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France, Italy, and Spain: Culturally Similar Nations, Yet Drastically Different In Their Roles as European Union Nations

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France, Italy, and Spain: Culturally Similar Nations, Yet
Drastically Different In Their Roles as European Union
Nations

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Honors Thesis

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Introduction

Since France, Italy and Spain are neighboring Western European countries, whose languages and cultures have descended from Latin, it is inevitable that these countries share similarities on many levels. France, Italy and Spain share similar lifestyles, religious values and cultural heritages. Throughout history France, Italy and Spain have experienced many of the same historical events because of their geographical proximity. Now that all three countries are members of the European Union they have become further united by occupying a common area without border controls, and sharing a common market, laws, and currency.

While France, Italy and Spain share many commonalities, their opinions and relationships within the European Union are diverse. Although each nation struggles to balance its national identity with its European identity and to maintain its sovereignty while at the same time giving some of it up to the EU, each nation has its own ideas about how much its identity should change and how much sovereignty it should give up to the EU government. Each nation also has unique opinions about what it means to part of the European Union and what the requirements for becoming a member nation should be. Each nation has different goals it hopes to accomplish for its own country and for the European Union. The differing ideas amongst France, Italy and Spain are a result of the variance that exists amongst their political and economic relationships and institutions, which have been molded by the historical experiences of each nation.

The focus of this paper will be examining why France, Spain and Italy share many cultural similarities, yet differ so greatly in their roles as members of the European Union. After a brief background on the European Union, I will discuss the cultural similarities France, Italy and Spain share. I will then mention several economic and political differences between the three countries and use supporting evidence to explain why and in what context these differences have arisen.

History of the European Union

The European Union is a political and economic community made up of 27 European countries, including Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia,

Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The European Union member countries form a single market with a system of laws which apply in all member states and guarantee the freedom of movement of people, goods, services and capital. The EU promotes cooperation amongst its members for issues concerning the environment, transport, trade and employment. Many of the countries also use a common currency, called the Euro.

Pre- European Union

The European Union was created for several reasons including economic stability, to prevent future wars, to encourage cohesion amongst European nations, to facilitate trade amongst European nations, and to serve as a counterweight against American economic and political dominance. The original objective for the European Union, and for the predecessors of the EU, was to promote cooperation amongst countries that had recently spent several years attempting to destroy each other during World Wars I and II and ultimately prevent future wars, that may have ultimately lead to the destruction of humanity (Lewis 30). The objectives of the European Union have evolved and currently include creating an economic superpower, and to encourage trade and foreign investment.

Although the European Union did not formally come into existence until 1993, the creation of the EU began in following the end of World War II based on French Planning Commissioner Jean Monnet's plan for global modernization and economic development. Monet believed that the best way to begin the process of European cooperation was to develop economic ties amongst the European nations. In 1946 the Monnet Plan was adopted, in which the French tried to take control over the coal and steel in the German Ruhr and Saar regions and use these resources to bring France to 150 percent of pre-war industrial production while German industrial capacity would be permanently limited. In 1949, as the friction between Germany and France for control of the Ruhr and Saar regions, was rising to dangerous levels, Monnet proposed integration of the French and German coal and steel industries under joint control. The cooperation of the European countries formally began in 1951 with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in which France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg and the

Netherlands formed a common market for coal and steel. In 1957, the Treaty of Rome was signed by the same six nations to form a customs union called the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community (Lewis 532). In 1967, the European Steel and Coal Community, the European Economic Community, and the European Atomic Energy Community combined to become collectively known as the European Communities, which focused on facilitating cooperation in economic and agricultural affairs.

In the 1960's the expansion of the European Economic Community began when Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom applied for European Economic Community membership in 1961 and finally were accepted into the EC in 1973. Norway applied at the same time but was rejected for membership. In 1979, the first direct democratic elections of members of the European Parliament were held. In 1981, Greece became the tenth member of the European Communities and in 1986 Portugal and Spain joined the EC(Lewis 31). In 1986 the Single European Act came into existence, formally establishing the single European market to promote reduced trade barriers, increased harmonization and increase competitiveness, and the European Political Cooperation to develop European foreign policy. In 1988, the member states agreed to establish the Delors committee on Economic and Monetary Union, which proposed a three stage plan to creating a European Monetary Union: linking the currencies, integration between states and the creation of the European Central Bank (Bomberg 33).

The European Union Begins

In 1992 European Union was created by the signing of the Maastricht Treaty. The Maastricht Treaty introduced the idea of the euro and the three pillar structure of the European Union. The three pillars include the Community pillar which concerns economic, social and environmental policies, the Common Foreign and Security Policy pillar which concerns foreign policy and military affairs, and the Police and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters pillar which concern immigration and criminal matters (Bomberg 35). The Maastricht Treaty also introduced the coordination of policy on immigration, drugs, and terrorism. The Maastricht Treaty specified the economic and budgetary criteria which determined if countries could join and lead to the Stability and

Growth Pact which specified penalties for EU member nations failing to control budget deficits. EU citizenship was introduced through the Maastricht Treaty, which abolished border controls and allowed members to move freely between member states(Europe).

In 1995 Austria, Sweden and Finland became member nations. In 1997, the Amsterdam Treaty was signed to amend the Maastricht Treaty in areas such as foreign policy and democracy. The Amsterdam Treaty also created the Schengen Agreement which abolished border checks and allowed for the free movement of people amongst most of the EU nations (Bomberg 35). In 2001 the Treaty of Nice was signed as an amendment to the Treaty of Rome and the Maastricht Treaty, to reform the European Union so that it could withstand an enlargement of the European Union. In 1999 the Euro was adopted by eleven countries, France, Spain, Germany, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Austria, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Finland. In 2002, the Euro replaced the national currencies of the countries in the Euro-zone, which included the previously mentioned eleven countries and Greece. In 2004 the Czech Republic, Malta, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia became EU member nations. In 2004, a European Constitution draft, which would replace all previous treaties with one single document, was presented but could not be ratified because it did not receive a unanimous vote. In early 2007, Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU and Croatia, Macedonia, and Turkey are pending applicants. In 2007, Slovenia adopted the Euro as its official currency and on January 1, 2008 Malta and Cyprus also joined the Euro-zone (Salzmann).

For many of the member nation's economic and political stability are the main benefits of being a member nation. Due to the relative small size and limited influence of the individual European countries with respect to the current and rising powers, such as the United States and China, being an EU member nation is crucial to being a competitor in the world economy and to effectively expressing a nation's economic and political concerns. The economies of many of the nations are growing due to increased exports and the ease of doing business Europe-wide. Many small and medium-sized enterprises, that previously did not have the resources to expand outside their home countries, are now operating Europe-wide.

Several of the Eastern-European member nations, such as Romania and Bulgaria, joined in hopes of increasing economic growth. However, after being exposed to the free-market conditions with virtually no support they have realized that economic growth is going to be difficult since the EU no longer offers new members substantial financial assistance as it did in the 1980's with Greece, Spain and Portugal (Salzmann). Many of the Eastern European member nations also sought support for social development from the European Union but many of these nations have such corrupt governments and political structures that social development, economic growth and political stability are nearly impossible. Although many of the Eastern European nations have yet to see substantial advantages from EU membership they have experienced some advantages such as increased trade and easier movement across national boundaries.

