

Congrès AFSP Aix 2015

ST 38

Changements dans la gouvernance des politiques sociales et dynamique du pacte démocratique en Europe

Jean-Claude Barbier,
CNRS Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, CES¹
(jean-claude.barbier@univ-paris1.fr)

Le mythe de la compétence linguistique en anglais et quelques conséquences pour la politique en Europe

/ The myth of English language and some of its consequences for politics in Europe

A double ignorance

Languages are ignored in the European Union. This bold statement can be easily contradicted; a number of facts and the existence of numerous institutions tend to belie it. Such facts and institutions are obvious to anyone familiar with –*inter alia*– the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (its article 22), with article 17 of the Treaty of Functioning of the European Union (TFEU); in the same vein, one would rightly recall that multilingualism is the rule in the European Parliament and that, at least in theory, EU law is only applicable to a European citizen as long as it is enacted in her or his native language. The statement in our *incipit* seems even bolder when one is conscious that “ignore” in standard English (the alleged “world’s language²”) is not *ignorer* in French, nor *ignorare* in Italian or in Latin. *Ignore* in English means “fail or refuse to notice, disregard”³. And yet it is in this *strong* sense that we consider that *the key role of languages is ignored in the European Union*, despite existing institutions and the obvious practice of interpretation, translation, multilingualism and so forth. Of course, it is more a “quasi-ignorance” we are dealing with.

¹ A preliminary version of this presentation was discussed at the Symposium “Economics, Justice and Language Policy” Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, 2-3 March, 2015. The present paper is a simplified version of “English speaking, a hidden political factor of European politics and European integration”, to be published in 2015 in the Italian journal *Politiche Sociali* (Il Mulino).

² On the 17th of January, 2008, Gordon Brown, former British Prime Minister, declared about English: “It is becoming the world’s language. Indeed, English is much more than a language: it is a bridge across borders and cultures, a source of unity in a rapidly changing world.” <http://www.politics.co.uk/news/2008/01/17/brown-pushes-english-as-global-language>, consulted November, 30th, 2014.

³ A great majority of non-native English speakers in the Latin countries of the EU probably do not know this exact meaning, even when they consider themselves proficient in English.

More precisely, the *national languages of politics*⁴ are ignored in two main ways: first, they are ignored by social scientists⁵ – only a handful of researchers care about the empirical and theoretical consequences of language diversity in European politics and polities; secondly, they are ignored by politicians in Europe who, as in a fortress, are strongly united fighting for their mainstream means of communication, “European English⁶”, proud as they are to belong to the tiny readership of *the Economist* newspaper⁷. Put against the vast numbers of European citizens who do not speak nor understand European (or any other brand of) English, especially in the Latin countries of the EU and in Central Europe – this tiny elite comprises the de facto national oligarchies and the political personnel at the EU level (made of members of lobby groups, MEPs, civil servants in the various EU institutions, members of think tanks, and members of various EU level forums like academics, administrative officers, trade union members, members of various associations and charities, etc.). The ignorance of the importance of languages by such elites is part of the explanation of the ignorance of this importance by social scientists who, more often than not, are also members of these elites and closely linked to the above mentioned oligarchies.

In this presentation, we want to show that national languages are a hidden factor, a forgotten variable of the explanation of politics as they are made today in the EU. Language also manifests the utter “disconnection” between the national forums of political communication (where people and actors mainly speak national languages, including their varieties⁸) and the other types of EU/national forums reserved to experts/élites⁹ (scientific, and policy community forums, elites who speak a variety among possible *Englishes*). As a consequence of the underestimation of this disconnection, reflections loose much of their value when they

⁴ In most countries, there is one official “national language” for politics, public life and public institutions, for elections, education and so forth; in a few ones, two languages are official: French and Dutch in Belgium; Swedish and Finnish in Finland; Catalanian and Castilian in parts of Spain, etc. We contend that official national languages are indispensable for the practice of politics and we don’t share the relativistic position of sociolinguists who prefer the term “named languages” (Ricento,2014).They thus symbolically decrease the importance of national languages and on the other hand stress the importance of all sorts of varieties of the alleged “named languages”. What is documented in sociolinguistics is only pertinent in political sociology to a certain extent.

⁵ See further: the contrast is obvious between Ferrera (2005) and Bartolini (2005); among political philosophers, Van Parijs (2011) stands out because he acknowledges that there exists a “language question” in Europe; economists ignore the question and Grin (2005; 2011) and Gazzola (2014) are exceptions. For the handful of social scientists studying European politics and at the same time considering languages as essential, see list of references.

⁶ Empirically, transnational elites in general do not speak proper English, whether American or British. They speak a variety of English, which we will call “European English”, to be compared with Chinese English, Indian English, and so on. Here I will ignore the discussion about “Globish”.

⁷ A newspaper that is, incidentally, written in excellent British English.

⁸ In forums of political communication, politics at the national level make use of both the national mainstream official language and a vast number of language varieties according to circumstances. Indeed, one of the characteristics of *national* forums of political communication (in Jobert’s sense, see next footnote) is that, within them, actors, individuals, politicians, and all sorts of citizens are able to use many varieties of the official languages and to play with them. No such counterfactual possibility exists at the EU level, where the mainstream variety of English spoken is the *shadow of a European language*, what Steiner once named a “thin wash” (Steiner, 1975).

⁹ Following Jobert (1998) there are three main types of forums: forums of political communication; forums of policy communities, and scientific forums. Each type of forum exists at national and transnational levels for a particular theme or topic. We show that the empirical forums tend to be more hybrid than their types. For an application, see Barbier (2014).

assume the existence of a universal “*Öffentlichkeit*”, where “debate” is supposed to take place between decontextualized citizens with no language limitations. This disconnection also opposes elites and ordinary citizens: it is the case that elites speak English and ordinary citizens do not. However, contrary to some analyses, the perspective of a “Euro-clash” (Fligstein, 2008) is not credible in the sense that it would oppose, on one side, Europeanized footloose elites and on the other, the poor and the immobile. Rather, it is *multiple clashes* that have already started to materialize in some places, but *within national boundaries*. In the conclusion, we will ponder the current limitations of reforms that are mooted for the European institutions, as they firmly keep ignoring the role of languages in European politics. Yet, as Box 1 illustrates in passing, language matters in national debates.

Box 1. Immigrants, welfare, sinners, debts and culpability, and the Fascist parties in France and Brussels

When for instance it comes to labelling foreigners and immigrants, a host of derogative words abound, which are often similar across countries but which have a strong meaning in each of the programmes and in their national languages. In Denmark, the *Dansk Folkeparti* has been trying for some years to foster policies for the preservation of the Danish language and provoked a parliamentary report in 2008¹⁰. The term “*social turisme*” or “*velfaerdsturisme*” (signifying “*misbrug af sociale ydelser*”, i. e. the “abuse” of benefits) was introduced in Danish in the mid-2000s and became a key factor during the 2014 European Parliament election, to the point that the president of the EU Commission had to intervene indirectly in the Danish debate. In the Netherlands, the words “betray” (*bedrog*), “deceit” (*verraad*) can be found in political manifestoes of Geert Wilder’s PVV (party of freedom), along with words of exclusion: “*allochtoon*” (euphemism for immigrant), “*vreemd*” (foreign)¹¹. In English, the term “welfare tourism” was also picked up by the Conservatives and the UKIP, but the tradition has been very long of bashing so-called “asylum seekers” who are also deemed to be “scroungers”. David Cameron was close to his voters when fearing “the magnetic pull of Britain’s benefit systems” in summer 2014. In French where the preservation and defense of the French language is a cross-party question, two typical French expressions were essential for the final outcome of the 2005 referendum: the term “*plombier polonais*” (Polish plumber, as the typical immigrant rival for jobs) and the expression, “*gravé dans le marbre*” (carved into the marble, literally meaning what cannot be changed for eternity) was a key motto for refusing to carve the EU project for a constitution into the EU marble tables.

