



Polity or Policies? The European Union in Parliamentary Debates and the Media

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INTRODUCTION

In the two previous chapters, the salience and contestation of the EU in parliaments and newspapers over time were measured using a similar framework and automated methods. While the novelty of a similar framework is important in itself, it also allows for comparisons. Although both arenas relate to and interact with each other (e.g. Auel et al., 2018), they have very different institutional characteristics and purposes and are composed of different actors. As is well known, the media is not a neutral transmitter of messages, and its commercialization process has led to an increase in commercial programming, implying a decrease in useful and compelling political content (McChesney, 2000). On the other hand,

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parliamentary debates follow distinct procedures that are designed around the law-making process and its outputs. Acknowledging those differences and their potential effects on the politicization of the EU turns this comparison into a valuable enterprise, as one could reach different conclusions and anticipate distinct outcomes depending on the arena considered. Therefore, here we address both arenas comparatively over time and in different countries.

To achieve this, the chapter builds on previous literature that considers the EU in its multiple dimensions (Hurrelmann et al., 2015), assessing four dimensions: (i) membership; (ii) constitutional structure; (iii) European policy issues; and (iv) domesticated issues. This typology allows us to better grasp the scope and possible consequences of the EU politicization process. While politicization of policy-related issues might suggest the EU is in the realm of “normal politics” (Bartolini, 2005, pp. 347–362), if the polity is still strongly salient in the political debate, this signals that its foundations are still contested. Since this chapter shows policy issues, both European and domesticated, are the most debated topics in the media and parliaments in respect of the EU, we take a step further by establishing what policies are the most salient in each arena.

As in the previous chapters, the empirical analysis here will focus on two elements of politicization—salience and tone—and will make use of the data that has been collected by the MAPLE project, focusing on the same countries (Belgium; Germany; Greece; Ireland; Portugal and Spain) over the same time period (2002–2017).

The chapter is structured as follows. First, we offer an overview of the state of the art on the phenomenon of EU politicization, on the media and the role of parliaments in it, and how these two arenas interact with each other in the process. Second, we set out down our expectations on how the politicization of the EU has been evolving. Third, we explain our empirical approach, detailing the data collection process as well as the research techniques employed. Fourth, we present the results and analysis. Finally, we summarize our main findings, reflecting on their potential implications for the future study of EU politicization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Politicization of the European Union

The concept of politicization has gained greater traction in European integration studies since the Maastricht Treaty, with different authors reaching conflicting conclusions. Hooghe and Marks' landmark study asserted that the "permissive consensus" that ruled relations between EU elites and citizens has gradually given way to a "constraining dissensus" (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). This has been verified subsequently, with the politicization of the EU at the national level confirmed by Hutter and Grande (2014) and Hutter et al. (2016b).

Research on the politicization of the EU has focused on three main dimensions: salience; polarization; and the expansion of actors (Hutter & Kriesi, 2019a; Rauh, 2015; Risse, 2015). Accordingly, the EU is considered to be politicized if there is (i) an increase in the importance attributed to European integration, (ii) a growing importance of extreme positions, either in favour of or against different aspects of the EU and (iii) a growing number of actors interested and engaged with EU topics (Kauppi & Wiesner, 2018). Moreover, past research has focused on three questions: (1) how has politicization developed over time (Hutter & Grande, 2014; Hutter et al., 2016b; Van der Eijk & Franklin, 2004); (2) what are its causes and (3) what are its consequences (Hutter et al., 2016b; Risse, 2010; Statham & Trenz, 2013). Yet, despite all the efforts, we are still "far from reaching an agreement on how and at what pace politicization has occurred" (Lobo & Karremans, 2018, p. 52).

Where is the EU Politicized?

Nonetheless, the research on the politicization of the EU has often disregarded the potential differences between distinct arenas of political discourse (i.e. institutional, intermediary and citizen arenas). According to Hurrelmann et al. (2015), politicization can be observed in different arenas: (a) institutional, which encompasses full-time politicians, such as in the European or national parliaments; (b) intermediary, constituted by political parties or the national media, the actors with the ability to link the EU decision-making process with European citizens and (c) citizen, in which ordinary citizens discuss and debate EU politics.

The interaction between the former two—intermediary (national media) and institutional (national parliaments)—is particularly interesting

in the context of EU politicization. Indeed, some authors have shown, in the context of EU debates, the existence of important links between political actors and media (Auel et al., 2018) since both arenas share the same audience, which might lead to similar trends in EU politicization (de Wilde, 2014). However, the multidimensional nature of the EU (polity and policy-related issues) and the different features of the media and parliaments might lead to distinct patterns of European politicization. On one hand, parliamentary debates are intimately linked with the law-making process and its outputs (Fernandes et al., 2021), thus focusing on policy-related issues. On the other hand, polity-related issues are more salient in media than policy-related ones (Hutter et al., 2016b). Therefore, there are reasons to believe the multiple dimensions of the EU might be addressed in similar or distinct ways in both parliaments and the media.

Extant literature has shown the media play a pivotal role in informing citizens about political events and activities that might affect their lives while helping organizations communicate their values and interests (Bennett & Entman, 2000). As such, the media is often used as a vehicle for parliaments to connect with citizens (Bennett & Entman, 2000). Furthermore, political actors and their statements tend to be the main focus of the media when EU issues are covered (Koopmans, 2007).

