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**Mapeando a Politização da União Europeia no
Parlamento Europeu (1999 – 2014)**

**Mapping the Politicisation of the European Union in
the European Parliament (1999 – 2014)**



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Mapping the Politicisation of the European Union in the European Parliament (1999 – 2014)

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palavras-chave

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resumo

É comum afirmar-se que, desde o Tratado de Maastricht, a União Europeia (UE) tem-se tornado cada vez mais uma questão politizada. À medida que os temas associados à integração europeia se tornam mais salientes e contestados, tanto na opinião pública como na competição interpartidária, a politização enraíza-se nas várias esferas políticas e públicas dos estados membros.

Esta investigação examina como as dinâmicas da politização da UE se fazem sentir dentro das próprias instituições da UE, especificamente na sua única instituição legislativa eleita diretamente - o Parlamento Europeu (PE). Ao aplicar técnicas automatizadas de análise de texto, como o Wordfish, a investigação analisa os debates no plenário do PE, entre o 5º e o 7º mandato (1999-2014) e a pesquisa ilumina sobre quais são os fatores que explicam a politização da UE no PE.

No que diz respeito aos fatores internos aos partidos políticos, a análise mostra que a ideologia partidária e o tipo de partido são um preditor significativo da politização da UE no PE. Igualmente, no que concerne aos fatores externos aos partidos, os resultados demonstram que a transferência de autoridade política dos estados membros para o nível supranacional é menos relevante do que o grau de desajuste institucional entre os dois níveis na explicação da politização da UE, nos discursos dos partidos no PE.

keywords

Politicisation, political parties, European Union, European Parliament

abstract

It is often claimed that, since the Maastricht Treaty, the European Union (EU) has become a politicised issue. As issues of European integration become more salient and contested, both in public opinion and in inter-party competition, politicisation takes root in the various national political and public spheres.

This research examines how the dynamics of EU politicisation are translated to the EU's institutions themselves, specifically in its only directly elected legislative institution - the European Parliament (EP). By applying automated text analysis techniques, such as Wordfish, to analyse the debates in the EP plenary between the 5th and 7th terms (1999-2014), the research assesses the factors that explain the politicisation of the EU in the EP.

As far as the internal factors to political parties are concerned, the analysis shows that party ideology and party type are a significant predictor of EU politicisation in the EP. Furthermore, regarding the external factors to parties, the research demonstrates that the transfer of political authority from the member state to the supranational level is less relevant than the degree of institutional misfit between the two levels in explaining the politicisation of the EU in parties' EP speeches.

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1:

Introduction

Particularly since the debates on, and eventual signing of, the Treaty of Maastricht in the early 1990s, the European Union (EU) has become an increasingly contested political territory. More recently, with the arrival of the polycrisis¹ of the Eurozone and migrant crises (Zeitlin et al., 2019) this pattern has been reinforced to such an extent that political science research has increasingly employed the concept of politicisation to understand these dynamics of contestation of the EU integration trajectory (De Wilde et al., 2016; Grande & Hutter, 2016b). The politicisation of the EU can be understood as the process by which EU decision-making and associated phenomena are brought into the realm of mass politics from the realm of largely insulated political elites. This process is grounded in each country's domestic public sphere, as European issues become more salient in public opinion and in interparty competition (Grande & Kriesi, 2016).

The way by which this politicisation takes place at the national level has already been widely studied, as I will detail below. However, there are fewer empirical studies of the process at the EU level. This research seeks to fill this gap by analysing how political parties use the European Parliament (EP) to politicise and debate the EU. I consider that the EP allows for great comparative research since it concatenates into the same institutional architecture a wide array of parties from distinct polities and political cultures. This allows for the testing of many hypotheses related to the association between EU politicisation and different types of parties and their ideological preferences, as well as to relevant aspects of their respective member state's institutional relationship with the supranational level. The period of analysis from 1999 to 2014, is particularly rich one in the history of the EU, as it encompasses different treaty reforms, the eastbound territorial expansion of the Union, and the aforementioned crisis of the Eurozone.

¹ The concept of polycrisis was first used in this context in 2016 by former European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker to depict the multiple crises that were encroaching upon the EU at the time, particularly the economic and financial crisis of the Eurozone and the migrant crisis in the Mediterranean.

In the first section I provide an overview of the broad background on which the dissertation is based, introduce the key insights of the extant research, and approach the research problem that I seek to address and why it is relevant to do so. I will present the research objectives and questions, as well as their overall significance for the field of study of EU politicisation. The second section of this chapter is dedicated to the framework of one of the main contributions of this research – a scoping review of the literature on the politicisation of the EU. Lastly, in the final section of this chapter I provide an outline of the dissertation as a whole.

1.1) Background of the study

The signing of the Treaty of Maastricht represented a significant acceleration and deepening of the process of EU integration. The treaty led to the Europeanisation of key areas of public policy previously considered to be the exclusive authority of elected national government. From issues of political economy, due to the institution of the convergence criteria for the introduction of the euro in 2002 (Börzel, 2005), to aspects of foreign and security policy, police, and judicial matters. This increasing delegation of political authority from the member state level to the EU (De Wilde et al., 2016; Grande & Hutter, 2016b), as led some authors to point out that a passage from a *permissive consensus* (of disengaged publics and parties) towards the EU to a *constraining dissensus* (of engaged publics and parties) has taken place (Hooghe & Marks, 2009), led by the increasingly contested status of EU decision-making, both at the party level (De Wilde et al., 2016; Grande & Hutter, 2016b). and at the citizen level (Lobo & Karremans, 2018; de Vries, 2007). Such politicisation was significantly affected by the onset of the polycrisis of the Eurozone and migrant crises in the first half of the twenty-tens (Zeitlin et al., 2019), and has even led to the rise of euroscepticism in countries conventionally seen as being overwhelmingly pro-EU integration such as Portugal and Spain (Cachafeiro & Plaza-Colodro, 2018; Lisi, 2020). This state of affairs has prompted analysts and commentators to assert that “something like politicisation” is taking place in the EU (Schmitter, 2009, pp. 211–212). This concept of politicisation, and how it applies to the EU, is the focal point of the present research.

Zürn et al. (2012) succinctly define politicisation as the demand or act of bringing an issue into the sphere of politics, that is, into the field of public contestation and debate about

collectively binding decisions concerning the common good. Recently this concept has been applied in political science to the study of the EU and its institutions.

We can say that the politicisation of the EU involves the expansion of actors seeking to influence the EU decision-making processes, by giving more salience to the topic in increasingly contested public debates (De Wilde et al., 2016; Grande & Hutter, 2016b).

Also, according to De Wilde (2011), politicisation of the EU develops through the polarisation of public opinion regarding it, expressed by distinct political actors. The author also claims that polarisation and intense debate need to be articulated in the public sphere, i.e., the media, because without an audience to monitor such debates there can be no EU politicisation at all. However, as Zürn (2016) points out, there is a difference between the political sphere and the public sphere. As such, we may still find politicisation in the absence of media articulation in the EP, albeit with a more restricted scope due to the general lack of attention paid by the media to the goings-on at the EP in comparison with political events at the national level.

The EU has become fertile ground for politicisation. In fact, van der Eijk and Franklin (2004) have created the metaphor of the “sleeping giant”, in which growing Eurosceptic attitudes among European citizens went unaddressed by mainstream political parties and were subsequently taken up by niche and challenger Eurosceptic parties (Hobolt & Tilley, 2016). The literature on issue entrepreneurship, broadly defined as a strategy employed by new or niche political parties to mobilise issues largely ignored by more established parties such as European integration, with the aim of achieving electoral gains, illustrates this (Hobolt & de Vries, 2015).

So far, politicisation of the EU has been mainly studied at the domestic level – in national parliaments (García Lupato, 2014; Wendler, 2013, 2014; Wonka, 2016), general and European elections (Dalton, 2015; De Wilde et al., 2014; Spoon, 2012), and the national media (Leupold, 2016; Meijers & Rauh, 2016). Politicisation of the EU emerges as more intense in challenger (Hobolt & Tilley, 2016) and Radical Right parties (RRPs) (Rooduijn, 2015), rather than in mainstream parties. It is also linked to periods of economic downturn (Börzel & Risse, 2018; Statham & Trenz, 2015). Extant research has additionally linked it to the transfer of political authority from the member state level to the EU level (Grande & Hutter, 2016a), and to the institutional mismatch between these two levels of governance (Börzel & Risse, 2000; Brinegar et al., 2004; Leupold, 2016). Finally, the politicisation of

the EU tends to be associated with relevant ideological dimensions, i.e., along social progressive versus conservative positions (Grande & Kriesi, 2012; Helbling & Jungkunz, 2020; Teney et al., 2014), left-right preferences on redistributive issues (Grande & Hutter, 2016b), and between national and democratic sovereignty against supranationalism (Mair, 2013), rather than linked with specific EU policies.

However, politicisation at the EU level itself has been neglected by the literature (as I demonstrate in the following chapters). This gap in the literature on the supranational dynamics of EU politicisation has recently been increasingly addressed in the case of the EP (e.g., Brack, 2018; Koop et al., 2018), and the European Council (e.g., Glencross, 2016), for instance. Still, there remains plenty of space for further research and it is in this context that this thesis emerges.

The EP, in particular, serves as a very convenient contextual frame through which to study the phenomenon of politicisation. Given the second-order nature of EP elections (Reif & Schmitt, 1980), and its enduring resilience (Boomgaarden et al., 2016; Ehin & Talving, 2021; Schmitt et al., 2020), which favour challenger parties (Schulte-Cloos, 2018), the EP is disposed to the presence of issue entrepreneurs willing to politicise the EU. Regarding the literature on the EP, there has been significant research done by Simon Hix and his colleagues on the changing lines of political conflict within this institution; the authors have pointed out that throughout most of the history of the EP, the left-right dimension of political conflict has stood out (Hix et al., 2006). The aforementioned polycrisis, however, has led to a significant realignment of the established cleavage structures, as the pro/anti EU division has risen to the forefront and side-lined the traditionally prevailing left-right cleavage (Hix et al., 2019; Otjes & van der Veer, 2016). Nevertheless, there are still persistent gaps in the study of EU politicisation in the EP, specifically longitudinal analysis of how the phenomenon has developed over time, and if it has, which parties are more likely to be engage in such politicisation and when they do so.

Given this background, this research aims to contribute to the general understanding of how EU politicisation unfolds at the supranational level. In other words, the main goal of this thesis is to answer the following research question: what factors explain the politicisation of the EU in parties' EP speeches? These factors can be divided into two kinds. The first deal with aspects *internal to political parties* such as parties' ideological preferences and different types of parties and how these impact EU politicisation. The second deals with

factors that are *external to political parties* such as the institutional dimensions of the EU how these are linked to the phenomenon. As the only directly elected institution of the EU, where parties can debate and voice their opinions publicly, I expect that the EP constitutes fertile ground for politicisation of the EU, mirroring the patterns observed at the member state level. To answer the research question, I will be looking specifically at the EP and examining the relevance of the left-right and GALTAN (green-alternative-libertarian, as opposed to traditional-authoritarian-nationalist) cleavages, as well as preferences over national sovereignty versus supranationalism in explaining the politicisation of the EU in the EP. I will also be assessing whether certain types of political parties (challenger and RRP) are more or less prone to politicise the EU in relation to other parties. Lastly, I look at when parties are more inclined to contest the EU, i.e., whether this is linked to periods where the degree of mismatch between the member state level and the supranational level is higher, and where there are changes to the delegation of political authority, between the two levels such as in episodes of EU enlargement or treaty ratification.

To achieve this, I employ automated text analysis methods, namely the Wordfish algorithm (Slapin & Proksch, 2008), and statistical analyses like linear regression with panel-corrected standard errors (Stimson, 1985), to analyse more than 200,000 plenary speeches of elected members of the EP (MEPs) over an extended period of time that goes from the beginning of the 5th Term in 1999 to the end of the 7th Term in 2014. This period of analysis is particularly rich given that it encompasses significant steps in the development of the EU integration trajectory. For instance, the period features major treaty reforms such as Treaty of Lisbon and the Constitution of Europe, not to mention the Eurozone crisis and the early stages of the migrant crisis, both of which significantly tested the EU's political capacity. During this time, the EU also saw a considerable expansion of its territorial reach, with the accession of many Central and Eastern European countries (formerly under the sphere of influence of the Soviet Bloc) in the 6th Term of the EP (2004 – 2009) and their consequent integration into the fold in the 7th Term (2009 – 2014). This combination of factors makes the period of analysis more than enough to test my hypotheses. The choice of time period is also dictated by data restrictions since the pre-1999 and post-2014 speeches in the EP's plenary are difficult to access and treat for different reasons. On the one hand, the pre-1999 speeches are only available in the EP's closed archives in Luxembourg, accessible through an archaic archival system that not only requires researchers to travel to

the archives to collect the documents, but the system makes the collection process extremely time-consuming. The tragic and rapid spread of COVID-19 across the globe forced most countries to enforce strict lockdown measures that significantly restricted travel which coincided with the data collection stage of this research. This, combined with the archaic nature of the archives, made it impossible to collect the speeches. On the other hand, contrary to what occurred before 2014, the EP stopped translating the plenary speeches (which are usually made in the native languages of the MEPs) into all official EU languages, including English, making their analysis with the above-mentioned methods practically impossible.

Broadly speaking, this dissertation makes a contribution to the field of study of the politicisation of the EU by expanding on the knowledge of how the phenomenon unfolds at the supranational level, thus helping to fill a gap in the existing literature. Moreover, it contributes to our understanding of party-based EU politicisation by exploring the ideological dimensions associated with the phenomenon and the aspects related with the status of member states towards the EU. Additionally, by providing an original scoping literature review on the topic of politicisation of the EU, this dissertation adds value to the field by systematising the current state of the art on the topic.

1.2) A note on the scoping review of the literature

Before moving onto the outline of the thesis, I must make a digression in order to explain one of the distinctive aspects of the thesis. As I have just mentioned, one of the main contribution of this research is the scoping literature review on EU politicisation. Scoping literature reviews are a type of systematic literature reviews. As defined by Denyer and Tranfield (2009), systematic literature reviews apply conventional empirical research strategies to the execution of a literature review wherein a pre-established methodology is applied to the identification, selection, categorisation, and analysis of an existing body of literature, and finally to the presentation of the findings. Such a pre-established methodology must be transparent and replicable by the wider scientific community. Systematic literature review exercises were initially designed for the health sciences, but their application has since extended beyond their initial bounds and into the social sciences (Daigneault et al., 2012). Systematic literature reviews have numerous advantages over traditional literature reviews, since that by applying standardised and transparent methodologies, such reviews reduce the biases that traditional reviews are more prone to (Dacombe, 2018).

Systematic literature reviews, Dacombe (2018) further clarifies, come in different genres. One of these are scoping literature reviews. In the words of Tricco et al. (2018, p. 467) scoping literature reviews “map available evidence on a topic and identify main concepts, theories, sources, and knowledge gaps”. In addition, they can also be used to assess the extent and quality of existing research with the objective of underscoring areas where the literature is lacking, and thus reveal avenues for future research.

I argue that political science and EU studies have a lot to gain from a scoping literature review (such as those carried out by Jungherr, 2016; Lourenço, 2021; van der Veer & Haverland, 2019 for recent examples), because by establishing an explicit protocol for the collection, selection, and analysis of relevant studies, systematic reviews tend to ensure a higher degree of objectivity, extensiveness, and reproducibility (Dacombe, 2018; Daigneault et al., 2012). In brief, scoping reviews are extremely useful for social and political research since they can offer a systematic exploration of a given field of research.

The main objective of the scoping literature review conducted for the present thesis is to supplement the conventional literature review by focusing on five key questions related to the use of the concept of politicisation to studying the EU as a political issue: 1) how has the concept been operationalised in the empirical literature?; 2) which political actors are politicising the EU; 3) is the process of politicisation relegated to nonmainstream Eurosceptic political actors on the fringes of the left-right spectrum or is the picture more nuanced than it may at first appear to be?; 4) where is EU politicisation taking place in terms of political arenas?; and 5) what are the structural factors that are driving EU politicisation forward? The results of this original exercise will be shown throughout chapters 2 and 3 of the thesis.

Regarding the methodology of the review, I established a multi-phased empirical strategy for the identification, collection, and selection of relevant research papers, which can be read in detail in appendix 1 of this thesis. The focus was on studies published between 1980 and 2018 in English language peer-review journals indexed in Social Sciences Citation Index (Web of Science). In the first phase of this process, I was able to identify and collect 533 research papers. To this pool, 48 hand-picked articles were added, totalling 581. In the second phase, I excluded from the initial pool 123 documents because they featured no mention of the concept of politicisation either in their title or abstract. The 458 remaining articles were then submitted to the third phase of the protocol, in which I analysed and

interpreted the use of the concept of politicisation therein, focusing exclusively on the concept of politicisation as defined in chapter 2. Through this protocol I was able to arrive at a final pool of 142 distinct high-quality research articles.

The analysis and interpretation of the selected research articles was conducted with recourse to a codebook designed to directly address the questions raised above – this codebook is available in the appendix 2 of the thesis. Thus, the codebook is divided into five categories: dimensions of the concept of politicisation, political actors who politicise the EU, political arenas of EU politicisation, and drivers of EU politicisation.

1.3) Outline of the dissertation

The dissertation has been organised into 6 distinct chapters. The second chapter seeks to define the main concept of this research, politicisation, grounding it in an agonistic understating of social relationship (Mouffe, 2013). Seeing as the political science discipline has employed the concept in a myriad of ways, often with distinct meanings, the chapter discuss the multiple forms into which the concept has been shaped. These have been identified as external, internal, and subjective understandings of the concept. It also discusses depoliticisation, the proverbial other side of the coin of politicisation. Finally, I conclude that internal politicisation is the most adequate concept given my specific research aims and go through the various aspects that structure it: salience, polarisation, and expansion of actors. The chapter also advances the notion that institutional arenas matter to EU politicisation, often acting as “sites of political structuring” (Grande & Kriesi, 2012; Helbling et al., 2012) of political conflict, after which the relationship between such a notion and the role played by the EP in the politicisation of the EU is developed.

The third chapter develops this discussion by reviewing the existing literature on how the concept of politicisation has been used to analyse recent developments around conflicts over EU integration. It does so by exploring its main ideological dimensions, actors, and drivers. I argue in this chapter that the politicisation of the EU occurs because the subject raises questions of identity and culture (Grande & Kriesi, 2012; Helbling & Jungkunz, 2020; Teney et al., 2014), national and democratic sovereignty (Mair, 2013), and economic redistribution and solidarity between countries (Statham & Trenz, 2015). These three ideological dimensions are consequently prioritised by distinct political parties. Lastly, the

chapter discuss the literature on the main driving forces of EU politicisation, and from this discussion, I advance the hypotheses that will be tested in this research.

The fourth chapter of this dissertation provides the methodological framework for hypothesis testing. In this chapter I describe how the dependent variable of party positions on the EU was generated through the use of automated content analysis of the MEPs' speeches in the EP. Additionally, I discuss the independent and control variables related to the party positions on key ideological dimensions, as well as to party types and the member states' relationship with the EU.

The fifth chapter constitutes the main empirical contribution of the dissertation. Here I conduct the test of the hypotheses using inferential statistics and discuss the findings in the context of my research aims and the extant literature on EU politicisation. Overall, the results confirm several of the proposed hypotheses and provide answers to the research question. Regarding the internal factors related to parties, I show that in general challenger parties tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in comparison with their mainstream counterparts, and that their left-right orientation is an important factor. The same can be said for RRP, especially during moments of economic crisis, such as the critical years of the 7th Term of the EP (2009 – 2014). The parties that politicise the EU also tend to have clearly marked ideological preferences on the trajectory of the EU, either for it or against it, and sharp positions on cultural and identity matters. Additionally, in specific moments such as the Eurozone crisis said parties tend to be against further economic redistribution and solidarity between member states. Regarding the external factors, the analysis shows that the transfer of political authority from the national to the supranational level is much less important than the degree of institutional misfit between the two levels when it comes to EU politicisation in parties' EP speeches.

The sixth and final chapter provides a concluding summary of the dissertation, with a focus on the main findings. Here I contextualise the results and findings within the limitations and weaknesses of the project and make recommendations for future studies.

2:

The concept of politicisation and its application to the study of the EU

The concept of politicisation has emerged as a powerful analytical tool to explain the recent developments in the contestation to the EU integration process. The aim of this chapter is to review the debates around the concept in order to provide the thesis with the theoretical scaffolding from which to move forward with the objective of survey the factors that explain how the politicisation of the EU unfolds in the EP. As such, this chapter is divided into four sections. The first sets out the concept of politicisation within a broader framework that considers primordial questions about the nature of politics itself and of social conflict. Additionally, the section outlines and discusses the definition of politicisation that is used in this research. The second is dedicated to an in-depth review of the particular components that generally make up the concept of politicisation, namely salience, polarisation and expansion of actors. The third section of the chapter deals with the effects that political arenas, conceptualised here as ‘sites of political structuring’, introduce in the process of EU politicisation, specifically the way institutions shape and constrain the dynamics of political conflict. In both of the second and third sections, I will present and discuss some of the results of the scoping literature review related to the specific topics of these sections. Finally, the last section offers the reader a summary of the main points discussed in this chapter.

2.1) Politics and political conflict

Before moving forward with a discussion of the concept of politicisation, however, it is necessary to offer a theory of what politics actually is. Indeed, as Hay (2007) argues, concepts such as politicisation, without an adequate definition of politics, are more likely to confuse than to clarify. In this section, I review the notion of politics in general, and apply it to the specific context of the EU, which is analysed in this research.

According to Hay's (2007) conception, the notion of politics features four aspects, drawn from a multiplicity of valid definitions. The first is politics as choice: the author sees politics as necessarily occurring in situations where choice is possible. This is noticeable in conceptions of politics which associate it with decision-making; or that view politics as the act of holding power accountable, for one can only scrutinise the decisions of policy-makers if there is an alternative that could have been pursued. But it is also visible in conceptualisations that see politics as the drawing of certain issue(s) or problem(s) into the public's attention. These situations depend on the possibility of alternatives to the contested status quo. Additionally, politics also deals with the choices of distribution and allocation of resources within societies. All these features of politics as choice make politics an intrinsically conflictual field of human activity.

How does this aspect translate to the EU? The EU has built-in institutional mechanisms that allow the citizens of member states to express their political choices and preferences, with the most direct form being by casting their vote in elections for the EP every five years. Moreover, these elections also allow for the contestation of the status quo. Indeed, EP elections are often seen as excellent opportunities for the consolidation of new parties that challenge established patterns of party conflict (Markowski, 2016).

According to Hay (2007), the second aspect is politics as the capacity for agency. This aspect flows from the first: politics can only occur in contexts wherein social agents have the capacity to influence and change political outcomes. These social agents must be able to act on their demands and perceived grievances, either through more traditional forms of participation in formalised institutions, such as joining and participating in political parties, joining trade unions, etc., or by participating in less formalised alternatives such as going to demonstrations, signing petitions, and participating in boycotts. The key in this aspect of politics is that without the capacity for agency, and subsequent capacity to change political outcomes, we cannot speak of politics as such.

The capacity for agency in the EU context is rather limited according to some authors (see, for example, Mair, 2013) since the EU lacks conventional mechanisms of accountability and democratic control, thus reducing citizens' capacity to affect the trajectory of the institutions. The literature on the EU's democratic deficits is a case in point (see Kratochvíl & Sychra, 2019 for an overview). Despite these limitations, imposed by the institutional architecture of the EU, it would be an overstatement to claim that the EU hinders

all capacity for agency. Indeed, citizens and parties can organise electoral lists for the EP and member states can act through the European Council to defend their interests and pressure the EU's institutions.

The third aspect highlighted by Hay (2007) is politics as deliberation. Having conceived of politics as choice and the capacity to act on those choices, it is also necessary to be able to raise issues, to articulate and debate choices and outcomes. Deliberation is thus central to any conception of politics. Hay (2007) recognises that this deliberation can occur in a wide range of arenas that go beyond the public and the formal into the private and the informal. While recognising this multiplicity of arenas wherein political deliberation over choices and outcomes can occur, the focus of this research lies on public and formal arenas of political deliberation. Despite the limited reach of the EP when it comes to directly impacting the policy outcomes of the EU as a whole (see, for instance, Bressanelli & Chelotti, 2018), it is undeniable that it is a political arena open to deliberation between different political actors with diverging points of view and preferences.

The final aspect of Hay's conception of politics concerns how politics is also a form of social interaction. If politics involves the decision and the capacity to act on available choices, then it will generate social consequences and outcomes. As Hay argues, a decision taken by a monarch that influences a whole population is both social and political; unlike the decision taken by a shipwrecked sailor on a deserted island, for example (unless one takes into account the possible wider consequences of said shipwrecked sailor's action upon the environment). Thus, actions can only be considered political if they occur in contexts of collective choice and entail collective consequences. The decisions deliberated and taken by EU elites and decision-makers influence the lives of millions. Indeed, the territory overseen by the EU's institutions encompasses one of the largest population hubs in the whole planet and the decisions at EU level impact the daily realities of the citizens of its member states in a myriad of areas of social life, from infrastructure to industrial policy, to agriculture, to finances and banking, just to name a few.

This dissertation embraces this multifaceted conception of politics, and subsequently of political systems, that presupposes an agonistic ontology (see Mouffe, 2013). But what does it mean to have an agonistic ontology? It means that social systems are shot through with conflict between antagonistic interests struggling over alternative forms of organising society accordingly, and that politics sits on top of this as the "ensemble of practices,

discourses and institutions that seeks to establish a certain order and to organize human coexistence in conditions which are always potentially conflicting” (Mouffe, 2013, pp. 2-3). However, Mouffe does not identify or describe the conflict dimensions in question. While I accept that there are conflictive dimensions that permeate societies at any given time, it is not enough to simply state that they exist. One must also be able to identify them in order to have a more grounded understanding of the phenomenon. Thus, I complement Mouffe’s contribution by identifying these dimensions: the struggle for redistribution and the struggle for recognition (Fraser & Honneth, 2003).

On the one hand, redistribution deals with political claims and struggles aimed at more equitable and just distribution of material resources within a given society. These struggles were at the heart of many political conflicts that have generated the welfare states of western Europe and beyond – from the rich to the poor, from the capitalists to the workers, for instance. On the other hand, recognition deals with the construction of societies that accept the right to difference. The struggles for recognition of the rights of religious, ethnic, and sexual minorities are paradigmatic examples.

It is from these elementary political struggles that the concrete history of political conflict in Europe emerges. Expanding upon Lipset and Rokkans's cleavage theory (1967), Hix and Lord (1997) argue, the history of modern party systems in the generality of European nation states can be explained by the emergence of critical junctures and the societal and political cleavages produced by them. As the authors point out, the first of these critical junctures that would shape the politics of Europe were the violent upheavals of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation in the 16th and the 17th centuries. This critical juncture produced a division between the defenders of the institutional and landed interests of the Roman Catholic Church and the interests of nascent Protestant reformers. The second critical juncture was led by the nationalist movements that swept most of Europe in the Romantic period between the 17th and the 19th centuries, culminating in the revolutions of 1848, which created the political divides between centre and periphery interests. The third critical juncture took place with the displacement of the ruling elites of the *Ancien Régime* in the first French Revolution, producing the divide between the emerging bourgeoisie and the regressive aristocracy, and emphasising the division between conservatives and liberals.

Up to this point one can classify these divides as being struggles for recognition in one way or the other, either of religious or national differences. As Hix and Lord (1997) point

out, the fourth and fifth critical junctures would be radically different from the former by introducing the struggle for redistribution and equality into the equation. The fourth critical juncture was the agricultural revolution of the 17th and the 19th centuries, producing the urban/rural cleavage, and the fifth was the industrial revolution from which the divide between defenders of the interests of the emergent industrial working class and defenders of the interests of the owners of capital – the bourgeoisie². In the 20th century, the emergence of the so-called ‘new politics’ (Inglehart, 1977) in the 60s and the 70s have led to new conflicts around so-called post-material issues such as women’s rights, LGBT rights, racial justice and so on, often muddying the distinction between struggles for recognition and redistribution such as the women’s struggle for both the recognition of gender specificities and equality of pay (Fraser, 2001).

Contemporary politics in Europe remain rife with these antagonisms. Indeed, far from being swept under the proverbial rug of history, many of these political conflicts are still with us and creating cross-cutting cleavages that still structure current politics in many nation states (Hooghe & Marks, 2018; Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). For instance, we can see this at work in the cleavages that interact and articulate to structure the political conflicts in present-day Spain, between the interests of the central state and the interests of the periphery of the autonomous regions like Catalonia, and how this conflict interacts with issues of economic redistribution (Vampa, 2020). The conflicts around the EU integration project are another key example of this interaction, combining conflicts of centre/periphery, economic redistribution, and old vs. new politics into a single Gordian Knot (Hooghe & Marks, 2018). The endurance of these political divides attests to the agonistic conception, which states that society is encompassed by antagonistic social relationships, and corresponding normative beliefs, that cannot be fully reconciled through rational deliberation (Mouffe, 2013). The potential for political conflict, i.e., politicisation, is always lurking underneath the surface. Thus, one of the tasks of politics is to uneasily manage these conflicting social relationships and interests (Hay, 2007).

² Hix and Lord (1997) also point out that both the Russian revolutions of 1917 and the advent of the Fascist dictatorships in the 1930s constitutes distinct critical junctures of their own. On one hand, the former created significant division within the wider Socialist movement between those in favour of a more reformist road to socialism and those favouring revolutionary forms of transition to socialism. On the other, the latter produced division on the right pitting a camp committed to democracy against anti-democratic currents. While of great historical significance, these critical junctures are not as important in explaining the contemporary party systems in Europe as the other ones discussed above.

2.2) The concept of politicisation

The preceding discussion on the nature of politics grounds my conception of politicisation. As a concept, politicisation has been employed in the political science literature in a wide variety of ways, often with polysemic meanings (Grande & Hutter, 2016b, p. 7). While its usage lacks a consistent approach, it can broadly be defined as the act of bringing an issue into the sphere of politics, that is, into the realm of public contestation and deliberation about collectively binding decisions concerning the common good (Zürn et al., 2012). However, politicisation has different dimensions, as Grande and Hutter (2016b, p. 7) point out. In particular, four distinct but interrelated varieties of the concept can be identified: external, internal, subjective politicisation, and depoliticisation.

The first distinction Grande and Hutter (2016b) establish is between external and internal politicisation. This is directly related to the political system: on one hand, external politicisation deals with the relationship between politics and other social systems, thus, it can be defined as the extension of the scope of the system of politics, in the narrow sense, to other spheres of society (Grande & Hutter, 2016b). One example of this would be the extension of the scope of politics to public administration, e.g., through political appointments in the administrative system (see Silva, 2017). On the other hand, internal politicisation deals with processes within the political system itself and can this be, defined as the act of bringing an issue into the realm of political conflict (see Zürn et al., 2012).

While falling outside of the scope of the present thesis, the scholarly literature has identified other expressions of politicisation. For instance, depoliticisation is defined as the retreat from the realm of contestation and political conflict (e.g., Glencross, 2009). I would argue that, like politicisation, depoliticisation can also be divided between an external and an internal variety, following the same logic. Thus, on one hand, we can observe external depoliticisation when certain aspects of policy-making are outsourced from the contentious process of electoral and parliamentary politics into technocratic institutions, such as nominally independent regulatory agencies that do not answer to popular constituencies (see Flinders & Wood, 2014). On the other hand, we can have internal depoliticisation when certain contentious issues get deliberately de-emphasised in order to avoid political conflict, an example of which is the strategy pursued by parties with deep internal divisions on EU integration, which routinely de-emphasise the issue. The long history of the internal

divisions over EU membership in the UK’s main political parties, is a case in point (Smith, 2012).

We can also speak of subjective politicisation, defined as the individual’s involvement with politics, i.e., mobilisation, and political socialisation (e.g., Bashevkin, 1985; Islar & Irgil, 2018; van Deth & Elff, 2004). Additionally, I would argue that one can conceptualise a subjective depoliticisation, when individuals become estranged from politics for any number of reasons, such as for instance, a perceived lack of responsiveness from governments which may lead to demobilisation and withdrawal from participation in political activity.

As the scoping review of the literature demonstrates, this polysemic aspect of the concept of politicisation is prevalent in the political science scholarship in the past decades. For instance, the collected sample of research articles for the scoping literature review features a predominance of articles dealing with internal politicisation in comparison with other forms of politicisation (see appendix 1 for more details). Internal politicisation appears in 142 articles, while external politicisation features in 65 articles. The concept of subjective politicisation is present in 21 articles, and depoliticisation in 22 articles. Table 2.1 summarises the results.

Table 2.1) Types of politicisation

	Number of articles	
Internal Politicisation	142	57%
External Politicisation	65	26%
Subjective Politicisation	21	8%
Depoliticisation	22	9%

Source: Own calculations.

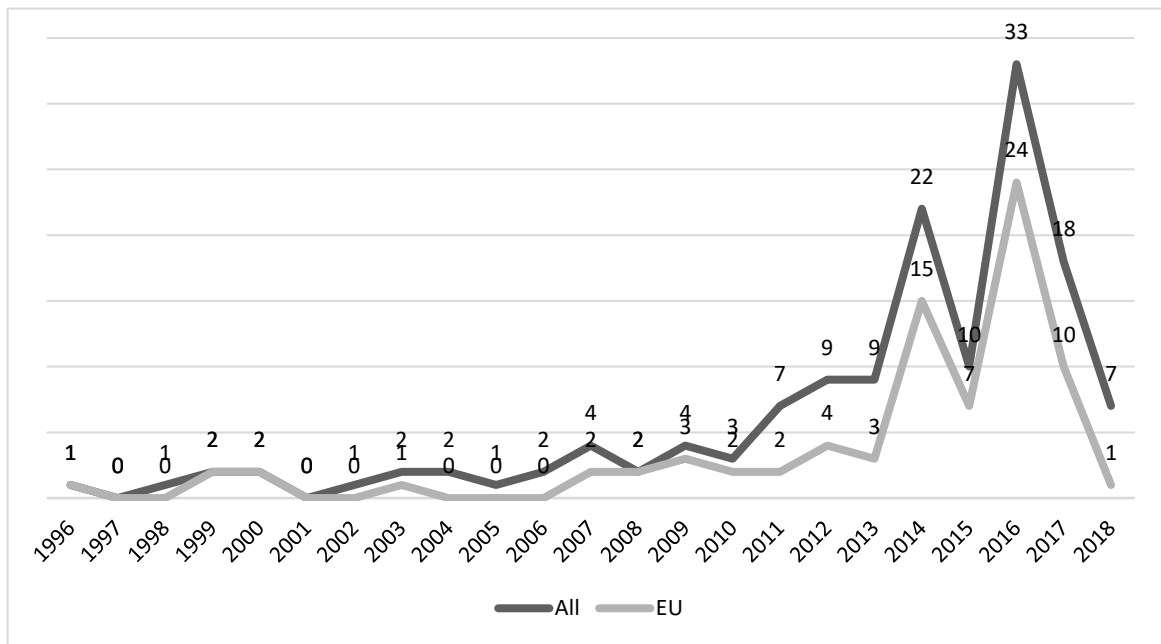
Secondly, as Figure 2.1 depicts³, the number of studies dealing with internal politicisation across the selected time period (1980-2018)⁴ sees a steep increase on the topic of internal politicisation in general, and EU politicisation in particular, with the advent of the Eurozone and the migrant crises. As a sidenote, it is interesting to observe how historical

³ The years between 1980 and 1996 were excluded from Figure 2.1 because no relevant articles were published in that time frame.

⁴ The drop in the number of studies between 2017 and 2018 is most likely attributed to the fact that the cut-off point for the collection of studies for the scoping literature review was September of 2018 (see appendix 1 for more details).

events, particularly the aforementioned crises, are motivating academics to rediscover, or even to create new concepts to explain social and political phenomenon. Given the findings reported in Figure 2.1, it seems, at first glance at least, that politicisation is such a case. Since this research seeks, first and foremost, to study the politicisation of the EU integration process as it plays out in the EP, henceforth the concept of internal politicisation will be simply addressed as politicisation, unless the other varieties are explicitly mobilised.

Figure 2.1) Absolute number of studies published per year



Source: Own calculations.

Climbing downwards on the ladder of abstraction of the concept of politicisation, Grande and Hutter (2016b) clarify that politicisation is both an analytical concept and a concrete political strategy. It is an analytical concept since it has allowed scholars to deepen our understanding of the conflicts around EU integrations, and it is a concrete political strategy in the sense that it relates to “the expansion of the scope of conflict within a political system” (2016b, p. 7). The authors concede that this definition is open to who is involved in the expansion of any given conflict, to their strategies on how they advance and expand this conflict, to where this conflict unfolds, and to what are the ultimate consequences of politicisation.

Recently, the concept of politicisation, as defined above, has been applied in political science to study the EU and its institutions and this specific use of the concept has been broken into three component parts. Hence, EU politicisation comprises of 1) an increased salience of EU-related issues in the public sphere, that is, political discourse and in the media; 2) polarisation of positions and arguments concerning the EU, its institutions and policies, and its future; and 3) expansion of political actors engaged in the public and political debates over the EU in the form of new political parties, movements, and interest groups (Börzel & Risse, 2018; De Wilde et al., 2016). I now turn the discussion towards these separate components of politicisation.

2.3) The three components of politicisation

2.3.1) Salience

The first component of politicisation is the salience of a given issue. Salience can be defined as the importance and subsequent public attention given to an issue in the political sphere (De Wilde et al., 2016; Grande & Hutter, 2016a; Wonka, 2016). Topics and issues are considered to be politicised if they are raised by political actors in public debates. A good example follows from van der Eijk and Franklin's (2004) characterisation of the EU issue as a “sleeping giant”: for most of the trajectory of the EU integration process there was a significant degree of polarisation in public opinion on the issue EU integration, albeit no major political parties throughout the Union actively chose to engage with it and thus its salience in public debates remained low. While this picture is somewhat outdated in the context of the polycrisis of the Eurozone and the migrant crises, it remains a good example of how the concept of issue salience operates in practice.

Authors such as Green-Pedersen (2012) establish that issue salience is intertwined with agenda-setting: political parties and other political actors struggle over what issues are on the public agenda by emphasising or de-emphasising certain issues depending on what these actors perceive to be politically favourable to the advancement of their agenda. This means that political actors might be forced to respond to issues that are not favourable to them and vice-versa, otherwise known as co-orientation (Eugster et al., 2021).

Additionally, political actors not only struggle over the overall salience of certain issues over other issues – they also struggle over the framing of these issues (Daviter, 2007;

Entman, 1993). As such, an issue like the EU can be framed in a wide variety of ways depending on the political objective of the actors who choose to raise the issue in public. For example, research has shown that RRP in the EU tend to frame its territorial and political expansion as a threat to the national sovereignty of the member states and as a dilution of national cultures and identities, especially in the context of the migrant crisis of 2015 (Börzel & Risse, 2018). Meanwhile, Radical Left parties' (RLPs) framing of the EU issue is more centered on economic and fiscal policies (Wonka, 2016), wherein these parties consider the expansion of the EU's authority on economic and fiscal policy as a threat to national welfare states and favouring capital over labour.

This leads us to the next step in the discussion of issue salience, specifically that the agenda-setting dynamics of issue salience can be triggered by exogenous events that provide political actors the opportunity to destabilise the public agenda. In the case of the EU, one is to expect that events such as rounds of enlargement or treaty ratifications will trigger these dynamics of issue salience (De Wilde et al., 2016). The effects of these critical events and their role in driving politicisation of the EU will be discussed in more depth in chapter 3.

Finally, political parties and governments are not in full control of the process of issue salience. As Green-Pedersen (2012) argues, the characteristics of the issue are crucial. Hence, as I have highlighted, an issue like the health and safety might be driven into the public agenda by exogenous events such as natural catastrophes, forcing parties to respond. Some issues can be driven by mobilisation from below, i.e., from protest movements, while others might be driven by political elites. In the case of EU integration, the issue is driven by Eurosceptic party elites, since the public has limited experience of the topic and is reasonably disconnected from EU integration in general (de Vries, 2007; Franklin & van der Eijk, 2007).