Cultural similarities

On a general level, France, Italy and Spain are similar nations. They are neighboring Western European nations whose cultures, languages, and social identities share many similarities. The French, Italians, and Spanish have a similar approach to life and value the same types of qualities. They share similar approaches to business and education, similar family values, and similar religious values. The French, Italian and Spanish languages, as well as several regional languages spoken within these countries, also share many similarities because they have all descended from Latin.

One cultural aspect that France, Italy and Spain share is their religious values and beliefs. All three nations are predominately Roman Catholic and up until 2004 French, Italian, and Spanish citizens made up the majority of Roman Catholic EU citizens. Since Eastern European countries such as Poland, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia and Slovenia have joined the European Union the presence of the number of EU citizens practicing Roman Catholicism has increased dramatically, however the three nations remain the largest Roman Catholic presence in Western Europe (Religion in Europe).

Although, France, Italy and Spain are predominately Roman Catholic each nation has a large Muslim influence because the three nations are located directly across the Mediterranean Sea from predominately Muslim nations, such as Morocco, Libya, Algeria

and Tunisia. Morocco, Libya, Algeria and Tunisia were each controlled at one time by one or more of the three nations and since their independence many Moroccans, Libyans, Algerians and Tunisians have moved to France, Italy or Spain. The Muslim population in France is the largest in Western Europe is 5-6 million or 8-9.6% of the total population. The Muslim population in Spain is approximately one million or 2.3% of the total population, and the Muslim population in Italy is 825,000, which comprises 1.4 % of the entire population (Muslims in Europe). France, Italy and Spain have all experienced cultural clashes within their nations as a result of the significant Muslim presence. In recent years, France has experienced rioting in Muslim communities after a ban in 2004 on religious symbols in schools intended to separate state and religion, which made it illegal to wear the traditional Muslim headscarf in schools. In Spain, tension has increased towards Muslim immigrants after radical Islamists killed 191 people on Madrid trains in 2004(Muslims in Europe).

The national languages of France, Italy and Spain, in addition to several regional languages within these nations including Galician, Occitan, Sardinian, Sicilian and Venetian, are all derived from Latin and share many similar words and formats. For example, the Latin verb *vendere* which translates into English as “to sell” is *vendre* in French, *vendere* in Italian, and *vender* in Spanish. The verbs are also conjugated in a similar manner as is displayed in Figure A.

Figure A

| English | French | Italian | Spanish |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| I sell | Je vends | Io vendo | Yo vendo |
| You sell | Tu vends | Tu vendi | Tú vendes |
| He/she sells | Il/elle vend | Lui/lei vende | Él/ella/usted vende |
| We sell | Nous vendons | Noi vendiamo | Nosotros vendemos |
| You (polite form) sell | Vous vendez | Voi vendete | Vosotros vendéis |
| They/ You (plural) sell | Ils/elles vendent | Loro vendono | Ellos/Ellas/ Ustedes venden |

Similarities also exist between the sentence structures of French, Italian, Spanish and Latin. Each language utilizes pronouns such as *I, you, he, she, we* and *they* and utilizes several different forms of the pronoun *you* which have different meanings depending on the form. French, Italian and Spanish require that every noun be either masculine or feminine, and that every noun be preceded by a definite article. French, Italian and Spanish sentences are generally formed in the SVO format in which the subject comes first followed by a verb, which is then followed by a noun (Posner 36).

French, Italians and Spaniards share a more relaxed view of time and punctuality than much of the Western world does. In all three countries punctuality is not mandatory and when a meeting, event, party or social gathering is planned the time it is scheduled to begin is only an approximation. For example, in France business meetings often begin 15 minutes after their scheduled times in order to wait for those who are late, because it is expected that people will be late (understand France.com). In many other countries such as the U.S. and Germany it is considered rude to be late, but in France, Italy and Spain it is understood that people will be late.

The French, Italians, and Spanish all enjoy having leisure time. The Italians and Spanish both have a break or 'siesta' in the afternoon during which all of the stores close and everyone goes home for lunch and a nap. In most European countries, including France, Spain and Italy, paid vacations are a legal right. The French receive approximately 5-6 weeks of paid vacation each year and the full time work week consists of 35 hours per week (Hyde 3). Italians enjoy approximately 42 days of paid vacation per year and the Spanish enjoy approximately 30 days of paid vacation per year. The three nations also spend a significant amount of time each year vacationing or relaxing at home, rather than working (Hyde 1).

In France, Italy and Spain business is conducted in a similar manner. For the French, Italians and Spanish developing a personal relationship is an essential step in the process of developing a business relationship. In each of the three countries it is common that the first business meeting is not intended to accomplish any business negotiations, it is simply to create a relationship of trust between two people or organizations. During business meetings in France, Italy and Spain it is common and is not considered rude for people to interrupt one another and for many people to speak at once because arguments

are a form of entertainment. During business meeting eye contact is often frequent and intense (understandfrance.com).

The French, Italians and Spanish people can be considered culturally related because their religious values, languages, immigrant influences, business practices and lifestyles are similar. The fact that France, Italy and Spain are culturally similar, but differ greatly in their economic and political relationships within the EU implies that it is not cultural factors that influence these nations to act and react differently. It is the institutions created by historical experiences that influence the variance between the three nation's economic and political interactions.

Variations in Economic and Political Relationships

Amongst France, Italy and Spain a variance in economic and political relationships within the European Union exists because each nation's historical experiences are different. Historical experiences have shaped each nation's informal and formal institutions, and it is the institutions that ultimately govern the nation's economic and political relationships (Lubatkin 1). Historical experiences have created a unique institutional infrastructure in each nation therefore each nation has different ideas about how much power the European Union government should have, what types of institutions are necessary, and what types of regulations these institutions should impose. The historical experiences of France, Italy and Spain, particularly those of the 20th century such as the two World Wars and the fascist and communist regimes, have had a significant impact on the formation of European Union institutions and the motives of each of country for joining the EU.

Formal and informal institutions shape France, Italy and Spain's interactions within the European Union because they have created a unique set of beliefs out of which the each nation's goals for the European Union originate. Institutions influence the people's ideas about how a government should operate and what mechanisms should be utilized. Since the French, Italians and Spanish each have a unique institutional infrastructure they have different ideas about how the European Central Government should operate (Lubatkin 5). France, Italy and Spain have different ideas about how much power the European Central Government should have, how much integration

should be imposed upon the European Union countries and what the European Union should accomplish. These institutions have also influenced citizen's ideas about who should be allowed to be a part of the European Union.

Institutional Influence

Informal institutions, which include family, religion, schools, sports and media, imprint a culture or set of social norms, values and routines upon a nation's people (Lubatkin 4). An essential part of a person or group's social identity is formed within informal social institutions. Formal institutions, which include religious institutions, government institutions and corporations, enforce the social norms, values and routines through rules and laws. Informal and formal institutions have formed over many years and have evolved according to historical experiences.

