policing measures, Cameron stated his intentions of renegotiating the UK-EU relationship, but he was careful to note that the UK did "not want to abandon its biggest trading partner at a time of recession and painful public spending

¹⁰¹ Griffiths, Peter. "In political gamble, UK's Cameron takes on Brussels." *Reuters*. 15 Oct. 2012. Web.

¹⁰² "Theresa May tells MPs UK government wants EU law opt out." *BBC*. 15 Oct. 2012. Web.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*.

¹⁰⁴ "Q&A: EU crime and justice opt-out." *BBC*. 29 Oct. 2012. Web.

¹⁰⁵ Watson, Iain. "Cameron to tread tricky path at EU summit." *BBC*. 17 Oct 2012. Web.

¹⁰⁶ Baker, Luke. "Britain seems to be saying 'bye bye' to EU, says Finland." *Reuters*. 18 Oct 2012.

cuts,”¹⁰⁷ proving that the Prime Minister recognizes the delicate approach required to alter the fundamental relationship between the UK and the European Union.

A few days later, Cameron outlined plans to announce a referendum before Christmas on the United Kingdom’s status within the European Union. Cameron claims that, instead of holding an “in/out” referendum, he would like to renegotiate the role of Britain in Europe and will hold a referendum on the renegotiated relationship after the next general election in 2015.¹⁰⁸ The referendum is necessary because of the coalition’s agreement to a referendum lock, another measure that was incorporated from the Conservative Manifesto. However, Cameron’s call for a reevaluation of the role of Britain in Europe pushes the boundaries of the coalitions’ policies and has led many to maintain that he is engaging in Euroskeptic policy-making in order to secure the support of right-wing Conservative MPs.

Cameron’s Promise of a Referendum

The Prime Minister’s decision belies a significant degree of pragmatism—he understands that his party is becoming increasingly Euroskeptic and that many MPs believe “Britain should leave [the EU] if it can’t negotiate better terms.”¹⁰⁹ Members of Cameron’s cabinet have stated that threatening the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union might actually facilitate UK gains during negotiations.¹¹⁰ The Prime Minister’s assertion that he does not support a simple “in/out” referendum illustrates that he is attempting to balance his roles as leader of the coalition government and head of the Conservative Party. Even though it does not quite offer what some have dubbed a “Brexit,” Cameron’s stance had undoubtedly appealed more to Euroskeptic Tories than the pro-Europe Lib Dems. It is worth noting that in their election manifesto, the Liberal Democrats called

¹⁰⁷ Griffiths, Peter. “In political gamble, UK’s Cameron takes on Brussels.” *Reuters*. 15 Oct 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Forsyth, James. “Cameron will announce an EU referendum by Christmas.” *The Spectator*. 20 Oct 2012. Web.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Watson, Iain. “Cameron to tread tricky path at EU summit.

for an “in/out referendum the next time a British government signs up for fundamental change in the relationship between the UK and the EU.”¹¹¹ Some could argue that, consequently, Cameron’s position aligns with the view of his Liberal Democrat coalition partners; however, the Liberal Democrats are firm in their commitment to Britain remaining a positive force in the European Union. Clearly, they would propose such a referendum with the hope that the outcome would be ‘in’ rather than ‘out’.

On 23 January 2013, the Prime Minister delivered a speech at Bloomberg announcing his intention to call a referendum after the 2015 general election. In the EU speech, Cameron addressed the concerns of the Euroskeptic faction, particularly the “growing frustration that the EU is seen as something that is done to people rather than acting on their behalf.”¹¹² His enumeration of the problems facing the EU included the Eurozone crisis, difficulties sustaining European competitiveness on a global stage, and the perceived democratic deficit in European institutions. Using language similar to his predecessor Margaret Thatcher, Cameron asserted that, for the British people, the European Union “is a means to an end...not an end in itself.”¹¹³ The Prime Minister called for “fundamental, far-reaching change” and outlined five points in his “vision for a new European Union, fit for the 21st century.”¹¹⁴ However, Cameron never established what he meant by fundamental change and avoided enumerating the specific policies he would like to renegotiate with the other EU member states.

The five points for an improved European Union as detailed in Cameron’s speech include competitiveness, flexibility, an ability to repatriate powers, increased democratic accountability, and fairness for all member states, both inside and outside the Eurozone. In true Conservative fashion, the Prime Minister emphasized the importance of the single market and described it as “the core of

¹¹¹ Liberal Democrat 2010 General Election Manifesto. 67.

¹¹² Cameron, David. “EU Speech at Bloomberg.” 23 Jan 2013. Web.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

the European Union.”¹¹⁵ During his discussion of flexibility, he dismissed the notion that all European countries desire ‘ever closer union’ and asserted that the EU should not be dominated by “a one size fits all approach” to integration.¹¹⁶ Cameron then pressed on to assert that sovereign powers should not only flow one way from national governments to Brussels but rather that member states should have the ability to repatriate powers and resist policy harmonization. The Prime Minister then addressed democratic accountability and maintained that national governments represent “the true source of real democratic legitimacy and accountability in the European Union,”¹¹⁷ a statement that emphasizes the British concept of parliamentary sovereignty. The final point discussed by the Prime Minister was fairness in the face of deeper fiscal union between the Eurozone states, an issue of prime concern to the Tory Euroskeptics.

After detailing his five points, Cameron promised, “The next Conservative Manifesto in 2015 will ask for a mandate from the British people for a Conservative Government to negotiate a new settlement with our European partners in the next Parliament...And when we have negotiated that new settlement, we will give the British people a referendum with a very simple in or out choice.”¹¹⁸ Although much of the speech focused on the shortcomings of the EU and the ways in which it stands opposed to British interests, the Prime Minister chose to end his speech on a positive note by reminding the British people that he would vote to remain in the European Union following a successful renegotiation. Cameron noted that if the British people voted to leave the EU, they would still be affected by European policies but would have “lost all our remaining vetoes and our voice in those decisions.”¹¹⁹ He also emphasized that Britain’s position on the world stage is benefited by its membership in the European Union because “the United States and other friends

¹¹⁵ Cameron, David. “EU Speech at Bloomberg.”

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

around the world...want Britain to remain in the EU.”¹²⁰ Cameron’s statement illustrates that perhaps General de Gaulle was correct in his belief that Britain would prioritize its relationship with the United States over membership in the European project. In the closing sentence of the speech David Cameron appealed to British nationalism and pride, asserting, “Britain’s national interest is best served in a flexible, adaptable and open European Union and...such a European Union is best with Britain in it.”¹²¹ When the speech was finished, a referendum had been announced, but the British people still had no clear idea what would qualify as a successful renegotiation.

In March 2014, Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg gave a speech to the Centre for European Reform (CER) think tank criticizing the Prime Minister’s referendum strategy and describing it as doomed to failure. According to Clegg, the most Cameron can hope for is “a little tweak here, a little tweak there,” which will never be sufficient for the Euroskeptic members of the Conservative Party whose basic desire is to repatriate significant powers or leave the EU.¹²² While Clegg and the Liberal Democrats are certainly in favor of Britain remaining in the EU, the Deputy Prime Minister has maintained, “We need to make the case for bold reform...[b]ut not unilaterally say we want to discard all the bits we don’t like but only keep the bits we like and you lot have to accede to that, otherwise we will leave.”¹²³ Clegg recognizes that the only way Britain can secure reform in Europe is by cooperating with like-minded member states instead of threatening a British exit unless special allowances are made for the UK. There is a long history of the UK attempting to secure the European practices it perceives to be in its national interest and opt out of all the rest, thus undermining the cooperative nature of the European Union in which member states occasionally have to sacrifice a degree of national interest to support the greater project.

¹²⁰ Cameron, David. “EU Speech at Bloomberg.”

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Watt, Nicholas. “PM’s strategy on UK’s EU membership condemned to fail—Clegg.” *The Guardian*. 5 March 2014. Web.

¹²³ Nick Clegg as quoted in Ibid.

Charles Grant of the CER agrees with Clegg's assessment of the situation and emphasizes that Conservative "optimism is built on a shaky foundation: the belief that the euro crisis will force the EU to revise its treaties in time for the 2017 referendum."¹²⁴ Even though a new EU treaty would require Britain's signature and perhaps give Cameron the ability to gain some concessions, as Major did in Maastricht, there is a possibility that the other member states will decide to confine negotiations to a more limited sphere in order to preclude the need to address British demands. As of 2014, however, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel has become increasingly amenable to the idea of a new EU treaty, which could give Britain some room for renegotiation.¹²⁵

The EU Budget and National Interests

In November 2012, there was an EU summit to set the budget for the 2014 to 2020 cycle. When David Cameron was preparing for the November 2012 EU summit, he knew he needed to be unyielding in his opposition to any sort of EU budget increase. At the end of October, 53 Conservatives had joined with Labour in voting for "a real terms cut...to the EU budget."¹²⁶ Mark John Reckless, a backbench MP who represents Rochester and Strood, led the rebellion. Several senior Conservative MPs allegedly refrained from joining the rebellion but told Cameron that they would go against the government if he refused to take a stronger position at the EU summit.¹²⁷ The rebellion was politically embarrassing for Cameron and reflected an increase in mobilization of the Euroskeptic faction within the Conservative Party. Cameron, however, maintained that there merely needed to be a freeze on the EU budget, which would keep it level with the budget for the previous cycle. In a speech in early November 2012, Nick Clegg supported Cameron's decision to block the

¹²⁴ Grant, Charles. *Financial Times*. "Cameron's European gamble is a losing proposition." Web. 17 Dec 2013.

¹²⁵ Watt, Nicholas. "David Cameron's plans for the EU gets timely boost from Angela Merkel." *The Guardian*. 27 March 2014. Web.

¹²⁶ "Q&A: EU budget battle." *BBC*. 22 Nov 2012. Web.

¹²⁷ Watt, Nicholas. "David Cameron suffers Commons defeat on EU budget." *The Guardian*. 31 Oct 2012. Web.

EU budget if it was determined that the budget was not reflective of the UK's interests, further illustrating the conciliatory nature of the Lib Dems in the coalition. Even so, Clegg was critical of the Euroskeptic-induced "unilateral repatriation of powers," which he decried as "a false promise wrapped in a Union Jack."¹²⁸ Cameron threatened to use the United Kingdom's veto a second time if the leaders of other EU states voted for an increase in the budget.¹²⁹ Exercise of the veto would have immediately prevented the adoption of the budget, as unanimity is required for its passage.

The November 2012 summit ultimately led to an impasse in the budget negotiations, as the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, and other member states pressed for cuts to the budget, particularly in the area of EU administrative funds. Cameron declared that a refusal to cut back on administrative finances was "insulting to European taxpayers," particularly given that governments are implementing austerity measures at the national level in order to decrease their sovereign debts.¹³⁰ Following the unsuccessful negotiations, the Prime Minister remained steadfast in his view that "freezing the budget is not an extreme proposition" and asserted that he would "fight hard for the best deal" for Britain, a declaration worthy of applause from Conservative Euroskeptics.¹³¹ EU leaders, such as MEP Hannes Swoboda, who is president of the Socialists and Democrats, were not so supportive of Cameron's position. Swoboda believed that member states were allowing themselves to be "blackmailed by David Cameron who is permanently threatening to block progress in the EU."¹³² Prominent members of the EU see the United Kingdom as a force of inertia, preventing progress in the European Union in order to satisfy British national interests.

The final EU budget for 2014 to 2020 was not passed until February 2013, and Cameron considered the end result a win for Britain, stating, "I think the British public can be proud that we

¹²⁸ Nick Clegg as quoted in Thomson, Ainsley and Winning, Nicholas. "Clegg Attacks Cameron Over EU." *Wall Street Journal*. 1 Nov 2012. Web.

¹²⁹ "Q&A: EU budget battle." *BBC*. 22 Nov 2012. Web.

¹³⁰ Griffiths, Peter. "Cameron braced for 'mission impossible' over EU budget." *Reuters*. 20 Nov 2012. Web.

¹³¹ Sparkes, Matthew. "EU Budget: as it happened—November 23, 2012." *The Telegraph*. 23 Nov 2012. Web.

¹³² *Ibid*.

have cut the seven-year credit card limit for the EU for the first time ever.”¹³³ However, the budget controversy did not end in February, and, as recently as June 2013, Cameron went to an EU summit on youth unemployment and, to the dismay of many European partners, diverted discussion to securing the British budget rebate for agricultural subsidies.¹³⁴ Since the new budget entailed a decrease in the agricultural budget, Cameron wanted to ensure that the British rebate would not go down proportionally. The rebate discussion took up a number of hours and left some of Cameron’s colleagues, namely French President Francois Hollande, exasperated.¹³⁵

Alienating Allies

Britain’s assertion of the necessity for a renegotiation of the UK-EU relationship has led many EU leaders to wonder whether the UK is still committed to remaining a part of the European Union at all. The Centre for European Reform has creatively dubbed a potential British exit from the EU, “Brexit.” Director of the Centre for European Reform, Charles Grant, has said that the Germans have expressed an interest in achieving new Eurozone policy through the cooperation of all 28 member states but that they are unwilling to tolerate excessive British demands and would be willing to negotiate a treaty amongst a smaller group of member states if necessary.¹³⁶ Journalist Philip Stephens warns that Cameron’s actions could result in the estrangement of other EU member states, recognizing that “as they strike out in the other direction of closer union, [EU] partners are content to say goodbye.”¹³⁷ While this may seem like a pessimistic point of view, Angela Merkel of Germany has stated that the UK should remain a part of the EU because, “If you have a world of

¹³³ “Q&A: EU budget battle.” *BBC*. 8 Feb 2013. Web.

¹³⁴ Sparkes, Matthew. “EU Budget: as it happened—November 23, 2012.”

¹³⁵ Volkery, Karsten. “EU Subsidies Lost: Cameron Hijacks Summit with Rebate Spat.” *Spiegel*. 28 Jun 2013. Web.

¹³⁶ Watt, Nicholas. “PM’s strategy on UK’s EU membership condemned to fail—Clegg.”

