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POLARIZATION OF PUBLIC OPINION REGARDING THE EU IN CONDITIONS OF
POLARIZED NATIONAL ELITE

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I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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ABSTRACT

Theoretically, elite polarization should lead to public polarization but it does not always happen. This Master's thesis examines what factors lead to mass polarization when parties are polarized. 12 cases with high elite polarization and varying mass polarization in the EU member states were selected from the sample of 56 cases based on the national elections taking place since 2008 and until 2017. Using Qualitative Comparative Analysis it was found that public opinion becomes polarized in the conditions of elite polarization if there is a crisis at the EU level, Eurosceptics reached 10% of electoral support and either Eurosceptic parties are present on both left and right sides of ideological scale and salience of European integration in the party's public stance is high, or media salience of the EU is high and people often discuss the EU political matters. The second part of the analysis was process tracing and it unfolded the mass polarization process in Greece from 2009 until 2015. It showed that a greater number of ideologically diverse parties that could effectively use the opportunity structure fostered mass polarization, while the EU crises, in turn, strengthened the opportunity structure.

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1. Introduction

EU politics have become vibrant over the last years. The once the pro-European bastion, the EP involves one-third Eurosceptic members (Halikiopoulou and Vasilopoulou 2014) for the second time and more Eurosceptic parties get places in national parliaments and governments all over the European Union. The voter turnout on the recent European Parliament elections increases significantly. In 20 member states, the national turnout increased, while the overall turnout reached 50,66 per cent that is the highest value since 1994 (European Parliament, 2019). Citizens also do not take the EU for granted. According to the survey conducted in 2018, 62 per cent of people consider their country's membership of the European Union to be a good thing, which is the highest figure since 1983. It could be a side effect of the complicated Brexit process (European Parliament, 2018).

Although the signs of politicization of the EU was observed since the late 1980s (De Wilde and Zürn, 2012, 140) or even since the early 1970s (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 281), it is a new phenomenon in most countries. The level of politicization was low in comparison with other political issues and some countries politicization achieved an adequate level only in the 2000s (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 110).

According to the theory, the EU crisis should influence «party competition over European integration, including EU issue position, EU issue salience, and EU issue framing» (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 312). Some authors claim that in times of Europe's multiple crises elites become highly polarized over the EU (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 312). Since 2009 there was a series of crisis at the EU that contributed to politicizing of the EU (De Wilde and Zürn, 2012, 145). The Lisbon treaty negotiations, the European debt crisis, the European migrant crisis, and the Brexit have provoked debate about the EU in the member states. For example, the euro crisis caused extremely salient debates and “increased visibility of Europe in the politics of the European nation states” (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 273). The tension of the conflict was high not only in countries that were hardest hit by the crisis. For example, the crisis caused a high level of politicization in Germany (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 276). The euro crisis debate took place even in non-member of Eurozone countries, although there the debate was less lively (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 273).

Elite polarization is a part of the politicization process (Hutter et al., 2016, 8). Polarization of parties on the EU increased over time (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 283). “Constraining dissensus” replaced the dominated “permissive consensus” (Down and Wilson 2008, 26). For a long time

parties did not offer the voters different visions of Europe (Van Der Eijk and Franklin, 2004, 37-39), but the Eurosceptic fringe parties started to openly campaign on EU polity issues (Adam et al., 2013, 88). Parties like the National Front and the Freedom Party of Austria took a more distinct position, increased the salience of the issue (Down and Wilson 2008, 29) and awakened the “slipping giant” (Grande and Kriesi, 2014).

Nowadays European integration has become an issue of mass politics and looking back at everything that has happened recently, it seems that the politicization of the EU is the key to an understanding the current main problems of the EU (Grande and Kriesi, 2014,3).

It is important to understand the effects of rising polarization on the voters. According to the theory, elite polarization should lead to public polarization (Down and Wilson, 2010; Ray, 2003; Hooghe and Marks, 2005). The elite polarization should decrease the cognitive cost of sophisticated electoral choice (Lachat, 2008, 687-688), makes it easier for voters to understand parties’ clues (Singer, 2016, 177), increases mass consistency (Levendusky, 2010, 114-115). More confrontational debates, emerging due to greater polarization, can alleviate the lack of clarity for citizens (Brack 2015, 347).

Despite the theoretical expectations, elite polarization does not always lead to mass polarization. Although the parties are polarized in the USA, many studies proved that across most issues Americans are ideologically moderate (Zingher and Flynn, 2018, 24). The scientists developed the different factors that can influence this process (Hetherington, 2001; Rogowski, 2018) but the one consolidated set of factors has not been developed yet. Furthermore, as the concept of polarization is especially popular in the USA (Layman, Carsey, and Horowitz, 2006), the focus of the study is often the USA. Although the politicization of the EU can be perceived as a part of the normalization of the EU politics (Statham and Trenz, 2013), the process of it and polarization as it’s dimension can differ from the American experience due to the unique character of the EU. The only study that analyzes why in some cases the elite polarization on the EU lead to the mass polarization on the EU, while in others it does not is the study of Down and Wilson (2010). However, Down and Wilson analyzed the polarization for the years 1988, 1992, 1996, 1999 and 2002 (2010, 73) before the time when the politicization of the EU has increased significantly (Grande and Kriesi, 2014). The electoral success of Eurosceptic parties has increased significantly (Brack, 2015b), as the salience of the EU integration issue and its coverage by parties (Ray, 2003, 988). As it was mentioned, since 2008 there was a series of crisis at the EU level that theoretically

should force national parties to include the EU issues in their national agenda. It is important to see what factors lead to mass polarization in the new political environment.

To answer this question 12 cases with high elite polarization were selected. To select cases the results of elections taking place since 2008 and until 2017 were analyzed. In this sample of 12 cases in 5 cases the public opinion was polarized as well: France in 2017, Greece in 2012, Austria in 2013, Greece in 2015 and the UK in 2017. In the remaining 7 cases elites were polarized but the public opinion was not: Hungary in 2014, Italy in 2013, the UK in 2010, Poland in 2015, Greece in 2009, Netherlands in 2017, Portugal 2011. The aim of this study is to define what sets of factors lead to mass polarization when parties are polarized. To do it the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) is used in this study. It will allow producing all possible combinations of conditions that lead to mass polarization when the elite is polarized, identifying the sufficient and necessary conditions. After that, the process-tracing analysis will be done to get more information about the cases and how these conditions work in practice. The case of Greece will be analyzed as there are three points of time in our sample. In Greece, the elite had been polarized already in 2009, but the public opinion had not been polarized until 2012. Process tracing allows unfolding the mass polarization process in conditions of elite polarization over time.

Following this introduction, the thesis contains three main chapters. The first chapter outlines the theoretical framework for studying polarization. As the outcome of this chapter the list of factors influencing mass polarization on the EU will be developed and directional expectations will be formulated. The second chapter details the case selection process, method description, data collection, operationalization and calibration of the variables. The third chapter presents the analysis and the results of the study. Some final conclusions are then presented.

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2. Literature review

2.1. The concepts' definition

Politicization

There is no one definition or framework for EU politicization. De Wilde claims that the discussion evolved around the distinct forms and functions of EU politicization. The main forms are: increasing political conflict in the EU level polity; increasing relevance of political actors compare to technocrats in decision-making; and increasing public contentiousness of European issues. The main functions are: (re)structuring political conflict; bringing questions of legitimacy; changing the character of integration and the EU (2011, 560–566).

Hutter et al., who are the key scholars in studying politicization, define external and internal politicization. External politicization means “the extension of the scope of the political system vis-à-vis the (capitalist) economy”. Internal politicization means “an expansion of the scope of conflict within the political system” (2016, 7) and this definition will be used in this study. There are alternative definitions such as the one of Pieter De Wilde and Michael Zurn: “the process by means of which decision-making powers and the associated authoritative interpretations of facts and circumstances are brought into the political sphere – that is, transported either into the political sub-system (defined by the ability to make collectively binding decisions) or into the political space (defined by public debates about the right course in handling a given problem)” (2012, 139). However, the definition of Hutter et al. is broader and includes Schattschneider’s concept of conflict as the heart of politics (2016, 7) that is related to the idea of this research.

Polarization

The concept of polarization has deep roots. It has been built on the spatial model that Downs introduced (Evans, 2004). Nowadays the concept is especially popular in the USA. Since the 1970s the polarization of both the House and Senate has increased steadily and the Republican Party and the Democratic Party are very polarized about almost all issues (Layman, Carsey, and Horowitz 2006, 84). Scholars have covered a wide range of countries from developing democracies (Singer, 2016) to Europe (Kurella and Pappi, 2015), but still mostly focus on the USA.

Polarization is closely tied with politicization. Hutter et al. see it as one of the dimensions of politicization along with issue salience and actor expansion (range). All these dimensions may be intercorrelated, but they are at least partly independent. According to Hutter et al., issue salience is a predominant condition for politicization, but all are necessary for full understanding of the phenomena of politicization (2016, 8). Pieter De Wilde and Michael Zurn also believe that an

increasing polarization of opinions, interests or values is one of indicators of politicization as well as rising awareness, which means greater engagement of citizens, and mobilization, which points to an increase in the amount of resources spent (2012, 140).

Hutter et al. define polarisation as “the intensity of conflict related to an issue among the different actors involved” (2016, 9). Evans mentions that Sartori distinguished between polarization as a static concept and as a dynamic concept. Static polarization means distance between parties, whereas dynamic polarization means a widening distance between them (Evans, 2002, 167). The focus of study is concentrated on the static polarization and on the more classical definition created by Dalton: “the degree of ideological differentiation among political parties in a system” (2008, 900).

Some scientists believe that a party system becomes polarized when parties are apart from each other ideologically and at the same time are homogenous internally (Zingher and Flynn, 2018, 23; Druckman et al., 2013, 57). At the same time elite level polarization can be asymmetric. This happens when one party is more ideologically united than another like in the USA, for example, where the Democratic party is more ideological fragmented than the Republicans (Thomsen, 2014).

2.2. Politicization of the EU

The politicization of the EU does not take place along the Left-Right dimension and it is not a new cleavage, it is a part of the transformed cultural-conflict dimension (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 191). Although the Left-Right dimension is important in EU politics, the politicization of the EU should not be reduced to it. The more-/less-EU division is also present and it “does not overlap with the Left-Right cleavage” (Papadopoulos and Magnette, 2010, 718). The EU dimension is still incoherent (Mair, 2007, 9-12), there is a greater gap between parties and voters on the EU dimension than on the left-right one (Hobolt, 2007, 166), but there can also be significant strategic potential. The majority of parties are not as deeply rooted to a specific stance on the EU as they are on domestic political issues, so it is easier to change positions strategically for electoral purposes (Down and Wilson, 2010, 64).

The politicization of the EU has been documented since the late 1980s (De Wilde and Zürn, 2012, 140), although some authors claim that the politicization can be observed in some countries as France and the UK since the early 1970s (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 281). Politicization was part of a more fundamental process of “denationalization” (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 191-193) and the

increasing political authority of the EU (De Wilde and Zürn, 2012, 138) that the Maastricht Treaty symbolized. The “permissive consensus”, which dominated before the Maastricht Treaty, when the public supported the EU and wanted to leave the issue to the elite, was replaced by “constraining dissensus”, as Hooghe and Marks have called it (Down and Wilson 2008, 26). Since the Maastricht Treaty, public support for the EU dropped in most countries and the EU as a whole (Down and Wilson, 2008, 37). On the other hand, some authors believe that the Maastricht Treaty was a main politicizing event, but it did not cause the politicization or even did not elevated the process of politicization of the EU to a new level (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 281).

Although the signs of polarization of the EU was observed since the late 1980s (De Wilde and Zürn, 2012, 140) or the early 1970s (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 281), it is a new phenomenon in most countries. The level of politicization was low in comparison with other political issues. In some countries it achieved an adequate level only in the 2000s (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 110). Parties constrained the politicization for a long time and did not offer the voters different visions of Europe. According to Van Der Eijk and Franklin, voters had already had different positions on EU integration in 1999, but there was not a big difference between parties (2004, 37-39). This situation created a window of opportunity for parties with a clear pro-/anti-EU stance (Van Der Eijk and Franklin, 2004, 47). They called it a “sleeping giant” (Van Der Eijk and Franklin, 2004).

A shift in voter orientations is one of the preconditions for greater politicization, however, it is not enough by itself. Political actors have to capitalize on it (Van Der Eijk and Franklin, 2004, 48). The presence of Eurosceptic parties was crucial for politicization and activation of the potential that existed on the demand side (Hernández and Kriesi, 2016, 516). Mair claims that the giant was not only sleeping but sedated by the mainstream parties. The parties chose to talk about issues of the EU polity in the European Parliament, where it cannot prove decisive, and not to talk about them in national elections, where it is relevant. As a result, the EU dimension was remarkably depoliticized because the preferences of citizens were mainly irrelevant to the outputs of the system (Mair, 2007, 12-13). As Vivien Schmidt claimed, the EU was a “polity without politics” (Mair, 2007, 7).

While mainstream parties chose to depoliticize EU issues, Eurosceptic fringe parties started to openly campaign on EU polity issues (Adam et al., 2013, 88). Many scholars showed that Eurosceptic parties fostered politicization (Grande and Kriesi, 2014). Parties like the National Front and the Freedom Party of Austria took a more distinct position and increased the salience of the issue to capitalize on the issues (Down and Wilson 2008, 29). Mainstream parties still can avoid EU issues as it is newer and can harm their reputation. In this case, the challenger parties

tend to differentiate themselves by taking a more radical position and increasing the salience that leads to the intensification of the conflict over the EU (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 316). Mainstream parties can be forced to speak more about the EU by challenger parties and increased importance of the EU agenda (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 317).

Nowadays European integration has become an issue of mass politics. Pieter De Wilde and Michael Zürn indicate that the number of citizens without an opinion “on important institutional questions such as EU membership” has dropped (De Wilde and Zürn, 2012, 149). Grande and Kriesi found that European integration has been a salient and contested issue in national elections since the 1990s. European integration accounts for 5.9 per cent of core statements, which is comparable to environmental issues and immigration (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 198-199). However, according to Down and Wilson, Europe used to be an issue of contestation only in the EP elections and referendums on EU matters (Down and Wilson, 2010, 62).

Some scientists believe that politicization of the EU might be a part of the normalization of the EU and political party competition, so, in other words, it makes the EU politics more similar to domestic politics. Criticism of European integration might lead to «a more mature political debate about what kind of Europe? rather than a simplistic for or against Europe» (Statham and Trenz, 2013, 969). However, consequences of politicization for the future of the EU is a disputable question: while Hix believes that politicization will positively influence the public debates, reforms and the legitimacy of the EU, Bartolini is sure that politicization will undermine the integration process (Papadopoulos and Magnette, 2010, 713-714). Papadopoulos and Magnette argue with both scientists stating that politicization at the EU level is absorbed by «consociational mechanisms» so politicization is less promising and less dangerous (Papadopoulos and Magnette, 2010, 714). Politicization gives better opportunities to articulate views and to mobilize citizens (Ray, 2003), but it was difficult for established actors to organize the potentials as the politicization of the European integration has not been caused by its’ supporters (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 191-192).

2.3. How elite polarization influences mass polarization

European integration has become a salient and contested issue. According to the theory, elite polarization should force mass polarization (Down and Wilson, 2010; Ray, 2003; Hooghe and Marks, 2005). To call society polarized citizens should be concentrated at ideological extremes and the poles should carry more weight than the centre (Zingher and Flynn, 2018, 24).

Although it is still unclear if inter-party competition and public opinion on the EU are systematically related and what is the direction of this connection. So, parties can cause the

divisions among the electorate, or the conflict among parties can be caused by existed divisions among voters, or they can be interrelated. Down and Wilson call the last option a reciprocal relationship and, referring to Gabel and Scheve, claim that an increase in an intra-party division can make voters more divided that in turn can lead to a higher level of intra-party dissent (Down and Wilson 2010, 68). It also cannot be taken for granted that the public and party divisions on the EU are connected at all. The argument in favour of this position is that parties do not compete on the EU, according to some studies (Down and Wilson, 2010, 68). Also, Adams, L. Ezrow and Z. Somer-Topcu found that voters do not recognize when parties change their manifestos (2011).

Zingher and Flynn showed that elite-level polarization has reshaped the political behaviour of the Americans (2018). Down and Wilson found that the more parties are polarized on the EU, the more widely dispersed and less peaked is public opinion. And they didn't find significant evidence that the last can cause the former. However, the inter-party competition does not cause public division in all 11 countries that authors studied (Down and Wilson, 2010, 72-75). They also accept the possibility the causal relationship can be more complex than they stated. For example, a decrease in party competition does not necessarily lead to a more unified public opinion (Down and Wilson, 2010, 83).

It is expected that elite polarization can influence public opinion because voters are usually are out of depth in politics and they know even less about the European level. For example, only 19 per cent knows about the Union's political system and only 7 per cent could identify a member-state of the EU, so voters may need cues and heuristics to make vote (Hobolt, 2007, 154). Scientists argue if people just follow cues and ignore content or party sponsorship influences how people interpret information (Druckman et al., 2013, 59), but many scholars claim that mass opinion doesn't tend to move significantly without parties' signals (Hetherington, 2001, 622). Hetherington claimed that V.O. Key, Nie, Verba, Petrocik etc. believed that elite behaviour "set the terms by which the masses think about politics": in a party-centric manner or an issue-centric manner (Hetherington, 2001, 622).

In times of elite polarization, parties can influence citizens stronger. Druckman et al. found that party endorsements drive opinions only when opposing frames have similar strength under conditions of low polarization. It means that when both arguments equally strong or weak it lacks clarity for voters and they are looking for something else and "something" appears to be party endorsements. In conditions without a party endorsement when parties present opposite frames of the same strength, it cannot affect individuals' opinions at all. But when polarization is high

partisans' opinions move in the direction endorsed by their party even if the frame is weaker. So in this case party endorsement becomes more important than substantive information. Furthermore, in the polarized conditions "half-hearted evaluations of weak frames turned into enthusiastic evaluations if the frame received an endorsement by the individual's party". A polarized environment also enhances attitude importance. Citizens will be "less likely to consider alternative positions and more likely to take action based on their opinion". Polarization influences how citizens evaluate substantive information and party cues, how the public views arguments. It shows that when "elites polarize on a given issue, citizens follow and polarize as well" (Druckman et al., 2013, 70-74).

Other authors provide many arguments explaining why elite polarization should increase parties' influence. When parties' ideological positions are far from each other, it becomes easier for voters to determine the cues and where they stand (Zingher and Flynn, 2018, 23; Hetherington, 2001, 628; Singer, 2016, 177). For example, at the time pro-integration consensus party positions influenced voters but the effect was limited (Ray, 2003, 979). Eurosceptic parties politicized the European integration conflict and without it voters would be "less likely to base their vote on EU attitudes" (Hernández and Kriesi, 2016, 517). After 1984 party positions affected voters more than socioeconomic factors (Ray, 2003, 988). Eurosceptic parties increased the impact of party cues as they made party messages more distinct (Ray, 2003, 991).

According to some studies, nowadays voters are affected by their ideological orientation and by attitudes towards issues rather than traditional loyalties or stable social cleavages (Eatwell and Goodwin, 2018). It is why parties have to simplify ideological concepts to be heard, that decreases the cognitive cost of sophisticated electoral choice (Lachat, 2008, 687-688). The message becomes simpler when the system is polarized because actors discuss issues loudly in a conflict way (Adam et al., 2017, 266). Although it could lead to a decline in the civility of political debate (Layman, Carsey, and Horowitz, 2006, 101), it also can alleviate the lack of clarity for citizens (Brack 2015a, 347). Furthermore, Geer found that when polarization is high, candidates focus more on opponents' weaknesses, but "negative ads provide voters with more policy-based information than do positive ads". Arguing candidates mention where their opponents are wrong, that, in fact, can make people more involved in politics (Layman, Carsey, and Horowitz 2006, 103).

