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DELIBERATING AROUND A DEFICIT

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PhD

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17 SEP 2002

2001



DELIBERATING AROUND A DEFICIT

**The geography of the EU's democratic deficit in
the UK and a practical application of deliberative
democratic theory**

Martin David Barratt, BSc.

**Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy of the University of Durham in the
Department of Geography**

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September 2001



Abstract

This thesis reports research into the democratic deficit of the European Union. Conducted at a time of increased academic, political and popular concern over the legitimacy of the EU, this research formulated a working definition of the deficit that had the citizens of the Union at its heart. The geographic variation of the deficit was assessed across the UK by means of a comparative case study methodology. Three regions were examined; South East England, North East England and central Scotland respectively, and the complex relationship that was found to exist between the regional scale, and the national scale is explained.

That the research placed citizens at the heart of its definition of the deficit stems from the intention to assess the potential offered by more effective participation in decision-making processes to enhancing the legitimacy of the EU. In particular the theory of deliberative democracy is tested, and as such a valuable contribution is made to the relatively under-developed literature on the more practical aspects of this model.

The research is uniquely placed to assess the potential offered by deliberative democracy to filling the deficit by means of its carefully devised methodology. At all times the research employed techniques that were deliberative in character, even devising a novel method as a counter to practical problems preventing the use of more established methods.

The thesis makes recommendations to the European Commission suggesting how its public information policy should be reformed, and builds towards reflections on the care with which deliberative ideals must be pursued if they are to realise their true potential for widening meaningful political participation in the contemporary EU.

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As the research progressed I have been indebted to the interviewees, some of which I can now say are personal friends. Also I owe thanks to academics at the universities I visited on several occasions, most particularly Fiona Smith at Dundee.

I must of course thank the ESRC for funding the research, and providing so many opportunities for additional training as part of the course.

On a more personal note, my eldest child could not even say 'European integration' when I wrote my initial proposal; he has just completed his first SATS test. Both of my children have put up with a lot during this project. Lastly to someone who had more choice about it than my children, my wife Julie is deserving of thanks for encouraging me to stick at it, and for 'being there'.

Finally thanks are due to my supervisor Joe Painter, mainly for believing in me during this my first year in teaching. The thesis has had to come second to 25 contact hours a week, and he has not given me any grief as I missed all my own deadlines (except of course the last one!).

Introduction

Why do we not believe in Europe?

This first section of the thesis sets out in summary form the very real problem that this research tackled and the theory of democracy that framed the investigation. The problem is the democratic deficit of the European Union and the theory; deliberative democracy.

The European Union has developed from an economic alliance of some 6 states to a political, social and economic union of 15, with many of Europe's other 27 states queuing up to join. With a population now topping 360 million (European Commission 1997), it has jurisdiction over areas of people's lives which have previously been the exclusive preserve of nation states. With this extended 'reach' has come a challenge to its legitimacy. Whilst the acceptance that nation states are somehow exempt from questions over their legitimacy is not unproblematic (Painter 1995), the broad consensus across much of the academic literature is that the EU is more challenged by fundamental questions about its legitimacy than are nation states (Weiler *et al* 1999).

This challenge is not particularly new in academic terms, but the importance here is that it is now being increasingly acknowledged that the 'people' of the EU have begun questioning this legitimacy in a way that did not happen in the early decades of integration. The 'permissive consensus' has come to an end (Obradovic 1996).

Though legitimacy itself is a complex term, at this point the most relevant way to demonstrate its meaning in the context of this research is to refer to some of the measures used by the by the European Commission as part of the so-called 'Eurobarometer'. This research tool has now collected data over many years which, taken as a whole, suggest that support for the EU itself is low compared with that for the systems of governance in place in the individual member states. It also shows that the people of the Union are ill informed about both its activities and the opportunities that membership offers them. Also evident is that there are low levels of support for the

concept of the European identity. For all these measures, the UK is among the least informed, and the least enthusiastic. Whilst indicators such as this do not prove the EU to be non-legitimate, and it should be noted that all the measures vary between countries, they do show that by comparison with nation states, the EU fares worse on all such measures.

There are also problems with the democratic accountability of the institutions making up the EU, with the Commission itself committed to ensuring greater levels of transparency and direct accountability in decision-making processes.

It is against this background that the research builds a 'working definition' of the democratic deficit based around three main problem areas. The first of these is that the institutions of the EU are lacking legitimacy, due in part to confusion over its exact role in relation to the governance of member states. Here the main problem concerns the fact that at the EU level members of the *executive* branch of governance enjoy a level of legislative power that they do not possess in their own states. The second problem area is that of communication between the EU itself and its now massive citizenry. The logistical problems of setting up effective lines of communication are here compounded by the continuation of predominantly national media, political and social organisations. The third area is that of the problematic relationship that the EU has with its citizens. Generally, citizenship is accepted as having a strong emotional element. That is, one has to feel part of the union to be a citizen of it. In the absence of this emotional attachment, the EU has purposefully created a legally inclusive type of citizenship, but even this has not been universally welcomed.

All of the above factors make up the democratic deficit, though as will become clear as the theoretical context to the research is set out in Chapter 1, the focus is on aspects of the deficit that directly concern the citizens' interactions with, and sense of belonging to, the EU. As such those concerning the problems of legitimacy associated with the institutions making up the EU are outside the scope of this research.

It was not essential to research the deficit within the framework of one particular type of democratic theory, indeed other researchers have investigated the deficit using different (broader) theoretical selectivity than that used here. It is thus necessary at this point to

comment on the rationale for choosing deliberative democracy as the basis for researching the deficit.

Deliberative democracy

The problem of the democratic deficit appeared to me to be primarily a problem related to disaffection and exclusion. I felt that if people could somehow be more involved in decision-making processes, then some of the problems of the deficit would be solved. However, at the earliest stages of thinking this process through I became aware that the problems of the democratic deficit were exactly those same problems that were preventing people becoming involved. Deliberative democracy appeared to offer a potential way out of this conundrum.

Deliberative democracy¹ is a participative theory of democracy that has its theoretical origins in two main bodies of work, each separated from the other by several centuries. The 'classic' claims to the benefits offered by participation in decision-making processes that were set out most prominently by writers such as J.J. Rousseau and J.S. Mill in the 18th. and 19th. Centuries respectively are combined with the more contemporary work on the peculiar nature of human communication proclaimed by writers such as Jurgen Habermas. That people learn not only about the issues under discussion, but also the skills needed to fully engage with debates are promoted through deliberation, and in this way the people are 'developed', draws from the classical work. That human communication (provided rigorous conditions of equality and fairness are met), has an in-built tendency towards consensus, draws particularly from the more contemporary work.² In sum, the model is concerned with democracy being more a process than an outcome. It offers the potential for decisions to be respected by all parties (even those who perceive themselves to have lost out), by virtue of the way that they were reached. To deliberative democracy, legitimacy is invested in the process through which decisions are made. If a good investment is made at the pre-decision stage, the benefits will be reaped after the decision has been taken. If people have had

¹ Though the term is now used universally, throughout the thesis I have credited James Bohman as the key theorist on the recent development of the model. Dryzek (1994) uses the term discursive democracy, and Giddens (1994) dialogic democracy. Both describe broadly similar models to that referred to here.

² For a very accessible overview of Habermas' highly influential *Theory of Communicative Action* see Brand 1990)

involvement in the decision-making process through informed deliberation, then any decisions reached are far more likely to be perceived as legitimate than had the people been excluded at the earlier stage.

It is exactly the aspects of citizen participation in decisions taken at the EU level (or rather the relative lack of it) that forms the basis here for the interaction between certain aspects of the democratic deficit and the theory of deliberative democracy. The detailed result of this interaction is set out in detail throughout the thesis.

Deliberative democracy is a new model, and as such is in the early stages of its development. One major consequence is that the literature on its practical application is less well developed than that pertaining to its theoretical claims. This research set out to contribute to that area by applying the model to the practical problem that is the democratic deficit.

There is however an extensive and relatively well developed body of literature (which is referred to by theorists of deliberative democracy) on methods such as focus groups and the citizens juries. These methods are 'deliberative' in character, and apparently offered the opportunity for this research to investigate the geography of the deficit at the same time as assessing the efficacy of deliberative democracy. A further method that was particularly influential on the research was that of the deliberative poll (Fishkin 1995) in which a televised spectacle converts deliberation into mass entertainment. In the event, the methodology used in this research was of my own design, each of the original chosen methods proving unsuitable. However, the key principles of deliberation were retained, and the model will thus benefit in some small way from its application here.

No discussion of deliberative democracy could be complete here without some mention of my strong personal motivation for investigating its usefulness to real life political situations. Since studying politics at undergraduate level I have been interested in the theoretical principles of political participation. Deliberative democracy is a normative model inasmuch as it sees participation as a 'good' that should be pursued wherever practically possible. It seems therefore acceptable that I declare my own interest in the theory to be equally motivated. My own motivation was inspired mainly by the writing

of the political theorist Benjamin Barber, and it is for this reason that the following short exegesis of his key text *Strong Democracy* is provided here.

In building the notion of *Strong Democracy* Barber takes the historical development of liberalism, with its emphasis on individualism, rationality and minimalist politics, and constructs the analogy of “politics as zoo keeping”:

The uninspired and uninspiring but “realistic” image of man as a creature of need, living alone by nature but fated to live in the company of his fellows by enlightened self interest combines with the cynical image of government as a provisional instrument of power servicing these creatures to suggest a general view of politics as zoo-keeping. (Barber 1984 p. 53)

Continuing this pessimistic view, Barber labels ‘man’ under this system of *thin* democracy ‘homo-economicus’, and whose behaviour is befitting their politics:

Like captured leopards, men are to be admired for their proud individuality and for their unshackled freedom, but they must be caged for their untrustworthiness and antisocial oneriness all the same. Indeed if the individual is dangerous, the species is deadly. Liberal democracy’s sturdiest cages are reserved for the People” (Barber 1984 p. 54).

Under strong democracy man as ‘homo-politicus’ will come to the fore, realising an in-built potential stifled by life under thin democracy:

Homo-politicus [is] dependent, yet under democracy self determining; insufficient and ignorant, yet under democracy teachable; selfish, yet under democracy co-operative; stubborn and solipsistic, yet under democracy creative and capable of genuine self-transformation. (Barber 1984 p119)

Strong democracy depends upon social pluralism for its dynamism, it depends upon formal and informal discursive practices in order to achieve consensus and it depends upon a belief in politics as a process not simply an outcome. All of these themes are central to those theories of deliberative democracy.

Having set out the problem of the deficit, and the broad principles on which the theory of deliberative democracy is based, this introductory section now presents the result of their integration into the research aims.

Research aims

This research was guided by the following aims:

1. *To establish a definition of the EU's democratic deficit which goes beyond the formal distribution of power between institutions to focus primarily on aspects relating to the individual citizen, such as people's knowledge, understanding, perceptions and feelings.*
2. *Guided by this definition, to investigate the geography within the UK of the EU's democratic deficit.*
3. *To investigate the potential offered by the application of theories of 'deliberative democracy', to filling the democratic deficit.*
4. *To contribute to the ongoing development of theories of deliberative democracy.*

As can be seen from the above aims, investigating the geography of the deficit within the UK was a major element of the research. The following section explains both the principal and the detail behind this aspect of the research.

The geography of the deficit:

This section firstly sets out the broad rationale for the regionally based analysis. Beyond this it explains the detailed pretext for the selection of the three case study regions themselves.

A regionally comparative approach: As mentioned earlier, the focus of much research into the democratic deficit is at the international level of comparison. Indeed, much of the secondary data that will be set out in the early stages of this thesis derive from research which used the nation state as the basis for investigation. Much less is known about the extent of variation between regions within those nations. Thus this represents a knowledge gap.

However, this research was not motivated only by a desire to fill a knowledge gap (in fact this had relatively little to do with it). Rather it was driven by the expectation that there would be significant variation in the way the democratic deficit was experienced regionally, and that that variation must be important in terms of any policy initiative aimed at filling aspects of the deficit³.

It must be acknowledged that if there are significant variations in the democratic deficit between regions, as well as between nation states, then attempting to assess it using solely national measures is only partially valid. Worse, would be the imposition of policies aimed at the amelioration of aspects of the deficit that were based on knowledge of exclusively national variation. These policies would be insensitive to regional factors and could actually exacerbate the very problems they were aimed at solving.

To an extent there is evidence of some acknowledgement of the importance of the regional scale by the EU itself in terms of its *Committee of the Regions*, and the widely hailed regional funding initiatives that have so benefited the economically challenged areas across the union, not least certain parts of the UK. The specific effects of these funding initiatives provide a major element of the regional focus reported in this thesis.

There is renewed academic and political interest in the role of regions in politics, particularly in the EU. The EU is of course an agglomeration of states, many of which have notorious, and in some cases very problematic regional identities within them.⁴

³ I should state here that of course I am aware of an ongoing debate within geography as to the relative merits of different levels of spatial analysis. From the 'traditional' dilemma of regional versus national, to the more contemporary incorporation of a 'micro' scale of analysis (exemplified by the wonderful work of Brown 1997), the Scale Problem (Taylor 1984) has exercised geographers for decades. I believe the subject to have moved on in recent years to a less rigid approach, which is exemplified in the following quotation:

Geographic scale, referring to the nested hierarchy of bounded spaces of differing size, such as the local, regional, national and global, is a familiar and taken-for-granted concept for political geographers and political analysts. In much contemporary analysis of political organisation and action, geographic scale is treated simply as different levels of analysis (from local to global) in which the investigation of political processes is set. Recently this notion of geographic scale as unproblematic, pre-given and fixed hierarchy of bounded spaces has been challenged. (Delaney and Leitner 1997 p. 93)

I have chosen a regional approach here not as the result of any theoretical bias, but because it is the most valid scale of analysis appropriate for this research (i.e. for the right reasons).

⁴ The most obvious of course are the regions of Catalonia and the Basque Country in Spain, and Northern

This debate has perhaps been led by the influential Professor of Political Science Michael Keating, who in writing of the 'new regionalism' in the EU, skilfully acknowledges that one does not have to envisage a 'Europe of the Regions'⁵ in order to accept that regionally based identities, cultural traditions and economic relationships are becoming increasingly important to the development of the contemporary EU (Keating 1998).

In *The New Regionalism in Western Europe* (1998) Keating describes this new regionalism as being based in part on the erosion of state level authority by organisations such as the EU, in part by the internationalisation of markets (globalisation) and by the renewed assertiveness of regions.⁶ This assertiveness is the result of, as much as it is the cause of, the other two constituents of the 'new regionalism'; the process is circular.

In emphasising a regional focus Keating rejects an acceptance of the 'realist school' (1998) which argues the position that states have long been the power base in Europe, and that the focus on regions tends to be at the more trivial end of the political spectrum. But, importantly, he boldly resists the temptation to 'sensationalise' the power that regions now possess relative to the national and international institutions making up the EU. Thus there is no sermonising that the nation is dead and that the region is the new nation. Instead he asserts that some regions are more 'different' than others. Where it does exist, this 'difference' is seen as being based on any or all of a range of criteria which includes local relationships to the international market, the strength of regional identity, the extent of political autonomy that the region has and the stability of connections with other regions, both within and across state boundaries. (Keating 1998). It is exactly these sort of 'differences' that motivated the selection of the particular case study regions used in this research.

Finally, before closing this section on the selection of a regional scale for the research it is necessary to clarify exactly what is meant by a region, as it is taken here to be

Ireland.

⁵ This notion takes many different forms depending on who is using it, and for what purpose. Certainly in his now famous televised journey of self-discovery the former Conservative leadership challenger Michael Portillo represented it as a potentially disastrous descent into regional ethnic squabbles over key resources, with states being impotent to intervene. A sort of 'Europe of Regional Conflict.'

⁶ For more on this, and a slightly different emphasis, see Painter 1995

much more than the *traditional*⁷ idea of an area of space. The regions selected and studied in this research were of interest because of the anticipated interactions between the people who lived there and aspects of the democratic deficit. In this sense, though they each have a physical geography (of course), and that should be expected to have had some effects upon human relationships, the focus was always to be on the social, not the physical. The two quotations which follow encapsulate this approach, the first referring generally to the relationship between space and social processes, the second more specifically defining a region, taken from Keating's own study of EU regions.

Space *per se* has no general effects. The significance of spatial relations depends upon the particular character of the social relations in question. So the spatial relationship cannot be limited to some general effect - it only has effect because the social objects in question possess particular characteristics or powers. (Urry 1995)

We can most usefully conceptualise regions as spaces, but extending the notion of space beyond the purely territorial to include functional space, political space and social space. A region is constituted from a territory, whose significance is given by its functional and political content (Keating 1998 p. 79)

It is to the 'differences' between the actual regions selected for this research, and the rationale behind that selection that this section now turns.

The case study regions: As set out above, there are significant (social) differences between regions in the UK, some of which could reasonably be expected to have effects upon the perceptions, understandings and experience of aspects of the democratic deficit. This section introduces and explains the factors that were influential in the original choice of case study regions. In so doing it provides some

⁷ A recitation of the definition provided in Goodall's 'Dictionary of Human Geography' is justified here in stressing that this research focused on the *social* much more than the *physical* aspects of the selected regions.

Regional Geography: The geographical study of regions in their total composition and complexity. Regional geography has its origins in the consideration of empirical material and a reaction to environmental determinism. It provided geography with its own distinctive subject matter and was regarded as the core of the discipline. This view gained widest acceptance between the two world wars and persisted until the 1950's.

Regions had to be identified and their boundaries defined i.e. a process of aerial differentiation. Each region was distinct having its own personality, and regional geography presented a synthesis or integration of the physical and human phenomena of the area. Details of the physical environment of the region were presented before those on human occupancy, implying some causal link." (Goodall 1987)

key points of information relating to each region. In each case this information is only provided because it was directly relevant to the decision to select that region. Therefore information pertaining the same subject is not replicated slavishly for each region. The focus is on the peculiar rather than the mundane. The section presents a list of the key questions related to the selection of each area. These questions are necessarily simplistic as they were originally formulated at the outset of the research. However, as it has turned out they have provided a sound basis throughout.

Before discussing the selection of the case study regions it is necessary to explain here why it is that in each region the study has actually been carried out in one city. Though this research might well have taken the city as its scale of intended focus, it did not. The reason that particular cities were chosen was a methodological rather than epistemological matter. At the earliest stages of thinking through the study of three distinct regions, each of which was considerable distance from the others, the limitations of my research resources came to the forefront of my mind (not for the last time in this research). It was simply not going to be possible to devise a methodology that would provide a valid representation of a whole region.

This was far from being the only factor at play. In consideration of selecting one city from each region it quickly became clear that there were other major advantages. Contacting potential recruits was expected to be much easier due to typically high population densities,⁸ accommodation was expected to be cheaper and easier to find. Other expected advantages were that access to the selected research participants should have been made easier by the areas being well mapped. Another major factor related to access was that as each chosen city was home to a major university (and public library), it was likely that I could hold some of the research activities at these venues, therefore saving money, whilst providing what should be perceived as a 'safe' environment in which to meet people. Finally, of course statistics relating to factors which were important in the selection process were readily available from each of the chosen cities.

I strongly feel that the essential character of the research was not adversely affected by the decision to focus on cities. The research was not intended to be representative of

⁸ Though as Chapter 2 recounts, even in cities this was by no means straight- forward.

the city itself, rather those people resident in it who were involved in the research. Likewise, it was never anticipated that the research would be making any claim to represent a whole region anyway. Rather, the research was intended to capture a flavour of each region's relationship with the democratic deficit, and compare these; one with another. This was achieved because the city's were located in the regions involved, and, importantly, shared with those wider regions' commonalities in terms of the criteria of selection.

North East England; Durham: This region has in recent years been identified as one of the poorer in the UK. The decline of industrial manufacturing has seriously damaged the economic prospects of the region, and particularly for Durham, the decline in the coal industry has caused major economic problems.

In respect of this relative structural decline, this region was, at the time of the research in receipt of EU regeneration funding (though the County Council expected that this funding would gradually be reduced in forthcoming years). Specifically this funding was allocated under Objective 2, which is intended to assist an areas response to recent industrial decline, and Objective 5b. which is intended to assist in the development of rural areas. Though figures for each of these inflows are immensely complex to arrive at,⁹ the European Commission's own documentation estimates the total under Objective 2 to have been £532m and Objective 5b. £35m between 1995 and 1999 (European Commission 2000).

As a result of this inflow of European funding, the EU is a major issue in local news, and there are numerous high profile infrastructure projects which display the EU emblem as evidence of part funding.

Politically the region is associated with traditional labour movements, which have themselves undergone significant restructuring in recent decades. The area as a whole though, and Durham in particular, remains dominated by Labour support. In the ward of my home, the local council elections are usually unopposed.

⁹ This is in part due to the definition of the North East region varying for different purposes, but also the interactions between different bodies involved in the allocation, collection and spending of these funds. There is also a further complicating factor in that urban areas have received other funds under Objective 4, and also there are a number of so-called Community Initiatives which have brought EU funding to the region. The Commission document referred to above lists 13 of these. (European Commission 2000)

The questions that guided the research in this area were:

Are people in the North East of England aware of the disproportionate amount of money from Europe that the region has received over recent years?

Does knowledge of the EU's apparent generosity to the region make people feel more supportive of it, or perhaps more a part of it?

In sum.... Is there a gratitude effect?

Central Scotland; Dundee: Scotland is specifically referred to by Keating (1998), as having 4 out of 5 of the key 'indicators of difference' which have the potential to set regions apart from the nation states of which they are part. He claims that Scotland has a strong regionally distinctive culture, identity, civil society and economic structure. The one criterion he did not credit Scotland with was its own government institutions (Keating 1998 pp. 109 – 111), stating that "up until now [Scotland has] only had administrative devolution" (1998 p. 110). This point is arguable in the context of formal devolution, and an update might well award this criterion as well.

Central Scotland is a region long associated with nationalist politics, and since the recent resurgence in support for the Scottish National Party, which of course sees the EU as central to its plan for an independent nation state of Scotland, the region has been among those most supportive.

Whilst politically Dundee was at the outset of the research regarded as a safe Labour seat at Westminster (and Edinburgh), the European constituency of which it was formerly part (i.e. prior to the 1999 election) was a strongly held SNP seat. The sitting MEP Allun Macartney secured a majority for the SNP over Labour of over 31,000 in the election prior to the onset of this research. Unfortunately Macartney died during the early stages of the research forcing a by-election. This election facilitated his successor

in extending this majority to some 33,000 votes. Clearly when it comes to Europe, the voters in this region would seem to favour the Nationalist Party.¹⁰

The questions that guided the research in this area were:

Does the success of the SNP in this region suggest that the people tend to feel favourable to an EU that might facilitate independence?

Do the people of this region see themselves as 'different' within the context of the UK?

Does an awareness of the political possibilities offered by the EU tend to make people feel more European?

In sum.... Is there a Scotland effect?

The South East region; Canterbury: This region is of course physically closest to continental Europe, indeed, since the opening of the Channel Tunnel it has become easier and faster to travel from here to France than to most of the rest of the UK. The 'social objects' (Urry 1995) resulting from this proximity include disproportionately high levels of foreign visitors, and similarly high levels of foreign travel. In fact Canterbury City itself is ranked 14th. in the whole of the UK in terms of the numbers of foreign visitors (Canterbury City Council 1998), with the majority of these staying in Canterbury for only one night. There must also be easier access to some of the benefits offered by the Single Market, due to the speed, ease, and relatively low cost of travel to continental Europe.

Though there are pockets of relative deprivation in this region, particularly some of the recently declined coal field areas of Kent, generally this region has been amongst the most economically prosperous in the UK over recent years. At the time of the research the county of Kent, as well as the city of Canterbury had the lowest rate of unemployment of the three counties and cities.

¹⁰ There are many other factors at play in these results such as turnout rates and the different priorities the electorate might vote on in different elections. Certain of these are discussed later in the thesis, but as the purpose of this section is to explain how the areas were chosen, this was the level of information used.

Politically, the county of Kent is associated with 'Home Counties conservatism'. Indeed at the time of the research the Conservative Party dominated the County Council, and was the largest party on the City Council of Canterbury. The Westminster constituency of which Canterbury is part was regarded as a very safe Conservative seat (having survived the 1997 election).

Over and above all the reasons for the focus on cities in general set out above, Canterbury was viewed as favourable to Dover because it is close enough to continental Europe to be influenced by several of the above factors, but lacks the extremes of traffic congestion and immigration issues associated with Dover.

The questions that guided the research in this area were:

Are the people in South East England generally more knowledgeable about the EU because it is prominent in local news, and daily activities?

Are they generally more supportive of the EU because they are well placed to take advantage of one of its most prized achievements, the single market by, for example, buying cheap cigarettes and alcohol, or being easily able to work on the continent?

Does tourism back and forth breed familiarity, conviviality and foster a sense of 'belonging' to Europe?

In sum.... Is there a proximity effect?

The three 'effects', gratitude, Scotland and proximity are hereafter referred to as the *case effects*.

This introductory section of the thesis now closes with a structural overview of the chapters which follow.

Thesis structure

The thesis is structured in such a way as to introduce the main areas of theory first, followed by the methodology used in pursuance of the above aims. This is followed by two chapters which focus on the presentation and analysis of findings, and the concluding section that draws out the main implications of the findings at both policy and theoretical levels. The brief summaries set out below indicate the content of each chapter in turn.

Chapter 1

This chapter outlines the detail of the democratic deficit and the theory of deliberative democracy that framed its investigation throughout the research. The chapter begins by focusing on the deficit, discussing its historical and political context, then presenting the ‘working definition’. At the point from which deliberative democracy becomes the focus of the chapter, this is framed very much within the definition of the deficit previously presented. Overall then, this chapter provides the theoretical context for the rest of the thesis, and the integration between the two areas of theory that is so much a feature of this research, is established here.

Chapter 2

The methodology chapter takes on a higher priority in this thesis than might typically be the case. This partly reflects the unusual prominence of methodology to this research, but also partly the fact that the research chronology, and in particular the problems I had actually getting this research off the ground, becomes a major feature of the critical appraisal presented in later chapters. As is explained fully in this chapter, methodology was more than just a means to an end in this research, but was something of an end in itself. The research methods by which I was to investigate the geography of the deficit were to be deliberative in character, and this influenced the selection of particular methods, which in the event I found impossible to actually use in practice. Why methods such as the focus group and the citizens’ jury could not be used is due to one of

the most important findings of this whole research project, this being that deliberation is far from a simple process which one only needs to set up and observe. Instead, deliberation is an immensely complex process requiring the utmost sensitivity and skill to establish and pursue to any meaningful extent.

The chapter also of course presents both the rationale behind, and the detail involved in the execution of all stages of this research from initial planning to the data analysis.

Chapter 3

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of data derived from the primary stage of the research. This stage was focused on the geography of the deficit, and is structured around the investigation of the three case effects set out above. It is generally argued that whilst there does exist a regional geography of the deficit, and that the differences found are likely to be important to any policy level initiatives aimed at filling the deficit, the dominant factor in individual interviewees' experience of the deficit was derived from their *general approach*. In the formation of *general approaches*, it was found that regional scale had had little real influence compared with the national scale. On the detail of the case effects, each was found to be significant, but to very much differing extents, and not in the way they were anticipated at the outset of the research.

Chapter 4

The focus by this chapter has moved to the investigation of the effects of new information provided as part of the secondary stage of the research, and an assessment of the broader effects of the deliberative process as a whole. Based very much on the findings of the primary stage of the research, the use of 'information packs' and in depth deliberative interviews provided a wealth of data on the effectiveness of different media of information presentation, which are analysed and presented in this chapter. The chapter uses these findings upon which to base a set of recommendations to the European Commission.

On the wider issue of the deliberative process, the results of the research were outstanding. There is shown to be great potential offered by deliberative democracy in terms of filling particular aspects of the deficit. Indeed the interviewees involved in this research greatly increased the confidence with which they expressed their views, and generally felt much more engaged with the issues at the end of the research compared with the beginning. The chapter deals with, among other issues, the difficult matter of disagreement and decision taking, framing the presentation of analysed data within the general focus on both the democratic deficit and the theory of deliberative democracy.

Conclusion

At this stage of the thesis the emphasis shifts from the presentation of results to the outcomes of a considered evaluation of its general findings. Following a brief summary of the main findings, the conclusion presents a two-stage assessment of the implications of the research. In the first section those findings which bear most relevance to policy are discussed. Here it is asserted that there needs to be change of emphasis in the EU's information policy, a change that in itself would require a shift in the main assumption that appears presently to underpin the policy. This section presents two distinct ideas which show my thinking applied to the question of 'what is to be done about the democratic deficit?' The ideas of the EU contributing to the teaching of citizenship to the next generation of adult citizens, and the running of a *road-show* scheme, are indicative of the sort of initiatives that the research points towards being potentially most effective.

The second section draws the thesis to its end by critically commenting on the theory of deliberative democracy in so far as it has been applied in this research. Whilst the optimism that I started the research with is very much retained, it is heavily qualified by certain caveats. Throughout this section the discussion is closely tied to the theorisations of the deficit with which the thesis began, and I assert that the literature on deliberative democracy must be more realistic in its claims if the model is to realise its full potential in practice. The idealism inherent in much of the theory is derived from a lack of emphasis on the realities of its application to actual political problems (such as the

democratic deficit), and I forward some key suggestions in a 'rubric' that should guide any deliberative scheme (or theory!).

A comprehensive list of references closes the thesis.

An extensive appendix accompanies the thesis, and is directly referred to at particular points throughout.

Chapter 1

The democratic deficit & deliberative democracy

Chapter overview

This chapter provides the theoretical context for the findings of the research that are presented throughout Chapters 3 and 4. Though the two main areas of theory are introduced and explained sequentially, with the first part of the chapter dealing with the democratic deficit, and the latter with deliberative democracy, a theme that runs throughout is that the two are entirely integrated. Whilst a certain personal motivation to investigate the potential offered by deliberative democracy has already been set out, the rationale for the use of that theory is very much developed here. The chapter sets out an inescapable logic to using the method of democratic practice that is deliberation to answer certain of the questions raised by the discussion of the deficit. In more detail, it is shown that the fundamental assumptions upon which the model of deliberative democracy is based, in particular that participation (especially through deliberation) educates citizens, that educated citizens are more likely to both demand and utilise opportunities for further participation, and that through the mutually enriching processes of education and participation can derive both individual and collective benefit, match very closely the problems of deficit that encumber the modern EU. Thus the chapter demonstrates the fit between the problems, and the potential solution.

Further, the detailed claims made for deliberative democracy include that it offers a route to the amelioration of disagreement and conflict that not only produces decisions of enhanced quantitative legitimacy, having been reached after the *active* participation of large numbers of people, but also that enjoy a particular qualitative legitimacy which

is derived from the process through which those decisions are reached. In this sense the outcomes of any discursive process are not prescribed, but the principles of procedure are. When applied to the deficit, as they were throughout this research, these principles of procedure were shown to offer great potential, although the realisation of such potential is far from simple.

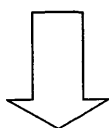
The democratic deficit

The concept of ‘deficit’: In order to concede that something is in deficit, it is first necessary to construct an image of what that something would be like were it in plenty. Unfortunately however, it is not possible to construct such an ideal in the case of democracy. A contested term indeed, definitions of democracy have been developed over time for two main purposes; firstly as frameworks for understanding the way particular political systems function (substantive definitions), secondly as frameworks around which speculation can be based as to how political systems *should* function (normative definitions), with some definitions combining the two.

What I should like to do at this early stage is introduce a sense of proportion to this brief section introducing the definitions of democracy. Borrowing from the work of Beetham (1993) it is helpful to distinguish between the ‘concept’ that is democracy, and the various theories or ‘models’ which contest to describe how it should best be achieved. As Figure 1 (and the accompanying quotation) below show there is a hierarchy of status between the incontestable principle of democracy (i.e. the greater involvement of people in decision-making processes), and the highly contestable issue of how much of it should pertain, and the way in which it should operate.

Figure 1

Governing systems totally excluding the people from decision-making processes.



‘democratisation’

Governing systems offering people effective freedom to control and influence decision-making processes.

We should distinguish between the concept of democracy, which in my view is incontestable and whose point of reference lies at one end of a spectrum of possibilities; and different theories of democracy which involve contestable claims about how much democracy is desirable or practicable, and how it might be realised in a sustainable institutional form [...]. The concept of 'democratisation' expresses both a clear direction of change along the spectrum, and a potential movement or process of change which can apply to any given system, not only change from authoritarian or dictatorial forms of rule (Beetham 1993).

The 'models'¹¹ that have been developed over time provide the democracy theorist with a reference point from which to begin a critique or defence of any governing system, and as has already been explained, this research was itself in part motivated by a particular model of democracy.

Understanding EU democracy: the role of democratic theory: The following section of this chapter sets out the background to the building of the working definition of the democratic deficit by drawing primarily on the work of Weiler et al (1995). Here models are employed to critically describe the functioning of EU governance. Their work uses a different model for each aspect of the EU's functioning,¹² none of which place priority on the active participation of EU citizens in decision-making processes. That I have presented work such as this at this stage should not be altogether surprising considering the nature of this research, and its focus on the potential benefits offered by greater levels of citizen participation. As Weiler *et al* (1995) correctly state "A description and analysis of European governance will depend today in large measure on

¹¹ David Held's *Models of Democracy* (1995) is the key text in this subject area. Held however acknowledges his indebtedness to C.B MacPherson for the language of 'models'.. In his book *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy*, first published in 1977, MacPherson provides a definition of models (or theories; he uses the term interchangeably), in the context of political theorising thus:

[T]hey may be concerned to explain not only the underlying reality of the prevailing or past relations between wilful and historically influenced human beings, but also the probability or possibility of future changes in those relations [...] The second additional dimension of models in political theorising is an ethical one, a concern for what is desirable or good or right. The outstanding models in political science, at least from Hobbes on, have been both explanatory and justificatory or advocacy. They are, in different proportions, statements about what a political system or a political society is, how it does work or could work, and statements of why it is a good thing, or why it would be a good thing to have it, or to have more of it. (MacPherson 1989 pp. 3-4).

¹² There are of course examples of the selection of a single model of democracy to explain the functioning of the EU (see for example Harlow 1999), but there are serious limitations built into any such approach. The EU is a unique political system, different to any state: "the EU is more than an inter-governmental organisation, indeed even more than a confederation, and less than a federation" (Weale 1995 p. 83). It is in an ambiguous position between an inter-governmental forum, and a Federal Union, and it is exactly this ambiguity which prevents the fit of any one model.

the literature you chose to study [...] it will also depend in large measure on ones purpose for 'describing and analysing' European governance." (Weiler *et al* 1995 p. 28)

Weiler *et al* (1995) identify three approaches; one for each mode of the EU's functioning :- the *international* (or intergovernmental), the *supranational* and the *infranational*. Whilst acknowledging that intellectually these approaches have been devised by others, they stress that to attempt to understand European governance within any one, over and above the others, is flawed. Instead they explain that in certain areas of its functioning the EU acts as an international system, whilst simultaneously acting as a supranational and infranational system in other areas.

For areas of the EU's functioning that are international, which include for example the decision making of the European Council and the Council of Ministers, they consider that 'consociational theory' offers the best model. This has developed from a gap in conventional democratic theory which left unexplained the conundrum of how deeply divided societies could be held together due to careful management by political elites.

Consociational theory explains the motivation of political elites to strike deals and to compromise, in order to maintain a loose cohesion which, though far from ideal, is considered superior to the alternative of fragmentation. "The elites, representing their respective segments, realise that the game is not zero- sum nor is it winner take all" (Weiler *et al* 1995 p. 29). Holland, Austria and Belgium are cited as examples of once deeply divided countries, which have reached stability through the application of this principle.¹³ The problems associated with this model include the tendency to prolong the status quo. This is demonstrated in the EU by the way that the member states hold together at a certain level of integration, but by retaining power at this level effectively prevent social cohesion forming at other, perhaps sub-national levels. Also, there is inevitably an exclusivity about negotiations between elites, and if there are any weaknesses within the member states in terms of representation, these will simply be replicated at the European level.

For areas of the EU's functioning which are supranational, which includes most obviously the activities of the Commission and the Parliament (i.e. those parts of the

¹³ This list must surely now include Northern Ireland after several years of the loose, but still binding

Union which are relatively independent of the member states), they consider that the Competitive Elitist model provides the best fit. This model accounts for the representation of mass electorates by small numbers of relatively expert politicians and bureaucrats. The inherent complexity of political decision making means that information is prized, and it is considered unrealistic to expect the people themselves to have more than the most cursory involvement. The problems associated with this model are essentially those of the representative institutions themselves. If there are inherent weaknesses in the structural arrangements for representation, then this system of governance will fall prey to them.

For areas of the EU's functioning that are infranational, which include the setting of standards, and the discussions about the detail of legislation, both of which are behind the scenes activities, and both of which involve specialist interest groups, they consider that a derivative of Neo-Corporatism provides the best fit. This is not the tripartite corporatism of early post war Britain, but it does provide an arena for business, managerial and technical elites to influence policy making at the pre legislative stage. The key aspect that makes such organised influence infranational is that the interest groups involved transcend national boundaries, and as such can weaken the influence of member states. Many of the democratic problems associated with this model are similar to those of the elite model above, in terms of potentially weak representation. Beyond this, there is a danger that this process may carry on unaltered by elections, referenda and the like. As such this can be a powerful force, not just in decision making but in the earlier process of agenda setting, which is entirely beyond the scrutiny or control of the mass public, who inevitably are not members of the various privileged elites.

As mentioned earlier, none of the above models place any strong emphasis on the need to directly involve the people in decision making processes. Consociational Theory assumes the member states bring to the EU the requisite legitimacy, and if popular participation were to be involved, its place would be at the national, not the European level. Competitive Elitist theory, relies on levels of expertise, and an understanding of the decision making bureaucracy that explicitly inhibits popular participation.¹⁴ Neo-

Good Friday Agreement.

¹⁴ In the 'classical' version of the Competitive Elitist model of democracy, Schumpeter argued that the "bulk of the population is uninvolved, uninterested and therefore, unable to think about the stuff of politics" (Held 1995). Indeed one of the 'General Conditions' required for democracy of this type is a 'poorly informed and/ or emotional electorate'(1995)

Corporatism relies on the formation of large interest groups, which though made up of individuals representative of certain group's interests, is effectively conceding that only such agglomerations can gain access to the decision making process. Individuals who are not involved in, nor represented by such groups have seriously restricted access to decision making processes. Worse still is the possibility of closure, whereby even forming new interest groups will not guarantee that the existing structures will permit access.

Deliberative democracy does prize the active involvement of citizens in decision – making processes. It is this fundamental juxtaposition between the current functioning of the EU, with its associated democratic deficit, and the claims of deliberative democracy that provide the fundamental basis of this research. It is to that democratic deficit that this chapter now turns. Firstly a brief explanation of the background to the issue of the deficit is set out, followed by the presentation of what I have titled the ‘working definition’. This phrasing was selected because that is exactly what it represented throughout the research. It provided the framework for the design of the research at all stages, and it is the congruence between this definition, the claims of deliberative democracy, and the actual findings of the research that is analysed in detail throughout the latter chapters of the thesis.

The democratic deficit: the origins of the debate: In order that one does not lose sight of the wider context within which the European Union is here being discussed, it is essential in this section on the democratic deficit, to offer the following important caveat. There exists an ongoing academic debate about the quality of democracy, and the extent to which systems can be considered legitimate,¹⁵ at the national and sub-national level. Concerning the national level, Painter (1997) provides an assessment of a number of distinct challenges to the established western liberal democracies.¹⁶ Indeed

¹⁵ Of course ‘legitimacy’ itself is a contested term, and means different things in different contexts. Here though, in congruence with the comment in the introduction, a process rather than outcome based view is taken. A definition provided by Obradovic fits well here: “In my view legitimacy means the acceptance of decisions as something which one should defend, even at personal cost, because they were made in a way that morally obliges one to accept them.” (Obradovic 1996)

¹⁶ Here Painter cites the following as contributory factors in the challenge to the legitimacy of western democracies:

- The increasing perception of political parties as being relatively powerless in the face of big business, being at least constrained by non-political factors, and at worst corrupt.
- Falling levels of support for the major parties, along with both an increase in support for extreme and/or populist parties, and a decline in voter turnout generally.
- Doubts as to the validity of any apparently expressed ‘popular will’ in the face of increasing social

what is particularly interesting in the context of the debate about the democratic deficit of the EU is that at the time of the ratification process for the Treaty on European Union (hereafter referred to as the TEU), the Eurobarometer was showing greater levels of dissatisfaction with democracy at the national level than at the European level (Shackleton 1995). At the sub-national scale, a contemporary example of the undermining of established local democracy is described by Wilson (1994), in which he describes the burgeoning 'democratic deficit' in British local democracy.¹⁷ However, to keep the debate in a relative perspective Weiler correctly points out that in general the state is, at least by comparison with the EU 'sound':

The preoccupation with European democracy should not make us think that the Member States are without problem. Also within our Member States there is ample room to enhance the democratic processes of government. But with very few exceptions it is thought that the basic structures of national democratic governance are in place and are sound[...] This it is generally acknowledged is not the case with the European Union and Community. (Weiler *et al* 1999 p. 5)

Returning now to the origin of the debate over the democratic deficit, there can be little doubt that academic, political and public interest has become more focused upon the EU's democratic credentials since the very point at which it became the 'Union' (i.e. at the time of the signing and problematic ratification of the TEU in 1992). It is no coincidence that there existed a 'permissive consensus' during the first four decades of the process of European integration, during which controversy and critical scrutiny were limited, and a comfortable position for European policy makers was maintained (Obradovic 1996).

Originally established as an elitist project, for many decades European integration failed to raise the basic question of its policy legitimacy. Since European integration has always been an affair of the elites, both political and business, they have relied on persuading the mass public that the European venture is a good idea. As long as people did not perceive themselves as being directly affected by European decisions, they were willing to 'go along' uncritically with elite decisions. (Obradovic 1996 p.192)

fragmentation within states, and the growing awareness of the socially constructed nature of knowledge and its dissemination.

- The changing scales of governance. Here the EU is used as a case in point, in that it itself is challenging the legitimacy of the nation states which make it up. (Painter 1997 pp 1-2)

¹⁷ Here Wilson explains that Britain already has fewer councillors per person than most European states, and that their existing role is being undermined by the appointment of officials to positions previously occupied by elected councillors. This shifts accountability from those directly elected, thus causing a democratic deficit.

As Shackleton (1995) argues, the end of this period is traceable to the Maastricht Treaty because of the crucial step that that Treaty represented. The new 'Union' had forever shifted from the 'administration of things' to the 'governance of people'. Fishing and agricultural policies were, up to the formalisation of the Single Market, the largest administrative tasks that the Community had dealt with. Though a source of great irritation and protest at times from the sections of the European workforce directly affected, these policies were ultimately justified by the classic administrative criteria of efficiency and fairness. Also, and crucial to the point being developed here, they were of only occasional and limited interest to the general public. Even the Single Market Project borne of the Single European Act (SEA) 1987 was designed to be administrative in style, thus building on (and relying upon) the hitherto successful combination of tough negotiation between specialist officials, and the very low levels of interest amongst the public in the detail. (Neunreither 1994a)

The Maastricht Treaty was the first major Treaty revision for 35 years and went much beyond where the EC had been before. The formalisation of the notion of European citizenship¹⁸ as well as the establishment of the timetable to Economic and Monetary Union, had very firmly moved the European situation into one of 'governance', with all the antecedent debates implied by a concern over the legitimacy of that 'governance'. It is on these debates, and the attention that began to be focused upon them during the ratification process of the Treaty, and its revision via the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997, that the definition and investigation of the democratic deficit of the European Union is centred. Franklin *et al* set this scene:

In some countries there was a formal requirement to consult the people before the final seal could be put on the document - a sort of splash from the bottle of democratic legitimacy to launch the European Union on its way.

To the surprise of many observers, what emerged from the bottle was an apparent wave of popular opposition the volume of which raised questions about the underpinnings of European Union, not just in those countries where there was a referendum, but also amongst the other signatories to the Treaty. (Franklin *et al* 1994)

The democratic deficit: A working definition: Considering that the definition of the democratic deficit is bound to be influenced by one's definition of democracy, there are wide ranging definitions present in the literature (Boyce 1993). This range is demonstrated in, for example, the work of Lodge (1994), who focuses upon the relative

power of the institutions of the European Union; Wiener (1997) who stresses conflict between the demands of European citizenship (in terms of accessing the institutions of democracy) and the inability of current constitutional arrangements to meet these; and Hedetoft (1994), who stresses the deficit in terms of the persistence of strong national identities concurrent with a weak European identity.

However, though these examples have been suggested as tackling different aspects of the deficit, so widespread is this definitional process that experienced authors on the subject such as Joseph Weiler are able to recite a "standard version of the European Union's democratic deficit thesis" (Weiler *et al* 1995 pp 6-9),¹⁹ which, in very simple terms, includes all of the aforementioned.

Rather than present an uncritical review of the definitional positions taken by different writers, and listing the aspects of democratic functioning in the EU that are in each case considered to be contributors to the deficit, this section is based around²⁰ a definition provided by an academic, and long time advisor to the European Parliament, Karlheinz Neunreither (see Neunreither 1994a and 1994b). In building this definition, a critical review of others' work has been conducted by myself, and the overall conclusion reached that inclusively is superior to exclusivity. This must not be interpreted as a wish to cast a wide net for fear of missing something, rather a considered and strong view that the focus on only one aspect of democratic processes at the EU level, though justified in terms of academic focus, tends to concealment of the overall problem. As explained earlier, the EU is complex and ambiguous, and functions at different levels (and in different ways) simultaneously, which has the effect of necessitating a broad approach to the democratic deficit.

The 'syndrome' of the democratic deficit: Neunreither sees the democratic deficit as akin to a medical syndrome, which manifests three distinct 'symptoms'. Following such an analogy, it is clear that all symptoms together make up the whole, and to some extent

¹⁸ This can be a highly problematic concept, and is dealt with later in this Chapter.