¹³⁷ Stephens, Philip. “Brexit: Europe loses patience with London.” *Financial Times*. 18 Oct 2012. Web.

seven billion, and if you are alone in that world, I don't think that is good for the UK.”¹³⁸ Merkel has articulated an ultimatum for the UK: stay in Europe and share its benefits or leave and struggle alone. Her statement substantiates Stephens' claim and reminds the world that the EU and the Eurozone in particular has much bigger problems than the UK's potential exit.

Regardless, David Cameron refused to bend to Merkel when she visited Downing Street to discuss the EU budget in 2012,¹³⁹ effectively showing the world that the United Kingdom would not bow to the desires of the European Union at the risk of its own interests. More recently, however, Cameron has realized that solidifying a European alliance with the Germans will be key to his referendum campaign. As a consequence, in February 2014, Angela Merkel was invited to address Parliament and was given the royal treatment during her visit to London. During her address, Merkel discussed British expectations that her speech would “pave the way for a fundamental reform of the European architecture which will satisfy all kinds of alleged or actual British wishes” and noted that those who believed this were “in for a disappointment.”¹⁴⁰ Merkel's speech did, however, indicate the “potential—necessity, even—for economic reforms” even if she does not support an overhaul of the European institutions.¹⁴¹ She discussed the importance of the U.S.-EU trade agreement that the UK and Germany are currently in the process of negotiating and also called for further integration in the single market.¹⁴²

Following Merkel's visit to London, Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne and German finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble co-wrote an article entitled “Protect Britain's interests in a two-speed Europe” in the *Financial Times*. Osborne and Schäuble address the issue of fairness

¹³⁸ Jowit, Juliette, et al. “Angela Merkel warns UK will struggle alone if it turns against EU.” *The Guardian*. 7 Nov 2012. Web.

¹³⁹ O'Donnell, Svenja. “Cameron Stands Ground Over EU Budget in Talks With Merkel.” *Bloomberg Businessweek*. 7 Nov 2012. Web.

¹⁴⁰ Merkel, Angela. Speech in House of Commons. 27 Feb 2014. Web.

¹⁴¹ Nixon, Simon. “U.K. Problem Out of Merkel's Hands.” *Wall Street Journal*. 3 March 2014. Web.

¹⁴² Merkel, Angela. Speech in House of Commons. 27 Feb 2014.

that Cameron discussed in his initial referendum speech and assert that any “future EU reform and treaty change must...guarantee fairness for those EU countries inside the single market but outside the single currency.”¹⁴³ The director of the think tank Open Europe, Mats Persson, declared the cooperation between London and Berlin, “a substantial win for Osborne and Cameron” because it represents “the first time treaty chances for further Eurozone integration and safeguarding the rights of non-euro countries have been linked by senior German and UK figures.”¹⁴⁴ Although there is the potential for Cameron to achieve somewhat modest reforms through an alliance with Germany, he has been warned about focusing all his attention on coordinating with Merkel because she cannot control the actions of the all the other member states and is unlikely to sacrifice German interests for the UK. Furthermore, Merkel is not expected to stand for re-election in 2017, and attempting a renegotiation without a strong German ally could prove devastating for Cameron.¹⁴⁵

V. Euroskepticism and the Rise of UKIP

As noted above, in the United Kingdom, the issue of British membership in the European Union is typically not part of the platform on which parties fight and win elections. Campaigns for British national elections revolve around domestic issues that politicians perceive as salient to the British public, and European Parliament elections are seen as elections of a “second order.” The voter turnout for the 2009 European Parliament elections was just 35.7%, compared with the 65.1% turnout for the 2010 general election.¹⁴⁶ The average voter turnout in the rest of the European Union was 43% in 2009, and in the period from 1979-2009, the UK has consistently fallen below

¹⁴³ Osborne, George and Schäuble, Wolfgang. “Protect Britain’s interests in a two-speed Europe.” *Financial Times*. 27 March 2014. Web.

¹⁴⁴ Mats Persson as quoted in Parker, George, Barker, Alex, and Wagstyl, Stefan. “Berlin boosts David Cameron’s effort to renegotiate links with EU.” *Financial Times*. 27 March 2014. Web.

¹⁴⁵ Rawnsley, Andrew. “Not even Angela Merkel can bridge the vast Europe divide for David Cameron.” *The Guardian*. 1 March 2014. Web.

¹⁴⁶ Rogers, Simon and Burn-Murdoch John. “UK election historic turnouts since 1918.” *The Guardian*. 16 Nov 2012. Web.

the EU average.^{147, 148} Historically, European membership has been a key issue within the political elite, causing divisions within Cabinets and parties and inevitably resulting in the political demise of leaders. In light of the absence of Europe from the UK political agenda, no one expected the rise of a small single-issue party founded in 1993 and known as the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). As its name suggests, the party's primary goal is for Britain to withdraw from the European Union, an action that UKIP believes will benefit the national interest by restoring powers stolen from the United Kingdom.¹⁴⁹

Amidst conflict within the coalition and difficulties coordinating with key allies, a new threat to Conservative power is rising in the form of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), a right wing Euroskeptic party that could co-opt some of Cameron's more Euroskeptic colleagues as well as his far right voter base. In 2013, Michael Fabricant, the Conservative MP for Staffordshire expressed the possibility of the Conservatives forming a pact with UKIP during the next general election, suggesting that some Conservative MPs might stand down to give UKIP some seats in the Commons in exchange for the party's support. Fabricant's statement was not well received, and Downing Street declared, "[Fabricant] does not speak for the party on electoral strategy...There is no thinking about a pact."¹⁵⁰ In addition, Nigel Farage, UKIP's leader has publicly stated that he would be completely unwilling to cooperate with the Conservatives in the interest of obtaining parliamentary seats. A by-election at the end of November 2012 saw UKIP coming in above the Conservatives and consigning the Liberal Democrats to eighth place, causing Farage to claim that UKIP is now the third party in the British political arena.¹⁵¹ Although the Labour Party secured the

¹⁴⁷ "Turnout at the European Elections (1979-2009)." European Parliament. Web.

¹⁴⁸ See Appendix, Table 1 for voter turnout across member states from 1979-2009.

¹⁴⁹ United Kingdom Independence Party website. Web.

¹⁵⁰ Morris, Nigel. "It's War": Nigel Farage flatly rejects call from senior Tory for UKIP and Conservative EU pact at the general election." *The Independent*. 26 Nov 2012. Web.

¹⁵¹ Grice, Andrew. "Nigel Farage hails by-election breakthrough for UKIP: 'We have established ourselves as the third force in British politics.'" *The Independent*. 30 Nov 2012. Web.

seats, the results of the by-election caused alarm among Conservatives who fear that UKIP could trump the Tories in the next European Parliament elections and potentially pose a threat to Cameron's continued premiership.

Most mainstream politicians have dismissed UKIP as a single-issue party that does not pose a significant electoral threat, and in 2006 when Prime Minister David Cameron was Leader of the Opposition, he described UKIP as “a bunch of...fruit cakes and loonies and closet racists mostly.”¹⁵² Although the party's leader, Nigel Farage, a Member of European Parliament vehemently denies the allegations of racism, it is no secret that it has been difficult for his party to be taken seriously on the political stage. In recent years, however, the escalation of the Eurozone crisis has brought the issue of Europe to the forefront of British politics, particularly given the Prime Minister's commitment to a renegotiation and referendum. While it is clear that the Prime Minister's decision to call for a referendum was not caused solely by a substantial electoral threat from UKIP, recent events have made it evident that UKIP can no longer be flippantly dismissed. UKIP has become more than a protest party and represents a genuine political threat to the ambitions of the major British political parties—the Conservatives, Labour, and the Liberal Democrats.

Why Vote UKIP?

UKIP's recent rise to the British political main stage has been startling, particularly since the party has been trying to get people's attention since 1993 with limited success. When Nigel Farage held a meeting in Cornwall four years ago, only one person was in attendance, yet a meeting in the same location in April 2013 was “standing room only.”¹⁵³ Although UKIP has traditionally been focused solely on the issue of British membership in the EU, the party has begun to broaden its platform to include immigration control, opposition to gay marriage, and reform of grammar

¹⁵² Lyons, Jamie. “UKIP are closet racists, says Cameron.” *The Independent*. 4 April 2006. Web.

¹⁵³ Nelson, Fraser. “Margaret Thatcher listened to voters—now it's Nigel Farage who hears their despair.” *The Telegraph*. 11 April 2013. Web.

schools, policies that “seem to have struck a chord with disenchanted voters from the ‘big three’.”¹⁵⁴ While immigration is an issue that UKIP sees as directly connected to the question of UK membership in the EU, its other policy aims represent a general discontentment with the current state of Britain. Such preoccupations reflect UKIP’s categorization as “a party of the reactionary right,” a party that dislikes the status quo and seeks to return to a simpler age represented by the country’s past.¹⁵⁵ Therein lies UKIP’s appeal to voters—it is a party that represents an alternative to the three mainstream parties.

UKIP’s ability to appeal to disillusioned voters has led some journalists and politicians, including the former Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party, Lord Ashcroft, to argue that the threat of UKIP is about more than just European Union membership. According to polls done by Lord Ashcroft in late 2012, people are not voting for UKIP merely because of its main issue. In fact only 7% of voters who said they would consider voting for UKIP believe that British membership in the EU is the single most important issue, and “only just over a quarter” consider it one of the top three policy issues.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the question of European membership has infiltrated the psyche of the general public and helped secure electoral and political gains for the UK Independence Party. A poll conducted by Angus Reid Public Opinion in January 2013 shows that although that 63% of British respondents would say that the politicization of Europe was “a distraction from the economic crisis facing Britain,” 55% thought that the Labour Party should also commit to an in/out referendum before the next general election.¹⁵⁷ On 12 March 2014, Labour Party leader, Ed Miliband responded to these requests and announced that if Labour is chosen as the governing party in 2015, it would “legislate for a new lock...a lock that guarantees that there will

¹⁵⁴ Hunt, Alex. “How UKIP became a British political force.” *BBC News*. 1 March 2013. Web.

¹⁵⁵ Cohen, Nick. “Why David Cameron won’t confront UKIP.” *The Guardian*. 13 April 2013. Web.

¹⁵⁶ Lord Ashcroft. “The UKIP threat is not about Europe.” *Conservative Home*. 18 Dec 2012. Web.

¹⁵⁷ “Britons See EU Membership Row as Distraction from Economic Crisis.” *Angus Reid Public Opinion*. 27 January 2013. Web.

be no transfer of powers without an in/out referendum.”¹⁵⁸ Unlike Cameron, Miliband has only committed to a referendum in the event that there is a further transfer of powers to the supranational level, a move that enables him to give the British people democratic accountability without committing his party to a referendum based on an uncertain renegotiation.

In a time of economic uncertainty and party dealignment, many voters have begun to resent the traditional Westminster politicians and have seen the rise of UKIP as an opportunity to express their discontent. This has led some to dismiss UKIP as a protest party, and although Nigel Farage has publicly rejected these claims, he did concede that there are UKIP voters who would like to “stick two fingers up to the establishment.”¹⁵⁹ The three major parties have been criticized for ignoring the preferences of the voting majority and for targeting their platforms only at the voters who will ultimately decide the election, the swing voters. In order to form a majority, both the Labour and the Conservative parties have to court the “golden 4 per cent” by campaigning on issues that are of interest to these voters.¹⁶⁰ As a consequence, even if a large percentage of the general voting population is very interested in a particular issue, such as immigration, the major parties will not put it on their platform for fear of alienating the election-deciding voters. Lord Ashcroft has asserted that those who are attracted to UKIP place their shared values with the party on a higher level of importance than the party’s actual policy aims; they vote for UKIP because they believe that “the mainstream political parties...have ceased to represent the silent majority.”¹⁶¹ UKIP, as an alternative party with little hope of ever forming a majority, has thus captured and mobilized otherwise apathetic voters, arguably contributing to the party’s unexpected successes in by-elections.

¹⁵⁸ Miliband, Ed. Speech on Europe at London Business School. Full text from *The Spectator*. 12 March 2014. Web.

¹⁵⁹ Nigel Farage as quoted in Watts, Robert. “UKIP urges Brits to withdraw their money from Spanish banks.” *The Telegraph*. 23 March 2013. Web.

¹⁶⁰ Nelson, Fraser. “Margaret Thatcher listened to voters—now it’s Nigel Farage who hears their despair.”

¹⁶¹ Lord Ashcroft. “The UKIP threat is not about Europe.” *Conservative Home*. 18 Dec 2012. Web.

A Surge in Electoral Success

UKIP is a party that claims to understand what the people of Britain want. Its leader Nigel Farage rails against the preexisting party structure and laments that parties only exist to win elections, claiming that Westminster politicians all “go to the same schools, the same Oxbridge colleges...and not one of them is in politics for principle.”¹⁶² Traditionally, in true majoritarian fashion, when voters are displeased with the current Government, they express their dissatisfaction by voting for the opposition party; a portion of these voters will also cast their votes for the third party, the Liberal Democrats. The rise of the UK Independence Party marks the first time that a fourth party has become politically viable. In the past, UKIP has been dismissed as a potential force in Westminster, primarily because the first-past-the-post system, in which the candidate with the majority in each constituency is elected, makes it difficult for UKIP to secure any seats in Parliament. European elections have generally been the only electoral arena in which UKIP has been able to succeed, largely due to the elections being decided through proportional representation in which parties are allocated seats based on the percentage of the vote share they receive.

Even so, UKIP has done surprisingly well in Westminster by-elections, coming in second place in the Rotherham and Middlesbrough by-elections in November 2012 as well as the Eastleigh by-election in February 2013. In addition, UKIP managed to split the rightwing vote in the 15 November 2012 by-election in Corby, coming in at 14% of the vote share.¹⁶³ The by-election in Eastleigh was UKIP’s biggest triumph with the party winning almost 28% of the vote share, coming in a close second to the Liberal Democrat candidate who won 32% of the vote and pushing Labour and the Conservatives into third and fourth place respectively.¹⁶⁴ A comparison of the by-election with the 2010 general election results shows that UKIP likely benefited from the constituency’s

¹⁶² Nigel Farage as quoted in “UKIP ‘only Westminster alternative.’” *BBC News*. 23 March 2013. Web.