As a consequence of focusing on specific issues, political parties can grow to be seen by the electorate as “owners” of these issues. Indeed, a strain of scholarship on issue salience focuses specifically on the concept of issue ownership (Petrocik, 1996; Stubager, 2017). As hinted before, the concept describes the process wherein parties become associated by voters with specific issues. In Stubager's (2017, p. 349) definition, “issue ownership is the perception in a voter's mind that a specific party over the long term is most competent at handling — in the sense of delivering desired outputs on — a given issue”. From this, it logically follows that as the EU becomes an ever more salient in public debates, the issue

will become associated with some parties and not others, that is Eurosceptic parties of both the right and left. One can argue that part of certain parties' political strategy revolves around explicitly giving salience to dormant issues, or issues that have been identified or perceived as having been neglected by other parties (issue emphasis). Once again, the image of the EU issue as a "sleeping giant" is illustrative.

The scoping literature review conducted for this thesis uncovered that salience has been measured in a wide variety of ways: from the frequency of articles related to the EU in newspapers (Grande & Hutter, 2016a; Leupold, 2016; Schmidtke, 2016) to whether European election campaign materials feature political candidates on an EU-wide scale (Adam & Maier, 2011); from the percentage of parties' manifestos that are dedicated to EU issues (Spoon, 2012); to the share of sentences dedicated to European issues in newspaper coverage of election campaigns in various countries (Hutter & Grande, 2014; Hutter & Kerscher, 2014). According to the results of this review, salience is the most studied aspect in the study of EU politicisation, representing 32% of the total pool of reviewed articles.

In sum, perhaps no other dimension in the concept of politicisation better highlights Hutter and Grande's (2016b) assertion that politicisation is both an analytical tool for political scientists and a concrete political strategy for competitive politics. Issue salience plays a role in setting the agenda and establishing the priorities of any given public and political system, as well as establishing how political parties are perceived by the electorate, thus influencing voting behaviour. However, unlike Green-Pedersen (2012), I do not conceive politicisation as a question of salience only – there are other dimensions at play. This leads us into a discussion of polarisation and expansion of actors.

2.3.2) Polarisation

The second dimension of the concept of politicisation is polarisation. Polarisation, or what has recently been labelled as contestation (Silva et al., 2022), is an easy concept to grasp. It is defined by Grande and Hutter (2016b, p. 9) as "the intensity of conflict related to an issue among the different actors involved". Thus, there must be a minimum of two antagonistic positions or perspectives on any given issue, and these must be articulated in public debates with similar levels of intensity (De Wilde, 2011). In other words, one can only speak of a politicised debate over an issue if the issue is contentious. As De Wilde et al. (2016) note, polarisation in the context of EU integration is the adoption of more extreme

positions regarding the EU and the integration process. As the authors point out, the concept has been increasingly used as an indicator for the position of parties and other political actors regarding the EU (see Braun & Grande, 2021; Strijdis et al., 2020 for recent examples). This makes up the specific use of the concept that I employ in this dissertation: party positions on the issue of the EU.

This concept of polarisation plays into the agonistic conception of politics (Mouffe, 2013). As I have stated, conflict between different interests and their representatives is a constitutive part of any society, wherein politics sits on top as the practices and institutions that manage this conflict. It logically follows from this that political actors will advocate opposing positions on a wide variety of issues.

According to the findings of the scoping literature review, polarisation features in 27% of the surveyed articles making it the second most studied aspect of politicisation. Furthermore, the results of the scoping review indicate that scholars have employed a myriad of ways to measure polarisation, ranging from the application of content analysis approaches to campaign materials and press releases (Adam et al., 2017; Adam & Maier, 2011) parties' websites (De Wilde et al., 2014), media coverage of politics (Leupold, 2016; Schmidtke, 2016) and parliamentary debates (Kinski, 2018).

2.3.3) Expansion of actors

The final dimension in the concept of politicisation deals with the expansion of the actors involved in contentious debates on a given issue. In the politicisation literature this dimension has been defined in two different ways, the first of which is broader in scope than the second.

De Wilde (2011), who prefers to use the term 'public resonance' to describe the concept, offers the broader definition. According to De Wilde, salience and polarisation of an issue must be met by an engaged audience willing and able to participate in the discussion. This participation can be direct, through voting in elections or referenda, or it can be indirect, through op-eds and discussion in public forums, for instance. The idea is that, through increased public resonance, more and more people participate in the political process. De Wilde (2011) also offers an illustrative example: if a decision is made by an intergovernmental body behind closed doors, even if the decision-making process was extremely laborious, with divergent positions on the course of action, one cannot speak of it

being politicised if there was no audience paying attention to it – either in mass media or through any other public forum.

While I do not dispute the validity of De Wilde's (2011) conception, I find it problematic for several reasons. The first is that, as Grande and Hutter (2016b, p. 9) argue, public resonance blends together the precondition and the effects of politicisation. In other words, the potential for certain issues to gain importance in public debates with the changes in behaviour of political actors, such as political participation. The second problem is relevant in the context of the EU. While few deny that the politicisation of the EU is a reality (see Börzel & Risse, 2018; Grande & Kriesi, 2016; Statham & Trenz, 2015), the enduring relevance of the second-order model of European elections tells the story of a generally disinterested public and mass media (Boomgaarden et al., 2016; Ehin & Talving, 2021; Schmitt et al., 2020)⁵.

For these reasons, I prefer the narrower definition of expansion of actors. Grande and Hutter (2016b, p. 9) succinctly define it as the increase in the number and types of political actors engaged in public debates. The authors put forward that even if relatively few political actors, such as governing elites, are publicly advancing their position on an issue, we can speak of politicisation, albeit within a more restricted scope. Additionally, the authors propose a distinction between actor expansion within political arenas and across political arenas. The former indicates that politicisation is restricted to a limited institutional scope, such as debates within parliament, while the latter refers to the extension of the scope of conflict across the polity. This introduces gradience to the concept of actor expansion, as an issue can have either a more or a less restricted scope of politicisation. For instance, an issue can be actively and intensely debated in parliament while its wider engagement in public debates can be more lukewarm. However, unlike in De Wilde's (2011) conception, we can still consider it to be politicised.

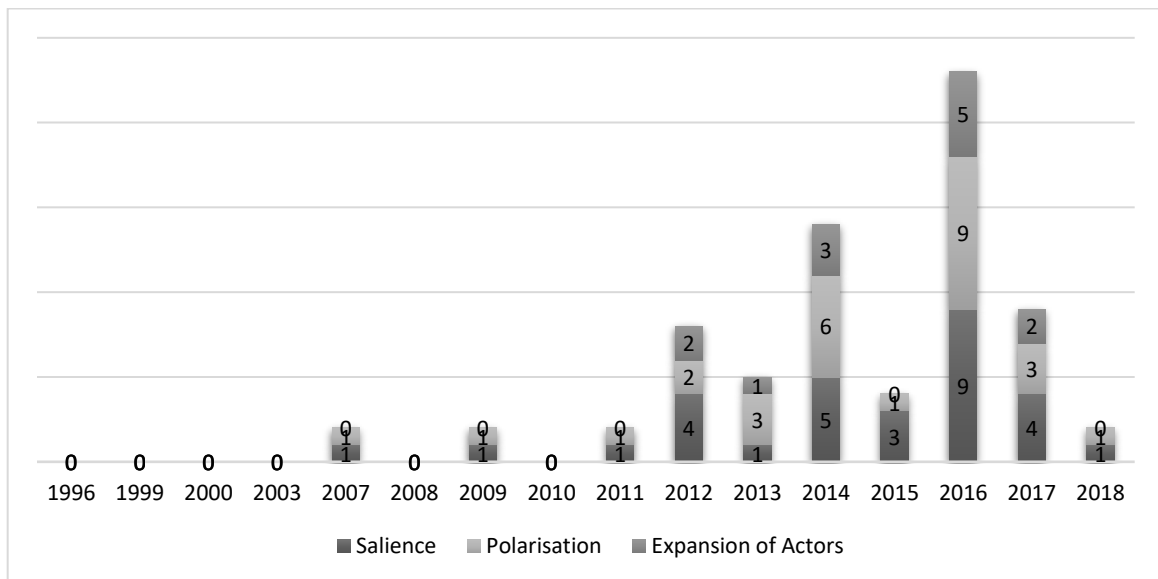
As per the findings of my scoping literature review, expansion of actors is the least studied aspect of EU politicisation (13%). This suggests that future research into politicisation in general, and EU politicisation in particular, should pay close attention to the ways political conflict, or the promise thereof, open opportunities for new political actors

⁵ The model characterises EP elections as second-order elections because they are perceived by voters, parties and the media as being less important than first-order elections, i.e., legislative elections (Reif & Schmitt, 1980). The endurance of this model has always been a matter of dispute and constant testing by researchers (see Ehin & Talving, 2021; Eugster et al., 2021; Plescia et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2022 for a sample of the recent literature on the topic).

and subjects to enter the scene. The literature has measured this aspect of politicisation by assessing the number of political actors making EU related claims in the media (de Bruycker, 2017; Leupold, 2016), wherein some authors specifically measure the concept by the amount of claims made by nongovernmental actors in the context of newspaper coverage of electoral campaigns as a percentage of all coded statements (Hutter & Grande, 2014; Hutter & Kerscher, 2014).

When I chart the subcomponents of the concept of EU politicisation over time (Figure 2.2⁶) a trend emerges wherein EU politicisation begins to be conceptualised along this tripartite scheme in 2007 and peaks in the years between 2014 and 2017, coinciding with the polycrisis of the Eurozone and the migrant crises. This trend establishes an interesting connection between the scholarly literature and the actual unfolding of political events, which shows how the political science of the time was able to build new conceptual tools to concurrently analyse ongoing processes at the supranational level.

Figure 2.2) Dimensions of EU politicisation over time



Source: Own calculations.

In sum, the concept of politicisation subscribed in this thesis recognises that it is a multidimensional concept, composed by three distinct but interrelated components: saliency, polarisation, and expansion of actors. However, the present research does not seek to explain

⁶ See footnote 4.

all these interrelated aspects – this falls beyond the scope of this doctoral thesis and its methodological framework. Rather, I set out to explore the dimension of polarisation (or contestation): specifically, parties’ positions towards the EU, and how it plays out in a specific context, i.e., the EP. This in turn, leads me to discuss how specific institutional arenas mediate political conflict.

2.4) Arenas of Politicisation of the EU

Considering that my main research aim relates to the study of how the politicisation of the EU as unfolded at the supranational level, specifically within the halls of the EP, it is important to review how distinct political arenas influence and shape the dynamics of political conflict that have been reviewed so far. But what are political arenas? According to Grande and Kriesi (2012, p. 6), political arenas are “sites of political structuring” wherein political and policy positions are advanced and debated by specific political actors. Political arenas can vary from parliaments or elections to street protests, and what is possible for political actors to do in the electoral arena might not be possible in national or European parliaments, for instance. In other words, distinct political arenas are going to structure the agency of political actors to advance their goals and agendas in different ways. As Helbling et al. (2012) argue, political arenas are characterised by specific constellations of institutional rules (or lack thereof) which structure political conflict in specific ways. Thus, political activity is shaped by the constraints that are constitutive of these arenas.

From this perspective, I can place these political arenas on a spectrum where on one side there is a high degree of institutional constraints on political actors’ agency and on the other side, there is a high degree of freedom. Thus, on one extreme, politicisation can occur in parliaments, both at the national and European levels. These arenas are highly structured by institutional norms and mores, which are likely to constrain the agency of political actors in the mobilisation of political conflict. Even speaking times and schedule are highly regimentalised in these institutional settings (see Proksch & Slapin, 2014, for an overview). On the opposite end of the spectrum, politicisation can occur at the level of public protest, which by nature is much less institutionalised and open to all kinds of political actors since the barriers to entry in this arena are much lower. Roughly in the middle of the spectrum, arenas such as the media can be placed, where the institutional rules are more strict than public protest but the barriers to entry are not as high as national parliaments, or the electoral

arena which also plays a crucial role in channelling political conflict. Given this framework, how can the EP be understood as a site of political structuring?

2.4.1) The European Parliament as a 'site of political structuring'

When considering the object of the present research, the EP, one can quickly realise the implications of institutional restraints on the development of political conflict. The EP is a parliament unlike the national parliaments of Europe, it has a larger degree of autonomy in the definition of its own proceedings since it is not bound by constitutional rules or other restrictions created by external bodies. The norms that govern the EP are codified in the institution's Rules of Procedure and this document has changed significantly throughout the history of the institution (see Brack et al., 2015; Kreppel, 2003). The history of the document itself has reflected the "power struggles as the distribution of power among actors in the chamber is at stake" (Brack, 2018, p. 116) .

According to Kreppel (2002), parliaments can be divided into two types: chambers of debate, wherein legislative work is usually externalised to the executive; and legislative bodies, where legislative work is the sole focus. As Lord (2018) show, the EP evolved from the former to the latter over a relatively short period of time, as a result of the development of the internal Rules of Procedures of the EP (Brack et al., 2015).

Following Brack's (2018) depiction of how the EP operates, the plenary sessions of the EP take place on a monthly basis and last for a week. These debates are usually held on legislative and non-legislative reports presented MEPs. The EP exercises supervision of other EU institutions such as the Council and the Commission through written and oral questions. Additionally, the MEPs may debate statements made by the President(s) of the European Council, the Commission, and the Council. Speaking time is tightly regulated in the EP (Lord, 2018): it is reserved to the Commission, the Council, and to MEPs who are serving as *rapporteurs*⁷ – draftsmen of opinions, and authors of motions for resolutions. The political groups of the EP have control over speaking time, and it is allocated to each of these party groups in the EP, according to its share of seats. Indeed, as Brack (2018) points out, European political groups exercise considerable constraining powers over the behaviour of individual MEPs. This constraining power over MEPs is exercised under peculiar circumstances, however. European political groups have very little control over the selection

⁷ Rapporteurs are MEPs who presents reports to the EP.

of MEPs and their future political careers since they are selected and depend upon their national parties. Nonetheless, as Hix et al. (2007) show, this has little effect on the constraining powers of European political groups since national parties act as enforcers of their respective European political group's line.

Legislative debates in the EP are generally initiated by an opening statement from the Commission which is then followed by a communication by the *rapporteur* presenting the latest developments of a given EP committee. Unlike national parliaments, the legislative proposals that are debated in the EP do not emanate from the initiative of any actors in the EP itself, but rather from an external institution: The European Commission. This is a constraint upon the ability of actors in the EP to set the agenda, and potentially reduces the opportunities for political conflict (Brack, 2018). After this initial impetus, the general debate ensues with each individual European political group intervening on the issue at hand. The decision on which MEPs are allowed to speak is decided internally by the political groups, with each intervention lasting no longer than three minutes. The debate is closed with the replies of the Commission, revealing its position on the amendments proposed by the MEPs. As Brack (2018) argues, the increasing relevance of legislative debates over plenary debates in the EP has significantly reduced the speaking time for MEPs, while at the same time empowering European political groups. As consequence of this move towards legislative debates Brack et al. (2015, p. 22) have argued that the Rules of Procedure have “deliberately privileged the efficiency and pragmatism of deliberation to the detriment of the dynamism and spontaneity”⁸ of the debates in the EP's plenary.

While an overview of the incremental changes to the Rules of Procedure of the EP overtime is not the aim here, it must be noted that during the period of analysis (from 1999 to 2014), specifically in the 6th Term (2004 – 2009), the powers of the President of the EP were significantly expanded as a reaction against the political manoeuvring of Eurosceptic MEPs (Brack et al., 2015). From this point forwards, the President is expected to preside over the deliberations of the EP; and she has acquired the right to significantly reduce the scope of MEPs actions and to sanction against the non-compliance of the Rules of Procedure. The combination of these factors represents a significant restriction on the agency of MEPs and parties, and I posit that these constraints can potentially have a softening effect on EU politicisation because they limit the opportunities for expressing political conflict.

⁸ My translation from the French original.

The nature of the effects of the political structuring imposed by the EP's Rules of Procedure has direct implications for the empirical strategy of this research. Given the constraints that individual MEPs face in terms of autonomy and speaking time, it makes little sense to analyse their individual speeches. As such I opt for a strategy of aggregation of speeches by national political parties like in previous studies that have used similar methodologies as my own (e.g., Proksch & Slapin, 2010). For a discussion of the details related to this choice, see chapter 4 of this dissertation.

As I have asserted earlier, EU politicisation studies have not focused to the same extent on how its dynamics play out at the supranational level in comparison with the member state's level. In fact, the results of scoping literature review conducted for this thesis lay this claim bear as can be seen by Table 2.2.

Table 2.2) Arenas of EU politicisation

	Number of articles*	
National Parliaments	17	35%
General Elections	4	8%
National Media	12	22%
European Parliament	3	6%
European Elections	7	14%
Protest arena	3	6%
Other	3	6%

*Percentages were calculated based on the number of articles in my sample that feature political arenas ($n=49$).

Source: Own calculations.

Most of the surveyed literature looks at the phenomenon at the national level: national parliaments (35%), national media (22%) and under the context of general elections (8%), while the ones that focus on the European level are less frequent comprising only 20% of the total studies in my sample: studies focusing on European elections (14%) and in the European Parliament (6%).

Nonetheless, the results revealed interesting insights. Once again, the idea that political arenas are sites of political structuring, exercising an effect on political behaviour, is seen to emerge in the three articles that address the European Parliament.

The first, by Brack (2015), finds different behaviour profiles of Eurosceptic MEPs: from absentees who prefer to do political work with their national constituency, using the EP as a way to fund their activities, to those who actively engage in the policy-making process of

the EP. This suggests that despite the structuring effects of political arenas, political actors within the EP do have a degree of freedom regardless of these constraints. Additionally, the multilevel nature of the EU introduces qualifications that modulate the behaviour of political actors. This relates to the second article by Koop et al. (2018), which, using roll-call vote data, observes that politicisation of the EU at the national level increases disloyalty, in the form of not voting in accordance with MEP's European party family in the EP. This process intensified between 2009 and 2014 lending credence to the argument that the Eurozone crisis intensified politicisation. In a different vein from the other two studies related to the EP, Broekema (2016) in his analysis of the politicisation of disasters such as oil spills in the EP, shows that such politicisation can impact policy learning by the EU's institutions.

I was also able to find studies exploring politicisation in spheres such as the European Council, which show that this phenomenon has evolved over time. Tallberg and Johansson (2008), for instance, demonstrate that there is little evidence that politicisation along left-right lines occurs in the European Council (at least not at the time of publication of their article). However, and more recently, Glencross (2016) has argued that, by claiming legitimacy to solve the crisis, the European Council has opened new venues for the politicisation of the EU's democratic legitimacy as it pertains to decisions over national budgets. Therefore, the strategy adopted by the European Council was one of depoliticisation as a way to prevent further national-level politicisation of the EU's handling of the Eurozone crisis.

To conclude, political arenas are sites of political structuring that shape the behaviour and the capacity to act of political actors. Some arenas can be quite flexible and de-institutionalised while others can impose great restraints on political actors. Consequently, arenas are key to any attempt at understanding the dynamics of EU politicisation. The EP, through its Rules of Procedures, by 1) reinforcing the powers of European political groups which are aided by the national parties who make up these groups; and by 2) having increased the importance of legislative debates over plenary debates, considerably constrains the behaviour of individual MEPs. This combination of factors has resulted in a move towards ideological moderation within the chamber, thus potentially constraining the possibility for political conflict when compared to the national level.

2.5) Concluding remarks

Research should ideally look at its object of study on the various rungs of the ladder of abstraction, and thus I sought to discuss the concept of politicisation in its multiple dimensions in this chapter. I agree with Hay (2007) that a concept like politicisation must be grounded in a solid conception of what politics actually is. Therefore, I have built the notion of politicisation on an agonistic ontology of social relationships, which recognises that society is constituted by antagonistic interactions between actors that often have conflicting interests and preferences (Mouffe, 2013). One of the roles of politics must thus be the uneasy management of these conflicting social relationships and interests (Hay, 2007).

From this point of departure, I approached the conventional aspects of politicisation by discussing the varieties of the concept from the point of view of the political system. As a result, both an external and an internal variety of politicisation emerged, wherein internal politicisation, that is, the act of bringing a previously non-political issue into the sphere of public contestation and deliberation, became the most adequate form of the concept from the perspective of my research aims.

However, internal politicisation is a multidimensional concept (Börzel & Risse, 2018; De Wilde et al., 2016; Grande & Hutter, 2016b), that encompasses three interrelated dimensions: salience, polarisation, and expansion of actors. In this chapter, I have sought to explore all of these interrelated dimensions. As the scoping literature review demonstrates, the most studied of these components are the first two.

The survey of the literature on EU politicisation also allowed me to uncover the role played by political arenas in the dynamics of EU politicisation. Following previous contributions, I argue that political arenas act as sites of political structuring. This means that the institutional architecture in place in these arenas has an effect on political conflict. Seeing as some arenas are more institutionalised than others, this will result in different constraints and opportunities for political actors. From this conceptual framework I analysed the EP and concluded that, given the constraints the institution places on the political agents' capacity to act through its Rules of Procedure, the political conflict over the EU in the EP is likely to be relatively mild as compared how EU politicisation plays out in national level arenas.

The results of the scoping literature review confirm the commonplace characterisation of the phenomenon of politicisation as being bounded within the national borders of the polities of EU member states. However, with the intensification of politicisation in the

context of the Eurozone crisis and the migrant crisis, and the growing weight of Radical Right populist Eurosceptics both at the EU level in general and at the EP level in particular (and increasingly at the member state level), this generalisation might not hold for much longer. Thus, the next step for EU scholars looking to deepen our collective understanding of how these dynamics of political conflict and politicisation unfold at the level of EU governance is to survey the phenomenon both at the EP and in the European Council. In this regard the EP in particular presents itself as the ideal locale for the study of politicisation, for if we assume that political arenas are ‘sites of political structuring’ the EP confines different political actors from different political cultures under the same political restraints. Additionally, the EP is the only institution of the EU’s supranational polity that is directly accountable to European electorates and thus has the potential to be more responsive to the dispositions of EU citizens.

In the next chapter I will approach the specific reasons that explain why the EU is the target of politicisation as well as the trigger points that drive such politicisation forwards, with the aim of establishing the analytical framework that structures this dissertation.

3:

Factors that impact the politicisation of the EU

The previous chapter developed an understanding of the concept of politicisation, delving into its roots and grounding it in an agonistic conception of politics that sees politics as the expression of irreconcilable antagonism that exist in any social order (Mouffe, 2013). Following Zürn et al. (2012), I define politicisation as the demand or act of bringing an issue into the sphere of politics, that is, into the field of public contestation and debate about collectively binding decisions concerning the common good. This conception of politicisation, as applied to the study of political conflict over the EU, has been broken into three component parts: 1) an increased salience of EU-related issues in the public sphere, that is, in political discourse and in the media; 2) polarisation of positions and arguments concerning the EU, its institutions and policies and its future (Börzel & Risse, 2018; De Wilde et al., 2016; Grande & Hutter, 2016b); and 3) an expansion of political actors engaged in the public debate over the EU in the form of new political parties, movements, and interest groups.

In this chapter, I argue that the EU, as a political issue, offers political actors, specifically parties, distinct opportunities for political conflict along cultural-identitarian, institutional and political economy lines. Such an argument, however, begs the question: why and how does EU integration foster an expansion of political conflict? Finding an answer to this question will also be one of the aims of the chapter. From the broad discussion on the topics of EU politicisation in the present chapter, I present the hypotheses that will be tested in this research project.

The chapter comprises three distinct sections. In the first section, I look at the ways the EU can become an object of political conflict according to three different logics and modes of mobilisation. The first sees the problem of EU integration through a cultural-identitarian perspective that frames the EU as a cosmopolitan threat to national identities. The second views the EU as a political-institutional problem that frames the EU's complex multilevel governance architecture as jeopardising national sovereignty and democratic mechanisms of accountability and responsiveness at the member state level. The third frames the EU's

political economy and its dynamics of north vs. south, creditor vs. debtor countries as a battle for economic redistribution. In the second section, I discuss the drivers, i.e., the political circumstances, that promote political actors to contest the EU and the integration process. This section builds on the work of Grande and Hutter (2016b), which have divided the drivers of EU politicisation into two types: critical events and mobilisation strategies of political actors. Additionally, in this section I will present and discuss results of the scoping literature review related to the drivers of EU politicisation and its actors. In the third and final section of the chapter, I provide a summation of the analytical framework for this thesis.

3.1) Why is the EU politicised?

As established above, this section has one main task: to survey the structural reasons and the correspondent mobilisation strategies by political actors that lead the EU to become an object of political conflict. I present three distinct structural reasons for the politicisation of the EU. The first is related to structural changes brought about by the process of globalisation at the level of culture and identity, the second is related to the consequences of the EU's multilevel governance and its effect on national and democratic sovereignty, and the third relates to the consequences of the EU's political economy. These three distinct reasons help to shed light on the first aspect the research question that I aim to answer: specifically, what are the internal factors to political parties that explain the politicisation of the EU in their EP speeches.

I consider that there is no singular explanation that accounts for the phenomenon of EU politicisation. Rather, I argue that the EU and the integration process opens multiple and distinct windows of opportunity that allow different political actors to mobilise against it, depending on their ideological foundation, strategic objectives, and regional background. In a nutshell, the three structural reasons for the politicisation of the EU that I discuss in this section are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, it is conceivable that a political party may include both nationalism and economic redistribution in its mobilisation repertoire. France's Front National (Rassemblement National as of 2018) is a case in point (Ivaldi & Mazzoleni, 2018, 2020). However, these three structural reasons as to why the EU is politicised prioritise distinct causal mechanisms and explanations. Next, I will discuss the three structural reasons individually.

3.1.1) Identity and membership

The first answer to the question of why the EU is politicised situates the increasingly controversial status of the EU integration process within the overall context of the political consequences of globalisation. For the subscribers to this thesis, the process of economic, political, and cultural globalisation has created a demarcation-integration cleavage by producing a set of social winners and losers of globalisation (see Grande & Kriesi, 2012; Helbling & Jungkunz, 2020; Teney et al., 2013).

According to this theory, globalisation has been occurring on three distinct but interrelated fronts: economic, cultural, and political. First, economic globalisation has increased economic competitiveness and economic inequalities, both between and within countries (see Milanovic, 2016), de-structuring the old social model in Europe with strong welfare states. While this has meant increasing economic prosperity and opportunities for some sectors of society, others have had to increasingly deal with greater economic insecurity. This process has affected low-skill and low-mobility workers in certain sectors of the economy, particularly those most exposed external competition brought about by globalisation and its international division of labour.

Second, cultural globalisation has led to an increase in cultural diversity and associated destabilisation of mores due to immigration towards Europe since the 1960s, the societal implication of the women's movement in that decade, as well as to other factors linked to the new politics of post-materialism (Inglehart, 1977). These developments have led some sectors of society in advanced capitalist countries to feel that their traditional way of life and social status is threatened, thus creating new opportunities for political conflict (Norris & Inglehart, 2019).

Finally, political globalisation led to the transfer of political authority from the nation state to international and supranational organisations such as the EU. As Grande and Kriesi (2012) claim, international political integration has been perceived by some as jeopardising national sovereignty. In the case of the EU, for instance, Eurozone member states have had to relinquish decision-making over significant macro-economic policy issues to the European Central Bank and other supranational institutions, thus diminishing capacity for autonomous monetary policy.

This, coupled with the economic pressures created by globalisation, has led to significant political challenges, as the most affected by these pressures (low-skill and low mobility

workers) began demanding more expansive social protection (Gingrich & Hausermann, 2015; Häusermann et al., 2015; Negri, 2019) that nation states either cannot or are no longer willing to guarantee (Kim & Zurlo, 2009). Additionally, political integration can produce divergent results at the level of identification with the national community (Grande & Kriesi, 2012). While citizens with universalistic and cosmopolitan attitudes might view weakening identification with the national community as a positive development, leading to further cosmopolitanism, those with stronger levels of identification and more exclusionary attitudes are more likely to perceive political integration as a threat. This, too, has created new opportunities for political conflict and mobilisation.

As mentioned above, these interlinked processes of globalisation have precipitated a new political cleavage in society, both between the winners and the losers and between integration and demarcation. On one hand, integration relates to demands centered around individual autonomy, universalistic values, and cosmopolitanism, which have emerged under the banner of the ‘silent revolution’ of new values and post-materialism of the 1960s and the 1970s (Inglehart, 1977). This has meant that questions of material well-being and welfare faded into the background as western societies became more prosperous in the second half of the 20th century, being replaced by demands for a better overall quality of life. On the other hand, demarcation relates to the rise in the 1990s for demands centered on values of authoritarianism, nativism, and social hierarchy fuelled by a backlash against the new values of the ‘silent revolution’ (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). There are, however, those who place the rise of right-wing authoritarianism and nativism in the context of increasing economic insecurity brought about by the process of globalisation and austerity policies (Traverso, 2019). Nonetheless, according to those who submit the thesis of integration-demarcation, this new cleavage has increasingly structured political conflict in Western Europe.

The increasingly controversial status of EU integration can be accommodated within the overall thesis of the integration-demarcation cleavage (Emanuele et al., 2020), but how? One of the principal transformations brought about by globalisation was an increased preponderance of international and supranational institutions as a form of mediating international relationships between nation states. The EU is a key example of such an arrangement. The EU is a complex multi-level political system that deals with political, economic, and social issues within its borders, through standardised system of laws and

institutions. Indeed, there is a whole body of scientific literature dealing with the effects of so-called Europeanisation on national institutions, the public policy process of member states, and even of political parties (see Exadaktylos et al., 2020; Featherstone & Radaelli, 2003; Labrech, 2002 for an overview).

In tandem with the growing political authority of the EU there has taken place a territorial expansion of the EU's supranational polity, materialised in its successive waves of EU enlargement⁹. It not only means the forfeiture of sovereignty from the national to the supranational level on areas of national and economic sovereignty, but it can also trigger fears of loss of national identity. The debate around the accession of Turkey is a case in point. Opponents of Turkey's accession mobilised arguments against the Islamic cultural heritage of the country, arguing this stood in opposition to the perceived Christian heritage of Europe (Phinnemore & İçener, 2016).

How has this conflict been articulated by political actors in the EU? By mobilising conflicts of identity and membership. As Grande and Kriesi (2012, p. 16) put forward, a cultural framing of the demarcation-integration conflict underscores the negative consequences of cultural diversity and international political integration over economic arguments, which become subordinate to cultural issues; loss of job security becomes a consequence of immigration and not a consequence of evermore flexible and precarious labour contractual relationships, for instance (Strijdis et al., 2020).

Rooduijn (2015) argues that the most successful mobilisers of the integration-demarcation cleavage have been Radical Right populists. Given the heterogeneous economic interests of the losers of globalisation, a distinct lowest common denominator for political mobilisation and organisation is required. Radical Right populists have been able to overcome this obstacle by de-emphasising economic issues and over-emphasising the cultural and identitarian questions by framing the integration-demarcation conflict around negative consequences associated with cultural diversity. In the case of the EU, right-wing Eurosceptic parties have successfully been able to reframe the EU issue away from specific

⁹ As of the present writing, the EU integration process has seen seven waves of enlargement. The first wave, in 1973, saw a northward expansion with the accession of Denmark, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland. Between 1981 and 1986 the EU expanded southward, first with the accession of Greece and then of Spain and Portugal in the second and third waves of enlargement. In 1995 the fourth wave of enlargement took place with the accession of the former EFTA countries of Austria, Sweden, and Finland. The fifth (2004), sixth (2007), and seventh (2013) waves of enlargement saw the EU extend its reach to eastern Europe with the accession of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Malta, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia.

policy contestation into a debate on constitutive issues of national sovereignty, identity, and solidarity between countries (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). So far, right-wing Euroscepticism has had its day by focusing specifically on sovereignty and national identity through a cultural-identitarian frame and by mobilising conflicts of identity and membership.

From this discussion, I posit that:

H1 – Parties with more conservative positions on cultural and identity issues (TAN) tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties.

3.1.2) National and democratic sovereignty

The second explanation as to why EU integration has become increasingly controversial places greater emphasis on the institutional aspects of the EU as a polity. According to Mair (2013), the political institutions of the EU were explicitly designed to protect and shield the policy-making process from the demands of member states' representative democracies. To the author, this must be placed within the general context of a "widespread drift towards forms of decision-making that eschew electoral accountability and popular democratic control" (Mair, 2013, p. 99), i.e., depoliticisation.

According to this account, the EU integration process has been developed under the auspices of a *permissive consensus* wherein crucial decisions on the course of integration were taken by technocratic elites in Brussels without much input from popular movements or pressure from electorates which largely acquiesced to the project (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). Mair posits that this was a deliberate choice since "the EU is the house party politicians built" (2013, p. 126). Moreover, this house lacked the conventional mechanism of democratic accountability. This is so because the EU is the level of governance wherein policy solutions that might be deemed unacceptable by electorates at the national level can be designed and executed (Mair 2013, p. 133). Mair summarises:

The EU is the solution to the policy problems and issues of credibility that have been confronted by decision-makers and their clients, offering a means of institutionalizing a regulatory system that would not always prove viable were it dependent upon the vagaries of electoral politics (2013, p. 135).

This political architecture has generated what some scholars, politicians and opinion-makers alike call the EU's democratic deficit. While there is no universal definition of what the democratic deficit is, the political science literature has identified four distinct accounts on the phenomenon (see Kratochvíl & Sychra, 2019). The first conceives of the democratic deficit as a consequence of the absence of a European *demos* (Weiler, 1999). The traditional conception of representative democracy states that it is the constituent people who legitimise, through universal suffrage, the exercise of political authority in the polity. Within such a conception, if the EU lacks a truly trans-European *demos*, the possibility of an EU-wide democracy becomes highly unlikely (see Risse, 2014 for a critique of this position). The second recognises that there is as a problem of conventional political legitimacy in the EU but argues that this can be overcome by so-called output legitimacy (Scharpf, 1999, 2009). In other words, legitimacy can be achieved by the results of performance and the ability of the polity to provide positive policy solutions. The third explanation rejects the notion that the EU has a democratic deficit altogether. Indeed, for Moravcsik (2002):

constitutional checks and balances, indirect democratic control via national governments, and the increasing powers of the European Parliament are sufficient to ensure that EU policy-making is, in nearly all cases, clean, transparent, effective and politically responsive to the demands of European citizens.' (p. 605).

The fourth and final explanation of the EU's democratic deficit expands upon both the no-*demos* and output legitimacy arguments, combining both strands to offer a more nuanced approach that theorises the existence of the democratic deficit. This view is associated with Føllesdal and Hix (2006), who argue that the expansion of political authority of the Commission and Council of the EU has not been accompanied by a similar expansion of the powers of the EP (the EU's only directly elected political body). This considerably weakens citizens' opportunity to directly influence the direction of the EU. Additionally, the authors argue that there is no EU-wide public sphere, elections to the EP continue to be largely ignored by large swathes of Europeans, and the decisions of the EU are distant from the actual lived experience of EU citizens, thus undermining the EU's responsiveness. I find the arguments advanced by Føllesdal and Hix persuasive given the resilience of the low turnouts in EP elections and the EP's limited capacity to influence policy making in comparison with the EU Commission or the Council. In other words, despite the impacts that EU policies have on many aspects of citizens' lives, when asked to cast their votes and to elect their

representatives in the EP significant sectors of member states' electorates still refrain from doing so and this has meaningful implications regarding the EU's responsiveness to popular demands.

From the standpoint of EU politicisation, the consequences of the EU's democratic deficit are clear. As Mair puts forward, the Union's lack of ability to respond to popular demands and the absence of a conventional government-opposition dynamic has resulted in "anti-European opposition and to Euroscepticism" (Mair, 2013, pp.138-9).

Political actors seeking to mobilise against these issues of democratic deficit resulting from the EU's particular institutional architecture as a multilevel polity can do so by agitating on grounds of *national and democratic sovereignty*. The principle of the EU's integration process is the establishment of a supranational institutional structure with authority and autonomy over the member states. As the functionalist argument goes, nation states forgo some of their sovereignty to the supranational level in exchange for mutual benefit (Mitrany, 1965). This trade-off has often been met with political resistance from and conflict between supporters of international/supranational authority and advocates of national sovereignty. The recent crisis of the Eurozone, and the consequent political response to overcome it, is a case in point. To answer this crisis, member states had to forfeit political authority over to the supranational level (see Börzel & Risse, 2018; Schimmelfennig, 2014). This forfeiture of national sovereignty was met with great resistance in the most impacted countries of the Eurozone crisis, some of which had up to that point widespread public support for the EU such as Portugal (Lisi, 2020) and Spain (Cachafeiro & Plaza-Colodro, 2018).

As Grande and Hutter (2016b) argue, sovereignty-based resistance to EU integration owes its existence to the concept of sovereignty as a safeguard for national interests, especially economic interests. Defenders of national sovereignty argue that the nation state itself is best equipped to pursue the interests of its citizens. Additionally, there is a normative dimension to the idea of national sovereignty. Sovereignists argue that the transfer of political authority to the EU level is fundamentally incompatible with democratic principles of accountability and responsiveness because the supranational level does not guarantee sufficient democratic mechanisms of expression and agency to off-set the transfers of authority. The debate on the democratic deficit of the EU is instructive here.

The history of the EU integration process has seen multiple instances of resistance to further integration, grounded on arguments of national sovereignty. A recent example is the victory of the Brexit position on the UK's referendum of 2016. Before this we had already seen similar instances of resistance to further EU integration such as the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands in 2005, also via referendum. Indeed, as Hix et al. (2019) have shown the pro/anti EU dimension of political conflict has progressively risen to the forefront in the EP and has been side-lining the traditionally prevailing left-right cleavage, at least as far as voting-patterns are concerned.

From this discussion, I hypothesise that:

H2 – Parties with more sovereigntists positions tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties.

3.1.3) Solidarity and redistribution of resources

The third explanation bases the controversial nature of EU integration on the specifics of its economic and monetary policies, in particular the architecture of the Euro and the Eurozone. As Streeck (2017) argues, the Euro has broken the Eurozone in two: a split between surplus countries in the North and West and deficit countries mostly in the South. According to this account, the Eurozone lumps together regions with wide disparities in terms of their political economy which produces outcomes that lead to political opportunities for conflict on economic redistribution. This literature operates under the theory that capitalism comes in distinct varieties and postulates that the institutional architecture of a given country has a structuring effect on that country's growth model, economic performance, and redistributive policy (for an introduction see Hall, 2015; Hall & Soskice, 2001).

In Hall's (2018) account, in the European South economic growth has been driven by domestic demand, based on inflation and budget deficits. In some countries in the region, such as Italy and Greece, strong trade unions are present. Nonetheless, they lack institutional incentives for inter-cooperation between labour and capital, job security, and a large public sector. These economies are also characterised by high inflation, facilitated by government borrowing, in order to drive up domestic demand. In addition, banking and financial activity

in the southern region of Europe has been targeted at propping-up demand-led growth. These conditions have made it easier to harmonise the disparate economic interests of employer and employees, thus creating social peace but at the cost of international competitiveness, which was offset by periodic currency devaluation. In the European North, however, economic growth has been driven by exports, making the region inflation- and deficit-adverse. Thus, northern European societies are in general financially stable because they have not gone through the cycles of devaluation that their southern neighbours have gone.

The architecture of the Euro sits on top of these disparate regional realities, while at the same time reflecting the imbalance created by aggregating supply-led and demand-led economies into a single monetary system, thus striking an uneasy balance and intensifying a process of ‘peripherisation’ in the southern region of the EU (Gambarotto & Solari, 2015). The results of this, according to Streeck, are clear:

qualitative horizontal diversity is transformed into a quantitative vertical inequality, (...) when politically differentiated national economies are forced together in a currency union, those disadvantaged by it come under pressure to ‘reform’ their mode of production and the social contract adapted to it along the lines of the countries privileged by the currency” (2017, p. 174).

