

**The Mobilization against the 2005 Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe: A *French*
Mobilization for Another Europe**

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ABSTRACT

Why did a majority of French voters reject the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe in the 2005 referendum? We argue here that the collective mobilization of the left-wing ‘No’ camp made the decisive difference through its formation of *Collectifs pour le non*, a coalition which facilitated the public expression of an anti-liberal and pro-European position capable of bringing together the Green and Socialist electorates, along with other parts of the left. Using a comprehensive analysis of the multi-organizational field of protest constituted by the mobilization of the left-wing No camp, we show first that the mobilization was a ‘European affair’, in the sense that it developed a pro-European position in the context of struggles against liberal forces. Second, we show that the mobilization was also a *French* affair because it relied on the high valuation of the *national* mode of belonging, through the defence of the French state model.

KEYWORDS

France; multiorganizational fields; alterglobalist movement; European integration; territorial belonging.

Biographical Note

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The Mobilization against the 2005 Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe: A *French Mobilization for Another Europe*

On 29 May 2005, French citizens were asked the following question: *Approuvez-vous le projet de loi qui autorise la ratification du traité établissant une Constitution pour l'Europe?*ⁱ The No votes won with 54.68%; the Yes votes totalised 45.32%; the turnout rate was very high for a European consultation (69.7%) (Ministère de l'intérieur, 2006). It was the highest No vote in a referendum in French history; in 18 referendums of this type since universal suffrage was introduced, only two had previously produced a negative result (in 1946 and 1969) (Perrineau 2005, p. 233). The 2005 vote prompted a major political crisis in the Europe-building process and led to an overhaul of the political landscape in France.

Why, then, did a majority of French voters reject the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe (henceforth the 'Treaty')? Some electoral analyses have directly linked the 'no' vote to the inward-looking nature of a large part of the electorate and to the fear produced by Europe building. Others maintained that French citizens voted no because of the French political context. In this paper, I challenge this structural argument in terms of its cleavages and qualify it in terms of '*Frenchness*'. I argue that, even if the No position was not a new one in the French context, something special happened in 2005: the collective mobilization of the left No camp, and argue that it is this mobilization which made the crucial difference. Compared to previous episodes of French voting on issues of European legislation, *the mobilization enabled the public expression of an anti-liberal and thus pro-European position* capable of bringing together part of the left electorate, especially the Green and the Socialist electorates. This radicalization of a portion of the French left electorate is linked to changes affecting progressive French social and political

forces over the last fifteen years.

My argument is developed in two steps. First, I show that the mobilization of the left No camp was a *European* affair, in the sense that it developed a pro-European position in the context of struggles against liberal forces (section 3). Second, I show that the mobilization was also a *French* affair because it relied on a dominant position primarily valuing the *national* mode of belonging through the defence of the French state model (section 4).

In order to demonstrate this I will use a comprehensive analysis of the multi-organizational field of protest composed by the left No camp mobilization. In other words, I will use analytical social movement tools to examine an episode of conventional politics: the referendum. By investigating this meso-level of analysis (the collective action), it is possible to go beyond individual electoral behaviour and offer an understanding of the social and political dynamics at work at the time of the referendum period, and which are still active today.

I conducted qualitative, semi-structured interviews in June 2005 in Paris and met leaders of various organizations directly involved in the left 'No' coalition. A comprehensive list of interviews is included in the bibliography. The main topic of the interviews was globalization and the actors' attitudes towards it, but a few minutes after the beginning of the interview, most people spontaneously spoke of the Europe-building process and the victory of the 'No' side on 29 May. This data was supplemented by written material (campaign material, and web sites, consulted in May 2005, and propaganda material), and a systematic consultation of newspapers (*Le Monde*, *Libération* and *Le Figaro*) during the referendum period (January to June 2005). Before presenting the results of this research, I will return to the main analysis of the No vote in

France in order to situate the research (section 1) and thus present the context of the coalition and its emergence (section 2).

I Return to the 'No' Vote

Shortly after the referendum, various electoral analyses attempted to draw conclusions from the results, which were described as 'surprising', by dissecting voter preference and proposing a sociological analysis of the outcome.

According to analyses produced by the IPSOS polling institute, the result was essentially a victory for the left, which made up two-thirds of the overall No vote, whilst the extreme-right accounted for the remaining third of the No vote. Nevertheless, on the left of the political spectrum the parties were highly divided. Almost sixty per cent of the Socialist and Green electorates voted against the Treaty whilst the parties themselves backed a Yes vote. On the right, the situation was markedly different, as 80% of the Gaullist UMP (Union pour la majorité présidentielle) electorate voted in favour of the Treaty, in line with their party's line on the issue. As for unions, 74 % of the Communist-aligned Confédération générale du travail (CGT) members voted No, along with 65% of the leftist Union syndicale Solidaires (USS, a federation of 39 unions outside the European Trade Union Confederation), yet only 46 % of the more centrist Confédération française démocratique du Travail (CFDT) members rejected the Treaty (IPSOS, website, 2005).

In the same analysis, it appears that No voters were voting against the decline in the quality of living conditions (52%) and the excessive liberalism included in the Constitution project (40%).

The Yes camp, in contrast, backed the ambition of creating a Europe able to measure itself favourably against China and the United States (64%) and to prevent No voters from stopping or slowing down the European construction process (44%) (IPSOS, website, 2005). Sociological differences were also highly germane: the more affluent and educated voters voted in favour of the Treaty while those with less formal education were more likely to vote No. Finally, young people voted more in this referendum than for the Maastricht Treaty, and they returned a large majority No vote.