¹⁶³ “The Farage farrago.” *The Economist*. 24 Nov 2012. Print.

¹⁶⁴ “Eastleigh by-election: Lib Dems hold on despite UKIP surge.” *BBC News*. 1 March 2013. Web.

general discontent with the present Government as both the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats saw considerable drops in their vote share percentage.¹⁶⁵ While there is disagreement about whether or not UKIP will actually be able to secure Westminster seats in the 2015 general election, what emerges from the voting percentage data is a statement that the mainstream parties can no longer afford to ignore UKIP because it is relegating the two major parties to the third and fourth positions of electoral prominence. In addition, it represents a substantial threat to the Liberal Democrats' position as the British third party.

The May 2013 local council elections presented an opportunity for UKIP to distinguish itself outside of Westminster by-elections, and UKIP experienced "the biggest surge by a fourth party in England since the second world war."¹⁶⁶ UKIP gained 139 local councilors and pushed the Liberal Democrats into fourth place, a victory that Nigel Farage said "sends a shockwave...through the establishment."^{167, 168} The success of UKIP in the local elections reminded the mainstream parties that UKIP is more of a challenger than they had anticipated. Furthermore, a March 2014 poll on voting intention in the 2015 general election showed that 32% would vote for the Conservatives, 39% for Labour, 14% for UKIP, and just 10% for the Lib Dems.¹⁶⁹

The success of the UK Independence Party in European Parliament elections and Westminster by-elections does not necessarily foreshadow future successes in general elections, but it does illustrate that "UKIP is now a force to be reckoned with."¹⁷⁰ Some, like prominent Tory Lord Michael Heseltine, wish to squash the UKIP threat before it can do any more damage but believe that it will run its course as a party. Lord Heseltine compares UKIP's leader Nigel Farage to the leader of the Front National in France, Jean-Marie Le Pen and maintains, "it is very important to

¹⁶⁵ "Eastleigh by-election: Lib Dems hold on despite UKIP surge." *BBC News*. 1 March 2013.

¹⁶⁶ Watt, Nicholas. "Ukip makes huge gains in local government elections." *The Guardian*. 3 May 2013. Web.

¹⁶⁷ "As it happened: Vote 2013 results and reaction." *BBC*. 3 March 2013. Web.

¹⁶⁸ "Local elections 2013: Nigel Farage Hails 'Remarkable' Ukip Gains." *Huffington Post UK*. 3 May 2013. Web.

¹⁶⁹ YouGov/Sunday Times Survey Results. 6-7 March 2014. Web.

¹⁷⁰ Hunt, Alex. "How UKIP became a British political force."

confront these extremists.”¹⁷¹ Since UKIP has now been classified as a potential threat to the success of the mainstream parties in future elections, the Conservatives, Labour, and the Liberal Democrats have all begun to consider to what extent they will have to reshape their electoral strategies to combat the threat of UKIP. The following section will address the upcoming 2014 European elections as well as the 2015 general election and examine the shifting election strategies of the three mainstream parties.

VI. Countering UKIP: An Examination of Electoral Strategy

The Conservative Party and the Vote of the Right

Analyses of UKIP’s effect on the mainstream parties almost always focus on the Conservative Party as the party whose electoral fortunes will likely be diminished in proportion to UKIP’s successes. It is widely believed that the Prime Minister has increasingly begun to toe the Euroskeptic line in order to manage unruly backbenchers and counteract the threat from the UK Independence Party. Peter Kellner of YouGov notes that “even if UKIP just held onto its current ex-Tory voters and did not win over any more, David Cameron would be heading for a heavy defeat.”¹⁷² The Conservative Party does not currently have a majority in Westminster and is in a precarious coalition government with the Liberal Democrats. In order to continue in government and fulfill its promise on an EU membership referendum, it needs to win a majority in the 2015 general election. Poll data has led Lord Ashcroft to conclude that “half of all those who would consider voting UKIP supported the Conservatives at the last election,”¹⁷³ a reality that could prove extremely detrimental to the prospects for a Tory-dominated Parliament.

¹⁷¹ Odone, Cristina. “Michael Heseltine at 80 on Boris, UKIP and why he won’t visit Lady Thatcher.” *The Telegraph*. 5 April 2013.

¹⁷² Kellner, Peter. “UKIP supporters: less rightwing than Tory voters?” *The Guardian*. 5 March 2013. Web.

¹⁷³ Lord Ashcroft. “The UKIP threat is not about Europe.”

In addition, certain media outlets, specifically Rupert Murdoch's *Sun*, have begun to pay more attention to UKIP. Since *The Sun* supported David Cameron in the last election, it is alarming that so much of its attention has been focused on UKIP, a party that has the potential to steal Conservative votes in future elections.¹⁷⁴ As recently as April 2013, it was rumored that Nigel Farage was invited to a dinner with Murdoch and expressed UKIP's interest in allying with the Conservative Party in the 2015 general election "but only if David Cameron agrees to step down as the party leader."¹⁷⁵ Farage's comments not only reflect his distaste for the current Prime Minister but also could be problematic for Cameron in light of the backbench unrest within his own party. Interestingly enough, the recent death of Baroness Margaret Thatcher, former Prime Minister and Conservative powerhouse, has been proposed as a potential factor that has led to increased support for the UK Independence Party. Farage has capitalized on nostalgia for the Conservative golden age under Thatcher, leading some to speculate that the newfound nostalgia will "divide [the Conservative] party even more, when [Cameron] needs it the least," particularly as some of their supporters are pushed "into the arms of UKIP."¹⁷⁶

Daniel Hannan, a Conservative MEP, has urged the Tories to make an electoral pact with UKIP in the 2015 general election because he worries that UKIP will "be the reason that there is no parliamentary majority to deliver an In/Out referendum."¹⁷⁷ Hannan believes that creating a right-wing coalition similar to the one in Canada would solve the problem of UKIP by preventing the party from coopting Tory voters. Furthermore, Hannan asserts that UKIP has an ability to reach a different voter base from that of the Tories, which could be very useful in terms of an electoral

¹⁷⁴ Hoskin, Peter. "The media are taking UKIP more and more seriously—how will the Tory leadership respond?" *Conservative Home Tory Diary*. 14 April 2013. Web.

¹⁷⁵ Winnett, Robert. "Farage suggests Conservative pact at secret dinner with Murdoch." *The Telegraph*. 7 March 2013. Web.

¹⁷⁶ Rigby, Elizabeth. "Will Thatcher memories drive Tory voters to UKIP?" *Financial Times*. 10 April 2013. Web.

¹⁷⁷ Hannan, Daniel. "The Euroskeptic Right wins more than half the vote, the Europhile Left gets in with less than a third." *The Telegraph*. 1 March 2013. Web.

agreement.¹⁷⁸ Such statements further highlight UKIP's aptitude to mobilize voters who are jaded with the mainstream Westminster elite. The question of whether or not the Conservatives will need to establish an electoral pact to succeed in the 2015 general election is rooted in a deeper issue concerning the future electoral viability of the Conservative Party, especially since it was forced to form a coalition government after the 2010 general election.

Since UKIP's strong showing at the Eastleigh by-election, there have been suggestions that the Conservative Party's strategy should begin to focus on countering the UKIP threat in order to avoid splitting the right wing votes, resulting in the loss of a parliamentary majority.¹⁷⁹ In spite of all the commotion surrounding the UK Independence Party, David Cameron has publicly refused to move further to the right in order to ensure that UKIP does not steal crucial Tory votes. Shortly after the Eastleigh by-election, Cameron wrote an article for the *Sunday Telegraph* in which he stated, "[T]he battle for Britain's future will not be won in lurching to the Right, nor by some cynical attempt to calculate the middle distance between your political opponents and then planting yourself somewhere between them."¹⁸⁰ It is, however, unclear whether Cameron's public comments are merely an attempt at a strong show of leadership in order to prevent Tory backbenchers from creating more unrest in response to UKIP successes.

The Prime Minister still dismisses UKIP as a protest party and does not want to acknowledge it as a budding force that could affect Conservative strategy at the next election. At a conference in January 2013, which came a mere day after the Prime Minister's long-awaited speech on UK membership in the EU, Cameron's campaign adviser Lynton Crosby outlined the Conservative Strategy for the 2015 general election. Crosby's overarching message was that the Government should focus on establishing the best possible policy record because a successful

¹⁷⁸ Hannan, Daniel. "The Euroskeptic Right wins more than half the vote, the Europhile Left gets in with less than a third."

¹⁷⁹ Rigby, Elizabeth. "Will Thatcher memories drive Tory voters to UKIP?"

¹⁸⁰ Cameron, David. "Conservatives will battle for Britain's future." *The Telegraph*. 2 March 2013. Web.

Government track record will speak louder to voters than an electoral strategy aimed to counter other parties, further emphasizing the Conservative leadership's public refusal to answer the UKIP challenge by changing its own policies.¹⁸¹ Similarly, Lord Ashcroft claims that voters who can be won back from UKIP can be persuaded to vote for the Conservatives if David Cameron proves himself as a leader by showing that his Government is making good decisions on various policy fronts such as immigration and welfare.¹⁸²

Regardless of how Cameron and his campaign advisers are approaching UKIP, many of the Conservative backbenchers believe the UK Independence Party represents a bigger threat than the Prime Minister is willing to acknowledge and fear losing votes to UKIP in the north of England where there are marginal seats that the Tories need to secure if the party is to have any hope of securing a parliamentary majority in 2015. Nigel Farage has declared that by 2015 UKIP will be "the real opposition to Labour in the north" and maintains that the Conservative presence in the north will be close to extinct by the next general election.¹⁸³ Perhaps the Prime Minister has refused to make further concessions to his backbenchers because he thinks that his referendum pledge is an adequate response to the UKIP electoral challenge, but he should not underestimate UKIP's political potential to exacerbate rifts within his own party. As the May 2014 European elections approach, Cameron has allegedly decided to rule out the formation of a coalition even if the 2015 general election results in a hung parliament. Cameron's decision reflects an attempt to counter Euroskeptic backbenchers who plan to overthrow Cameron in the event that UKIP secures a victory in the upcoming European election.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Brogan, Benedict. "Lynton Crosby reveals 2015 strategy for Tories." *The Telegraph*. 24 Jan 2013. Web.

¹⁸² Lord Ashcroft. "The UKIP threat is not about Europe."

¹⁸³ Nigel Farage as quoted in Helm, Toby. "Cameron refuses to veer right as UKIP targets Tory seats in the north." *The Guardian*. 2 March 2013. Web.

¹⁸⁴ Watt, Nicholas. "David Cameron may rule out forming coalition after general election." *The Guardian*. 25 Feb 2014. Web.

UKIP draws much of its voter base from disaffected Conservative voters as well as voters who are disillusioned with Westminster as an institution. The gains for UKIP with respect to the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats are much less significant but do not preclude a need for the other two mainstream parties to worry about a threat from the UK Independence Party. A YouGov poll in March 2013 demonstrated that voters who support UKIP are less likely to describe themselves as right of center than their Tory counterparts (45% and 60% respectively) but that UKIP supporters are more likely to describe themselves as being in the center or left of center of the political spectrum when compared to Tories. These data have led to suggestions that the Conservatives should warn voters that if they choose UKIP over the Conservatives, there will be a very real chance that Labour leader Ed Miliband will become Prime Minister as a consequence.¹⁸⁵ Since many UKIP supporters would prefer a Tory Government under Cameron than a Labour Government under Miliband, this tactic might benefit the Conservatives electorally, particularly if the current Government can cement a positive track record before the 2015 election.

Electoral Benefits for the Labour Party?

Unlike the Conservative Party, which understands that UKIP is a threat that either needs to be publicly discredited or electorally countered, the Labour Party has given little consideration to UKIP. Labour has appeared to be unconcerned about a potential challenge from UKIP precisely because UKIP is drawing many of its voters from the Conservative voter base, which could split the right and help the Labour Party win the next general election. Since the prevailing view is that UKIP will be unable to succeed in securing many, if any, Westminster seats in the 2015 general election, it would seem that the Labour Party would merely reap the benefits of UKIP's effect on the Tories. In the November 2012 by-election in Corby, UKIP won 14% of the vote share, which helped the Labour Party to secure the seat, leading some to advocate that Labour ignore UKIP and

¹⁸⁵ Kellner, Peter. "UKIP supporters: less rightwing than Tory voters?" *The Guardian*. 5 March 2013. Web.

allow it to continue wreaking havoc on the right, particularly in contested marginal seats.^{186,187} However, it is important to note that if Ed Miliband hopes to get a majority in the next general election, he will need to win over more voters than the current 39% at which the Labour Party has been polling as of March 2014.¹⁸⁸ Both Labour and the Conservatives need to inspire some of the disinterested voters in order to secure a majority, meaning that the two major parties would need to coopt a portion of UKIP's voter base in order to succeed in 2015. In response to criticism that Labour lacks a strategy to counteract UKIP, a party staffer reported that "the way in which the party opposes UKIP varies, depending on which area of the country the battle is taking place."¹⁸⁹ For example, seats in the North are typically safe for Labour, yet it cannot win many of the seats in the South as demonstrated by the Eastleigh by-election in which it took fourth place. This arguably explains Labour's seeming lack of a reaction following the Eastleigh by-election, which stands in stark opposition to the Conservative Party's publicized reaction to UKIP.

