

**Progress, democracy, efficiency:**

**Normative narratives in political science EU Studies**

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**Abstract:**

This article identifies influential political narratives in the 73 currently most highly cited political science articles on the EU. It is based on systematic analysis of expressions of normativity, which signal that European integration, or its institutions or policies, are bad, good, flourishing or declining. A normative narrative of continuous progress in integration, connected with a 1990s grand theoretical debate in EU studies, accounts for much of the positive tone of EU studies until about 1998. Narratives about the EU's democratic deficit and its impact beyond its borders help explain the subsequent negative turn in EU studies normativity.

**Keywords:**

European integration, democratic deficit, European Union, EU studies, narratives, progressive narrative

## **Progress, democracy, efficiency:**

### **Normative narratives in political science EU Studies**

Sociologists of knowledge and historians of science stress that scholars produce narratives that have a vital role in interpreting and legitimising major political developments. The modern social sciences emerged to a great extent as the intellectual infrastructure of nineteenth-century nation states. Stephanie Mudge and Antoine Vauchez thus see ‘knowledge-bearing elites’, linking academia with politics, as equally central to both ‘Western state-building processes’ and European integration (2012, p. 450). Despite episodes like European Commission President José Manuel Barroso’s references since 2008 to the political scientist Ian Manners’s normative power thesis (Manners, 2015, p. 330), scholars disagree about whether academics have directly influenced European integration politics, and in particular, 1960s Commission strategy (Cohen & Weisbein, 2005, pp. 354-60; Kaiser, 2010, p. 52; Mudge & Vauchez, 2012, p. 459; Rosamond, 2015, p. 186; White, 2003, p. 126). There is more consensus however on the continuing importance of indirect academic influence on European integration politics, through factors like networks, press-reporting, the university education of political leaders, and the academic professional background of some of them, including Barroso (Kaiser, 2010; White, 2003, p. 131). Sociologists therefore draw on Pierre Bourdieu to describe academic institutions as part of ‘*a nascent European field of power*’ (Cohen, 2011, pp. 336-37).

Although the key power of academics is to develop and legitimise narratives of European integration, only one existing work expressly identifies these in current EU studies. The historian Mark Gilbert argues that scholars of the EU have always systematically generated teleological ‘narrative accounts’ of its inexorable progress towards supranational integration

(2008, p. 649). Until the 1990s for example, theoretical debate in political science EU Studies (PS-EUS) revolved around neo-functionalism. This theory provided a mechanism for progressive (i.e. continuously intensifying) integration and was very close to the European Commission's own understanding of integration as a process (White, 2003, p. 114).

This article explores and analyses the presence and use of narratives by scholars in political science, the central discipline within the multi- or interdisciplinary field of EUS. It confirms that Gilbert's progressive narrative remains important in the most highly-cited PS-EUS journal articles, but that narratives of democratic deficit and efficiency are also significant. In addition, the article relates currently dominant narratives to an increasingly negative tone towards European integration in PS-EUS articles since about 1998.

The research for this article exclusively addressed *writing* practices, ignoring other important academic normativity practices, such as political engagement or the conscious or unconscious choice of topic, evidence and research methods. I systematically analysed expressions of normativity, which signalled that European integration, or its functioning, institutions or policies, was bad, good, flourishing or declining, in the 73 most cited PS-EUS peer-reviewed articles (see appendix). This corpus, or canon, was defined by searching Google Scholar on 29 April 2015 for the terms 'European Union', 'European integration', their French and German equivalents and 'EU' and selecting political science articles. These articles are referenced in the text with a # followed by their ranking in the canon (e.g. Scharpf, #3).

Normative expressions, which appeared to some extent in the texts of 85% of the 73 articles and quite assertively in more than 75% of them, are treated as the necessary building blocks of politically useful narratives.

Three trends should be expected to draw scholarly attention to practices of normativity in EUS writing. First, a large post-positivist constructivist and critical studies literature has, since the 1990s, increasingly challenged the previously dominant positivist approach to

political science (Bevir, 2006, pp. 591 & 600). This literature has ‘warmly embraced’ ‘a reflection on the relation between political science and politics’, including normativity in public, elite and official discourse on European integration (Berling & Bueger, 2013, p. 116). While the normative power thesis constitutes a prominent example, the autobiographical reflexivity of feminist and critical scholars particularly supports reflection about scholarly normativity (Eagleton-Pierce, 2011, pp. 808-9). Second, questions about the democratic legitimacy of EU governance stimulated what is often labelled a ‘normative turn’ in EUS in the 1990s, placing issues of justice on the disciplinary agenda (Bellamy & Attucci, 2009, p. 198). Third, since the millennium, some EUS scholars, especially in France, have turned a reflexive eye to the organisation and practices of their own field (e.g. Mudge & Vauchez, 2012; Rosamond, 2007). Parallel developments in International Relations (IR), drawing particular inspiration from Bourdieu’s key concept of reflexivity, suggest this is part of a broader opening in political science to the sociology of knowledge (Berling & Bueger, 2013, p. 116; Eagleton-Pierce, 2011, pp. 805-6 & 815). Though the EU inspired neither Bourdieu’s affection nor much of his interest, his ideas are central to the recent flourishing of reflexive sociological work on European integration (Madsen, 2011, p. 259; Cohen, 2011, pp. 335 & 338; Favell & Guiraudon, 2011, pp. 2-3; Kauppi, 2003, pp. 781-82; Parsons, 2010, pp. 150-52). The ‘double rupture’ of Bourdieusian reflexivity insists on critically examining not just ‘the object itself’ (i.e. the EU), ‘but also... the dominant academic pre-constructions’ of it (Madsen, 2011, p. 262).