In a different domain, the problems of the crisis, we have already mentioned the success of the offensive English term “bail out”, which carries with it the deeply derogatory connotation of the moral failure of those who are to be “bailed out”. But the German language is also of much importance. The sacred “*Deutsche Steuerzahler*” (the German taxpayer) “*ist der Dumme*” (is the stupid victim), recently wrote the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (13.9.2014) in one of its editorials. The German language is peopled with words

¹⁰ *Sprog til tiden, rapport fra sprogdvalget*, Ministry of Culture. Copenhagen, 2008.

¹¹ See M. Rooduijn & T. Pauwels, 2011.

conveying religious connotations when it comes to economic behavior: debts are “*Schulden*”, evoking culpability; countries that overstep their spending constraints are “*Defizitsünder*” (sinners). Expressions with a historical meaning, as in all languages, have a great importance, as for instance the “*Geld drucken*” (printing money) which evokes the monetary crisis of the 1930s. Nowadays, the German media very naturally talk about “*Schuldenstaaten*” literally “debt states”, meaning the countries seen as having excessive debts. In German, the European Union has now become divided between the *Schuldenstaaten* (sometimes “*Krisenländer*” or *Krisenstaaten*) (a code for Southern countries, “countries of the crisis” or in crisis) and respectable countries (the likes of Germany, Finland, the Netherlands and Austria). Such political communication is highly dependent on the language it uses for each electorate.

It also frequently leads to misunderstandings and the inability of politicians in one country to go beyond their stereotypes. The German case is here again interesting. After the European Parliament election, German minister Schäuble declared that in France, there was “*eine faschistische Partei*” when he spoke about the French *Front national* (27.5.2014). This was a typical misunderstanding between German and French political cultures: assimilating the French FN to fascism missed the essential development of the ethno-nationalist party in recent history. In the same vein, Frank Walter Steinmeier, the German foreign minister made a declaration after the European elections where he called to “standing up to xenophobia and anti-Semitism”¹², and of the “openly right-wing parties”. He took the German NPD (the heir to the Nazi party) as typical and called for introducing a “threshold” of a certain proportion of votes in order to block the “populist parties” from being elected in the European Parliament. It was as if all parties leaning to the extremes were to be considered by the German elite politicians a reinvention of Nazi and Fascist parties, a situation that is entirely belied by any empirical analysis of these forces across the European Union.

Despite and along European integration, the variety of languages has remained – and, as we will see, will remain in the future a key characteristic of European politics: at the same time, a tiny number of people really seems to care about language and languages, the indispensable channel through which humans do politics, whether in the EU or elsewhere. Especially in “Brussels”, hardly any influential official does apparently really care. The scope for EU language policies is direly limited. For all the boasting about the richness and value of multilingualism by the Commission, empirical realizations remain marginal and confined to the world of myths and spin doctoring. Even basic statistics of language proficiency are scarce, as will be seen now, or, worse, manipulated politically. At the national level, politicians seem to think that they can escape the problem: they assume that, however dismal, their “English” will do¹³. We will now turn to the myth of English competence.

¹² Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, London, July, 3rd, 2014.

¹³ Incidentally, politicians heavily involved in European politics – in the sense of the European Union forums and arenas – comprise quite a number of polyglots, including some famous as Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the British vice prime minister (Nick Clegg), or Commission President Barroso. There is also a constantly renewed group of politicians who are derided for their English. German Commissioner Öttinger is perhaps the most famous for this on the internet and in his own country. French Commissioner Barrot once had to attend a crash course of English when he learnt he was Commissioner for Transport. Minister of Finance Michel Sapin in the Valls government in 2014 was often quoted as having many problems with his English.

The language question in the European Union

Very generally, the “language question” in the European Union is considered to be more or less solved by the successful dissemination of *European English*. This belief is widespread among politicians, civil servants and academics, but also among chief executive officers who often impose the use of English as a working language in meetings and in personal evaluation procedures in big companies. The way (British or American, essentially) English was turned into today’s European “lingua franca” (i.e. vehicular language) (Ostler, 2011) is complicated. It has been upheld with the help of many justifications, among which the active participation of various elites has been central.

One of the most consistent advocates for the universalization of English in Europe is without doubt political philosopher Philippe Van Parijs at Louvain University. We will not systematically analyze his views here (for a review, see Barbier, 2012) but we will start from the essential point that he pretends making in his remarkable book, *Linguistic Justice*, where he writes: “English has become – and, judging by the age pattern of linguistic competence documented above is becoming every day even more – Europe’s lingua franca” (ibid., p. 9). In this section we proceed in three steps: first we challenge Van Parijs's views¹⁴ about English practice and proficiency in Europe today and in the future. Second we point at the striking coexistence of three facts observed in some countries: lower class and less qualified people who are at the same time the less proficient in foreign languages skills, also tend to vote for parties which are hostile, distrustful both of European integration and of immigration. And finally we stress how social polarization affects the distribution of language skills in Europe along the distribution of trust towards the European Union. The first point is not well known and must be documented in detail. The second point provides an illustration of the polarization of language skills in three countries. For the third point, this polarization fits well into the wider European context.

The fallacy of English as lingua franca and the polarization of English skills

Van Parijs’s controversial book starts from a chapter (“Lingua franca”) that brings about empirical facts that are essential. Yet the chapter is methodologically flawed because it starts from the erroneous assumption that “there is no dataset that could document it [the extension of English as a lingua franca, ndr] with anything like the same precision as the Eurobarometer”. In this P. Van Parijs has no original take: he belongs to the large class of scholars – N. Fligstein is another (see 2008: 147-158) – who are victims of the methodologically inadequate Eurobarometer – a highly politicized instrument (Aldin, 2000). It is a well-known fact that, because of its very marginal intervention in terms of language policies, and because of its dogged sanctioning of the de facto inequality of languages in the day- to-day functioning of the “Brussels” arenas, the European Commission has a vested interest in pretending that this linguistic situation is not problematic. Hence its direct interest

¹⁴ While at the same time acknowledging that he belongs to the tiny minority of scholars who thinks Europe has “a central language problem” and that it should be tackled in a “fair and efficient” way (Van Parijs, 2011, p. 3).

to the “window-dressing” of statistics about language skills, and the promotion of the fallacy according to which “English” is shared by a majority of European citizens, and should be promoted as such.

