

## Report on Ms 1929

The authors tackle a long overdue issue, the "endogeneity" of the political space for EU reform. They argue convincingly in the introduction that the debate between partisans of a "political Europe" and those of a "government by the rule" has so far been leaning towards the latter view on the basis of an exogenous political constraint: "there is no political space for further reduction of sovereignty". This has led to the typical TINA (there is no alternative) approach to EMU reform.

The authors carry on a thorough analysis of the Eurobarometer results, especially when close to elections. They notice that growing dissatisfaction towards Europe does in fact go hand in hand with what they call "global discontent". This latter measure is in turn linked with "economic pain" from the crisis. This in turn leads, they show, to actual electoral results and parliament seats

This is the basis for the core of the paper, in which the authors propose a four-fold geopolitical map of Europe, that goes well beyond the typical (and in their opinion misleading) distinction between the core and the periphery.

The paper reaches a rather gloomy conclusion: there is little hope of change of the status quo towards "more Europe". Change may well take the form of a drive towards disintegration, a conclusion that fits perfectly well with recent political developments (that I am sure the authors will discuss in their revision of the paper)

The paper is very interesting, well written, and convincingly argued. Furthermore there is a political economy interest in the topic that would make it appreciated by the academic and policy makers' communities. I would therefore certainly recommend publication.

I have a suggestion for a major extension, that the authors may choose or not to follow, and a few minor remarks that I'd like to be discussed in their response, if not addressed in the paper.

The possible major extension stems from the consideration that the keys to reform still are in the hands of national parliaments and governments. It would be interesting to see the analysis repeated for the national parliaments of at least the 4 largest EMU countries (FR-GE-SP-IT). I am sure it would strengthen the conclusions of the authors, but I also understand it would steer the paper away from its current focus on EU institutions. It is a tradeoff, so I'd leave the choice of whether to add such a section to the authors.

As for the minor points, they follow:

1. While I agree with the fact that austerity caused pain, I do not see how it can be seen as "pain" *per se*. Its negative effects should be seen in GDP and employment. I'd drop it from the indicators.
2. Related to this, I'd use employment rather than unemployment, as the latter famously misses the discouraged worker effect that played an important role in crisis countries
3. If data on income distribution existed, I'd add those to the economic pain index
4. I am not sure that the measure the authors take captures an element that I believe to be crucial, which is "crisis fatigue". Is the average over the medium term enough? Maybe it could be weighted with variability? A sharp increase of pain, but short lasted is in my opinion less conducive to disaffection than a slow "descent to hell"
5. regarding the attribution of seats to the three groups, I believe the authors should justify their choice to keep the Tories within the EPP, and maybe as a robustness check try to move them into the euro skeptic group