Nevertheless, scholarly practices of normativity, impartiality, objectivity, value neutrality, etc. have so far been a Cinderella topic in political science. Several historians and legal scholars of the EU identify strong pro-European political agendas in their fields, but they focus heavily on early scholarship (Robert & Vauchez, 2010, pp. 15-16; Varsori, 2010, p. 6). Even self-described critical scholars are accused of using reflexivity to attack the positivist

mainstream, rather than reflecting on their own practices (Berling & Bueger, 2013, p. 116). Scholars struggle with contradictions within reflexivity and especially with the still powerful grip of the positivist stricture that ‘good’ scholarship’ and ‘rigour’ require ‘an objectivist gaze free from personality’ (Berling & Bueger, 2013; Eagleton-Pierce, 2011, p. 809). This positivist scientific ideology of neutral, objective and apolitical discovery and analysis of real facts about the world remains a ‘prevailing convention’ in science, despite sociologists of knowledge having criticised it for decades as a social construct (Berling & Bueger, 2013, pp. 115-16; Harding, 1992, pp. 567-70). EUS scholars, like political scientists more widely, therefore still often assume that they and the politics they study constitute separate spheres (Adler-Nissen & Kropp, 2015, p. 156; Oren, 2003, p. 20; see also Kaiser, 2010, p. 53).

This scholarship-politics dichotomy imposes subtle, implicit rules, governing the habitual practices of writing, into which academic disciplines socialise scholars. The presence of the author, their emotions or viewpoint is for example acceptable in so-called mainstream political science, and in fact ubiquitous, when it discusses what can be called ‘internal’ academic issues such as theory and methodology. PS-EUS articles regularly express forceful opinions about theory (e.g. Stone Sweet & Sandholz, #24, p. 314) and speak about their authors having a hunch, something sparking their interest or surprising results (e.g. Hooghe, Marks & Wilson, #9, p. 985). However, unlike openly political genres such as hustings speeches or tabloid editorials, scholarship frowns on this normativity when it is applied to the object of study (Berling & Bueger, 2013, p. 116).

In part, these practices of normativity go unrecognised because outside of the sociologically-oriented French discipline, political science has been slow to develop a disciplinary ‘sociology of itself’ (Eagleton-Pierce, 2011, pp. 805-6). Even where this has emerged in PS-EUS, it focusses on more conspicuous issues such as the subfield’s transatlantic and

theoretical cleavages and has only very recently begun to engage with sociology of knowledge literature (Adler-Nissen & Kropp, 2015).

Section one of this article explains in detail my criteria for selecting the 73 chosen texts and addresses the canon's distinct Anglophone bias. Section two sets out how I identified expressions of political normativity, including implicitly through scholars' use of language and evidence. Expressions of normativity are intensely complex. They can frame narratives in positive, negative or neutral terms. Whether they are accidental or deliberate, they can express a scholar's ideological commitments, such as to European federalism or social democracy, or be generated 'coincidentally' in the reader's perception, regardless of the author's intention (Gilbert, 2008, p. 649). This section uses two key sociology insights. First, followers of Bourdieu and other sociologists insist that narratives and other ideational, 'subjective' constructions interact with 'material', 'objective' contexts and constraints, such as how disciplines were organised (Parsons, 2010, pp. 149-50; Kauppi, 2003, p. 777; Madsen, 2011, p. 260). Second, sociologists of knowledge note that issues 'external' and 'internal' to academia interpenetrate and influence one another (Adler-Nissen & Kropp, 2015, pp. 156 & 160-65). Developments in European integration and academic theories therefore both shape scientific practices of expressing normativity and creating narratives. Some apparent normativity about the EU is, for example, a mere by-product of arguments about theory.

The final section examines three important sets of narratives, concerning progressive integration, the democratic deficit and efficiency. Narratives of progress in grand theoretical debates explain much of the positive tone in canonical PS-EUS articles up to 1998. In contrast, discussion of the democratic deficit and the EU's external effects account for much of the negative, critical turn since then. In part, these factors reflect the EU's 'sea of troubles' since the millennium. However, they also mark a transformation in the agenda of EUS, from

trying to define European integration, to an often critical assessment of its politics and policies.

### **Selecting the canon**

The canon was selected using Google Scholar, which for the purposes of this research, is less flawed than other citation databases (Harzing & van der Wal, 2008, pp. 63-65). All available databases are for example heavily weighted towards English-language work<sup>1</sup>, but Google Scholar at least indexes post-1993 sources in German and French. Nevertheless, all but one of the 73 canonical articles are in English. This reflects linguistic and disciplinary relations within EUS as well as Google's linguistic bias. In 2006, the huge American and British EUS societies together accounted for 59% of global membership of such bodies (Rosamond, 2007, p. 10). Leading EUS scholars from all countries meanwhile publish in English-language 'international' journals. Political science EUS is even more Anglo-Saxon. Political scientists constituted 78% and 50% respectively of the American and British EUS society members but were the majority in 'barely 10%' of all national EUS societies. For historical reasons, moreover, English speaking and especially American political scientists were largely responsible for prominent early theories of integration. Scholars of law and economics dominated EUS in continental countries because political science there developed later as an entirely autonomous discipline (Wæver, 1998, pp. 704-7).

The Google search was limited in three ways. First, only peer-reviewed journal articles were chosen, leaving out books, reports, etc., which might have different conventions of normativity. Citations of books outnumber those of articles by more than two to one among all EUS works cited over 500 times. As Wæver notes, however, for 'practitioners', an

academic field ‘exists mostly in the journals’, and they constitute its ‘crucial institution’ (1998, p. 697). The total citations of the canonical writers above 100 cites were also checked, including their books. It turned out that there was a strong match between their ranking in both lists. Of the 17 authors in the top ten articles of my canon for example, 78% were also in the top ten of the longer list.

Second, to get a sense of the narratives preoccupying PS-EUS at present, its most highly cited texts were chosen, but a series of progressively lower inclusion thresholds (see table below) were also used to include well-cited recent texts (since 2003). These have simply not had time to be cited as often as older works have been. These lower thresholds brought citations in 2003-10 up to an average of 3.5 per year, which is comparable with the 3.86 annual average in 1995-2001. The same attempt to compensate was not made for the period since 2010, however, in which only one article has been cited over 100 times. These low numbers make the genuine preoccupations of EUS relatively uncertain.

Threshold no. of citations	Period	No. articles	No. articles 2003-6	No. articles 2007-13
400	Open	52	7	1
300	Since 2003	8	7	1
200	Since 2007	4		4
100	Since 2008	9		9
Total		73	22	11

Canons of authoritative texts, repeatedly read and cited, are a key institution in any academic community. The hope is that the PS-EUS canon offers a model for normative practices in general. The canon is not necessarily a typical sample of PS-EUS literature, however.