Elite polarization does not necessarily lead to issue polarization. Although the parties in the USA are polarized, many studies proved that across most issues Americans are ideologically moderate (Zingher and Flynn, 2018, 24). For example, the ideological distribution of voters can stay the

same but an individual's policy orientations can "become a stronger predictor of their partisanship". Zingher and Flynn call it sorting because voters sort into the right ideological camp (Zingher and Flynn, 2018, 24).

The polarization is not constructed just within one for/against integration issue, it is constructed within a field of legitimating ideas (Statham and Trenz, 2013, 978), so parties become more ideological homogeneity about different issue dimensions (Zingher and Flynn, 2018, 23). It makes topics connected, that is called conflict extension. It increases mass consistency because voters learn "what goes with what". This effect occurs whether an ordinal voter has strong ties to the party or not (Levendusky, 2010, 114-115). It might help voters to vote rationally, i.e. in accordance with their preferences. Some scholars think it is unlikely that citizens will become more consistently "in the absence of elite-level cues" because there are no other reasons why the person who supports tax cuts should oppose abortion rights as well. Politicians' positions help citizens to "bring their attitudes on cross-cutting issue agendas into line with each other" (Layman, Carsey, and Horowitz 2006, 95). Some authors like Gelmen believe that effect of polarization on a voter coherency is at least limited, but Gelmen's results based on over-time data that Levendusky finds not suitable to discovery a real causal relationship as many other factors can have an influence (2010).

Many other authors support the idea that elite polarization helps citizens to choose parties that best represent them. Putting forward arguments parties should refer to both specific policies and the ideology, and when they differ on it, it becomes easier for voters to understand this connection, that is especially important in developing democracies where voters do not have enough knowledge to make a choice (Singer, 2016, 177). Zingher and Flynn found that as elite-level polarization increases, voters tend to more strongly identify themselves with the correct ideological party, and policy orientations have become a strong predictor of political behaviour. Increasing polarization has had the strongest effect on more moderate voters, who could not vote for the ideologically correct party. Also, more liberal citizens tend to self-identify as more extreme liberals, but self-identity of more conservative citizens did not change. It shows that the effect of polarization can be not symmetrical (Zingher and Flynn, 2018, 30-38). Analyzing time trend Zingher and Flynn to the conclusion that these changes in political behaviour and attitude on the mass level have been driven by the increasing polarization of elites (2018, 41). Cecilia Testa believes that as electoral stakes are growing up with polarization (2012), that should increase a voter's motivation to make an accurate choice.

However, Rogowski claims that elite polarization does not lead to a more accurate choice because voters become less responsive to policy positions and more to salient political identities (2018,1-2). When media cover elites' debate, "partisan predispositions are activated in the minds of citizens". It enhances partisans' party identity and makes it less ambivalent, that will lead to increased partisan motivated reasoning. Motivated reasoning means that people tend to seek out information that confirms what they believe in. As a result, people rely more on partisan endorsements and less on substantive arguments (Druckman et al., 2013, 57-60). There are many examples of motivated reasoning in politics. For example, Democrats and Republicans in the USA differently evaluated the size of the national debt, inflation rates, and unemployment depending on who was in power (Cacciatore et al., 2014, 656).

Cognitive-dissonance theory explains that it is psychologically uncomfortable for people "when discrepancies exist in their cognition", so they prefer to avoid it (Cacciatore et al., 2014, 658). Greater elite ideological polarization produces "a more partisan information stream" (Hetherington, 2001, 623). Cacciatore et al. found that partisan audiences tend to selectively choose and interpret the news. As a result, "different segments of the population become fragmented and further entrenched in their points of view" that leads to mass polarization (2014, 658-660). In the USA due to reinforcing partisan identities partisan out-groups is perceived increasingly negative and the political process became hostile and divided (Zingher and Flynn, 2018, 24-25).

To sum up, according to previous studies, elite polarization should enhance mass polarization. However, the effect is not always so straightforward. It is important that the speed and character of politicization of the EU, and polarization respectively, can differ across countries. Empirically it was proven by Grande and Kriesi. In their study, the salience varied from country to country significantly. Among the members states that the authors analyzed (Austria, France, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom) the salience was highest in the United Kingdom and lowest in Germany (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 198-199). Different factors can influence this process. To highlight the important factors for the study firstly the factors that influence the public opinion on European integration will be analyzed and then the factors that influence mass polarization.

2.4. The public opinion on European integration

According to Vries analysis, member-states have either a clear majority of supporters or sceptics. Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain have a majority of supporters. Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Sweden have a large share of sceptics (2018, 83-84).

Scholars studying public opinion on European integration are not united about the factors that have an influence. Hooghe and Marks claim that the set of factors depends on an understanding of what the EU is. If the EU is perceived as a regime provoking economic exchange, citizens evaluate the costs and benefits for themselves and the country (2005, 420-421). For example, Vries believes that people compare the pros of their country being in the EU and the pros of being outside the EU. When the perceived benefits of being in the EU exceed the pros of being outside, people support the EU, and vice versa (Vries, 2018, 78). The degree of scepticism depends on the viability of an exit option. In this sense economic performance and quality of government (corruption) are especially important (Vries, 2018, 85).

The adherents of the second approach see the EU as “a polity overarching established territorial communities”, in this sense the social identities of citizens should be taken into account (Hooghe and Marks, 2005, 420-421). Hooghe and Marks believe that national identity is important for understanding the public opinion, but found that the meaningful difference exists only between respondents with exclusive national identity and the rest (Hooghe and Marks 2005, 433). They also claimed that the effect of national identity means something if national elites are divided. So, in a context of exclusive national identity, the elite division will fuel negative opinion on European integration. When the elite is not divided, national identity will not play a big role or will be positively associated with the EU support (2005, 436).

An alternative line of explanation conceives the European Union as “an extension of domestic politics” and this approach draws on the belief that public opinion is guided by domestic political organizations (Hooghe and Marks, 2005, 420-421). According to the cue theory, values and interests of citizens become politically salient because of the political actors. Although the level of involvement of different actors varies among different cases, the political parties are one of the main actors in the debate on European integration (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 212). Of course, parties are no longer the exclusive actors in this regard, as social movements, interest groups, and media also play a role in expressing contestation. However, for the “authoritative allocation of values and public policy” of all actors involved in mobilizing depend on parties (Van Der Eijk and

Franklin, 2004, 40-41). Interestingly, there is no correlation between EU knowledge and support for European integration, and only limited connections between cue-taking and support for European integration (Hobolt, 2007, 169).

As different explanations lines exist, the parties use different frames to represent their attitude to European integration. Cultural frames are related to identity and, for example, a party, that negatively frame a cultural aspect of the European integration, will stress the importance of cultural homogeneity and national boundaries. Economic frames are connected with economic prosperity, labour and social security. When the party positively frames the economic aspects of the EU it will stress the role of the EU in economic prosperity and labour security rights. Also, other frames exist such as security, ecology and political efficiency (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 317). In times of the crisis, parties can intensify the frames related to the nature of the crisis (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 317).

Ray, referencing Eichenberg and Dalton, claims that campaigns, elite actions, and the international environment can influence public opinion on the EU (Ray, 2003, 979), but it is still under-researched how public opinion is formed in a multi-layered system. Grande and Kriesi studying newspapers content found that international and supranational arenas contribute to the national debates on the EU. Supranational actors account for 27.7 per cent of core sentences, national executives from other countries for 38.5 per cent and national executives only for 10.9 per cent. The picture is similar in regards to political parties. It shows a high degree of both vertical and horizontal Europeanization (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 213-214).

Vertical Europeanization means that the EU level can influence the national one. Horizontal Europeanization means that a more polarized party system in one country can lead to greater voters' polarization in another. There are some arguments in favour of this position in literature. Cees van der Eijk and Mark N. Franklin claimed the if the EU integration becomes politicized in one country, the other countries will be contaminated (Van Der Eijk and Franklin, 2004, 49).

Furthermore, at the time of the euro crisis, Germany significantly contributed to the debate in other member states (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 213-214). However, it seems that the different countries have different capacity to influence the debate due to the different factors like geographical proximity, political affinity or weight. Pieter De Wilde and Michael Zurn claim that increasing polarization in France and Germany may influence the political climate more than other countries due to the status of the motor behind integration (2012, 149). Nevertheless, the most relevant cues

about European integration arise at the national level, in other words, by domestic actors (Hooghe and Marks, 2005, 424-425). The national level should be of paramount importance.

Down and Wilson prove that even in the EU case, where the level of support is generally rather high, bimodality in the distribution of attitudes can exist. Even if the distribution is not bimodal, public opinion can become more polarized over time and it is an important trend to study (2008, 30).

2.5. Factors influencing mass polarization

2.5.1. The salience of the issue, Eurosceptic parties, party size

Down and Wilson tested what factors or set of factors can explain why elite polarization causes public polarization in some countries and does not in other. Firstly, they have come to believe that theoretically even if parties' stances on the EU are polarized but the salience of the issue is low, it "may play little part in structuring public opinion" (Down and Wilson, 2010). The salience of the different issues indeed varies among parties. According to the "saliency theory", political parties focus on the issues supported by a majority of the electorate and ignore other questions (Ray, 2003, 980). Ray proved it statistically but also found that since all parties address issues of European integration after 1992, the strength of the factor was mitigated (2003, 988). Adam et al. found that pro-European parties "attach salience to the topic of EU integration" as Eurosceptic parties do. However, it is also true that pro-European catch-all internally dissent parties choose to decrease salience of the issue (Adam et al., 2017, 277). S. Adam et al. show that the right-wing Eurosceptic fringe parties address the EU polity issues more than others during the EP elections: "60% of EU issue mobilization by radical right-wing parties refer to polity issues". (Adam et al., 2013, 88-89). Non-Eurosceptic parties in general focus on policy issues (Adam et al., 2013, 94-95). Opposition to the EU polity means opposition to "the EU project as a whole" (Mair, 2007, 3).

Secondly, the public support for Eurosceptic parties should reach a certain threshold as in this case it would be difficult for the mainstream parties to ignore this topic (Down and Wilson, 2010). Mainstream parties may indeed have a temptation to avoid such topics. Putting the EU issues on the agenda Eurosceptics challenge the mainstream parties, especially if the parties internally dissent on the EU (Adam et al., 2017, 262). It is also important to note that if party is divided on the issue, its' capacity to build public opinion will be lower. The contradictory messages will blur the cues and supporters will not get it (Ray, 2003, 980-981). Adam et al. formulated three strategic options that pro-EU parties have in such situation: 1) defend a pro-EU position; 2) adopt more critical position; 3) blur their position (Adam et al., 2017, 263). As party's agenda influences

agenda of other parties, it can be expected that mainstream parties will be influenced by Eurosceptic ones. It was proved statistically that in the countries where parties most harshly criticize the EU, like the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK, non-Eurosceptic parties demonstrate the strongest support for the EU (Adam et al., 2013, 93-94). It can be important that Eurosceptic parties criticize the EU in a moderate way (-.21), while non-Eurosceptic parties are rather neutral (.05) (Adam et al., 2013, 93).

Also, the location of such parties on the left-right axis may affect public division. If Eurosceptic parties present on both the left and the right side of the scale, the probability that they will get voters also on both sides increases (Down and Wilson, 2010, 77-80). Hernández and Kriesi also proved that Eurosceptic partisan offer influences this process (2016, 521).

Finally, party size can influence the public division. Theoretically, the level of congruence between voters and parties will be higher in countries with many small parties (Down and Wilson, 2010). At the same time studying polarization in a multi-party system can be a more challenging task than studying it in a two-party system (Thomsen, 2014, 786.).

Using binary indicators, Down and Wilson found that in different countries different set of conditions lead to the public division. So public division is high when the median party size is small and

- 1) The salience is low, but there are Eurosceptic parties on the left and the right or high Eurosceptic party support or
- 2) there is low Eurosceptic party support, but the salience of the EU is high.

If the median party size is large, it requires the high salience, the low level of support and an absence of Eurosceptic parties on the left and the right. So, in five of six cases, the inter-party competition causes the public division when parties are small plus at least one causal factor (Down and Wilson, 2010, 77-80).

2.5.2. Personal characteristics

According to the theory strength of ideology and partisanship, education, age, gender and race may influence how likely citizens will see the differences between the parties, but in Hetherington's study, which covered data since 1960 until 1996 in the USA, only education turned out to be the significant factor (Hetherington, 2001, 626-628).

Some authors claim that although polarization can help to build an opinion about politics, the effect is limited by party' affiliation and political awareness (Layman and Carsey, 2002; Ray 2003, 981). Elite polarization should affect mainly citizens with strong partisan ties and who know where their party stands on the issue (Rogowski, 2018, 5). Although Down and Wilson claim that even not adherents of the party are influenced by a change of parties' stance. When a party moves from a centre and offers a new choice to voters, they get the message and this new stance becomes the part of their beliefs. Since a party provides a new choice it may resonate with the wider public (2010, 67).

To interpret partisan cues on the European dimension correctly the higher level of knowledge is needed. Hobolt found that voters, which are ignorant about political affairs, were more likely to think that the ideological gap between them and parties are smaller than it was on the EU dimension, although such effect was not observed on the left-right dimension (2007, 168). Only if voters know party positions on the EU, voters can act relying on the endorsements (Hobolt, 2007, 175).

2.5.3. Time

Although it is still the subject of debate, some believe that politicization can be not a linear process (De Wilde and Zürn, 2012, 140). For example, in 1992 in the EU variance in public attitude raised, but it "did not initiate a new trend of increasing dissensus" after and the dispersion of public attitude in member states did not significantly change since 1992 to 2002 (Down and Wilson, 2008, 40). Furthermore, over the long run the changes in the level of consensus are not so significant (Down and Wilson, 2008, 46). Other authors support these findings. Grande and Kriesi showed that the salience of the EU integration increased since the 1970s in all countries, but in comparison with 1990s it declined in the 2000s (2014, 198-199).

Polarization as a part of the politicization process also can have peaks and recession but scientists found that polarization on the EU tends to increase over time (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 283). Zingher and Flynn mentioned that polarization trends positively over time, it is why it is highly correlated with time trend and other positively trended variables. However, the changes have to be constant for a linear trend, but not the variation in the change in polarization (2018, 40). Also, public opinion doesn't always respond to a change in parties' positions immediately (Hetherington, 2001, 626).

2.5.4. Opportunity structure

It is why many believe that polarization isn't consistently increasing but increasing in times of special moments like major treaty negotiations and crisis. According to study analyzing the politicization of the EU, the Maastricht Treaty, the constitutional process, the Lisbon Treaty and conflicts over Turkey's EU membership caused the highest levels of politicization in the period since 1970 and until 2012 in the sample of six countries of the EU (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 106).

The crises of various types, such as geopolitical or economic crises, contribute to creating institutional opportunities for the politicization of the EU (De Wilde and Zürn, 2012, 145). Especially important in this sense are crises at the EU level because it provokes debate about the EU and elites become highly polarized over the EU (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 312). The euro crisis increased the salience of the European integration issues and as a consequence, the political parties developed more differentiated positions on it (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 217). Vries in her book mentions that "existing differences in public opinion hardened and became more pronounced during the crisis" (2018, 89). Other scholars also demonstrated that the crisis increased the importance of the pro-/anti-EU dimension (Otjes and van der Veer, 2016).

The EU crisis can influence the political agenda even if the country did not suffer from the crisis significantly. The euro crisis is an illustration of it. The euro crisis debate was a European, highly visible and took all over the EU. The politicization of the euro crisis was constrained but it led to the Europeanisation of the political debate. The euro crisis caused extremely salient debates and led "to the increased visibility of Europe in the politics of the European nation states" (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 273). The tension of the conflict was not high only in countries that were hardest hit by the crisis. For example, the crisis caused a high level of politicization in Germany (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 276). The euro crisis debate took place even in non-member of Eurozone countries, although there the debates were less lively (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 273).

Vasilopoulou supposes that during the crisis mainstream and challenger parties will behave differently. Mainstream parties tend to stick to the positive EU position but increase the salience of these issues, while challenger parties tend to stress their Eurosceptic positions in times of political or economic instability. However, when challenger parties get into government, they tend to mitigate their Eurosceptic position (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 312).

Another factor that may have an influence is elections. According to Hetherington, in off-year elections, people pay less attention to politics so they may pay less attention to the differences

between parties as well. Although if the government is divided, the differences in parties' positions will be seen, on the other hand, it would be more difficult for people to understand whether the government is ideologically driving (Hetherington, 2001, 626). Time of accession is quite important in this sense as well. Down and Wilson claim after the accession public debates on the merits of membership become less tense as the decision-making process become more technical (2008, 36).

Grande and Hutter call referendums «the ideal opportunity structures for politicising European integration issues» (2016, 289). In their study the cases with a national referendum demonstrated a high-intensity mass conflict. The referendum leads to a higher polarization over Europe and involvement of non-governmental actors (2016, 77). Grande and Hutter claim that national referendums lead to strong politicization due to five factors:

- Voters choose between different positions in referendums, rather than parties, and their choice is more concerned with issues outcomes than elections.
- The European issues compete with other political in elections, while in referendums parties focus only on European issues.
- The referendum gives «dissenting voices better opportunities to articulate themselves».
- Parties have more freedom in framing issues in referendums.
- Referendums have the own momentum and «it is more difficult for mainstream parties to control their courses and outcomes» (2016, 288-289).

Other factors creating an opportunity structure and provoking politicization include different national narratives about European integration, competitive party politics and media attention for EU issue that has grown over time but differ across countries. De Wilde and Zürn call it intermediating factors because they lie somewhere between the real cause the of politicization and the process itself, but are essential to launch politicization process (2012, 138-139). Statham and Trenz also believe that institutional opportunities for influencing the decision and high media attention are important for politicization (2013, 977).

2.6.Summary and directional expectations

To sum up the following factors can influence mass polarization:

- The salience of the issue
- Eurosceptic party support and the location of Eurosceptic parties on the left–right axis
- Party size and party system
- Ideological coherence of the parties

- Personal characteristics: political awareness, strength of ideology and partisan ties
- Major treaty negotiations, crisis, elections, time of accession
- Media attention

According to the theory, the following directional expectations are formulated:

- 1) The high salience of European integration in the party's public stance should provoke public opinion polarization.
- 2) The sufficient electoral support of Eurosceptic parties should provoke public opinion polarization.
- 3) The presence of Eurosceptic parties on both sides of the left–right axis should provoke public opinion polarization.
- 4) The effect of party size is indistinct. The small median party size should provoke polarization but at the same time polarization can be higher in the two-party system.
- 5) Higher political awareness should provoke public opinion polarization.
- 6) The EU crisis creates the opportunity structure that should provoke public opinion polarization.
- 7) Low media salience of the EU issues should prevent public opinion polarization.

3. Methodological chapter

3.1. Cases selection

3.1.1. Mass polarization

The dependent variable of the study is the polarization of public opinion about the EU. The dependent variable is operationalized as the standard deviation of the opinion about the EU because it is similar to as Dalton's measure of polarization. For the public opinion about the EU Standard Eurobarometer reports are used.

For each survey independent samples are drawn. The basic sampling design is a multi-stage, random design. The regular sample size is 1000 respondents per country, with the exception of small countries like Luxembourg or Malta (Sampling and Fieldwork, n.d). Separate samples are drawn for Northern Ireland and Great Britain and for West-Germany and East-Germany during the period that is studied (Population, countries & regions, n.d.). The results are combined for the comparability of data.

Since 2000 the question about the image of the EU is present in the questionnaire. Respondents are asked: "In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?" Answer categories: 1 "Very positive", 2 "Fairly positive", 3 "Neutral", 4 "Fairly negative", 5 "Very negative", 6 "DK". The number of the question has changed from year to year: QA9, QA10, QA11, QA12, QA13, QA14, QA15, D78.