The electoral analyses of these results have developed in two directions. One interprets the vote mainly as a 'French affair'; the other position argues that explanation through the French political context is not the whole story.

To make sense of this 'surprising result', Pascal Perrineau has spoken of the 'nationalisation of the European vote', showing that the debates were mostly framed in relation to national issues (the unpopularity of the government, economic and social pessimism, fear of 'strangers') (Perrineau 2005, p. 229). He also linked these reactions to the way debates over Europe-building were traditionally organized in France, with 'Euro-sceptics' on one side and 'pro-Europeans' on the other. The 'pro-Europeans' constitute the open part of the electorate, primarily urban, highly educated, open-minded and in favour of multiculturalism and European integration; the 'Euro-sceptics' constitute the closed part of the electorate, more closed-minded, mostly rural, less educated, against European integration, ethnocentric (Chiche *et al.*, 2000; Perrineau, 2005: 238). For Perrineau, the reinforcement of the No camp after the 1992 Maastricht referendum did not change the fundamental structure of the opposition between Yes and No to Europe. In 2005, as before, the right/left cleavage imploded in the face of the European integration issue, opposing

the No camp (with extreme-left and extreme-right forces) and the Yes camp (the centre-right and the centre-left). It is also important to note that the same types of electorate supported the No side in 1957 (the Rome Treaty), in 1972 (the first EU enlargement), in 1992 (Maastricht) and in 2005, at least for three-quarters of the No voters (Perrineau, 2005: 240).

Others analysts have suggested a slightly different and more nuanced interpretation of the structure of the vote in 2005, by focusing on the quarter of the electorate who voted Yes in 1992 and No in 2005, and who, according to their analyses, make up the ‘deciding’ portion of the voting population. These voters, traditionally in favour of European integration, chose to follow their dissenting leaders and not their organizations in 2005 – a phenomenon that can certainly be recognised as the case for the Green and the Socialist electorates.

For example, Sylvain Brouard and Vincent Tiberj, using multivariate analysis, show that the political distrust hypothesis (rejection of political elites or the government) lacks persuasiveness (Brouard & Tiberj 2006, p. 266). They propose a comparison of the similarities and differences between the 1992 Maastricht referendum, which was accepted by only 51% of French voters, and the 2005 referendum. They show that in 2005, as in 1992, all social groups were represented in the vote against the Treaty and ‘the higher the class level of the individual’s profession, the higher the probability that they [would] support the European Treaties’ (Brouard & Tiberj 2006, p. 262). But, in 2005, less of the middle-class were in favour of the Treaty than were in favour of Maastricht, so the social basis of the Yes vote diminished during the same period of time.

As in 1992, in 2005 the extreme right and the extreme left remained in the No camp. Since Maastricht however, the positions of the mainstream parties have changed. In 1992, under the

presidency of François Mitterrand, the Socialist Party (PS) supported the then President and campaigned for the Yes side, persuading the majority of Socialist supporters to vote for the Treaty (Bussi, Colange & Gosset 2005, p. 9). But in 2005, Jacques Chirac was President and campaigning for the Yes vote, while the PS was more divided, and the majority of Socialist voters voted No, a pattern also found within Les Verts (the Greens). From this perspective, the results of the 2005 referendum are not only a question of putative 'French' political fears of Europe as expressed by extreme left and right electorates, but also mark a change in the way parts of the middle-class, educated and left electorate evaluates the achievements of European governance. Compared to previous debates (Nice in 2001 or Maastricht in 1992), the No camp was characterized not only by rejection of, but also by disappointment over European integration. As Ivaldi (2006) and Cambadélis *et al.* (2005) have argued, this disappointment over concrete European achievements has favoured the development of the classical left/right debate, questioning not European construction *per se* but rather the structure of the Europe that is being built.

In this respect, the 2005 referendum is not a repetition of structural French anti-European positions. It is over-simplistic to talk about a 'French' reaction to a complex national political context, just as it is over-simplistic to put the results of the referendum down to French voting habits on European questions. I argue that what made the difference was the *mobilization* against the Treaty, which developed a *pro*-European and *anti*-liberal position, and opened the possibility for part of the mainstream left electorate to vote No without being necessarily anti-European. The next section presents the *Collectif pour le non*, the coalition that supported the mobilization against the Treaty.

II Beyond Established Borders: A Multiorganizational Protest Field in a Constrained Context

Social movement analyses have traditionally divided politics into two spheres: conventional versus unconventional politics, partisan versus protest politics, the field of social movements versus the field of partisan politics (della Porta & Diani, 2006; Mathieu, 2002, 2007). Beyond the theoretical differences inherent in these terms, the premise underlying this binary classification is that certain types of organizations favour specific types of collective actions. For instance, political parties are generally concerned with conventional politics in the electoral arena, while social movement organizations specialize in protest politics. Most of the contemporary literature recognizes the often artificial nature of these partitions and the increasing complexity of the political game, which no longer corresponds to a strict division of tasks. The mobilization against the Treaty offers an excellent illustration of these dynamics. For instance, the mobilization clearly took place in the field of conventional politics, given that a referendum was held and that social and political actors came together with the objective of ‘winning’ the referendum. In addition, the organizational diversity of the coalition was remarkable, including political parties from the left and extreme-left, ecological parties, union leaders and volunteer and non-profit organizations. The main characteristic of this coalition was that it blurred the boundaries between the traditionally distinct spheres of collective action (see Table 1).

