Europe Wide Web

Public Sphere in European Online Media

Soili Semkina

University of Helsinki
Faculty of Social Sciences
Media and Global Communication
Master´s Thesis
January 2012

HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Tiedekunta/Osasto – Fakultet/Sektion – Faculty	Laitos – Institution – Department	
Faculty of Social Sciences	Department of Social Research	
Tekijä – Författare – Author		
Semkina, Soili		
Työn nimi – Arbetets titel – Title		
Europe Wide Web. Public Sphere in European Online Media		
Oppiaine – Läroämne – Subject		
Media and Global Communication		
Työn laji – Arbetets art – Level	Aika – Datum – Month and year	Sivumäärä – Sidoantal – Number of pages
Master's Thesis	January 2012	111 (+ annexes)

Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

The European Union is often argued to be an elite project with which common citizens are not associated. One of the problems is claimed to be the absence of a common public sphere where Europeans can debate societal issues. However, recent developments in communication technology call for rethinking on the European public sphere. The internet provides solutions to many technical obstacles often presented as barriers to transnational debate. The development has beared fruit: There are an increasing number of online publications dealing with the EU or Europe in general. However, the online media's potential for the European public sphere has not been much researched. This research attempts to fill the gap.

The object of this research are European online media that write about the EU or Europe. The main interest is in discovering their possibilities to promote debate on European issues, and the research question is: What kind of a European public sphere do online publications construct?

To answer the question, a test model of the European public sphere is constructed based on the descriptive models developed by Erik Eriksen and Marianne van de Steeg. The theory of deliberative public sphere of Jürgen Habermas forms the normative background of this study. In addition, ideas of Chantal Mouffe on agonistic public sphere are elaborated. The developed model is tested in the empirical part.

As thorough research has not been conducted previously on the European online media, first a general categorization is made. Fifty online publications are researched and grouped in eight categories. The second phase of empirical research consists of qualitative content analysis. Twelve publications from four categories are analysed. The material comprises news articles on the European sovereign debt crisis. Text samples are analysed with the aid of four indicators actors, topics, sources and virtual contact.

One of the most important observations of both categorisation and analysis of the European online media is its diversity in topics, actors or political opinions. The analysis also shows that the debt crisis is a very political topic and holds conflict of interests on the left-wing and right-wing level, contrary to the common claim that the EU is lacking such a political tension. There are only a few references to particular European values even though Europe is the main frame. Also, international news media such as Reuters is often used as a source what indicates to common Western features rather than European features. This applies especially to the online dailies covering the EU issues.

Another observation is a sign of an emerging European civic society discovered in the European volunteer and opinion media both of which operate mostly on a volunteer basis. Yet, as citizens play as small role in the debt crisis news coverage, the ideal European public sphere is far from being realised.

The European online media is believed to gain more importance and reputation as the online media will develop furher. This research reveals the abundance of it and demonstrates that there is plenty to explore in the Europe Wide Web.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords

European public sphere, European media, online media, Jürgen Habermas, deliberative public sphere, Chantal Mouffe, agonistic public sphere, European debt crisis

HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Tiedekunta/Osasto – Fakultet/Sektion – Faculty	Laitos – Institution – Department
Valtiotieteellinen tiedekunta	Sosiaalitieteiden laitos

Tekijä – Författare – Author
Semkina, Soili

Työn nimi – Arbetets titel – Title
Europe Wide Web. Public Sphere in European Online Media

Oppiaine – Läroämne – Subject
Media and Global Communication

Työn laji – Arbetets art – Level	Aika – Datum – Month and year	Sivumäärä – Sidoantal – Number of pages
Pro gradu -tutkielma	Tammikuu 2012	111 (+ liitteet)

Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

Euroopan unionia pidetään eliittiprojektina, jossa tavalliset kansalaiset eivät ole osallisina. Yhtenä ongelmista pidetään sellaisen yhteisen julkisuuden puuttumista, jossa eurooppalaiset voisivat keskustella yhteiskunnallisista asioista. Viestintäteknologian kehittyminen antaa kuitenkin aihetta pohtia eurooppalaista julkisuutta uudestaan. Internet ratkaisee monet tekniset seikat, joita on pidetty esteenä ylikansallisen keskustelun syntymiselle. Kehitys on kantanut hedelmää: on olemassa yhä enemmän EU- tai Eurooppa-aiheisia verkkolehtiä. Niiden potentiaalia eurooppalaiselle julkisuudelle ei kuitenkaan ole erityisemmin tutkittu. Pro gradu -tutkielma yrittää paikata tämän aukon.

Tutkimuksen kohteena on eurooppalainen verkkomedia, joka kirjoittaa EU:sta tai Euroopasta. Tavoitteena on selvittää sen mahdollisuuksia edistää keskustelua eurooppalaisista asioista. Tutkimuskysymys kuuluu, minkälaista eurooppalaista julkisuutta verkkolehdet rakentavat.

Ensin muotoillaan eurooppalaisen julkisuuden testimalli, joka pohjautuu Erik Eriksenin ja Marianne van de Steegin deskriptiivisiin malleihin.Tämän tutkimuksen normatiivinen tausta nojaa Jürgen Habermasin deliberatiivisen julkisuuden teoriaan. Lisäksi Chantal Mouffen agonistisen julkisuuden teoriaan viitataan. Kehitettyä julkisuusmallia testataan tutkimuksen empiirisessä osassa.

Koska eurooppalaista verkkomediaa ei ole tutkittu syvällisesti, empiirisen osan ensimmäinen vaihe on yleinen kategorisointi. Viisikymmentä verkkolehteä tutkitaan ja ryhmitellään kahdeksaan kategoriaan. Empiirisen vaiheen toinen osa käsittää laadullisen sisällönanalyysin. Aineisto koostuu Euroopan velkakriisiä käsittelevistä teksteistä, joita analysoidaan kahdessatoista lehdessä neljästä eri kategoriasta. Tekstit analysoidaan neljän indikaattorin avulla. Ne olivat tekijät, aiheet, lähteet ja virtuaalinen kontakti.

Yksi tärkeimmistä havainnoista on eurooppalaisen verkkomedian moninaisuus aiheissa, tekijöissä ja poliittisissa mielipiteissä. Analyysi osoittaa myös, että velkakriisi on hyvin poliittinen aihe ja sisältää eturistiriitoja oikeisto-vasemmisto-akselilla vastoin yleistä väitettä, että EU:sta puuttuu tämä poliittinen jännite. Viittauksia erityisiin eurooppalaisiin arvoihin on vähän, huolimatta siitä, että Eurooppa kehystää tapahtumia. Lähteitä ovat usein kansainväliset mediat kuten Reuters, mikä viittaa ennemmin yhteisiin länsimaisiin piirteisiin kuin eurooppalaisiin. Lähteiden käyttö pätee ennen kaikkea EU:sta kirjoittaviin verkkosanomalehtiin.

Toinen havainto on merkki orastavasta eurooppalaisesta kansalaisyhteiskunnasta, joka näkyi suurelta osin vapaaehtoisvoimin toimivassa eurooppalaisessa vapaaehtois- ja mielipidemediassa. Siitä huolimatta kansalaisten rooli velkakriisiuutisoinnissa on pieni, joten ideaali eurooppalainen julkisuus on vielä kaukana.

Eurooppalainen verkkomedia muuttunee tärkeämmäksi ja tunnetummaksi sitä myötä, kun internet-journalismi kehittyy. Tämä tutkimus osoittaa, että verkkolehtiä on runsaasti ja että Euroopan laajuisessa verkkomaailmassa on vielä paljon tutkittavaa.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords
Eurooppalainen julkisuus, eurooppalainen media, verkkolehdet, Jürgen Habermas, deliberatiivinen julkisuus, Chantal Mouffe, agonistinen julkisuus, Euroopan velkakriisi

Table of contents

1. Introduction 1

1.1. Research subject 3

1.2. Research questions and material 4

1.3. Structure 5

2. The European public sphere research 6

2.1. Pan-European media or Europeanisation of national spheres 7

2.2. A polity or a network of communications 8

2.3. Five approaches to European public sphere research 9

2.4. Empirical research on the European public sphere 10

3. A public sphere for Europe 12

3.1. Normative background 12

3.1.1. Habermas and the public sphere 12

3.1.2. Criticism and other views on the public sphere 16

3.1.3. Mouffe and the agonistic public sphere 16

3.1.4. Conflict or compromise? 20

3.2. Other views on the public sphere 22

3.2.1. The cultural public sphere 22

3.2.2. Citizenship, identity and Europe 24

3.3. Operative models for European public sphere 26

3.3.1. Structure of layers 26

3.3.2. Communication dynamics 28

3.4. Synthesis: My definition of the European public sphere 31

3.4.1. A multilayered sphere of discursive interaction 32

3.4.2. The normative background 37

4. Categorising European online media 39

4.1. Research material 39

4.1.1. General observations of the European online media sphere 40

4.1.2. Earlier research on European online media 41

4.2. Indicators defining the categories 43

4.3. Categories of European online media 49

1. EU news media for international audiences 49

2. EU news media for national audiences 51
3. European opinion media 52
4. European volunteer media 54
5. News media with other regional focus 56
6. European press review media 57
7. News aggregators with some original content 59
8. Niche news media 59
4.4. General observations 60
5. Analysing European online media 62
5.1. Topic: The European debt crisis 62
5.2. Research methods and operative questions 64
5.3. Analysis 66
5.3.1. Actors 68
5.3.2. Topics 76
5.3.3. Sources 84
5.3.4. Virtual contact 87
5.4. Final remarks on analysis 90
6. The public sphere in European online media 93
6.1. The internet enables diversity 93
6.2. Diversity reconsidered: EU information news flows 95
6.3. Many layers, little interaction? 97
6.4. Online publications and the public sphere 98
6.4.1. Long live Brussels - International EU news media 98
6.4.2. Alternative commentary - European opinion media 99
6.4.3. Alternative views - European volunteer online media 100
6.4.3. The public sphere of the European press - press review media 100
6.6. Public sphere far from ideal 101
7. Discussion 105
References 106
Annex 1: European online media 112
Annex 2: List of analysed articles 114

1. Introduction

The European Union is often argued to be an elite project with which common citizens are not associated. This gap is referred to as the democratic deficit of the EU. One of the elements in this deficit, is the alleged absence of a common public sphere where Europeans can debate societal issues. The European public sphere along with common European political culture and European civil society are considered by some (e.g. Habermas 2001, Scharpf in Eriksen 2008) as conditions for development of European identity, a sense of common destiny which would make Europeans interested in and willing to debate EU matters and would render the union as a more legitimate project in the eyes of European citizens.

In this research, the starting point is the European public sphere. In general, academic approaches towards the concept can be divided in two: The European public sphere as a pan-European media system and The European public sphere as Europeanisation of national public spheres. Many researchers have deemed the former either non-existent or improbable. Consequently, a lot of empirical research has focused on the latter approach, especially analyses of the printed press (e.g. Downey & Koenig 2006, van de Steeg 2006, Trenz 2004).

However, recent developments in communication technology call for rethinking on the European public sphere. The internet, technology adopted widely only a decade ago, provides solutions to many technical obstacles often presented as barriers to the development of transnational debate and the public sphere in Europe. As a technology, the internet enables publishing content for free, in many languages simultaneously and is accessible to people from every corner of Europe, for those with access to a computer. In addition, it enables instant commenting and discussions.

These technological possibilities have beared fruit: There are an increasing number of online publications dealing with the EU or Europe in general. Some of them have existed for a decade now and have an established position in the field of EU/European journalism (e.g. *Euractiv*, *Euobserver*). Some are new and stem from volunteering young journalists creating pan-European debate (e.g. *Café Babel*, *Europa451*, *EMAJ magazine*). Others are funded by the European Union, and even though claiming editorial independence, they represent an institutional effort to create transnational exchange of opinions (e.g. *Presseurop*). These are only a few of the existing publications. In addition to this, there are an enormous amount of blogs

where individuals can effectively discuss European matters and comment upon each other's posts. The internet has opened new platforms for radio broadcasting also: pan-European radio exists on the internet as well (e.g. *EuradioNantes*). Futhermore, different interest groups with an interest in the EU or Europe such as NGOs, think tanks, business groups, etc. have their own online publications and discussion forums. Some of them are very lively and resemble proper media publications. The EU institutions themselves have recognised the potential of the internet and started to employ it as a tool in their information policy and for promoting debate on European affairs (European Commission 2006).

Thus, while *The European*, a printed weekly newspaper with pan-European ambitions and circulation was published only for about eight years and is often cited as an example of failure to establish a pan-European media system, many of the above-mentioned online media have existed for longer, have audience of hundreds of thousands and show no signs of withering away. However, despite the apparent proliferation of European cyberspace, one should not give way to technological determinism. Most of the above-mentioned online publications are published in English which means excluding a majority of European citizens. Secondly, using the internet for media consumption and information gathering is not as usual and widespread as the white-collar professionals would assume. Thirdly, these publications are not known to large European audiences. The disinterest of Europeans towards the EU has not changed: It is not a great exaggeration to say that the audience of these online publications is small, somewhat elitist and special-interest. The internet is also claimed to be fragmented and selective in the sense that one needs to know the particular webpages to obtain information, while the mass media is and has long been more easily available for larger masses.

All arguments considered, the online media's potential for the European public sphere has not been much researched. Academics have focused, for instance, on the possibilities of internet in democratic processes. However, European integration and internet are not commonly connected, and there seems to be no intervention on online publications, save from short reference as an example of something new (e.g. Thomass 2010, Brüggeman & Schulz-Forberg 2009). Nevertheless, I argue that the internet provides a new factor to consider in the discussion of the European public sphere. This research attempts to fill the gap in academic literature and from this new perspective provide a fresh insight on the already abundant EPS literature.

