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978-1-107-11517-0 - Framing the European Union: The Power of Political Arguments in Shaping European Integration

Ece Özlem Atıkcın

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Framing the European Union

What is the impact of political language upon public opinion toward European integration? Based on media analysis, public opinion data, and more than 140 in-depth interviews with senior officials and campaigners, Ece Özlem Atıkcın examines six EU referendum votes: in Spain, France, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg on the European Constitution in 2005; and in Ireland on the Lisbon Treaty in 2008 and 2009. In all instances, polls show that the voting public favored the referendum proposals before the campaigns began, yet this initially positive public opinion melted away in three of these six cases. Why did this occur? Atıkcın demonstrates that the key to the puzzle lies in political campaigns, where argument strategies can, at least temporarily, reverse public opinion enough to affect referendum outcomes. Providing a critical analysis of campaign strategy and EU communication policy, this book will be essential reading for academics, policymakers, politicians, and future campaigners.

ECE ÖZLEM ATIKCAN is an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science, Laval University.

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Framing the European Union

*The Power of Political Arguments in Shaping
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Acknowledgments

This book is about how political language affects public opinion toward European integration. Referendums on European treaties have become more and more controversial since the Maastricht Treaty, but the subject gained utmost importance when the French and Dutch rejected the European Constitution within a few days of each other. Most intriguingly, the Irish public first rejected but then approved the Lisbon Treaty. Even though the existing studies emphasized the importance of referendum campaigns, most research on the subject did not interview the actors on the field. I have been fascinated with the actual campaigners, the front-line actors, and how they explained this incredibly complex entity and its technical treaties to their public. More than 140 in-depth interviews with campaigners and senior EU officials, who included European ministers, members of parliament, party strategists, civil society activists, EU civil servants, and Members of the European Parliament, demonstrate that political actors' campaign arguments can indeed, at least temporarily, reverse public opinion enough to influence referendum results.

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Quebec, Canada

Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|--|
| ABBL | Association of Banks and Bankers of Luxembourg (Luxembourg) |
| ADR | Alternative Democratic Reform Party (Luxembourg) |
| ATTAC | Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens |
| BNG | Galician Nationalist Block (Spain) |
| CC | Canarian Coalition (Spain) |
| CCOO | Workers Commissions (Spain) |
| CDA | Christian Democratic Appeal (The Netherlands) |
| CEOE | Confederation of Employers and Industries of Spain (Spain) |
| CEVIPOF | Centre for Political Research at Sciences Po (France) |
| CFDT | French Democratic Confederation of Labour (France) |
| CFTC | French Confederation of Christian Workers (France) |
| CGC | General Confederation of Executives (France) |
| CGT | General Workers' Confederation (France) |
| CHA | Aragonese Council (Spain) |
| CIDOB | Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (Spain) |
| CIS | Center of Sociological Investigations (Spain) |
| CiU | Catalan Nationalist Convergence and Unity (Spain) |
| CLC | Chamber of Commerce (Luxembourg) |
| CPB | Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (The Netherlands) |
| CSA | Advice on Survey Analysis (France) |
| CSV | Christian Social People's Party (Luxembourg) |
| CU | Christian Union (The Netherlands) |
| D66 | Democrats 66 (The Netherlands) |
| DG | Directorate-General |
| DP | Democratic Party (Luxembourg) |
| EA | Basque Solidarity (Spain) |
| EMU | Economic and Monetary Union |
| ENC | European No Campaign |

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List of abbreviations

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| EP | European Parliament |
| EPERN | European Parties Elections and Referendums Network |
| ERC | Republican Left of Catalonia (Spain) |
| ESF | European Social Forum |
| ETA | Basque Homeland and Freedom (Spain) |
| EU | European Union |
| EURES | European Employment Services |
| DLR | Arise the Republic (France) |
| FEDIL | Federation of Luxembourg Industrialists (Luxembourg) |
| FN | National Front (France) |
| FNV | Federation Dutch Labor Movement (The Netherlands) |
| FO | Workers' Force (France) |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GL | GreenLeft (The Netherlands) |
| ICV | Initiative for Catalonia Greens (Spain) |
| IFOP | French Institute of Public Opinion (France) |
| IU | United Left (Spain) |
| KPL | Communist Party (Luxembourg) |
| LCGB | Luxembourg Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (Luxembourg) |
| LCR | Revolutionary Communist League (France) |
| LO | Workers' Struggle (France) |
| LPF | List Pim Fortuyn (The Netherlands) |
| LSAP | Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party (Luxembourg) |
| MEP | Member of European Parliament |
| MFA | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| MNR | National Republican Movement (France) |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| MPF | Movement for France (France) |
| MRC | Citizen and Republican Movement (France) |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NGO | Nongovernmental Organization |
| OGBL | Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Luxembourg (Luxembourg) |
| PCE | Communist Party of Spain (Spain) |
| PCF | French Communist Party (France) |
| PNV | Basque Nationalist Party (Spain) |
| PP | Popular Party (Spain) |
| PS | Socialist Party (France) |
| PSOE | Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (Spain) |

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| | |
|-----------|---|
| PvdA | Dutch Labor Party (The Netherlands) |
| PVV | Party of Freedom (The Netherlands) |
| RPF | Movement for France (France) |
| RTL | Luxembourg Television and Radio (Luxembourg) |
| SCP | Netherlands Institute for Social Research (The Netherlands) |
| SGP | Reformed Political Party (The Netherlands) |
| SOFRES | French Survey Institute (France) |
| SP | Socialist Party (The Netherlands) |
| SUD | Solidarity Unity Democracy (France) |
| TCE | Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe |
| TNS-ILRES | Luxembourg Institute for Social Research (Luxembourg) |
| UDF | Union for French Democracy (France) |
| UGT | General Workers Union (Spain) |
| UMP | Union for a Popular Movement (France) |
| UNEL | National Union of Luxembourgish Students (Luxembourg) |
| VVD | People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (The Netherlands) |
| WRR | Scientific Council for Government Policy (The Netherlands) |