<INSERT TABLE 1 HERE>

The mobilization against the Treaty, the *Collectif pour le non*, brought together political parties from the left of the political spectrum (a fraction of the PS, a fraction of Les Verts, the Parti communiste (PCF), the trotskyist Ligue communiste révolutionnaire (LCR)), unions

(Confédération paysanne, USS, CGT, a number of local education unions) and various social actors (Association pour la taxation des transactions pour l'Aide aux citoyens (ATTAC), the Centre d'études et d'initiatives de solidarités internationales (CEDETIM) and the Copernic Foundation, a progressive think tank).

In order to account for this type of coalition, recent social movement literature (Klandermans, 1992; Fillieule & Blanchard, 2005) has reintroduced the notion of 'multiorganizational fields' developed by Curtis and Zurcher (1973). A multiorganizational field refers to a network of alliances consisting of the various organizations rallied around a cause. It is analysed at the activist level (many are active across several different scenes) as well as at the organizational level (revealing the various connections uniting them or placing them in a situation of conflict). Fillieule and Blanchard (2005) have mapped out the French alterglobalist 'multiorganizational field' that existed at the time of the 2003 European Social Forum in Paris/Saint-Denis, demonstrating how *the* alterglobalist movement corresponds more to an incongruous movement of collective actors who are assembled at certain poles and who share activist profiles and causes. This concept allows the space of the mobilizations to be considered in a dynamic fashion, by situating the collective actors in a field of alliances and of conflicts that is not limited *a priori* by the nature of the organizations or the location of the mobilization and that is extremely sensitive to the context of the action.

If this concept seems particularly appropriate to study the *Collectif pour le non*, the specific context in which this multiorganizational field emerged needs some clarification due to its direct impact on the possible dynamics among actors involved.

First, the multiorganizational field formed by the mobilization against the Treaty was formed within a relatively set structure of alliances and opposition. In fact, the referendum context quickly led to the formation of two sides (the Yes side and the No side), giving rise to a strong polarization of the debate. This specific structure imposed tight constraints on the kind of discourses that could be developed, and a large portion of the energy deployed during the campaign by actors was directed towards rebuilding boundaries *within* the two camps (the left-wing actors in the Yes camp (PS, Les Verts, CFDT) working very hard to distance themselves from the right-wing actors in their camp (UMP); and in the No camp, the left-wing forces (PS, PC, Les Verts, LCR, ATTAC, USS, CGT) similarly working very hard to separate themselves from the extreme-right Front national (FN)). As a result, a consideration of the changing dynamics between actors is less relevant, due to its stability in this context. Nevertheless, this stability was not a ‘given’, as it had been constructed by all of the collective actors involved. To explain how such a multiorganizational field could have emerged, we first have to look at the political context in which the referendum took place.

The campaign took place in a relatively tense national context. The government was clearly losing ground, but it nevertheless refused to give in to the demands of societal actors. The political left was still divided, despite the positive outcome of the regional elections in 2004, in which the unified left had won control of 20 of France’s 22 regional councils. It was as if the 2002 presidential election – in which Lionel Jospin, the former Prime minister and Socialist candidate, was eliminated in the first round, with Front National leader Jean-Marie Le Pen progressing to the second round run-off with Jacques Chirac – remained a traumatic event for the left political forces. Moreover, societal actors had experienced several recent defeats, particularly over Prime minister Raffarin’s pension reform plan, which had been adopted despite the huge

mobilizations against it in May 2003.ⁱⁱ

The referendum period was a fabulous opportunity for left leaders to build political capital and to position themselves for the next presidential elections in 2007. This was certainly the case for the PS and its leader (Francois Hollande), who led the party's Yes position. It was also the case for the LCR and Laurent Fabius, one of the main PS dissidents and the party's second-in-command, and it was definitely the case for ATTAC. As Agrikoliansky has demonstrated (Agrikoliansky, 2007), the referendum campaign came at the right time for ATTAC: the organization was experiencing serious internal turmoil and stood to benefit from the referendum context. It would have an opportunity to rally its troops and reclaim its place within the French alterglobalist nebula by demonstrating its strength and mobilization capacity in the course of the campaign.

The competition among these leaders (and others, such as peasant syndicalist José Bové) after the referendum, in anticipation of the 2007 presidential election, and the difficulties they faced in unifying the left-wing forces, clearly point to the interpretation of the referendum period as an 'exceptional' period, led by the strategic calculations of each leader. Nevertheless, ending the analysis here would be to truncate the discussion.

Why did thousands of activists, affiliated or not to the main organizations which were included in the coalition, participate in meetings, organise public debates in small villages, public markets, and also peoples' kitchens? As Crettiez and Sommier indicate, 200,000 people were part of the *Collectif* in May 2005, participating in 1000 *local Collectifs*; 1500 public meetings were held between October 2004 and March 2005 and 60,000 posters distributed (Crettiez & Sommier, 2006: 204-205).

In these episodes of massive mobilization, ideas have played a key role in the mobilization process. People on the ground were not only acting because it was a good strategic choice for their organization, but also because they believed their positions were the best for the future of Europe, France, and themselves. To go beyond leaders' strategies and explanations, and to understand how collective actors managed to build these common positions, I propose to analyse the *content* of the mobilization, in general and for each actor.

