

Communicating Europe, Contesting Europe: An Introduction

Manuela Caiani and Simona Guerra

Introduction

This volume explores attitudes of various types of political actors (citizens, political parties, social movements) towards the EU and Europe, focusing on the potential role of old and new media on them. In a context of contested legitimacy of the European democracy, the media are crucial either as an arena for political actors where to express their discontent and to contest the EU. The media represent an instrument for citizens to

M. Caiani (✉)

SNS Scuola normale Superiore, Institute of Human and Social Sciences,
Palazzo Strozzi, 1, Firenze 50100, Italy
e-mail: manuela.caiani@sns.it

S. Guerra

School of History, Politics and International Relations, University of Leicester,
University Road, Leicester, LE1 7RH, UK
e-mail: gs219@leicester.ac.uk

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11 both get informed about European matters and, eventually, increase their
 12 interest in European politics and, possibly participation. Hence, the role
 13 of traditional mass media and the new ones in an increasingly ‘politicized’
 14 EU can be manifold: agenda setters, catalysers (and amplifiers) of critical
 15 situations, as well as bottom-up channel for the voice of citizens (Hobolt
 16 and Tilley 2014). In this book, we shall address these issues, framing the
 17 current situation of Europe and the positions towards it in the context of
 18 ‘mediated’ politics. Therefore, this book will be guided by the following
 19 questions: *How is Euroscepticism emerging in the current European turmoil?*
 20 *Are the (traditional and new) media, facilitators or obstacles to European*
 21 *democracy and the development of (pro) European citizens?*

22 Trust in European institutions and support for the integration process
 23 have steadily declined (Guerra and Serricchio 2014), as the results of the
 24 British referendum have showed on 23 June 2016, with 52 per cent of
 25 British citizens voting to leave the EU (see Guerra in this volume), along
 26 with, in many countries, decreasing voter participation in European
 27 Parliament (EP) elections (41.62 per cent at the 2014 EP elections, it
 28 was 61.99 per cent at the first EP elections in 1979). Also, the image of
 29 the EU across public opinion has been viewing increasing negative evalu-
 30 ations, since the economic and financial crisis hit its peak, in 2010 and
 31 2011. About 48 per cent had a positive image of the EU in 2009, down to
 32 31 per cent in 2011, according to the Eurobarometer data, which discon-
 33 tinued the question on the evaluation of EU membership for the country.
 34 In addition, tendencies of a ‘renationalisation’ of politics are observable
 35 in many member states, in particular in the form of increasing support
 36 for Populist Radical Right parties (PRRPs) and nationalistic or xenopho-
 37 bic movements, which usually also have a strong anti-European profile
 38 and who skilfully use the media and Internet to spread their virulent
 39 anti-Brussels propaganda. In particular, the last European elections mark
 40 a clear advancement of PRRPs all over Europe, and 51 MEPs (Members
 41 of the European Parliament) of Eurosceptic forces now seat in the EP. As
 42 Cas Mudde (2016) underlines, about 6.8 per cent of Europeans voted
 43 for Radical Right parties, within lowering turnout, an East-West divide
 44 and a challenging economic situation. The *Front National* (FN) in France
 45 gained 25 per cent of the votes and 24 seats (against 6.4 per cent in 2009);
 46 in the UK, UKIP (*United Kingdom Independence Party*) had 37 per cent

of votes and 22 seats (more than 10 per cent compared to 2009); in Denmark, the *People's Party* triumphed becoming one of the most powerful right-wing populist party of Northern Europe, doubling its number of MEPs from two to four. In Hungary, the neo-fascist formation *Jobbik* maintained the support it had in 2009, with 15 per cent, and in the Netherlands, Geert Wilders' Europhobic Party for Freedom (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*: PVV) gained four MEPs, with about 13 per cent of votes.

