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**Waiting for the starting signal: the UK's pro- and anti-euro
campaigns¹**

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¹ This paper is written in the context of a European Union Framework Five project, 'The Transformation of Political Communication and Mobilisation in European Public Spheres', that began in September 2001 and runs for 3 years. The EurPolCom centre at the Institute of Communications Studies has been developing expertise on the British case since the project began. The paper also relates to my PhD thesis, which looks at political campaigning for and against European integration in the UK.

Abstract

While referendums are being used more frequently than ever before in democratic societies, there has been little academic study of how campaign communications operate prior to and during referendums. This paper models campaign communications in referendums, arguing that pressure groups can be considered as potentially campaigning in any of three campaign arenas – the policy, media and public arenas. These are defined by their different immediate targets of persuasion, which are government and key opinion formers, the mass media, and public opinion respectively, and the different sets of campaign strategies that characterise them. This framework of campaign arenas is applied to the current campaigns for and against the European single currency in the UK. Using both secondary research and interview data, the paper identifies the key phases of Britain’s euro campaigns and analyses the strategies currently used by the many pro- and anti-euro pressure groups that have begun preparations for a referendum. While in the present ‘pre-campaign’ stage groups campaign largely in the policy and media arenas rather than waging the full battle for public opinion, in the event of a referendum campaigners’ efforts will be concentrated in the public and media arenas.

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1. Introduction: will campaigns matter in Britain's euro referendum?

'Comedy stars, Labour MPs, business people and many others are taking part in a film opposing the euro. The film features Bob Geldof, Johnny Vaughan, Harry Enfield, Vic Reeves, Dianne Abbot MP, Jools Holland, Kate Hoey MP, Rik Mayall, Tony Parsons and Gordon Ramsay. The film is screening in cinemas as part of a major new 'people versus the politicians' campaign.' No Campaign website, www.no-euro.com, July 2002.

'The campaign about the euro is not started yet and I think just turning to a bunch of comedians isn't going to help explain to people what the serious issues are about.'
Comment from Simon Buckby, director of Britain in Europe, in BBC News online article, 'Pro-euro group hits back at critics', 29 August 2002.

Will campaigns really matter in the event of a referendum on the euro? It is clear that the campaigners themselves believe they will, as the above comments on the No Campaign's anti-euro cinema advertisement indicate. Pro- and anti-euro campaigners in the UK are highly aware of the possible effects of the campaign strategies they use, and of those that the other side employ. For example, the two organisations which would be likely to form the official Yes and No campaigns in the event of a referendum – Britain in Europe and the No Campaign – both issue weekly campaign briefings, which frequently denigrate or argue against the other camp's strategies and suggest high levels of monitoring of the opposing campaign.

This belief among campaign groups that campaigns will matter is borne out by much of the political science research that has been conducted into referendum campaigns. It has been argued that campaigns are likely to be particularly important where elites are divided over the referendum issue, where ideological alignments on the issue are unclear and there are low levels of public knowledge of the issue (LeDuc 2002), since under these conditions the referendum is likely to be more volatile. Given that a euro referendum in Britain appears to fulfil all three of these criteria, it seems probable that the strategies organisations use in campaigning for and against the euro can potentially affect the political future of European Economic and Monetary Union [EMU] in Britain.

This paper has two aims: first, to outline the idea of campaign arenas in referendums, and second, to demonstrate how campaign arenas work in practice in analysing the pro- and anti-euro campaigns in Britain. The paper begins by making some preliminary points about campaign communications in referendums, in contrast with election communications. The first section explores the construct of political campaign arenas as a means of analysing how pressure groups campaign for and against Europe. Organisations are conceived of as potentially campaigning in the policy arena, the media arena and/or the public arena, the defining distinction between the three being that the immediate targets of campaign efforts in each arena are government and elite opinion, the mass media, and public opinion respectively. For each arena the actors involved and usual campaign strategies employed are specified, after which a set of six hypotheses is advanced on how pro- and anti-euro organisations are likely to campaign prior to and during a referendum, on the basis of relevant literature from political science and communications research (Grant 2001; Gitlin 1980; Schlesinger and Tumber 1994; Manning 2001).

The second section applies the construct of campaign arenas to the UK's euro campaigns, using secondary research and interview data to analyse the campaign

strategies of the major actors in the Yes and No campaigns that have been taking shape in Britain since the late 1990s. It identifies phases in the euro debate, arguing that the campaigns are currently in a pre-campaign stage. Over the last five years, the euro campaigns have increasingly taken place in the media arena as well as in the policy arena, due to the potential of a nationwide referendum on the issue. In this current stage, organisations do not campaign fully in the public arena, concentrating instead on setting up the infrastructure necessary for a full referendum campaign in the event that one is called. In the event of the government calling a referendum, however, a massive upsurge in campaigning in both the public and media arenas will take place. The paper concludes by answering two questions: first, whether the six hypotheses put forward earlier stand up to empirical testing, and secondly, how valuable the model of campaign communications in referendums developed in the paper is likely to be in analysing referendum campaigns for and against European integration elsewhere in an enlarging European Union.

2. Campaign arenas

It may seem odd to be discussing the campaign strategies of the pro- and anti-euro pressure groups in the UK at all, when it is increasingly unlikely that the UK will see a referendum on the single currency in this parliament. The result of the Treasury's assessment of the Chancellor's five economic tests is to be made public by June 2003 at the latest, but it seems doubtful that Labour will risk calling a referendum in the current climate. Whether or not a referendum takes place soon, however, political actors have geared up for the campaign, and the sets of campaign strategies they use at present are characteristic of political communications prior to referendums.

Mendelsohn and Parkin (2001) identify that referendums 'are being used more frequently than ever before in liberal-democratic societies'. The reasons for this are contested, some analysts such as Mendelsohn and Parkin suggesting it may be possible to ascribe the rise in the use of referendums to a shift in citizens' political attitudes, while others question if using referendums does not stem rather from the desire of elites to find new ways of advancing their own agendas (Craig *et al* 2001). However, there has been little academic study of campaign communications in referendums, with the existing literature on direct democracy tending to focus on explaining referendum outcomes and voter behaviour and on assessing the implications of referendums for liberal democratic societies (Butler and Ranney 1994; Franklin *et al* 1995; Mendelsohn and Parkin 2001; LeDuc 2002). There has been extensive study of campaign communications during elections (recent studies include Kavanagh 1995; Swanson and Mancini 1996; Norris *et al* 1999), but again, little work on referendums. Yet given the substantial differences between elections and referendums – such as the wider range of political actors involved in referendum campaigns, the single-issue nature of referendums, and the uncertainty of referendum timing compared with election timing – differences in campaign communications and strategies would be expected.

This paper considers how campaign communications operate prior to and during referendum campaigns. In analysing the dynamics of campaign communications over the euro in Britain, it uses the construct of *campaign arenas*. Campaigns can be defined as 'organised attempts to inform, persuade and mobilise' (Norris 2002). In these organised attempts, political actors employ characteristic sets of strategies

depending on whether their immediate target of influence is government, policymakers or institutions, the mass media, or public opinion. In analysing how political actors campaign three campaign arenas can be distinguished: the *policy arena*, the *media arena*, and the *public arena*. Campaigning in the first targets government, policymakers and elite opinion, campaigns in the second target the mass media directly, and campaigns in the third attempt to influence public opinion in the first instance. These campaign arenas are conceived of here as sites of political conflict, continually in flux but structured according to certain institutional dynamics and rhythms, where Norris' 'organised attempts to inform, persuade, and mobilise' are waged.