In its original formulation, the multiorganizational field concept assumed the cognitive dimension as a given, whereby the organizations belonging to the same coalition were deemed to share the same ideologies (Curtis & Zurcher, 1973). In a 1997 study, Evans elaborates on Klandermans' proposal that the structure of the field of alliances impacts upon the building of meaning within the coalition. He suggests that certain structural factors affecting the selection of cognitive frameworks of collective action be updated (Evans, 1997). More specifically, he attempts to measure the impact on the building of multiple target frameworks (members, sympathizers, allies, opponents) for a given coalition of actors. In common with Evans, we think that the *content* of mobilizations in the multiorganizational field are the complex result of the relationships between contextual elements, the type of coalitions built, and the strategies of actors. However, we propose a more constructivist view of 'frame building' than the literature on framing has generally assumed (Benford & Snow, 2000).

More specifically, we propose to relate the context of the mobilization against the Treaty (the very specific period of the referendum campaign) to the short-term history of protest in France. In the next section, we show how the mobilization against the Treaty was portrayed by the actors

involved as a mobilization for ‘another Europe’, directly linking the emergence of the coalition to the multiorganizational field of protest for ‘another world’ that emerged during the 1990s in France. In the final section, we take into account the content-based differences within the coalition, to show that this multiorganizational field is also directly linked with *French* political debates on the left of the political spectrum. If the *Collectif pour le non* offered a pro-European and anti-liberal opposition on the Treaty, it was also articulating a position that primarily valued an idea of French 'belonging' through the defence of the French state model, a position which is not shared by all alterglobalist activists.

III The Mobilization Against the Treaty: A ‘European Affair’

The leaders interviewed employed strong language to describe the result of the referendum: ‘May 1968 in the ballot box’ (P. Farbiaz, 2005, personal communication); ‘A national political earthquake’ (A. Krivine, 2005, personal communication); ‘A historical victory against neoliberalism’ (J. Nikonoff, 2005, personal communication; all translations are the author’s). In addition to the drama of the situation (the interviews were conducted a few days after the victory of the No side), the reactions of the actors we met conveyed the deep political significance of the referendum campaign. How did this mobilization fit with the short-term history of protest in France? In this section, we show that the *Collectif pour le non* was directly linked with the emergence of an alterglobalist nebula in France. This direct affiliation has favoured the dominance of a discourse for ‘another Europe’.

A Multiorganizational Field linked with past mobilizations for ‘another world’

The mobilization against the Treaty began with the *Appel contre le traité constitutionnel européen* [Call to oppose the European Constitutional Treaty], which was launched by the

Copernic Foundation, signed by 200 people, and published in the communist newspaper *L'Humanité* on 20 October 2004. Over 500 signatures were rapidly obtained, and the *Appel des 200*, an informal group of organizations and individuals, was created. In April 2005, it was active under the name *Collectif national pour un non de gauche*. After the referendum, it became the *Collectif national du 29 mai* and pursued its activities for 'another Europe' (see www.collectifdu29mai.org).ⁱⁱⁱ

As several studies have shown, since the early 1990s, France has experienced a rise in protest activity (AIDS advocacy, protests by the unemployed, the homeless, undocumented immigrants, the general strike of November and December 1995, and so on), while left political parties have been distancing themselves from social actors and their claims (Mathieu, 2002, 2007; Andretta & Reiter, 2007). As Mathieu explains (2007: 143), it was during the 1997 legislative elections that Act Up launched the 'We are the Left' call that directly pitted social movement organizations against political parties. This wariness toward actors from the political partisan field would continue to grow at a time when the 'plural left' coalition of the PS, PCF and Les Verts, was in power (from 1997 to 2001). Today, it is a characteristic of organizations that are active in the global justice movement, in France and elsewhere (della Porta *et al.*, 2006; Agrikoliansky and Sommier, 2005). In this context, the creation of a *Collectif national pour le non au Traité* appeared as a break with routine protest practices.

At the same time, the existence of the *Collectif* was not the result of a spontaneous generation of activists. Quite the contrary, in fact. It is linked with more than ten years of different struggles. As della Porta and Caiani (2007: 2) have stated, the left No in France was largely sustained by actors who participated in the movement for a 'Europeanization from below,' which gradually

emerged from the mid-1990s. These same actors and resource networks were mobilized during the preparation of the European Social Forum of 2003 in Paris/Saint-Denis and during the 2005 referendum campaign (Agrikoliansky, 2007: 224). These networks, in the case of France, made extensive use of resources offered by extreme-left political organizations such as the PCF (Andretta and Reiter, 2007: 234) as well as the LCR (A. Krivine, 2005, personal communication) and by union organizations (the SUD unions and the Confédération paysanne in particular). From this perspective, the nature of the coalition does not appear to be a departure from France's very recent history of protest movements. Rather, it was simply making public the activist practices with which social movement activists and analysts were very familiar. This structural connection also provides an understanding of why the argument of the *Collectif* in favour of 'another Europe' draws directly on arguments 'for another world' common in alterglobalist circles.