The current economic and financial crisis has increasingly exacerbated the crisis of political representation within European democracies. Together with the Right-wing nationalistic reaction, also alternative forms of citizen participation in EU politics emerged, in the forms of pan-European protests against austerity measures or related debates and consultations on the social media. The mobilization of the new Left in electoral and protests arenas (Kriesi et al. 2008) has given birth to many 'movements-parties', as they have been called (Kitschelt 2006), like *Podemos* in Spain, the Five Star Movement (*Movimento 5 Stelle*: M5S) in Italy and *Syriza* in Greece, which further enrich their initial agenda, which focused on economic mismanagement of national governments and the EU, by interpreting the economic crisis as a symptom of a flawed democracy. At the domestic levels, the common protest against austerity took different colours, in Greece against the 'Weimarisation' of the country, while in Germany, the Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland*: AfD) party raises the protest against the 'euro-rescue' and the role of Germany during the crisis (Guerra, forthcoming), and was the second most voted (24.3 per cent and 25 seats) at Saxony-Anhalt, while still doing well (15.1 per cent and 23 seats) at Baden-Württemberg at the German State elections on 13 March 2016.

Although opposition towards the EU has been pitched as a temporary phenomenon, it has now become a distinctive characteristic of the EU integration process, described by Simon Usherwood and Nick Startin (2013) as 'embedded', pervasive and enduring, within an active opposition that links public opinion, civil society and political action, with a narrative on the EU that remains encapsulated within a negative articulation. In sum, as Peter Mair argued some years ago: 'one of the principal reasons to address the issue of political opposition in the context of the European Union is that there seems to be a lot of it about' (Mair 2007,

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83 p. 1) and this will be even more significant in the next few years, we can
 84 assume, in the after-‘Brexit’ scenario. The recent ‘politicization’ debate
 85 around Europe (see De Wilde 2011) warns that the ‘permissive consen-
 86 sus’ of European integration in many public opinions has changed into a
 87 ‘constraining dissensus’ (Hooghe and Marks 2009), leading to increasing
 88 conflict and lack of legitimization. This volume sheds new light on such
 89 emerging forms of political opposition vis-à-vis European institutions.
 90 By discussing and problematizing the theoretical debate on the defini-
 91 tion of Euroscepticism, it examines the role of the media, political par-
 92 ties and other civil society actors in framing and communicating their
 93 positions on the EU.

94 In this book, we refer to Euroscepticism as ‘contingent or qualified
 95 opposition’ and ‘outright and unqualified opposition to the process of
 96 European integration’ (Taggart 1998, pp. 365–366). Further research
 97 distinguishes between ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ party Euroscepticism, where the
 98 former defines when there is no opposition to EU integration or EU
 99 membership, but scepticism emerges on the basis of specific policies or
 100 against the national interest; and the latter defines ‘principled opposi-
 101 tion to the EU and European integration’, which may support leaving
 102 EU membership or opposing EU integration or further developments
 103 (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2002, p. 7). De Vries and Edwards (2009) inter-
 104 preted it as a continuum between these two positions, as done quali-
 105 tatively by Flood and Usherwood (2005), from (i) ‘maximalist’, most
 106 supportive in their categorization to (ii) ‘reformist’, improving current
 107 plans, (iii) ‘gradualist’, for an integration at a slow pace, (iv) ‘minimal-
 108 ist’, accepting the EU, but opposing further integration, (v) ‘revisionist’,
 109 going back to a pre-Treaty situation and (vi) ‘rejectionist’, opposing both
 110 the EU and its policies.

111 An alternative explanation, based on a ‘two-dimensional conceptu-
 112 alization’ (Kopecký and Mudde 2002), which includes also support for
 113 EU integration, provides an interesting theoretical exercise, although it is
 114 not supported by strong empirical evidences. Based on David Easton’s *A*
 115 *Framework for Political Analysis* (1965), the research design proposed exam-
 116 ines only Central and Eastern European countries and distinguishes ‘diffuse’
 117 and ‘specific’ support for European integration, indicating support for the
 118 ‘general ideas’ and support for the ‘general practice’ of the EU integration