Research focusing on the interaction between the media and political actors has shown it might influence the relationship between politics and the media (Van der Pas et al., 2017). For instance, in the context of elections to the European Parliament (EP), Jansen et al. (2019) found parties in each Member State are the main agenda setters in the national media in respect of the attention devoted to the EU. Also, the type of frameworks used in news coverage influences party incentives in responding to the media, i.e. the parties tend to respond to media attention if the news issues are framed in the party's terms (Van der Pas, 2014). Moreover, the type of issues discussed in the media might determine the government's and parliament's political agenda (Walgrave et al., 2008). Likewise, the media tone used will define a party's reaction to news depending on the extent to which it favours the government or the opposition (Thesen, 2013).

This connection between both arenas was categorized as political parallelism by Hallin and Mancini (2004) and developed further by Brüggemann et al. (2014). Political parallelism assesses the existing links between political actors and media and to what extent the national media reflects political divisions (Hallin & Mancini, 2004): in other words,

political parallelism refers to the ties between a medium and a political actor. Nevertheless, the typology proposed by Hallin and Mancini (2004) presupposes a considerable degree of stability in political cleavages and in the behaviour of media organizations to identify consistent alignments between them. Besides that, the media organization is used as a dependent variable that evaluates the degree to which the media system mirrors party lines. More recent approaches to the concept of political parallelism suggest the concept only can be used productively if there is a competitive political system and if the institutional relationship between the media and political actors is sufficiently stable to identify interaction patterns (de Albuquerque, 2013).

Recent studies of political parallelism in Europe have found political agenda-setting is particularly strong in newspapers and parties with similar political orientations (Vliegthart & Montes, 2014) and that those political ties are also important in countries with low levels of political parallelism where there is no such partisan bias (van der Pas et al., 2017). Analysis carried out in the Netherlands shows political parties tend to respond to the media's agenda-setting only when the issues are addressed by those newspapers read by the party's voters. Likewise, newspapers tend to respond to the agenda of parties associated with their political preferences. Brüggemann et al. (2014) discovered political parallelism is higher in countries in which the media system is more partisan, such as in Greece and Spain, and less so in the other countries included in the study.

Another important element for understanding how the EU has been politicized in the media and parliaments is the concept of newsworthiness, which is the set of attributes that may make a story worth reporting (Bednarek & Caple, 2014; Eilders, 2006). In this sense, and depending on the issues discussed and the quality of parliamentary activity, a certain topic might be newsworthy to the media (de Vreese, 2003), which in turn might change the relevance, salience and nature of certain events (O'Neil & Harcup, 2009). When the EU is considered, there is evidence parliamentary activity and parliamentary news supply on EU topics are relevant to the national media (Auel et al., 2018). Additionally, the newsworthiness of the activities of parliaments in relation to EU affairs tends to be influenced by the institutional power and EU salience in public opinion (Auel et al., 2018).

However, there are very few studies about the relationship between parliaments and media. de Wilde (2014) is a noteworthy exception, distinguishing and emphasizing the potential role of the distinct arenas in politicizing the EU and assessing both simultaneously. Parliaments and the media are two distinct arenas with different characteristics: they have different purposes; different working logic; and a distinct variety of actors that can express their political stances. Moreover, as Zürn (2016, p. 166) argues: “the public sphere as reflected in mass media is not necessarily identical with the political”. The mass media’s agenda-setting function often results in the prominence of issues that are “utterly apolitical”, dismissing important political events in their coverage (Zürn, 2016). In this sense, it is plausible the EU has been differently politicized across arenas over time.

There is a growing body of literature looking at EU politicization in national parliaments (Auel & Raunio, 2014; de Wilde, 2011; Winzen, 2010). Most of these studies have focused on legislative debates since they are crucial moments for “electoral competition as they provide for a public articulation of societal interests and the discussion of policies, thus informing citizens about complex political issues” (Auel & Raunio, 2014, p. 13). In comparison with other parliamentary activities, such as committee work and meetings, plenary debates are more important due to their communicative function, because anything an MP says on the floor of parliament can be heard by the wider electorate and more easily conveyed by the media. Additionally, legislative debates offer parties the opportunity to represent their constituents (Fernandes et al., 2021), without risking the legislature’s survival, and even represent an opportunity to produce arguments in an attempt to make the other parties change their stance (Fernandes et al., 2021).

The Multidimensional Nature of the EU

The debate surrounding European integration can assume different natures. According to Mair (2004), there are two distinct—but intertwined—dimensions of contestation about the EU. The first is the Europeanization of national public spheres, which deals with the creation, consolidation and territorial reach of European institutions; the second is focused on the penetration of EU legislation into domestic arenas. de Wilde (2011) has further developed these distinctions and identified three manifestations of EU politicization: (i) institutions; (ii) decision-making

processes and (iii) policies. More recently, Hurrelmann et al. (2015) proposed another differentiation along four dimensions: (a) membership—one's own and other countries' membership as well as its costs and benefits; (b) constitutional structure—institutions, decision-making processes; (c) EU policy issues—European policies on the agenda and (d) domestic issues—national issues stemming from one's own country's membership. The former two dimensions are related to polity issues and the latter two to policy issues. It may of course be difficult to make a clear-cut distinction between policy and polity issues. For instance, some of the debates on EU decision-making concerning economic and financial policies, namely, the collectivization of debt and the creation of Eurobonds, may be considered simultaneously as policy and polity debates. While acknowledging these difficulties, we still believe these categories are useful to inform our analysis.

Indeed, more recent research has considered the EU in its multidimensional role, focusing on the distinct forms EU politicization can take (Braun et al., 2016; de Wilde et al., 2016). These distinctions can have consequences: with the polarization between parties in relation to the EU being greater on polity-related than it is on policy-related issues and with polity-related issues tending to be more salient in European debates than are its policies (Hutter et al., 2016b).