These tensions reached their zenith in the Great Recession of 2008 and its subsequent shocks in Europe in the following years, culminating in the economic crisis in the southern periphery of the Eurozone. As Copelovitch et al. (2016) argue, the political consequences of this crisis were significant. The crisis has led to domestic polarisation and the rise of anti-austerity political parties in debtor countries such as Greece’s Syriza and Spain’s Podemos. In a nutshell, the crisis unleashed significant reorientations in behaviour and in political conflict pertaining to questions of transnational solidarity and economic redistribution both at the party and citizen levels. Indeed, extant literature on the effects of the Eurozone crisis on both the salience of the EU and contestation to it depict a clear trend. In Silva et al.’s (2022) analysis of media coverage of electoral campaigns in six Eurozone countries, two creditor member states (Belgium and Germany) and four debtor member states (Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain), shows that the crisis, and the measures taken by the EU to solve it, sharply increased the politicisation of the EU in the Southern debtor countries and in Belgium as well. At the citizen level, research has demonstrated that the increased relevance of economic consideration due to the arrival of the Eurozone crisis led voters of

the most crisis-ridden member states to change their behaviour towards more economic voting (Lobo & Pannico, 2020). This growth in the relevance of economic considerations in voting behaviour had similar effects at the core of the Eurozone in Germany, wherein economic voting increased in citizens that attributed greater responsibility to the EU in the management of economic affairs (Lobo & Pannico, 2021).

Thus, I argue that political actors seeking to rally against the EU's political economy do so by mobilising *conflicts of solidarity and distribution of resources*. As Grande and Hutter (2016b) point out, the initial impetus of integration and cooperation in Europe was not based on solidarity and redistribution but rather on the functionalist principle of mutual benefit between members. But since solidarity was not excluded a priori from the settlement this has opened a space for conflict on redistributive questions within the process of EU integration. Indeed, the establishment of the Single Market, the accession of less industrialised countries from southern Europe in the 1980s, and the creation of the Eurozone exacerbated these conflicts with a demand-based southern periphery seeking to alter the institutional arrangements of the EU which were largely designed to accommodate the needs of a heavily industrialised and supply-based core of nations in western and northern Europe. From the tensions resulting from this arrangement, it is expected that parties with more radical preferences in favour of economic redistribution will politicise the EU more than moderate parties. Those favouring more redistribution are likely to contest the EU on the grounds that more solidarity between member states is necessary to overcome the effects of the Euro (Keith, 2018).

While it can be argued that the EU's structural funds played a key role in diluting these conflicts, as they represented major transfers of wealth based on the nominal notion of solidarity between member states, the creation of the Eurozone represented a shift in the opposite direction, as it reinserted and reinstated the functionalist principle of integration based on mutual benefit (Grande & Hutter 2016b). The Eurozone crisis has sublimated these tensions by 1) producing new conflicts between so-called creditor and debtor states, and 2) by catalysing redistributive conflicts within member states particularly in the wake of the bailout interventions in Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain – the most significantly affected countries of the Eurozone crisis.

From this discussion, I postulate that:

H3 – Parties in favour of more economic redistribution tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties.

In conclusion, while these three explanations for the politicisation of the EU integration process are not mutually exclusive, they do prioritise different causal mechanisms. The first frames the dynamics of politicisation within a cultural-identitarian mould; the second establishes the phenomenon as being the result of politico-institutional arrangements; and the third highlights the consequences of the political economy of the Eurozone as the root of EU-based political conflict. Now that the underlying reasons for why EU integration is politicised have been discussed, which helps me answer the ideological dimensions of the first aspect of the research question (what are the internal factors to political parties that explain the politicisation of the EU in their EP speeches?). I move on to distinct drivers of the phenomenon.

3.2) Drivers of Politicisation of the EU

As we have previously seen, the EU is ripe with potential for political conflict on multiple fronts, from culture/identity and national/democratic sovereignty to the struggle over economic redistribution and solidarity. However, political conflict does not spontaneously arise from the void, it requires a driving force that compels it into the public agenda. Political conflict needs to be articulated and organised, and here mediating factors play a key role. Grande and Hutter (2016b) in their analytical framework for the study of politicisation of the EU, divide these drivers of EU politicisation into two major categories: *mobilisation strategies of political actors* and *critical events*.

Mobilisation strategies of political actors relate to the reaction of political parties to critical events and major steps of the EU integration process, thus further contributing to answer the first dimension of my research question related to the internal factors to political parties. As Grande and Hutter (2016b, p. 22) argue, “critical events may trigger political controversy. However, these conflicts only become relevant if political actors and organisations articulate them in public debates”. In turn, *critical events*, as defined by Grande and Hutter (2016b), are major events in the EU integration process which represent significant adjustments to the trajectory of the integration process and they can be rounds of enlargement, treaty reforms, EU referendums, etc. The discussion on such critical events can

further the understanding of the external factors to parties' EU politicisation, thus answering the second aspect of the research question. These two overarching categories help group together various hypotheses for what is driving EU politicisation as theorised by different authors.

3.2.1) Mobilisation strategies of political actors

While certain conjunctures might trigger political controversies, these often end up being little more than windows of opportunity for political actors to articulate political conflict. Thus, the first category of drivers of EU politicisation, the *mobilising strategies of political actors*, must be discussed. Most of the literature on the politicisation of the EU has a focus on the role of political parties in such a process. However, these are not the only actors engaged in politicising the EU. Indeed, there is a strand in the literature that looks into the demand-side of this process, i.e., Eurosceptic attitudes in public opinion (Baglioni & Hurrelmann, 2016; Ruiz-Rufino & Alonso, 2017). The role played by social movements in this process has also made a space for itself in the literature (see Dolezal et al., 2016; Petithomme, 2012). Nevertheless, since the research aim of this project is to analyse the dynamics of politicisation of the EU in the EP, the role of political parties must be discussed in more detail before moving on with the discussion of the drivers of EU politicisation.

As the scoping review of the literature makes clear, existing studies mostly focusses on challenger parties in the process of EU politicisation (80% of the 54 articles of the review that deal with political actors). Of the 43 articles that explicitly mention challenger parties 93% feature RRP, as opposed to 74% that mention RLP. For instance, Adam and Maier (2011) observe that in the 2009 European Parliament elections, politicisation was driven by right-wing Eurosceptic parties over issues of national sovereignty and identity, an observation which is echoed elsewhere in the literature (e.g., De Wilde & Zürn, 2012; Grande & Hutter, 2016a; Hoeglinger, 2016). The analysis points towards the conclusion that RRP view the expansion of the EU and its decision-making powers as a threat to the national sovereignty of member states, lacking democratic legitimacy. Indeed, these parties tend to frame the EU's enlargement and integration process as diluting national cultures and identities. These dynamics have only been intensified by the political response of the EU to the onset of the migrant crisis of 2015 (e.g., Börzel & Risse, 2018). However, the politicisation of the EU is not a prerogative solely of these parties. The findings indicate that

RLPs also play an important role, albeit under specific conditions: their opposition to the EU is above all targeted towards its economic and fiscal policies (e.g., Wonka, 2016), which, since these parties favour stronger redistributive policies, they consider a threat to national welfare states. This is a dynamic of politicisation that became especially important in the context of the crisis of the Eurozone (Statham & Trezz, 2015).

The results of the scoping literature review regarding the role played by political actors also shows that the phenomenon of EU politicisation is no longer confined to explicitly Eurosceptic parties on the fringes of the political system. Indeed, EU politicisation has increasingly come to impact government parties and the mainstream opposition. Unlike the time of the *permissive consensus* (Hooghe & Marks, 2009), mainstream parties of the centre can no longer avoid engaging with the issue of the EU as it becomes increasingly and intensely politicised in public spheres. The results of the scoping review show that the empirical literature has documented this process. For instance, Wendler (2013) observes a pattern of the politicisation of the EU that follows a government-opposition pattern of polarisation: even mainstream centrist parties tend to polarise on the issue of the EU when in opposition. Adam et al. (2017) have provided a critical contribution to the understanding of how pro-EU parties behave in the context of intense Eurosceptic contestation; they have shown that pro-EU mainstream parties have come to shift tactics and now actively engage the issue with their Eurosceptic adversaries, albeit with varying degrees of polarisation and salience. Indeed, Rauh (2015) finds, that in the case of the Bundestag, mainstream and especially government parties are responsible for leading the discussion of the EU. Nonetheless, and despite a more intensive engagement with the EU as a political issue, centrist mainstream parties tend to be much less critical of the EU overall (Wonka, 2016).

Given these findings of the scoping literature review, it seems fair to say that political parties are the main protagonists in the drama of the politicisation of the EU. Thus, the first category of drivers of EU politicisation centres the explanation of these developments around political parties and groups together four distinct explanations: 1) the role played by the Radical Right (Grande & Hutter, 2016b); 2) the cultural shift model (Hutter & Grande, 2014); 3) the mass politics thesis (Grande & Hutter, 2016b), and finally, 4) the strategic competition model (De Wilde et al., 2016).

The first explanation in the *mobilising strategies of political actors* category relates to the role played by RRP, which claims that EU politicisation is driven by these parties. As

discussed in the first section of this chapter, RRP are at an advantage because its strategy is better suited to the mobilisation of the losers of globalisation', since these parties' strategies cut across the heterogeneous economic interests of the 'losers' by framing political conflict around cultural values, thus providing a lowest common denominator for mobilisation (see Grande & Kriesi, 2012; Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Rooduijn, 2015).

As my scoping review of the literature shows, the link between RRP and EU politicisation is one of the most explored themes of the extant literature, composing 7 of the 19 reviewed studies directly related to the drivers of EU politicisation. However, the results of this scoping review depict a nuanced picture. On one hand, Grande and Hutter (2016a) find evidence linking RRP and politicisation in national elections: the more these parties becomes active in public debates, the more the EU is politicised. Moreover, Adam and Maier (2011) demonstrate that in some countries mainstream conservative parties also adopt more Eurocritical position when RRP mobilise against the EU. On the other hand, Hutter and Grande (2014) do not find any strong link between the vote share of Eurosceptic RRP and a higher degree of politicisation; and Auel et al. (2016) find that these parties have a positive, albeit fairly weak, effect in the number of oral questions and debates on EU-related issues in national parliaments. According to Auel et al. (2016), the amount of time that parliaments devote to EU issues decreases with the presence of Eurosceptic parties, perhaps pointing towards a depoliticisation strategy undertaken by pro-EU parties when faced with Eurosceptic challengers.

It is thus worthwhile to explore the role played by RRP in the politicisation of the EU in the EP, and I posit a further hypothesis:

H4 – Radical Right parties tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties.

The second aspect of the *mobilising strategies of political actors* category is the cultural shift model (sometimes also referred to as *cleavage transformation*), which suggests that political conflict over the EU is driven by issues of identity and culture (Grande & Kriesi, 2012). As seen above, some authors have noted a shift from a traditional axis of political competition, between those on the left favouring more economic redistribution and state intervention in the economy and those on the right favouring less redistribution and less state

intervention, to a new axis of competition between those favouring demarcation and those favouring integration (see section 3.1.1 of this chapter for a more in-depth discussion of this concept).

The cultural shift model is an understudied aspect of EU politicisation as shown by the results of the scoping review (16% (3) of the 19 articles that directly deal with the drivers of EU politicisation). On the one hand, Hutter and Grande (2014a) find a positive link between cultural and identitarian frames in national election campaigns and the degree of politicisation in a given country. While on the other hand, Kriesi (2016) links politicisation to a broader political conflict in Europe – between universalism and particularism, specifically in the context of the overall globalisation process, which is waged by Eurosceptic parties which the European integration process is an important fault line.

The third model in the *mobilising strategies of political actors* category is the mass politics thesis, which states that the increasing authority of the EU and subsequent politicisation are spilling over from the more institutionalised and elite political arenas into the realms of protest and mass politics, i.e., social movements and civil society actors (Dolezal et al., 2016). The scoping literature review reveals that civil society actors also engage in the politicisation of the EU. For instance, De Bruycker (2017) demonstrates that EU elites respond when issues are highly salient and attract intensive mobilisation by civil society. Petithomme (2010) highlights that ATTAC, an alter-globalisation movement, targets its concerns at the EU's non-majoritarian institutions, such as the European Central Bank and the Commission, but its discourse avoids contesting the EU on constitutive grounds focusing instead on policy issues, mimicking the pattern observed in Radical Left parties.

However, given the nature of this research project, the testing of the second (cultural shift) and third (mass politics) models of the *mobilising strategies of political actors* category fall beyond the scope of analysis. The testing of the former is made impossible due to the form in which this research generates its unit of analysis (by aggregating all of each party's EP speeches in a given year), making the analysis of individual topics areas not viable. While the latter relates to circumstances that largely fall outside the confines of the EP into the protest arena.

The fourth and final account in the *mobilising strategies of political actors* category is the strategic competition model (De Wilde et al., 2016) and it posits that politicisation is

largely driven by the strategic considerations of competing political parties on electoral grounds rather than on substantive ideological positions. In Topaloff's (2012) seminal taxonomy of Euroscepticism and Eurosceptic parties, the author describes the rising tide of Euroscepticism as a strategic consideration on the part of fringe political parties. For Topaloff, the expansion of political actors contesting the EU is placed in the mainstream vs challenger parties' dynamics of competition, wherein mainstream parties are those who command greater financial resources and vast networks of local organisations, have conventional agenda-setting capabilities, and can sustain electoral success in consecutive electoral cycles. Conversely, challenger parties are those which in comparison are less able to mobilise financial resources, attract a significantly lesser degree of voters, do not possess a substantial network of local organisations, and are usually placed at the edges of the left/right ideological spectrum. These asymmetrical circumstances force the latter to adopt a variety of unconventional strategies of competition focused on single issues, protest politics and so on to attempt to set the agenda. In the context of the *permissive consensus* of EU integration (Hooghe & Marks, 2009) the issue of the EU was ripe for politicisation and parties at the margins, so the story goes, seized upon the opportunity.

Mair (2013) maintains that mainstream political parties throughout the EU member states have largely converged on policy position on the EU, following the line of the *permissive consensus*, and this has essentially denied citizens the choice between alternative political projects concerning the EU (the proverbial sleeping gaint van der Eijk and Franklin warned us about in 2004). Such absence of political alternatives concerning the EU from mainstream parties has effectively created a void which challenger Eurosceptic parties have slowly but steadily filled by politicising and giving the issue increased salience (Hobolt & de Vries, 2015).

Nevertheless, the scoping review conducted for this thesis shows that the relationship between these strategic considerations and EU politicisation is a relatively understudied aspect of this literature (comprising 2 of the 19 articles that study the drivers of EU politicisation). A notable example that stands out is Adam and Maier (2011) who find evidence that politicisation is driven by Eurosceptic political actors. In other words, the more Eurosceptic voices there are, the more likely it is for the EU to become a salient issue, since it creates an incentive for mainstream parties to respond and even to adopt more Eurocritical positions.

On this topic, a specific literature on challenger parties has recently begun to emerge (de Vries & Hobolt, 2020; Hobolt & Tilley, 2016). These parties are defined as parties that confront the mainstream political consensus on issues like the EU by taking advantage of the strategic incentives provided by *permissive consensus* on the EU. These parties are also generally unencumbered by the responsibility of government and tend to compete on fringe issues.

Thus, I expect that:

H5 – Challenger parties tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties.

3.2.2) *Critical events*

The category of critical events advances three explanations for the EU politicisation: 1) authority transfer (De Wilde et al., 2016; De Wilde & Zürn, 2012; Grande & Hutter, 2016b, 2016a); 2) institutional misfit (Börzel & Risse, 2000; Brinegar et al., 2004); and 3) the role played by constitutive issues (Grande & Hutter, 2016b).

The authority transfer explanation posits that politicisation is driven by the transfer or delegation of authority from the national polity to the supranational EU level. In this case, politicisation constitutes a reaction against this trend (De Wilde & Zürn 2012). Thus, major steps towards greater integration are triggers of EU-based political conflict. So far, the two major integration steps in the history of EU integration have been rounds of enlargement and treaty reforms.

The EU has enlarged and expanded its territorial reach in the course of its history. Enlargement has meant different things from the point of view of prospective countries and from that of member states. From the point of view of states seeking to enter the EU, accession can be seen as the “mother of all authority transfers” (Grande & Hutter, 2016a, p. 21). Countries must submit substantial political authority on multiple policy areas over to the EU level and this can trigger intense political conflict. Membership in a supranational polity raises questions of: 1) cultural identity, since it potentially sparks deep-seated beliefs regarding national identity and belonging, 2) national and democratic sovereignty, as it will invariably require major institutional changes, and 3) economic redistribution, with

increased demands for solidarity between member states over contributions to the EU's budget. All of these are key issues of political conflict, as discussed in the previous section of this chapter. From the perspective of already established member states, enlargement of the community also triggers these lines of political conflict, albeit in different ways. For instance, Grande and Hutter (2016b) argue that the accession of countries with distinct cultural backgrounds from the remaining community elicit stronger politicisation because they potentially trigger questions of identity cohesion within the community. Indeed, the debate over Turkey's accession to the EU is a case in point once again.

The other instances of authority transfer very likely to trigger heightened politicisation are treaty reforms. These represent significant events whereat the institutional framework governing the EU as a polity goes through substantial alterations. The literature on EU politicisation generally assigns great significance to the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) as a major turning point in the process of EU integration and as having triggered a strong and well-documented political response (see Hooghe & Marks, 2009). Maastricht established the three-pillar structure guiding further EU integration from that point onwards: European communities, common foreign and security policy, and police and judicial co-operation in criminal matters. And most crucially, it instituted the convergence criteria for the introduction of the Euro in 2002 as the common EU currency. This was a major step in the process of EU integration, activating significant conflicts over political and national sovereignty, by transferring typically national level competencies to the supranational level; for instance, by significantly furthering single-market integration and establishing the convergence criteria necessary for the creation of the Eurozone.

Thus far, empirical evidence supporting the transfer of political authority from prospective EU member states to the EU itself as a driving force of political conflict is ambiguous. Indeed, according to the overview provided by De Wilde et al. (2016), the degree of politicisation does not follow a linear path concomitant with the transfer of authority from the member states to the EU level. De Wilde et al. (2016) underscore the role that intermediating factors play in the process of politicisation, particularly country-specific variables related to the political and economic systems, elections, and referendum on EU subjects. This conclusion is echoed elsewhere. Grande and Kriesi (2016, p. 280) describe the overall trajectory of politicisation, from the point of view of authority transfer, as "punctuated politicisation". While Grande and Kriesi find evidence that political conflict

across the EU does intensify during periods in which the transfer of political authority is on the table, there is a “conflict-tempering” (Grande & Kriesi, 2016, p. 281) effect produced by the multi-level political system of the EU, “in which intergovernmental and partisan channels co-exist and European and domestic issues compete in national political arenas”.

My scoping review of the literature clearly shows that the relationship between authority transfer and EU politicisation is one of the most studied aspects of the phenomenon since over 9 of the 19 dealing with the drivers of EU politicisation captured by my selection process explores this relationship. For instance, Rauh (2015) and Rauh and De Wilde, (2018) observe that the salience of EU-related issues in national parliaments increases significantly when instances of authority transfer, such as the ratification of new EU treaties, are being discussed. It has been empirically observed by researchers that political conflict around the EU intensified after the signing of the Treaty of Maastricht and the subsequent delegation of political authority to the EU at the supranational level, especially when accession to the EU has been on the agenda (e.g., Grande & Hutter, 2016a; Hutter & Grande, 2014). The same happens when the delegation of authority over specific policies, such as tax governance, is being publicly discussed (e.g., Schmidtke, 2016). De Wilde and Zürn (2012) go so far as to argue that as this tendency towards delegation of authority intensifies, the politicisation of the EU integration process will eventually become irreversible.

From this discussion of the effect of authority transfer upon the politicisation of the EU, I propose the following hypothesis:

H6 – Parties assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in moments of authority transfers, such as rounds of enlargement and treaty reforms.

The second explanation in the *critical events* category relates to the role played by institutional misfit, which posits that asymmetries between domestic economic and political systems and the EU multilevel governance intensifies EU politicisation. As Börzel and Risse (2000, p. 5) argue, “the lower the compatibility between European and domestic processes, policies, and institutions, the higher the adaptational pressure”. This friction inherent in Europeanisation in turn leads to intensification of politicisation and conflict since political actors from member states that have less capacity to adapt to the new framework resist the changes and defend the status quo at the national level (Brinegar et al., 2004). The example

of the Euro is noteworthy here. As we discussed above, the Euro is currency that favours supply-led over demand-led economies (Streeck, 2017), and this has led to significant tensions within the EU and between member states. The differentiated pace at which different countries adopt EU directives is also a relevant instance of this institutional misfit.

Unlike the authority transfer, the effects institutional misfit as a driver of the politicisation of the EU have been less studied, composing only 16% (3 articles) of my scoping literature review sample. Still, the studies that explore this dimension of the phenomenon have submitted interesting findings. Kriesi (2016) and Schimmelfennig (2018) argue that rising politicisation can be explained by the particular confluence of supranational crises. Both the Eurozone and migrant crises exposed cracks in the EU integration process because of the misfit between member state's institutions and the EU multilevel polity. Indeed, Leupold (2016) finds that, during the Eurozone crisis, the politicisation of the EU was exacerbated in countries with a higher degree of institutional misfit between the member state level and the EU's supranational level.

Thus, I postulate that:

H7 – Parties from member states with higher institutional misfit tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with parties from member states with lower institutional misfit.

The third and final account in the *critical events* category concerns the role that constitutive issues play in the politicisation of the EU. This framework claims that debates on constitutive issues drive and intensify the politicisation of the EU. Constitutive issues of the EU relate to deeper questions about the EU as a polity: questions of membership in the community, competencies of the EU's institutions and other crucial decision-making processes within the Union (Bartolini, 2005). Given the significance of these types of issues, they are bound to trigger substantial opportunities for political conflict along the lines of identity, national sovereignty, and redistribution whenever they come up. Grande and Hutter (2016b) thus propose that politicisation of the EU occurs more often when constitutive issues are in the order of business (as opposed to other types of issues such as EU policy issues). The results of the scoping review reveal that the study of the role played by constitutive issues in driving EU politicisation have not been the priority, featuring only in 16% (3

studies) of the sample. Nevertheless, these studies show that politicisation of the EU in national parliaments is mostly driven by constitutive issues in comparison with EU-related policy issues. For example, (Hutter & Kerscher, 2014) observed that, in France, political conflict over EU integration was more intense during debates on identity and sovereignty – such as the question of the accession of Turkey to the EU – when compared to debates on economic policy. However, given the specificities of the research design implemented in this doctoral dissertation (see chapter 4 for an in-depth discussion) I cannot convert and test this theoretical claim into a workable research hypothesis for the same reasons that inhibit the testing of the cultural shift explanation, since given the form in which I establish this research’s unit of analysis I cannot analyse of individual topics areas in EP speeches.

3.3) Concluding remarks

This chapter sought to examine the application of the concept of politicisation in the field of EU studies. Following a conceptualisation of politicisation of the EU that emphasises a three-dimensional approach linking salience, polarisation and expansion of actors, we explored the structural reasons that explain why “something like politicization” is taking place in the EU (Schmitter, 2009, pp. 211–212), discussing the drivers of EU politicisation and the role played by political arenas as sites of political structuring. From this discussion of the literature, I advance the analytical strategy that will guide the empirical strategy.

The first explanation of why this is happening relates to the of issues *identity and culture* in the context of the consequences of globalisation, of which the EU is one expression of. As such, globalisation has created a new socio-political cleavage, the integration-demarcation antagonism, that pits the winners of the process against its losers. The second explanation relates to the arguments for *national and democratic sovereignty* against what is perceived as the EU’s democratic deficit and lack of conventional mechanisms of representation and accountability. The third explanation relates to the conflicts of *economic redistribution and solidarity* in the context of the EU’s political economy. I argue that the phenomenon of EU politicisation is too complex to be described by any one of these explanations alone. Instead, different political actors will prioritise one of these structural reasons over the others according to their ideological background, strategic objectives, and national context.

Moreover, I examined the driving forces of politicisation of the EU. My schema follows the contribution made by Grande and Hutter (2016b), who establish the crucial distinction between *mobilising strategies of political actors* and *critical events*.

Regarding the former category, the results of the scoping review shows that the literature has focused mostly on the responsibility of RRP for the intensification and polarisation of debates around the EU. The specificities of the UE as a political issue make it more likely to be taken over by this type of party. The EU can be framed as a problem for national sovereignty and national identity, issues which the Radical Right is known to be keenly invested in. Yet the phenomenon of EU politicisation is by no means the purview of RRP alone, as the scoping literature review demonstrates. RLPs also play a role in the phenomenon, especially in the context of the Eurozone crisis, agitating against the EU on an agenda of economic redistribution in opposition to austerity. Mainstream pro-European parties, also, which have mostly maintained silence on the issue of EU integration, have become increasingly engaged with the Eurosceptics on the topic of politicisation.

Politicisation of the EU is here to stay. Indeed, as De Wilde and Zürn (2012) argue, this is a trend that is very unlikely to be reversed as long as the EU continues to grow in authority. The literature surveyed in the scoping review reflects this generalisation. Out of all the hypothesised drivers of politicisation in the *critical events* category, the authority transfer model stands out as the most studied by the literature.

Following the empirical literature on the subject, notwithstanding any of the other explanations discussed in the previous section, I expect that the transfer of political authority from the member state level to the supranational sphere of the EU's institutions; the degree of institutional misfit between member states and the EU; the role played by RRP in particular, and challenger parties in general, will be driving forces behind the politicisation of the EU.

In the next chapter I will operationalise the hypotheses laid out here and survey the methodological literature on quantitative text analysis methods. From this discussion, I will detail the methodological strategy with which the research hypotheses will be tested.

4:

Methodology

In chapter 3 I set out the analytical framework that guide this thesis, and the definition of the concept that lies at its heart: EU politicisation. From the discussion of these themes, I postulated seven hypotheses that seek to enrich the overall state of the art of the scholarship on EU politicisation in particular and political conflict in general. In this chapter, I lay out the empirical strategy of the present research, aimed at providing an answer to my overarching research question: what factors explain the politicisation of the EU in parties' EP speeches? These factors can be *internal to political parties* (ideological preferences and different types of parties) and they can be *external to them* (the transfer of political authority from the member states to the supranational level and the degree of institutional misfit between these two levels). To achieve this goal, I adopt an empirical strategy that uses novel methods of automated analysis of the transcriptions of the plenary speeches in the EP, described in detail in the next pages. As shall be seen below, these methods offer researchers with limited resources the ability to analyse great volumes of text in a reliable and replicable manner (for an application of these methods to the study of the EU see Proksch & Slapin, 2010; Rauh, 2015; Rauh & De Wilde, 2018; Silva et al., 2022).

As I noted before, most of the empirical literature on EU politicisation has studied the phenomenon by analysing it as it occurs at the level of EU member states. While I do not dispute that the principal setting of EU politicisation is indeed the national level, the focus here is on how the phenomenon of EU politicisation unfolds within the institutions of the EU and specifically within the EP. I argue that the EP offers researchers of EU politicisation in particular, and of political conflict in general, an ideal scenario to put their theories and hypotheses to the test. The EP puts under the same institutional restraints political parties with manifold backgrounds, policy preferences, and political cultures.

The chapter is divided into four sections. Next, I present the overarching empirical strategy of this research project. The second section is dedicated to a discussion of the dependent variable and will deal with the operationalisation of EU politicisation as well as details pertaining to the measurement of this concept. The third section deal in detail with

the operationalisation of the independent variables regarding parties' policy preferences and ideological positioning, as well as critical events. Here I also discuss the control variables that are included in the linear regression models computed to test my hypotheses. The fourth and final section provides a summary of this thesis' research design.

4.1) Research Design

The hypotheses laid out in the previous chapter are tested using a dataset of party positions estimated from the speeches of EU parliamentarians from 1999 to 2014. This time period encompasses major milestones of the EU integration process such as the Treaty of Nice (2001), the debates on the European Constitution (2004), the Treaty of Lisbon (2007), the entry of Cyprus, the Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia (2003), the entry of Bulgaria and Romania (2005), the debates on Turkey's accession (still ongoing), and the introduction of the Euro in the earlier period (1999 – 2002), the crisis of the Eurozone in the later period (2009 – 2014), and the earlier stages of the migrant crisis. The time period covered by this analysis is thus rich with critical junctures that have fostered political conflict on key political dimensions such as identity, sovereignty, and economic redistribution, and as such presents itself as a more than adequate timeframe to test the research hypotheses.

As alluded to in the introductory chapter, both the pre-1999 and the post-2014 plenary speeches are problematic to collect and analyse for reasons related to the accessibility of the documents. The pre-1999 speeches are only made available at the archives of the EP in Luxembourg and the process of collecting them is overwhelmingly difficult and lengthy due to the inner working of the archival system¹⁰. In turn, in 2014 the EP decided to stop translating the MEPs' speeches, which are usually delivered in their respective native languages, into the official languages of the EU. As I will discuss below, this is problematic because the quantitative text analysis method employed in this research does not deal with distinct languages – language uniformity is a key factor in assuring the overall quality of the data.

¹⁰ As of January 2020, when I attempted to collect speeches prior to 1999, researchers had to fetch each individual EP plenary report through an extremely archaic user interface that made the time-consuming collection process considerably difficult by requiring the work to be done in person in the archives in Luxembourg. Tragically, two months after this first attempt at data collection, the rapid world-wide spread of COVID-19, forced governments to implement social and physical distancing measures and severe restrictions on cross-border mobility, making the work of data collection impossible.

The estimations of party positions were derived from the application of automated text analysis methods, specifically unsupervised ideological scaling, to the transcriptions of more than 200,000 individual speeches. These speeches were extracted from Greene and Cross' (2017) dataset which features the official English translations of the plenary speeches, with their treatment and subsequent analysis being conducted in the context of the present research, via the use of novel methods of quantitative text analysis, which I will discuss in more detail below.

The dataset on party positions towards the EU in the EP is structured in a time-series cross-party manner with a continuously distributed dependent variable. This panel structure introduces heteroskedastic errors and autocorrelation that need to be accounted for in the statistical models (Stimson, 1985). As such, I perform linear regressions with panel-corrected standard errors to test the seven hypotheses under scrutiny. This model assumes by default that the disturbances are heteroskedastic and contemporaneously correlated across panels (Beck & Katz, 1995). The dependent variable in the regression models is an estimation of EU politicisation drawn from an analysis of the MEPs' speeches using the Wordfish technique. These models also include a battery of independent (parties' ideology, positions on a wide variety of policy domains, country- and institutional-level variables, etc), and control variables. Therefore, the task at hand is to operationalise the dependent, independent, and control variables.

4.2) Dependent variable – Parties' positions towards the EU in the EP speeches

The dependent variable in this research is EU politicisation, measured by parties' positions on the EU expressed in the EP. As I established in previous chapters, EU politicisation can be defined as the demand or act of bringing the EU issue into the sphere of politics, that is, into the field of public contestation and debate about collectively binding decisions concerning the common good (De Wilde et al., 2016; Grande & Hutter, 2016b; Zürn et al., 2012). This concept has been broken into three component parts (Börzel & Risse, 2018; De Wilde et al., 2016): 1) increased salience of EU-related issues in the public sphere, that is, in political discourse and in the media; 2) polarisation of positions and arguments concerning the EU, its institutions and policies, and its future; and 3) expansion of political actors engaged in the public debate over the EU in the form of new political parties, movements, and interest groups.

While I agree that the concept of EU politicisation is indeed formed by these three components, I will focus only on parties' positions towards the EU. I am not alone in taking this more fragmented approach. For instance, Green-Pedersen's (2012) seminal study of the phenomenon restricted the analysis to the question of salience. Indeed, party positions have been increasingly used as an indicator for parties' and other political actors' politicisation of the EU (Braun & Grande, 2021; Proksch & Slapin, 2010; Strijdis et al., 2020). Most EU politicisation studies only focus on the phenomenon as it occurs at the level of member states. But since this thesis seeks to look at EU politicisation within the EU's institutions, namely the EP, I assume that political speeches in the EP have an unavoidable EU dimension, and thus forgoing the need to analyse both salience and expansion of actors, a concept more suited to studies centred on the electoral arena.

The EU politicisation literature has overwhelmingly used conventional content analysis to measure party positions in their campaign materials and press releases (Adam et al., 2017; Adam & Maier, 2011), in their websites (De Wilde et al., 2014), in their media coverage (Leupold, 2016; Schmidtke, 2016) or in parliamentary debates in which they took part (Kinski, 2018). In line with that, but introducing a rather more innovative approach, necessary to deal with more than 200 thousand speeches, I assess the politicisation of the EU, operationalised as parties' political position towards the EU from the EP plenary debates, via automated methods of content analysis. In any research project, one must juggle between desirability and feasibility in a context of limited financial and human resources. I chose the automated quantitative text analysis route because of the great quantity of text involved. Such methods of text analysis offer a viable alternative to time-consuming and resource-heavy human coding, albeit with a trade-off — what time and resources are won should be measured against the loss of detail and exhaustiveness. I acknowledge and accept such a trade-off.

Concretely speaking, I resorted to ideological scaling (see Grimmer & Stewart, 2013, pp. 291–294 for an introduction), a technique that estimates and places a party's ideological position in a political space by comparing the words used by political parties in their documents, manifestos, and speeches with their relative frequency. This technique can be divided into two distinct types: *supervised* and *unsupervised*.

Supervised computer-assisted ideological scaling techniques were introduced by Laver et al. (2003). These authors developed an algorithm called Wordscores to better execute such

techniques. To use Wordscores, one must select a set of reference texts (party manifestos, for instance), which represent the ideological extremes of the political space under review (pro-EU or anti-EU, in this case), along with a set of non-reference texts (or virgin texts, as how the specialised literature usually names them as), which represent the parties which position the researcher aims to estimate¹¹. Once these sets of texts have been selected, the algorithm attributes a reference value for both sets of reference texts. Wordscores then counts the frequency of every word in both sets of texts and attributes a score to each word. This process eventually results in a placement of the texts, both reference and non-reference, on a scale relative to how similar the word scores are between them. As Collete and Pétry (2014, p. 34) succinctly explain, Wordscores produces a

distribution of scores around an estimated mean score. This makes it possible to calculate a standard error and hence to establish a confidence interval around the estimated mean score. Wordscores provides a statistical measure of how different two virgin texts are from one another in their vocabulary. Two texts are statistically different if their confidence intervals do not overlap. Of course, the scores are all the more valid if one has confidence in the choice of reference texts and in the measure used to decide what their positions are on a given scale or cleavage.

In turn, *unsupervised* computer-assisted scaling was first introduced by Slapin and Proksch (2008) with their Wordfish algorithm. As Collete and Pétry (2014, p. 38) point out, this algorithm uses a:

naive Bayes assumption to infer the process by which words are processed in a text. A text is represented as a vector of word counts (occurrences) and individual words are assumed to be distributed at random. The probability that each word occurs in a text is independent of the position of other words in the text.

Wordfish also analyses word frequencies within texts along a single-issue dimension defined *a priori*, but unlike the supervised technique, it eschews the necessity of reference texts. Additionally, Wordfish assumes that the word frequencies are generated by a Poisson process. As the creators of the algorithm have explained, a Poisson distribution was chosen because of its simplicity (see Slapin & Proksch, 2008, p. 709 for a detailed explanation of the mechanics at work in the algorithm). Wordfish presupposes that politicians' and/or political parties' ideological positioning affects the rate at which they use certain words. The

¹¹ Laver et al. (2003) resorted to the 1992 Labour, Conservative, and Liberal Democrat party manifestos as reference texts to measure these parties left-right positions in the 1997 general election, using this elections campaign manifestos as the virgin texts.

algorithm estimates a party's political position in relation to others and places it on a scale. Given the specificities of Wordfish, researchers must make sure that the documents of a party under review pertain to the same issue dimension (pro-/anti-Europe or left-right, for example).

Wordfish has been used successfully in previous empirical studies in the discipline of political science. For instance, Proksch and Slapin (2009) have used the technique to study the positions of German political parties on a variety of ideological dimensions via the analysis of electoral manifestos, while Hjorth et al. (2015) have applied the method to Danish electoral manifestos, and the same was done to Japanese electoral pledges by Proksch et al. (2011). In another study, the same authors use the technique to estimate the position of political parties in the 5th EP (Proksch & Slapin, 2010). Wordfish has also been used to analyse non-party data such as interest groups consultation documents (Klüver, 2009), newspaper articles (Hart et al., 2020; Wakoa, 2012) and Twitter data on Belgian parliamentarians (Boireau, 2014).

By providing a reliable, easy, and replicable way to analyse huge volumes of text without the necessity of using a team of human coders, both algorithms described above can be extremely useful to researchers who endeavour a wider analysis of political texts. Nonetheless, one must acknowledge their limitations. After all, both techniques operate under debatable assumptions of how language works known as the *bag-of-words* model (Grimmer & Stewart, 2013, p. 272). This means that the algorithms employed assume that the relative frequencies of specific words provide manifestations of latent concepts we want to estimate. Natural language does not function exactly in this way – contexts and the order in which a political actor utters words, for example, quite often convey meanings these automated algorithms cannot possibly capture. However, despite following this logic of how natural languages convey meaning, methods that rely on word frequencies do end up producing sufficient information that allow for many types of analysis (Welbers et al., 2017). Just like any other method of analysis, each of these techniques has its advantages and disadvantages.

The use of quantitative methods of text analysis in political science is still taking its first steps. In spite of this, there are some studies that test the reliability and robustness of these methods.

The validity of the estimates produced by Wordscores appears to fall largely to the researcher's ability to properly identify adequate reference texts. Also, the algorithm assigns the same relevance to all words, meaning that articles have the same value as nouns or verbs. In a comprehensive study to assess the validity of the estimates produced by Wordscores, Bruinsma and Gemenis (2019, p. 222) demonstrate that the results produced by the algorithm are "highly dependent on the selection of virgin texts as well as particularities in the software implementation of the proposed algorithm". Given the dynamic nature of political discourse, which changes over time, the reliance of the algorithm on reference texts becomes problematic in the long run. For this reason, Slapin and Proksch (2008) argue that Wordscores is not suitable for longitudinal analysis.

Conversely, as Grimmer and Stewart (2013) point out, Wordfish's biggest strength and biggest weakness are both evinced by the same particular feature: the lack of supervision. Hjorth et al. (2015) building on this idea, argue that Wordfish's lack of supervision makes the technique more data-driven in relation to Wordscores, since it relies less on researcher input, thus making it more applicable in scenarios where it is difficult to establish appropriate reference texts, such as parliamentary speeches. Using Wordfish, however, one should take into consideration that instead of measuring latent ideological differences one can end up unwittingly measuring differences in political rhetorical styles. Then again, since it is not anchored to reference texts that may in time become expressions of outdated political discourse, it is precisely the lack of supervision that makes the algorithm particularly well-suited to longitudinal analysis.

Both techniques have drawbacks but given the specificities of Wordscores' need for reference texts I consider that it might become problematic in the context of choosing which are appropriate references texts for the research needs, added to which the dynamic and ever-shifting nature of political discourse heightens the difficulty of making such choices. As such, I maintain that Wordfish is more suited to the analysis of parliamentary speeches over time since this type of political discourse is more dynamic and/or more sensitive to conjectural factors (especially when compared to party manifestos, which are static documents representative of the party's position in a specific point in time). Ultimately it is for this reason that this research employs Wordfish and not Wordscores for the measurement of parties' positions towards the EU in the EP. More specifically, I use Wordfish in R's *quanteda* package (Benoit et al., 2018).

Instead of relying on reference texts like Wordscores, Wordfish requires that researchers choose two of the documents in the model to indicate the extremes of their chosen spectrum. Thus, I defined the dimensions of the Wordfish scale in the R code by attributing a document to each of the extremes of the scale (-1 for anti-EU, 1 for pro-EU). Given the longitudinal character of the research, I have deferred to Chapel Hill's expert estimations of parties' positions on the EU to establish the exact positioning of these extremes.