¹⁹ All the aspects of democratic critique which make up this standard version, which the authors describe as "non-attributable [...] an aggregate of public opinion data, politician's statements, media commentary, and considerable learned analysis" (Weiler *et al* 1995 pp 6-9) are incorporated into the definition which has informed this research, and as such are set out later in this section.

²⁰ My definition re-arranges some of Neunreither's aspects of the deficit, develops some in a different way, and plays down others. I have no reason to believe that Neunreither would agree with this definition, but he would surely recognise that it is 'based around' his own.

compound each other. By applying the same logic, there would be little point in tackling one symptom, leaving others untreated, the syndrome would not, under such remedial treatment, be cured. The symptoms are:

1. The Institutional deficit - the problematic relationship between power and legitimacy amongst the institutions of European governance.
 2. The Transmission deficit - the lack of effective channels through which the people of Europe can become informed about, and involved in, the activities of the EU.
 3. The Citizen deficit - the paucity, despite the implementation of initiatives aimed at creating European citizenship, of the EU's relationship with its 'citizens'.
- (adapted from Neunreither 1994 a / 1994b)

Whilst it is of course the case that all of these 'symptoms' are linked, it is not the case that they must necessarily be researched equally. This research set out to investigate the relationship that citizens in each of the three case study regions had with the EU. For example it was intended that the focus of the interviews would be on the level of information interviewees felt that they had about the EU, and the effect this had on their participation in its governance. What information participants had come across was bound to have originated from particular sources, and it was my intention to investigate the 'transmission' routes at play. It was important for the secondary stage of the research (in which I was effectively to devise my own routes of transmission) to establish what were the favoured media, or at least felt likely to be most effective. Further to the focus on transmission, it was always important to investigate the feelings of identity that interviewees expressed, and the relationship between these and feelings of engagement with the EU.

That the emphasis on information, levels of participation, and feelings of 'engagement' was driven in part by an early theoretical selectivity has already been explained, but it is important here to clarify that this had the effect of pulling the research very much towards the latter two 'symptoms' of the deficit. I was also guided at an early stage by secondary data suggesting that knowledge of, and levels of interest in the institutions of

the EU was very limited, and in fact this also was found throughout the collection of primary data.

In sum I should say that the focus on the transmission deficit and the citizen deficit was partly dictated by the research design, and partly by the actual results. That the institutional deficit needs tackling is not disputed here, but that this thesis does not extend its 'reach' towards fully investigating how deliberative democracy might contribute to this is entirely justified.

As a consequence of this focus, the emphasis in this section on setting out the working definition is appropriately placed on the latter two symptoms.

The Institutional deficit: The overall concern in terms of the institutional aspects of the democratic deficit is the formal division of political authority between the institutions. Very rarely in any political system is this division equal, but essentially that is not the purpose. Instead, the aim is to prevent the abuse of power by its gross accumulation at one level, or in this case, within one institution (Boyce 1993).

The focus of most work on the institutional deficit then, is on the way that this political authority has shifted as a result of the process of integration, and that this has not been matched by a concurrent shift in the location of democratic legitimacy. The institutions central to this 'ambiguous' legitimacy location are the Council,²¹ the Commission and the Parliament (the 'institutional core' - Wallace 1990). Other institutions of the Union, particularly the Court of Justice and the Committee of the Regions do of course play an important role in certain areas of EU affairs, but they are not central to most work on the institutional deficit.

The crucial distinction between these three institutions is that the Council is international (inter-governmental) and both the Commission and Parliament are supranational, being relatively independent of the member states. This difference gives rise to the source of the institutional deficit. According to the 'standard version' (Weiler

²¹ The title 'Council' is used here. It is often referred to as the Council of Ministers, though the official title since the TEU has been the Council of the European Union. This institution was formed from the original three Councils of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1965. This institution must not be confused with the European Council (of Heads of State or government), formed in 1974.

et al 1995) the Council's ministers²² have invested in them a degree of legislative power that they do not even have in their own states. The result being a shift in the location of political authority from legislatures to executives:

The output of European governance is like that of a state, even a super state: an endless stream of laws in increasingly varied areas of public and private life. They are binding on governments and individuals as part of the law of the land. Indeed, they are a higher law of the land - supreme over conflicting state laws. The structure and process of European governance, by contrast, is not at all, in many of its features, like that of a state.[...]

Community and Union governance pervert the balance between executive and legislative organs of government of the state. Member state ministers are reconstituted in the Community as the principal legislative organ with [...] an ever widening jurisdiction over increasing areas of public policy. (Wieler *et al* 1995 p. 4)

Neunreither extends a similar argument and, taking an historical approach, explains the relative role of the Commission and Parliament:

The power to take legislative decisions was embodied in the Council of Ministers i.e. the joint executives of the member-states. A newly conceived body, the Commission, was entrusted with the monopoly of initiating legislation, [the Commission's] participation in legislation is exercised on the executive/administrative side and not the parliamentary one. As a result, we find only the EP as a poor man's co-legislator to defend the former balance of powers. (Neunreither 1994a p. 98)

So, as defined here, the institutional deficit consists of the unequal distribution of political authority compared with legitimacy. In member states the parliaments are the primary legislatures (having a direct mandate through voting), and yet European law, which is 'higher law' (Wiener *et al* 1995), is decided upon by members of the states' executives, and need not be subject to domestic parliament.²³ At present the relatively weak role of the Commission and the Parliament prohibits correction of this imbalance. In this very simple, but also very important sense European law (or policy) cannot enjoy the same legitimacy as state law (or policy).

²² In several EU countries including the UK, government ministers do not have to be sitting MP's (they can be selected by the Prime Minister from for example, industry or academia), therefore it is possible that ministers on the Council might not have been elected at all.

²³ Of course the Treaties under which this situation came into being were subject to Parliamentary assent, and in the case of the TEU by popular referenda in some states. However, as explained by Neunreither, the negotiation of the TEU was not, legally speaking an EU matter but an inter-governmental one, and as such, there was no obligation on Ministers to discuss the matter with parliaments. This resulted in the exclusion of parliaments up to the point of the presentation of a completed document for acceptance or rejection. (Neunreither 1994b). Also, Franklin *et al* (1994) point out that the factors at play in the referenda on the TEU were complex, and not insignificantly influenced by domestic politics (Franklin *et al* 1994).

Referring back to the earlier section *Understanding EU democracy*, consociational theory would explain the efficiency with which the Council has been able to hold the member states together. However, ironically it is in part the nature of this ‘consociation’ that might have prevented a more supranational Commission or Parliament correcting the imbalance between power and legitimacy amongst the institutions of the EU.

The transmission deficit: This aspect of the democratic deficit is concerned with the inadequacy of ‘transmission structures’ (Neunreither 1994a), through which the EU should be able to involve the public(s)²⁴ in, and inform them of, its actions. The deficit, as defined here is inferred in the following quote from Joseph Weiler, an advocate of the EU involving its people by playing to its general strengths (its noble ideals of peace and trade etc.), and not of fostering the support of interest groups via political factionalism:

The people have disappointed: Maastricht, justly hailed as a remarkable diplomatic achievement, was met in many a European street with a sentiment ranging from hostility to indifference. One cannot even derive comfort from those segments of public opinion which have rallied behind “**Europe**” such as the agricultural lobby in Ireland, the Political Establishment in France, the German Partitocracy. Narrow self-interest, a formidable stake in the status-quo, a growing cleavage with the constituents are the respective hall-marks of this support. Maybe **The People** should indeed be changed. (Weiler 1995 p.1)

The problem of reaching (in order that there might be the possibility of inciting change) is the transmission deficit.

Observing the familiar national scale of political organisation, there are, for example, political parties, television and radio channels and mass circulation newspaper titles, all of which are orientated towards, and managed specifically within, the national context. These should be viewed as ‘conduits’ for information flows, as well as being the structures which can both initiate and facilitate political involvement. The EU lacks such an infrastructure of ‘transmission’. Beyond this, worse than not having its own infrastructure of this kind is the *de facto* need for it to compete with exactly those national ones which are so well established. This fact is highlighted in the way that national governments (made up of course of national political parties) often blame the EU for unpopular policies.²⁵ (Neunreither 1994b) Also, national media are known to

²⁴ The brackets relate to the question of whether there is a European public, or a collection of national publics. This will be dealt with in more depth later.

²⁵ For example, in the case of the UK’s invidious withdrawal from the ERM the Chancellor of the

represent the EU unfavourably.²⁶ At the very least, national media interpret and represent EU affairs in the national context, to match the national pattern of consumption. Compounding this problem of not being able to communicate independently of the national context, is the complex, and in some key areas, very secretive way in which the EU actually operates.

As with the institutional deficit, this problem is essentially the result of the EU's being neither a federal system (which could develop its own independent infrastructure of transmission), nor a solely inter-national (i.e. inter-governmental) system (which would have no need of such, because everything of importance would remain undisturbed within the national context). Again as with the institutional deficit, the problem has increased both in terms of its visibility, and its consequences, as the 'reach' of the EU has extended into the lives of the people. Neunreither demonstrates this deficit and expresses his own concerns for the future of the EU in the face of it thus:

In all EC member countries, the fact that there are national trade unions, national federations of businesses, national farmers unions etc. strengthens enormously the national web of government, even where regional problems may prevail [...] A decision may be contested, but not the place where it was taken, not the legitimacy of the decision-making process as a whole. 'Brussels' - the EC - is not yet in such a relatively comfortable position. In the absence of a functioning transmission system, it lives a dangerous life and takes risks.[...] without substantial enforcement of its political infrastructure, the EC is poorly prepared to tackle the difficult questions which lie ahead. (Neunreither 1994a p. 105))

Neunreither here alludes to the issue of regional problems within the EU, and of course there are some very serious examples of such, but crucially, as he stresses, the legitimacy of the governing system as a whole, at the national level, rarely comes under threat in such circumstances.

In the discussion that follows, the most significant constituent elements of the transmission deficit are explained in terms of their contribution to the whole. Those elements are secrecy in the decision-making processes of the EU, the national media.²⁷

Exchequer, Norman Lamont, publicly suggested that the crisis was precipitated by statements made by the President of the Bundesbank, Helmut Schlesinger, and that the Bundesbank had refused adequate support." (George 1994)

²⁶ Between 1992 and 1994 The European Commission issued 108 formal rebuffs to 'Euromyths' that had appeared in the British press. (European Commission Representation in Britain 1996)

²⁷ Although there was for over a decade an English language weekly paper 'The European' which claimed to report European news from a non-national perspective, it recently ceased publication due to

and the limited development so far of influential trans-European political groupings along the lines of those already deeply entrenched at the national level. The research (most particularly the primary stage) directly investigated the role of the national media and political parties in terms of interviewees' attitudes towards the EU. However, there was little focus on secrecy. This was mainly a result of the aforementioned lack of knowledge of the way the EU actually works (i.e. issues relating to the institutional deficit). It is however briefly discussed here because the debate over what has become known as 'transparency' is intimately linked with the EU's public information strategies. The findings of this research form the basis for a critique of exactly these strategies.

Secrecy: *The Guardian* (8 July 1994) reported Tony Blair's concern about the lack of openness of EU decision making prior to his election to Leader of the Labour. "It is absolutely scandalous that important decisions are taken behind closed doors and are barely reported to national parliaments afterwards" (quoted in Tumber 1995 p. 515). This problem remains, and its contribution to the transmission deficit is set out below.

The lack of openness concerning decision making in the EU must play an important part in the transmission deficit. Clearly, for the EU to inform, and therefore 'reach', its people, whatever the efficacy of the various structures of transmission (the examples of the media and political groupings being described below), information must be available in the first place, and in reality, in certain important areas, it is not. This section will not recount in detail the EU's myriad policies on public access to information, as that is unnecessary to the elucidation of the point, that being the relatively simple fact that the locus of ultimate decision-making power, the Council, is correspondingly, the locus of ultimate secrecy.

The origins of the transparency debate stem from the debates preceding the TEU, in which both the principles of the right to information.²⁸ and of the explicit justification of EU action within the framework of 'subsidiarity' were established. The justification for EU action could only be establishable if there was openness in the debates and

poor circulation. For the very most part, media are national in orientation.

²⁸ The TEU included a Declaration on the Right of Access to Information, which stated "The Conference considers that transparency of the decision-making process strengthens the democratic nature of the institutions and the public's confidence in the administration." (Office for Official Publications of the EC 1992 p.229). This issue is also referred to later in this chapter in the section entitled: *The identity*

processes involved, and this led to the Commission initiating policies on access to information and procedural papers which go further than those in place in many of the member states.²⁹ There is now an Ombudsman to help the public and interest groups in their formal requests for information from the EU, and much of the Commission and Parliament's deliberations (and all of their decisions) are made public. The situation is very different regarding the Council. Although there have been Council meetings open to the public in the past, this is not generally the case.³⁰ However, opening up vital decisions to public scrutiny would surely force the real negotiation into the 'private spaces' of bars and clubs, leaving the public arena as nothing more than a charade. What is lacking from Council procedures is not the opportunity to 'watch ministers / civil servants in action', rather the opportunity to establish how the national representatives voted, and why. The Council does publish the outcomes of votes in official documents and on their web site,³¹ but the column entitled 'votes made public' is rather thin on details. Most votes are secret.

The ongoing secrecy at this level serves to undermine the progress made in other areas of EU 'transparency' policy. Exactly how this aspect of the transmission deficit interacts with national politics, and the media that reports such is succinctly elucidated by Neunreither:

[The Council's] highly secretive decision-making is clearly more linked with the times of Metternich than with contemporary forms of democracy. This secrecy allows national ministers to monopolise to a large extent information about Council meetings and to influence public opinion in their own country as it suits them. Either they have been successful in defending what inevitably is defined as the national interest, or they have lost a fight against a faceless monster, the Brussels bureaucracy. (Neunreither 1994a p. 100)

The media: This section will first consider the role of the media in general, in terms of its contribution to the transmission deficit, and will then go on to examine the part played by particular types of media, focussing finally on the press.

Neunreither expresses the concern that the media is fixated on outcomes and decisions, rather than on deliberations and debates (Neunreither 1994a). The inevitable

approach.

²⁹ For an orientation of the context of EU transparency issues (secrecy) with respect to member states such as Britain see Taylor 1996 p.76.

³⁰ Interestingly, the new Council building; the £300 million Justus Lipsius Building (Goodman 1996) has no public gallery. (Lodge 1994)

³¹ See <http://ue.eu.int/en/acts/index.htm>

consequence of this is that much reporting of the EU is based around Council decisions and Commission directives (of course, were the Parliament to have more independent decision making power, the focus would shift to that institution). Even within this, there is a strong tendency for the media to focus on certain types of decisions and policy areas. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been the Achilles heel of the EU's media representation:

The EC may take the most important decisions, say on enlargement[...] no TV stations would consider it prime news[...] but if the price of wheat were cut by only 5 per cent or the possibility of exporting subsidised frozen beef slightly diminished, a very strong coalition of national political decision makers, of national farmers organisations and of national media would make sure that this was portrayed as a major issue. (Neunreither 1994a p. 101)

Though as pointed out above, there is the opportunity for certain powerful groups to solicit media attention, the British left wing think-tank Demos sees the EU itself being to blame for the negative coverage associated with the CAP:

The public will support a political system that is seen to address their needs and priorities. The EU almost does the opposite. [The EU] devotes most of its time to precisely the issues that are not seen as priorities by the public. though only one in ten (9 per cent) Europeans see 'ensuring an adequate income for farmers' as important, half the EU budget and one fifth of ministerial meetings are devoted to the Common Agricultural Policy. [...]Although the EU spends over half its budget on food, farmers and fishermen have been some of its harshest critics and firmest opponents. (Demos 1998 p. 13)

This is not a new phenomenon,³² as the study of influences upon British public opinion towards integration throughout the 1970's, conducted by Dalton and Duval informs:

Support (diffuse or specific), will not develop when the news is predominantly negative. If the British data are at all representative of other nations, then the 1970's crisis of support has largely been brought on by the Community itself. For instance the CAP has been a source of overwhelmingly negative news. Policy makers in Brussels and the respective national capitals are well-aware of the problem but are short on solutions - and the Community's image has suffered as a result. (Dalton and Duval 1996)

The influence of the agricultural lobby upon the CAP can be seen as a classic example of the infranational functioning in the EU, and, applying the model of Neo-corporatism, where an interest group has secured power beyond that which would have been possible in a generally more open system.

³² Although it should be noted here that in relation to one particular media i.e. the press, in Britain from 1948 - 1975 there was a supportive approach to European integration. This has declined to "widespread

MEP's themselves are concerned about the representation of the EU in their own national media, with two thirds of them rating it as either 'poor or very poor' and only one per cent prepared to declare that their national media represents the EU 'very well' (The European / MORI 1997). According to research conducted on behalf of the Commission 78% of the British felt that the media does not give all sides of the argument, 70% felt there was a focus on the negative at the expense of the positive, 74% felt there was too much coverage of trivial matters and 73% felt that the coverage made the issue seem too complicated (Opinion Research Business 1997).

The popular media (i.e. the television, radio and newspapers) is by far the most widely used source of information about the EU (European Commission 1999). Across the Union almost 7 in 10 people use the television to access information, nearly 5 in 10 the daily papers and over 3 in 10 the radio, obviously there is overlap whereby people use more than one source (1999). Perhaps unsurprisingly, this matches with the declared preferences of surveyed respondents, the television being the most commonly preferred method of receiving information about the EU, followed by the daily papers, and third most popular being the radio.

Though not related specifically to EU reporting, the Eurobarometer measures trust in these media, showing the television and radio to be trusted on average across the Union by 67% and 66% respectively. The press, despite being the second most used media for gaining information on EU matters, is actually very much the least trusted at only 49% (1999). Turning specifically to the UK, the discrepancy is more extreme with television and radio being trusted by 71% and 66% respectively, but the press only 24%, far the lowest across the Union (1999), suggesting that the British press is perceived to be much less trustworthy, not only compared with the other media, but also with the press in other member states.

There is also evidence suggesting that the influence of the press upon political opinion might be greater than that of the television. Presented in an impressive review paper, over 100 studies of the potential effects of television viewing compared with newspaper readership on political attitudes, were analysed by Weaver and

Buddenbaum (1980). Though their findings show that there are very few consistencies across such a range of studies; political knowledge they found to be exceptional:

On the whole, the findings from these studies are surprisingly consistent: exposure to newspapers seems to lead to more concern over political issues and to more political knowledge than does exposure to television. (Weaver and Buddenbaum 1980 p.37)

It is in consideration of these remarkable data, showing an apparent three-way paradox between the use of the press for the provision of information, its untrustworthiness, and its potential influence on attitudes compared with television, that justifies the focus here on the press, and within that, the British press.

The British, though not the greatest consumers of daily papers in the Union³³ are above average with 79% of people reading a daily paper at least once or twice a week (European Commission 1999). Within this the choice of paper is far from evenly distributed amongst those available. Of the 10 titles of national daily newspapers, *The Sun* reaches a readership of 9.9 million daily (National Readership Surveys Ltd 1999). Its nearest rival, *The Mirror* only reaches 6.3 million daily, and these two 'Tabloid' titles approximately equal the total readership of all the others added together (1999).³⁴ *The Sun*, is known to be one of the most strongly Eurosceptic titles in the UK.³⁵

Though different approaches have been taken to analysing the press in terms of contributing to the institutional deficit (i.e. hindering the EU's communication with people), a common theme is exemplified by the work of the Gerlinde Hardt-Mautner, a Professor of English. Analysing data collected at the time of the passing through parliament of the TEU, and using a discourse analysis approach, Hardt-Mautner explains how one of the essential roles of the press i.e. "assuming a didactic role between the elite discourse of politicians and technocrats on the one hand and the (presumed) lay discourse of its readers on the other" (Hardt-Mautner 1995), can be open to "manipulation of the informed" (1995). She analyses an article from *The Sun*

³³ In Finland only 3% of the population never read the daily papers, and 90% read them at least once or twice a week. The UK is the eighth greatest consumer of daily papers in the Union. (European Commission 1999)

³⁴ In this research readership is defined as 'the average issue readership and represents the number of people who claim to have looked at one or more copies of a given daily newspaper yesterday' (National Readership Surveys Ltd. 1999), and it is not the same as sales, because there are approximately 3 readers per sold copy.

³⁵ The Sun has a separate Scottish edition 'The Scottish Sun', which, though for the most part the same, has at times taken a completely opposite stance on certain issues, notably the recent devolution issue. On

of 22 September 1992 entitled “What the hell is Maastricht all about?”, and stresses that throughout the argument presented is in colloquial (“pseudo-spoken”) language, draws on commonly understood imagery and above all approaches the issue from a “British and personal vantage point”(1995). This leads her to the statement “that major national newspapers, in particular the mass-circulation tabloid *The Sun*, have been increasing rather than reducing anti-European sentiment.” (1995)³⁶

The essential point is that the EU does have a major problem reaching its people through the national media, and has undoubtedly suffered a bad press at the hands of such media. To sum up:

[The EU] is having to compete with national governments of member States in a game still officiated by national media and particularly the national press. At the moment it is the EU which is receiving most of the yellow cards. (Tumber 1995 p. 518)

There is a certain inevitability about the continuing orientation of European affairs within the national context, even leaving aside for now the existence of strong nationally-based media, and that is based on the obvious, but extremely important fact that there are language barriers. John Stuart Mill referred to this point as long ago as 1861 in *Considerations on Representative Government*, “Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. Among a people without fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion necessary to the working of representative government cannot exist” (cited in Shackleton 1995). Mill is of course a product of his time, and his overly pessimistic view of the feasibility of democracy across language frontiers is not directly applicable now. However, the point is not to be dismissed, in entirety. Though the EU recognises 11 ‘official’ languages, and has recently extended a special status to certain ‘non-official’ languages,³⁷ most Europeans are monolingual. Josep Gifreu, in a paper which evaluates how the complete absence of issues around language and communication

Europe though, the most famously Euro-bashing articles have appeared in both editions.

³⁶ I am aware of course of a long running debate in the area of media studies as to the potential influence on political attitudes coverage such as this has. From the ‘hypodermic’ portrayal of a passive audience being injected with a message, to the idea that audiences ‘use’ the media for gratification of particular needs in a highly active way, the debate will long continue. I cannot present this debate in full here, but suffice to say that Hardt-Mautner’s comments are not unambiguously accepted.

³⁷ This is via the Regional or Minoritarian Languages Project 1992, which provides an optional framework of support for member states to promote minor languages. France is not a signatory to the Convention.

from the TEU affects the legitimacy of the EU, explains the realities of mass communication across the EU:

Every day it will become more evident that the barriers against the free circulation will not be political but basically linguistic [...] There is the indisputable fact of scant plurilingual competence existing in Europe. [...] The market forces of the big advertising companies do not hesitate to regard this as an insurmountable fact. The clearest evidence of this linguistic order, which marks and determines the development of pan-European communication, can be found in the press. The daily press in particular covers the different linguistic markets, which show themselves unyielding to the pressures of managerial concentration. The big European newspapers continue to be 'national', not just because they deal mainly with national questions, but also because of the language they use. (Gifreu 1996 p. 132-134)

Though the language problems referred to earlier of course relate to all trans-European communications, the significance of the media is that it is consumed for pleasure. Whilst businesses and political organisations might be sufficiently motivated to employ interpreters, consumers will not.

Political groupings: Taking this term to include not only formal political parties, but any organised group which represents the common interests of its membership or supporters, this section explains the way in which they form part of the transmission deficit. Trade Unions, business confederations, charities and social organisations such as the Women's Institute are all examples of such groupings which, for the most part are organised along national lines. They might well of course have affiliations (formal and informal) with not only the EU, but similar interested bodies across the Union, but the essential point is that most represent interests which are delineated nationally. Brevity prohibits discussion of a range of such structures, so political parties are here used to exemplify the general problem. Political parties are intimately involved with the EU; they contest elections on European manifestos, and do deals with other European parties. However, central to the discussion here is that they do all of this through the visor of the national interest. Europe is an issue to the national parties only in so far as it affects their own (national) agendas, policies, interpretation of the national interest, and most importantly of all, levels of domestic support.

There are no pan-European political parties. However, in the European Parliament there are 'groups' of political parties which have official status, each having a chair

who represents the group at the Conference of Presidents.³⁸ These groups have been remarkably successful at forming supranational coalitions (Neunreither 1994a), except those comprising the smaller, or more extreme parties (Pinder 1994). As such they might well represent a future model for European parties. However, as it now stands, elections are contested by national parties (with very little mention of the group that the parties will join if elected) and are widely claimed to be fought on national issues (see Obradovic 1996, Pinder 1994,). This, in terms of the transmission deficit is the main point, in that even though these groups exist in the parliament, and may at times function as if they were European parties, the people voting for them are ignorant of their role. Therefore they have no choice but to vote for the national parties on the knowledge that they do have of them (which is predominantly nationally based).

An important point to make here is that voting for national parties in the national context does not mean that such voting ignores the parties' policies on Europe, rather that the policies on Europe are set to appeal nationally, are presented nationally, interpreted nationally and are voted for nationally. According to Albert Weale, "[there has been a] desire on the part of national politicians to maintain political capital and control within their own national systems" (Weale 1995), and this is supported by an opinion poll showing that in Britain 86% of people believe that 'politicians manipulate coverage of the EU and make it difficult to get an impartial view' (ORB 1997). Pinder speculated about how the Conservative party fared less badly than expected in the 1994 European elections (considering its unpopularity) precisely because of its policy statements about the UK's future position in Europe³⁹ and that they might well choose to adopt a relatively Eurosceptic stance at the next election (Pinder 1994). Pinder was right.

In the elections to the European Parliament 1999, the Conservative party hailed as a success their campaign based on overt Euroscepticism. This has since bolstered the party's confidence in this orientation.⁴⁰ At the time of this election, the European issue

³⁸ The Conference of Presidents brings together the Parliament President and the Chairs of the party groups to decide order and agenda of sessions in the Parliament.

³⁹ Conservatives used the slogan 'We want less Europe, not more.' (Pinder 1994)

⁴⁰ The Conservative party polled the largest proportion of the national vote of all the party's. This election used a regional system of Proportional Representation for the first time in a European election (N.B. Northern Ireland has used a system of PR called the single transferable vote for a number of years). Their total share of the vote was 38.09%, but from a turnout of only 24% this actually represents less than 10% of the total electorate. Interestingly the 'other' parties (other than Labour, Conservative and Lib Dem) polled over 20% of the national vote (figures calculated from data presented in the Times newspaper

was considered by the British people to be one of the most important facing the country. Concern about Europe was higher than at any point since entry into the Common Market (MORI 1999)⁴¹, and so one could assume that electors were at least more likely to consider European policies in this election compared with those occurring when the issue is less high profile.

The list of campaign slogans below is indicative of the predominantly national scale of European elections.

1999 European election campaign soundbites
(except the Northern Ireland parties⁴²)

Labour Party - *"Integrate where necessary, decentralise where possible"*

Conservative Party - *"We want to be in Europe but not run by Europe"*

Liberal Democrat Party - *"We are pro-Europe, but clear about its limits and firm on its failings"*

Scottish National Party - *"Scotland needs a direct voice in the EU so that we can promote our national interests at the top table"*

Plaid Cymru - *"A strong voice for Wales in Europe"*

Green party - *"Vote for what you believe in and send a clear message that people want a cleaner, safer, fairer world"*

15/6/99).

⁴¹ The highly respected market research company MORI conduct a month by month survey of the British public of what are considered to be the most important issues. Categories in the survey include unemployment, the NHS, law and order, prices, race etc. The 'EU/Common Market' was considered more important during May/ June 1999, far surpassing the level of importance declared at the time of the TEU negotiations. Generally, at the end of 1999, the importance placed on the EU was consistently higher than ever before.

⁴² Northern Irish politics is of course dominated by sectarian concerns. The parties standing at the European election were the same ones that contest national elections. As usual the turnout in the Province was remarkably high at 57.77%

Pro-Euro conservative Party - “ *The PECP believes that Euroscepticism not merely makes the Conservative Party unelectable but threatens its very survival*”

UK Independence Party - “*The aim of the UKIP is to achieve British withdrawal from the EU*”

(The Times 21/5/99).

Habermas, as quoted by Paolo Dardanelli, explains that politics remains a national business, and that there is an intimate link between this fact and the third symptom of the democratic deficit, the problem with the ‘European citizen’ to which, following the quote below, the chapter turns:

The political public sphere is fragmented into national units by and large, the national public spheres are culturally isolated from one another. They are anchored in contexts in which political issues only gain relevance against the background of national histories and national experiences. (Dardanelli 1988 p. 7)

The citizen deficit: This aspect of the democratic deficit involves what Neunreither described as the EU’s “difficult links with the citizen” (Neunreither 1994a). ‘Citizenship’ is itself problematic both to define, and to isolate from political bias, as highlighted in the following quote from Plant in a UK government-sponsored report:

Trying to pin down *the* definition as the only true or real one is in itself a political activity because it brings into play a more general normative of ideological commitment within which an idea of citizenship sits as a part (Report of the Commission on Citizenship 1989 p. 3)

Smith correctly develops this idea thus:

The important thing to recognise is that terminological and conceptual differences in the use of the idea of citizenship are not neutral: there is an ideological struggle for control over the meaning of citizenship, and these meanings cannot be abstracted from the specific (geographically differentiated) political contexts in which the terms of citizenship are generated (Smith 1995 p. 1)

The literature on citizenship shares a great deal with that on democracy, the two areas of theory being somewhat interactive one with another. There are both normative and substantive trends, neither of which it is possible to do justice to here. I have however selected what is common to most conceptualisations of citizenship, and used that as the

starting point for a discussion of the key elements of the EU's problematic relationship with its citizens.

This commonality is around the notion of belonging (and necessarily its antithesis; not belonging). Wiener and Della Sala put it thus: "it [citizenship] concerns the entitlement to belong" (Wiener and Della Sala 1997)

There are two obvious questions arising from the concept of citizenship as an entitlement to belong. These are; Who is entitled to belong?, and; To what are they entitled to belong?

This section now examines the answer to these two questions in the context of EU citizenship in order that the problems implicit in those answers be assessed. It is helpful first though to identify two distinct strands literature on EU citizenship, and to structure the answers around these. First there is the focus on formal rights (citizens rights), and structures through which people can exercise these rights (e.g. suffrage, access to redress through the courts etc.). This has been described as the '*political approach*' (Painter and Philo 1995). Second, there is the focus on the feelings of *identity* that being a citizen commonly inspires:- the 'imagined community' (Anderson 1993).

This research made full and appropriate use of both aspects of citizenship. This was in part by design, as it was felt at the outset that *political* and *identity* based aspects are, so to speak: 'two sides of the same coin'. Also however, it was determined by outcome, as particular interviewees themselves described citizenship in terms most similar to the political approach, whilst others tended to interpret and discuss 'belonginess' in terms of their feelings and perceptions of identity.

The political approach: The notion of European citizenship originated as a by-product of the pursuit of the Single European Market. Were there to be 'free movement of goods and services', labour mobility was to be a major factor. To this end there was the formal recognition of EU workers' right to work in other member countries without hindrance. Europeans became 'different' to non-Europeans, who were excluded from this economically motivated 'passport union'. Quoting Everson's work,

Harlow describes this as follows: “citizen participation in the Community is at heart no more than participation in the market, a peculiarly ‘thin’ notion of citizenship” (Harlow 1999). This ‘thin citizenship’ (which was not formalised as citizenship *per se*), was exclusive. The ‘entitlement to belong’ to this European Community did not extend to those who were not economically valued within it. The very old, the very young, and the unemployed were excluded. So were those who were non-nationals of the member state in which they lived (the so called ‘third country nationals’). Over time, more and more groups were brought into this new citizenry, including academics, students, consumers and travellers, but it remained a top down system (i.e. which groups were to be citizens depended upon the sectoral policies of the EC). As Wiener and Della Sala explain, “belongingness to the EC/EU emerged according to what individuals did, or might aspire to do with reference to economic and political participation” and further, quoting Wiener’s earlier work, “belongingness was generated step by step and area by area.” (Wiener and Della Sala 1997)

This approach to citizenship was fundamentally altered with the passing of the TEU. For the first time in a European Treaty, citizenship as a concept in and of itself was institutionalised. In Part Two, Article 8 of the Treaty; “Citizenship of the Union is hereby established” (TEU 1992 p.15). This citizenship was based on a bundle of rights such as the right to vote in, or stand as a candidate in, elections in the country of residence even if a non-national, the right to petition the Parliament, or to apply to the Ombudsman. It is interesting to note that citizenship of the EU remained secondary, and therefore contingent upon, citizenship of one of its member states: “Every person holding citizenship of a member state shall be a citizen of the Union” (TEU 1992 Article 8 p. 15) i.e. legal third country nationals, of which *The Guardian* estimated there were 9 million in 1992 (quoted in Geddes 1995) were (as they remain today), excluded.

Developing this theme of formal citizens rights, the Treaty of Amsterdam (alternatively known as Maastricht II), declared as one of its key objectives to put “citizens’ rights at the heart of the Union” (European Commission 1997), and to this end, as well as formalising rights in the areas of consumer and health protection, the Treaty established the crucial right to redress through the European Court of Justice:

The Union is founded on the principle of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. Henceforth any citizen has the possibility, on the terms set out in the Treaty, of bringing action in the court of Justice if he or she considers that an instrument issued by the institutions violates fundamental rights. (European Commission 1997)

This provision for redress through the court as a right to all (excepting that not all residents of the EU are citizens of it) apparently represents a fundamental and far reaching step in the progress of this type of European citizenship, and essentially mimics that associated with most member states (though some do not have formally ascribed 'rights', e.g. the UK). What is also clear from this Declaration is that the citizenship as exercised through the European Court is primary in any dispute with institutions of the state.

By its deliberate policies, since the SEA, and most particularly since the TEU, the EU has created the phenomena of a European citizenship based on rights. However, these rights have been 'given' to the people in a top-down way. For many of the reasons already explained in this section defining the democratic deficit, the people have very largely been excluded from the process of citizenship making.

The most striking consequence of this is that the rights that citizens have are not the ones they want.

Out of the 'bundle of rights' listed in its question, the Eurobarometer in 1997 found that across the Union, only two of them attracted the interest of a majority of respondents (and even then at 57% and 51% respectively the majority was slim). In the case of seven of the rights more were uninterested than were interested (European Commission 1997). More specifically, in terms of taking up the rights to live and work in other member states, the fact is that most do not. "Fewer than one in 50 (1.6%) EU citizens is resident in another EU country" (Eurostat quoted in Demos 1998) and "[l]ess than a third of Europeans would take a good job elsewhere in Europe if they were offered one" (The Henley Centre, quoted in Demos 1998).

A point by point critique of the citizenship outlined above is provided by Weiler *et al* in a Research paper sponsored by the European Parliament. In this paper the authors suggest that they prefer to adopt the option of seeing the TEU's notion of citizenship as

a “cynical public relations exercise” (Weiler *et al* 1999) because to accept the only alternative explanation would be even worse:

Can one credit the hodgepodge of relatively trivial civic artefacts in Article 8 was believed by any serious official of statesman or stateswoman to capture what European citizenship should be about? A citizenship composed of-- the right to complain to an ombudsman or petition the European Parliament [...] the right to consular help in foreign countries in which your own Member- State has no representation [...] and the right of non-residents to vote for the European Parliament or local authorities? (Weiler *et al* 1999 p. 20)

As according to EU publicity “[c]ommon citizenship is forged over time, through shared experience and the *affectio societatis* which unites individuals and gives them a sense of belonging to a collectivity” (Fontaine 1994), it is now appropriate to examine the identity aspects of European citizenship.

The identity approach: There is academic, popular and political debate about the notion of a European identity:- whether it should be a replacement for national identity, a supplement to it, or another ‘regional’ identity lying alongside others, or ‘above’ or ‘below’ them. There is general agreement however on the need for some form of European identity, in order to contribute to the sum of legitimacy at EU level. As Soledad Garcia states:

Europe will exist as an unquestionable political community only when European identity permeates people’s lives and daily existence. (quoted in Demos 1998 p. 24)

All members of the public in the EU have some concept(s) of their own identity, and it is because the issue touches everyone in a very intimate way that the EU faces either the ultimate opportunity to create a common sense of identity by tapping into and recruiting those already existing, or alternatively, to be perceived as a threat to the very notions of self that the public holds dearest. Identity represents a game of very high stakes for the EU.

It is not possible to present a full exegeses of major works on identity here, nor is it necessary so to do in order that the purpose of examining the contribution of the European identity issue to the ‘citizen deficit’ be fulfilled. Instead, this section will explain the different types of identity that have actually been pursued by the EU at different times, along with evidence of their effectiveness. Firstly though it is necessary to very briefly explain what is to be understood as ‘identity’.

Identity is a feeling, usually a feeling of belonging to a community or group, and the influences upon the formation of identities include discourse, ideas, traditions (these are the 'mythmoteurs' - i.e. generators of myths) and 'mythology' itself. The use of the word 'mythology' perhaps captures the essence of identity most completely, as it is itself a 'myth'. Belonging to a group implies tangible characteristics associated with that group which are shared by the members, but are exclusive (i.e. not possessed by non-members). Anderson's term 'Imagined Communities', though originally used to describe national identity really explains the concept of belonging to any group:- members feel like members, they 'imagine' that others share this feeling with them. One cannot prove an identity, in the way that one could prove nationality (e.g. by showing a passport or birth certificate). Identity is a feeling:- it is a '*myth*'. The following quote from the writings of Winston Churchill perhaps captures the essence of what the European identity would be as an ideal:

I hope to see a Europe where men and women of every country will think as much of being European as of belonging to their native land and wherever they go in this wide domain will truly feel "Here I am at home." (quoted in Cochrane 1996 p. 101)

Within Europe there are countless identities, some of them very personal and private, others much more public. Some, for example, based around hobbies and interests, others rooted in ethnicity or territorial space. Some inspiring little interest, others being major factors in issues of life and death. However, the one that is of most interest here is the 'Euro-identity', and there is a wealth of research data, much of it from the EU itself, which shows that this, insofar as it is perceived to be a quantitatively measurable phenomena has remained an elusive concept.

Across the Union 38% of people declared that they agreed with the statement "There is a European cultural identity shared by all Europeans", compared with 49% who disagreed (European Commission 1998 p. 60). This of course varies from country to country, with the Finns showing the highest percentage of sceptics in this regard, and the Greeks the highest proportion accepting the notion of a common European cultural identity. No country shows a majority accepting the statement, and the ratio between those who agree and disagree is greatest in the UK with more than twice as many sceptics. Beyond variation between countries, the acceptance of this statement varies as one would expect with support for the EU. Amongst those who support their

country's membership, there is greater proportion who agree with this statement. (1998 p.60)

Unfortunately this research leaves totally undefined the nature of this 'shared cultural identity, as the respondents who agreed that it existed, were not asked how they perceived it. Anthony Smith is absolutely right in his critique of research such as this:

[R]elatively little attention has been devoted to the cultural and psychological issues associated with European unification - to those questions of meaning, value and symbolism. What research there has been in this area has suffered from a lack of theoretical sophistication and tends to be somewhat impressionistic and superficial. [...] In few areas is the attitude questionnaire of such doubtful utility as in the domain of cultural values and meanings. (Smith 1992 p.57)

Apart from the cultural approach, the Eurobarometer surveys feelings of identity on a comparative basis. Across the Union, more than four out of every ten people perceive there to be no European element in their identity (European Commission 1998 p.59), and this figure has generally been rising in recent years (European Commission 1998b p.41). Even in Luxembourg, which has the highest proportion of citizens from other EU states, the percentage seeing themselves as 'European only' is dwarfed by that seeing themselves as 'national only'. In the UK, as well as Sweden, Portugal, Finland, Ireland, and Denmark, the majority see only a national element in their identity (1998 p.59). Breakdown of these data by socio-demographic factors shows that people becoming adults before the formulation of the Community are less likely to feel to any extent European than those growing up within the Community. Also, higher levels of education tend to correlate with a more 'European' identity. The most important single factor though is support for the Union in general; "74% of people who regard their countries membership as a bad thing identify solely with their nationality, compared to only 27% of people who regard their country's membership as a good thing" (European Commission 1998 p. 60). In the UK the percentage of people considering membership to be a bad thing has been consistently above the EU average (European Commission 1998 pp 17 -36). Research conducted for the European Commission by ORB showed a similar correlation between support for the EU, and feelings of identity with Europe (ORB 1997). These data show this correlation, but they do not indicate the direction of causation. That is to say, we cannot tell whether Eurosceptics identify solely with nationality because they dislike the EU, or that they dislike the EU because they happen, for other reasons, to identify solely with their nation.

Though the Eurobarometer has recently begun surveying ‘feelings of attachment to region’ in comparison with town / village, nation and Europe, which shows variation in the importance of the region in this respect across the Union, it does not investigate regional identities in the way it does national and European ones. Thus this research misses entirely the effects of sub-national identities (e.g. Catalunya and Scotland both have strong and distinctive identities, which have been highly influential in, among other things, the politics of the state of which the regions are part). Further, as with the cultural identity, what is entirely lacking from this research is any valid investigation into what the subjects actually understand by terms being used here. Smith’s critique above is equally valid here.

The above data show at the very least that there is still some way to go towards a ‘common European identity’.

Turning now to the EU's involvement at a policy level in the common euro-identity, the following section examines the history of approaches. To this end a framework is taken from the work of Paulo Dardanelli⁴³ (1998), which is itself a development of the work of Smith (1991). Dardanelli develops a distinction used by Smith between two models of Euro-identity, the *supranational* (i.e. different to national identity) identity and *supernational* (i.e. replicating national identity) identity. Dardanelli explains that there have essentially been two types, that at various times the EU has actively pursued (i.e. put into place policies specifically intended to enhance the universality of particular feelings of identity). These he has called ‘regional cosmopolitanism’ or RC, (where the regions is ‘Europe’), and ‘multi level nation’ or MLN. RC is described as an identity based on the common need amongst the nation states of Europe to co-operate with each other in order to avoid the bloody problems of the past. This identity would most evocatively be represented by all the nations flags flying side by side, and is different in character to the national identities (supranational).⁴⁴ Contrastingly, MLN is an identity based on the same principles that are thought to exist at the national level

⁴³ Using Dardanelli’s work in this way allows for the introduction of a wide range of contributions, which were not present in the original work. Thus the end result, is that of my own analysis, not Dardanelli’s, though I should hope the originator would see at least some congruence.

⁴⁴ There is an obvious ambiguity between the use of supranational here and earlier in this Chapter. In actual fact there is also an irony, because this type of identity forms as a result of the ‘international’ mode of operation of the EU, explained by use of the consociational model of democracy.

(supernational),⁴⁵ including notions of a shared concept of history, culture, ethnicity and perhaps language (N.B. the extent to which factors such as this are, or have been, important in the formation of national identities is fiercely contested, and reference will be made to this debate later on), and would most evocatively be represented by similar symbols to the nation state, such as an anthem, a flag, and even perhaps an army.

These different types of identities are fundamentally rooted in the EU's ambiguous position as neither a federal union of states nor a clearly defined international body. As will be made clear below, the issue of European identity is totally entwined with this issue of political ambiguity.

In the early days of European integration, there was little talk (at least in public) about the need for, nor the desire to create, a common European identity. Indeed in the shadow of Nazism it would have been impossibly unlikely that Europeans would be happy to see themselves as having anything much in common : "memories were still so fresh that the idea of overcoming differences was much stronger than the idea of emphasising similarities" (Dardanelli 1998). In his classic work of that period Aron (1954) emphasises the lack of common ideology amongst the nations of Europe at that time, seeing the idea of a common identity as an elitist project, having little resonance with the lives of ordinary people:

The European idea is empty, it has neither the transcendence of Messianic ideologies nor the immanence of concrete patriotism. It was created by intellectuals, and that fact accounts at once for its genuine appeal to the mind and its feeble echo in the heart. (1954 p.316)

Responding to this climate, the EU adopted the RC approach to identity, in stressing the need for co-operation between independent nation states to secure the ideals of peace and free trade. This was largely left unchanged until the period of the mid 1980's. Confidence in the SEA, optimism about the effects of the single market, and the drawing up of the TEA had encouraged the notion that there could be a common identity amongst Europeans that would go beyond the limited RC type. Though not a replacement for national identity, the new European identity was formally promoted by the People's Europe initiative culminating in the Adonnino Committee's Report of

⁴⁵ Following on from the above footnote, this would form as a result of the 'supranational' mode of

1985, which introduced such ideas as the Circle of Stars Emblem⁴⁶ and the adoption of Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' as the Community's anthem. At this time the Commission also initiated the celebration of Europe Day on 9 May, and the use of Euro driving licences. If successful, such initiatives to nurture the development of this identity would have had the effect of increasing the legitimacy of the whole of the EU's decision making processes and institutions. (Obradovic 1996)

Going beyond these symbols, Thomas Risse (1998), sees the single currency project as the ultimate identity symbol, and in an account of the differential acceptance of it as such across the Union, stresses the role the existing national identity plays in the formation of the new European identity. Beyond this, by focussing attention on the role played by political elite's in identity construction, he sets out the rationale by which the EU attempted, to lead its people towards the MLN type of identity during this period.

The Euro then symbolises a collective European identity, while the *Deutsche Mark*, the franc and the Pound Sterling are constructed as symbolic remnants of a nationalist past.[...] The strongest identification can probably be found among the German political elite's where "Euro-patriotism" forms part and parcel of the country's post World-War II national identity.[...] The opposite is the case in Britain.

Identity constructions put forward by political elite's are powerful tools by which policy-makers communicate with their electorate which is supposed to form the "imagined community" of a nation. While policy-makers cannot simply make up national identities, their use of collective identity constructions, of symbols and myths with which people identify, is a means to increase the legitimacy of their policies. (Risse *et al* 1998 p. 14)

Following the problematic ratification of the TEU, the EU has returned to the RC approach during the 1990's, relying more upon the secondary citizenship rights discussed above to gradually form the Euro-identity through '*affectio societatis*' (Fontaine 1994). Dardanelli (1998) suggests that the RC is thus a defensive position, adopted at times of unpopularity, and MLN that pursued when there has been greater confidence in the process.

Returning to the distinction used by Smith upon which the account of these two types of identity is based, he himself is extremely sceptical about their chances of future

operation of the EU, explained by use of the Competitive Elitist model of democracy.