France

French institutions such as family, schools, media and government institutions have imprinted a sense of French superiority on the French people. These institutions have obtained the idea that France is superior to other nations through France's history of economic, intellectual and cultural success. In the 17th century, during the reign of Louis XIV, France was the most populous and the wealthiest nation in Europe (Lewis 99). Since the French Revolution in 1789, during which the French were the first European nation to revolt against their harsh rulers, the French have thought of their country as "the homeland of the rights of man" (Lewis 100). During the French Renaissance, which occurred from the late 15th century to the early 17th century, French philanthropists were the intellectual leaders of the world (Lewis 100). The Renaissance period also marked the beginning of absolutism in France, the spread of humanism and the exploration of the "New World". The French had colonies in North America, South America, Asia, Europe, and Africa, including islands in oceans across the world. By the 19th and 20th centuries the French colonial empire was the third largest behind that of the British and the Spanish.

The French have always been admired by nations across the world, so much so that they began to think they were better than everyone else. The French have no

problems of identity, and they cannot imagine wanting to be like anyone else (Lewis 113). Amongst every Frenchman there lies a deep sense of being special, separate and superior (Lewis 112). Many French believe that France is an ideal European nation and that the French are the perfect example of what it means to be European and they feel others should recognize this (Lewis 112). Particularly after the admission of several former Soviet Union nations to the European Union, this attitude makes viewing oneself as a 'European' citizen rather than simply a French citizen difficult for the French because they tend to view themselves as separate from and superior to other Europeans. The French have slowly begun to accept themselves as European citizens but there remains a sense that the French are reluctant to see themselves primarily as Europeans rather than simply French.

Through the Catholic Church, the French educational system, and French organizations the French have learned to have a great respect for authority. According to Geert Hofstede's cultural dimension ranking the French experience a high level of power distance, significantly higher than the level Italians and Spanish experience. On a scale from 1 to 100 where 100 is the highest level of power distance, France scored 68, Italy scored 50 and Spain scored 57 (geert-hofstede.com).

Since its commencement in France during the second century, the French Roman Catholic Church has been imprinting the idea of a hierarchy of authority upon the French through dependence on priests as God's representatives. The French educational system by reinforcing "rationalism", a way of thinking that builds on a hierarchy of knowledge, and by reinforcing a level of 'power distance' between teachers and students (Lubatkin 13). Top managers of French companies create a power distance or barrier between themselves and their employees. French top managers are often from the elitist castes and have obtained their job by using their network within their caste. It is rare that a person would obtain a position outside of those allotted to the group to which he or she belongs. If a person is promoted to a higher level they are considered a traitor to their own group and are not accepted into the new group. It is common that senior management acts in the interest of themselves and their caste, which further reinforces the impervious barriers that exist between them and managers below them (Lubatkin 16).

Spain

Spanish informal institutions such as family, schools and language have created a division between certain groups of Spaniards and the rest of the nation. National unity is a key issue for Spain because, although each region of Spain is unique, some regions are reluctant to associate themselves with and cooperate with the rest of the Spanish population. Although, the language and cultures of Northern and Southern Spain are different from one another the northerners and southerners are able to overcome their differences and cooperate for the advancement of their nation. However, there exist a few regions, such as Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque region, that reluctant to cooperate with the rest of Spain. These regions prefer to speak their native languages instead of Spanish and view themselves as completely different from the rest of the Spanish. While Catalonia seeks full regional autonomy the Basques people are more extreme and they seek complete independence from Spain.

Spanish political institutions have imprinted a sense of inferiority in comparison to other Western European nations upon the Spanish population. Spanish fascism, which lasted from 1936-1975, left the Spanish excluded from the rest of Western Europe and led foreigners to believe that Spain was a backwards nation. When Spain applied for EU membership in 1962, it was rejected because the EU nations did not approve of the Spanish fascist government. The Spanish people were devastated to be excluded from the EU because the EU government embodied all of the qualities they would have liked in a government but were denied under Spain's fascist government.

Italy

Italian informal institutions have created a sense of division amongst Italians across the country. Informal institutions, such as family, tradition and culture, are an essential part of the creation of social identity (Minzgiione 309). Amongst the different regions in Italy, there exist many different social groups who have difficulty cooperating because of racial, ethnic and cultural conflicts, or simply because they have different opinions and goals.

Italian institutions have created a more individualistic society, as opposed to a collectivist society, so it is inevitable that Italians are less willing to cooperate with one another than other Europeans. Italian society is said to be individualistic because Italians are more concerned with themselves and their individual group, rather than with Italy as a whole. According to Hofstede's studies, Italians have the highest level of individualism amongst Italy, France and Spain, scoring 76 points on a scale from 1 to 100. France scored 71 points and Spain scored 51 points (Geert-Hofstede.com).

During the 20th century Italy became more divided than ever, as the successful, industrial north became disgusted by the burdensome south. The Northern culture was made up of hard-working, educated, industrious individuals. The South was suffering economically and was dependent on the North. The South was overridden by crime, particularly the Mafia, and filth. Long after most European nations had formed nations with a sense of identity and common will, Italy was still separated into many regions in the form of principalities, dukedoms and papal states, which experienced frequent and violent changes of rule. (Lewis 151).

Institutions have created a culture in each nation that influences the way each nation acts towards other EU member nations and reacts to European Union policies and proposals. Since historical experiences have influenced the development of the institutions and have further influenced the opinions of each institution, we can draw the conclusion that historical experiences have influenced the interactions between European Union nations. Although France, Italy and Spain have experienced several of the same historical events, such as World Wars I and II, they have each experienced the historical events from different perspectives.

What Roles do France, Italy and Spain play in the European Union?

Now that the cultural similarities of these three countries have been discussed, the focus will shift to the economic and political differences amongst these countries. The variance in economic and political relationships between France, Italy and Spain is demonstrated by the way each country reacts to European Union laws and how its opinions about what the EU should do differ. Each country has different economic and

political motives for being an EU member nation, so when an economic or political issue is raised each country reacts in a unique manner.

One of the most recent significant differences in opinion between France, Italy and Spain was their votes for the European Union Constitution proposal. France voted not to ratify the constitution, while Italy and Spain approved of the constitution proposal and voted to ratify the constitution. Since the voting occurred, there has been a lot of speculation as to why France voted against the ratification of the constitution. France's decision will be further discussed and compared with the decisions Italy and Spain made regarding the constitution proposal.

Another difference between France, Italy and Spain is how cooperative they are within the EU and how much of their sovereignty they are willing to give up to the EU government. The more a nation depends on the European Union for social and political stability the more sovereignty the nation is willing to give up and the more cooperative the nation is. France is often reluctant to give up its national sovereignty to the European Union government and finds difficulty in cooperating with fellow EU member nations. France is slightly dependent on the EU for social and political stability, but prefers a more independent approach to stability. Spain and Italy are more willing to give up their national sovereignty and are more cooperative than France. Italy is highly dependent on the European Union for social and political stability because Italy lacks social and political stability on a national level. Italy is experiencing such a sharp division between its northern and southern halves, whose economies and cultures are completely different, that it is highly possible that the country will break apart. Spain is moderately dependent of the European Union for social and political stability, since Spain has become relatively stable since the fall of Franco.

France, Italy and Spain each depend on the European Union to support their economy to a different extent. When Spain joined the EU its economy had been struggling for decades. Once becoming an EU member nation, Spain's economy became stronger and less volatile. Italy depends on the European Union to assist its effort to strengthen the economy of Southern Italy. France has experienced economic advantages by being an EU member nation, such as less restrictive trade regulations, but France fears that poorer EU member nations will drag the wealthier nations down.