4.2.1) Units of analysis

One of the key steps of any research design using content analysis, even automated variants of the methodology, is the definition of the units of analysis (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2017). In conventional content analysis research, a unit is defined as the message or segment of a message that the researcher will measure and analyse. These can be individual statements, images, arguments, etc. For my unsupervised automated content analysis, the unit of analysis will be political parties' speeches in the plenary debates in the EP in a given year (more on this issue of the years of analysis below). I arrive at this unit of analysis by aggregating all the speeches made by the MEPs of each party in any given year into a single document. This document is then used by the Wordfish algorithm to extract the party's position.

This choice of aggregating individual speeches by party pertains to the fact that I am interested in the overall position of the political parties towards the EU rather than positions on distinct policy dimensions in individual speeches. Indeed, as Proksch and Slapin (2010) demonstrate, aggregating speeches by political parties ensures that their positions are estimated from more comprehensive data instead of short speeches, which can significantly affect the results.

4.2.2) Selection of debates and documents

As Laver et al. (2003) argue, the analysis of plenary debates, whether through conventional or automated content analysis, presents challenges to researchers of political parties that must be approached with care. Drawing a comparison between programmatic manifestos and political speech, the authors claim that the former report on a wide variety of policy areas and have a circumscribed political context, while the latter tend to be much less comprehensive in terms of addressed issues. To overcome these challenges, I adopt the same

strategy as Proksch and Slapin (2010) in their seminal automated content analysis of EP plenary speeches. Thus, instead of restricting the analysis to debates on key policy areas, I included all speeches made throughout the period under consideration. Following this empirical strategy, Proksch and Slapin (2010) were able to produce interesting and robust results – specifically that speeches made by MEPs are structured around positions on EU integration rather than the traditional left-right axis.

Furthermore, I did not follow the calendar to establish any yearly delimitations in the period of analysis. I followed instead a distinct method to establish the cut-off points for each year given that the EP is in recess during the summer months between June and September and that there are elections during our considered (in 2004 and in 2009), I established that the date of the first debate marks the beginning of each of the years and the last debate marks the end of it. By dividing each year in this way, I can ensure a more even number of debates throughout the considered period, particularly in years in which EP elections take place¹². Table 4.1 breaks down the period of study into individual years and the respective number of speeches.

¹² There are two years in the period under analysis that exceptionally begin in October: 10/2001 – 09/2002 and 10/2002 – 07/2003. I was not able to ascertain as to why these two sessions of the EP began later in the year.

Table 4.1) Number of speeches under analysis by year

Period	Number of speeches*
5 th EP	
20/07/1999 – 07/07/2000	10405
04/09/2000 – 20/09/2001	11524
01/10/2001 – 26/09/2002	9851
09/10/2002 – 03/07/2003	7981
01/09/2003 – 05/05/2004	8564
6 th EP	
20/07/2004 – 07/07/2005	9125
05/09/2005 – 06/07/2006	11600
04/09/2006 – 12/07/2007	11823
03/09/2007 – 10/07/2008	14430
01/09/2008 – 07/05/2009	14036
7 th EP	
14/07/2009 – 08/07/2010	15491
06/09/2010 – 07/07/2011	27568
12/09/2011 – 05/07/2012	32228
10/09/2012 – 04/07/2013	13590
09/09/2013 – 17/04/2014	6963
Total	205179

*Speeches given by independent MEPs were removed from the sample.
Source: Own calculations.

Finally, I established a cut-off point for the exclusion of parties' aggregate speeches from the analysis in each year of 5000 words; documents composed of less than 5000 words were removed. This was done for two reasons. The first reason was to make the computation of the algorithm more efficient (Proksch & Slapin, 2010). The second reason relates to the quanteda's imposed limitations regarding the number of documents that the application allows for while using Wordfish (Benoit et al., 2018).

4.2.3) Preparation of the text

Careful treatment of the documents is a fundamental step when using automated methods of text analysis (Grimmer & Stewart, 2013; Slapin & Proksch, 2008; Welbers et al., 2017). Given the specificities related to the bag-of-words model that lies at the base of the method of obtaining the dependent variable, preparing the documents for analysis is an important step, which needs to be carried out with care. Available scholarship on quantitative methods of text analysis calls the process of document preparation preprocessing. The empirical literature has demonstrated that the choices that researchers make in this stage of the research

can have a significant effect on the validity of the results (see Bruinsma & Gemenis, 2019; Crone et al., 2006; Günther & Quandt, 2016; Leopold & Kindermann, 2002 for an overview).

Following the preprocessing recommendations established by Welbers et al. (2017), I carried out the removal of stop-words and numerical digits from the raw text data provided by Greene and Cross (2017). Stop-words are commonly-used words that are selected a priori as having no significant political meaning or substance: for example words such as *and*, *but*, *at*, etc. Removing these words from the documents is important, not only because of the bag-of-words model but also because they can significantly increase the computational time required to perform the overall analysis. The same principle applies to the numerical digits.

Another important phase of the preprocessing process is called normalisation (see Welbers et al., 2017, pp. 250–251). Normalisation is the process of uniformisation of the words in the documents. This process is important because an algorithm such as Wordfish does not recognise that two different instances of the same word have the same meaning when one begins in upper case and the other begins in lower case¹³. For instance, *Austerity* and *austerity* are the same word, but Wordfish considers them to be in fact two distinct words. Situations such as this not only affect the results but also unnecessarily increase the computational time required to run the analysis. Thus, I made all the words in the raw text data begin in lower case (see Bruinsma & Gemenis, 2019; Hart et al., 2020; Hjorth et al., 2015; Proksch & Slapin, 2010 for examples of studies that follow this procedure). Another preprocessing procedure recommended by Welbers et al. (2017) is called *stemming*. Stemming converts inflected forms of words into their base forms; for instance, *politicisation* becomes *politicis**. However, I forgo this procedure in the preprocessing following the realisation that it decreases the effectiveness of ideological scaling methods such as Wordfish (Bruinsma & Gemenis, 2019; Ruedin, 2013). In sum, I submitted the text data only to stop-word and numerals removal and normalisation.

4.2.4) *Validating the dependent variable*

Despite the successful results of automated ideological scaling studies, one should keep in mind Grimmer and Stewart's (2013) warnings about the validity of the results produced

¹³ It is due to this baseline reason that researchers must guarantee language uniformity when using quantitative methods of text analysis, hence why the analysis of the post-2014 EP speeches is rendered impossible since the EP stopped translating them into English.

by these tools – for, as they point out, “the output of the models may be misleading or simply wrong. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the researcher to validate their use of automated content analysis” (p. 271).

Heeding this call for validation and following previous Wordfish validation studies (Bruinsma & Gemenis, 2019; Hjorth et al., 2015; Proksch & Slapin, 2010; Slapin & Proksch, 2008), I correlate the Wordfish estimates of party positions towards the EU in the EP with measures from canonical party positional datasets such as the Euromanifestos dataset (EM) (Schmitt et al., 2018) and the Manifestos Project Dataset (MARPOR) (Lehman et al., 2022). Both datasets rely on content analysis of party manifestos, specifically EP elections in the case of the EM and legislative elections in the case of MARPOR. The content analysis focuses on parties’ issue emphasis and policy positions and the coding schema for both sources is extremely similar (Wüst & Volkens, 2003) and encompasses a wide range of policy domains from positions on the EU, external relations, to welfare and economic distribution. The EM and MARPOR’s estimates of party position are the result of content analysis of quasi-sentences in electoral manifestos, using a pre-established classification schema, or codebook. MARPOR, and by extension the EM, has received criticism regarding the theoretical underpinnings of its coding scheme, its selection of documents, the reliability of its human coding and its scaling (see Bakker & Hobolt, 2013; Gemenis, 2013; Krouwel & van Elfrinkhof, 2014). Gemenis (2013), for example, points out that the MARPOR uses a coding scheme with unrealistic assumptions regarding the role of issue salience in party competition and what it considers to be the left/right dimensions. Notwithstanding these criticisms, both datasets have been successfully used by researchers of party politics over the last decades as reliable sources of party positions because of their range and scope. Additionally, both sources cover the entire period of analysis.

I choose Pearson’s r correlation since I am measuring the linear relationship between two continuous variables. From year 1 (07/1999 – 07/2000) to year 5 (09/2003 – 05/2004), I correlated the dependent variable with EM’s 1999 wave. From year 6 (07/2004 – 07/2005) to 10 (09/2008 – 05/2009) with the EM’s 2004 wave. Finally, from year 11 (07/2009 – 07/2010) to 15 (09/2013 – 04/2014), I correlated Wordfish’s estimates with the EM’s 2009 wave. Regarding MARPOR, I correlated the dependent variable with this dataset’s measure of parties’ EU position that was closest to the year in question. Based on the analytical framework developed for EU politicisation in the previous chapters, I choose specific

dimensions from EM and MARPOR – in particular, parties’ position on the EU. Table 4.2 summarises the results.

The majority of the yearly Wordfish estimates of party positions towards the EU in the EP correlate at statistically significant levels with the measures of parties’ positions on the EU (with the exceptions of year 9, 12, 13, 14 and 15, corresponding to the period between 2007 and 2014, an especially tumultuous time in the history of the EU). Given these results, I can claim with a relative degree of certainty that the algorithm is able to capture relevant latent dimensions from parties’ EP speeches.

In sum, I consider these results to be a robust test of the validity of the dependent variable. Both EM and MARPOR measure positions from more stable sources in comparison with plenary speeches. Electoral manifestos are carefully crafted documents, targeted to specific audiences, that are expected to go through multiple hands of party officials and are constructed to depict the parties’ program at a very specific point in time, i.e., an election (Harmel, 2018). Political speeches in parliament are very different, however, and those made at the EP are no exception. They occur in a less controlled environment relative to electoral manifestos and are therefore more sensitive to the overall context of a political debate in a given polity and thus more conjectural. As Proksch and Slapin (2014, pp. 20–21) argue, parliamentary debate “exists (almost) solely for ‘theatrical’ purposes, addressed to outside audiences for political - as opposed to policy - reasons”. The authors go on to conclude that parliamentary speech is a tool used by political parties for position-taking. Given these particularities, the fact that my dependent variable is able to largely map on to relevant latent dimensions from EM and MARPOR is a test of its robustness.

Table 4.2) Validation of the dependent variable

07/99 – 07/00	EM	Pro/anti EU: 0,485**
	MARPOR	EU position: 0,246
09/00 – 09/01	EM	Pro/anti EU: -0,254*
	MARPOR	EU position: 0,128
10/01 – 09/02	EM	Pro/anti EU: 0,452**
	MARPOR	EU position: 0,340*
10/02 – 07/03	EM	Pro/anti EU: 0,485**
	MARPOR	EU position: 0,399**
09/03 – 05/04	EM	Pro/anti EU: 0,380**
	MARPOR	EU position: 0,276*
07/04 – 07/05	EM	Pro/anti EU: -0,406**
	MARPOR	EU position: 0,526***
09/05 – 07/06	EM	Pro/anti EU: 0,301*
	MARPOR	EU position: 0,304*
09/06 – 07/07	EM	Pro/anti EU: 0,327*
	MARPOR	EU position: 0,411***
09/07 – 07/08	EM	Pro/anti EU: -0,224
	MARPOR	EU position: -0,137
09/08 – 05/09	EM	Pro/anti EU: 0,277*
	MARPOR	EU position: 0,147
07/09 – 07/10	EM	Pro/anti EU: 0,166
	MARPOR	EU position: 0,249*
09/10 – 07/11	EM	Pro/anti EU: -0,012
	MARPOR	EU position: 0,176
09/11 – 07/12	EM	Pro/anti EU: 0,085
	MARPOR	EU position: 0,081
09/12 – 07/13	EM	Pro/anti EU: 0,042
	MARPOR	EU position: 0,032
09/13 – 04/14	EM	Pro/anti EU: 0,273
	MARPOR	EU position: 0,001

* The correlation is significant at the 0,05 level.

** The correlation is significant at the 0,01 level

*** The correlation is significant at the 0,001 level.

Source: Own calculations.

4.3) Independent and control variables

In order to successfully test the research hypotheses, I introduced various independent and control variables into the research design. Most of the hypotheses include dimensions that are operationalisable via party-level variables from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (Bakker et al., 2020). This dataset amounts to one of the most commonly referred to sources of political parties' policy positions and preferences. To measure policy positions CHES relies on a panel of national experts who are asked to make judgments on parties' positions on a wide variety of policy areas, ranging from – just to name a few – EU integration and state intervention in the economy to migration policy. CHES was launched in 1994 and its latest survey covers the year 2019, thus including the whole of the period of analysis of this study. Conveniently, the CHES surveys also cover all of the current EU member states (albeit not all of the parties in the dataset, with the cases not included computed as missing values – see appendix 3 for details). According to Bakker and Hobolt (2013, p. 35), expert surveys such as CHES provide researchers with data that has “high face validity and internal consistency among experts”. At the same time, however, these authors recognise that expert surveys have an inherent subjective dimension and tend to “exaggerate the stability of party positions” in the long run, which is a concern echoed by some of CHES's founders (Steenbergen & Marks, 2007). Also, as pointed out by Budge (2000), it is not always clear what is actually being evaluated by the experts in each category, which introduces problems of replicability and incomparability between countries' estimates. Nonetheless, the CHES dataset has been an invaluable empirical resource in the literature on political parties.

However, not all independent variables in the statistical models are measures with data coming from this source. The models include additional independent variables designed to measure institutional aspects pertaining to the EU and member states' relationship to it. These variables do not capture party positions or policy preferences; instead, they seek to introduce temporal, contextual, and institutional dimensions into the analysis. These variables are associated with the authority transfer and the institutional misfit hypotheses.

Having surveyed and discussed the data sources for the independent and control variables, next I will discuss the operationalisations for each one of them. Table 4.3 offers a guide to the discussion that will follow.

Table 4.3) List of hypotheses and correspondent independent variables

	Independent Variables
<i>H1 – Parties with more conservative positions on cultural and identity issues (TAN) tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties</i>	GALTAN position
<i>H2 – Parties with more sovereigntists positions tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties</i>	EU position
<i>H3 – Parties in favour of more economic redistribution tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties</i>	Economy left-right position
<i>H4 – Radical Right parties tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties</i>	Party family
<i>H5 – Challenger parties tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties</i>	Former participation in government
<i>H6 – Parties assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in moments of authority transfers, such as rounds of enlargement and treaty reforms</i>	Years with debates concerning enlargement and treaty reforms
<i>H7 – Parties from member states with higher institutional misfit tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with parties from member states with lower institutional misfit.</i>	Deficit of transposition of EU directives

Source: Author

My first hypothesis deals with the association between parties' positions on culture and identity issues and negative positions towards the EU (Grande & Kriesi, 2012; Helbling & Jungkunz, 2020). Specifically, I assume that parties with more conservative positions on cultural and identity issues tend to politicise more the EU in their speeches in the EP. To test this assumption, I use CHES's data in parties' positions on the GALTAN scale, on which 0 means that the party is strong GAL (green-alternative-libertarian), and 10 means that the party is strong TAN (traditional-authoritarian-nationalist). When it comes to the question of EU integration, the theoretical expectation is that GAL parties tend to be pro-European integration, while TAN parties tend to be negative towards the EU (Hooghe & Marks, 2009).

The second hypothesis to be tested relates to the topic of the EU's democratic deficit and the issues of national and democratic sovereignty that EU integration invokes. Here I assume that parties with more sovereigntists positions tend to express more negative positions

towards the EU in their EP speeches in comparison with parties in favour of European integration (Mair, 2013). To test this, I rely once again on the CHES data, specifically on its measurement of parties' overall positions on the EU. This variable measures the parties' overall positions towards the integration process on a scale from 1 to 7, on which 1 is strongly opposed and 7 is strongly in favour. The inclusion of this independent variable begs the question as to why it should be integrated in the first place, since it seems that the link between it and parties' positions towards the EU in the EP is self-evident at first glance. However, as I noted before, the potential of the EP to act as a moderating influence in parties' positions is a possibility, as Kreppel (2002) points out. As such, it is not automatically guaranteed that just because parties are Eurosceptic in general, they will continue to be so in their EP speeches.

The third hypothesis seeks to test whether there is a positive association between parties' EU politicisation and their positions on questions of economic redistribution. In this instance, I expect that parties with more extreme preferences in favour of economic redistribution tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in their EP speeches compared with more moderate parties (Grande & Hutter, 2016b). To measure this, I rely on parties' positions from the CHES dataset, particularly their overall position on economic issues (on which 0 is the extreme left, which advocates for more state intervention on economic issues in order to assure economic redistribution, and 10 is the extreme right, who defend a minimal role of the state on economic issues).

One of the dimensions of the phenomenon of EU politicisation that I seek to test is its relationship with RRPs (Grande & Kriesi, 2012; Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Rooduijn, 2015). I postulate that these parties are going to express significantly more negative positions towards the EU in their speeches in the EP in comparison with other parties. To test this assumption, I created a dummy variable classifying each party in the dataset as being either a RRP or not, relying on the party family variable of the CHES dataset (though for cases that were omitted from the CHES I consulted the PopuList¹⁴ dataset of Rooduijn et al., 2019, to aid in the classification).

The fifth hypothesis focusses on the extent to which EU politicisation is associated with challenger parties (Hobolt & Tilley, 2016). As discussed in chapter 3, mainstream political

¹⁴ The PopuList dataset is aimed at cataloguing European populist parties, both of the right and left, since 1989 to the present day. The dataset is available online at: <https://popu-list.org/>.

parties in Europe have largely converged on EU integration. However, this has essentially denied citizens a political alternative on the issue. This situation has developed in tandem with a growing resentment toward the EU from citizens across member states, but because of the convergence of mainstream parties on the issue it had not been politically channelled. Nevertheless, it is a situation which sowed the seeds from which challenger parties have sprouted. These parties have sought to fill the void left by the mainstream political parties by explicitly challenging the political consensus via the politicisation of issues like the EU (Hobolt & Tilley, 2016). To test this assumption, I created a dummy variable that classifies parties according to their status as either challenger parties or not, operationalised as whether the party has participated in government either as a majority or in a coalition, obtained through the Who Governs Europe dataset (Casal Bértoa & Enyedi, 2022)¹⁵.

Up until this point, my hypotheses have focused on the internal factors to political parties, i.e., they put political parties, and specifically their preferences in policy and ideology, at the centre of the explanation of the phenomenon of EU politicisation. However, I am also interested in analysing the external explanatory factors that go beyond political parties and perhaps the most studied aspect of EU politicisation is the association between politicisation and authority transfer from the member state level to the EU's supranational level (De Wilde et al., 2016; De Wilde & Zürn, 2012; Grande & Hutter, 2016a, 2016b). According to the authority transfer thesis such delegation of political authority is a significant trigger of EU politicisation. As such, I expect that parties assume more negative positions towards the EU in their speeches in years during which authority transfer is being discussed in the EP. To operationalise the concept of authority transfer, I created a dummy variable that categorises each year in the analysis as either an authority transfer year or not. To do this, I cross-referenced each of the years with the dates on which these moments of authority transfer take place to determine which of them is or is not an authority transfer year. To recap, I define a year as being an authority transfer year if it comprised the 6 months immediately preceding and following the signing of a treaty. Table 4.4 displays the classification of each year according to this criterion.

¹⁵ The Who Governs Europe dataset aims to catalogue European executives since the 19th century to the present day. The dataset is available online at: <https://whogoverns.eu/>.

Table 4.4) Instances of authority transfer by year between 1999 and 2014

Year	Authority Transfer	Treaty	Enlargement
Year 1 (07/99 - 07/00)	Introduction of the Euro (01/01/99)	✓	
Year 2 (09/00 - 09/01)	Treaty of Nice (26/02/01)	✓	
Year 3 (10/01 - 09/02)			
Year 4 (10/02 - 07/03)	Eastern Enlargement I (16/04/03)		✓
Year 5 (09/03 - 05/04)	Constitution of Europe (25/04/04)	✓	
Year 6 (07/04 - 07/05)	Constitution of Europe; Eastern Enlargement II (25/04/05)	✓	✓
Year 7 (09/05 - 07/06)	Eastern Enlargement II		✓
Year 8 (09/06 - 07/07)	Treaty of Lisbon (13/12/07)	✓	
Year 9 (09/07 - 07/08)	Treaty of Lisbon	✓	
Year 10 (09/08 - 05/09)			
Year 11 (07/09 - 07/10)			
Year 12 (09/10 - 07/11)			
Year 13 (09/11 - 07/12)			
Year 14 (09/12 - 07/13)	Croatia Accession (01/07/13)		✓
Year 15 (09/13 - 04/14)	Croatia Accession		✓

Source: Author.

The seventh and final hypothesis in this study follows the logic of the fourth, in as much as it seeks to look beyond political parties in a restrictive sense towards other institutional aspects that might promote the politicisation of the EU. Among the multiple theories that seek to explain the phenomenon of EU politicisation, the institutional misfit hypothesis posits that a mismatch between the domestic institutions at the member state level and EU's institutions lead to the politicisation of the EU (Börzel & Risse, 2000; Brinegar et al., 2004; De Wilde et al., 2016). My own version of the institutional misfit hypothesis suggests that parties from member states with a higher degree of mismatch, or misfit, between the two levels will assume more negative positions towards the EU in the EP. However, as the scoping review of the literature on EU politicisation showed, research on the relationship between institutional misfit and EU politicisation is scant and does not offer a convenient or ready-made basis on which to turn this dimension into a workable independent variable. To overcome this hurdle, here I am conceptualising institutional misfit as the inability or unwillingness of the governments of the member states to adopt the EU's directives. Consequently, I gathered data on the transposition of EU directives into national law. Specifically, the European Commission's data on the transposition deficits through the Single Market Scoreboard initiative. The Commission defines the transposition deficit as the

percentage of Single Market directives not yet completely notified to the Commission in relation to the total number of directives that should have been notified by the deadline (European Commission, 2021).

This index is available for all the current EU member states and covers the entirety of our period of analysis¹⁶. The higher the value of the index, the higher the degree of misfit in a given member state. In order to conform to the period under analysis in this thesis, I calculated the simple mean of the degree of misfit between two years. For instance, for year 1 (07/99 – 07/00), I averaged the values of 1999 and 2000, and used this value as the institutional misfit variable. This procedure was done throughout the entirety of the period of analysis.

The control variables in the statistical models account for key dimensions that interact with the phenomenon of the politicisation of the EU based on the existing literature, such as: 1) the potential redistributive effects relating to the economies of the member states; 2) the size of each party in the EP as measured by their vote share in each of the European elections featured in our period of analysis; 3) whether or not the party was in government at the time of the observation; 4) whether or not it was a newly elected party in the EP; and 5) whether or not the party hailed from a recent member state of the EU.

To account for the redistributive aspects, I have used data on the GDP per capita (Proksch & Slapin, 2010), on whether or not the party's member state was a net creditor or debtor to the EU's budget (Silva et al., 2022), and for the 7th Term of the EP whether the member state was under a Bailout program or not (Statham & Trenz, 2015). Concretely speaking, I used the logarithm transformation of the OECD's (2022) data on GDP per capita. The OECD provides these stats on quarterly basis, thus allowing me to calculate a more accurate measure in each of the years of observation (roughly from September to September). This data is reported in dollars and not in Euros but since I am interested in capturing the differences between countries this is not problematic. For the status of the member state as either a creditor or a debtor state of the EU's budget, I created a dummy variable based on the difference between the amount each country receives and contributes to the EU's budget, where 0 means that member states are a net contributor, while 1 means that they are net beneficiaries. This data was retrieved from the EU Commission's website (European Commission, 2020), and in order to fit it into the way I have segmented the period of analysis

¹⁶ The transposition index scores for each country are available for consultation in Table 10.1 of the appendix 4.

(Table 4.1), I have calculated the simple mean of the balance between member state's contributions to the EU's budget and the EU's spending on said country between each of the calendar years that make up the analytical years. Finally, I classified each country according to whether or not it was under a Bailout program in the context of the Eurozone crisis¹⁷. This variable is only available for the years between 2009 and 2014; 1 means the member state is under a Bailout program and 0 means that it is not.

Regarding the party-related control variables, I classified each party on the basis of whether or not they were playing an executive role at the time of observation; 1 means that it was in government and 0 means that it was not. To obtain this information, I used the Who Govern Europe dataset (Casal Bértoa & Enyedi, 2022). Additionally, I created a dummy that classifies each party in the database as a new party if it has elected MEPs for the first time (this classification only applies to the specific EP term during which the party elected its first-time MEPs); 1 means that the party is newly elected and 0 means the opposite. This information was obtained through the EP's website (European Parliament, 2021). Finally, to account for the size of each party in the EP I rely on its vote share in each of the EP elections for our period of analysis. Once again, for this I employed the data reported on the EP's website (European Parliament, 2021).

To account for any potential effects on EU politicisation associated with the accession of new countries to the EU in the context of the so-called Eastern Enlargement in 2003 and 2005, I created a dummy that classifies each observation in the database according to the status of the member state in this regard. A new member state is defined and operationalised as a country that has joined the EU in the previous 5 years; 1 means that the country is a recent entry and 0 means that it is not.

Finally, in order to ensure the quality of the independent and control variables and to avoid possible issues of collinearity in the linear regression models that were employed to test the research hypotheses, I ran tests of covariance for all of the variables. As can be seen by the results in appendix 5, there are no major or widespread issues of collinearity in my variables, thus proving that my model is solid basis from which to understand the underlying factors of the EU politicisation in the EP.

¹⁷ List of bailed-out countries: Cyprus; Greece; Ireland; Portugal; Spain.

4.4) Concluding remarks

In this chapter I sought to describe the research design, and to justify the choices made therein, that guide the main empirical component of this research. To flesh out the research question inspiring this dissertation, I established a total of seven hypotheses, and in the present chapter the discussion was dedicated to the operationalisation of the variables within each one of them.

Concretely speaking, I devised a model wherein the dependent variable is political parties' positions on the EU and the independent variables are political parties' positions on a wide variety of issues, as well as an array of contextual variables.

To measure the dependent variable, I relied on automated content analysis of more than 200 thousand speeches made by MEPs from 1999 to 2014, covering the entirety of the 5th, 6th, and 7th Terms of the EP. Specifically, I used unsupervised ideological scaling through the Wordfish algorithm (Slapin & Proksch, 2008). Automated content analysis techniques enable researchers to extract party positions on single-issue dimensions from party documents and texts with relative ease and without the need for the human resources required in conventional methods of content analysis. Despite the advantages of these techniques, they are not without limitations: they follow a less-than-perfect model of how human languages operate – the so-called bag-of-words model. Thus, these techniques rely heavily on a researcher's input in matters of document selection and treatment of the text data. These limitations and the way I have dealt with them were outlined above.

For the independent variables, I rely on benchmark datasets of parties' policy preferences and ideological positions such as the CHES (Bakker et al., 2020). To operationalise the dimensions highlighted in my research hypotheses, I extracted parties' preferences regarding the EU, the left-right axis on economic issues, GALTAN, among others. Additionally, I created wholly new independent variables to test the authority transfer and institutional misfit hypotheses.

5:

The politicisation of the EU in the EP: patterns and explaining factors

In the previous chapter, I laid out the methodological framework that structures this research. In the present chapter, I analyse the data described before and test the research hypotheses using statistical techniques ranging from descriptive statistics to more advanced inferential methods.

This chapter is divided into three distinct sections. In the first section, I provide a depiction of the dependent variable of party positions on the EU, analysing it over time, by party family and by EU region, in order to unearth latent patterns from the data. This preliminary analysis reveals significant differences regarding how parties position themselves towards the EU. In the second section, I test the hypotheses outlined in chapter 3, using linear regression with panel-corrected standard errors. Finally, the third section provides a summary of the main findings of the empirical analysis.

5.1) Describing the politicisation of the EU in the EP

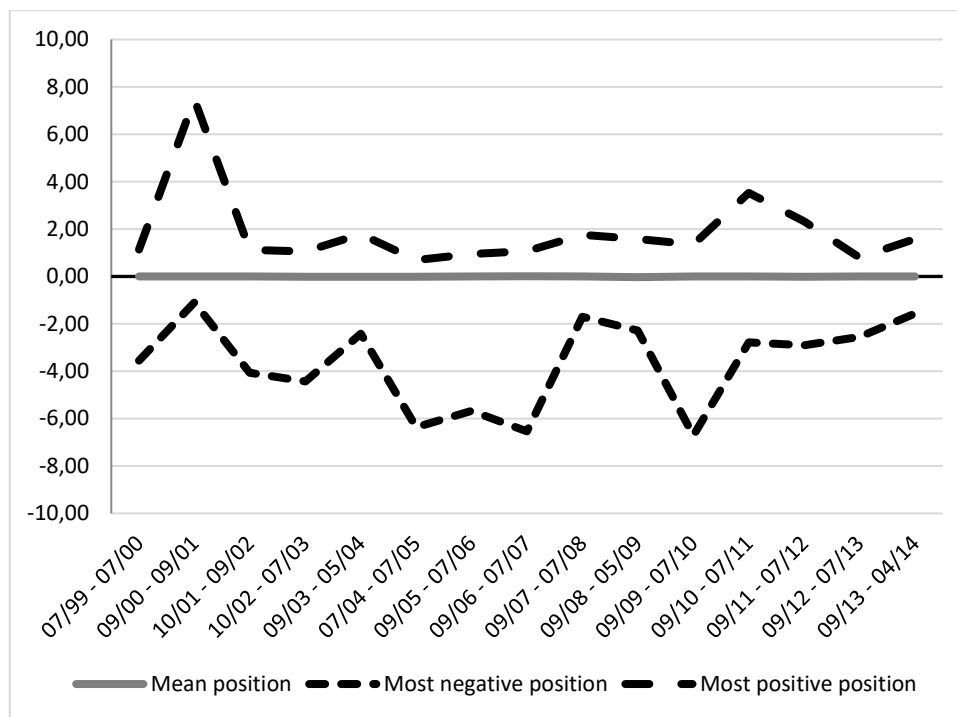
As mentioned above, in this section I describe the patterns observed in the dependent variable of party positions towards the EU in the EP (obtained through the quantitative text analysis of MEPs speeches the plenary), across a variety of dimensions, in particular by time, by party family, and by region of the EU.

5.1.1) The politicisation of the EU over time

When the mean party positions on the EU across each of the years comprising this study's period of analysis is calculated, as well as by the EP Term for all parties, I observe that the mean value over all these years is stable around zero. However, the analysis of the absolute values for the most positive and most negative positions towards the EU in each given year is much more insightful, revealing on the one hand a high degree of stability of the position of Europhile parties, while on the other hand, Eurosceptic parties appear to be

much more unstable in their positioning towards the EU. Figure 5.1 breaks down the results of the exercise.

Figure 5.1) Position towards the EU over time (1999 – 2014)¹⁸



Source: Own calculations.

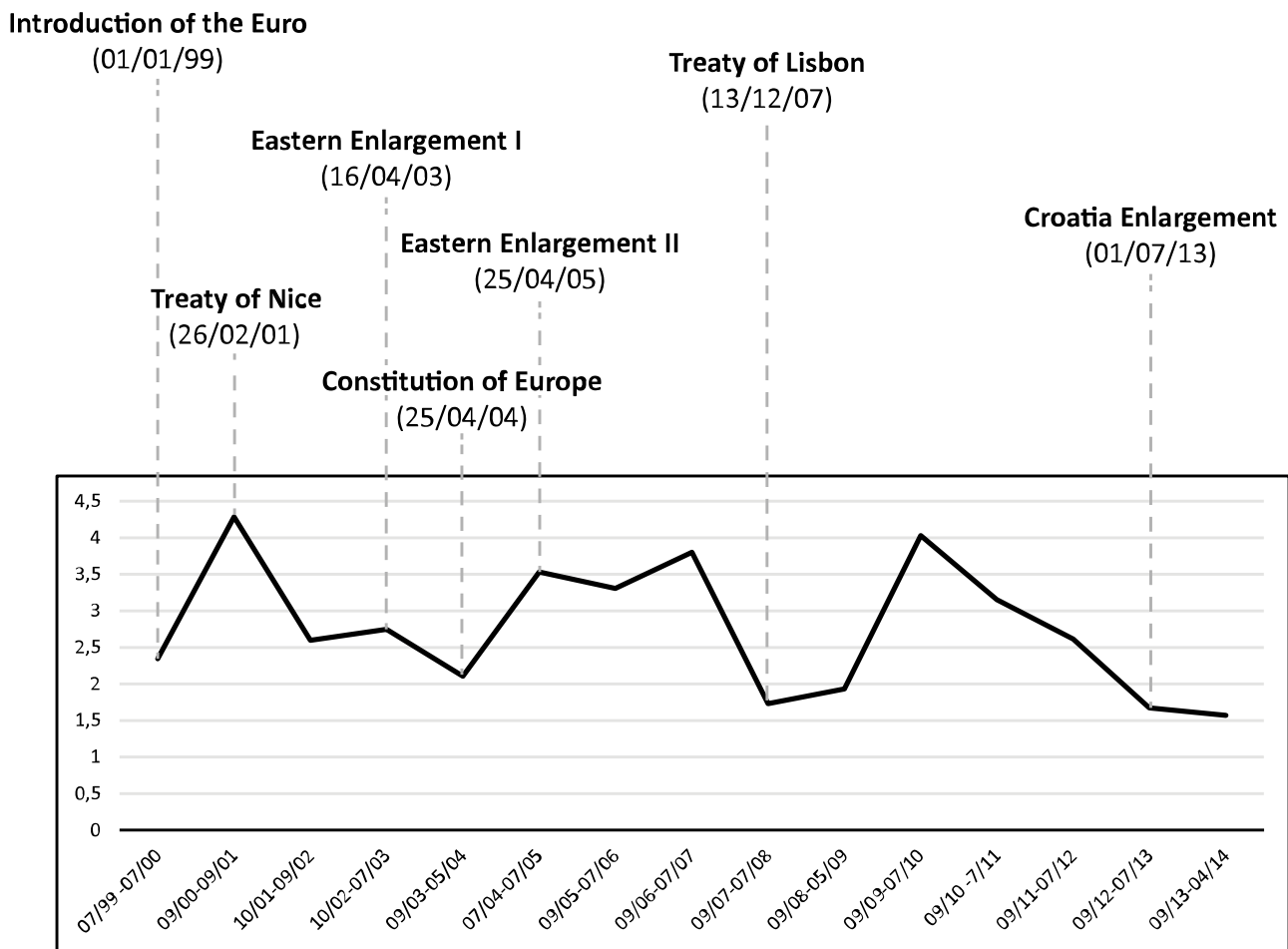
The lowest mean value of parties’ positions towards the EU belongs to the 10th year (09/2008 – 05/2009), right before the financial crisis of the Eurozone kicked-off in full force, and the one with the highest mean value is the 8th (09/2006 – 07/2007). In terms of average variation across EP Terms, the lowest score occurs during the 6th EP Term (2004 – 2009), which witnessed the signing of the treaties establishing a Constitution for Europe and Lisbon, and the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU. The highest score occurs during the 7th Term (2009 – 2014), which saw the full brunt of the crisis in the Eurozone and the accession of Croatia. These results are somewhat counter-intuitive in relation to the established view in other studies focussing on the national level, which points towards an increase in negative positions towards the EU during the Eurozone crisis (Börzel & Risse,

¹⁸ As a reminder, for the purposes of our research we consider a ‘year’ to begin with the first debate that took place after the EP’s summer recess and end with the last debate immediately preceding said recess. It must be noted that there are two years in our period of analysis that exceptionally begin in October: 10/2001 – 09/2002 and 10/2002 – 07/2003. We could not ascertain as to why these two sessions of the EP began later than in other years.

2018; Statham & Trenz, 2015). However, it should be noted that there are no statistically significant differences between the years and between EP Terms, suggesting that overall party positions on the EU in the EP do indeed tend to be stable over time (at the aggregate level, at least).

While this thesis deals with party positions on the EU as its dependent variable, it is interesting to quickly survey how these positions relate to each other, i.e., polarisation, across the period of analysis. In order to look at such polarisation of EU positions develops over time, a polarisation index was created. Given that there are always negative and positive values in each of the years of analysis, I calculated the mean of the absolute values of the most negative and the most positive position towards the EU, and thus I am able to measure the distance between the two poles in each years composing the whole period of analysis. Figure 5.2 reports the results of this exercise. To contextualise the results, and to aid in their interpretation, the Figure includes the moments of transfer of political authority from member states to the EU, i.e., major institutional reforms, as well as the waves of enlargement of the EU that occurred between 1999 and 2014.

Figure 5.2) The polarisation index over time (1999 – 2014)



Source: Own calculations.

As can be seen in Figure 5.2, polarisation does not follow a linear path on which the phenomenon intensifies over time. The highest values occur between 09/00 and 09/01, in the same year in which the Treaty of Nice was signed, and between 09/06 and 07/07 and between 09/09 and 07/10, while the lowest polarisation occurs in the tail end of our period of analysis: between 09/13 and 04/14 and between 09/12 and 07/13, during which time no significant EU reforms were discussed or deliberated upon. At this point, two noteworthy observations are warranted. The first is that higher polarisation in the EP tends to coincide with significant moments of the EU integration process (albeit the Constitution of Europe and the Treaty of Lisbon stand out as notable and surprising exceptions to this trend), although it is generally higher in years during which EU treaties are being signed than in years in which the EU sees an enlargement. This suggests that not all institutional changes are the same or produce the

same effects. The second, and concomitant, point is that the data is clearly demonstrative of the scenario of “punctuated politicisation” proposed by Grande and Kriesi (2016). In other words, EU politicisation does not follow a linear and progressive trajectory but rather varies in its intensity over time with moments at which politicisation of the EU heats up and others at which it cools down. In sum, the data on Figure 5.2 suggests that these dynamics might be linked to moments of authority transfer.

In previous chapters I posited, following the literature, that EU politicisation is particularly intense in moments of transfer of political authority from the national level to the EU level (Grande & Hutter, 2016a). However, when I leave the polarisation index and return to our dependent variable of party positions towards the EU, the data does not corroborate this thesis. As can be seen from Table 5.1, the average position towards the EU (determined by calculating the simple mean. This applies to all the mean values used in this section) is very similar between years in which authority transfers were being implemented and debated in the EP and years in which they were not, whether in general, or when I consider treaty reform discussion or waves of enlargement of the EU in isolation, since the differences between these groups are not statistically significant. This finding by itself might suggest that politicisation is mainly a national level phenomenon and that parties at the EU level are not as interested in polarising the issue given that, generally, there is less attention being paid to what goes on politically in the EU’s institutions. However, as I will discuss below, there are more important factors at play in politicisation of the EU in the EP (such as a party ideology and institutional factors).