⁴⁶ This emblem has an illustrious history. Originally used by the Council of Europe, it began with a cross in the centre. The Christian symbol of the cross was removed as a gesture of respect to Turkey's Islamic faith on their accession to the Council. The circle is almost universal amongst religions as symbolising

success. Though Smith's work, particularly that based on his ideas about ethnicity and nationalism is by no means unchallenged (see for example Howe 1995, Painter 1995 p.168), it is referred to here only because it so effectively challenges the optimism inherent in both of the EU's identity projects outlined above:-

On the idea of the supranational/RC identity:

If the possibility of being intensely French or British and intensely European exists, what does it mean to feel European? Is 'Europe' merely the sum total of its various national identities and communities? If so, is there not something quite arbitrary about aggregating such identities simply because certain otherwise unrelated communities happen to reside in a geographical area which is conventionally designated as the continent of Europe? (Smith 1992 p. 70)

On the idea of the supranational /MLN identity:

On the other hand, if 'Europe' and 'European' signify something more than the sum total of the populations and cultures that happen to inhabit a conventionally demarcated geographical space, what exactly are those characteristics and qualities that distinguish Europe from anything or anyone else? Can we find in the history and cultures of this continent some thing or things that are not replicated elsewhere, and that shaped what might be called specifically 'European experiences'? (Smith 1992 p. 70)

What Smith is really saying in the wording of the first question:- what is the point of such an identity? and he is sceptical about the chances of finding 'European experience' which is firstly positive, and secondly can compete with the much stronger national myths and traditions already in existence. The following further quote encapsulates his pessimism:

Here lies the new Europe's true dilemma: a choice between unacceptable historical myths and memories on the one hand, and on the other a patchwork, memoryless scientific 'culture' held together solely by the political will and economic interests that are so often subject to change. (Smith 1992 p. 76)

There is still scope however, for optimism in terms of the formation of a European identity. It need not be constructed around either the need for supranational co-operation, nor the supranational replication of national identities. There is another route, proposed in the following quote:

[There is a] futility in transposing the conventional concepts of social integration borrowed from the nation-state to the European level: Europe is neither a political nor a

cultural community and neither is it a society in the conventional sense of the term based on the principle of consensus. This leads to the conclusion that if Europe cannot become a 'real' community perhaps it can become a 'virtual' one. This virtual society is not one that is constituted as a system of values but as a discursive framework. (Delanty 1998 p. 11)

The potential for facilitating the take-up of a European identity based on discursive practices, as well as tackling other aspects of the wider democratic deficit, is returned to later in the thesis.

At this point, having critically discussed the approaches to defining and promoting citizenship within the broad EU context, and provided the theoretical grounding for results that are presented in forthcoming chapters, this section closes with a more general issue which I feel is of the utmost importance to any *real* citizenship. If people are to have any truly meaningful sense of inclusion within a political system they must have knowledge of that system. The importance I am inclined to place on this issue as part of the citizen deficit is endorsed by the following quote which was originally used as the opening statement of the DeClerq report about the inadequacies of the EU's information policy written by A.Sauvy.

*“Un homme qui n'est pas informé est un sujet;
un homme informé est un citoyen” (taken from Tumber 1995)⁴⁷*

It is with only a very short step in logic that one can go from all that has been set out above, particularly concerning the unpopularity of certain aspects of the EU, and its relative failure to create widespread support for the notion of EU citizenship, to see that ignorance might be playing a part. It is certainly tempting to imagine that if people were more informed they might be more supportive of the EU. That is a theme taken up throughout this research, but at this point, it is necessary to examine the 'problem' of information. This section sets out to very briefly demonstrate that there exists an 'information deficit' (Caddel 1997) in the European Union, which, as implied here, must be a key element in the citizen deficit.

In a measure of 'self perceived knowledge of the EU', on average across the Union “the large majority of Europeans continue to perceive their knowledge levels of the European Union as relatively low” (European Commission 1999), and the UK scores

⁴⁷ This translates as; A man who is not informed is a subject, a man who is informed is a citizen.

the lowest by this measure (1999). A breakdown of these data show that self perceived knowledge is highest amongst “opinion leaders, managers, people who stayed in full time education the longest and the most frequent users of the media”(1999). Age is not a consistent factor here, as independent of other variables the 40-54 age group attained higher average scores than both the 55+ and the 15-24 age groups. Across all other variables men perceive themselves to be better informed than women (1999).

In an assessment of how knowledge about the EU correlates with support for it, *The British Social Attitudes Survey* (SCPR 1998) found the existence of the group ‘*informed Euorosceptics*’ (who had declared that they wanted Britain to remain in an EU which had reduced powers), and that they were actually the best informed. There was also a correlation between those wanting Britain to leave the EU, and the least informed (1998).⁴⁸ One of the most interesting claims about the relationship between knowledge about issues, and attitudes towards them, is that tested by the ‘*Deliberative Poll*’. This research methodology is accredited to James Fishkin (whose work is discussed in more detail later), and involves the testing of attitudes both prior to, and after, the provision of new information. One example of such a poll on Attitudes towards the EU was televised for Channel 4 in 1995. The results of this poll lend support to the notion that more information changes attitudes, as in this case, more members of the research population declared support for the EU afterwards than did before (Curtice and Gray1995).⁴⁹

The EU has for a number of years been responsive to the ‘information deficit’. Indeed there has been a concerted attempt, most particularly by the Commission to bring more information into the public sphere since the passing of the SEA, (which included a Declaration on Access to Information⁵⁰), and the following Pinheiro Commission Report of 1994, ‘Information, Communication, Openness’.⁵¹ Schemes have included

⁴⁸ Data of this kind are useful for exemplifying the phenomenon of the ‘information deficit’ as used here. However, they have serious limitations in terms of their application and extended validity. This matter will be returned to in detail later in the thesis.

⁴⁹ As above, this matter will be returned to later. It is suffice to say that such data are appropriate as used here, but should be treated with some caution.

⁵⁰ Declaration On The Right of Access To Information states: “The conference Considers that transparency of the decision-making process strengthens the democratic nature of the institutions and the public’s confidence in the administration. The Conference accordingly recommends that the Commission submit to the Council no later than 1993 a report on measures designed to improve public access to the information available to the institutions.” (Treaty on European Union 1992)

⁵¹ This Report led to the co-ordination of information provision under the auspices of the Director General of the European Commission. (Caddel 1997)

the enhancement of the UK's existing network of European Documentation Centres, of which there are 44 (see Caddel 1997), the development of the extensive 'Europa' Website, and most recently the establishment of the 'Europe Direct' freephone helpline (see European Commission DG X 1999). As this research reports in full later, certain of these schemes have major flaws, which must in part have contributed to the paucity of their effects.

Overall, the lack of information must be inhibiting the ability of the public to become full *citizens* of the Union:

Until people have a clearer idea of the real issues in the political debate at European level, there is bound to be a lack of information and civic commitment which has to be overcome. (Fontaine 1994)

Having established the working definition of the democratic deficit, and in so doing presented a range of evidence, this chapter now turns to the other major area of theory providing the context for this research. It was this area of theory that not only guided the defining process set out above, but went on to provide the tools needed to 'operationalise' that definition. As such, it allowed the deficit to be researched in terms of its geography, whilst at the same time facilitating an investigation into its possible amelioration⁵². That theory is deliberative democracy.

Deliberative democracy

This theoretical model is introduced here within the context of its use in this research. In view of this, the section below does not fully recount the theoretical background to the model, in a sense setting out its full 'intellectual pedigree'. Instead, particular aspects of the development of the model are necessarily referred to in order that the detailed findings from the research presented in later chapters are fully theoretically orientated.

If, as suggested earlier in this chapter, the people have disappointed with their indifference and hostility to the achievements of the EU (Weiler 1995 p.1), then it is exactly those same people who are going to have to be brought in to debates around the issues concerning the development of the EU if the deficit is to be filled. As the earlier

⁵² I have already used the phrasing 'filling the deficit' to refer to reducing the severity of its effects.

part of this chapter explained, there exist myriad problems concerning the transmission of information to these people, but this should be seen as only part of the problem. Widespread scepticism over the politically constructed notion of citizenship, coupled with the limited reach of, and in some cases the overt resistance to, any form of unifying cultural identity make the problems of engaging these citizens in meaningful and productive decision-making processes apparently insurmountable. This research makes no claim that deliberative democracy can solve all the problems of the deficit, but as set out earlier, certain of its central claims made its investigation here somewhat irresistible.

Prior to detailing the most relevant elements of the theory's origins and claims, it is helpful to examine an idealised vision of what a 'deliberative democracy' might look like. One of the foremost theorists within this field is Joshua Cohen, and reproduced below is his widely referenced 'conception' of deliberative democracy.⁵³ Cohen sets out the main features of the democracy, and the end result is something akin to a 'model', which probably through the dominance of *Held's Models of Democracy* (1995), has become a familiar way to envision a democratic theory. This account provides a reference for the discussion that follows in which the key features of deliberative democracy (and its main claims) are more comprehensively introduced.

The formal conception of a deliberative democracy has five main features:

D1. A deliberative democracy is an ongoing and independent association whose members expect it to continue into the indefinite future.

D2. The members of the association share (and it is common knowledge that they share) the view that the appropriate terms of association provide a framework for or are the results of their deliberation. They share, that is, a commitment to co-ordinating their activities within institutions that make deliberation possible and according to norms that they arrive at through their deliberation. For them, free deliberation among equals is the basis of legitimacy.

⁵³ It was mentioned earlier that deliberative democracy is a relatively new theory. It was explained at that point that one consequence of this is that the work on its practical application is less well developed than that on its theoretical claims. One other consequence is that it has yet to enjoy the formal endorsement of

D3. A deliberative democracy is a pluralistic association. The members have diverse preferences, convictions and ideals concerning the conduct of their own lives. While sharing a commitment to the deliberative resolution of problems of collective choice (D2), they also have divergent aims, and do not think that some particular set of preferences, convictions or ideals is mandatory.

D4. Because the members of a democratic association regard deliberative procedures as the source of *legitimacy*, it is important to them that the terms of their association not merely *be* the results of their deliberation, but also be *manifest* to them as such. They prefer institutions in which the connections between deliberation and outcomes are evident to ones in which the connections are less clear.

D 5. The members recognise one another as having deliberative capacities, i.e. the capacities required for entering into a public exchange of reasons and for acting on the result of such public reasoning.

A theory of deliberative democracy aims to give substance to this formal ideal (Cohen 1991).

Examination of this conception shows both how far the EU is from such an ideal, whilst at the same time justifying some optimism for its partial realisation in the future. In particular it is clear that the EU is lacking a respected framework for widespread deliberation among equals, which in turn undermines the legitimacy of its decisions and policies. However, the conception welcomes diversity, and places no great emphasis on the need to reduce such. Later in the thesis it is recounted how the interviewees in this research felt that they had ‘developed their deliberative capacities’, whilst simultaneously entrenching their ‘divergent aims’. The relationship between deliberation and legitimacy forms a major focus of much of the latter half of the thesis.

Deliberative democracy is a participatory theory. This simple but inescapable reality effectively places the theory very much within one of the oldest but still most important debates in political theory, that of representation versus participation. That is to say that

the model shares much with certain of the ‘classical’ writings on participation such as the work of Rousseau and J.S. Mill. To such theorists participation is seen as a ‘good’, and the advantages it offers are claimed to be many. Two are focused on here, the first being that participation has the potential to educate the citizenry. The second that there is something of a sliding scale of legitimacy, with greater levels of citizen participation in decisions bestowing greater legitimacy upon those decisions, and reduced levels of citizen participation having the opposite effect.

In addressing the claims relating to the educational benefits of participation this section focuses on the classical work, keeping the discussion mainly focused in the notion of participation generally. In addressing the latter claim the section draws more specifically from the literature on deliberative democracy itself.

Participation educates. The central argument here is that participation in politics leads citizens to become more informed about the issues that are involved which in turn leads to them being able to participate more effectively in future political discussions or decisions. Thus their ‘competence’⁵⁴ improves.

In essence what this argument is doing is challenging the inherent pessimism of what, from its publication in the 1940’s right through to the mid-1970’s was the *orthodox doctrine* of democratic theory (Pateman 1975). This doctrine was based on the work of Joseph Schumpeter (first published in 1943 as *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*), in which representative democracy that assured an ongoing competition for citizens occasional vote provided both the most efficient but also, importantly, the safest form of governance. The basis of the argument that the people should be largely excluded from

⁵⁴ This term ‘competence’ was used extensively by J.S. Mill and has been focused on by detractors to highlight an apparent weakness in his work. Mill does not advocate the full and equal participation of all citizens. Indeed in his most influential work (what he termed his ‘Matured Views’), *Considerations on Representative Government* he advocated greater influence being given to those most competent:

[Representative government should bring to bear] the general standard of intelligence and honesty existing in the community, and the individual intellect and virtue of its wisest members, more directly to bear upon the government, and investing them with greater influence in it, than they would in general have under any other mode of organisation (Mill 1946 Ch. 2, p. 128)

However, Mill saw this as a temporary and transitional position. Once the competence of the masses had improved (i.e. through education), they would be allowed greater influence in decision-making processes. Thus this is actually a pragmatic attempt to break into the cycle of ignorance leading to non-participation, and hints at one of the most important findings of this research that is reported in detail in later chapters.

decision-making processes is captured in the following highly illuminating quote from Schumpeter's work:

Ignorance is the norm] it persists even in the face of the meritorious efforts to that are being made to go beyond presenting information and to teach the use of it by means of lectures, classes, discussion groups. Results are not zero. But they are small. People cannot be carried up the ladder.

Thus the typical citizen drops down to a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field [...] He becomes primitive again. [...] This will make it still more difficult for him to see things in their correct proportions or even to see more than one aspect of one thing at a time. Hence, if for once he does emerge from his usual vagueness [...] he is likely as not to become still more unintelligent and irresponsible than he usually is. At certain times this can be fatal to his nation (Schumpeter 1976)

The challenge to the *orthodox doctrine* provided by participative theories of democracy, and deliberative democracy in particular, has two-fold relevance here. Firstly, and most broadly, this research was conducted within the context of apparent increasing dissatisfaction with the activities of the EU, most eloquently summed up in the quotation reproduced in the thesis Introduction: "*The permissive consensus is over*" (Obradovic 1996). Secondly, and this one more focused on the actual research and its findings, because this research worked with a relatively uninformed citizenry, setting out to measure the extent to which meaningful participation might be able to '*carry them up the ladder*'.

The claimed educative effects of participation extend far beyond issues. In fact it is claimed that the whole basis of the political system can be altered by increasing levels of participation. Here, when people who have previously been excluded from political decision-making (possibly by their own volition), begin some form of participation, they see that the system they had previously been excluded from could actually offer them some benefit. This dynamic process is explained by Elster (1997) by drawing an analogy between the folklore fable of the 'Fox and the Sour Grapes', and political participation. Here the fox considers a bunch of grapes (which he cannot access) to be sour, therefore, unsurprisingly, he exhibits no interest in eating them. However, the real truth is that the fox does want to eat the grapes, only telling itself they are sour to make his inevitable exclusion from their consumption more bearable. Translating this fable into politics, it exemplifies the way that excluded groups might proclaim no interest in participating in a political system that they perceive to be 'someone else's'. However, what they 'really' want, if only it were available, is a chance to participate in a different

political system, one which they could influence towards their own interests. Thus the apparent desires and interests of groups may not represent their real (i.e. suppressed) interests, rather an 'accommodation' of what they consider to be realistic.⁵⁵ Further to this, groups might not even realise what their interests are until they have been 'educated' into the options available to them. Participation is something akin to an *art form* that has in part to be taught, and in part is learnt through experience. Evidence presented later in the thesis suggests that certain of the research participants were faced with re-appraising their view of the *sour grapes* (the *sour grapes* of course being the EU's governing system, and their relationship to it), something that at least in part is attributed to the deliberative strategies employed throughout the research.

That this research placed such great emphasis on information (as reported in detail throughout following chapters) reflects that emphasis given to it in the working definition of the deficit itself, as well as its centrality to theories of participation. The research provided participants with information in various forms and media. In this way the *information deficit* was challenged. Further to this, the role of information within the broader 'educative' process described above was tested. It is explained later that information itself is of little use in terms of filling the information deficit nor in educating the recipients of it in the 'art' of participation. Instead, information becomes useful only when it forms but one part of a broad and engaging participative process.

Overall, the argument presented above (and broadly supported by the thesis) runs thus: *education in the art that is participation, through participation, becomes in turn a justification for participation.*

Participation bestows legitimacy: That participation in discussion about political decisions (i.e. through the process of, for example deliberation) can enhance the legitimacy of those decisions was clearly set out in the classic writings of Rousseau, but as the quote below shows, Rousseau was very much concerned with the emergence of a 'general will'.

⁵⁵ See also Cohen's discussion of the 'accommodationist preferences' of the Stoic slaves, in attempting to make the best decisions for themselves, given that they knew they would always be slaves. The options which would only be available if they were free were deliberately not considered in order to 'minimise frustration' (Cohen 1991). In addition see Rousseau's comment on slaves adopting 'accommodationist strategies:" a slave in fetters loses everything - even the desire to be freed from them. He grows to love

If the people, engaged in deliberation, were adequately informed, [...] from the great number of small differences the general will would result, and the decisions reached would always be good. (Rousseau 1966, Book 3 Ch. 3 p. 341)

This section will present a short account of an ongoing debate within the theory of deliberative democracy that has the effect of showing both how deliberative democracy is claimed to work, and also that to seek a full and complete consensus (i.e. something akin to a 'general will') as a measure of legitimacy is erroneous.

As set out in introduction to the thesis the model of deliberative democracy has its intellectual roots in both the work on participation generally, and more specifically the work on human communication and its claimed in-built dynamic towards consensus provided dialogue is fair equal and prolonged.⁵⁶ By focusing on the latter area of theory, this section shows that it is not consensus *per se* that bestows legitimacy on decisions reached through participation, but instead the process through which the decisions were reached. This is illustrated by setting out a debate over how deliberative democracy should handle the issue of conflict resolution. The two exponents drawn on here are Bruce Ackerman and James Bohman. Though this is at times within the literature a debate that is prone to a high level of abstraction, in keeping with the theme of this whole section, it is introduced here in an applied way.

Ackerman (1989) is sceptical of the chances of deliberative democracy being able to secure consensus on moral issues (which he sees as essentially private matters), due in the main to the lack of motivation on the part of people to deliberate on them. Thus, if deliberative democracy is to stand any chance of motivating people into greater levels of participation in politics, (which Ackerman does support) then the issues up for deliberation must only be 'public' ones. His theory of 'conversational restraint' by which matters considered private are 'not talked about' at all,⁵⁷ would, he claims, avoid alienation and at least allow the use of "dialogue for pragmatically productive purposes:

his slavery". (Rousseau 1966, Book 1, Ch. 2 p. 243)

⁵⁶ As mentioned earlier in the thesis this claim is most prominently proclaimed in Habermas' *Theory of Communicative Rationality*, which claims that to humans reality is a communicative construction, based in our use and understanding of language. The end result of free and equal dialogue is seen to be 'the ideal speech situation' in which a consensus is reached not through the calculation by individuals of their own advantage, but from a genuine belief on the part of all participants that they had found truth:- "The ideal speech situation is characterised by *compulsion free consensus*" (Brand 1990 p.12)

⁵⁷ A similar idea is credited to Rawls by Bohman "[Rawls's] 'method of avoidance' suggests that [...] conflicts about which no public agreement is possible might be left to some pragmatic device, such as 'gag rule' or other pre-commitments". The point of such 'self-binding' is to remove some topics (such as fundamental rights and religious differences) from public discussion". (Bohman 1996 p. 74)

to identify normative premises all political participants find reasonable (or, at least, not unreasonable)" - (Ackerman 1989). However, Ackerman pessimistically acknowledges that restricting the agenda in this way might not leave much of any real consequence on it, thus potentially reducing motivation, leaving a deliberative democracy with the same problem he attempted to solve.

Whilst Ackerman only discusses 'private' matters, in applying his theory more widely as is the case here, there is a clear link in principle to the issue of secrecy that was discussed in Chapter 1. Whilst it might be an incidental rather than a deliberate effect, the secrecy that is endemic at the highest levels of EU governance must be seen as contributory to limiting the agenda of any public deliberation. If the views and actions of Ministers cannot be known, then they cannot be discussed. The key point to make here though is that the decision to restrict the agenda in this way is not one made by the participants themselves in the interests of initiating difficult deliberation (which Ackerman would support), but by an external, and unequal, power. This conflicts with Ackerman's view of the justification for 'conversational restraint', and though this research does present evidence in part supporting Ackerman's general claim, it presents no support for structural secrecy at the top levels of the EU.

Bohman sees this pessimistic approach as an unjustified limitation on the claimed potential offered by deliberative processes. He acknowledges that in reality it is simply impossible to 'not talk about' issues that are of great importance to participants. The breakthrough rests in the potential for compromise that can, if reached through legitimate means (i.e. allowing for fair representation in a deliberative process), be just as valid,⁵⁸ sometimes more so than consensus:

Consensus is not the only form of democratic agreement [...] In democracy the issue at stake must be decided in such a way that a general will is formed. In theoretical discourses, other forms of agreement are possible short of a general will. As is often the case in science, problems and claims may remain suspended. However, in a practical discourse, if we agree only to disagree, no common will is formed, problems and conflicts remain unresolved, and political discourse fails. [...] Institutions orientated to compromise can also be designed discursively. [...] Their communicative conditions are just as rigorous

⁵⁸ There is of course a fundamental problem with accepting that Habermas' logic is sound in relation to the inevitability of dialogue ending in consensus, and then accepting that compromise is useful. Surely, it could be said that 'if the principal of communicative rationality is applicable at all, it must be universally applicable'. However it must be remembered that consensus is the 'ideal' end result, which is not always, or even ever, achievable in reality. Habermas, in a quote adapted from *A Reply to My Critics* 1982, claims: "[E]ven failing this kind of [ideal] consensus, simple compromise between different views is defensible to the extent it is reached under communicatively rational conditions". (Dryzek 1994 p. 17)

[resultantly] the necessity of compromise does not remove either the decision or the decision-making process from democratic criteria. Nor should compromise be seen as final. (Bohman 1990 p. 100)

Bohman broadens this thesis of compromise in a later work, explaining how it allows deliberative democracy to cope with modern cultural pluralism, whilst at the same time achieving a legitimacy, through decision making processes that is both widely inclusive and voluntarily binding.

As part of the process of deliberation people are forced to make their views at least understandable, and at best justifiable to others in a public forum. Bohman here borrows the term 'laundering' from Robert Goodwin to describe the process through which ideas pass in the run up to their public articulation. Before making an input to the deliberative process one is forced to defend that position. This inevitably involves imagining the challenges it will be subject to from others. If the holder of the opinion finds that it is only rendered defensible by appeal to ignorance, bigotry or any other 'unreasonable' justification it is likely to be modified. Further, when these 'laundered' opinions (i.e. those surviving the personal assessment of likely public reaction) are brought into the public domain, it is exactly the challenge from others that can prove persuasive.

It is crucial to note here that Bohman describes 'public deliberation' in predominantly qualitative terms. As such he does not prescribe for example the numbers of people needed for 'public' as opposed to private deliberations. As is fully described and explained later, the participants in this research were engaged in one to one deliberations.⁵⁹ Whilst it is accepted that certain of the 'quality' might have been impeded by numerical restrictions (i.e. the lack of other people), much of the essential principle described by Bohman was retained. Though intimate and small scale, the deliberation forming the basis of this research was 'public'.

Bohman explains how this vital 'public' aspect of deliberation makes the emotional and intellectual 'distance' to be travelled between original positions and compromise shorter:

The fact that rational deliberation is guided by publicity can engender a revision of *substantive arguments* that, even if it does not terminate in consensus, can bring positions

⁵⁹ This was the outcome of methodological adaptation necessitated by problems with recruitment. However, as later chapters reveal, the reason there were problems with recruitment is in part intimately linked to the nature of public deliberation, in particular starting the process off.

closer together so that a kind of moral compromise becomes possible (Bohman 1996 p. 101).⁶⁰

Here moral compromises are simply decisions (which might in the end be taken by means of a majoritarian vote,⁶¹) that allow opposing groups (or individuals) to continue deliberating, even if none of them are entirely happy with the outcome. As such they represent the way that deliberative democracy is able to accommodate cultural pluralism, indeed, as Thomas Christiano points out: "as deliberation becomes established the total number of reasoned arguments actually increases, as previously mute interests are heard, thus the sum of disagreement increases" (Christiano 1997). Whilst this might seem to be a contradiction of Habermas' claim that human communication tends towards consensus, Bohman sees virtue in this inescapable reality. The process of deliberation should have bestowed in participants the belief that all decisions are genuinely based on reasonable argument: "reasonable disagreements may still persist. That however is just the point: that all *unreasonable* disagreements, as well as all *unreasonable agreements* be eliminated" (Bohman 1996 p. 101). This is the claimed basis for the legitimacy of decisions taken through deliberation.

One of the most interesting and striking results of the investigation of this process throughout the research was that sum disagreement did increase within the participant group, and that there was in fact little or no revision of original positions. However, as is reported in detail later in the thesis, the basis of these views in many cases shifted from *unreasonable* to *reasonable*. Thus, in applying Bohman's theory to the democratic deficit, the objective should be seen not to reach agreement around all issues (or even in fact *any* particular issues), but to enhance the standing in terms of legitimacy, of the views on those issues, which are themselves the product of ongoing deliberation.

Finally, in this section introducing deliberative democracy it is essential to refer to the issue of social inequality. All that has gone before is suggestive of the benefits from deliberation being derived provided it is fair and equal. Of course in real life, things are rarely entirely fair nor equal. Therefore, if all social groups and individuals are to accept

⁶⁰ Bohman's use of the term 'laundering' serves the same purpose as Joshua Cohen's 'motivational thesis': - "While I may take my preferences as a sufficient reason for advancing a proposal, deliberation [...] requires that I find reasons that make the proposal acceptable to others who cannot be expected to regard my preferences as sufficient reasons for agreeing." (Cohen 1991)

⁶¹ In principal deliberative democracy is fully compatible with voting. The important point is really that the vote be preceded (and followed) by deliberation on the issues.

the legitimacy of decisions in the way the theory suggests, then they must have had something approaching a fair and equal input into them. In addition to this they must *believe* that this has been the case.

Theorists of deliberative democracy do accept that there is some need to equalise the resources which, in unequal distribution limit the 'effective freedom' (Bohman 1996) of groups to contribute to, and duly benefit from, the deliberative process. However, the theory does not claim to be a panacea on this issue, and it shares much with the social science literature on all aspects of social exclusion. However, if the deliberation process can at least be initiated, (and certain institutionalised compensations for existing inequalities might be necessary for this), the process itself can generate a dynamic towards equalisation.

Once convinced of the genuine inclusiveness of political deliberations, previously excluded groups would join in. Resultantly, previously suppressed demands would become public, as would some entirely new ones not even considered before. Of these demands, the most obvious and pressing are likely to be for greater equality in social, economic and political spheres. Whilst it should be re- stated here the focus here was on the political sphere, and the role of information and participation within that, the assumption within the literature is that the tendency to equalisation would in principle be replicated in economic and social spheres, It is thus claimed that deliberative democracy, once successfully started, has an intrinsic dynamic towards equality.

This rather circular claim, (i.e. that once started, deliberative democracy tends towards the solution of exactly the problems that make it difficult to start), forms one of the elements of the models application in this research. It should be clear that this theme is broadly the same in principle as that discussed above in the section on the educative effects of participation. As the thesis explains, education and participation are mutually supportive processes (indeed mutually dependent), and the tendency towards social equalisation discussed here stems from the process of education. In this research the provision of technical information via discussions and the 'Information Pack' (explained more fully in the following chapter) formed a [relatively] small part of the 'education' involved, with deliberation *around* that information playing the larger role..

In sum then, deliberative democracy is not a model that claims to resolve all of the problems associated with other models. What it is though is an imaginative method of engaging the public in active and demanding participation, which offers in return genuine influence on decision-making processes, and an inclusive and unique type of legitimacy. There is no guarantee that deliberation around issues will produce decisions considered equally legitimate by all, but as Cohen reminds us "there are no guarantees of anything in politics" (Cohen 1991). Instead, as the following quote shows, decisions have to be made, so we might as well attempt to make them in the best way possible. Deliberative democracy represents a step in the right direction, away from arbitrariness towards consensual legitimacy.

For a society to continue to exist, decisions must be made and conflicts resolved [...] between the rational object of universal agreement and the arbitrary lies the domain of the reasonable and the justifiable, that is, the domain of propositions that are likely to convince, by means of arguments whose conclusion is not incontestable, the greater part of an audience made up of all citizens.

The theory of deliberative democracy offers only an imperfect method for making the decision process as reasonable as possible [...] but this process makes the realisation of reasonable results more likely. (Manin 1997p. 363)

It is to the implementation of deliberative practices, and their effects upon the people involved, that the thesis turns to in later chapters. First though, in the following chapter, it is necessary to explain the methodology used in this research, and in particular the way that it was both informed by, and exemplary of, the model discussed above.

Chapter 2

Theory and method: method and theory

Chapter overview

This chapter presents the methodology that the research employed in pursuance of the aims set out in the thesis introduction. As is clear from these aims, the use of methodology in this research was intended to be, and indeed has been, a complex process. The ambitious task of employing methods which would investigate the geography of the democratic deficit in the UK, whilst at the same time facilitating a critical assessment of the potential of deliberative democracy to filling the deficit, placed two major constraints upon methodological selectivity. The first of these was the procedural and technical merits offered by the various methods, which of course any research must contend with. The second and more unusual constraint, was that the methods employed had to be fully compatible with the theoretical literature on deliberative democracy. In other words the research had not only to investigate the geography of the democratic deficit in the UK, but also to do so using only methods which were essentially 'deliberative'.

I believe the technique of using methods in this way has been highly innovative, and it is because of this that there is perhaps more priority given to methodology than might be the norm for a PhD thesis. Methodology was not simply a means to an end, rather more somewhat of an end in itself.

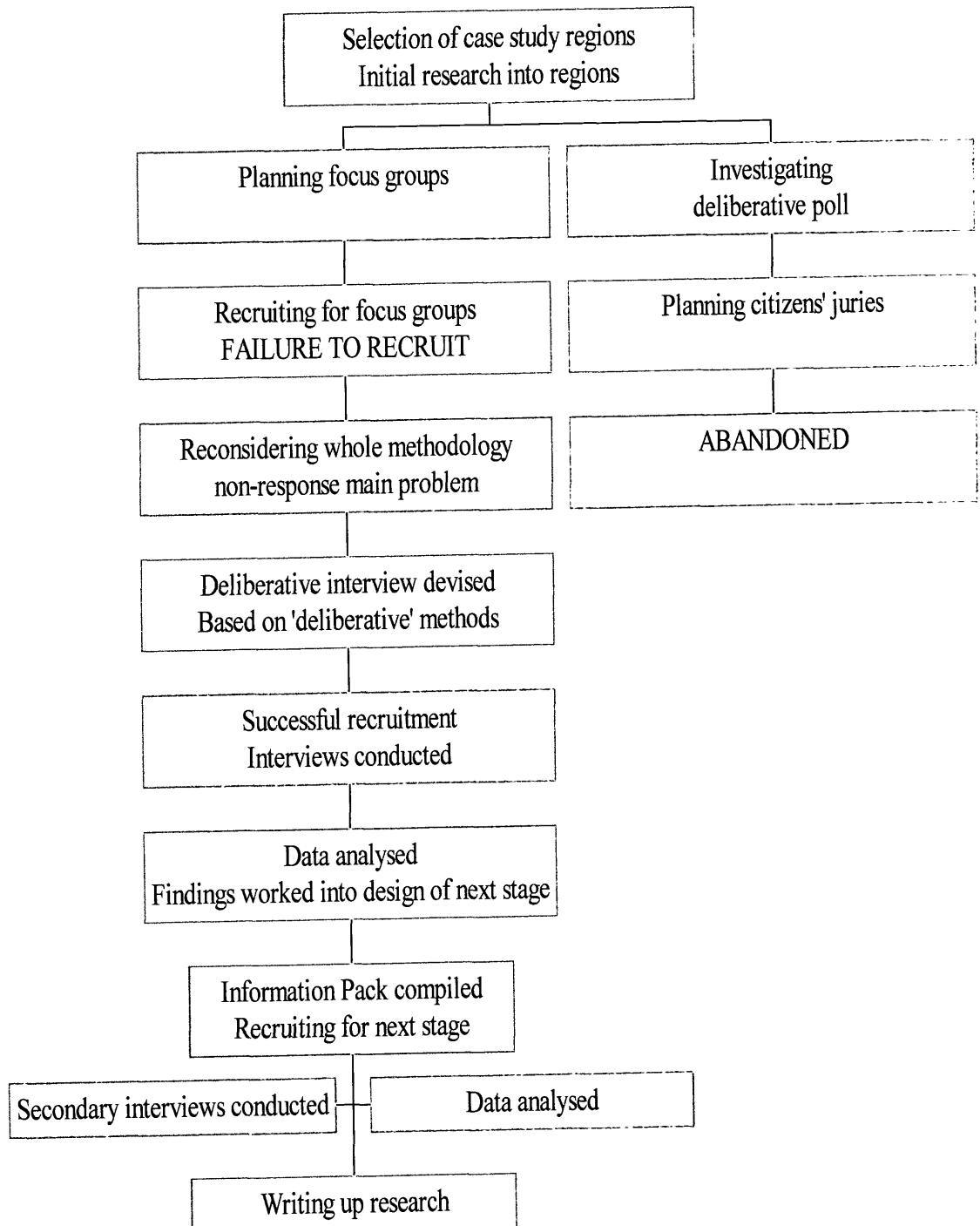
This chapter, perhaps again unusually, gives quite significant attention to methods that were in fact not used. This reflects what became a dominant theme throughout; that of adaptation. The 'off the shelf' methods that I had planned to use but, for reasons that

will be explained, could not, effectively led to me devising my own methodology more tailored to the particular requirements of the research. It is only because my own methods drew so heavily from various more established ones that each justifies some description here.

For reasons of clarity, the chapter begins with the presentation of a brief summary of the whole research methodology. Following this overview, the detail is presented in a way that follows the chronology of the research itself. As such the chapter begins by explaining the planning process, which methods were considered here and why, and a brief account of the selection of the case study regions (building on the more theoretical account provided in the thesis Introduction). The following section explains how the plans were put into practice, or, more accurately how and why they could not be put into practice! This section really conveys a flavour of what the early stage of this research was actually like. It was extremely difficult to get started, and the procedures I went through in order to break this inertia are recounted here. The research did get off the ground in the end, and the next section explains first how the primary stage of the research was conducted, and later moves on to an explanation of the methodology employed during the secondary stage. The chapter adopts a reflexive style in places. This is deliberate, and is based on the fact that this was very much my research, and that I am responsible for the outcomes, good and bad. Using the first person throughout is also a way of reinforcing this sense of ownership and responsibility (see Woolcot 1990 p. 19).

The chart below shows in note form the major stages of the research, with the top representing October 1997 and the bottom going up to August 2001.

Methodological Summary Flow Chart



Planning

On starting this research the task that demanded my most urgent attention was devising a methodology suitable for investigating the ideas contained in my initial research proposal. This must be unsurprising, considering that having an idea of what to research, is a long way from feeling assured that there really are practicable ways of doing so within the financial and time constraints of the contemporary PhD programme. Thus from the outset the greater enthusiasm was directed towards the literature associated with various methodologies. At the same time however, I was conducting a review of literature on the two main theoretical themes of the research, namely the politics of the EU, and the more participatory areas of democratic theory, in particular deliberative democracy. In the case of the politics of the EU, I was reviewing not only the key academic publications but also the popular press, the EU's own publications, political literature from major and minor parties, and voluminous quantitative data generated by either the EU itself or commercial research organisations. In the case of the political theory, the literature review took me from the very latest theoretical models of participatory democracy, right back to the 'classical' texts of centuries past.

The earliest methodological casualty of the extensive literature review was the postal survey. The original intention had been to use this to collect a representative range of views on European integration in each of the case study regions⁶² (the respondents to which could possibly have been used as a research population for later methods). This decision was based in part on an appraisal of data already available, but much more on a realisation that it would simply not be valid in terms of answering the emerging research questions. It is thus a source of some satisfaction that the rejection of this quantitative method, was not a conscious rejection of quantitative methods *per se*, but rather because the data available from the method no longer fitted the requirements of the project. The emerging definition of the democratic deficit, coupled with a developing understanding of the problems associated with relatively superficial opinion polling⁶³ was suggesting that survey data would be meaningless, or worse, misleading.

⁶² That this research would be case study based did survive this thought process. This matter is returned to later in this section, when the rationale for the selection of the three areas is discussed.

⁶³ This subject is returned to later in this chapter, where a discussion of the questionable usefulness of opinion polling is set out.

Following the initial literature review, the focus shifted to the urgent task of confirming the case study regions.

Case study research, and case selection: As explained earlier in the thesis, this research makes use of the comparative case study approach, which though the traditional stock in trade of geography,⁶⁴ is used here in the more contemporary sense referred to in the thesis Introduction. This approach can be understood at the most fundamental level as a combination of the case study, where the objective is to find out; 'what is going on?' and the comparison, where the objective is to answer the question: 'is what is going on in one case different to that which is going on in another?' (Dixon *et al* 1988 pp.107-118). There is of course much scope for extending the latter question to include investigations into the extent of commonality as well as difference, interactions between factors across the cases, and perhaps the at highest level of abstraction, 'what is the explanation for any differences or commonality that are found?'

At this point it is essential to develop this simplistic overview of the principal of comparative case study research with some crucial caveats. The case is always unique, (even where there is greater focus placed upon commonality than differences), and for this reason the emphasis of any findings should be kept at the particular, rather than the general level. (Stake 1995 pp. 4-8) Also, the case study is always comparative, even when only one case is studied. It is quite simply impossible to decide to study a case (be it a person, a group or a locale), without having based that selection upon some comparative criteria. Even if it were possible to select a case at random (and of course "case study research is not sampling research" (Stake 1995 p. 4): - i.e. a case is always selected for a reason), what the researcher would then observe, or deem sufficiently important to justify any analysis, would be the result of a comparison with her/ his criteria of what is important. Thus research design, implementation, data collection, interpretation and reporting are all comparative processes (May 1997 pp.179-194). The selection of cases for comparative study is concisely described in the *Dictionary of Social Science Methods* thus: "The selection for study of situations which are similar in

⁶⁴ And a great many academic and non-academic disciplines. Much of the research conducted by the EU itself (examples of which have been quoted throughout this thesis), is based on the comparative case study. Most commonly the EU has used the nation state as the 'case', though as mentioned in earlier in the thesis, there is now an increasing volume of research which identifies regions as 'cases' for comparative study.

most respects but which differ in known ways, thus allowing dimensions of interest to the researcher to be tested." (Miller and Wilson 1983 p 20)

The essential criteria that prompted the selection of the three case study regions (and the cities within them) were set out in the thesis Introduction. At this stage relatively little was known about the regions, but I felt strongly that the basis for the three effects being investigated (i.e. the *proximity*, the *gratitude* and the *Scotland* effect respectively) were soundly based on the relevant differences between the regions. After beginning the process of gathering information about the regions, nothing dislodged this belief. To paraphrase Miller and Wilson from above; I felt that I was comparing like with like, except for the variables upon which the selection was purposefully made.

All three cities are to greater or lesser extent tourist destinations, which made the collecting of documents relating to their history relatively straightforward. Detailed statistics on trade, industry, commerce, and social indicators were enthusiastically provided in all cases by contacts I built up in the relevant departments of local government. Similarly, the regions' relations with the EU (direct and indirect) were explained in some detail during telephone and face to face interviews with the relevant officials. I experienced only the highest levels of co-operation and assistance with this aspect of the research, and all the contacts were assured that they would be informed of any relevant outcomes following the research's publication. Much of this information was considered in framing the questions and discussion issues drawn on during interaction with interviewees at later stages of the research, as well of course as providing me with a respectable level of local knowledge in order to boost my credibility as a face-to-face researcher.⁶⁵ Inevitably, large volumes of data were collected and analysed at this stage of the research. Though so crucial, these data played a background role in the research, and as such are not necessary for the presentation of argument throughout the thesis.

Choosing deliberative methods: In general, the literature on deliberative democracy that has been referred to so far in this thesis is more concerned with the abstract rationale for the model, than its practical application. Even where process-based

⁶⁵ This is exemplified by my having attempted to see with my own eyes the actual EU funded projects which I later used photographs of as 'stimulus material' in interviews. This was not possible in all cases, and it certainly made a difference to my own confidence when discussing projects that I had seen

accounts are provided, they are most commonly concerned more with explaining the justification for the process of deliberation in certain situations,⁶⁶ than with the detailed methodology by which it should best be achieved. Further, when the methods through which deliberative ideals can be achieved are mentioned, it is by way of references to established, or vaguely defined practices such as 'mediation' or 'negotiation' (Dryzek 1994 pp 29-56), certain types of 'self help groups and social movements' (Giddens 1994 pp120-121), or the formal reform of public institutions ('institutional innovation') aimed at forming 'new publics' (Bohman 1996 pp197-236). It is perhaps not the political theorist's job (and even less political philosopher's job), to provide detailed explanations of how deliberation should be 'done'.

However, there is one notable exception to this general trend. James Fishkin is credited with developing the deliberative poll. As such Fishkin has not only become the standard reference for the application of deliberative techniques, but has reached a far wider audience than most academics achieve. It has also been highly influential on the methodological selectivity exercised in this research. It is the extent of the influence of this method over this research that justifies the level of detail that is presented below.

The Deliberative Poll: Fishkin's 'Deliberative Poll' was conceived and developed in response to concerns about the validity of conventional opinion polling, which has become increasingly influential in public policy decision making.⁶⁷ There are two major concerns over such polling, the first relating to the tendency people have to make up

compared with those I had not.

⁶⁶ This is evident in the approach to the process of deliberation set out in Dryzek's *Discursive Democracy*, (1994). Dryzek suggests the criteria for 'discursive designs', and examples of real life practices which have, to a greater or lesser extent, exhibited those criteria (pp 29 -56). He then provides examples of conflict resolution drawing upon these practices.

A key theme of this text is an optimism based on the increasing use of 'incipient discursive designs' to resolve disputes in situations where the interests of various agents are opposed, but there is a common recognition that the issue of concern represents some sort of problem. This is explicitly exemplified by reference to the difference between the settlement of international security issues, where the immediate threat of violence usually leads to a temporary solution based on a negotiated settlement of the point of conflict itself, but with no discussion of the underlying cause of that specific conflict, and the settlement of international environmental issues. In the latter case it is increasingly becoming the norm to discuss the broad issues involved, at length and over several years, with the intention of hopefully reaching a settlement (most likely a compromise, see Chapter 1). The settlement [i.e. of the environmental issue] is thus based upon communicative rationality, but in the meantime the process will have involved as many groups as possible in this system of 'deliberation'.

Typically throughout this discussion of 'discursive designs' and their application, methodological detail of the sort presented above is absent.

⁶⁷ I myself have made use of conventional opinion poll data throughout the early part of this thesis!

opinions on the spot when asked, and the second to express firmly held opinions, which are themselves based on very limited information.

Taking the first of these points, Fishkin refers to experiments conducted in the 1950's by Philip Converse, which led to his coining the phrase 'non-attitudes'. Converse found that when asked about complex issues, most people will offer some opinion, and if the same people are asked again and again, their responses are very often no more consistent than would be achieved at random. In a follow up study in the 1970's, about one third of survey respondents were found to express a directional opinion (i.e. one either in support of or against an issue) about an issue which was entirely fictitious. These attitudes and opinions were thought to be being made up on the spot, and were thus called 'non-attitudes'⁶⁸(Fishkin 1995 pp 80-84).

Turning to the second concern over conventional opinion polling, on issues that for some reason have struck a chord with citizens and thus they do genuinely hold strong opinions on them, Fishkin draws on an ancient analogy suggested by Plato. In the "allegory of the cave", the cave dwellers watch the images of fire on the cave walls, and wisdom is bestowed on those most knowledgeable about the patterns. That is their perceived reality, and knowledge of it is prized. They do not look outside of the cave for contrary information. Modern citizens are claimed to be living in a 'high-tech version of Plato's cave' (Fishkin 1995 pp. 11-12). The following abridged quote fills out this argument, as well stressing the key role played by television:

[L]ike the inhabitants of Plato's cave, we receive our picture of the world, especially our picture of the political world, from the reflected images and echoed voices. Instead of puppetlike reflections from fire on a cave wall, we watch television images in our living rooms. [...] We listen to the voices of radio and television talk shows and advertisements. Like the inhabitants of Plato's cave, we tend to take these reflected images and voices as the real world. At least in terms of our role as citizens, things that do not happen on television have little, if any, force, vividness, or immediacy. [...] In terms of the politics that counts, if something is not on television, it hasn't happened. The people have a level of knowledge and wisdom comparable to the denizens of the cave. (Fishkin 1995 pp13-15)⁶⁹.

In the design of the deliberative poll Fishkin takes this centrality of television, and turns it around in favour of both deliberation and democracy.

⁶⁸ Whilst it is possible of course that the respondents were being in some way mischievous, what can for certain be stated is that opinions elicited in opinion polls cannot be assumed to represent firmly held opinions on the part of the respondents.

⁶⁹ There is certainly congruence here with the secondary data presented earlier in the thesis suggesting

The deliberative poll is an experiment in face-to-face democracy, and in essence combines the principals of participation so central to ancient Athenian democracy (whereby a certain proportion of the decision makers were drawn by random lot from the general population and invited to contribute to deliberations on political issues), with the awesome power of television.

In detail what the poll does is to take a representative sample of the general public⁷⁰ and 'poll' their opinions and attitudes on a certain subject. However this is only the very start of the process. These people are then assembled in a public setting (probably a television studio) for a set period of time, during which they are presented with information related to the issues they had already expressed their views upon. There is opportunity to question the experts, and most importantly, to discuss the issues within the group. As the conclusion of the deliberative poll, the members of the group are 'polled' once again, and their latest views recorded.