The reason for challenging Eurobarometer (EB)’s findings¹⁵ lies first and foremost in its haphazard methodology. First, the survey is entirely based on self-declaration, which is well known in the field for allowing for overestimation of language skills. Second, the categories used for assessing whether speakers of English speak it fairly, badly or proficiently, are uncertain and not based on explicit statements submitted to interviewees. A person will be considered by EB as speaking/knowing a second language once they claim being able to have a conversation in it¹⁶. Additionally, the situations in which they have such conversations are not preconceived in the questionnaire; they merely result from what interviewees declare. Two dominant situations are: “during holidays abroad” and “watching TV films or listening to the radio”, a third and a fourth mainstream situation being the use of internet and exchanges with friends¹⁷. None of these situations are checked against real practice and, especially for the first two of them, they cannot seriously characterize genuine knowledge of a language. In 2012, according to a fresh version of the Eurobarometer¹⁸, foreign languages knowledge as the EB defined it showed no progress since 2006; language skills were rather stagnant – even with younger speakers deemed to perform better. They even decreased if one used the mean figure, a measure that has moreover little meaning. Across the European Union, in 2006, the proportion of people supposedly able to speak a second language – in their majority, English – was 56% whereas in 2012 the proportion was 54%¹⁹. What all this boils down to is that a *very fragile majority of people are, according to their own declarations, able for mundane purposes to use some form of second language that is generally English-like*. Mainly because the second language in many countries is not English (it is only in 19 out of 25 countries), and given that English is not counted as a foreign language in the UK and in Ireland, the mean strict rate of English speaking according to Eurobarometer was only 38% among Europeans in 2012. This left out 6 out of 10 people and was far from substantiating the claim, either by Van Parijs or by the Commission’s departments, according to which English actually functioned as a “lingua franca” in Europe. Moreover, what was hidden by Eurobarometer’s “optimistic” spin was the deep inequality of the distribution of English skills: in fact, in most countries, only a minority of the population speaks/understands English and EU peoples are de facto excluded from English in their majority. Given that today English has become the language of politics and law at the EU level²⁰, this is not a minor political problem. Contrary to what Van Parijs and mainstream economists generally consider, languages are not merely “resources” or

¹⁵ For an organization that features itself as a promoter of plurilingualism, the European Union does very few surveys about languages. A special survey was first issued in 2001. A second in 2006 and a third one in 2012.

¹⁶ Question D48b-d:” Which languages do you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation, excluding your mother tongue? First other language? Second other language? Third other language? »

¹⁷ Eurobarometer 2006, special EB243, p. 18. (Special EB 54.1 (2001) was the previous version).

¹⁸ Special EB 386, June 2012.

¹⁹ Part of this decrease was explained by the change in Russian speaking in Bulgaria, but also as a consequence of the separation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

²⁰ For details see Barbier (2015): more than 80% of lawmaking happens in English in the European Union and a majority of political texts will never be translated.

“capital” available for their utilitarian use and investment: they are basic universal human features and the essential vehicles of politics. Hence English speaking for European citizens has become more essential than ever.

It so happens that, from 2007, the European Commission has been publishing other findings about language skills that came from an experimental survey (Adult Education Survey, AES); the AES has now a second point of measure with 2012 (except for some countries, see Gazzola, 2014). It is representative of the European population aged from 25 to 64, and this puts English skills higher than a survey representative of all ages would do. Also using self-declaration, the AES has similar limitations as the EB. However, it displays a more rigorous approach because people are put in types according to defined abilities. Initially the survey had four types (basic, fair, good and proficient). People were asked whether they were (a) proficient (this means the ability to understand and produce a wide range of demanding texts and use the language flexibly; (b) good (this means claiming an ability to describe experiences and event fairly fluently and to produce a simple text; and (c) fair/basic, i.e. an ability to understand and use the most common and everyday expressions in relations to familiar things and situations²¹.

Compared with “optimistic” EB findings, AES ones seriously lower the level of language skills of Europeans. The 2007 findings showed that, across the EU, only 13.3 % of “adults” (25-64 of age) considered themselves as “proficient”, i. e. belonging to the best category; 15.9% saw themselves among the “good”. This led to the fact that less than a third of Europeans were able at the time to really handle a rather simple situation in English, and to write simple texts. As for the ability of seriously participating in politics in English, this left only the small number of proficient people on the basis of their declarations, the 13.3%. In the 2007 survey the majority was made of those who had no second language (38.3%²²) and those who claimed a fair/basic knowledge (30.0 %). As we can see from the following tables, the situation has not changed much with the second wave of the AES (2011). On its basis²³, Gazzola (2014) went further and defined a “linguistic exclusion rate” (*tasso di esclusione linguistica*). He compared various linguistic regimes, one of which being a monolingual one with English as an official language in this case. An “absolute” exclusion rate (Ea) measured the rate of those who didn’t speak or understand documents and broadcasts in English. Gazzola added those who had English as a mother tongue or understood or spoke it excellently: the rest was considered as “relatively” excluded (Er), because of their lower skill in English. Gazzola’s figures appear in tables 1 and 2. Mean figures show that the proportion of the *absolutely excluded* make about half the European Union population (25-65), and, those who they are neither native speakers or proficient more than 80% of it. Figures would be higher still if the survey covered people aged more than 65.

Table 1 Exclusion rates in the European Union in a monolingual regime (English as the official language)

²¹ AES specifications. Initially in 2007, fair and basic were counted apart.

²² EB findings are not strictly comparable with AES findings.

²³ There are several limits to the coverage of the survey in 2011: no data for the Netherlands, partial data for Italy, Malta, and Denmark.

%, AES, 2011, figures from Gazzola, 2014	Absolute exclusion rate	Relative exclusion rate
Across the EU	49	81
Age 55-64	63	82
Age 25-34	37	79
Highest income quintile	29	Na
Lowest income quintile	60	Na
Highest education level	19	Na
Lowest education level	89	Na
Intellectual occupations	16	60
Managers	35	66
Low qualified workers and employees	69	86
Financial industry	12	59
Agriculture	86	97

Table 1 illustrates the fact that a small minority of people in the European Union are able to perform the basic social requirements in English that are expected from ordinary members of any society. One should not, in this respect, forget that, in a majority of member states today, there exist significant minorities and groups who experience dire difficulties in speaking, understanding and writing the official language of their countries according to mainstream standards, as the very high degrees of illiteracy in the European Union illustrate²⁴. Notwithstanding this important caveat, table 2 shows that in the most populated countries (Germany, France, Italy, Spain and Poland, the relative exclusion rate is higher than 90%. According to the view of politics we hold here, only one in ten people is assumed to be able to participate in European English politics, the mainstream situation.

There are in fact roughly three main groups of countries (again excluding the UK, for obvious reasons): Latin countries, Central and Eastern European countries and the Scandinavians (Germany and the Netherlands stand apart). Scandinavians are the only ones who are sufficiently proficient to understand proper English, and often to speak a rather understandable variety of it. Table 1 also illustrates the huge polarization between the lower

²⁴ European surveys have estimated that about 20% of European citizens lack the literacy skills they need to function fully in a modern society, and the OECD Pisa studies in 2009 showed that one in five 15-year old had poor reading skills.

qualified (almost 90% of them have no access to a second language) and the better qualified (only 20% are absolutely excluded). Similar polarization goes along with income levels and occupations. People employed in agriculture are absolutely excluded from English at nearly a 90% rate while the “excluded” working in the financial sector are only 12%. What is perhaps even more striking is that when one takes into consideration the level of proficiency, occupations deemed to be better qualified still show a very high *relative* exclusion rate (two thirds for managers). Being de facto excluded from the practice of “very good English” is also the situation of about one fifth of Scandinavian adults, despite the very high levels of their national country average. To sum up briefly the European situation: the “language question” in the European Union is extremely worrying, because across the Union, roughly eight to nine out of ten people cannot understand the ordinary functioning of European English politics and are de facto excluded from any serious political participation in them.

Table 2 Exclusion rates of the population in a monolingual regime (English as the official language): countries

% , AES, 2011 figures from Gazzola, 2014	Absolute exclusion rate	Relative exclusion rate
France	55	95
The UK	1	3
Germany	43	82
Italy	54	97
Spain	67	94
Poland	75	96
Denmark	15	No data
Sweden	9	18
Hungary	85	97

Table 3 complements this picture when one considers occupations and employment status. Here, figures are about second languages (one looks for the proportion of people who know no other language as their own national or mother tongue language), and we leave aside the question of the monolingual regime. Except for the case of the UK and Central European countries²⁵, this question roughly measures the proportion of people who are excluded from communication when one uses English.

Table 3. % of people knowing no second language, status of employment and occupations in 2007 (AES, Eurostat) (25-64 year old)

²⁵ Because of the role of Russian and some other languages as a second language.