1.1. Research subject

In this thesis I research online publications dealing with Europe or the European Union. While taking into account the risk of resorting to technological determinism, I argue that the internet has provided Europe with a tool that can seriously aid in the creation of a European public sphere[1]. The most important feature of the internet is, in my opinion, the simplicity and low cost of publication. After that there is only one's own interest and intellect as a limit. Consequently, I am interested in discovering what kind of a public sphere the European online media subscribe to, what motivates publishing and what kind of potential for the European public sphere the online media hold. Can it be described as seeds of an emerging European public sphere? Do they make the EU any less elitist than what it has been claimed to be?

I consider the topic interesting and worth the research because I have seen the European debate proliferating, particularly on the web. The world of Europe and the EU is not as dull and incomprehensible as sometimes described and the variety of the European online media is a proof of this. The European online media show as well that Europe is more than mere institutions; it is cultures, different people, social problems, etc. It is exactly how I got interested in the EU: first by getting to know Europe. Furthermore, I have personal experience about this media: I have been writing myself for *Café Babel*, my friends have been setting up some of the publications (e.g. *EMAJ Magazine* and *Europa451*) or writing for them (e.g. *27etc*) and my former manager at Courrier international (where I did an internship) is now the editor-in-chief and one of the founders of *Presseurop*. I have witnessed the enthusiasm and drive to tackle European issues and create a debate. A lot of the action is based on volunteer work and honest motivation to bring the EU and Europe onto the streets and out of their stiff institutional structures. However, without the internet I doubt there would have been even a half of all that is now online. Surely, there would not have been such a level of volunteer European journalism as there is now. In tge 1990s there were *The European* and *Euronews*, but now there are dozens of online publications. Some are the creations of small groups of people and stem from true interest towards this continent and concern about European affairs and willingness to participate in constructing a common Europe.

[1] Further, I will alternately refer to European public sphere also as EPS.

I suggest that the internet has enabled the creation of a European public sphere among these interested parties. However, circles are small, and people who are interested in politics and Europe tend to be interested in the European Union. Thus, you quickly notice that everyone knows each other and how demarcated these circles are. And it is very difficult to explain to "outsiders" why the EU is so interesting. For the majority of Europeans, domestic political and cultural fields are of prior importance. But though national issues are most important for many Europeans, it is important that there is a common debate in Europe since citizens have a right to steer European integration. Yet, today the development has mostly followed the course set by European politicians, especially the governments. Nonetheless, citizens do have opinions; the lively debate on the European sovereign debt crisis has shown this. Finally, these European online publications deserve to be researched simply because they have not evoked the serious interest of European academia. This study will attempt to fill the gap.

1.2. Research questions and material

As I am interested in the potential of the European online media to promote debate on European issues, the central research question is:

What kind of a European public sphere do online publications construct?

I am also interested to find out what role the online publications play in the debate about Europe? Do they construct any kind of polity? What motivates the European online media to publish? Do these online publications offer any transnational potential to function as a synchroniser, a mediator or an independent forum for debate?

The research material consists of online publications dealing with the European Union or Europe in general. I have gathered a list of all European online media to my knowledge; fifty in all. I have included mostly only those with free content and those that publish at least once a month and were still active (in June 2011) when I gathered the information. I have tried to gather webzines that are journalistic, not individual blogs or organisations' online publications.

All in all, the world wide web is full of websites of different nature catering for those in need of European information. There are blogs, radio and TV, news websites of established mass media and news sites kept by consultant groups, think tanks, research companies and research institutions, non-governmental organisations, interest groups. Hence, there is a lot to research in the vast European cyberspace.

The thesis has its limitations: Considering the novelty of my research topic, I have first made a categorisation of all publications and then chosen 12 (three from four categories) for more thorough analysis. As the online media chosen for analysis were many, the time period that samples covered was rather short. And as webzines published with differing frequency, the time period ranged from three months to two weeks. This might have caused a certain imbalance and this has been kept in mind when analysing texts. Furthermore, because in the text analyses I focused on the debt crisis, the full variety of topics and perspectives in the European online media is not fully covered and rather concentrated on an economic event, another limitation to keep in mind.

1.3. Structure

The thesis consists of three parts: The theoretical framework in chapters two and three, in which firstly I give an overview of previous research on the European public sphere and then elaborate on the central concepts of the research and construct a test model of the European public sphere. In chapter four I focus on empirical research where I categorise all online publications; and in chapter five I conduct a more in-depth analysis of the news coverage of the European debt crisis in chosen publications. The sixth chapter records conclusions where results are compared to a theoretical test model of the European public sphere. In the last chapter seven I discuss how this study contributes to earlier research on the topic.

2. The European public sphere research

The central concept of this thesis is the European public sphere. To be clear, the European public sphere is not a theory per se but a phenomenon to which different theories, be they deliberative or radical-pluralistic models of public sphere, have been applied. The main concept, the public sphere can be described in short as a space where actors discuss common issues in the presence of a public and where public opinion is formed. The above-mentioned theories, deliberative model and radical democracy model that are central concepts of this thesis are presented thoroughly in the next chapter. In this chapter, I will give an overview of research concerning the European public sphere.

The debate on the European public sphere has generated a lot of research, mostly starting in the 1990's when the discussion on European identity began to proliferate. This can be partly explained by the fact that the former European Community transformed into a more political European union ensuring an increase in the organisation's political competence and for example the establishment of 'European citizenship' from which has stemmed debate on what kind of political community the European Union is. Its enlargements and treaty reforms and apparent resistance among the European publics to some of these reforms (for example the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in referenda in France and the Netherlands in 2005) have added fuel to this discussion. Citizens' opposition towards- and their apparent disassociation with European integration has often been referred to as democratic deficit. The changes have provided European affairs research something to reflect upon. The debate has covered such topics as European identity, European citizenship, and the European public sphere. And although this thesis focuses on the public sphere, the questions on European identity, civil society and political culture are no less important when discussing the democratic dimension of the European project. On the contrary, these topics are intertwined and even when academic studies focus on one, the others are constantly referred to.

One way to divide the existing research is between theoretical and empirical, yet I don't consider it the most fruitful approach. A better, although still rough division, can be made between literature conceiving the European public sphere as a pan-European media system and to that conceiving it mostly as a Europeanisation of national public spheres. Another way is to categorise the literature according to those approaching the European public sphere as a polity and those approaching it as a network of communications (cf. van de Steeg 2010). Nieminen (2009) has

formulated five approaches pragmatic, procedural, sceptical, critical and that of social and cultural networks.

All in all, the EPS research is rather transnational in nature, that is, the literature, articles and books tend to be written in English and published in international academic journals. They include researchers from a variety of European countries concentrated mostly in Northern, Central and Western Europe. There is, however, extensive literature at the national level, meaning, not published in English in international academic journals. For instance, there is abundant literature on the European public sphere in German that partly is filtered to international discussion via German researches articles in English. There is also EPS research in France but it much rarely appears in international journals, even though a great deal of the European online media is written in French or based in France. In addition there is some literature in Finnish which is consulted here. Finally, though the topic is the European *online* media, I shall not elaborate on research on the public sphere and the internet which is very vast. But as I do not analyse how readers debate or interact but only how issues are presented in media, it is justifiable to exclude this branch of the public sphere research. First I shall introduce different ways in which the European public sphere research has been grouped.

2.1. Pan-European media or Europeanisation of national spheres

In the research literature (e.g. AIM Research Consortium 2007, Lingenberg 2006, Machill et al. 2006) the discussion on the European public sphere has been roughly divided between two approaches: The first conceives the European public sphere as a singular sphere similar to national public spheres and requiring a European-wide media system, European identity and a common language. At the moment, these three conditions are not met in Europe and this leads many researchers to conclude that the European public sphere does not exist and instead turn their gaze to the other approach.

According to the second model, the European public sphere is about the Europeanisation of national public spheres (e.g. Thomass 2011). Through the national public spheres the existence of a European public space is considered more realistic. At this level, Europeanisation has been defined as debating the same issues at the same time with the same frame of reference (e.g. Downey & Koenig, 2006). Despite such Europeanisation of national sphere being more realistic, meta-analysis of empirical studies conducted by Machill et al. (2006) shows that European issues

are discussed very little in the national media and that perspectives are mostly national. Trenz (2008) points out that Brüggemann et al. noted a slight increase of EU-coverage in quality newspapers but it did not "translate into an increase in discursive interchange between national media spheres" (ibid., 9).

The first two models have been criticised for not being sufficient in explaining the new forms of public sphere that have emerged with the multi-level system of the EU (e.g. Steeg 2002, Lingenberg 2006). One of the counter-arguments to the first way of thinking has been Switzerland where the existence of the national public sphere is not questioned despite the linguistic and cultural variety. Likewise, as no equivalent to national public spheres exists at the European level, the nation-based concept should be reconsidered. Fragmentation and pluralisation takes place at national levels as well.

2.2. A polity or a network of communications

As opposed to the two previous models of conceiving the European public sphere, in the third model more dynamism is introduced. Eder and Kantner (in Lingenberg 2006) define the European public sphere as "a pluralistic ensemble of issue-oriented publics that exists once the same issues are discussed simultaneously and within a shared frame of relevance" (ibid., 123). A similar idea of public sphere as a network of communication is shared by Trenz (2008). According to him, the public sphere should be perceived as "an open field of communicative exchange. It is made up of communication flows and discourses which allow for the diffusion of intersubjective meaning and understanding. As a realm of intersubjectivity, the public sphere is only loosely coupled to particular culture and languages. The public sphere rather opens up closed meaning systems and, through its intermediary structures, facilitates cross-cultural communication and interchange" (ibid., 3). Both authors emphasise communication and sharing meanings not necessarily tied to a particular community.

Likewise, Steeg (2003) proposes a more dynamic idea of the European public sphere. Steeg defines public sphere as "the debate held in public by several actors who are in one way or another in contact with each other, for instance, through the pages of a newspaper" (ibid., 503). In these formulations Steeg follows the tradition of considering the public sphere as a network of communication which she later (2010) points out to be too oriented on the rational-critical discourse side of the public sphere theory. According to her, research on the public sphere in the

EU has forgotten about 'social integration'. She mentions the critique targeted to such orientation and suggests including the idea of public sphere as a polity back in the debate. Consequently, if the public sphere is understood as something more than a network of communications, then viewing it through thematic convergence is not enough. The challenge is to include this dimension into a working hypothesis of the European public sphere. Steeg delivers some practical conditions as to what is expected of this polity-kind of public sphere. Firstly, it entails realisation that a common destiny is shared. Secondly, it entails that everyone is treated as legitimate speakers, independent of background; every national's opinion matters, also in closed national debates. A community of communication emerges which presupposes some level of collective identification with each other's fate, this identification is created in the course of debate in the public sphere. The condition, of course, is that the EU is identified as a polity in which certain issues are defined. The speakers and listeners not only observe each other across national spaces but recognise that Europe is an issue of common concern.

2.3. Five approaches to European public sphere research

Hannu Nieminen (2009) divides the European public sphere debate on different approaches: pragmatic, procedural, sceptical and critical. According to the pragmatic approach which is inherent to the EU administration, the problems of the European public sphere are pragmatic rather than philosophical and can be solved in a pragmatic way, for instance, by enhancing the information provided to citizens and by working with the media in order to increase and diversify media coverage. In the second, procedural, approach the goal is a process where a real pan-European public opinion can be formed. The target is to increase the democratisation of the Union by making the Commission and the Council more accountable and responsible to the citizens and by exposing their action to open debate and criticism.

From the sceptical perspective the development of the European public sphere is showing signs of degradation: there is a gap between the Euro-elite and the citizens and media is still very nation-oriented in its topics. Thus, there is a need for reforms in the EU's political structures to enable citizens to increase participation in decision-making. The fourth is the critical approach that contests the universalism of deliberative democracy that is inherent to the former perspectives. Instead, another approach is proposed: the radical democracy which accepts the idea of differing power statuses and interests and proposes to have a debate on a case by case

basis without the precondition of universal common values. Nieminen proposes yet another point of view that is one of social and cultural networks where the lynchpin for citizens' participation are the social networks that are formed around a common issue such as environment protection or forestry. The idea is to form the European public sphere as a forum for the debate of interests between these cross-national social networks.

2.4. Empirical research on the European public sphere

There are a large number of empirical and theoretical studies concerning the European public sphere. A significant number of empirical studies are centred on analysing national newspapers where most European debate takes place. Usually, the studies consist of national comparisons on how, for instance, an issue related to the EU or Europe has been covered (e.g. Brüggeman & Kleinen-Von Königslöw 2009, Downey & Koenig 2006, Steeg 2006).

The results of such comparative studies show no clear signs as to whether there is such a Europeanisation. Even when searching specific events, results are different. For instance, Downey & Koenig (2006) assessed how national newspapers covered the Berlusconi-Schulz case and their conclusion was that there was no European transcendence of national public spheres. On the other hand Steeg's (2006) results of analysis of the Haider debate showed a clear tendency towards Europeanisation. Yet, Machill et al. (2006) conclude in their meta-analysis of empirical studies that the national media is not very europeanised and European issues are discussed very little.

The European public sphere has also been studied through EU correspondence (e.g. AIM Research Consortium 2007, Gleissner & de Vreese 2005, Raeymaeckers et al. 2007, Mörä 2008). One of the interesting issues pointed out was that EU correspondents feel more European that their colleagues back at home and they would be interested in writing more stories with a European perspective. In addition, correspondents criticise home offices for emphasising the national perspective too much and for conforming too easily to pressures from assumed demands of readers and advertisers.

The policies of the EU institutions and their reference to the European public sphere have also been discussed (Trenz & Vetters 2006, Kurpas et al. 2006). European elections have also been of interest to scholars (de Vreese et al. 2006). To conclude, a lot of topics have been covered.

However, the implications of the internet on the European debate and the European public sphere haven not significantly appeared in the research (one example of a study, cf. Wright 2007). Though, when researching European elections, the Internet dimension was involved (e.g. van Os et al. 2007).