Specific Variances Amongst France, Italy and Spain

The European Constitution Proposal

Historical experiences have created institutions in each EU nation that influence each nation's opinions and reactions towards EU policies and proposals. Throughout the past few years, the 27 members of the European Union have been unable to agree on any major issues extending beyond national boundaries. Several countries, including Great Britain, Sweden and Denmark, have chosen not to adopt the Euro as their national currency. Several countries, such as France, do not agree with EU foreign policies and ignore several of the EU policies (Godoy 2). Recently, one of the major issues that the member states have been divided over is the ratification of the proposed European Constitution.

The European Union Constitution Proposal is a perfect example of differing interests amongst France, Italy and Spain. Italy was the first of the founding EU nations to ratify the constitution showing strong support for complete European integration (euractiv). Spain and several other countries also voted to ratify the Constitution while only two countries, French and the Netherlands, voted 'No' on the proposed constitution. In order for the proposed constitution to go into effect it must be ratified by all 27 countries.

It is difficult to tell why the French majority judged the EU constitution proposal to be inadequate, while the majority of Italian and Spanish approved of it. Since popular vote was used for the European constitution proposal, it is impossible to know why each French voter who voted 'No' chose to vote 'No', but there have been many speculations as to why the majority of the French were unsatisfied with European Constitution proposal. One possible reason that the French voted 'No' is that the proposed constitution contained no provision for EU-wide initiative and referendum. An initiative and referendum provision would allow European citizens to modify the constitution and lead the EU in the direction they would like. Without this provision many Europeans fear that they may never have a chance to express their opinions on Europe and make any

desired changes. It is logical that the French would be reluctant to give up their sovereignty by agreeing to abide by a constitution they will never have the right to modify.

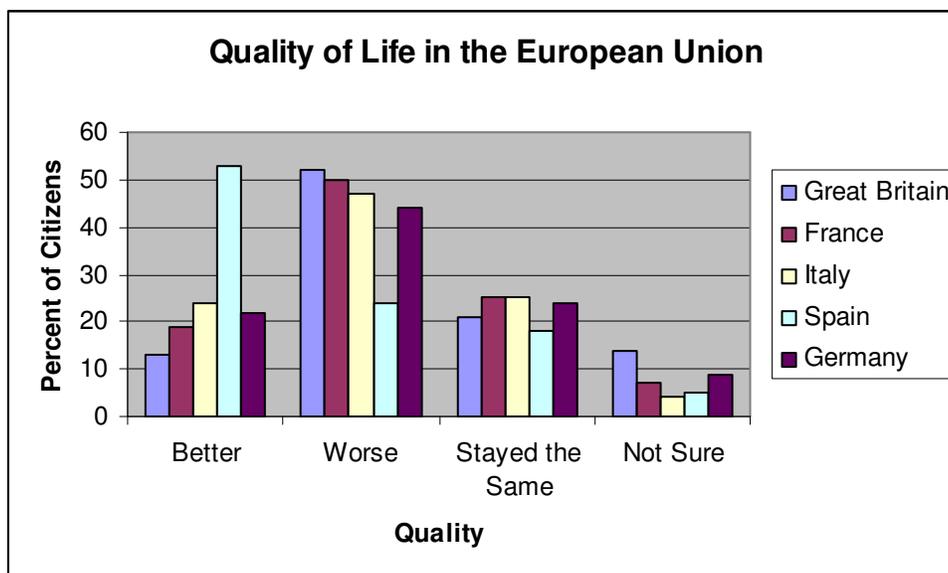
Another possible reason that many French voted 'No' is that the constitution draft does not include an institutional body to monitor the implementation of the constitution. The president is given the power of monitoring the implementation of the constitution, which means there is no one to hold the president accountable if he violates the constitution. In many countries, including France which has a constitutional supreme council, there exist institutions to monitor the persons of the institution who implement the constitution. It is foreseeable that the French and other EU member states would disapprove of exchanging a system in which the implementation of the constitution is monitored for one in which the president will have unlimited powers (Payam 1).

Although both of these speculated causes could have also negatively influenced the decisions of Italy and Spain, they did not because for Italy and Spain the advantages of being an EU member nation outweigh disadvantages such as the absence of a referendum provision and of an institutional body to monitor the implementation of the constitution. Italy is grateful to be an EU member nation because the EU gives Italy the support it needs to begin overcoming the economic, political and social crises it faces due to the sharp division between Northern and Southern Italy. The Italians are aware that it will be difficult to make changes and structurally realign everything within Italy without long-term economic help (Posner 810). Italy has historically depended on the EU for support in resolving their issues, for example many Italians assumed that EU regional development policies would resolve Italy's underdevelopment issue in its southern region (Posner 822). Spain is grateful to be an EU member because after first being rejected for membership in the 1960's, Spain worked hard to gain membership and since joining the EU and adopting the euro Spain's economy has grown substantially. Although, Italy and Spain may not have been completely satisfied with the constitution proposal, they did not want to let a few minor disadvantages stand in the way of many advantages they experience as member nations. French citizens, however, appear to be more dissatisfied than Italian and Spanish citizens with their lives as EU citizens and it is likely that they

did not want to approve a constitution for a union for which they would rather not be a member.

It is possible that the French voted 'No' to the EU constitution proposal because they are unhappy with their lives as members of the EU. Out of the five largest EU countries (Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain), the majority or plurality of adult citizens in every country, except Spain, feel that their lives have gotten worse since their country became a part of the European Union. Fifty-two percent of British citizens, 50 percent of French citizens, 47 percent of Italian citizens and 44 percent of German citizens said their quality of living had gotten worse. Only 24 percent of Spanish citizens said their quality of living had gotten worse since joining the European Union (Corso Mar 2007).

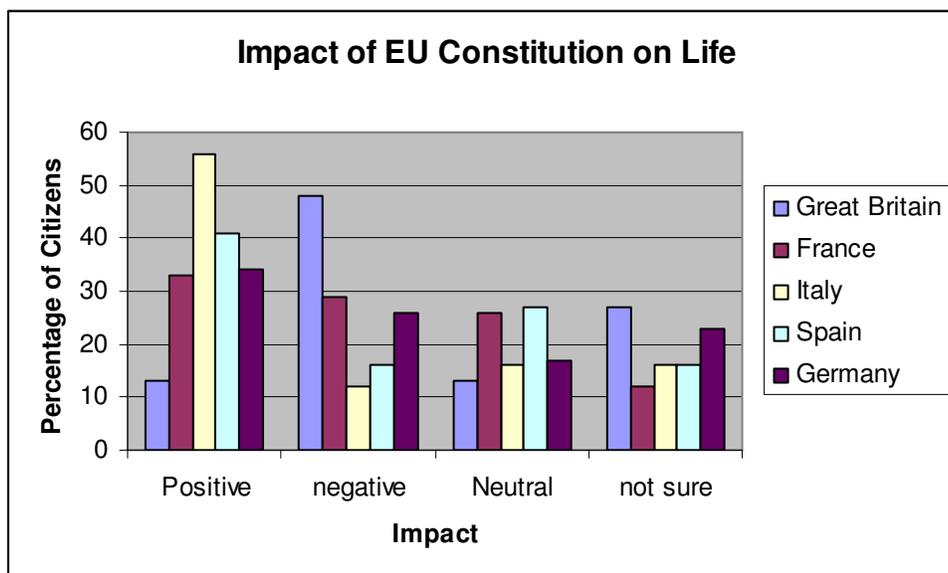
Figure B



It is also possible that France may be resistant to a European Constitution no matter what the constitution contains because they are reluctant to give up their autonomy to higher institution, particularly an institution that is not French. The French have historically been a socially, economically, culturally and politically advanced nation, so it is inevitable that they would be hesitant to allow a governing body made up of officials from many different countries. Although the plurality of French citizens felt a European