Status country	All in employment	Inactive	unemployed	managers	Elementary occupations ²⁶
The UK	31.4	44.7	45.4	21.1	52
France	38.1	51.9	41.3	20.7	54.7
Germany	25.4	35.0	38.4	13.7	34.3
Italy	na	56.8	37	Na	na
Spain	40.7	65.6	49.5	33.0	56.7
Poland	31.5	49.8	41.8	12.3	52.2
Denmark	9.4	25.2	Na	3.2	20.9
Sweden	3.7	10.1	Na	Na	na
Hungary	68.3	84.6	89.5	42.7	91.5
Greece	36.2	64.9	37.2	18.1	39.4
EU ²⁷	35.1	52.6	42.4	23.2	51.0

The worst situation of “exclusion” (no second language) is experienced by the so-called “elementary” occupations, again except in the Scandinavian countries and in a more limited way in the Netherlands²⁸. Perhaps another fact will surprise many readers: across the EU, managers are also left without access to a second language at a rate of one out of five, and even more in France and Spain. AES surveys, and especially the 2011²⁹ one, allow us to explore many further aspects³⁰, but the big picture is absolutely clear. To go more into details about the polarization of language skills and confront them with education levels, we selected data about all education levels and the professions. On top of the bigger member states, we added two Scandinavian countries (Denmark and Sweden), two Central Europe countries (Poland and Hungary) and Greece, and when possible the Netherlands. They are presented in tables 4-1 to 4-3.

Table 4-1 Language skills and level of knowledge of the best known language in country.

	No second language	One language	Very good second language	Basic and fair
AES 2011 % of adults 25-64			Best known language in the country	

²⁶ Cleaners, lower skilled workers, various labourers.

²⁷ **2007 AES:** Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom as well as Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. **2011 AES:** Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom as well as Norway, Switzerland and Serbia.

²⁸ The Netherlands’ figures were not available in the 2007 version of the survey.

²⁹ One should note that their results were only partially published and are available for the years 2007 and 2011, but for some items and for some countries where the numbers of interviewees was not reliable (see Gazzola, 2014). Our data are selected from the Eurostat website, either 2007 or 2011: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database, see language skills tables.

³⁰ The AES assesses many aspects including the skills in a second, third and more language.

All levels of education				
EU	34.3	35.8	20.0	44.8
Countries				
UK	na	Na	Na	na
France	41.2	34.9	12.7	49.4
Germany	21.5	42	16.2	49.8
Italy	40.1	39.6	9.7	64.5
Spain	48.9	34.0	18.6	39.7
Poland	38.1	26.6	17.4	48.7
Sweden	8.1	31.6	43.3	20.7
Denmark	5.9	26.3	36.4	28.0
Hungary	63.2	25.9	24.8	44.5
Greece	41.9	43.0	18.7	42.8
The Netherlands	13.9	25.2	36.2	18.7

The items documented are the proficiency in languages and the level of such proficiency. The group of tables 4 confirms our previous assessment. Table 4-1 gives the reference for the selected countries for the average in all levels of education. Polarization is confirmed between the previously identified groups of countries, Germany faring relatively better on average than the other continentals, and especially Central Europeans. But even in Germany 50% of “adults” score only as “basic and fair”. Again Scandinavians stand out along with the Netherlands. But the polarization across levels of education (and implicitly occupations and classes) is perfectly illustrated by the opposition between table 4-2 – (primary and lower secondary education levels) and table 4-3 (higher education levels). Everywhere, again apart from the UK, one tenth of the higher educated have no access to a second language (generally English) whereas it is the situation of nearly two thirds of lower qualified Europeans. Levels of exclusion from language skills are even higher in Spain, Greece and Central Europe. Germany fares in-between. Finally, for the better educated, less than one third of those who have a second language claim to be proficient.

Table 4-2 Language skills and level of knowledge of the best known language in country.

	No second language	One language	Very good second language	Basic and fair
AES 2011			Best known language in the country	
Primary and lower secondary				
EU	61.1	27.1	9.6	65.8

Countries				
UK	Na	Na	Na	Na
France	60	30.1	5.4	67.2
Germany	34	45.7	Na	75.8
Italy	67.3	25.9	Na	87.5
Spain	70.2	24.2	7.3	67.2
Poland	79.0	18.1	Na	85.8
Sweden	14.4	49.0	18.6	50.7
Denmark	15.7	32.8	19.9	42.2
Hungary	91.1	7.9	Na	Na
Greece	78.0	19.7	Na	83.5
The Netherlands	28.6	30.5	22.6	32.1

Table 4-3 Language skills and level of knowledge of the best known language in country.

	No second language	One language	Very good second language	Basic and fair
AES 2011			Best known language in the country	
Higher education				
EU	11.6	36.7	29.9	29.8
Countries				
UK	Na	Na	Na	Na
France	15.8	42.5	19.8	35.5
Germany	8.2	32.6	26.1	33.1
Italy	7.9	53.6	22.0	42.1
Spain	24.2	44.7	23.5	32.2
Poland	6.9	42.2	25.3	35.3
Sweden	6.3	21.0	61.1	7.4
Denmark	Na	19.5	52.6	13.9
Hungary	18	49.8	32.4	35.0
Greece	8.5	57.9	33.8	23.7
The Netherlands	4.0	20.5	48.2	10.4

Coincidences in three countries: France, Denmark and the Netherlands

In order to focus our analysis, we selected three countries where the ethno-populist parties have gradually established themselves as key political actors for the last twenty years: France, with the *Front National* (FN), initially created as the offshoot of a proto-fascist group in 1972

(see Milza, 2002); Denmark, with the *Dansk Folkeparti* (DFP), created in 1995, another offshoot of the extremist Progress Party also founded in 1972, and the Netherlands, where, after the initiative and demise, for cause of assassination in 2002, of the *Lijst Pim Fortuyn* (LPF), the PVV (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*), led by Gert Wilders has taken over since 2006. FN and PVV are allies in the European Parliament, but the DFP declined to join their group. All three parties are strongly anti-immigrant (especially migrants of Muslim/Arab origin), and they combat European integration explicitly, although not uniformly. At this preliminary stage, we just want to draw the reader's attention to one conspicuous coincidence – not to be of course seen as a correlation or causality. It is the amazing parallel of education backgrounds (often, more generally social class) of the three parties' supporters, and of the groups of citizens who do not have access to a second language (ordinarily, English)³¹. We start by the French case, using AES data similar to those discussed in the previous section.

France

2011/AES (% aged 25-64)	No second language	One language
All levels of education	41.2	34.9
Lower education (levels 0-2)	60.0	30.1
Medium education (levels 3-4)	47.6	32.6
Higher education (levels 5-6)	15.8	42.5
Managers	23.7	41.1
Clerks	39.2	36.4
Skilled workers	55.2	30.8
Elementary occupations	59.9	29.1
Unemployed	45.7	32.2
Inactive	54.5	28.6
In employment	38.0	31.6

In France, the immense majority of lower educated people, 6 out of 10, have no access to English. It is the same for so called “elementary” occupations. Inactive people (aged 25-64) and the unemployed are also easily distinguished from managers or higher educated people. The polarization of English skills is well captured by contrasting the 24% of managers who

³¹ It is also to be noted that in the three countries, significant extreme-left parties exist, that are also strongly acting against the various forms of European integration: we don't take this point in consideration for our exploratory observation.

don't speak English with the 60% of labourers. If we turn to experts of the Front National, what we find is that 74% of FN supporters have less than "bac" (i.e. secondary education) whereas 44% of other voters achieve more (Perrineau, 2014). At 79%, Perrineau (2012) puts FN voters among the "losers of modernity". 22% of voters with primary education, 28% of the unemployed voters, 31% of the worker voters choose the Front National, as against 6% of those with a higher education background, and 7% of managers. Clearly then, the profile of non-speakers of English in France is comparable to the profile of FN supporters. Something similar can be observed in Denmark.