3. A public sphere for Europe

The aim of this chapter is to present the main theoretical concepts relevant in this research. The central concept is the public sphere and it will be elaborated upon based on Jürgen Habermas' formulations. It will serve as a normative background according to which one can evaluate the quality of a public sphere. I also formulate an operative model of EPS based on Erik Eriksen's and Marianne van de Steeg's models and test it in later chapters when I conduct an empirical analysis of the European online media.

3.1. Normative background

3.1.1. Habermas and the public sphere

The most prominent formulations of the public sphere has been presented by German philosopher Jürgen Habermas whose idea of the public sphere whether opposed or followed has been a subject of great discussion in social science theory. The much discussed definition is based on his early work, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (1962) where the notion of an ideal public sphere leans on ideas of enlightenment and the emergence of civic society in Europe in the 18th century. According to those early formulations, public sphere is a space for rational and critical debate whose a goal is to establish compromises via public deliberation; a space where the common good is possible to define and where individuals settle with the public opinion as it is the best solution that emerges from debate. Habermas' early work has faced much criticism, for instance, for emphasising rationality and dismissing emotions; for assuming a compromise as the political goal and for implying an pre-existing political community which is often interpreted as implying a nation state. As Habermas has reformulated some of his ideas, his later publications will be quoted here.

Jürgen Habermas (2006) defines three elements in the design of modern democracies: the private autonomy of citizens, democratic citizenship, that is, the inclusion of free and equal citizens in the political community and an independent public sphere that operates as an intermediary system between the state and the society. Habermas is a proponent of the deliberative model, where "the cooperative search of deliberating citizens for solutions to political problems takes the place of the preference aggregation of private citizens or the collective self-determination of an ethically integrated nation", the latter two referring

respectively to political liberalism and to republicanism with its communitarian approaches (ibid., 413).

The deliberative model is more interested in ”the epistemic function of discourse and negotiation than in rational choice or political ethos” (ibid., 413). The question is about democratic process where legitimacy is acquired through opinion and will formation that allows ”a) publicity and transparency for the deliberative process, b) inclusion and equal opportunity for participation, and c) a justified presumption for reasonable outcome” (ibid., 413). Reasonable outcome is based on the assumption that discourses can mobilise relevant topics, promote critical evaluation and lead to rationally motivated yes or no reactions.

Simply put, the ideal situation is that people explain their motives and reasons and listen to each other without prejudices and let the argument decide; that people in the public sphere can rise above their petty interests and refrain from fighting for their own self-interest if another argument is understood to be better. Ideally, people have to ”learn to take also the perspective of the other”, understand one another and each other’s differences (Habermas 2005, 14).

Yet, Greek type face-to-face democracy is no longer possible. It is partly through mass communication that public opinions are formed. They are formed in the political public sphere or in “wild life” as Habermas (2005) defines it. The actual decisions are taken in the core of the political system, such as by parliaments. Gripsrud (2008) defines these two spheres as *wild* and *serious.* We are interested primarily in the political public sphere, the periphery of the political system, or as Habermas also calls it, “the unruly life of the public sphere” (2006, 417).

> *At the periphery of the political system, the public sphere is rooted in networks for wild flows of messages—news, reports, commentaries, talks, scenes and images, and shows and movies with an informative, polemical, educational, or entertaining content. These published opinions originate from various types of actors—politicians and political parties, lobbyists and pressure groups, or actors of civil society. They are selected and shaped by mass-media professionals and received by broad and overlapping audiences, camps, subcultures, and so on. From the spectrum of published political opinions, we can distinguish, as polled opinion, the measured aggregate of pro or con attitudes to controversial public issues as they tacitly take shape within weak publics. These attitudes are influenced by everyday talk in the informal settings or episodic publics of civil society at least as much as they are by paying attention to print or electronic media. (Ibid., 415-416.)*

What is the function of this "wild" political public sphere? It is to ensure the formation of "a plurality of considered public opinions" (ibid., 416), that is, that not only relevant issues are identified but that elected governments and citizens and other actors in the public sphere deliberate on them and develop an attitude towards them that turns public opinions into *considered* ones.

According to Habermas, public opinions "make manifest what large but conflicting sectors of the population consider in the light of available information to be the most plausible interpretations of each of the controversial issues at hand" (ibid., 418). To governments and political elites, considered opinions set frames to what are considered legitimate decisions and for citizens they present "plausible alternatives for what counts as a reasonable position on public issues" (ibid). To Habermas it is the vote, the actual opinion and will formation of *individual* voters that connects flows of communication in the peripheral political public sphere to deliberative decision making of political institutions at the centre of the political system. In Switzerland, voting is used for each important issue separately, but in many other countries, it is parliamentary elections where citizens get to manifest their attitude.

Yet, as the world is not perfect, the power structure of the public sphere can distort the dynamics of mass communication. Habermas also points out that different actors in mass communication have different power positions; no one is really equal. But as the public sphere has a reflexive nature, it allows *all* participants to reconsider what they perceive as public opinion. Public opinion formation does not need to be distorted despite the difference in equality if media is independent and ensures plurality and if civil society is inclusive enough to empower citizens to participate in and respond to public discourse. Habermas admits the reality does not correspond to ideals but proposes it as a critical tool for analysis.

As the world is imperfect, I will refer to Habermas' finalité as *compromise*, not *consensus* as is usually the case in the public sphere research. Habermas (2006) refers to various empirical studies where it has been demonstrated that debate in face-to-face situations can resul in convergence of opponents' originally differing opinions. This is something we can call unanimity, a *consensus*. Discussing society face-to-face is hardly possible on a national or international level and if all parties concerned are to be taken into consideration and given voice. Hence we need a more realistic term. As consensus is not possible, at least a *compromise* should be sought. In his most recent article cited in this thesis (2006) Habermas uses neither word but, but it

compromise is closer to the political system and dynamics he describes. Consensus is also a difficult word as it has negative connotations; in many cases it implies an artificial agreement reached when one party gives in on demands to another. It also implies an unwillingness to challenge and deliberate. For instance Finland this is referred to as consensus politics and it has a very negative connotation. Hence, *compromise* will be used.

Habermas' deliberative model has been criticised e.g. because discussants when entering the public sphere should leave some of their particularity and self behind and that only *rational* arguments should be posed. This is no (longer) a valid criticism as in the latest articles Habermas clearly points out that identity and particularity is not excluded in the wild public sphere. Habermas (2005) does not expect citizens to "split their identity in public and private components" nor does he expect everyone participating in the wild public sphere to articulate in the same rational way, but he does not want to transfer the arguments born out of private components and conviction per se to formal parliamentary proceedings. Basically, through deliberation where all arguments, even irrational, are discussed and speakers genuinely try to understand each other, the best arguments need to be chosen and translated into rational before passing on to formal proceedings i.e. parliamentary sessions. *Habermas does allow "irrational" arguments but expects them to be cultivated into rational ones through discussion*. It is the function of the "wild" political public sphere to bring about the plurality of arguments, choose the best through debate and refine it into a rational form so that it can be valid also in formal politics. As a sidenote, Habermas expects parliamentary politics to be rational, which unfortunately is not always the case. In any way, this idea of Habermas' supports *pluralism* in the public sphere but also the public spheres *in plural* that have somewhat different functions. There is no single unified public sphere.

This leads me to another point, that is, the division between the cultural – (or literary – as it was called in Habermas seminal work) and the political public sphere. There is no such division in articles referred to here. But as Habermas allows irrational arguments, he does not exclude identity, he emphasises the effort to understand the other and says that the public sphere is rooted in news flow and commentaries as well as scenes and images – this gives me reason to conceive that some sort of a cultural sphere is included in the wild political public sphere. Yet, in case of Europe Habermas proposes a political identity that is not tied to culture and constructed in the political public sphere. This idea will be clarified in section 2.3.2. which deals with citizenship and identity. In my opinion, dismissing explicit cultural dimensions is a weakness,

hence there is a subchapter on the cultural public sphere in order to highlight this aspect in the idea of the public sphere. Before that, I will look at Chantal Mouffe's idea of the agonistic public sphere that provides interesting additions to the compromise centred deliberative model.

3.1.2. Criticism and other views on the public sphere

Although I am referring to Habermas' recent work and his reformulated ideas, I include some of the criticism directed toward the early ideas of the public sphere and deliberative democracy in order to demonstrate the different aspects that should be taken into consideration.

A number of aspects has been criticised about Habermas' original definition. Firstly, it has been deemed too idealistic, e.g. even in the enlightened 18th century public sphere women and the poor were excluded. Secondly, the public sphere is seen as a process within an existing community and this has been considered problematic. As Nancy Fraser (2007) points out, "Structural Transformation, conceptualized the public sphere from the standpoint of a historically specific project: the democratization of the modern territorial (nation-) state" (ibid., 10). This sort of criticism has risen particularly in the field of global and European research where the polity; the object of study expands beyond national borders. Thirdly, as we are reminded by Hannu Nieminen (2008), the deliberative approach which highlight the importance of shared values has been considered problematic. The critics point out that the standpoint is distorted as all individuals are not equal in public discussion, thus all values are not considered in public. One of the proponents of this criticism is Chantal Mouffe (2005).

Furthermore, Habermas has been criticised for overlooking "the importance of the general media culture in providing shared interpretive frameworks" (Dahlgren 1991, 17). Similar criticism is directed also from Jim McGuigan (1998) who argues that Habermas' notion of the public sphere is too cognitively oriented and that it accounts for only information important in the debate. According to McGuigan "aspirations linked to the public sphere must include genuinely popular movement, and, therefore, encompass emotion as well as cognition" (ibid., 92).

3.1.3. Mouffe and the agonistic public sphere

One of the prominent critics of Habermas' model is Chantal Mouffe whose radical-pluralistic model of democracy and the public sphere, has according to Kari Karppinen et al. (2008), been often employed as a "counter-narrative to the Habermasian approach, and scholars in media and cultural studies have used it to promote perspectives that take into account not only rational

debate but also emotions, passions and identity" (ibid., 6). Next, I briefly present her ideas in order to provide another point of view of the public sphere concept. One of the reasons to include Mouffe is, as Karppinen (2008) puts it, because radical democracy questions the idea of consensus ascribed by the characteristics of the Habermasian public sphere model: the very reason for disinterest in the EU may be because it is not politicised enough, not questioned enough and not enough alternatives are presented (Karppinen, 66).

Carpentier and Cammaerts (2006) define as one the key ideas of Chantal Mouffe, thinking of *the political* as all pervasive, not only restricted to formal politics, but society in general which implies that political is not restricted to political elite but non-state actors as well. On a practical level this means that journalism and its outputs are political, therefore ideological. Another concept is hegemony; the prevalence of something, for instance, an idea or a social order favoured over others. Mouffe refers to Antonio Gramsci's idea of hegemony of "a process of struggle, a permanent striving, a ceaseless endeavour to maintain control over the 'hearts and minds' of subordinate class" (Miliband in Ransome 1992, 132). As the creators of types of hegemony are human beings, hegemony is not an independent force but something actively created and reproduced by individuals. And as it is reproduces constantly, it can be contested; there is always an alternative. When applied to media, it means that traditional journalistic ideals of objectivity, neutrality and detachment are only hegemonic ones and that there can be others, such as public journalism or human-interest journalism.

In an interview by Carpentier & Cammaerts (2006), Chantal Mouffe defines democracy as "an agonistic struggle where you are being bombarded by different views" (ibid., 968). Mouffe says pluralism entails conflict and reconciliation is not only impossible but unwanted; since people are inherently different, unequal and can never fully understand each other. She approaches critically the idea in modern political thinking that humans are social and essentially moved by empathy and reciprocity. On the contrary for her, violence and hostility is part of human communication and nature, hence the task for democratic theorists should be "to envisage the creation of a vibrant 'agonistic' public sphere of contestation where different hegemonic political projects can be confronted".

Here, we have another key concept in Mouffe's theory – *agonism*. In society, there is natural *antagonism*, enmity, which results in conflict and separation between 'we' and 'them'. In order not to supress this conflict but to legitimise it, it needs to take a form that does not destroy the

political association. Hence, according to Mouffe (2005), "some kind of common bond must exist between the parties in conflict, so that they will not treat their opponents as enemies to be eradicated" (ibid., 20). One needs to move from antagonism to agonism, which means a relation where parties recognise the legitimacy of their opponents, i.e. there is a profound respect towards the other. Therefor, "while in conflict, they see themselves as belonging to the same political association, as sharing a common symbolic space" (ibid.). In short, because Mouffe thinks that there are irreconcilable differences in society one should not erase this conflict as it would result into antagonism; real enmity. Instead conflicts need to have a legitimate form of expression. She points out that today, instead of traditional conflict between 'right and left', the struggle goes on between 'right and wrong'. Instead of "a political confrontation between 'adversaries', the we/they confrontation is visualized as a moral one between good and evil", the opponent being an enemy to destroy (ibid., 2-5). This is why one should resist the call by post-political theorists to think beyond left and right.

For Mouffe, parliament is an example of how agonistic conflict could take place. It is the bond, the political association. She refers to Elias Canetti who describes parliamentary voting:

> *"No one has ever really believed that the majority decision is necessarily the wiser one because it has received the greater number of votes. It is will against will as in war. Each is convinced that right and reason are on his side. - - The member of an outvoted party accepts the majority decision, not because he has ceased to believe in his own case, but simply because he admits defeat." (Canetti in Mouffe 2005, 23)*

In agonism, the adversaries recognise there is no rational solution to their conflict but they also recognise the legitimacy of their opponents, hence the antagonistic dimension is always present without it turning into violence. In summary, to Mouffe every order is political and based on some form of exclusion. Hence, instead of superficial competition of positions of power, the goal of the agonistic model is "a profound transformation of existing power relations and establishment of a new hegemony", which is why the approach is also called radical (ibid., 52).