This method is thus designed to engage people with, and educate people in the issues, and then see what they think afterwards. The closing opinions are likely to be both firmly established, and based on unusually high levels of knowledge and understanding. Because the original sample was a representative one,⁷¹ the findings could be scaled up to suggest that this is what the general population would think, if only they were able to devote so much time and motivation to that issue. The sample group thus becomes a microcosm for an engaged and informed citizenry:

A deliberative poll is not meant to describe or predict public opinion. Rather it prescribes [...] it is an opportunity for the country, in microcosm, to make recommendations to itself through television under conditions where it can arrive at considered judgements (Fishkin 1995 pp. 162 -173).

that the television is the preferred media for providing information about the EU.

⁷⁰ The representativeness of the sample is crucial to the eventual use of the data. Most opinion polls, which are publicly conducted through radio or television, rely upon the self-selection of subjects. Obviously this only includes those who for some reason feel they should volunteer their view to the audience. Of course, due to the practical limitations of this research a similar critique can be applied, though possibly not to the same extent. The implications of self-selection are acknowledged as appropriate throughout this thesis.

⁷¹ Of course it is no longer representative once this process has begun. Bringing a representative sample group together immediately compromises this representativeness because they talk to one another. Providing information and the chance to deliberate in this way only further compromises representativeness. That they are no longer representative though is the whole point, as Fishkin explains: "In my view they would become representative of something else - representative of the public the people would become if everyone had a comparable opportunity to behave more like ideal citizens and discuss the issues face to face with other voters and with political leaders." (Fishkin 1995 p 163)

The televising of the whole process is essential in extending the engagement with the issues to a wider audience, as viewers see people just like themselves learning about and debating issues just as they would themselves.⁷² Of course the editing of the broadcast must be orientated towards entertainment, as it would defeat the object to produce a television programme which would lead people to a 'rational' decision to switch channels due to boredom.

The deliberative poll then is essentially deliberative because it engages not only the participants but, via the power of television, potentially millions of other citizens as well, in a structured process of fair and equal deliberation. In addition to this it adds into the forum of deliberation new and additional information, the effects of which upon opinions and attitudes can then be tested. It should be reasonable to assume⁷³ that the process of deliberation coupled with exposure to the same information on the part of all participants would tend towards a consensus in final opinions. Indeed this is exactly the result Fishkin reports having found. Beyond this, Fishkin reports that several of the subjects declared themselves to have become generally more interested, not just in the issue under discussion, but similar issues as well. Thus there seems to be at least the possibility that once brought into the process of deliberation in this way, there may be a continuing effect which leaves the citizen somehow different ever after. This of course concurs with the general theories of democratic participation referred to in Chapter 1 and in fact also matches closely the findings of this research reported in detail in Chapter 4.

The deliberative poll then provided an ideal model for my research, and it was planned to run one poll in each case study area. The detailed methodology for the polls however was not to be drawn from Fishkin's work. This was for the simple reason that the cost and logistics of modelling his methodology was inconceivable for a PhD project. Instead, detailed instruction was borrowed from the recently expanded literature on a very similar research method; the citizens jury.

⁷² It is also highly significant that Fishkin used the televisual appeal of these events to secure funding for the earliest attempts. Having failed in his pursuit of funding in America, the technique was piloted in the UK, as part of Channel 4 collaboration with the Independent newspaper.

⁷³ That is, in the context of the theoretical background to deliberation referred to in Chapter 1.

The Citizens jury: The citizens jury is a relatively novel research method which is based in principle on the 'Planning Cells' (*plannungzelle*), which have been used in Germany for over two decades, and have become so highly regarded as measures of informed public opinion that government policy has on occasion altered in respect of their recommendations (Coote and Mattinson 1997 p 3). In these cells a representative group of up to 25 citizens are gathered together, and intensively informed about all aspects of a particular issue. The group is encouraged to interact with the expert providers of information, and following considered deliberation amongst themselves, agree on a policy approach.

The citizens jury, which has been piloted and developed in the UK by, amongst other groups, the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR 1998), draws on the established credibility of the German planning cells, the theoretical rationale of the deliberative poll,⁷⁴ and the procedural rigour and formality of the legal jury. In a typical jury a group of between 12 and 16 members of the community are selected with representativeness being the priority (as opposed to a real jury where random selection is used), and required to attend a hotel or other public venue for up to four days. During this time they will hear presentations from expert 'witnesses', as well as reading prepared material ('evidence'), and perhaps participate in field trips if relevant. Most important of all though is that they will be expected to actively contribute to the discussions and deliberations. At the close of the event the jury does not have to reach a formal 'verdict', but is expected to make informed and considered recommendations.

The exact interpretation of the above method that was planned in my research lay somewhere between the deliberative poll and the citizens jury. Though modelling the practical methodology of the jury,⁷⁵ I was more interested in observing the processes of deliberation, and any changes in opinion before during and after the event than with the

⁷⁴ That is: - taking a small sample of people which is representative of the general population, and informing them intensively about a particular issue in an environment which encourages their active engagement with that information, produces the range of opinion which is indicative of that which could be expected amongst the general population if only they were able to become so informed and engaged with the issue at hand.

⁷⁵ Accepting of course the major limitations imposed by the limited funding that was available to me. Coote and Mattison (1997 pp 13-14) report the cost of juries as described above to be between £5,000 and £20,000. My annual research budget was in the order of £250. In respect of this I intended running the juries at the local University's free of charge (and indeed did secure agreement for this from Dundee, Durham and Kent University's respectively), not paying the participants, and recruiting the assistance of local MEP's, European Officer's and academics to act as the 'witnesses'. I planned to act as the moderator for the events myself.

formulation of policy. To this end I planned to interview subjects before the event, observe the ongoing processes of deliberation during the event, and then conduct follow up interviews in the weeks following the event. A further factor that I hoped to be able to observe from this methodology was the type of information (in terms of media and presentation style), that was most influential in any direction of changes in opinions.

I planned to conduct one such event in each case study region, and the timing was intended to coincide with the anticipated increased interest in the issue of European integration during the build up to the Elections to the European Parliament in June 1999.

The one outstanding factor that had to be determined prior to running the citizens juries/deliberative polls was what issues to put to the 'jurors' (or 'poll subjects'). It was clear that I was not in a position to determine these myself, as to have done so would certainly have imposed an unacceptably normative element at the outset, which would then have affected the validity of all the resultant findings. The solution was to be found in another 'deliberative' method, which is much more widely used in the social sciences generally, and lends itself particularly well to this exploratory stage of research. This method was the focus group.

The Focus Group: The focus group is essentially a group interview, focused on a particular topic area, which makes a positive virtue out of the tendency for the group to develop discussion beyond that prompted, or encouraged by the researcher. Though first used to study the effects of wartime propaganda in the 1940's, the method became popular within the commercially driven research environment of the marketing industry (Morgan 1988, p. 12-13). However, since the late 1980's there has been increased use of the method in the social sciences. Corresponding with this has been the rapid development of an applied literature,⁷⁶ which is in fact rife with contradictory claims and 'myths' (Morgan and Krueger 1993 pp 3-10). In most cases the supposed advantages of focus groups are expressed in terms of comparison with the other widely used type of interview, the 'one to one interview' (see for example Frey and Fontana 1993). From the plethora of definitional options across this literature, the following most closely match the intended use of the method in this research:

⁷⁶ N.B. the 'old' Dictionary of Social Science Methods (Miller and Wilson 1983) makes no mention of

The groups are generally composed of 7 to 10 people [...] who are unfamiliar to one another. [...] The interviewer creates a permissive environment, asking focused questions, in order to encourage discussion and expression of differing opinions and points of view. [...]. This method assumes that an individuals attitudes and beliefs do not form in a vacuum. People often need to listen to others' opinions and understandings in order to form their own. (Marshall and Rossman 1995, p. 84)

The emphasis in focus groups on non-directive interviewing [shifts] the attention from the interviewer's agenda to the interaction between group participants, which enable [s] issues of importance to be identified by group members rather than imposed by the researcher. (Hennick and Diamond 1999 p. 113)

Focus groups were intended to be a preliminary method in this research. That is, the data collected from them, though useful in itself, was primarily intended for the purpose of informing the selection of topics, presentation styles, and arguments, to be used in the Citizens juries. Though focus groups do have considerable value as a primary data gathering method (Morgan 1988 p. 38), and indeed this use is increasing as familiarity with the method builds up (Morgan 1993, p ix), they do lend particularly well to this type of exploratory investigation (Frey and Fontana 1993). In an earlier volume Morgan listed the following as key uses for the method, all of which were drawn upon in my selection of the method:

1. orientating oneself to a new field;
2. generating hypotheses based on informants' insights;
3. evaluating different research sites or study populations;
4. developing interview schedules and questionnaires;
5. getting participants' interpretations of results from earlier studies.

(Morgan 1988, p. 11)

As I was new to the field of investigating attitudes and opinions about European integration, the first use was particularly pertinent. The second, and fourth relate very closely to the structuring of the Citizens Juries around the data emerging from the groups. Each of the three areas was relatively unfamiliar to me, and certainly was expected to be different from the other two, and lastly, it was intended that certain of the secondary data that had been collected (most particularly that with a local relevance) was to be used as stimulus material for the groups.

Lastly, and crucially, though there was never to be any pressure upon group members to agree with each other by the end of the discussion, the focus groups offered the chance to observe in a limited way, the claimed tendency towards consensus inherent in public deliberation.

I planned to run three focus groups in each case study region, and the timing was to allow sufficient time to analyse the data before the need to organise the juries/polls. Thus the groups were to be conducted between October 1998 and February 1999.

Doing deliberative research: Plans into practice

Guided primarily by the latest and most comprehensive series of texts on planning and conducting focus groups, David Morgan's *Focus Group Kit* (1998), I set about the task of recruiting subjects for focus groups (1998 bk. 2. pp. 85 - 91). Of the several methods available, the most common is that of selecting either at random or via personal referrals from a population of 'interested' persons. This is the most common owing to its relative simplicity, in addition to the fact that in many cases of specialist research, it is the only effective method. However for my research, this was not an option. There is no tangible collective population of 'interested' persons outside of the political and campaign groups,⁷⁷ any members of which were certain to be 'too interested' by comparison with the ideal population of the general public, and might therefore skew the results. Similarly it was not possible to 'intercept' likely interested people at venues which would imply sufficient interest in taking part in focus group research on Europe, whilst at the same time, not representing what could reasonably be expected to be non typical levels of knowledge or opinion.⁷⁸ The method of recruiting via random sampling from a general list such as the Electoral Register or the Telephone Directory would have

⁷⁷ Such groups did play a crucial role in the later stages of this research. Materials, opinions and arguments advanced by interest groups and their individual members were used both as background data and stimulus materials in the interview stage of the project. However, whilst it was of course possible that random sampling from the entire research population might have recruited participants with similar levels of knowledge or strength of opinion to members of such groups, as far as I can reasonably be aware, no members of relevant special interest groups contributed directly to the interviewee database.

⁷⁸ But for this problem, considering that each case study region is home to a major University, an obvious population from which I should easily have been able to recruit is that of students. Tempting as it was during certain stages of the research, no recruitment of participants was conducted via the Universities. This is of course not the same thing as rejecting potential subjects recruited via other routes because they happen to be students.

matched as close as reasonably possible the recruitment population with the research population. It is now a source of some incredulity that this method was rejected, at least at the outset, because it seemed laborious, time consuming, and above all, unnecessary. It was in fact exactly the method that I ended up using!

The initial method used for recruiting participants was that of 'open solicitation'. Following due consideration of advisory literature (most particularly Morgan 1998 Bk. 2 pp 110 - 111), an advertisement was prepared (Appendix A). The intention was that it be attractive, inspirational, simple, and clear. Without trivialising the research itself the advertisement focused upon the issues which had featured strongly in the recent General Election campaign (particularly considering the contribution made by The Referendum Party).

Whilst Morgan realistically acknowledges money to be the greatest incentive in recruitment, he does concede that other, more personal and altruistic factors can be influential (Morgan 1998 Bk. 2 p.100). To this end, considering that the offering of financial inducements was certainly not an option, the advertisement emphasised the personal and local aspects of the research, stressing that it was very much the individual's view, and local knowledge that was sought. Also, the advertisement made clear that the research was non-commercial, that they would be helping a student, as well as being regarded as important enough to be provided with free information which they could retain, and informed of the research outcomes at a later date. For fear of implying any requirement for specialist knowledge (or interest), the theoretical background to the research as a whole, and in particular the issue of the democratic deficit was absent from the advertisement. Before use the advertisement was piloted by consultation amongst colleagues in the Department. The effort and thought that went in to this advert indicates the store that was put by it as a recruitment tool.

All of the branch and main libraries in the three cities (Durham, Dundee and Canterbury) agreed to display the advertisement on notice boards for a period of three weeks. In addition a number of Community groups provided exposure in a similar way. In terms of placing the advertisement, or for that matter anything similar, in newspapers the cost was prohibitive.⁷⁹ Instead the support of the local newspapers was recruited,

⁷⁹ In the smallest typeset that was legible, the advertisement would have cost in excess of £100 for each

and publicity for the research was thus obtained through Editorial content. Publicity was also secured on the Bulletin Boards of local radio stations in each of the three cities. However, despite numerous contacts with journalists, and extensive telephone interviews,⁸⁰ the size and prominence of the publicity resulting was extremely limited. Clearly, at this time, research about European integration was not newsworthy.

The effort that had been put into this campaign, followed by the period of waiting for responses, remains the most invidious and chastening of the entire research project. From my original estimate of a self-selected subject group of approximately 200, to which I intended sending an initial screening questionnaire,⁸¹ and duly selecting between 6 and 8 for each focus group, I received only one reply. Rather adding insult to injury, this was by e-mail from a Dundee postgraduate student who, working in a related field requested a list of references in return for help with one of the focus groups! The references were sent, but we had no further contact.

Whilst it is of course possible that I could have returned to the method of recruitment based on random selection from a general list, which I had previously shunned as unnecessary and time consuming, another factor had come into play in the mean time. As it became clear that results were not going to be as I had anticipated, I began to ask of friends and acquaintances whether they would have volunteered to take part in focus groups on Europe. They all said no, but particularly interesting was that several explained that they simply did not have sufficient interest to discuss the issue in the relatively competitive environment of a group. In response they were asked whether a one to one discussion, perhaps in their own home would be less intimidating, and the answer, in all cases was yes (though some were quick to point out that they didn't want to do that either!). In response to this I conducted research into the interview method, discovering that, as far as my research objectives were concerned, it could potentially do all that the focus groups would have done, and perhaps more.

With hindsight it is clear that I had erroneously omitted to evaluate all potential methods. Instead I had been attracted to the popularity of the focus group, assuming that

placement.

⁸⁰ I was amazed to find that the questions during these interviews were generally more focused on me, where I came from and how many children I had than the nature of the research. The personal interest angle!

⁸¹ A similar degree of industry had gone into producing this questionnaire. This has not been included in

if it is new, and becoming widely used, it must be better than a rather old and 'simple' method such as the interview. This view was quite simply wrong.

It is at this point that this chapter moves from an account of methods that were not used to those that were. It should be clear that the methods discussed below are based upon those planned. Essentially what was most important was to retain the deliberative character of the initially chosen methods, whilst at the same time making the research possible. It is no good having a well-researched method, with all the justification for it in place, but with nobody to actually take part. This was the grim realisation I had come to at this point. From here things did improve.

Making contact: Having decided to run a series of interviews instead of focus groups, the task of recruiting volunteers was certainly not going to meet the same fate as the last. Thus I employed the method of random selection from a general list.

As it seemed obvious that the research I was doing was complicated to explain, and therefore would require relatively long phone calls, it was an easy decision to make the initial contact by letter. The level of effort that had been put into the advertisement was now directed to the initial contact letter (Appendix B), as this was to be both the first and last chance of initiating a favourable response. Though slightly different for each case study region the letter was aimed first and foremost at achieving the correct balance of friendliness and formality. Advice on this apparently simple task is generally lacking from the literature on recruitment, with the emphasis being placed on subject screening, selection and sampling instead. This omission is unhelpful, as without an effective initial contact letter, none of the more technical tasks can be performed at all. The task of devising a letter which is simple yet informative, inspirational without being intimidating, and polite without being frivolous is a challenge indeed, and in my experience was best achieved by asking for comments from people from as wide a range of occupational groups as possible.⁸²

appendices because it was not used.

⁸² This is easily achieved in a University, so long as one extends piloting beyond the office corridors of academics. The two most significant challenges I found here were using appropriate language, and leaving out detail that was not essential at this stage. Ownership of a research project implies a level of enthusiasm that is unlikely to be shared by others. Unfortunately this can all too easily be forgotten. This point is charmingly explained in Stanley Payne's classic text *The Art of Asking Questions* first published in 1951:

"The specialist may lose sight of the fact that others have no need for his jargon. He

Particular points of note in terms of the letter's content are that it fulfilled the following important requirements: The letter: -

- Introduced myself, my position and the nature of the research;
- Explained the route by which I came to be contacting that particular individual;
- Personalised the issue of Europe, and implied a high priority on the individuals views;
- Clearly set out the time required for an individual interview, and the dates available;
- Explained that with permission the interviews would be taped, but that anonymity is guaranteed (on the importance of this see: Ingham, VanWeesenbeck and Kirkland 1999, p.160);
- Offered the option to meet in a public building⁸³ (i.e. the local university⁸⁴);
- Provided two ways by which further information about the research could be obtained, including the 'authority' figure of the Research Supervisor;
- Offered the option of responding by telephone, or by post;
- Provided a simple 'taster' of the sort of questions the research was concerned with, whilst at the same time stressing that no specialist knowledge was required.

As a trial it made sense to start with the local area. Resultantly the letter was sent to sample of 50 households, randomly selected from the Electoral Register for Durham City.⁸⁵ The response received was 6% (i.e. 3 replies), with only 2% (i.e. 1 reply) being positive. Follow up telephone calls were decided upon, but matching names and addresses from the Electoral Roll with the Telephone Directory/Directory Enquiries proved to be an inefficient, and unreliable process. In fact only 20 of the 50 potential

may think that, because his associates and the technical books use the same lingo, his brand of gobbledegook should be universal." (Payne 1965, p. 20)

⁸³ This was particularly intended to be a way of enhancing access to potentially vulnerable groups such as the elderly, or single women. I was also mindful of the potential problems to me as a researcher, in terms of the potential for malicious accusations.

⁸⁴ In the event some interviews were conducted in quiet pubs or hotel lounges. Whilst it was accepted that the University may have implied an intimidating environment to some potential subjects (here I am mindful of Raymond Gorden's reminder that "the impression of a setting can overpower any attempt of the interviewer to communicate a non-threatening image of himself" Gorden 1969, p. 155), the logistical restraints of travelling time, and finding unfamiliar public meeting places, prevented my formally offering general flexibility.

⁸⁵ The Postcode Address File (PAF) provides the most complete listing of postal addresses. I acquired a free sample from the Post Office, but unfortunately this generous offer was actually in the format of twelve-inch reels of magnetic tape (circa approx. 1980). No hardware exists at Durham University to read

subjects were contactable by telephone. The eventual result of this trial was that four interviews were arranged. However, during this period a number of people whom I had not formally contacted agreed to be interviewed, the word having reached them through personal contact with either myself, friends or colleagues. Though perhaps not apparently the most rigorous of recruitment strategies, it had worked, and with time marching on, the Durham interviews were arranged with as representative a spread of age, gender and occupation as was practicably possible.⁸⁶

For the other two case study regions, a different strategy was required. As indicative of the reflexive and dynamic approach that this research has adopted throughout, the rationale for employing the telephone directory as a sampling frame is now set out.

Though far from an ideal, it was selected because it was the least worse option. Whilst there were potential advantages in the first attempt at using the Electoral Roll as a 'sampling frame', inasmuch as it includes all adults in each household, is grouped according to locality, and includes people who may not be on the telephone, or be ex-directory (indeed it was for these reasons that it was the first method of choice), it is not without limitations. For example people who are uninterested in mainstream/formal politics (for whatever reason) might have avoided listing on the Roll, further, whilst it is a public document, it cannot be copied, posted or electronically accessed. This would have required an expensive and time consuming visit to libraries in each of the case study regions. However, the primary reason for the method's rejection, and replacement with the telephone directory method, was the apparent need to make follow up telephone calls.

Building a 'sampling fraction' from the telephone directory of course throws up the 'systematic error' of excluding all those for any reason not listed,⁸⁷ but, in consideration

these data, rendering the use of this method, within the limited budget of this research, impossible.

⁸⁶ It must be stated here that it was never an objective of this research to claim any generalised representativeness across various social groupings, nor was it seen as in any way relevant to the objectives pursued (here of course this research diverges from the more ambitious aims of the Deliberative Poll). Realistically the numbers involved would never have supported such with any validity. In the event, reasonable attempts were made to recruit a spread of occupation, gender and age groupings. Further it must also be acknowledged that the sampling at this stage was 'purposive' (Morgan 1998 Bk. 2 p. 56), insofar as subjects expressed their preparedness to be interviewed about their views on the issue under research, which made this self-declaration a criteria for selection. On an ethical point, I was extremely careful not to persuade anyone on the telephone whom I perceived to be reluctant but too polite to refuse. In my view telephoning people uninvited is a form of intrusion, and respect of this is essential.

⁸⁷ The two most important reasons for non-listing are economic factors, and privacy factors. There is

of the emergent fact that follow up calls were essential anyway, this error was in effect built into any alternative sampling frame (i.e. the research population had become members of the public in each case study area who had an entry in the telephone directory). Telephone directories for both of the case study regions were available remotely, and it was thus possible to select 200 names and addresses, with contact numbers quickly and efficiently.

Despite researching the most rigorous methods of randomly selecting from a list such as the telephone directory (see for example: Maisel and Hodges Persell 1996 p.158-165), what in fact I did was to pick the first individual name and address on each page of the directory, when randomly opened, which was in, or close to the City Centre (N.B. this can quickly be determined by observation of the first three digits of the telephone number). Whilst this inevitably excluded the possibility of selecting individuals in certain positions on the page, there was absolutely no reason to suppose that this would be at all significant. After all, at this stage, the only information I had about any of the members of the sampling frame was that they were in the telephone directory. As the only attributes used in the compiling of the list (i.e. by BT), is having a landline telephone, and being prepared to be in the book, this was as random a method as necessary for the purposes of this research.

The response was contrasting. Dundee was as expected; Canterbury surprising. In brief, the results were:

- Dundee: 29 letters returned unopened, 11 replies (9 negative/2 positive);
- Canterbury: 6 letters returned unopened, 22 replies (7 negative, though 2 of these did include a detailed list of answers to the questions posed in the letter/15 positive, of which two included a letter particularly asking to be included).

A total of 95 telephone calls were required in Dundee, but, due to the remarkable level of response from people in Canterbury, I was actually able to select those 15 eager volunteers. This anecdotal but surprising contrast between the case study regions rather

unlikely though to be a 'fit' between the social groups that do not have telephone book entries for economic reasons, and those who do not for reasons of privacy. Thus, at least the error is not effectively compounded by a correlation between both factors.

made me wonder if I might already have tapped into a rich vein of regional distinctiveness (i.e. in terms of preparedness even to discuss the issue of Europe).

Into the field at last: The intention to conduct 15 interviews in each case study region finally became a realisable reality. The Durham interviews were spread out over a period of several weeks, but for reasons of time and cost efficiency, the Dundee and Canterbury ones were fitted into a period of one week each.

Having researched the body of literature on interview conduct, and considered such issues as the wording of questions, the use of prompt cards, appropriate dress, gentle argument and the potential effects that my relative 'expertise' might have, the planning of my interviews most closely fits the following quote's description of an ideal 'qualitative interview':

Each interviewee is expected to have had unique experiences, special stories to tell. [...] The qualitative interviewer should arrive with a short list of issue orientated questions [the aim being] not to get simple yes or no answers but descriptions of an episode, a linkage, an explanation. Formulating the questions and anticipating probes that evoke good responses is a special art [...] Main questions should be kept in mind, probes carefully created, occasionally asking the dumb question, assuring that what was said was said, or asking if they meant clearly what clearly was not meant. If possible, the interviewer should enjoy the interview but mostly be its repository. (Stake 1995, p. 65-66)

I arrived with a list of questions, mostly designed to open up areas of discussion, rather than to tackle issues head on. In addition I had a series of twelve A4 sized prompt cards, each with a short text and colour pictures to demonstrate certain points (an example is reproduced in the Appendix C). Though in most cases it was not necessary to use more than half of these, they did provide an invaluable way of re-starting an apparently stalled interview. As there was no standardised format for the semi-structured interviews, issues could be dealt with in the order dictated by the discussion, though I took care to check that each of my topic areas had been addressed before closing the interview. On the whole the interviews were enjoyable, though demanding, and completing five in one day, as I did once was extremely tiring. Question asking is indeed an art, one that can only be perfected with experience.⁸⁸ My experiences ranged

⁸⁸ In the context of the quote below this footnote about active interviewing, I was able to develop not only skills, but also valuable information as my experience of interviewing developed. This information was instrumental in developing a dynamic and progressive interview technique:

Whereas the standardised interview would try to limit informational "spillage" from one

from the most verbose subjects, to the positively monosyllabic, with everything in between. On occasions I became aware of a certain aggressiveness on the part of the subject, most likely a result of a perceived ego-threat (Gorden 1969 pp. 72-76) due to the inevitable differences in our levels of issue-related knowledge. This clearly demonstrates that despite efforts to establish rapport, and an emphasis on opinion rather than knowledge, some individuals will use the interview process as a battleground. Interviews are indeed "social constructs, created by the self-presentation of the respondent"(Dingwall 1997 p. 59).

For the most part though, subjects were keen to debate points and ask questions (to which I always attempted to give full and balanced answers), were courteous, and reported that they had found the experience not only enjoyable, but also informative and engaging. Some subjects actually reported that discussing the issues had actually developed their own views on them (for a comment on this aspect of qualitative interviews see Kvale, quoted in Payne 1999 p. 96), and this very important point is returned to in depth throughout following chapters.

In terms of 'anticipating probes' mentioned in the above quote, my interviews were 'active':

The active interview eschews the image of the vessel waiting to be tapped in favour of the notion that the subject's interpretative capabilities must be activated, stimulated, and cultivated. [The interviewer should] converse with respondents in such a way that alternative considerations are brought into play. They may suggest orientations to, and linkages between, diverse aspects of respondents' experience, adumbrating - even inviting - interpretations that make use of particular resources, connections and outlooks. (Holstein and Gubrium 1995 p. 17)

Most interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Each was tape-recorded using a small and unobtrusive recorder. On completion of the last of the Durham interviews the tapes were transcribed verbatim with the invaluable assistance of a transcribing machine. A period of two full weeks was taken at this time for my learning to touch type, as it was clear that the payback would be significant.

interview to another, active interviewing takes advantage of the growing stockpile of background knowledge that the interviewer collects in prior interviews to pose concrete questions and explore facets of respondent's circumstances that would not otherwise be probed. (Holstein and Gubrium 1995 p. 46)

Data analysis: As long ago as the mid-1980's Nigel and Jane Fielding reported their observation that the literature on research methodology is heavily weighted towards the collection of data, at the expense of its analysis (Fielding and Fielding 1986 p. 9). This remains true, possibly a result of the need for emphasis at the research design stage (i.e. when funding or access is being sought), on detailed accounts of the data collection and recording methods, and little interest, beyond broad statements, as to plans for analysis (Marshall and Rossman 1995. P. 108). This was indeed true of the proposal for this research. However, having transcribed the initial interview records, and being faced with 35 documents, averaging 5,500 words each, the importance of the task, as well as the sheer scale, turned me towards the literature for detailed guidance. If I had been to any extent victim of the conundrum recounted by Tim May: "it is frequently believed that once the data are collected most of the work is done" (May 1997 p. 125), I was no longer.

Before briefly dealing with the procedural specifics of how these data were analysed, it is helpful to outline the principle that framed the detail. The approach used is actually very closely represented in an analogy developed by Ian Dey (1993). This analogy is particularly helpful because it is holistic, and as such describes the overall process of qualitative data analysis without resort to inappropriate, mechanistic and, 'cookbook' (Silverman 1997 p.196) strategies.

Here the researcher (me) is likened to a mountaineer. His primary interest is in achieving the view from the top. Scaling the mountain is undertaken one step at a time, and during the climb the focus of attention is on each step (obviously, to avoid falling off!). However, there are periods of rest, during which the 'climber' can look around, seeing the horizon from a new vantagepoint. Also during these natural breaks there is the chance to review the route to the top, making changes if necessary. On reaching the top, the mountaineer realises that the view (i.e. the end result) is not seen in isolation from the route taken to reach it, nor all the other views seen along that route. Of course, there is no guarantee that the view from the top will live up to the expectations formed at the bottom. (Adapted from Dey 1993 pp. 53-54)

So it was with analysing the data from these interviews. The 'mountain' was determining the meaning of the data; the steps taken to reach the top consisted in the main of a circular process of reading, coding, reading, and more coding. At regular intervals I reviewed the coding system being used. Ultimately, any interpretation made following this process was based on an immeasurably extensive collection of impressions, feelings and judgements formed at any and all the stages involved in collecting and handling these data.

In terms of the detail of analysis, I began with reading. Reading in an active, as opposed to a passive way (Dey 1993 p. 83), is one of the key skills that this research process has taught me, and is invaluable to the task of data analysis. From a questioning approach to reading transcripts (which I found I was only able to do from hard copy), I began to form connections and groupings across the data. From these originated the categories into which groups of data would later be placed. Whilst it appears that these categories are thus 'grounded' in the data themselves, I should prefer to employ the term 'middle-order' categories (Dey 1993 p. 103-105), than the classic 'grounded theory'⁸⁹ to describe the theoretical guidance behind this process. Middle order categorisation allows scope for both the grounding of categories in the data, and the seeking of data that fit categories devised in isolation from the data themselves (e.g. based on a theoretical literature review). To adapt another of Dey's analogies, to have an open mind is not the same thing as having an empty head (Dey 1995 p.78). As has already been clearly demonstrated throughout this thesis, this research is theory driven, so it would be somewhat inconsistent to claim to have embarked upon the process of data analysis with a mindset entirely 'empty'.

Categories of data are abstractions, and are only important in terms of the overall objective of making that data manageable, comparable, and understandable. On the issue of how many categories to split data into, there is no definitive guide. I ended up with 67, though reaching this number was a gradual process.⁹⁰ Throughout this process I was mindful of the risk of data 'decontextualisation'⁹¹ (Kelle 1995 p.12), with the result

⁸⁹ Grounded Theory is a complete method of analysing qualitative data, justice to which it is impossible to do here. Nonetheless, a very brief overview is helpful; in as much as it had significant bearing upon the decision as to how to analyse my data. The intellectual product of two sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, grounded theory is a method of 'doing' research that combines scientific rigour with artistic creativity. Using grounded theory requires an approach from the very outset of the research (i.e. deciding upon the research area and the research questions), which is reciprocal. What this means in practice is that one should induce theories from the study, though at all times that theory should be tested, re-tested and challenged against the emerging patterns of the data. This guiding principal is captured in the following quotation:

A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. [...] Therefore, data collection, analysis and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory then prove it, Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge (Strauss and Corbin 1990 pp 7 - 23).

⁹⁰ N.B. Each time a new category is devised, all the pre-categorised data have to be re-studied.

⁹¹ An alternative phrase is 'data fragmentation'. Each refers to categorising a section of text, which in isolation from the preceding and following comments loses its original meaning. This major source of

that the categories contained long sections of text (usually a paragraph), which meant that there was considerable overlap between categories.

When I felt that the data had been categorised, I did have a feeling of; 'what next?' In other words, returning to the mountain climbing analogy, I had completed all the steps to the summit, but there seemed to be something missing. What in fact was missing was the big picture (the view from the top), or in other words an acknowledgement that the circular reading and categorisation process was the *analysis*. Each category was devised in respect of the relationship it shared with the others already used. Each decision to place a piece of data in a category had been influenced by the entire process of data collection, transcription, reading and categorisation. In fact, there had been no distinct phase of analysis *per se*, even though I had set aside some weeks in which to do it. The process is a continuum, and is still going on, during the compiling of this thesis.

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time consuming, creative, and fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not neat. (Marshall and Rossman 1995)

The final aspect of data analysis to report here is the way computer software was used to assist the process.⁹²

Computer aided data analysis: The use of computers as tools in the analysis of qualitative data can be traced back to the mid 1960's, although it remained a highly specialised task until the user friendliness of the Personal Computer brought it to desktop of the less computer literate academic (Kelle 1995 pp. 1-3). Though the earliest programs were simple search devices that would report the frequency of certain words or phrases, there are now over a dozen sophisticated programs, which range in possibilities from coding and retrieval, through linking of data between documents, to theory building and testing devices (Prein *et al* 1995 pp. 190-210). Despite this long history, ease of use, and ever extending range of possibilities, the very issue of using computers in qualitative data analysis remains a contentious one. There are genuine, and widely held concerns that the fundamental nature of 'artificial intelligence' makes computers useful for counting, but not so for interpreting (Dey 1995 pp 55-62).

potential error is inherent in any category-based method of qualitative data analysis.

⁹² Discussing this topic last is reflective of its importance to the analysis process. i.e. analysis first, computer assistance second!

That computers cannot interpret is of course true, but to see this as the rationale for rejecting their use in Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA), is to 'throw the baby out with the bath-water'. An altogether different approach is needed, which from my own experience can only be achieved by trying to analyse data without and then with the use of QDA software. The specific use of QDA software in this research is described below, followed by a more reflective comment on its use in general.

I used HyperRESEARCH (from Researchware). Though this decision was based primarily on it being the only one available to me, it is clear from my limited use of the possibilities offered by the program, that had a more sophisticated one been available, I should still have been attracted by its simplicity. According to the Manufacturer's User Guide:

HyperRESEARCH lets you:

- 1. Code any amount of data any number of times.*
- 2. Retrieve and manipulate portions of coded source material.*
- 3. Test propositions about the data on any code or combination of codes using Boolean searches.*
- 4. Test hypotheses about the overall meaning of your data using artificial intelligence.*
- 5. Print or export the retrieved data to a word processor, spreadsheet, or statistical package for more in-depth analysis.*

Whilst the program does indeed do all these things, I had no intention of using 'artificial intelligence' to test hypotheses⁹³ for me (number 4), and therefore imposed only a 'flat coding' system on the data. This meant that codes (the computer software term for 'category') did not necessarily have a directional element,⁹⁴ which I felt allowed greater

⁹³ Whilst I can see that this facility could be of great benefit to data collected from structured interviews, I found that the data collected in my semi-structured interviews was not suitable. To have imposed the sort of directional coding required to use 'hypotheses testing', would, in my view have unjustifiably increased the risk of fragmentation error (see also the following footnote).

⁹⁴ An example from my use of HyperRESEARCH of a flat code is 'discussed UK leaving EU'. Alternatively as two directional codes, this could be broken down into 'felt UK should leave EU' and 'felt UK shouldn't leave EU'. Following the previous footnote, the transcripts, in most cases did not provide examples of such clear-cut 'directional' comments. Thus, I made use of only a small part of what HyperRESEARCH potentially had to offer.

freedom for me in coding, but of course rendered impossible the later option of hypothesis testing.

What I did use the program for, and for which it was of great value, was coding and retrieval. Thus, I simply assigned codes to data, and made use of the infinite variety of coding combinations that the program is able to retrieve and display.⁹⁵ Despite the irritating restriction of only working in the ASCII (plain text) format, and being limited to a mere 16,000 characters per file (meaning that each of my transcripts had to be separated into two documents), the program is excellent as a 'cut and paste' assistant.

From my initial fears that the computer might somehow take over the data, and begin telling me what it means, I have realised that it can not only assist with the laborious and tedious tasks of manipulating and organising data, but can actually open up opportunities to try avenues of inquiry that would simply be impossible (from the point of view of logistics) without the computer's use. In this sense, the computer is able not only to assist with the process of analysis, but also to expand and enhance the process. Taking a practical example to demonstrate this important point: - wondering whether a certain combination of categories of data, if compared, would show up a relationship previously unseen, is a valid part of the analysis process. However, to answer such a question without the assistance of a computer would take such a significant amount of time, that there would have to be at the very least a strong reason for thinking that there might be a result which would justify the effort. With the assistance of a computer, no such pre-justification applies, there is an almost limitless freedom of thought (and with it a rather bewildering range of possibilities!).

In summing up the usefulness of computers in QDA, the following two quotes represent the very worst that could happen, and, with the imposition of just a little bit of care, the very best:

[T]he computer can encourage a 'mechanistic' approach to analysis. In this nightmare scenario, the roles of creativity, intuition and insight in analysis are eclipsed in favour of a routine and mechanical processing of the data [...]. All that remains is to write up the results. (Dey 1993 p. 61)

⁹⁵ The concept and design of HyperRESEARCH is heavily influenced by 'grounded theory', with its emphasis on codes, and the ability to test emerging hypotheses (Lonkila 1995 p.41-50). However, the user is not bound by the 'rules' of grounded theory.

QDA's can make research easier and better. QDA programs constantly remind us of data contents and contexts. QDA's contribute an ability to do the same things we do now, but more quickly and completely. They promise an ability to emphasise and analyse data in new ways. (Durkin 1997 p. 92-93)

With care, computer's can offer simplicity, efficiency and enhanced quality in QDA. Even though I did return to non-software assisted analysis of data at the latter stages of the research (this is reported in more depth later in this chapter), the fact that I would now find the idea of analysing data without the option of using a computer as absurd a notion as having to write this thesis without one, is the clearest indication of my own 'conversion'.

On to the secondary stage

From the original methodological plan for this research, the focus groups would have been followed up, and built upon, by a series of citizens juries. At the early stages of analysing the data from the focus groups' replacement, the interviews, it was still the plan to run the citizens juries, simply using the interview data to inform the agenda, and selection of speakers in each case study region. However, by the close of the data analysis stage (accepting the comment made earlier, that the process is never fully completed), there was significant cause for a major re-think.

Whilst I had no experience of semi-structured interviews on which to base predictions, I had nonetheless made some assumptions as to what level of insight I could expect to glean. However, the breadth and depth of data collected via the interviews far and away exceeded my expectations. I realised that I had in fact collected an extremely valuable and unique database about 35 individual's views, attitudes and opinions about a very wide range of issues related to European integration. This was clearly of far greater value than the use to which I had intended it be put. In addition to this, I strongly believed that I had established a relationship and rapport with the interviewees, as well as having stirred up a high level of interest in my research's progress. These factors together clearly represented a potential resource, which it would be wasteful not to 'tap' in some way. Finally of course I had been very much chastened by the experience of attempting to involve the public in focus groups, and there was certainly no reason to expect that recruiting for citizens juries (which require a greater commitment on the part

of volunteers) would be anything short of tortuous. Thus I felt very much as though, having struggled so much to get some good interviewees, I shouldn't let them get away!

Of course the possibility of recruiting the original interviewees for the citizens juries had previously occurred to me, and at the close of the interview each of them had been asked in principle if they would be interested in helping further with the research. Though not one subject declined outright, almost all did attach the reservation that time was likely to be their main constraint (I must accept that in some cases this might have been the politest way of saying no). It was my considered view that none of these subjects could be relied upon to make a commitment to spend a day at the local University deliberating on Europe. In consideration of this view, and also of what they had already provided me with, I was not even prepared to ask.

This combination of data quality, and the logistical problems of running citizens juries culminated in the idea of 'taking the mountain to Mohammed'. As an Open University graduate (and now Tutor), I am very familiar with the technique of sending stimulating and attractive materials through the post. It thus occurred to me that if I could gain agreement to send a tailor made 'information pack' to subjects, ask them to peruse the contents at their convenience,⁹⁶ I could then meet with them again at a later date to discuss the pack contents. These 'secondary' interviews would be based around the contents of the pack (as well of course as the discussions during the earlier interviews). I planned to act as *agent provocateur*, during these interviews, challenging and probing to a greater extent than I had so far. I felt that in this way I could make use of a so-far successful methodology, whilst still retaining the 'deliberative' principals of the original plan.

This last point was the key to the eventual success of this method. It was to be crucial that the essential character of the citizens jury be retained as far as possible. The provision of information was retained. Interviewees were encouraged to, and in fact all of them did (see Chapter 4) discuss the contents of that information with friends and colleagues. I was also going to be able to assess the effectiveness of different media of

⁹⁶ This technique (i.e. of posting information) did not entirely present itself from my own experience as a previous Open University student. It did in fact have a strong 'grounding' in the original data from the interviews. In fact the claim most often made by subjects was that they felt ill informed, and when asked about how information could be presented to them, several had said that through the post would be an effective method. This, along with the other findings is reported in depth in the following chapters of the

information provision. There would be an opportunity to investigate the extent of revision of interviewee's opinions and attitudes during the process. As such most of the character was indeed retained. There was one element missing though of course, that being that one to one interviews are just that: - one to one. Certain of the group dynamic and interaction would be missing from my secondary interviews. I had to accept that this was not ideal, but that it was likely to be the least worse solution to the problem of recruitment.

Looking back on this stage of the research, I feel that opting to redesign the methodology whilst making every effort to retain its deliberative essence was something of a 'master-stroke'. I now feel that citizens juries just would not have worked in the way that the literature suggests (see Chapter 4), and that the interviews I did conduct were highly interactive, extremely engaging for those taking part, and collected both a breadth and depth of data that no other method could have matched. Whilst the results of this methodology are reported in full in Chapter 4, it is helpful just to point out here that the reason these interviews worked so well, and citizens juries would have failed is rooted in the process of '*education*' introduced in Chapter 1. People need to work up to deliberation.

The first task at this stage was to select interviewees for the secondary stage.

Interviewee selection: It was patently clear that I could not replicate the original subject group in entirety (although from a purely technical point of view it would have been ideal so to do). This was not due to cost factors, but rather the sheer volume of data collected would have been too much for me to manage effectively within the broader constraints of the PhD process. Here I was mindful of Woolcot's advice that it is far better to collect a smaller volume of data and use it properly, than to collect too much and get lost in the analysis (Woolcot 1990 p.35-36). Resultantly I decided to involve 5 subjects in each case study region in the secondary stage.

Selection was based upon a multi-factor search of the coded data. The practicalities of the task of course made easy by the use of Hyper RESEARCH in the original coding process. It was certain to be impossible within a selection of only 5 subjects, to



represent the whole range of views, approaches and attitudes on all the issues that had been discussed during the initial interviews. However, this was not necessary. What were of importance here were the general approaches⁹⁷ that subjects exhibited to two key aspects of the research. Firstly, the issue of European integration. Secondly the issue of information, and subjects self-proclaimed judgement as to how well informed they already were. This latter category was based upon the not unreasonable assumption that those already best informed (at least in their own opinion), should be less affected by the presentation of new information, than those considering themselves to be less well informed.

In selecting interviewees for the second stage of the research process, the intention was to include at least one representative of the generally 'negative' approach, one of the generally 'positive' approach, one of the 'well enough informed', and one of the 'not well enough informed'. However, these categories were not mutually exclusive so there would be some overlap. The purpose of this mix was to test as fully as possible the impact of new information on the opinions of representatives of all groups.

Having made an ideal selection of 5 subjects (15 in total), the issue of selecting 'reserves' was considered, but then put off. If various of the initial selection were not able or willing to take part in the planned second stage of the research, then replacements would be required who matched as closely as possible those particular individuals opting out. In consideration of this, there was no point in selecting reserves at this stage.

Each of the selected subjects was contacted by means of a letter⁹⁸ which explained the plan, and what would be required of them in terms of time and effort were they to agree to participate. Beyond this informative role, the letter was very much a personal correspondence, which aimed to build on the relationship we had developed, and the credibility I had already established for both the research and myself. The hope was that

⁹⁷ N.B. It is essential to make a forward reference here. The categories used here to describe the 'general approaches' of interviewees to issues related to the EU (including how well informed they perceived themselves to be) are derived from the data analysis of the primary interviews, and can be misleading if taken in isolation from their full analytical context. This context is set out in the following Chapter, in which all the relevant analysed data from the primary interviews are presented.

⁹⁸ The level of detail considered in planning this letter was very much less than the initial contact letter, and is thus not reported in the same way here. The fact that contact was now on a personal level was the reason for the relative simplicity.

the subjects would feel a combination of flattery in having been 'exclusively' selected and challenge in finding out more about the issues. There was also some play made for their sense of obligation in pointing out that this was the final stage in my research (a copy of this contact letter is reproduced as Appendix D).

This plan was successful, with a 100% positive response from the selected group. Having established access, and arranged for the delivery of the pack, and the timings of follow up interviews, the focus of efforts shifted to the compilation of the pack itself.

Compiling the 'information pack':

This pack had now become the vehicle for the delivery of new information, and as such had to be balanced and accessible. The opportunity presented to use a range of media had been unanticipated, and it was a period of some considerable excitement as I collected, rejected, and selected various documents to go in 'my pack'. Of course I was going to be well placed to judge the effectiveness of the various media in the pack, so it made sense to use as wide a range as was possible. This I did.⁹⁹

During several weeks I collected a very wide range of documentation from the Commission, the government and campaign groups. I was also determined to provide some form of televisual media for the interviewees. I could not find any commercially produced video films that met the required standards of neutrality, information content and accessibility, so I made my own. Below the production of this film is reported, followed by a brief summary of the rationale for the pack contents. The pack itself is included in the thesis as Appendix E.

Devising and producing the video: Guided by the data I had now analysed from the primary interviews, this film was to be only 30 minutes long, and focused on 'popular' argument rather than dry facts. The best way to present this was for me to take on a 'Paxman' type¹⁰⁰ role interviewing experts representing the various 'general approaches' found to exist among the research group during the primary interviews. My first auditions however proved rather unsuccessful.

⁹⁹ In the event the pack contained a video film, maps, emblems, glossy brochures, stickers, some sample euro's and some press cuttings.

¹⁰⁰ i.e. I wouldn't have been quite so aggressive!

Up to this point in the research I had built up a wide range of contacts with 'officials' in European Funding Departments of various local authority's, some of whom had provisionally offered to present a case for the benefits of European integration in the planned citizens juries. Just the people to put such a case on my video. However, I was unsuccessful in securing consent from any such specialists. Despite promises of fair editing, and the opportunity to view the finished film prior to its use, no such professionals were prepared to speak about the issues on video.