Political science requires authors to locate their work within the major theoretical debates that structure the disciplinary literature. This may create an overrepresentation of works on what are known as theoretical grand debates (11 articles), which receive an average of 751 cites each, compared to 468 for other articles, and literature reviews (five articles). By contrast, most writing on the EU is probably much more empirical (Andrews, 2012, p. 757; Katzenstein, Keohane & Krasner, 1998, p. 655).

Third, only political science articles were chosen for the canon. Interdisciplinary articles were included or excluded on the basis of the balance of the authors' training and current departmental affiliations, the article's subject matter and the journal's declared disciplinary affiliation.

Finally, in order to review a large number of articles efficiently, only their introductions and conclusions were examined. These sections are the most likely to contain normative language because this is where authors present their project and sum up the more technical analysis in the main body of the article. For example, authors quite often use their first paragraphs to make broad and eye-catching framing statements that are not necessarily very closely related to the article's main argument. The first four sentences of the single most cited PS-EUS article therefore enthusiastically sets out the essence of the progressive narrative, It calls the EU 'an extraordinary political experiment ... [p]rogressing ... in a consistent direction', pooling 'increasing areas of political authority' through 'prominent' institutions which have 'transformed the nature of European politics' (Pierson, 1996, p. 123). Conclusions often attempt a high level synthesis of the evidence that the body of an article closely analyses. This greater distance from the evidence gives freer rein to the author to interpret it imaginatively and link it with broader political or theoretical concerns that they feel strongly about and therefore discuss in normative terms.

## Identifying normativity

The empirical research centres on how building blocks of narratives represent integration or its works favourably or unfavourably. Normativity towards supranational integration is particularly important. Whereas the neo-functionalist progressive narrative insisted that supranational institutions like the European Commission and Parliament would grow in power, the rival intergovernmentalist theory claimed that member state governments remained in control. Normative expressions therefore include statements which contrast supranational integration and institutions with intergovernmentalism, nationalism and member states. Individual canonical articles frequently contain multiple normative expressions, which can support different narratives and take positive and negative stances towards different aspects of integration.

As fig. 1 demonstrates, I used several criteria to identify expressions as normative. The most straightforward is explicit statement of opinion, criticising or praising some aspect of integration. Ernst Haas considers integration ‘most satisfying’ (#15, pp. 366 & 389). Fritz Scharpf by contrast describes the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy as ‘almost universally considered a grandiose failure’ (#3, p. 241). However, this explicit normativity is relatively rare. Fig. 1 therefore shows three more common types of normative expression, which imply praise or criticism more indirectly.

First, several articles assert that some aspect of integration is failing or succeeding, or will do so. This implies that the integration project is well or ill-founded in some way, with particular implications for the progressive narrative. A common example is the opinion that the democratic deficit constitutes a serious problem for the EU. A surprising number of EUS authors contest this, illustrating the extent to which this opinion is a normative choice.

Second, a few articles explicitly recommend policy change, implicitly criticising present policy. Thomas Risse for example advocates informal networks and institutionalised ‘communicative processes’ as more efficient decision-making mechanisms than ‘slow-moving’ intergovernmental bargaining, which produces ‘nothing more than the lowest common denominator’ (e.g. #16, p. 73).

Third, a very common form of normative expression is the choice of words and phrases such as ‘fortunately’, ‘improve’, ‘optimistic’, ‘succeed’, ‘good’, ‘should’ and their antonyms, especially if such language is repeated or extreme, or if more neutral synonyms are available. Scharpf for example describes some ‘beneficial programmes’ as ‘ridiculously under-financed’ (#3, p. 241). Chadwick and May meanwhile use inverted commas to delegitimise managerial e-government’s emphasis on “‘efficient’” “‘service delivery’” to “‘customers’” or “‘users’” (#21, p. 272). These ‘scare-quotes’ ostentatiously disapprove of practitioners’ claims of efficiency and representations of citizens as customers. A very common variant of normative phraseology associates or disassociates integration with ideas such as progress, innovation, creativity, democracy, peace, fairness, efficiency, reform, idealism, solidarity, compromise and rationality, which Western culture or liberal scholars generally load with positive meaning. When Ian Manners describes the EU’s ‘creative efforts and long-term vision’ as encouraging ‘a more just, cosmopolitan world’, for example, he references values of creativity, foresight, justice and cosmopolitanism which all have positive connotations for Western liberals (Manners, #58, p. 60).

Fourth, an important criterion of normativity is the relationship between assertions and evidence. I treat statements like Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier’s warning about problems with EU conditionality mechanisms for enlargement (#8, p. 676) as non-normative because they emerged directly from detailed empirical analysis in the articles. Fritz Scharpf (#3, p. 270) and Richard Eichenberg and Russell Dalton’s (#12, pp. 507-8) insistence

that the EC needed to ‘deal forcefully’ with vital ‘real problems’, does not. I treat their statements as normative because they instead help contextualize and interpret the authors’ evidence, which supports other conclusions. I do not consider whether representations of European integration correspond to any objective ‘reality’.

Very occasionally, authors apparently select evidence for normative rhetorical effect. Peter Mair for example uses the French and Dutch referendum votes against the EU constitution in 2005, and the lukewarm Luxembourg yes, as examples of ‘ebbing’ support for the EU, but never mentions the 77% yes vote in Spain’s referendum (#64, p. 2). Literature reviews can also be a rhetorical strategy for using evidence, in which it is not always entirely clear whether the author is endorsing or merely reporting the views of cited scholars (e.g. Wessels, #31, pp. 291-92).