process. All the analyses provide definitions for party-based Euroscepticism, while a first attempt to move beyond Euroenthusiasm and Euroscepticism has been provided by Szczerbiak (2001) and Guerra (2013), addressing the category of public Euroneutrality, generally represented by the ‘don’t know’ answers. Further research has led to examine the affective side of public Euroscepticism. Similarly to Thomas Patterson’s analysis (2002), Guerra suggests considering Euroneutral (apathetic) category in the definitions of attitudes at the EU level, and splitting mass Euroscepticism into further categories, based on emotions. These can represent, as the UK case indicates, also in Daddow’s analysis (2011), what is described as ‘disenchanted’ and ‘Passive Euroscepticism’, ‘spawned by ... negative news’, affected by uncertainty, and an ‘alienated’ attitude, as ‘Angry Euroscepticism’, subject to contingent issues emerging from the domestic context, showing anger or bitterness towards the EU, at both the political or economic integration levels or any of the types of integration.

More recent studies focusing on the civil society level (della Porta and Caiani 2007; FitzGibbon 2013) suggest a distinction between ‘Euroscepticism’, considered as qualified or outright opposition to the EU (see Szczerbiak and Taggart 2003; Taggart 1998), and ‘Euroalternativism’, defined as a ‘pro-systemic opposition’ that supports alternative policies and institutional reforms, contesting the current mode of EU integration and arguing that ‘another Europe is possible’. Similarly, della Porta and Caiani (2009) elaborate the category of ‘critical Europeanists’ to refer to those social movements and civil society groups in Europe, that support the project of the European integration per se, but criticize the policies of the EU (for instance, in terms of lack of ‘social Europe’). An example of alternative Europe was the support for the Greek bailout referendum in 2015, or the European movement DiEM25, launched by the former Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis early in 2016. Its manifesto stressed that the movement seeks to ‘bring about a fully democratic, functional Europe by 2015’ to counterpose the current ‘common bureaucracy and a common currency’ dividing Europeans, the demos that was ‘beginning to unite despite our different languages and cultures’. Varoufakis has spoken of the EU as a ‘monster who needs civilization’ (BBC, March 2016), with the referendum on British membership that has further stretched a contested narrative.

155 As Erick Jones (2015) observed at the time of the Greek referendum,
156 the European integration process is broken. Further, European integra-
157 tion has now become an 'empty signifier' signalling what could come next
158 with the British referendum. This led to a fundamental dilemma of the
159 European integration process and in general of the EU, that could already
160 be observed with the French and Dutch referendums in 2005 (Taggart
161 2006; Harmsen 2005; Marthaler 2005). General support for EU integra-
162 tion is likely to correlate with a positive attitude on referendum choices,
163 but non-voting and the 'No' vote at the referendum does not necessarily
164 seem to show the same Eurosceptic attitude. This would also resonate
165 with results (Schmitt and van der Eijk 2008) from studies on EP elections,
166 where there is no Eurosceptic voting at EP election and abstention does
167 not necessarily show alienation from the domestic political system and
168 the EU. Social-structural reasons are generally explanatory in comparative
169 perspective (Schmitt and van der Eijk 2008), but low levels of turnout
170 give evidence of the perceived lack of influence of remote governance and
171 the second-order dimension of these elections. Remote governance is cer-
172 tainly more difficult to be understood and Franklin's thesis (2002) may
173 still prove its validity in a few years' time. As noted by Hermann Schmitt
174 and Cees van der Eijk (2008), there is definitely a dark side behind absten-
175 tion that may provoke further apathy in a vicious circle of low interest and
176 understanding of the relationship between domestic politics and the EU.

177 If Euroscepticism, as a concept thoroughly studied in the social sci-
178 ence literature, has therefore received several definitions and classi-
179 fications, mainly seen through the public opinion attitudes and party
180 system analytical lenses, this book seeks to link different contributions
181 on party-based, public and civil society Euroscepticism in order to pro-
182 vide a comprehensive exploration and understanding of the increasing
183 contestation of the EU. These can contribute to further accrue research
184 on Euroscepticism and opposition to the EU, and shed a light on the
185 phenomenon from different angles. In this volume, we shall address
186 these questions, around the increasing opposition to the EU, locating
187 the complex relationship between various types of political actors and
188 Europe, in the broader scenario of challenges and opportunities provided
189 by traditional and new media (such as the new information and com-
190 munication technologies).