The policy arena, media arena, and public arena differ in terms of the key actors involved, the immediate and ultimate targets of their campaigns, the campaign strategies typically employed, and the advantages and drawbacks for political actors of using them. The defining difference between the three arenas is that the immediate target of campaign activity is different in each. Campaigns in the policy arena have political institutions and/or actors as their immediate group to influence; campaigns in the media arena are directed immediately at media actors; and campaigns in the public arena have the general public, or key sectors of it, as their immediate target of influence. Note that political actors, media and the public are only the *immediate* targets of campaign activities in the respective arenas, and campaigns are often waged with the intention of influencing different ultimate targets. For example, a pressure group may seek to use the media arena in order to influence the government, or alternatively, to attain a degree of public exposure for its claims.

Using arenas of campaigning as an analytic construct has several advantages over pressing into service the often-discussed construct of the public sphere or spheres, since the concept of an arena implies location, conflict, and boundedness. The concept of arenas fits political campaigning more closely than does the concept of spheres, for three reasons: first, it is less indistinct, second, it implies conflict between actors, which is at the heart of political campaign communications, and third, it lacks the normative baggage of the idea of the public sphere (Habermas 1989). As a result, the construct of campaign arenas is of use in analysing political contestation over particular issues that face referendums.

Defining this conception of campaign arenas against that of public arenas put forward by Hilgartner and Bosk (1988), several differences emerge. Hilgartner and Bosk use the idea of public arenas to analyse the rise and fall of social problems, terming them the sites where social problem definitions evolve. For them, public arenas include locations as diverse as the executive and legislative branches of government, the cinema, the news media, social action groups, direct mail solicitations, books dealing with social issues and religious organisations. Under this conception, an arena can be an institution, a campaign group, a mass medium or a marketing tool, meaning that precisely what an arena is is not quite certain. Furthermore, it is not always clear whether Hilgartner and Bosk conceive of public arenas in their model as empirical reality or as analytic constructs.

Here, the policy, media and public arenas are viewed as constructs that allow us to reach a better understanding of how organisations campaign over contentious issues such as Europe that become subject to referendums. This is in contrast to Hilgartner

and Bosk's model, which uses the concept of arenas as a means of conceptualising how social problems ascend and descend the public agenda. With this different aim in mind (understanding how organisations campaign), the arenas model as used here distinguishes three immediate targets at which campaign efforts are directed - government and elite opinion, the mass media, and public opinion. This means we can conceive of three broad arenas in which a multitude of organisations wage campaign activity over a contentious issue – the policy, media and public arenas - which contrasts with Hilgartner and Bosk's presumably vast number of public arenas.

The model of campaign arenas employed here also shares several common features with Hilgartner and Bosk's public arenas. First, in both models the various campaign arenas are characterised by a 'complex organisational and cultural competition'. Hilgartner and Bosk argue that 'within each substantive area, there is competition over definitions, that is, between alternative ways of framing the problem'. Similarly, it is argued here that the policy, media and public arenas are characterised by conflict over issue definition. Campaigners attempt to reframe a contentious issue in a way that will resonate throughout the arenas in which they campaign and aid them in achieving their political aims.

Secondly, both models recognise that each arena has its own internal dynamics that condition how campaign organisations are able to use it. In the model used here, access to the policy and media campaign arenas is influenced by the existence of a set of principles of selection in the political and media systems. Campaigning in the public arena is not determined by institutional dynamics in the same way, but carries its own attendant set of constraints and opportunities, such as the resources necessary for effective public arena campaigning. Furthermore, the dynamics of competition change over time; in response to both group-external (changes in the political environment) and group-internal factors (such as an increase in financial resources or membership), campaigners may downgrade their activities in one campaign arena to concentrate more efforts on another.

Finally, there is the question of interaction between the three arenas of campaigning; to what extent does campaign activity in one arena affect another? Hilgartner and Bosk describe feedback among their different public arenas as 'a central characteristic of the process through which social problems are developed', holding that 'through a complex set of linkages, activities in each arena propagate throughout the others'. The model developed here also holds that there are considerable synergies between the policy, media and public arenas, but sees arenas of campaigning as more bounded than in the Hilgartner and Bosk model. For example, campaign activity in the policy arena will often never become visible in the media or in the public domain.

Typical campaign strategies

To specify the model of policy, media and public arenas further, each of the three arenas of campaigning has certain characteristic sets of campaign strategies. The *policy arena*, with its immediate campaign target of political institutions and/or actors, is characterised by the use of 'insider' campaign strategies appropriate to targeting political actors in the policy field. Typical strategies in the policy arena would be providing advice or information to government or policymakers, lobbying government or policymakers over an issue, holding conferences to debate an issue and

disseminate information to a policy community, or publishing research reports to provide high-level information on an issue. All these policy arena strategies are targeted at political institutions and actors. As this suggests, campaign activities in this arena are intended to influence the opinion of crucial political actors and opinion-formers. These need not necessarily be elite actors such as government or policymakers; campaigning in the policy arena may also involve attempts to get the opinion of other political actors felt to be key to campaign success, such as business or the unions, on board. In summary, campaigning in the policy arena involves targeting campaign efforts at political institutions and actors, using 'insider' campaign strategies directed at a restricted specialist audience. For example, both the No Campaign and Britain in Europe have recently presented reports to a parliamentary select committee on the single currency, which could potentially play an influential part in the course of the euro debate over the coming months.

A different set of campaign strategies is typical of attempts to use the *media arena*. Those campaigns attempting to gain favourable coverage in the mass media may use the tactics of giving interviews and maintaining frequent contact with journalists, using press releases, setting up a dedicated 'media centre' (physically, virtually, or both), holding press conferences, staging PR stunts or writing newspaper articles. A salient example is the recent web relaunch of anti-euro organisation The Bruges Group, which now has a frequently updated media centre including press releases and interview material. Finally, the *public arena* involves sets of campaign strategies that have the opinion of the public, or sectors of the public, as their first point of pressure. These include communications strategies, such as advertising campaigns (whether in print media, TV, in the cinema or on websites) and online campaigning via actors' own websites. Public arena strategies may also be direct attempts at contact with or mobilisation of sections of the public, such as making public speeches, organising petitions or letter-writing campaigns, non-violent rallies and demonstrations, or more confrontational protests such as boycotts and blockades. One example from the euro campaigns is anti-euro organisation the Democracy Movement's 'Stop The Eurostate' rally, held in London in October 2000.

The main distinctions between the three campaign arenas are summarised in figure 1, overleaf.

Fig.1 Three arenas of political campaigning

Policy arena

Campaigners active in this arena: political actors (such as parties, trade unions, campaign groups and NGOs)

Immediate target of campaign activity: political actors and institutions, elite opinion

Ultimate targets of campaign activity: political actors and institutions, elite opinion

Characteristic campaign strategies:

- Advising/presenting research results/information to government/policymakers
- Lobbying government/policymakers on an issue
- Holding high-level conferences, seminars, research meetings (attendance exclusive)
- Publication of research reports/books

Media arena

Campaigners active in this arena: political actors, media actors

Immediate target of campaign activity: mass media

Ultimate targets of campaign activity include: political actors, public opinion

Characteristic campaign strategies:

- Giving interviews/talking to journalists
- Press releases
- Holding press conferences to announce position on issue/ research results
- PR stunts (e.g. staged media opportunities)
- Writing newspaper articles

Public arena

Campaigners active in this arena: political actors, public

Immediate target of campaign activity: public, or sectors of the public

Ultimate targets of campaign activity include: public opinion, political actors/institutions

Characteristic campaign strategies:

- Making public speeches
- Advertising campaigns (in newspapers/TV/cinema/internet)
- Online campaigning via own website
- Organising petitions/letter-writing campaigns
- Direct contact with citizens (e.g. door-to-door canvassing for support, direct mail fund-raising, stalls in street/at events such as festivals)
- Non-violent rallies and demonstrations (public assemblies; legal, non-violent marches/demonstrations; vigils or pickets)
- Confrontational/violent protests (illegal demonstrations, boycotts, strikes, blockades, destruction of property etc.)