3.1.2. Elite polarization

For elite polarization Dalton's index is used (Dalton, 2008):

$$PI = SQRT\{\Sigma(\text{party vote share}_i) \times ([\text{party } L/R \text{ score}_i - \text{party system average } L/R \text{ score}] / 5)^2\}$$

This scale is from 0, which means that all parties occupy the same position, to 10, which means that all the parties are split between the two extremes of the scale. This index reflects both party position and vote share or, in other words, party size, that is valuable according to the theory (Down and Wilson, 2010). Since Dalton believes that parties' polarization and parties' fragmentation should not always be connected, this index does not depend on a number of parties, that is a clear advantage (Dalton, 2008). However, 1 to 10 ideological scale is used in Dalton's study, while Chapel Hill surveys data, which is used in this study, use 1-7 scale to estimate the

ideological positions of parties. Dalton divides by 5 to rescale the measure, so that it would run from 0 to a theoretical maximum of 10. Since it is not applicable in this case, this dividing will not be applied in this study:

$$PI = Sqrt\{\sum(parties\ vote\ share_i) \times ([party\ L/R\ score_i - party\ system\ average\ L/R\ score])^2\}$$

For the index it is necessary to know where parties stand on the pro-/anti-EU scale. There are several ways to estimate parties' positions: 1) the content analysis of manifestos; 2) voter surveys; 3) expert surveys.

Several famous databases are based on the content analysis of manifestos. First of all, there is Euromanifesto study of European Election Studies and Manifesto Project. Some authors, such as Andrews and Money (2009) and Budge and McDonald (2006), used this approach. However, there is debate about the validity of this approach, because it focuses more on salience than on positions (Dalton 2008, 904).

Another way is to ask voters to define parties' positions. The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), European Social Survey European Election Study can be used for this approach. The disadvantage is that voter's position can be interconnected with parties' positions or they can just do not know where a party stand but be ashamed to say it. Also, Adams, L. Ezrow and Z. Somer-Topcu found that voters do not recognize when parties changes their manifestos (2011).

As a result, the experts surveys will be used in this study. The Chapel Hill expert surveys estimate party positioning on European integration based on national elections. They have data from 1999 until 2017. They estimate overall orientation of the party leadership towards European integration. They use a 1 to 7 scale where 1 is strongly opposed, 2 is opposed, 3 is somewhat opposed, 4 is neutral, 5 is somewhat in favor, 6 is in favor and 7 is strongly in favor. The Chapel Hill database also consists of latest national elections results, which is needed for Dalton's polarization index. It makes the data cleaner and more sustainable. In several cases the position of the parties was not estimated precisely: In Denmark in 2011 RV was estimated as strongly in favor, in Greece in 2009 KKE was estimated as strongly opposed, in the UK in 2010 UKIP was estimated as strongly opposed, in Portugal 2009 PS was estimated as strongly in favor, in Bulgaria in 2009 L was estimated as neutral, in Poland in 2011 PR was estimated as neutral, in Croatia in 2011 HNS was estimated as strongly in favor, in Malta in 2013 PN was estimated as strongly in favor, in

Luxemburg in 2013 CSV was estimated as strongly in favor. For all these cases these estimations were replaced by the corresponding figure defined in the codebook.

3.1.3. The sample of the study

For the analysis the national elections results since 2008 until 2017 was used. It is justified for theoretical reasons and data availability. Since 2008 there were many events that, according to the theory (De Wilde and Zürn, 2012, 138-139), should create the opportunity structure for polarization: the Lisbon treaty negotiations, the European debt crisis, the European migrant crisis, the Brexit. These events should force parties to address the EU agenda during the electoral campaign in national elections. In these conditions politicization of the EU should increase and polarization, as a part of this process, should increase as well. The national elections were covered only until 2017 because the latest available Chapel Hill expert survey was carried out in January and February 2018.

In this study the elite polarization on the EU dimension was analyzed in time of national elections. The elections can create the opportunity structure for parties to polarize public opinion. In the year of elections people pay more attention to politics and the differences between parties respectively (Hetherington, 2001, 626).

The national elections and not the European Parliament elections were used due to the several reasons. First of all, the European parliament elections are specific. Still due to the lower stakes, protest voting and proportional electoral system small and more radical parties get more seats than they get in national elections (Dinas and Riera, 2018). It would influence the polarization index significantly.

The EP elections for the long time were not important. Shortly after the first Parliament elections, Relf and Schmit named them second-order elections, that means that voters wanted to influence their government not the EU politics (1980, 8-9). The parties at the EP elections didn't compete to offer voters a different vision of the EU future (Ferrara, Weishaupt, 2004, 285). Neither the degree of attention to EU issues, nor the position about integration were statistically significant factors defining the electoral success of a party (Ferrara, Weishaupt, 2004, 299). Till Weber drew attention to the fact that the parties deliberately avoided integration issues as traditional support for the major parties is determined by the left-right dimension (Weber, 2007, 509).

The election campaigns in the EP elections used to be unspectacular as parties spend significantly less money, time and attention, media also pay less attention, so turnout was low (Tenscher, 2013). Some believe that the EP elections have become even more secondary (Hix, Hagemann, 2009, 39). Of course, the nature of political competition between political groups in the EP have changed over time and it became more competitive. There used to be a grand coalition of the two main parties, but the relations became more competitive and now look like the classical left-right opposition (Hix, Kreppel, 2003, 81-85). The leading academics claim that the last European Parliament elections of 2019 were more political, less second order and Europe was on the agenda, although not always at the core of the campaign (Molder, 2019).

At the same time, national political arena is still of paramount importance. According to Hooghe and Marks, the most relevant cues about European integration arise at national level by domestic actors (2005, 424-425). Being in the European Parliament deputies do not always choose to actively communicate with electorate and spend time “in their domestic base, rather than concentrating solely or mainly on work inside the EP” (Farrell and Scully, 2010, 39). It means that parties ties with these representatives will be weaker so their ability to influence mass polarization will be lower as well (Rogowski, 2018, 5).

It is theoretically justified to choose the national elections for the analysis. The disadvantage of this approach is that countries use different electoral systems for national elections. As it was mentioned studying polarization in a multi-party system can be a more challenging task than studying it in a two-party system (Thomsen, 2014, 786.). As Dalton’s index include the party size, the systems that favors big parties, like majoritarian systems, likely will be more polarized. It will be controlled for effective number of parties to compensate for it.

There were 56 national elections in the EU since 2008 until 2017 analyzed by Chapel Hill expert survey. Using Dalton’s index and the standard deviation elite polarization was counted for all these cases. Then the mass polarization in about 6 months since the national elections was analyzed. During the electoral campaign parties should actively debate on the issue and people should pay more attention to politics (Hetherington, 2001, 626). However, public opinion doesn’t always respond to a change in parties’ positions immediately (Hetherington, 2001, 626). It is why the lagged variable was used in this study. Standard Eurobarometer reports are published twice per year, usually in November and May. The survey reports, that were published more than 4 months since elections but less than 9, were used to get comparable results.

Table 1. Mass and elite polarization

Country	Year of elections	Elite polarization	Mass polarization
Austria	2008	1.749264	0.9459587
Austria	2013	1.965645	1.0720552
Belgium	2010	1.127717	0.8271954
Belgium	2014	1.092411	0.8845412
Bulgaria	2009	1.342121	0.8973498
Bulgaria	2014	1.456959	1.0367709
Croatia	2011	0.8129497	1.0306895
Cyprus	2011	0.926058	0.8871260
Czech Republic	2010	1.423052	0.8860814
Czech Republic	2013	1.689057	0.9586612
Czech Republic	2017	1.633397	1.0374165
Denmark	2011	1.70617	0.8458469
Estonia	2011	0.7468371	0.6736437
Estonia	2015	1.099055	0.7347840
Finland	2011	1.735907	0.7525388
France	2012	1.633009	0.9846930
France	2017	2.206457	1.0270492
Germany	2009	0.8944968	0.9397012
Germany	2013	1.770446	0.8615333
Germany	2017	1.574712	0.9364502
Greece	2009	1.898882	0.9397012
Greece	2012	2.134811	1.0393730
Greece	2015	1.853105	1.0116651
Hungary	2010	1.385202	0.8450026
Hungary	2014	3.003052	0.8861059
Ireland	2011	1.486502	0.9534218
Italy	2008	1.171702	0.8916299
Italy	2013	2.749301	0.9397547
Latvia	2011	1.248827	0.7395733
Latvia	2014	1.072193	0.7615357
Lithuania	2008	0.9094111	0.7332636
Lithuania	2012	1.261628	0.7351845
Luxembourg	2013	1.32268	0.9644474
Malta	2013	0.6933182	0.8675133
Netherlands	2010	1.639662	0.8277448

Netherlands	2012	1.703677	0.9228890
Netherlands	2017	1.859289	0.9051476
Poland	2011	1.409564	0.7759403
Poland	2015	1.913103	0.9022235
Portugal	2009	1.576418	0.8849238
Portugal	2011	1.833848	0.8663537
Portugal	2015	1.77789	0.9230655
Romania	2008	0.6322588	0.8312896
Romania	2012	0.6800588	0.9199309
Slovakia	2010	0.7679206	0.7889340
Slovakia	2012	1.42414	0.9296458
Slovakia	2016	1.485258	0.9013590
Slovenia	2008	1.00578	0.7734659
Slovenia	2014	0.6830602	0.8754835
Spain	2011	0.8660779	0.9379098
Spain	2016	0.8444841	0.8380383
Spain	2008	0.7529906	0.7890171
Sweden	2010	1.682971	0.8824934
Sweden	2014	1.739977	0.8824941
UK	2010	2.399051	0.9896201
UK	2017	1.795432	1.2481904

According to the theory, elite polarization should cause mass polarization. For this paper it was decided to look at cases with high elite polarization and check if the mass polarization is high in these cases as well. Since the Dalton's index of elite polarization was changed, 0 does not show low polarization anymore and 10 is not and an indicator of high polarization. In this case the threshold cannot be determined and what is the high and low elite polarization will be defined in comparison with each other. The same approach is valid for mass polarization. As a result, 12 cases with highest elite polarization were chosen.

Table 2. Selected cases

Country	Year of elections	Elite polarization	Mass polarization
Hungary	2014	3.003052	0.8861059
Italy	2013	2.749301	0.9397547
UK	2010	2.399051	0.9896201
France	2017	2.206457	1.0270492

Greece	2012	2.134811	1.0393730
Austria	2013	1.965645	1.0720552
Poland	2015	1.913103	0.9022235
Greece	2009	1.898882	0.9397012
Netherlands	2017	1.859289	0.9051476
Greece	2015	1.853105	1.0116651
Portugal	2011	1.833848	0.8663537
UK	2017	1.795432	1.2481904

In this sample of 12 cases, in 5 cases public opinion is polarized as well: France in 2017, Greece in 2012, Austria in 2013, Greece in 2015 and the UK in 2017. In the remaining 7 cases elites are polarized but public opinion is not: Hungary in 2014, Italy in 2013, the UK in 2010, Poland in 2015, Greece in 2009, the Netherlands in 2017, Portugal in 2011.

3.2. Research design

The dependent variable of this study is mass polarization and the independent variable of this study is elite polarization. According to the theory, elite polarization should cause mass polarization (Down and Wilson, 2010; Ray, 2003; Hooghe and Marks, 2005) but as it was showed in the literature review it is not a linear process. Many factors intervene and influence how elite polarization affects mass polarization. To determine what factors explain the variation of the dependent variable Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) is used in this study. The QCA is used when the same factors lead to different outcomes. QCA is especially useful for causal interpretation, which is supposed to be done in this research.

The sample of this study is too small for meaningful statistical tests. Even 56 cases are too small sample for complex statistical models and will impose many restrictions. In the end 12 cases with varying dependent variable were chosen and it is too big sample for comparative case studies. QCA is designed for studying mid-sized datasets about 10-50 cases. It is a good solution in the case of this study.

Qualitative Comparative Analysis was used by Down and Wilson to define what set of conditions lead to the public division in different countries (2010). The approached used by famous experts was borrowed in this study as well. However, in contrast to Down and Wilson the different set of factors used in this study, some the factors are operationalized in different ways, and are tested in different time line and different cases. Down and Wilson analyzed 11 countries (Belgium,

Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain) for the years 1988, 1992, 1996, 1999 and 2002 (2010, 73). Although, it is an important research, the politicization of the EU has increased significantly since 2008 (Grande and Kriesi, 2014), some factors like the presence of Eurosceptic parties also changed (Brack, 2015b), since the '90s the salience of the topic increased and now all parties address issues of European integration (Ray, 2003, 988). What is more important since 2008 there was a series of crisis in the EU that theoretically should force national parties to include the EU dimension in their national agenda. It is important to see what factors lead to mass polarization in these new circumstances.

3.2.1. QCA

Qualitative Comparative Analysis is both a data analysis technic and a research approach. Collection and re-collection of data, definition and re-definition of the criteria, dropping and adding cases, calibrating and recalibrating sets, adding and dropping conditions is the normal and important part of the research (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012, 11). Qualitative Comparative Analysis can be applied by computer software. In this analysis R software environment was chosen.

Qualitative Comparative Analysis produces all possible combinations of conditions that lead to the outcome, identifying the sufficient and necessary conditions. Qualitative Comparative Analysis uses the logical operators OR (+) and AND (*). QCA addresses the principles of logical minimization. It is “a process by which the empirical information is expressed in a more parsimonious yet logically equivalent manner by looking for commonalities and differences among cases that share the same outcome” (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012, 9). As a final result, the shortest set of factors that imply the outcome will be found.

Qualitative Comparative Analysis is set-theoretic method. All set-theoretic methods are applied to analyze social reality when relations between social phenomena are perceived as set relations and when there is causal complexity. The set relations are interpreted not in a causal or a descriptive manner but in terms of sufficient, necessary conditions or of more complex configuration like Insufficient but Necessary part of a condition (INUS) and Sufficient but Unnecessary part of a factor (SUIN) (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012, 3-6). In the case of mass polarization when other studies highlighted many different factors this method has significant analytical potential. Elite polarization can cause mass polarization under different circumstances, so not the only one set of factors can lead to a positive outcome and they can work in combination rather than in isolation.

According to Schneider and Wagemann, Qualitative Comparative Analysis is the most formalized and complete method from all set-theoretic methods (2012, 9).

There is a classic confrontation between adherents of quantitative and qualitative methods, but QCA can be perceived as a third way or hybrid method (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012, 10). QCA has some advantages over the qualitative methods and quantitative methods. It has a more formalized and systematic character. However, using QCA multi-collinearity, heteroskedasticity and unit homogeneity will be avoided, which is often a problem for the statistical tests. It also allows to visualize and analyze causal complexity using truth tables (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012, 9).

In this paper crisp-set QCA (csQCA) will be used. Crisp-set QCA works with binary variables: the score is either 0 or 1. The disadvantage of this type of QCA is that it does not have gradations, so this black or white approach does not always reflect reality. Calibration involves an element of subjectivity as the research sets the threshold defining what is negative (0) and positive (1) result in this case. It can be partly eliminated if the operationalization of the variables is based on solid theoretical assumptions.

Two main parameters that evaluate the solution are consistency and coverage. Consistency indicates how much one set is included by another, that demonstrate if the configuration is consistent with the underlying theoretical assumptions. Sometimes it is called inclusion (Thiem and Duşa, 2013, 89). The closer consistency is to 1, the better, but it should not be below 0.75 for sufficiency and should not be below 0.9 for necessity. Coverage shows how well the data is explained by the conditions. “For sufficient conditions, raw coverage indicates how much a single path covers, while unique coverage indicates how much it uniquely covers. For necessary conditions, coverage expresses their relevance in terms of not being much larger than the outcome, and the Relevance of Necessity (RoN), in terms of the condition being close to a constant” (Hinterleitner et al., 2016, 556). The closer it is to 1, the better. However, in contrast to consistency, the low coverage does not mean that the results are irrelevant. As Roig-Tierno et al. claim configuration that has low coverage can be still useful “to explain a set which causes a particular outcome” (2017, 17).

It was decided to use an intermediate solution for this study. The three main option exist: conservative solution, the most parsimonious solution and the intermediate solution. The difference between them is that the conservative solution is not based on logical remainders, while the most parsimonious solution is based on simplifying assumptions. The intermediate solution,

in turn, is “a subset of the most parsimonious solution and a superset of the conservative solution, a direct result of the requirement that easy counterfactuals are a subset of all simplifying assumptions”. While the interpretation of conservative solution term is often too complex, the interpretation of the most parsimonious solution term can contradict the theory. In a sense of complexity, the intermediate solution is in between the conservative and the most parsimonious solutions and help to find a balance (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012, 175).

3.2.2. Process tracing

Qualitative Comparative Analysis will be the first phase of the study. The goal of this phase is to determine the set of conditions that lead to polarized public opinion about the EU when the elite is polarized. After this when the appropriate set of conditions will be found the case analysis can be done. The case analysis is needed to study typical and deviant cases or to get more information about how these cases look like and how these sets of conditions work in practice.

The case of Greece is interested for process tracing analysis because it allows tracing how the factors caused public opinion polarization about the EU. In Greece, the elite had been polarized already in 2009, but the public opinion had not been polarized in 2009 yet. Although public opinion became polarized about the EU in 2012 and 2015.

The process tracing method will help to unfold the mass polarization process over time. Collier defines process tracing “as the systematic examination of diagnostic evidence selected and analyzed in light of research questions and hypotheses posed by the investigator” (Collier, 2011, 823). Process tracing is a suitable analytic tool for describing phenomena but also for evaluating causal claims. Process tracing can contribute when there is a need to evaluate prior hypotheses and produce new hypotheses, to assess causal claims as well as gain an insight into causal mechanisms (Collier, 2011, 824). The results of Qualitative Comparative Analysis will be supplemented by within-case analysis as it will help to look more closely at the factors’ influence on the public opinion polarization about the EU. Process tracing will add leverage in the analysis and increases its explanatory value.

To determine diagnostic pieces of evidence, process tracing requires prior knowledge such as conceptional framework, recurring empirical regularities, etc. In this study after theory review and the Qualitative Comparative Analysis the factors will be formulated and can be used for process tracing. For purposes of this study simplified version of process tracing will be used. The approached will be used without testing of the hypothesis such as straw-in-the-wind, hoop,

smoking-gun, and doubly decisive (Collier, 2011, 825). These elements of process tracing help to make the research more objective and systematized but they are not necessary.

3.3. Operationalization and calibration

According to the theory there are different factors that can influence the ability of polarized parties to influence mass polarization and public opinion about the EU.

3.3.1. Eurosceptic support

According to the theory, pro-European parties may choose to decrease salience of the EU issues, while Eurosceptic parties tend to address these issues loudly (Adam et al., 2017). When the public support for Eurosceptic parties reach a certain threshold, it became difficult for the mainstream parties to ignore this topic (Down and Wilson, 2010).

To determine what parties are Eurosceptics the Chapel Hill expert survey's estimations were used. They use 1 to 7 point scale: 1 is strongly opposed, 2 is opposed, 3 is somewhat opposed, 4 is neutral, 5 is somewhat in favour, 6 is in favour, 7 is strongly in favour. In this scale from 1 to 3 points correspond to Eurosceptic positions but for determining real Eurosceptic parties only 1 and 2 points should be used. The same approach was used by Sydow (2013, 87).

Following Down and Wilson's approach, the Eurosceptic support variable is operationalized as the sum of the average vote share for Eurosceptic parties in each country. Down and Wilson divided the countries from their sample into two groups: in one group the Eurosceptic vote share was high, in another the Eurosceptic vote share was low (Down and Wilson, 2010, 77). In this study for calibration the threshold of 10 per cent of votes was used. First of all, the chance that in all these cases Eurosceptic support is high should not be excluded so dividing these cases into two groups based on the comparison to each other might be not right. Setting the independent threshold is more objective and valid. Sydow defined the EU dimension is politicized in the country-member of the EU if the support for Eurosceptic parties above than 10 per cent (Sydow, 2013, 133-135). Due to these reasons, the threshold of 10 per cent of votes was used. If the support for Eurosceptic parties in a country was equal or more than 10 per cent the case was marked with 1, if less it was marked with 0. In the sample of this study, Austria in 2013, France in 2017, Greece in 2009, Greece in 2012, Greece in 2015, Hungary in 2014, Italy in 2013, the Netherlands in 2017, the UK in 2010 and the UK in 2017 were marked with 1. And Poland in 2015 and Portugal in 2011 were marked with 0.