The debate on the democratic deficit of the EU is often discussed in terms of institutional design and reform, or with regard to lack of interest in the EU and identification with it among European citizens. While the importance of these factors is not denied, in this book, we wish to deal with the relationship between the media (and their use by new and traditional actors) and European democracy, as an important factor of EU legitimacy. Indeed, on the one hand, the media—either the traditional ones and the information and communication technologies (Internet and social media)—may play a crucial role in making European governance accountable, namely more transparent and open to the public; on the other hand, the media can act as an intermediate link between the citizens and their elected and unelected representatives (input legitimacy), hence ascertaining the quality of representation (Koopmans and Statham 2010).

There is a general understanding among scholars that media play an important role in democratic societies: in particular, how the media cover the EU has a profound effect on political debate and public opinion. This is reflected in the increase in academic attention on different aspects of media coverage of EU affairs (see among others Michailidou and Trez 2015). The media can influence (with their negative or limited representation of European affairs) individual attitudes towards the EU. In fact, research on the reasons behind the weak media presence of the EU's institutions and policies often point to characteristics of the EU decision-making process that do not match the news value criteria journalists use in selecting news (see Meyer 1999; de Vreese 2001). One of the reasons media have difficulties in covering EU affairs is that negotiations and consensus-building processes—which are at the basis of many important decisions in the EU—are often kept outside the media columns in order not to endanger compromise solutions. And this often entails that EU policies do not receive much media attention at all. Most existing studies on media coverage stress that newsworthiness is promoted by such factors as the possibility of clear attributions of responsibility for policy problems and solutions, the presence of pronounced conflict lines, or opportunities for personalisation and dramatization—all things that are often lacking in the case of many EU decisions (Statham 2013). European Governance remains obscure and it is not clear who is responsible, the main conflicts

227 remain invisible, and the emphasis in the EU consensus and collegiality
 228 offers few possibilities for personalisation and dramatization. In gen-
 229 eral, it has been argued that media boost negative attitudes towards the
 230 EU. Yet, specific research that combines the perspective of these studies
 231 with that of Euroscepticism literature hardly exists.

232 The volume seeks to make a significant contribution to the scientific and
 233 practical knowledge regarding EU legitimacy, by looking at the development
 234 of an intermediary public sphere of political communication and mobiliza-
 235 tion that can help bridge the gap between European policies and institutions
 236 and the European citizenry. The analysis aims at focusing on public spheres
 237 (as those represented by traditional media and the Internet) both as chan-
 238 nels for citizen participation and expression of citizenship identities and as
 239 arenas in which EU policies and institutions can be held accountable and
 240 where their contested legitimacy is at stake (Koopmans and Statham 2010).

241 Moreover, in the digital era, the new information communication
 242 technologies (ICTs) have added an extra spotlight for the politicisation or
 243 downplaying of EU issue. The Internet and Web 2.0 technologies (such
 244 as Twitter, Facebook, etc.) have become a crucial channel today and new
 245 spaces for political communication of parties and social movements,
 246 which increasingly use them to recruit members, make political propa-
 247 ganda, spread information about their electoral programmes and views,
 248 as for the coordination of collective action, also at the transnational and
 249 European level (Petit 2004). Citizens, on the other hand, can access a
 250 great mass of political information through the Web. In sum, new media
 251 provide great efficacy as a form of dissemination of political information,
 252 and as an emergent forum for public debate and exchange, at times inter-
 253 actively with political institutions.