Campaigning in the policy, media and public arenas

Several hypotheses can be put forward about the different benefits and constraints that pro- and anti-euro organisations face in campaigning in the policy, media and public arenas respectively. As a general principle, it is clear that none of the three campaign arenas is a level playing field, since certain political actors are better able to access certain campaign arenas than are others. **A first, overarching hypothesis is that in the case of campaigning for and against Europe, the policy and media arenas in particular are characterised by unequal patterns of access for campaigners.** Whether actors are likely to gain access to the policy and media campaign arenas depends crucially on two factors: first, the type of political actor, and second, the material and symbolic resources that actor is able to mobilise. This is because any organisation's ability to push a pro- or anti-euro agenda in the policy and media

arenas will be conditioned by the preferences of the immediate campaign targets of those arenas – political institutions and actors, and the mass media, respectively – for institutional, powerful actors over non-institutional, less well-resourced ones.

Support can be found for this first hypothesis from both the literature on interest and pressure groups from political science, and that on the relationship between news media and news sources from communications research. Both bodies of work identify the differential patterns of access that organisations face when campaigning in the policy and media arenas, though they do not specify them in these terms. Existing literatures suggest a general trend for favoured access for institutional, well-resourced political actors to both policy and media campaign arenas. For the policy arena, it is well established in the pressure group literature that ‘government would prefer to consult with properly constituted organisations with an identifiable membership’ (Grant 2001). Similarly, in the media arena it is clear that institutional, powerful actors enjoy more access to the mass media than do non-institutional, resource-poor ones (Hall *et al* 1978; Gitlin 1980; Schlesinger and Tumber 1994; Manning 2001; Davis 2002). These patterns of access mean that there will be certain perceived benefits and drawbacks for different kinds of pressure organisations to campaign in the policy and media arenas.

Where political actors are less resource-rich, as many of the groups campaigning for and against the euro are, there is less agreement on their abilities to access the policy and media arenas. Media sociologists have disagreed as to what extent the potential exists for less advantaged political actors to gain access to the mass media and obtain favourable coverage. Hall *et al* (1978) put forward the idea of institutional actors as ‘primary definers’, arguing that news coverage privileges the interests of the powerful, especially those articulating the interests of capital, since such actors are able to set the terms of the news agenda (Manning 2001). However, subsequent writers have criticised Hall *et al*’s analysis, in part because there is empirical evidence illustrating that organisations which Hall *et al* would not consider primary definers, such as marginal political groups or non-official sources, are able to set the agenda in certain policy arenas (Schlesinger 1990; Miller and Williams 1993; Schlesinger and Tumber 1994; Manning 2001).

For the media arena, we can develop a second hypothesis, namely that generally speaking **the less well-resourced a pro- or anti-euro campaign group is** (where resources are viewed both in terms of symbolic capital such as contacts or insider access, and material resources such as funding or personnel), **the more it will be at a disadvantage in terms of media access and coverage.** While the potential can exist for resource-poor political actors to become authoritative sources for the media, as Davis (2002) identifies, the norm is nonetheless that such actors remain at a disadvantage in terms of media access and coverage. Groups can gain greater or less access to the media arena over time, which can happen due to group-internal factors (such as increasingly well-thought-out and sophisticated communications strategies, or the development of strong relationships with journalists) as well as due to external factors beyond any one political actor’s control (such as short-term changes in the political environment, e.g. the calling of a referendum). Similarly for the policy arena, groups may gain better access under certain circumstances, including group-specific factors (such as the development of more effective lobbying strategies) as well as factors stemming from changes in the political environment (such as a change

in elite alignments over an issue, creating new opportunities for challengers to access the policy arena). Nonetheless the norm is that non-institutional, resource-poor political actors are at a disadvantage if they attempt to campaign in the media or policy arenas, in contrast to better-resourced and institutional actors that enjoy easier access to both.

A third hypothesis is that **whether a political actor campaigns for or against the euro will mean it experiences different patterns of access to pro-European and Eurosceptic elements of the press.** Campaigning in the media arena is made more complex by the fact that the print media in particular often themselves act as political actors on key issues and seek to put forward their own agendas (Page 1996), as well as forming sites where political conflicts are played out. This means that where a newspaper holds a strong position on an issue, this is likely to influence both which political actors it uses as sources in its own media coverage and how it presents actors' claims once they make it to the newspaper's pages. For example, in the case of the euro campaigns it might be expected that pro- and anti-euro political actors' claims or attempts to manage the media would be treated differently by anti-single currency newspapers (such as the *Sun*, the *Times*, or the *Daily Telegraph*) than they would by pro-euro newspapers (such as the *Mirror*, the *Independent* or the *Guardian*), and by broadsheets compared to tabloids.

A fourth hypothesis is that **groups that experience limited or poor access to the policy and media arenas are likely to seek to use the public arena in their campaigns for or against the euro.** The public arena is relatively open to all political actors, in contrast to the differential patterns of access for institutional and non-institutional actors to the policy and media arenas. While the wider audience potentially reached via the media arena makes it an attractive option for gaining wider publicity and support for an organisation's claims, using the media arena also presents several hindrances for campaigners. One is that in contrast with the direct contact made via the public arena, campaigning in the media arena allows only mediated contact with the public; campaigners are attempting to persuade. This gives rise to another potential risk for political actors in using the media arena, which is that actors have little control over how their campaigns are covered in the media arena. For the less well-resourced, less 'insider' actors, these difficulties of access may make the public arena seem a better option for campaigning, since it can allow them to bypass the media arena by setting up their own direct communications media, such as newsletters and email networks.

In contrast to the policy and media arenas, in principle it is possible for any political actor to campaign in the public arena, though in practice it depends on the material resources available to them since public arena campaigning is normally resource-intensive. Campaigning in the public arena allows direct contact with members of the public, and groups often perceive this kind of unmediated personal contact as a highly effective campaign tool since it frequently involves direct participation in discussion on the part of the citizens involved. However, effective public arena campaigning requires resources, whether in terms of personnel (such as a battery of activists at local level to carry out campaign activities, who also need to be coordinated in some way by the overall group) or financial backing (such as the money to run a nationwide cinema advertisement, direct mailshot or poster campaign).

In particular, those actors with substantial material resources that are relatively marginalized from policy and media arenas often prefer to campaign in the public arena. Take the recent example from the UK of Stagecoach boss Brian Souter's privately funded ballot on Section 28 guidelines for sex education in schools in Scotland in May 2000. The public arena is where capital can have a major effect; actors such as Souter who may be relatively marginalized from policy and media agendas are able to spend significant amounts of money in attempts to influence public opinion to their cause. This need for material resources when using the public arena in campaigning is significant in that it raises questions about the ability of well-resourced individuals or organisations to influence the political process through campaigning in the public arena. While in referendums campaign spending is usually regulated, prior to the official campaign period no spending limits are enforced, offering opportunities for well-funded special interest campaigns (such as Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party campaign in the 1997 election) to attempt to influence political outcomes.