Table 5.1) EU Politicisation by Authority Transfer Year¹⁹

	Mean	SD	<i>n</i> *
Authority Transfer Year	-0,002	0,997	617
Enlargement	-0,003	0,988	274
Treaty	-0,003	1,003	389

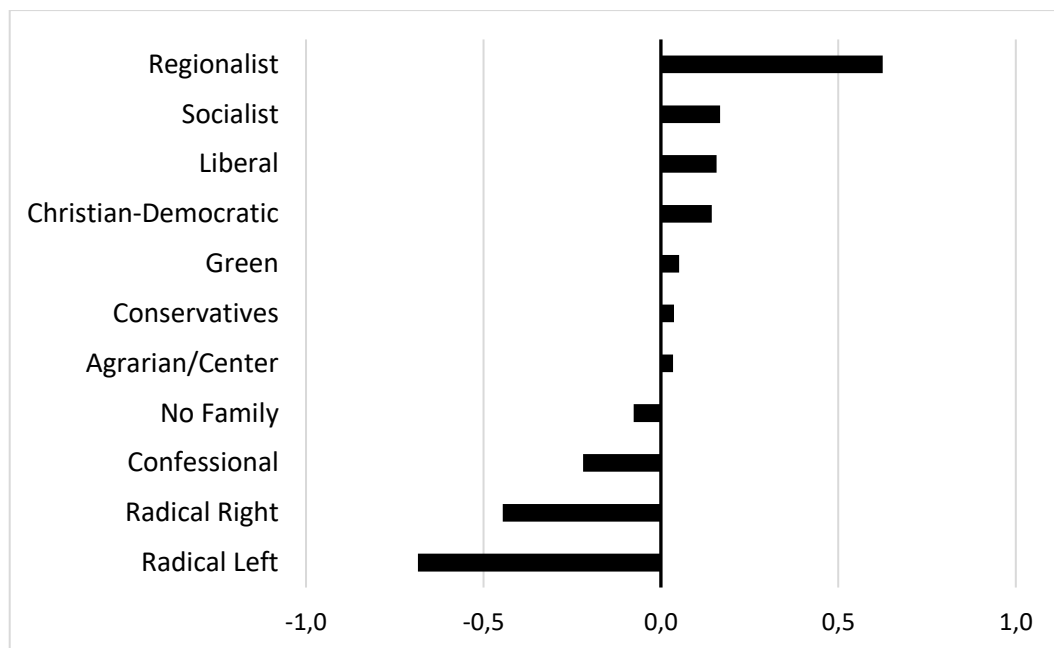
*The *n* stands for parties by year.
Source: Own calculations.

¹⁹ As can be seen in Table 4.4, there are years that have both enlargement and treaty instances of authority transfer. This explains why the mean of authority transfer year is slightly lower than enlargement and treaty and why the sum of the *n* of each exceeds that of authority transfer.

5.1.2) EU politicisation by party family

To survey these differences in party positions, I calculated the mean score of parties' positions towards the EU by using the classifications of party family offered by the CHES. Figure 5.3 illustrates the results and a cursory look at it allows me to identify four distinct groupings of party families: a more Eurosceptical cluster composed of the Radical Left and the Radical Right; a strongly Euro-enthusiastic cluster composed of Regionalist parties; a moderately positive cluster composed of Socialist, Liberal, Christian-Democratic, Green, Conservative, and Agrarian & Center parties; and, finally, a moderately negative cluster composed of the Confessional party and other parties which the experts at the CHES have come to term "No Family" (such as the Eurosceptic June Movement in Denmark).

Figure 5.3) EU positions in the EP by party family (1999 – 2014)

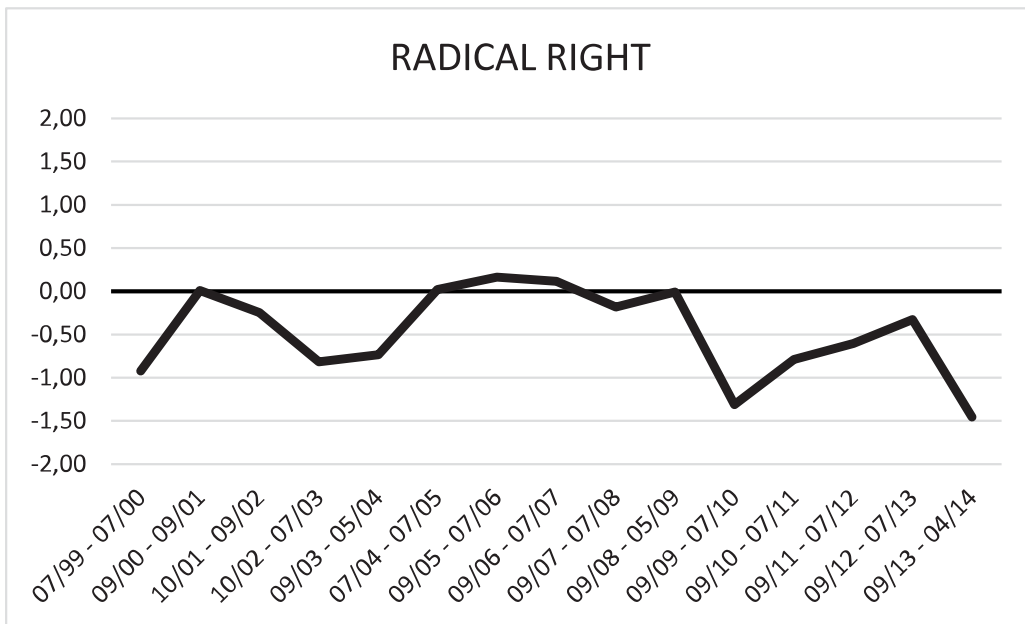
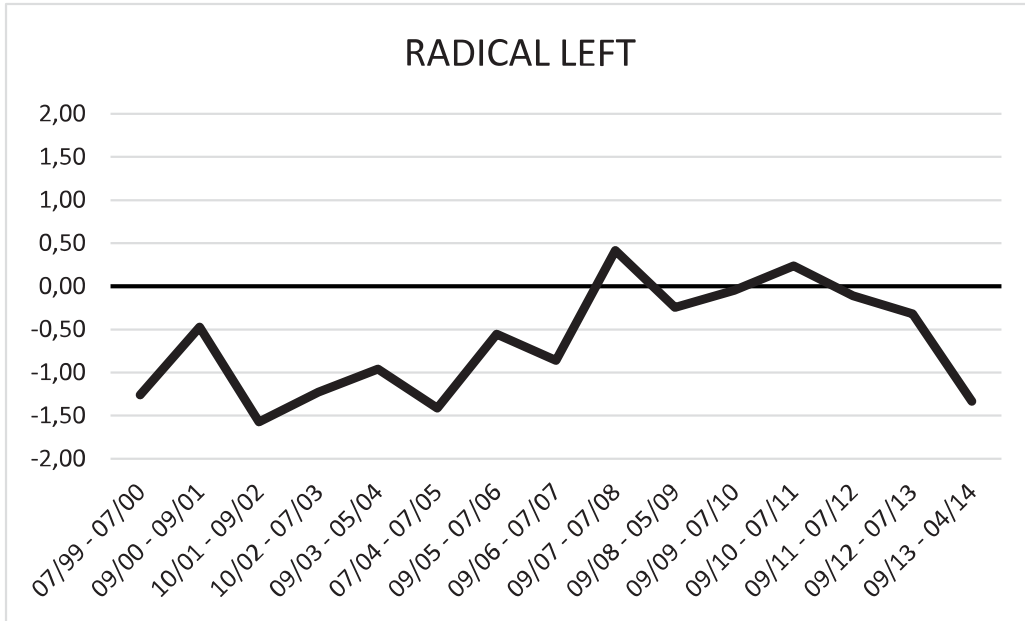


Source: Own calculations.

In the Eurosceptic cluster, the party family with the most critical positions on the EU in the EP is the Radical Left, with an overall mean position of -0,685, followed by the Radical Right, with an overall mean position of -0,446. These results are not surprising as the literature on EU politicisation has shown that these parties tend to adopt more critical positions towards the EU in comparison with others – albeit from radically different perspectives. RLPs base their opposition to the EU on distributive issues (Keith, 2018) while the Radical Right contest the EU along cultural and identitarian lines (Rooduijn, 2015).

When I trace the development of both the Radical Right and the Radical Left's positions towards the EU over time, by calculating their associated mean values of positions towards the EU for each year comprising the period under analysis, both party families tend to be placed on the negative side of the scale, even if with inconsistent positions that tend to fluctuate over time. Figure 5.4 reports the results of the exercise.

Figure 5.4) Radical Left and Right positions towards the EU over time (1999 – 2014)

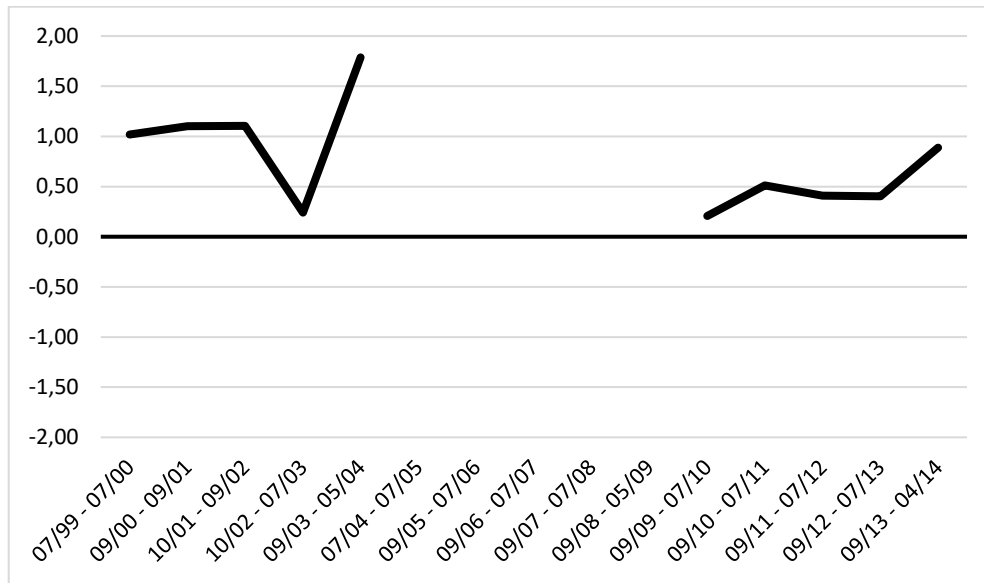


Source: Own calculations.

The Radical Left is more consistently negative towards the EU when compared to the Radical Right. Yet it must be pointed out that, as time advances, it is possible to note a shift in the positions of both party groups. The Radical Left softens its stance towards the EU after 2006 – 2007, with a consistent trend towards the middle of the scale that lasts until 2012 – 2013 (after which it begins to drop precipitately). The Radical Right, in turn, radicalises its anti-EU position in the later part of our period of analysis, specifically in the 7th EP Term (beginning in 2009 – 2010). During this critical period, this party family likely saw a weakened EU, due to the economic crisis and the earlier stages of the migrant crisis, as an opportunity to agitate the growing Eurosceptic sentiment in many member states. Such observations, taken entirely from the available data, are perhaps hinting at a structural change in the dynamics of political conflict at the EU level, from competition anchored in the traditional redistribution issues of left-right politics to a competition structured by other issues such as cultural identity, national sovereignty, and Euroscepticism, a change also detected using distinct empirical methods (Hix et al., 2019).

Going back to the results reported in Figure 5.3, the regionalist parties (such as the Scottish National Party from the UK) are the most Euro-enthusiastic group in the sample, with a mean position of 0,625. As the literature has shown, the EU's cohesion policy has pushed towards regionalisation in the context of consolidating the EU's multilevel governance architecture and has thereby strengthened the opportunities for regional actors to advance their agendas in informal and informal ways (Masseti & Schakel, 2020). Even so, some have pointed out a general shift in some of these parties from pro-EU positions to euroscepticism over the last several years (Masseti, 2009; Massetti & Schakel, 2016). This does not, however, invalidate my findings, which still place such parties firmly in the pro-EU camp, as can be seen in Figure 5.5, which shows that the position of Regionalist parties towards the EU in the EP is positive across the entire extension of the period of analysis. Before I proceed, it must be noted that the number of regionalist parties in the sample is so small as to almost always be represented by a single party (the Scottish National Party). It is for this reason that the Figure 5.5 depicts data gaps over a significant portion of the period of analysis. This has made it difficult to interpret the data and to carry out accurate generalisations about this party family.

Figure 5.5) Positions of Regionalist Parties towards the EU in the EP (1999 – 2014)



Source: Own calculations.

In the moderately positive cluster of party families, the most favourable towards the EU is the Socialist party family, with a mean position of 0,167. Indeed, existing literature on Socialist and Social Democratic parties in the EU points towards a significant shift in these parties' trajectories: from an earlier phase of scepticism towards what was to become the EU to an eventual full embrace of the project (Holmes & Roder, 2021). Historically, European Social Democratic parties were the political home of the organised working class (Sassoon, 1998). However, with the adoption of so-called Third Way politics²⁰ in the last decades of the 20th century, these parties began a process of 'de-linking' with the organised working class (Howell, 2001; Piazza, 2001) and to soften their commitments to redistributive policies while embracing market neoliberalism, globalisation, and post-materialist values, such as diversity, tolerance, and cosmopolitanism (Mudge, 2018). Political integration at the European level has been seen as being part of this package, which is related to the integration-demarcation cleavage, and by the time that the period of analysis begins these parties had fully embraced it. When the evolution of the Socialist party family's positions towards the EU in the EP during the period of analysis is traced (Figure 5.6), we see that, while firmly placed on the positive side of the anti-/pro-EU divide (with the exception of the

²⁰ Third Way politics were an attempt at synthesis, during the 90s and the early 00s, of the conventional centre-left social democratic model that dominated much of Western Europe during the second half of the 20th century and the centre-right economic policy associated with the neoliberalism of the 80s (see Keman, 2011). Third Way politics was spearheaded by political leaders such as Labour's Tony Blair in the United Kingdom and Social Democratic Party's Gerhard Schröder in Germany.

periods between 09/00 and 09/01 and between 09/07 and 07/08), this party family's position nevertheless tends to fluctuate significantly over time.

The Socialists are closely followed by the Liberals, with a mean position towards the EU of 0,157. It is not surprising to find the Liberals in the pro-EU camp seeing as most of these parties are overwhelmingly organised in the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe supranational alliance, which has historically been pro-EU. Indeed, as Wagner (2011) points out, while being on the right on economic policy²¹, most Liberal parties in Europe tend to place themselves on the GAL (green-alternative-libertarian) side of the divide on cultural issues, which is usually a good predictor of positive positions on EU integration (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). It is noteworthy, however, that when I chart the Liberals' positions towards the EU in the EP, it is possible to observe a significant drop from a generally positive position at the tail end of the period of analysis which coincides with the Eurozone crisis (Figure 5.6). This suggests that parties favouring less economic redistribution began to harden their stance towards the EU precisely when it was facing the most significant demands for said redistribution and solidarity between member states. As discussed further on, this tendency of shifting outlooks towards the EU as the economic crisis worsens is observed in other right-leaning party families.

Among this moderately positive cluster of parties we also find the Christian-Democrats, with a mean position towards the EU of 0,144. As demonstrated by both the historical record and scholarly literature, Christian-Democratic parties were foundational to what was to become the EU. Indeed, among the main features of the founding member states of the EU (Belgium, France, Italy, Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands) there was a predominance of such Christian-Democratic parties. As Hein and Wolkenstein (2021) point out, many of the so-called founding fathers of the European integration process (Konrad Adenauer in West Germany, Alcide De Gasperi in Italy, and Robert Schuman in Luxembourg) were all historical leaders of European Christian Democracy. Moreover, as Kaiser (2007) argues, the transnational networks of Christian Democracy were crucial in shaping the trajectory of the EU supranational integration process from the beginning, steering the project towards subsidiarity, federalism, and liberal political economy. This generally positive outlook towards the EU can be seen in Christian-Democratic parties'

²¹ Which in and of itself is not at odds with further EU integration, given that this often synonymous with the internal market and associated liberalisation of national economies, with some analysts going so far as to describe the EU as a "liberalisation machine" (Streeck, 2014, p. 103).

positions towards the EU in the EP throughout the period of analysis (again, see Figure 5.6). Nevertheless, the tendency we observed in the Liberal parties makes itself felt for the Christian-Democrats as well, albeit to a lesser degree. As time progress and as the economic situation worsens in Europe, Christian-Democrats begin to gradually assume more negative positions on the EU (peaking between 09/13 and 04/14; in other words, towards the end of the Eurozone crisis).

To complete the moderately positive cluster, I now focus on the Green, Conservative, and Agrarian & Centre party families as its remaining constituents: the Greens display a mean position towards the EU of 0,052, the Conservatives have a value of 0,037, and the Agrarian & Centre parties 0,035.

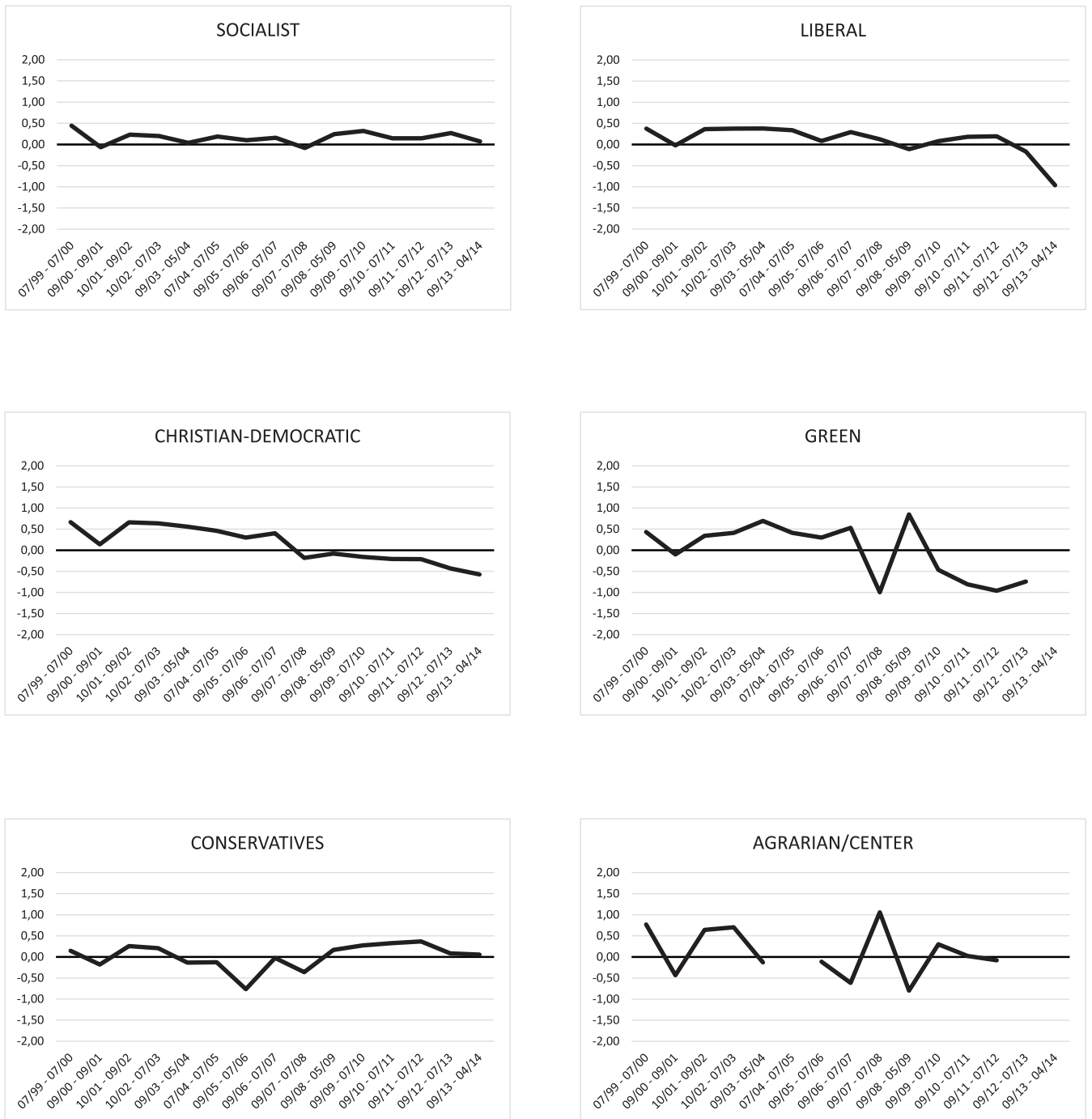
Green parties are possibly the quintessential GAL party family, having emerged and then consolidated around issues dear to the *new politics* wave of the late 20th century (Inglehart, 1977) and thus openly embracing the cosmopolitanism associated with EU integration. However, this party family is very diverse when it comes to left-right alignments, for instance with the German Greens being significantly more liberal on economic issues if compared with the Green Party of England and Wales which are more on the left. This aspect of diversity opens up space for more heterogeneous positions towards the EU based on issues of redistribution, with some parties being more sympathetic to the current direction of EU integration in comparison with others. Indeed, as Figure 5.6 depicts, Green parties' positions on the EU, while mostly placed at positive values during our period of analysis, do tend to be quite erratic throughout this same period, especially at the end of the 6th Term of the EP and over the span of the 7th Term.

Agrarian & Centre parties²², with their loss of prominence as the centre-periphery/urban-rural cleavage has generally faded across Europe with the decline of the influence of landed interests in society (Wagner, 2011), have had to become catch-all centrist parties in order to survive. This significant transformation is conducive to more moderate positions on the EU (Wagner, 2011). Given that the sample of parties features a low number of Agrarian & Centre parties, the exercise of charting their positions towards the EU in the EP – and of subsequently interpreting the results – becomes a challenge. Still, as we can see in Figure 5.6 Agrarian & Centre parties' positions tend to be quite erratic and fluctuate between a

²² As can be seen in Figure 5.6, there are gaps in the position of this party family in some of the years of our period of analysis. This is due to the reduced number of observations for Agrarian & Centre parties in the dataset.

general embrace of the EU and mildly negative positions towards it throughout the period of analysis. Conservative parties, for their part, have also had to moderate their position on the EU, from a more nationalist outlook (when compared with Christian Democracy) to a growing acceptance of EU integration (Wagner, 2011). This can be seen in the data reported in Figure 5.6, which shows that Conservative parties are generally ambivalent towards the EU in the EP during the course of the period under analysis.

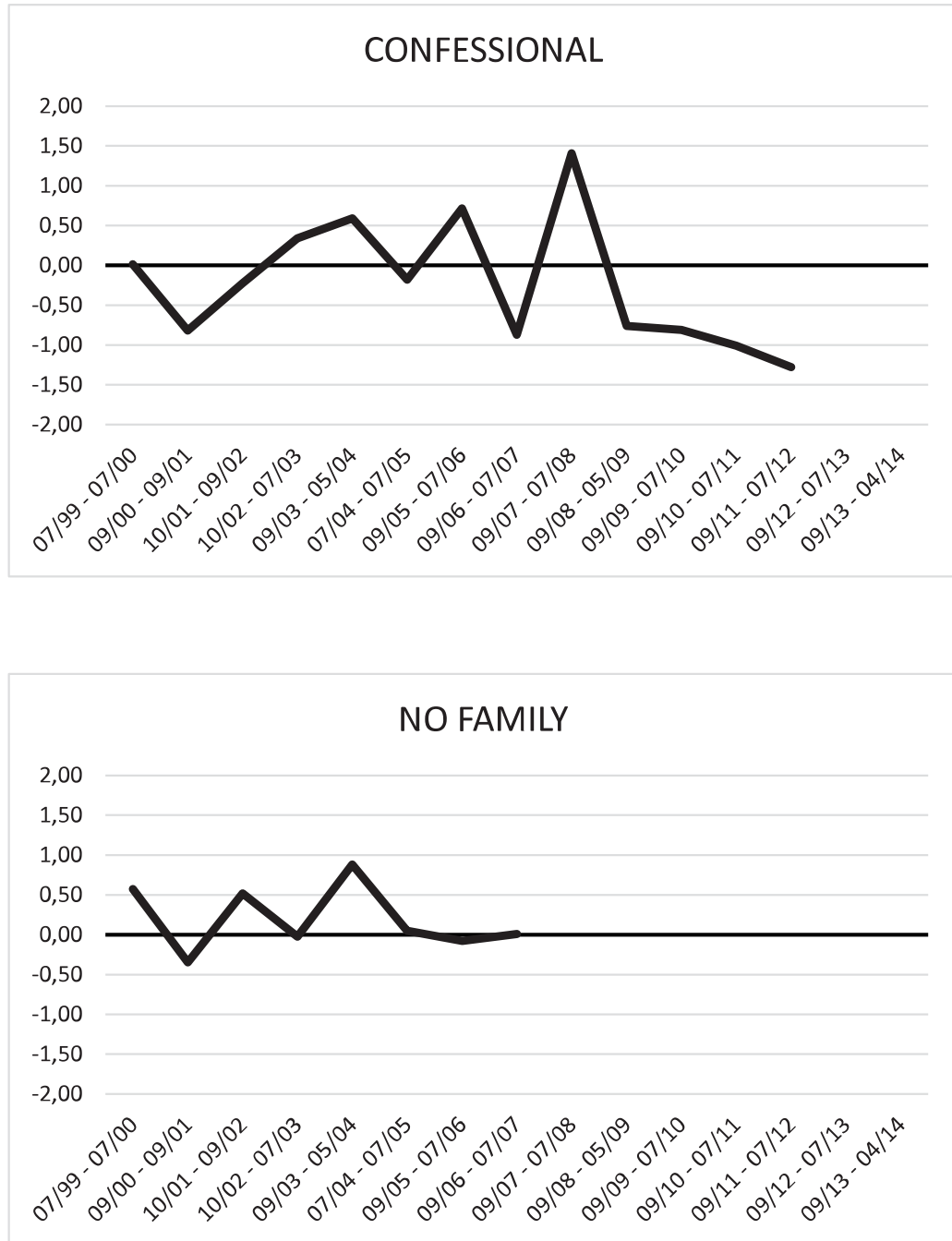
Figure 5.6) Positions of Socialist, Liberal, Christian-Democratic, Green, Conservative, and Agrarian/Centre parties towards the EU in the EP over time (1999 – 2014)



Source: Own calculations.

The last cluster of party families, the moderately negative, is composed of Confessional parties, such as the Reformed Political Party from the Netherlands or the League of Polish Families, with a mean position towards the EU in the EP of -0,219, and a sub-cluster of parties which are difficult to categorise using traditional party classifications (the experts at the CHES have labelled this group as “No Family”) and which if taken together attain a mean position of -0,077. Confessional parties have not secularised to the same degree as Christian Democrats and the Conservatives have ever since the historical church-state cleavage in politics began to fade across Europe (Wagner, 2011). These parties have thus maintained more of their TAN (traditional-authoritarian-nationalist) outlook, which can explain their more negative positions towards the EU (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). For both “No Family” and Confessional parties, the exercise of charting their positions towards the EU in the EP is a difficult task given the reduced number of parties in the dataset for these families. With this in mind, then, the results reported in Figure 5.7 depicts a quite erratic behaviour in terms of the positions these parties articulate, with Confessional parties in particular assuming very negative positions towards the EU during the 7th Term of the EP.

Figure 5.7) Positions of Confessional and "No Family" parties towards the EU in the EP over time (1999 – 2014)²³



Source: Own calculations.

²³ Figure 5.7 displays gaps for both of these party families during the period of analysis. This is due to the reduced number of observations in our dataset for each of them.

Through an ANOVA, I established that the differences in position towards the EU described above between party families are statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level²⁴. But, while the ANOVA can tell us whether or not the differences are significant, it does not tell us exactly in which party families those differences lie. As such, I conducted a Tukey's test to ascertain which specific party family or families are distinct in their positions towards the EU. The results of this test indicate that it is the Radical Left, to a greater degree, and the Radical Right, to a slightly lesser degree, that are driving these differences.

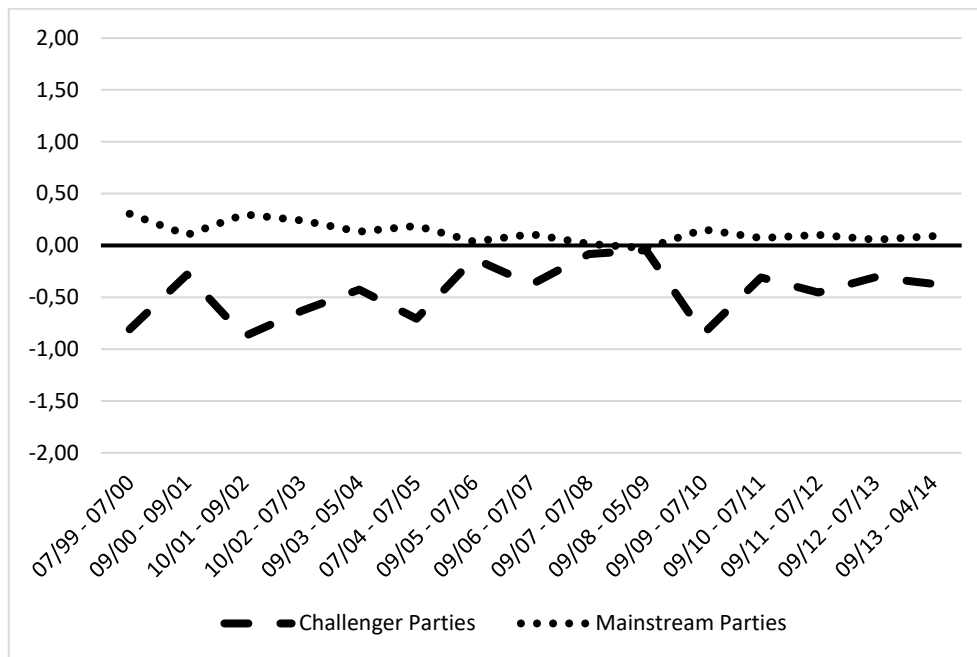
5.1.3) Challenger versus mainstream parties on EU politicisation

Beyond depicting how the positions towards the EU vary over time for different party families, I am also interested in surveying how the positions of challenger parties have evolved during the period of analysis in comparison with mainstream parties. As explained before, I created a dummy variable to identify challenger parties by concatenating RRP, RLP, and the Green parties that have not previously held any executive duties (de Vries & Hobolt, 2020; Hobolt & Tilley, 2016). This operationalisation leaves out, for instance, the Greens in Germany and the Freedom Party of Austria, despite these parties being classified as Green and Radical Right respectively. The theoretical expectation is that such challenger parties tend to adopt more negative positions towards the EU when compared with more mainstream parties. As we can see from Figure 5.8, the positions of challenger parties towards the EU are generally negative, which contrasts with the aggregate ambivalent positions of mainstream parties. Additionally, the latter's positions are much more stable than the positions of challenger parties (which tend to fluctuate). Still, it is noteworthy to see that between 2007 and 2009, both challengers and mainstream parties converged at around the mid-point after a period where the former began to soften their positions towards the EU in their EP speeches. This convergence was to be short-lived, however. As depicted in Figure 5.8, in 2010 challenger parties resumed their more critical stance towards the EU as the Eurozone crisis unfolded. At face value these findings are congruent with what was posited in chapter 3, in which I argued that challenger parties have been able to exploit the strategic incentives that result from the absence of political alternatives concerning the EU coming from mainstream parties. When I compare the mean position towards the EU between

²⁴ F-test results: 8,34.

challenger and mainstream parties, I find that the differences are statistically different at the $p < 0,001$ level.

Figure 5.8) Positions of challenger and mainstream parties towards the EU in the EP over time (1999 – 2014)



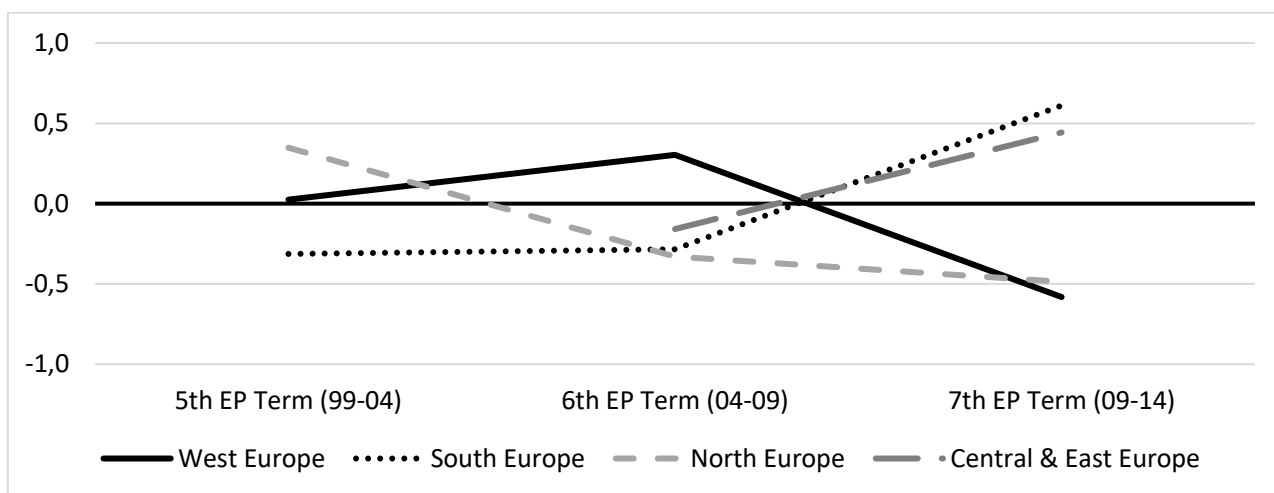
Source: Own calculations.

5.1.4) Regional differences in EU politicisation

The final dimension of interest in this descriptive approach involves the regional dynamics associated with EU politicisation. These patterns are important because, as previously mentioned, the EP brings together, within the same institutional framework of its Rules of Procedure, different political parties from distinct societies and polities. For instance, extant literature has demonstrated considerable differences pertaining to the dynamics of political conflict on the issue of EU integration between countries from the post-Soviet space in comparison with other regions of the EU (Marks et al., 2006). Regional differences also elicit issues of economic redistribution within the EU, particularly the distinctions between creditor and debtor member states of the EU budget – which has often been a source of political conflict in the EU (Silva et al., 2022) – and the distinctions between Bailout and non-Bailout countries during the economic crisis of the Eurozone. Figure 5.9 charts the simple mean positions of parties towards the EU in the EP across the regions of

the EU (Western, Southern, Northern, and Central and Eastern Europe²⁵) by EP Term. This was done in order to increase the interpretability of the findings since the yearly values were too erratic.

Figure 5.9) Regional differences in position towards the EU in the EP by Term



Source: Own calculations.

As we interpret the Figure, it becomes apparent that there are notable differences in position towards the EU by regional blocs. My results indicate that during the 5th EP (1999 – 2004) negative positions towards the EU were most intensely expressed by parties from Southern Europe, while during the 6th Term of the EP (2004 – 2009) on average it was only parties from Western Europe that had positive positions towards the EU. There was a considerable shake-up during the 7th EP (2009 – 2014), however, in which parties from Western and Northern Europe were on average much more negative towards the EU than parties from other regions while parties from both Southern and Central & Eastern Europe became on average much more positive towards the EU between the 6th and the 7th Terms. It must be noted that all such differences by Term of the EP are statistically significant at the 0.001 level. Taking the period of analysis as a whole, on average parties hailing from Western Europe tend to be slightly more negative when compared with their counterparts in

²⁵ Western Europe: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, United Kingdom. Southern Europe: Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain. Northern Europe: Denmark, Finland, Sweden. Central & Eastern Europe: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia.

other EU regions. Table 5.2 summarises the results of the regional differences for 1999 to 2014.

Table 5.2) Regional differences in position towards the EU in the EP overtime (1999 – 2014)

	Mean	SD	<i>n</i> *
West Europe	-0,083	0,950	501
South Europe	0,017	1,189	259
North Europe	-0,021	0,907	116
Central & East Europe	0,196	0,846	180

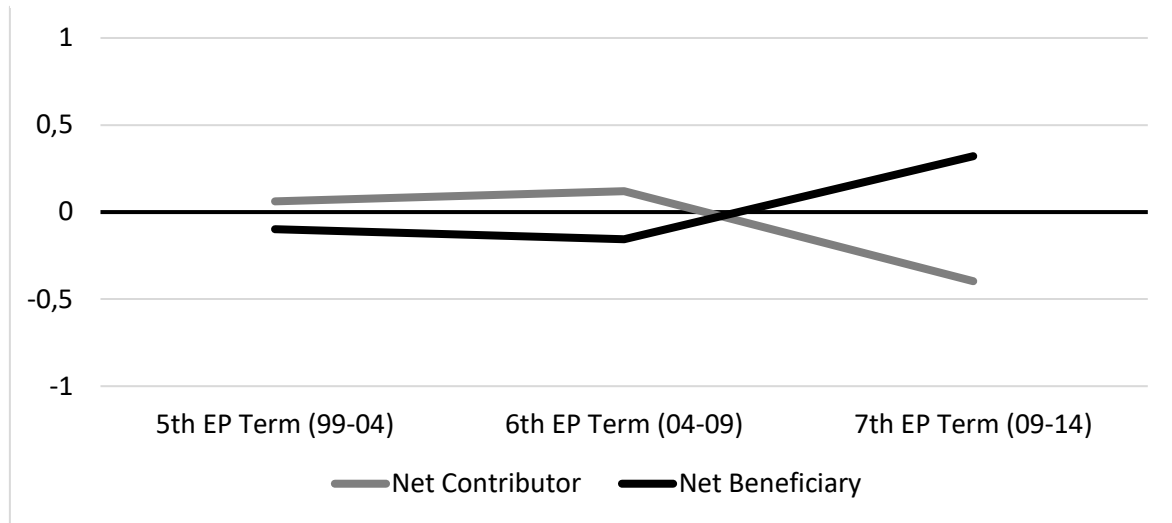
*The *n* stands for parties by year.

Source: Own calculations

Overall, the results show considerable longitudinal changes in party positions towards the EU at the regional level. However, what can explain these differences? I posit that they can be explained by redistributive questions within the EU. As time moves on, we observe that it is the parties from the wealthier regions of the EU (the West and the North) that begin to assume more negative positions towards the EU, while the inverse phenomenon occurs in the economic periphery of the EU. This becomes especially evident during the 7th Term of the EP (2009 - 2014), during which the European continent was hit by the effects of the global financial crisis of 2008, which, in turn, intensified the redistributive dimension of EU politicisation.

In order to more fully explore this proposition, I classified each of the member states in our dataset according to their statuses towards the EU's budget, either as net contributor or net beneficiaries of it (see the methodological chapter for the operationalisation of this variable). Figure 5.10 reports the results of the exercise.

Figure 5.10) Differences in positions towards the EU between net contributor and net beneficiary member states by EP Term



Source: Own calculations.

In general, the results reported in Figure 5.10 are consistent with the scenario displayed in Figure 5.9, which lends credence to the relevance of the redistributive explanation for the regional differences in the politicisation of the EU. Indeed, during both the 5th (1999 – 2004) and the 6th (2004 – 2009) Terms of the EP, it is not the parties from net contributor countries that tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU but rather those from net beneficiary member states. While the differences are not statistically significant during the 5th EP Term, they are during the 6th at the 0.01 level. This suggests an increase in EU politicisation, by way of which demands for more redistribution from less affluent member states are being articulated. By the time of the 7th (2009 – 2014) Term of the EP, however, on average it is parties from net contributor member states that assume negative positions towards the EU compared with those that are net beneficiaries, and these differences are statistically significant at the 0.001 level. Taking the period of analysis as a whole, there is little to distinguish parties from member states that are net contributors to the EU's budget from those that are net beneficiaries since the differences are not statistically significant. Table 5.3 reports these results.

Table 5.3) Differences in position towards the EU between net contributor and net beneficiary member states

	Mean	SD	<i>n</i> *
Net Contributor	0,059	0,955	555
Net Beneficiary	0,057	1,041	499

*The *n* stands for parties by year.

Source: Own calculations.

If, at an earlier time in the period of analysis, parties from countries making demands on the EU's budget were assuming negative positions towards the EU, once the economic crisis of the Eurozone began to unfold this situation was reversed. Thus, parties from the economic periphery of the EU, on average, quite markedly changed their tune during the Eurozone crisis and began to adopt less contentious positions towards the Union while parties from wealthier economies, feeling the strain that the crisis was exerting on their budgets because of being forced to help the crisis-stricken member states, began to assume more critical positions.

The effects of the Great Recession on the EU as a whole began to be felt specifically during the 7th Term of the EP and, not surprisingly, hit the most indebted member states of the Southern periphery of the Eurozone hardest. Such was the context for the most significant political events of the period: the financial Bailouts of Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. Given the scope and the gravity of the crisis of the Eurozone for EU politicisation (Börzel & Risse, 2018; Statham & Trezz, 2015), my expectation is that there be significant differences among this set of countries regarding the positions adopted by their political parties during the crisis. As such, I created a dummy variable to distinguish between member states subjected to Bailouts during the Eurozone crisis and those that were not.