There was no such difficulty in recruiting a speaker prepared to argue the case against many aspects of the UK's involvement in European integration. A businessman in South Shields, who had been an agent for the Referendum Party¹⁰¹ at the 1997 General Election was tremendously enthusiastic about the opportunity, and recorded nearly 30 minutes of tape with almost no prompting. The case for European integration, and in particular a positive role for the UK in the process was, in the end, put by a Mathematics Professor at Durham University, who in his spare time is a Liberal Democrat Councillor, and one time candidate at an election to the European Parliament. The credibility of a lecturer in European Studies at a Further and Higher Education College was recruited to provide a balance of the arguments.¹⁰² After a period of several weeks spent arranging (including equipment loan), interviewing and editing the film, it was ready for inclusion in the pack. It then had to be copied 15 times!

The rest of the pack: Decisions as to what to include in the pack, and how to present the information so as to make it easily navigable by interviewees were thought through with great care. The pack as a whole had to be attractive and user friendly, it had to include a range of types of material, and above all, it had to include only information relevant to the issues grounded in the data from the primary interviews.¹⁰³ It had also to

¹⁰¹ The Referendum Party was the single-issue party funded and led by the late Sir James Goldsmith. Following a disappointing showing at the 1997 General Election the Party effectively disbanded, though officially it was merged into the new 'Democracy Movement' which itself is similarly funded and led by a wealthy businessman, in this case Paul Sykes. Instead of campaigning for a referendum on membership of the EU, this movement is focussing its campaign on opposition to The UK joining the single currency.

¹⁰² In the event it proved almost impossible to get the balance I required in this interview. The lecturer himself was very committed to the European ideal, and this came through in almost all his comments. This was compensated for in editing by providing an approximately equal time to argument for, and argument against (i.e. the enthusiastic Euro-sceptic was featured for longer than each of the other two individuals).

¹⁰³ This of course had to be gauged as a whole, as all interviewees (allowing for variations in local information between the groups of 5 from each case study region), though having been concerned with

have the appearance of striking a balance between arguments in favour of those aspects of European integration, and arguments against.¹⁰⁴ The pack was piloted in consultation with colleagues prior to its use. This was to ensure that it was clearly understandable, and reasonably balanced.¹⁰⁵

The list of contents of the pack, along with a brief rationale for their inclusion is set out below:

ITEM	RATIONALE FOR INCLUSION/DETAILS
Welcome letter, and contents guide	This introductory letter welcomed interviewees to the pack, provided a list of contents and explained that a follow up interview would focus on the pack and their reactions to the material therein. It was made clear that, excepting the video film, all the contents were freely available to the public, and a list of contact addresses from which duplicate or further information could be obtained was included. Perhaps most important of all is that it was explained that interviewees were being requested to gain an overview of the material, not to actually read it all. It was explicitly pointed out in the contents guide that the first seven elements of the information pack originated from the EU itself, and that for reasons related to the availability of resources, the published quality (i.e. the design, content and printing), would be superior to the latter elements. Though the format of materials was of interest, interviewees were requested not to compare materials only on the basis of publication quality.
1. The EU emblem	The blue and yellow Circle of Stars has become the primary

different issues, were to receive identical packs.

¹⁰⁴ This consideration influenced my decision not to edit any of the material (except of course the video). Thus, in the event, nothing was included in the pack that could not have been obtained by any member of the public free of charge. I had not manipulated the content in any way other than having discretion over its inclusion.

¹⁰⁵ I did receive a comment at this stage that the pack was perhaps weighted towards the positive side of the issues. I considered this view carefully, and, whilst accepting that there are more items originating from the EU than any other body, I felt that their publications were information dense, whereas the campaign literature from various groups was more superficially captivating and appealing because it was based only on argument. This differential of purpose, was the reason for leaving the pack as it had been designed, and inviting interviewees to judge whether they felt there was a lack of balance. Comments on this, and related matters are of course reported in detail throughout the following chapter.

and map	icon of the EU, and is not only the symbol on stationary etc. but on the EU flag. For this reason it was included to assess the type, and strength of feelings it inspired in interviewees. The map was informative, in terms of membership and geography, and it too is increasingly being used (in simplified block format), as an iconographic symbol in official EU publications.
2. 'Europe Today'	This high quality glossy booklet is the main public information document published by the Commission and distributed through libraries and Documentation Centres. It is packed with information about many aspects of the EU, and is in a carefully thought out, easy to follow format. Slipped into the front of this booklet was a copy of the Declaration of 9 May 1950, which explains the origins of the integration project. It was felt that this text document would be of interest to some subjects.
3. 'What exactly is Europe?: a classroom guide to the EU'	This is a similar document to that above, except in that it is intended for school pupils between the ages of 11-14. Whilst of course all my interviewees were adults, there was considerable interest expressed in the role of schools in educating people about the EU. Also, several did have children, and felt them to be better informed than themselves. This booklet was included to show an example of the sort of teaching resources that the Commission make available free of charge to schools. This fitted in particularly well with a comment presented on the video that school children were potentially being 'brain-washed' by access to what was described as 'official propaganda', with no necessary opportunity for teachers to balance the argument by use of material of similar publishing quality from other sources. Of course no such link was made explicit to interviewees.
4. A Guide to Economic and Monetary Union	This Commission published guide is very detailed and technical. It is however another public information pamphlet of high published quality. It is in a very text dense format. It was included to provide specialist information to those interested, but also to assess perceptions of the format. Lack of information

	about the single currency was a common theme in the primary interviews.
5. The European Union: What's in it for me?	This Commission published booklet carries the title that would lead to the anticipation of its answering many of the questions that interviewees reported they had. It is presented in a question /answer format, and is again a document aimed at members of the general public. It was included particularly to assess whether it asked the right questions (i.e. its relevance to interviewee's interests), and whether it was at all persuasive.
6. 'A regional guide to the EU'	This document explains in detail the role of the EU in local initiatives (at the regional scale). Examples are presented of the economic, social, and cultural impact of the EU. Obviously a different version of this pamphlet was used for each case study region.
7. 'The European Parliament'	This element of the pack comprised an information booklet explaining the role of the Parliament (there is of course much informational overlap with above publications here), as well as some leaflets distributed by the Parliament in the run up to the election. These had the explicit intention of increasing the levels of voter turnout.
8. 'Representations of the Single European Currency'	This item was a laminated A4 poster showing colour pictures of the euro coins and symbols. Attached was a range of one-sided sample 5, 10, and 50 euro notes. This represented a chance for subjects to 'get their hands on the currency', and consider their own feelings not only about its appearance, but, importantly, its symbolism. (The pictures of the coins originated from an EU publication, and the Britain in Europe Group supplied the notes to me).
9. 'Are we in or are we out?'	This element was a collection of pamphlets from campaign groups in favour of the UK joining the single currency. Concerns over the standard of debate about this and other issues related to European integration were a common theme in the primary interviews.
10. UK Independence	This element comprised the front line election campaign

Party literature.	literature of this Party. Though the only explicitly political material in the pack, this was considered justified for inclusion because of the Party's high profile campaign, and unique stance that the UK should withdraw from the EU. Much of the material was in the question/answer format; though there were also some stickers and posters.
11. Democracy Movement literature	This Movement's <i>raison detre</i> is to campaign against the UK joining the single currency. Its literature is carefully researched, and forcefully presented. Included in this item were two pages of quotes from key figures in the European debate, and several pages of question/answer format. Attached to these documents were some samples of 'anti euro' posters, and a campaign leaflet from the <i>Campaign for an Independent Britain</i> which carried its logo of the five-pound note with a large cross through it.
12. Press cuttings	This was a series of reproductions of the most well known anti European reports from <i>The Sun</i> newspaper.

The secondary interviews: The pack was sent to the interviewees a full two weeks prior to the interview date, which was more time than most had said they would require. In many ways the interviews in the secondary stage were similar to those conducted in the primary stage; they were certainly based on the same guiding literature. However, there are some key differences that justify explanation here.

By the time of the onset of the secondary interviews I was an experienced 'active interviewer'. It is impossible to quantify the difference that this made, but I do know that a more relaxed style coupled with more confidence to allow the interviewee more control over the interview was much better suited to the requirements of the secondary interview than to the primary ones. In this sense the learning process was well timed. Unlike the format suggested in much of the literature about citizens juries, I was not interested in a point by point measurement of opinion change.¹⁰⁶ I believe this would not only have been uninspiring for everyone involved, but would also have ignored the most important finding from the primary interviews, that is that general approaches tended to dominate opinion. In respect of this my questions were indirect, probing and

¹⁰⁶ There is no way I was going to allow my research to be limited by the 'non-attitude' syndrome that

delivered in a conversational way. To re-use a quote from earlier, by now I was fully doing as Holstein and Gubrium suggest the active interviewer should:

[The interviewer should] converse with respondents in such a way that alternative considerations are brought into play. They may suggest orientations to, and linkages between, diverse aspects of respondents' experience, adumbrating - even inviting - interpretations that make use of particular resources, connections and outlooks (Holstein and Gubrium 1995 p. 17).

The interviews lasted in all cases longer than the corresponding primary interview, the maximum being an exhausting two hours. They began simply with 'warm up' questions, following the chronology of the pack contents. However, as the interviews progressed, and much of the data relating to specific contents of the pack (which was needed to assess the effectiveness of different media) had been collected, the questions broadened out somewhat. It was at this point that the data collection had shifted emphasis towards the final (and in many ways most important) aspect of these secondary interviews; that of an assessment of the effects of the deliberative process, of which the provision of information had been just one part.

For this aspect of the research, asking direct questions was unlikely to yield valid data, partly because the interviewees were unaware of this as one of the research aims, but also because it is not something that is amenable to a question/answer format. Rather it is an impression built up over the course not only of the interviews, but also of telephone conversations, email and postal exchanges and by no means least importantly informal chats after the interviews,¹⁰⁷ which due to there being fewer interviewees, I had more time for than during the primary stage.

Certain of my questions were related to my investigation of the 'deliberation effect', but appeared to interviewees as questions about their reactions to elements of the pack contents, which were invariably spread out on the floor in front of us during the interviews. This is reflected in the reporting of data from the secondary stage of the research, in that there is less emphasis on direct quotation from the transcripts, and more of my own reasoned assessment of the processes at play.

provided the original motivation for Fishkin's development of the deliberative poll.

¹⁰⁷ There is more on this in Chapter 4 as part of the presentation of data from the secondary interviews, but for now I should point out that the level of hospitality extended to me by many of the interviewees was quite extraordinary.

In terms of the analysis of the secondary compared with that originating from the primary interviews, the different way it was dealt with stems from exactly the points referred to above.

In approaching the transcribed interview data,¹⁰⁸ I was by this stage a competent operator of the QDA software. However, I found that its use in this secondary stage was to be severely limited. It was invaluable for organising responses to particular elements of the pack contents, and as such has proved a very useful resource during the writing up of this research. Its limitations became all too obvious beyond that point. I found attempting to use Hyper RESEARCH for assisting in the analysis of the data relating to interviewees responses to the deliberative process more trouble than it was worth. This was not so much because of the limits of the software, (as stated earlier I did not use it to its full), but the fact that the chunks of data being put into the coding categories were so long, it was easier to read them off the hard copy. Of course this was caused by my fear of 'decontextualisation' (Kelle 1995 p.12), but I feel that by abandoning the computer at this stage, I had reached the optimum point between Dey's (1991) comment and Durkin's (1997) set out earlier in this chapter. In this sense I had used a machine, but not in a mechanistic way.

This chapter has explained the long and at times fraught process involved in doing this research. It is hoped that presenting it in the order that it happened has conveyed something of the experience I had. As stated earlier, it is my belief that the methodology used here has been innovative and responsive to unforeseen conditions. It has been of the utmost importance to the research to retain certain key elements of the original plan, and this has been achieved, despite major challenges. It is to the presentation of data resulting from this methodology that the thesis now turns.

¹⁰⁸ I should hope not to mention the process of transcription in the hope that those weeks might be erased from memory, but it remains an important part of the data analysis process. In this sense the data handling here was similar to that of the primary stage, i.e. a feedback system of reading, interpreting and transcribing etc.

Chapter 3

The geography of the deficit

Chapter overview

The structure of this chapter reflects the multi-layered purpose of these primary interviews. Firstly they were intended to ascertain the extent to which particular factors relating to interviewees attitudes and opinions about the EU varied across case study regions, and as far as possible to uncover the explanation for any emergent pattern. Secondly, they were intended to inform the selection of materials to be used in the latter stages of the research (originally of course to be citizens juries, but changed to information packs followed up by deliberative interviews). Perhaps as with any such semi-structured interviews, the depth and breadth of data collected reaches far beyond these objectives, and inevitably much has been omitted from the reported analysis. This by no means implies however that certain data have been ignored because they do not fit with the intended objectives. Instead what is presented in this chapter (and the following one) is a selective focus on certain areas of the data, which is at all times influenced by the whole. This 'whole' should be understood to include the preparation for the interviews, discussions with interviewees before, during and after the interviews, as well as my own overall interpretations and impressions. Inevitably though, the presentation below draws most explicitly from the transcripts of the interviews, and their analysis.

Throughout the research itself the theoretical account of the democratic deficit, and the working definition in particular, provided the guiding structure. This is replicated in the reporting of data throughout this chapter. In this sense there are references made to specific areas of theory as and when they are pertinent to the findings. No attempt has been made however to scour the database looking for 'proof'. The prominence of the theory derives from its influence in the design and conduct of the research. As set out in

Chapter 2, whilst I cannot claim that I have approached these data 'blind' to theory, I should hope it is clear that this analysis has been very largely grounded in the data themselves. This is in part the reason why there is uneven weighting given to particular aspects of the deficit. This simply reflects the actual character and direction of the semi-structured interviews themselves, of which I was only partially the determinant.

The first section of the Chapter begins by explaining the relationship that was found to exist between the regional scale of the case studies, and the national scale. The justification for starting at this point, is inherent in the actual findings that are presented. The section explains how certain national factors were found to be dominant over the local effects, and that these must be dealt with first in order that the latter are placed in the correct context. The section then moves on to address in detail the findings relating to these factors. Information is discussed first, followed by the interviewees' general approaches. On information, the section presents the evidence that shows the interviewees to be unhappy with the quality of information available about the issues related to the research. On general approaches, it is explained how interviewee's views on most issues in the research were remarkably consistent with what I have termed their general approach to 'Europe'.¹⁰⁹ Only after these factors have been fully explained can the chapter then present the evidence pertaining to the 'case effects'.

The second section presents a systematic analysis of the case study comparisons. In each case there is some modification of the *case effect*. Of course had more been known about what to expect, such modification would not have been necessary, but it is very much the case that the key words in each effect i.e. *proximity*, *gratitude*, *Scotland* were retained, rather it is that the relevance of some of the constituent tests that altered.

The main section of the chapter is then concluded with a drawing together of the key findings relating to the geography of the deficit within the UK.

¹⁰⁹ It is essential here to explain the distinction between the acronym EU, and all that it means, and the word 'Europe'. This is potentially a highly problematic distinction, and as several of the sections below show is not consistently understood by interviewees. Here I use the word 'Europe' to refer to the broad issues related to European integration that I am researching, which of course includes all aspects of the EU, its form and functioning. This technically incorrect use of the word is adopted for the following reason. Because this part of the thesis is grounded in the data provided by interviewees, and on the whole this is the way they used the word, I have taken my lead from them. Should I attempt to distinguish between their intended use of the terms (which most interviewees used interchangeably), I would risk misrepresenting their comments. There are however a number of exceptions throughout this section where it is clear that interviewees did distinguish between 'Europe' and the 'EU', and where that is the case

The final part is necessarily brief, and essentially leads into the following chapter. Here, the way that interviewees felt that they could become more informed about the EU is discussed in detail. This analysis was heavily relied upon in the design of the secondary stage of the research, the results of which is the focus of Chapter 4.

The regional and national scale

At the point from which I began conducting the primary interviews my intention was of course to investigate the extent and nature of variation in aspects of the democratic deficit between the selected case study regions. As such the design of interviews was tailored towards this aim. Whilst intending that the interviews remain semi-structured in typology, I planned to open up discussion about the issues in the most general sense first, and then steer the discussion to the local context as soon as was possible. What had not been anticipated though was the almost universal lack of any unprompted references to the regional scale on the part of the interviewees. In almost all cases if interviewees discussed the EU in any regional context, it was at my initiation, and only persisted through my questioning being much more direct than I had planned. This quickly became a challenge to the relatively open structure that I was intent on retaining. There were no cases in which interviewees spoke as freely, as knowledgeably, nor as enthusiastically about the EU in the regional context compared with the national context. It is also clear that even in cases where interviewees did exhibit a relatively high level of knowledge as to the effects of, for example, EU funding on their region, they did not readily associate this knowledge with determining their general views on the EU. Indeed as the need arose to focus at least part of the interview on the regional scale I sensed that many interviewees became relatively uncomfortable.

Whilst it is not possible to be certain, it is my considered view that this was the result of two factors which operated separately in some cases, together in others. The first of these was the most obvious, in that they felt that their ignorance was being exposed. After all they must have thought that I had selected them because they were locals, and yet they seemed to have so little to offer in the way of local knowledge. The following

quote, which was recorded at the very end of an interview, puts into words this mostly unspoken perception:

M.B: Is there anything that I haven't asked that you would have expected to be asked, or anything else that you'd like to add?

Interviewee: I felt more uncomfortable on that local stuff. I think I'm reasonably well read and well informed but if you begin to press me on that I begin to realise the I've got huge gaps in my knowledge. (Durham 5)

The second reason, for which I cannot reproduce a directly indicative quote is more intuitive, and that is that interviewees simply did not appear to understand the relevance of discussing the EU in the context of regional factors such as the example of EU-funded projects. I did press the point however, and I managed to collect certain data pertaining to regional effects of the EU. The results of the analysis of these particular data though are not presented until later in the chapter. The reason for the decision to present the results in this way is actually grounded in the data themselves, and must now be explained.

The primary interviews were dominated by two themes. The first of these was information or, more accurately, the lack of it. Most interviewees felt ill informed about the EU, and all interviewees felt that lack of good quality information was negatively influencing the quality of debate. This factor was consistent across all the case study regions, there appearing to be little local 'effect' involved.

The second dominant theme was the general approaches that interviewees brought to bear on their responses throughout. Here it appears that interviewees interpreted all information related to Europe through their own general outlook. This seemed to operate uni-directionally insofar as it determined the interpretation of information relating to the regional aspects of European integration just as much as any other information, whilst the regional factors themselves appear to have had little or nothing to do with the formation of this general approach itself. To put this another way there appeared no feedback from regional factors and information to the general approach that interviewees adopted. Because the origins of these approaches (whatever they had been) appeared not to have involved local factors, there was less consistency within regions than between them.

So dominant in fact were these themes, that my attempts to focus on the regional 'case effects' were thwarted, especially early on in the interviews. It is in reflection of this that the chapter must deal with these themes first, and then return to focus on the regional 'effects' afterward. To do otherwise would be to obscure the emergent fact that to the interviewees, and therefore to the interviews, any regional differences were minor compared to the commonalities that derived from these two factors. As was mentioned in introduction to this chapter, all the data have been involved in this analysis, and a finding such as this typifies such a consistently broad approach to analysis and reporting. It has only been at the stage of organising the presentation of results that this organisational priority has been used. I could not have made decisions such as those involved here until the latter stages of data analysis. To rephrase this very important point; I could not have proclaimed the dominance of commonalities across case studies over the differences between case studies until the data had been extensively analysed. Lastly it is worth pointing out in the context of the passage in Chapter 2 about *grounded theory* that I did not expect to find these relationships in the data, and was certainly not looking for them.

Information

The concept of the information deficit was introduced in Chapter 1, and much that is presented in this section relates closely to that theoretical account.

In the light of the data presented earlier from the Eurobarometer, it is no surprise that the overwhelming feeling expressed by interviewees was that they were ill informed about Europe. Overall only three interviewees considered themselves to be content with their own level of knowledge, each making the judgement that though they would not describe themselves as 'well informed', they had not found their lack of knowledge to be a problem (i.e. they were well enough informed).

The problem was put down to information. The lack of quality information was seen as a great problem, not just to themselves, but to the general standard of debate as a whole. Even the three 'well enough informed' interviewees conceded that low levels of knowledge were detrimental to the general standard of debate about Europe. The research interviews were dominated by this theme right from the start with most

interviewees starting their comments with either a self deprecating apology for lack of knowledge, or an acknowledgement of frustration that they were not able to discuss the matter effectively because of their ignorance. This went on to manifest itself as a lack of confidence in opinions, due mainly to the lack of evidence available to justify them.¹¹⁰

The theme of lack of information came up in a more applied way in discussions about democracy and citizenship,¹¹¹ and how involved interviewees felt they should be (or could be) in decisions at the European level. Here, after discussing the importance of the right to cast a vote (as all interviewees did), there was considerable frustration in sensing that any decision was more likely to be based on ignorance than information. The following quotes are exemplary of such responses:

Interviewee: It [the EU] has not reached the level of success that it should have done
M.B.: What would you say it should have achieved, I mean what criteria do you have that you think it has failed to meet?
Interviewee: It has failed in the sense that if you're reading newspapers, you can see that everyone is, including me, ignorant and fearful on so many matters. (Dundee 3)

M.B.: Are you confident that that information that you want..... would you get that during the referendum campaign [on the single currency]?
Interviewee: No, that's why I said it has got to be independent information. I think at the moment when you look at the telly you get people who are against it and for it and what they're doing is giving their view but not giving you the choice by giving you both sides of it. So you end up thinking 'Oh yes I'll vote for it', and then you're negative and against it. If you could only somehow get the whole picture and what they're trying to do and what it's all about. (Canterbury2)

A further point on information which is framed by the discussion of the transmission deficit in Chapter 1, is that though the group were good voters (voting at the rates of 100%, 97% and 60% in national, local and European elections respectively),¹¹² in the case of those who did vote in European elections, most said that they simply replicated their national vote. This decision was claimed to be based on a relative ignorance of the parties at the European level. This is reinforced by the finding that even among those claiming to cast their vote with European issues in mind (and this was the minority), that vote had to be based on ignorance of the European manifestos. This supports that

¹¹⁰ This point is returned to at length in the following chapter where the effects of the deliberation process are discussed in full.

¹¹¹ My questions on democracy and citizenship were obviously very practical, focusing on areas most familiar to interviewees' everyday lives. They did generally move on into discussion voting behaviour, and the way information is used in voting decisions. Whilst I did not ask for abstract definitions of what democracy and citizenship should mean, I nonetheless did get some that could quite respectably grace the pages of general textbooks on the subjects!

¹¹² These extraordinarily high rates must be considered in the context that the interviewees were self-selected. Volunteering for research such as this is highly likely to correlate with higher rates of voting

part of the commentary on the transmission deficit that claims European votes are cast in necessary ignorance of European policies, and it also rather challenges the basis upon which the Conservative Party claimed victory in the 1999 elections to the European Parliament. If most replicate their national vote without consideration of the scale of the election (as appeared to be the case amongst this group), then specifically 'European' policies are unlikely to be the cause of such success.¹¹³

A very important feature of the perceived paucity of information is the striking correlation between the general finding that Europe is predominantly thought of in national terms, and the sources of information that most interviewees currently use to become informed.¹¹⁴ Matching the data set out in Chapter 1, the most popular media for gaining information was the television, followed by the press. Of these media it was very much the national rather than regional versions that interviewees were referring to. In fact only two interviewees could remember having received information about Europe via the regional television news or local press.

Of the two who had received local information, one actually relied on the free local newspaper to inform him of local and wider news, but also declared himself to be very ill informed about Europe! The other was more comfortable with his level of knowledge, and was well used to hearing from his local MEP: "our MEP is pretty active, always on the local radio, telly, and always writing in the local paper" (Canterbury 13). This is surely true, but it is interesting that no other interviewees in this region could recall having seen their local MEP on television.

In most cases interviewees were highly critical of the quality of reporting of European issues in the press, and a few felt the same about television reporting. Again this matches the data from Eurobarometer; the television being generally considered more 'trustworthy' than the press. There was also evident concurrence with the ORB (1997) finding that the British press tended to trivialise issues relating to Europe and present information in a predominantly negative way.¹¹⁵

than the average.

¹¹³ Hindsight of course indicates that this success was more likely to be attributable to very low rates of turnout among Labour supporters at what was a mid-term election.

¹¹⁴ The passive way that this phrase is presented is intentional, reflecting the fact that few interviewees claimed to have been proactive in attempting to inform themselves about Europe. This theme is developed later in the chapter.

¹¹⁵ I had as one of my prompt cards a typed copy of *The Sun* article which had formed the basis of Hardt-

However, while the interviewees themselves (excepting one) felt that they were able to read negative reports without their opinions being influenced, they had little such faith in the wider populace. On this matter the data suggests that whether the more controversial press reporting influences people was considered by interviewees to be a factor of education, with those 'least educated' believed to be most influenced. It can thus be no surprise that only two interviewees reported that they themselves had been influenced by it, and both of these prior to becoming 'more educated'. These two interviewees' comments on this are reproduced below:

Interviewee: I think this stuff is patriotic, you know just to sell papers.

M.B.: But you're patriotic.

Interviewee: I am but mine goes beyond things like that. I accept that we won wars and things, but this is offensive. Once upon a time when I was young and uneducated it would have appealed to me but now I've grown out of it. (Canterbury 1)

I have a negative slant on Europe, but that's probably because of the coverage of it that I've had. [...] Now that I'm at University I'm doing Britain in the EEC at the moment, from a historical perspective rather than a political one, so I've got a lot of information from that. Had I not done this course I would not have said what I have said. (Dundee 6)

Overall the database lends support to the argument of Tumber (1995) set out in Chapter 1 that the national press is very much giving the EU some 'yellow cards'. Tumber means that the EU not only suffers a bad press, but that people's opinions are influenced by the nature of that coverage. The following three quotes represent the near consensus among interviewees that (other) people are influenced by the press.

This first quote, though not specifically about the coverage of the EU, does indicate specifically the sort of people felt likely to be influenced by *The Sun*:

The Sun, well you know what The Sun is. If that paper says vote Labour, then people will vote Labour. Look at that lad who got banned for drink driving who got his case back to the Court of Appeal because people were abusing him on public transport because of the character he played in Coronation Street. Now if people will do that then they would vote Labour if The Sun told them to. (Durham 3)

Mautner's study (see Chapter 1). The article was: - 'Up yours Delors' from September 1990 (N.B. obtaining a back copy from the publishers of *The Sun* was prohibitively expensive as this is apparently their second most requested edition. The most popular being 'Freddie Starr ate my hamster'). In the event I did not have to use this as a stimulus for discussion in this area because all interviewees remembered either this or another example of negative reporting of Europe in the British press.

The following quote broadens the discussion away from the exclusive focus on the tabloids, by explaining how this interviewee sees the difference between *The Sun* and *The Times*, and finally, why he himself chooses the latter:

You think of an alliance of *The Times* on the one hand and *The Sun* on the other. If that [*The Sun*] is the formative influence on what I call the gut reaction in the British people, and the *Sunday Times* depicts the reasoned reaction, then both come up with a fairly solidly anti-European stance. [Later in the interview] I'm aware of *The Sun* even though I don't read it. I'm aware of *The Times* internal debate and that even though it has a stance on Europe it nevertheless allows a certain amount of freedom of expression to certain commentators and therefore I can pick and choose. I can be enlightened by opposition voices. (Dundee 8)

Finally on this matter of the press as providers of untrustworthy information, the following quote shows an insightful approach to the rationale behind *The Sun's* editorial approach. This also contributes to explanation of the occasional differences between the content and approach adopted by the English and Scottish editions of the paper:

[On commenting on the 'Up yours Delors' article] *The Sun* does this to suit its own purposes, the next thing the next day is that you'll find them advertising cheap ferry trips to France to get your fags and booze. [...] So what they say doesn't mean anything but the trouble is, and I'm not being nasty to people who don't think about things but all they're trying to do is write for people of lesser intelligence so this stuff will go in and stay in. (Canterbury 4)

In sum, interviewees were very concerned with the lack of information available about the issues involved in this research. In many cases this influenced the confidence with which they expressed many of their views. Further, the majority of interviewees wanted to become better informed and were frustrated that this appeared not to be possible. Most interviewees did suggest how they felt they might most effectively become better informed, and this is discussed in the closing section of this chapter. Now the focus moves to the other theme that dominated these primary interviews.

General approaches

As set out earlier, interviewees appeared to have 'general approaches' to issues related to the EU which influenced their interpretation of information they had already gleaned, information that I provided as part of the interaction during the interviews, and indeed in some cases, the nature of my questions.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ The first example of this approach driven interpretation of my questions actually occurred during the

There is an essential caveat to put with this 'general approach' criteria though, and that is that it is not concerned with stereotypical categorisations of interviewees into popular and polarised camps such as Euro-sceptics and Euro-enthusiasts (N.B alternatives gaining in contemporary use, particularly in the broadcast media are the terms 'Euro-phobe', and 'Euro-phile'). Indeed one of the clearest themes to emerge from the data is that there were, among the interviewee group, no interviewees with views consistently opposed to all factors relating to the EU, nor likewise in favour.

Turning now to the detail of these general approaches to the EU, there is unsurprisingly a division into those generally positive in their approach, and those generally negative. There appear to be no cases in which the overall tone of responses taken across the entire interview suggests the interviewee adopting a neutral (or non-directional) approach. This is unsurprising considering the self-selection of the interviewees. That is to say that individuals with no strongly directional views are probably less likely to have volunteered to take part, though I have no way of verifying such a suspicion.

The direction of the interviewee's approach is traceable through the analysis of responses to all the questions in the interview, from the broadest to those most focused. However, an interesting theme that emerges from the data is the evident congruence between interviewees' answer to my deliberately obtuse opening question, and the type of response given throughout the rest of the interview. This question was broadly put thus: 'What does 'Europe' mean to you?',¹¹⁷ and the analysis of the data shows there to be

very first interview. This particular interviewee rather came at me with the following:

I want to interrupt you, the thing's you've mentioned, and written in this [the introductory letter attachment, see Appendix A], are as if you've read and believed everything in the Daily Telegraph, which seems to be very anti-Europe at the moment. All the business of democracy, no democracy [...] The way you've said that sounds as if you're biased, and you expect other people to be biased against Europe (Durham 1).

Naturally I took these comments very seriously, though the whole interview process had been rigorously piloted. On later occasions I received comments, though less forthrightly in entirely the opposite direction. To some extent this is an exaggerated, and obverse reaction to my role as an active interviewer as described by Holstein and Gubrium (1995), discussed in Chapter 2. It was my considered conclusion that the bias here was more on the part of the interviewee than my research approach.

¹¹⁷ This question like all the others used was adapted and explained in more detail if required. Also, interviewees had been assured even before this first question that there were to be no right or wrong answers, and that any thoughts that came to mind throughout the interview were likely to be of interest to me. It was clearly of the utmost importance when opening with what to some might appear a rather abstract question, to be mindful of representing an 'ego threat' (Gorden 1969 pp 72 - 76, see Chapter 3) to interviewees at this very early stage. In the event the question did not appear to present such problems.

three distinct types of conceptualisations that interviewees tended to frame their answers within.

Firstly there is the physical geographic conception, that 'Europe' is a spatial entity which can be imagined in relation to, and observed by, reference to a map. Secondly there is the notion that 'Europe' is a political construction which is inclusive of certain countries and exclusive of others. Lastly there is the conception that 'Europe' is a 'people' phenomena, which is associated to varying degrees with feelings of commonality, enjoyment, and togetherness. The data do not present any particular one of these as dominant, neither numerically nor comparatively between any of the case study regions.

Taking these conceptualisations of 'Europe' in turn, amongst those who declared that Europe meant a geographical space, there was not a clear link to either positive or negative general approaches. However, on breaking the geographical conceptual responses down further, links do in fact emerge. The difference lies in whether the interviewee described this geographical conception in a neutral (i.e. simply a factual way) or in any sense an exclusive way. Essentially this relates to whether interviewees mentioned the position of the UK in Europe, and if they did, in what way. This is best exemplified further by the use of short quotes.

The two quotes below draw on this neutral geographical conceptualisation of Europe, and, along with other similar responses, correlate with a generally positive approach to the EU:

Geography of course, it means Europe as you see it on a map, which includes all the members of the European Union plus all the others like Switzerland and Yugoslavia, and perhaps including Russia down to the Urals. (Canterbury 5)

All of the countries of Europe basically as a whole rather than individual ones. (Canterbury 9)¹¹⁸

The view which dominated this strategy at all times was that the basic meaning of the question was always more important than the wording. Examples of the modification of this question include explaining that interviewees might want to interpret the word as a concept, a fact, or an image. Whatever they felt Europe meant to them in the context of the very beginning of these interviews was what I wished to record. Of course I must be mindful that interviewees already had a broad idea that I was researching the European Union, and that this might have prompted a link between Europe and the Union that would not otherwise be made. In the event such an expressed link was an uncommon response.

¹¹⁸ The fact that both of these quotes are from the Canterbury case is coincidental. These were simply the

The following three quotes represent examples of an exclusive geographical conceptualisation, all of which imply Europe as something exclusive of the UK. These correlate with a generally negative approach to the EU:

Just straight across the Channel - France Germany, Holland [...] Europe I tend to think of as over there. (Durham 11)

The land across the water [...] you just think of Europe as the continent. A place that you visit and that's that you know. (Canterbury 11)

Europe I think of as the traditional countries, France, Germany, Spain, Italy really. Not the UK, not Turkey, not Greece, not what I call the peripheral countries that have crept in. (Durham 8)

Turning now to the second conceptualisation, of those who answered in terms of politics, there was a range of general approaches adopted, again showing that thinking of 'Europe' in terms of politics does not in itself suggest a tendency to view integration positively or negatively. Rather it is in the detail of the actual answer itself that an underlying approach might be identifiable. In the following two examples just such an indication is given:

A very natural amalgamation of states with common interests and a common purpose to work together. (Dundee 10)

A group of nations which in many ways are very disintegrated. I tend to think of the western European countries, France and Germany in particular, you see those are the two which want the ascendancy in my view. (Canterbury 10)

The interviewee giving the first answer was generally positive throughout the interview about the principle of European integration, and in particular the 'natural' and therefore unstoppable logic of both deeper and wider integration. Conversely the interviewee providing the second answer was genuinely frightened by what he perceived to be the threat to British independence represented by the dominant Franco-German alliance.

Finally, interviewees who answered the question by declaring that they thought of 'people' related notions and ideas were, with only one exception, generally favourable to European integration. Specific examples of 'people' phenomena include viewing Europe as a holiday destination, seeing commonality between the people (or peoples, as some distinguished between nationalities at this point) of continental Europe, and themselves.

The commonest initial response here was to say simply "holidays", but of the more extended responses, the two set out below demonstrate deeply held convictions as to the personal commonality felt to exist between themselves and fellow Europeans. In fact the two quotes are very close in sentiment to the statement used by the European Commission in its research into the European identity discussed in Chapter 1: "*there is a European cultural identity shared by all Europeans*" (European Commission 1998):

What it means to me is a kind of enlarged homeland. I consider myself to be a European citizen. I would see us as one great cultural whole. (Durham 2)

It is us you see it's in our blood; we're a mixed lot. [...] The British come from Europe, Vikings, Danes, Saxons, Romans. My idea is that there shouldn't be any more wars like the first and Second World War- that's what I really think of when you say Europe. (Canterbury 7)

In contrast, the one such conceptualisation which was representative of a negative approach is reproduced below. Here, as with the first of the two quotes above, the interviewee is able clearly to convey his depth of conviction in just a very few words:

Europe, different nationalities, some good some bad [...] there's a lot of British people hate the Europeans. (Durham 3)

This section has outlined the importance of these general approaches to the interviewees. It has also highlighted how influential they were on the research, in respect of the correlation existing between general approaches and the 'direction' of views expressed throughout the interviews.

In conclusion of the section however, there is a need to address an apparent paradox which emerges from these results. On the whole, interviewees claim to have received most of the information that they have about European integration from the media of national television and the national daily press. Though generally trusting of the television, there was universal concern that at least some newspapers report issues relating to European integration in a way that is capable of influencing certain people to perceive these issues in a negative way. However, interviewees generally denied that such negative reporting had influenced their own views. Thus the question clearly emerges as to where the views of interviewees, and in particular the general approaches that were so dominant, did actually come from.

It is not possible from the database to fully answer the question of where these views and the general approaches come from. Indeed on being asked that very question, most interviewees were not able to point to specific events or pieces of information which had been influential. This in fact proved quite a challenging question for most interviewees, and the dominant response was along the lines of it being 'just a feeling'. One summed it up thus: "Europe is a state of mind." (Durham 2)

Whilst the effect of these approaches was known, the origins of them were not, and this was bound to add an extra level of interest to the second stage of the research which had as one of its aims to assess the effects of new information on opinions. The results of this second stage are presented in the following chapter.

The regional scale in detail: case effects assessed

This chapter has already made clear that the national context appeared to be more important to interviewees than the regional. This is not in any way to be interpreted as suggesting that variation between case study regions was not significant. It was. It is simply that it should be placed in the correct proportion, accepting that interviewees generally thought of the EU and their experience of it in national terms. That this research is sensitive to the two levels, and is not adversely affected by the lesser relative importance of the scale it set out primarily to study, is attributable to the carefully thought out approach taken to the 'scale problem' (Taylor 1984), as explained earlier in the thesis. All levels are important, and the chapter now moves on to consideration of the regional scale, having clearly set out its relationship to the national scale. Each of the cases is now discussed in turn.

North East England: Durham and the *gratitude* effect

The gratitude effect was of course postulated with specific reference to the North East England case study region, but in fact, the data from the primary interviews as a whole indicate very strongly that certain themes relevant to assessing the effect are replicated across all three case study regions. As a result of this, and in keeping with the *grounded* approach to the analysis and presentation of data, this section widens the application of

the effect to all three case study regions, and outlines as appropriate commonalities and comparisons.¹¹⁹

Information – again The discussion around this effect was initiated by my questioning about the regional impacts of the EU, and in particular the part funding of various projects in the area.¹²⁰ It became immediately apparent how the 'information factor' was at play, with generally little awareness claimed by interviewees of such projects. In fact the levels of claimed knowledge expressed in answer to my questioning can be divided into the following three categories.

First, in all three case study areas the relatively few interviewees who exhibited any detailed knowledge of schemes were those who had had some direct personal¹²¹ involvement with them. Second, the most common response given by interviewees was that they were 'vaguely aware' that there had been some EU money spent in their region, but that they did not know what it was spent on. The third category of response offered by interviewees was to declare no awareness whatsoever of such schemes. However, this response belies the true level of awareness. On further probing, and particularly on introducing the stimulus material of colour photographs of the more high profile projects, it became evident that in almost all cases there was at the very least some low level awareness of the schemes.

Taking the first of these types of response, where personal involvement with EU funded projects themselves provided the 'engagement' resulting in such atypical levels of awareness, there was a concurrent understanding of the principles upon which the system of EU funding is based. The following quote demonstrates this awareness, though the interviewee himself clearly shows his personal frustration with the criteria set for achieving the funding:

¹¹⁹ Stake (1995) introduced in Chapter 2 also supports this approach: 'case study research is always comparative'. In this sense it would not be valid to limit analysis of data on each *effect* to that collected from only the case study area for which the effect was devised. Comparison is omnipresent throughout analysis.

¹²⁰ It is important to point out here that the 'case effects' did not drive the questioning in the interviews. As such the questions were broadly similar in each case study.

¹²¹ The word 'personal' here is intended to be inclusive of professional involvement. There were a number of interviewees who had had some involvement through their professional activities with EU funded projects. These included an architect whose professional colleagues had discussed EU funded schemes they had worked on, and a Prison Officer who had contributed to a proposal for funding from the EU

It's a hell of a job trying to get money out of the EU. I know because I'm treasurer of a charity trying to do it. Even if you get the agreement you've got to get matching funds. We've got a scheme, and it's all agreed, it's the inter-regional thing you know [INTERREG]. It's held up, our share of £110,000 of European money because the Mayor of Calais is fighting two groups of environmentalists and hunters. We've got our matching funds on this side, I think they should pay up, I mean it's not as if we're asking for all of it. (Canterbury 11)

Interviewees giving an answer of the second type were able to suggest local projects that they thought might have been part funded by the EU, and a much used phrase was along the lines the following example: "they put up little signs don't they, I've seen the signs, but I couldn't tell you where" (Durham 4).

The most significant factor in the third category of response is not so much that interviewees did not have any knowledge of the schemes (because in all cases they did have some awareness), but that even during a focused discussion, the most obvious prompts were needed to jog memories. It is implicitly clear from the data relating to responses of this type, that many interviewees had never given the matter any detailed consideration prior to our meeting. One interviewee made this assumption explicit thus:

I mean you're telling me about Herne Bay seafront, I knew that had been done but I didn't know it was with money from Europe. I've no idea, in fact I'd never even thought about it actually. (Canterbury 4)

Whilst it is not possible to compare levels of awareness between case study regions in any quantitative way (nor would it be valid so to do), the data do indicate that interviewees in the South East and central Scotland were more forthright in declaring knowledge of particular schemes, and where they made guesses as to which projects might have been part funded by the EU, they were, on the whole, correct. In the North East England case however, whilst there was a definite feeling that the region had had some European funding¹²² there was almost no project specific awareness, and most interviewees could not even guess which local projects might have been part EU-funded.

That the North East region was in part selected specifically because it has had more EU funding than the other two, renders this finding rather surprising. However, what adds

intended to assist the resettlement of offenders.

¹²² Many interviewees referred to this funding using the word 'aid'. The word was being used in the same context as the word is used in reference to 'aid' to third world countries. The significance of this kind of imagery, and associated terminology is explained more fully later in this section.

to this surprise is that at the time of the research, the issue of European funding was actually enjoying an unusually high profile in the region. In the weeks immediately preceding the interviews much attention in the local media had been focused upon the imminent closure of the Fujitsu factory in Bishop Auckland. This factory's closure was a more significant news story than might otherwise have been the case because it had been widely hailed as indicative of the region's new focus upon micro-electronics, as well as exemplifying how EU funding could assist in the regeneration of a depressed region.¹²³

These findings clearly have implications for assessing the *gratitude effect*, as certainly one cannot be 'grateful' for things that one is unaware of having received. However, even in the face of this relative ignorance about particular projects, the data still offers a number of important findings related to this effect.

Fairness and entitlement Across all of the interviewees, the data provides no examples of what could, in any normal and reasonable use of the word, be described as expressions of gratitude for the effects that EU funding has had either regionally, nor indeed nationally. Whilst it is a fact that there was more criticism of specific projects upon which the funding had been spent (by those who had any knowledge of such schemes) than there was praise, the most significant causal factor in this ingratitude was one not of detail, but of principle.

There was unanimity across the whole interviewee group that relatively deprived regions are entitled to financial assistance in order to adapt to changed conditions, and interviewees in all three case study areas were content that the regional distribution of EU Structural Funding within the UK is fair,¹²⁴ and that the regions most in need are in

¹²³ I actually used as part of the stimulus material for my interviews a colour photograph of the factory taken from the County Council's frontline pamphlet entitled '*County Durham and the European Union: a Successful Partnership*'.

¹²⁴ There is no comparable consensus on the related issue of the distribution of Structural Funds across the Union as a whole. Indeed, the data show that whilst most interviewees were prepared to accept that the relatively poor countries should be assisted by virtue of their membership of the EU (i.e. in terms of enhanced trading conditions and co-operation), there is some discomfort about this being in the form of direct financial assistance. Though there were concerns over fraud, most of the concern was based on the view that if the level of assistance were too great, it would be unfair on the relatively rich countries, in particular in the context of our discussion, the UK. The following interviewee provided this fairly typical comment:

I find that for instance when you go across to Spain, the stuff that you, the money that is flowing into Spain from the EU with regards to tourism, and this sort of thing, and

receipt of the most funding.¹²⁵ However, most answers to a hypothetical question about whether they felt that the North East region and central Scotland would have done so well were it not for the EU, were negative. Generally it was felt that if the Westminster had decided the allocation of money based UK government, the distribution pattern would have been different, with effect that these regions would have received less. Considering the popularity of this view, it is surprising that very few interviewees were able to articulate a coherent explanation beyond what can best be summed up as expressions of a 'gut feeling'. Two interviewees who did put forward explanations hinted at political barriers to the fair distribution of funding at the national level, which are bypassed when the funding is allocated at the European level:

[On whether the North East would have received the levels of financial assistance that it has from the EU, from the UK government] No I don't think so because you would have problems with the rest of the electorate. If the money comes from somewhere else they can't query it. (Canterbury 4)¹²⁶

[On why Scotland was believed to have fared better from the EU than it would have done from the UK government] I think in Britain there has always been a colonial attitude to Scotland, you know with the Queen coming up to the bonny countryside. [...] I think Scotland has been the poor relation. (Dundee 9)

Despite this apparent twofold rationale for potential gratitude, the reason there were no expressions of such is simply because people will not be grateful for something they feel they are entitled to. Thus the data suggests the proposition that the interviewees in

everything you read about, you know you think "well they're able to do things that we can't afford to do back home". Our seaside resorts are falling to bits (Durham 11)

This finding does suggest that the nation is viewed differently from the Union, in relation to the distribution of funding.

¹²⁵ That said, there were a number of comments from interviewees in the South East which, though not challenging the overall fairness of the distribution of Structural Funding within the UK (see previous footnote for a comparison with the outlook in terms of the union), were suggestive of some underlying concern that the North East's reputation as poor relative to the South East to some extent masks the reality. The following comments are indicative:

Well we [the South East] are a declining rural community as well now [...] there are serious concerns about Kent farmers being able to make a living. [...] Everyone has this fixed idea that the South East is well off when in fact there is loads of unemployment in places. It's an erroneous idea in the minds of politicians. (Canterbury 12)

That's not to say these [the North East] are poor areas though. In Newcastle there's a huge Marks and Spencer, second only to one in London, and the amount of money being spent up there, it's as if it's going out of fashion. Newcastle is not a poor looking area. [...] I don't regard any of these areas as particularly declining because new industry has been attracted to it. (Canterbury 1)

¹²⁶ This exact sentiment was in fact expressed by speaker number 3 on the video that I made as part of the Information Pack used in the secondary stage of the research.

the regions benefiting from EU Structural Funds are not grateful because they feel entitled to financial assistance. This is further reinforced by the concurrent finding that interviewees are similarly 'ungrateful' for other financial assistance which is distributed by the UK government. Financial assistance (of the kind exemplified by the EU's structural funds) appears from the data not to be something with which expressions of gratitude are associated.