What is more striking in the 2005 coalition is the presence of leaders of non-extreme left parties, such as the Greens and the Socialist Party. How could these links have been possible? The French Socialists had supported all previous European Treaties, with the exception of the European Defence Community in 1954. In 2005, the party was strongly divided, and some leaders, such as Fabius, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, and Henri Emmanuelli,^{iv} publicly supported the No side. In December 2004, the PS organized an internal referendum on the Treaty (Treille, 2007): 58% of the members who voted were in favour of it. Despite these results, the No leaders of the PS continued to campaign against the Treaty, and Fabius was an active organizer of the No side during the campaign (for further details concerning internal divisions, see Ivaldi 2006).

The Greens were also shaken by the debates concerning the Treaty. Since the mid-1990s, they had been very close to an alterglobalist position.^v In 2003, they created an alterglobalist section

within the party, distinct from International Relations, for the purpose of the European Social Forum in Paris/Saint-Denis in 2003. Although the party officially endorsed the Yes camp, a large number of Green activists voted No and supported the No campaign. As Patrick Farbiaz, in charge of the alterglobalist section, has stated:

It is our political identity that is at stake because Greens are naturally part of the global justice movement [...] By campaigning for the 'Yes' side we are giving the impression that we are the same as the socio-liberals of the *Parti socialiste* [...] It is going to be very difficult to put a 'Band-Aid' over it. (P. Farbiaz, 2005, personal communication, author's translation).

Social movement literature has extensively documented the phenomenon of the multipositionality of activists within left-wing organizations (Andretta & Reiter, 2007: 238). In France, this phenomenon has been at work since the mid-1990s and the emergence of ATTAC, the leader of the emerging alterglobalist protest network (Crettiez & Sommier, 2006: 488). Often, ATTAC activists are also activists for the PS or Greens. Multi-positionality means that borders between conventional and unconventional actions are more and more porous for individuals. It is precisely in this context that some convergences among radical left and left partisan organizations have developed. The possibility of the No coalition is thus also the result of this larger transformation, which has its own roots in the radicalization of some leftist activists (the massive mobilizations of December 1995 are one of the turning points generally raised in the literature – see for example Mathieu, 2009) and the realignment process that followed within left-wing political parties (Ivaldi, 2006).

The renewal of dynamics among social and political actors has opened up the possibility for a multiorganizational field, such as the No coalition, to emerge. But what about the *content* of it? The discursive framework that sustained it was broad (and vague) enough to accommodate all of them: the common desire for ‘another Europe’.

A Coalition for ‘Another Europe’

Beyond the ideological differences which distinguish the collective actors involved in the coalition, two complementary elements form the basis for their opposition to the Treaty.

First, the liberal nature of the Treaty (Article I-3) was criticized for two main reasons: its constitutionalization of the neo-liberal Europe-building process, and its closure of the door to alternative policy options. In this respect, mobilization against the Treaty was framed as a way to preserve the very possibility of building an alternative Europe.

In the No camp within the PS, the Treaty was viewed as an attempt to cement not only the rules of the European (liberal) game, but its very nature as well, which would prevent the social European model from becoming a reality; Laurent Fabius, for example, claimed that a No could mean a new beginning for Europe, and that it was the duty of left forces to say No today to save the future of Europe (Fabius, 2004). In contrast, the dominant discourse within the PS presented the No camp as a No to Europe, while the Yes position was a guarantee that Europe-building would remain the primary tool with which to respond to economic globalization, along with financial taxation, fair trade, sustainable development and the reform of the WTO. As Lionel Jospin, campaigning for a Yes vote, stated in Nantes on 20 May 2005: ‘If the French vote No,

there will be no change in France. It will be a No to Europe' (quoted in *L'Hebdo des socialistes*, 28 May 2005, p.11, author's translation). This position is consistent with PS discourses on Europe-building in general, which articulate the deepening of Europe-building as synonymous with having more tools to regulate capitalism (Marks, Wilson & Ray, 2002). By saying No to the Treaty, PS dissidents had to prove that they were not anti-European and also that it was necessary to exit (and break) the liberal path in order to build a true European social-democratic path.

The PCF and the LCR opposed what they argued to be the liberal project of the Treaty, and framed their opposition within the larger struggle against liberalism. For them, the Treaty would reinforce Europe as an economic partner of the USA, rather than as a potential counter-weight to its global geo-political hegemony. The 29 May victory was interpreted as only a step in the fight against liberalism and its policies, not as an end in itself (Duval, 2005: 5); post- referendum, the struggle to build progressive alternatives on a European scale would continue.

Second, all the left-wing No forces claimed that through their opposition they were ensuring the possibility of building another Europe in the future, together and from below, i.e., democratically. This argument about 'democracy' was especially used by the LCR and the USS. The LCR stressed the need to oppose the 'undemocratic' process of the Treaty, and pushed for the democratization of European institutions, and more participatory democracy. They also proposed the creation of constituent assemblies for Europe and the adoption of a new charter of rights. They justified their strategies by arguing that after the rejection of the Treaty, the constitutional project would have to be redefined and renegotiated with a stronger voice for the left No camp. For the USS, a No victory had the potential to realign the European political process, and create positive opportunities for progressive forces to push for 'another Europe'.

Members of the No coalition argued that the Treaty should be rejected as a liberal political project in the name of the very possibility of ‘another Europe’. In this respect, the referendum period also corresponded to a key moment of alterglobalist mobilization in France. Dissident actors from institutionalised left forces (the PS, and to some extent the Greens) campaigned alongside what we might call, following Andretta and Reiter’s definition (2007: 226), as ‘radical-left’ forces (if we exclude the PCF). Their participation in the No coalition was a reflection of profound divergences within these organizations, and symptomatic of changes at work on the left of the political spectrum since the mid-1990s.