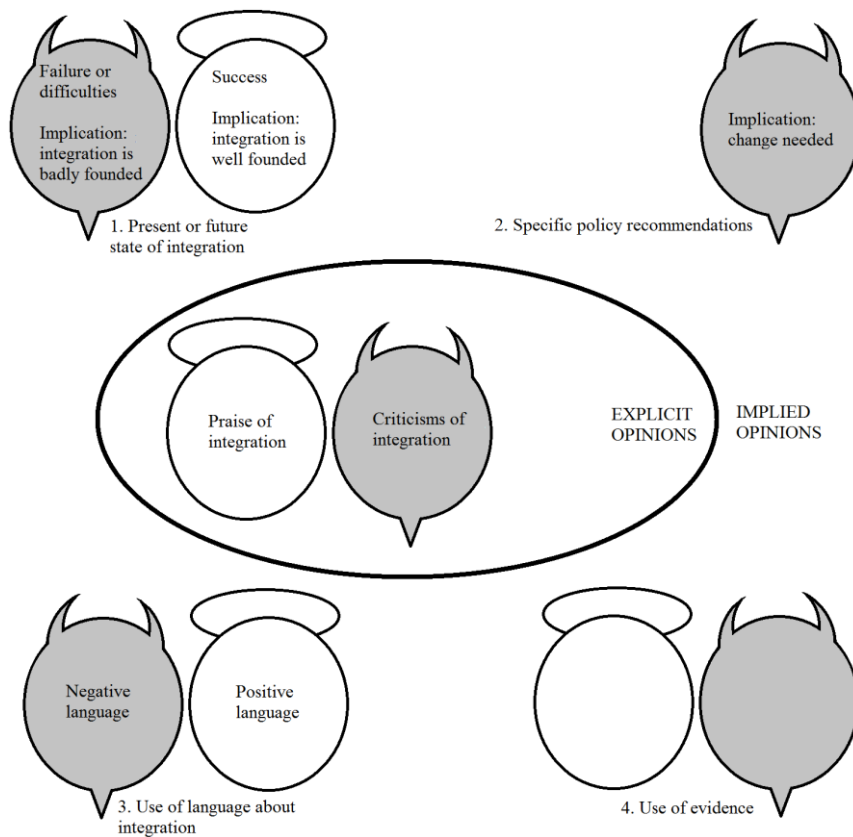


Fig. 1. Angels and demons respectively represent types of normative expression that are positive or negative towards integration.

These are all ways of judging individual normative expressions within articles rather than the overall stances of articles or authors. Risse's policy recommendation above for example implicitly criticises the existing EU for not being supranational enough, so he is using a negative expression of normativity to advocate for greater integration. The very pro-

integrationist Ernst Haas meanwhile despairs of integration's prospects outside Europe (#15, p. 389).

The assessment of individual normative expressions was then used to rate the overall tone of each canonical article on a scale of positivity. Scoring was based on (1), a judgement of the explicitness, forcefulness (e.g. strong language) and gratuitousness of individual normative expressions and (2), the degree to which they were repeated and consistently negative or positive across the article as a whole. Though this two stage process helped ensure consistency, the judgements nevertheless involved some subjectivity. A finely graduated scale for a simple judgement of articles as neutral, balanced (positive and negative statements cancel one another out) or very or slightly favourable/unfavourable towards European integration and its works was therefore eschewed. This resulted in a positivity scale running from +2 to -2, which in turn allowed the production of quite fine-grained quantitative results for the 73 articles as a whole. Their overall average positivity score was 0.03 for example.

Two caveats are in order, the first concerning context. Clearly, normative vocabulary only counts in the analysis when it refers to European integration, but context is most crucial where it involves the relationship of statements to evidence. References to the democratic deficit are for example often presented briefly and with little supporting evidence in framing statements, sometimes to illustrate a broader European malaise. For this reason, the assertion at the start of Sean Carey's article that EU citizens 'have rarely had any direct involvement in the major political decisions made in their name' is treated as highly normative (#29, p. 388). Not only is it unsupported by his empirical survey-based study of how Europeans identify with their nation and other territorial entities, but it is only loosely related to it. He instead appears to be making a deliberate declaration of his normative political position. By contrast, Simon Hix's conclusion that political parties find it 'very difficult' to establish 'stable' pan-

European alliances is treated as non-normative, because it emerges directly from his detailed empirical analysis of party alignments across the EU (#42, p. 92).

The second caveat concerns author's intention. The concern here is with narratives as a form of political communication which shapes opinion. Particular expressions as normative are therefore judged on the basis of whether readers, including relatively unsophisticated readers, such as undergraduates, are likely consciously or unconsciously to interpret them as such.

This defines normativity very broadly. It can include assertions that, for example, a treaty is 'ambitious' or the EU is a 'unique laboratory', which others might interpret as simple non-normative statements of fact.

This broad definition means that normativity is attributed to authors with very different degrees of commitment to political persuasion, apolitical science or reflection on their own normative writing practices. Some of the normative expressions identified are ambiguously and perhaps accidentally normative (e.g. Dür, #66, p. 1213; Hay & Rosamond, #30, p. 163), whereas certain other authors use strong language in canonical articles and are identified in their own writing or secondary sources as politically engaged. Fritz Scharpf (#3, p. 241) is thus firmly committed to the national welfare state for example, and refers to the EC's 'pervasive sense of disappointment, frustration and general malaise' and 'the perversities of CAP'. The critical theorist Ian Manners meanwhile speaks about the EU's 'creative efforts', promotion of 'universally applicable' normative principles and 'ability to normalize a more just, cosmopolitan world' (#58, pp. 45-47).

Normative internal academic agendas add a crucial complication. As examples in the following section demonstrate, authors sometimes make what readers can interpret as normative statements about the EU in order to make arguments about academic theories or the disciplinary organisation of EU studies. The analysis therefore pays attention to

differences between surface meaning and, to the extent it can be reconstructed, the author's agenda.

### **The three narratives**

Representations of a progressive process of European integration and of its failure to create adequate institutions for democratic representation constitute quite coherent narratives. Three elements of these narratives appear to explain a key pattern detected in the canon. Positivity dropped from an average of 0.39 among the 17 articles published before 1998, to -0.11 among the 56 later articles (see Fig. 2). More diverse sets of arguments reject the democratic deficit thesis and emphasise the importance of efficiency.