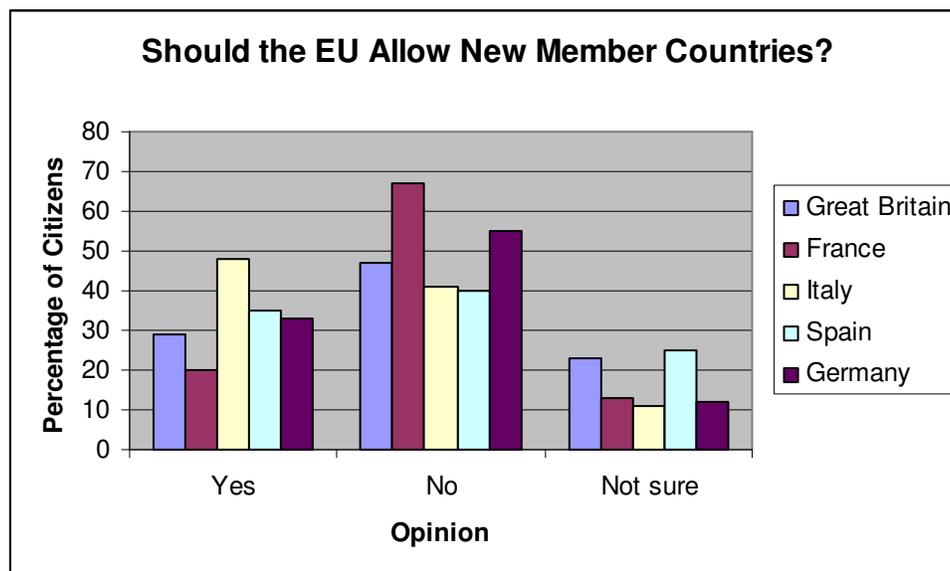
Union constitution would have a positive impact on life, as Figure C displays, a much higher percentage of Italian and Spanish citizens felt that a European Union constitution would have a positive effect on life (Corso Mar 2007).

Figure C

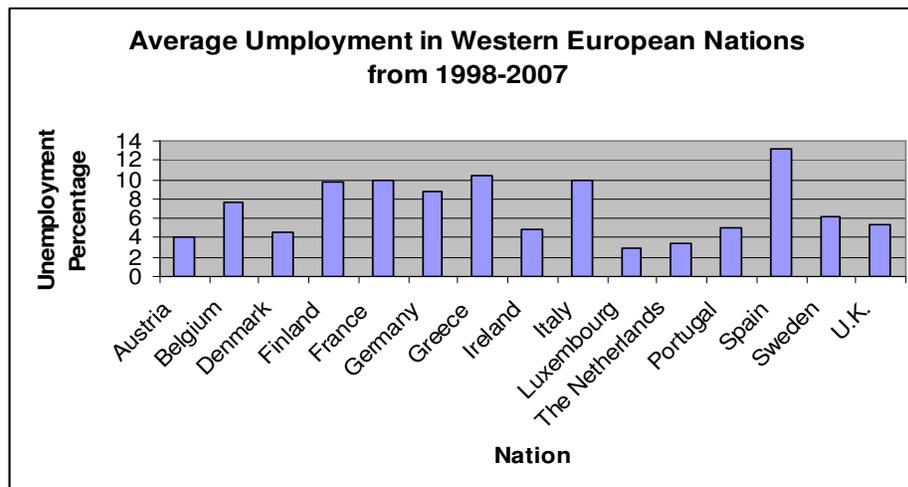


The French are also reluctant to comply with proposed changes in the European Union because they have high expectations for the European Union and would like the EU to be more exclusive. The French are unhappy that Eastern European countries have become member nations and they fear that more Eastern European countries will become member nations. Although, this is a concern for many Western European countries, the French are much more resistant to the admission of Eastern European countries into the European Union than the other countries, particularly Italy and Spain. As Figure D below displays 67 percent of French citizens polled thought that the EU should not allow new member countries, whereas 40 of Spanish citizens and 41 percent of Italian citizens polled did not think the EU should allow new member countries. The plurality of Spanish and Italian citizens polled thought that the EU should allow new member countries (Corso Jun 2007).

Figure D



One of the main reasons that French do not want any more Eastern European countries to become member nations is the fear of the influx of cheap labor that will accompany these nations and the lower wages they will experience as a result. The influx of cheap labor is also a major concern to France just as struggles to reduce a steep unemployment rate, a rate much higher than nearby countries. France's unemployment rate has been higher throughout the last decade than that of most of the Western European countries as Figure E displays. However, Spain has had a higher average unemployment rate over the past decade, yet any fears they may have had that a unified Europe would bring an influx of cheap labor did not influence the Spanish to vote 'No' (World Development Indicators).

Figure E

It is paradoxical that France voted no to the European Constitution since France is a founding member of the EU, and one of the richest countries with a significant amount of leverage within the European Union, so it appears that France would have the most to lose from the collapse of the EU, which could be a result of the constitution not being passed. As France aims to keep up with American foreign policy, trade and economic leverage, a strong European Union would benefit France because a strong, united European Union is the sole entity that can realistically counterweight America's strength.

Since the constitution will not go into effect, the next step was to draw up a treaty including only those provisions that appeared in the rejected constitution draft which were not called into question at the referendum debate, such as provisions dealing with the philosophy of the European market, policy content, and the Union's geographic borders. This treaty, named the Treaty of Lisbon was agreed upon in December, 2007 and Europe was finally able to overcome "the political and institutional impasse that limited its capacity to act during the last few years" (Godoy 1). The treaty did not include the EU anthem, flag and motto proposed in the constitution draft, but it did include many of the key features of the rejected constitution draft such as "a strengthened executive serving a longer term; a new EU foreign policy czar and diplomatic corps; and expanded "majority voting" on key issues" such as immigration policies (Sands 1). Although approximately 96 percent of the treaty was same as the rejected constitution

draft, it was passed because it does not require the popular vote for its approval, it needed only approval by parliaments because it is not a constitution, but a treaty (Godoy 1).

Sovereignty and Cooperation

France, Italy and Spain have had different historical experiences that have influenced each country's motives for being a part of the European Union and what their goals for the European Union are. Although each member country has willingly joined the European Union many nations are still reluctant to cooperate with other members and to give up some of their sovereignty and national identity to become a European citizen. France tends to be more reluctant to cooperate and to give up its sovereignty to the European Union government than the other member countries, particularly Italy and Spain. Italy, who was also a founding member of the European Union, is cooperative and is willing to give up its sovereignty to the EU government. Spain was eager to become a member country, after first being denied admission two decades earlier, and is often cooperative and willing to give up its sovereignty to the EU government.