3.3.2. The presence of both right and left Eurosceptic parties

According to the theory, the location of such parties on the left-right axis may affect public division. If Eurosceptic parties present on both the left and the right side of the scale, the probability that they will get voters also on both sides increases (Down and Wilson, 2010, 77-80; Hernández and Kriesi, 2016, 521).

To define the location of Eurosceptic parties on the left-right axis the Chapel Hill expert survey's estimations were used. The variable «LRGEN» of the Chapel Hill database defines the position of the party in terms of its overall ideological stance where 0 means extreme left, 5 means centre and 10 means extreme right. In this paper, the case got 1 if there were both Eurosceptic parties with its overall ideological stance equal or higher than 6 and Eurosceptic parties with its overall ideological stance equal or less than 4 in the country. In the sample of this study in France in 2017, Greece in 2012 and 2015, Italy in 2013 and the Netherlands in 2017 were both right and left Eurosceptic parties and these cases were marked with 1. In Austria in 2013, Greece in 2009, Hungary in 2014, Poland in 2015, Portugal in 2011, the UK in 2010 and 2017 there were not both right and left Eurosceptic parties and these cases were marked with 0.

3.3.3. The salience of the issue

According to theory, if the salience of the issue is low, it will prevent structuring public opinion even if elites are polarized (Down and Wilson, 2010).

To measure the salience of the issue that parties attach in a country the Chapel Hill expert surveys were used in this study. The variable «EU_SALIENCE» of the Chapel Hill database defines relative salience of European integration in the party's public stance. 11 point scale is used for it where 0 means that European integration is of no importance, never mentioned by a party and 10 means that European integration is the most important issue for a party.

To define the overall indicator for the whole country weighted arithmetic mean was used. The ability of the party to influence the agenda is affected by the party size. The more votes party has in a parliament, the more money and media attention it will have. The voices of the bigger parties will be heard better and if they pay more attention to the topic it will have a bigger impact, that the diligence of smaller parties.

The formula of weighted arithmetic mean is:

$$\bar{x}_w = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^n (w_j \times x_j)}{\sum_{j=1}^n (w_j)}$$

Where

\bar{x}_w is the weighted mean variable;

x_j is the allocated weighted value;

w_j is the observed values.

If salience of European integration in the parties' public stance in a country is bigger than 5 in principle it can be defined that the salience of the issue is high. However, due to the politicization of the EU European integration has become a salient and contested issue in national elections (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 198-199), so the threshold for what is high salience should be stricter to be meaningful. In the sample of this study, there are no cases where the salience was smaller than 5 and the average estimation of the salience of European integration is 6,762548568, in other words, it is higher than the projected threshold. In this regard, in this study, it was decided that if the salience of European integration in the parties' public stance in a country is bigger or equal to 7 it would be defined as high salience and marked with 1, if the weighted arithmetic mean is smaller than 7 it would be defined as low salience and marked with 0. In the sample of the study France in 2017, Greece in 2012, Portugal in 2011 and the UK in 2017 were marked with 1. And Greece in 2009, Greece in 2015, the UK in 2010, Austria in 2013, Hungary in 2014, Italy in 2013, the Netherlands in 2017 and Poland in 2015 were marked with 0.

3.3.4. Ideological coherence

According to the theory, ideological cohesion should enhance the influence of elite polarization on mass polarization because If a party is divided on the issue, the capacity to build public opinion will be lower. The contradictory messages will blur the cues and supporters will not get it (Ray 2003, 980-981).

To measure ideological coherence of parties about the EU dimension the Chapel Hill expert surveys were used in this study. The variable «EU_DISSENT» of the Chapel Hill database defines the degree of dissent of parties on European integration. 11 point scale is used for it where 0 means that party was completely united and 10 means that party was extremely divided. To define the overall indicator for the whole country weighted arithmetic mean was used again due to the same reasons. The voices of the bigger parties will be heard better and if they are united it will have a bigger impact than the united voice of smaller parties.

If the weighted arithmetic mean of the degree of dissent of parties on European integration is lower than 4 it would be defined as united and marked with 1, if the weighted arithmetic mean of the degree of dissent of parties on European integration is equal or bigger than 6 it would be defined as not ideologically united and marked with 0. In the sample of this study Austria in 2013, France in 2017, Greece in 2012, Greece in 2015, Hungary in 2014, Italy in 2013, the Netherlands in 2017, Poland in 2015, Portugal in 2011 and the UK in 2017 were marked with 1. And Greece in 2009 and the UK in 2010 were marked with 0.

3.3.5. Party size

According to the theory, party size can be an important factor in studying mass polarization. Level of congruence between voters and parties will be higher in countries with many small parties and lower in countries with a lower number of large parties (Down and Wilson, 2010). At the same time, it is important to control for a party system because studying polarization in a multi-party system can differ from studying it in a two-party system (Thomsen, 2014, 786.). The system is absolutely polarized when there are two big parties on different sides of the ideological scale and it is more likely in two-party systems than in a multi-party system.

There are different ways to control for party size and the type of the system. The types of systems can be encoded. In this paper this way wasn't chosen as in the EU there are mixed types and many other elements like thresholds, the registration and funding rules that are not included in the type of the system but can considerably support or constrain small parties. For example, in Hungary, there is a mixed type system but it significantly favours big parties (Bogaards, 2018, 1485-1487). Down and Wilson measured average party vote share and divided countries into two groups where the median party was small and where it was big (2010, 78). It can be a way but dividing the cases into two groups based on the comparison to each other is not the most objective method. It is why the effective number of elective parties (also known as Eff N_v and ENEP) was chosen as an indicator. The formula of the effective number of elective parties is:

$$N_v = \frac{1}{\sum (P_v)^2}$$

Where P_v is party's proportion of the total votes.

The effective number of elective parties shows the degree of fragmentation of a party system at the electoral level. It cannot tell everything about the party system, but it shows if it is a big or

small party system. For example, if it is equal to 2.78, it means that “party system is as fragmented as if it contained exactly 2.78 equal-sized parties” (Gallagher and Mitchell, 2008, 598). Gallagher and Michael mentioned that effective number of elective parties maintained the position of the most widely used measure as Lijphart once called it (2008, 599).

The value of the factor for the cases of the sample of this study was taken from Gallagher and Michael’s election indices dataset (Gallagher and Michael, 2019). If the effective number of elective parties was bigger than 3 or equal to 3 it was perceived that it is a system with small parties and was marked with 0. If the effective number of elective parties was smaller than 3 it was perceived that it is a system with big parties and was marked with 1. In the sample of the study Greece in 2009, Hungary in 2014, Poland in 2015, Portugal in 2011, the UK in 2010 and 2017 were marked with 1. And Austria in 2013, France in 2017, Italy in 2013, the Netherlands in 2017, Greece in 2012, Greece in 2015 were marked with 0.

3.3.6. Political awareness

Some authors claim that although polarization can help to build an opinion about politics, the effect is limited by political awareness (Layman and Carsey, 2002; Ray 2003, 981).

According to some studies, from all possible characteristics only education turned out to be the significant factor (Hetherington, 2001, 626-628) and it was a proxy indicator of political awareness. To interpret partisan cues on the European dimension correctly the higher level of knowledge is needed (Hobolt, 2007, 168). It means that the more citizens know about European politics and the more they are interested in it, the more they should be exposed to the parties’ cues on the European dimension. Although it is personal characteristics, the level of political engagement varies from country to country in the EU (Kitanova, 2019), which means that the common level of the knowledge about the EU politics and interest in it can vary from country to country as well.

To measure it two proxy indicators were used. For the first indicator the question of Eurobarometer “When you get together with friends or relatives, would you say you discuss frequently, occasionally or never about European political matters”. The question was coded as QA1 in 2009, as QA2 since 2010 and until 2012, as D71 since 2013. The answers are: Frequently, Occasionally, Never and DK. The high level of interest in the EU implies that European political matters are frequently discussed. For the threshold the average EU value was used. If the per cent of people who frequently discuss European political matters in a country is bigger than the average in the

EU countries it was perceived that the level of interest in the EU is high and was marked with 1. If it was less the level of interest in the EU was estimated as low and was marked with 0. In the sample of the study Austria in 2013, the Netherlands in 2017, the UK in 2017, Greece in 2009, 2012 and 2015 were marked with 1. And Hungary in 2014, Poland in 2015, Portugal in 2011, the UK in 2010, France in 2017, Italy in 2013 were marked with 0.

The second indicator showed knowledge about the EU. At the Eurobarometer surveys there is the of questions about the EU such as “For each of the following statements about the EU could you please tell me whether you think it is true or false”:

- The EU currently consists of 28 Member States;
- The members of the European Parliament are directly elected by the citizens of each Member State;
- Switzerland is a Member State of the EU.

There is also per cent of right answers in average in a country. This value was used to estimate the level of political awareness of the EU. To determine the high level of political awareness the average EU value was used. If the per cent of people who answered all questions correctly is bigger than the average in the EU countries it was perceived that the level of political awareness of the EU is high and was marked with 1. If it was less the level of political awareness was estimated as low and was marked with 0. In the sample of the study Austria in 2013, Hungary in 2014, Portugal in 2011, Greece in 2009, 2012 and 2015 were marked with 1. The Netherlands in 2017, Poland in 2015, France in 2017, Italy in 2013, the UK in 2017 and 2010 were marked with 0.

The data was got from the closet to national elections Eurobarometer reports as the task of this study is to understand when mass became polarized in times of elite polarization.

3.3.7. The EU crisis

Special moments such as major treaty negotiations and crisis contribute to creating an opportunity structure (De Wilde and Zürn, 2012, 138-139). Especially important are the crisis at the EU level because it provokes debate about the EU (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 312) and forces the political parties to develop more differentiated positions on it (Grande and Kriesi, 2014, 217). In this study the case was marked with 1 if in time of it there was European migrant crisis, European debt crisis or Brexit. Even if the crisis did not hurt the country heavily, it could affect the political agenda. In this study Austria in 2013, Greece in 2012 and 2015, Poland in 2015, Italy in 2013, Portugal in

2011, France in 2017, the Netherlands in 2017, the UK in 2010 and in 2017 were marked with 1. Greece in 2009 and Hungary in 2014 were marked with 0.

3.3.8. Media coverage

Media attention for EU issues provoke politicization (De Wilde and Zürn, 2012, 138-139) so it can enhance the polarization process. To define if media coverage was high or not the proxy indicator was used. In the Eurobarometer reports «Media use in the European Union» is a question Generally speaking, do you think that «the (NATIONALITY) ... talk(s) too much, about the right amount or too little about the EU? ». This question is asked about television, radio, press and websites. For this study television coverage was used. Although the per cent of people who use television when look information about the EU have been decreasing since 2005, by 2017 it still was the main source of information: 48 per cent of people in the EU chose it (European Commission, Brussels (2018): Eurobarometer 88.3 (2017). TNS opinion, Brussels [producer]. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA6928 Data file Version 1.0.0).

If per cent of people who answered that television talks too little about the EU is bigger than the average in the EU countries, it was estimated that the media coverage is too low and the case was marked with 1, otherwise it was marked with 0. In the sample of this study, France in 2017 and the Netherlands in 2017 were marked with 1. Austria in 2013, Hungary in 2014, Portugal in 2011, Italy in 2013, Poland in 2015, the UK in 2017 and 2010, Greece in 2009, 2012 and 2015 were marked with 0.

The data was got from the closet to national elections Eurobarometer reports as a task of this study is to understand when mass became polarized in times of elite polarization.

4. Analysis. QCA

When all factors were calibrated truth table was created.

Table 3. Truth table of conditions leading elite polarization to cause public opinion polarization

Case	Low media salience	Coherent	Salient	EU crisis	Euroskeptics	Right and left Euroskeptics	Big parties	Discussions	Awareness
Austria 2013	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
France 2017	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Greece 2009	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
Greece 2012	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Greece 2015	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
Hungary 2014	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Italy 2013	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
Netherlands 2017	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0
Poland 2015	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Portugal 2011	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
UK 2010	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
UK 2017	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0

After the first test the results were not credible. As there was set threshold consistency of these solutions (and all others) is higher than 0.75 for sufficiency and than 0.9 for necessity. The coverage is equal to 0.2 in 3 of 4 solutions and is equal to 0.4 in the last solution. The closer the coverage is to 1, the better. Although the low coverage does not mean that the results are irrelevant (2017, 17), in this case all solutions have low coverage. It means that theoretical assumptions should be reconsidered.

Table 4. The intermediate solution with awareness

	Solutions	inclS	PRI	covS	covU	cases
1	COHERENT*AWARENESS*low_media_salience*EUROSCEPTICS*DISCUSS*EU_CRISIS	1	1	0.4	0.4	1;5
2	COHERENT*LOW_MEDIA_SALIENGE*EUROSCEPTICS*RIGHT_AND_LEFT*SALIENT*EU_CRISIS	1	1	0.2	0.2	2
3	COHERENT*BIG_PARTIES*EUROSCEPTICS*DISCUSS*SALIENT*EU_CRISIS	1	1	0.2	0.2	12
4	AWARENESS*EUROSCEPTICS*RIGHT_AND_LEFT*DISCUSS*SALIENT*EU_CRISIS	1	1	0.2	0.2	4
	M1	1	1	1		

It was decided to drop the political awareness condition. Theoretically, political awareness is a meaningful factor because to follow parties' cues voters should understand where parties stand on the issue (Layman and Carsey, 2002; Ray 2003, 981). The way that was chosen in this paper to measure political awareness, in fact, reflects EU political knowledge that is not the same things. EU awareness means the capacity of citizens to understand EU politics at the elementary level, while EU political knowledge refers to "understanding of how the EU works and of the political means, objectives and strategies of European governance" (Fanoulis, 2018, 38). Political knowledge is not a precondition for civic engagement, EU awareness may be a sufficient factor (Fanoulis, 2018, 39). Furthermore, the citizens that are better informed about the EU can be less susceptible to party cues (Hobolt, 2005) so it can even negatively affect parties' ability to influence voters.

The coverage of solutions increased. The coverage of the first solution is equal to 0.2 in 2 of 3 solutions and was equal to 0.4 in the last solution.

Table 5. The intermediate solution with ideological coherence

	Solutions	inclS	PRI	covS	covU	cases
1	COHERENT*low_media_salience*EUROSCEPTICS*DISCUSS*EU_CRISIS	1	1	0.6	0.6	1;5;12
2	EUROSCEPTICS*RIGHT_AND_LEFT*DISCUSS*SALIENT*EU_CRISIS	1	1	0.2	0.2	4

3	COHERENT*LOW_MEDIA_SALIENESS*EURO SCEPTICS*RIGHT_AND_LEFT*SALIENT*EU_ CRISIS	1	1	0.2	0.2	2
M1		1	1	1		

Also, it was decided to drop ideological coherence factor. First of all, ideological coherence of all parties is rather high in all the cases of this study. The weighted arithmetic mean of the degree of dissent of parties on European integration was lower than the set threshold (4) only in 2 cases and even in these cases it was higher by 0,11 and 0,36.

Table 6. The weighted arithmetic mean of the degree of dissent of parties on European integration (from 0 to 10)

Case	Coherent
Austria 2013	2,352378
France 2017	2,602385
Greece 2009	3,67914
Greece 2012	4,367906
Greece 2015	3,201642
Hungary 2014	2,810147
Italy 2013	3,294651
Netherlands 2017	2,472076
Poland 2015	2,719911
Portugal 2011	2,986659
UK 2010	4,114609
UK 2017	3,145591273

There are not compelling theoretical reasons why 4 should be such a strict threshold and why such a small difference between cases should play a role. In all these cases it can be claimed that parties are ideologically united and if the factor does not vary it is not useful for QCA analysis.

Dropping the ideological coherence factor decreased the number of solutions and increased the coverage. It is an acceptable outcome. However, one problem was found in a stage of interpretation of the solutions. When people answer that media tell about the EU too little, it shows not the real media coverage level but the level perceived by citizens. Low media coverage does not mean that it is low, it means that citizens in this period of time is not satisfied with it.

Table 7. The intermediate solution with low media salience

Solutions		inclS	PRI	covS	covU	cases
1	low_media_salience*EUROSCEPTICS*DISCUSS*EU_CRISIS	1	1	0.8	0.8	1;5;4;12
2	LOW_MEDIA_SALIENGE*EUROSCEPTICS*RIGHT_AND_LEFT*SALIENT*EU_CRISIS	1	1	0.2	0.2	2
M1		1	1	1		

This indicator can be valuable for case study as it can provide valuable information about the process of mass polarization. However, for QCA it was replaced by another indicator. If per cent of people who answered that television talks too much about the EU is bigger than the average in the EU countries, it was estimated that the media coverage is high and the case was marked with 1, otherwise it was marked with 0. In the sample of the study Austria in 2013, Hungary in 2014, Portugal in 2011, Italy in 2013, the UK in 2017 and 2010, Greece in 2009, 2012 and 2015 were marked with 1. And France in 2017, the Netherlands in 2017 and Poland in 2015 were marked with 0. When the media tells about the EU too much it reflects the situation of high media coverage better than if the media do not speak too little. The new truth table was created.

Table 8. New truth table of conditions leading elite polarization to cause public opinion polarization

Case	Media salience	Salient	EU crisis	Euroskeptics	Right and left Euroskeptics	Big parties	Discuss
Austria 2013	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
France 2017	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
Greece 2009	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
Greece 2012	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
Greece 2015	1	0	1	1	1	0	1

Hungary 2014	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Italy 2013	1	0	1	1	1	0	0
Netherlands 2017	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
Poland 2015	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Portugal 2011	1	1	1	0	0	1	0
UK 2010	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
UK 2017	1	1	1	1	0	1	1

Unique coverage of the first solution decreased, while the raw coverage of the second solution increased. Raw coverage shows “how much of the outcome is covered”, while unique coverage shows “how much of the outcome is covered only by a specific path” (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012, 133). It means that the less cases are explained only by the first solution, but more cases when public is polarized are explained by the second solution.

Table 9. The final intermediate solution

Solutions		inclS	PRI	covS	covU	cases
1	MEDIA_SALIENCE*EUROSCEPTICS*DISC USS*EU_CRISIS	1	1	0.8	0.6	1; 5; 4; 12
2	EUROSCEPTICS*RIGHT_AND_LEFT*SALI ENT*EU_CRISIS	1	1	0.4	0.2	2; 4
M1		1	1	1		

According to the results of this study, when elite is polarized about the EU public opinion become polarized:

- 1) If there is a crisis at the EU level, Eurosceptics reached 10% of electoral support, Eurosceptics present on both left and right sides of ideological scale and salience of European integration in the party’s public stance is high.
- 2) If there is a crisis at the EU level, Eurosceptics reached 10% of electoral support, media salience of the EU is high and people often discuss the EU political matters.

The crisis at the EU level and sufficient electoral support of Eurosceptic parties are two essential conditions. These results are in line with theoretical expectations. The Eurosceptics play an important role in the politicization of the EU (Hernández and Kriesi, 2016, 517) and polarization is a part of this process. Eurosceptic parties increased the impact of party cues as they made party messages more distinct (Ray, 2003, 991). Eurosceptic parties tend to address these issues loudly (Adam et al., 2017) and when the public support for Eurosceptic parties reach a certain threshold, it became difficult for the mainstream parties to ignore this topic (Down and Wilson, 2010). The crisis at the EU level provokes polarization (Vries, 2018, 89) and increases the importance of the pro-/anti-EU dimension (Otjes and van der Veer, 2016).