Denmark

2011/AES (aged 25-64)	No second language	One language
All levels of education	5.9	26.3
Lower education (levels 0-2)	15.7	32.8
Medium education (levels 3-4)	5.0	28.8
Higher education (levels 5-6)	Na	19.5
Managers	Na	19.8
Clerks	5.0	25.2
Skilled workers	6.7	36.2
Elementary occupations	Na	36.1
Unemployed	Na	28.9
Inactive	12.1	29.2
In employment	4.3	25.4

The average situations of Denmark and France are very different with regard to English skills, as we just documented (tables 4). According to their declarations, Danes are generally seen as good or very good speakers of English. As in the case of the Netherlands, many reasons facilitate the promotion of English practice in both countries (small open countries, with a high share of services production, and a relatively good education system are some factors³²). In both countries stands a very powerful political force set at the far-right, hostile to Arab immigrants and Islam, but also hostile to European integration. Compared to France, lower

³² Comparisons between the structures of qualification between Denmark, the Netherlands and France are made difficult because of statistics: at face value (Eurostat), the three structures are not very different. I thank Arnaud Lechevalier for his remark on this point.

educated people³³ not speaking a second language are a minority (about 15%): yet this figure is nearly three times the Danish average, and the proportion of “very good” in this category is less than half the figure for the higher educated people (table 4-2 and 4-3). Even in a country that scores good on average, extensive polarization exists between the low and high qualified. In parallel, when one looks at the composition of DF voters (Stubager et al., 2013, p. 65-73), one finds that –leaving aside other anti-European parties like Enhedslisten³⁴ - DF voters (13%, against 27% of Venstre and 25% of Socialdemocrats in the 2011 elections) were 19% among the low qualified and 18% among the unemployed, as against 7% among the highly qualified managers; DF supporters also score higher in the low income groups (25% among those with an income inferior to 200.000 Danish crowns, as against 8% among those with more than 800.000 crowns). A significant group also belongs to the self-employed. When it comes to education levels, lower levels tend to vote more for the DF (17% of Danes with a *folkeskole* background (primary) and 20% with *erhvervsfaglig* (occupational education) as against 2% of those with a long higher education (*lang videregående*). Here again, and perhaps more excluded in a society, the Danish one, where English is supposed to be commonly mastered, the profiles of the lower educated and the lower occupations are comparable to the profile of those who vote significantly more for the DFP and are not good at languages.

The Netherlands

2011/AES (aged 25-64)	No second language	One language
All levels of education		
Lower education (levels 0-2)	28.6	30.5
Medium education (levels 3-4)	12.0	25.5
Higher education (levels 5-6)	4	20.5
Managers	5.0	23.1
Clerks	14.9	27.2
Skilled workers	17.3	25.2
Elementary occupations	25.2	Na
Unemployed	3	2
Inactive	24.6	28.1
In employment	10.3	24.4

³³ Danish colleagues have reminded me of the limitations of Danish statistics for the measurement of training and skills.

³⁴ The party SF (socialistisk folkeparti) also used to be anti-European.

The Dutch case is again different from France and Denmark, with regard to English skills. The Dutch are those who, according to Eurostat categories, claim to be among the best in Europe. We already noticed (table 4-2 and 4-3) that only 4% of the higher educated spoke no second language, as against seven times more (29%) for the lower educated – a level which corresponds roughly to French managers'. In a country where, as in Denmark, the possession of (some) English competence is seen as “normal”, the polarization between the less and higher educated appears very high (the proportion of very good performers in English among the higher educated equals twice the level of lower educated people – tables 4-2 and 4-3). And in the Netherlands, although there exist rivals to the PVV among the anti-Europeans and anti-immigrants, the typical PVV voter is lower educated and male, and he earns less than the average income (Hovens, 2012).³⁵ 96% of Wilder's supporters voted against the Treaty for a Constitution in 2005 (as against about an average of 62%). Before the European Parliament elections in 2014, the PVV was supposed to appeal to a broader section of the population, including highly educated people, and it remains to be seen what were the consequences of this recent election, not to mention the alliance with the French *Front national*. In any case, a clear first observation leads to think that the profiles of the non-English speakers and of the opponents to the European Union in the Netherlands are lower-qualified in a majority.

The above tables and comments only sketch out vignettes that would deserve much more research, and triangulation with a host of national data, comparing the evolution of more than one anti-European party, and the rest of the political spectrum. In Europe, many countries would have to be explored in their specificity, such as the United Kingdom with the Conservatives and the UKIP, and their special relationship to the English language, the so called “True Finns” and their special relationship to the Swedish and Finnish languages, etc.. Our purpose only being to shed light on a generally unexplored phenomenon, we cannot but be conscious that much research remains to be done about these phenomena. However, the vignettes tend to point to a situation of polarization within the three countries. The polarization is between those who possess second language skills and those who don't: this opposition strongly resembles the opposition between the lower and higher qualifications and occupations. On the other hand lower educated voters tend to favour voting for the ethno-nationalist parties. For scholars who consider that languages are important, as the key vehicles for politics in Europe, an interesting research question would be to inquire about the various links existing in many countries between language skills, other skills, occupations and voting behavior. This is not an easy task because of the existing language skills data, the quality and the availability of which are very low; this has the detrimental consequence of shedding all the light on qualifications in general and, potentially at least, underestimating the role of language skills. Social polarization, in a wider sense, is a key characteristic of the relationship to the European Union, as we will see now, and it also has a linguistic dimension.

³⁵ He is also older than the supporters of many far-right parties in Europe.

The polarization of trust across the European Union

The overall fall in trust in the European Union did not occur only with the recent economic and political crisis, and the polarization of opinion about it is not at all a new phenomenon. Bruno Cautrès recently wrote: “the less favorable assessment that Europeans relate to European integration (..) dates from the early 1990s when the conjunction of the “post-1989 world” and public debates on the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty introduced in public opinion a series of questions about the limits, the scope and meaning of economic and political European integration.” (2014, p. 21). Indeed political science literature demonstrates that the relationship citizens entertain with European integration has been polarized according to “class”, employment status, education, for a long time (see also Arnold *et al.*, 2012). This was already the case after the elections for the European Parliament in 1999, before the 2004 wave of enlargement. In all countries, although with varying degrees, the gap was already very high between the highly and the lower qualified. Cautrès and Grunberg named this the “elitist bias” (2007), a bias that has remained with us until today. This bias should not be considered as if the EU were an aggregate polity, as Fligstein (2012) wrongly does when he predicts a cross-EU “Euro-clash”. As already stressed, the bias exists *within the boundaries* of each country, as table 5 illustrates, (measures are according to duration of education). Cautrès and Grunberg documented the proportion of people showing what they call “strong support”³⁶ to European integration according to the length of their education. For instance, in Spain, those who stopped their education at the latest when 16, were 60.0% in 2004 to show *strong support* for the EU, as against 73.3% of those whose education went beyond the age of 20 (first line table 5). In 2004, differences ranged from about 13 points in Spain to more than 33 in West Germany. We do not know 2014 comparable figures, but we know the answer to one of the five questions used in Cautrès and Grunberg’s index of strong support, i. e. “tell me if you tend to trust or

Table 5 Strong support for European integration

Country/ Age for end of education	Up to 16 year old	After 20 year	Difference
Spain	60.0	73.3	13.3
Greece	54.9	70.3	15.4
Germany West	34.5	68.3	33.8
Germany East	38.5	61.0	22.5
Hungary	36.9	66.0	29.1

³⁶ With the help of aggregating answers to five questions of the Eurobarometer, they distribute the Barometer sample into two categories (strong versus weak), each making 50% of it.