Instead of a public sphere, Mouffe speaks of a public space or rather spaces as there are many and many forms of articulation between the different spaces. Mouffe is against the rationality of Habermas' deliberative model, as according to her reading of Habermas, the public sphere is not the place where passions should be expressed but a place where a consensus is sought. Instead she promotes these *passions* in politics which are inherent in society with conflict and

differences. For her, public spaces are “places for expression on dissensus and to bringing fore what forces attempt to keep concealed” (ibid., 973). In addition, Mouffe does not agree with Habermas’ idea of universalisation, which as she puts it “refers to the idea that only things that can be universalised should be part of the deliberation” (ibid.).

Radical democracy theory has its opponents as well. For instance, Erman (2009) points out that agonism has been criticised depending on the notion of consensus and other deliberative presumptions even though the theory tries to distance itself from them. However, Erman herself notes that agonism rests as well on the notion of antagonism. Her own criticism is directed to the notion of conflict which, according to Erman, cannot be fully understood in Mouffe’s agonistic framework. According to Erman even to be enemies, one needs to understand what the other is talking about. Hence there is a need for a common language, a symbolic space where a common understanding of ones’ differences is obtained. This does not yet mean respect for the other as in agonism. Yet, as Erman points out Mouffe coulve never attribute to antagonism such a dimension of common understanding, because in distinction between friend and enemy, there should be none at all. Erman criticises Mouffe for misunderstanding of conflict in deliberative democracy: Since as the logic presented above follows, it is through communication and deliberation that opponents become aware of their similarities or differences, hence, there must be a common symbolic space, ”a shared idea of what is at stake” (ibid., 1047).

Erman adds that agonistic theory does not explain how antagonism can transform to agonism. How do adversaries know having passed from not sharing a symbolic space (antagonism) to sharing it (agonism) without some common understanding. Mouffe’s transformation seems to be a moral choice that cannot be explained nor grounded reflecting an idea of Kantian idea of autonomy. But then again, how a moral choice in its content can be binding for a person if he or she does what considers correct. Hence a moral choice must be an ”action that could be justified to others in a moral discourse” (ibid., 1050).To sum up the main critique of Erman is that ”we cannot ontologically presume that certain conflicts are ineradicable, because we would not know which conflicts these are” (ibid., 1050).

Finally, perhaps Mouffe’s strongest message is the need to be aware of the conflict. If a decision is made, it means only the establishment of one of the possible alternatives. The idea of hegemony, contestation and conflict renders us constantly aware of the other, of an alternative,

if not visible and obvious, but at least potential which gives a critical tool of analysis to any argument and social interaction whether mediatised or direct. Mouffe's agonistic approach does not accept putting democratic society in question as it provides a structure for an agonistic debate to take place. But this is also a political decision, so it should always remain open for contestation.

3.1.4. Conflict or compromise?

Jürgen Habermas' deliberative model and Chantal Mouffe's agonistic model have often been presented in opposition to each other. Yet, there are many common features, such as the importance of debate and deliberation in formulating citizenship and identities, importance of citizens' participation as a condition for ideal democracy, respect of those with oppositional views and acceptance that views are divergent, and finally the importance of pluralistic viewpoints. Both Mouffe and Habermas recognise that all people are not equal in mass media. They are both proponents of democracy but recognise democratic politics is more than voting; a civil society is one of its crucial components.

The main difference between the two models thus appears to be between Habermas' ideal of *consensus* and Mouffe's *conflict*. Mouffe opposes *consensus* because for her it is a false agreement; but, for Habermas it is an ideal that is not expected to be reached in the real world. The Habermasian consensus-seeking public sphere is in a normative ideal. Hence, *compromise* corresponds better to what Habermas is trying to attain in the world of mediatised and often biased communication. *Compromise* does not imply perfect satisfaction but the best solution reached at a particular moment that satisfies the majority. Mouffe's input is to render us aware of the unhappy party and the possibility of an alternative. Then again, Habermas does not exclude that after public debate some previous decision could be subverted as unconvenient in a new situation. In deliberative democracy, issues are discussed all the time; it is a permanent state of transformation.

Karppinen, Moe and Svensson (2008) also do not see why Habermas' and Mouffe's logic should be considered completely incompatible;, instead they could be viewed as two necessary perspectives to the democratisation of any social institution. Referring to Honig, the writers note that politics is settlement and unsettlement, disruption and administration. Therefore, theories can be understood as "co-existing impulses of political life" rather than as opposing ideologies and as they have normative status, can be even simultaneously used to reveal problems in social

reality (ibid., 8). Writers point out that Habermas advocates a much more plural conception of the public sphere than critics usually claim. Likewise, Mouffe has been accused of postmodern relativism without it fully reflecting in her work. The writers advocate the model of "multiple and overlapping networks of publicity" where different types of communication is possible and argue that "public sphere is best understood as an arena of articulating expressions both solidarity and difference, and in a general sense, this understanding is shared by both Mouffe and Habermas" (ibid.). Finally, as Karppinen et al. point out, neither Habermas nor Mouffe would embrace full consensus or unlimited pluralism.

Finally, I would like to make clear the difference between the statuses of the two models in my thesis. Firstly, Habermas has an ideal of a deliberative and consensus-seeking public sphere. He believes in the cognitive potential of deliberation and direct communication and that with additional information people's opinions change over time. Mouffe thinks total reconciliation is not possible and emphasises conflict. Then again, she does not provide an explicit model for how public opinion formation should function or what the ideal situations are. As the first has a clear ideal but the latter does not, it seems we have two models on different levels. Hence, I will use Habermas's ideal as the main normative background. It seems logical: if we do not strive to come to an agreement then why discuss at all. At least, through debate we could reach some sort of understanding, not only status quo. Then again, Mouffe also has to believe in the transformative power of debate and deliberation otherwise how could changes come about in society and the opinions of the minority win over the discourses of majority, or as Gramsci would put it, the hegemony.

Then again Mouffe renders us constantly aware of the other. It is as if she reminds us of the complexity of society and of the idea that there is not one only solution to societal problems. In the public sphere where public opinions are evasive and difficult to pin down, it is difficult to see the alternative, hence there is a more acute need for sensitivity granted by Mouffe's approach. Mouffe's idea of conflict and irreconcilable difference keeps us and politicians awake. Despite any decision, the society is never finished.

What about solidarity or sense of belonging to a community with shared destiny? Both Habermas and Mouffe expect the existence of political and societal structure in order to public opinion for emerge. Then again, what if people do not want to understand and be understood? Mouffe's conflictual approach at least provides some tool to deal with the situation. But is

solidarity the same as respect emphasised by both theoreticians? I suppose to some extent, yes. In sum, all parties need to be willing to work in the same political space. Respect includes recognition that everyone should have a say on the common issues; therefore a common bond and discursive interaction must exist. The discussion on the debt crisis has swept over the continent, though as much of it concerns unwillingness to fund another country's budget deficit I would not consider it a sign of solidarity. But is it even a common debate or just parallel discussions with similar topics but different framings and no interpenetration of discussion? Is this something we can call a mutual public sphere? I would say not. Finally, I will get back to these thoughts in section 3.4.2. when I will formulate a normative background to my own definition of the European public sphere.

3.2. Other views on the public sphere

3.2.1. The cultural public sphere

One of the problems of thinking about the (European) public sphere is that it is very focused on a political public sphere. This problem is not only relevant to Habermas' early work but inherent in much public sphere research; theoretical and empirical. Jostein Gripsrud (2008) criticises this saying both theoretical and empirical research on deliberative democracy and the deliberative public sphere tends to exclude culture and arts, despite forming most major part of the public sphere. A great deal of empirical research uses quality newspapers when analysing the public sphere and Gripsrud considers this a severe limitation since it means that "the meaning of 'deliberation' as in 'deliberative democracy' is limited to … properly argued discourses in elite media" (ibid., 197). He argues that the association between the cultural and the political is important for the functioning of democratic politics as cultural pluralism and activities produce a sense of communality and involvement that is likely to produce political participation. Culture should not be discarded since it is an important part of opinion formation. According to Gripsrud, democratic deliberation should be seen as an ongoing process with all its statements, whether badly justified or not, in a variety of forms.

Understanding the cultural public sphere as being as inherent and important to the formation of society as the political public sphere affects, for example, the way women's role is understood in the 18th century Europe, a period that Habermas originally describes as the most ideal one in terms of the public sphere. Van Horn Melton (2005) points out that while women were excluded

from official politics, they were active in the private sphere and the cultural public sphere writing fiction and organising salons and hosting soirees where cultural as much as political issues where discussed. Though many of the women's tools to influence were unofficials, female activities became more organised. In such a way, women's own awareness about their way of influencing and participation grew clearer and stronger; an important step towards female emancipation. Hence, participation in the cultural sphere has served for women, an important way to strengthen participation in the public sphere. And if the cultural public sphere is understood in a symbiotic relationship with the political public sphere, then maybe it can be understood that women had an effect on the latter as well as, e.g. by literary writing thus having an impact on the formulation of shared values at the time.

In addition, the emotional aspect is important to take into account as it is more and more part of everyday journalism. Even though traditionally journalism has been considered to perform the informative function of media (Nieminen & Pantti 2004, 12), there have been counter-examples showing a growing tendency of journalists to sympathise with the readers and convey emotions through articles or television news (at least crisis reporting, e.g. Pantti & Sumiala 2009; Koljonen & Kunelius, 2005) or to rely on the voices of ordinary people instead of only official voices, such as media professionals and experts (e.g. Pantti & Husslage, 2009). Though, as Pantti and Husslage (2009) point out referring to past research, citizens' participation in media has been mostly restricted to expressing emotions instead of rational reflection. This is problematic as it leaves citizens to perform only a particular role of expressers of emotion, but then again, "the emotional dimension of news, exemplified in the vox pops interviews, should be examined in terms of its potential to foster passions and identities that connect people with public life and with each other" (ibid., 77). And instead of emotion being a disruption in news making, "the emotionally charged interviews with ordinary citizens may represent a resource for political life" (ibid., 92). Inclusion of emotion would enrich the whole of the public sphere. Otherwise, as Gripsruds puts it (2008), "establishment of elitist expert cultures that are cut off from ordinary life gives way to cultural improverishment. This is applied to arts and aesthetics but the logic could be easily applied to the debate of European issues which has developed into a technical debate of experts" (ibid., 207).

All this is to show that separation of the cultural and political public spheres, the emotional and the rational is not necessary reasonable and rather one-dimensional, it rather impoverishes discussion on the public sphere as it excludes important aspects of society and public discussion.

Jim McGuigan (2005) points out the importance of the cultural or literary public sphere as defined by Habermas, who distinguished between the literary and the political public spheres. According to McGuigan, "[r]uthless questioning on conventional wisdom … was more likely to be found in the 18th-century novel than in a newspaper. … The very practice of criticism was literary before it was directly political" (430). The cultural public sphere and the cultural, however, should not be understood strictly as literal or artistic. When speaking of culture, in this thesis, it is useful to refer to it in all three senses as defined by Raymond Williams (1988), as a) "a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development", b) "a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general", and c) "the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity" (ibid., 90). In this way, the cultural sphere can be understood in all its richness including emotion, arts and everyday life with its particularities, also works of intellectual activity. As McGuigan (2005) defines it, the concept of the cultural public sphere refers to "the articulation of politics, public and personal, as a contested terrain through affective (aesthetic and emotional) modes of communication" (ibid., 435).

3.2.2. Citizenship, identity and Europe

An intrinsic part of discussion of the public sphere is the question of citizenship and identity. As the topic is Europe, I continue with Habermas' idea of European identity. According to Habermas (2001), the formation of European identity rests on three conditions: the emergence of a European-wide public sphere, and European civil society and political culture shared by all Europeans. Habermas' ideas of identity or citizenship, that are more or less parallel concepts, are based on an idea of constitutional patriotism. Identity is not defined according to an ethnic community with shared language and culture but through democratic process, common political culture based on civil rights, participation and communication. Referring to Immanuel Kant's ideas, the political system is legitimated through debate, deliberation and free will-formation of citizens, thus making them feel not only the objects but also authors of the law. With the existence of legitimation citizens identify themselves with the system, feel loyal to it and there develops "an abstract, legally mediated solidarity between strangers". This solidarity is parallel to emergence of national identities which involved "a painful process of abstraction". According to Habermas such process is expandable over national borders (ibid., 16).

Jürgen Habermas' original theory has been criticised for assuming personal identity and interests are formed before entering the public sphere (e.g. Gripsrud, 2008). In this later text, the idea of

citizenship of constitutional patriotism assumes identity develops through citizens' rights and through the deliberative process. Yet, one can blame it for being too politically oriented. Habermas assumes that a common European identity can emerge when cultural particularities are left behind and when focus is on the political system; the EU in this case and through shared values that emerge through communication and debate. But how can identity be based solely on political institution? In addition, as Joseph Weiler (in Shore 2004) puts it, what kind is a political culture that talks about citizens' right but does not empower them politically. Also, it is often pointed out, the development of European identity/ citizenship is presented as a necessary condition for legitimation of the European integration project and solution for democratic deficit (e.g. Habermas 2001, Delanty 2007, Fossum 2001, Shore 2004). But why should it serve such a predefined goal? Such definition leaves little space for alternatives; if the EU is the prevailing political order, it does not mean it is the best or the only one and we should have a public sphere enabling societal plurality and presenting of alternatives.

For Chantal Mouffe (2008), identity is constructed through demarcation of 'we' and 'they', of defining the other: 'me' and 'we' is not 'the other' and 'they'. For Mouffe every identity is relational. Another concept Mouffe's is conflict and contestation as discussed previously. Hence European identity should start by questioning the existing hegemonic account of the EU as a union of free internal market in the form of neoliberal politics and globalisation. According to Mouffe, if the pluralistic model is to be applied to Europe, one must discard the idea of one possible form of globalisation, the neoliberal one:

> *"For Europe to assert its identity, it is the very idea of the 'West' that must be questioned, so as to open a dynamics of pluralization which could create the basis for resisting neo-liberal hegemony." (Mouffe 2008, 127)*

Contestation of the existing status quo would politicise the EU and possibly render it more interesting than if there would exist just one alternative to which to anchor one's identity, as for Mouffe the public sphere is an important place for identity politics. Mouffe also argues for returning of 'left and right' division as it has not disappeared though subdued by hegemonic discourse.