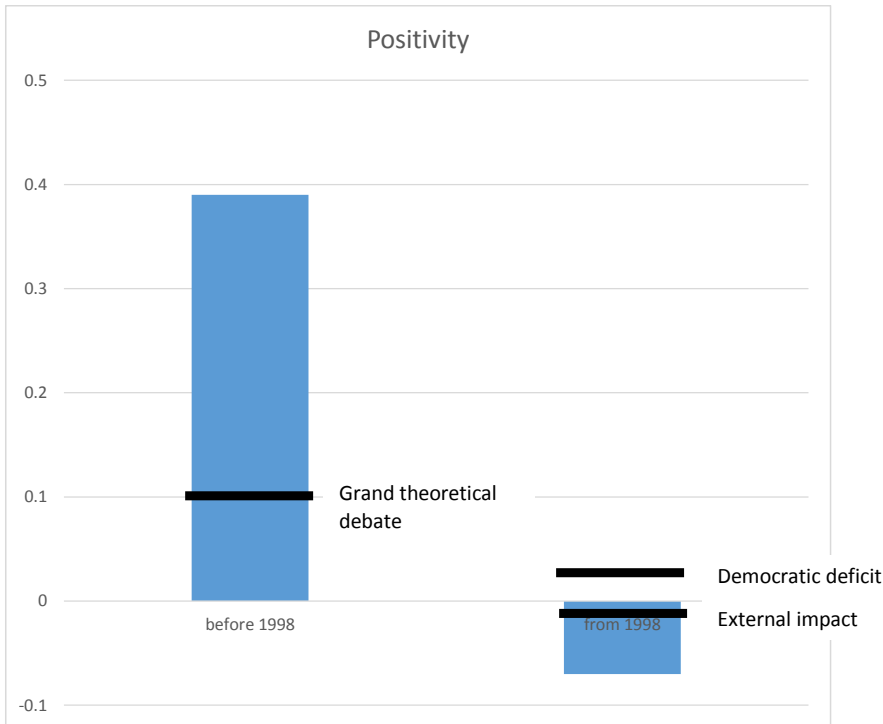


Fig. 2. The dark lines show how positivity before 1998 is reduced if grand theoretical debate articles are removed and positivity from 1998 increases if democratic deficit or external impact articles are removed.

*The progressive-teleological narrative* [section can have national-regional, Europhile/sceptic/rationalist, timed external factors]

Discussing the progressive narrative Gilbert identifies a systematic use in EUS of terms such as ‘Europe’s ‘path’, ‘march’, ‘advance’, ‘progress’’, re-launch, revival or, conversely, ‘stagnation’ and ‘set-backs’. He argues that they turn progressive integration ‘into a creature with a vital life of its own’ (2008, p. 645). Judgements by authors of the success or failure of

measures, he adds, depend ‘almost always [on] whether they augmented or reduced’ supranationality, describing reforms as ‘limited’, ‘tinkering’ or ‘piecemeal’ if they do not. This is a longstanding criticism of EUS. In 1971, Donald Puchala complained that it focussed on what integration ‘*should be* and ... *be leading towards*’ rather than on ‘what it really is’ (#51, p. 268). Two decades later, Alan Milward and Vibeke Sørensen described EUS’s central theory of neo-functionalism, which since the 1960s represented integration as self-reinforcing teleological progress towards supranationalism, as a creature of America’s Cold War foreign policy and European policy-making (1994, pp. 2-3). Gilbert agrees that ‘[a]lmost all scholars of European integration’, have ‘blithe confidence in the inevitability’ of ‘profoundly desirable’ progress towards ‘ever more complex forms of supranational government’ and ‘gradual erosion of national sovereignty’ (Gilbert, 2008, pp. 641-42, 649-50). Even Stanley Hoffmann’s intergovernmentalist critique opposed neo-functionalism ‘gloomily’, recognising its ‘optimism’ (Cafruny & Ryner, 2009, p. 223).

The issue of whether the EU has been, will be or should be becoming more deeply integrated and transferring power from member states to supranational institutions, is a key issue in the canon, mentioned normatively (and mostly positively) in 26 of the 73 articles. Richard Eichenberg and Russell Dalton (#12, p. 507) exemplify Gilbert’s narrative, describing the Single European Act and Maastricht Treaty as an ‘ambitious’ ‘historic threshold’ following ‘a decade of stagnation’. James Caporaso’s description of integration’s ‘incoherent path ... disjointed, moves forward (and backward) in fits and starts’ (#11, p. 30) meanwhile typifies the negativity towards non-progressive change.

The inherently teleological nature of the progressive narrative, perhaps combined with positivist ambitions for the predictive power of science, leads PS-EUS scholars to make normative statements about the future of integration. Alec Stone Sweet and Wayne Sandholz predict that integration will continue to deepen and become more supranational because ‘the

long-term interests of member state governments will be increasingly biased towards the long-term interests of transnational society' (#24, pp. 314-15). A consoling perspective for pro-integrationists compares the 'historical process of state building' of the EU and the pre-Civil War United States, implying that the present uncertain and halting integration process may ultimately culminate in close unity (Caporaso, #11, p. 30). Eight canonical texts reference innovation and creativity, a key element of Europe's progressive-teleological narrative. Jachtenfuchs describes the 'exciting' and 'important' 'transformation' of nation-states into 'a new transnational political system', where 'fundamental developments are probably transforming the possibilities of effective and responsible governance' (#23, pp. 256 & 260). Marks, Liesbet Hooghe and Kermit Blank praise the EU's 'innovative jurisprudence' (#2, p. 372).