Broadening this focus to the link between gratitude and attitudes towards the EU (which was of course the overall rationale behind this particular *case effect*), in the absence of the sought gratitude, there can be no simple correlation. However, in the light of the finding that gratitude is not applicable to financial assistance of this kind, and considering the high levels of approval in terms of fund distribution that the EU enjoys as compared to the UK government, one should expect there at least to be evidence for a modified (i.e. less ambitious), case effect. Perhaps something along the lines of

"The wide acknowledgement that the EU distributes financial assistance to regions most in need, and in so doing assists them more than perhaps the UK government does, makes people in those affected regions view the EU favourably".

The surprising finding is that even this effect is not supported by the data.¹²⁷ There are evident in the data two explanations for this, which do not overlap (i.e. interviewees drew upon one or the other, not both).

The first is very much linked with the reason that gratitude was not felt, and that is the fact that interviewees accepted that regional financial assistance is part and parcel of the accepted remit of the EU, and so they did not credit the issue with any particular

¹²⁷ This surprise is only compounded when put in a broader context. Elsewhere in the interviews, many interviewees commented that Ireland had gained enormously from its membership of the EU, and that this is the reason why they were felt to be such good Europeans. Thus, the assumption is that there was indeed a *gratitude effect* of the modified type set out here at play in Ireland. The following quote is exemplary of this common approach. It was actually given in response to questioning on why it is that the British are shown by opinion polls to be at best unenthusiastic about European integration. The interviewee first puts this down to the island mentality, and then goes on to explain why such a factor is less influential in the other island of Ireland:

Well you could say the simple answer is because we're an island, so sort of offshore. But I've already mentioned Ireland which of course is also an island but it has benefited a great deal, and I'm sure the people there know that and feel it. (Canterbury 5)

attention. No interviewees accepted that their view of the EU had been affected in any way by whether (or not) their region had been in receipt of relatively high levels of financial assistance.¹²⁸ This then is a passive (or negative), reason for the annulment of the above *case effect*, in the sense that the detailed distribution of regional assistance within the UK, and its local impact is not sufficiently important to influence views about the EU.

The second explanation, though obviously differing in detail, shares with the first a scale and context much wider than the region. All interviewees were aware by the time of discussing this issue that the UK is a net contributor to the EU budget,¹²⁹ and as such they understood the simple notion that the UK's overall direct financial contributions outweigh the direct financial return. This knowledge was used by several interviewees as the context within which to understand the broad issue of regional assistance. Here, there was some incredulity and bemusement over the fact that the UK pays its contributions in, and then applies for smaller sums back. This is demonstrated in the following exemplary comments:

Well that's something I don't really understand, is that you put something in, and then you get some of it back again. Why don't they just work out the difference, pay it in and have done with it? (Canterbury 3)

Yes we can see that there is tremendous evidence here of all sorts of schemes, good and absolutely bloody crazy in terms of sucking money from Europe. But at the end of the day we're paying it all in in the first place, it's a matter again of are we actually developing a bureaucracy within this country of sitting down there with towels round their heads thinking up all sorts of ways that we can claw some of it back? (Durham 7)

Yes yes there are things funded by Europe I'll agree, but we pay the money in for them to fund it with. We pay the money into Europe. [...] Well if we didn't pay it in, we'd have that money to spend ourselves, surely. (Canterbury 6).

What the above quotes do show most clearly is the confusion felt by the interviewees about this issue of funding. Whilst there were very few comments made which suggested a basic unfairness about the UK's position as a net contributor, the complaints (as indicated by the quotes above), were specifically aimed at the way the

¹²⁸ Interestingly, even interviewees who had had personal involvement with EU funded projects and felt positively about that particular scheme (which most, though not all, did), did not believe that their overall opinions about the EU had been significantly influenced by that experience.

¹²⁹ Stimulus material detailing the countries which pay in more than they receive, and vice versa, was used earlier in the interviews whilst discussing the issue of EU expansion. In actual fact almost all interviewees had some knowledge (or at least 'a feeling') that the UK was a net contributor. Most were also aware that Germany was the largest contributor.

funds are managed. Though as has been explained, there was some feeling that the EU has essentially been more generous to certain regions than the UK government might have been, the quotes above represent the numerous interviewees who felt that this was inadequate justification for a negative payment balance.

It is clear from this discussion that interviewees were more concerned with broad issues of EU funding as a whole than the specific details of regional schemes. Such regional schemes were generally considered within this broader context, and as such, any negative perceptions associated with the EU as a whole were overlaid onto the regional funding issue.

Finally, by way of annulling both the *gratitude effect* as originally postulated and the modified version above, in the North East England case, for which it was devised, there was widespread suspicion that what EU funding had flowed into the region might not have been used as effectively as possible. When I introduced the example of the Bishop Auckland micro-electronics factory mentioned above, one could expect negative comments about that particular project, however a number of interviewees used this as indicative of a perceived broader problem with EU-funding. The following are exemplary:

I think there is an anxiety to get the box office features. Was it sufficiently thought out? Was it just throwing money at a problem which at the end of the day becomes a waste of money even before it comes on stream [...] I think Siemens is another example of this.¹³⁰ (Durham 5)

If they [the public] see Fujitsu being funded by Europe and then going bust ten years later they're not impressed. They've still got Fujitsu in Japan; they'll be all right. They took the subsidies for ten years then pulled out. (Durham 8)

The above quotes demonstrate once again that interviewees tended to broaden the issue of funding, even when my questioning was focused on specific examples, and that the result was often more 'yellow cards' (Tumber 1995) for the EU.

Conclusion: Across all three case study regions, and most particularly in the North East England case, the data showed there to be low levels of awareness among interviewees about the local impacts of EU funding.

¹³⁰ This reference is to another high profile electronics development in the Tyneside region, part funded by EU funds, which also announced its receivership around the time of this interview.

Though there appears from the data to be a consensus that the distribution of Structural Funds across the UK is fair (and indeed many felt the EU to have benefited the most needy regions to a greater extent than the UK government might have done had it been in control of the funds), and that relatively poor regions deserve this financial assistance, in the areas benefiting most from this funding (central Scotland, and most particularly, the North East of England), there was no expression of gratitude. Though this could in part be due to ignorance of the funding, it is shown by the data to be more the result of feelings of entitlement, with which gratitude is not associated.

Also significant is the finding that the issue of local funding is viewed by many interviewees within the context of the broader issues related to funding across the whole Union, and that the relative importance of the region, in terms of interviewees views on the issue of funding, is small. None of the interviewees declared their views on European integration as a whole to have been significantly influenced by the issue of local funding.

In sum, the *gratitude effect*, both as originally postulated and as modified above must, on the findings of this research, be annulled.

Central Scotland: Dundee and the *Scotland effect*

The central Scotland case study region shared with the other two cases the overarching finding set out in the introduction to this section; that being that the issue of European integration was seen in national rather than local terms. The difference here was that the nation was Scotland, not Britain.¹³¹

In the above discussion of the *gratitude effect* various 'regional' factors which set the interviewees in the central Scotland case study area apart from the other two have been referred to. That discussion effectively exhausted the limited database in terms of specific relevance to the region of central Scotland and Dundee in particular. This,

¹³¹ This distinction is actually crucial to the discussion of the Scotland effect, and as such is developed throughout this section.

along with the major rationale for selecting this case being to investigate primarily national (i.e. Scottish) factors, justifies its focus on Scotland, rather than Dundee.¹³²

The *Scot factor*: In all but one case the interviewees interviewed in the central Scotland case study area explicitly stated that the issue of 'Europe' is one which is interpreted differently by Scots compared with the English.¹³³ For simplicity, this claim is hereafter referred to as the *Scot factor*.¹³⁴ For the most part interviewees proactively commented on this differential without my raising the subject for consideration at all. It is this concern that interviewees exhibited with Scotland, and in particular the fact that the nation was almost always referred to in the context of some kind of comparison with England, which underpins the discussion here of the detail of the *Scotland effect*. In other words, because the findings reported here are grounded in the data, they reflect this dominant theme.

Overall, it is inescapable that the issue of European integration was found to be one which, at the time of this research, was totally intertwined with the relationship between Scotland, (i.e. the nation, its identity, the people and its governmental system), and England, within the context of devolution in the UK.¹³⁵ This section builds up the explanation provided by interviewees for this supposed (and according to the data collected in this research, the actual) difference in approach to European integration between the Scots and the English. This begins with the detailed ideas explicitly put

¹³² That is not to say that the findings here are to be taken as representative of Scotland, rather that the factors considered here stem from the interviewees' focus on Scotland, not mine. It is important to re-state in this context the limitations of this research, which have been fully acknowledged earlier in the thesis. The central Scotland case study is representative only of itself, and the findings cannot be extended to the whole of Scotland, nor indeed to the whole of Dundee.

¹³³ Whilst it is acknowledged that there are many and varied categorisations of 'English' and 'Scottish' (as well indeed as 'British'), which could be invoked in explanation of this distinction (see for example Mohan 1999 pp 28 -33 for a brief overview of the relevant literature), it is my belief that in the context of the interviews, the terms were used by subjects in very broad and indistinct ways. No interviewees specifically referred to ethnic, cultural or political distinctions in connection with their use of these terms. As such it is not possible to be certain what each meant by using these distinguishing labels such as 'English', 'Scottish' or 'British'. My own considered view based on my interactions with the interviewees is that the terms were used to represent stereotypical residents of England, likewise Scotland. If I had questioned interviewees further on exceptions to any such stereotypes (such as, for example English born residents of Scotland) I believe they would not have been able to specify how they might accurately be categorised. Thus I can only use the terms here in the way that the interviewees used them, that is as broad and abstract stereotypes.

¹³⁴ This terminology is chosen to avoid confusion with the *Scotland effect*. It has no hidden meaning.

¹³⁵ It is not possible, nor indeed necessary, to account in detail here the issue of Scottish devolution. The same applies to the academic literature on such. The essential facts that bear on this research are that at the time of these primary interviews the Scottish nation had voted conclusively in favour of the establishment of a devolved parliament. The first elections determining the political make up of this parliament had not yet taken place, but the unofficial campaigning had begun.

forward, then introduces the issue of devolution and concludes with what the overall database suggests to be the omnipresent common factor of significance in all interpretations of Scotland's relationship with the EU, that being the Scottish national identity.

The idea that the Scots would typically see the issue of Europe differently to the English went beyond difference *per se*, in that the data consistently implied that Scots approached the issue of European integration more positively, than did the English. In fact the data show this assumption to be based on a stereotypical view of the English as being negative in their approach to integration. One claimed consequence of this is that popular opinion poll data about attitudes towards the EU in the UK are in fact very much skewed towards the English view; inadequately representing Scots (N.B. this might also apply to the Welsh and Northern Irish, though there is of course no basis in this research to speculate further on this). Without making any claim to have proved this assumption to be true, the data do show that more of the Dundee interviewees were generally favourable in their approach to the EU, than in either of the other two (English) case study regions.

The quotes below capture this stereotypical view of the English outlook on Europe:

You see English people see themselves as against Europe, you know back to the time when England was great, you know Rule Britannia and all that (Dundee 5).

I think a lot of people are very suspicious of Europe, but I actually think there is a Scottish/English divide there as well. I think there are a lot more people in Scotland who have more of an affinity with Europe than the English do. That's my impression anyway. (Dundee 7)

What is particularly interesting though is not so much whether the *Scot factor* is a statistically provable truism, but the reasons why it is thought to exist. Re-examination of the first of the above quotes shows that within the same sentence the interviewee not only outlines part of the *Scot factor*, but hints at its origins being rooted in the powerful world role that Britain enjoyed in the past. The assumption is that the Scots have somehow been differently affected by this compared with the English. However, there appears to be some confusion in the interviewee's mind between the nation of England, and an anthem associated with the British Empire. Her explanation of this apparent contradiction is very informative, as well as being indicative of the way many of her

fellow Scots interviewees used the terms English and British. She explained that to her understanding of the terms, English and British are interchangeable, with neither including the Scots. She exemplified this understanding by using the example of the athlete Liz McCulgan whom, the interviewee felt, used to be known by everybody as a Scot, but now, having performed well at the Olympic Games had become British. Thus she saw the term British as being used by the English to refer to themselves, plus a few exceptional Scots with whom they are happy to share nationhood. This issue of the inclusiveness and exclusiveness of the terms British, English and Scottish is returned to later in this section.

The devolution issue: The changing government of the UK, in particular devolution for Scotland is shown by the data to be a significant factor in influencing Scottish opinion towards the EU, though there was no consistent direction to that influence. There was a range of opinion expressed about the question of whether the devolved parliament will lead to a more direct relationship with the EU, and thus assist in the representation of Scottish interests at the European level. Those supporting this hypothetical outcome were unsurprisingly enthusiastic about the parliament; others were sceptical as to whether the parliament, as proposed at the time, would have sufficient power to influence the EU in this way. There was however a strong consensus on the closely related issue of Scottish independence. The majority of interviewees felt that Scotland would become 'independent', though no interviewees believed that the time scale suggested by the SNP¹³⁶ of less than a decade was realistic. Interviewees appeared to understand 'independence' as meaning Scotland voting by simple majority in a referendum to become a separate country, and thus break away from its current status as part of the UK. All but one interviewee saw membership of the EU for the new Scotland as an essential element of this independence; the other prepared to see an independent Scotland outside of the EU if necessary. Despite this understanding of what independence means, it was most commonly referred to as 'independence from England'. Again, this is revealing. An issue of major importance to Scotland is viewed comparatively; Scotland with England.

The following series of quotes capture not only the perception that independence, and the resultant relationship with the EU is an issue understood within this context of

¹³⁶ The Guardian newspaper (18/4/00 p. 12) refers to the SNP leader Alex Salmond's party conference

Scottish - English comparison, but also the feeling that there has developed in recent years a greater momentum towards independence:

The momentum that's running now I would say yes [towards independence for Scotland] It's very interesting that for hundreds of years we were integrated into the United Kingdom, and then the sharpest divide happened in 1979. There was a fundamental principle that was eroded during Thatcher's time, and that is fair play. That didn't sit well with the Scottish psyche, she had a misconception of the Scottish dimension. That's not craving special pleading, it's just saying that there are qualities and assets here that need to be tapped in the right way. (Dundee 10)

[Of Scotland becoming independent] I think if you'd asked me that question a year ago I would have been very positive and said not in the foreseeable future, indeed I would have said never, but now it is a greater concern to me. [On the cause of this change] I don't think it is based on a negative thing, though there are certainly racist overtones in what people say and the speeches some people make, and of course the boo ha ha of the football stadium. I would have thought though it was more an assertion of Scottish confidence, and the devolution debate has increased that confidence in the future, and therefore the feeling that we can go it alone. (Dundee 8)

Illustrated above is the link that interviewees had made between devolution (and more particularly possible future independence for Scotland) and the EU, which of course is a major tenet of the Scotland effect as originally set out in the thesis Introduction. However, there is so far an essential element of that part of the effect missing. The following quote from a Dundee interviewee who was an English resident of the city¹³⁷ refers to this missing element:

I think certainly from the Scottish people I've come to know, they do seem to be much more pro-European than perhaps the English are, they see Europe as a way of influencing policies that they cannot influence at Westminster. So they see it as more of an opportunity to influence policy (Dundee 4)

From this interviewee's anecdotal evidence it could be deduced that an important reason for the *Scot factor* is exactly this route to greater influence, which is of course itself one of the primary reasons suggested by the SNP for Scottish independence. However, no interviewees made mention of this as being an influence on their own support (or otherwise) of the EU, nor as an explanation for the generally positive approach of the Scots. Whatever are the causes of the *Scot factor*, the weight of data does not suggest that it is significantly influenced by the calculated and rational belief that Europe represents a route away from domination within the UK by England.

speech 1999, in which he stated that Scotland would be independent by 2007.

¹³⁷ Whilst I did not seek an English resident of Dundee, there was absolutely no basis for rejecting her acceptance of my invitation to take part in this research.

The Scottish identity: The final part of this section deals with the Scottish identity, which the data suggests is not only a further influence in the *Scot factor*, but one which interacts with all of the previously discussed influences.

None of the primary interviews in Dundee progressed very far without interviewees referring to the Scottish identity. This contrasts strikingly with the two English case study regions where there was no such enthusiasm to declare a national identity. Whilst the detail of this Scottish identity is undoubtedly personal to each interviewee, the most dominant theme that was expressed to me (an Englishman of course¹³⁸) was that it is an identity of distinction from the English. Despite this contrast, and the contrast implied in the *Scot factor* in general, there was in fact no greater propensity for Scots interviewees to describe themselves as 'Europeans'.

That every interviewee (excepting of course the English one) described their identity as Scottish is wholly unremarkable, but some of the comments flowing from what in the two English case study regions was an unproblematic line of questioning is indicative of the depth and breadth of influence this identity had on all the issues related to the EU which the interviews touched upon. English interviewees described themselves as British or English, with very few examples of a strong distinction being made between the two (i.e. a interviewees describing their sense of national identity as English were on the whole prepared to accept that British means much the same thing, and vice versa). The majority of Scottish interviewees were very clear that British did not describe their feeling of national identity adequately, or indeed at all.¹³⁹

I perceived a strong sense among many interviewees, not only of the desire to affirm their own sense of national identity, but to go further in explaining it in terms of references to England, Englishness, and in some cases, the English. The most common use of such references was based on experience of travelling abroad, in which

¹³⁸ This was not the only time that I was made aware of interviewees reacting in some way to my apparent identity. I believe that interviewees were careful in some of their comments not to cause offence to me. This also occurred in the South East region where interviewees confirmed that I was a 'southerner' prior to making any unfavourable comments about 'northerners'. This is not a central issue to the research, and I do not believe it to have had any significant effects upon the data collected, but the 'feeling' that I perceived on occasions only confirms the quotation reproduced in the previous chapter from Dingwall (1997): - "interviews are social constructs, created by the self presentation of the respondent".

¹³⁹ Mohan 1999 observed the same phenomenon thus: "seen from England, there might be an equivalence between 'Englishness' and 'Britishness' but from Scotland or Wales, national identities would be defined very differently." (Mohan 1999 p 29)

interviewees had found that foreigners would react more positively to them if they knew they were not English. Thus the use of the word British was potentially confusing, leaving Scottish as the most favoured identity.

However, feelings ran deeper than mere description. The sense of identity being described was not only one of convenience, but a deeply held and intimate part of the interviewees' psyche. This is demonstrated by the following quote, which in the same comment draws both from a remarkable level of historical knowledge (his dates are correct), and rather more sublime personal anecdotes. The significance of both rests not in their objectivity, but in their perceived importance to the interviewee. It serves only to further emphasise the considered importance of identity, to point out that this comment was actually made in response to a question not about identity, but about the Single European Currency:

We are if you like a conquered race, I know that in 1603 the Crowns came together, and that in 1707 the Parliaments came together. They called it a merger but really it was a take over by the country with the largest population. I know that the people down south probably think we are anti- English, but what it is really is that we're anti-Englishness. You know with the football on the telly it's all English and then there's a little bit of Scottish on at the end, that sort of thing really rankles with the Scots. [...] I went to Wembley in 1977 and had a lot of fun, but it's almost like a min-war with all the historical stuff that goes on. Some of my countrymen are quite mindless at times. (Dundee 9)¹⁴⁰

Beyond the finding emerging from this data that the Scottish identity was so important to the interviewees, and that it effectively coloured the interpretation of issues related to the EU, there is also grounded in the data the question of whether the racist element of this identity (i.e. antipathy towards the racial group that is the English) is actually increasing in line with the belief that Scotland is on the road to independence. The English interviewee made the following observation, which though far the most forthright on the issue of increasing racism as part of the Scottish identity, does share congruence with others' observations.

There is an intense hatred of the English. Nationalism in Scotland has increased dramatically in the last few months. After the devolved parliament it's quite noticeable now. I mean it was there before but now people are very nationalistic. (Dundee 4)

¹⁴⁰ The interviewee is referring here to the last of the annual home international 'friendly's' between England and Scotland. The Scottish supporters famously swung on the England cross bar causing it to break in half. The traditional event has never occurred since due to fears over escalating vandalism and violence.

Others accepted that there are indeed unsavoury elements to some people's sense of Scottish identity, that there is racism, and that it is primarily directed at the English. However, the data do not support what the above interviewee claims herself to have observed. One telling comment, which might provide a clearly thought out explanation for the increased newsworthiness of anti-English racism in Scotland is shown in the section of transcript reproduced below. In the discussion from which this quote is taken the interviewee was claiming that as Scotland gained its own parliament, it had become more aware of its own identity, and as such there was a heightened interest in all related issues, including racism:

M.B.: So you don't have to be a Scottish Nationalist to be a true Scot?

Interviewee: No, it rather helps if you're not, it makes you more broad minded.

[Slightly later in the discussion]

M.B.: So do you think that anti-English feeling is on the increase?

Interviewee: I have an idea it's not increasing, it's just better publicised, especially with the devolved parliament coming. There's more opportunity for it, as more teenagers become anti-English activists or supporters of Settler Watch.

M.B.: Settler Watch?

Interviewee: You'll find very few intellectuals in the Settler Watch movement. The SNP are distancing themselves from it now, but it's [i.e. distancing themselves] certainly not something they have done in the recent past. (Dundee 3)¹⁴¹

Conclusion: From the data collected in this research it appears that there is a uniquely Scottish approach to the EU. The Scots are believed by interviewees to be more positively disposed to the EU than their fellow Britons in England. The evidence presented above supports this assumption, but cannot prove it.

Though various accounts were put forward as to the reasons for this differing approach, the one account that I had expected to find, that is that Scots saw Europe as a facilitator of increased independence from England was not prominent in the data.

There is however a theme running through all of the Scottish interviews, and that is that issues of national and international importance such as those involved in this research were understood and interpreted through the 'visor' of the Scottish national identity.

¹⁴¹ This interviewee was not the only one to make reference to this movement, which is associated with violence and intimidation towards English residents in Scotland. The targeting of English residents by this group touches upon the two distinctive types of nationalism that exist in Scotland. Settler Watch's version of nationalism shares a definition (though little else), with The Saltier Society in that it is focused upon 'cultural nationalism' (i.e. a concern with language, arts and identity). Conversely the SNP is associated (unsurprisingly for a political party) with political nationalism. The SNP would recognise any resident of Scotland (including the interviewee quoted above, Dundee 4), as a Scot; the Saltier Society clearly would not.

This identity itself appears, from the data collected in these interviews, to have as one of its dominant concepts a central distinction between Scottishness and Englishness.

In sum, the Scottish identity appears to have taken precedence over other factors in determining how the interviewees in this case study region interpreted issues related to European integration. Whether or not an issue was interpreted in a positive or negative way, though not determined, was certainly influenced, by the interviewees' own sense of national identity. There was very much a *Scotland effect* albeit different in character to that anticipated.

South East England: Canterbury and the *proximity effect*

The main reason for selecting this case study area in the South East had been due not to its proximity *per se* but the social effects that proximity was expected to have created. Easy travel to the continent, the possibility of working in France, and the very high numbers of foreign tourists were all the direct results of proximity. I wanted to assess what the indirect effects of this were. In terms of the democratic deficit, there were two main possibilities. The first was that the 'closer' relationship to the single market might have increased the sense of inclusive citizenship, and the second that there might be more of a sense of emotional attachment in this region. Both of these factors, it was suspected could have fed into feeling 'European'. In essence then, this case was based around the search for the elusive European identity.

The operationalisation of this search was based in the first instance around the question (which was asked in all case study regions) 'Do you think that the EU has affected you personally at all?' The responses in this region were particularly interesting.

Taking it personally: In answer to the above question half of the interviewees reported that the EU had had such an effect. Though in numerical terms this is interesting, it is not so much the numbers, but more the detail of the claims themselves that is indicative of a consistent trend. Of those believing themselves to have been personally 'reached' by the EU, only one in fact actually had, the others rather reinterpreting the question. The interviewee who had (by my definition) been personally affected explains this effect below:

We've lived in Italy for four years on a government posting. This changed my views on all manner of things. [...] As a family it [the EU] has affected us a lot, because I've worked there and we go there regularly. Its definitely had all manner of effects on us all. Culturally, socially and educationally especially for my son, yes all manner of ways. (Canterbury 13)

In all the other cases, the examples interviewees provided, were personal inasmuch as they 'took them personally', but turned out on further questioning not to have had any actual direct affect on those individuals. The claimed personal affects included for example the impact of French lorry drivers protesting against EU regulations and blockading the roads (which in itself would have fitted with my intended definition provided the interviewees mentioning this had had some personal or professional involvement; none did), the EU wide ban on exports of British beef (again, there were no livestock farmers in my sample group), and the general effects on the area of tourism and the single market (these two are returned to in greater detail below).

The above discussion shows that there was a tendency in this case study area for interviewees to report abstract and impersonal effects of the EU as if they had indeed affected them personally. However, far from dismissing this data as the result of a misunderstanding, it is actually most illuminating. What was in fact happening here is that interviewees were unwittingly showing that they 'felt' personally connected to these issues, though their real effects were not directly personal. This contrasts with the other cases where there was no such tendency apparent in the data. What these interviewees were in fact doing is best described as 'taking these issues personally'.

This increased feeling of connection is further demonstrated in responses given at many stages throughout the interviews. Though the data do not show that interviewees in the South East to have been more knowledgeable about the EU, nor even to be any more confident in what knowledge they did have, what is highly significant is the specificity of the comments that were made. In the North East and central Scotland almost all of the discussion of the benefits or otherwise of the EU tended towards the national, international, and highly abstract level. In almost all cases it was through my own initiation that the discussion (briefly) focused on the regional scale. Contrastingly in the South East case the comments were more experientially based, which made them not only more personal, but also more firmly held, and, importantly, more 'local'. While at the most general level there was most indifference in the North East, most support in

central Scotland, the South East certainly produced the most strongly held and clearly thought out opinions on particular issues.

The two main areas of experience that interviewees related as being relevant to the EU during my general questioning were the relative ease with which they were able to purchase reduced duty products from continental Europe, and the effects of tourism. Though wholly unsurprising in themselves, both having been included in my original formulation of the *proximity effect*, the strength of feeling producing the responses, and in particular their direction was somewhat unexpected.

Though there was a general acknowledgement of the obvious opportunity to buy 'cheap fags and booze' as most interviewees put it, none claimed, nor in fact even accepted, that this had made them feel any more favourable to the EU than they otherwise did. Though this is returned to later, several interviewees were very insistent on this point that I understand that they meant to convey a difference between being close to continental Europe, and being close to the EU. This potential benefit seemed at best to be taken for granted, and at worst, as in the case of the interviewee quoted below, to be of some potential detriment to the region itself:

Well we are closer, and we can get on a boat and be there you know, and a lot of people do. But the pubs here have suffered and the local brewery is fighting the cause, their local pubs have really suffered. There's all the smuggling going on as well of course.
(Canterbury 4)

Broadening this issue to include the other potential benefits offered by the single market to people in this region, in particular the opportunity to live and/or work in another country, only one interviewee (i.e. Canterbury 13 quoted above) expressed any interest in this.¹⁴² Proximity to continental Europe seemed to have no effect whatsoever in raising the profile of this issue, and certainly there was no discernible enthusiasm for it.

It was however the issue of tourism which elicited the most impassioned and animated comments. On the whole the comments were mostly negative, and appeared to focus upon the apparently more superficially irritating effects of having large numbers of

¹⁴² This case study specific finding actually appears to fit with the data from the other cases. Across the entire database from all the interviews there were very few expressions of interest in the opportunities to live and work in another member state of the EU, nor in any of the other potential benefits offered by the single market. This fits closely with the critique of the *political approach* to EU citizenship that is developed in Chapter 1.

'foreigners' in a relatively small city. Several spoke about the large 'gangs' of poorly supervised French children littering the streets and stealing goods from shops.

Whilst this might seem somewhat trivial, the point is that it is not. To these interviewees this was one of the foremost issues concerning them about European integration. If they were serious considerations to the interviewees, and they were, then they were serious to this research. What was particularly interesting though about the comments on tourism, is that like so much else in the primary interviews, they were reflective of the interviewees' general approach. The following quotes show a range of responses to the same facts, if not coloured by, then certainly consistent with differing general approaches:

I think we're insular in the sense, you know that 'we're an island', but I think that's all going because you see I look out of this window every day and there's droves of people from the continent coming just for the day trip and they all seem to be quite happy to come here. All kinds you know little children, old people [...] Everything's getting integrated. (Canterbury 7)¹⁴³

There is an attitude I think that people, as far as Canterbury is concerned, you get a lot of tourists, but the majority seem to be French, and they don't..... Particularly if they're young, they're not spending an awful lot of money. It's an attitude that people are not always well behaved, you sometimes see about 80 of them clogging up the streets and the feeling is frequently 'God those bloody French! Erm.

It's one of those strange things that the nearer you get to some people on the continent, the less actually you like them, and the less you want to have to do with them [...] there is a cynical viewpoint - yes we like the cheap wine but it's a pity about the people (Canterbury 1).

This last example below is taken from a interviewee who declared himself to be very much an opponent of the EU (see footnote), indeed he had written to me prior to the interview checking whether I should still be interested in his views in consideration of the fact that he had fought in the Second World War, and retains an almost phobic antipathy towards Germany. His entire outlook on the EU was coloured by the view that Germany seemed to him to have secured the ascendancy in Europe which rendered his efforts, and those of his generation, worthless. Though apparently not illiberal in many

¹⁴³ This interviewee was in fact the first of two in this case study region who had informed me in advance that their views were very heavily influenced by the Second World War (see footnote below). This particular interviewee had been a Conscientious Objector, and had worked for peace ever since, travelling widely with various relief organisations. His views on the EU were dominated by his belief that it had helped the cause of peace in Europe, and as such justified his unequivocal support.

other respects, the comment about the lack of English spoken was to this interviewee a heartfelt expression not of anger, but rather of considerable sadness¹⁴⁴:

We do see a lot of visitors from France and Germany. We rather resent the youngsters that come, I bet you've heard that. [Mentions litter and theft] Really it is extraordinary. In the summertime in the streets, there is sometimes no English spoken at all. This integration is something that is happening everywhere (Canterbury 10)

One thing that I was able to put to the interviewees in this the last of the three case study areas that I visited was that the response to my initial letter had been so much greater in this region than the other two (See Chapter 2). This allowed me to inquire as to whether they had any thoughts as to why that might be. Though the data show there to be a small minority of interviewees who focused their explanation on the fact that the region was generally the more affluent of the three, which can, they claimed, be linked with a generally more politically and aware culture,¹⁴⁵ the bulk of interviewees felt that the issue was more simplistically linked with proximity.

Several mentioned the fact that you can see France from the coast, as if to express their exasperation at how obvious it was that the issue of Europe would generally enjoy a higher profile, which itself led to the greater response.¹⁴⁶ From the range of interviewees I met in all areas, I would have to come down on the side of this the more simplistic reasoning. The data referred to above, as well as the remaining bulk of the transcript data points throughout to proximity, and rarely to any broad social differences between the people in the South East of England compared with other regions. A further reason for the support of the more simplistic explanation is linked with the finding that there was no greater propensity on the part of interviewees in this region to express a feeling of being European.

¹⁴⁴ This particular interviewee was undoubtedly one of the most interesting and endearing that I met during the research. He felt the need to excuse his views on several occasions, putting them down to his age, and almost seemed to be embarrassed to express them to a person 50 years his junior. He mentioned that 'a German family' (typically referring to the family in terms of their 'Germanness'), had moved into his neighbourhood, and that he got on alright but could never mention the war, even though the man of the house would not even have been born then.

¹⁴⁵ The issue of education came up in other contexts with certain interviewees apparently believing that the University had influenced the culture of the region. Whilst this might be true, it is also likely to have influenced the other two cases similarly, as each is home to a prominent University.

¹⁴⁶ This amounts to the same thing as the now infamous Americanism "it's the economy stupid". Some interviewees saw the simplicity of the reason behind the greater response so clearly that they almost couldn't believe I was even asking them about it.

One final detail emergent from the interview data is that of a distinction that was made by a number of interviewees between the issue of 'Europe' as they saw it, and the issue of the EU. This is in fact based on the history of the region and its links with Europe, and as such shares much with the historical approach of several of the Scots interviewees. However, the detail is unique to the region, and refers to the fact that proximity has been a factor in attitudes towards 'Europe' for far longer than it has been one in attitudes towards the EU, and the effect cannot be assumed to have been the same. I was aware on occasions of some irritation on the part of the interviewee that the focus of my questioning seemed to them to link issues such as being European, or travelling around Europe to the EU, when they saw the EU as having nothing to do with such things. In the case of the quote reproduced below the interviewee was using her long standing local knowledge to explain that Anglo French co-operation is nothing new, and that the effect of the EU on such has actually been negative:

Interviewee: Well we've been twinned with towns in France since long before the Common market came along. In fact I think things like this tend to worsen Anglo-French relations because they used to be quite good, but when Brussels gets involved people think they're being told what to do and they get annoyed by it, like cheddar cheese....

M.B.: Cheddar Cheese?

Interviewee: Yes because I mean they said Cheddar cheese couldn't be a registered cheese but then some of the French ones are, so that hasn't helped relations. (Canterbury 12)

Conclusion: The evidence presented here suggests that, based on the data from the primary interviews, the proximity effect can be supported; though as with the *Scotland effect*, not in quite the way originally postulated. The South East's geographical proximity to continental Europe seems to have affected interviewees' outlook on the issue of European integration in varied ways.

The most significant single effect was the tendency to 'take things personally'. Here it has been shown that abstract and non-personal effects of the EU tended to be regarded by a significant number of interviewees as personal (and in several cases, very significant) because of the connection that interviewees feel to the continent, but not necessarily the EU. This does not however directly translate into feelings of belonging, which it was expected might be suggested by a certain 'Europeanness' in interviewees identity, or in higher levels of general support for the EU. In fact connectedness tended

only to increase the strength of feeling; in whichever direction that happened to be. 'Connectedness' yes; 'belongingness' no.

Whilst interviewees acknowledged the potential benefits that those in their region enjoy from the single market, they appeared to be relatively uninterested in them. The most common as well as the most forthright views about the EU and its relation to the region were expressed in regard to tourism, where apparently minor irritations were seen to be very important to the interviewees sufficiently concerned to mention them. Further, the effects of tourism were placed in the context of their wider views, and they appeared to reinforce either the positive or negative, depending upon which they were interpreted within.

Overall, interviewees accepted the inescapability of the EU (and Europe more generally) enjoying a high profile in this region, which is best summed up by the comment, 'you can see it from here'.

In sum: the geography of the deficit

The evidence presented above clearly suggests that based on the findings of this research, the geography of the democratic deficit is dominated by the national scale. In detail, it has been shown that interviewees tended to discuss almost all issues related to the EU in terms of the national context. Essentially, the key aspects of the deficit set out in Chapter 1, which were relevant to the interviews, (i.e. levels of knowledge and understanding, sources of information, engagement with political parties, and both the 'political' and 'identity' aspects of citizenship), were understood almost entirely at the national rather than the regional scale. Further, it has been reported that the 'general approach' of interviewees was largely deterministic of their opinion on a whole range of issues, and that again, the regional scale appeared to have little or nothing to do (in most cases), with the formation of this approach.

However, this finding is not to deny that there was any regional variation in the deficit, rather it is to acknowledge that the differences between individual interviewees were more significant than the differences consistently found between the case study regions.

This acknowledgement is only possible because of the multi-level approach taken to the 'scale problem' (Taylor 1984) adopted throughout this research. Having declared there to be knowledge gap at the level of the region in the area of the democratic deficit, it might have been all too easy, especially at the stage of data analysis, to only see the differences between regions.¹⁴⁷ Though I devoted some considerable space earlier in the thesis to explaining how I was not 'empty headed' in analysing these data, and that therefore I was inevitably focused at the regional scale, to have somehow missed the fact that the national scale was primary would have been a major weakness in validity. I feel that this overall finding shares some congruence with the approach taken by Keating (1998) in his work on regional geography in the EU. As mentioned earlier he is prepared to resist what he admits is a temptation; to hype up the scale of his chosen focus. Regions are important, and in many cases are becoming more so, but it is not a universal and even process. Just because some regions have high levels of 'difference' from the state of which they are part, does not mean that all do. Generally, the region that showed the highest level of 'difference' in this research was that of central Scotland,¹⁴⁸ (which considering that it met all but one of the criteria set out by Keating (1998) for likely regional distinctiveness (see thesis Introduction) is not altogether surprising), but that Scotland can be claimed by this research as the *most different* is of course a direct result of the comparative case study approach.

On the differences between the case study regions, and to return the focus to the *effects* originally being assessed; there was found not to be a prevailing sense of gratitude for the financial assistance provided by the EU in the North East of England. Though initially this appeared to be based on ignorance of the funding itself, it turned out to be more complex than this. It was found to be the case that EU funding was not something that people would feel grateful about because there is a strong sentiment of entitlement associated with it. This persisted even in the context of the widespread acknowledgement that the EU might actually have dealt with issues of regional funding

¹⁴⁷ Especially in this situation, because I might have to admit that everyone else was right and that the democratic deficit should be studied at the national scale!

¹⁴⁸ It bears repetition here that in this case, the region has been adjusted to the level of the nation. Whilst I cannot claim this case to represent the whole of Scotland, this change is grounded in the data. Throughout the interviews the weighting of focus was very much Scotland rather than central Scotland. This is entirely compatible with the original research aims though, and the investigation of the Scotland effect in particular because the main rationale for choosing this region was that it was expected to exemplify factors which were applicable to much of Scotland. It should also be noted in this context that I was concerned primarily with a 'Scotland effect; not a 'central Scotland' effect.

in a more fair way than the UK government. Interestingly this finding was actually consistent across all cases.

There was found to be a uniquely Scottish outlook on the EU, but not a uniquely regional one (i.e. central Scotland), and the Scottish identity was the most significant factor in this. It was found that the Scottish identity was more important than the anticipated *effect* that Scots might view the EU more favourably because it represented a potential route to independence. The analogy was used that issues related to the EU were interpreted through a 'visor' of the Scottish identity that, though not consistently determinant of the direction of general approaches, was considered by interviewees to be the context in which their opinions should be placed. Identity was not a significant factor in the other cases.

There was found to be some consistent influence on the outlook of the interviewees in the South East of England based on the region's proximity to continental Europe. However, this influence was complex, and was found not to be determined by proximity *per se*, but rather by the factor of proximity exaggerating the strength of feelings, which in turn were largely consistent with individual interviewees general approaches. To use a similar analogy to that used above, in the South East the visor of the general approach was used through which to view matters directly relating to proximity (rather than the other way around as had been anticipated).

Having established the relative priority of national compared with regional factors in the geography of the deficit; the research was set to move into its second stage. As the most significant findings from the primary stage were that general approaches were dominant over opinions, and that issues related to information were universally concerning, the second stage was clearly going to focus on these areas. In order that it be most effective, it was designed responsively. The findings from the primary stage that were most influential in the detailed preparation of the secondary stage are reported below.

Considerations in preparing the secondary stage

The most important aspect of the secondary stage was always going to be to take the deliberation process as far as possible. Thus it was important to inform as much as

possible, whilst also providing at the very least some sort of challenge to interviewees general approaches. The detail of what finally ended up in the information pack was discussed in Chapter 2, but this is the most appropriate point to set out the findings from the primary stage of the research which were so influential in that selection.

The section is divided into two; the first part reflects the general finding that interviewees expected 'someone' to have informed them about the EU. They felt that if they were expected to be more involved in decisions in the future, then the least 'someone' could do was to provide the necessary information. The second part reports the main findings about how it was suggested this might be done. It must be stated here that by no means all interviewees did comment on how they should be informed. The findings here are thus representative of only those who took it upon themselves to make suggestions.

'They' should inform me! Only a small minority of interviewees had made any particular effort to inform themselves about the EU, the others seeing themselves as passive recipients of what (limited) information they had gleaned. This of course fits closely with the main sources of that information being the television and press, which are consumed primarily for reasons other than specifically to gain information about the EU. There were no examples of interviewees having any awareness that their local library (and their local University library) offered free information leaflets produced by the European Commission. Whilst this in itself is not particularly illuminating, interviewees' responses on being told about this opportunity were in many cases indicative of a certain passivity. The quotes below encapsulate this contradictory tendency exhibited by the majority of interviewees to state that they were ill informed, that they felt that they (and others) should become better informed, but at the same time doubted the likelihood of their actually pursuing this aim with any great vigour:

It would be a lot better for me to be able to sit here and answer you properly and be able to say it because I understand enough about it, as opposed to 'I'm afraid I can't because no one has ever told me'. But I have to say though I have never bothered to go and find it because really I'm not that interested. (Canterbury 3)

M.B: Do you think that if more information was available you'd read it?

Interviewee: Well that would depend, I mean I wouldn't purposefully ignore it.

M.B: Well the University library here has stocks of leaflets produced by the European Commission which are informative, about all the things we have talked about, did you know that?

Interviewee: I didn't know that no?

M.B: Would you call in to pick some up, now that you know its there?

Interviewee: No I wouldn't. If they want me to know then they can send the stuff to me.
(Dundee 6)

M.B: So you're saying that in the European elections you know too little about them because the information isn't available, or you don't make use of it because you're not interested enough?

Interviewee: No, I'm saying it's not available because I've said I am interested enough.

M.B: Did you know that information is available from the European Commission in the University library?

Interviewee: No I didn't, but anyway it should be the candidates that bring that information to us. (Durham 4)

In these quotes the interviewees expected the information to be told, sent and brought to them respectively (another interviewee put it thus: "they ought to thrust it [information] at us a bit more", Canterbury 9). Thus in each example it was seen as the job of somebody: unknown in the first example, the 'EU' itself in the second, and prospective MEP's in the third, to do the informing, and the interviewees themselves would passively become informed as a result¹⁴⁹.

It is worthy of reiterating the point here that information on the EU was perceived differently to information about the UK, in the sense that by whatever means interviewees informed themselves about the UK, they were on the whole satisfied with the outcome. Whilst it is quite possibly the case that interviewees' actual levels of knowledge about the UK were similar to those about the EU, the crucial factor here is that, in most cases, their perceived level of knowledge was significantly different. Thus the 'information deficit' was 'problematicised' by the interviewees themselves as 'relative' to their more comfortable perception of knowledge about the UK. Beyond this 'problematicisation' and the emerging contradictory approaches outlined above, the database also presents a number of proposed solutions. It is to these that this section now turns.

How they should do it: How 'they' should do it effectively became how 'I' should do it, and as such this section provides much of the grounding for the 'nitty gritty' of the design of the secondary stage of the research.

¹⁴⁹ There is an obvious link here with the quote reproduced from Schumpeter in Chapter 1 of this thesis. Here an interpretation of the above quotes could be as reflecting the passive citizen, effectively remaining ignorant despite the modern day equivalents of Schumpeter's 'lectures, classes and discussion groups' (1976). The complex relationship between citizens, information and democracy is of course taken up in detail later in the thesis (where Schumpeter's pessimism is challenged by the results of the secondary

Unsurprisingly the most popular media by which interviewees felt they would receive information about the EU was the television, in fact, rather than the news, which many felt was too focused upon particular issues and events, a documentary was favoured. However, even here one subject declared that despite her intention to become better informed, the matter would not be so simple as broadcasting an informative documentary:

It's [Europe] a bit of a turn off though really isn't it? There would always be something on the other side that you would want to watch. (Durham 9)

Considering the contradiction revealed in the data (discussed above) between the desire to become informed, and the lack of effort expended in so doing, I strongly suspect that this interviewee would not be alone in taking such an approach.

The second most popular media by which interviewees suggested information might effectively reach them was through the post. Most were well used to receiving, and promptly dealing with 'junk mail', but did suggest that information about the EU would not be treated in the same way. From the overall database it is possible to pick out two essential elements which would render posted information about the EU worthy of the interviewees' consideration.

The most important criterion was that the information should be politically non-partisan. Indeed one of the strongest criticisms of the information that interviewees had received was that it was intended to be politically persuasive. The following quote captures the view of many interviewees:

Yes I would like it to come through the door. Provided it is in a balanced form though. This is where when you have the elections you get screeds of stuff through the door and it's so hopelessly biased actually. I think the issues tend to get a bit clouded by it. (Canterbury 1)

Developing this point, the data from these primary interviews do not suggest that interviewees had any particular preferred source for this posted information. Rather the implication is only negative. That is they were certain that they did not want the information to come from political parties, but very few offered any positive suggestion as to what source they should prefer. This could however have simply been

the result of their ignorance regarding potential sources. A small number of interviewees did suggest that the information should have an 'official' status, indicated by a logo, which would inspire confidence that it was 'information' rather than 'propaganda' (though as is reported in the following chapter, this view was far from universally accepted in the event)

Second was the criterion that the information should be appropriate, both in terms of its level and format. Unsurprisingly, considering that most interviewees felt themselves to be ill informed, there was concern that any information would be pitched at too high a level. The most popular approach to the format was something along the lines of a general information leaflet explaining the background to the major issues,¹⁵⁰ followed up by regular information leaflets. The following quote captures the apparent rationale behind this 'regularity' approach, as most interviewees would be used to receiving information from local government in the format referred to here:

Every month we get a newsletter from the Parish Church, If on a quarterly basis you had some information publication, not some party political propaganda, that would be useful. Set information out and let me make my mind up. Like when the gas bill comes through, you'd know it was time to be getting your information publication. It might take two or three years, but once you got into the cycle of expecting that information, you know, if it didn't come you'd be aware of it. (Canterbury 3)

Of course the secondary stage was not going to be 'all things to all people', but it was designed with comments such as those above in mind.