Finally, it should be stressed that European identity should not be centred on the EU alone as it predefines what it is to be a European. The EU has an agenda and European citizens should be able to question that agenda. Habermas' theory of consensus and constitutional patriotism and

citizenship of societal rights can easily be misused in understanding that as a propagandistic way of legitimising the EU as a political order. Mouffe's idea of conflict renders us aware of the possibility of the other. Then again, the European public sphere should be a public sphere of Europe not only of the European Union. This is important because concentration on a political institution or ideology leaves little space for manoeuvre and reduces societal alternatives. In my view, thinking about the European public sphere should not be centred on the European Union only but should include other aspects of Europeanness because identity is not only political, but also personal and cultural. Consequently, Habermas' constitutional patriotism and rationality is not enough but other approaches as mentioned in earlier subchapters should be kept in mind.

3.3. Operative models for European public sphere

In this subchapter I introduce two different operative models each presenting a different way of characterizing the European public sphere. In chapter 3.4. I will formulate my own operative model combining features from both models.

3.3.1. Structure of layers

Earlier in this chapter Jürgen Habermas' idea of the public sphere was introduced which not only provides a normative approach but a rather clear idea of how the public sphere functions. According to Habermas (2006), a political system constitutes *central deliberative arenas* and *the peripheral political public sphere*. The former is e.g. parliaments, courts and governments where formal decision making takes place. The latter is where citizens act and public opinions emerge. In addition, there are two other kinds of actors: Firstly, lobbyists coming from *functional systems* (e.g. representatives of Business Europe that represents over 20 million companies in Europe) and presenting their own demands to the core of the political system. Secondly actors from civil society belonging to *associational networks in civil society and special interest groups*, e.g. intellectuals and special interest groups like human rights organisation Amnesty International. Actors of civil society translate social problems to political issues and confront the state with demands rising from everyday life of various groups that may not represent the interest of all citizens.

Erik Eriksen (2008) follows the deliberative model as he draws his own description of the European public sphere. Firstly, Eriksen defines the public sphere as not an institution but a communication network, "a social space which is created by communicatively acting operators

who are bearers of opinions and interests" (ibid., 31). Eriksen's operative model of EPS resembles Habermas' formulations but to be exact Eriksen uses Nancy Fraser's division between strong and weak publics. According to Eriksen's model, the European public sphere comprises three kinds of publics:

> *-overarching general publics, which are communicative spaces of civil society in which all may participate on a free and equal basis and, due to proper rights entrenchment, can deliberate subject only to the constraints of reason;*
>
> *-transnational segmented publics, which evolve around policy networks constituted by a selection of actors with a common interest in certain issues, problems and solutions;*
>
> *-strong publics, which are legally institutionalised and regulated discourses specialised in collective will formation at the polity centre. (ibid., 32.)*

Usually general public is deemed a lost case when talking about Europe, but to Eriksen general public is not totally missing, though the existing pan-European media fall short of creating "committed public deliberation needed for collective opinion and will formation" (ibid., 33). Eriksen mentions *The Financial Times*, *European Voice* and *Euronews*, and the internet as examples of new European audiovisual spaces and English as the possibly unavoidable first language. In addition, though national perspectives prevail, transnational events have common types of debates, so there is Europeanisation of events and news coverage in national media as well. All in all, there is a potential for the creation of a collective identity in the pan-European press.

A transnational segmented public emanate from the policy networks of the EU. Networks are epistemic communities with common interest and orientation. Their vehicles of communication are campaigns and scandals such as the 'Euro' campaign or campaigns against racism. These campaigns are examples of how events create transnational but segmented publics that vary according to issues. Interests of policy networks often reflect the EU's institutional structure. Networks are important to Europeanisation of deliberative governance beyond the national state, but they are still "a form of elite communication where experts and the well-educated speak to one another and stage communicative noise and protest" (ibid., 34). The problem is that even though they have an impact on decision-making, they do not reach general publics but take place in scattered arena. Hence they lack the ability to provide a possibility for identity

formation on an equal basis and facilitate collective decision-making. Eriksen would attribute such tasks primarily to the pan-European press, but in his view, it now has only a potential.

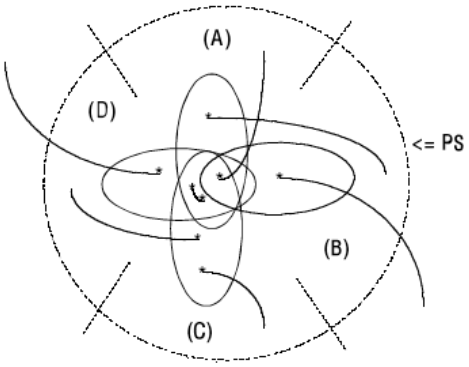
Strong publics in the European Union are institutional deliberative places such as the European Parliament where debate takes place prior to the decision and in which decision-makers are held to account. As there is no clear-cut division between government and opposition, debate in the EP is even more open to deliberation than normal party politics. And as members of the parliament are from different countries, achieving understanding and agreement requires proper argumentation. The EP has also monitoring functions as it approves all new commissioners and can make questions to the Commission in addition to its regular legislative functions.

To Eriksen, the main problem is the lack of connection between general publics and strong and segmented publics. Themes and topics aired in general publics are not transmitted to the two latter to influence the decision-making process. Eriksen deems necessary one single European public space where all Europeans can address the same issues and be exposed to the same information and arguments. At the moment, it is only segmented publics that perform the role usually reserved for the whole general public when assuming deliberative governance. However, it demands common themes, shared interpretative frames and inclusive forums in order to have "rational opinion-formation process among all that are affected" and to bring about identity strong enough for collective action (ibid., 38). However, according to Eriksen public debate can have an epistemic value even if ideal requirements are not met because deliberation process forces the participants to justify their standpoints and decisions. Hence, the EU is more like a problem-solving entity rather than a democratic government.

3.3.2. Communication dynamics

Another practical description of the European public sphere is presented by Marianne van de Steeg (2002). Steeg generally defines the public sphere as a space where citizens discuss issues with each other in the presence of a public that in principle has a chance to intervene and participate. Steeg's idea of the public sphere is similar to Eriksen's but in Steeg's model the dynamics of communication are in the foreground. Steeg criticises mainstream EPS thinking as too static and dismisses the concept of the public sphere outright as being too burdened with meaning.

Instead, Steeg uses the concept of *public discourse* which she defines as "'texts' emanating from the interaction of people in public debate" such as media texts (ibid., 507). In her model (figure attached) each ellipse represents a particular discourse developed in a certain medium of communication, e.g. the contents of articles in a particular newspaper. Different discourses may contain the same issues, facts, arguments and a common frame of reference. This resemblance of discourses means that *systems of meaning* overlap. Hence, discourse here refers to ways of speaking about an issue. The more similar is an issue, the more similar is the way of understanding the issue and of constructing the meaning. Hence, similarity in discussion implies similarity in thinking awhat consequently means to some extent we are part of the same public sphere. Thus, in the picture, the more there are overlapping ellipses; the more there is an overlap of systems of meaning and this means that actors developing a particular discourse participate in the same public sphere. Following Habermas' belief in communication's potential, Steeg assumes that actors participating in the same debate tend to develop a similar perspective on matters in the course of interaction.



The second element in the model is asterisks that mark *discursive interaction*. They are points of contact between debates held in various forums and they indicate a shared debate. There is discursive interaction, e.g. when a newspaper refers to a statement made by an actor outside of the media (e.g. a speech held in a parliament) or when a newspaper reprints an article or quotes a thought from another paper. The interaction is *discursive* as pieces of different discourse are shared in another discourse. To Steeg such points of contact are important to demonstrate that similarity in systems of meaning is not a mere coincidence but a sign that communicative actors are part of the same public sphere. Finally, each particular discourse forms in sum the public discourse which is embedded as a whole in the public sphere, which is broader, more ambiguous and remains in the background. Hence, there can be many public discourses in the public sphere. Ideally, there is both similarity in system of meaning and much discursive interaction so that there can truly be a common public discourse where a common opinion can be formed.

In Steeg's later article *(2010)*, the difference between ellipses and asterisks gains a clearer theoretical background. Basically, ellipses represent the public sphere as a network of

communication[2] and asterisks, the public sphere as a political community. Steeg criticises empirical research for being too oriented on the former conception and forgetting social integration of the EU and for focusing mostly on 'thematic convergence' i.e. the similarity in themes covered, that is, whether there are same issues discussed at the same time with similar frames of references. In short, Steeg criticises empirical research for looking only at ellipses.

Hence, Steeg includes the idea of the public sphere as political community, which in essence is how Jürgen Habermas understands the public sphere. According to Steeg, in order to communicate meaningfully we need to be aware of each other. This entails realisation that a common destiny is shared and that everyone is treated as legitimate speakers independent of their national background. On a concrete level, this means that opinions rising in one national sphere are quoted in another national sphere, so that, as Habermas puts it "all the national public opinions converged on the same range of contributions to the same set of issues, regardless of their origin" (2001, 18). This would help ensure "mutual opening up of existing national universes to one another" resulting in "interpenetration of mutually translated national communications" deemed intact in the European public sphere and necessary for the formation of European identity (Ibid., 18).

What Steeg does is to provide a concrete tool with which to grasp the communal aspect of the public sphere. The political community approach, in my view, corresponds to asterisks, in other words, discursive interaction in Steeg's earlier model. Steeg renders this important as political community aspect includes identity which being a difficult concept has been excluded from newer empirical research. In the writer's idea, while debating in the public sphere, Europeans discursively establish their identity, though first it is necessary define the EU as the polity in which certain issues are decided. If thinking, for instance, the debt crisis, one can assume that its dealing on a primarily European level has been recognised. As the debt crisis is a European concern, one can assume some sense of common Europeaness, a common destiny emerges while debating the issue.

All in all, I have made parallels between ellipses and the public sphere as a network of communication, and asterisks and the public sphere as a political community. Even though the

[2] It is worth noting that despite similar names, Hannu Nieminen's idea of public sphere as social and cultural networks is not the same as Steeg's described network of communications. I will not elaborate further but this clarification is important to avoid confusion.

author does not explicitly do the same, these parallels are rather apparent when one looks at the indicators Steeg elaborates for analysing the media in the earlier article (2002) and that are used in chapter 5.2., though rephrased a bit. Both of these aspects are important as they give us tools to analyse what kind of a public sphere the online media construct. For instance, if there are many references between the European online media, it means they are aware of each other and part of the same political community.

Next, I shall discuss Erik Eriksen's and Marianne van de Steeg's models and reformulate my own model of the European public sphere. I use both as they provide different approaches to the same issue. These are also very clear models, hence, easy to work with and easy to apply to empirical research as I will do in chapter 5.

3.4. Synthesis: My definition of the European public sphere

In this subchapter I formulate my own definition of the public sphere based on ideas of the European public sphere presented above. I will first use Eriksen's and Steeg's models and later include Habermas and Mouffe in the discussion.

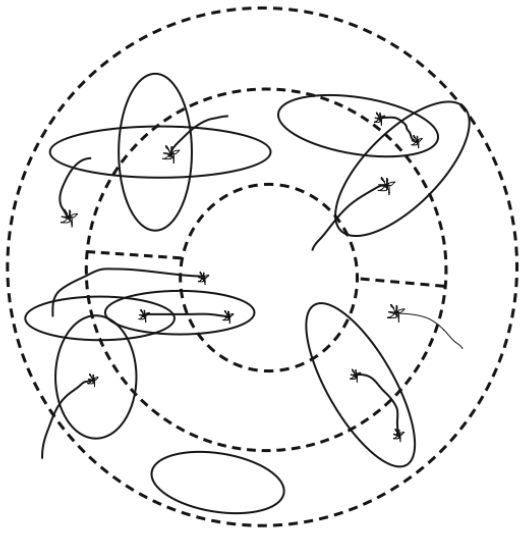
Eriksen's model with three different publics is appealing, although I would add one "public": the European media. Eriksen defines general publics as consisting of two phenomena usually separated in literature: the emergence of pan-European[3] media and the Europeanisation of national public spheres. In order to obtain a more accurate understanding of the European public sphere today, it is better to separate the two. Firstly, the national media and the Pan-European media develop independently and are different by nature. The European online media that I have gathered for this thesis are special; they do not have overarching national mass audiences as *Helsingin Sanomat* in Finland or *El País* in Spain; it is reasonable to define them as distinct public. Secondly, the online media also to some extent serve as sources for background information for EU correspondents writing for the national media (cf. earlier research on the online media, chapter 4.1.2.), and hence function as an intermediary or even agenda-setter for EU news in national public spheres. In addition, European media are international and often use the medium of English with a cosmopolitan viewpoint but national public spheres comprise national media with public content in particular national languages and with a wide range of

[3] In this context, pan-European simply refers to over-arching European, international European as distinct from global international. The term does not refer to pan-European ideology such as promoted by an Austrian count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi who founded a Pan-Europa Union after the First World War.

content from a local perspective. Yet, empirical research tends to focus on one or the other. In my opinion, it is a simplification to refer to the European public sphere as either one of these processes.

Eriksen does not elaborate what kind of communication and how it takes place in the European public sphere. But in my view interaction deserves more attention, so I have turned to van de Steeg's model. I find discursive interaction an especially interesting element as it outlines a concrete form for the public sphere as political community. The understanding of an ideal public sphere as Habermas defines it, thus translates normative elements into concrete analytic tools. Now a lot of expectations are built up on discursive interaction and asterisks. In later empirical analysis, asterisks will be tested to see whether have their place in the European public sphere.