The Netherlands	40.5	61.6	21.1
Italy	40.2	60.9	20.7
France	33.9	60.1	26.2
Poland	29.5	55.5	26.0
Denmark	31.8	52.7	20.9
The United Kingdom	20.8	50.7	29.9
Sweden	21.9	39.4	17.5
EU	40.4	58.9	18.5

Source: from Cautres and Grunberg (2007) using Eurobarometer EB62, 2004.

tend not to trust the European Union”. Across the EU, the measure fell from 57% at the beginning of the crisis (spring 2007) to 31% in spring 2014 (in autumn 2004, it was 50%). As the elitist bias has been present for a long time, it is certain that it has persisted. This characteristic of the citizens’ relationship to European integration comes as a complementary facet to what we have seen with the coexistence of low qualification, low skills in foreign languages (generally English) and a propensity to vote for anti-European parties. In the three countries selected earlier (France, Denmark and the Netherlands), differences in trust for the EU between the better and the less educated was 26.2, 20.9 and 21.1 points respectively in 2004. These differences can be definitely associated with the differences in language proficiency between the less and the higher educated in those countries.

Wider political implications to explore: languages and the dire limitations of the notion of “populism”

After documenting hard facts about the polarization of language skills in the European Union, we need to go further and link up these findings with their wider political implications. This is not well chartered territory indeed, precisely because of the double ignorance we have alluded to, and of the lack of data. In the wider context of the polarization of trust in the politics of Europeanisation, after a rapid review of the dire limitations of an increasing utilization of the qualifier “populist”, we show that there are very good reasons for exploring the links between trust in European integration, voting behaviour and language skills. This task is before us social scientists.

The previous analysis points to a deeply and variously embedded gap between elites (de facto oligarchies) and citizens across the Union. However, as our tables show, this situation is not even across countries. If we take for instance the gap between workers and managers, according to their “strong support” as defined earlier, it was only 3% in the Netherlands, as against 24.8% in France and 19.5% in Denmark (ibid., 2007, p.20). However when the change in trust and the change in votes became more visible in the 2010s, both politicians and scholars adopted the view of “populism” without trying to understand what such changes

really meant. For instance, on the side of politicians and journalists, *The Economist* wrote: “They come in many varieties, but all claim to represent what Pierre Poujade, France’s original post-war populist, called “the ripped-off, lied-to little people”. These movements are sometimes described as neo-fascist. A few of them indeed are³⁷ and all of them embrace odious and intolerant views of one sort or another. But to dismiss them as fascist, and thereby safely rule them out of European political life, offers the liberal mainstream false comfort.” (November, 12, 2011). At about the same time, Vandenbroucke and his colleagues wrote: “Although populist anti-EU as well as anti-immigrant parties may not muster the strength to take office in most countries, their growing support will put pressure on existing governments to protect national welfare programmes and limit their commitments to European integration” (2011), as if one could legitimately and merely equate “being populist” and protecting so-called “welfare”. In a way, into the early 2010s, populism provided a sort of “first aid” instrument for scholars and politicians confronted with what they saw as a new phenomenon. Yet bundling up together all the hues and shades of enemies of European integration hardly brought any clarification. Were these people followers of “fascists” as W. Schaüble had it in 2014? Were they simply protesting against the ordinary functioning of the European Union that they deemed not democratic? Were they racist, xenophobes? Were they nationalists, patriots, and defenders of national sovereignty? Under the “carpet” of populism, under which difficult questions have been brushed for a too long time now, tentative answers to these questions have only started to emerge. Now it is very important to understand what actual political ideas, expressions, attitudes lie under the vague, if not “empty”³⁸ signifier of “populism”. Actually, if we borrow Sartori’s expressions³⁹, the notion resembles a “dog-cat”, or a “grey cow” concept, at least so far.

In the present paper, we have no room for an in-depth survey of the origins of the concept and its present validity. Suffice it to say that a very rich sociological and political science tradition exists on the topic. Isaiah Berlin (1968) was a pioneer on this, in the late 1960s: with other colleagues, they were researching the populism of the past, including the Russian and American ones. Why it was vain to look for a precise analytic concept, populism nevertheless had distinctive characteristics, Berlin concluded. Later, Canovan (1981) contributed to recording the history of populism across the world. These works are essential, but, for the purpose of our article about contemporary Europe, we must adapt these classical references to the present day. In this respect, three main points demonstrate that “populism” is rather a hindrance than a help for the understanding of the present attitudes of the electorates in the European Union with regard to the role of languages.

The first one was established by Leca (2012), when he ironically stressed that first and foremost, populism is linked to the expression of the will of the people. As a consequence, he writes (2012, p. 85), every usage of the qualifier « populist » carries with it a normative

³⁷ See for instance Taguieff, 2002.

³⁸ Claus Offe (2009) used the term when discussing governance: by “empty signifier” he meant that governance had lost practically any distinctive meaning; he perhaps should have indicated that, because of its vagueness, “governance” had no actual referents.

³⁹ For G. Sartori (1991), loosely defined concepts lead to the use of “*gatto-cane*” concepts or, even worse, of concepts that transform all reality in population of grey cows (*vacche grigie*).

assessment of the voters' attitudes by elites vis-à-vis "the people": either they find it reasonable and it is "*populaire*" (pertaining to the people's will) or they find it unacceptable and then it is "*populiste*"⁴⁰. The second and the third essential points have been brought about quite precisely by Pierre-André Taguieff in his unsurpassed *L'illusion populiste* (2002). With regard to attitudes vis-à-vis European integration, the brand of "populism" condemned and brushed away by reasonable elites bears two features: first, voters challenge the desirability and the rationality of neo-liberal politics and policies⁴¹, more and more imposed despotically on the peoples of Europe (Barbier, 2013b). Finally, an essential feature of present day European "populism" is that it shares what Taguieff calls an "ethno-nationalist" orientation. When it comes to European Union politics and policies, these forces' normative orientations directly challenge one of the key foundations of the legal economic structure of the European Union, namely, the free movement of workers, and are hostile to all sorts of immigrants, especially Muslim ones. Seen more neutrally, those accused of "populism" indeed comprise some racists and fascists and undoubtedly many forms of extremists but their essential common trait is to condemn and oppose the main tenets of European integration. That such an attitude of a significant proportion of European citizens is legitimate, by principle, is precisely what the oligarchic European elite⁴² wants to deny and it is why it so often labels its opponents "populists". At the end of the day, the polarization of trust across the European Union, which is firmly associated with levels of education, income and actually, class, is to be linked with the fact that a very important – and growing – proportion of European electorates reject the legitimacy of politics and policies as they are conceived, designed and carried out today. One of the most salient problems is the balance/imbalance between the national and supranational scales. Hence the European Union has a growing problem of legitimizing its policies, and the time is definitely gone when it could proceed with a "benign neglect" from the part of "the peoples". Policies are challenged by this growing and nationally fragmented constituency on two essential topics: economic and immigration policies that, intrinsically, put in question the very legal fabric of the European Union. Our detailed exploration of the distribution of language skills across Europeans adds one facet to this diagnosis: a troubling parallel exists between speakers of foreign languages and supporters of European integration, as the two very roughly painted ideal-types illustrate in the chart below.