There remains however one media of receiving information which was referred to by several interviewees. That in fact was the process of talking to me¹⁵¹ during the interviews themselves. In keeping with the intended methodology of *active interviewing* set out in Chapter 2, not only was I providing information by means of the stimulus cards and the background to particular questions, but also I was answering questions. The following two quotes are used to bring the substantive part of this chapter to a close, and to provide something of a lead in to Chapter 4. In so doing, they hint at the potential importance of the process of deliberation in engaging with,

¹⁵⁰ It was in essence this background which interviewees felt was needed first. Then with this in place they generally felt that they could make greater use of the reporting of news stories related to the EU, which currently many felt 'went over their heads'

¹⁵¹ I am not claiming any undue status here. The data do suggest that very few interviewees had actually discussed the issues included in the interviews with anyone else. As such there is something of an 'exclusivity' bonus!

learning about, and gaining confidence in discussing issues related to the EU. Matters taken up in detail later.

M.B: So you would be happy to see more information about Europe at election times?

Interviewee: Well yes, partly as a result of this conversation, because you've told me a lot of things that I feel I ought to have known, and I thank you for that very much.

M.B: so would it be fair to say that you feel a bit more involved in it all now?

Interviewee: Oh yes indeed. And you would have thought I ought to have done as well.
(Canterbury 10)

To be honest when I agreed to do this and when I came in here tonight it was in my mind that I wouldn't be able to say two words, and yet I've not stopped talking about it.
(Durham 11)

Having explained the prominence of the national scale in interviewees' experience of the democratic deficit, whilst at the same time highlighting the importance of the regional aspects, the chapter has also presented detailed evidence and analysis pertaining to the *case effects*, as set out earlier in the thesis. By concluding with the findings from the primary stage of the research which were most relevant to the process of engaging interviewees in the secondary stage, the thesis is now ideally placed to present the data from that secondary stage throughout the next chapter.

Chapter 4

The Secondary Stage: Information and Deliberation

Chapter overview

This chapter takes up the remaining two major themes of this research, that of the effects of new information, and the effects of the deliberative process itself. Ultimately this leads to an assessment of the potential for deliberative democracy contributing to filling particular aspects of the democratic deficit.

The processes of providing new information, and deliberating on issues around that information are in fact highly inter-related, and in the practical context of this research, were inseparable. However, in theoretical terms, the two are potentially distinct processes, and it is in order that this research be able to assess the value of each independently that they are discussed separately here. The distinction made here then is an arbitrary one, the justification for which will be seen throughout the chapter as inherent in the use to which the analysis is put.

Though it was intended from the start to provide new information to interviewees, and then to engage in extensive deliberation around it, it was not until the completion of the primary interview data analysis that the real importance of information to the democratic deficit was fully appreciated. That is, it was at this stage that what had been a research plan based upon secondary data from a variety of sources, became very much rooted in the primary data collected as part of this research project. The detail of the secondary stage of the research was thus modified in order to fit the key findings emerging from the primary stage, which had the effect of boosting very considerably the

emphasis placed on information. The relative priority given to analysing the informing process compared with the analysis of the deliberative process of which it was part is reflected throughout the Chapter.

The secondary stage was designed specifically to provide the type of information that interviewees had suggested would be most effective, and also to provide a range of information that would both challenge and support interviewees' 'general approaches'. For simplicity, the interviews broadly followed the ordering of the pack contents (i.e. items 1- 12), but the reporting of the data here is driven by the priority to assess the effects of information, media and content, and so need not slavishly follow the pack chronology.

In terms of deliberative processes, in particular the way this secondary stage was designed to facilitate the evaluation of their potential application to filling the deficit, the very methods used at all stages were deliberative in character. Thus, this evaluation might appear a by-product, but if that is the case, that is testament only to how effectively the methodological selectivity was thought through earlier on. The secondary stage (and to a lesser degree, the primary stage) was based around the discussion of opinions and attitudes, and their being subject to challenge, first by the information provided, and secondly by myself in the role as '*active interviewer*'. In this way it effectively represented an example of the application of the key techniques associated with deliberative democracy. Despite major adaptation from the original plan¹⁵² (see Chapter 2), the following objectives were achieved:

- The interviewees had already 'laundered' (see Chapter 1) their ideas in public (some for the first time), during the primary interviews.
- New information had been provided, which in conjunction with a particular interviewing technique had challenged the original views.

¹⁵² In particular of course the fact that, as set out earlier, the research was not able to involve the participants in 'group' deliberation. However, as is explained later in this chapter, this should be seen as an advanced stage in any deliberative process, one that this research had effectively prepared the participants for, but was unable in itself to reach.

- The interviewees were then participating in further public deliberation, which in effect was revealing the extent of any revision in 'substantive arguments' (Bohman 1996 p.101).

The chapter begins with an analysis of the effects of new information. It explains that the provision of such information is a highly complex issue, with the media¹⁵³ of information presentation being very important in terms of efficacy. Further, the chapter reports how the content of the information itself was interpreted very much through the 'general approaches' of the interviewees, which had been so dominant during the primary stage of the research. At this point some important recommendations which the research is able to make to European Commission (in its role as the publisher of much of the information used in the research) are presented. To draw to an end the section dealing with the specific effects of information provision, the chapter presents the analysis of data relating to any changes of opinion or attitude. Here it is shown that whilst there was little significant alteration in the direction of such (i.e. from positive to negative and vice versa) there had been changes.

The second major part of the chapter presents the analysis of data relating to the effects of the deliberative process as a whole. Here it is explained how the interviewees became significantly more engaged with debates about the issues involved in the research. This was as a direct result of the particular methodology used. The section goes on to examine the related theme of increased confidence felt by interviewees in their own views. This had the effect of strengthening their conviction that their own views were legitimate, whilst at the same time allowing an equal respect for opposing views. The issue of agreement/disagreement is dealt with by reference to the theoretical models of deliberative democracy set out in Chapter 1. It is asserted that the research has shown great potential for the wider application of these techniques, provided great care is taken with particular aspects of practical deliberation. The implications of these potential applications is then taken up in the thesis conclusion which follows on from this chapter.

¹⁵³ 'Media' from the Latin *Medius* (middle) is used here interchangeably with format. Thus it refers to the

Information

In terms specifically of the provision of new information there was a simplistic but very important logic at play in the design of this secondary stage of the research. This logic is rooted in the classic works on the relationships between participation and education of Rousseau and Mill which were referred to earlier in the thesis, as well as the central claims made for deliberative democracy. Clearly it is also based on the evidence emerging from the primary stage of the research pointing to the fundamental importance of the information deficit. This logic can be summarised thus:

If citizens of the EU [including the interviewees in this research] were better informed about the EU's reason for existence, its history, its functioning, and the rationale behind its policies and activities, then they would be more likely to get involved in its activities. This involvement can be expected to manifest itself through a greater enthusiasm for debating the issues, along with an enhanced ability to engage fully with these debates. There might also be an increased commitment to engage with more formal routes to participation such as voting in European elections. There should also be some tendency towards a consensus of opinions.

The practicalities of this logic mainly relate to the assumption that following the informing of the citizens, they might see, perhaps for the first time, what the political system is able to offer them (or alternatively, is denying them), and henceforth demand ever greater and more meaningful ways to participate. In this way the virtuous circle of participation would be initiated. As explained in Chapter 2, this intention to partially fill the information deficit placed an onus upon me, the researcher, to devise an effective means of 'transmission'. This of course was the role of the information pack and the associated interviews.

The above description is far from being a purely theoretical abstraction. It is in fact very much grounded in the comments of many of the interviewees involved in the primary stage of this research. Beyond this practical grounding, it is also the fundamental basis of the EU's extensive public information policy. This policy, the UK variation of which was discussed earlier in the thesis, is based upon informing the public, and expecting many of the problems related to the deficit to be, at least in part, ameliorated as a result.

Though this goes beyond the above logic in implying a directional change in opinion, there is evidence of countries whose populations are generally more informed about the EU, being more inclined to participate, and are also generally more inclined, to show higher levels of support.¹⁵⁴

Ultimately, the major reason for the discussion of the data analysis related to information here, is to interrogate this supposed relationship, and to critically assess the application of the above logic to the interviewees involved in this research.

The Information Pack and informing: Without exception all interviewees were informed by the pack and were indeed pleased with this outcome. On the whole the interviewees gave the pack due consideration, for which of course I was very grateful. One interviewee went further than others did, making something of an extraordinary effort:

Interviewee: Well by the time I picked up number 4 [a reference to the Commission's booklet entitled 'A Guide to Economic and Monetary Union'] I was at the end of my first session and I really couldn't stand anymore. I had another go at it at the start of my second session. I know it's only a little book but it still took me some time to understand all the arguments that in it. [...] When I watched it [i.e. the video] for the third time... (*Secondary, Canterbury 3*)

Not only is it something of a relief that they felt they had been informed (considering the intended purpose of the 'Information Pack'), but it was also particularly rewarding considering that not all interviewees selected for the second phase were overtly motivated to become better informed. This point justifies some further brief explanation.

Though, as referred to earlier, there was a universal acknowledgement of the 'information deficit', this did not translate in all cases into a personal commitment to become better informed. In fact, the secondary group included three interviewees who earlier had declared themselves to be sufficiently well informed. These interviewees knew that the secondary phase of the research would involve the provision of new

¹⁵⁴ This of course is in comparison with the UK, which as suggested earlier in the thesis, has a population relatively ill informed, disinclined to participate, and disinclined to express support for the EU. However, these relationships might be mere correlations, and it would be wholly wrong to imply causation based solely upon this sort of evidence. That is, those well informed populations might know more about the EU because they, for some reason already feel more a part of it, and participate in it more, rather than the other way around. Likewise the UK population might have remained relatively ignorant for reasons completely unrelated to participation or support.

information, but telephone discussions during the selection process had revealed their motivation to be based on the opportunity for further discussion rather than the opportunity to become better informed. This, I strongly believe is an endorsement of my selection of the 'active interviewing' methodology, coupled with my increasing skill in applying the techniques involved.

The following quote typifies the eventual reaction of those having claimed to be 'well enough informed':

Having looked through all of this stuff I'm not so sure now about how well informed I actually was. (Secondary, Canterbury 13)

Accepting that the pack had achieved success at informing all interviewees, the process of their becoming informed was far from being a simplistic one.

Borrowing from the reference to the discipline of media studies made in Chapter 1, the interviewees constituted a highly 'active audience' in terms of their response to the Information Pack. It was the extent of this response that provided the richness of data reported below.

Whilst it was always intended there would be some emergent data relating to favoured formats and media of presentation, the depth and level of insight here was wholly unanticipated. This section presents a flavour of this insight, culminating in brief recommendations to the European Commission¹⁵⁵ as to how their own publication strategies might be improved.

The reporting of reactions to the various elements of the Information Pack can essentially be divided into two levels of focus. Not only is this compatible with the way most interviewees reported their reactions, but it also facilitates a helpful abstraction of the detail. The first level of focus is on how the interviewees interacted with the various media used in the pack, the second level is related to the actual technical content within those various media.

¹⁵⁵ It is not possible here to do full justice to the database that exists pertinent to the design, content and distribution of publicity materials produced by the EU. Resultantly, it is hoped that a separate, forthcoming paper will develop a fuller discussion of these data.

Dealing with the first, and more general level of focus, the pattern that emerged was essentially that certain media are more effective at informing than others, and that the content is not significantly important in this distinction. Some media just appear from the data to be better than others!¹⁵⁶

The winning formats: Of all the varied formats of information presentation contained in the pack, there are three that stand out as having been the most impactful upon the interviewees. That these three are the 'snippet', the 'short quotation' and the 'video' respectively is not based only on a quantitative analysis of the number of positive comments about their impact, but also on a qualitative analysis of the 'strength' of such comments.

Taking the first of these, it was rather a surprise that when discussing the 'Europe Today' booklet, the 'What exactly is Europe?' and the official EU map,¹⁵⁷ the majority of comments referred not to the bulk of information within them (and these three were among the more information dense elements of the pack), but to the small highlighted boxes of supplementary information which were set out outside of the main text area (i.e. the 'snippets'). Asking as they did the question 'Did you know that...?' or in the case of the map, presenting statistics such as population, area, languages spoken and national speed limits, these snippets were more positively commented upon than any other part of the pack. The following quotes illustrate just how engaging these quirky text boxes actually were:

Useful those you know. I was looking at all of those. Useful background stuff, and my wife as well I might add. It was quickly informative Anything one didn't know about when a country came in or whatever about it. (Secondary, Canterbury 10)

Well to tell you the truth with this I actually drew more information from these little facts and figures you know. Things like France and the UK having the same driving

¹⁵⁶ I am of course aware that there exists a great deal of research relating to the relative effectiveness of particular media. Such information is becoming increasingly important to all organisations, but perhaps the most obvious transformation in recent years has been the way political parties have taken on an awareness of the relationship between the media and the message. As it has not been a priority in this research this thesis cannot do justice to this area of academic and practical interest, and as such makes no attempt to provide a detailed overview of debate.

What it can do however is to assert with absolute confidence that this particular database along with my approach to the analysis of it is unique. This alone justifies the detailed reporting here.

¹⁵⁷ These were contained within items 1 –3 and were examples of the EU's front-line publications, i.e. they were the high quality, high volume publications intended to inform the general public about its history, structure, and activities. No specialist knowledge is required to access this information, nor any special level of interest. This was not the case for certain of the other EU produced material in the pack.

laws, and the same populations, but very different land mass, also Germany having the largest population. I think these were the most interesting bits actually. (Secondary, Dundee 6).

Whilst there might be some trivia in these snippets, the point is that they were engaging, and as will be discussed later in this section, anything in these publications that achieved this level of engagement without simultaneously provoking critical comment can be considered to have done very well indeed.

They even provided a 'hook' to those who alternatively might have read nothing at all:

I'm afraid I didn't read this in any great detail. I did read all these things about the populations, and so on. I have failed you badly here I know (Secondary, Dundee 3)

The following interviewee suggests why the snippets hold such appeal:

Well you know it's like those crisp packets for the kids. You read them don't you. It's a jokey thing I know but you find yourself reading them, but if you look at this stuff you just think 'Oh bloody hell' you know. (Secondary Durham 3)¹⁵⁸

If the 'snippet' proved to be the most commented upon means of transmitting information, the most commented upon means of drawing attention to an argument was the use of quotations. Quotes were used in both the elements of the pack which were broadly 'pro-European, and those that were broadly 'anti'. Irrespective of their sentiment, their effectiveness at conveying argument was equal.

Quotes were favoured most when they were short. Also significant in their effectiveness was both the source and date of origin. The need for brevity and for the quote to be relatively contemporary was clearly expressed in relation to the Declaration. This was included as a supplement to Item 1, and was in fact read by only two of the interviewees. The main reason for others' rejection of it was that it was too long, that it was attributed to a person the interviewees were not familiar with, and that it was labelled as dating from the 1950's. Some interviewees excused their non-attention to it; others were more forthright in declaring it irrelevant to the modern EU.¹⁵⁹ On the

¹⁵⁸ At the time of this interview the major potato crisp manufacturer Walkers were running a promotion on packets which had a 'snippet' of information in a highlighted box.

¹⁵⁹ With hindsight, my inserting a lengthy historical quotation inside a document entitled 'Europe Today' was not perhaps the most effective means of its presentation! This might have had a significant effect on this response.

effectiveness of quotations at drawing attention to arguments, the following interviewee's express a view that was widely reported amongst the research group:

I like the quotes, I'm more likely to read them. Some of the printed stuff is more like university handouts, and is more than likely to go in the bin. (Secondary Dundee 6)

I liked the quotes, I mean I have books of quotes. I always read things like this. (Secondary Durham 8)

Popular as the quotes were, the interviewees were not ciphers in their reading of them. Interviewee's 'active' response was generally to acknowledge that there must have been a context to the original quotation that was not clear in the reproduction. However, their interpretation of this consideration was highly dependent upon the general approach they adopted. In this sense interviewee's responses were content dependent, a theme which is taken up more generally later in this section. This is demonstrated particularly clearly in reference to perhaps the most controversial quotation from Chancellor Kohl¹⁶⁰ The first interviewees comment below correlates with his strongly pro European approach,¹⁶¹ the second and third, with broadly negative approaches.v

Oh yes, 'the future will belong to the Germans.....'. I suspect he was aiming that at his own electorate, I mean he is a politician after all. He is there as a European statesman speaking as a European statesman. I think that is a lovely example of taking something out of context. (Secondary, Durham 2)

Well straight away I thought he's being awfully honest for a start. And yes I think that is a fear. I know you say about the context but you know the language he's using, you know the images and analogies about battles and fights suggests that there is going to be an opponent, not peaceful integration. (Secondary, Dundee 6)

Well sometimes people make quotes which they probably would regret, but which sometimes speak more of the truth. (Secondary Durham 7)

In each of these examples, the reaction to the quotations was a strongly engaged one, showing that the format is effective, whatever the argument, and whatever directional reaction it provokes.

¹⁶⁰ This was included in Item 11 (See Appendix E), and ran thus:

"The future will belong to the Germans.... when we build the house of Europe. In the next two years, we will make the process of European integration irreversible. This is a really big battle but it is worth the fight" (Chancellor Kohl)

¹⁶¹ Indeed this is the interviewee who is quoted in Chapter 3 suggesting that to him Europe is a 'state of mind'

The video was the least surprising of these more popular media, given the data (both the secondary data presented in Chapter 1, and the primary data referred to in Chapter 3), was so supportive of the notion of the television being the preferred source of information about the EU. Also of course, this element of the research design was strongly influenced by Fishkin's televised deliberative polls. With the unfortunate exception of one interviewee who did not have access to a VCR, all interviewees reported that they had enjoyed this element, and most importantly found it engaging and informative. It is very much my feeling that there was no unique information on the video (all of it having been presented in another format elsewhere in the pack), but that there was a strong line of argument developed throughout, indeed that was the initial intention. Based upon the data, the general consensus from the interviewees is that the video provided the most effective route to engaging with those arguments.

Accepting the endorsement of the video as a format, the relationship between the interviewee and the video was not a passive one. As a feature of its design the video included speakers from a range of professional backgrounds. Specifically there was a businessman, an academic and a local politician.¹⁶² The effect of this was very much that individual interviewees were drawn sympathetically to the presenter whose style of presentation most closely matched their wider interests and experiences. As with the quotes, the actual argument (i.e. the content), being put forward was not essential to the effectiveness of the media, only to the direction of the interviewees reaction to it.

Overall, the businessman recruited the most favourable response, both in terms of the number of positive comments, and the strength with which they were expressed. This despite the fact that several of his 'supporters' felt he took his views to a rather farcical extreme when discussing the possibility of a future war between the UK and the rest of the EU. His credibility was sufficient to partially compensate for a lack of congruence in his views.

The following quote captures the apparent deference to his professional position relative to the other speakers, in this case from a fellow businessman:

¹⁶² The politician of course was also an academic (i.e. a Mathematics Professor - see Chapter 2), but he

Interviewee: I do think I identified more with the middle one.

M.B: Why do you think that was?

Interviewee: Ermmm.... I think maybe I should say this in a quiet voice. My wife's a teacher, and my daughter is also a teacher, and to me they don't really know what goes on in the world. They sort of live in a cocoon. Now the other two were both lecturers and they probably have spent most of their lives in education, they've probably not experienced much in the outside world. This chap is a bit like myself, he's travelled a lot and so on. (Secondary, Durham 8)

However, deference to his professional position was more widespread than simply amongst other businessmen. There was a link made by several interviewees between the type of examples he used, the style of his presentation, and the nature of his profession. In other words it was not because he was a businessman *per se* that he enjoyed greater credibility, rather because his style of presentation leant credibility. In turn this style was attributed to his professional position. This is summed up succinctly thus:

It [his job] gives him credibility, he is a worker and he says that if interest rates go sky high he goes bankrupt. The first one was more of a politician. He was talking, how can I say, from more of a detached point of view. No the second one, he was talking from personal experience, more your man in the street. (Secondary, Durham 3)¹⁶³

Overall, the strong tone emerging from the data is that the credibility afforded to the businessman was due to his having an apparent personal interest in the issue. He spoke in terms of effects on his own business, whereas the first and last speakers spoke in terms of broad societal implications of European integration.¹⁶⁴

The evidence supporting the effectiveness of the video is an endorsement of the priority placed on television by Fishkin in his deliberative poll. However, there is one important point that the data does raise, which relates to the assumption Fishkin makes about the priority of television in the forming of political opinions across the citizenry as a whole.

The evidence presented above suggests that Fishkin might have been guilty of overstating the case in his description of the modern citizenry as the residents of a high tech version of Plato's cave (see Chapter 2). Even allowing for the fact that the interviewees taking part in this research had already received a considerable quantity of

was speaking here as a committed Liberal Democrat.

¹⁶³ In fact all three speakers on the video used anecdotes from their own personal experience, but in the case of the first and last speakers, these seem to have gone largely unnoticed.

¹⁶⁴ It is particularly disappointing here that the interviewee who himself tended to speak about Europe in similar terms to the first speaker was the only one who did not watch the video (i.e. he was the one without a VCR)

information, it is difficult to accept Fishkin's analogy in full. Whilst I accept the first part of Fishkin's analogy, indeed this was part of the rationale for using the video (i.e. that "[we receive] our picture of the political world, from the reflected images [on] television images in our living rooms" Fishkin 1995 pp 13-15), the critique of the resultant level of citizen knowledge and wisdom is challenged by the data. It cannot be the case that "the people have a level of knowledge and wisdom comparable to the denizens of the cave" (Fishkin 1995 pp13-15) because in all cases these citizens were so 'active' in their viewing. Clearly the elements in the video which provoked directional responses (i.e. agreement or disagreement) was entirely a matter for the viewers, not for me (as the producer). As such, the viewers most certainly did look 'outside the cave for their contrary information'.

Finally, in closing this section on the effectiveness of the various media at both providing information and putting across argument, an interesting one off comment from an interviewee does provide an interesting (though non-replicated) comment on the extraordinary effectiveness of the 'snippets' relative to other media:

Despite the fact that most of the population seem to be glued to the TV all day long, I still think that some of these little green boxes and so on in these sort of things are the best at getting it over. (Secondary, Canterbury 13)

This section of the Chapter now moves on to consider how the substantive content of particular elements of the pack was interpreted, irrespective of their format.

Content - and 'general approaches again': Once discussion moved from format to content, the general consensus that was reported above disappeared. Here interviewees reactions to the pack contents were remarkably consistent with the general approaches they had demonstrated to be so dominant during the primary stage of the research.

All interviewees clearly recognised a distinction between elements in the pack that were intended as informative, and those that were overtly persuasive. In a sense this was a simple distinction between the first seven elements of the pack, and the last five. However, the distinction is not so simple as to stop there. Recognising that an element of the pack was intended as informative did not, preclude the possibility of also recognising that same element to be persuasive. On this point there is a clear division in

typology of responses given. This division is directly traceable to the general approaches that interviewees demonstrated during the primary interviews.

Those who had exhibited a positive general approach in the primary interviews (whatever the basis for that approach, e.g. geography, people or politics - see Chapter 3), found all the information in the pack broadly acceptable, except the racism inherent in the certain of the press cuttings included in Item 12. In contrast, those possessed of a negative general approach (again, irrespective of the basis for it), found certain of the elements in the pack highly objectionable.

The dividing line between the two approaches could be drawn around the tendency of those most positive to accept information as simply that, but those more negative to see a conspiracy of persuasion implicit in certain information. To put this another way, though all accepted that certain elements of the pack claimed only to be informative, and some obviously persuasive, those inclined to a negative general approach saw a 'hidden agenda' in the EU's information documents. The most popular word used was 'propaganda'.¹⁶⁵

The reactions of interviewees to the two major icons of the EU that opened the pack (i.e. the Circle of Stars emblem, and the pictorial map) were predictable, mirroring general approaches. As such they fulfilled their role as 'warm ups', both to reading of the pack and the interviews. The main focus of this section however is material contained in items 2, and 5. This is not only because they are the 'general' information documents produced by the Commission,¹⁶⁶ but also because they were the items which inspired the most animated reactions from the interviewees.

Firstly all interviewees agreed that these documents provided information, and that they had been informed as a result of their reading them. However, there was a strong sense across all the interviews that the items did not engage with the problems that interviewees associated with the EU. Thus, they were charged with only including information that showed the EU in a 'positive light'. All interviewees acknowledged

¹⁶⁵ This sentiment was of course not likely to be expressed in reverse because all of the 'anti' elements of the pack were overtly persuasive rather than informative.

¹⁶⁶ As explained in detail in Chapter 2, the other items from the first seven were either more specialised, or, as in the case of item 3, aimed at schoolchildren (this was included to correspond with certain of the comments made on the video).

this, but those with a positive general approach were reflexive in their comments about it. The following quote is indicative of such a response:

This thing has only the positive information in it. It doesn't have warnings in it. I think this is what you would expect from the Commission. (Secondary, Dundee 3).

Even this reflexivity however, proved in some cases to be selective. The most positive general approach of all of was exhibited by the '*Europe is a state of mind*' interviewee (i.e. Durham 2) who, though very positive about integration in general was unconvinced about the merits of the single currency. The following two comments from different parts of his secondary interview transcript give away an inconsistency in terms of what he expects to glean from EU information documents:

I think in a little book like this [reference to item 5] I'm not surprised to find only the favourable side, I mean it's called 'What's in it for me', it's hardly likely to have questions about what's not in it for me is it? No, I think that is a fair thing.

And on the single currency:

M.B.: Would you have preferred more about the arguments against economic and monetary union in there [reference to item 4]?

Interviewee: I think I would in fact. Of course it doesn't at all, but I think there would be a very good case for that. I mean it isn't a done and dusted discussion at all. It is very much an ongoing discussion. (Secondary, Durham 2)

The essential point made by use of the above quotes is that where interviewees were generally content with the process of integration, they were content with the content of the Commission produced documents. However, in the areas where they were not content, the credibility of the documents was severely damaged by not addressing their concerns.

This is far more explicitly displayed in the responses of those interviewees who were less content with the process of integration. Several interviewees exhibiting a negative general approach found the Commission's publications irritating and patronising. They felt that they did not address the issues of concern to them, focusing instead on issues that allowed the EU to boast its achievements. As there is a considerable proportion of the UK public who apparently share similar general approaches (see Chapter 1), I believe this is finding to be indicative of a serious and fundamental flaw in the Commission's public information strategy. So serious is this flaw that it is actually

undermining the Commission's attempts (at considerable expense) to set up the effective infrastructure of transmission which it so needs.

The comments reproduced below convey a flavour of the complaints, in particular about the impaired credibility of the documents which stems directly from the selective focus on certain of the claimed benefits of integration:

I think they've got to try to balance it. If they don't then people are only going to see the other side - the bad side. The readers of *The Sun*, whatever percentage of the population who reads that, it's massive, will only see the downside. So it wouldn't be a bad idea for them here to counter the good bits with some other information. (Secondary, Canterbury 13)

I think it is written from a perspective which doesn't take into account the suspicions and negative thoughts that are at large in the UK. I think it should be more specific for UK consumption. (Secondary, Dundee 8)

And this comparative comment is particularly illuminating:

M.B.: What about these sort of questions here, you know 'so you're little Englanders then?', which they then answer [reference to item 10], is that what you were saying you wanted in the earlier stuff?

Interviewee: They should be doing the same Martin. I mean this is the UK Independence Party, they want us out of Europe, that's what it's all about, and there's a question for them and they answer it. I read it and I thought well they're not getting my vote but at least they're prepared to criticise themselves.

M.B.: And that gives them that credibility?

Interviewee: Ohhh yes. It gives them more credibility for me than the bloody European Union. (Secondary, Durham 3)

Credibility is as important in a written publication as in a televisual one, and though the EU do produce documents specifically addressing certain of the criticisms it is widely subject to,¹⁶⁷ there is little emphasis on response to critique in these 'front-line' documents. It is exactly because these documents are 'front-line' (i.e. likely to be the only ones read by members of the public) that this problem with credibility not only represents a wasted opportunity, but worse, actually damages the reputation of the whole EU further. In this sense, for several of the interviewees, their view of the EU after reading these 'positive' documents was more negative than it had been before. The EU is thus giving itself the '*Yellow Cards*' (from Tumber 1995 - see Chapter 1)

¹⁶⁷ For example '*Do you still believe all you read in the newspapers?* (European Commission Representation in Britain 1995), which refutes some of the more famous 'euromyths'.

The Commission should be told! The previous two sections provide the background to the following set of recommendations as to how the Commission could (and I believe should), improve its public information strategy. It must be clarified though that these recommendations are my own, and are based upon the whole database from both the primary and secondary stages of this research. As such, certain recommendations draw upon areas of the data that have not been specifically referred to above. I did not set out to make recommendations to the Commission, and should have felt it quite an arrogant intention. However, the data do support them, and including them here effectively summarises much of what has been presented above.

Recommendations to the Commission

1. No interviewees had seen any of the literature before. This is of particular concern considering that the research group included one university lecturer, one university student and one schoolteacher. The distribution infrastructure needs to be revised.
2. Whilst brevity is essential, if documents are too insubstantial they risk trivialising the issue. A flyer was seen by most interviewees as too 'light', but the booklet format of items 4, 5, 6 was considered too 'heavy'. The format of item 2 was very popular. This A4 booklet format should be retained, along with its strong theme of colour and graphics throughout.
3. The snippets, quotes and televisual format are most effective. These should be expanded upon wherever possible.
4. If a question/answer format is adopted, it is essential to effectively target those questions at the consumer. Content selection should be consumer led, not producer led (or, to use a contemporary business/politics phrase: 'bottom up rather than top down').

5. It is imperative that if one document is to be used as a front-line information publication, it respectfully addresses the concerns that many of those reading it can reasonably be assumed to have. This by no means prohibits the telling of a positive story about the EU, as all interviewees accepted that this would be the overall tone. However, to seemingly ignore such concerns suggests they are illegitimate. This implication, intended or otherwise, can be insulting to some readers and is seriously damaging to the effectiveness of the documents.

In sum, the Commission could contribute more fully to filling the transmission deficit (albeit in a relatively small way, considering the problems of hostile national media etc. - see Chapter 1). However, to optimise effectiveness, the information has to reach the people, it has to contain the right content, and it has to be in the right format. Presently, the Commission is a long way from achieving optimum in these areas.

Information and change: This section of the chapter takes up the theme of the effects of this new and additional information on interviewee's views. It is now possible to set aside the finding that media were found to vary in effectiveness, and that certain areas of content caused some concern to interviewees, in order to focus on the general question of whether the information provided was capable of affecting interviewees general approaches.¹⁶⁸

In the vast majority of cases there was no directional change in interviewees general approaches. In fact there was only one change in the direction of general approach. This was from a negative to a positive position. This interviewee expressed this change in somewhat exuberant terms, and as she was the only such interviewee, her case justifies some examination.

The following quote captures the expression of this change, whilst at the same time conveying her own surprise at this outcome:

¹⁶⁸ This section focuses on general approaches rather than opinion on particular issues. This is because of the importance of the general level indicated by the analysis of the primary stage. That is not to say that the research did not collect large amounts of data on the individual issues related to European integration. Though these issues generally followed the pattern of the more important general approaches, there is still considerable value in these data, but the occasion of their presentation is not to be this thesis.

Interviewee: I think I'm more favourable to it now than I was after reading this.

M.B: So this information has actually not only informed you about it, but you actually feel more positive now?

Interviewee: Yes, and I may even feel more European some time in the future. You know when I said before about some countries having this tunnel vision [reference to primary interview], I'm realising now that it's probably Britain that has the tunnel vision. We seem to be dragging our feet. I never thought I'd say that though. (Secondary, Dundee 5).

As a matter of routine all of the primary and secondary interview data were extensively cross referenced throughout the analysis, and what that process reveals in this case is that there is some background to this change. During the primary interview when discussing the allocation of EU funds in the Dundee region, this interviewee was shocked to find out that the EU had funded major infrastructure projects in Dundee, and had inquired as to the priorities used in the allocation of this money.¹⁶⁹ She revealed later (i.e. after the interview), that her rationale for asking was that she and other residents had unsuccessfully campaigned to improve the derelict area neighbouring her block of flats. She was beginning to see some potential in applying for EU funds. Here she was responding in the same way as the mythical fox in Elster's (1997) analogy of the 'fox and the sour grapes' (see Chapter 1). This kind of personal (financial), engagement with the EU was also specifically cited by another interviewee as being the catalyst that had, at a particular point in the past, changed his views about the EU.¹⁷⁰ As there was so much criticism of the EU's spending policies in the primary interviews, it would seem reasonable that if interviewees believed they could have some input into spending decisions, this hostility should at least be lessened.

That there was in the event only one declared change in the direction of interviewees general approach is not really surprising, considering the all pervading nature of these approaches demonstrated during the primary interviews. It is therefore clear that it would be wholly wrong to focus on the number of such changes in measuring the effects of the provision of information upon the interviewees. In sum this would be a 'blunt tool'.

¹⁶⁹ I was using the stimulus material of a picture of the Claverhouse Industrial Park, to which the EU had contributed £33.1million.

¹⁷⁰ This was Canterbury 9 who as a Senior Prison Officer had worked on a successful application to the EU to assist with funding the education and re-integration to society of long term inmates. He commented that he eventually felt quite proud to see the EU emblem on the project stationary.

Using a subtler analytical framework does in fact reveal that there were significant effects upon the general approaches of interviewees resulting from the informing process. This was that they had been strengthened. This showed no greater effect among the generally negative interviewees compared with the generally positive interviewees.

In effect, what happened in the majority of cases was that interviewees picked out elements of the pack as 'proof' that their approach was correct all along. This gave them greater confidence in their own beliefs, dispelling the ignorance which many had felt undermined their confidence.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of this effect. I believe it to be one of the most important findings emerging from the research. This is because of the effect that it had upon the process of engaging with the issues and debates involved. This particular effect is returned to in the second major section of this chapter, but presented below is a selection from the evidence supporting this assertion that opinions didn't generally change in direction, but change they certainly did.

The following interviewee, though one of those with a negative general approach, was most specifically concerned that the EU were being very selective in the way that it provided information to the people. In particular, his concern was that the EU was really all about politics¹⁷¹ and that the information provided to the public tended to focus on the minor economic and social benefits resulting from integration. This theme from the primary interviews is again expressed here, this time in a strengthened form, having found the information pack contents originating from the EU to be deliberately selective:

M.B: There clearly is some scepticism in Britain. Do you think that they should deal with that here?

Interviewee: Well yes I think if they dealt with it yes, and sort of said well why are they sceptical, and everybody's argument came out in the open....

M.B: Would that be better for you then?

Interviewee: It would be more honest.

M.B: So what you're saying is that it is true information, and that you are better informed now, but you reckon its only part of the story?

Interviewee: Yes. A lot of what they're offering is the economics, business employment and the social Chapter. These are great things but having done a course on Britain in the EC, I just think there is something bigger behind it all. There is this super-national idea

¹⁷¹ As mentioned above, this belief itself was accredited to an informing process. This interviewee was a student at Dundee University (studying modern politics), and had stated in the primary interview that his views about Europe had changed since he began his course.

so yes that's in the back of my mind whenever I've looked at this stuff. I had the negative views before I got to the end of the pack and in a sense all this reinforced them. (Secondary, Dundee 6)

The following interviewee adopted very much a positive general approach that was grounded in the strong belief that the EU represented a route to enhanced peaceful co-operation between nations. This interviewee was one of the (small) group who was both positive in general approach and considered himself to be 'well enough informed', therefore one least likely to be influenced by new and additional information (see Chapter 2). In the following quote he refers to the anticipated consistency of his views, whilst also highlighting the way in which he considered them to have been further solidified as a result of the informing process.

M.B: Do you think that any piece of information, video or text or whatever could shift your viewpoint at all?

Interviewee: No. I think all this has just heightened my awareness of the greater issues within it. Not the concept you know. I mean I think the concept initially was, I mean I'm not an aggressive person, you know I like to see the humanitarian issues addressed and I think that I'm not just in it for what the country can get out of it, although that is great because it does help get the support of our own people. No, not now I've looked into it in this sort of depth, no. (Secondary, Canterbury 9)

The above selected quotes show a lack of change in the direction of general approaches despite the provision of new and additional information, whilst also indicating the way that the interviewees saw their original views as having been strengthened.

Returning to the logic set out in italics earlier in this chapter, it is by now clear that informing citizens cannot be assumed (according to the data emerging from this research), to inspire a greater wish to become involved in the activities of the EU. The strengthening of opinions was actually replicated on all the major issues discussed including those relating to citizenship and the European identity. Ultimately, information does not appear to correlate directly with support.

There is however one major behavioural aspect of participation that did tend to follow part of that italicised logic. That is in the area of voting behaviour. Though the research group consisted of good voters,¹⁷² the most revealing data were collected from only four

¹⁷² Such an effect is, as has been explained before, unsurprising in such a self-selected group. To replicate figures presented earlier in the thesis, the reported general voting rates for this group were 100% for national elections, 97% for local elections and 60% for European elections.

particular interviewees.¹⁷³ Of these, three were intending to vote for the first time in the forthcoming election and the fourth very definitely not. Of the former group it is clear from the data that this change resulted from increased levels of knowledge about the workings of the EU generally and in particular the parliament. Clearly in these cases, information had led them towards this route of participation.

The fourth interviewee had not actually altered his voting intentions, but instead what was significant was that his rationale had very much strengthened. In this case his increased knowledge had 'developed' his rationale for not voting from one that he had attributed to ignorance, to one based on a knowledge that there was no point:

Interviewee: One of the problems I have with it all now is that if you take Neil Kinnock, and Leon Brittan, how did they get their jobs? They were appointed weren't they, they're not elected.

M.B: You're right.

Interviewee: And they have power.

M.B: Yes but you'd be voting for the Parliament.

Interviewee: I know but I think about the Council of Europe now. I know from this stuff that they have the ultimate power, and my vote will not affect them. (Secondary, Canterbury 3)

Not only is this quote particularly enlightening in terms of the thoughts of this one interviewee, but more generally it highlights the link between the Institutional aspects of the deficit (which of course this research has not focused upon), and the transmission/citizen aspects. As is discussed later in this chapter, whilst deliberative democracy might be able to offer some benefits in terms of filling the deficit, it is no panacea. Encouraging participation is always a 'good' (according to my approach here, see thesis Introduction and Chapter 1), but one of the consequences that should be particularly welcomed, is the pressure to reform the institutions of governance in order that they accommodate newly found enthusiasm for meaningful participation.

The process described here is exemplary of a real life version of Elster's (1997) analogous use of the '*fox and the sour grapes*' fable discussed earlier in the thesis. It also shows the onset of the process described by Bohman as '*institutional innovation*' (Bohman 1996 pp.229 – 232 – see Chapter 2). Greater determination to formally

¹⁷³ I have to admit this is not strictly true. Here I mean most revealing in terms of its contribution to the argument of the thesis. In fact the most revealing of all, though not directly relevant here was a comment made by an interviewee who was a Minister in the Church of Scotland. He told me that he and his colleagues were praying for a high turnout, and that the Church takes a very strong view that the Clergy have a role to play in maintaining a high respect for citizen participation in politics at all levels.

participate, in order to influence governance is clearly an outcome of this deliberative process. Ironically, so is the decision reported above not to vote. Here the interviewee is making a strong personal statement based on a confident knowledge of the system of governance. Both directions of decision then should be seen as informed, confident, and rooted in a greater level of engagement, and a corresponding desire to exert influence. The comments of *Canterbury 3* show that in his case non-voting is far from an expression of apathy or ignorance, but rather is that of a person requiring institutional change before his vote can justifiably be recruited.

In sum: What effect information? This section draws together the main points raised by the data analysis presented above. For clarity a point by point summary is provided:

The main effects of the new information were:

1. Information informed.
2. Certain formats were very much favoured by most interviewees.
3. The information was interpreted through the 'visor' of general approaches.
4. Those with a generally negative approach tended to interpret parts of the Commission published information as propaganda.
5. The lack of open and honest discussion of the perceived problems associated with European integration, particularly in the Commission published information reduced its credibility with many interviewees, irrespective of their general approach.
6. There was no significant expression of greater interest in European citizenship, nor the European identity as a result of becoming better informed.

7. Though some interviewees have become more likely to vote because of the information they received, one interviewee became more determined than before not to vote.
8. Generally the informing process did not alter the direction of opinions, but it did tend to strengthen existing approaches.

By way of placing these findings explicitly within the context of the working definition of the democratic deficit set out in Chapter 1, the informing process did contribute in a small but detailed way¹⁷⁴ to filling the transmission deficit (i.e. it did effectively deliver information about the EU and its activities to citizens). The information provided was (taken as a whole) considered to be fair, balanced, and of better quality than the interviewees were used to. However, aside from informing the citizens, the transmission of that information did not significantly contribute to the filling of the other major aspects of the 'citizen deficit', neither in terms of the *political* approach to citizenship, nor in terms of the *identity* approach (see Chapter 1).

This research was of course about much more than just informing the interviewees. Indeed the informing process, though always expected to be one of the most important aspects, and despite becoming of greater priority following analysis of the primary stage, was always intended to be only one part of the wider process of engaging the participants in deliberation. This indeed it remained, and it is to the effects of the whole deliberative process that the chapter now turns.

Deliberation

There is now an obvious point from which to begin this section, and that can be summarised by the following simple question, which effectively 'rolls together' all the analysed data so far present and the ambitious intentions of this research project. I

¹⁷⁴ I am fully aware that the information delivered did not challenge the serious problem recognised by Neunreither of the national rather than European wide context for the provision of information (see Chapter 1). Indeed it is possible that the intention to examine the influence of geography on the deficit within the UK, and the resultant focus, particularly in the primary stage of the research on local information might have exacerbated rather than ameliorated this problem. However, it stands repeating here that this research did not set out to 'fill' the democratic deficit, rather to demonstrate the role that deliberation could potentially play in that task. As such, a clear focus was needed, and was indeed

should not normally adopt this question/answer style of presentation at this stage of the thesis, however, so important has this question been to me throughout the latter stages of this research, that its inclusion here is fully justified:

The question is thus:

If the research process informed the interviewees, but did not significantly alter their opinions, in the context of the democratic deficit, and in particular the application of deliberative democracy to that deficit, what exactly can it be claimed to have achieved?

And the simple answer: A great deal!

This section of the chapter explains just how influential the deliberative process has been upon the interviewees. This is of course grounded at all times in the database, but the presentation of this analysis is necessarily different to that which has gone before. This change is important to the reader, but has a methodological significance that is more far reaching. For the latter reason in particular this change is discussed here in some detail.

Because the section is concerned with the broad effects of the whole deliberative process, and not specific aspects of it such as information, education or opinion, much of the transcript data is not amenable to direct quotation. As such there is at times less emphasis placed on the actual words of interviewees, and more on my considered evaluation of the database as an entirety.

Further, whilst the database used throughout this research has always included far more than the interview transcripts themselves, this particular section draws more explicitly from other sources within the whole database. This includes telephone conversations, replies to letters and e-mails sent to interviewees and informal chats conducted before and after the interviews.¹⁷⁵ By whatever means one intends to record data throughout a

maintained. Depth has had to replace breadth at many points, and this is but one such instance.

¹⁷⁵ It is not necessary to list, rather only to refer to the numerous occasions on which interviewee's extended hospitality to me during the research. This ranged from a cup of tea to being taken to a local club for a meal. The best of all though was a guided car tour of the Kentish coastline. Naturally the subject of Europe came up on occasions during such excursions.

project such as this, I am now able to confidently assert the impossibility (and indeed the undesirability), of recording everything. Consequently, elements of what is presented below are based on my unique knowledge resulting from 'being there'.

This explanation notwithstanding, there are some quotes used, but their context is altered by my use of them. That is to say that they have been used as illustrative of points made, even though they are not responses to direct questions about those particular issues. In consideration of this, they should be interpreted as directed in the text that introduces and discusses them. They do not (and should not) 'stand alone'.

The opportunity to interrogate such a broad database, as well as that to use quotations in support of an argument to which they were not explicitly referring is indicative of the true value of the methodology employed during this stage of the research. The 'active interview' coupled with a highly sensitive data analysis technique and conscientious reflection throughout the research has facilitated this exceptionally valid and unexpectedly rewarding process.

In answering the above question this section presents evidence of the deliberative processes involved in this research having achieved a level of engagement with debates and issues related to European integration which was entirely unanticipated. As an integral part of this increased level of engagement, the interviewees were 'developed' in terms of their 'competence' to participate further, and also in terms of their desire to procure meaningful routes through which to achieve any newly desired levels of participation. Further, it will present evidence suggesting that these effects can reasonably be expected to last beyond the end of the interviewees' direct involvement in the research.

The section will end by tackling head on the apparent challenge to one of the central claims of deliberative democracy represented by the data so far presented, that being that there appears to have been no tendency towards consensus. It will be explained that, despite the apparent paradox of greater disagreement evident at a superficial level, the process of consensus building had indeed not only been started, but had been significantly developed.

At all times the above arguments are presented with close reference back to the model that is deliberative democracy, as set out earlier in the thesis.

Deliberation and engagement: One of the altogether most surprising aspects of this whole research process was the enthusiasm with which the interviewees approached the secondary stage of the research. This is not only indicated by the fact that there were no refusals to take part in the secondary stage, even though I gave a clear warning early on that it was likely to involve several hours work, but from the evident enthusiasm throughout the research period. Typical of this was the two phone calls I got complaining that the Information Packs had not yet arrived. The secondary interviews were entirely different in this regard in comparison with those conducted as part of the primary stage. Interviewees were forthright; challenging and probing compared with the more passive behaviour during the primary interviews. On some occasions I had to ask very few questions, interviewees being only too keen to tell me what they had thought of various elements of the pack. It is my certain view that this cannot be put down simply to my having got to know the interviewees better. I am made doubly certain of this by the observation that even those interviewees who appeared not to 'warm' to me¹⁷⁶ reacted in the same way to those who could be observed gaining confidence in the company of someone they might have considered an expert.

I learned that the interviewees had been more interested in issues related to the EU between the primary and secondary interviews. In most cases this was reported as listening more closely to television reports, particularly about the Conservative Party's strongly Euro-sceptic campaign for the elections to the European Parliament. Interviewees also reported that they had found themselves discussing the issues with family members and work colleagues. Several actually commented that they had for the first time taken to challenging others' views on issues related to the research, in a sense rehearsing what their own view really was.