3.4.1. A multilayered sphere of discursive interaction



In order to have the best understanding of the public sphere in Europe, I propose the following model (the sketch on the left). Circles refer to different publics, ellipses to different discourses, the little smudges are asterisks and lines connected to them refer to discursive connections, sometimes there is interaction in both directions (an asterisk on each end of line), sometimes only in one direction.

In my model, there are four layers in a European public sphere: strong publics consisting of the EU institutions (inner circle), the emerging pan-European media (one of the halves in the middle circle), segmented publics (the second half) and to some extent Europeanised national public spheres (the biggest circle). Segmented publics and pan-European media are halves because it makes it simpler to draw. But I would conceive them as parallel on the same level just as importantly. Strong publics refer to EU institutions. Segmented publics are interest and expertise groups, though I think Nieminen's idea of the public sphere as social and cultural networks is more suitable to European politics than Eriksen's rather narrow definition, as there is more to segmented publics than just those strictly around the EU. Pan-European media widely refers to publications and broadcasting with a European focus to assumedly European international

audiences. These are for instance European online publications such as *Euobserver* but also more globally read print, *The Financial Times* and broadcasters such as *Euronews* and Franco-German *Arte*. National publics refer to publics defined according to nation-states and national languages (though understandably national spheres are not homogenous, e.g. Belgium) and include the national media.

On the different layers, I have drawn ellipses and asterisks as in van de Steeg's model. The idea is that public discourses overlap each other and different layers of the European public sphere. This would mean that a particular discourse touches both strong publics and pan-European media or both pan-European media and national public spheres or all three. So there are no strict limits but all three layers of the European public sphere are connected somehow through different discourses (though not all discourses overlap all layers and some might stay on one layer only). In this model, no distinction is made between countries. To make it simple, each ellipse represents a particular discourse developed in a medium of communication, as in van de Steeg's model.

There are also various points of contact. In this diagram, references are made in all different directions and from different origins. Ideally, all ellipses and asterisks should be somehow connected through one another when the same topic is discussed. If this connection does not occur, the middle layer, pan-European media should function as some sort of a mediator between strong and national spheres. Eriksen grants this role only to segmented publics, though in my opinion, pan-European media from the start focusing on Europe, European politics and culture should just as well perform the task, and partly do in EU correspondence (cf. chapter 4.1.2.). It would also seem natural, since the press is supposedly a watchdog of political power, and here European media observes European institutions. As it is focusing solely on European politics, pan-European media is supposedly an expert on the topic, thus national public spheres could exploit this critical expertise to deliver relevant issues to national publics. The role of a mediator would mean there is a stream of communication going from national to strong publics. Ideally, pan-European media would convey opinions formulated in national public spheres to strong publics by e.g. presenting national discourses in their own pan-European publications.

It might appear that this model assumes that national public spheres are not at all Europeanised and that all European debate goes through pan-European media. Yet, empirical research has shown some similarity of discourses in national public sphere, though there has been less

interaction. If national public spheres do Europeanise further, e.g. by covering more European issues, pan-European media can still have a supporting and expert role. Also, pan-European media could deliver messages from national to strong publics, a task difficult to perform for national media because actors in strong publics might observe their own national media but they do not observe all the other spheres since e.g. they do not understand the language, etc. However, a lot of European media (*The Financial Times*, *European Voice*) is accesses by many actors in strong publics (Fleishman and Hillard, 2009). Hence, pan-European media is set to play a rather important part in this model of the European public sphere.

Finally, it is worth noting that despite having drawn a rather large picture of EPS including national spheres and strong publics, in the empirical analysis I will only be concentrating on the European online media. Consequently, the model I have drawn will be only partly tested. Then again, I think it necessary to conceive EPS with all its dimensions to grasp the whole of it. It would be distorting to think of EPS as only consisting of pan-European media. Nonetheless, the focus of this research is on the European online media, the middle layer in the Eriksen inspired model. Primarily, I will look at communication dynamics, basically I will test the Steeg inspired part of this model with tools adapted again from Steeg. Then again, Eriksen's layers are kept in mind and we go back to them later as Steeg's model alone does not count in all dimensions of the European public sphere. Steeg uses her model to analyse Europeanised discourse in the national media, consequently, I thought it necessary to include Eriksen's layers to grasp the diversity. There is more to the European public sphere than only national media or pan-European media.

The Public sphere of Europe or of the European Union?

The model has several weaknesses: firstly, it seems very centred on the EU institutions since the strong publics circle is in the centre as if these are the most important publics. If we think about the ideal of speakers' equality, this kind of structural disparity should not be present. In addition, the *European* public sphere should not be centred on the *European Union* but include other aspects of Europeanness. In my view, one of the problems of thinking about the European public sphere is that it is so focused on the political public sphere. However, for example, the cultural side should be intact and just as relevant since it plays a role when in development of European identity. The European public sphere should be a public sphere of Europe not only of the European Union. This is important because concentration on a political institution or ideology leaves little space to manoeuvre and reduces societal alternatives. Even though the EU is the

prevailing political order, it does not mean it is the best or the only one and we should have a public sphere enabling societal plurality and alternatives. These aspects are not conveyed in the model but must be kept in mind even though the current presentation makes the general structure of the European public sphere easier to convey.

Another problem is that the second circle; international European media and segmented publics seem always to be in between strong EU publics and national publics highlighting their importance and mediatory role. This mediatory role is prescribed for pan-European media. However, it must be remembered that pan-European media and national media might exist somewhat separately, although some pan-European media play a more important role in national public spheres than others. Nevertheless, it might be an exaggeration to assume all Pan-European media possess the same influence.

Lastly, I find it important to note that there are many public spheres, 'European' is only one among others such as 'global western', 'global', 'Latin American', etc. As Downey and Koenig (2006) point out, ideas of a transnational public sphere based on common language or on a historical relationship (such as Spain and Latin America or France, Canada and the former French colonies) are obviously competing with the notion of a European public sphere. I agree with all except with the word competition; I see no need for competition but concurrency; there is no need to exclude the other as there is no need for European to exclude national.

An occasional or a continuous public sphere? Potential or active?

This model I draw is also somewhat static: it presumes a continuous existence of a European public sphere as it would be a *space*. But it might be useful to think the public sphere as something occasional, as a *situation* where European issues are discussed by all European parties concerned. The word *situation* reflects the dynamic and unfinished nature of the public sphere. The public sphere cannot be something static since it involves active protagonists; it exists as long as they are willing to deliberate (or at least some of them).

And maybe, the characteristic of the European public sphere is that it emerges from time to time during great debates (the Constitutional Treaty, the European debt crisis). Or at least continent-sweeping European debate emerges only from time to time during big and fundamental debates. Otherwise, the European public sphere is latent. At least, academic literature seems to support this argument because it tends to research media coverage of certain events, such as

the Haider Debate, Constitutional Treaty, European elections, and not long-term coverage all in all. Then again, is this not characteristic of national public spheres as well? Surely, the national audience is not active all the time, only some topics wake up the quiescent political will of citizens and political actions come pouring in, but surely this does not happen all the time?

It may be wrong to single out big events since defining the European public sphere then depends on the appearance of these events. According to the ideal, the public sphere should be a constant debate of issues affecting citizens. And in the EU, there are more issues affecting citizens than only the Constitutional Treaty and the debt crisis. E.g. reforms of the EU's agricultural policy never obtain such wide interest even though they are one of the most important elements of EU action (at least the budget, around 40 percent of the union's budget is allocated to agriculture [European Commission 2011]).

On the other hand, there is pan-European media in place covering European affairs all the time, not only during the big events. Occasional coverage is rather a characteristic of the national media but since defining the European public sphere should not be reduced to the national media only, then the idea of an occasional European public sphere should be abandoned. Consequently, the permanent nature of the European public sphere can be established, whether it corresponds to the ideal, is another question. However, even though permanent it can be either space or situation. If it is a space, it refers to a potential which is activated or not. A situation would refer to an active state of affairs, thus European public sphere only exist then when it is acted out. This would be similar to Hannah Arendt's (1998) idea of the public sphere or realm as a space of appearance that "comes into being wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action" and where power "exists only in its actualization" (ibid., 199-200). This might be true when applied to the inner levels of my figure, the strong publics and European media, but again, as we consider national public spheres part of the European sphere, thinking of the European public sphere existing only on the occasions of active speech and action might not be the most useful approach for this thesis.

Hence, the European public sphere is rather a space with existing and palpable features such as strong publics, pan-European media and national media. Such conceptualisation does not actively include opinion-formation in spheres of face-to-face communication between citizens because it is much more difficult to research. With media, the public sphere has at least some concrete shape and we can still apply some normative criteria to its quality because a mere

structure obviously does not create a public sphere per se, in this sense Arendt's thinking of the public sphere through action should be kept in mind.

3.4.2. The normative background

In the previous reflections, some indications of normativity have been introduced. Yet, normative background needs to be more explicitly expressed for it to function as an analytical tool.

Ideally, the European public sphere is a situation where European issues are discussed by all Europeans concerned. The debate does not need to take place in one medium of communication or many, as long as issues and opinions are redirected so that all parties concerned are aware of the opinions of others. In addition, an ideal European public sphere includes different societal groups, such as politicians, NGOs, citizens and different nationalities such as Finns and Slovenians, Germans and British without the bias towards the big nations or small: All European citizens are treated equally and given the voice they deserve. The ideal public sphere also includes issues other than just party-political or legislative issues, not only policies but also politics (that is values) and the idea of 'the political'. Finally, issues raised in the public sphere should be delivered to decision-makers so that they can address the concerns voiced by the public.

The difficulty in the EU is that the union's structure does not support the emergence of a public sphere as formulated by Habermas (2006). For instance, the EU does not have the traditional structure of government and opposition what would render us more aware of political differences. Then again, as the continent-sweeping debt crisis debate has demonstrated, one does not need the right kind of political structures to discuss. The debt crisis concerns all Europeans, though primarily eurozone citizens, hence is it much reported by the media.

Then again, we have formulated an ideal for a European public sphere. But where do we draw the line between an existence and non-existence of a public sphere? Even a poor public sphere is an existing public sphere. Does compromise need to be achieved to prove its existence or is debate enough? As I rest my thought on the Habermasian model, for EPS to function ideally a compromise should be reached in European institutions based on broad 'wild' and conflictual debate in the European political public sphere, e.g. eurozone leaders meeting to tackle the debt crisis. The extensiveness of debate on the debt crisis gives a strong reason to believe a public

sphere exists in Europe. Next, we must analyse its quality, at least in the European media. If it is of quality, one should see a lot of discursive interaction – a sign of solidarity and respect; 'we respect your opinion and your right to participate in the debate held in this forum, so we publish your opinion'. On the other hand, there should be no need for pre-existing solidarity or communality since one of the requirements of professional journalism is an even-handedness that would guarantee interaction between different levels and discourses of the public sphere. But do the media function ideally? This will be tested in chapter five.

All in all, the test structure of the European public sphere as I have previously drawn; there is overlap in systems of meaning and discursive interaction. If this description would take place, the European public sphere would not merely be a network of communications but a polity since there would be a real engagement and a link to political institutions.

How do I intend to use my definition?

In this chapter I have constructed an operational model of how the European public sphere is to be structured. I have included normative approaches from both deliberative and radical pluralistic theories of the public sphere. The idea of further chapters is to test my definition. Yet, as Karppinen (2009) points out referring to Marion Young, the goal of ideals is not to function as descriptions or models but as tools in order to reflect reality critically from a distance and to reveal deficiencies in existing political systems and provide alternatives. Hence, the synthesis based on elaborated theories serves as a test tool to reflect the situation in the European online media.

4. Categorising European online media

The objects of this research are online publications covering the European Union or Europe in general. I am interested to find out what role they play in the European public sphere. To answer the question, I analyse online publications in two phases. In this chapter, having gathered a list of all European online media in my knowledge, I make an overall and rather superficial content analysis of what sort of publications they are in order to categorise them in different groups. Having obtained a general view of the European online media landscape, I proceed to the next phase; the qualitative content analysis in chapter five. I shall analyse how particular online media have covered the sovereign debt crisis in Europe. This will help me to answer the original research question in chapter six.

4.1. Research material

I have gathered a list of 50 European online publications[4]. With online publications I refer to journalistic publications, not blogs or organisations' websites with news content, nor European news websites of the established mass media. I have tried to gather webzines that are truly journalistic, that is, seek to promote freedom of expression, debate and knowledge about Europe and the European Union. I included those that publish at least once a month and that were still active (in June 2011) when I gathered the information and whose content is mostly free. I gathered the list based on my former knowledge of the European online media, by browsing the internet and by consulting my European contacts. While browsing the internet, I have used search terms such as "European magazine", "European information", "European news", etc. in various languages. My search has been limited to using English, French, Finnish, Spanish, Swedish, Italian and German. I am aware this excludes a good deal of what is published e.g. in Eastern-Europe and the new member states, yet I also have a few publications from this region as well. Finally, it is very possible that I have missed some media. However, considering the effort, I believe I have a good and extensive list of European online publications. As the list contains publications in languages I do not speak, I have used Google's online translation service

[4] As to writing the names of publications, I have resorted to simplified and grammatically more correct versions, e.g. writing Eurotopics instead of euro|topics, or Café Babel instead of cafebabel.com, Cafebabel.com or Cafébabel.com (all versions could be found on the website). This applies to all online media mentioned in the text. Only in the table where all publications are listed is written the version presented on websites.

Google Translate (similar service is provided e.g. by Babel Fish). It is easy to use and serves its purpose at this stage of analysis where I am only gathering information and trying to obtain a general overview.