Assessing the phenomenon of its multidimensionality is key, since different patterns of EU politicization might lead to very different consequences for the future of the EU. The focus on the distinction between policy- and polity-related issues can be linked to earlier research that distinguished between soft and hard Euroscepticism as different types of opposition to the EU (Szczerbiak & Taggart, 2008). Hard Euroscepticism is a fundamental opposition to European integration and preference for withdrawal from EU membership, while soft Euroscepticism stands for a general criticism of European policies over a specific period. Since negativity and conflict are two of the most important elements determining what makes the news (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Harcup & O'Neill, 2017), principled opposition to the EU is likely to receive media attention. However, as parliaments generally address legislative matters, ideological discussions about the European polity might fall short.

Despite the valuable insights the distinction between policy- and polity-related issues might bring, this chapter will take a step farther and distinguish the different European policies that are addressed. Presently, the EU has a wide array of competencies across multiple areas. In fact, according

to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), three main types of competencies might be established: exclusive; shared and supporting. The number of exclusive and shared competencies has increased over the years, so disentangling the different policy fields might provide us with valuable insights into the process of European integration.

EXPECTATIONS

As previously shown, both institutional and intermediary arenas can influence each other and the strength of their connections differs across countries and media systems, according to the levels of political parallelism. Thus, the salience and tone of parliamentary speeches and newspaper articles tend to be more similar the greater the political parallelism in each country. Following the revisited model proposed by Brüggemann et al. (2014), we expect a higher resemblance between parliamentary speeches and media coverage in Greece and Spain followed by the remaining countries.

The institutional and intermediary arenas of communication have important differences, but they also can influence each other mutually. Not only are they constituted by distinct actors, but they encompass unique working logics. Parliaments, and more specifically parliamentary debates, answer both representative and deliberative democracy concerns. As Auel and Raunio note (2014, p. 13): “debates are vital elements of electoral competition as they provide for a public articulation of societal interests and the discussions of policies, thus informing citizens about complex political issues”. Furthermore, debates are intimately linked with the legislative process and its outputs (Fernandes et al., 2021). Therefore, while both polity and policy-related issues might be addressed in the parliamentary arena, we expect a higher proportion of parliamentary speeches about the EU to be about policy-related issues.

In turn, the media is the most important source of information about politics (Bennett & Entman, 2000; Koopmans & Statham, 2010), becoming “the central means by which individuals are connected to the wider social and political world” (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 33–34), with the extent to which the EU or any other topic is addressed in the media depending on its newsworthiness (Eilders, 2006; Zoch & Supa, 2014). The existence of conflict is one of the most important factors determining the newsworthiness of each event (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Harcup & O’Neill, 2017; Lippmann, 1922). As Hutter et al. (2016b)

note, the conflict (polarization) between parties in respect of the EU is greater on polity-related issues than it is on those that are policy-related. Moreover, by examining media statements, they show that polity-related issues are in general twice as salient in general debates about Europe than are debates on European policies, leading to a media “polity-bias” (Galpin & Trenz, 2018). Therefore, and contrary to our expectations for parliamentary debates, we expect polity-related issues to lead the debate in the print media.

Empirical research has also shown there to be a negative bias in political news coverage (Farnsworth & Lichter, 2011; Haselmayer et al., 2017; Soroka, 2014). In other words, negativity determines what events are worthy of media coverage. In fact, during electoral campaigns, candidates using a more negative tone receive greater media coverage (Haselmayer et al., 2017; Maier & Nai, 2020). This bias also applies to the specific case of elections to the EP in some countries (de Vreese et al., 2006), including in the UK in 2014 (Galpin & Trenz, 2018), where the success of UKIP and the 2016 Brexit referendum were due to both polity and negative media bias (Galpin & Trenz, 2018). Taken together, this research leads us to expect that, generally speaking, a greater share of newspaper articles will have a negative tone when compared with parliamentary speeches. Nonetheless, there is another important dynamic at play. As Wendler (2016) notes, the tone with which the EU is addressed in national parliaments is determined mainly by the existence of Eurosceptic parties. Therefore, in countries in which Eurosceptic parties have a large parliamentary presence, such as Greece, we might not see a clear difference in the negative tone between arenas since we would also observe a higher level of EU contestation in parliament.

Finally, in addition to the distinction between European polity and policy, we must consider the many areas within which the EU has the competence to legislate. Despite the numerous issues in which the EU has exclusive, shared or supporting competencies, economic and financial-related issues have always been the EU’s central theme. In fact, the EU began as a project for economic integration that sought to bring the benefits of scale, internal efficiency and robustness to the EU economy as a whole and to the economies of each individual Member State. The later decision to form the Economic and Monetary Union was a major and further step in the development of the integration process. Therefore, we expect those issues to be more salient in the political debates whenever policies are addressed, regardless of whether we consider the media or parliaments.

METHODS AND DATA

To test our expectations, we considered both media content (newspapers) and parliamentary activity (parliamentary debates) in Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain between 2002 and 2017.

The content of newspaper articles and parliamentary debates was analysed using a combination of automated methods—a dictionary-based approach—and manual coding. In contrast with the previous chapters that relied on automated analyses to assess politicization patterns in both the mainstream media and parliamentary debates (see Chapters 2 and 3), here we resort mainly to in-depth manual content analysis. This approach allows us to delve into the content of both newspaper articles and parliamentary debates to disentangle the different European dimensions of interest.