The clearest and most concise comment on this theme of heightened awareness of the issues is provided by the quote below:¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ This is a reference to the phenomena mentioned in Chapter 2: - 'the ego-threat' (Gorden 1969 pp. 72-76). Whilst it is possible that particular interviewees just didn't like me, I believe that the 'ego threat' was the more likely explanation for a lack of congeniality.

¹⁷⁷ As referred to earlier, this is an example of my using a quote to exemplify a point other than that to which the interviewee was actually referring. Examples such as this show the process of 'adumbrating'

Interviewee: Well I think the idea of dropping a leaflet through the door is a very poor tool, always has been.

M.B: Have you had one from the Commission this week?

Interviewee: Yes I have and I can tell you I read it.

M.B: So it really does work then?

Interviewee: Well it probably wouldn't have done if it had not come at the time that I was doing this. It was really the fact that it was so timed with this that I thought I should take a look at it in case it had some relevance to this lot [pointing to the Information Pack]. The other thing is that I noticed the other day on a telegraph pole a poster with all the parties standing at this election. The one thing that did surprise me about that was that there was only one person who actually lived in the North East, and I thought 'how can you actually relate to these people?' Not to mention the fact that there were about 12 parties, and some of these were a bit obtuse. (Secondary, Durham 7)

Even greater significance can be drawn from the above comments when they are placed in the broader context of the background of this particular interviewee. He was very much within the 'I'm well enough informed' group, having previously stated (i.e. in the primary interview) that he did not wish to seek any additional information. Above he explains how he had not only read a flyer from the EU which came through his door (normally they go straight in the bin), but that he had actually taken the trouble to read (and critically engage with), a poster about the forthcoming European election that was stuck to a telegraph pole. I feel certain, based on a combination of interview data and my own knowledge of this interviewee that these particular behavioural acts are extremely unlikely to have occurred had he not been engaged with this research process.

Later in the interview this theme is returned to. The following comment goes beyond that above in that it suggests that not only has there been a difference in the interviewees level of engagement with the formal politics of European integration during the period of the research, but that he very much expects that effect to continue.

As with the earlier quote, this comment is drawn from an area of the interview transcript in which the interviewee's general level of engagement with the issues was not the primary focus of discussion. It is certainly the case that data such as these were very much the result of spontaneous and unprepared responses on the part of the interviewees. This is partly because of the subtle way the questions were introduced, but also in part because the interviewees were not fully aware of the intention of this research to investigate this aspect. In all cases the interviewees focus was (and was

being responded to by the interviewee drawing their own 'connections and outlooks' (from Holstein and Gubrium 1995 p.17 quoted in full in Chapter 2)

encouraged to be), on the issues themselves and the associated material. It is in order to demonstrate something of this context that the quote below is slightly extended:

M.B.: So you think there are the two extremes in this stuff. You've got the European Commission stuff, which is too factual, and you've got this stuff [reference to the press cuttings in Item 12], which is too trivial?

Interviewee: Yes. I found that the video held the concentration much better than I was able to muster looking at the verbiage.

M.B.: But do you think that overall it was balanced?

Interviewee: Yes because I didn't detect any particular bias at all in it so that equals balance doesn't it. I think neutral is a better word.

M.B.: Neutral and informative then?

Interviewee: Yes, and it has brought all this closer to me I think.

M.B.: Do you think any of that will remain?

Interviewee: Yes I do I think.

M.B.: Would you accept that it has done that without trying to change your views in any way?

Interviewee: Yes I would accept that. It's an opportunity to express a view and get a reaction based on either the information supplied or just expressing a view. I quite enjoy that. I would far sooner have discussion about something than someone think they can just slip me a leaflet through the door and not only expect me to read it but to accept what it is saying. (Secondary, Durham 7)

The above quote reports the interviewee's prediction that his increased level of engagement was likely to continue into the future. Though others didn't express this thought during the interview, an important piece of evidence was collected from outside the interview setting. I did ask the rather facetious question of whether interviewees felt they had seen enough information about the EU, to which they all sternly replied that they had (probably fearing that I was about to suggest sending them some more¹⁷⁸). However, it was only after the interview had ended that most commented they felt themselves more likely to read stories about the EU in the press. Several also reported that they would go to their local library and collect some more of the information. This was a spontaneous, unprompted and entirely genuine statement of interest in the issues, which was only considered worthy of comment at all because it represented a change in their approach to the issues discussed. To put this another way, they felt surprised by this, and that it was not the sort of behaviour they would have expected before taking part in this research. I am left with the strong suspicion that a similar, though perhaps lesser effect was experienced by those only taking part in the primary stage, but I have no way of providing further evidence in support of this view.

¹⁷⁸ This question really was a light-hearted one and I fully understand why these interviewees said that they did not wish to see any more information during the interview, and then contradicted this afterwards. In response to such comments I felt I had no right to pursue them in any way (as the interview was over), though I did of course note them later.

That interviewees had begun to engage more fully with the issues and express a desire to continue informing themselves is suggestive of a direct contradiction of Schumpeter's highly influential challenge to the principle of participation referred to earlier. Returning to the quotation first presented in Chapter 1:

[Ignorance is the norm] it persists even in the face of the meritorious efforts to that are being made to go beyond presenting information and to teach the use of it by means of lectures, classes, discussion groups. Results are not zero. But they are small. People cannot be carried up the ladder. (Schumpeter 1976)

His pessimism is incompatible with this evidence. The interviewees had been informed (mainly by their own 'meritorious efforts'), the results being far from zero. The interviewees involved in this research had not so much been *carried up* the ladder but rather had begun to *climb* the ladder (with little more than some facilitation from myself).

Taking the latter part of that quotation, in which Schumpeter suggests that 'the typical citizen drops down to a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field' (1976), this is directly contradicted by the evidence presented here. The interviewees (who would certainly have considered themselves to be fairly typical)¹⁷⁹ were generally pleased to be operating at a higher level, the result of both being better informed, and having had the opportunity to discuss¹⁸⁰ the issues.

This evidence very much supports the somewhat optimistic approach to the issue of participation in politics. It is entirely 'realistic' to *educate*¹⁸¹ the citizens, and if their *education* leads to an increased ability and enthusiasm to engage with politics, then the justification for their exclusion (see the discussion of Schumpeter's *orthodox doctrine* in Chapter 1) is greatly diminished.

Further, to take the application of this evidence from the abstract to the more practical, it suggests that the deliberative process had moved the interviewees closer to Cohen's 'ideal deliberative democracy concept' (1991 - see Chapter 1). In particular the

¹⁷⁹ There is a potentially problematic area here that was encountered by Fishkin in his research on the Deliberative Poll (see Chapter 2). Once people have been 'educated' they are of course no longer typical. He responded to this by explaining that they had now come to be typical of something else: - an educated citizenry (see Chapter 2 Footnotes). I maintain a similar response.

¹⁸⁰ *Discuss* as used here of course implies a two-way conversation with interviewees' views being probed and challenged. Therefore, crucially, they received responsive feedback throughout the process.

interviewees had secured enough information by the secondary stage of the research to engage in more effective and impassioned deliberation with me and, significantly, in many cases, with others too. This is of great importance because it is essential to deliberative democracy that participants are 'equals, and that they have the 'capacities required for entering into a public exchange of reasons' (Cohen 1991). Here, the primary and secondary stages of the research process had had an 'equalising effect'.

The essence of the difference which had brought interviewees to this position by the secondary stage of the research was in part the result of this greater engagement, and in part the cause of it. This factor was a significant increase in the confidence with which they not only expressed, but also claimed to hold their views. That the deliberative process as a whole (i.e. not any individual component of it), had this effect has been one of the most rewarding aspects of the research, not just for me but for the interviewees as well. It is to explanation of this effect that the chapter now turns.

Deliberation and confidence: As was explained earlier in the thesis (see Chapter 2), the 'laundering' (Bohman 1996) of ideas is an essential part of the process of deliberation. Here Bohman (actually borrowing from Goodwin) is using the term to mean the thinking through of ideas within the mind of the citizen. This process would first occur '*privately*' (emphasis is explained below), and latterly in a more public setting. The crucial aspect of this process though, and that which is most relevant here is that both of these stages are in fact '*public*'. Even when a person thinks through their ideas in 'private' they do so within the context of an anticipated challenge from others. Was there no prospect of deliberating around these ideas, and the ideas were thus set to remain private, then this process would not occur. It is only in the absence of deliberative processes (or the anticipation of such), that the continuity of opinions defensible only by appeal to ignorance and bigotry is sustained. Though Bohman is applying this idea to the establishment of 'moral compromise', and certainly the examples he uses of religious and ethical issues are different to those involved in this research, the principle is the same. Aside from this, the strength of feeling and fundamental importance associated with interviewees 'general approaches' to European integration actually indicate that they, at least in part, stem from interviewees

¹⁸¹ The concept is used here specifically (and only) in the way it was introduced in Chapter 1 of the thesis.

‘moral’ views. Therefore the use of Bohman’s theory here is most certainly congruent with the issues involved in this research.

Throughout this research I have witnessed this ‘laundering’ process occurring. Overall the process is most clearly indicated by an increase in confidence in the interviewees opinions and attitudes. This comes across in myriad ways such as for example the more positive way (compared with in the primary interviews), that issue specific questions were answered. Also significant was the way interviewees challenged the substantive content (i.e. not just the format) of one element of the pack by comparing with another contrasting element. Though, as explained earlier this overall trend is not generally amenable to the reproduction of quotes, there was one interviewee who articulated just this change. It is my belief that his tendency to express ideas in this particular way is linked to his profession as a teacher, but nonetheless his words do encapsulate the apparent views of the majority. The quote below is taken from the section of the interview where the discussion was focused on the video as a media for informing:

Interviewee: I listened to the speakers that you interviewed and I didn’t think, and I don’t want you to think I’m being arrogant here, but I thought they don’t know a hell of a lot more about this than me. I mean there are things that I don’t know and I would say so. It was interesting to listen to these people’s opinions and sort of think oh yes that’s what I think or I don’t quite agree with that. Another thing that was quite interesting was that in one of the books was the degree to which they felt European and they felt their country and European, and just their country. It was interesting to see that we weren’t the least European of all. (Secondary, Dundee 9)

The interviewee makes two very important points here. First he suggests that seeing people on a video (who have been deliberately selected to appear, and that he has set time aside to watch, thereby implying some status), mirroring his views, or alternatively saying things that he finds himself capable of arguing with, increased confidence in his own views. This he expresses by referring to their knowledge base being little superior to his own. Second, he refers to the European identity. In the primary interview he seemed to struggle with the idea that he felt Scottish, and that he did not see the European identity as relevant to him, despite him being very keen to express a generally positive outlook on European integration. Here, what I believe he is really showing is that he now knows it is ‘alright’ not to feel European, as other countries citizens feel that way too.

The significance of this increase in confidence cannot be overstated. Indeed by the end of the secondary stage of the research all of the interviewees had been educated (including those having declared themselves 'well enough informed'), were finding that they were more engaged with the issues, and were arguing, debating and asserting more strongly that their view was entirely 'reasonable'. I suspect that if the information pack had not been so carefully balanced this confidence might have been destroyed rather than fostered, as some were made to feel their views were (as they might have hitherto suspected) 'unreasonable'. Thus, the interviewees had been able to draw on particular parts of the information pack to bolster their views, whilst very importantly also seeing that the opposite view was equally legitimate (just wrong!).¹⁸² Very significantly this legitimacy had come to be realised '*deliberatively*'. From the introspective examinations of views in preparation for interviews, and the critical internal dialogue based around the pack contents through to the deliberations with myself during the interviews, the process not the argument has been seen as the legitimising factor. As was set out in Chapter 1, deliberative democracy is about a process as well as an outcome, and that decisions and viewpoints borrow legitimacy from that process is enshrined in the writings of all the major theorists. As such, to see this process at play across the database as a whole, but most particularly during the secondary interviews has been quite remarkable.

However, for all that this thesis has introduced many inspiring (for me anyway), but rather broad statements about [deliberative] democracy being a continuous process not an outcome, it is inescapable that democracy must decide. Deliberative democracy is but one way of arriving at a decision, but all theorists accept (though as noted in Chapter 1 some focus upon this rather less than others) that decisions must be reached, and that in order that there can be a decision, there must be some agreement. Though it has been shown that both the process of deliberation and the views expressed as part of that process were accepted as legitimate, the database now has to be challenged as to what effect that deliberation might have had on any decisions based upon it. In particular, it might seem that, taken as a whole across the group of interviewees, the strength of disagreement had been increased. This in turn might suggest that any decisions taken by this group would be highly unsatisfactory to many members. This

¹⁸² In fact in most cases there was a subtle but nonetheless noticeable (and very important) change in the way interviewees referred to the 'other' side of the arguments. To acknowledge the merits of an argument that does not agree with one's own requires a certain confidence in one's own view.

challenge strikes to the heart of the potential usefulness of the model that is deliberative democracy, and is tackled below.

Disagreement and decisions: It is necessary here to return to the disagreement between Ackerman (1989) and Bohman (1990), which was introduced in Chapter 1. The 'conversational restraint' advocated by Ackerman, would limit the agenda of any deliberative system to issues around which there are no known fundamental cleavages. In this way a process of dialogue can be begun, and maintained long term even where there are such differences between parties that a broader agenda would preclude any dialogue.¹⁸³ Bohman however points out that it is simply not possible to avoid certain issues, and indeed to attempt at all costs to avoid disagreement is to underestimate the potential offered by the deliberative process.

Based upon the experience of this research I sympathise with both views and believe that the two are not mutually incompatible.

Taking Ackerman's argument, the database compiled from both the primary and secondary interviews supports the view that 'conversational restraint' can be a positive 'enabler'. In this sense, as interviewees knowledge and confidence developed it was possible to extend the 'reach' of deliberations towards matters which interviewees were likely to have held closer to them (i.e. more similar to those issues of fundamental importance considered by both Ackerman and Bohman). The practical exemplification of this is provided by discussion around identity. Discussion on this issue during the primary interviews had been necessarily led by the interviewees, with them being in complete control of how far they were going to personalise their comments. For example an interviewee explaining that they felt Scottish rather than British or European was not pressed to explain why they felt that might be. When the same issue was returned to in the secondary interviews (most likely initiated by discussion of the European flag or the video) a much broader agenda was pursued. In part this was at my insistence (subject to my own rules of respect for privacy, which were absolutely upheld), but also in part at the instigation of the interviewees. They wanted to discuss

¹⁸³ During the time of this research 'conversational restraint', has been most notably employed, and with some success in both Northern Ireland over weapons de-commissioning, and Israel over the future of Jerusalem.

how and why they felt as they did, and also how it might have been that their own views contrasted those of the speakers on the video or other people they had spoken to.

Above it can be seen that 'conversational restraint' was essential at the outset, but it was highly desirable to reduce its effects later on. This is where I am pointed to Bohman's argument that it is ultimately impossible to restrict the agenda for any deliberations. This is true if any democratic system is to reach difficult decisions; just as it were true if this research was to collect meaningful data on in depth issues. The point however is that deliberation has to both begin, and be kept going at all times. Had I 'pushed up the agenda' too many difficult issues early on the process might have stopped, leaving me with neither meaningful data nor any prospect of collecting any. By beginning with a high degree of restraint and then reducing it I was able to mimic as closely as possible the 'incipient discursive design' (Dryzek 1994 – see Chapter 2) which combined the immediate need to begin deliberation followed by a more far reaching discussion later on.

The confidence gained during the research also feeds into an explanation of a problem that had troubled me almost from the outset of the research. That problem was the very low response rate to initial appeal for volunteers. I had considered a number of possible reasons including for example the fact that there had only recently been a general election campaign in which Europe had been prominent issue, and there might resultantly be some issue fatigue. However, these were only ever vague notions, not based on any hard data. Of course it had not been one of the research objectives to investigate why the response rate was so poor, but it was inevitably of interest.

Looking back over the failed attempts to set up focus groups and later citizens juries, and the then relatively high rates of response (though still poor in absolute terms), to invitations to take part in one to one interviews, it was clear that the originally selected methodology was inappropriate. However, the methodological reason interacts closely with the findings from the research. People lacking confidence in their knowledge and even their opinions are less likely to 'launder' those in an interactive public setting in front of a number of strangers.¹⁸⁴ They proved to be more amenable to discussion with

¹⁸⁴ More than half of the interviewees in the primary stage regularly spoke to audiences of strangers either as part of their profession or their hobbies. Every one said that they would not have been prepared to discuss their views in public. Therefore the common anxiety over public speaking per se was less of a

one person, who guaranteed to be non-judgemental and who built up a relationship over time. When asked the question at the end of the secondary interviews as to whether they would now be prepared to take part in either a focus group or citizens jury all of the interviewees said no. However, what is of great significance is that every interviewee accepted that they were closer to taking up such an invitation at the end of the process than they had been at the outset.

The models of deliberative democracy introduced earlier in the thesis consider deliberative forums (as far as they stipulate procedural criteria), which involve public challenge and possible verbal confrontation. This is actually a highly advanced stage of the process, and a considerable degree of development¹⁸⁵ is required on the part of the citizens before such systems could be inclusive. The database of this research leads me to conclude that to set up such forums with any degree of immediacy would be all too likely to limit their inclusiveness to the expert, the professional and/or the arrogant. This would defeat the objective of deliberation that the procedural systems are intended to pursue.

Just as I have accepted a need to restrain the range of 'conversation', coupled with a gradual move towards the broadening of the agenda to encompass problematic issues, I believe that the forums for deliberation must involve similar gradualism. It is essential to 'go to where the people are'. To involve them in some form of deliberation, whatever that might be, based on whatever they are prepared to accept. The process can then take up its own momentum, and, so long as sufficient care and research is put into its format, information can be provided. By gaining information, and deliberating around it, citizens can develop the 'art of participation'. The virtuous circle of increased ability to participate effectively, coupled with an increased motivation so to do can be initiated in this way. Aiming to achieve too much too soon is counter productive.

Having demonstrated that the deliberative process had 'developed' the interviewees and that the procedural arrangements for the deliberation had been influential in this success, this section must now explain how significant it is that the sum total of disagreement actually increased during the process.

factor compared with that of speaking about European issues.

¹⁸⁵ This is not meant to be patronising. It refers only to the citizens' deliberative capacities, including, crucially, knowledge and corresponding confidence in that knowledge.

As Chapter 1 discussed with reference to Habermas' theory of communicative Action, (acknowledged earlier as one of the intellectual building blocks of the model of deliberative democracy), deliberating around issues should lead the participants towards consensus. However, what has been shown to have happened in this research is that the disagreement that existed early in the process had become more entrenched later. Instead of finding some 'ideal' truth (see Chapter 1 footnotes) interviewees seem to have found several different versions of the truth, and each laid a stronger claim to their *own* version at the end than they had at the outset. Explanation of this phenomenon is where those theorists of deliberative democracy who have interpreted Habermas theory need to be drawn upon.

As has been referred to above, the deliberative process had only reached its earliest stages by the end of this research. Interviewees had gone through the early process of 'laundering' and developing their views. This should be seen as preparation for further (and more public) deliberation later on. In no way could the deliberative process I managed as part of this research be considered 'ideal' from a Habermasian perspective. However, as that was never the intention, there is still great validity in what was achieved.

It should be seen as a positive that polarised opinions were strengthened during this research, indeed as Christiano (1997) explained (see Chapter 1) it is the norm for sum-disagreement to increase in the early stages of any deliberative process, as previously mute interests (and opinions) are heard. What could be expected if the process were continued is a series of modifications in 'substantive arguments' (Bohman 1996) as public deliberation subjected arguments to scrutiny, re-consideration and revision. As the interviewees were closer to accepting a role in this more demanding stage of public deliberation there is justifiable cause for optimism that the process could be continued towards a more *ideal speech situation*, with a corresponding tendency towards consensus.

It is also very important in this analysis to place the issue of agreement/ consensus within the correct sense of proportion. From Rousseau through Mill to the conception of deliberative democracy provided by Cohen (1991 – see Chapter 1) there has been an

emphasis on the discovery of some form of *general will*. However, that general will is not imagined as being equally pleasing to all. What is stressed by theorists of deliberative democracy is the tendency *towards* consensus. Thus it (i.e. the compromise) is a dynamic and temporary position along a continuum, not a singular point of absolute and all embracing agreement. The general will might thus never be reached. However, as it was explained in Chapter 1, there is virtue in its pursuance through deliberation.

Reached via deliberative means, a compromise (and any decision based upon it) borrows legitimacy from the process leading to it, and at the same time, encourages further deliberation: '[T]he necessity of compromise does not remove either the decision or the decision-making process from democratic criteria. Nor should compromise be seen as final' (Bohman 1990).

In sum, I am not at all discouraged by the lack of explicit tendency towards consensus during this research. I believe the evidence shows very clearly that the deliberative process had been begun. Those individuals involved had been kept on board the process, and the dynamic of deliberation had met all the key predictions suggested by the theoretical models. If a decision were to be made by the group of interviewees, it would be a compromise based on equally legitimate views on either side, and would be respected as such. What it would not be though is final. The process would continue.

The deliberation had reached the stage set out by Bohman below:

Reasonable disagreements [...] still persist. That, however is just the point: that all *unreasonable* disagreements, as well as all unreasonable agreements be eliminated (Bohman 1996 p. 101).

Whilst presenting the two themes sequentially, this chapter has addressed the complexities inherent in the relationship between the provision of information and the process of deliberation. In this sense, the detail about which formats of information were most effective was used to provide the backdrop for the discussion of the dynamics of deliberation that followed. From the recommendations made to the Commission, to the analysis of the effects of the whole deliberative process upon the participant group, the chapter has adopted not only an analytical style, but also a

reflective one. The thesis conclusion that follows develops this dual theme further by presenting my own considered view of the implications of this research in terms of both EU policy, and the theoretical development of the model of deliberative democracy.

Conclusion

Conclusion overview

This concluding chapter of the thesis aims to bring together the main themes of what has been presented so far. This is achieved in a number of ways. First, a summary of the general findings reminds the reader of the key statements that have been made as evidence has been presented throughout preceding chapters. The conclusion then broadens to the more general level by presenting a detailed analysis of the implications of this research. This is done in two sections. The implications for the EU (and any other interested party) in terms of policy are presented first, within the framework assumption that the democratic deficit should be filled. Here I provide suggestions for two practical schemes that respond to the question: *What should be done?* These suggestions are presented not as a prescription, rather as typically indicative of the sort of schemes that this research generally points towards. Next, the implications of this research for the theory of deliberative democracy are set out, focusing particularly on the challenge inherent in taking the theory into practice. As such, the problems this research encountered in actually '*doing deliberation*' are put to optimum use. This section returns to the theorisation of the deficit set out in Chapter 1 in order that the critical commentary on the theory remains very much linked with the actual problem to which it was applied.

Summary of general findings

That this research employed a range of theoretical literature in building a definition of the democratic deficit, which went on to guide the research, has been clearly set out throughout the thesis. That a certain theoretical selectivity was guided by the intention to test deliberative democracy in a practical political situation has also been discussed at length above. The two areas of theory effectively came together in the way that the research investigated the geography of the deficit using deliberative techniques, finally

taking the deliberative process as far as was possible in assessing the validity of certain claims made by deliberative theorists.

On the geography of the deficit it must be stated very clearly here that the EU was found to be an issue essentially *framed* in national terms. By this I mean that interviewees tended to think of it (almost) exclusively in terms of the national context. The very sensitive research methodology employed here was able to establish this basic framework whilst at the same time allowing me to gain an understanding of the extent and nature of regional variation in attitudes towards the EU. Following Keating (1998) I should assert that regions *do* matter, but that they are *not* the new nations. What I called the '*general approaches*' of interviewees dominated their outlook on issues discussed in the research, including, importantly, any regionally specific information about the EU. In the English case study regions that national scale was the UK, in Dundee it was Scotland only. Of the three originally postulated effects set out in the thesis Introduction, the gratitude effect was effectively annulled, and though the other two effects were found, they were not in the event confirmed as being based on the ideas that had underpinned their formulation. The implications of these findings are taken up later.

On deliberative democracy, it was clear that the *information deficit* was a major hindrance to the active engagement of the interviewees in the politics of the EU. Data presented throughout Chapters 3 and 4 report both the self-perceived and the actual ignorance of interviewees, and how the research methodology set about tackling this. It was reported at length that the *Information Pack* was effective in informing interviewees about the EU, but that this had not in itself had the effect of making them more favourable in their approaches to the EU. Indeed, what was observed to have happened in most cases was that interviewees *used* the information in the packs (and all the other information provided both directly and indirectly as part of this research¹⁸⁶) to bolster their original positions.

¹⁸⁶ This is a reference to information that interviewees came into contact with during the process of this research that was not in any way provided by myself. The point was well demonstrated in Chapter 4 where an explicit example of this is referred to. Here an interviewee is shown to have made extraordinary use of information because of his involvement in this research. However, the information was not provided as part of the research. Other quoted sources of 'extra' information derived from more informed chats with friends and colleagues, and a clearer understanding of media reporting of the EU.

In this sense it can be judged that the overall strength of disagreement had increased. Thus one of the apparently central claims of deliberative democracy, that is that deliberation around issues should tend towards consensus, seems on the surface to have been contradicted by this finding. However, this cannot be accepted as the overall finding from the evidence presented throughout the previous two chapters.

The deliberative methodology employed in this research engaged the interviewees effectively with the issues. Beyond this, their views had gone through both the private and public stages of what Bohman referred to as the '*laundering*' process. The increased confidence with which interviewees both held and expressed their views was a sea change compared with the relatively passive and apologetic approach adopted by many of the same interviewees during the primary interviews. Taking interviewees from the position they were in at the outset of the research to where they were at the end was a considerable achievement. By the end, they were more ready to participate in public forums of discussion and debate, more prepared to respect the legitimacy of opposing views and crucially, more prepared to demand meaningful participation in the future.

The research found active participation in deliberation to be a highly advanced skill, one that requires a citizenry that is *educated* in how it is done. This research had to, and did, find ways of *educating* the participants; the methodologies typically referred to by theorists of deliberative democracy proving inappropriate in this practical situation. That the model is dominated by theoretical methodologies that are not easily amenable to practice is unsurprising considering its 'newness', and the weight of its development so far being in theory rather than practice. The implications of this research for the model are discussed later in this concluding section.

This section now turns to an analysis of the wider implications stemming from this research, taking first those most closely related to policy, and second those more specifically relevant to the theory of deliberative democracy.

Findings and policy implications

As was stated earlier in the thesis, the permissive consensus is over (Obradovic 1996). As such, citizens of the Union generally no longer accept integration without query and

challenge. This research engaged a number of people across the three regions who had widely ranging views on the issues associated with European integration, but what was common to all was concern about the levels and quality of available information.

Information is essential for citizenship. This is supported very strongly by the research findings insofar as there was far more concern and interest in this issue than *any* of the formal arrangements for citizenship that have been facilitated by EU. Referring back to terminology used in Chapter 1, whether they be the '*bundles of rights*' deriving from the TEU, calculated gains associated with '*regional cosmopolitanism*' or feelings of commonality associated with the '*multi-level nation*' identity (from Dardinelli 1998); deliberate strategies aimed at forging the *affectio societatis* (Fontaine 1994 – see Chapter 1), are failing in the face of the information deficit.

Considering this finding, it might be tempting to assume that providing more information about the benefits of European integration, particularly in terms of citizenship, offers a route to filling the information deficit, and through this the citizen deficit. The findings of this research nullify this assumption.

Whilst I should not wish to repeat here the recommendations to the Commission set out in Chapter 4, it must be pertinent in this section on policy implications to return more broadly to the issue of how the EU produces and distributes information. That the EU produced information had not previously been seen by the interviewees is perhaps excusable given the problems associated with the transmission deficit, and the relative youth of the distribution networks. What however is of greater significance is the content of that information.

The problem with content is best demonstrated here by reference to the *gratitude effect*, most particularly the finding that it had to be annulled. I have chosen to focus on this because it is indicative of an underlying assumption that appears to guide the selection of content for EU information publications. This assumption should be seen as the cause of the detailed critique culminating in my recommendations to the Commission.

No *gratitude* was found in the north east case study region, nor in fact in either of the others. This was found not to be due to ignorance, but rather a prevailing attitude

towards the distribution of EU funding that simply precluded *gratitude*. Though the detail of this attitude was complex, (there in fact being a range of motivations for it), the result was the same.

This attitude clashes head on with the tone of much of the EU produced information. That information appears to be informed by the assumption that the benefits of European integration can be sold by the telling of a positive story. Whilst those most positive towards integration and the EU generally saw nothing wrong with the EU selling itself in this way, those individuals are surely not the ones the hard sell is being aimed at. To those less favourable, the reaction to the presentation of an exclusively positive story of the EU's successes was in many cases vehemently negative.

EU produced information should be improved in the ways suggested earlier, but for this to happen, the assumption underlying the detail must change. This is best summed up by the following postscript to a key quote introduced earlier in the thesis: '[if]the people have disappointed' (Weiler et al 1995 p. 1), they cannot be *'bought'*.

Another major finding from this research should impact upon the information policy of the EU. That is that the information should acknowledge that there exists certain differences in the way the deficit is experienced regionally. If the Commission (as the publishing body of most of the information) were to take on board the need to alter the content of its publications as suggested above, it would do very well to tailor it to local concerns. This research has shown the importance of the Scottish identity in one case, and the propensity to take issues personally in another. These were shown to be very important to individuals' experience and perception of the EU, and in respect of this finding, the Commission should be prepared to research and then acknowledge regional distinctiveness in its publication strategy.¹⁸⁷

Accepting the above broad implications in terms of the content of EU produced information, there are two much more narrowly focused policy suggestions that have presented themselves during the progress of this research. Whilst it was never a specific research aim to *'solve the problem that is the democratic deficit'*, I see these as two very

¹⁸⁷ Here there is an obvious link with the point made above. The Commission's regional guides were used as part of the research (see Appendix E) but were particularly exemplary of the unhelpful assumption discussed above.

practical ways that the EU could move towards its resolution. Though each is fundamentally based in the findings reported throughout the thesis, neither is claimed to be catholicon. Instead, each is indicative of the general finding that more of the same, that is: *more* information, *more* persuasion, and *more* 'citizenship' will certainly not fill the transmission and citizen aspects of the democratic deficit.

The first policy suggestion focuses particularly on the transmission deficit, and is that the EU should take a more proactive role in supplying information to schools across the UK. As stated earlier, it is perhaps acceptable that up until now the reach of EU derived publications into schools has been limited. This in fact is partly due to the Commission having a request based policy of supply¹⁸⁸. However, *citizenship* is now being introduced as a Foundation Subject within the National Curriculum in England and Wales, and a National Priority in Education in Scotland. This means that in future years all children in British [state] schools will be following a programme of study which is aimed at, among other things, teaching political literacy. This involves:

Pupils learning about the institutions, issues, problems and practices of our democracy and how citizens can make themselves effective in public life locally, regionally, nationally and internationally through skills and values as well as knowledge.
(Advisory Group on Citizenship Education 2001)

Teaching about the EU is thus soon to be a statutory requirement in state funded schools, although from where schools and teachers choose to source information supporting this teaching is their own concern. The Commission should produce and effectively distribute (most likely via school libraries) information of a published quality equal to that used in this research (see Chapters 2 & 4), but with due consideration to all that has been presented above concerning content and tone.¹⁸⁹ When willingly and actively used by teachers as the basis for classroom discussion and deliberation, such information could overcome many of the problems associated with the current information deficit, not just with some of the next generation of EU adult citizens, but also surely, at least to some extent, their parents/carers.

¹⁸⁸ The Commission supplies information to schools only after they individually request specific documents. Thus, the current policy is reactive rather than proactive.

¹⁸⁹ It is in fact an offence in England and Wales under the 1996 Education Act to promote ANY particular political view. Indeed, sections 406 and 407 of the Act require any biased information to be adequately balanced by contrasting information. If governing body's perceived the current Commission derived literature to be biased, they should not use it as it would be difficult to equal it from other sources, so

The second policy suggestion made here relates to the adult citizenry of the EU upon which this research was actually conducted. As it touches so closely on the problem of engaging citizens with any available information about the EU, it inevitably links into the following section of this conclusion which focuses more specifically on the theoretical implications of the research for the model of deliberative democracy.

Even if the information being distributed by the Commission¹⁹⁰ were perfect (i.e. the right media, content and transmission route), it would not in itself impact significantly on the studied aspects of the democratic deficit. Instead, the findings of this research point very much to the need to integrate the provision of information with some practical method of engagement. Here, the research process itself provided that engagement. Working with the raw material that was the motivation of the interviewees, inviting them to participate in deliberation with me on a one-to-one basis provided the integration. In turn they became more informed, more interested, and ultimately more 'able'¹⁹¹ to participate in deliberation involving greater numbers of citizens in the future. Whilst I cannot claim that this would automatically replicate throughout the 320 million citizens of the Union, the lessons learned here do suggest that the 'Road-show' might have a lot to offer.

There exists in the UK, as in many other countries, a network of groups who regularly meet to discuss [any] contemporary issues. Most of these groups are apolitical (though some of course are not), but they do welcome speakers who are prepared to deliver an interesting and thought provoking talk, followed by an opportunity to take questions. Round-Table/Rotary, The Women's Institute, Young Farmers Clubs and Sixth Form Debating Forums/ School Assemblies are examples that I myself have conducted talks with during the years of this research. Extending beyond this short list is a huge range of available clubs¹⁹² spanning a very wide range of special interests. It is very much my view that a short talk on the EU would be a considerable draw at meetings, acting as something of a pump-primer for further discursive involvement.

superior would its published quality be by comparison with likely alternatives.

¹⁹⁰ Or indeed any other body.

¹⁹¹ Here I am referring to the educative process in the way it was introduced in Chapter 1

¹⁹² Lists of Clubs and Associations are readily available from Local Authorities, and in fact not one of the three case study regions involved in this research had less than 200 listed.

The talks would of course need to be guided at all stages of their formulation and presentation by the findings presented earlier in the thesis. In particular I feel that the credibility of the speaker would be even more important in this forum than it proved to be on my video presentation. There is no suggestion in what I am recommending here that politicians should be involved, rather it should be more likely to succeed were they not. Government Officers, Councillors and in appropriate cases, students should likely be the best candidates to deliver what might become something of a populist *Road-show*. Overall, the tone of the talks should be 'playing to the EU's strengths, whilst accepting, and paying due respect to concerns over its perceived weaknesses'. This approach would be broadly acceptable to audiences which in most cases (depending on the nature of the Association), are likely to span the full range of *general approaches* set out in Chapter 3. There should be a strong local theme built into the talks.

Whilst this might seem something of a simplistic suggestion, it is not. The *Road-show* potentially incorporates solutions to the myriad problems experienced early in this research. The pressure placed on selected potential interviewees to discuss their views in public turned out to be one of the greatest hindrances to getting this research off the ground. At talks such as this they do not have to, they can just listen, and question. Participants in the talks (i.e. the audience) will be amongst peers and friends, thereby facilitating an atmosphere of perceived equality. It provides the gentle start found to be so crucial to the establishment of deliberative forums.

This Road-show idea, like that of the more positive role in the teaching of citizenship within British schools, is achievable, ethical and, not unimportantly, relatively cheap. Both are indicative of a need to shift emphasis from the grandiose to the unpretentious. As I state at the very close of the thesis, though the democratic deficit is a big problem, the solution will be based on small-scale, well designed and closely targeted schemes, of which the above are exemplary, though far from exhaustive.

This conclusion now turns to the implications arising from this research that most impact upon the area of theory that provided part of the context for the whole research project.

Findings and deliberative democracy

As has been set out at various points throughout the thesis, the methodology employed in this research was novel. Focus groups and citizens juries had to be rejected in favour of my so-called 'deliberative interviews'. In spite of these necessary modifications, the essential character was in keeping with the theoretical account of deliberative democracy that inspired the original selection. The methods provided '*an exercise in face to face democracy*' (Fishkin 1995), and were essentially '*public*' (from Bohman 1996). As set out earlier, the results of the deliberative process were very encouraging. The interviewees became much more informed about, and resultantly more engaged with the politics of European integration than had previously been the case. Following extensive *laundering* of views, though the sum of disagreement (Christiano 1997) across the whole group could be seen as having increased, that this disagreement was by the end of the process *reasonable* (Bohman 1996 – see Chapter 4) is indicative of the potential for reaching a satisfactory compromise. Such a hypothetical compromise would be temporary, and not equally pleasing to all, but nonetheless a more legitimate one than would have been possible were the same individuals to be involved in its induction prior to the research process.

Based on these findings I am, at the end of this research, in the position of largely endorsing the enthusiasm for participation generally, and deliberative democracy in particular that motivated the approach taken throughout. However, that is not to leave me uncritical of the theoretical model of deliberative democracy. What I wish to do in this closing section is to broadly focus on the rather circular argument that I began with. That argument runs thus: *in order to realise the claimed benefits of participation through deliberation, the citizens involved must share broadly equal competence and motivation. However, previous exclusion from participation limits competence and motivation to a select few, thus potentially endorsing Schumpeter's orthodox doctrine (See Chapter 1).*

Within the broad focus on this claim, the section maintains throughout a more detailed analysis of how the research findings interrelate with the theorisation of the democratic deficit as presented earlier in the thesis. In this sense, the section aims to achieve both a

general and a specific commentary on the theory of deliberative democracy, insofar as it has been applied throughout this research.

The most obvious starting point for this analysis of the theoretical implications arising from this research must be the problems that I had in getting it off the ground. Whilst the procedural details of this have been recounted elsewhere (see Chapter 2), the reasons behind the difficulties faced at this stage are fundamental in terms of their importance here. In fact, by explaining the main reasons why focus groups and citizens juries failed, but deliberative interviews succeeded, I am able to comment critically on the deliberative democracy literature,¹⁹³ whilst at the same time providing the basis for commendation as to how deliberation could be employed more effectively by the EU.

I introduced the concept in Chapter 1 of participation being something akin to an *art form* that can in part be taught and in part learnt through experience. It is at this point that I must state that all that I have found throughout this research validates that claim. Before the interviewees involved in this research progressed to the point of even considering exposing themselves to the prospect of having their views challenged in such a public forum as a focus group, they required a great deal of both teaching and experiential learning. Part of this process involved the realisation that there was a legitimacy to their views. This was itself in part based on the realisation that '*experts*' also held similar views. This also extended to the views opposing theirs, as again interviewees were exposed to credible material espousing those contrary ideas and opinions. The legitimate standing of both sides of the argument was undoubtedly further enhanced in the interviewees eyes by the nature of the discursive process which was built up around them. All views were dealt respect, but none were beyond challenge. However, the evidence from this research points overwhelmingly to the need to allow the interviewee to actively influence this process. It is not a uni-directional or passive process.

This finding in particular, which was discussed in detail towards the end of the previous chapter, leads me to conclude that insofar as the theorists of deliberative democracy do stipulate the methods through which the ideals of the model should be met, there is a

¹⁹³ As the model is new, and therefore in the early stages of development, my comments are directed towards the collective literature rather than at any particular theorist. It also happens to be the case that the literature as a whole shares the common fault that forms the basis of my critical comment.

naivety that presently hinders the model's usefulness. An essentially normative view of how decisions should best be made can be insensitive to the needs of the supposed participants; something (i.e. the participants needs) that the model is supposed to be all about!

Public deliberation of the kind implied by focus groups and citizens juries demands a baseline confidence in ones views that was not present in the interview group (nor, one must suppose, amongst many of those refusing to take part at all), at least not at the beginning of the process. Much *education* was needed to take these ordinary citizens to this point, and this is wholly underplayed in the theoretical literature. As the previous chapter discussed, there are dangers of researching with only those unusually 'educated'; there must be even greater dangers inherent in basing political decisions exclusively on the participation of such citizens. To theorise benefits deriving from deliberative processes based on methods that are unachievable in practice raises unrealistic expectations. Informed by the evidence of the whole of this research it is my belief that there is great potential for deliberative methods to tackle the democratic deficit. However, they should be guided at all times by the following rubric:

'Any deliberative scheme must go to where the people are, not where it is thought they should be. It must work at their level, at their pace, using methods that they find acceptable and non-threatening. It must bring them along the road to more effective participation step by step. Each mistake made in the process will shed participants. Any scheme which appears to meet the theoretical ideals of deliberation, but which is unappealing to the citizens themselves is doomed to failure.'

It is now pertinent to take this comment that the theoretical literature of deliberative democracy should extend greater consideration to the less grandiose aspects of deliberation, and apply a similar logic to the EU, and any deliberative attempts to fill the deficit.

This research did not focus on the institutional aspects of the deficit, and so there is relatively little basis for comment on the potential filling of such. However, even in this case there are grounds for some measured optimism. Evidence was presented in the previous chapter that showed the process of deliberation involved in this research to

have begun, in some small way, to enhance the effects of concerns over the institutional arrangements for governance at the European level. There was always a high level of interest among the participant group in how the EU actually functions, and the information provided, along with the deliberation 'around' it went some way to satisfying that interest. In so doing though, there were significant examples of a strengthening of views not only about the relationships between the institutions, but, more importantly in the context of the aspects of the deficit that were focused on here, the opportunity available to individuals to influence these arrangements. The strengthening of resolve to use the vote [or not to!] exemplifies the potential that the deliberative process offers in increasing the pressure for *institutional innovation* (from Bohman 1996 see Chapter 2). If there is to be institutional reform of the EU, surely it is better that the pressure for it comes from the citizens, not the *governors*. This might avoid further examples of the well intentioned, but largely unsuccessful attempts to forge the European citizenship. Once again the implication is clear: the issue of institutional reform is a very big one, but as it is likely best to be directed from the level of individuals; deliberative democracy (provided it engages citizens in the way achieved in this research) shows some potential to effectively channel citizens' aspirations.

On the aspects of the deficit that the research did particularly focus on, the results were obviously much more clearly indicative of the real potential and limitations offered by deliberative democracy.

Effectively, deliberation is in itself a method of transmission. In fact what has been shown throughout this thesis is that citizens need information to support the deliberation, and the deliberation itself is necessary to ensure effective engagement with that information. But even though the two are mutually dependent, the exact relationship between them has to remain flexible. Whilst throughout this research there was a general theme of introducing increasingly complex and challenging information very much in line with the development of the deliberation, there was one notable exception, in which information had to take a secondary role.

Concerning the national scale of the media, and all the peculiarities this implies, my presentation of information tended to follow this existing pattern. Though I challenged it repeatedly, especially in the primary interviews, in order to continue the process of

deliberation, I rather '*went to where the interviewees were*' in terms of their understanding of the issues being discussed. That the national scale was already so dominant, and that I could not have set out to substantially challenge this without losing the burgeoning momentum of the deliberative process very much represents the 'conversational restraint' that I stressed to be so important in the previous chapter. The deliberative process used here has probably had the effect of reinforcing this one aspect of the transmission deficit. There can be no prescription for deliberation, and the 'tools' of the focus group and citizens jury would not, in my view, have been sufficiently sensitive to the need for constant reflexivity and adaptation.

Again, this infers a need for the literature on deliberative democracy not only to place greater emphasis on routes to the realisation of its claims, but also to exhibit a preparedness to demonstrate how the process can so easily be broken down by inappropriate 'methodology'.

Turning specifically to the citizen deficit, the deliberative processes involved in this research largely failed to show significant increases in enthusiasm for the European identity within the participant group. If the intention had been to use deliberation as a route to increasing either the *political* or *identity* approaches to the European identity (as identified in Chapter 1) then pessimism might be justified. This, however was neither the intention, nor, as it turned out, the outcome. In fact what is most significant is that by partially filling the information deficit, participants became able to engage more effectively with debates and discussions, which is the **right** way to generate progress towards an inclusive political or cultural identity. Delanty's (1988, see Chapter 1) notion of a *different* European community based not around the concepts of unity borrowed from the nation state, but instead around a shared '*discursive framework*' is something that this research has shown deliberative techniques to offer the potential to begin to create.

Well informed citizens, confidently enjoying meaningful engagement with European issues and debates, even in within the comfort of their own home (perhaps, particularly in the comfort of their own home), represents a more effective route to filling the democratic deficit than does a continued focus on how European they feel, or how many formal rights they enjoy. Such a situation (which was reached with the participants in

this research) is much closer to Cohen's idealised conception of a deliberative democracy (see Chapter 1), than to the various citizenship schemes that the EU has pursued over time. In sum, deliberative democracy might not have indicated here that it offers any great potential to make citizens feel more European, but it has very much demonstrated a different *kind* of citizenship, one which might itself represent a pragmatic route out of the problems of the current citizen deficit.

I close this thesis with a reiteration of the optimism that inspired it. Based on the evidence of this research, the EU does matter to people. It reaches into people's lives and consequently they have strong views about it. Despite it being a huge (and possibly confusing) political body, the interest is there. However, so far it appears the Schumpeter was right; *ignorance is the norm* (1976), and I also believe that more of the same '*meritorious effort*' to inform citizens, to interest them in European citizenship and identity will leave citizens at the *bottom of the ladder* (1976). What is needed is a meaningful route to engagement such as that provided in this research. Though less than fifty people were involved, the results were very powerful. Previous exclusion from participation can be overcome: the *orthodox doctrine* can be challenged.

The issues most focused on were those of most interest to the participants. They were encouraged to seek answers to bewildering questions, their views being treated with respect, never exasperation. Each participant in the research became something of a teacher in the *art* that is participation, passing on a sense of that engagement to others. The democratic deficit is a big problem, but it is also a very small problem. As the south east England case showed most clearly, the personal and the apparently trivial really matters, and it is this territory over which the democratic deficit is both experienced, and will ultimately be filled.

The EU does need to react sensitively to citizen's concerns. Establishing what are these concerns requires qualitative methodologies, and just as with deliberative democracy, there is a need to 'go to where citizens are', not to where it is thought they should be.

Homo-politicus is alive and well for me at the close of this research, and whilst it is no panacea, I believe deliberative democracy represents an opportunity to fill aspects of the

democratic deficit that less participative decision-making processes will serve only to exacerbate:

The theory of deliberative democracy offers only an imperfect method for making the decision process as reasonable as possible [...] but this process makes the realisation of reasonable results more likely. (Manin 1997 p. 363)

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