As Agrikoliansky (2007: 210) has stressed, the alterglobalist nebula was deeply divided on the Treaty issue. Certainly not all elements of the alterglobalist ‘movement’ campaigned for a No: for example, a number of leading figures, such as Antonio Negri, supported the Treaty. If, as we have demonstrated, the coalition against the Treaty was clearly inspired by discourses for ‘another Europe’ and was a direct descendant of the fight against neo-liberal globalization, it still does not, however, represent the entire alterglobalist nebula. Moreover, the presence of a common framework of mobilization does not exclude the existence of major differences of opinion within the coalition. The multiorganizational field created by the *Collectif pour le non* was in fact criss-crossed by several lines of conflict. In the last part of the article, we return to this *French* side of the coalition; i.e. divisions that are proper to French leftist activists. We argue that territory was the major point of contention among actors and that the dominant position that prevailed prevents long-term convergence with other social forces, in France and in Europe.

IV A *French* Mobilization

The Coalition for the No was not only a European affair, it was also a *French* mobilization. First, this is because at least part of the opposition from the left-wing No forces reflected a tactical opposition to President Chirac (this is especially true for the PCF and the LCR) (Ivaldi 2006; Perrineau, 2005). But more than a reaction to the French political context, the very *content* of the mobilization was divided around the crucial question of territorial identity. The territory issue was problematic from the perspective of European integration, as well as from that of economic globalization. What were the boundaries of belonging? What were the targets of claims? For whom were organizations fighting: European citizens or French ones? What was the main referent of discourse, the national territory or European solidarity networks?

Divergent relationships vis-à-vis territory

For historical reasons, the nation-state in Europe has built territorial links through its social policies and the regulation of social solidarity. If the national social state is no longer a guarantee of social solidarity, what happens to the feeling of belonging? Can it simply be transposed to Europe and European institutions? Two contrasting positions on this matter have been developed.

One position within the coalition considered the territory of belonging and the issues raised by the Treaty as primarily European. For these actors, such as the Confédération paysanne and the USS, as well as the dissident sections of the PS and Les Verts, the Brussels and European institutions were becoming central actors of solidarity between European citizens, including French citizens. They believed that increased European integration should go hand in hand with increased redistribution and solidarity on the European scale. The social model they were advocating was associated with (and for some, indistinguishable from) the European territory.

For traditional social democratic parties, the Europe-building process has always been a way of building a new social model in the context of globalization. For the PS, European integration was the only manner in which European societies could domesticate economic globalization and ensure the preservation of the social model for which they had been fighting for several decades, and which was no longer viable at the national level. The idea involved transposing this social model and regulating the economic forces that accompanied it to the level of European institutions, in the hope that these would be in a better position to control the economic systems than the national states, which had become powerless, would be. However, the dissident Socialist and Green forces felt that the Treaty did not allow European institutions to assume this role, and that some of the Treaty provisions had the potential to prevent, or at least drastically hinder, the development of a 'social' Europe. For these actors, it was therefore from the perspective of European belonging, and based on their partisan organization's loyalty to the initial European project, that they chose the path of dissidence.

For the unions, which had been more involved in the European Social Forum than the parties, beyond this interpretation of European integration as the primary tool for promoting and building 'a better Europe', European construction was associated with the fight against another territorial enemy: the United States. In common with the global justice movement in general, these actors conceived the USA as emblematic of a model of economic development that must be rejected. Europe-building, as a territory and a social model, could become a way of opposing US hegemony. In this perspective, the opposition to the Treaty was grounded in a certain vision of Europe as the main alternative available to European citizens for building 'another world'. For these actors, the borders of solidarity were increasingly European and, correspondingly, decreasingly national.

The second, dominant position in the multiorganizational field cast defence of the national territory as the primordial factor, with the connection to a European territory being possible only *via* national borders. This position was mainly promoted by ATTAC.^{vi} As Ancelovici (2002, 2004) has demonstrated, ATTAC emerged articulating ‘global claims that centred exclusively on globalization’, such as the Tobin tax on international movements of capital, the reform of tax havens, and the establishment of an international penal court; gradually, ‘ATTAC’s claims focused on more traditional and national themes, such as defending public services’ (Ancelovici, 2004:54, author’s translation). The refocusing of ATTAC–France on national territorial concerns and the defence of the ‘French model’ would lead to internal divisions within the organizations, between those who joined the association on the basis of its initial global claims (activists as well as certain local ATTAC groups) and those who no longer saw a clear distinction between ATTAC and classic French left-wing organizations traditionally fighting for the defence of the state. This transformation would progressively pit anti-liberals (for whom ATTAC had become the standard-bearer) against the others, accused of being ‘social liberals,’ in other words, those open to redefining the left outside the state tradition (Ancelovici, 2004: 58).