Fifthly, **the patterns of access to the policy and media arenas that pro- and anti-euro campaigners experience are likely to alter over time**, as identified in both the interest group and the source-media relations literatures. Grant (2001) points out that political actors trying to campaign in the policy arena now face 'a much more complex environment of multi-level governance' than was formerly the case, while communications scholars have come to see that in the media arena political actors do not 'retain the same levels of access over time, let alone possess equal amounts of access' (Davis 2002). In the euro campaigns, according to changing political circumstances, at certain times it will clearly offer more advantages (or fewer disadvantages) to political actors to shift from one arena of campaigning to another. For example, if significant opposition to the euro within the parliamentary Labour Party became apparent at the time of writing, when the government is remaining quiet on the single currency issue, anti-euro campaigners could expect greater access to sections of the party sympathetic to their cause and would be likely to concentrate more efforts in campaigning in the policy and media arenas in order to exploit the shift in elite Labour opinion.

A final hypothesis is that **upcoming referendums compel political actors to shift the arenas in which they campaign. Once a referendum is called, even those political actors normally active only in the policy arena will perceive the need to campaign in the public and media arenas in order to attempt to persuade public opinion.** Two stages of campaigning prior to a referendum can be distinguished, both involving shifts in campaign arenas – the pre-campaign and the full campaign phases. In the pre-campaign, when a referendum has been committed to but no date has yet been set, campaigners will use both media and policy arenas to make their claims, using the policy arena to put pressure on the government (not) to hold a referendum and on various political actors to come out in support of the cause, and using the media arena to gain wider publicity for their campaign. Prior to a referendum being called, the vast majority of campaign organisations will not perceive benefit in waging a full campaign for public opinion. As soon as a referendum is announced, however, a massive upsurge of public arena campaigning will be witnessed.

Once a referendum date has been set, the campaigns move to a full campaign stage. In this phase, activists will hardly use the policy arena in campaigning, since the

decision-making power no longer lies with the political institutions that are the immediate target of campaigns in the policy arena, and attempts have already been made to persuade other political actors to come on side in the pre-campaign stage. Instead, as the referendum approaches campaigners will increasingly seek to use the public and media arenas to get their messages across to public opinion and portrayed favourably in the media. Campaign activity moves almost wholly to the media and public arenas, and the policy arena becomes temporarily redundant.

Six hypotheses have been put forward as to how pro- and anti-euro pressure groups in the UK are likely to campaign in the policy, media and public arenas. The remainder of this paper uses empirical evidence to test how valid those hypotheses are in practice.

3. Britain's euro campaigns

European issues have been subject to political contention in the UK for decades. Conflict over European integration in Britain was temporarily quelled by the 1975 referendum on staying in the Common Market, but resurfaced again from the late 1980s onwards as the integration process accelerated apace. Since the early 1990s, the single currency issue has been the focus for political contention over European integration in Britain, so much so that analysts have referred to the 'continued ability of the single currency to wreak havoc in British politics' (Hughes and Smith 1998). The issue of participating in Economic and Monetary Union [EMU] brings enduring questions that have divided Britain's political elites – concerns about the nature and importance of national sovereignty, national economic control and national identity – to a head. As such, while many of the current pro- and anti-euro campaign groups have only been set up in the last five years, they can be viewed as contemporary manifestations of a long running, simmering debate among Britain's elites over the value of European integration.

Across EU member states, where monetary union has become a highly contested issue it has become so for two key reasons: a history of national elite divisions over Europe, and parties committing to a referendum on the EMU issue. The elite divisions that are key in making monetary union an issue of political contestation have been particularly fraught in the British case. The possibility of a referendum on joining the single currency was first bandied about in late 1990 by then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. By the time of the run-up to the 1997 election, divisions within the Tory party on Europe had become increasingly hard-fought, and Prime Minister John Major committed his party to holding a referendum on the single currency before entry, in order to try and defuse the potentially highly damaging issue of Europe before the general election. Similar commitments by the other two major parties, Labour and the Liberal Democrats, followed. That there was the need to defuse monetary union as an election issue points to the intense divisions over Europe that have emerged in British politics, both on the left and on the right.

Both monetary politics and European integration have a history of being driven by political and financial elites in EU member states; neither has a history of being publicly debated at national level, except in those countries where referendums have taken place or have been mooted. In terms of campaign arenas, given that decision-making power over monetary politics and European integration issues has lain with

national political and financial elites, it is unsurprising that contention over EMU in Britain throughout most of the 1990s took place largely within the policy arena. Consider, for example, the Tory party wrangling over the Maastricht Treaty on European Union; the pressure groups in existence at the time, such as The Bruges Group, a Eurosceptic and predominantly Tory organisation set up in 1988, campaigned largely internally within the policy arena.

However, following the referendum commitment made by all major UK political parties in 1997, the state of campaigning for and against the euro has come to look very different from the way it did in the early and mid-1990s. The 1997 referendum commitment has meant that over the last five years, the pro- and anti-euro campaigns in Britain have geared up for a referendum, although they will not campaign fully until the government actually calls the referendum, which to date it has been reluctant to do. A number of new campaign groups have been established in anticipation of the referendum, and both these and existing political actors campaigning for or against the euro have set up the infrastructure for a nationwide campaign. Post-1997, the UK's euro debate has been in a pre-campaign situation, with political campaigning for and against the euro increasingly taking place in both the media and the policy arenas, rather than the previous climate of elite contention in the policy arena alone. Two campaign arenas are used in the pre-campaign stage: the policy arena, to put pressure on the government (not) to call a referendum, and the media arena, to influence both public and policy agendas and attitudes on the single currency. Figure 2, below, summarises these shifts in political campaigning over the single currency issue in Britain over time.

Fig.2 Stages of political campaigning for and against the euro, over time

| Time period | Late 1980s-1997 | 1997-present day | If/when referendum announced |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Stage | • Elite contention | • Pre-campaign | • Full campaign |
| Main arena/s of campaigning | • Policy arena | • Media arena • Policy arena | • Public arena • Media arena |
| Ultimate campaign targets | • Political elites | • Political elites • Public opinion | • Public opinion |

Figure 2 also indicates how campaigning would alter if a referendum were called tomorrow. Two major shifts in political campaigning over the euro issue could be expected. First, it would be expected that the policy arena would become largely redundant as a campaign arena for the duration of the referendum. Given that the decision is turned over to public opinion, there would no longer be the need to put pressure on government and policymakers, resulting in a downturn in campaign activities in the policy arena. In the current pre-campaign stage, the main aim of targeting government in campaigning over the euro has been to influence them over calling a referendum, which would no longer be necessary in the actual campaign stage, since with a referendum imminent the key target of actors' campaigns becomes public opinion.

Secondly, a referendum becoming definite would also mean that campaigners would seek to mobilise citizens directly by campaigning in the public arena, as takes place in election campaigns. In other words, campaigners will massively step up their efforts

to make direct contact with citizens over the euro issue. The resources in terms of time and organisation that this involves means that it is only likely to be perceived by pro- and anti-euro campaigners as worthwhile to do so when a referendum is imminent and a public decision over Britain's monetary future at stake. In the pre-campaign, in contrast, there are fairly low levels of use of public arena campaign strategies, since campaign groups cannot be sure when a referendum will happen.