Farage's party, however, has declared that contrary to the media's assessment UKIP is getting voters from all three parties, not just stealing Tory votes; the UKIP leader claimed that his party would be "actively targeting" Labour voters in the local elections on 2 May 2013.^{190,191} UKIP, a party discontented with the status quo and the current political elite, seeks to draw voters away from any of the three major parties because, as stated previously, it sees Westminster politicians as individuals who care deeply about their careers but little about preserving Britain and its interests. In light of UKIP's unexpected electoral successes Labour Party has begun to review how UKIP might affect its chances in the 2015 election. Although it is unlikely that UKIP will be deemed a significant electoral threat, it has been argued that "the risk of continued political embarrassment at

¹⁸⁶ "The Farage farrago."

¹⁸⁷ Ferguson, Mark. "Purple on red: Is Labour afraid of UKIP?" *Total Politics*. 18 March 2013. Web.

¹⁸⁸ YouGov/Sunday Times Survey Results. 6-7 March 2014. Web.

¹⁸⁹ Ferguson, Mark. "Purple on red: Is Labour afraid of UKIP?"

¹⁹⁰ "Local elections: Farage predicts UKIP breakthrough." *BBC News*. 12 April 2013. Web.

¹⁹¹ "UKIP 'only Westminster alternative.'" *BBC News*. 23 March 2013. Web.

the hands of [UKIP] is a distinct possibility,” making UKIP a political threat to the Labour Party.¹⁹² Therein lies the difference between UKIP’s threat to Labour and the Conservatives. For the Conservative Party, UKIP is an electoral threat, a party that can steal their voter base and jeopardize their chances in key seats. UKIP might inadvertently provide the Labour Party with an electoral advantage in some seats, but defeats by UKIP could damage the credibility of the Labour Party and undermine its ability to create a legitimate government in 2015. If UKIP garners the highest percentage of the vote share in the 2014 European elections, the Labour Party might be further discredited in the eyes of potential Labour voters, and there is a very real worry that UKIP’s mobilization of apathetic voters could threaten Labour’s prospects for success.

The Liberal Democrats and Third Party Status

The Liberal Democrats, as the reigning third party in British politics, are in a very different position than their Labour and Conservative counterparts. Although the Lib Dems are currently in the Conservative-led coalition government, they are unlikely to be a government party after the 2015 election unless the Conservatives or Labour decides to form a coalition instead of a minority government if neither is able to secure a majority. Farage has declared that UKIP is now the “third force in British politics,” and recent polls have shown UKIP with a higher percentage of the vote share than the Liberal Democrats.¹⁹³ Even so, the Liberal Democrats have been able to defend their seats in recent by-elections against the challenge from UKIP. According to Tim Farron, the president of the Liberal Democrats, the triumph in the Eastleigh by-election affirmed that the Lib Dems do “not need to fight the 2015 election on a purely defensive basis” and that there is an expectation among party strategists that there might be some Lib Dem gains at the expense of the

¹⁹² Ferguson, Mark. “Purple on red: Is Labour afraid of UKIP?” *Total Politics*. 18 March 2013. Web.

¹⁹³ “The Farage farrago.”

Conservatives if UKIP is able to split the right wing vote.¹⁹⁴ Farron stated that Lib Dem resources would be aimed at approximately 25 seats that might go to his party even if a portion of the Liberal Democrat vote is lost to the Labour Party or UKIP.¹⁹⁵ It is uncertain to what extent a positive Government record will impact the Liberal Democrats' electoral prospects, particularly because the party is considered the junior partner in the enterprise. If, however, the voters deem the Government to be a failure, it is likely that the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives alike will suffer electoral consequences.

An examination of the negotiations leading up to the coalition agreement illustrated that Europe was perceived as a divisive issue between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. Once the issue of Europe became politically entangled with the British debt, Conservative Euroskeptics were given a higher degree of legitimacy and began to push the Prime Minister to adopt Euroskeptical policies. Although the policies have been controversial, the Liberal Democrats have been largely unable to contest them because Cameron has been careful to work within the framework provided by the coalition agreement, only occasionally pushing the boundaries to appease the Euroskeptical right wing and counter the threat posed by the UK Independence Party.

The 2014 European Election and 2015 General Election

Following UKIP's strong showing in the 2013 local elections, it is unsurprising that voter intention polls for the upcoming 2014 European election place UKIP in second place at 26% of the vote share, only six percentage points behind Labour's 32%.¹⁹⁶ YouGov predicts, based on previous trends, that UKIP could surpass Labour by election day and secure a victory in the European Parliament. Furthermore, as noted above, Leader of the Opposition Ed Miliband announced that

¹⁹⁴ Wright, Oliver. "With UKIP stealing vital Tory votes, Lib Dems reassess 2015 election strategy to target marginal seats." *The Independent*. 10 March 2013. Web.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Kellner, Peter. "European Elections: UKIP Closes In On First Place." *YouGov*. Web. 16 Jan 2014.

Labour will hold a referendum on EU membership if the party is elected in 2015 but only if there is a further transfer of powers from the Westminster Parliament to Brussels.¹⁹⁷ If the Labour Party does hold a referendum, Farage and UKIP would be delighted because a referendum ensures that UKIP can mount a full-fledged campaign urging the British public to vote against membership in the EU. In an October 2013 speech, Nick Clegg asserted, “We are no longer asking if Britain will have a referendum on continued membership, we are asking when Britain will have a referendum on continued membership.”¹⁹⁸ Clegg also highlighted the reality that the European elections and 2015 general election are likely to be fought on the “bigger question of ‘in versus out’.”¹⁹⁹

Regardless of whether or not UKIP is regarded as a mainstream political party in the United Kingdom, its presence on the British political stage highlights a general dissatisfaction with the contemporary state of Britain and its relationship with Europe. UKIP will probably win the European elections in May 2014 but is unlikely to excel in Westminster elections unless there is a much greater shift in British public opinion. The party’s electoral successes in by-elections and local elections are symptomatic of a push against the political establishment, not necessarily a surge in positive feelings toward the UK Independence Party.

The Conservatives might have their vote share split by UKIP, the Labour Party might be unable to appeal to disaffected voters, and the Liberal Democrats might win or lose some seats. The latest projections have indicated that Labour will likely garner the most votes in the 2015 election but that it might not secure enough to achieve a majority. At the end of the day, however, if the Conservative Party wins the next general election and holds its in/out referendum on EU membership or if the Labour Party forms a government and decides not to hold a referendum, UKIP’s political niche will have disappeared. UKIP has tried to broaden its image, has attempted to

¹⁹⁷ Brinded, Lianna. “Labour Follows Tories with EU Referendum Pledge.” *International Business Times*. 26 Feb 2014. Web.

¹⁹⁸ Clegg, Nick. “In Europe for the National Interest.” 8 Oct 2013. Web.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

promise the British people a return to the past, but in the end, it is still an anti-establishment, anti-Europe single-issue party with few positive policy goals.

VII. Fueling Euroskepticism: Rupert Murdoch and the British Tabloid Press

Political parties are not the only drivers of Euroskepticism in the United Kingdom; much of the widely-read British press has recently expressed a somewhat Euroskeptic bias. The British press, much like its counterparts in other Western nations, can be divided into two categories: tabloids and “quality” or broadsheet publications. In Britain, there is a long history of publications having clear affiliations with certain political parties, and both tabloids and quality print outlets typically endorse parties and prime ministerial candidates during general elections. The close relationship between the press and political parties has led to allegations that, in order to secure their political agendas and careers, Britain’s political elites engage in backroom deals and make concessions to prominent media tycoons. Such accusations were especially salient during the premiership of Tony Blair, who allegedly made agreements with Rupert Murdoch regarding New Labour’s European policy.²⁰⁰ This section will examine how a powerful British tabloid press has been an important driving factor behind the rampant Euroskepticism that has led David Cameron to call for a referendum in 2017. To this end, it will be necessary to assess the influence of the British press on the policy of successive governments as well as the extent to which a Euroskeptic press has sensationalized “Europe” and helped create a climate in which there is widespread popular support for an in/out referendum.

The power of the press in the United Kingdom cannot be underestimated, especially because the political parties depend on endorsements from the popular press to sway undecided voters in elections. During the 2010 general election, which resulted in the Cameron Government, 11 major

²⁰⁰ Daddow, Oliver. "The UK Media and 'Europe': From Permissive Consensus to Destructive Dissent." *International Affairs* 88.6 (2012): 1219-236. Web. 1229.

publications, including the *Sun* and the *Daily Mail*, supported the Tory Party, while three declared support for the Liberal Democrats, and only one (the *Daily Mirror*) retained an allegiance to Gordon Brown's Labour Party.²⁰¹ Scholars and politicians alike have noted that Rupert Murdoch, owner of the *Sun* and the *Times*, is the only man who has not lost a general election as the *Sun* has correctly backed the winning party of the general election since 1979.²⁰² Murdoch's success in predicting, and arguably influencing, the outcomes of general elections is particularly noteworthy because the *Sun* is the most widely circulated tabloid in Britain, with an average circulation of 2,268,455 copies from March 2013-August 2013.²⁰³ The second and third most widely circulated publications are also tabloids, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror* respectively.²⁰⁴ Judging by simple circulation numbers, the tabloid press is very pervasive in the UK, and scholars have noted that the British tabloids in particular tend toward Euroskepticism.^{205,206}

Since millions of people across the nation consume tabloid newspapers, it is unsurprising that the Euroskeptic attitudes of the tabloids and right-wing press have exacerbated the British public's attitude towards the UK's continued membership in the European Union. In *Insulting the public?: The British Press and the European Union*, Peter J. Anderson and Anthony Weymouth note, "due to the ownership, and the dominance of the right in this media sector, Eurosceptic voices are in the majority."²⁰⁷ As a result, the Euroskeptic press largely frames and directs the media's conversation with the public with regards to the European Union. In November 2010, the *Daily Express* went so far as to declare its intention to lead a campaign to get Britain out of the European Union and

²⁰¹ Willis, Amy. "General Election 2010: who are the newspapers backing?" *The Telegraph*. 2 May 2010. Web.

²⁰² Newspaper support in UK general elections." *The Guardian*. 4 May 2010. Web

²⁰³ Information from the Audit Bureau of Circulation as reported by *The Guardian*. "ABCs: National daily newspaper circulation August 2013." 6 September 2013. Web.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Grant, Charles. "Why is Britain Euroskeptic?" *Centre for European Reform*. Dec. 2008. Web.

²⁰⁶ Daddow, Oliver.

²⁰⁷ Anderson, Peter J. and Weymouth, Anthony. *Insulting the public?: The British Press and the European Union*. New York: Longman, 1999. Print. 61.

created a petition that online readers could sign. The petition calls for “the Government to arrange for an orderly withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU either by means of an enabling referendum or directly so that the British people are once again placed in charge of their own political destiny.”²⁰⁸

While other publications have not yet openly declared support for a “No” campaign during the 2017 referendum, they are certainly not pro-Europe by any stretch of the imagination. Although many broadsheet publications and magazines like *The Economist* tend to take more neutral stances on Europe, “in terms of readership numbers and therefore influence over the terms of the debate they cannot compete with the top-selling daily newspapers.”²⁰⁹ Tabloid papers are able to promote Euroskepticism because of their large readership figures and are therefore at least partially responsible for the current political climate in which the Prime Minister has called a referendum to keep Euroskeptics and rebellious party members at bay.

Charles Grant, director of the Centre for European Reform, notes that not only are three-quarters of the major newspapers in circulation Euroskeptic, but that even serious papers like “the *Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*...almost never print an opinion piece that is supportive of the EU.”²¹⁰ Since the media in Britain is not heavily regulated, and the regulation that does exist is voluntary, reporters essentially have free license to make up stories about threats from Brussels and the European super-state.²¹¹ The Euroskeptic biases of the British press have led members of the European Commission to feel that certain British newspapers, most notably tabloids, “specialize in distortion, representing only the worst aspects of the news concerning the Union.”²¹² Following the 2012 Leveson Inquiry into media ethics, new regulation legislation was introduced, but it has been

²⁰⁸ “Get Britain Out of Europe.” *The Daily Express*. Web.

²⁰⁹ Daddow, Oliver. 1226.

²¹⁰ Grant, Charles. 3.

²¹¹ Ibid. 4.

²¹² Anderson, Peter J. and Weymouth, Anthony. 23.

met with resistance by the media industry, which claims that further regulation would infringe on freedom of the press.

“The Murdoch Effect”

One man in particular runs the British tabloid press show. As noted above, Rupert Murdoch has backed the winning party in every election, and it is rumored that he has done so in exchange for policies that protect the interests of his News Corporation. Murdoch sees the European Union as antithetical to the interests of the media industry and his business. The press, unlike other British industries, does not have the benefit of expanding into the European market because newspapers are often constrained to a national audience due to language barriers. Nevertheless, the Murdoch and the British press barons fear the implications of European integration, especially the potential for “tighter state regulation” at a European level.²¹³ Consequently, Murdoch has a vested interest in encouraging the rampant Euroskepticism in the British press and has exercised his substantial clout to ensure that British governments since the Thatcher era have maintained the distance between Britain and Europe.

Prior to the 1980s, the British press was not especially concerned with Europe and mostly took its cues from the politicians who had an interest in securing Britain’s position in Europe. During the 1975 referendum campaign on UK membership in the European Economic Community, all the major parties were in favor of a “Yes” vote, and the media reflected the dominant view, leaving the “No” camp feeling marginalized.²¹⁴ With the rise of Thatcherism and the free market ideals of the 1980s, there was a marked shift toward suspicion of Brussels and the European project. The combination of Thatcherism and what Oliver Daddow terms the “Murdoch effect” resulted in a resurgence of British nationalism, which was accompanied by widespread

²¹³ Horrie, Chris. “Why Fleet Street Fears Europe.” *BBC News*. 3 Jan 2002. Web.

²¹⁴ Daddow, Oliver. 1223.