This chapter makes use of the MAPLE dataset collection for media and parliamentary debates, as described in the previous two chapters. From the collected dataset, 10,516 parliamentary debates and 22,618 newspaper articles were manually coded. Considering the comparative purpose of this chapter, all parliamentary speeches in the year preceding each legislative election were included, as were all newspaper articles during the 30 days before the same election. This approach allowed us to address two important aspects: (1) to capture a period of heightened party competition and (2) to have a meaningful number of speeches and articles to analyse. Electoral campaign periods offer a “window of opportunity” into a period of conflict between political parties (Hutter & Grande, 2014; Hutter & Kriesi, 2019b) that heightens as the election draws nearer. Simultaneously, non-political actors might try to put forward the issues they most care about in an attempt to influence electoral choices or the political positions of the parties. However, while the campaign period is suitable for media analyses, it does not provide enough parliamentary speeches for our purposes. Consequently, we also analysed all parliamentary speeches made during the 12 months prior to each legislative election.

The methodological strategy followed a two-step process. First, we proceeded with a keyword approach for identifying newspaper articles/parliamentary speeches mentioning the EU. The extensive list of

EU-related strings is the same as that used by Silva et al. (2021),¹ which was adapted from the codebook developed by Maier et al. (2014) and translated into seven languages. Second, a random sample of 10,516 parliamentary speeches and 22,616 newspaper articles mentioning the EU were coded manually by a team of native speakers. Our unit of analysis was each newspaper article and parliamentary speech. Coders were asked to identify several features within each article/debate, such as whether the EU was the main topic or if it was simply mentioned, the European dimensions addressed, the main topic, the tone and the actor/organization the addressee is affiliated with, among others.² All coders received proper training, were monitored throughout the process and only began coding after achieving high levels of inter-coder reliability.

We start by comparing the politicization of the EU across arenas by focusing on its most crucial element: salience. Then, as previously discussed, different European dimensions are considered. Following the typology proposed by Hurrelmann et al. (2015), we distinguish four EU dimensions: (1) membership; (2) constitutional structure; (3) EU policies and (4) domestic policies (see Table 4.1). While the former two are EU polity-related, the latter two are policy-related. While this typology is undoubtedly useful, we are aware that certain issues may fall within constitutional and policy domains simultaneously. For instance, the debate on the collectivization of debt and the creation of Eurobonds which occurred during the Eurozone crisis period can be seen as a combination of the two types of dimensions.

In addition to the distinction made between the European polity and its policies, we identify the category of policies debated in the speeches and discussed in media articles about the EU. Since some policies are mentioned only very residually, we present only those that are most salient in each arena.

Finally, since “Economy and Work” and “Financial and Taxes” policies are the most salient, we look to the tone associated with them in both arenas. In fact, assessing the tone is as important as the salience of the different dimensions of the EU, and is needed to test our expectation that tone will be more negative in the media than it is in parliamentary

¹ The list of EU-related terms used to identify EU speeches can be found in Appendix 4.1.

² The codebook for the parliamentary debates and media articles is available in Appendix 4.2.

Table 4.1 Operationalization of the different dimensions of the European Union

Membership	Discussions on the geographical reach of the EU, whether a particular country should be in the EU and the benefits and cost of being the EU/ Eurozone member ³
Constitutional	Discussions on the objectives and responsibilities of the EU, its institutional arrangements, its institutions and its decision-making processes, i.e. the functioning of the EU in general (e.g. how EU institutions work, how their members are chosen/elected, the EU's democratic deficit)
EU policies	Discussion on issues that emerge from EU-level institutions—legislative, executive and judicial—with implications for all EU Member States. These are issues/policies that are currently on the agenda of the EU's legislative, executive or judicial institutions (e.g. EU data protection law)
Domesticated policies	Discussion about issues in national politics that have emerged as an implication of EU membership, such as budget cuts mandated by Eurozone requirements (e.g. austerity measures to comply with EU deficit or debt limits)

debates. Indeed, existing literature has focused on the tone (see de Vreese et al., 2006; Hobolt & Tilley, 2014; Silva et al., 2021; Nina, 2022 for other studies assessing tone). Depending on its overall valence towards the EU integration process, each article/speech about the EU was coded as either positive, negative, neutral or mixed/balanced, when it included both positive and negative claims.

RESULTS

Assessing the salience of the EU's multiple dimensions, results suggest policy-related issues are the most salient topics in both the media and parliaments. Yet, despite the overall residual importance of polity-related issues, it seems that in the media of some countries (Greece, Spain, Germany and Ireland), matters related to membership received a great deal of attention during some elections. While in Greece this might reveal a discussion around its membership in the June 2012 election as it nearly

³ Leaving the eurozone has been coded as “membership” rather than policy because the treaties have not yet stipulated a formal way to opt-out of eurozone membership that does not involve leaving the EU.

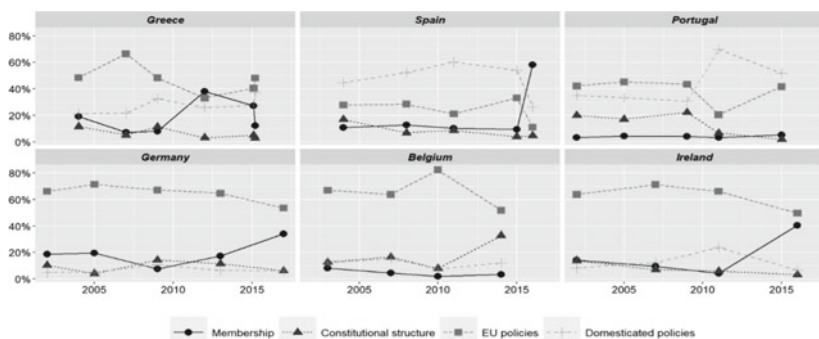


Fig. 4.1 Salience of different European dimensions in the media⁴

left the EU around 2015, in Spain, Ireland and Germany (elections in 2016 and 2017) the debate on membership was highly influenced by Brexit. Despite polity-related issues being of minor importance, whenever they became salient they invariably occurred in the media and never in parliaments (Figs. 4.1 and 4.2).