Canonical narratives frequently represent integration as the EU's power struggle against its member nation states. Burkard Eberlein and Dieter Kerwer say the EU 'has overcome' member-state interests to move into new policy fields (#60, p. 122). Nation-states are commonly portrayed as the violent, selfish, Machiavellian, regressive antitheses of the peaceful, just and open European future. Five canonical articles link the EU with cooperation, negotiation, decentralisation and peace and twelve refer to selfish, anti-democratic, cynical, hierarchical and violent nation states. Critical scholars argue that key theoretical frameworks, including neo-functionalism, transactionalism, and neo-institutionalism, 'idealized' integration 'as the 'rational' and 'general'', in contrast to the 'irrational', 'special interests' and 'power politics' of states and their international system (Cafruny & Ryner, 2009, pp. 222-23). Jeffrey Lewis identifies the practice of 'appeals to fairness or principled debate' as part of the socialisation of EU officials into EU norms, based on his empirical observations (#59, p. 969). He normatively contrasts this with the chance that they can 'revert to more egoistic and instrumental' national stances. Substituting national interest, democratic

representativeness or patriotism for egoism would leave his basic point largely intact but dramatically change its normative tone. Gary Marks *et al.* discuss state power and control in the emotionally charged language of loss; it has ‘slipped away’, been ‘diluted’; states ‘lose their grip’ and ‘weaken’ (#2, pp. 342-43). The authors then however hint that this is a civilising process. States are ‘extremely powerful ... capable of crushing’ threats and ‘systematically wielding violence’ but, weakened by mutual ‘mistrust’, are ‘melded gently’ into the EU, with its more attractive characteristics of ‘mutual dependence’ and ‘complementary functions’ (Marks *et al.*, #2, pp. 371-72). Emphasising teleological progress, several authors contrast historical ‘national rulers’, who ‘reinforced national solidarity by impelling their populations’ into war and ‘great suffering’, with European integration ‘thankfully’ not using ‘coercion’ (Hooghe & Marks, #10, p. 23; Zürn, #40, p. 212).

Academic factionalism and the geography of scholarship interacted with normative narratives. More than half of the eleven articles that address theoretical grand debates in EUS reference the progressive narrative. Though recognising difficulties in integration, many were critical of nation states and stressed the progress of integration, plus sometimes its innovativeness and necessity. The average positivity score for grand debate articles was a very high 1.11. Grand debate texts leaning towards supranationalism, with an even higher positivity score of 1.125, outnumbered intergovernmentalist articles by four to one.

A new Comparative Politics (CP) challenge to both IR, its disciplinary rival, and to intergovernmentalism, led to eight of the grand debates articles clustering in 1995-98 (Diez & Wiener, 2009, p. 9). Their high positivity level (0.75) largely explains that of this period. Without them, the positivity of the nine other pre-1998 articles is just 0.1 (see Fig 1). For intergovernmentalists, the pre-integration landscape of state-dominated IR remained central and essentially intact. Moravcsik argues that ‘bargaining and delegation by explicit governmental agreement better explains most important decisions in EU history than the

supranationalist alternative' (#37, p. 625). By contrast, CP scholars turned towards the EU following the Maastricht Treaty because integration had become 'so advanced' (Bulmer, #31, p. 352; Christiansen, Jorgensen & Wiener #43, p. 528). Their analyses of the EU's day-to-day functioning minimised the role of member states and their occasional grand bargains (Pierson, #1, p. 124). Gilbert therefore characterises neo-institutionalist CP scholars like Paul Pierson as sharing the supranationalist faith of neo-functionalism (Gilbert, 2008, pp. 641-42, 649-50). In 1999, the CP scholar Hix explicitly challenged IR's traditional leadership of PS-EUS, insisting that 'the EU is now more a 'political system' than an international organisation' (#42, p. 69). This change in the object of study had a profound influence on scholarship. Articles of empirical CP research on governance, policy-making, institutional design, political parties, Europeanisation and lobbying soared from 23% of my canon prior to 1998 to 53% thereafter. The switch from IR grand bargains to day-to-day politics contributed to European scholars, defined by nationality, PhD venue and current workplace, supplanting the previously central role of Americans in EUS (McMahon 2017). Americans were slightly more numerous among canonical IR authors but Europeans overwhelmingly dominated CP EUS. Though European scholars are systematically somewhat more negative about European integration than Americans, CP-IR differences in positivity were at least three times greater, suggesting that subdiscipline largely explains transatlantic differences.

The unremarkable normativity and positivity (-0.125) of the 32 articles of empirical CP research help explain the decline of positivity after 1998. CP contributions to grand debates apparently account for much of the positivity in 1995-98 because Hix and others specifically emphasised supranational progress in grand debate articles in order to advance their disciplinary claim to priority in EUS. The internal academic agendas of academics therefore produced language which a reader can interpret as politically normative.

Intensifying integration is the main preoccupation of the progressive narrative but 13 articles (five on enlargement and eight on the EU's global influence) deal with the expanding geographical impact of European integration, and at least 10 focus exclusively on this. Almost all external impact articles were published in 2000-8, coinciding closely with the negotiation of the EU's eastern enlargement. Manners's piece on the EU's normative power (2007) celebrates Europe's potential to encourage a new, peaceful form of international relations and promote liberal norms outside Europe. However external impact texts are relatively negative in tone (positivity: -0.33). In their absence, positivity for the period since 1998 rises from -0.11 to -0.05 (see Fig. 2). About eight texts criticise the EU's double standards, incoherent external relations and harmful effects. The two on migration policy are especially critical (Guiraudon, #50; Huysmans, #13). Texts that portray the EU as 'a unique laboratory', implicitly suggest that its innovations can be copied elsewhere (Jachtenfuchs, #23, p. 260), but articles that focus on external impact highlight problems with exporting Europe's model. Ernst Haas believes integration contributes to world peace but is deeply pessimistic about the 'pleasant' prospect of its development outside Europe (#15, pp. 366 & 389). Wolfgang Wessels suggests that widening and deepening may be incompatible, as eastern enlargement might require 'bold' and difficult constitutional reforms (#31, p. 292).

#### *Democratic deficit narratives*

Worries about democracy are central to three canonical articles and raised in normative terms by 32 others, often linked with normative turn issues of elitism and technocracy. Rejections and near-rejections of EU treaties since 1993 have made the so-called 'democratic deficit' between the EU's increased powers and its insufficiently democratic political system a core issue for even pro-European PS-EUS scholars (Bellamy & Attucci, 2009, pp. 198-99; Gilbert, 2008, pp. 648-49). Thomas Risse for example considers 'the consequences of ignoring' this

problem ‘disastrous’ (# 16, p. 74) and along with Matthew Gabel and Harvey Palmer (#36, p. 13), offers policy recommendations to address it. Democratic deficit worries are sometimes expressed in strongly normative terms. One article for example complains that although member states ‘[n]ot surprisingly’ resist ‘the EU interfering with national production and welfare regimes’, ‘European elites’ show an ‘alarming tendency’ not to take ‘the public’s ‘growing unease ... seriously enough’ (Höpner & Schäfer, #67, p. 364). Many other references to democracy are only normative however, in the sense that they recognise it as a serious problem for European integration and its progress (e.g. Hix, #42, p. 70).