254 Ever since social scientists began exploring the role of the Internet in
 255 politics, about 10–15 years ago, the debate has focused on many effects of
 256 the Internet on society, including its impact on participation and plural-
 257 ism (Mosca 2007, p. 1). Optimistic commentators on the new technolo-
 258 gies have stressed several positive effects arising from them, such as their
 259 capacity to overcome the one-to-many character of the once-dominant
 260 mass media in favour of unmediated connections among the new global
 261 citizens, as well as their potential to ‘revive a dormant public sphere by
 262 creating new networked spaces for participation and de-territorialized

domains for deliberation' (Bruszt et al. 2005, p. 149). In particular, at the level of voters and elections, it has been argued that new ICTs and especially the Internet would encourage citizens alienated from institutions of representative democracy to become involved in new types of political activities and to become re-engaged with traditional forms of participation (Russo and Smets 2012), and therefore also with European institutions and politics. Indeed, as new means of communication, these technologies would provide to a larger portion of the population with information on politics, which had previously limited to the few, thereby improving the possibilities for the public to become more interested in politics and consequently more engaged with it. Also pluralism, in terms of different horizontal 'views' populating the political discourse and the increasing of universalism and public deliberation, were expected to increase with the Internet (see Emmer and Wolling 2010). The presence of self-managed resources, such as websites, might also reduce the 'filtering' function of journalists on political issues. Regarding the participation in politics, the Internet would therefore allow an expansion of not only the 'users' but also the producers of (political) information, increasing the channels of participation. Being horizontal, bidirectional and interactive, communication via the Internet should reduce hierarchies, by increasing participation from below (Warkentin 2001). In addition, as noted, by increasing the channels of information available to citizens, and facilitating in this way the participation of those who do not normally have a voice, the Internet would also reduce political inequalities at different levels (Ayres 1999; Myers 2000; Cotta et al. 2004, p. 256). However, some scepticism has emerged on the quality of information available on the Internet as well as on the capacity of Internet communication to overcome social and/or ideological barriers (Sunstein 2001; Rucht 2005, quoted in Mosca 2007, p. 2). Shulman (2009, quoted in Karpf 2012, p. 171), for example, argues that online mobilization results largely in 'comments by the public of low quality, redundant and generally superficial'. The virtual Net is not exempt from limitations, simplifications and manipulations (Ceccarini 2012, p. 90). Thus, it will depend on the aims and content of the political communication and mobilization spread through this new medium, the quality of the virtual public sphere created and the consequences on democracy.

299 Beyond general citizens, when looking at parties' communication in
300 times of growing Euroscepticism, studies stress the changes in party com-
301 munication due to media landscape change. Several studies have therefore
302 pointed out at the increasing relevance of the Web (and in particular Web AU7
303 2.0 technologies) for electoral and political events (Hooghe and Vissers
304 2009; Strandberg 2009; Koc-Michalska et al. 2014a, b) as well as single
305 candidates' websites and blogs (Stanyer 2008). Several analyses focus on
306 the contents of parties' websites (Gibson et al. 2003; Larsson 2015), oth-
307 ers on party 'profile' on the Internet (Hooghe and Teepe 2007), or on
308 more specific topics such as party networks and hyperlinks. However,
309 whereas it is known that the Internet and other social media are used by
310 political parties in their communication activities, there are still fewer
311 studies on how these possibilities impact on the quantity and quality of
312 (their) political communication.

313 This book is located within this new scenario of 'mediated' politics and
314 both positive and negative aspects of new communication and information
315 technologies vis-à-vis communication and mobilization on Europe will be
316 addressed in the present volume. The analyses of the following chapters
317 shall enter into this debate (Euroscepticism, European legitimacy and the
318 role of the media), by investigating the opposition to Europe from differ-
319 ent perspectives and in a comparative fashion, looking at Euroscepticism
320 and EU contestation raised by different types of actors that compose the
321 political system (individual citizens, political parties from the Left and the
322 Right, movements and media themselves) and communicated through
323 different kinds of media (traditional media and the Internet).