Two ideal-types of European citizens: a troubling parallel		
	In favour of European integration Trusting the European	Hostile to further European integration (or to European integration as such)

⁴⁰ « *Quand je suis d'accord avec les opinions « raisonnables » du peuple, celles-ci sont populaires. Quand je ne suis pas d'accord, elles sont populistes et je tiens qu'elles lui sont inculquées par de mauvais bergers* »

⁴¹ « *Sous l'hypothèse néo-libérale que l'ouverture à l'économie internationale exclut le protectionnisme économique, une telle offre idéologique peut être accusée de nourrir un imaginaire social travaillé par des passions strictement négatives, de ne pouvoir en aucune manière fonder une politique crédible, permettant de répondre aux défis économiques, sociaux et culturels auxquels sont confrontées les sociétés démocratiques d'Europe de l'Ouest, profondément bouleversées par l'affaiblissement des souverainetés nationales et l'impuissance croissante des États protecteurs* » (Taguieff, 2002, p. 75).

⁴² For a typical example: The President of the Commission's website, in October 2009, carried his image with the following motto: 'Europeans have told us that they want results, not divisive ideological battles. The Lisbon Growth and Jobs Strategy is the way we can deliver these results'.

	Union institutions For their achievements (outcomes)	Distrusting EU institutions For their achievements (a special case: the euro)
	Professional and highly qualified Long education Favouring the four freedoms of movement	Lower qualified occupations Short education Hostile to immigration (potentially racist, mainstream xenophobes)
	Mobile and enjoying the four freedoms, including those brought about by the euro and freedoms of travel	Immobile, de facto mainstream impossibility (economic and cultural) to individually enjoy the benefits of the four freedoms
	“European English” speakers	Not speaking English

Conclusion

At the beginning of 2015, the European Union is confronted with two well-known deep divisions: perhaps paradoxically the first division results from economic integration (Lehndorff, 2014) and opposes what the German press calls “the crisis states” (the sinners, see box1) and the decent ones in the family, resembling Germany. Both types nevertheless have a common problem, the euro, growth and macroeconomic coordination. The second division is political and, just as the economic one, it is lived and experienced not at the transnational level, but first at the national (domestic) level in the member states: hence the elite bias described above, and the polarization of trust. Basically, as we showed with the sociological analysis of EU law (Barbier and Colomb, 2012), actual European rights of citizens are unequal in the European Union: the footloose enjoy many whereas the immobile enjoy few. Less studied but nevertheless important, a third divide, the language one, is more and more visible and it will stay with us in the future. Because European English is the language of European (transnational) politics, and because only scarce and weak policies at the EU level address the language question (Barbier, 2013a), the fact is that no European citizen can enjoy the full promises of European citizenship if he or she does not master not only his or her native tongue, but also the European brand of language used in all the documents, the speeches, the narratives, the websites and the institutions of the complex EU polity. This has now become a key element of possible equality between citizens, and non-discrimination. From this very general point of view, and however nationally fragmented, there are two “classes” of citizens: the “first class” enjoy abilities that allow them to participate decently to the major aspects of European politics. Not all of course belong to the section of this “first class” which groups together “enlightened despots”, those who have de facto accepted that the European project cannot be genuinely democratic. Indeed, there are still members of the

academic and political elites who undoubtedly share Jürgen Habermas's genuine advocacy for a democratic European Union. Yet not many institutions indeed support these politics today, mainly for functional reasons. Such reasons are in abundance, as Bartolini (2005) has intelligently demonstrated. Some have even de facto abandoned a further European integration and propose to turn back to the national level (Scharpf, 2014).

Despite a devastating evolution that has transformed the European Union perhaps more in eight years of crisis than it had been transformed during the previous thirty, the modesty if not shyness of reactions by politicians and social scientists is nevertheless striking. When they are favourable to more European integration, a majority of social scientists are busy designing future institutions, or proposing reforms to incrementally transform the European Union into some more democratic polity. There is now no more hesitation about acknowledging the existence of a profound democratic deficit (Scharpf, 2014; Ferrera, 2014; Schmidt, 2014). This deficit has been with us for as long as the Union has existed, but the economic crisis brought about a deep political crisis that has just started to be analyzed. Not from the point of view of experts and elites, but from the point of view of electorates and ordinary citizens, one of the aspects that is seriously underestimated concerns the democratic functioning of the Union, the very norms of European democracy. Maurizio Ferrera (2014, p. 338) seems especially blind to this importance when he writes "*quelle poche discussioni sulla assiologia UE che pur si svolgono sono relegate entro i recinti strettissimi dell' "alta" academia*". Our impression, after tentative empirical explorations of anti-European sentiments and choices in many countries is exactly the opposite. In the streets and on the TV screens and the newspapers of France, Denmark and the Netherlands, in the streets and on the screens of Germany, in the German and Greek papers, axiological debates about European integration have never been so widespread and commonplace. Certainly the debate is not conducted in the subtle way that we, with M. Ferrera, would prefer. But such a brutal debate is here to stay. All tentative institutional solutions (some of which are reviewed by Schmidt, 2014, among which she overestimates the change brought by the existence of *Spitzenkandidaten*) will be confronted with this reality. Times when "*ricinti strettissimi*" still constituted the core of the emerging "*Öffentlichkeit*" are something of the past. "Politicization" is inevitable, despite the very well argued reluctance of political scientists who (clearsightedly) fear its consequences Bartolini (2006). It will no doubt be very difficult to handle.

However, we assume that is not possible to imagine much progress in the future of European integration and consistent Europeanization so long as an overwhelming proportion of citizens remain excluded from European (transnational) politics. They are those who are already disgruntled, hostile and often despondent in their own traditional political forums – the national spheres where they speak their native tongue with their "own" politicians, the Öttingers and the Schaübles, the Sapins and the Wilders or the Messerschmidts and Kjæsgards and the Grillos and Le Pens or Philipots – and they are excluded from the language of European politics, European English. Such basic observations are brushed away too often. We hope that the present article will help making them more visible. In the European Union, as far as languages are concerned, two possibilities in any case remain open: the first is that common idioms (not only English) shared in language families (for instance, the

Scandinavian, the Latin, the Slav) are more and more used and promoted in European politics, de facto increasing the potential participation of citizens; the second is that in order to protect and even promote the future of European integration against the increase of anti-European and ethno-nationalism, decisive steps are taken at the EU and the national levels to train the young intensively in languages, and, at the same time not to discard the growing proportion of old citizens who still remain among the most excluded from second and third language uses, and hence, from European politics. Even legal support to language policies could be found in the very basic core of European law, in the principle of equality of languages affirmed in the Treaty of the European Union and the Charter of fundamental rights, and more generally, in the mainstream principle of non-discrimination. Yet, the exploration of language skills data – however scarce they are – certainly does not lead to imagining that multilingual citizens will turn enthusiastic about the future of European integration at the drop of a hat. As we showed in exploring the functioning of their systems of social protection (Barbier, 2013), they have every good reason to be cautious about it.

References

Aldrin P., 2010, “L’invention de l’opinion publique européenne, genèse intellectuelle de l’Eurobaromètre (1950-1973)», *Politix*, 2010/1, n°89, p. 79-101.

Arnold C., Sapir E.V. and Zapryanova G., 2012, “Trust in the institutions of the European Union: A cross-country examination”, in Beaudonnet, Laurie and Danilo Di Mauro (eds) “Beyond Euro -skepticism: Understanding attitudes towards the EU”, *European Integration online Papers* (EIoP), Special Mini-Issue 2, Vol. 16, Article 8, <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2012-008a.htm>

Barbier J.-C., 2008, *La longue marche vers l’Europe sociale*, Paris, PUF, Le lien Social.

Barbier J.-C., 2012, « Une seule bannière linguistique pour une justice globale », recension de *Linguistic Justice for Europe and for the World*, Philippe Van Parijs, *Revue française de science politique*, vol. 62, n°3, pp. 469-471.