Euroskepticism. By sensationalizing Europe and raising the alarm about Brussels' alleged infringement on British sovereignty, the tabloid press has "worked synergistically with politicians to articulate a workable language of Euroskepticism that has taken hold of the popular imagination."²¹⁵ The portrayal of Europe in the press, combined with political scapegoating of Brussels, has led to the British public's shift toward Euroskepticism since the 1980s.²¹⁶

In order to understand the rise and prevalence of Euroskepticism in the present day, it is crucial to identify the connections between politicians and leading tabloid press owners. There is evidence that Murdoch has colluded with political actors in order to ensure that he succeeds in his Euroskeptic objectives. During the recent Leveson Inquiry into media ethics, former Prime Minister John Major provided testimony that Murdoch requested that the governing Conservative Party reevaluate its policy with regards to Europe or else Murdoch would reevaluate his publications' support for the Conservatives.²¹⁷ During the initial years of New Labour, it was purported that Tony Blair had made a "Faustian pact" with Rupert Murdoch in exchange for the support of the *Sun*.²¹⁸ The pact allegedly required Blair to clear his policies regarding European affairs with Murdoch before taking action. While it is true that the *Sun* shifted its support to New Labour during the 1997 general election, Tony Blair and other prominent Labour politicians have denied that Blair made a pact with Murdoch.²¹⁹

In recent years, Rupert Murdoch has continued his relationship with the UK's top politicians, and during his cross-examination at the Leveson Inquiry, he stated that he had met with David Cameron on seven different occasions following Cameron's election as Prime Minister.²²⁰

²¹⁵ Daddow, Oliver. 1222.

²¹⁶ Grant, Charles. 5.

²¹⁷ Sir John Major. Testimony to Leveson Inquiry. 12 June 2012. Web. 31.

²¹⁸ Daddow, Oliver. 1229.

²¹⁹ Hawkins, Ross. "Leveson Inquiry: 'No pact with Murdoch'—Mandelson." *BBC News*. 21 May 2102. Web.

²²⁰ Mason, Rowena. "David Cameron's five secret meetings with Rupert Murdoch." *The Telegraph*. 25 Apr 2012. Web.

Cameron, however, maintained that he had only met with Murdoch twice, which led people to speculate that, much like his predecessors, David Cameron was making secret deals with Murdoch. Rupert Murdoch has continued to make attempts to further his Euroskeptic agenda and recently invited Nigel Farage, Member of European Parliament and leader of the right-wing Euroskeptic United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), over for dinner at his London home.²²¹ Murdoch's dinner with Farage has led to speculation that the newspaper tycoon's actions are meant to add pressure to the Prime Minister in order to force him to take a hard line on the European Union.²²² Cameron's Conservative party stands to suffer the biggest loss of voters to UKIP in the 2015 election, and Euroskepticism poses the largest threat to unity within the Tory Party.

Murdoch and the tabloid press have done their part to ensure that Europe is sensationalized and demonized in many widely circulated British papers. The British politicians have been, either willingly or inadvertently, complicit in the media's Euroskeptic agenda. It is challenging to discern where politics ends and the press begins and vice versa. Since the 1980s and the rise of the Murdoch empire, politicians have been led to understand that securing the backing of the papers is an important electoral strategy and that "serious and sustained public discussion of European affairs [is] dangerous to their personal careers and party political fortunes."²²³ As the European Union has expanded and pursued further integration, the media and politicians have engaged in a collaborative effort to bring Euroskepticism to the forefront of the public consciousness. Events like the Eurozone crisis have provided opportunities for politicians and press outlets alike to fuel British nationalism and Euroskepticism.

²²¹ Osborn, Andrew. "Murdoch dines with British anti-EU leader, critics cry foul." *Reuters*. 8 Mar 2013. Web.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Daddow, Oliver. 1236.

The Public and the Press

The media and its dealings with political actors have contributed to popular discontent with the European Union, and the press has helped determine the ways in which people discuss and understand the EU. Press framing of Brussels and Europe is especially important in the United Kingdom because the population's "knowledge of the EU political system is the lowest of all member states."²²⁴ The UK Electoral Commission, which is an independent body that monitors elections and referendums, suggested in October 2013 that the referendum question be changed from "Do you think that the United Kingdom should be a member of the European Union?" to "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?"²²⁵ The Electoral Commission stated that the latter question would be more neutral and would resolve the potential issue of British voters who do not know that the UK is already a member of the EU.

Certainly, it is difficult to assess the precise extent to which the media is likely to influence the public's perception of the 2017 referendum. What is evident, however, is that strong political campaigns and high levels of media attention have influenced previous referendum outcomes. The 1975 referendum involved a wholehearted "Yes" campaign on the part of the political parties and the newspapers. Sean Carey and Jonathan Burton conducted a study examining the print media and attitudes toward European integration during the 2001 general election and discovered that media has a noticeable but small effect on public opinion. Although Carey and Burton note that party affiliation tends to have a stronger influence than the media on formation of public opinion, "when individuals receive reinforcing cueing information from both parties and the media, these effects are

²²⁴ Daddow, Oliver. 1221.

²²⁵ "Quit the EU? Some voters don't know Britain is already a member, warns watchdog." *The Guardian*. 29 October 2013. Web.

stronger still.”²²⁶ The study by Carey and Burton, however, did not take into account the British public’s lack of knowledge about the EU, a factor that makes public opinion more susceptible to the Euroskeptic depictions in the media. More recently, studies have examined the 2011 referendum on the electoral system in order to illustrate the impact of media coverage on referendum campaigns and voting behavior. Scholars have argued that media influenced the way in which the public understood a topic they knew very little about during the 2011 referendum, which gave the public the option to maintain the “first past the post” system or to switch to an alternative voting electoral system.²²⁷ In the midst of the referendum campaign, “political learning took place based on leadership cues and media coverage.”²²⁸

Benjamin Hawkins maintains that since “the media is citizens’ principal source of information on EU affairs,” public opinion is strongly shaped by how newspapers, particularly the right-wing press, portray the European Union.²²⁹ Furthermore, the Euroskeptic press capitalizes on pervasive feelings of nationalism as well as the sharp distinctions that British citizens draw between British people and “Europeans.”²³⁰ Based on the apparent lack of knowledge and high level of circulated misinformation regarding the UK’s relationship with Europe, it is probable that the politicians and media will once again have the opportunity to shape the vote during the 2017 referendum.

²²⁶ Carey, Sean and Burton, Jonathan. “Research Note: The Influence of the Press in Shaping Public Opinion towards the European Union in Britain.” *Political Studies* 52.3 (2004): 623-40. Print. 624.

²²⁷ Vowles, Jack. “Campaign Claims, Partisan Cues, and Media Effects in the 2011 British Electoral System Referendum.” *Electoral Studies* 32 (2013): 253-64. Web.

²²⁸ Ibid. 254.

²²⁹ Hawkins, Benjamin. “Nation Separation and Threat: An Analysis of British Media Discourses on the European Union Treaty Reform Process.” *Journal of Common Market Studies*. 50.4 (2012): 561-77. Print. 562.

²³⁰ Ibid. 574.

VIII. The Power of the British Voter

British, Not European

The interaction between the press and public opinion creates a complex feedback cycle that makes it difficult to isolate cause and effect. Clearly, the British press has a demonstrated interest in avoiding the regulation of the media at a European level, but it is also important to note that Euroskepticism sells papers and is appealing to the British public. The very existence and success of UKIP is a testament to the pervasiveness of Euroskepticism and xenophobia within the British political system. One major problem is that the British public is unfamiliar with the European Union outside of its portrayal in the Euroskeptic press. Anderson and Weymouth argue that the Euroskeptic media insults the public by presuming that it cannot understand EU issues and does not care. Moreover, they claim that this contributes to an environment in which “the public is not given information of sufficient quality upon which to base opinions.”²³¹ The media is largely Euroskeptic, and the political parties are split, proposing in/out referendums on different terms, with both Labour and the Tories avoiding a firm commitment to ‘in’ or ‘out’. As a consequence, the British public is uncertain about the European Union and what membership entails and provides. The perpetual disconnect between Britain and Europe, bolstered by the two major parties, has led British citizens to refuse to be identified as European.

Each year, the European Commission’s Directorate General of Communication conducts a Eurobarometer public opinion survey that asks the citizens of the 28 EU member states a variety of questions concerning their relationship with their home country and the European Union. In the Autumn 2013 report on “European Citizenship”, UK respondents consistently demonstrated a lack of attachment to the European Union and resisted classification as “European.” When asked how attached they felt to the European Union, only 29 percent of British citizens surveyed felt

²³¹ Anderson, Peter J. and Weymouth, Anthony. 185.

“attached,” a figure that is much lower than the 46 percent EU average and that places the UK among the member states with the lowest percentages, along with Greece and Cyprus.²³² Only 42 percent of UK respondents see themselves as EU citizens, while a majority (56 percent) does not. Among the 28 member states, the UK has the lowest percentage of people who identify as EU citizens, 14 percentage points lower than the EU average of 56 percent.²³³ Furthermore, 63 percent claimed that they only identified themselves as British, making the UK the country with the highest percentage of people who only identify with their home nationality. At 29 percent, the percentage of people who see themselves as both British and European is one of the lowest in the European Union.²³⁴

Polls conducted in the United Kingdom itself have produced similar results. In conjunction with a quantitative poll of over 20,000 people, Lord Ashcroft held a conference of 80 members of the British public with differing views on Britain’s relationship with the European Union and a panel of experts. During the daylong conference, Lord Ashcroft compiled the responses of the 80 British citizens for qualitative analysis. One of the attendees noted, “I think of myself as English and all those people on the continent who speak different languages—they’re Europeans.”²³⁵ The statement not only reflects the sentiments of the public but also the longstanding tradition of differentiating between “British” and “European” identities.

A refusal to be identified as European has led to a lack of interest in EU membership, and many British people neither know nor care about their rights as EU citizens. The Autumn 2013 Eurobarometer poll results showed that only 34 percent of UK respondents reported knowledge of

²³² European Commission Directorate General of Communications. “European Citizenship.” Eurobarometer Report. Autumn 2013. Print. 11.

²³³ Ibid. 30.

²³⁴ Ibid. 36.

²³⁵ Lord Ashcroft. “Europe on Trial: Public opinion and Britain’s relationship with the EU.” Lord Ashcroft Polls. March 2014. Print. 19.

their rights as EU citizens, while 65 percent did not.²³⁶ Perhaps more striking is the fact that less than half of those surveyed (48 percent) claimed that they wanted to know more about their rights as EU citizens, while 52 percent said they did not care to know more.²³⁷ In an assessment of the level of knowledge of EU institutions across member states, the Eurobarometer found that only 44 percent of UK respondents profess to know how the EU works, which is 6 percentage points lower than the EU average of 50 percent.²³⁸ To further underscore the lack of knowledge about the EU, only 45 percent of British people knew that there were 28 member states in the EU, the lowest percentage of all the member states and well below the EU average of 62 percent.²³⁹ All the data illustrates a lack of knowledge regarding the European Union and a general unwillingness to learn more about the EU and its institutions.

Feelings of national separation, promoted by the media and political parties, have combined with disinterest to fuel widespread distrust of the EU and its institutions. When compared to other member states, people in the UK are least likely to trust the European Parliament, with only 20 percent saying they “tend to trust” the EP. Additionally, 60 percent claimed that they “tend not to trust” the Parliament, and 20 percent said they did not know.²⁴⁰ Similarly, the British public expressed the lowest percentage of people (18 percent) who “tend to trust” the European Commission.²⁴¹ Rather unsurprisingly, when asked about the EU as a whole, only 19 percent of UK respondents answered that they trust the EU, with 67 percent stating that they “tend not to trust” it.²⁴² In fact, the United Kingdom is one of only two countries, along with Cyprus, in which “a

²³⁶ European Commission. “European Citizenship.” 46.

²³⁷ Ibid. 47.

²³⁸ European Commission Directorate General of Communications. “Public Opinion in the European Union.” Eurobarometer Report. Autumn 2013. Print. 95.

²³⁹ Ibid. 97.

²⁴⁰ Ibid. 71.

²⁴¹ Ibid. 73.

²⁴² Ibid. 76.

majority of respondents consider that their country could better face the future outside the EU.”²⁴³ Lord Ashcroft’s March 2014 poll data illustrates the depth of negativity toward the EU. Only four nations, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and North Korea, were ranked below the EU in terms of favorability.²⁴⁴

Nevertheless, widespread mistrust and dislike of the European Union does not necessarily indicate that the public is demanding a referendum. Quite the opposite, the data demonstrates the extent to which British people are apathetic about the EU. Europe was not on the public’s agenda until cues from the politicians and the media indicated that EU membership was an important issue. Lord Ashcroft notes that even amongst those voters who most strongly oppose EU membership “only a third put Europe among the most crucial issues facing the country, and only a quarter think it important to them and their families.”²⁴⁵ Overall, only 19 percent of voters think that “defending Britain’s interests in Europe” should be one of the government’s top three priorities. Voters who support the Conservatives and UKIP are more likely to identify this as a priority (25 percent and 33 percent, respectively).²⁴⁶ As noted above, the predominant feeling on the part of the public is uncertainty. A little over half of those polled believed that Labour and the Lib Dems want Britain to remain in the EU, while over 30 percent said they did not know the parties’ positions. Forty-one percent thought the Conservatives would like to stay in the EU, 30 percent thought they would like to leave, and another 30 percent said they did not know what the Conservatives would like to do.²⁴⁷ The public’s inability to fully understand the positions of the various parties serves to emphasize the extent to which Cameron’s referendum decision has been dictated by political strategy and party management rather than shifts in popular opinion.

²⁴³ European Commission. “Public Opinion in the European Union.” 68.

²⁴⁴ Lord Ashcroft. “Europe on Trial: Public opinion and Britain’s relationship with the EU.” 46.

²⁴⁵ Ibid. 5.

²⁴⁶ Ibid. 8.