Indeed, as reported in Table 5.4, the mean EU position for parties coming from countries in economic crisis is significantly higher than the rest, suggesting on one hand that parties from some richer member states began to resent the way the EU's institutions dealt with the crisis and with the more indebted countries while, on the other hand, on average the parties from the Bailed-out member states remained pro-EU. These differences between the two groups of countries are statistically significant at the 0.001 level, indicating that the crisis of the Eurozone had a meaningful impact on the way parties positioned themselves on European integration.

Table 5.4) The Eurozone Bailout and parties' positions towards the EU in the EP

Eurozone Bailout Country?	Mean	SD	<i>n</i> *
No	-0,083	0,976	304
Yes	0,342	1,008	72

*The *n* stands for parties by year.

Source: Own calculations.

To conclude the descriptive section of the analysis of EU politicisation in the EP, I found no statistically significant differences in the intensity of EU politicisation in the EP over time either by year or by parliamentary term. Nevertheless, I did observe a statistically significant relationship between party family and positions towards the EU. It is RLPs, to a greater degree, and RRP, to a lesser degree, that tend to adopt more negative positions towards the EU in comparison with other party families. The same pattern was observed between challenger parties and their more mainstream rivals. Finally, this preliminary analysis revealed significant differences by region and by position on the EU's budget in specific Terms of the EP – which suggests a growing relevance of the redistributive dimension over time, at least as it is expressed regionally. This is especially true during the 7th Term of the EP (2009 – 2014), during which the difference between member states subjected to a Bailout and those that were not turned out to be very much statistically relevant. The patterns of EU politicisation uncovered by this descriptive analysis will be further explored in the following section of the chapter.

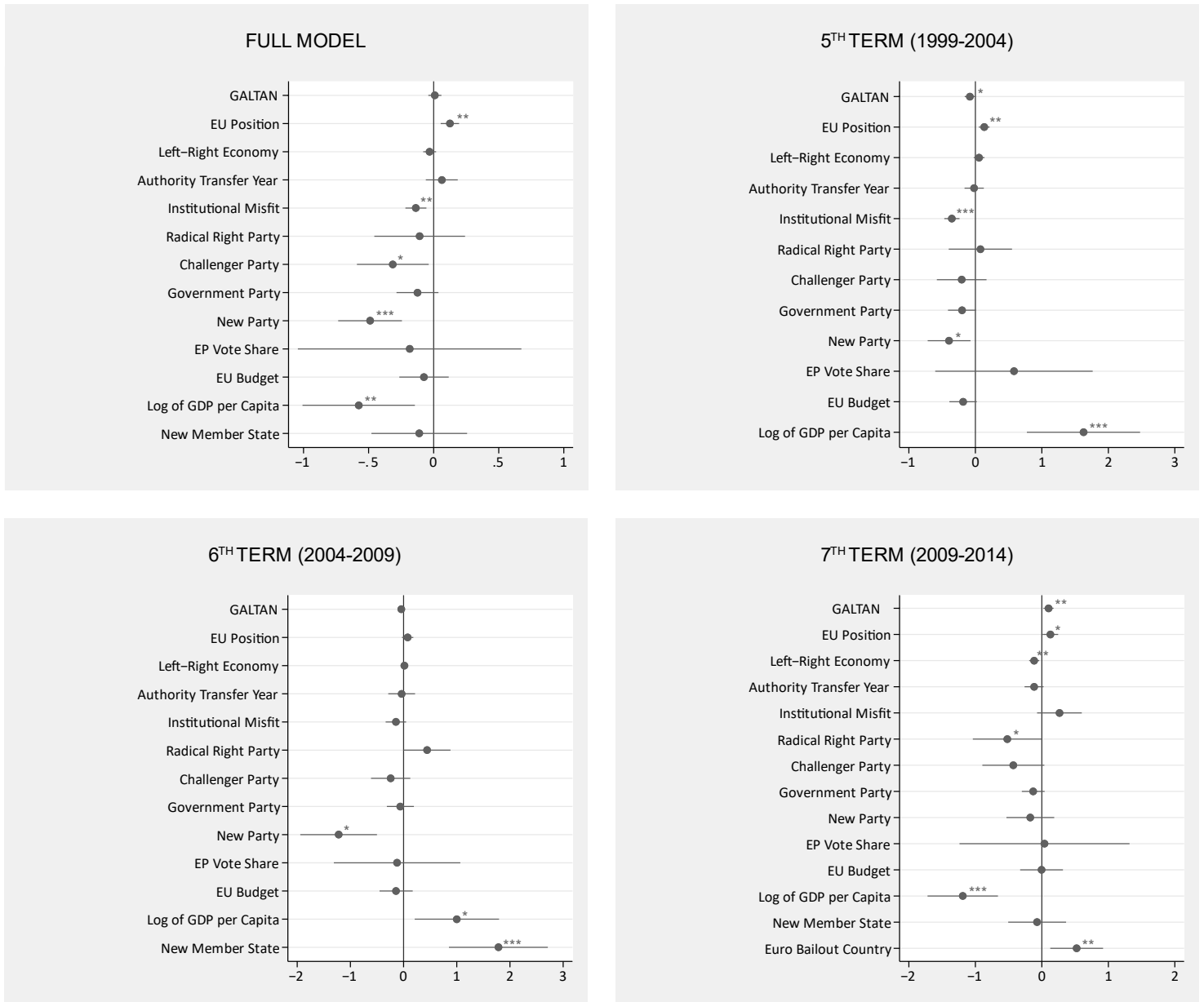
5.2) Explaining the politicisation of the EU in the EP

The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to testing the research hypotheses established in chapter 3 and Figure 5.11²⁶ reports the results of this empirical exercise. The full model concerns the totality of the period of analysis and explains the general trends of the politicisation of the EU in EP speeches, from the 5th EP starting in 1999 to the end of the 7th in 2014. The subsequent models concern each of the EP's Terms individually and are aimed at exploring the variations resulting from the different political set-ups of each parliament. Given this mode of presenting the results of the statistical models, I consider a hypothesis to be strongly supported if the relationship between the dependent and independent variable in question is statistically significant in the full model and at least one EP term model; or in

²⁶ For the full regression table see Table 12.1 in the appendix 6.

three of the four EP term models. A hypothesis is considered weakly supported if a significant statistical relationship is found in at least one model. And finally, it is rejected in cases where no significant statistical relationship is established in any of the models. For instance, if an independent variable is statistically significant in the full, the 5th, and the 6th EP Term models it is strongly supported. The same occurs if its statistical significance was restricted to the full and the 7th Term models. However, if statistically significant relationships are only observed in the full or in the 5th and 7th Terms models, the hypothesis will be considered as weakly supported.

Figure 5.11) Explaining the politicisation of the EU in the EP between 1999 and 2014



* $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$

Source: Own calculations.

Before moving on to the discussion of the findings of the hypotheses testing, a note pertaining to the R-squared values (i.e., the ability of the independent variables to explain the variation of the dependent variable in our regression models) is in order. The R-squared

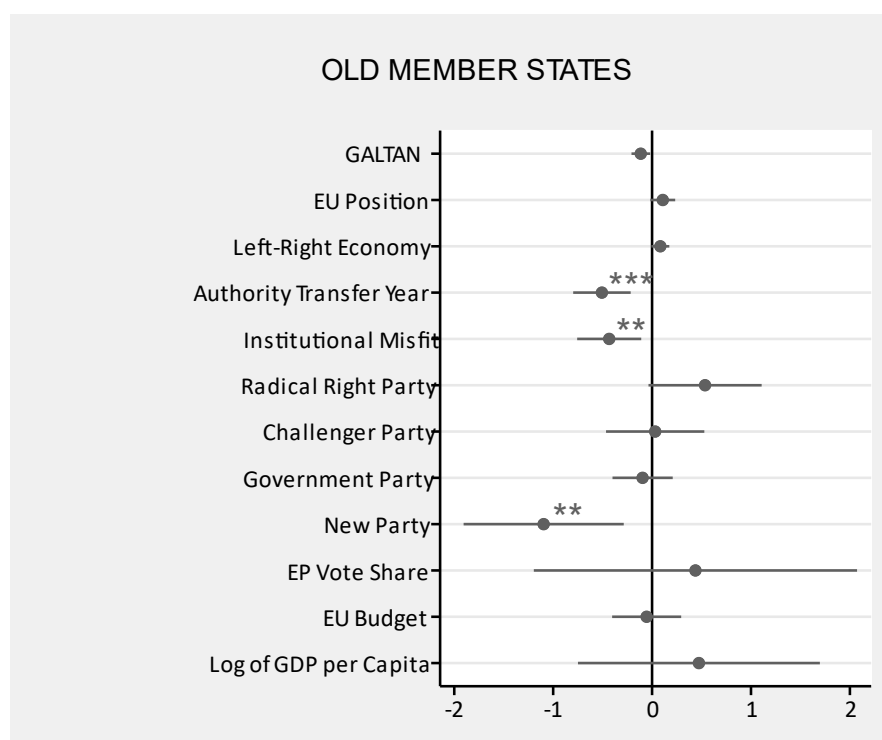
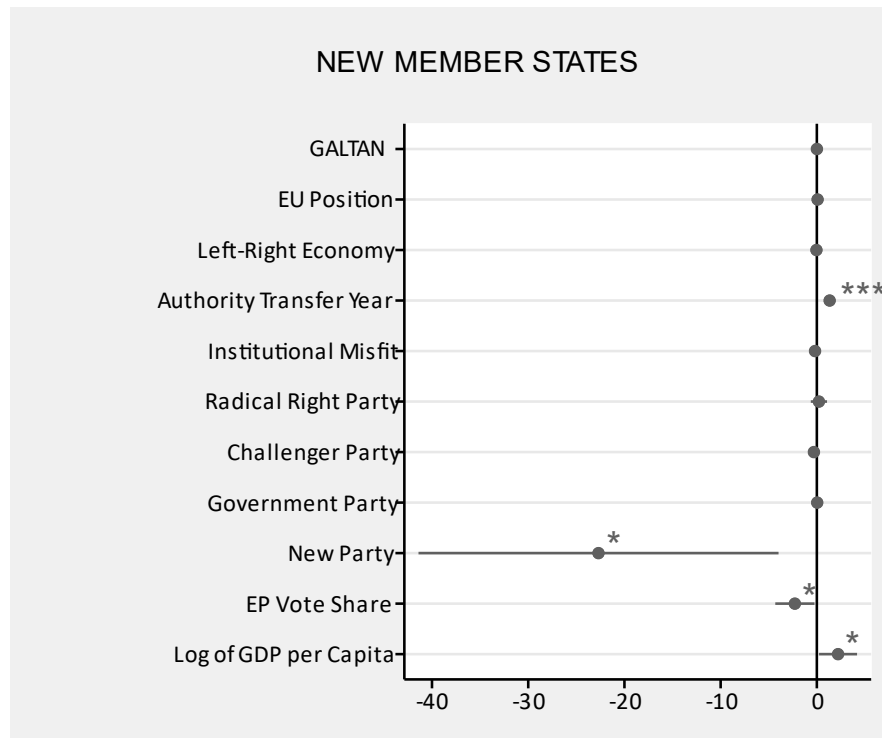
value²⁷ for the general model is fairly low, standing at approximately 10%, while the model for the 5th Term of the EP is markedly higher, at 40%. The R-squared value for the 6th Term is lower than for the 5th, at 15%, but then it moderately picks up for the 7th Term, ending up at 23%. While the low explanatory power of the general model can be justified by the fact that the model encompasses a significant extent of time and number of observations, the drop observed between the 5th and the 6th Terms is less so and thus worth looking at more closely. As reviewed in section 2.4, during the 6th Term the Rules of Procedure of the EP were significantly changed with the strengthening of the powers of the President of the EP and I had posited that this had led to a substantial tempering of political conflict in the chamber (Brack et al., 2015). Additionally, between these two Terms of the EP, the EU club was significantly expanded with the accession of new member states from the Eastern and Central regions of Europe between 2004 and 2007 – the so-called Eastern Enlargement.

In order to find out whether this event was introducing unexpected nuances to the regression models, I decided to carry out further tests in which the new member states were isolated from the old over the course of the 6th Term. The results of these tests are reported in Figure 5.12²⁸ and they clearly show that this particular regression model is much better able to explain the variation in EU politicisation between new members in comparison with the old – note the distinct R-squared values from one model to another (50% for the new member state’s model and 22% for the older member states’ model). However, at the same time, one should try not to overestimate these findings since there is a considerable difference between the number of observations in each of the models (78 for the new member states versus 244 for the old), which likely contributes to such distinct R-squared values.

²⁷ See previous footnote.

²⁸ For the full regression table see Table 12.3 in the appendix 6.

Figure 5.12) Explaining the politicisation of the EU in the EP in new member states during the 6th EP Term



* $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$

Source: Own calculations.

5.2.1) *Parties' positions on cultural and identity issues as a predictor of EU politicisation in the EP*

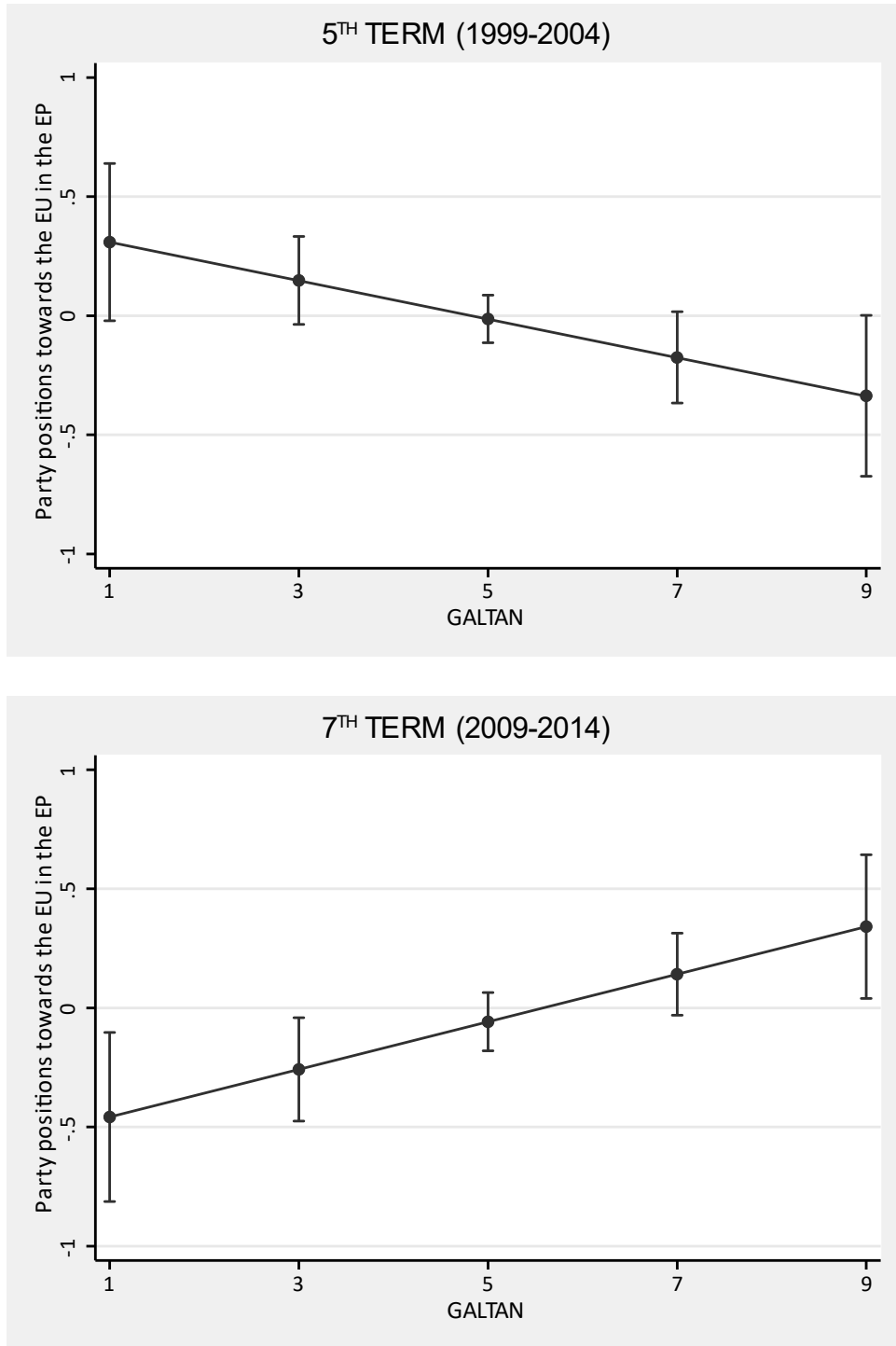
As discussed in chapter 3, scholars have come to associate the increasingly politicised status of the EU with the development of a new political cleavage in post-industrial societies: the integration-demarcation cleavage (Grande & Kriesi, 2012; Helbling & Jungkunz, 2020; Teney et al., 2013). For subscribers to the integration-demarcation cleavage thesis, political competition has increasingly become structured around the conflict between the preferences (and the political expression thereof) of the winners and the losers of globalisation. The EU integration project is the concrete expression of this trend in most of the European continent. This has led me to posit that *parties with more conservative positions on cultural and identity issues (TAN) tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties* (H1). In order to assess this relationship, I use the CHES classification of parties on the GALTAN spectrum (on which GAL stands for green, alternative, and liberal socio-political values, while TAN represents traditionalism, authoritarianism, and nationalism).

As Figure 5.11 displays, the results are mixed. For the full model the GALTAN variable is not a predictor of EU politicisation in the EP, and neither is it for the model dealing exclusively with the 6th Term – not even when we separate the new member states from the old (Figure 5.12). Even so, this variable becomes statistically significant in the models concerning the 5th ($p < 0,05$) and 7th Terms of the EP ($p < 0,01$), albeit in different directions (as seen in predicted margins plotted in Figure 5.13). Between 1999 and 2004, we find that TAN parties tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU and GAL parties the opposite. This is in line with the theoretical expectations which claim that parties with more regressive values along cultural and identitarian lines tend to see the EU as an engine of globalisation, diluting national identities and borders (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). We then see a reversal in the years between 2009 and 2014; during this period, it is instead the GAL parties that become more likely to contest EU integration in EP speeches, which very much goes against the theoretical expectations. These results remain constant even when I run the models without controlling for other party and country factors²⁹.

²⁹ See Table 12.2 in the appendix 6.

The analysis indicate that the first hypothesis is only weakly supported, since we do not see that, in general, parties with more culturally conservative positions are necessarily more critical towards the EU in EP speeches; with the notable exception of the 5th Term of the EP. In fact, what the empirical results surprisingly show is that GAL parties do not shy away from assuming negative positions towards the EU in their EP speeches, as observed during the 7th Term of the EP. This result complexifies the theoretical assumptions of the EU politicisation literature which tends to portray the relationship between cultural/identitarian values and the politicisation of the EU in a unidirectional manner. Overall, then, the findings reported here seemingly paint a somewhat richer picture than first anticipated.

Figure 5.13) Predictive margins for parties' GALTAN position



Source: Own calculations.

5.2.2) *Parties' positions on national and democratic sovereignty as a predictor of EU politicisation in the EP*

The second hypothesis relates to the topic of the EU's democratic mechanisms and architecture and the issues of national and democratic sovereignty that it elicits. As asserted in chapter 3, the institutional aspects of the EU as a polity have been a source of controversy that some political actors have picked up on to politicise the EU. According to this account, the EU's institutions lack conventional means of democratic accountability and responsiveness. Scholars, commentators, and politicians have labelled this as the EU's democratic deficit (see Kratochvíl & Sychra, 2019 for an overview), with some going so far as to argue that the EU was explicitly constructed to shield the policy-making process from the pressures of majoritarian democracy (Mair, 2013). This democratic deficit, and subsequent inability of the EU's institutions to effectively accommodate popular pressures has been exploited by Eurosceptic forces and challenger parties, which in turn have agitated Eurosceptic attitudes in the public by mobilising arguments of national and democratic sovereignty. From this discussion, I posited that *parties with more sovereigntists positions tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties* (H2). In order to operationalise the dimensions related to the issues of national and democratic sovereignty, I relied once again on the CHES data; and, more specifically, on parties' EU positions, which serves as a proxy to position political parties on these questions.

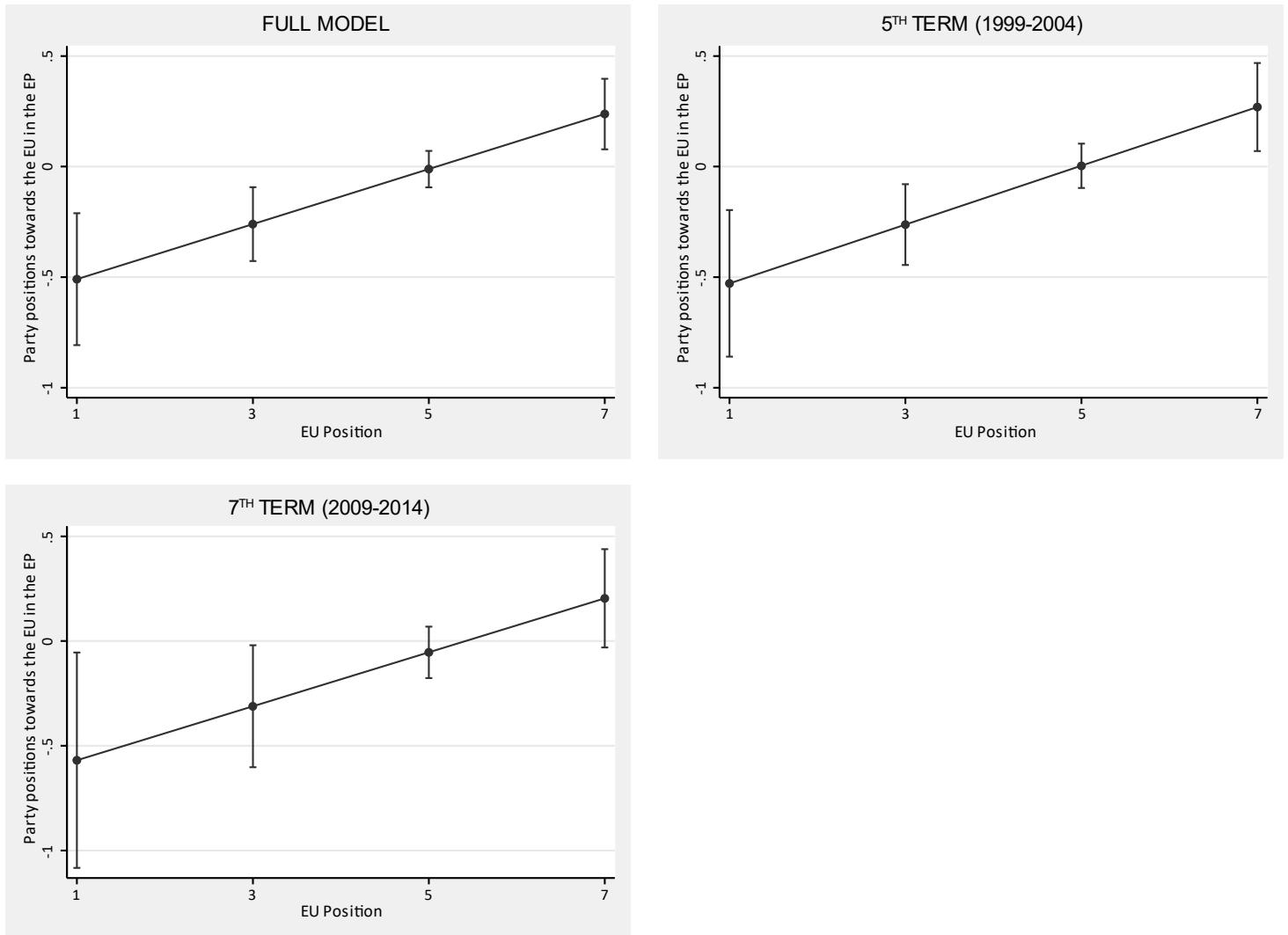
As shown in Figure 5.11 there is a significant statistical relationship between political parties' overall attitudes towards the EU and their tendencies to contest them in the EP in the full model ($p < 0,01$), in the model which restricts the analysis to the 5th Term of the EP ($p < 0,01$) (1999 – 2004), and – albeit to a lesser degree – in the model for the 7th Term ($p < 0,05$) (2009 – 2014). The notable exception occurs during the 6th Term (2004 – 2009), during which no statistically significant association is established; not even when I disaggregate the new member states from the old for this parliamentary term. The results for the models that do not take into consideration control variables follow the same pattern (with the exception of the one that restricts the analysis to 6th Term, which becomes statistically significant³⁰). As can be seen in the predicted margins reported in Figure 5.14, more

³⁰ See Table 12.2 in the appendix 6.

Eurosceptic parties tend to adopt more negative positions in the EP speeches while euro-enthusiastic parties tend to express more positive positions. These results show that the EP does not act as a moderating institution in parties' EU politicisation, as previously suggested, and that parties with clearly delineated positions, either for or against the EU, do not fail to express them in the EP. Still, one observation that stands out is the decreasing explanatory power of the parties' overall positions towards the EU regarding their tendency to politicise the EU in the EP. This can perhaps be explained by the growing complexity of the EU as a political issue and as it gets progressively entangled with other issues such as, for instance, immigration (Hoeglinger, 2016). Indeed, in the 7th Term model, the GALTAN outlook of political parties is a much stronger predictor of their EU politicisation, and the same applies for parties' positions on economic redistribution.

In general, the results of the analysis strongly support the hypothesis that parties with more sovereigntist positions contest the EU in their EP speeches, which is in line with observations made elsewhere that indicate a growing relevance of the pro- vs. anti-EU dimension in the EP (see Hix et al., 2019; Otjes & van der Veer, 2016) – though, unlike the present study, these studies look at voting patterns and not political speech.

Figure 5.14) Predictive margins for parties' overall EU positions



Source: Own calculations.

5.2.3) Parties' left-right positions on the economy as a predictor of EU politicisation in the EP

The third hypothesis claims that there is a positive association between parties' EU politicisation and their positions on questions of economic redistribution. As noted earlier, the architecture of the Eurozone has exacerbated regional disparities within the EU and widened the gap between surplus countries in the Centre and North and deficit countries in the South (Hall, 2018). As Streeck (2017, p. 174) argues, with the arrival of the Euro and the Eurozone what was once a mere distinction in economic regimes has grown into a "quantitative vertical inequality" between Euro countries. In the context of the Eurozone

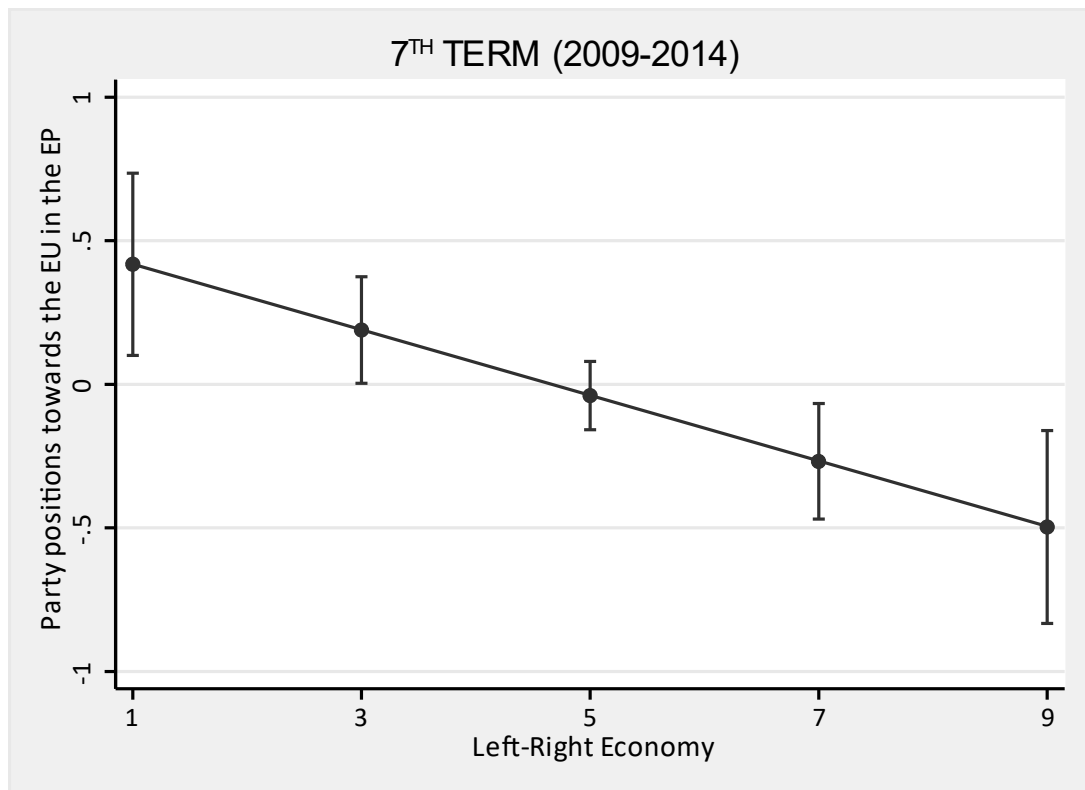
crisis this inequality and its consequences have intensified the demand for redistributive policies and transnational solidarity in the Southern region of the EU, while in the EU's Western and Northern core the crisis has mobilised Eurosceptics against such policies (Copelovitch et al., 2016). The results: on one hand, domestic polarisation, and the rise of anti-austerity political parties demanding more redistribution and mobilising citizens on the basis of solidarity and distribution of resources within the EU. This discussion lead me to posit that *parties in favour of more economic redistribution tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties* (H3). To operationalise these dimensions of political conflict, I relied on variables of parties' positions from the CHES dataset and, more specifically, on their Left-Right positions on economic issues.

As Figure 5.11 illustrates, the outlook of parties on economic issues generally plays a minor role in explaining EU politicisation over the period of analysis, since for most of it the variable is not statistically significant. There is, however, one notable exception. During the 7th Term of the EP (2009 – 2014), which coincides with the Eurozone crisis, a party's Left-Right positioning on economic issues is statistically associated with its EU politicisation ($p < 0,01$). These findings are not surprising since during this specific Term of the EP the EU went through significant economic challenges associated with the overall crisis of the Eurozone, which strained the EU's institutional capacity and exacerbated the inequalities between and within the EU's member states. However, as the predicted margins reported in the upcoming Figure 5.15 indicate, negative positions towards the EU are not associated with parties that favour more economic redistribution, as was initially expected, but rather with parties that are against such policies. Despite the fact that the analysis of the substantial meaning of MEP's speeches in the EP is outside of the scope of this research, I can speculate that right-wing parties in the EP are here reacting against the EU's response to the financial crisis of the Eurozone and its redistributive dimensions. In fact, as seen earlier in the descriptive analysis section of this chapter, right-leaning party families such the Christian-Democrats and especially the Liberals began to assume negative positions towards the EU during the 7th Term of the EP, after having gone through the previous period with a generally positive outlook towards EU integration.

In sum, the third hypothesis has to be rejected since the link between EU politicisation and parties' preferences on economic redistribution goes against my theoretical expectations.

Parties who rally for more economic redistribution do not politicise the EU to a greater degree than others, and the analysis indicates that moments of serious economic and financial strain (such as during the 7th Term of the EP) actually activate more negative positions in the EP’s plenary speeches of parties who seek less redistribution, not more.

Figure 5.15) Predictive margins for parties’ left-Right positions on economic issues



Source: Own calculations.

5.2.4) *The Radical Right and EU politicisation*

According to the literature surveyed in chapter 3 of this thesis, RRP are the main actors driving EU politicisation. These parties have proven themselves very capable of capturing the growing Eurosceptic sentiment among the perceived losers of globalisation through mobilisation strategies that emphasise an unambiguous Eurosceptic position based on a cultural/identitarian framing of the political conflict over the EU’s constitutive issues (Grande & Hutter, 2016b). Such a framing, which at its most basic elevates cultural values over material interests, crosscuts the heterogeneous economic conditions of the aforementioned ‘losers’ and thus provides a clear and solid basis for their mobilisation (Grande & Kriesi, 2012; Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Rooduijn, 2015). Given this, H4 posited

that *Radical Right parties tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties*. To test this hypothesis, I rely mostly on the party family classification of the CHES dataset, and in PopuList for cases where no information is available in CHES.

As shown by the results in Figure 5.11 the only statistically significant relationship between the Radical Right and negative positions towards the EU is observed in the model related to the 7th Term of the EP ($p < 0,05$), suggesting that the role played by the Radical Right in EU politicisation might have been overstated, at least as it plays out within the EU's institutions. The regression models that do not account for controlling variables show similar results. A minor difference, however, is noted in the 6th Term; here we find that not being a RRP is a statistically significant predictor of EU politicisation ($p < 0,05$)³¹, which is basically an inversion of the results of the 7th Term's model. Given these results, this hypothesis is only weakly supported since the rise of the Radical Right as an insurgent force for the politicisation of the EU in the EP is a recent phenomenon and one that only really manifested itself over the course of the 7th Term of the EP, which coincided with the Eurozone crisis and the earlier stages of the migrant crisis, which suggests that such parties are more likely to contest the EU during periods of crisis.

5.2.5) *Challenger parties and EU politicisation*

The fifth hypothesis deals with the role played by challenger parties in the politicisation of the EU. The post-functionalist account of the politicisation of the EU posits that the integration process has developed without much input from regular citizens across its member states (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). Mainstream political parties in the EU have largely converged on the issue (which is shown by the data reported in Figure 5.8), essentially denying citizens a political alternative to EU integration. This has developed in tandem with a growing resentment of the EU, particularly in citizens from the EU's core countries (those in Western Europe and Northern Europe). The situation as such presents itself as a veritable window of opportunity for challenger parties, which have sought to increase their standing and fill the void left by mainstream political parties by explicitly challenging the political consensus via an overt politicisation of the EU (Hobolt & Tilley, 2016). Bearing this in mind, I posit that *challenger parties tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP*

³¹ See Table 12.2 in the appendix 6.

speeches in comparison with other parties (H5). To test this hypothesis, I created a dummy variable that classifies parties according to their status as either challenger parties or not.

As shown by the results in Figure 5.11, there is a statistically significant association between challenger parties and negative position-taking on the EU in EP speeches, but this association is only present in the model spanning the whole period of analysis ($p < 0,05$), however, which weakly supports this hypothesis. Yet it must be noted that when I run the statistical models without control variables the challenger party dimension loses all of its explanatory power for both the whole period and for each individual Term of the EP³².

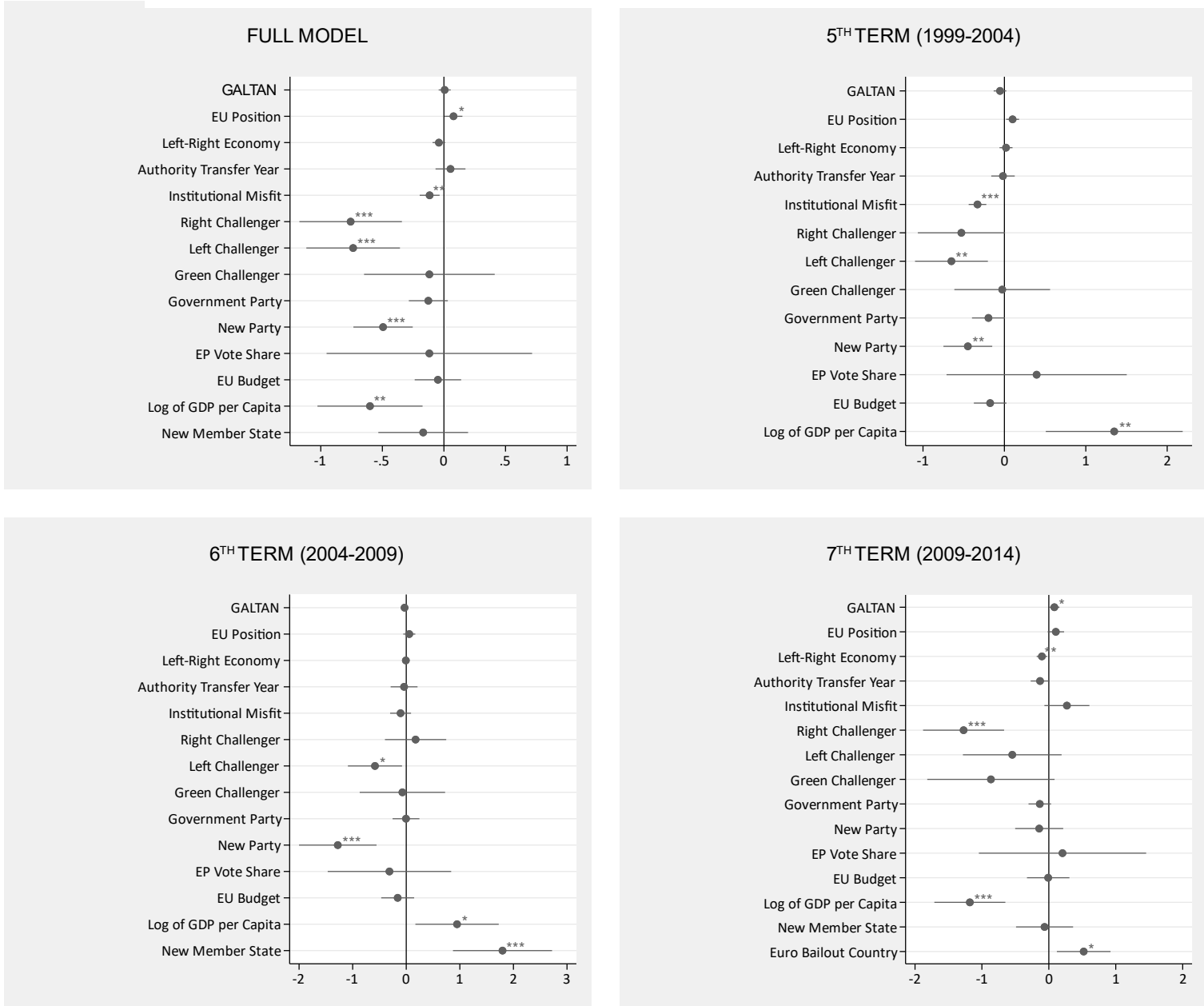
To explore these results further, following Hobolt and Tilley's (2016) strategy, I disaggregated the challenger variable into three distinct types of challenger parties: right ($n=58$), left ($n=108$), and green ($n=22$). Figure 5.16³³ presents the results of the linear regression with the disaggregated challenger party variable³⁴.

³² See Table 12.2 in the appendix 6.

³³ For the full regression table see Table 11.5 in appendix 6.

³⁴ The Radical Right party variable was removed from these models to avoid issues of collinearity with the Right Challenger variable. See appendix 5.

Figure 5.16) Testing the disaggregated operationalisation of challenger party variable



* $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$

Source: Own calculations.

First, as the results clearly demonstrate, there is a strong statistically significant association between negative EU positions and both right ($p < 0,001$) and left challenger ($p < 0,001$) parties, but not for green challenger parties. The regression models which disregard control variables yield largely similar results³⁵. This is to be expected, seeing as

³⁵ See Table 12.6 in the appendix 6.

euroscepticism is more often than not the purview of parties on the edges of the Left-Right spectrum (even if for radically different reasons, as I have already discussed). Second, both right and left challenger parties are assuming negative positions towards the EU in distinct periods. This suggests the intervention of exogenous factors that activate different strategic incentives. When focussing on the models that segment the period of analysis into the distinct Terms of the EP, for instance, we note that the right-wing challenger parties only assume negative positions towards the EU at statistically significant levels between 2009 and 2014 ($p < 0,001$), precisely during the tumultuous years of the crisis of the Eurozone (akin to what we already observed when I tested the Radical Right research hypothesis) and in the early stages of the migrant crisis. EU politicisation from left-wing challenger parties is visible over a longer period of time, between 1999 – 2004 ($p < 0,01$) and 2004 – 2009 ($p < 0,05$), and one which includes the period of the eastward territorial expansion of the political reach of the EU and debates on important institutional reforms (such as the introduction of the Euro and the European Constitution). Overall, the statistical results with the disaggregated challenger party variable strongly support the hypothesis and suggest that further research on the role of challenger parties in the politicisation of the EU should be careful to differentiate between the ideological backgrounds of different challenger parties.