These two factors in a certain way provide actors and the moment provoking polarization and then the different set of factors cause it. In the first case, parties are responsible for it. They provide high salience of European integration in their public stance that helps to structure public opinion (Down and Wilson, 2010) and since there are Eurosceptic parties on both the left and the right side of the scale, they address voters also on both sides of the ideological spectrum (Down and Wilson, 2010, 77-80; Hernández and Kriesi, 2016, 521).

In the second case, the polarization is explained by high media salience that provokes politicization (De Wilde and Zürn, 2012, 138-139) and high interest of citizens in the EU politics that motivate them to follow parties' cues on the EU (Layman and Carsey, 2002; Ray 2003) and media.

These sets of conditions work both and in countries with small parties and in countries with big parties as it was expected theoretically.

The following conditions are necessary for positive outcome:

Table 10. Analysis of necessary conditions for positive outcome

Solutions		inclN	RoN	covN
1	EUROSCEPTICS*EU_CRISIS	1	0.571	0.625
2	big_parties+DISCUSS	1	0.571	0.625
3	big_parties+SALIENT	1	0.571	0.625
4	media_salience+DISCUSS	1	0.571	0.625
5	RIGHT_AND_LEFT+DISCUSS	1	0.571	0.625
6	DISCUSS+SALIENT	1	0.571	0.625

The following conditions are necessary for negative outcome:

Table 11. Analysis of necessary conditions of negative outcome

Solutions		inclN	RoN	covN
1	eurosceptics+salient	1	0.6	0.778
2	BIG_PARTIES+media_salience+discuss	1	0.6	0.778
3	media_salience+discuss+eu_crisis	1	0.8	0.875

The following conditions are sufficient for positive outcome:

Table 12. Analysis of sufficient conditions of negative outcome

	Big parti es	Media salien ce	Euroscepti cs	Righ t and left	Discu ss	Salie nt	EU crisi s	Ou t n	inc l	PR I	case s
28	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	2
54	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
62	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	5
64	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4
120	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	12
30	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	8
58	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	7
66	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	9
100	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	10
113	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6
114	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	11
117	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3

The EU crisis factor may look subjective and cast doubt on the validity of the results. If drop this factor the coverage value would decrease. The EU crisis factor unites all cases and without it, the

UK cases become more distinct: it is a two-party system, so there are not both right and left Eurosceptic parties and the public polarization in 2017 is mainly explained by Brexit that makes this case unique. If the UK is removed from the sample of the analysis, the same results are received. It was also indicated that big party system indicator can vary because as it was shown in the original sample the mass polarization can be both in the system with big parties and in the system with small parties.

Table 13. The intermediate solution for sample without the UK and the EU crisis factor

Solutions		inclS	PRI	covS	covU	cases
1	big_parties*MEDIA_SALIENESS*EUROSC EPTICS*DISCUSS	1	1	0.75	0.5	1; 5; 4;
2	big_parties*EUROSCEPTICS*RIGHT_AN D_LEFT*SALIENT	1	1	0.5	0.25	2; 4
M1		1	1	1		

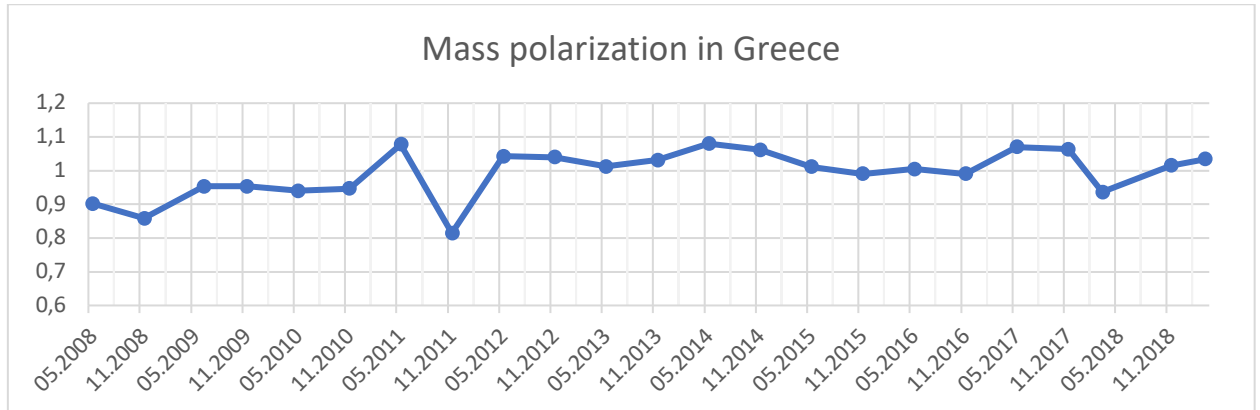
Almost the same results were received. The only difference is that in these solutions the mass polarization would appear only in the systems with small parties but it is explained by the fact that the UK was the only case when the mass polarization appeared in the system with big parties.

5. Analysis. Process tracing

5.1. Mass polarization

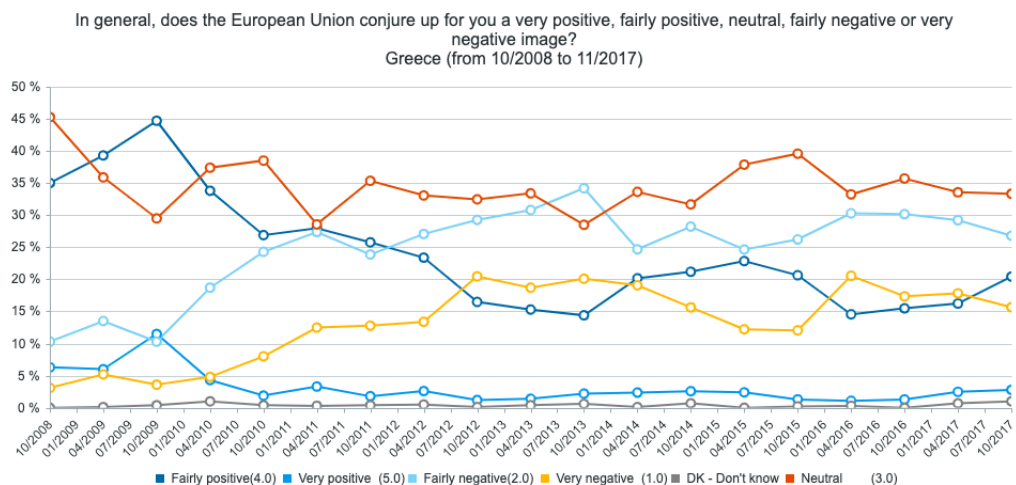
To unfold the mass polarization process in Greece over time it was decided to count mass polarization since 2008 and until February 2019 when the latest individual level results of Eurobarometer surveys were published.

Figure 1. Mass polarization in Greece



First of all, the Figure 1 shows that mass polarization is not stable. The level of mass polarization fluctuates in the constrained range from 0,8 to about 1,2. Several significant rises and falls are seen in the studied period. To look at the bigger picture it was decided to analyze how the attitude to the EU was changing over time.

Figure 2. Public opinion on the image of the EU



Source: European Commission (European Commission, n.d.).

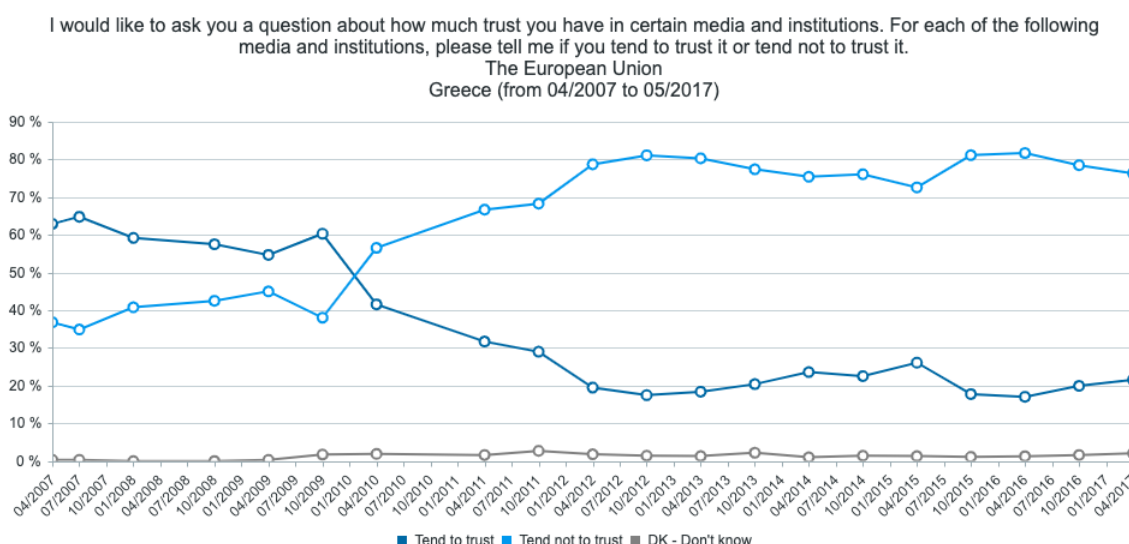
The figure 2 shows that the public opinion had started to change since November 2009. Since November 2009 the per cent of respondents who thought that the EU has a fairly positive image

started to decrease, while the per cent of respondents who thought that the EU has a fairly negative image started to increase.

One important observation is that mass polarization was climbing before the 2012 elections. The per cent of people who said that EU conjures up for fairly negative and very negative image was increasing and the per cent of people who said that EU conjures up for fairly positive image was decreasing steadily since November 2009 that coincide with the elections and the beginning of the crisis in Greece. The per cent of people who said that EU conjures up for a very positive image also dropped in 2009 significantly. Although according to the index public opinion was not polarized in 2009, it is a point in time when public opinion started to change.

The public polarization reached a peak in May of 2011. By that time almost equal parts of society thought that the EU had a fairly positive and fairly negative image, and the per cent of people who are neutral towards the EU decreased significantly. Now it is seen that the society became polarized before elections 2012. Then there was a significant decrease in mass polarization in November of 2011. The value of index decreased as the per cent of people having a neutral attitude to the EU increased by about 5 per cent and the per cent of people having a very positive attitude to the EU decreased. A neutral position is marked as 3, it is the middle of the scale. At the same time, the per cent of people who believe that the EU has a fairly positive and per cent of people who believe that the EU has fairly negative image stayed almost in the same proportion.

Figure 3. Trust in the EU



Source: European Commission (European Commission, n.d.).

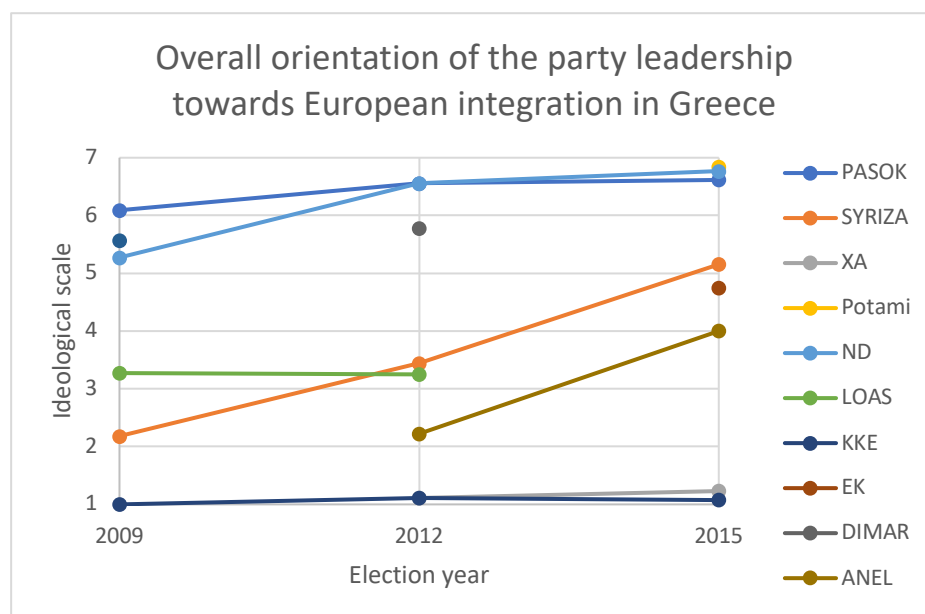
The Figure 3 shows that the crisis caused a rise in Euroscepticism. Greek society blamed the EU for economic problems and loss of sovereignty as the EU was linked with the crisis. The economic crisis coincided with the migration crisis that severely affected Greece. As the result, the Greek population thought that the EU did not do enough to help and in autumn 2015 the level of distrust in the EU reached 81 per cent, representing 25 per cent more than the EU average.

Due to the research question of this study and the dynamics of changes in mass polarization, it is important to understand why mass polarization was low in 2009-2010, why it became high in May 2011, what caused the drop in mass polarization in November 2011, and why mass polarization became high in 2012 and stayed high in 2015.

5.2. Elite polarization

Although parties were already polarized in 2009 by 2012 they took more radical positions. In fact, in 2012 it was a peak of elite polarization. In 2009 it was equal to 1.898882, in 2012 it was equal to 2.134811 and in 2015 it again decreased to 1.853105. Although an increased level of polarization can explain why voters became polarized in 2012, it cannot explain why voters stayed polarized in 2015 when the level of elite polarization was just like in 2009.

Figure 4. Overall orientation of the party leadership towards European integration in Greece

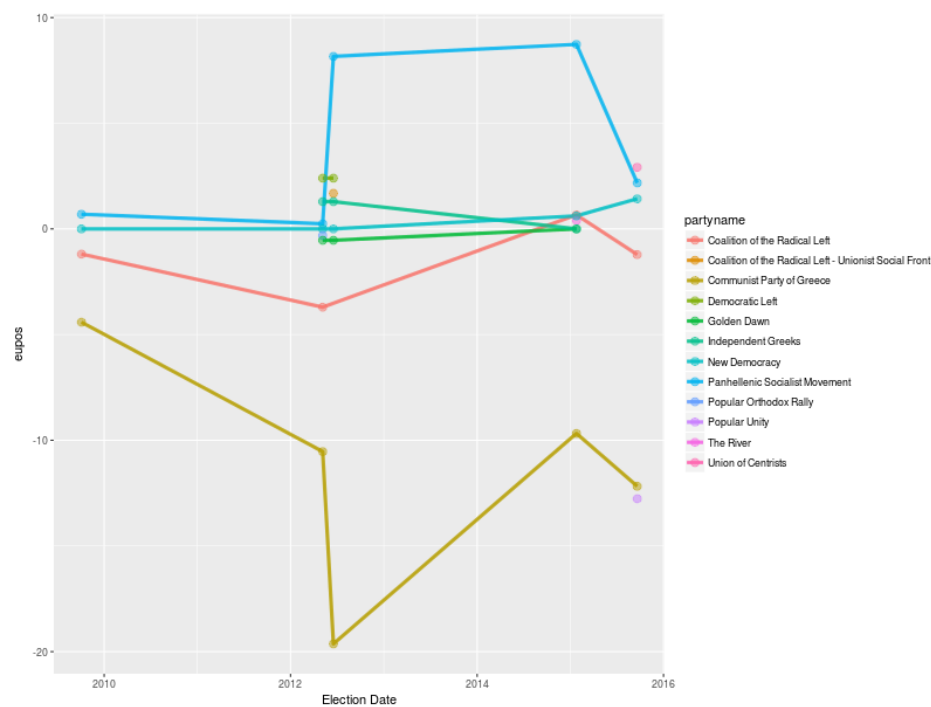


Source: Chapel Hill Survey

Some important things can be noticed if look at how parties change their positions on the EU integration over the time. Index of polarization reflects how ideologically far from each other are parties but it weighted by party size due to the theoretical expectations that the bigger parties are,

the more influence it can have. The Figure 4 shows that although elite polarization is a bit bigger in 2009, the variety of ideological positions is greater in 2015. There are Potami, PASOK, ND on the one edge of the scale and KKE and XA on the another. Since SYRIZA is closer to the middle of the scale (the position is equal to 5,2) and it got 35,5 per cent of votes, it reduces the value of elite polarization index.

Figure 5. Parties position on the European integration in Greece



Source: The Manifesto Project database

It is better seen in a plot based on manifesto project data (Figure 5) as they use bigger scale, another method analyze parties' positions (manifestos instead of expert surveys) and analyze all 5 elections that took place since 2009 until 2015. The parties became more radical by 2012, and although they became more moderate by 2015, the variance of the positions was still bigger than it was in 2009. Also, it is seen that parties' positions became significantly more radical in the elections taking place in June 2012.

As it was theoretically expected, the mainstream parties PASOK and ND stuck to the pro-EU positions, despite the electoral success of Eurosceptic parties in 2012 (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 319). Most challenger parties chose Eurosceptic positions, but not all of them (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 312). The crisis, shift in Greek public opinion, the electoral success of Eurosceptic parties increased the relevance of Eurosceptic voices (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 323). At the same time, although SYRIZA

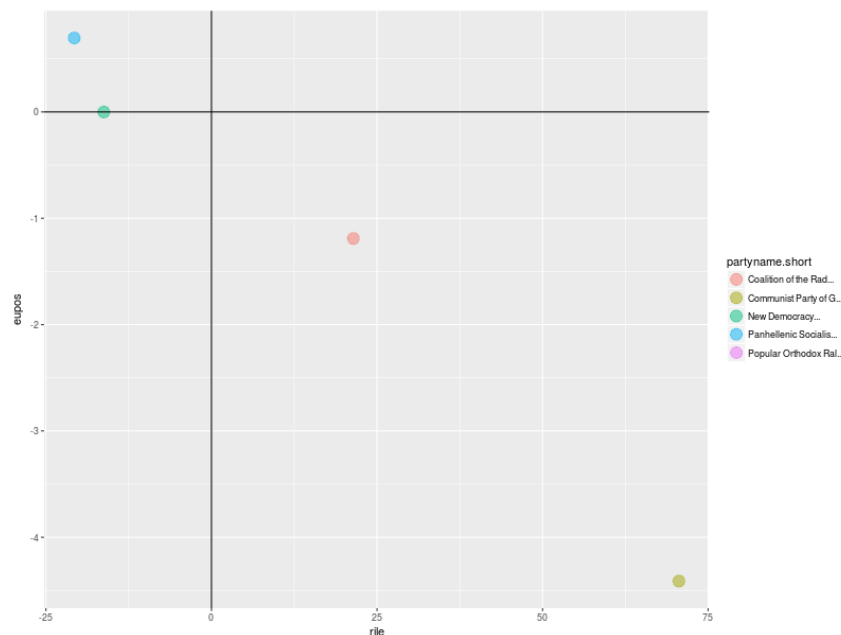
put forward a hard Eurosceptic position, the party mitigated it when it won elections and got into government (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 312).

The economic frames were predominant for both pro-EU parties, PASOK and ND, and Eurosceptic parties. The far-right Eurosceptic parties, LAOS, ANEL, and the Golden Dawn, also used security frames, foreign interference, cultural/nationalistic frames. The far-left party KKE used labour/social security frames, foreign interference, claimed that the EU policies were anti-popular and even used nationalist frames, but focused on popular sovereignty. The far-left SYRIZA used similar frames, and economic and security frames as well were of paramount importance (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 322-323).

5.3. The presence of both right and left Eurosceptic parties

Another important thing is that in 2009, in constant to 2012 and 2015, there were not Eurosceptic parties on both edges of Left–Right ideological scale. In 2009 there was only more pro-European right parties and more Eurosceptic left parties.