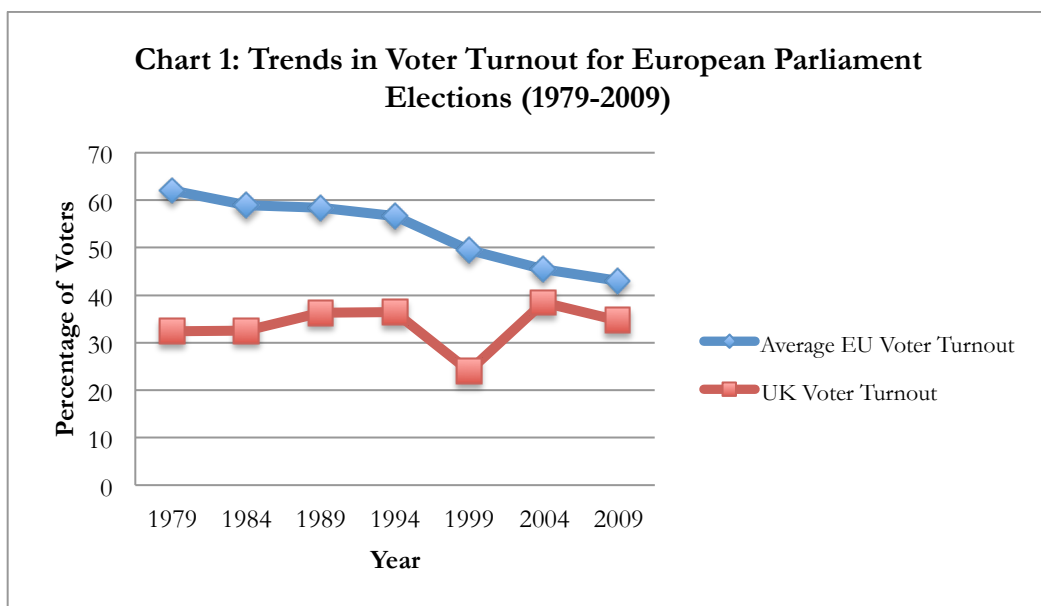
²⁴⁷ Ibid. 28.

Graphical Analysis of Public Opinion Polls

Due to the influence of Euroskeptics, Europe is often seen as an aggressive super-state that commandeers the powers of national parliaments, and as a consequence of a perceived democratic deficit, most British people cannot be bothered to turn up for European elections. An Ipsos MORI poll for the British Future think tank asked British people to rank events in 2014, such as the World Cup, the Commonwealth Games, the announcement of the budget, and the European elections, in order of importance. Only 11 percent of those surveyed said that the European elections mattered to them personally, making them the lowest ranked event in 2014, far behind the UK budget announcement and the World Cup.²⁴⁸ The poll report also noted that most UKIP supporters believe that casting their vote for UKIP in the European elections provides them an outlet to express discontent with the other parties.²⁴⁹ European elections are, for the most part, seen as an opportunity to convey satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the current British government, and the actual outcome of the election tends to be less of a concern to people. Chart 1 uses data from the European Parliament and illustrates that voter turnout in the UK has been consistently lower than the EU average in the period between 1979 and 2009.

²⁴⁸ Ipsos MORI for British Future. "State of the Nation 2014: The year of identity." Web. 12.

²⁴⁹ Ibid. 22.



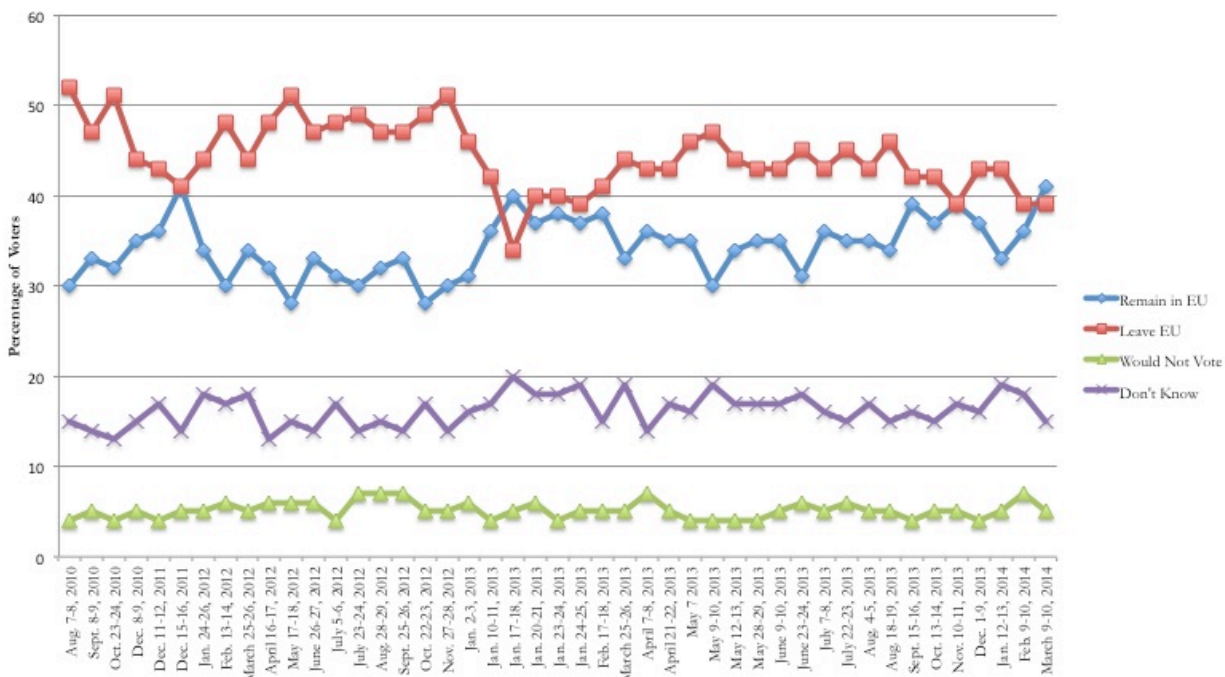
YouGov, one of the leading polling agencies in the UK has been asking voters, “If there was a referendum on Britain’s membership of the European Union, how would you vote?” The January 2014 poll illustrates the extent to which the British public is split over Europe, as 33 percent of voters would opt to remain in the EU, 43 percent would vote in favor of leaving, 5 percent would not vote, and 19 percent claimed not to have an opinion.²⁵⁰ In August 2010, a few months after the general election and the formation of the coalition government, 30 percent of voters said they would vote to remain in the EU, 52 percent would leave, 4 percent would not vote, and 15 percent did not know what they would do.²⁵¹ Chart 2 below illustrates the percentage of voters who would, in the event of a referendum, vote to remain in the EU, leave the EU, would not vote, and don’t know how they would vote.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ YouGov Table. “EU Referendum.” Web. 1.

²⁵¹ YouGov Table. “EU Referendum.” 2.

²⁵² Data from YouGov Polls conducted at various dates between Aug. 7-8, 2010 and March 9-10, 2014.

Chart 2: YouGov Poll
If there was a referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union, how would you vote?



The graph above details that the percentage of voters who would choose to leave the EU has decreased 13 percent, from 52 percent to 39 percent, between August 2010 and March 2014, while the percentage who would vote to remain in the EU has increased from 30 percent to 41 percent. In fact, the YouGov poll on March 2014 represented the first time since the Prime Minister's January 2013 EU referendum speech that more people have voted in favor of remaining in the EU than voted in favor of leaving. The polls taken in the days after Cameron's speech do not reflect any substantial changes in the percentages of voters who would vote to remain in the EU and leave the EU. Note that the green and purple lines, "Would Not Vote" and "Don't Know" respectively do not fluctuate much when charted over time, which seems to illustrate that perhaps the media attention and political discourse are not having quite the desired effect on the undecided and ambivalent voters. Furthermore, the relative stability of the percentages in all four categories seems to indicate that the Prime Minister's actions are not primarily a reaction to significant changes in public opinion. It is also worth noting that the March 2014 poll took place in the midst of the

apparently increasing willingness of Chancellor Merkel and the German government to consider British interests in the event of a new EU treaty.

A December 2013 poll for *The Sun* asked voters how they would vote if David Cameron's renegotiation attempts had one of three outcomes: no renegotiation, a moderate renegotiation, or a major renegotiation. If Cameron fails in his renegotiation and does not repatriate any powers from Brussels, 45 percent of respondents would vote to leave and 32 percent would vote to stay in the EU.²⁵³ If Cameron were able to secure a moderate renegotiation, defined as "guarantees over some key issues but not in any major policy areas," 39 percent would vote 'in' while 38 percent would vote 'out'.²⁵⁴ In the event that Cameron managed a major renegotiation, "with substantial changes to the rules Britain has to follow and British opt-out from EU rules in several policy areas," voters would remain in the EU with a vote of 52 percent to 23 percent.²⁵⁵

Even though it appears that the British public is gradually coming to realize that staying in the EU would be beneficial for Britain, the final referendum decision could hinge on the swing voters, who comprise about 20 percent of the public.²⁵⁶ In the December 2013, YouGov poll for *The Sun*, the agency isolated the swing voters and determined which issues could be classified as the most important in influencing the swing vote. Then, the polling agency asked undecided voters if they would vote to stay in the EU if each priority was secured in a renegotiation. YouGov found that the top priority among swing voters was "getting powers to control immigration from the EU back from Brussels" and that 61 percent of swing voters believed this would be a necessary part of a successful renegotiation.²⁵⁷ The next two priorities were "discretion over immigrant benefits" and reducing the money Britain pays to the EU, which 46 and 43 percent of voters, respectively,

²⁵³ Dahlgreen, Will. "EU Referendum: The Red Lines for Swing Voters." *YouGov*. 18 Dec 2013. Web.

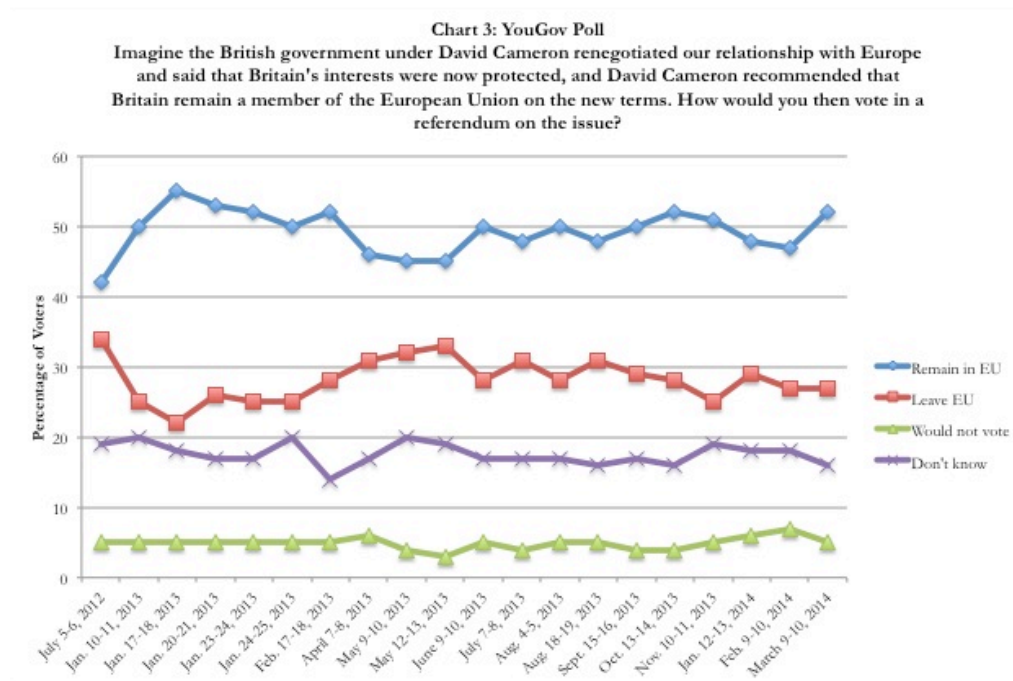
²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

considered necessary in the event of a renegotiation. What is striking about these swing voter priorities is that the top two have to do with immigration, a concern that reflects nationalistic and xenophobic tendencies of the British public that are advantageous for right-wing parties like UKIP.

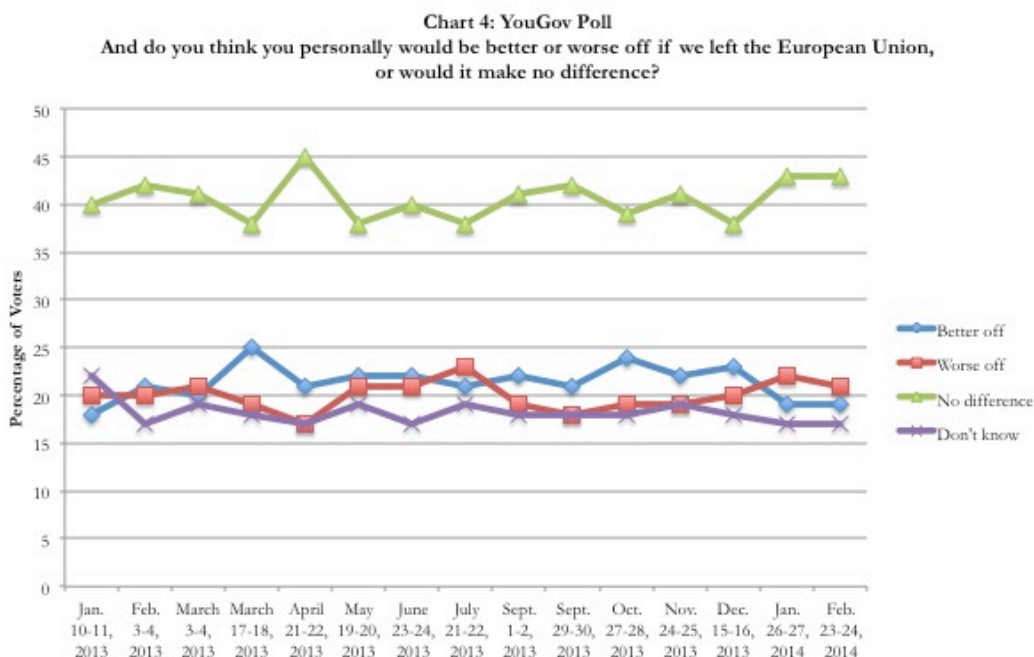


In a number of independent polls conducted by YouGov, respondents were asked: “Imagine the British government under David Cameron renegotiated our relationship with Europe and said that Britain’s interests were now protected, and David Cameron recommended that Britain remain a member of the European Union on the new terms. How would you then vote on the issue?”²⁵⁸ When the question was asked for the first time, prior to Cameron’s referendum announcement, 42 percent of voters said they would choose to remain in the EU, 34 percent would leave the EU, 5 percent would not vote, and 19 percent said they did not know what they would do. As of January 2014, 48 percent would choose to stay in the EU, 29 percent would vote to leave, 6 percent would abstain from voting, and 18 percent did not know. The chart above shows that voters would prefer to remain in the EU on renegotiated terms supported by the Prime Minister. The information in the

²⁵⁸ YouGov Table. “EU Referendum.” 3.

chart bodes well for the Prime Minister if he is indeed able to secure a successful renegotiation of the relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union.