When it comes to the policies discussed in media and parliaments, the results confirm issues related to economic and financial matters are those most addressed in both. We opted to group European and domestic policies to show the trends in policy salience across arenas, as results do not differ dramatically if we disaggregate them. Since the EU has exclusive competence in the customs union, the establishment of competition rules, monetary policy, common commercial policy and increasingly shared competencies in related economic and financial areas, we expected economic and financial issues would lead the debate when policies are addressed, regardless of the arena considered. Moreover, the eurozone crisis has drawn the EU's attention to economic and financial-related matters, with further economic integration occurring during this period. Parliaments and the media have reflected this trend, so we can confirm the

⁴ All graphs presented in this chapter pertain to the following legislative elections:
 Greece—2004, 2007, 2009, 2012, 2015 (both elections).
 Spain—2004, 2008, 2011, 2015, 2016.
 Portugal—2002, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2015.
 Germany—2002, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017.
 Belgium—2003, 2007, 2010, 2014.
 Ireland—2002, 2007, 2011, 2016.

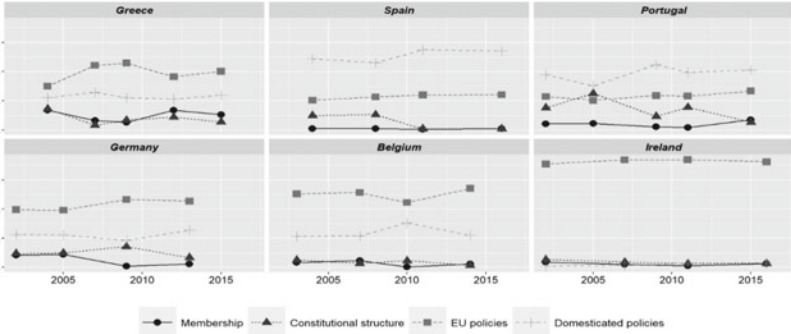


Fig. 4.2 Salience of different European dimensions in parliaments

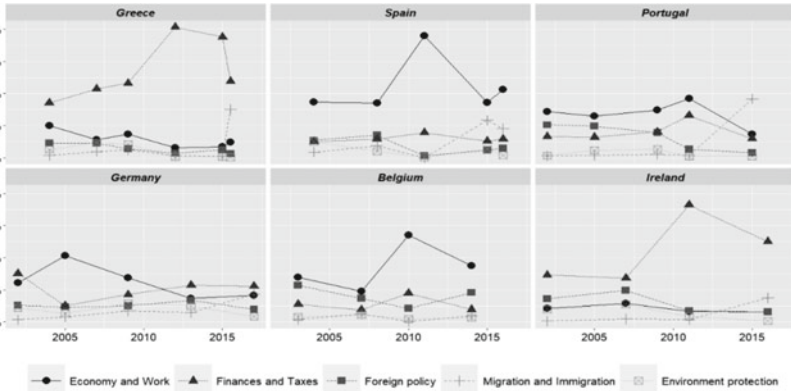


Fig. 4.3 Salience of European and domestic policies in the media

salience of those issues has also increased in both arenas in every country, but particularly in Greece, Spain and Ireland.

Besides economic and financial-related issues, there is no other single topic with similar prominence in either parliaments or the media. However, the German Bundestag emerges as a unique case since “Foreign policy” is the most addressed policy up until 2014. If we consider both “Economy and Work” and “Finances and Taxes” as related matters, except in Germany, there are no significant differences between either when it comes to the most addressed policies (Figs. 4.3 and 4.4).

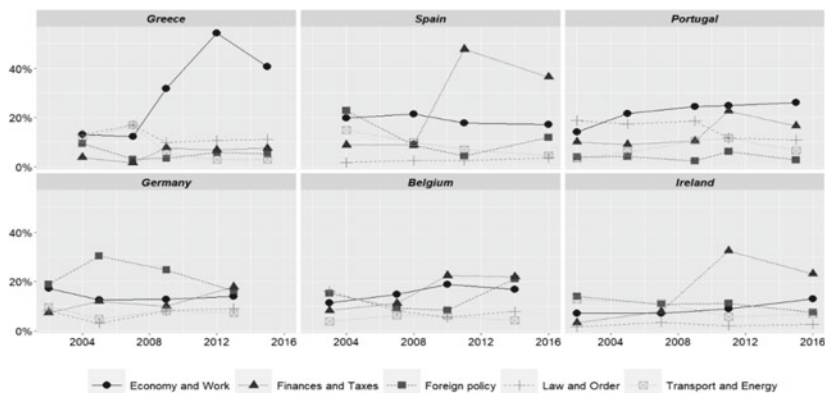


Fig. 4.4 Salience of European and domesticated policies in parliaments

As established above, assessing the tone is as important as assessing the salience of the different dimensions of the EU. Hence, we consider how European and domestic policies were addressed in both arenas (i.e. the tone). In parliaments, apart from Greece, the share of negative parliamentary speeches on policies becomes more residual over time. In the Greek parliament, we discern a very negative stance on European and domestic policies, which might be explained by two different factors. On the one hand, Eurosceptic parties have an important share of seats in the Greek parliament from 2012 on with the success of Syriza. As Wendler (2016) noted, the stronger Eurosceptic parties are electorally the greater is the contestation towards the EU in parliament. On the other hand, since the dominant topic in the Greek parliament was related to “Economy and Work” related issues, and considering how severe the eurozone crisis was felt in Greece, Greek parties would certainly be the most critical of some of the European policies after 2009.