One of the key factors as to whether or not each country is willing to give some of its sovereignty and to be cooperative within the EU is its ability to maintain its own nation and overcome internal issues. The more dependent a nation is on the EU for economic, political or social support the more cooperative the nation is and the more willing the nation is to give up its sovereignty. France is a strong, centralized nation that is able to maintain control of internal issues that may arise. On the other end of the spectrum lies Italy who is so divided that it is barely keeping its own nation together, yet it hopes to benefit from forming a union with other European countries. Spain lies on the opposite end of the spectrum from France, but not quite as far as Italy. Spain has had a history of internal issues, and has managed to overcome many of them, most importantly the fascist regime of Franco. Spain still faces economic difficulties and cultural separation issues, so Spain is still willing to give up a significant amount of its sovereignty to the EU, so that the EU may aid the advancement of Spain.

Cultural and Economic Separation in Italy

Many of the EU member nations face different types of problems that challenge their ability to be a member nation. While France and Spain have had and continue to have some issues with separation within their nations, Italy has severe issues of separation within its own country. Italy is one of the most, if not the most, divided of the European Union nations. Italy cannot promote cooperation amongst its own citizens, yet in the form of one nation, Italy promotes cooperation amongst itself and other European countries (Lewis 158). It is evident that Italy is eager to cooperate with the other member nations and to give up its sovereignty to the EU government because it views the EU as a source of stability that will help Italy overcome its internal issues.

Although Italy represents one member nation, it often seems difficult to believe that Italy itself is one nation because its citizens and regions are immensely different. Italy is a patchwork of different groups of people who speak their own dialects and cling to their local customs (Lewis 156). Italy's northern half is richer, more productive and more industrious than Italy's southern region. Unemployment is virtually zero in Northern Italy, while Southern Italy continuously struggles to reduce unemployment. Recent unemployment levels in the south have been 15 to 20 percent of the workforce, four to five times higher than those in the north (Barber 2). Southern Italy has also been more dependent on state investment and welfare since Italy was united in 1861 (Barber 2). The polarization between high income and low income regions of Italy has made it difficult for Italians cooperate as one nation, because the Northern Italy has a feeling of frustration towards Southern Italy and feels as if it is being weighed down by Southern Italy, especially since Northern Italy is forced to financially support Southern Italy.

Italians tend to have difficulty identifying national interest with their own, so it is difficult for them to relate to Italians of other regions (Lewis 158). Italians are primarily concerned with the well-being of their particular region, so it is difficult for Italy to define common economic, political and social goals and encourage its citizens to support those goals. Globalization has become an important factor in the economic, political and social growth of European nations but the present trends towards globalization often contradict local, particularistic interests (Mingione 307). While some business, corporations, social groupings and cultures benefit from globalization, many other are

penalized because of globalization. Although the Italians have different ideas how Italy should achieve economic, political and social stability, the overwhelming majority feel that the European Union will be able to help Italy achieve overall stability.

Political Separation in Italy

Italy's separation issues are a result of a de-centralized and weakly-organized government, yet the issues have also been the cause of Italy's de-centralized, weakly organized government. Italy has long needed to give priority to internal change instead of focusing on external issues but the government cannot seem to agree on the necessary actions to accomplish this or how to implement the plans to accomplish this. Italy has put forth effort to fix its problems externally, but has learned that it is difficult to function well externally when internally the country remains fragmented and divided.

Throughout the post World War II period Italy strived to achieve economic, political and social stability but the Italian government was characterized by internal fragmentation, disorganization and international dependence that it proved to be nearly impossible (Posner 823)

After World War II Italy's main priorities were to rebuild its country from the devastation that occurred during the war and to avoid isolation (Posner 811). In 1947, the Christian Democratic Party (DC) came to power and attempted to create a postwar climate receptive to business interests and foreign investment. The DC developed policies intended to stabilize inflation and stimulate exports and foreign investment in Italy. The DC supported the expansion of state-controlled industrial and commercial enterprises (Posner 817). The DC also aimed to maintain stable political and social order.

Although Italy's priorities under the leadership of the DC were to facilitate increased exports and foreign investment in order to build up its economy, the Italian government could not seem to organize itself enough to accomplish this well. The Italian government assigned low priority to foreign policy in general and the political elites were not concerned with it, therefore Italy's international economy was left with little direction and organization (Posner 827). Most of Italian foreign economic activity took place in an environment where no direction had been given by the government to its government agencies responsible for external relations, so many state and private agencies competed

for the power to make policies (Posner 825). Economic and monetary policies were not controlled by the government, but by banks (Posner 820). Italy's industrial and commercial policy were not created or controlled by the government, but by state-controlled enterprises and large private corporations (Posner 821). When doing business internationally, these enterprises would do whatever they wanted without consulting the Foreign Ministry or fearing consequences because the government did not have strong, comprehensive foreign economic policies and did not enforce the rules and regulations they did have. The Italian Foreign Ministry, which was supposed to coordinate foreign economic policy, did not create a strong policy because government officials could not agree on what the policies should include and often acted more in self-interest, than in the interest of Italy (Posner 826).

Italy's foreign operations were often inefficient because they also lacked assertiveness. Since becoming a member of the European Economic Community in 1957 Italy has benefited little due to limited involvement. The Italian government hardly defended Italy's interest in the Economic Community and was often more concerned with what was going on elsewhere, such as in Eastern Europe, rather than what was going within its own country. For example, in the 1975 meeting which formed the G-7, the Italian Premier gave more attention to problems of East-West relations than to issues that affected Italy's economic crisis more directly (Posner 827). In order to maintain economic growth and stability, it would have been beneficial for Italy to assign low priority to international economic issues and focus on the economic issues it has at home (Posner 829).

Although, Italy's economic weaknesses could have been attributed to many different causes, the Italian administration felt it could not govern effectively without the communist party and therefore could not attack its internal or external problems correctly (Posner 810). The Italian government was not allowed to associate itself with the communist party per orders of those who Italy had formed alliances with and was receiving help from, particularly the United States and Germany (Posner 814). However, Italians feel that it was necessary to incorporate the communist party into the government because an alliance between the DC and the PCI would make the government more vigorous in pursuing new economic policies and more successful in returning to

economic stability (Posner 813). Finally, Italy and its alliances comprised, so the PCI was included in policy determination without direct government participation or ministerial responsibility.

In the 21st century Italy still suffers from many problems, such as the Mafia, corruption, financial crime and separation between the North and the South. These problems stem from the issues rooted in the country's history for centuries. It has proved difficult for the Italians to attempt to solve these problems, because these problems are not rooted in intellectual concepts, but in old habits that are difficult to break.

Separation in Spain

In Spain, the cultural and economic division between regions is not as severe as that in Italy, but Spain still experiences difficulty unifying its citizens to cooperate in the quest for economic, political, and social stability. In the region of Catalonia the people speak their own language and have their own regional government. They do not seek independence, but full autonomy. Although, most Catalonians speak Spanish and Catalan, they prefer to speak Catalan, so they feel separate from the rest of the Spaniards who cannot speak Catalan. Many Catalonians feel a deeper cultural connection with the French people than with their fellow Spaniards. Since Catalonia borders France and is separated from the rest of Spain by the Pyrenees Mountains it tends to gain more French cultural influence than Spanish cultural influence. Catalonians tend to act more welcomingly to French tourists in their cities than they do to Spanish tourists. Catalonians do not like to associate themselves with the rest of the Spaniards, particularly Andalusians, because they find the backwardness of Andalusia and its history of subjugation to be intolerable (Lewis 127).