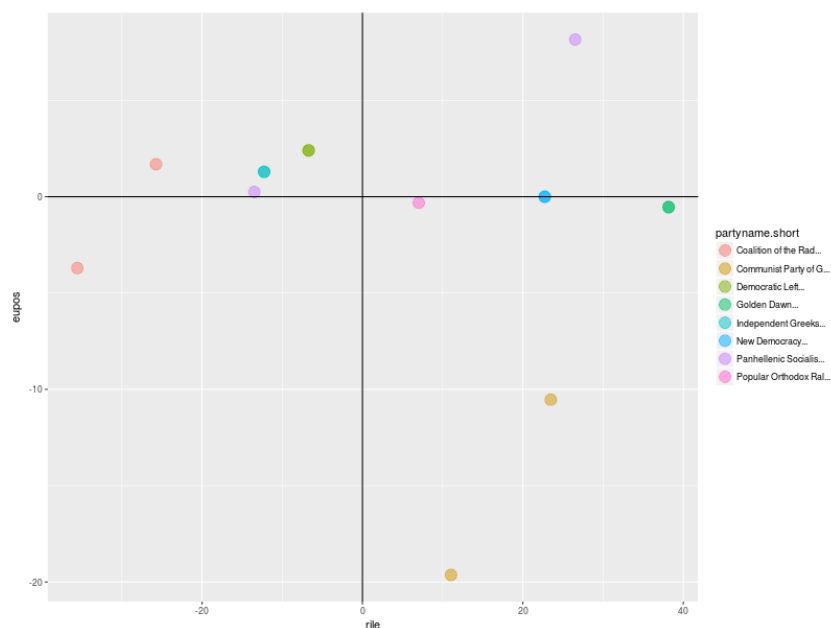
Figure 6. Positions of parties on the EU integration and Left–Right ideological scale in 2009



Source: The Manifesto Project database

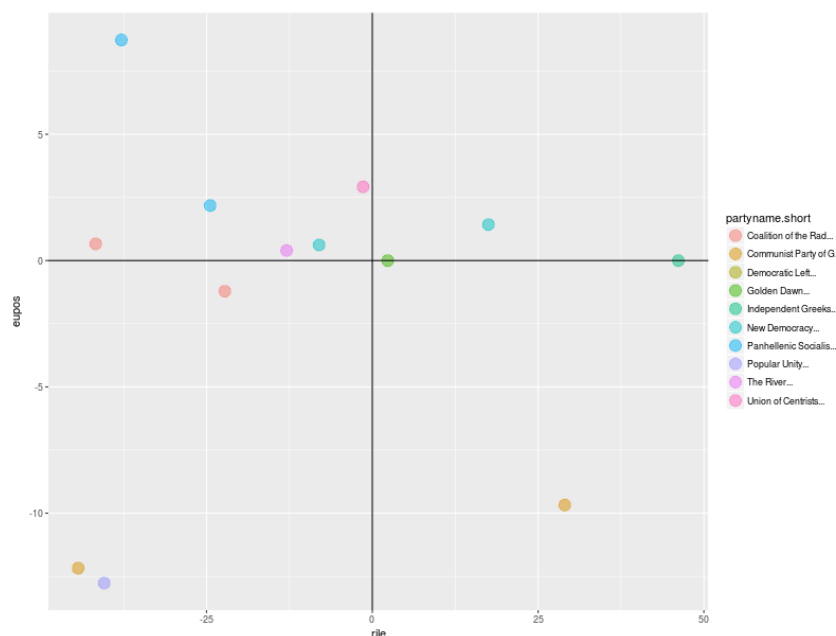
While in 2012 and 2015 there were both left and right Eurosceptic and pro-European parties.

Figure 7. Positions of parties on the EU integration and Left–Right ideological scale in 2012



Source: The Manifesto Project database

Figure 8. Positions of parties on the EU integration and Left–Right ideological scale in 2015

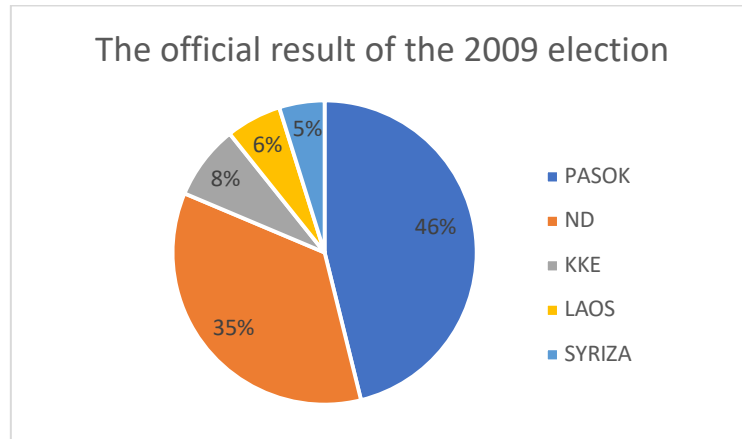


Source: The Manifesto Project database

5.4. The number of parties

The number of parties increased respectively. The effective number of elective parties was 2,59 in 2009, then it increased to 3,79 in 2012 and then slightly decreased to 3,09 in 2015 but stayed at the level higher than it was in 2009. Until 2012 Greece was a classic two-party system, but in 2012 the dynamics of the traditional Greek party system changed. In the elections of 2009, PASOK took 46 per cent of votes and ND took 35 per cent.

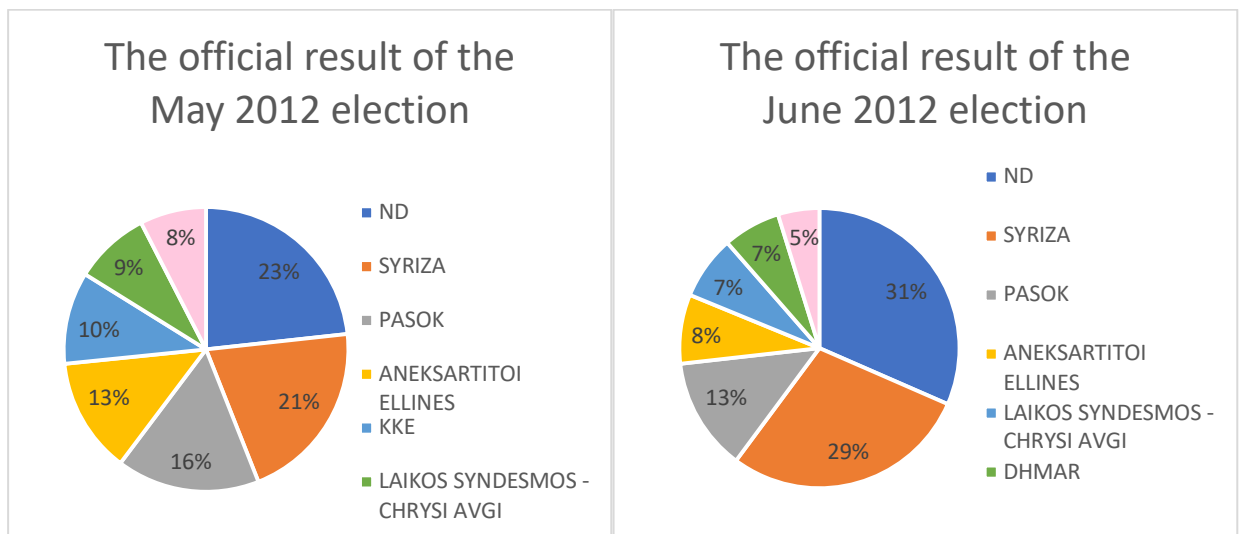
Figure 9. The official result of the 2009 election



Source: Hellenic Parliament

In the election in May 2012, no party won the majority and coalition government was not formed. In one month the second election was held where the pro-austerity party New Democracy won and got 31 per cent of votes. Overall there were 7 parties in the parliament comparing to 5 parties in 2009.

Figure 10. The official result of the 2012 elections



Source: Hellenic Parliament

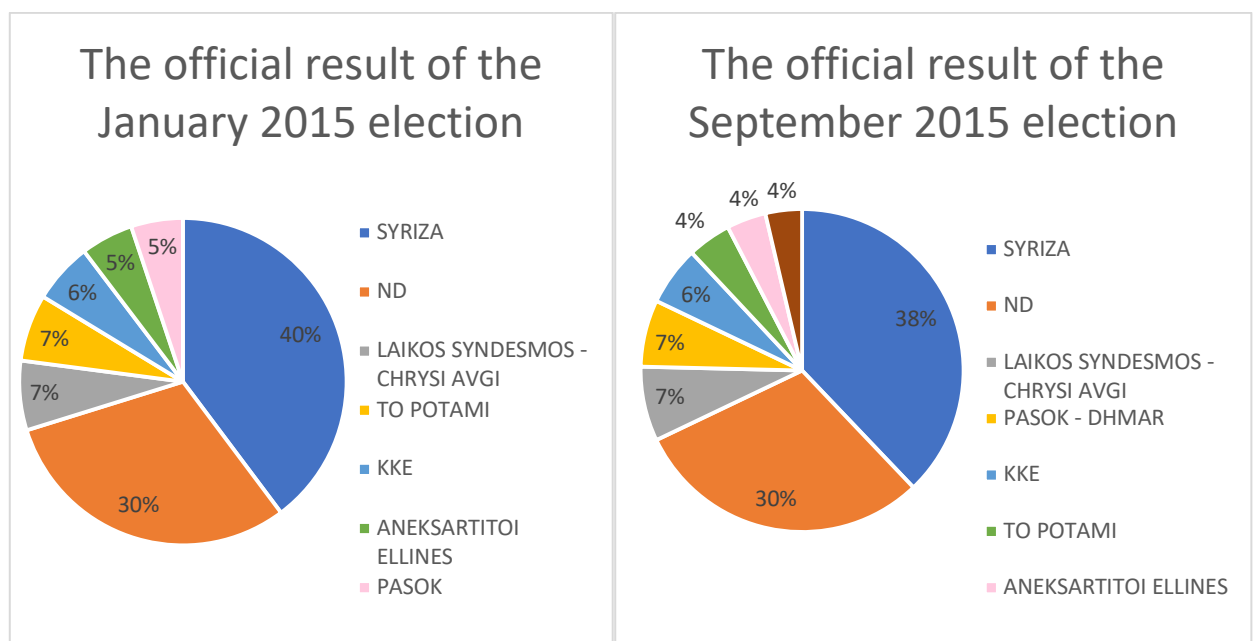
In these elections were two groups of parties: parties that supported the bailout agreements were PASOK and New Democracy, and parties that opposed the bailout agreements were KKE, SYRIZA, Democratic Left, Golden Dawn and ANEL (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 315). The electoral success of Eurosceptic parties was not only related to Euroscepticism. Two pro-EU mainstream parties, PASOK and ND, were associated with clientelism, corruption and austerity measures,

while the anti-system character of the challenger parties contributed to their electoral success (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 323-324).

Pappas believes that the unusual fragmentation in 2012 elections can be explained by the specifics of the Greek party system. Pappas claims that after 1981 in Greece the «polarized bipartism» has been shaped. It is the system that combines two-party politics and elite polarization. It allowed keeping society divided into two groups (2013, 40). In conditions of such «polarized bipartism» parties tend to reduce the competition to a single dimension. Two biggest parties present the opposite opinions and prefer to increase polarization to get more votes. However, as Pappas mentions «when politics is polarized, bipartism does not work». When bipartism fails to produce a moderate political society, the political instability emerges and as a result the number of parties increases or a type of party system changes (2013, 41-42).

In 2015 SYRIZA, that used to be a marginal party in 2009, won elections and got firstly 40 per cent of votes and then 38 per cent of votes. There were 7 parties in the parliament and then 8.

Figure 11. The official result of the 2015 elections

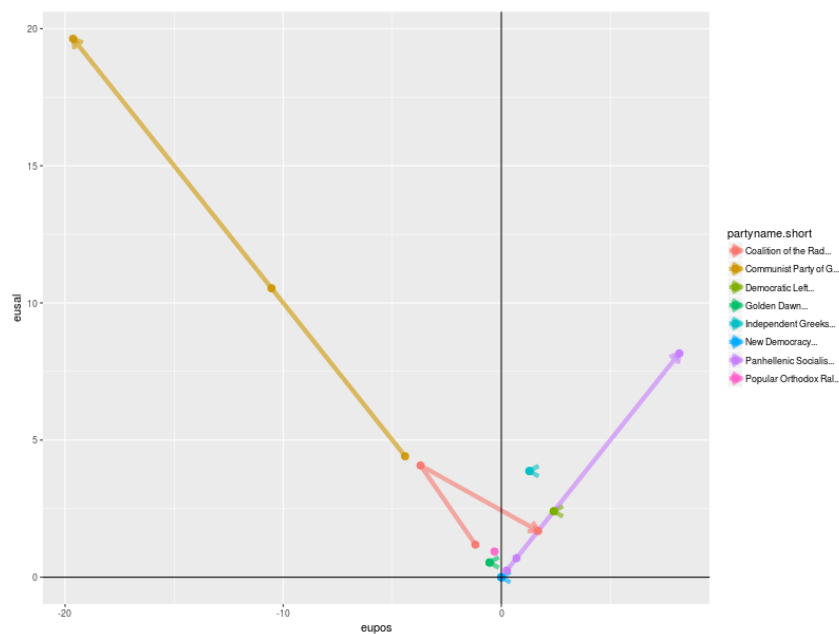


Source: Hellenic Parliament

5.5. Saliency

According to Chapel Hill database, the saliency of European integration in the party's public stance was extremely high only in 2012, when the weighted mean was equal to 8,9. In 2009 the weighted mean was equal to 6,6 and in 2015 it was equal to 6,7. Interestingly, the Figure 12 shows that the parties, whose positions became more radical, also increased the saliency of European integration. Although according to Vasilopoulou, the EU issues were salient across the party system and over time (2018, 321).

Figure 12. Positions of parties on EU integration and the saliency of EU integration 2009-2012



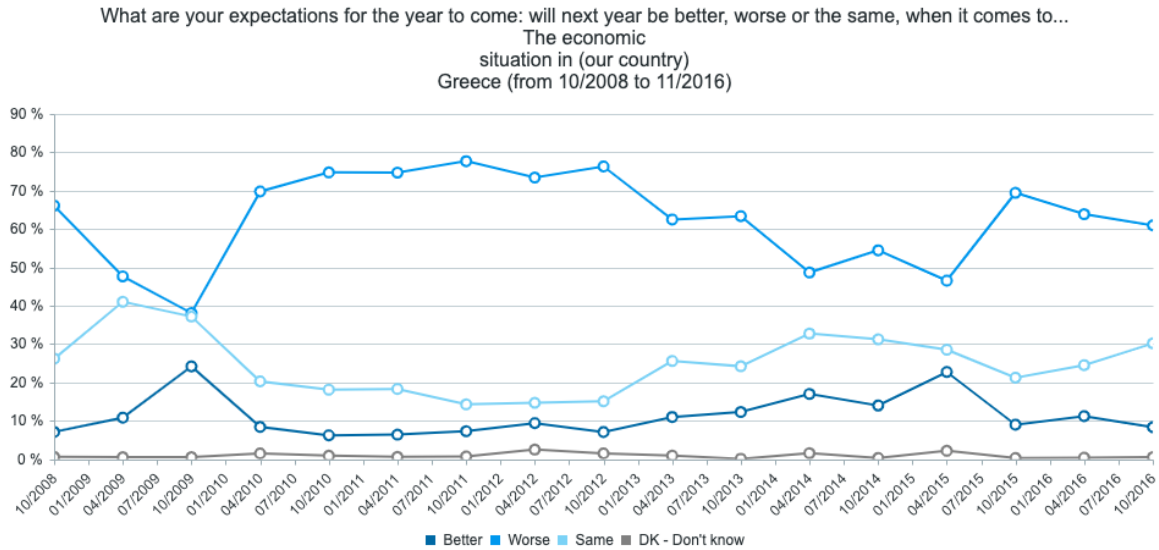
Source: The Manifesto Project database

5.6. The crisis 2009-2010

On 4 October 2009 George Andreas Papandreou, the leader of the social-democratic party the Panhellenic Socialist Movement, wins national elections. In December he admits that the debt of the country was equal to 300bn euros. It was the highest debt in modern history and amounted to 113 per cent of GDP of the country, while the eurozone limit was 60 per cent (Timeline: The unfolding eurozone crisis, 2019). Greece was already in crisis in 2009 but the danger was played down on the public agenda and it was the EU level crisis at that time. George Papandreou claimed that Greece was "not about to default on its debts" (Greece insists it will not default on huge debts, 2019).

The per cent of respondents who had positive expectations for the year to come increased in November 2009.

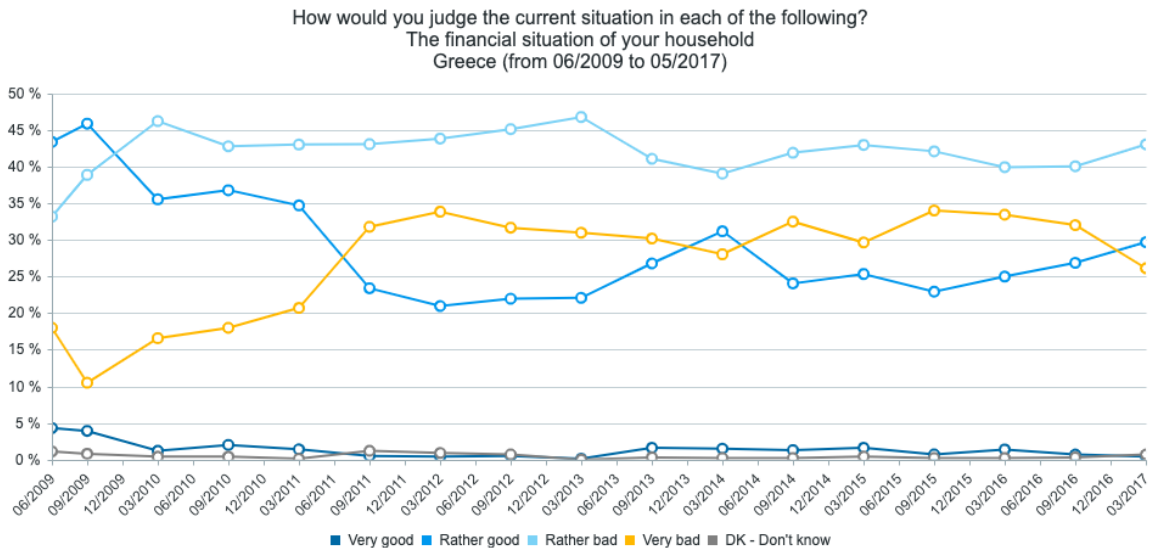
Figure 13. Economic expectations in Greece



Source: European Commission (European Commission, n.d.).

If we look at how citizens estimated the current financial situation of their household, we could see the similar picture. The financial satiation was constantly getting worse since autumn 2009.

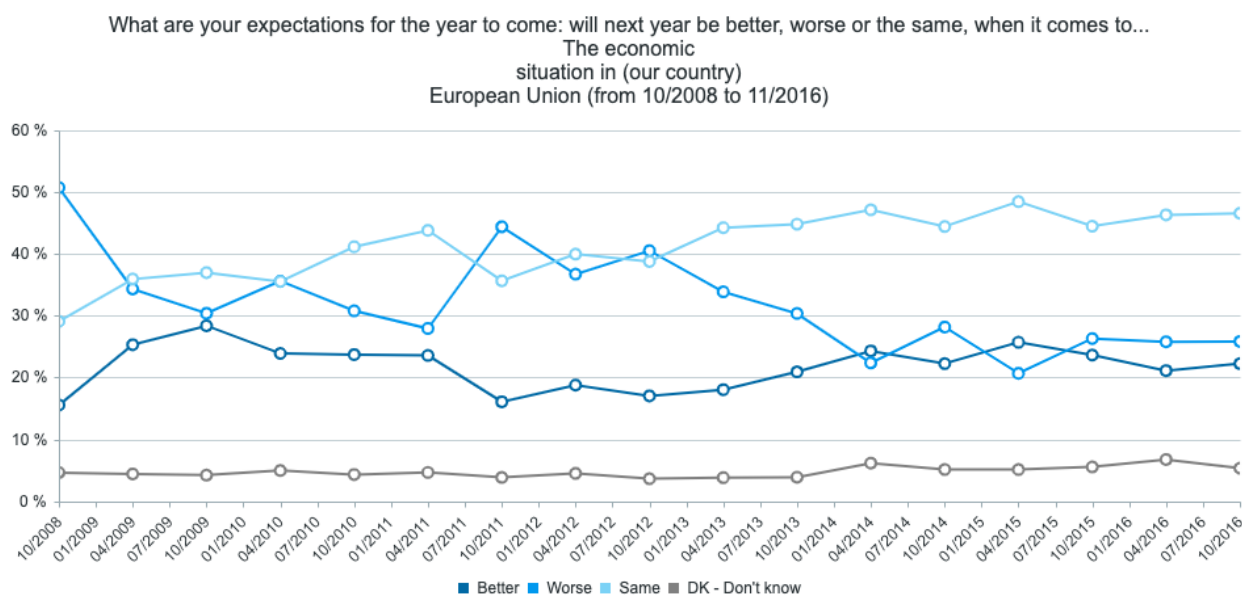
Figure 14. The financial situation of the household



Source: European Commission (European Commission, n.d.).