A slightly different picture emerges in the media. Overall, and with the exception of Greece, the share of negative articles is considerably higher than the share of negative parliamentary speeches in both policies. Unlike those in the other countries, the Greek parliament is much more critical of European policies than its media. However, important differences emerge between countries and over time. This is in line with our expectations and

with previous research, which has shown political news coverage to have a negative bias (Farnsworth & Lichter, 2011; Haselmayer et al., 2017; Soroka, 2014), leading to more negative reports in comparison with party communication (Walter & Vliegenthart, 2010) (Figs. 4.5 and 4.6).

Despite parliaments and the media having very different characteristics and working logics, they have a mutual influence over each other. Therefore, the way the EU is addressed in both arenas might be more or less similar depending on strength of their connections.

Considering the salience of both polity and policy-related issues, a similar picture emerges in the two arenas. More concretely, policy-related

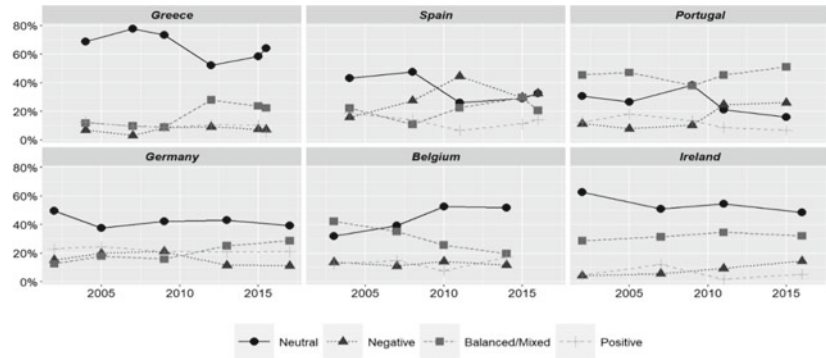


Fig. 4.5 Tone on European and domestic policies in the media

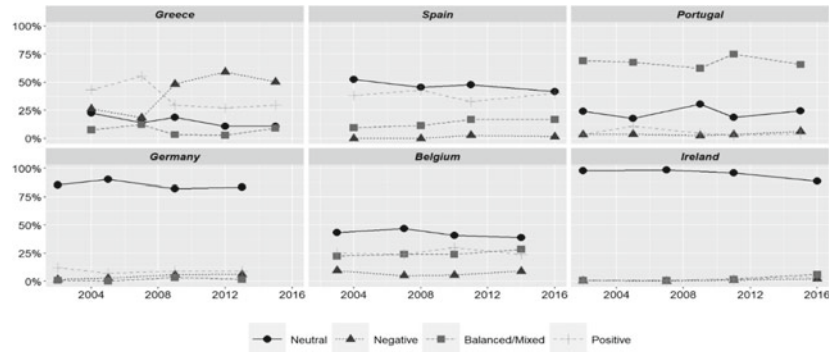


Fig. 4.6 Tone on European and domestic policies in parliaments

issues (European or domestic) are the most salient topics in both the media and parliaments. A different scenario emerges when we delve into what policies are addressed. Indeed, the prominence of economic and financial-related issues is much greater in the media than it is in parliaments. Nevertheless, it seems the gap between the media and parliaments on these matters may be narrowing as parliaments have also been paying more attention to economic and financial-related matters in the wake of the eurozone crisis. In sum, the more specific we get on what European issues are addressed in parliaments and the media, the greater the difference between both arenas.

Nonetheless, it is when we assess the tone that we discern the greatest differences between parliaments and the media. With the exception of Greece, the share of negative utterances is much greater in the media than it is in parliaments, confirming the negative bias in political news coverage previously established in the literature. However, there are important differences between countries over time and even between the policies considered. No other clear differences between arenas can be identified beside the important negative bias in the media.

Finally, while we expected greater resemblance between parliamentary speeches and newspaper articles in Spain and Greece, as past literature classifies both have high levels of political parallelism, we do not have any evidence supporting that expectation in respect of the EU. Instead, our results suggest there are important differences in how parliaments and the media politicise the EU, particularly when considering the salience of the different European dimensions. In fact, assessing Tables 4.2 and 4.3, we see a higher number of negative correlations when we consider the salience vis-à-vis tone: in other words, regarding salience, we see that in several dimensions, parliaments and the media are incongruous. The only country in which both arenas are congruent across every dimension is Ireland. Focusing on tone, we also observe some negative correlations, even if they are weaker. Moreover, in relation to tone, parliaments and the media are congruent in three different countries—Portugal, Spain and Ireland. Therefore, taking everything into account, Ireland emerges as the country in which both arenas seem to go hand-in-hand on most occasions, at least when the EU is the issue in question.

Table 4.2 Correlation between the salience in parliaments and media by dimension

	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Constitutional structure</i>	<i>EU policies</i>	<i>Domesticated policies</i>
Greece	0.87	0.58	0.48	-0.27
Spain	0.23	0.48	-0.73	-0.19
Portugal	0.78	0.32	-0.07	0.13
Germany	0.77	0.31	-0.39	-0.61
Belgium	0.48	-0.95	-1.00	-0.94
Ireland	0.40	0.97	0.41	0.32

Table 4.3 Correlation between the tone in parliaments and media

	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Balanced/mixed</i>	<i>Positive</i>
Greece	0.63	0.84	-0.28	-0.22
Spain	0.09	0.73	0.49	0.98
Portugal	0.89	0.71	0.45	0.88
Germany	0.15	-0.04	-0.07	0.58
Belgium	-0.69	0.11	-0.93	-0.94
Ireland	0.67	0.97	0.59	0.00

CONCLUSION

Current research has assessed the politicization of the EU in national parliaments and the media; however, since each arena has a distinct purpose, audience and actors conveying their political positions, different patterns of politicization might emerge. Up until this point, the literature has not addressed this phenomenon by comparing the arenas in which the EU has been mostly politicized. In this chapter, we sought to fill this lacuna with a multidimensional study on the politicization of the EU, one that uncovers the salience and tone in both the media and parliamentary arenas by exploring the impact the eurozone crisis had on the European debate. This comparative endeavour is guided by the expectation that both arenas are considerably different, and acknowledging those differences is crucial to improving our knowledge of the EU's politicization patterns.