The referendum period was a pivotal time during which opposition between ‘sovereignists’ and ‘federalists’ would crystallize, revealing, as Agrikoliansky points out (2007: 224), diverging positions concerning Europe that had not been brought to the forefront within the alterglobalist movement until then, despite their underlying continuous presence. As a result, the referendum period forced these organizations, with ATTAC at the helm, to position themselves with regard to the territorial stakes of the proposed alternative. ATTAC’s presence within the coalition, which at the outset was viewed as entirely new, thus heightened the debate between the ‘social liberals’

and the 'anti-liberals'. Having become the think tank of the anti-liberals, ATTAC assumed the role of 'intellectual avant-garde' during the referendum period, blurring the nature of coalition's relationship to Europe and preventing a complete separation of social issues (against the Treaty, for a defence of Social Europe on the European territory) and national issues (against the Treaty, for the defence of the French state model and for the export of this model to other peoples of Europe, which was the dominant position defended by ATTAC–France during the referendum period). This manner of framing the debate concerning the Treaty – and concerning Europe-building in general – constitutes one of the French particularities of the debate.^{vii}

ATTAC carried out the concrete work of the mobilization, and expended much energy and resources meeting people on the ground and participating in thousands of meetings in local areas. In addition, at the national level, ATTAC produced an impressive amount of literature, which dissected and analysed the Treaty provisions. These jargon-free documents armed the coalition's activists with arguments in support of their position. In addition, they also served as popular education tools, which were widely used and disseminated among members of the public. As Sarah Waters (2004) notes, the role of intellectuals within the organization was central, which explains why ATTAC's political positions were extremely well developed and articulated, and why they had real influence within political, university, and media circles. Despite internal and external criticism of the centralization of power within the organization, ATTAC was the main source of knowledge and expertise for the left No camp.

For ATTAC, the most important task in the campaign was to stop the Treaty. However, it was also an opportunity to disseminate popular education tools about anti-liberalism on the basis of the proposals the organization had developed during the campaign. This central role in the

coalition, as the main source of expertise, facilitated the diffusion of ATTAC's positions in the No coalition's multiorganizational field. But this specific *French* positioning hindered the development of longer-term convergences among left social and political actors, as we shall discuss below.

Deepening divisions amongst French left-wing actors

With the exception of certain Trotskyist activists, most of the activists involved in the alterglobalist mobilizations agreed that the French 'progressive forces' should operate in an era where revolutions are not part of the possible repertoire of actions. However, they disagree upon the most effective manner for carrying out the resistance. Some prefer to work towards the convergence of forces behind an anti-liberal *avant-garde*, others think that it is preferable to create empirical alternatives here and now, to demonstrate that it is possible to build 'another world'. This debate is not unique to France. It divides alterglobalist movements around the world and represents a recurring cleavage within World Social Forums (De Sousa Santos, 2008). However, in the French context, it takes on particular significance because it has been coupled with differences regarding the collective actors' preferred mode of belonging.

The dominant position within ATTAC has been to build *the* social movement capable of 'jamming the machine' (opposition to the Multilateral Agreement on Investments, the Treaty). For ATTAC, the objective of collective action against globalization is the fight against economic liberalism. This is a very classic strategy in left-wing protest strategies: to undermine the system so that it crumbles. This alignment has not always been obstacle-free (Agrikoliansky, 2007). Some leading activists inside ATTAC-France and some local ATTACs were also pushing for the necessity to engage in 'another way of doing politics', meaning that they were less concerned

with the *outcomes* of struggles and much more with their *processes*. In this respect, questions of participation, horizontal democracy, valuing diversity have become more important than questions of strategy. This dichotomy inside ATTAC enabled the building of coalitions with extreme-left partisan organizations tending towards political solutions to resistance (PCF, LCR) as well as with actors that supported the concept of ‘a fight for a fight’ (such as associations of the unemployed) or actors that fell somewhere in between (USS, Confédération paysanne). The presence of this double position inside ATTAC allows the organizations to build large networks of allies. The 2005 Coalition for the No is thus, in part, the successful result of this ambiguity. At the same time, the moment of the referendum changed the balance of power inside ATTAC and limited the nature of the alliances possible in the future.

Between the birth of ATTAC in 1998 and 2005, the two positions coexisted, more or less peacefully. In 2005, during the referendum period, divergences concerning the most effective strategies raised, opposing those who wanted to build a coalition able to stop the Treaty (and who won the referendum) with those who wanted to continue the work towards the convergence of resistance across Europe. This strategic dispute combined with the divergences discussed above, regarding the content of the struggle (the fight for the French model for Europe OR for another Europe). The result was the emergence of two positions: on one side were the actors defending the French model, preferring a non-partisan political strategy that unified anti-liberal forces, and which concerns the positions of a large portion of the actors involved in the coalition against the Treaty. On the other side were those who supported the building of social networks beyond national borders and the articulation of fights on different scales and different territories as the primary means for converging fights and global resistance. These actors were not directly involved in the coalition. It includes the movement of the *sans*, or have-nots (undocumented

persons, the unemployed, the homeless), as well as more moderate organizations, including some international solidarity associations or women's movements (e.g., the French chapter of the World March of Women). For a while, after the No victory, it was difficult for them to make themselves heard, with ATTAC and other members of the coalition having retained a monopoly over the opposition to neo-liberal globalization. In this sense, the 2005 campaign constituted a turning point in the balance of forces among alterglobalist activists.

The 2005 referendum moment was also a turning point for all France's left-wing parties. The Socialists and the Greens did not recover from their internal divisions over the Treaty and were unable to restore their lost unity. After the *Collectif pour le non* experience and success in 2005, some actors involved tried to build an electoral alliance to present a united candidate for the 2007 presidential elections. This attempt was unsuccessful, and five candidates to the left of the PS ran in 2007, obtaining only 9% of the vote between them. Since then, the LCR has tried to federate the extreme-left, establishing the Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste in February 2009.