The per cent of respondents who had positive expectations for the year to come increased in the EU average as well.

Figure 15. Economic expectations in EU



Source: European Commission (European Commission, n.d.).

In May 2010 the negative expectations increased by 30 per cent. The negative expectations in the EU average also increased but only by 5 per cent, and without Greece it increased only by 3 per cent.

In February 2010 Greece develops austerity measures to curb the deficit. On 2 May 2010 the International Monetary Fund and the EU agreed to loan Greece 110 billion of euro. Prime Minister Papandreou commits to austerity measures (Eurozone approves massive Greece bail-out, 2019). The austerity measures plan provoked protests. It was the first wave of the anti-austerity protests. According to police data, in 2010 there were 7123 protest events and the protests intensified after the first bailout agreement was signed in May 2010 (Karyotis and Rüdiger, 2018, 160). According to the study of Karyotis and Rüdiger, 23% of the adult population responded that they took part in anti-austerity demonstrations in 2010. However, the most important predictor of participation was the experience of protest activity before the crisis (2018, 160). Although it was massive protests, the activists failed to mobilize new participants. Other predictors were being male, left-wing and from a trade union, that reflects “old social movements” profile (Karyotis and Rüdiger, 2018, 165).

2011

May

The second wave of protests took place in 2011. In 2011 there was a greater number of participants and greater types of its activities. During the survey, 36 per cent of the adult population took part

in demonstrations comparing with 23 per cent in 2010. In 2011 activists resorted to the occupation of public spaces such as Syntagma Square in front of the Greek Parliament, that was occupied from 25 May until 7 August 2011. The higher mobilization is at least partly explained by the rise of the Aganaktismeni. It was a new movement, inspired by 15M or Indignados movement that arose in Spain after mass demonstrations in May 2011 (Karyotis and Rüdig, 2018, 159). According to the theory, the appearance of the non-governmental actors is of paramount importance for intensification of conflict over Europe (2016, 76).

Aganaktismeni movement represented the diversity of political views, including the far right (Karyotis and Rüdig, 2018, 161). As Karyotis and Rüdig claim, the protests in that time were characterized by “their inclusive and diverse nature, their fluid and leaderless structure and their use of and mobilization via digital media” (2018, 161). It shows that mobilization in 2011 was more effective than it used to be.

November

The negative expectations in Greece reached a peak in November 2011: 78 per cent of respondents said that the year to come would be worse when it comes to economics. At the exact same moment, the negative expectations in the EU average dramatically increased for the first time and reached a peak of 44%.

In October 2011 the Greek parliament accepted the Fifth austerity package, that caused violent protests. In October Eurozone leaders discussed a haircut of 50 per cent and by the end of the month finally agreed to it in return for further austerity measures (Timeline: The unfolding eurozone crisis, 2019).

George Papandreou announced a referendum on the rescue package, but then it was cancelled as the centre-right opposition agrees to support the deal. As ND and PASOK struggled to find an agreement, it was decided to form a technocratic government by agreement. Papandreou resigned and Lucas Papademos became a head of coalition government consisting of the PASOK, New Democracy, and LAOS parties (Smith and Kington, 2019).

It was not a typical situation for Greece. The PASOK won a majority in the elections of 2009 and led the country on their own. In fact, Greek governments used to be one-party majority government since 1974. The political landscape was also characterized by a polarization between New Democracy, The PASOK and some third party that could be labelled as the Communist party. In

the case of the new cabinet “the enduring nature of Greece’s polarization has been suspended momentarily” (Pastorella, 2016b, 129). The parties in the government were not ideologically close to each other. The PASOK is the left party, while New Democracy, and LAOS are the right. Their positions on the EU also were different. According to Chapel Hill survey, the position of the PASOK in time of the elections of 2009 was equal to 6,1, the position of ND was equal to 5,3 and the position of LAOS was equal to 3,3 on the scale where 1 is strongly opposed and 7 is strongly in favour.

Prototype technocratic government is “a cabinet composed of all non-partisan, expert ministers and headed by a non-partisan prime minister, who has a sufficiently long period of time in power and sufficiently broad mandate to change the status quo” (Pastorella, 2016, 949). Papademos’ cabinet was not fully technocratic as it included politicians (not non-partisan experts), but it had a non-partisan prime minister and was claimed to be technocratic. In particular, Greek media promoted the idea of independence and technocracy (Pastorella, 2014, 10). The new cabinet was supposed to “create a climate of consensus after months of political tension” (Q&A: Greece’s ‘technocratic’ government, 2019). And it could be a reason why the per cent of people having a neutral attitude to the EU increased by about 5 per cent and the public polarization decreased.

Greek political parties at that time preferred to avoid blaming each other, which is a classical strategy for such cases. It involves “a consensual solution among a coalition of the major political parties and ideas of national unity” (Pastorella, 2016b, 132). Technocratic governments often have widespread support as they perceived to be a government of national unity. Furthermore, technocracy prevents deliberation about policies due to the declared neutrality. It is perceived that the government does “what should be done according to scientific evidence” (Pastorella, 2016a, 954).

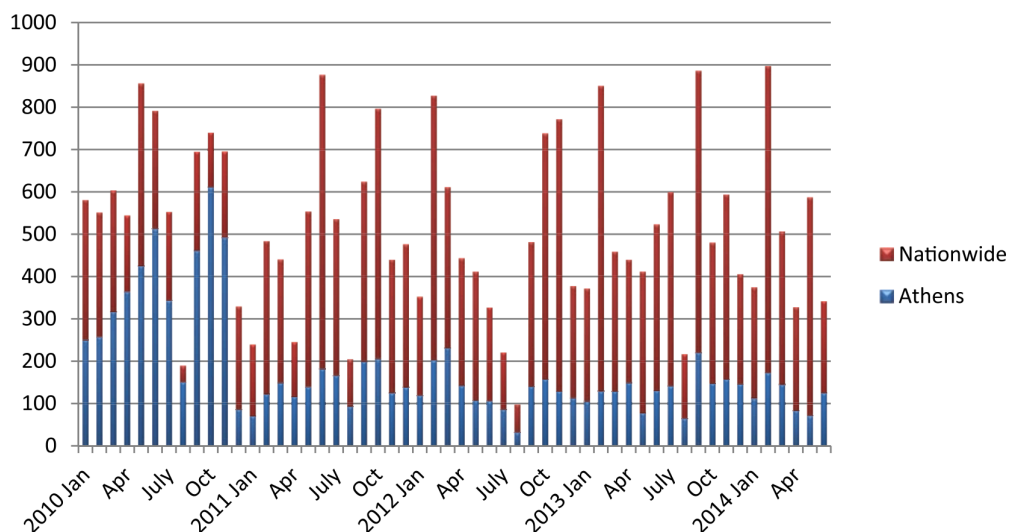
2012

In February 2012 the Sixth austerity package was approved by the Parliament and the second bailout package was finalized. The Seventh austerity package was adopted by the parliament in November (Anger in Athens as Greek austerity measures passed, 2019). In May 2012 the general elections were held and then in one month in June. The Eurosceptic, anti-establishment, and anti-austerity agenda became the main common denominator for the coalition government (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 312).

The per cent of people who judged the current financial situation as very bad reached a peak in May 2012 and was equal to 34 per cent. In November 2012 there was a second peak of per cent of respondents with the negative expectations about the economic situation in Greece: 76 per cent of respondents said that the year to come would be worse when it comes to economic. The negative expectations in the EU average also reached a peak of 41%. Since November 2012 the negative expectations about the economic situation in the country were decreasing both in Greece and the EU average.

Also, the third wave of mobilization started from the middle of 2012, in the period of the electoral race to the May/June 2012 Parliamentary elections. In that time the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA), that used to be a marginal party, became the main party of the movement (Karyotis and Rüdig, 2018, 159). According to the police data, there were 5654 protest events in 2012. The peak was in March, then the number of events declined significantly but stayed high (Karyotis and Rüdig, 2018, 161).

Figure 16. Monthly Number of Protest Events in Greece since 2010 until 2014



Source: Karyotis and Rüdig on the basis of Hellenic Police Statistics (2018, 161).

What distinguishes the third wave of austerity protests in Greece from other waves is the linkage to the electoral arena. While in other cases protesters were detached from political parties, in Greece it became identified with SYRIZA (Karyotis and Rüdig, 2018, 166). The SYRIZA opposed austerity measures, actively participated in the protests and its electoral support rose over time.

SYRIZA provides populists rhetoric. According to the Chapel Hill survey, the party's position on direct vs. representative democracy is equal to 6,9 in a scale where 10 means that "The people"

should make the most important decisions and 0 means that elected politicians should make the most important decisions. After the elections of June 2012 SYRIZA tried to represent diverse ideological groups the same as the Aganaktismenoi movement did. And what is more important SYRIZA was managed to strengthen the partisan ties with the demonstrators. 60 per cent of demonstrators did not feel close to any party and only 3 per cent felt close to SYRIZA in 2010, but 39 per cent of demonstrators said that they were close to SYRIZA in 2015 (Karyotis and Rüdig, 2018, 166).

2015

The economic situation still was poor in Greece. In November 2015 the per cent of people who judged the current financial situation as very bad reached a peak and was equal to 34 per cent. The negative expectations became to rise since spring 2015 and in July 70 per cent of citizens in Greece thought that next year would be worse when it comes to economics. There was not an equal rise in the EU average. Also in 2015, the migration crisis started so Greece faced two the EU crisis at the same time.

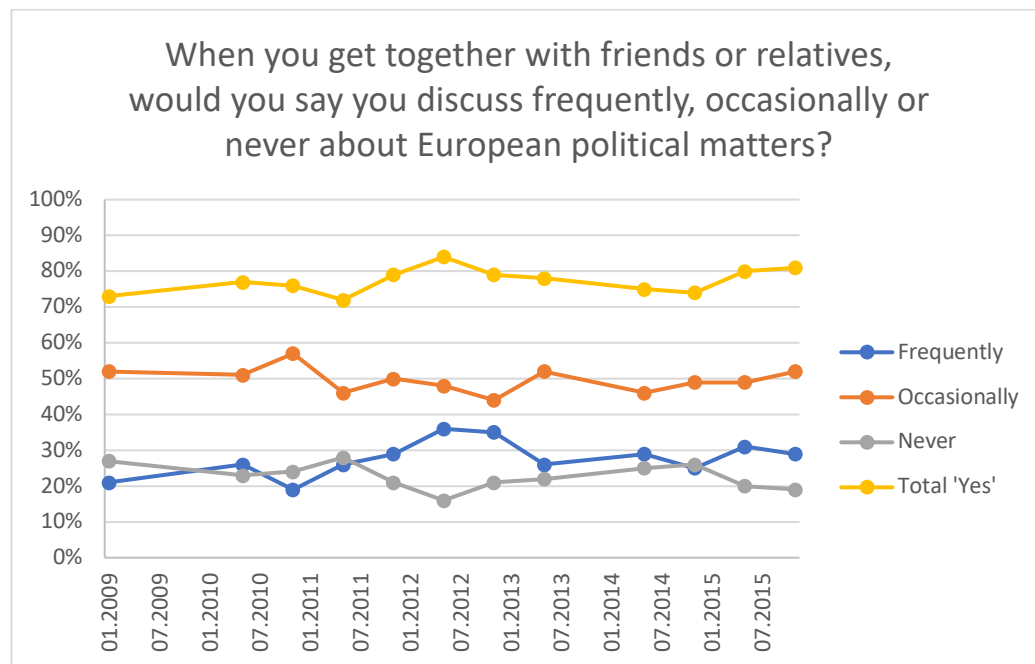
At the end of June Prime Minister Tsipras announced a referendum on a bailout agreement that could propel the country out of the euro (Tsipras's shock call for vote on Greek bailout sets day of destiny for Europe, 2019). On 5 July 2015, the referendum was held and over 60 per cent voted against international bailout terms. The next days Samaras resigned as a leader of ND and Varoufakis resigned as minister of Finance (Greece debt crisis: Finance Minister Varoufakis resigns, 2019). Despite the results of the referendum on 11 July, the parliament approved the bailout plan and the new austerity measures for the third bailout package. On 20 August 2015 Prime Minister Tsipras resigned. On 20 September 2015 the general legislative election was held. In November 2015 the new austerity package was accepted (Greece's Debt, 2019). According to theory, the referendum is the ideal opportunity structure for politicising European issues, it leads to higher polarization over Europe, the involvement of non-governmental actors and connected with a high-intensity mass conflict (Grande and Hutter, 2016, 77).

According to Karyotis and Rüdig's study that was conducted in February of 2015, 28% of respondents answered that they participated in protests after June 2012. In 2013 there were 6231 protest events and 3032 protest events in the first half of 2014. It means that protest appeared in 2010, raised further in 2011 until the middle of 2012, then the number of protests declined but stayed high between 2012 and 2015 (Karyotis and Rüdig, 2018, 161).

5.7. Political awareness

It is seen that per cent of people who discuss European political matters with their friends or relatives frequently or occasionally were mostly increasing since 2009. It reached a peak in May of 2012 when the per cent of people who discuss European political matters frequently or occasionally increased by 12 per cent since May 2011. The per cent of people who discuss European political matters frequently itself also reached a peak in November of 2015.

Figure 17. How often discuss EU political matters

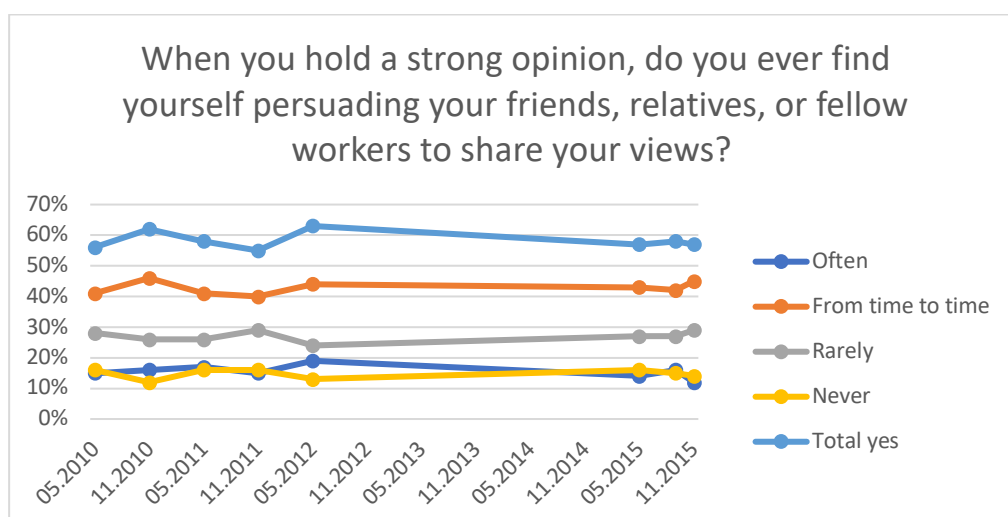


Source: Eurobarometer reports

Although, it should be noticed that the level of political awareness was high in all studied periods. In 2009, 2012, and 2015 bigger per cent of people discussed European political matters frequently in Greece than in the EU overall.

It is also interesting that in May of 2012 the per cent of people who found themselves persuading their acquaintances to share their view often or from time to time reached a peak. The per cent of people who do it often increased by 3 per cent since the last survey and who do it from time to time by 4. As it was claimed in a theoretical review it can be an important symptom of polarization. Elite polarization does not necessary lead to issue polarization, people can stay moderate but there can be other symptoms. Particularity, population can become more fragmented and further entrenched in their points of view (Cacciatore et al., 2014, 658-660). It shows that although the value of public polarization was lower in 2012 than it was in May of 2011, the occurring trends were also significant.

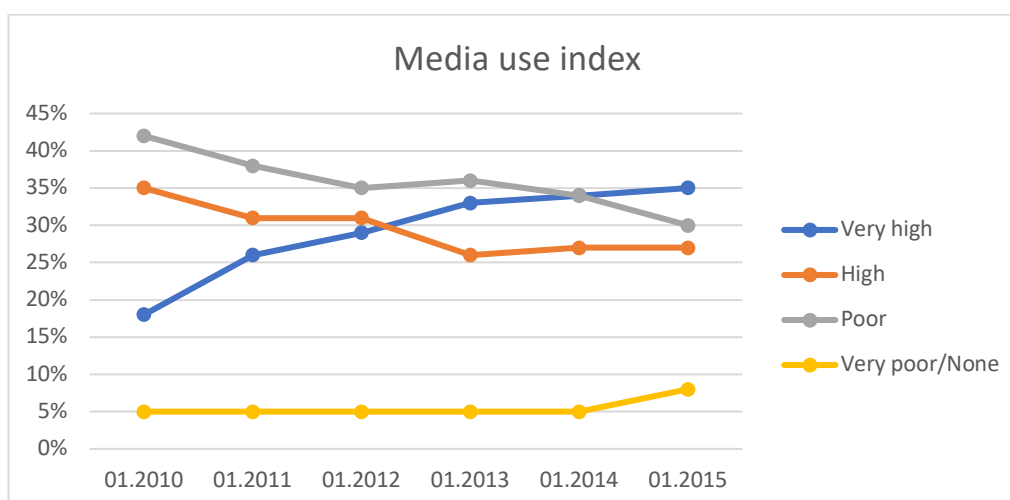
Figure 18. How often persuade to share views



Source: Eurobarometer reports

The index of media use was also increasing since the beginning of the crisis. The per cent of people with very high media use increased constantly until 2015.

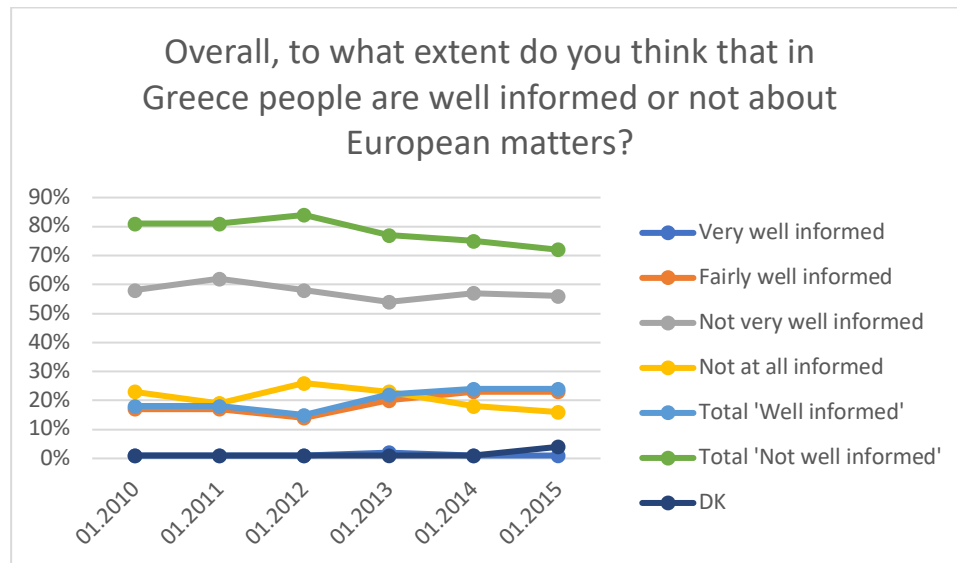
Figure 19. Media use index



Source: Eurobarometer reports

As a result, per cent of people who felt that in Greece people are not well informed or not at all informed (total not well informed) were decreasing since 2012, while per cent of people who felt that in Greece people are fairly well informed or very well informed (total well informed) were increasing since that time.