The emergent Yes and No campaigns

Figure 3, overleaf, sets out the field of pressure groups that currently campaign for and against the euro.

| Fig. 3 Groups campaigning for and against the euro in Britain, 1999-2002 | | |
|---|--|---|
| Type of organisation | Pro-euro | Anti-euro |
| Political party | | All-Party Alliance Against Brussels UK Independence Party [UKIP] The Democratic Party* |
| Party fraction | Tory Reform Group Labour Movement for Europe* Liberal Democrat European Group Conservative Group for Europe Tory Europe Network* | Conservatives Against a Federal Europe Labour Euro-Safeguards Campaign Labour Against The Euro* |
| Business organisation | | Business for Sterling* |
| Union organisation | | Trade Unions Against The Single Currency [TUASC]* |
| Research organisation | Action Centre for Europe | New Europe* Global Britain* European Research Group European Foundation |
| Campaign organisation (coalition/alliance) | Britain in Europe* | No Campaign* Anti-Maastricht Alliance [AMA] Congress for Democracy* The European Alliance of EU-Critical Movements [TEAM] Campaign Alliance for Referendums in Parishes* |
| Campaign organisation | Citizens for Europe* European Movement Young European Movement | Democracy Movement* Campaign for an Independent Britain [CIB] British Democracy Campaign* Campaign Against Euro-Federalism Freedom Association New Alliance* Youth For A Free Europe The Bruges Group Anti-Common Market League |

(* indicates a group established in the last 5 years)

Three aspects of Britain's euro campaigns are worth detailing further, since they may influence the strategies selected by campaigners: the upsurge in campaigning since 1997, the elite composition of both pro- and anti-euro campaign groups, and the greater potential for ideological conflict among anti-euro campaigners than among the pro-euro camp. As figure 3 indicates, there has been an upsurge in campaign group formation over the last five years. Many new campaign organisations have been set up over the period from 1997 to 2002 (the starred groups in figure 3), whether coalitions and alliances or single groups. Most of the groups have been established by politicians and business leaders with the purpose of influencing the political process over European issues. As this suggests, elite activism over European issues has increasingly come to involve mobilisation in pressure group form as well as from within established institutions. Usherwood (2002) argues that these campaign groups

essentially represent the continuation of party politics by other means, and that they result from the concern of party managers to externalise conflict over European integration. However, many of these campaign groups do not come from party politics, but from capital (as evidenced by business campaign groups such as Business for Sterling) or labour (witness groups such as Trade Unions Against the Single Currency). This shows, contrary to Usherwood's argument, that campaigning over the euro is not purely a party political issue but rather a matter that also divides other significant sectors of British society.

The pro- and anti-euro campaigns exhibit substantial differences in organisation. There are many more anti-euro campaign groups than pro-, and whereas the pro-euro cause has just one umbrella organisation (Britain in Europe), five alliance organisations of various size and influence exist to contest the anti-euro side of the debate. Furthermore, the alliances and coalitions that form among the anti-euro campaigners are typically looser than those on the pro- side. I would argue these differences in organisation stem from the fact that anti-euro campaigners are more diverse ideologically than pro-euro campaigners, who typically come from the political centre-right, centre and centre-left. Analysts have identified that more peripheral or extreme brands of political opinion are typically opposed to European integration (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2002), suggesting that an anti-euro position is associated with both ends of the left-right spectrum. This ideological diversity is a significant factor in determining the organisational differences between the pro- and anti-euro campaigns.

The pre-campaign

It is clear that pro- and anti-euro pressure groups currently use an array of strategies in campaigning for and against the euro, ranging from behind-the-scenes tactics such as lobbying to public communications such as press conferences and releases through to demonstrations and rallies. Three general remarks are in order here about the recent strategies of the euro campaigns. First, the campaign strategies employed are typically moderate, with a low degree of confrontation. Political actors have tended to use institutional campaign strategies, both in the media arena (press releases, giving interviews) and the policy arena (lobbying, holding conferences, publishing research reports). The only instances of groups using campaign strategies commonly considered non-institutional or 'outsider' have been a few peaceful, very small-scale pro- and anti-euro demonstrations organised by groups, none of which has been confrontational or violent. This reflects the composition of the pro- and anti-euro campaigns from among political, business and union elites. Elites traditionally use insider forms of action, and have no need to resort to confrontational protest because they have other, more effective resources available to them such as elite and media access.

Secondly, the pre-campaign period since 1997 has been characterised by low use of the public arena. The infrastructure for a referendum campaign has been set up for both the pro- and anti-euro camps at local/regional and national level. For example, by the time of writing Britain in Europe had set up full-time campaign directors in six of the nine English regions, as well as devolved campaigns in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. However, at the moment the priority is for campaigners on both sides to build networks of activists rather than to convince the public at large. This

means trying to get key opinion-formers at local, regional and national levels on side, in particular targeting party political, business and union opinion.

Thirdly, campaign strategies appear to vary according to the kind of campaign group, and the material and symbolic resources available to it, rather than according to whether a group is pro- or anti-euro. This may originate in part from the high levels of awareness the major campaign groups exhibit of the strategies of the other side. The campaign news bulletins of each organisation contain numerous attempts to rebut or discredit the tactics and frames used by the other², suggesting both that the organisations monitor the opposing campaign in detail and that each makes considerable attempts to counter its opponent's strategies. An example of tactical awareness from a smaller campaign group is that of the eighth members' congress of the anti-euro alliance the Congress for Democracy in November 2002, which involved a presentation of the strategies likely to be used by government and pro-euro campaigners in the event of a referendum³, followed by 'a full debate on tactics for a euro referendum campaign'⁴.

There are multiple examples of pro-euro organisations adopting or countering the tactics of anti-euro groups, for example the use of celebrities in consciously populist campaigns by the main campaign groups. The No Campaign ran a cinema advertisement campaign in summer 2002 featuring Bob Geldof, various alternative comedians and Labour MPs, and Britain in Europe has used Eddie Izzard in campaigning. Both represented attempts to portray the campaigns as not restricted to one political party and as not dominated by political elites, with much talk of building a genuine non-party 'people's campaign'. As this example suggests, the campaign strategies of the major pro- and anti-euro organisations are typically rather similar. Variation in campaign strategies, and in the arenas used in campaigning, exists between different types of campaign groups with varying resources available to them, rather than between the pro- and anti-euro campaigns.

Campaign groups and the policy arena

Beyond these general characteristics of the campaigns for and against the euro, the campaign strategies employed differ according to the type of political actor. Five categories of pressure group can be distinguished here:

- The major Yes and No campaign groups (Britain in Europe and the No campaign for the pro- and anti- sides respectively)
- Political party campaign groups (Labour Movement for Europe, Labour Against The Euro, Tory Europe Network, Conservative Group for Europe, Liberal Democrat European Group, etc.)
- Business or union campaign groups (Business for Sterling, Trade Unions Against the Single Currency)
- Single-issue research organisations and thinktanks (Action Centre for Europe, European Foundation, etc.)

² See No Campaign Media Centre at <http://www.no-euro.com/mediacentre/mediacentre.asp>. (Britain in Europe does not publish its campaign news on its website, but it is structured in a similar way to the No Campaign's bulletins, with news of the week and Britain in Europe's campaign).