324 The book is divided into three sections. The first is a theoretical intro-
325 duction, which examines increasing widespread levels of Euroscepticism,
326 the contemporary European crisis and the relationship with the media. The
327 second section presents up-to-date empirical studies, which problematize,
328 using different methods of data gathering and focusing on different cases
329 (e.g. different countries in Europe), the role of (traditional) media cover-
330 age on EU attitudes and positions in details. In this section, works also
331 compare traditional and new media in their influence on Euroscepticism.
332 The third and final sections examine the Internet and social media as new
333 arena where Eurosceptical claims and positions can be made visible. It
334 addresses the use of this new medium by political parties and left-wing and AU8

right-wing populist movements, which contest Europe and its politics and policies skilfully using the Internet and social media to this end. On the basis of these contributions, in the conclusion, the book provides new avenues for scholarly research and policy recommendations to enhance active citizen participation and strengthen the EU. Each chapter offers an original contribution to the scholarly and current debate about Euroscepticism, democracy and the media by offering an empirical analysis based on the theoretical concepts introduced in the first two chapters of the volume.

AU9

In the second chapter, Simona Guerra introduces the most pressing questions of the current research agenda on Euroscepticism. The literature has not yet investigated Euroscepticism beyond political parties and where and when countries view the lack of success of Eurosceptic parties at the domestic level. This chapter addresses the understanding of the phenomenon, what it seeks to represent and manifest. Euroscepticism is multifaceted, it changes its colours, it moves its targets and its study requires tackling those issues it tries to represent, how the EU is communicated and how perceptions of the EU are formulated. Nearly a decade ago, Taggart (2006) suggested the analysis of the domestic politics of European integration, and this becomes even more urgent now that the EU is more and more contested due to its perceived lack of legitimacy. Further, as stressed, it is not possible to understand contestation at the EU level without knowing the dynamics at the domestic level. If Cas Mudde (2011) points to a mixed-method approach in order to answer the lack of validity on one side and the lack of reliability on the other, the goal for scholars could be to take a step backwards and reconcile two fields of studies, political science—and a focus on domestic politics—and European studies, as this analysis seeks to address. This chapter examines public Euroscepticism, as not only apathy towards politics in general, manifesting itself as an uninterested attitude towards the EU (see Guerra

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2013), but also a more emotional dimension of the phenomenon, when the role of the media or contested debates can further trigger anger. It is in the different nuances and messages (or lack of messages) at the domestic and EU levels together that we can understand Euroscepticism and, within the process of EU integration, the empirical and theoretical study can be addressed to respond to Euroscepticism as a legitimate manifestation within the EU political process.

371 In the third chapter, Charlotte Galpin and Hans-Joerg Trenz insight
372 about media framing studies for an explanation of Euroscepticism as an
373 effect of negative learning through media inputs. Based on a review of the
374 media scholarly literature to the analysis of EU legitimacy, Galpin and
375 Trenz argue that Euroscepticism is, at least partly, media-driven. When
376 considering the role of the media in shaping negative attitudes of the
377 citizens about the EU, the focus is often laid on single actors' media strat-
378 egies, for instance, the mobilization potential of Eurosceptic parties, the
379 emergence of new extremist movements or the media skills of particular
380 leaders to spread anti-Brussels propaganda. Against this body of litera-
381 ture, they wish to emphasize the need to attribute a more independent
382 role to the media and specifically to the role of news journalism. Instead
383 of considering media as an arena that is strategically occupied by politi-
384 cal parties, they therefore suggest in this chapter to take media auton-
385 omy seriously and to understand how media internal logics and selective
386 devices contribute to the shaping of public discourse about the EU.

387 In the fourth chapter, Patrick Bijsmans, by means of a qualitative com-
388 parison of media coverage in 2009 and 2014, will explore if Euroscepticism
389 has indeed become mainstream. The focus will be on quality newspapers
390 in two countries, Britain and the Netherlands. Britain is the archetypical
391 example of a Eurosceptic Member State and is not part of the Eurozone. The
392 Netherlands is a Eurozone member in which criticism towards the EU has
393 been on the rise, especially since the 2005 referendum on the Constitutional
394 Treaty. Interestingly, both have been largely in favour of further Eurozone
395 integration. If the mainstreaming thesis is correct, we should find forms
396 of Euroscepticism and opposition in mainstream quality newspapers. This
397 chapter takes a more detailed look at the topic of media and Euroscepticism
398 at a time when the Eurozone crisis has made many headlines. Starting in
399 2009, the crisis saw a Eurozone on the verge of collapse, stringent austerity
400 measures in several Member States and new steps towards further economic
401 and monetary integration. It has been argued that this crisis has resulted in
402 a more political EU and an increase of opposition to the EU and its poli-
403 cies. Euroscepticism, so it is argued, has become mainstream.