In January 2014 the Ipsos MORI for British Future poll results showed that although 28 percent of respondents thought Britain should leave the EU, 38 percent believe “Britain’s long-term policy on Europe should be to stay in and try to reduce EU powers.”²⁵⁹ According to the British Future report, across all three mainstream parties (57 percent of Conservatives, 41 percent of Labour, and 43 percent of the Liberal Democrats), voters supported remaining in the EU and attempting to reduce its powers. The report found that 29 percent of Conservatives, 19 percent of Labour voters, and 22 percent of Lib Dem supporters thought that the UK should leave the European Union.²⁶⁰ UKIP supporters, on the other hand, largely supported leaving the European Union, with 73 percent saying Britain should leave the EU and 19 percent maintaining the UK should work within the European Union to renegotiate powers.²⁶¹



²⁵⁹ “Public prefer Cameron-Merkel EU deal over UK exit.” *British Future*. 27 Feb 2014. Web.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

As noted previously, the British people do not necessarily see the EU as relevant in their personal lives. Chart 4 above demonstrates that, since January 2013, the percentage of people who have expressed that leaving the European Union would have no impact on them personally has consistently been much higher than those who believe they would be better or worse off.²⁶² A series of YouGov polls have also asked, “Do you think Britain would be better or worse off economically if we left the European Union, or would it make no difference?”²⁶³ From March to December 2013, the percentage of people who answered “better off” fluctuated between 32 and 35 percent, while those answering “worse off” were between 30 and 35 percent. The “no difference” and “don’t know” categories also remained fairly stable, not changing more than 3 percentage points in spite of the increased prominence of the European issue in the lead-up to the 2014 European elections. In December 2013, those who answered “no difference” and “don’t know” made up 33 percent of voters, with those who answered “better off” and “worse off” at 33 and 34 percent, respectively.²⁶⁴ Based on the percentages, the British public is essentially split in its thinking about Europe, and it will take strong mobilization on the part of the media and the parties to secure an ‘in’ vote in a referendum.

Public opinion data illustrates that the British people are having difficulty determining what exactly British membership in the European Union means, and the mixed messages from politicians and the media are not helping to clarify positions. Europe is not a red line issue for the majority of the British public, but it has become more prominent due to media exposure and political posturing. The British people do not see themselves as citizens of Europe, do not turn up for European elections, and care little for European institutions. At the May 2014 European elections, UKIP may secure more seats than the other three parties, but it will not be because the British people are

²⁶² YouGov Table. “EU Referendum.” 6.

²⁶³ Ibid. 4.

²⁶⁴ Ibid. 4.

fundamentally Euroskeptic and want a referendum with an ‘out’ vote. The majority of those who vote for UKIP will do so because they are jaded with the mainstream parties and identify with the strong British identity represented by UKIP’s platform. The Prime Minister has not decided to gamble on a referendum due to a widespread resurgence in public Euroskepticism but rather because of the internal divisions in his party and the threat posed by UKIP. However, his referendum gamble and failure to commit to anything specific in terms of a renegotiation has placed him at risk of losing the support and confidence of British voters.

IX. Conclusion and Implications of a “Brexit”

With a referendum becoming an increasingly real possibility, it is worth evaluating the potential implications of a British exit, or “Brexit” from the European Union. Britain has been a member of the EU for just over 40 years, and if the British people were to vote ‘out’ in a referendum, there would undeniably be noticeable changes in terms of Britain’s international relationships and access to trade and markets. Those in favor of leaving the European Union argue that the benefits of cutting the expenditures associated with EU membership outweigh the potential costs of leaving. Increasingly, however, business interests have become more vocal, maintaining that a Britain outside of Europe would see a diminished level of political and economic influence. The final section will assess the impact of a “Brexit” on the U.S.-UK special relationship, arguably the UK’s most important foreign policy connection, as well as the potential consequences for trade and investment in the UK.

Future of the Special Relationship

Since the United Kingdom joined the European Community in 1973, many have seen Britain as the transatlantic bridge linking the United States with the European Union. As the United Kingdom reconsiders its role in the European Union, and the prospect of an in/out referendum

looms ever closer, concerns have been raised regarding the future of the Anglo-American ‘special relationship.’ The special relationship is often considered the hallmark of British foreign policy, and there have been many historical instances in which Britain attempted to exercise ‘power by proxy’ via the United States. The American government has consistently advocated for a European Britain, precluding the need for Britain to make a difficult choice between the EU and the U.S. In the UK, membership in the European Union has been seen as a mechanism aimed at solidifying British closeness with America, while at the same time, paradoxically, encouraging a prioritization of Europe over Atlanticism and the special relationship.²⁶⁵

The aspects of the special relationship that have persisted since Britain’s accession to the European Union are largely of a political and military nature. Defense cooperation and political unity on the global stage are the historical roots of the special relationship. The wide variety of areas in which the U.S. and UK cooperate on defense is illustrative of the chief importance of strategic coordination. Unless an unfortunate economic situation impacts British defense spending, there is ample reason to believe that the special relationship will continue independent of Britain’s affiliation with the European Union. While the political and military aspects of the special relationship are mutually beneficial, in many cases, the agreements are tilted in favor of the U.S., providing America with a stable ally. However, senior officials in the Obama Administration have made it clear that the United States is interested in keeping Britain in the European Union. Mere weeks before Cameron’s referendum speech in January 2013, Philip Gordon Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs advised the British government, “We benefit when the EU is unified, speaking with a single voice, and focused on our shared interests around the world and in Europe. We want to see

²⁶⁵ Dumbrell, John. *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations from the Cold War to Iraq*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Print. 216.

a strong British voice in the European Union. 'That is in the American interest.'"²⁶⁶ Due to the longstanding degree of cooperation between the UK and U.S., the two nations often share security and foreign policy priorities, yet, as an EU member state, the UK has more leverage in European affairs than the United States.

While the practical political and military aspects of the U.S.-UK relationship are unlikely to suffer in the event of a Brexit, the economic facet of Anglo-American relations might not be as fortunate. In terms of economics, "the US has to operate—certainly as regards Europe—in a much more reciprocal and concessionary fashion."²⁶⁷ Since the United States is dependent on trade networks with other states, in particular the European Union, it would seem that the economic aspect of the special relationship would suffer greatly if the UK were to leave the EU. John Dumbrell notes that the two most prominent features of the economic relationship between America and Britain are "asymmetry and the increasing Europeanization of British economic priorities."²⁶⁸ America receives disproportionate benefits from the military and defense aspects of the relationship, and it should come as no surprise that the economic relationship is asymmetrical. The British prioritization of the European Union in economic matters is also unsurprising given that Britain's chief interest in the EU is the single market.

For its part, America has attempted to capitalize on its special relationship with the United Kingdom to pursue the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, and Prime Minister David Cameron and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry have met to discuss "how the UK and US could work together to build support for a deal on both sides of the Atlantic."²⁶⁹ The United States naturally seeks to gain privileged access to the European single market, and the decision to discuss

²⁶⁶ Philip Gordon as quoted in Borger, Julian, Ian Traynor and Nicholas Watt. "Britain should stay in European Union says Obama administration." *The Guardian*. 9 Jan 2013. Web.

²⁶⁷ Dumbrell, John. 270.

²⁶⁸ Ibid. 217.

²⁶⁹ "Prime Minister's meeting with US Secretary of State John Kerry." 25 Feb 2013.

the prospect of a trade agreement with the UK before other European partners emphasizes the closeness between the U.S. and UK. In her February 2014 address, Angela Merkel declared, “Our relations [with the U.S.] are of prime importance—and the United Kingdom is an important, if not the most important, anchor in this relationship,”²⁷⁰ further emphasizing the idea of the UK as a bridge spanning the vast Atlantic. In economic matters, the United States turns to the United Kingdom because the U.S. recognizes that the UK will be an advocate of the American perspective within the EU. If the United Kingdom were to leave the European Union, the United States would lose arguably the only European nation that is concerned with the impact of policies on American interests. Moreover, both the UK’s American and European partners recognize its importance in facilitating the transatlantic partnership.

Nevertheless, it is important not to overstate the significance of the Anglo-American relationship. Even though the practical aspects might be preserved in the event of a British exit from the European Union, it does not follow that Britain should leave the EU. The British conception of ‘power by proxy’ and its accompanying belief that Britain must have a voice in America in order to have an international role is misguided. The special relationship, a product of decades of cooperation, is not likely to disintegrate overnight, but Britain’s economic power will likely deteriorate considerably if it leaves the EU. As its partner across the Atlantic has asserted, the United Kingdom will have a stronger global role, not only via the special relationship, but also through continued and committed membership in the EU.

Consequences for Trade and Foreign Direct Investment

A British exit from the European Union could have a significant impact on trade and foreign direct investment in the UK, potentially putting City of London’s status as a global financial hub in

²⁷⁰ Merkel, Angela. Speech in House of Commons. 27 Feb 2014.

jeopardy. Nick Clegg has described the prospect of a British exit as “economic suicide.”²⁷¹ Euroskeptics have voiced concerns about the extent to which EU membership stunts the UK’s global economic competitiveness, claiming that leaving the EU would provide Britain with an opportunity to focus on trade with emerging economies. A January 2014 report by the Centre for European Reform finds that EU membership does not diminish Britain’s trade relationships with non-EU countries but has the benefit of significantly increasing trade between the UK and other EU member states.²⁷² Increased trade between the UK and Europe is advantageous because neighboring European countries are the UK’s natural trading partners. The CER report argues that trade between wealthier countries, like many of those in the EU, is often more advantageous because people in developed countries tend to desire luxury imports that can only be produced in countries with sufficiently developed infrastructures.²⁷³ Opponents of the EU maintain that, because of tariffs on imports from non-EU countries, the single market forces the majority of trade to be conducted inside the EU, however the CER model showed that there had been no diversion of trade and that “membership of the Union boosts [Britain’s] goods trade overall by around 30 percent.”²⁷⁴ Given that the UK would naturally conduct most of its trade with EU member states and that its trade has been enhanced by EU membership, there does not appear to be a strong economic rationale supporting a British exit from the European Union.

Nevertheless, the Centre for European reform acknowledges that due to the economic collapse of the Eurozone crisis, the EU has become a less important market for the UK. Euroskeptics have argued that, in the event of a Brexit, trade deficits would preclude EU member states from introducing barriers to trade with Britain. If the British people decided to leave the EU

²⁷¹ Clegg, Nick. “In Europe for the National Interest.” 8 Oct 2013.

²⁷² Springford, John and Tifford, Simon. “The Great British trade-off: The impact of leaving the EU on the UK’s trade and investment.” *Centre for European Reform*. January 2014. Print. 1.

²⁷³ Ibid. 2.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. 4.

in 2017, the UK would likely have to negotiate a free trade agreement. Contrary to the Euroskeptic position, the CER report demonstrates that asymmetrical trade with the EU places the UK in a weak bargaining position. EU member states buy about half of British exports while the UK only purchases around 10 percent of EU exports.²⁷⁵ Under a free trade agreement, the UK would be subject to many of the same EU market regulations but would have no decision-making power.

Many of the trade advantages the UK enjoys as an EU member would disappear if the people were to vote ‘out’ in a referendum. The UK stands to lose even more in foreign direct investment (FDI) than it does in trade. The UK is a major participant in and recipient of foreign direct investment. At the start of the twenty-first century, there was an increase in economic activity between the U.S. and UK, with the UK exporting \$46 billion to the U.S., generating a nearly \$10 billion trade surplus.²⁷⁶ Furthermore, the U.S. and the UK have the “largest bilateral foreign direct investment partnerships.”²⁷⁷ By the end of 2011, UK foreign direct investment in the United States had reached a total of \$442.2 billion, the largest amount of any European country.²⁷⁸ Within the EU, Britain is the largest recipient of FDI, which is due primarily to its access to the large EU single market.²⁷⁹ The Centre for European Reform data shows that FDI from the EU amounts to 30 percent of the UK’s GDP.²⁸⁰ If the UK leaves the EU, it is likely that the area of foreign direct investment will take the greatest hit because companies might decide to invest in countries that have unfettered access to the single market.

Shifts in foreign direct investment would jeopardize London’s position as a major center of international finance, and an article in the *International Business Times* predicts, “It would begin with a

²⁷⁵ Springford, John and Tifford, Simon. 7.

²⁷⁶ Dumbrell, John. 220.

²⁷⁷ Zhang, Moran. “Brexit: If Britain Quits the EU, What Then?” *International Business Times*. 28 Feb 2013. Web.

²⁷⁸ Jackson, James K. “Foreign Direct Investment in the United States: An Economic Analysis.” Congressional Research Service. 26 Oct 2012. Web. 3.

²⁷⁹ Springford, John and Tifford, Simon. 5.