³ Brian Burkitt and Andy Mullen, *The Euro: The Battle for British Hearts and Minds*, Congress for Democracy, November 2002.

⁴ Congress for Democracy website, at <http://www.congressfordemocracy.org.uk/eighth.html>

- Other single-issue campaign groups and alliances (such as The Democracy Movement)

Differences can be witnessed in how these types of campaign groups use the policy, media and public arenas. The policy arena could be termed the natural habitat of the euro campaigns. It has been identified that those groups campaigning for and against the euro are typically insider groups, composed of political and economic elites. It would therefore come as no surprise if such groups were most accustomed to using, and best able to use, the policy arena rather than the media or public arenas in campaigning. Policy arena strategies such as lobbying, briefing MPs, making speeches at party conferences and publishing research reports would be expected to typify Britain's campaigns for and against the euro.

However, the extent to which and way in which the pro- and anti-euro campaign groups use the policy arena also depends on the type of political actor. Both in this pre-campaign phase and in the event of a referendum campaign, the two main Yes and No groups are likely to campaign in the media arena more than in the policy arena. Both have been established comparatively recently, and given their key purpose (to form the Yes and No campaigns in the event of a referendum) it makes more sense for them to use the media arena more than the policy arena to put pressure on the government (not) to call a referendum.

For the No Campaign, campaigning in the media arena fulfils their dual aim of putting pressure on the government and maintaining anti-euro public opinion; the group has stated that at present the campaign focuses on putting pressure on the government and on keeping the opinion polls where they are. For Britain in Europe, there are more constraints on campaigning in the media arena to put pressure on the Labour government to call a referendum. Given that the BiE coalition is backed by major representatives of the UK's three main political parties, the organisation is in a difficult balancing position where it needs to be conscious of the wishes of its major backers, including Labour politicians such as Tony Blair, but also needs to put pressure on Labour to call a referendum and to portray itself as a genuinely cross-party campaign, rather than an extension of the Labour Party. Therefore, while BiE do use the media arena to put pressure on government – for example, in a May 2002 interview with BBC News Online, BiE campaign director Simon Buckby urged Tony Blair not to 'chicken out' of calling a referendum⁵ - the timing and content of such calls is likely to be highly managed by the organisation and may often include discussion with the group's coalition partners prior to making new claims in the media arena.

For intra-party pressure groups, the policy arena is the preferred and natural arena of campaign activity, since such groups exist to put pressure on party politicians, party membership, and in Labour's case, the trade unions. This can be illustrated by examples such as the recent activity of parliamentary anti-euro group Labour Against The Euro, set up in early 2002. The group holds meetings, uses personal contacts and makes speeches at relevant conferences, to influence the Labour movement – both Labour MPs and the trade unions – to come out against the euro. LATE's Secretary

⁵ Brian Wheeler, 'Euro campaign urges Blair to act', BBC News Online, 8 May 2002. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/1895199.stm.

John Cryer MP has claimed the group was formed to put pressure on the ‘great mass of the Parliamentary Labour Party’ as well as on the trade unions, which he views as ‘absolutely key in the future of this debate... because of all their membership’⁶.

The other intra-party groups, such as the long-running Labour Euro-Safeguards Campaign, Leon Brittan’s Conservative Group for Europe or the Liberal Democrat European Group, also use the policy arena in campaigning. For example, the Liberal Democrat European Group cites its main campaign activities as preparing and distributing pro-European material to Lib Dem party members and activists, publishing briefings on European policies, organising educational visits to Brussels for party members, holding fringe meetings and stalls at federal, state and regional conferences and discussion meetings on European themes⁷. These types of insider campaign tactics – targeted at MPs and party membership – are typical of the policy arena and constitute the main activities of the intra-party groups. However, while the natural campaign arena of these groups would be the policy arena, given the potential for a referendum even these intra-party groups are increasingly using campaign tactics more typical of campaigns in the media and public arenas. For example, Kenneth Clarke launched his Tory Europe Network via an article in *The Times*, using the media arena to garner publicity for his cause in a drive to make ‘the pro-European Conservative voice’ heard⁸. The group’s main campaign activities continue to be firmly in the policy arena, such as briefing sessions and the publication of occasional policy papers, but the occasional (and increasing) tendency of intra-party groups to use the media arena in campaigning is symptomatic of attempts to exert pressure in the light of a potential referendum.

Campaign groups also exist within UK business and trade unions, which mobilise partly to persuade business and union opinion respectively against the euro, but also to put pressure on government over the referendum. It would be expected that the business anti-euro campaign group Business for Sterling, now part of the No Campaign, would be better able to campaign in the policy arena than would union groups such as the anti-euro Trade Unions Against the Single Currency or the pro-euro Trade Unionists for Europe. This greater ability of the business group to use the policy arena in campaigning stems from the fact that trade union groups typically lack institutional legitimacy, while corporations typically command it (Davis 2002: 24). Furthermore, Business for Sterling, before its merger into the No Campaign in 2000, was both far better resourced and larger in size than the small union anti-euro campaign group. As a consequence, Business for Sterling was better equipped to use the policy arena in campaigning than are Trade Unions Against the Single Currency or Trade Unionists for Europe, or for that matter, the unions themselves.

Of the smaller campaign groups, the research organisations and thinktanks (such as Lord Howe’s Action Centre for Europe) are active only in the policy arena, using policy arena tactics such as holding high-level meetings and publishing research reports in attempts to influence political elites over European issues. For the single-issue groups, use of the policy arena depends very much on whether the groups are

⁶ Speech by John Cryer MP, Secretary of Labour Against The Euro, at the Eighth Congress for Democracy, Church House, Westminster, 1 Nov 2002. Full text available at <http://www.congressfordemocracy.org.uk/Cryer%20speech.html>.

⁷ See Liberal Democrat European Group website at <http://www.ldeg.org>.

⁸ ‘Clarke launches pro-Euro campaign’, *Ananova* news service, 15 May 2002.

accepted insiders in British politics. The majority of the longer-established groups are led by people who are used to working within the policy arena and have significant contacts in British politics; in the anti-euro case, there is also a considerable degree of cross-membership between the groups. This means that most such groups instinctively campaign within the policy arena, since networks of contacts already exist in this domain.

In recent years, however, some of the single-issue campaign groups have increasingly begun to use the media and public arenas as well as the policy arena in campaigning. For example, take the anti-euro organisation The Bruges Group. The Bruges Group was formed in 1988, named after Mrs Thatcher's famed anti-European speech at Bruges, and its membership continues to be predominantly Conservative. It has traditionally used campaign strategies characteristic of the policy arena, such as publishing research reports and holding conferences. However, of late it appears to have stepped up its attempts to use the media arena, through establishing a media centre on its website and increasing use of press releases, as well as the public arena, for instance through the rally it held in London on 2 November 2002.

In summary, the policy arena can be described as the natural habitat of the longer-running pro- and anti-euro campaign groups. Given these groups' largely insider leadership and membership, strategies such as lobbying government, holding conferences and fringe meetings or publishing research reports and articles have typified their campaigns. In contrast, groups formed in the last few years are more likely to use the media and, eventually, the public arenas in campaigning, since they have been established with a referendum in mind. The potential for a referendum also means that many of the longer-running, insider groups have increasingly sought to campaign in the media and public arenas in recent years, perceiving that these public forums will be more important battlegrounds in the event of a referendum than will the policy arena, thanks to the decision being turned over to the UK public.

