A taxonomy of referendums on European integration: how does direct democracy relate to representative government action?

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Outline

- PhD project: The relationship between EU referendums and representative government action

- Paper: A taxonomy of EU referendums
  - What were referendums about and where did they take place?
  - Within which institutional constraints were referendums organised?
  - EU referendum trigger model

- Conclusion and Outlook
Legitimacy crisis of representative democracy?

- Direct democracy as substitute for the end of permissive consensus?
- Public support as inherent requirement of legitimacy of EU integration
- Input / output legitimacy
- Complex referendum issues?
PhD project: Relationship between EU referendums and representative government action

- EU referendums have been analysed extensively, but comparative perspective on interference with government at national level is lacking:
  - What is the role of governments at these referendum campaigns within their national (institutional) contexts?
  - Which relations can we identify between this governmental role; and the course of the campaign and the outcome of the referendum?
What preconditions constrained the role of representative governments within their national institutional contexts related to EU referendums?

- What are EU referendums about?
  - Membership, treaty or policy?

- How do EU referendums come about?
  - Mandatory or optional?
  - Controlled or uncontrolled?
  - Binding or consultative?
  - Who determines the wording of the referendum question?
What are EU-referendums about?
*(based on Shu, 2008)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries with &gt;1 referendum</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Treaty ratification</th>
<th>Policy issue</th>
<th>Number of referendums</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liechtenstein</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries with 1 referendum</td>
<td>15*</td>
<td>3**</td>
<td>1***</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total nr. of R.**

| 25 | 19 | 8 | 52 |

* AT, HR, CZ, EE, FI, GL, HU, LV, LT, MT, PL, RO, SK, SI, UK
** CT: LU, ES, NL
*** IT
What are EU-related referendums about?
EU referendum trigger model
*(based on Hug & Tsebelis, 2002)*

This model makes predictions about how various provisions for referendums constrain governmental action in relation to

- **1. Constitution**
  - Yes
- **2. Government**
  - Yes
  - **3. Parliament**
    - Yes
    - **4. People**
      - Yes
        - Initiative
      - **Veto**
  - No
How do EU-referendums come about?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constitution</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Parliament</th>
<th>Popular initiative* / Popular veto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Note: Popular initiative and Popular veto are not applicable in all cases.
What is the referendum trigger?

- Constitution
- Government
- Parliament
- People
- No referendums
- Government/people
- Constitution/government/parliament
Conclusion

- Only a few countries >1 referendum [membership]
  - 2000s sequence of referendums in CEECs
- Just in 10 cases deliberate choice of government

- Almost everywhere constitutionally regulated
  - No uniform set of EU-referendum criteria
  - Minimum thresholds / turnout requirements
- If choice: political compromise or change of government
  - Wording mostly straightforward
  - Timing -if possible- politically motivated
  - Binding? Does not matter in practice
Outlook

- Further research on course of campaigns and role of governments:
  - Did governments learn from each other and did this influence the campaign?
  - Do campaigns help the public to legitimize policy choices as they are intended to?

- Contribute to the most effective form of campaigning by governments in order to optimize the legitimacy of the referendum instrument.