Finally, I would like to discuss the term 'online publication'. The internet is a new field for journalism and that is mirrored in the variety of terms used. An online publication is referred to as a *webzine*, an *e-zine*, an *ezine*, an *online newspaper*, an *online magazine*, *online media*, *online news media*, a *web paper*, *web media*, a *news site*, a *media portal*, a *netmagazine*, an *internet newspaper*, an *internet magazine*, an *online journal*, etc. depending on the type and the frequency of publication. The most official term appears to be *online publication* and its derivative terms *online newspaper*, *online magazine* and *online monthly magazine*. I have used the term *online media* to refer to all types of online publications. For publications similar to print newspapers, the appropriate synonyms would be *online newspapers*, *online news media*, *news sites*. I will refer to publications similar to print magazines as *webzines* or *online magazines*.

4.1.1. General observations of the European online media sphere

Before going into detailed descriptions of the European media, I give a short summary of observations made when I was searching for publications: Firstly, the internet is full of websites of different nature catering for those in need of European information. A great many of them are blogs that discuss the EU. Many are hosted on the websites of the media that I have included in my list. I noticed many of them were published by people living in Brussels, often journalists or people working for some organisation, company or research institution acting within the sphere of the EU. Blogs were often linked to each other, thus, I imagine bloggers writing about the EU are generally aware of one other (especially those living in Brussels). An interesting finding I made was *Bloggingportal.eu* that brings together the content of 895 blogs related to EU affairs[5]. This is a rather inexhaustible source of information for anyone willing to research the European blogosphere. In addition, there were some news websites in a form of blogs published by the big established media such as *Le Monde, The Wall Street Journal, The Economist, The Financial Times, BBC, Deutche Welle, Spiegel Online, Radio France Internationale*.

There are also a variety of European news sites run by consultant groups, think tanks, research companies and institutions, non-governmental organisations and special interest groups. They

[5] This information was retrieved 18.12.2011.

deal mostly with the European Union and even though can provide very in-depth and critical views on the EU and thus enhance European debate, they represent special interest and are not included in this research. I have also excluded special news sites such as *European plastics news* and *European Motor News Online*. There are also numerous news aggregators of European information from external websites and they have no content of their own. Usually, their layout is modest and they are full of advertisements, typically of online game and dating services. The majority of these were dismissed, although I have left in a few that had some original content or a more or less serious-looking layout. Lastly, there are European internet radio stations (in addition to being on air) such as *Eur@dioNantes* run by students in the French city of Nantes and The European Radio Network *Euranet*.

While researching the internet, what stood out was great number of outdated publications. This is the inevitable outcome of volunteer based action where so many publications are published by a very small number of people. It is easy to set up a page and just as easy to abandon it. Many of those publications I did include in my list might cease publishing in a year or two.

4.1.2. Earlier research on European online media

The online publications researched in this thesis have hardly appeared in research of the European public sphere. I have come across only a few short references: Barbara Thomass (2010) mentions *Café Babel* as an example of a growing virtual sphere of communication on European topics. According to the writer more media than before can intervene in the construction of public spheres, yet "[i]nteractivity alone is not enough – the political system has its own logic of communication, which tends to avoid interactivity and exclude non-elites" (ibid., 123).

Brüggeman and Schulz-Forberg (2009) mention *European Voice*, *Café Babel* and *Euractiv*. The writers define four types of transnational media and place the aforementioned publications in the third category: pan-regional media or Pan-European media. They characterise this group as having a specifically European focus, but not of the EU but rather a geographical scope of the Council of Europe (that has 47 member states including e.g. Russia and Turkey), although some media have a deliberate EU focus and thus the EU citizenry as target audience. Brüggeman and Schulz-Forberg point out that some of these media have been conceived with a view to identity building, e.g. *Euronews* and *European Voice*. As to *European Voice*, it is pointed out that the print version has a small circulation but that it is widely read in "the communicative microcosm of EU

officials, lobbyists, Brussels correspondents and policy experts" (ibid, 703). *Café Babel* is mentioned as an example of a non-commercial forum for European debate. Finally, Brüggeman and Schulz-Forberg, too, state that despite the internet having lifted some barriers of communication, it has not resulted in a rise of European mass media. In addition, they refer to a study on the internet's influence on the Europeanisation process that said web communication is highly language-bound and that links are vertical between the national online media and EU institutions instead of being vertical between the different national online media. As an interesting annotation: one of the Pan-European media the writers mention, *Europa-digital.de*, a discussion forum for German speaking students, has not been updated since 2010. Another one *EUpolitix.com,* show nos signs of activity. This is a good example of the nature of publications in the web: easy to set up, easy to shut down.

Euractiv and *Café Babel* have been more thoroughly researched at least at master's academic level. In a case study, Jean-Sébastien Lefebvre (2010) briefly analyses *Euractiv's* and *Café Babel's* business model, working structure, contributors' profiles, languages and editorial policy based on background information on the respective websites and on interviews with founders of both media. There is probably more research made on master's level but I have no knowledge of it.

The European online media have appeared when EU correspondence has been researched. In Heikki Heikkilä's (2007) analysis of Finnish EU correspondents in Brussels, online news services focusing on EU issues such as *EUpolitics*, *Euobserver* and *Euractiv* were an important source of background information in addition to news agencies and briefings organised by the EU institutions. As EU correspondents face the problem not of the shortage of information but oversupply, the value of such EU news sites is to keep updated with the newsworthy items through edited news briefs. In addition, some online sites provide direct links to original documents. As Heikkilä puts it, "[b]ackground information constitutes an indispensable infrastructure of knowledge without which correspondents would fail in distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information" (ibid., 16), hence news sites like *Euractiv* and *Euobserver* serve as a tool for agenda-setting for the national media.

Heikkilä's analysis is part of AIM Research Consortium's project where correspondents of multiple countries were interviewed. Other reports were not available but the importance of the EU news media sites as background information for EU correspondents in general is affirmed in non-academic research. According to a survey by communication firm APCO (2008), *Euobserver*

was correspondents' most consulted source for EU news (33 % of respondents) right after *The Financial Times*. *Euractiv* was the fourth most consulted (23 %). Of the European media analysed in this thesis, the list included also *European Voice* (the 9th with 15 %). Yet, results neeed to be treated critically as the sample was small; only 121 respondents.

The news media focused on the EU is also used as a source for other EU actors. According to a survey by public affairs consultancy Fleishman and Hillard's European Parliament Digital Trends survey (2009), 41,7 % of MEPs use EU focused online media (e.g. *Euractiv*, *Euobserver*) every day and 40 % several times per week for research or other daily legislative work. Yet, online version of the traditional media is used even more: 69,2 % every day and 25,8 % several times per week. According to PR company Edelman's Capital Staffers Index (2009), *Euractiv* was the top online information source for trusted policy analysis for European parliamentarians.

All in all, webzines are hardly present in EPS research and are not a target of a thorough analysis, at least on the level of international academic journals. Yet, as several commercial pieces of research show, the EU focused newsmedia such as *Euractiv*, *Euobserver* and *European Voice* have a relatively important role for EU correspondents and MEPs. This is important knowledge when evaluating the role of publications in constructing the European public sphere.

4.2. Indicators defining the categories

In order to categorise publications, I defined nineteen indicators to bring forth the most important elements in all publications. Indicators as follow:

> *1. Founded: The year when publishing began.*
> *2. Access: Whether content is available for free or needs a registration or a paid subscription.*
> *3. Type of publication: news media, feature media (magazine), analysis and opinion media, press review media, news aggregator, information portal.*
> *4. Frequency of publication: daily (min. 2-3 articles per day), weekly (min. 5 articles per week) and monthly (min 2-3 articles per month).*
> *5. Average number of articles per day.*
> *6. Central office's location: city and country.*
> *7. Languages.*
> *8. Funding: advertising, sponsors, donations, subscriptions, public support, international, national, etc.*
> *9. If there are sponsors (or partners who provide financial support), what are they? Companies, public organisations, think tanks, universities, research institutions, non-governmental organisations, media, foundations, etc?*
> *10. Cooperation: Are there any partners, content partners, links or references to other webzines or organisations?*

11. Contributors: Are contributors voluntary or paid, are they professional journalists, amateur journalists, experts (e.g. researchers, politicians, consultants, etc), young, old, of one nationality or from many different countries, situated in many different countries or in one place?
12. Structure: News, feature articles, analyses, reports, press reviews, interviews, comments, blogs, job advertss, aggregated content, translated content, etc.
13. Other activities: Seminars, debates, training, book publishing, etc.
14. Sections (thematic): Foreign affairs, Culture, Energy, Justice and Home Affairs, Climate Change, Society, etc.
15. Examples of headlines (first ten): All retrieved on Thu 21.7.2011.
16. Number of readers (=unique visitors).
17. Type of readers: young / old, national / international, highly educated / less educated, expert, media, EU professionals, politicians, corporate, etc.
18. Interaction: Is commenting on articles possible, are there blogs or discussion forums? Publications are defined as informative (no comments), comments (comments allowed but are few), debative (comments allowed and there are many) or inclusive (comments, readers' articles, invitation to contribute, etc).
19. Goals and identification: How does the media describe itself, what is the mission, values, goals, etc? What is said on the "About" page?

The information I obtained from the online media is partly incomplete, especially in type and readership. I contacted publications' editors in order to fill out the missing gaps, but responses were few. However, the gaps are occasional and in my opinion do not affect the whole analysis. In addition, as there are similarities between the media, one can make assumptions on the missing information. Another difficulty to highlight is defining frequency of publishing and labelling a publication as a daily, weekly or monthly since irregularity seems to be *the* word in web journalism, on some days there is nothing published, on some days a lot. Thus there is a possibility for interpretative difference if the media would be researched again in the same way. As to the type, in print we have newspapers, magazines, dailies, weeklies and monthlies. Accordingly, the correct equivalents would be online newspaper, webnewspaper or webdaily, and online magazine, webzine or webweekly or webmonthly for publications appearing less often. In addition, many contain videos and some even claim to be multimedia publications, which again makes clear-cut definitions somewhat problematic.

In addition, the sources of funding were not always clear. In most cases it was stated if funding came from readers, public or private support or from advertising, but for the most part there was no straightforward information on the share of a particular kind of funding. The same uncertainty applies to cooperation with other media or other partners. Yet, I managed to separate publications into eight categories. In the following table all online media are listed with some indicators.

Name	*Founded*	*Published*	*Languages*	*Access*	*Funding*[6]	*Readers (unique visitors per month)*	*Description*[7]
EU NEWS MEDIA FOR INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES							
EurActiv.com	1999	daily	En, Fr, De	free	mixed	210 000	news media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for international audience (in Brussels), EU focus, political focus, informative
Eubusiness	1997	daily	English	free	private	160 000	news media, paid contributors (mostly news agency content), professional journalists, for international audience (in Brussels), EU focus, political focus, debative
EUobserver	2000	daily	English	free	private	60 000 / day	news media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for international audience (in Brussels), EU focus, political focus, informative
Eureporter	2011 (online)	daily	English	free	own	10 000	news media, volunteer & paid contributors, professional journalists & aggregated content, for international audience, , EU focus, political focus, informative
European Voice	1995 (print)	daily	English	some behind a paid subscription or free registration	private	150 000	news media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for international audience (in Brussels), mostly EU focus, political focus, comments
New Europe	1993 (print)	daily	English	free	private	78 000	news media, paid contributors (?), journalists, for international audience, mostly Europe focus (with a special input on the EU), political focus, comments
TheParliament.com	?	daily	English	free	private	14 200	news media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for international audience (in Brussels?), EU focus, political focus, debative
EU NEWS MEDIA FOR NATIONAL AUDIENCES							
EurActiv.fr	2007	daily	French	free	mixed	45 000	news media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for national audience, EU focus (with a national add-on), political focus, comments
EurActiv.de	2009	daily	German	free	mixed	?	news media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for national

[6] As types of funding are very varied between publications, I will simplify by separating public funding (public organizations receiving direct funding or through sponsorship), private (e.g. advertising both public and private organisations, donations from readers), mixed (both public and private), no external funding or little funding and self-funding.

[7] A short description of each publication according to the type of articles published most often (e.g. news media, feature media, opinion media), its contributors, whether the media is mostly focused on the EU or Europe as a whole or whether on politics or culture or society at large and whether the contributors are obviously young or the media is branded to be young.

							audience, EU focus (with a national add-on), political focus, informative
Euractiv.es	2010	daily	Spanish	free	mixed	?	news media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for national audience, EU focus (with a national add-on), political focus, informative
EurActiv.cz	2004	daily	Czech	free	mixed	25 000	news media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for national audience, EU focus (with a national add-on), political focus, informative
EurActiv.hu	2008	daily	Hungarian	free	mixed	12-16 000	news media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for national audience, EU focus, political focus, informative
EurActiv.pl	2008	daily	Polish	free	mixed	?	news media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for national audience, EU focus (with a national add-on), political focus, informative
EurActiv.sk	2003	daily	Slovakian	free	mixed	89 000	news media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for national audience, EU focus (with a national all-on), political focus, informative
Euractiv.com.tr	2007	daily	Turkish	free	mixed	?	news media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for national audience, Europe focus & other regional focus (with a national add-on), political focus, informative
EurActiv.ro	2004	daily	Romanian	free	mixed	70 050	news media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for national audience, Europe focus (with a national add-on), political focus, comments
EurActiv.gr	2011?	daily	Greek	free	private	?	news media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for national audience, Europe focus, political focus, informative
Dnevnik Evropa	2004	daily	Bulgarian	free	mixed	34 800	news media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for national audience, EU focus (+ with additional focus on national European issues), political focus, comments
EurActiv.lt	2011	daily	Lithuanian	free	mixed	300 / day	public communications media, paid contributors, professional editors, for national audience, EU focus, political focus, informative
EurActiv.rs	2010	daily	Serbian	free	mixed	10 000	news media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for national audience, Europe focus with a national add-on, political focus, informative
Europaportalen	2000	daily	Swedish	free	mixed	?	feature media, partly volunteer contributors, for national audience, Europe focus, political focus, young (?), very inclusive
Toute l'Europe	2006	weekly	Fr, (En,De)[8]	free	mixed	?	feature media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for national audience, Europe focus, general societal focus, young (?), debative