Campaign groups and the media arena

It is clear that the political actors campaigning for and against the euro experience differential patterns of access to the media arena. The two major campaign groups – Britain in Europe and the No Campaign – have increasingly become authoritative sources of pro- and anti-euro opinion for the media. When pro- or anti-euro campaign groups are cited in news coverage, the groups cited are almost always Britain in Europe or the No Campaign. In the event of a referendum, when the organisations are confirmed as the major campaign groups, their authority as news sources will be further cemented.

The two major campaign groups are more media-aware and devote more resources to their media operations than do (or can) the smaller campaign groups. Both the No Campaign and Britain in Europe clearly employ significant efforts and resources in their relations with the media. Both have dedicated communications personnel, make regular use of press releases and release weekly campaign news. The No Campaign's website has a well-maintained media centre section, and Britain in Europe's a press room; both provide archived press releases, articles and briefing notes, while the No Campaign's section also provides archived news articles on European issues and details of its latest campaigns. Furthermore, former journalists are employed as

members of staff in both campaigns, which suggests that the groups are both likely to have a good insider grasp of the media's norms and imperatives and a sense of the stories that are likely to be successful in garnering media coverage.

BiE and the No Campaign's greater visibility in the media arena than the other campaign groups therefore stems from two factors. First, as the emerging major pro- and anti- groups they are considered authoritative sources by the media. Second, they have more substantial material (staff, financial means) and symbolic resources (insider knowledge of the British media, and access to elites) than the smaller campaign groups, and are consequently able to devote more resources to media relations.

Moving on to the campaign groups that emerge within political parties, business and the trade unions, these small groups are rarely the subjects of media coverage. Such groups are only likely to be newsworthy either when they are new players in British politics or when conflict over the euro issue within parties, business or the unions is particularly apparent. Looking at two of the intra-party campaign groups set up in 2002, Kenneth Clarke's Tory Europe Network and Labour Against the Euro, both groups received some media coverage when launching, and gained further mentions in the media at times when there was coverage of conflict over the euro among the Conservative Party and the Labour Party respectively. This is likely to be due to a feedback loop of media-group communication at times of particular party conflict over the euro issue. Journalists are more likely to contact the intra-party campaign groups for information at these times or mention them in news coverage, but the groups themselves are also likely to attempt to get their claims into the media more at these times of heightened conflict, for example through the use of targeted press releases. Unsurprisingly, however, there is no routine media coverage of these small campaign groups; they are not newsworthy other than at times of conflict. Journalists covering the euro issue are far more likely to approach the major campaign groups, since these groups are viewed as authoritative sources and have stronger relations with the media.

This last point also holds true for the smaller single-issue campaign groups and alliances, which are rarely the subjects of media attention given that journalists will tend to perceive only the main campaign groups as authoritative sources. Only in limited cases - when an unusual campaign event is staged that attracts media interest, or when a newspaper has its own agenda to promote on the euro issue and actively seeks out anti- or pro-euro activity - are these groups likely to become newsworthy, and even then this newsworthiness lasts only for a short time. A key exception has been the campaigns by Yorkshire millionaire Paul Sykes against the euro (at present, as part of the Democracy Movement and British Democracy Campaign). These campaigns have gained news coverage, which has focused largely on the vast sums of money Sykes is willing to employ in campaigning, suggesting that his activities are viewed as newsworthy because of the unusual amounts of capital involved.

In summary, the two major Yes and No campaign groups are likely to enjoy greater access to the media arena than are the rest of the groups. This is the case because Britain in Europe and the No Campaign are well resourced (in both material and symbolic terms), devote considerable efforts to their communications with the media, and as the major campaign groups, attain the status of authoritative sources. In

contrast, the rest of the pro- and anti-euro groups are likely to achieve only limited or sporadic access to the media arena and find it challenging to attract media coverage to their campaigns. This means that the majority of the pro- and anti-euro campaign groups are likely to focus their activities in either the policy arena, in the case of long-running groups, or the public arena, in the case of groups established since the 1997 referendum commitment.

Campaign groups in the public arena

The current pre-campaign phase is likely to be characterised by fairly low-level use of the public arena. Considerable material resources are required to campaign effectively in the public arena, in terms of infrastructure and in terms of building networks of activists, and now is not the time to expend these resources in waging a full campaign for public opinion. In the event of a referendum, however, this will change radically. The euro campaigns will be waged in the public and media arenas, with the policy arena becoming largely redundant, and sizeable resources will be spent on public arena campaigning (limits will be set on campaign spending by the Electoral Commission⁹). However, the focus in the pre-campaign stage has been on getting everything in place for a full public arena campaign, and getting opinion formers and teams of activists on board, rather than making substantial attempts to persuade public opinion at large.

The groups most likely to use the public arena are the major campaign organisations for each side, since these can garner the material resources and funding necessary to do so. During the pre-campaign over the past two years, Britain in Europe and the No Campaign have invested effort in building the infrastructure and teams of volunteers required for effective devolved public arena campaigning. Local-level activity is crucial to public arena campaigning, since it makes direct contact with members of the public. At present there is still a great degree of variation between regions, in terms of both campaign activity and the presence of any regional/local-level campaign in the first place; there are active campaigns in some regions but not in others.

In essence the pre-campaign involves extensive preparation for campaigning in the public arena. This preparation includes some campaigning targeted at the general public, such as the No Campaign's nationwide 'Never Mind The Euro' poster campaign or its recent anti-euro cinema advertisement, which used celebrities and Labour MPs to put the case against the euro. Preparations to date have also included attempts to get key opinion-formers from business, local councils and communities onside, and also some general low-level campaigning targeted at sectors of public opinion felt to be particularly important to convince, such as women. However, it does not yet entail the comprehensive concentration of campaign efforts in the public arena that will happen in the event of a referendum.

Websites are a means of public arena campaigning that have become increasingly used by the major pro- and anti-euro organisations in recent years (clearly, a web presence can also operate as an instrument of campaigning in the media arena, for

⁹ The Electoral Commission will decide which two groups should be the official Yes and No campaigns, allowing each to spend £5 million once a referendum has been called. Spending restrictions for other groups will be much more limited, at £500,000 maximum for a group and £10,000 maximum for an individual.

example through the setting up of online ‘media centres’). In the pre-campaign stage, websites have several functions, including information provision, boosting membership and funds through the ability to donate to the campaigns and register interest, and the provision of toolkits for activists (e.g. downloadable campaign posters and publicity material). However, neither BiE nor the No Campaign’s sites are yet fully geared up for campaigning for public opinion¹⁰. As pointed out by a BiE representative, ‘the site at the moment is for people who are engaged in the campaign, it’s not currently designed to talk to the public’, though it is claimed that the site will be ‘much more accessible and interactive in a referendum’¹¹.

The campaign groups within parties, business and the unions rarely use the public arena in campaigning, since they typically lack the material resources to do so. Similarly, research organisations and thinktanks will seldom campaign in the public arena; again, they lack the resources to do so, and the symbolic resources they do have (insider access, for example) mean that their normal campaign home is the policy arena. Thanks to their lack of material resources and niche in the policy arena, neither of these types of campaign groups is likely to play a major frontline role in a referendum campaign. Their peak campaign phase is the pre-campaign, when they become active in the policy arena, seeking to build support for the Yes or No campaigns within their party, within business opinion or among trade union leaders and members. However, their small size, lack of material resources and consequent low ability to use the public arena means that in a referendum their campaign efforts will be limited to a certain degree of use of the media arena.