All in all, and ironically, the 2005 coalition for the No has produced more divisions among left-wing social and political actors rather than a stable structuration of alliances. The main elements of divisions inside this multiorganizational field were and are typically French. For the majority of the actors involved, the best way of building another Europe was to defend and to promote the French State model. At the same time, this position – which was not dominant in the alterglobalist field before 2005 but became so during and after the referendum – represents a serious limitation of the possibility of enlarging the coalition (in France and in Europe), as well as to sustain it.

CONCLUSION

The 2005 referendum result was essentially a victory of the left faction of the No camp. The mobilization of the coalition for the No certainly made the difference, opening a new space for part of the left electorate to be simultaneously pro-Europe and anti-liberal. By adopting a comprehensive analysis of the multi-organizational field of protest composed by the left No camp, we have shown that:

- Europe-building crystallized the oppositions of a large portion of the activists who were close to the alterglobalist movement. They were fighting for ‘another Europe’ in the same way they were fighting for ‘another world’. From this perspective, European institutions constituted an ‘identity marker’, to use the Agrikoliansky’s term (2007). It is reasonable to think that these trends will continue in the future and will probably change European dynamics.
- However, the referendum period was also an opportunity for many activists to participate in the building (even if imaginary) of this ‘other Europe’. By forcing collective actors to provide concrete content of what this other Europe meant, a central division appeared among those who defended the French model of the state and those who worked toward unifying the battles beyond national borders to promote a ‘European’ social justice.

This analysis challenges the structural explanation that relies solely on French electoral divisions to explain the result of the referendum. We have seen that some French No voters were not simply ‘closed’ to Europe. By using social movement tools for the understanding of conventional politics like the referendum, we have been able to stress the crucial role of social movement

actors in French and European political life.

Since the Second World War and the Europe-building process, European citizens have debated the idea of Europe. As Bartolini shows, the primary opposition to European integration was territorial (Bartolini, 2001: 25). With time, it tended to become a specific field of political action, with some social actors protesting against European institutions and other actors demanding that European institutions intervene as legitimate public authorities in an attempt to exert a direct influence on the European political process. Today, the debate among political and social actors appears to be less about the relevance of Europe-building and more about the nature of the building process and what form Europe should take (Balme *et al.*, 2002: 23). During the campaign, Europe was at the heart of a strong public debate in France. On the left of the political spectrum, the dimensions of this debate are complex, mixing anti-liberal positions (the sole common elements of all actors against the Treaty), the defence of the national state versus the promotion of European solidarities, and political outcomes versus alternative process building. The specific articulation of these dimensions by collective actors will facilitate or constrain the possibility of the building of other multiorganizational fields in the future, in France and beyond national borders.

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Table 1 – The two referendum camps

Yes camp	No camp
UMP	PC
PS, with dissidents	FN
<i>Les Verts, with dissidents</i>	CGT, unofficially
CFDT, unofficially	USS
MEDEF	ATTAC / CEDETIM / Copernic Foundation
	<i>Confédération paysanne</i>

NB: In **bold** print, the organizations (or fractions thereof) that are part of the *Collectif pour le NON au Traité*.

Notes

ⁱ ‘Do you agree with the Act of Parliament authorizing the ratification of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe’, my translation.

ⁱⁱ During the winter of 2003, Jean-Pierre Raffarin’s government reformed pension plans. The pension reform was quickly linked to Europe-building, and Brussels asked the French government for a financial ‘clean-up’ plan (*Le Monde*, 25 April 2003). On April 23, the main unions (CGT, CFDT, FO, CFTC, UNSA and FSU) agreed to create a common front against the reform. In May 2003, huge union demonstrations were organized against the proposed pension and educational reforms. After the Raffarin government proposed a series of amendments to the proposed law, the CFDT accepted the agreements and broke rank with the united front. Despite a large mobilization in June, the law was adopted in the National Assembly. It is during this event that the link between European directives and the national government’s acquiescence was publicized by opponents to the reform.

ⁱⁱⁱ This gave rise to the *Collectif d’initiative nationale pour un rassemblement antilibéral de gauche et des candidatures communes* (National Initiative Collective for a Left Anti-Liberal Movement and Common Candidates), which was working nationally as well as locally to nominate a single left Parti socialiste candidate for the 2007 presidential election.

^{iv} The PS was at that time organised internally along four main ‘streams’: 1) *Nouveau Monde*, headed by Mélenchon and Emmanuelli; 2) The *Nouveau Parti socialiste*, headed by Montebourg, 3) *Motion militante*, headed by Dollé, 4) the majoritarian stream, headed by François Hollande, First Secretary of the Party. After the referendum, divisions within the party remained, even after the National Congress in November 2005.

^v The alterglobalization movement is a ‘global social justice movement’ or a ‘movement for an alternative globalization’. In this article, it refers to the diverse networks that emerged against globalization in France and elsewhere in Europe at the end of the 1990s and that developed during the World and European Social Forums.

^{vi} In December 2004, ATTAC organized an internal consultation: 84% of the members who voted said that they would vote against the Treaty, and 72% said they wished that ATTAC would tell its members which way to vote. As a result, ATTAC directed all of its resources toward the campaign for an ‘authentically European ‘No’ ’ (Crettiez & Sommier, 2006: 489).

^{vii} In addition to these positions, we also see the more classic internationalist discourse, led by parties of the extreme-left, such as the *Ligue communiste révolutionnaire*.