In the Basque region of Spain the people speak their own language, have their own way of life and desperately seek independence from Spain. The Basque region lies on border of France and Spain, but the Basque people feel they are different from both the Spanish and French, so they seek separation in the form of their own nation. The Basque population has experienced many cultural clashes with the rest of Spain, such as clashing opinions on the language of education. Spain has tried to enforce Spanish as the official language in the Basque region and has made it the official language required for

public education. After struggling for many years, the Basque language Euskara, alongside Spanish, was named the official language of the region, and education is provided in Euskara or in Euskara and Spanish. Although most people residing in the Basque region would like complete autonomy, it is the Basque nationalists that actively demand self-determination and independence. Several Basque nationalists have formed a leftist terrorist group called ETA which uses terrorist methods against national and regional officials and government buildings in Spain in hopes of achieving independence. Aside from a few uncooperative regions, Spain is relatively unified, particularly in comparison to Italy, but is still dependent on the EU for support.

Spain is also eager to cooperate within the EU because it has always had a strong desire to join the European Union particularly after its application for membership was rejected in 1962 because member countries did not agree with Franco's political regime. To Spain, the EU embodies all of the ideals which the Spanish people had been denied under Franco's 39 year regime. Since Spain was neutral during both World War I and World War II, Spain did not feel a sense of distrust towards its fellow Western European countries and reluctance to form a union.

Fascism in Italy and Spain

Italy and Spain are eager to give up their sovereignty to the EU's democratic government because they both endured many years of suppression under Fascist regimes. Italy's fascist leader, Benito Mussolini, seized power in 1925 shortly after the Black Shirts', a fascist extremist group, murdered Giacomo Matteotti, Mussolini's most outspoken parliamentary critic. During Mussolini's 18 year regime, the Fascists abolished independent political parties and trade unions, took direct control of regional and local governments, curbed freedom of the press, regimented Italians time, and created a special court and police force to suppress anti-Fascism (Encarta 4). In Spain, the Fascist regime began in 1936 when Francisco Franco seized power and lasted for 39 years. Franco's fascist regime was characterized by corruption, dysfunctional protected industry, and Spain's highest level of unemployment during the last 50 years (Lewis 120). After enduring many years of fascist suppression, it is understandable that Italy and Spain would prefer a stable democratic government, and would forfeit some of their

sovereignty to obtain democratic government that they perceive to be stable, such as the EU government.

A Strong Nation Unwilling to Cooperate

On many occasions France has been unwilling to cooperate with the EU government and with the other EU member nations. As I discussed earlier, France did not vote to ratify the proposed European Union Constitution. Another example of France's unwillingness to cooperate is its blatant refusal to abide by EU policies. Since becoming president of France in 2007 Nicolas Sarkozy has been trying to give European diplomacy a new direction without considering other member states opinions. Sarkozy has undermined the EU's policy of independence from the U.S Government by aligning himself closely with U.S. President George Bush. In December 2007 Sarkozy agreed to sell weapons and nuclear technology to Libya although Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi is considered in Europe to be a "sponsor of international terrorism" (Godoy 2).

There are many factors that influence France's unwillingness to cooperate within the EU and to give up its sovereignty to the EU. As I previously discussed, France does not like abiding by laws made by other institutions and is unhappy as an EU member nation because of EU laws and recent EU expansion. As I will discuss in the following section, France has historically been an economically strong nation and is not as economically dependent on the EU as many other EU nations, therefore it has more ability to sustain its economy independently if it were to terminate its membership. Another reason France is reluctant to cooperate with other member nations is because a sense of distrust between France and member nations who had been France's enemies during World War II has existed since World War II there has existed and presently continues to exist.

For the French World War II has held a particular significance since its end because World War II created a sense of distrust amongst many European nations and the devastation of World War II was the original reason that the European Coal and Steel Community and later the European Union were created. Although, Italy had held a significant role in World War II, it did not experience as much destruction as France experienced because many significant battles and attacks occurred in France during

WWII. On June 13th, 1940 Paris fell to German forces and then France surrendered nine days later. On June 6th, 1944 the battle of D-day was fought on the beaches of Normandy, France. On August, 15th 1944 Toulon and Marseilles were captured (historycentral) . After the Germans and the other Axis powers, such as Italy, had caused such extreme destruction in France it was difficult for the French to trust these countries, especially since both Germany and Italy border France. It is inevitable that France was weary about forming an economic and political union with their former enemies, because higher levels of anxiety and conflict are likely when states that have pre-existing perceptions of incompatible values are subject to increased institutionalization (Herrmann 12).

Now that the European Union has 27 member countries, several of which are Eastern European countries, and 3 candidates for membership, including predominately Muslim nation, cooperation amongst member nations has become more even more challenging. As the evidence concludes, the more divided, weakly organized nations are more willing to cooperate with other EU nations and are more willing to give up sovereignty to the European Union government. In the case of France, Italy and Spain, the most divided nation is the most willing to give up its sovereignty to the European Union government, and the least divided nation is the most stubborn about giving up its sovereignty.

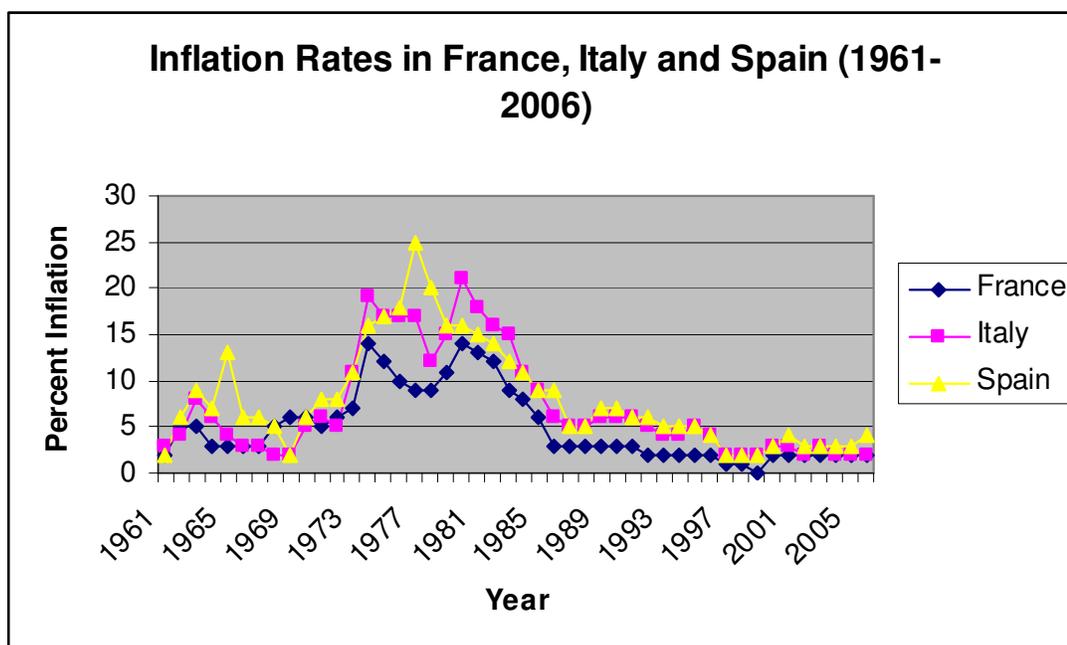
European Union Economic Support

As a founding member of the European Economic Community, and later on the European Union, the French economy has always been one of Europe's strongest economies. Conversely, Spain was considered one of the poor Western European countries when it joined the EU in 1986 and has become the fastest growing large economies in Europe since joining the EU (Adler 1). The Italian economy has historically been stronger than that of Spain, but has had its weak moments and has not taken advantage of EU programs or policies to improve its economy.