In contrast, for many of the smaller single-issue campaign groups, the public arena tends to be the main arena of campaign activity. This is particularly the case for those groups set up in the period since 1997, and happens partly because the organisations are aware of the need to campaign for public opinion in advance of a referendum, and partly because these newly established groups’ ability to access the policy and media arenas is often limited. The Democracy Movement is a case in point. This group’s campaign strategies are characteristic of the public arena. The organisation holds campaign rallies and stages local and national meetings, and it puts particular emphasis on local-level ‘grassroots’ campaigning, with networks of varying sizes at local level throughout the country. In terms of finance the organisation is well equipped, with funding from Lady Annabel Goldsmith, the widow of anti-euro Referendum Party campaigner Sir James Goldsmith, and Yorkshire millionaire Paul Sykes, as well as private donations from members and supporters. The logical campaign arena for this kind of group – well-resourced, aware of the need to target public opinion in advance of a referendum, but regarded with suspicion by many political insiders – is the public arena.

4. Conclusions and implications

This paper has advanced the analytic framework of campaign arenas, specifying three arenas in which political actors campaign, the policy, media and public arenas, and applied this to the campaigns for and against the euro in Britain that are currently gearing up for a referendum. It has argued that the campaigns for and against the euro

¹⁰ Websites at www.britainineurope.org.uk and www.no-euro.com respectively.

¹¹ Informal interview conducted on 5 November 2002.

in Britain are increasingly waged in both the media and policy arenas, rather than mainly in the policy arena as was the case throughout most of the 1990s, and that this shift can be ascribed to the potential of a referendum on the single currency. It has also reviewed the opportunities and difficulties that different kinds of pro- and anti-euro pressure groups face when campaigning in the various arenas. Returning to the six hypotheses set out earlier in this paper, this final section considers how closely the above empirical analysis of Britain's euro campaigns appears to fit the hypotheses developed.

First, it is clear that campaigners experience unequal patterns of access to the policy and media arenas, a relevant example of the latter being Britain in Europe and the No Campaign's increasing emergence as authoritative sources for the media, while most of the smaller campaign groups are rarely the subjects of media coverage. This feeds into the second hypothesis, that the less well-resourced campaign groups are typically at a disadvantage in terms of media access and coverage, which also appears to be valid. Consider the intra-party campaign groups such as the Tory Europe Network, which tend to receive coverage only when launching or when divisions within the party on Europe are particularly visible, or other pressure groups such as the Democracy Movement, which virtually never appear in the media. The reasons for this are reviewed above, a major factor being that journalists covering the euro issue are far more likely to approach the major campaign groups, since these groups are viewed as authoritative sources and invest more effort in their relations with the media.

The third hypothesis, that pro- and anti-euro campaign groups will experience different patterns of access to pro-European and Eurosceptic parts of the print media, requires further research. How the links between pro- and anti-euro pressure groups, on the one hand, and pro- and anti-European newspapers, on the other, operate needs to be ascertained through interview data. It seems probable that campaign groups will not devote many resources to attempting to get coverage in the newspapers that are not sympathetic to their cause, while maintaining strong relationships with those newspapers that are. However, there are still many questions remaining to be asked about the nature of the relationships between campaign groups and the print media in the UK, such as whether some pro-European newspapers are viewed as more valuable to their cause than others by pro-euro campaign groups (similarly for the Eurosceptic groups and media).

The fourth hypothesis is that groups experiencing limited or poor access to the policy and media arenas are likely to use the public arena in campaigning for or against the euro. A relevant case is the Democracy Movement, an anti-euro organisation that makes considerable use of public arena strategies such as rallies, street stalls and public meetings in campaigning. However, it seems likely that this use of the public arena stems partly from the ethos of the organisation (which seeks to portray itself as a grassroots 'people's campaign' against the euro), partly from the fact that it has the required resources to mount extensive campaigns in the public arena, and only partly from the limited access it enjoys to the policy and media arenas. As this suggests, the reasons for organisations using the public arena in the current pre-campaign stage appear to be more complex than a mere lack of opportunities in the policy and media arenas. While the hypothesis as it is phrased is valid – those groups that are marginalized from the policy and media arenas are likely to campaign in the public

arena – there also exist multiple other motives for campaigning in the public arena under the present conditions.

Turning to the fifth hypothesis, that the patterns of access to the policy and media arenas that pro- and anti-euro campaigners experience are likely to alter over time, the answer seems to be that these patterns of access have altered relatively little. There is little evidence from the recent history of the euro campaigns to suggest that groups experience particularly different patterns of access to the policy and media arenas at the time of writing compared to when they were first set up. This may partly be a function of the short timespan of the euro campaigns to date, or alternatively it may indicate that while patterns of access have been shown to have altered significantly in other areas – for example, the decline in relations between the trade unions and the media over the course of the 1980s (Davis 2002) – in the case of the euro campaigns this has not been the case. A pro- or anti-euro campaign group's ease of access to the policy and media arenas appears to be influenced by relatively constant factors such as the elite contacts it already possesses and whether or not it is the main campaign group for one side of the debate, which alter little over time.

Finally, the example of the 1997 commitment to a referendum by the UK's political parties is one case of how an elite decision has altered the dynamics of the euro debate. It provides an example of how the potential for a referendum causes groups to employ different campaign strategies, using the media and policy arenas rather than the policy arena alone. The 1997 referendum commitment catalysed an upsurge in campaign group formation and an increase in activity from existing pro- and anti-European pressure groups. Furthermore, it has meant that the pressure groups engaged in campaigning have made considerable attempts to use the media, to put pressure on the government, and to get key sectors of elite opinion on board – in the terms of this paper, to use the policy and media arenas in campaigning. If the government were to call a referendum on the single currency, it seems clear that campaign efforts would shift wholesale into the public and media arenas, which would constitute a case of campaign strategies altering as a result of a definite referendum date being set. This indicates that upcoming referendums do compel political actors to shift the arenas in which they campaign, as the last of the six hypotheses suggests.

A concluding question is how far the framework of campaign arenas can be extended beyond Britain's euro campaigns and applied to communications in referenda more widely. Given the rise in single-issue politics in recent decades (Marsh 1983; Jordan 1998) and in the use of referendums in Western democracies (Mendelsohn and Parkin 2001), understanding how communications work in these kinds of issue-led campaigns is likely to be increasingly relevant. Across Europe in particular, referendum democracy is set to be an issue in 2003 and beyond, since use of the referendum device for key decisions on European integration is spiralling. In 2003 alone there will be at least eleven referendums on European issues across the continent, including Sweden's referendum on EMU in September, and a cascade of referendums on EU membership in ten accession countries over spring and summer 2003. In national contexts where there is a greater elite consensus on European issues, such as Hungary, campaigns are likely to matter less, whereas in more volatile contexts such as Estonia, where there is considerable opposition to European integration expressed by sectors of the political elite, campaigns may matter more.

In all the European states, holding a referendum will give rise to an upsurge in political campaigning for and against European integration in the public and media arenas. Whether these upsurges in political campaigning will serve to invigorate national debates over European integration, at least for the duration of the referendum, or to make the contemporary disengagement of many European publics from the democratic process even more apparent, remains to be seen. In these contexts of intense political conflict over Europe, the construct of the policy, media and public arenas may well prove a useful way of viewing the campaigns, both in analysing the strategies used by pro- and anti-European organisations to influence government and elite opinion, the mass media and public opinion, and in identifying phases of campaigning prior to and during referendums.

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