5.2.6) The transfer of political authority to the supranational level and the politicisation of the EU

The next hypothesis tests whether there is an association between the politicisation of the EU and the transfer of political authority from the member state level to the EU's supranational level (De Wilde et al., 2016; De Wilde & Zürn, 2012; Grande & Hutter, 2016a, 2016b). Previous studies have shown that this process of delegation can destabilise fundamental political questions, and ultimately lead to an intensification of the political conflict about the EU, such as: 1) national sovereignty, as it will inevitably produce institutional changes and potential loss of political power at the national level; 2) culture and identity, as they can potentially unsettle deep-seated beliefs regarding national identity and belonging; and 3) economic redistribution, with increased demands for solidarity between member states over the contributions and expenses to and from the EU budget. From this discussion, hypothesis 6 posit *parties assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in moments of authority transfers, such as rounds of enlargement and treaty*

reforms. To operationalise the concept of authority transfer into a workable independent variable I created a dummy variable that classifies each year in the analysis as either an authority transfer year or not. To do this, I cross-reference each of the years with the dates on which these moments of authority transfer take place in order to determine which of them is or is not an authority transfer year. To recap, I define a year as being an authority transfer year if it comprised the 6 months immediately preceding and immediately following the signing of a treaty or the enlargement of the Union.

As demonstrated by the results reported in Figure 5.11, at first glance there is no visible statistical relationship between moments of authority transfer and more negative positions towards the EU in the EP speeches, and thus forcing me to reject this hypothesis. However, in the regression for the 6th Term, which separates the new member states from the old, we can see that the transfer of political authority from the member states' level to the EU level is a predictor of negative positions towards the EU for parties in older member states ($n=244$; $p<0,001$), while for the parties from new member states the variable is actually a strong predictor of positive positions towards the EU ($n=78$; $p<0,001$) (see Figure 5.7). These statistic associations remain strong (at the $p<0,001$ level) when I do not consider control variables³⁶.

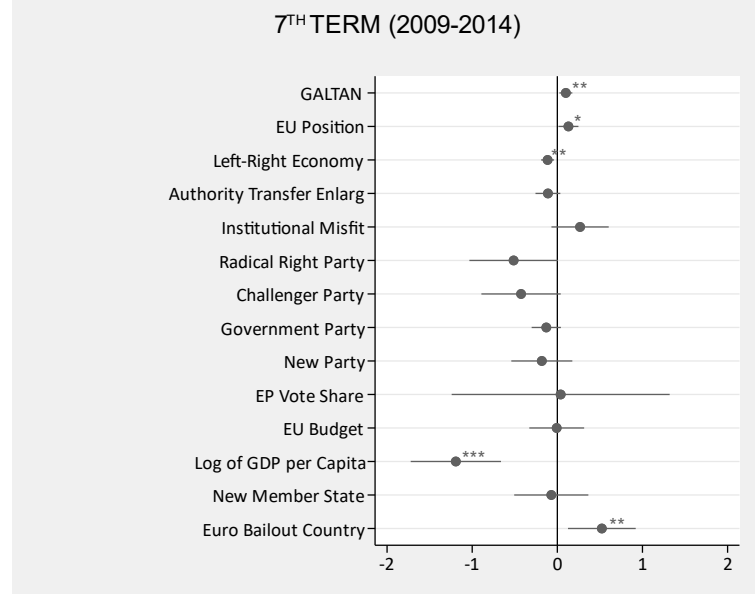
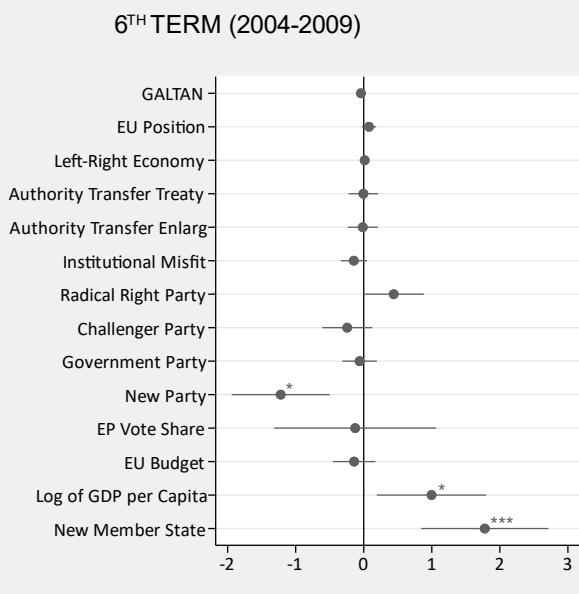
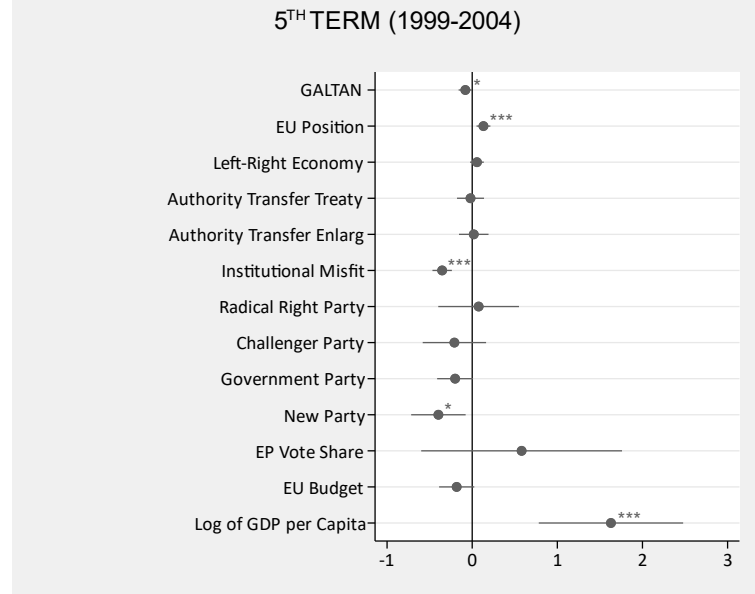
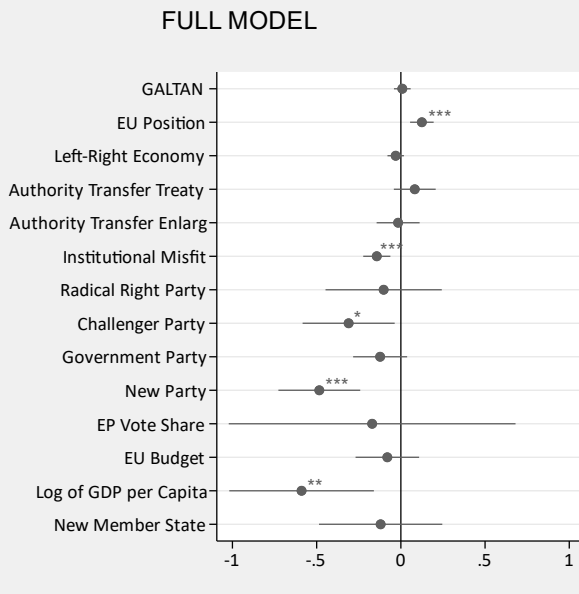
On one hand, given the perks associated with accession to the EU (such as the access to structural funds, the entry into a much wider economic area, and free movement throughout the Union, for instance), the transfer of authority and invariable loss of political autonomy in exchange for the aforementioned perks is most likely perceived by parties from new member states as a worthwhile trade-off. On the other hand, for parties from older member states, the delegation of authority does not bring with it such perks and is much more likely to be perceived as simply yet another onerous demand on their member-states. We should, however, read these results with caution, given the low number of observations for each of the regression models.

To further explore the data, following Grande and Hutter's (2016a) approach, I disaggregated the authority transfer variable into two distinct dummy variables for each of the different modes of authority transfer: EU enlargement and treaty reforms. Figure 5.17³⁷ reports the results of these models.

³⁶ See Table 12.4 in the appendix 6.

³⁷ For the full regression table see Table 12.7 in the appendix 6.

Figure 5.17) Testing the disaggregated authority transfer variable



* $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$
 Source: Own calculations.

When the authority transfer variable is disaggregated, the results of the linear regression remain the same, i.e., EU politicisation does not intensify in years when either treaty reforms are being discussed in the EP and signed or when the EU is deliberating on the expansion of its territorial reach (a pattern that is repeated when I run the model without control

variables³⁸). Overall, this result suggests that the role played by authority transfers, as a driver of EU politicisation, has been overstated, at least in terms of debates within the EP. This phenomenon is likely to be more confined to the political dynamics at the member state level but with distinct profiles across different member states (Grande & Hutter, 2016a).

Following the same logic as before, I ran the same regression model for the 6th Term, separating the new member states from the old³⁹, and found statistically significant results that are worthy of consideration. With older member states it is only treaty reforms that seem to have any significant statistical association with EU politicisation ($p < 0,05$). It seems to be the further delegation of political authority itself, entailed by the treaties themselves, that is intensifying parties' negative positions towards the EU. With new member states, conversely, both treaty reforms and rounds of EU enlargement have obvious statistical associations with positive positions towards the EU ($p < 0,001$ and $p < 0,05$, respectively).

The results of the regression models without control variables⁴⁰ were largely similar, though treaty reforms lose their explanatory power for the new member states. In general, the results for this model are similar to what I had already established previously: parties from new member states seem to be much more willing to overlook the transfer of political authority in comparison with parties from member states with more well-established relationships with the EU, which suggests that the authority transfer's association with EU politicisation does not follow a linear correlation but is rather a two-way street very much dependent upon a given country's specific relationship with the EU and its degree of Europeanisation.

Notwithstanding these specific tests, the general results make me reject the hypothesis. Even so, the differentiated effect of authority transfer upon EU politicisation between older and new member states in the 6th Term of the EP is a noteworthy finding.

5.2.7) The institutional misfit between the member state and EU level and the politicisation of the EU

The seventh and final hypothesis turns the spotlight specifically to the role played by institutional misfit on EU politicisation. This theory posits that the mismatch, or

³⁸ See Table 12.8 in the appendix 6.

³⁹ See Table 12.9 in the appendix 6.

⁴⁰ See Table 12.10 in the appendix 6.

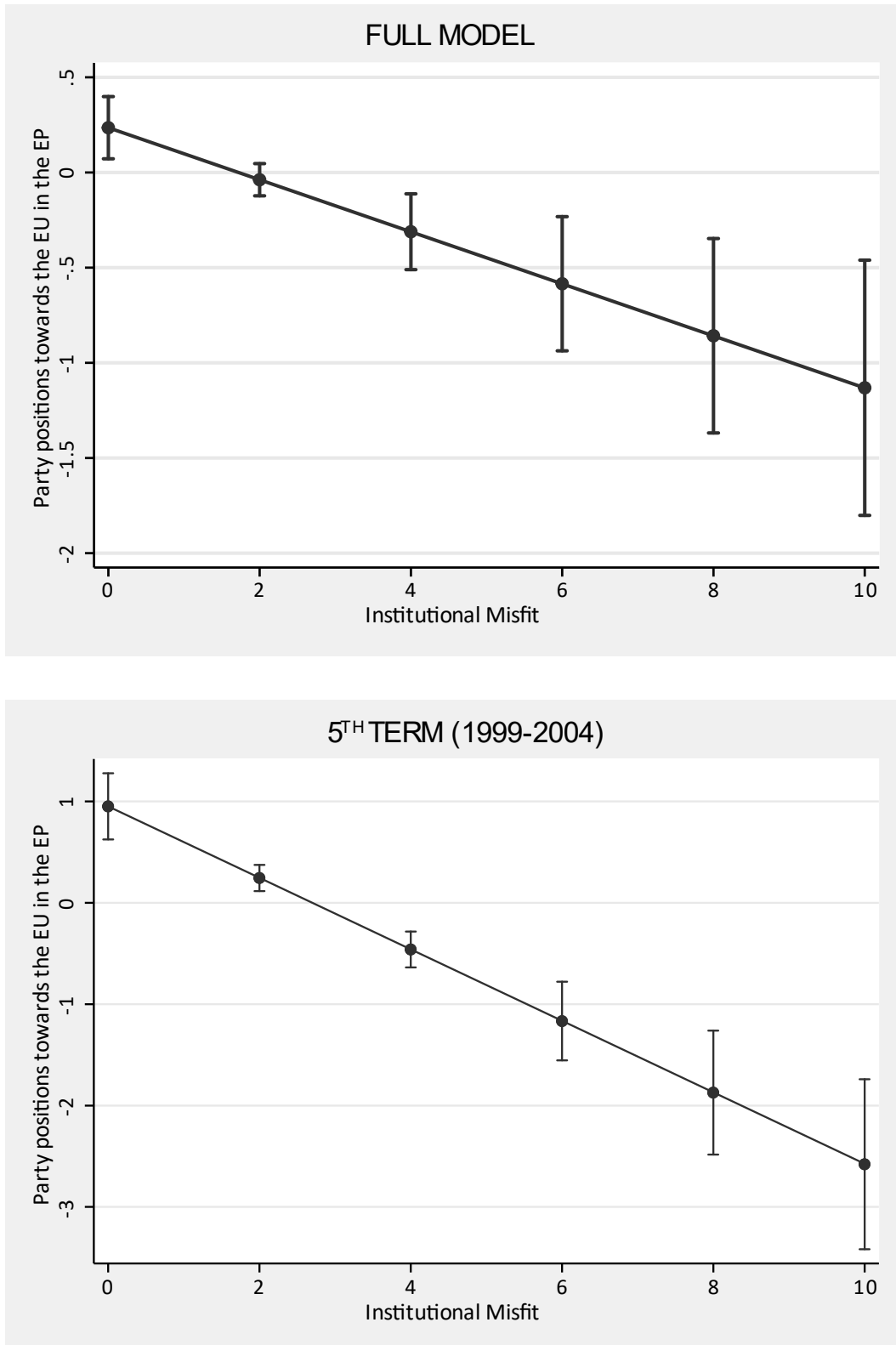
incompatibility, between domestic institutions at the member state level and the EU's supranational institutions cause adaptive pressures that foster political conflict over the EU (Börzel & Risse, 2000; Brinegar et al., 2004; De Wilde et al., 2016). This research's version of the institutional misfit hypothesis posits *parties from member states with higher institutional misfit tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with parties from member states with lower institutional misfit* (H7). To test this hypothesis, I use the European Commission's data on the transposition deficits through the Single Market Scoreboard initiative as a proxy for the degree of institutional misfit in a given member state (the higher the score, the higher the degree of institutional misfit and vice-versa)⁴¹.

Figure 5.11 shows that there is a clear link between the institutional misfit between member states and the EU level and the politicisation of the EU by political parties, at least as it plays out in the EP, since we can observe a strong statistical association in the general model ($p < 0,01$) and in the 5th Term's model ($p < 0,001$). It is also noteworthy to observe, that as the overall degree of institutional misfit decreases with time (in the first year of the period of analysis the mean for institutional misfit is 3,42, while in the last year it is 0,637) the variable becomes less able to explain negative positions towards the EU. If we take into consideration the statistical models that do not account for controlling variables, we also observe a statistically significant – but slightly weaker – relationship in the 6th Term's model ($p < 0,01$)⁴². Indeed, as shown by the predicted margins reported in Figure 5.18, there is a linear relationship between the degree of institutional misfit in a given member state and its parties' propensity to assume negative positions towards the EU in the EP. Taken together, these results give strong support to this hypothesis.

⁴¹ See Table 10.1 in the appendix 4 for the scores for each of the member states over the period of analysis.

⁴² See Table 12.2 in the appendix 6.

Figure 5.18) Predictive margins for the degree of institutional misfit



Source: Own calculations.

Further exploration of the data is still warranted, however, given the different results of the regression models for the 6th Term – especially taking into consideration whether or not we use control variables. As stated above, the integration of new member states in the 6th Term of the EP introduced important nuances that differentiate older member states from new member states, and this definitely holds true for the case of institutional misfit. When I run the regression models for the 6th Term (Figure 5.12), for instance, and differentiate between older and new member states, institutional misfit variable is only statistically significant in the model that restricts the analysis to older member states ($p < 0,01$), which suggests that this institutional mismatch only leads to higher politicisation of the EU in countries with a consolidated relationship with the EU. Such an observation can perhaps be explained by the fact that political actors from older member states with higher institutional misfit might be perceiving their country's relationship with the EU in a more negative light because of the friction caused by the difficulties in adopting EU directives, particularly when compared with political parties from more recent arrivals to the EU that are likely to still be experiencing a sort of *honeymoon* effect (Franklin et al., 1996; Magalhães, 2016; Reif, 1984; Silva et al., 2022), akin to what we saw regarding the transfer of political authority in prospective members. These results seem to confirm the institutional misfit hypothesis, at least in the earlier phase of the period of analysis.

To sum up, through the results of the analysis, several conclusive answers to the overarching research question can be submitted and Table 5.5 provides a summary of the findings. Concerning the internal factors to political parties, I can say that these tend to be both left and right challenger parties; they also tend to have clearly defined programmatic positions on the EU. At specific moments, activated by exogenous shocks such as the Eurozone crisis, these parties tend to favour less economic redistribution and solidarity between member states, and they also tend to have strong positions on cultural and identity matters. Concerning the external factors, the degree of institutional misfit, and the resulting tensions in the context of the EU's multilevel governance, are more important factors when explaining parties EU politicisation when compared with the delegation of political authority from the member state level to the supranational level. Overall, I believe that the findings contribute to a general understanding of how the dynamics of EU politicisation are expressed at the EU level.

Table 5.5) Summary of the findings

	Status
<i>H1 – Parties with more conservative positions on cultural and identity issues (TAN) tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties</i>	Weakly supported
<i>H2 – Parties with more sovereigntists positions tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties</i>	Strongly supported
<i>H3 – Parties in favour of more economic redistribution tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties</i>	Rejected
<i>H4 – Radical Right parties tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties</i>	Weakly supported
<i>H5 – Challenger parties tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with other parties</i>	Strongly supported
<i>H6 – Parties assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in moments of authority transfers, such as rounds of enlargement and treaty reforms</i>	Rejected
<i>H7 – Parties from member states with higher institutional misfit tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches in comparison with parties from member states with lower institutional misfit.</i>	Strongly supported

Source: Author

5.3) Concluding remarks

This chapter sought to explore the dynamics of EU politicisation in the EP, firstly by exploring the data to uncover relevant patterns in how parties position themselves on the issue of the EU and secondly by drawing inferences to uncover both of the internal and external factors to political parties that explain EU politicisation in their EP speeches.

In the descriptive section, I was able to uncover interesting insights and patterns about EU politicisation in the EP level. We saw that parties' position towards the EU in the EP and polarisation do not follow a linear trajectory over time but are instead punctuated (Grande & Kriesi, 2016) by moments such as the crisis of the Eurozone for instance. I also observed four distinct clusters of political parties (otherwise referred to as 'party families'), each of which tends to display a particular position towards the EU; the most Eurosceptic of these clusters combines both the Radical Left and the Radical Right party families. Additionally,

challenger parties generally assume more negative positions towards the EU in comparison with more established mainstream political parties. Regional differences also contribute to a possible explanation of the dynamics of EU politicisation in the EP since parties from Western and Northern Europe are more likely to assume negative positions towards the EU in comparison with those from Southern Europe and Central and Eastern Europe. Such a pattern is justified by the obvious economic differences between these regions.

As far as the testing of the research hypotheses is concerned, the empirical strategy was able to support some of them – albeit under specific conditions.

The most consistent predictor of EU politicisation in the EP is the challenger vs. mainstream nature of political parties (Hobolt & Tilley, 2016), but it is specifically when I consider them across an ideological divide that this factor's relevance is most easily made apparent. Left-leaning challenger parties, for instance, tended to be more critical of the EU between 1999 and 2009, while right-leaning challenger parties were much more likely to assume negative positions towards the EU between 2009 and 2014 (which is similar to what occurs with the Radical Right). This suggests that the interplay between exogenous factors (such as a crisis, for instance) and party ideology is of particular significance when considering the role played by challenger parties in the politicisation of the EU.

Parties' ideological preferences are also important when it comes to the politicisation of the EU in the EP. Firstly, we observed an association between parties' positions towards the EU and their GALTAN orientation (albeit with substantial qualifications, since this relationship varies over time). Secondly, parties' preferences on redistribution are not as powerful a predictor of EU politicisation as first expected. This dimension only became relevant during the 7th Term of the EP – precisely during the most critical economic crisis experienced in the EU during the period of analysis. Thirdly, the overall position of parties towards the EU impacts their politicisation of the EU: parties with more sovereigntist positions are those that are most likely to take their politicisation to the EP.

As a final observation, the results of my analysis confirm a link between negative positions towards the EU and the member states' degree of institutional misfit at the EU level. This holds true across all member states between 1999 and 2004, and more specifically with older member states between 2004 and 2009. During this later period, we saw that in newly integrated member states the degree of institutional misfit was associated with positive positions towards the EU, thus suggesting that a *honeymoon* effect may have been

at play. Regarding the effects, if any, of the transfer of political authority from the member state level to the EU level, the only statistically significant association occurred during the 6th Term of the EP between 2004 and 2009, albeit with interesting nuances. On one hand, for new members authority transfer is associated with positive positions towards the EU; on the other hand, however, for older members authority transfer is linked to negative positions. Such results quite reinforce the notion that some sort of *honeymoon* effect can intervene with positions towards the EU in the parties of new member-states.

6:

Conclusions

This research sought to survey the dynamics of political contestation and politicisation of the EU in the EP between 1999 and 2014, and the present chapter aims to critically review the main insights and contributions of this research. As such, the chapter is structured as follows. It begins with a summary of the key findings and how these help to answer the research question. It then outlines the main contributions of the research to our general knowledge of the politicisation of the EU. Finally, I conclude with an appraisal of the limitations and weaknesses of the thesis from which recommendations for future studies will be delineated.

This dissertation set out to answer the following research question: what factors explain the politicisation of the EU in parties' EP speeches? As I pointed out, these factors can be internal to political parties and external to them. The objective, then, was to assess the relevance of parties' positions on questions of economic redistribution (left-right) (Grande & Hutter, 2016), on culture and identity (GALTAN) (Grande & Kriesi, 2012; Helbling & Jungkunz, 2020), and on preferences regarding national and democratic sovereignty versus supranationalism (Mair, 2013) in explaining the politicisation of the EU in the EP. I also aimed to assess whether challenger and RRP were more likely to politicise the EU in comparison with other parties. Finally, I sought to look at whether a party's proclivity to contest the EU might be linked with moments of authority transfer from the member state to the EU and/or with a country's degree of institutional mismatch with the European supranational level.

As to the internal factors that explain parties' EU politicisation in their EP speeches, the analysis was able to establish a connection between parties' ideological preferences and their tendency to contest the EU in the EP, albeit under specific circumstances. On the question of parties' preferences regarding national and democratic sovereignty versus supranationalism, measured by their overall positions towards the EU, I find that parties with sovereigntist positions are much more likely to assume negative positions towards the EU in EP speeches, and this is a finding that holds throughout most of the period of analysis. This

result speaks for the growing relevance of the pro- versus anti-EU dimension in the EP over the more conventional left-right cleavage, which extant research argues has been increasingly side-lined (see Hix et al., 2019; Otjes & van der Veer, 2016). Indeed, out of the three ideological dimensions put to the test in this research, the degree of support or opposition to the EU integration project is the most consistent predictor of parties' EU politicisation.

When I examine parties' conservative positions on culture and identity, as measured by their GALTAN placement, we see that this dimension is only linked to EU politicisation during the 5th Term of the EP (1999 – 2004). Surprisingly, however, the empirical tests reveal that in the 7th Term (2009 – 2014) it is parties with more progressive positions on such issues that tend to assume more negative positions towards the EU. This is perhaps one of the most unexpected findings of my research, since the prevailing notion in EU politicisation studies points towards a unidirectional relationship between politicisation and cultural/identarian ideological preferences (Grande & Kriesi, 2012; Helbling & Jungkunz, 2020; Teney et al., 2013). These findings seemingly suggest that the received wisdom regarding the association between EU politicisation and issues of culture and identity might perhaps be more complex than first expected, since it shows that GAL parties also contest the trajectory of the EU in EP speeches, albeit during a particularly tumultuous period in the history the Union.

On the question of parties' preferences regarding economic redistribution, as measured by their left-right position on economic issues, I find that these preferences are only associated with EU politicisation during periods of economic crisis and in particular during the 7th Term of the EP, when the EU went through the Eurozone crisis. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that it is specifically parties that favour less economic redistribution which tend to be more negative towards the EU. Although the data cannot give us the substantial meaning of these interventions in the EP's plenary, it is reasonable to assume that such parties may be reacting against the EU's response to the economic crisis and to what is perceived as too much economic redistribution to face the challenge brought about by this critical juncture.

The study finds that left-wing challenger parties were more likely to politicise the EU during an earlier phase of the period of analysis (from 1999 to 2009), while among right-wing challenger parties the politicisation of the EU intensified later, during the subsequent 7th Term of the EP, somewhat paralleling what was observed regarding the Radical Right.

Although I cannot pinpoint the exact reason for this, it is possible that these parties are reacting to the political demands brought about by the redistributive pressures related to the Eurozone crisis.

Regarding the external factors that explain parties' EU politicisation in EP, the research indicates that it is associated with their member states' degree of institutional misfit between domestic economic and political systems and the EU's multilevel governance. The results demonstrate that this association is particularly strong in an earlier phase of the period of analysis, when the overall degree of misfit is greater. As time moves on, and the degree of misfit lessens, the association loses its explanatory power in turn. Thus, the findings seemingly confirm that the adaptive pressures prompted by institutional misfit lead to higher political conflict targeted at the EU (Brinegar et al., 2004). The analysis also uncovered a *honeymoon* effect wherein the relationship between degrees of institutional misfit and EU politicisation in parties from the member states of Eastern and Central Europe, which at the time had just recently joined the EU, was inverted, and became associated with positive positions towards the EU rather than the negative positions that were observed in the remaining member states.

As for the expectation that politicisation of the EU intensifies when the transfer of political authority to the EU from member states is being discussed and deliberated upon in the EP, it ultimately proved to be overestimated. The analysis could not establish any statistical association in most of the statistical models (with the notable exception for the 6th Term when differentiating between new and old member states). The results thus suggest that, despite its adequateness when it comes to the relationship between party ideology and EU politicisation (see De Wilde et al., 2016; De Wilde & Zürn, 2012; Grande & Hutter, 2016a, 2016b), some aspects of the theoretical model that is used to study the phenomenon in national polities – such as this question of the effects of authority transfers upon politicisation – should be revisited in order to better fit the framework at the supranational level. Nonetheless, the analysis did reveal a rather unexpected result regarding the effects of authority transfer upon EU politicisation, consistent with what was observed in the case of the impact of the degree of institutional misfit. Specifically, the so-called honeymoon effect observed during the 6th Term of the EP (2004 – 2009) is also visible when we look at authority transfers. On the one hand, this dimension is a predictor of positive positions

towards the EU in parties from recently integrated member states, while on the other hand the exact opposite association is present in the case of established member states.

On the whole, having found significant variation regarding which parties tend to politicise the EU and when they do so, this research enables several answers to the overarching research question. It is evident that ideological preferences do indeed matter when it comes to EU politicisation, which furthers our understanding of the internal factors of political parties that explain their EU politicisation in the EP. But politicisation frequently seems to be activated by exogenous factors (exogenous to the EP specifically, at least) such as the Eurozone crisis, which helps us understand the external factors of said EU politicisation. Additionally, politicisation of the EU also seems to be more likely when member states experience major institutional disparities with the supranational level.

Given what has been discussed up to this point, I consider that this research makes a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the politicisation of the EU by helping to fill a persistent gap regarding how the phenomenon develops at the supranational level. Still, as stated previously, I recognise that my findings and contributions were made with a research design that has limitations and weaknesses. For one, despite its aims to survey EU politicisation in the EP over an extended period of time, the resources and the time available to execute the project were limited. These limitations led me to employ automated text analysis methodologies, particularly Wordfish – which, despite the substantial advantages it grants to researchers, has limitations due to the fact that it operates under debatable assumptions of how human languages actually function (Grimmer & Stewart, 2013) (see the methodological chapter for an in-depth discussion). Students of political conflict in the EP should strive to complement this research with other, perhaps more interpretative, methods of text analysis such as conventional content analysis or critical discourse analysis when looking at the politicisation of the EU in the future. Notwithstanding the considerable resources these methodologies require, they would enable political analysts to achieve a more complete assessment of the dynamics of supranational EU politicisation.

Secondly, the measure of EU politicisation employed in the research was restricted, since it did not encompass either salience or expansion of actors – two aspects the existing literature on the topic recognises as important to the overall concept of EU politicisation (De Wilde et al., 2016; Grande & Hutter, 2016). My measurement of the concept was restricted to parties' positions on the EU, and while other studies of the phenomenon have also focused

on either one or two aspects of the concept (usually salience and/or positions), I recognise that this is a limitation in this research. Future studies on EU politicisation in the EP should endeavour to use more comprehensive measurements of politicisation, for example either by looking at the phenomenon through the lens of each individual aspect of the concept or by creating an aggregate measurement, such as Grande and Hutter's (2016) politicisation index.

Thirdly, the period of time covered by the study, while rich, is by no means all-encompassing. Critical moments of the EU integration process, such as the Treaty of Maastricht, are left out, thus leaving the research unable to draw a full picture of the phenomenon and how pre-1999 critical junctures have impacted it. For the same reason, I could not assess the full extent of the migrant crisis on EU politicisation, or the more recent redistributive conflicts between member states over what should be the role of the EU in response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis (see, for instance, Tesche, 2022; Wolff & Ladi, 2020). Still, the partial portrait I do manage to draw here suggests that EU politicisation is definitely a feature of the EP. This longitudinal aspect should be further explored in future studies.

By way of conclusion, this chapter sought to bookend this research by providing the reader with a summary of its main findings and contributions. The politicisation of the EU, as I have discussed in the thesis, is linked to specific parties' ideological preferences regarding economic redistribution, culture and identity, and national sovereignty versus supranationalism. It is also tethered to specific moments such as exogenous shocks like the Eurozone crisis, for instance. These findings were grounded in a critical assessment of the limitations inherent in the research design employed throughout, and via this discussion I advanced recommendations for future research on the topic. As Schmitter (2009, pp. 211-212) asserted, "something like politicization" has occurred in the EU. And, as shown by my research, the phenomenon has also definitely been transpiring at the supranational level in the European Parliament.

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Appendix 1 – Identification, collection and selection protocol of the scoping literature review

Identification and collection protocol

The first task of the scoping literature review was to establish the empirical strategy for the collection of relevant articles. Studies included in this scoping review were subject to a set of predefined criteria, as per the recommendations of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses (PRISMA) protocol (Liberati et al., 2009). Eligibility criteria are summarised in Table 7.1. Studies also had to have been published in English-language peer-review journals indexed in Web of Science: Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI). This restriction is justified due to the general acceptance of the SSCI's combined comprehensiveness and adherence to high standards in terms of academic quality. Also, had I included other citation indexes, such as SCOPUS in the collection process the volume of studies would have become unwieldy. Scoping literature reviews, after all, are resource-intensive and time-consuming endeavours (Mallett et al., 2012), and as such, one should strive to reach a compromise between inclusivity and realistic executability. I have additionally excluded books, book chapters, and conference proceedings for this review, and, as mentioned above, scientific literature produced in languages other than English. While striving to reach a balance between inclusivity and realistic executability, this review naturally does not aim to encompass the totality of available research on the concept of politicisation. In other words, while I recognise that there are limitations to this review, I ultimately contend that the effect of our choices and restrictions will establish a systematic criterion for the identification of relevant studies and thus allow for the replication of the findings.

I narrowed the focus to be on English-language studies published between 1980 and 2018. I chose this specific time period for the identification and collection of pertinent studies because it begins with the year of the first elections to the EP, and because I expect that this is the instance that marks the beginning of the EU politicisation process; in 1980,

European political parties that had operated solely in their respective countries of origin found themselves having to position themselves for the first time in the much wider European and European electorates were tasked with voting on the integration process and on parties' positions.

As was outlined above, for the identification and collection of relevant studies, I conducted a search using the following combination of terms: "Politicization AND Politicisation", covering their application in the studies' titles, abstract, keywords and in the body of text. I did this to not only capture the polysemic usages of the concept itself but also to include studies written in both British and American English.

Table 7.1) Eligibility criteria for scoping literature review

	<i>Criteria</i>
Topic	Studies must employ the concept of politicisation either in its external, internal, subjective or depoliticisation varieties.
Publication status	Studies must be published in peer-reviewed journals.
Language	Studies must be published in English (UK or USA).
Year of publication	Studies must be published between 1980 and 2018.

Source: Author.

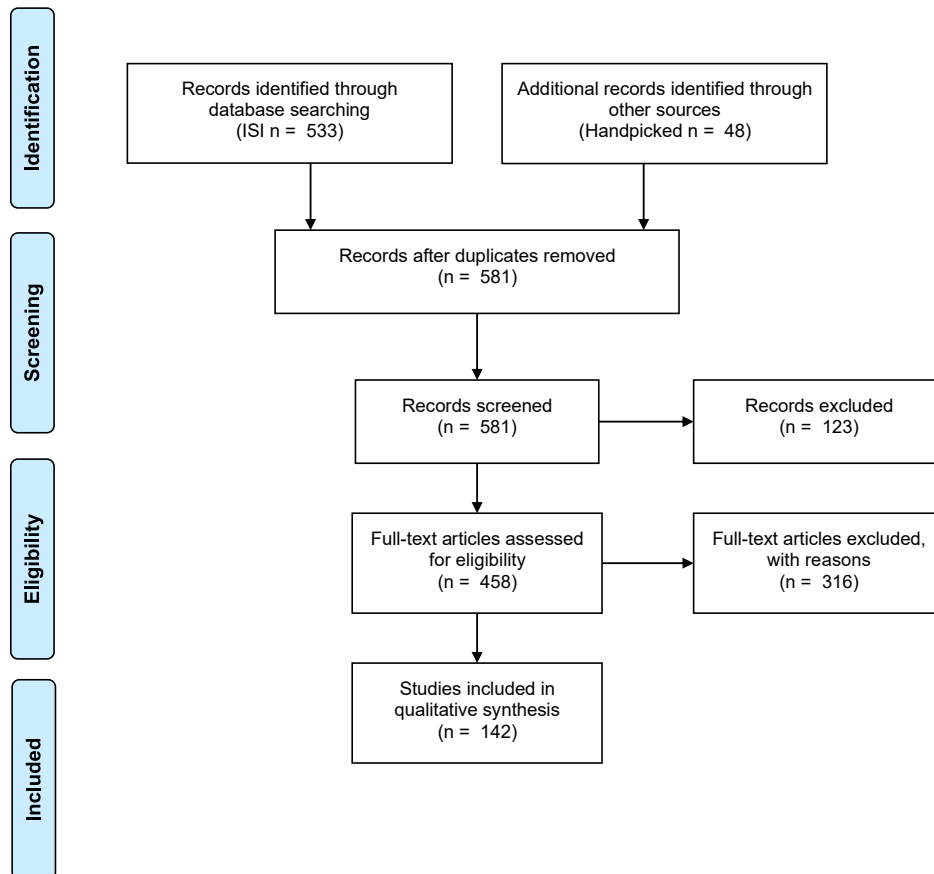
Using this procedure, I collected a total of 533 articles. To supplement the original article collection, I conducted a further snowball search of articles cited in the original batch of studies, which supplied the review with a further 48 articles. Thus, the total arrived at in the first stage of screening was 581 studies. The cut-off point for collection was September of 2018.

Selection protocol

The second task of the scoping literature review was to the establish a clear protocol for the selection and exclusion of studies based on the assessment of their quality and relevance (Dacombe, 2018). To this end, two distinct stages of treating the study pool still lay ahead (this process is summarised in Figure 7.1, below) During the first stage I scrutinised the contents of the titles and the abstracts of the collected articles for their relevance to our research objective, specifically regarding the definitions of politicisation. The exclusion criteria that I applied in the first stage of triage was simple: articles had to explicitly mention

the concept of politicisation either in the title, or in the abstract. At the end of this stage, I ended up excluding a total of 118 from the original pool.

Figure 7.1) Process of identifying and retaining studies



Source: Liberati et al. (2009) & author.

The second stage of the selection process involved the analysis and interpretation of the 458 articles by their use of the concept of politicisation. Each of the articles was labelled as external ($n=65$), internal ($n=142$), subjective politicisation ($n=21$), or depoliticisation ($n=22$) based on the definition of politicisation used by the authors of the articles (see chapter 2 of this dissertation for an in-depth discussion on this topic). I operationalise the various definitions of politicisation as shown in Table 7.2. The selection protocol also identified 208 studies, that despite featuring the term politicisation in the title & abstract, did not conform to any of the strict definition mentioned above.

Table 7.2) Operationalisations of politicisation

External politicisation	The extension of the scope of the system of politics to other spheres of society, such as the public administration through political appointments (see Silva, 2017).
Internal politicisation	The act of bringing an issue into the realm of political conflict (see Statham & Trenz, 2015).
Subjective politicisation	The individual's involvement with politics, i.e., mobilisation, political socialization (see Bashevkin, 1985; Islar & Irgil, 2018; Van Deth & Elff, 2004).
Depoliticisation	The retreat from the realm of contestation and political conflict (see Glencross, 2009).

Source: Author.

Given that I have restricted the scope to the process of politicisation of issues (i.e., internal politicisation), articles dealing with external politicisation, subjective politicisation, and depoliticisation were excluded after this process of coding. The process yielded 142 relevant articles, which form the main body for my empirical analysis. At the end of this stage, I excluded a total of 316 articles, which left the review with a total sample of 142 items dealing directly with internal politicisation.

Appendix 2 – Scoping literature review codebook

IDENTIFICATION VARIABLES

A – Author(s) [STRING] – Enter the name of the corresponding author/authors.

B – Year [STRING] – Enter the year when it was published.

C – Title [STRING] – Enter the full title of the article.

D – Name of journal [STRING] – Enter the name of journal.

F – Keywords [STRING] – Enter the keywords of the article.

G – Abstract [STRING] – Enter the articles' abstract.

DEFINITION VARIABLES

H.1 – Is there an explicit definition of politicisation in the article (Exp.Ref.Polit) -

Yes [Jump to H.3];

No.

H.2 – Is there an implicit definition of politicisation in the article (Imp.Ref.Polit) -

Yes;

No.

H.3 - Definition of politicisation (Def.Polit) –

I follow and build upon the typology of politicisation of Grande & Hutter (2016a) which divides between internal and external politicisation. External politicisation is the extension of the influence of politics (political parties and government) into the realm of public administration. Internal politicisation is defined as the act of carrying an issue into the realm of political conflict. Additionally, I created two more variables for subjective politicisation, defined as becoming a political subject, i.e., becoming engaged or politically mobilized, and depoliticization, defined as the process or mechanism to restrict contestation and political conflict in the polity (Kuzemko, 2014).