²⁸⁰ Ibid. 10.

decline in investment and hiring as London suffers relative to cities such as Frankfurt and Paris.”²⁸¹ The two largest sectors for FDI in Britain are manufacturing and services. While the service sector is dependent on human capital and might not be severely impacted, it is likely that corporations would choose to relocate manufacturing, particularly car manufacturing, to another EU member state with direct trade and distribution networks.²⁸² According to the joint CEOs of Goldman Sachs International, Michael Sherwood and Richard Gnodde, “Banks won’t disappear from London overnight, but they will over time if Britain votes ‘no’.”²⁸³ Goldman Sachs has already publicly stated that, if Britain leaves the EU, it will move its business from London to other major EU financial capitals.²⁸⁴ The United States, currently the largest foreign investor in the United Kingdom, might discontinue its investments in Britain if there is a perception that American business interests would be better served by investing in an EU member state, encouraging the rise of French and German finance capitals. A shift in American investments would adversely affect the UK and would endanger the economic facet of the special relationship, especially if the UK were further disadvantaged by its lack of a privileged position in the single market. In addition, if the European Union and the United States proceed in establishing a free trade agreement, it is probable that the United Kingdom would also find itself marginalized during negotiations.

Conclusion: Britain Moving Forward

A careful examination of various driving factors behind Prime Minister David Cameron’s decision to call a referendum, has established that Cameron has promised a referendum as an exercise in political calculation and party management. By examining the decisions of Prime Ministers at specific important historical moments in the British relationship with the European

²⁸¹ Zhang, Moran. “Brexit: If Britain Quits the EU, What Then?”

²⁸² Springford, John and Tifford, Simon. 11.

²⁸³ Michael Sherwood and Richard Gnodde as quoted in Zhang, Moran.

²⁸⁴ Springford, John and Tifford, Simon. 11.

Union, it becomes clear that both Conservative and Labour leaders are often unwilling to take firm positions on the European question because it remains such a divisive issue within the political class. Conservative Prime Ministers have traditionally had to cope with stronger Euroskeptic mobilization, and David Cameron is no exception. If his party wins a majority in the 2015 general election, it will have to deliver concrete terms in its renegotiation with Europe in order to secure the 'in' vote that Cameron professes to desire. An unsatisfactory renegotiation could very well place Cameron among the ranks of Conservative leaders who have lost their supporters over the question of Europe.

In committing to a referendum, however, Cameron unintentionally provided more fodder for rabid Euroskeptics within his own party. The Prime Minister also gave UKIP an issue on which to campaign and appeal to the British public. Cameron's failure to set out expectations for a renegotiation, coupled with an inability to definitively advocate for an 'in' or 'out' vote, has created problems within his coalition government and alienated many allies in other member states. Although the Prime Minister may have Angela Merkel, arguably the most powerful player on the EU stage, on his side, even a Merkel-Cameron agreement is not sufficient to secure a major renegotiation of the terms of British membership. Moreover, the rise of UKIP represents a significant threat to a Conservative majority in 2015, and UKIP's quick ascent illustrates widespread discontent among British voters. As Cameron brings Europe to the forefront with no firm commitments, UKIP capitalizes on people's lack of knowledge and distrust of the EU to encourage rampant Euroskepticism. In short, the Prime Minister, in attempting to mitigate Euroskepticism, has actually allowed it to escalate to the point where he can no longer control it.

The British media is also exacerbating the uncertainty that the public feels about the EU, and politicians from all parties are carefully maneuvering to avoid electoral backlash over the issue of Europe. A general dearth of knowledge about the EU and its institutions, along with voluntary media regulation, allows the British press to run wild when reporting stories about the EU. Tabloids

decry the excesses of the European Union and urge the people to vote 'out' in a referendum, while even pro-Europe politicians like Labour leader Ed Miliband resist making any definite statements about European policy. Meanwhile, Europhile Liberal Democrats lament the Prime Minister's handling of the EU situation but are constrained by their position as the junior partners in a coalition government.

As of March 2014, pollsters have predicted that UKIP will come in first in the European elections, and many UKIP supporters have expressed their intent to remain loyal to the protest party in the 2015 general election.^{285, 286} The Populus/*Financial Times* poll in March 2014 showed that 36.6 percent of people intend to vote for Labour, 34 percent for the Tories, 12.2 percent for UKIP, and 9.4 percent for the Liberal Democrats, highlighting the likelihood that no party will emerge with a clear majority after the next general election.²⁸⁷ Since the European elections have little bearing on general elections and current numbers preclude a prediction of what the dominant party will be in the 2015 general election, the probability of a referendum is uncertain. If the Tories are elected, there will certainly be a renegotiation followed by a referendum. If Labour is elected, Ed Miliband will not hold a referendum unless there is a further transfer of powers to Brussels. Finally, if a coalition government is formed with one of the smaller parties, the coalition agreement might stipulate other terms and conditions that have to be met in order to hold a referendum on EU membership.

In the event that there is a referendum on the United Kingdom's membership in the European Union, it would be advantageous for the people of Britain to vote to remain in the EU. Polling data indicates that people do not understand how Europe impacts their daily lives. There

²⁸⁵ Pickard, Jim and Stacey, Kiran. "Ukip will win most votes in European elections says pollster." *Financial Times*. 31 March 2014. Web.

²⁸⁶ Stacey, Kiran. "Ukip supporters to stay loyal to party for general election." *Financial Times*. 7 April 2014. Web.

²⁸⁷ Parker, George, Pickard, Jim and Stacey, Kiran. "Labour opinion poll lead shrinks to under 3%." *Financial Times*. 31 March 2014. Web.

also seem to be persistent fears that a Brussels superstate threatens to undermine national sovereignty and identity. What many fail to realize is just how much Britain stands to lose if it decides to isolate itself from the EU and become an isolated island adrift in the massive Atlantic. Leaving the EU would create tension in the UK's relationship with the United States and would likely undermine Britain's place on the world stage, not to mention its trade relationships with both EU and non-EU nations. Access to trade and investment from the single market could truly make or break the United Kingdom, but it will take strong voices in business and the financial sector to convince the public. In order to move forward, Britain and its people should consider what is at stake in the referendum outcome. The Prime Minister has placed his bet and gambled on a referendum promise, setting into motion an uncontrollable chain of events that could very well lead to the United Kingdom attempting to survive alone in an increasingly globalized and interdependent world. David Cameron has opened Pandora's box, and there is no closing it.

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XI. APPENDIX



Figure 1 Margaret Thatcher during 1975 Referendum Campaign
Credit: Daily Mail

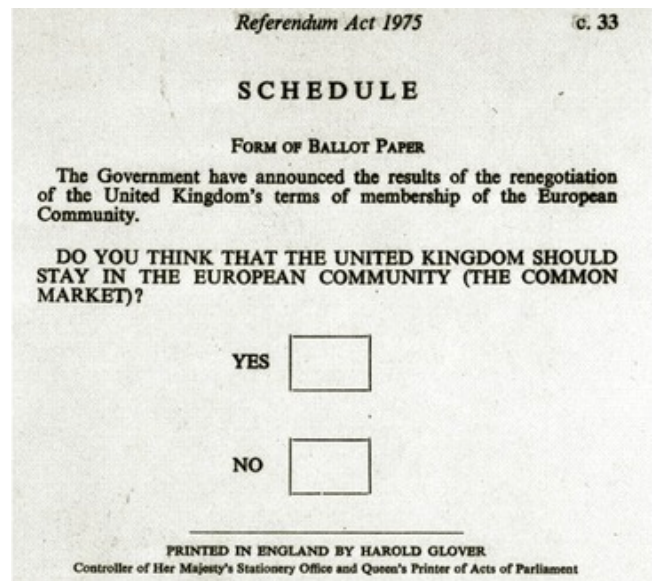


Figure 2 1975 Referendum Ballot
Credit: PA/PA Wire

Table 1: EU Voting Turnout Percentage by Member State (1979-2009)Source: Data from European Parliament Website (www.europarl.europa.eu)

Member State	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009
Belgium	91.36	92.09	90.73	90.66	91.05	90.81	90.39
Denmark	47.82	52.38	46.17	52.92	50.46	47.89	59.54
Germany	65.73	56.76	62.28	60.02	45.19	43	43.3
Ireland	63.61	47.56	68.28	43.98	50.21	58.58	58.64
France	60.71	56.72	48.8	52.71	46.76	42.76	40.63
Italy	85.65	82.47	81.07	73.6	69.76	71.72	65.05
Luxembourg	88.91	88.79	87.39	88.55	87.27	91.35	90.75
Netherlands	58.12	50.88	47.48	35.69	30.02	39.26	36.75
United Kingdom	32.35	32.57	36.37	36.43	24	38.52	34.7
Greece		80.59	80.03	73.18	70.25	63.22	52.61
Spain			54.71	59.14	63.05	45.14	44.9
Portugal			51.1	35.54	39.93	38.6	36.78
Sweden					38.84	37.85	45.53
Austria					49.4	42.43	45.97
Finland					30.14	39.43	40.3
Czech Republic						28.3	28.2
Estonia						26.83	43.9
Cyprus						72.5	59.4
Lithuania						48.38	20.98
Latvia						41.34	53.7
Hungary						38.5	36.31
Malta						82.39	78.79
Poland						20.87	24.53
Slovenia						28.35	28.33
Slovakia						16.97	19.64
Bulgaria							38.99
Romania							27.67
Average EU Turnout	61.99	58.98	58.41	56.67	49.51	45.47	43

Table 2: YouGov Poll (Aug. 2010-March 2014)
If there was a referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union, how would you vote?
Source: YouGov Polls.

Date of Poll	Remain in EU (%)	Leave EU (%)	Would not vote (%)	Don't know (%)
Aug. 7-8, 2010	30	52	4	15
Sept. 8-9, 2010	33	47	5	14
Oct. 23-24, 2010	32	51	4	13
Dec. 8-9, 2010	35	44	5	15
Dec. 11-12, 2011	36	43	4	17
Dec. 15-16, 2011	41	41	5	14
Jan. 24-26, 2012	34	44	5	18
Feb. 13-14, 2012	30	48	6	17
March 25-26, 2012	34	44	5	18
April 16-17, 2012	32	48	6	13
May 17-18, 2012	28	51	6	15
June 26-27, 2012	33	47	6	14
July 5-6, 2012	31	48	4	17
July 23-24, 2012	30	49	7	14
Aug. 28-29, 2012	32	47	7	15
Sept. 25-26, 2012	33	47	7	14
Oct. 22-23, 2012	28	49	5	17
Nov. 27-28, 2012	30	51	5	14
Jan. 2-3, 2013	31	46	6	16
Jan. 10-11, 2013	36	42	4	17
Jan. 17-18, 2013	40	34	5	20
Jan. 20-21, 2013	37	40	6	18
Jan. 23-24, 2013	38	40	4	18
Jan. 24-25, 2013	37	39	5	19
Feb. 17-18, 2013	38	41	5	15
March 25-26, 2013	33	44	5	19
April 7-8, 2013	36	43	7	14
April 21-22, 2013	35	43	5	17
May 7 2013	35	46	4	16
May 9-10, 2013	30	47	4	19
May 12-13, 2013	34	44	4	17
May 28-29, 2013	35	43	4	17
June 9-10, 2013	35	43	5	17
June 23-24, 2013	31	45	6	18
July 7-8, 2013	36	43	5	16
July 22-23, 2013	35	45	6	15
Aug. 4-5, 2013	35	43	5	17
Aug. 18-19, 2013	34	46	5	15
Sept. 15-16, 2013	39	42	4	16
Oct. 13-14, 2013	37	42	5	15
Nov. 10-11, 2013	39	39	5	17
Dec. 1-9, 2013	37	43	4	16
Jan. 12-13, 2014	33	43	5	19
Feb. 9-10, 2014	36	39	7	18
March 9-10, 2014	41	39	5	15

Table 3: YouGov Poll (July 2012-March 2014)

Imagine the British government under David Cameron renegotiated our relationship with Europe and said that Britain's interests were now protected, and David Cameron recommended that Britain remain a member of the European Union on the new terms. How would you then vote in a referendum on the issue?

Source: YouGov Polls.

Date of Poll	Remain in EU (%)	Leave EU (%)	Would not vote (%)	Don't know (%)
July 5-6, 2012	42	34	5	19
Jan. 10-11, 2013	50	25	5	20
Jan. 17-18, 2013	55	22	5	18
Jan. 20-21, 2013	53	26	5	17
Jan. 23-24, 2013	52	25	5	17
Jan. 24-25, 2013	50	25	5	20
Feb. 17-18, 2013	52	28	5	14
April 7-8, 2013	46	31	6	17
May 9-10, 2013	45	32	4	20
May 12-13, 2013	45	33	3	19
June 9-10, 2013	50	28	5	17
July 7-8, 2013	48	31	4	17
Aug. 4-5, 2013	50	28	5	17
Aug. 18-19, 2013	48	31	5	16
Sept. 15-16, 2013	50	29	4	17
Oct. 13-14, 2013	52	28	4	16
Nov. 10-11, 2013	51	25	5	19
Jan. 12-13, 2014	48	29	6	18
Feb. 9-10, 2014	47	27	7	18
March 9-10, 2014	52	27	5	16

Table 4: YouGov Poll (January 2013-February 2014)

And do you think you personally would be better or worse off if we left the European Union, or would it make no difference?

Source: YouGov Polls.

Date of Poll	Better off	Worse off	No difference	Don't know
Jan. 10-11, 2013	18	20	40	22
Feb. 3-4, 2013	21	20	42	17
March 3-4, 2013	20	21	41	19
March 17-18, 2013	25	19	38	18
April 21-22, 2013	21	17	45	17
May 19-20, 2013	22	21	38	19
June 23-24, 2013	22	21	40	17
July 21-22, 2013	21	23	38	19
Sept. 1-2, 2013	22	19	41	18
Sept. 29-30, 2013	21	18	42	18
Oct. 27-28, 2013	24	19	39	18
Nov. 24-25, 2013	22	19	41	19
Dec. 15-16, 2013	23	20	38	18
Jan. 26-27, 2014	19	22	43	17
Feb. 23-24, 2014	19	21	43	17