Pro-integration scholars deflect blame for the democratic deficit to member states. Hooghe and Marks present national leaders as irresponsible cynics, stimulating Euroscepticism among the less ‘cognitively sophisticated’ general public through an ‘elitist style’ of negotiating EU institutional change (#10, p. 22; Marks *et al.*, #2, pp. 371-73). Member governments ‘purport’ incorrectly to represent all their citizens by intensifying ‘national stubbornness in European negotiations’, while trying to preserve ‘log-rolling and side-payments’ (Hooghe & Marks, #10, p. 22). These and other authors argue that member governments use ‘strategic’ European integration rhetoric to push through ‘unpalatable reforms’, shifting decisions to the EU level ‘to shed responsibility’ for them (Hay & Rosamond, #30, p. 163; Marks *et al.*, #2, p. 371). This argument is normative to the extent that authors or readers object to manipulative, sneaky government strategies to sell reforms.

Democracy concerns are the third major explanation for falling positivity. Since 1998, articles normatively referencing democracy have a positivity of -0.41 while the remaining articles score 0.13 (see Fig. 2). Negativity is concentrated in the five texts which warn that the democracy problem is worsening (positivity -1.6), and also in the 13 articles from 2002-7 (positivity -0.8), when Irish, French and Dutch voters rejected the Nice, Constitutional or Lisbon EU reform treaties in four separate referenda. Other articles referencing democracy

are slightly positive on average. A surprising portion of theorists are quite sanguine on the subject (Schmidt, #70, p. 2). Jonas Tallberg identifies a synergistic ‘mutual empowerment’ of supranational EU institutions and the ‘citizens and companies’ who use them to complain about infringements of European law (#38, p. 638). Andreas Dür cites studies of EU lobbying that aim to counter the ‘simplistic ... popular’ view of ‘all-powerful interest groups’, implying that EU governance is somewhat better than stereotypes suggest (#66, p. 1213).

Andrew Moravcsik’s exceptionally clear and comprehensive rejection of democratic deficit worries as ‘unsupported by the existing empirical evidence’ may offer a second example of academic agendas influencing normative narratives of integration (#4, p. 605). Andreas Føllesdal and Hix (#6, p. 541) describe his arguments on the democratic deficit as ‘extensions’ of his liberal-intergovernmental theory of European integration, around which he constructed his entire career. Some elements of Moravcsik’s argument, such as describing EU democracy as ‘very much in line with the general practice of most modern democracies’ (#4, pp. 621-22) do not necessarily support this accusation. Other key elements, such as insisting that the EU is ‘restricted by treaty and practice to a modest subset of the substantive activities’ of modern states (#4, p. 607), certainly do however. Moravcsik’s quest for liberal-intergovernmentalist explanations for practically all major developments in EU politics (e.g. Moravcsik & Vachudova, 2003) suggest his democracy article was part of a campaign to demonstrate its comprehensiveness as a grand theory, and therefore, as theoretical rivals complain, ‘aggressively’ demonstrate ‘its superiority’ (Stone Sweet & Sandholz, #24, p. 298). Moravcsik thus boasted that ‘many critics now concede’ that his theory ‘remains indispensable and fundamental to any account of regional integration’ (#37, p. 625).

The progressive-teleological and democratic deficit narratives interact in complex ways. Hix describes concerns about democracy as a ‘by-product’ of enhanced and increasingly politicised integration, as the EU has massively expanded its competences since the 1992



Maastricht Treaty (1999, p. 70). This external issue interacted with two internal factors to promote the rise of critical scholarship, which stressed left-wing political engagement over scientific traditions of objectivity. First, critical work in my canon overlapped strongly with reflectivist approaches that spread into political science in the 1990s from sociology, philosophy and cultural studies. Second, canonical reflectivists and critical scholars were overwhelmingly of European origin and therefore benefitted from the thorough Europeanisation of EUS scholarship from the 1990s on (McMahon 2017).

Some critical EUS scholars have denounced the ‘imperialist’, ‘neo-liberal’ EU but others placed their hopes in its ‘post-national and cosmopolitan democracy’, implying teleological progress beyond the nation-state era (Manners, 2007, pp. 77-78). Føllesdal and Hix disagree with Moravcsik’s ‘optimistic conclusions’ about EU democracy but predict a brighter future (#6, pp. 556-57). ‘All is not lost ... change is on its way’ in transnational political alignments and institutions, which ‘may not even require fundamental reform’, while democratic contestation has ‘started to emerge’. Other theorists offer very conditional hope for progress. Sandra Lavenex qualifies her rather negative assessment of EU external governance by leaving open the ‘long run’ possibility that adaptation by the EU and its member states, ‘if successful’, could create greater ‘politics of inclusion’ (#35, p. 695). Simon Bulmer meanwhile states that European institutions developed ‘ahead of a popular, democratic groundswell of support’ and ‘in advance of the structures for ensuring democratic legitimation’ (#31, p. 353). The phrases ‘ahead of’ and ‘in advance of’ suggest an expected future. Some leading rational choice scholars in the canon reverse the causal relationship; democracy might ‘slow down the pace’ of integration (Gabel & Palmer, #36, p. 13; Tsebelis & Garrett, #28, p. 32; #46, p. 384). They argue that once those citizens ‘least able to benefit from EC membership’ realise that the European Parliament has increased its powers, they

may demand that MEPs ‘act more as delegates’ than as ‘pro-integrationist coconspirators with the Commission and Court’.

### *Efficiency narratives*

For scholars of institutional design in particular, efficiency and effectiveness are key normative considerations, expressed in normative language in 14 canonical articles. Tallberg repeats the adjective ‘effective’ for the EU’s compliance mechanisms four times in the first three paragraphs of his conclusion (#38, pp. 637-38). In four paragraphs of their introduction, tracing the history of European institutions, Tsebelis and Garrett use the terms ‘remarkably effective’, ‘legislative gridlock’ (twice), ‘ineffective’, ‘hamstrung’, ‘effective’ and ‘gridlock’ (#46, pp. 358-59). In contrast to other articles, those referencing efficiency became much more positive after the millennium. Far from explaining the drop in positivity therefore, it becomes wider if these articles are removed.