First, we expected policy-related issues to be more salient in the parliamentary setting, while polity-related ones would emerge as the main European topic in the media. This chapter's results only support the first half of this proposition, since policy-related issues were in general addressed more in both parliaments and the media. This cross-arena focus on policies may suggest the increasing role played by Europe in national policy-making, and also that the country's EU membership is not contested. To that extent, the focus on policies signals a deepening of European integration through national parliaments and media. Nevertheless, a more grim interpretation might also follow: if the European electorate falls short of knowing and having a meaningful say about the membership, competencies and institutional design of the EU, then its democratic character might not be entirely fulfilled.

Second, as economic and financial-related issues have been the EU's central theme since its foundation, we expected those policies to rate higher in political debate. By disentangling what policies were being addressed over time, the results confirm initial expectations since "Economy and Work" and "Finances and Taxes" are the most addressed policies in both the media and in parliaments. Moreover, the prominence of one of the two policies increased significantly in some countries immediately after the eurozone crisis and regardless of the arena considered, although this impact has faded over time. Besides economic and financial-related issues, there is not any other single topic with similar prominence in either parliaments or the media. The only exception is the German parliament, where the "Foreign policy" issue was the most addressed up until 2013, where it was considered much more often than anywhere else.

Third, political parties have been addressing economic and financial-related policies in a rather mixed or neutral tone. Greece emerges as an exception, since the share of negative parliamentary speeches is in general quite high, as was to be expected given the importance Eurosceptic parties have in the Greek parliament. In turn, the share of negative mentions in the media is considerably higher compared with mentions in parliaments and was even the dominant tone in some periods. These results support the expected and previously established negative bias in political news coverage. The eurozone crisis also impacted the way these policies were addressed, but only in the media. While the share of negative mentions does not seem to have changed in parliaments, it has definitely changed within the media, although with cross-regional differences.

Finally, the main goal of this chapter was to compare EU politicization patterns in the media and in parliaments. The results are mixed and suggest different pictures emerge depending on the element being focused on. In general, the deeper and more specific our focus gets, the greater the differences. While the balance between polity and policy-related issues is quite similar in both arenas, it gets a little different when we focus on which—and to what extent—different policies are addressed. Considerable differences also emerge when tone is assessed: the share of negative mentions is much higher in the media, confirming a negativity bias in media reporting. Moreover, we did not find the expected differences between countries based on different levels of political parallelism. In fact, considering both salience and tone, it is in Ireland where the media and parliament seem most congruent, followed by Spain and Portugal.

The results of this chapter demonstrate that considering the politicization of the EU in its multidimensional aspects is crucial to better understand this phenomenon and its potential consequences. Much more focus should be placed on the arena in which the politicization process occurs. Since the media and parliaments are very different institutions with singular features and their own working logics, and while they emphasize the same European dimensions to a similar extent, they address policies quite differently. Future research should try to address the reasons for this. Are the same political actors conveying different messages in different arenas? Or is the media drifting away from the prevailing consensus among Europe's political elites? Responses to these questions will help us better understand the politicization of and public attitudes towards the EU.

APPENDIX 4.1

See (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 List of the base/root words used to identify the articles that mention EU

<i>European Union</i>	<i>European Parliament</i>	<i>European Council</i>	<i>European Commission</i>
Eurozone	Council of the European Union	European Central Bank	European Investment Bank
European Stability Mechanism	European Financial Stability Facility	European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism	European Constitution
Court of Justice of the European Union	European Court of Justice	European Court of Auditors	The European External Action Service
European Economic and Social Committee	The European Investment Fund	European Ombudsman	European Data Protection Supervisor
Economic and Monetary Union of the European Union	European common...	European policies	European Elections
European Integration	Troika	Frontex	Constitutional Treaty
Treaty of Lisbon	Eurogroup	Common Market	European Economic Community
Single Market	Customs Union	Brexit	Schengen
European summit			

APPENDIX 4.2

MAPLE's Parliament Codebook:

Unit of analysis.

- Speeches by budget plenary session ordered

ELIGIBILITY

Is the Speech a substantial intervention to the debate?

0. No
1. Yes.

If the Speech is Too short, or it's an interpellation/intervention/interruption, or it's the president's speech (concerning: Procedural issues, Rules, Calls to order).

Filter: If **ELIGIBILITY = 0** Stop coding here

EUSALIENCE—How salient/important is the EU (EU as a topic or EU-related actors/institutions/organizations) in the speech?

0. EU is not mentioned in the speech
1. EU, EU institutions or EU actors are mentioned but the speech is mainly about something else.
2. EU, EU institutions or EU actors are a central topic/aspect in the speech.

TONEEU—Overall valence towards the EU

Code from the perspective of the EU, i.e., would those who believe in the EU and European integration consider that the EU is evaluated positively or negatively?