404 In the fifth chapter, Benjamin Leruth, Yordan Kutiyski, André Krouwel
405 and Nicholas Startin move from similar reflections and address if informa-
406 tion source can matter on anti-European and anti-elitist Sentiments. The

analysis focuses on voters in the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and France: countries in which radical right, populist Eurosceptic parties have had a favourable electoral performance in the 2014 European elections and received ample media attention. In this study, they relate media use to political preferences by utilizing a cross-national large-N data set collected during the European elections in 2014 through an online opt-in sample and the European Election Studies (EES), in order to test whether individuals with negative attitudes towards the EU and the political elites get informed via media that have similar stances. Following the notion that radicals and cynics are ‘epistemologically crippled’, in the sense that the main sources of information about political issues they trust also communicate Eurosceptic (or at least Euro-ambivalent positions), whereas they avoid or ignore more nuanced and EU-positive news, they assess what media outlets were most frequently used by Eurosceptic voters. By using their own large non-probability sample in combination with the probability samples from the EES—both containing information on the media usage of different voter groups—they chart possible differences between Eurosceptic and Euroenthusiastic voters in terms of the media channels they use to obtain political information. They argue that Eurosceptic voters differ considerably from moderate and pro-European voters in terms of their daily media use. In addition, getting informed via left-wing- or right-wing-oriented mainstream media matters, when explaining voter’s policy preferences.

Moving towards a comparison of traditional and new media in their influence on Euroscepticism, Nicolò Conti and Vincenzo Memoli, in the sixth chapter, investigate the impact of the media on citizens’ attitudes towards Europe. If traditionally the empirical research on the topic has often favoured the descriptive approach in the analysis of media representation of Europe, the authors take a step forward and through an explanatory approach to investigate the impact of the media on citizens’ attitudes. All the EU member states are considered in the analysis as well as the traditional and the new media. The results show that the media play an influence on citizens’ opinions on the EU, specifically the new media promote more critical attitudes and channel disaffection for the EU. The new media often take a critical posture on many issues and the same is true with respect to Europe. The two authors argue that their use

443 makes citizens more inclined to Euroscepticism. However, this does not
444 happen in the same way in every country but different patterns are vis-
445 ible within the EU. The chapter presents a cluster of countries based on
446 public attitudes towards the EU and use of the media.

447 On a similar theme, but by the use of different methods and units of
448 analysis, Lorenzo Mosca and Mario Quaranta, in the seventh chapter,
449 compare 'news diets', electoral choices and EU attitudes in Germany,
450 Italy and the UK in the 2014 EP elections. In particular, based on three
451 original post-electoral surveys held after the 2014 European elections on
452 representative samples of citizens with Internet access in Italy, Germany
453 and the UK, they explore the relationship between the exposition to dif-
454 ferent sources of information and the degree of support towards EU insti-
455 tutions. A classification of news diets is elaborated by the two authors,
456 who distinguish among occasional media users, prevalently traditional
457 (frequent users of TV and newspapers), prevalently digital (frequent
458 users of Internet and/or social network) and 'omnivores'. The last EU
459 electoral campaigns in the three countries demonstrate the presence of
460 relatively strong Eurosceptic parties, such as *Alternative für Deutschland* in
461 Germany, the *Movimento 5 Stelle* or the *Lega Nord* in Italy and the UKIP
462 in the UK. They argue that the 'styles' of consumption of political infor-
463 mation, together with party preferences, can have a multiplicative effect
464 on citizens' EU attitudes. In particular, it could be possible that citizens
465 with preferences for eurosceptic parties have particular news diets, which
466 can, in turn, 'boost' their negative orientations towards the EU institu-
467 tions. The study takes into account political and media systems charac-
468 teristics, and control for cross-national differences in framing the EU.