The broadest efficiency narrative is that integration is a practical necessity to provide ‘benefits’ and address ‘real problems’, which member states cannot handle singly (Eichenberg & Dalton, #12, p. 508; Scharpf, #3, p. 270). Three articles for example argue that globalisation requires international political organisation. Linking efficiency and democracy, Eichenberg and Dalton say ‘elites must convince their domestic audiences that the benefits of further integration are worth their costs’. This might just be an objective analysis of political strategy, but by adding that ‘active public support’ is needed for the EU ‘to deal forcefully’ with issues confronting it (#12, p. 508), they hint that they also normatively believe the benefits of integration outweigh its costs.

Five articles on ‘new governance’ techniques, such as the open method of coordination, multi-level governance and policy networks, tightly link narratives of efficiency, innovation and democracy. Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (#8, pp. 674-75) distinguish between the ‘hierarchical’ ‘old governance’, involving ‘command, control, and steering by the state’, and the ‘new’ or ‘network governance’ ... based on horizontal co-ordination and co-operation, negotiated in decentralized settings’. Their normative language about ‘bureaucratic actors’ and ‘a top-down process’ imposing rules, even where ‘societal actors should have played an important role’, suggests that they see the new governance as more socially representative. Whereas scholars are largely positive about governance innovations, many recognise that they may pose problems of elitism and opacity. John Peterson for example suggests that democracy and efficiency may not be entirely reconcilable. He says policy networks ‘bring advantages’ for ‘policy innovation’, allow ‘affected interests to participate directly’ and ‘curb the excesses of public power’ but may have ‘sinister’ implications for democracy (#19, p. 88). He quotes both a national official complaining about ‘real decisions’ being taken in ‘cosy chats’ with EU officials and EU officials praising these ‘useful and ‘important’ ‘informal conciliations’ (Peterson, #19, p. 87). Moravcsik meanwhile insists that certain public institutions work better when insulated from democratic control (#4, p. 614).

## **Conclusion**

Identifying normativity in scholarly writing is challenging and necessarily subjective. This article has therefore sought to clarify its interpretative process as much as possible. I found that the vast majority of canonical PS-EUS texts contain some normative commentary on European integration, its institutions and policies. These shifted from largely positive towards

European integration and its works before 1998 to greater negativity afterwards. I found three explanatory factors for this.

One is that in a batch of highly cited grand debate articles, clustered in 1995-98, CP scholars successfully presented an alternative to IR-centred intergovernmentalist EUS. By arguing that the advanced state of supranational integration necessitated their research on the EU's day-to-day operations, they contributed to the progressive narrative, one of the longest-standing and most powerful narrative traditions in EUS, including among canonical PS-EUS texts. This teleological narrative sometimes takes such forms as predictions and hopes. It celebrates supranational integration as an innovative force for peace and rationality, gradually but successfully supplanting the cynical and brutal old nation state system.

The other two factors encouraging the more negative tone after 1998 were the EU's external impact and its democratic deficit, which became increasingly prominent in PS-EUS writing. Democratic deficit articles were much more numerous and had a more significant effect, though surprising numbers of them were relatively relaxed about the EU's democratic legitimacy. The democratic deficit and progressive narratives interacted in complex ways. Ten authors believed more effective democracy was on the way, though one rational choice article thought more democracy would empower opponents of further integration.

The third major group of narratives of integration, concerning the EU's efficiency in functioning, delivering benefits and addressing Europe's problems, were also entangled with the other narratives. Innovative new forms of governance and the technocratic threat they posed to democracy were, for example, major concerns.

Factors external to academia impact on EUS. The passage of time made new problems of globalisation more prominent in PS-EUS than congratulatory old narratives of escaping war among European states. The EU's constitutional crisis and new responsibilities for difficult

external-impact issues such as migration also help explain why scholars became increasingly pessimistic and critical about integration. Scholars had more liberty to imbue the earlier, relatively content-free phase of the European project with positive cosmopolitan ideals and hopes. Deepening integration also assured the triumph of the CP agenda of studying EU politics and policy, side-lining the grand ontological debates of twentieth-century PS-EUS. This internal academic upheaval then made CP preoccupations, such as the democratic deficit, external impact and efficiency, prominent in the PS-EUS canon. By marginalising the grand debate's disciplinary and theoretical arguments meanwhile, it restrained the rhetorical use of normative language about the EU.

This illustrates the difficulty in neatly distinguishing normative language about integration and about theoretical or disciplinary agendas. For example, Hix's perhaps spoke of the EU's 'enormous' or 'increasing impact' to advocate for CP's role in studying it. Readers, particularly if unfamiliar with intra-disciplinary agendas of this kind, could be forgiven for understanding a normative endorsement of the progressive narrative. I attempt elsewhere to isolate Europhile and Eurosceptic convictions from internal academic impulses for EUS scholars' normativity (McMahon 2017), but this is never entirely possible.

If EUS indeed influences policy-makers' narratives of European integration, EUS scholars should be aware of how their practices of normative writing construct these narratives. Even without political influence however, scholars need reflexivity about practices like normative expression, in order to avoid reproducing unconscious biases. Did different national narratives about European identity for example shape EUS debate about the specific geography of EU enlargement? As Pierre Bourdieu argues, continuous awareness of 'the implications and presuppositions of the routine operations of scientific practice' is 'a particularly effective means' for scholars to improve our 'chances of attaining truth' (2004, p. 89).

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## Appendix: Canonical texts

Key: CPS: Comparative Political Studies, EJPR: European Journal of Political Research, EUP: European Union Politics, IO: International Organization, JEI: Journal of European integration, JEPP: Journal of European Public Policy, JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, JoP: Journal of Politics, WEP: West European Politics

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Diez (personal communication, July 10, 2015) also noted that my harvesting software failed to find certain highly cited articles. This is probably due to Google's secret search algorithm, which lists results in order of 'relevance'.