1. Neutral
2. Negative
3. Balanced/Mixed
4. Positive.

Is the EU itself evaluated/portrayed as something positive or negative? The coding decision should be based on the manifest positive or negative wording on the overall impression of the speech—if the speech presents the EU in a positive or negative way.

Some Examples might be:

- Positive—Someone saying we should remain in the EU.
- Balanced—Despite the EU causing a lot of problems to our Economy, it would be worse to leave.
- Negative—The EU is responsible for the bad economic situation.

EUDIMENS_MAIN—What is THE MAIN dimension of the European integration that is discussed in the speech? (Hurrelmann, et al., 2015)

1. Membership
2. Constitutional structure
3. EU policies
4. Domesticated policies.

Code 1—Membership;

This includes discussions regarding the geographical reach of the EU, whether a particular country should be in the EU, the benefits and costs of being an EU/Eurozone member).

Code 2—Constitutional structure;

Discussions regarding the objectives and responsibilities of the EU, its institutional arrangement, its institutions and its decision-making processes, and the functioning of the EU in general (e.g. stories about how EU institutions work, how their members are chosen/elected, about EU's *democratic deficit*, etc.).

Code 3—EU policies;

Articles discussing issues that emerge from EU-level institutions—legislative, executive and judiciary—that have implications for all EU member states. These are issues/policies that are currently on the agenda of the EU's legislative, executive or judiciary institutions (e.g. EU data protection law).

Code 4—Domesticated policies;

Articles discussing issues in national politics that emerge as an implication of membership, such as budget cuts mandated by Eurozone requirements, etc. (e.g. austerity measures in order to comply with EU deficit or debt limits).

EUDIMENS_ADD—If any, what alternate dimension of the European integration is CLEARLY DISCUSSED/REFERENCED in the speech?

1. Membership
2. Constitutional structure

3. EU policies
4. Domesticated policies.

Filter: Code **MAINTOPIC** only if **EUDIMENS = 3 or 4**

MAINTOPIC—What is THE MAIN policy area (around the EU, as per your selection earlier) discussed in the speech?

1. Economy and Work
2. Finances and Taxes
3. Health
4. Migration and Immigration
5. National Security
6. Society, Social rights, Religion and culture
7. Environment protection
8. Transport and Energy
9. Law and Order
10. Foreign Policy
11. Institutional design
12. Welfare and Family
13. Education
14. Other.

TOPIC_ADD—If any, what alternate policy areas CLEARLY DISCUSSED/REFERENCED (around the EU, as per your selection earlier) in the speech?

1. Economy and Work
2. Finances and Taxes
3. Health
4. Migration and Immigration
5. National Security
6. Society, Social rights, Religion and culture
7. Environment protection
8. Transport and Energy
9. Law and Order
10. Foreign Policy

11. Institutional design
12. Welfare and Family
13. Education
14. Other.

MAPLE's Media Codebook.

EUSALIENCE—How salient/important is the EU (EU as a topic or EU-related actors/institutions/organizations) in the article?

1. EU is not mentioned in the article
2. EU, EU institutions or EU actors are mentioned but the article is mainly about something else
3. EU, EU institutions or EU actors are a central topic/aspect of the article.

- Code 2 if any EU term appears in the title.
(If you are not sure whether a term is about the EU check the list in the appendix).
- Code 1 if the article is mostly about something else and the EU term(s) is(are) simply mentioned
- Code 2 if you are not sure.

FILTER:

Media: All subsequent variables are only coded if **EUSALIENCE = 2**

TONEEU—Overall valence towards the EU

Code from the perspective of the EU, i.e., would those who believe in the EU and European integration consider that the EU is evaluated positively or negatively?

1. Neutral
2. Negative
3. Balanced/Mixed
4. Positive.

Is the EU itself evaluated/portrayed as something positive or negative? The coding decision should be based on the manifest positive or negative wording on the overall impression of the article—if the article presents the EU in a positive or negative way.

Some Examples might be:

Positive—Someone saying we should remain in the EU.

Balanced—Despite the EU causing a lot of problems to our Economy, it would be worse to leave.

Negative—The EU is responsible for the bad economic situation.

EUDIMENS—What is the main dimension of the European integration that is discussed in the item? (Hurrelmann et al., 2015).

1. Membership
2. Constitutional structure
3. EU policies
4. Domesticated policies.

Code 1—Membership;

This includes discussions regarding the geographical reach of the EU, whether a particular country should be in the EU, and the benefits and costs of being an EU/Eurozone member.

Code 2—Constitutional structure;

Discussions regarding the objectives and responsibilities of the EU, its institutional arrangement, its institutions, and its decision-making processes, and the functioning of the EU in general (e.g. stories about how EU institutions work, how their members are chosen/elected, about EU's *democratic deficit*, etc.).

Code 3—EU policies;

Articles discussing issues that emerge from EU-level institutions—legislative, executive and judiciary—that have implications for all EU member states). These are issues/policies that are currently on the agenda of the EU's legislative, executive or judiciary institutions (e.g. EU data protection law).

Code 4—domesticated policies;

Articles discussing issues in national politics that emerge as an implication of membership, such as budget cuts mandated by Eurozone requirements, etc. (e.g. austerity measures in order to comply with EU deficit or debt limits).

FILTER: All subsequent variables are only coded if **EUDEMENS =3** or **EUDEMENS =4**

MAINTOPIC—What is the main policy area discussed in the article:

1. Economy and Work
2. Finances and Taxes
3. Health
4. Migration and Immigration
5. National Security
6. Society, Social rights, Religion and culture
7. Environment protection
8. Transport and Energy
9. Law and Order
10. Foreign Policy
11. Institutional design
12. Welfare and Family
13. Education
14. Other.

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