Figure 20. How well informed about European matters

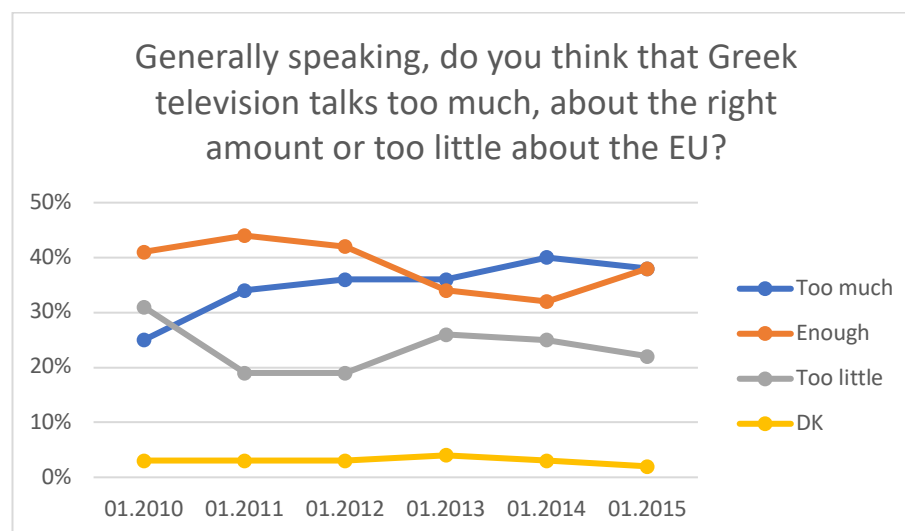


Source: Eurobarometer reports

5.8. Media coverage

The per cent of people who believed that television talks too much about the EU were increasing since 2010 and until 2015. In 2011 the per cent of people who believed that television talks too much about the EU increased by almost 10 per cent and kept this high level until 2015. The peak was in 2014, the year of the European Parliament election.

Figure 21. How much television talks about the EU

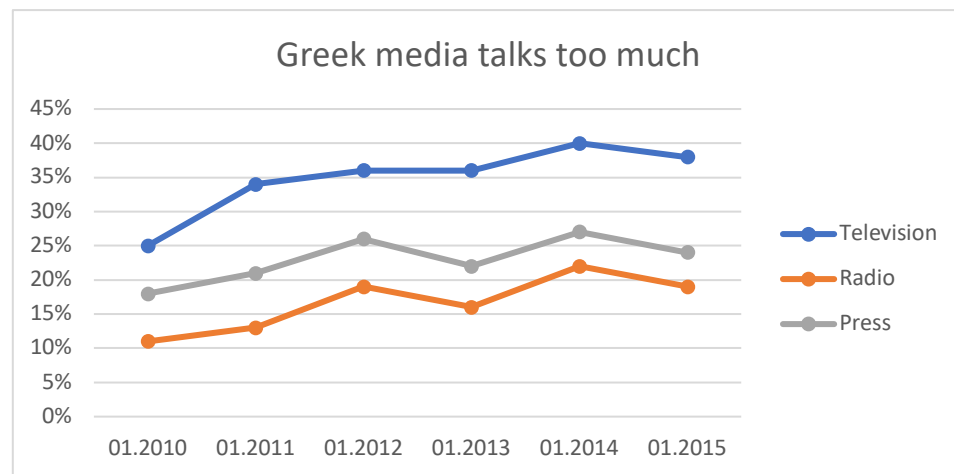


Source: Eurobarometer reports

The television is the main source of information, but the importance of other sources is increasing over time (European Commission, Brussels (2018): Eurobarometer 88.3 (2017). TNS opinion, Brussels [producer]. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA6928 Data file Version 1.0.0). If look at

the radio, television and press coverage of the EU issues it is seen there are two peaks in 2012 and in 2014.

Figure 22. Greek media talks too much



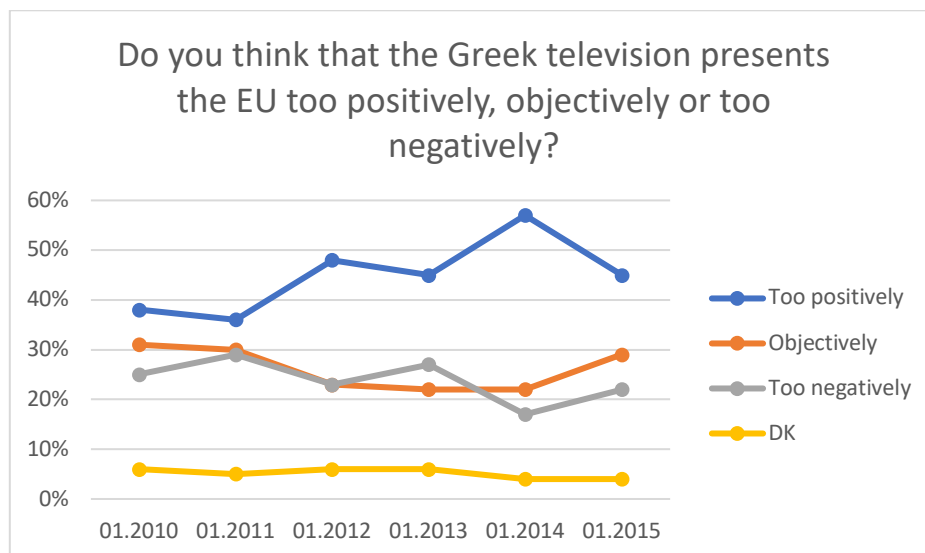
Source: Eurobarometer reports

It should be noticed that in all studied periods a bigger per cent of people believed that television talks too much about the EU in Greece than in the EU average. According to the study of Capelos and Exadaktylos, in general, the EU actors were mentioned in 17 per cent of cases, while domestic political leaders was mentioned in 38 per cent. It means that although the EU was an important topic of public agenda, the domestic politics was of a paramount importance. EU actors were at the core of public agenda in December 2009 and November 2011, when the EU actors were mentioned in 25 per cent of cases (2017, 86).

Thematically there were three stages of media coverage of the Greek crisis. Since December 2009 and until May 2010 the print media outlets stressed how grave was the crisis, since June 2010 until December 2011 media stressed the public frustration, and since early 2012 media stressed the public disappointment in political system (Capelos and Exadaktylos, 2017, 78). Also since June 2010 scientists find that media discuss the crisis using “them versus us” narrative (Capelos and Exadaktylos, 2017, 81). The Greek media reflected the crude line of international news agencies. After 2010–2011 the Greek media became polarized. Dominant media, that included TV-channels, supported Troika decisions. Since November 2011, when the referendum was announced, these media strongly supported euro and those parties who shared their positive attitude to the EU. Several newspapers, who were less powerful, and internet media adopted the opposite position and the dichotomy was observable in all conflicts (Kaitatzi-Whitlock, 2014, 36-37).

According to the public opinion surveys, the objectivity of the EU presentation in media changed from time to time. It is seen that in time since 2011 and until 2015 the television presented the EU less objective.

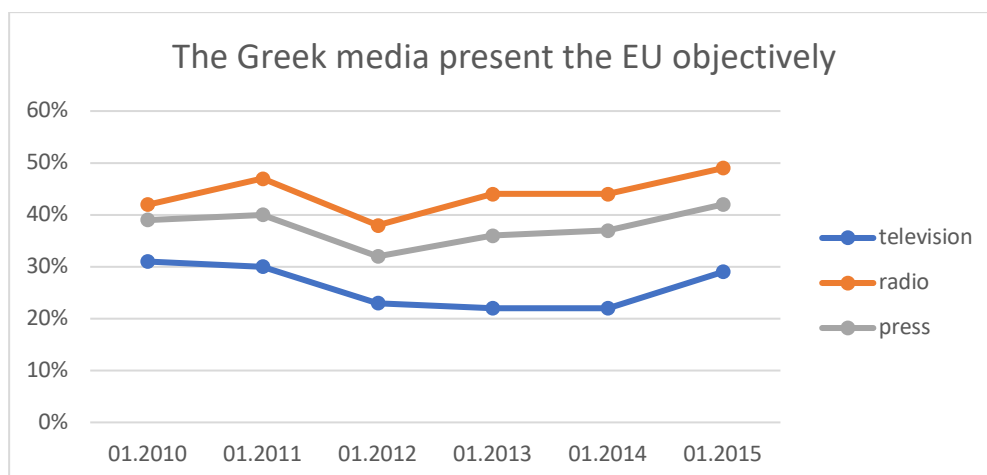
Figure 23. Objectivity of the Greek television



Source: Eurobarometer reports

If we look at other sources of the information it is seen that 2012 was the year when people the most believed that the EU was not presented objectively.

Figure 24. The Greek media present the EU objectively



Source: Eurobarometer reports

It should be noticed that in all studied periods a bigger per cent of people believed that media does not present the EU objective in Greece than in the EU average.

5.9. Summary

As it was claimed at the beginning it is important to understand: 1) why mass polarization was low in 2009-2010 and became high in May 2011 before new elections; 2) what caused the drop in mass polarization in November 2011 in comparison to May 2011; 3) Why mass polarization became high in 2012 and stayed high in 2015, while it was low in 2012, although elite polarization in all these cases were high.

May 2011 vs. November 2011

All conditions that fostered polarization in May 2011 existed and were even stronger in November 2011. The only factor that theoretically can explain the drop is technocratic government. Papademos' cabinet was not fully technocratic but it had a non-partisan prime minister and was claimed to be technocratic and independent by media (Pastorella, 2014, 10). The new cabinet was supposed to "create a climate of consensus after months of political tension" (Q&A: Greece's 'technocratic' government, 2019). And it could be a reason why the per cent of people having a neutral attitude to the EU increased by about 5 per cent and the public polarization decreased.

To compare the rest 4 cases the presence of factors was visualized. All factors located in comparison to each other to reflect when the value of the factor was higher.

Figure 25. Factors influencing mass polarization



2009-2010 vs. May 2011

The next elections after 2009 was held in 2012 so technically the number of parties, level of elite polarization and the presence of both right and left parties were the same in 2009 and 2011. However, in 2011 the Aganaktismeni movement became an important actor of protest political arena (Karyotis and Rüdig, 2018, 159). As it was non-governmental actor, actively mobilized citizens and represented diversity of political views, including the far right (Karyotis and Rüdig, 2018, 161). So, in fact, the number and ideological diversity of actors increased in 2011.

The crisis in 2011 had deteriorated a bit and the tension on the EU level also increased, but the difference between 2009-2010 and 2011 in this sense was not large. The another factor is opportunity structure. There were not elections in 2011 and were in 2009, that should theoretically foster polarization in 2009. But in 2011 the opportunity structure was strengthened by the protests. Although, there were protests in 2010, the activists failed to mobilize new participants and the most important predictor of participation was the experience of protest activity before the crisis (2018, 160).

Political awareness stayed at the same level, although the index of media usage increased by 10 per cent. According to the study of Capelos and Exadaktylos, the EU actors were at the core of public agenda in December 2009 and November 2011 (2017, 86). But according to public survey, media spoke about the EU more in 2011. Although, in 2009, according to public opinion, media was more biased that should provoke polarization.

2012 and 2015 vs. 2009-2010

In 2012 there was the highest level of elite polarization and mass polarization in comparison with 2009-2010 and 2012. Many factors that should theoretically foster mass polarization also had the highest value in 2012. There were the highest level of ideological diversity, the biggest number of parties, both right and left Eurosceptic parties. The crisis significantly deteriorated by that time and became European. In November 2012 there was a second peak of per cent of respondents with the negative economic expectations in Greece and the negative expectations in the EU average also reached a peak of 41%.

In 2012 the salience of the topic reached a peak, media coverage reached a peak and the biggest per cent of people believed that media was biased. The media coverage was also high, it was higher only in 2015.

The political situation in 2012 was also important. SYRIZA became the main party of the movement so the protest could be expressed in the electoral arena. SYRIZA tried to represent diverse ideological groups and what is more important SYRIZA was managed to strengthen the partisan ties with the demonstrators (Karyotis and Rüdig, 2018, 166). The election of 2012 was a key moment for mass polarization as all parties were divided into two groups: parties that supported the bailout agreements and parties that opposed it (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 315). The elections were linked with the EU political dimension and the results had a direct impact on the citizens' life.

There was a high level of public awareness. The per cent of citizens who discussed European political matters frequently or occasionally reached a peak as well as per cent of people who found themselves persuading their acquaintances to share their view often or from time to time reached a peak. The number of protests was also high.

So it is not surprising that in 2012 the mass polarization was high. It is more interesting why mass polarization in 2009 was low and in 2015 it was high, while the level of elite polarization was even a bit higher in 2009. The main two differences seem to be a number of parties and the presence of both right and left Eurosceptic. It used to be a two-party system in Greece and there was only more pro-European right parties and more Eurosceptic left parties. So the parties could not meet the demands of citizens. In 2015 Eurosceptics existed on both sides of the ideological spectrum and the number of parties was equal to 3,09 in 2015. Furthermore, while the value of the index of polarization was bigger in 2009, the ideological diversity was greater in 2015.

Parties salience was the same. The media coverage according to public surveys were the highest in 2015, but according to Capelos and Exadaktylos, the EU actors were at the core of public agenda in December 2009 (2017, 86).

Public awareness was higher in 2015 than in 2009. The per cent of people who discussed European political matters frequently itself also reached a peak in November of 2015. However, the level of political awareness was higher than in the EU average all the time.

Since 2009 the crisis significantly deteriorated and became more European, also in 2015 the migration crisis took place. But in the sense of opportunity structure, the biggest role played the referendum. According to theory, the referendum is the ideal opportunity structure for politicising

European issues, it leads to higher polarization over Europe, the involvement of non-governmental actors and connected with a high-intensity mass conflict (Grande and Hutter, 2016, 77).

These cases illustrate the results that were got through QCA. When elite is polarized the public opinion will be polarized if Eurosceptics parties reach a certain level of support, there are both right and left Eurosceptic parties, the topic is salient and there is EU crisis. These conditions were present in the case of 2015 and absent in the case of 2009. In the case of 2012 there also was a strong opportunity structure. The second set of factors also did not present in the case of 2009: high media attention, high salience, Eurosceptics parties reach a certain level of support, EU crisis and people often discuss the EU issues. The parties at the beginning of the crisis played down the topic, the crisis was not perceived as the EU crisis, and the society was less involved in a discussion.

6. Conclusion

According to the theory, elite polarization should lead to public polarization (Down and Wilson, 2010; Ray, 2003; Hooghe and Marks, 2005). However, it does not always happen. Although the parties are polarized in the USA, many studies proved that across most issues Americans are ideologically moderate (Zingher and Flynn, 2018, 24). Also, Down and Wilson found that when elite polarization was high in some cases mass polarization was high but in some cases it was low in the EU (2010). It is especially relevant to understand the effect of elite polarization on mass polarization in times of the crisis of the EU as the EU crisis should influence «party competition over European integration, including EU issue position, EU issue salience, and EU issue framing» (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 312).

To define what sets of conditions lead to mass polarization when parties are polarized, 12 cases with high elite polarization were selected. Applying Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) it was found out that when the elite is polarized regarding the EU public opinion become polarized:

- 1) If there is a crisis at the EU level, Eurosceptics reached 10% of electoral support, Eurosceptics present on both left and right sides of the ideological scale and salience of European integration in the party's public stance is high.
- 2) If there is a crisis at the EU level, Eurosceptics reached 10% of electoral support, media salience of the EU is high and people often discuss the EU political matters.

The process-tracing analysis helped to get more information about the case of Greece and how these conditions work in practice. In Greece, the elite had been polarized already in 2009, but the public opinion had not been polarized until 2012. Process tracing allowed to unfold the mass polarization process in conditions of elite polarization over time. It was found out that mass became polarized not in 2012 but in May 2011 in Greece. Technically the number of parties, level of elite polarization and the presence of both right and left parties were the same in 2009 and 2011. However, in 2011 the Aganaktismeni movement became an important actor of protest political arena (Karyotis and Rüdiger, 2018, 159), so, in fact, the number and ideological diversity of actors increased in 2011. In 2011 the opportunity structure was also strengthened by the protests.

Process tracing also helped to explain the difference between 2009 when public opinion was not polarized and 2012 and 2015 when it was. In 2012 there were many factors that should theoretically foster mass polarization: there was the highest level of ideological diversity, the biggest number of parties, both right and left Eurosceptic parties, the crisis significantly deteriorated by that time and became European, the salience of the topic reached a peak, media

coverage reached a peak and the biggest per cent of people believed that media was biased. The media coverage and the high level of public awareness were also high. SYRIZA became the main party of the movement so the protest could be expressed in the electoral arena. The election of 2012 was a key moment for mass polarization as all parties were divided into two groups: parties that supported the bailout agreements and parties that opposed it (Vasilopoulou, 2018, 315). It is why in 2012 the mass polarization reached the highest level.

It is more interesting why mass polarization in 2009 was low and in 2015 it was high, while level of elite polarization was even a bit higher in 2009. The main two differences seem to be a number of parties and the presence of both right and left Eurosceptic. It used to be a two-party system in Greece and there was only more pro-European right parties and more Eurosceptic left parties, while in 2015 Eurosceptics existed on both sides of the ideological spectrum and the number of parties was equal to 3,09. Furthermore, the ideological diversity was greater in 2015. Since 2009 the crisis significantly deteriorated and became more European, also in 2015 the migration crisis took place. But in the sense of opportunity structure, the biggest role played the referendum. Some other factors like public awareness also had to provoke polarization greater in 2015 than in 2009. But it does not seem to play the main role at least because the level of political awareness was higher than in the EU average all the time. The case of Greece shows that a greater number of ideologically diverse parties that can effectively use the opportunity structure dramatically foster mass polarization. The EU crises, in turn, strengthen the opportunity structure.

The process tracing also showed that mass polarization is less stable than it was supposed in the QCA part. Mass polarization varied all over the time and changed more often than elite polarization based on the results of elections. There was a significant drop in November 2011. The only factor that theoretically can explain the drop is settled technocratic government that was supposed to “create a climate of consensus after months of political tension” (Q&A: Greece's 'technocratic' government, 2019).

The thesis has several shortcomings. First of all, the elite polarization can be operationalized in another way. Also, the case of Greece in 2015 showed that ideological variance can be bigger than Dalton's index' elite polarization value and it can play a role so, perhaps, it is wrong to include the parties' size in the index. The size of the party might be important to influence the legislative agenda but less important to influence public opinion. Also, the Aganaktismeni movement played an important role in mass polarization although it was a non-governmental actor. It was showed that mass polarization is not stable that the shorter periods should be studied.

Another issue is the role of the crisis. Society in Greece used to be pro-EU and increasing mass polarization was connected with the decrease in support of the EU. It is why the factor of crisis played such a big role. It should be relevant for other the EU member states as the EU is still highly supported (European Parliament, 2019) and maybe only in time of crisis the Eurosceptics can attract more pro-EU voters. In this sense, it might be analytically useful to replace polity questions with policy for measuring polarization. So, instead of for/against the EU questions look at what kind of Europe questions. Nowadays, when Eurosceptics do not promote the exit from the EU, it should have sense and may help to understand if the elite polarization regarding the EU issues influences mass polarization not in time of the EU crisis.

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