Barbier J.-C., 2013a, *The Road to Social Europe, A contemporary approach to political cultures and diversity in Europe*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Barbier J.-C., 2013b, « Europe sociale, l’état d’alerte », *Opinion Paper* n°13, 4 janvier 2013, observatoire social européen.

Barbier J.-C., 2014, “Languages of ‘social policy’ at ‘the EU level’”, in Béland D. & Pedersen K., *Analysing social policy language and concepts: Comparative and transnational perspectives*, Bristol, Policy Press, p. 59-79.

Barbier J.-C., 2015, « Les langues et le Droit de l’Union européenne, une enquête sociologique », in A. Supiot, dir. *Loi de la langue*, Paris, Fayard, (Poids et mesures du monde) (à paraître).

Barbier J.-C. and Colomb F., 2012, 'EU Law as *Janus bifrons*, a sociological approach to "Social Europe"', in: Barbier, Jean-Claude (ed.) EU Law, Governance and Social Policy, *European Integration online Papers (EIoP)*, Special Mini-Issue 1, Vol. 16, Article 2 <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2012-002a.htm>.

Bartolini S., 2005, *Restructuring Europe, Centre formation, system building and political structuring between the nation-state and the European Union*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Bartolini S., 2006, « Faut-il "politiser" l'Union européenne ? Perspectives et Risques », Policy Paper, n°19, (La politisation de l'Europe, remède ou poison), Notre Europe, p. 32-52. <http://www.notre-europe.asso.fr>, accessed on the 1st of November, 2014.

Berlin I., 1968, « To define populism », Isaiah Berlin Virtual Library, <http://berlin.wolf.ox.ac.uk/> accessed on the 12th of November, 2014.

Canovan M., 1981, *Populism*, New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Cautrès B., 2008, « Plus on se connaît, plus on s'aime ? » », *Politique européenne* n° 3/2008 (n° 26), p. 165-190.

Cautrès B., 2014, « A collapse in trust in the EU », *Revue de l'OFCE*, May, English edition, p. 19-26

Cautrès B. et Grunberg G., 2007, « Position sociale, identité nationale et attitudes à l'égard de l'Europe, la construction européenne souffre-t-elle d'un biais élitiste », in Costa O. & Magnette P., dir., *Une Europe des élites ? Réflexions sur la fracture démocratique de l'Union européenne*, Bruxelles, Éditions de l'université de Bruxelles, p. 12-31.

Cautrès B. and Sinnott R., 2000, « Les cultures politiques de l'intégration européenne : les attitudes vis-à-vis de l'Europe », in Grunberg G., Perrineau and C. Ysmal, 2000, *Le vote des quinze, les élections européennes du 13 juin 1999*, Paris, Presses de Science Po, p. 21-48.

Costa O. et Magnette P., 2007, dir., *Une Europe des élites ? Réflexions sur la fracture démocratique de l'Union européenne*, Bruxelles, Éditions de l'université de Bruxelles.

Ferrera M., 2005, *The Boundaries of Welfare, European Integration and the New Spatial Politics of Social Protection*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Ferrera M., 2014, « Europa e solidarietà dopo la crisi. Un'agenda per il «lavoro intellettuale» », *Politiche sociali*, 3, settembre-dicembre, pp 329-352.

Fligstein N., 2008, *Euro-Clash, the EU, European identity and the future of Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Gazzola M., 2014, “Partecipazione, esclusione linguistica et traduzione: una valutazione des regime linguistico dell’ Unione europea”, ELF Working Paper# 12, Humbolt Universität zu Berlin, provisional draft.
- Grin F., 2005, « L’enseignement des langues comme politique publique », *Rapport pour le haut conseil de l’évaluation de l’école*, Paris, N° 19, septembre.
- Grin F., 2011, «Interview with Professor Grin” in “Lingua Franca, Chimera or Reality”, European Commission, Directorate general for translation, Brussels, p. 59-70.
- Grunberg G., Perrineau and C. Ysmal, 2000, *Le vote des quinze, les élections européennes du 13 juin 1999*, Paris, Presses de Science Po.
- Habermas J., 2011, *Zur Verfassung Europas, Ein Essay*, Berlin, Suhrkamp.
- Hovens D., 2012, “Who are ‘the ordinary people’ of Europe and why they do not like the European Union”, a case study of Dutch populism, in Klein, L. & Tamcke M. (ed.), *European in-between identities in a (Trans-)Cultural Space*, Groninguen University, <http://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/434256.html> accessed on the 21st of December, 2014.
- Jobert B., 1998, « La régulation politique : le point de vue d’un politiste », in Commaille J. et B. Jobert, *Les métamorphoses de la régulation politique*, Paris, LGDJ, p.119-144.
- Kjær A.L. & Adamo S., 2011, eds, *Linguistic Diversity and European Democracy*, Farnham, Ashgate.
- Kraus P., 2008, *A Union of Diversity, Language, Identity and Polity-Building in Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Leca J., 2012, « Justice pour les renards ! Comment le pluralisme peut nous aider à comprendre le populisme », *Critique*, 1, 276-277, p. 85-95.
- Lehndorff S., 2014, dir (Hrsg), *Spaltende Integration, Der Triumph gescheiterter Ideen in Europa – revisited Zehn Länderstudien*, Hamburg, VSA Verlag.
- Milza P., 2002, *L’Europe en chemise noire, les extrêmes droites européennes de 1945 à aujourd’hui*, Paris, Fayard.
- Offe C., 2009, “Governance, an empty signifier”, *Constellation*, Volume 16, Issue 4, December, p. 550–562.
- Ostler N., (2011), *The Last Lingua Franca, English Until the Return of Babel*, London Penguin Allen Lane.
- Rooduijn & T. Pauwels, 2011, “Measuring populism, comparing two methods of content analysis”, *West European Politics*, vol 34, n°6, 1272-1283.

Perrineau P., 2013, dir., “L’électorat de Marine Le Pen », in *Le vote normal, les élections présidentielles et législatives d’avril-mai-juin 2012*, Presses de s po, Paris, p. 227-251.

Perrineau P., 2014, *La France au Front*, Paris, Fayard.

Ricento T., 2014, “Thinking about language: what political theorists need to know about language in the real world”, *Language Policy*, vol. 13, n°3, November, p. 351-369.

Sartori G., 1991, “Comparazione e metodo comparato”, in G. Sartori and L. Morlino (eds), *La comparazione nelle scienze sociali*, Bologna: Il Mulino.

Scharpf F., 1999, *Governing Europe, effective and democratic*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Scharpf F., 2014, “Legitimierung, oder das demokratische Dilemma der Euro-Rettungspolitik”, *Wirtschaftsdienst* 2014, p. 35-41, ZBW, Leibnizinformationszentrum Wirtschaft. DOI: 10.1007/s10273-014-1648-z

Schmidt V. A., 2006, *Democracy in Europe, EU and National Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schmidt V.A., 2014, “Forgotten Democratic Legitimacy: “Governing by the Rules” and “Ruling by the Numbers” », in M. Blyth and M. Matthijs, eds, *The Future of the Euro*, New York: Oxford University Press. (forthcoming)

Steiner G., *After Babel*, London: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Stubager R., Møller Hansen K. & Jørgen Goul Andersen, 2013, *Krisevalg Økonomien og folketingsvalget 2011*, Copenhagen, DJØF Publishers.

Taguieff P.-A., 2002, *L’illusion populiste*, Paris: Berg international.

Vandenbroucke F., A. Hemerjick and B. Palier, 2011, “The EU needs a social investment pact”, OSE Opinion Paper, Brussels, no. 5, May.

Van Parijs P., 2011, *Linguistic justice, for Europe and The World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.