469 Moving to the study of social movements (from the Left and the
470 Right) and the use of the Internet in relation to Europe, Elena Pavan
471 and Manuela Caiani, in the eighth chapter, address the issue of extreme
472 right groups and their Euroscepticism, locating this complex relationship
473 in a broader scenario of new challenges and opportunities provided by
474 the new information and communication technologies to civil society
475 organizations (also the radical ones). With the help of social network
476 analysis and digital methods for the study on online environments, in
477 this chapter they reconstruct the cyber communities of the extreme right
478 in six European countries (France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Spain and

Great Britain) and analyse their structural properties. All extreme right organizations with an online presence (i.e. website) are mapped and their relational characteristics are examined in order to understand if they represent a cohesive or a fragmented 'movement sector'. Thus, a Web content analysis is performed, showing the anti- and pro-European discourses transmitted online by these organizations through their respective websites and the recurring (anti)European topics are found. The main idea is to determine under which conditions these extreme right communities are able to elaborate a unified (and coherent?) discourse nationally and cross-nationally around the new and increasingly significant new European cleavage, which can form, eventually, the basis for the development of genuine European political parties in the future.

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With a focus on Web 2.0 technologies, in the ninth chapter, Annett Heft, Sophia Wittwer, Barbara Pfetsch propose a comparative analysis of Twitter networks of pro- and anti-EU parties. To address the issue of EU politicization, they examine Twitter networks of pro- and anti-EU parties from four European countries (France, Germany, Poland and the UK). Considering following and interaction networks, they ask to what degree party networks from both sides of the political spectrum are interconnected and what their connections actually mean. In addition, they analyse which types of actors follow and interact with the respective parties and which functions (e.g. support, criticism) these connections perform. They argue that Eurosceptical parties show a higher degree of interconnectedness across countries than Eurofriendly parties. Also they find that networks of Eurosceptical parties are more exclusive in terms of ideology while the networks of Eurofriendly parties entail more connections to the opposing camp.

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In the tenth chapter, Donatella della Porta, Hara Kouki, Joseba Fernández present an analysis on Left-wing social movements and Europe, by looking at *Syriza* and *Podemos* and Euroscepticism during the crisis. They start from the assumption that particularly in the South, austerity policies imposed by international and European institutions and adopted by national governments have provoked a strong wave or protests and generated new political actors challenging neo-liberalism. In this chapter, they explore *Syriza's* and *Podemos'* ambivalent stance towards Europe by tackling three dimensions: First, they analyse their discourse

AU16

515 on both European institutions and the European project in an attempt
516 to explore what is the idea of Europe put forward by those leftist par-
517 ties. Secondly, they compare *Syriza's* and *Podemos'* approach to European
518 integration with 'hard Euroscepticism' defended by the European radical
519 right. Finally, they reflect upon Europe in terms of political activism: is
520 the European perspective relevant for the political activity of those par-
521 ties' members?

522 In the eleventh chapter, Evangelos Fanoulis and Anasol Peña-Ríos look
523 at 'EU u-Government' as a solution for more citizen participation in EU
524 policy-making. If EU democracy has been traditionally practised through
525 representation, in this chapter they argue that more civic participation in
526 EU policy-making is plausible thanks to ubiquitous computing, mixed
527 reality technology and virtual spaces. Current technology and IT services
528 can remedy problems of time and space, which have been the biggest
529 obstacles for active civic participation in EU governance. An examina-
530 tion of advantages and disadvantages of applying ubiquitous government
531 (u-Government) in policy-making is conducted with an investigation
532 on how practising democracy at the EU level can be facilitated through
533 u-Government, enhancing the democratic quality of the EU representa-
534 tive model, whereas the fourth part proposes a conceptual model for the
535 use of mixed reality technology in policy-making scenarios.

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