Controlling Inflation

Throughout the last half of the 20th century and into the 21st century France's economy has been stronger in many ways than that of much of Europe, particularly Italy and Spain. Because of its economic strength France as a country does not feel dependent of the EU for economic support. As Figure F below displays, France's inflation rate has been consistently lower than that of Italy and Spain. Between 1973 and 1984, when inflation rates were particularly high in Europe, France's inflation rate reached 14 percent at it highest in 1974. Italy reached 21 percent at its highest in 1980 and Spain reached 25 percent at its highest in 1977. From 1961 to 2006 France's average inflation rate was 5, while that of Italy and Spain were 7.13 and 8.07, respectively.

Figure F



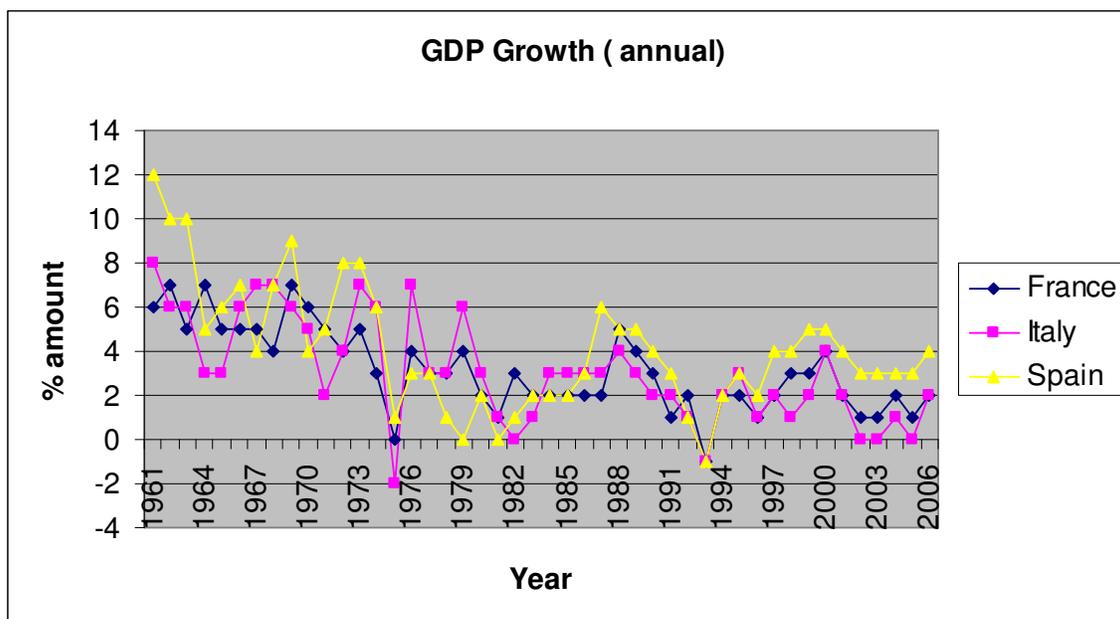
Spain's inflation rate has dropped drastically since becoming a member nation and has maintained itself a steady rate in comparison to drastic changes in inflation Spain had often experienced in the past. Before joining the EU, Spain had an average yearly inflation rate of 11.12 (based on inflation rates from 1961-1985). After becoming an EU member nation Spain had an average yearly inflation rate of 3.38 (based on inflation rates from 1986-2006).

Gross Domestic Product

France has historically had a higher Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita than Italy and Spain. Since joining the EU, the GDPs of the three countries have increased. As of 2007, France's GDP per capita (\$33,800 USD) was only slightly higher than that of Italy which equaled \$31,000 USD and Spain which equaled \$33,700 USD(cia.gov).

France has had a relatively stable GDP growth in comparison to Italy and Spain. Although, France's GDP growth was negative during 1975 and 1993, France's GDP remained the strongest and most stable of the three nations. From 1961 to 2006 France's GDP growth ranged from -1 % to 7%, while Spain's GDP growth ranged from -1% to 12%, and Italy's GDP growth ranged from -2% to 8%. France's relatively stable GDP growth

Figure G



Spain's economy has benefited immensely once it became a member of the European Union. As Figure G displays Spain did have a higher GDP growth rate than France and Italy from 1961 to 1975, but after 1975 Spain's growth rate plummeted.

Once all three 3 countries reached -1 % of GDP growth, Spain's growth increased quicker than that of France and Italy(World Development Indicators).

The Euro

The introduction of the Euro has been beneficial to France, Italy and Spain on many levels, particularly for economic stability. All three countries have experienced high rates of inflation in the past particularly from 1973 to 1984 when inflation rates reached the double digits. Since they have adopted the Euro the inflation rates of France, Italy and Spain have been increasingly stable and have remained at approximately 2-3%. This decrease in inflation cannot be solely contributed the adoption of the Euro, since the inflation rates decreased in the late 1990's as well, but the introduction of the Euro has caused the inflation rates to decrease even further and to stay steady.

The Euro has been a major factor in strengthening the Italian and Spanish economies. Since they have started using the Euro the purchasing power of Spain and Italy has become more even with that of the richer European countries. Before each country's currency either appreciated or depreciated in value against the currencies of neighboring countries. The Spanish peso and the Italian lira depreciated in value against currencies such as the British pound and the French franc. Although prices vary from country to country which makes the Euros value slightly different from country to country the purchasing power of each country has become more equal to that of its fellow European Union members because Euro has one exchange rate that applies to every country it is used in. Goods and services may be more expensive in one country than they are in another, or in one city than they are in another, just as goods are more expensive in one part of the U.S. than they may be in another, but the disparity is no longer as great (Adler).

On an economic level the EU has helped Italy and Spain strengthen their economies more than it has helped France strengthen its economy, therefore, Spain and Italy rely on the EU for economic support more than France does. Because of their dependence on the EU Italy and Spain are more likely to agree with the political proposals of the EU, such as the EU Constitution proposal, because they do not feel they have the leverage to disagree. Italy and Spain are grateful to be a part of the EU, and

would like future help, so they will be more likely to agree with EU actions and proposals.

Conclusion

After extensive research I have concluded that, although their cultures are similar, France, Italy and Spain interact differently within the European Union because each nation's historical experiences have created unique institutions within each nation and these institutions govern its economic and political behavior. Each country's historical experiences have created cultural and political ideas that influence its opinions about every type of issue, such as how cooperation amongst member nations is necessary, how much sovereignty the member nations should maintain, how the European Union should attain its goals, how life has changed since being a member of the European Union, what laws should enacted and enforced by the European government and who should be allowed to join the EU. French is reluctant to give up its sovereignty to EU institutions and to cooperate with EU proposals and policies, because French institutions have imprinted a sense of superiority on the French and have taught the French to be economically, politically and socially independent. Spain and Italy are grateful to be a part of the European Union and are willing to deal with any disadvantages that the EU may present, because to them the advantages of being an EU member nation outweigh the disadvantages.

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