1. Internal Politicisation [to bring an issue into the realm of political conflict];
2. External Politicisation [extension of the influence of politics (political parties and government) into the realm of public administration] - **If YES – STOP data extraction.**
3. Subjective Politicisation [becoming a political subject, i.e., becoming engaged or politically mobilized] - **If YES – STOP data extraction.**
4. Depoliticisation – [process or mechanism to restricting contestation and political conflict in the polity] **If YES – STOP data extraction.**

H.4 Citation of definition (Cit.Def.Polit) [STRING] – Enter articles' citation of the definition of politicisation

OPERATIONALISATION VARIABLES

For our capture of how politicisation has been operationalized in the literature under study, I follow (Börzel & Risse, 2018) which posit that politicisation can be operationalized by dividing it into three components: 1) increasing issue salience of issues in the various public domains; 2) increasing levels of polarisation; and 3) increasing mobilisation and expansion of actors in the various public domains. We are interested in both the definition (L.2.1; L.3.1; L.4.1) of these three components of our central concept as well as how they have been measured in the empirical literature (L.2.2; L3.2; L.4.2).

I.1 – Is there an explicit reference to the operationalisation of politicisation in the article? (Exp.Ref.OP.Polit) -

1. Yes;
2. No [Jump to J].

I.2 - Operationalisation – Issue Salience (OP.Polit.IssueSal) –

1. Yes;
2. No.

I.2.1 - Citation of operationalisation – Issue Salience – in literature review (Cit.OP.Polit.IssueSal.RevLit) [STRING] – Enter articles' citation where Issue salience is operationalized in the literature review section.

I.2.2 - Citation of operationalisation – Issue Salience – in methodology (Cit.OP.Polit.IssueSal.Meth) [STRING] – Enter articles' citation where Issue salience is operationalized in the methodology section.

I.3 - Operationalisation – Polarisation (OP.Polit.Polarisation) –

1. Yes;
2. No.

I.3.1 - Citation of operationalisation – Polarisation – in literature review (Cit.OP.Polit.Polarisation.RevLit) [STRING] – Enter articles' citation where Polarisation is operationalized in the literature review section.

I.3.2 - Citation of operationalisation – Polarisation – in methodology (Cit.OP.Polit.Polarisation.Meth) [STRING] - Enter articles' citation where Polarisation is operationalized in the methodology section.

I.4 - Operationalisation – Expansion of actors (OP.Polit.ExpAct) –

1. Yes;
2. No.

I.4.1 - Citation of operationalisation – Polarisation – in literature review chapter (Cit.OP.Polit.ExpAct.RevLit) [STRING] – Enter articles' citation where Expansion of Actors is operationalized in the literature review section.

I.4.2 - Citation of operationalisation – Polarisation – in methodology chapter (Cit.OP.Polit.ExpAct.Meth) [STRING] - Enter articles' citation where Expansion of Actors is operationalized in the Methodology section.

ISSUE, ARENA, ACTOR AND INSTITUTION VARIABLES

These variables (J.1 to M.2) are to be extracted from the empirical section of the articles preferentially. Unless the article under analysis is strictly theoretical and/or descriptive.

J.2 - What issue(s) is politicised (What.Issues.Polit) –

1. Europe Union issues
2. Other issue [If YES – STOP data extraction]

J.3 – Which Other Issue(s) are politicised (Which.Other-Issue.Polit) - [STRING] Enter which Other issue(s) are politicised as reported by the article.

J.4 - Which European Union Issues are politicised (Which.EU-Issue.Polit) – [STRING] Enter which European Issue(s) are politicised as reported by the article.

J.5 - Is the European Issue that is being politicised a General orientation(s), Constitutive, Policy Issue (Which-Type.EU-Issue.Polit) –

I divided EU issues into three categories, following the typology of EU issues used by Grande & Hutter (2016): The first are General Orientation on EU, which relate to positive or negative positions towards to EU in general. Constitutive issues, which for (Bartolini, 2005) are those that relate to nature of the EU as a polity such as questions of membership, competencies and question of decision-making rules. Policy issues relate to questions about how European institutions use their competencies in a specific policy area.

1. General orientations;
2. Constitutive issues;
3. Policy issues.

K.1 – Does the article explicitly refer to the arena wherein politicisation is taking place (Exp.Ref.Arena.Polit) -

This variable seeks to capture the institutional contexts wherein politicisation can take place as reported by the article.

1. Yes
2. No

K.1.1 – Which one? National Parliaments (Arena.Polit.Nat-Parl)

1. Yes
2. No

K.1.2 – Which one? General Elections (Arena.Polit.Gen-Elect)

1. Yes
2. No

K.1.3 – Which one? National Media (Arena.Polit.Nat-Media)

1. Yes
2. No

K.1.4 – Which one? European Parliament (Arena.Polit.Euro-Parl)

1. Yes
2. No

K.1.5 – Which one? Protest Arena (Arena.Polit.Protest)

1. Yes
2. No

K.1.6 – Which one? Other (Arena.Polit.Other)

1. Yes
2. No

K.1.6.1 – Which one? Other (Arena.Polit.Cit) [String] Enter arena of politicisation

L.1 – Does the article explicitly refer to the political actor who is politicizing (Exp.Ref.Actor.Polit)

1. Yes
2. No

L.1.1 – Which one? Government party (Actor.Polit.Gov-Party)

1. Yes
2. No

L.1.2 – Which one? Mainstream opposition party (Actor.Polit.Main-Opp-Party)

1. Yes
2. No

L.1.3 – Which one? Outsider party (Actor.Polit.Outsider-Party)

1. Yes
2. No

L.1.4 – Which one? Civil Society actors (Actor.Polit.Civil-Soc)

1. Yes
2. No

L.1.5 – Which one? Other (Actor.Polit.Other)

1. Yes
2. No

L.1.5.1 – Which one? Other (Actor.Polit.Other.Cit) [String]

L.2 Which parties/Civil Society actors (Which.Actor) [STRING] – Enter the name(s) of the actor(s) as reported by the article.

M.1 – Is there an explicit reference to a European Union institution that is being politicised? (Exp.Ref.Polit.EU-Inst)

1. Yes;
2. No. [Jump to N.1]

M.2 - Which EU Institution is politicised (Which.EU-Inst.Polit) [STRING] – Enter the European Institution(s) that are being politicised as reported by the article.

DRIVERS OF POLITICISATION VARIABLES

These variables seek to capture how the literature has treated the drivers and effects of politicisation. The coding follows the contribution laid out by Hutter & Grande (2016). The authors divide drivers into two major categories: critical events and mobilisation strategies of political actors. These two over-arching categories help us group together various hypothesis theorised different authors (De Wilde et al., 2016; Grande & Hutter, 2016b).

In the category of critical events, I group the following dimensions: 1) the authority transfer hypothesis, which states that politicisation is driven by transfer of authority from the national polity into the European Union; 2) the institutional misfit hypothesis, which argues that asymmetries between the domestic economic and political systems and the EU multilevel governance drive politicisation forward; and 3) the constitutive issue hypothesis, which states that constitutive issues drive and intensify the politicisation of the European Union.

In the category of mobilizing strategies of political actors, I group the following dimensions: 4) the Radical Right hypothesis: politicisation is driven by Radical-Right eurosceptic parties; 5) the cultural shift hypothesis or the cleavage transformation hypothesis, which argues that political conflict over the European Union is driven by frames of identity and culture; 6) the mass politics hypothesis, which states that politicisation is not restricted to the electoral arena and has spilled over the protest arena and mass politics; 7) the strategic competition hypothesis, which posits that politicisation is largely driven by strategically competing party officials; and 8) the proxy hypothesis, which suggests that citizens use national criteria to make evaluation of European integration and vice-versa. This process of blame-shifting drives politicisation.

1. Critical Events:

- 1.1 Authority Transfer hypothesis [*transfer of political authority to supranational institutions can trigger politicisation*];
- 1.2 Institutional Misfit hypothesis [*politicisation occurs due to asymmetries between the domestic economic and political systems and the EU multilevel governance*];
- 1.3 Constitutive Issue hypothesis [*politicisation occurs when issues that relate to nature of the EU as a polity such as questions of membership, competencies are discussed*];
- 1.4 Other

2. Actor Mobilisation:

- 1.1 Radical Right hypothesis [*politicisation is driven by Radical Right eurosceptic parties*];
- 1.2 Cultural Shift/Cleavage Transformation hypothesis [*politicisation is driven by ideology and changes in culture/identity which over time consubstantiates into new cleavages*];
- 1.3 Mass Politics hypothesis [*politicisation occurs when European Issues spill over from the electoral arena to the protest arena and mass politics*];
- 1.4 Strategic Competition hypothesis [*politicisation is largely driven by strategically competing party officials*];
- 1.5 Proxy hypothesis [*citizens use national criteria to make evaluation of European integration and vice-versa. This process of blame-shifting drives politicisation*];
- 1.6 Other

These variables (N.1 to N.4.7) are to be extracted from the empirical section of the articles preferentially. Unless the article under analysis is strictly theoretical and/or descriptive.

N.1 – Does the article make an explicit reference to drivers of politicisation of the EU (Exp.Ref.Polit.Drivers)

1. Yes; [Jump to N.3]
2. No.

N.2 – Does the article make an implicit reference to drivers of politicisation of the EU (Imp.Ref.Polit.Drivers)

2. Yes;
3. No. [Jump to O.1]

N.3 – Is the politicisation of the European Union driven by Critical Events? (Polit.Driver.Crit-Event)

1. Yes
2. No

N.3.1 – Which one? Authority Transfer hypothesis [*transfer of political authority to supranational institutions can trigger politicisation*] (Polit.Driver.Crit-Event.Authority)

1. Yes
2. No
- 3.

N.3.2. – Which one? Institutional Misfit hypothesis [*politicisation occurs due to asymmetries between the domestic economic and political systems and the EU multilevel governance*] (Polit.Driver.Crit-Event.Misfit)

1. Yes
2. No

N.3.3 – Which one? Constitutive Issue hypothesis [*politicisation occurs when issues that relate to nature of the EU as a polity such as questions of membership, competencies are discussed*] (Polit.Driver.Crit-Event.Constitutive)

1. Yes
2. No

N.3.4 – Which one? Other (Polit.Driver.Crit-Event.Other)

1. Yes
2. No

N.3.4.1 - Which one? Other (Polit.Driver.Crit-Event.Other.Cit) [STRING] Enter the name of Other driver of politicisation

N.3.5 – Driver of politicisation citation – Critical Events (Cit.Driver.Polit.Crit-Event) [STRING] – Enter articles' citation where the driver of politicisation is referred to.

N.4. - Is the politicisation of the European Union driven by Actor Mobilisation? (Polit.Driver.Actor-Mob)

1. Yes
2. No

N.4.1 – Which one? Radical Right hypothesis [*politicisation is driven by Radical Right eurosceptic parties*] (Polit.Driver.Actor-Mob.Radical.Right)

1. Yes
2. No

N.4.2 – Which one? Cultural Shift/Cleavage Transformation hypothesis [*politicisation is driven by ideology and changes in culture/identity which over time consubstantiates into new cleavages*] (**Polit.Driver.Actor-Mob.Cleavage**)

1. Yes
2. No

N.4.3 – Which one? Mass Politics hypothesis [*politicisation occurs when European Issues spill over from the electoral arena to the protest arena and mass politics*] (**Polit.Driver.Actor-Mob.Mass**)

1. Yes
2. No

N.4.4 – Which one? Strategic Competition hypothesis [*politicisation is largely driven by strategically competing party officials*] (**Polit.Driver.Actor-Mob.Strat-Comp**)

1. Yes
2. No

N.4.5 – Which one? Proxy hypothesis [*citizens use national criteria to make evaluation of European integration and vice-versa. This process of blame-shifting drives politicisation*] (**Polit.Driver.Actor-Mob.Proxy**)

1. Yes
2. No

N.4.6 – Which one? Other (Polit.Driver.Actor-Mob.Other)

1. Yes
2. No

N.4.6.1 - Which one? Other (Polit.Driver.Act-Mob.Other.Cit) [STRING] Enter the name of Other Actor Mobilisation driver of politicisation

N.4.7 – Driver of politicisation citation – Actor Mobilisation (Cit.Driver.Polit.Act-Mob) [STRING] – Enter articles' citation where this is referred to.

Appendix 3 – List of parties with missing values

Table 9.1) List of parties with missing values

Party	Country	Missing Years (Month/Year)
5 th EP		
Christian Democratic and Flemish	Belgium	07/99 – 07/00
Socialist Party Differently	Belgium	09/20 – 09/01
Lista Emma Bonino	Italy	07/99 – 07/00; 09/20 – 09/01; 10/01 – 09/02; 10/02 – 07/03; 09/03 – 05/04
Pensioners' Party	Italy	07/99 – 07/00; 09/20 – 09/01; 10/01 – 09/02; 10/02 – 07/03
The People of Freedom	Italy	07/99 – 07/00; 09/20 – 09/01
Christian Social People's Party	Luxembourg	07/99 – 07/00; 09/20 – 09/01; 10/2001 – 09/02; 09/2003 – 05/04
Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party	Luxembourg	07/99 – 07/00; 09/20 – 09/01; 10/01 – 09/02; 10/02 – 07/03; 09/03 – 05/04
6 th EP		
Bulgarian Socialist Party	Bulgaria	09/08 – 05/09
Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria	Bulgaria	09/08 – 05/09
Democratic Party	Cyprus	09/2005 – 07/06; 09/06 – 07/07; 09/07 – 07/08; 09/08 – 05/09
Progressive Party of Working People	Cyprus	09/05 – 07/06; 09/06 – 07/07
Democratic Party	Italy	09/05 – 07/06
The Olive Tree	Italy	09/05 – 07/06; 09/06 – 07/07
The People of Freedom	Italy	07/04 – 07/05; 09/05 – 07/06; 09/06 – 07/07; 09/07 – 07/08; 09/08 – 05/09
Tricolour Flame	Italy	09/07 – 07/08; 09/08 – 05/09
Lista Emma Bonino	Italy	09/08 – 05/09
Christian Social People's Party	Luxembourg	09/05 – 07/06; 09/08 – 05/09
Labour Party	Malta	09/05 – 07/06; 09/06 – 07/07; 09/08 – 05/09
Reformed Political Party	Netherlands	07/04 – 07/05; 09/05 – 07/06
Democratic Party	Romania	09/07 – 07/08; 09/08 – 05/09
Liberal Democratic Party	Romania	09/08 – 05/09
Democratic Unionist Party	United Kingdom	09/05 – 07/06; 09/08 – 05/09
7 th EP		
Bulgarian Socialist Party	Bulgaria	07/09 – 07/10; 09/10 – 07/11; 09/11 – 07/12
Democratic Party	Cyprus	09/12 – 07/13; 09/13 – 04/14
Left Front	France	07/09 – 07/10; 09/10 – 07/11; 09/11 – 07/12; 09/12 – 07/13
Union of Democrats for Europe	Italy	09/10 – 07/11; 09/11 – 07/12
Labour Party	Malta	09/10 – 07/11; 09/11 – 07/12; 09/13 – 04/14
Nationalist Party	Malta	07/09 – 07/10; 09/10 – 07/11; 09/11 – 07/12; 09/13 – 04/14
Democratic Left Alliance	Poland	07/09 – 07/10; 09/12 – 07/13
Poland Comes First	Poland	09/10 – 07/11; 09/11 – 07/12
United Poland	Poland	09/10 – 07/11; 09/11 – 07/12; 09/12 – 07/13
People's Movement Party	Romania	07/09 – 07/10; 09/10 – 07/11
Basque Nationalist Party	Spain	09/11 – 07/12
Democratic Unionist Party	United Kingdom	09/10 – 07/11; 09/11 – 07/12; 09/12 – 07/13; 09/13 – 04/14
Ulster Unionist Party	United Kingdom	09/13 – 04/14

Source: Author.

Appendix 4 – Transposition index (institutional misfit)

Table 10.1) Transposition index scores for each country (1999 – 2014)

	99 – 00	00 – 01	01 – 02	02 – 03	03 – 04	04 – 05	05 – 06	06 – 07	07 – 08	08 – 09	09 – 10	10 – 11	11 – 12	12 – 13	13 – 14
Austria	3,3	2,9	2,9	2,7	2,3	1,8	1,3	1	0,9	1	1,1	1,3	1,4	1,1	0,9
Belgium	3,2	2,6	2,15	2,75	3,45	2,6	1,7	1,4	1,3	1,15	0,85	1,5	2,1	1,6	0,95
Bulgaria								0,8	0,6	0,35	0,35	0,65	0,75	0,65	0,8
Cyprus						2,75	0,95	1	1,45	1,25	1,1	1,7	1,4	1,1	1,2
Czechia						6,05	2,05	2,5	2,4	1,3	1,2	1,55	1,05	0,25	0,3
Denmark	3,3	2,5	2,05	2,2	2,95	2,6	1,4	1,15	1,05	0,85	0,8	1,05	0,8	0,55	0,45
Estonia						3,15	1,2	1,05	1,05	0,9	1	1,1	0,5	0,25	0,3
Finland	1,5	1	0,65	1	1,85	1,55	0,75	0,95	0,9	0,55	0,65	1,05	1	0,65	0,4
France	5,05	3,75	3,4	3,65	3,35	2,45	1,5	1,2	1	0,8	0,75	0,9	0,65	0,45	0,6
Germany	3	2,85	2,65	3,1	3	1,9	1,15	0,95	0,75	0,6	0,8	1,05	0,85	0,6	0,6
Greece	6,35	4,75	3,15	3,2	4,1	4,4	3,25	2,25	1,7	1,6	1,25	1,1	0,85	0,4	0,25
Hungary						1,35	0,8	1,05	0,9	0,5	0,9	1,4	0,95	0,6	0,65
Ireland	4	3	2,5	2	1,9	2,1	1,5	1,2	1,05	0,95	0,85	0,5	0,15	0,35	0,55
Italy	3,55	2,45	2,15	2,8	3,75	3,8	2,65	1,75	1,3	1,35	1,75	2,1	1,45	1,15	1
Latvia						4,05	0,8	0,55	0,55	0,45	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,5	0,6
Lithuania						0,7	0,35	0,45	0,6	0,4	0,35	0,7	0,75	0,6	0,45
Luxembourg	4,45	2,65	2,2	2,85	3,8	4,3	3,5	2,7	2,5	1,8	1,2	1,2	1	0,65	0,75
Malta						3,6	1,1	0,95	0,6	0,25	0,15	0,1	0,1	0,15	0,15
Netherlands	2,65	1,9	1,3	1,95	2,3	1,6	1,1	0,85	0,55	0,45	0,6	1	0,85	0,5	0,5
Poland						0,9	0,9	1,3	1,85	1,7	1,55	1,9	1,95	1,4	0,85
Portugal	4,65	3,45	2,8	2,65	2,7	3,15	3,05	2,65	2,1	1,5	1	1,3	1,4	0,8	0,55
Romania									0,6	0,35	0,4	0,85	0,8	0,75	1,05
Slovakia						3,85	1	0,6	0,5	0,4	0,45	0,55	0,45	0,35	0,3
Slovenia						2,2	1,1	0,85	0,55	0,45	0,7	1,15	1,1	1,15	1,45
Spain	1,9	1,45	1,45	1,25	1,1	1,4	1,45	1,2	1	0,75	0,7	0,95	0,8	0,65	0,7
Sweden	1,65	1,05	0,65	1	1,8	1,45	1,1	1,15	0,95	0,65	0,65	0,75	0,35	0,2	0,25
UK	2,75	2,75	2,1	1,4	1,95	1,95	1,05	0,85	1,05	0,9	0,8	1,1	0,95	0,65	0,65

Source: European Commission (2021) and own calculations.

Appendix 5 – Collinearity in the independent variables

Table 11.1) Covariance of independent variables for the full model (1999 – 2014)

	GALTAN	EU Pos.	Left-Right	Auth. Transfer	Inst. Misfit	Rad. Right	Challenger	Gov.	New Party	EP Vote	EU Budget	GDP	Ne.mem.sta.
GALTAN	1,0												
EU Position	-0,3	1,0											
Left-Right	0,5	0,3	1,0										
Auth. Transfer	0,0	-0,1	0,0	1,0									
Inst. Misfit	0,0	-0,1	-0,1	0,3	1,0								
Rad. Right	0,5	-0,4	0,2	0,0	0,0	1,0							
Challenger	0,0	-0,6	-0,4	0,1	0,2	0,3	1,0						
Gov.	0,0	0,3	0,2	0,0	0,0	-0,1	-0,4	1,0					
New Party	0,1	-0,2	-0,1	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	-0,2	1,0				
EP Vote	0,2	0,4	0,3	0,0	0,0	-0,2	-0,4	0,3	-0,1	1,0			
EU Budget	0,0	0,2	-0,1	-0,1	0,0	-0,1	-0,1	0,0	0,1	0,2	1,0		
GDP	-0,1	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,1	-0,3	-0,1	-0,6	1,0	
Ne.mem.sta.	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	-0,1	0,0	-0,1	-0,1	0,5	0,0	0,3	-0,6	1,0

Source: Own calculations.

Legend:

Auth. Transfer: Authority Transfer Year

Inst. Misfit: Institutional Misfit

Rad. Right: Radical Right

Ne.mem.sta: New member state

Table 11.2) Covariance of independent variables for the 5th Term's model (1999 – 2004)

	GALTAN	EU Pos.	Left-Right	Auth. Transfer	Inst. Misfit	Rad. Right	Challenger	Gov.	New Party	EP Vote	EU Budget	GDP
GALTAN	1,0											
EU Position	-0,2	1,0										
Left-Right	0,6	0,3	1,0									
Authority Transfer	0,0	0,0	0,0	1,0								
Institutional Misfit	0,1	-0,2	-0,1	0,0	1,0							
Radical Right	0,4	-0,2	0,2	0,0	0,2	1,0						
Challenger	-0,1	-0,7	-0,5	0,0	0,1	0,2	1,0					
Gov.	-0,1	0,4	0,1	0,0	-0,1	0,0	-0,4	1,0				
New Party	0,1	-0,3	-0,3	0,0	-0,1	-0,1	0,2	-0,2	1,0			
EP Vote share	0,2	0,5	0,4	0,0	-0,1	-0,1	-0,5	0,3	-0,3	1,0		
EU Budget	-0,1	0,1	0,0	0,1	0,1	-0,1	-0,1	0,1	-0,2	0,2	1,0	
Log GDP per capita	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	-0,3	0,0	-0,1	0,1	0,0	-0,1	-0,4	1,0

Source: Own calculations.

Table 11.3) Covariance of independent variables for the 6th Term's model (2004 – 2009)

	GALTAN	EU Pos.	Left-Right	Auth. Transfer	Inst. Misfit	Rad. Right	Challenger	Gov.	New Party	EP Vote	EU Budget	GDP	Ne.mem.sta.
GALTAN	1,0												
EU Pos.	-0,3	1,0											
Left-Right	0,3	0,4	1,0										
Auth. Transfer	0,0	0,0	0,0	1,0									
Inst. Misfit	0,1	-0,1	-0,1	0,0	1,0								
Rad. Right	0,5	-0,4	0,2	0,0	0,0	1,0							
Challenger	0,0	-0,6	-0,4	0,0	0,2	0,3	1,0						
Gov.	0,1	0,3	0,2	0,0	-0,1	0,0	-0,3	1,0					
New Party	0,1	-0,1	0,0	-0,1	0,0	0,1	-0,1	-0,2	1,0				
EP Vote	0,2	0,5	0,3	0,0	0,1	-0,2	-0,4	0,3	0,0	1,0			
EU Budget	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,4	-0,1	-0,1	-0,1	0,5	0,3	1,0		
GDP	-0,1	0,0	0,1	0,1	-0,2	0,0	0,1	0,2	-0,8	-0,1	-0,6	1,0	
Ne.mem.sta.	0,1	0,0	-0,1	-0,1	0,0	-0,1	-0,1	-0,1	0,9	0,0	0,6	-0,9	1,0

Source: Own calculations.

Legend:

Auth. Transfer: Authority Transfer Year

Inst. Misfit: Institutional Misfit

Rad. Right: Radical Right

Ne.mem.sta: New member state

Table 11.4) Covariance of independent variables for the 7th Term's model (2009 – 2014)

	GALTAN	EU Pos.	Left-Right	Auth. Transfer	Inst. Misfit	Rad. Right	Challenger	Gov.	New Party	EP Vote	EU Budget	GDP	Ne.mem.sta.	Bailout
GALTAN	1,00													
EU Pos.	-0,38	1,00												
Left-Right	0,52	0,11	1,00											
Auth. Transfer	-0,03	-0,01	0,02	1,00										
Inst. Misfit	-0,01	0,00	-0,01	-0,02	1,00									
Rad. Right	0,46	-0,57	0,10	0,00	0,04	1,00								
Challenger	-0,05	-0,60	-0,31	-0,01	-0,06	0,39	1,00							
Gov.	0,07	0,25	0,21	0,05	0,11	-0,16	-0,33	1,00						
New Party	0,08	-0,24	-0,11	0,08	-0,08	0,23	0,13	-0,19	1,00					
EP Vote	0,15	0,28	0,22	0,08	-0,02	-0,13	-0,38	0,31	-0,11	1,00				
EU Budget	-0,05	0,15	-0,14	0,01	-0,06	-0,15	-0,05	0,01	-0,09	0,07	1,00			
GDP	-0,15	-0,06	0,06	0,03	0,04	0,02	0,10	0,09	0,04	-0,17	-0,62	1,00		
Ne.mem.sta.	0,00	0,11	0,08	-0,09	-0,06	-0,06	-0,07	-0,01	-0,06	0,05	0,15	-0,36	1,00	
Bailout	-0,16	-0,04	-0,13	0,06	-0,15	-0,10	0,29	-0,05	-0,09	0,07	0,46	0,00	-0,08	1,00

Source: Own calculations.

Legend:

Auth. Transfer: Authority Transfer Year

Inst. Misfit: Institutional Misfit

Rad. Right: Radical Right

Ne.mem.sta: New member state

Bailout: Euro Bailout

Appendix 6 – Regression models & tables

Table 12.1) Explaining the politicisation of the EU in the EP between 1999 and 2014

	Full Model	5th Term	6th Term	7th Term
GALTAN	0,009 (0,026)	-0,081* (0,041)	-0,041 (0,033)	0,100** (0,039)
EU Position	0,124** (0,036)	0,133** (0,042)	0,077 (0,054)	0,129* (0,060)
Left-Right Econ.	-0,031 (0,025)	0,057 (0,041)	0,014 (0,030)	-0,114** (0,039)
Authority Transfer Year	0,062 (0,063)	-0,018 (0,074)	-0,036 (0,129)	-0,116 (0,073)
Institutional Misfit	-0,137** (0,041)	-0,353*** (0,058)	-0,145 (0,098)	0,265 (0,172)
Radical Right Party	-0,108 (0,178)	0,075 (0,243)	0,440 (0,225)	-0,518* (0,265)
Challenger Party	-0,314* (0,141)	-0,206 (0,191)	-0,243 (0,188)	-0,429 (0,238)
Government Party	-0,125 (0,082)	-0,201 (0,108)	-0,060 (0,130)	-0,130 (0,087)
New Party	-0,489*** (0,125)	-0,395* (0,164)	-1,221* (0,368)	-0,173 (0,183)
EP Vote Share	-0,185 (0,438)	0,581 (0,604)	-0,122 (0,606)	0,041 (0,652)
EU Budget	-0,074 (0,097)	-0,185 (0,105)	-0,141 (0,159)	-0,005 (0,164)
Log GDP per Capita	-0,576** (0,220)	1,626*** (0,434)	1,002* (0,404)	-1,189*** (0,270)
New member state	-0,111 (0,187)		1,782*** (0,474)	-0,071 (0,222)
Euro Bail Out				0,524** (0,203)
Constant	6,018* (2,369)	-16,588*** (4,725)	-10,491* (4,332)	11,624 (2,937)
<i>n</i>	965	309	313	343
<i>n</i> parties	138	75	84	104
R ²	0,095	0,395	0,145	0,234

Independent panels corrected standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$

Table 12.2) Explaining the politicisation of the EU in the EP between 1999 and 2014 with no control variables

	Full Model	5th Term	6th Term	7th Term
GALTAN	0,006 (0,024)	-0,105* (0,041)	-0,028 (0,030)	0,154*** (0,040)
EU Position	0,142*** (0,034)	0,128** (0,046)	0,118* (0,047)	0,176** (0,063)
Left-Right Econ.	-0,026 (0,024)	0,087 (0,044)	-0,001 (0,029)	-0,160*** (0,041)
Authority Transfer Year	0,036 (0,063)	-0,054 (0,074)	-0,029 (0,132)	-0,111 (0,077)
Institutional Misfit	-0,144*** (0,041)	-0,408*** (0,063)	-0,292** (0,088)	0,133 (0,182)
Radical Right Party	-0,066 (0,175)	0,239 (0,273)	0,478* (0,226)	-0,734** (0,279)
Challenger Party	-0,220 (0,135)	-0,224 (0,204)	-0,035 (0,183)	-0,219 (0,233)
Constant	-0,344 (0,257)	0,666 (0,401)	0,013 (0,347)	-0,979* (0,495)
<i>n</i>	965	309	313	343
<i>n</i> parties	138	75	84	104
R ²	0,073	0,395	0,090	0,122

Independent panels corrected standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$

Table 12.3) Explaining the politicisation of the EU in the EP for only for new member states during the 6th EP Term

	New member states	Old member states
GALTAN	0,008 (0,061)	-0,114 (0,048)
EU Position	0,078 (0,130)	0,108 (0,064)
Left-Right Econ.	-0,042 (0,057)	0,084 (0,046)
Authority Transfer Year	1,331*** (0,182)	-0,507*** (0,148)
Institutional Misfit	-0,184 (0,223)	-0,433** (0,165)
Radical Right Party	0,215 (0,431)	0,536 (0,292)
Challenger Party	-0,304 (0,306)	0,031 (0,254)
Government Party	0,039 (0,246)	-0,096 (0,155)
New Party	-22,694* (9,548)	-1,096** (0,413)
EP Vote Share	-2,282* (1,040)	0,439 (0,834)
EU Budget	0 (omitted)	-0,055 (0,178)
Log GDP per Capita	2,207* (1,007)	0,474 (0,624)
Constant	0 (omitted)	-4,344 (6,799)
<i>n</i>	78	244
<i>n</i> Parties	23	64
R ²	0,455	0,220

Independent panels corrected standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$

Table 12.4) Explaining the politicisation of the EU in the EP for only for new member states during the 6th EP Term with no control variables

	New member states	Old member states
GALTAN	0,022 (0,053)	-0,087* (0,043495)
EU Position	0,101 (0,112)	0,175** (0,055286)
Left-Right Econ.	-0,033 (0,055)	0,055 (0,0451)
Authority Transfer Year	1,167*** (0,180)	-0,501*** (0,150416)
Institutional Misfit	0,227 (0,145)	-0,544*** (0,114796)
Radical Right Party	0,122 (0,356)	0,614** (0,290449)
Challenger Party	-0,367 (0,307)	0,170 (0,238289)
Constant	-1,793* (0,843)	0,505 (0,413268)
<i>n</i>	78	244
<i>n</i> Parties	23	64
R ²	0,397	0,195

Independent panels corrected standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$

Table 12.5) Explaining the politicisation of the EU in the EP with the disaggregated challenger party variable

	Full Model	5th Term	6th Term	7th Term
GALTAN	0,006 (0,025)	-0,054 (0,040)	-0,031 (0,032)	0,083* (0,039)
EU Position	0,078* (0,037)	0,100* (0,041)	0,056 (0,057)	0,105 (0,063)
Left-Right Econ.	-0,041 (0,026)	0,020 (0,041)	-0,007 (0,032)	-0,104** (0,040)
Authority Transfer Year	0,053 (0,062)	-0,018 (0,073)	-0,041 (0,128)	-0,131 (0,072)
Institutional Misfit	-0,116** (0,041)	-0,331*** (0,055)	-0,106 (0,100)	0,270 (0,171)
Right Challenger	-0,757*** (0,212)	-0,529 (0,273)	0,174 (0,292)	-1,274*** (0,309)
Left Challenger	-0,737*** (0,194)	-0,651** (0,228)	-0,584* (0,258)	-0,547 (0,376)
Green Challenger	-0,118 (0,271)	-0,027 (0,300)	-0,072 (0,407)	-0,865 (0,485)
Government Party	-0,127 (0,081)	-0,196 (0,103)	-0,005 (0,128)	-0,135 (0,086)
New Party	-0,494*** (0,123)	-0,449** (0,153)	-1,278*** (0,369)	-0,144 (0,183)
EP Vote Share	-0,118 (0,426)	0,396 (0,565)	-0,314 (0,588)	0,204 (0,638)
EU Budget	-0,049 (0,096)	-0,175 (0,102)	-0,160 (0,157)	-0,010 (0,162)
Log GDP per Capita	-0,600** (0,218)	1,349** (0,429)	0,948* (0,397)	-1,180*** (0,271)
New member state	-0,168 (0,186)		1,796*** (0,472)	-0,064 (0,218)
Euro Bail Out				0,521* (0,205)
Constant	6,562** (2,348)	-13,414** (4,678)	-9,743* (4,244)	11,670*** (2,958)
<i>n</i>	965	309	313	343
<i>n</i> parties	138	75	84	104
R ²	0,111	0,423	0,153	0,251

Independent panels corrected standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$

Table 12.6) Explaining the politicisation of the EU in the EP with the disaggregated challenger party variable with no control variables

	Full Model	5th Term	6th Term	7th Term
GALTAN	0,005 (0,024)	-0,082 (0,043)	-0,016 (0,029)	0,142*** (0,039)
EU Position	0,098** (0,034)	0,078 (0,046)	0,106* (0,049)	0,193** (0,062)
Left-Right Econ.	-0,035 (0,026)	0,043 (0,046)	-0,019 (0,033)	-0,137*** (0,041)
Authority Transfer Year	0,027 (0,063)	-0,054 (0,072)	-0,028 (0,132)	-0,118 (0,076)
Institutional Misfit	-0,125** (0,041)	-0,358*** (0,064)	-0,273** (0,092)	0,136 (0,176)
Right Challenger	-0,643** (0,209)	-0,459 (0,321)	0,446 (0,293)	-1,209*** (0,319)
Left Challenger	-0,617*** (0,191)	-0,848*** (0,264)	-0,280 (0,260)	0,095 (0,355)
Green Challenger	-0,079 (0,267)	-0,035 (0,364)	0,224 (0,421)	-1,207* (0,503)
Constant	-0,052 (0,265)	0,973* (0,405)	0,108 (0,368)	-1,140* (0,503)
<i>n</i>	965	309	313	343
<i>n</i> parties	138	75	84	104
R ²	0,086	0,299	0,090	0,156

Independent panels corrected standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$

Table 12.7) Explaining the politicisation of the EU in the EP with the disaggregated authority transfer variable

	Full Model	5th Term	6th Term	7th Term
GALTAN	0,009 (0,025)	-0,080* (0,041)	-0,041 (0,033)	0,100** (0,039)
EU Position	0,125*** (0,036)	0,132*** (0,041)	0,077 (0,054)	0,131* (0,060)
Left-Right Econ.	-0,031 (0,025)	0,056 (0,041)	0,014 (0,030)	-0,114** (0,039)
Treaty	0,083 (0,063)	-0,020 (0,081)	-0,005 (0,110)	
Enlargement	-0,016 (0,065)	0,019 (0,088)	-0,014 (0,113)	-0,110 (0,074)
Institutional Misfit	-0,143*** (0,041)	-0,353*** (0,058)	-0,145 (0,098)	0,267 (0,172)
Radical Right Party	-0,102 (0,176)	0,076 (0,242)	0,440 (0,225)	-0,513 (0,265)
Challenger Party	-0,310* (0,139)	-0,209 (0,190)	-0,243 (0,189)	-0,426 (0,238)
Government Party	-0,123 (0,082)	-0,200 (0,108)	-0,061 (0,130)	-0,130 (0,087)
New Party	-0,484*** (0,124)	-0,397* (0,163)	-1,220* (0,368)	-0,182 (0,183)
EP Vote Share	-0,170 (0,434)	0,581 (0,602)	-0,126 (0,606)	0,039 (0,653)
EU Budget	-0,080 (0,096)	-0,182 (0,105)	-0,141 (0,159)	-0,007 (0,164)
Log GDP per Capita	-0,590** (0,219)	1,630*** (0,433)	0,996* (0,410)	-1,192*** (0,271)
New member state	-0,120 (0,187)		1,778*** (0,476)	-0,071 (0,222)
Euro Bail Out				0,523** (0,203)
Constant	6,178** (2,356)	-16,630*** (4,711)	-10,451* (4,398)	11,636 (2,940)
<i>n</i>	965	309	313	343
<i>n</i> parties	138	75	84	104
R ²	0,097	0,397	0,145	0,233

Independent panels corrected standard errors in parentheses.

*p<0,05; ** p<0,01; *** p<0,001

Table 12.8) Explaining the politicisation of the EU in the EP with the disaggregated authority transfer variable with no control variables

	Full Model	5th Term	6th Term	7th Term
GALTAN	0,006 (0,024)	-0,105* (0,042)	-0,028 (0,030)	0,155** (0,040)
EU Position	0,142*** (0,034)	0,128** (0,046)	0,118* (0,047)	0,178*** (0,063)
Left-Right Econ.	-0,026 (0,024)	0,087* (0,044)	0,000 (0,029)	-0,160*** (0,041)
Treaty	0,059 (0,064)	-0,067 (0,081)	0,002 (0,112)	
Enlargement	-0,018 (0,066)	-0,009 (0,088)	-0,044 (0,114)	-0,103 (0,078)
Institutional Misfit	-0,150*** (0,041)	-0,408*** (0,064)	-0,292*** (0,089)	0,137 (0,182)
Radical Right Party	-0,061 (0,173)	0,239 (0,276)	0,480 (0,227)	-0,730* (0,280)
Challenger Party	-0,218 (0,134)	-0,228 (0,206)	-0,031 (0,183)	-0,216 (0,233)
Constant	-0,332 (0,255)	0,671 (0,404)	0,005 (0,340)	-1,002* (0,495)
<i>n</i>	965	309	313	343
<i>n</i> parties	138	75	84	104
R ²	0,07	0,284	0,091	0,121

Independent panels corrected standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$

Table 12.9) Explaining the politicisation of the EU in the 6th EP Term (new vs old member states) with the disaggregated authority transfer variable

	New member states	Old member states
GALTAN	-0,017 (0,056)	-0,114* (0,047)
EU Position	0,031 (0,119)	0,108 (0,063)
Left-Right Econ.	-0,035 (0,051)	0,084 (0,045)
Authority Transfer Treaty	0,999*** (0,170)	-0,272* (0,120)
Authority Transfer Enlarg.	0,538* (0,229)	-0,161 (0,128)
Institutional Misfit	-0,108 (0,222)	-0,436** (0,161)
Radical Right Party	0,154 (0,388)	0,528 (0,284)
Challenger Party	-0,284 (0,280)	0,025 (0,248)
Government Party	0,109 (0,224)	-0,107 (0,153)
New Party	-17,279 (10,756)	-1,119** (0,403)
EP Vote Share	-1,808 (1,051)	0,486 (0,813)
EU Budget	0 (omitted)	-0,055 (0,174)
Log GDP per Capita		0,390 (0,613)
Constant	0 (omitted)	-3,640 (6,691)
<i>n</i>	78	244
<i>n</i> Parties	23	64
R ²	0,364	0,213

Independent panels corrected standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$

Table 12.10) Explaining the politicisation of the EU in the 6th EP Term (new vs old member states) with the disaggregated authority transfer variable with no control variables

	New member states	Old member states
GALTAN	-0,006 (0,039)	-0,086* (0,042)
EU Position	0,034 (0,082)	0,176*** (0,054)
Left-Right Econ.	-0,017 (0,040)	0,056 (0,044)
Authority Transfer Treaty	0,877 (0,161)	-0,258* (0,121)
Authority Transfer Enlarg.	0,163 (0,158)	-0,161 (0,129)
Institutional Misfit	0,166 (0,111)	-0,529 (0,111)
Radical Right Party	0,207 (0,254)	0,605* (0,282)
Challenger Party	-0,249 (0,236)	0,171 (0,233)
Constant	-0,937 (0,632)	0,282 (0,395)
<i>n</i>	78	244
<i>n</i> Parties	23	64
R ²	0,334	0,186

Independent panels corrected standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$