[8] Brackets mean that these language versions have not been updated for some while.

euroXpress	2009	daily	Spanish	free	?	?	feature media, volunteer contributors (?), journalists, for national audience, Europe focus, general societal focus, comments, young (?)
EUROPEAN OPINION WEBZINES							
A Fistful of Euros	2003	weekly	English	free	private, little funding	?	opinion media, volunteer contributors (?), journalists & experts, for international audience, Europe focus, general societal focus, debative
Telos	2005	-	Fr, (En)	free	private	?	opinion media, volunteer contributors, mostly experts, for national audience, national & European & global focus, general societal focus, informative
The European	2009	daily	De, En	free	private	?	opinion media, partly volunteer contributors(?), experts & editors, for international & national audience, Europe focus, general societal focus, comments
Social Europe Journal	2005	daily	English	free	mixed	?	opinion media, paid contributors, experts, for international audience, Europe focus, general societal focus (with a "progressive" focus), debative
Metis	2006	monthly	French	free	mixed	30 000	feature media, some paid, mostly volunteer contributors, professionals & experts, for national audience, Europe focus, societal, special focus (employment), inclusive
EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER MEDIA							
Café Babel	2001	weekly	En, Fr, De, Es, It, Pl	free	mixed	300 000	feature media, mostly volunteer contributors, young professional & amateur journalists, for international audience, Europe focus, general societal focus, young, very inclusive
EMAJ Magazine	2010	weekly	English	free	little, mixed	6 000	feature media, volunteer contributors, young journalists, for international audience, EU-MENA focus, general societal focus, young, inclusive
E&M	2008	quadrannually	English	free	no funding	1 500	feature media, volunteer contributors, young writers, for international audience, Europe focus, general focus, young, inclusive
Euros du Village[9]	2005	monthly	Fr, En, Es, De, It	free	private	120 000	news media, volunteer contributors, young journalists, for international audience (or rather multiple national audience), Europe focus, political focus, young, very inclusive

[9] Euros du Village is the name of the French version of the publication. The version in English is called The Euros, in Spanish Los Euros, etc. In this thesis, I will only use the French name and will then mean all language versions at the same time though they have different contents.

El Europeo	2010	weekly	Spanish	free	self	950	feature media, volunteer contributors, young (journalists), for national audience (though a big share of Latin American readers), Europe focus, general focus, young, inclusive
Europa451	2009	weekly	Es, It, (Fr)	free	?	?	feature media, young professional journalists, for international audience, Europe focus, general societal focus, young, comments
Myeurop	2011	daily	Fr, (En)	free	self, private	?	feature media, volunteer contributors, professional journalists, for national audience, Europe focus, general societal focus, comments
NewropMag	?	monthly	En, Fr, De, (Es, It, Nl)	free	no funding	?	opinion media, volunteer contributors, writers & editors, for international audience, mostly Europe focus, general societal focus, informative
wEast Magazine	2010	monthly	English	free	no funding	1 500	feature media, volunteer contributors, young volunteers (journalists), for international audience, Europe (at large) focus, general focus, young, inclusive
27etc	2010	monthly	Fr, some in En	free	no funding	2 000	feature media, volunteer contributors (?), professional journalists, for national audiences, Europe focus, mostly political focus, comments
NEWS MEDIA WITH OTHER REGIONAL FOCUS							
Balkan Insight	2007	daily	English	some behind a paid subscription	mixed	12 000 registered readers	feature media, paid contributors (?), professional journalists, for international audience, other regional focus, general societal focus, debative
SETimes	2002	daily	En, Tr, Bu, Ro, Rs, Gr, Al, Mk, Hr, Ba	free	public	?	feature media,, paid contributors, professional journalists, for international audience, other regional focus, debative
Transitions Online	1999	daily	English	some behind a paid subscription	mixed	7 000 registered readers	feature media, paid contributors, professional journalists, for international audience,, regional focus, general societal focus, informative
EUROPEAN PRESS REVIEW MEDIA							
Le Courrier des Balkans	1998	weekly	French	free	mixed	5 000 registered readers	press review media, partly volunteer contributors, editors (translated content), for national audience ("outside" audience), one language, other regional focus, general societal focus, very debative
euro|topics	2005	daily	De, En, Fr, Es, Pl	free	public	?	press review media, paid contributors, editors (translated content), for international audience, Europe focus, general focus, informative
Eurozine	1998	weekly	En, original languages	free	mixed	?	press review media, paid contributors (?), editors (&

							translated content), for international audience, Europe focus, cultural focus, informative
Presseurop.eu	2009	daily	En, Fr, De, Pl, Pt, Es, It, Cs, Ro, Nl	free	public	350-400 000	press review media, paid contributors, editors (translated content), for international audience, Europe focus, general societal focus (though mostly politics), debative
signandsight.com		monthly	English	free	mixed?	?	press review media, paid contributors (?), editors (translated content), for international audience, mostly Europe focus (though mostly through the eyes of German media), cultural focus, debative
NEWS AGGREGATORS							
European Daily	2008	daily	English	free	private	?	news media, daily, volunteer contributors, aggregated content, for international audience, Europe & global focus, political focus, young, informative
EuropeNews	?	daily	En, De	free	private	?	news media, volunteer contributors, aggregated content, Europe focus, political focus, informative
Fenêtre sur l'Europe	1998	daily	French	free	mixed	?	news media, mostly volunteer contributors (?), aggregated content, for national audience, Europe focus, mostly political focus, informative
NICHE NEWS MEDIA							
Cineuropa	2002	daily	En, Es, It, Fr	free	mixed	350 000	news media, partly volunteer contributors, for international audience, Europe focus, cultural focus, young (?),informative

4.3. Categories of European online media

Based on similarities between the online publications, I have defined eight categories: 1. EU news media for international audiences, 2. EU news media for national audiences, 3. European opinion webzines, 4. European volunteer webzines, 5. News media with other regional focus, 6. European press review media, 7. News aggregators, 8. Niche news media. Further I describe their general characteristics.

1. EU news media for international audiences

The EU news media typically focus on EU affairs and target international audience. In my list these are *Euractiv*, *Eubusiness*, *Euobserver*, *Eureporter*, *European Voice*, *New Europe* and *The Parliament*. The latter four have a print edition that existed prior to the online publication, making them somewhat borderline cases. However, I included them in the list since their online

activities are daily whereas their print editions appear weekly or bimonthly. Eureporter differs even more as it provides daily news coverage as a press review: by publishing headlines and the first sentences of original articles and a link to the original for further reading. But as Eureporter has video reportages and interviews on the site and it clearly focuses on the Brussels audience and covers EU news, it is placed in this category.

The EU news media cover typically EU news and focus on politics, economics; in general "hard news". There are reports and opinions published but the main content is providing day-to-day updates of events in and related to the EU. The news reporting approach is mirrored in the relationship with the readers, which is mostly informative: Even though commenting on articles is possible for half of papers (*Euractiv* started only in the summer 2011), there were not many comments. However, there is a separate and active discussion forum in *Eubusiness* and links to blogs in *Euractiv*, *Euobserver*, *The Parliament* and *New Europe*.

The language is mainly English with the exception of *Euractiv* that provides all content in English, French and German. The audience is international; it comprises people interested in the EU around Europe or in Brussels. It is a niche audience, mostly actors in EU institutions, national governments and administration officials, corporations with EU interests, consultancies, media, NGOs, think tanks, students and academia. However, the readership is large, around 150 000 unique visitors per month for each publication (except for *The Parliament* and *Eureporter*). The majority of online papers are explicit about targeting these educated expert audiences: *Euractiv* provides "in-depth information to the Community of EU Actors" and "a point of reference for key EU decision-makers and an important source of information for thousands of journalists" (Anx1, 1). Then again, *The Parliament* is "regularly used by a unique and powerful audience" (Anx1, 7), *New Europe* "provides critical and timely information to opinion formers and decision makers" (Anx1, 6) and *Eubusiness* caters for "English-speaking business professionals" (Anx1, 2). *European Voice* similarly, "has become essential reading for the EU regulatory and political affairs communities – Europe's most important decision-makers" (Anx1, 5).

In addition, these online dailies' introductions are quite business-as-usual, stripped of ideological emphases such as European identity. They stress professionalism and independence, although the mission of providing information and creating debate is mentioned. Editorial missions statements seem to reflect general journalistic aspirations rather than any particular set of ideas about European community and the public sphere. That said, writers are typically professional

journalists. Other contributors tend to be experts and other opinion-makers. In general, the aim of these publications is to provide professional quality journalism on EU affairs for audiences already interested and informed about the EU. These publications represent European "mass media". For *European Voice*, the ties to the established quality media are direct: it is published by the same media group as the well-known elite daily *The Economist*.

2. EU news media for national audiences

The EU news media for national audiences are similar to the publications in the previous category. They focus on EU news relevant to the particular country where the media is published. First, it is important to note that most of publications in this category are part of the same media network called *Euractiv*. These are *Euractiv.fr*, *Euractiv.de*, *Euractiv.es*, *Euractiv.cz*, *Euractiv.hu*, *Euractiv.pl*, *Euractiv.sk*, *Euractiv.com.tr*, *Euractiv.ro*, *Euractiv.gr*, *Dnevnik Evropa*, *Euractiv.lt* and *Euractiv.rs*. The *Euractiv Network* covers France, Germany, Spain, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Turkey, Romania, Greece, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Serbia. In addition, there is a Swedish online news site *Europaportalen*, Spanish *Euroxpress* and French *Toute l'Europe*.

Readers appear to be segmented in the same way as in the case of the international EU news media (EU experts, officials, academia, etc). Though, as these publications operate in one language, they target a specific linguistic audience that usually forms a nationality. The number of readers is significantly less than in category one: on average tens of thousands instead of over 100 000, although there are variations. The relationship with the readers is mostly informative as commenting is not possible, but there are few exceptions. A notable one is Europaportalen which engages its audience in many ways, for instance by publishing readers' articles and videos with readers' questions to Swedish MEPs and their answers.

Editorial teams are small, on average three professional and paid writing journalists (with separate editors and sales employees). Most of these publish news daily, so they can be described as news media. The emphasis is on the EU affairs with a national add-on, though national issues are usually somehow related to the EU. Since most publications are part of the same *EurActiv* network, some content is translated and republished from the international *Euractiv*. When comparing the ten first headlines on each website, they were similar with some regional differences: *Euractiv.rs* (stationed in Serbia) reported on Kosovo and Albania and

Swedish *Europaportalen* wrote about the Danish border control case though no one else did, except for Czech *EurActiv* and *Euroxpress*.

As most of these publications are part of *Euractiv* network; their introduction is very similar saying that they add a national perspective to Brussels affairs or bring European affairs to national audiences and they emphasise journalistic professionalism, efficacy and independence. The exceptions are the Bulgarian *Dnevnik Evropa* and the Lithuanian *Euractiv.lt*. The former is run in partnership with a Bulgarian business daily and hosted on its webpage, the latter functions in cooperation with the local Europe direct information office (public information service initiated by the EU and operated by national actors) the goal of which is rather to inform citizens than make European journalism. In the case of *Euractiv.lt* and *Toute l'Europe* (founded by the French government and the European Commission) the share of public support in funding seems large, though in all other cases, the stream of income appears to range from advertisement to public and private sponsorship.

3. European opinion media

The European opinion media, *The European*, *A Fistful of Euros*, *Metis*, *Social Europe Journal* and *Telos*, are characterised by a strong emphasis on opinions and analyses instead of EU focused news as in the two previous categories. Much of its content is produced by volunteer writers, making it similar to category four, but as the opinion media provides only opinions and analyses, it is grouped separately from the volunteer media that publishes reports and news as well.

Though in most publications readers are engaged in discussions by enabling commenting on articles, the focus is on experts, politicians and intellectuals exchanging opinions between themselves and informing the reading public. As *Telos* puts it, the magazine "serves as a platform for debate between intellectuals, [and] as a channel of communication between intellectuals and the public" (Anx1, 25). *Social Europe Journal* explains that it has "writers of the highest calibre including several Nobel laureates, international political leaders and academics as well as some of the best young talent" (Anx1, 27). However, it would be misleading to argue that the relationship is only top-down since all webzines except for *Telos* allow commenting on articles and discussion is often very active. In *Metis*, readers' comments are displayed on the first page where you can click and read the newest, and writers comment on the debate surrounding their texts. *A Fistful of Euros* has the same practice: writers take part in the discussion revolving

around their texts and articles are very actively commented. Discussions around articles are highly active also on *The European*.

Opinion webzines are also characterised by a significant volunteer effort. In *Telos* most of the content is written by volunteer contributors, for *Metis* the share of volunteer work is a little smaller. Considering that *A Fistful of Euros* has an easy-to-manage blog structure and many writers listed on the introduction are not contributing actively, it is easy to assume, the publication also runs on volunteer efforts. However, the rest, *The European* and *Social Europe Journal* have several full-time editors and obviously greater abundance of resources since they publish many articles daily, whereas others publish new content on a weekly basis. Abundant resources come from funding which is very varied. *The European* relies on advertising and accepts no investments from "political parties, publishing houses, religious organizations, unions or interest groups" (Anx1, 26). *Telos* runs on donations, *Social Europe Journal* has institutional support and *Metis* runs partly on subscriptions, donors and sponsors.

Compared to the EU news sites for international and national audiences, these webzines are much more explicit about their values and goals. The writers of *A Fistful of Euros* have the "determination to contribute to an informed debate in the nascent European public sphere" (Anx1, 24). *The European* explains its *raison d'être* by saying that "absolute truths cannot exist within a pluralistic, democratic and secular society. Discourses are shaped by those who present and defend their ideas truthfully and persuasively. That discursive streak is an integral part of European intellectual and cultural history. The name The European stands as a reminder of that tradition" (Anx1, 26). *Social Europe Journal* that clearly represents left-wing political sympathies stresses an interactive element. It says that by "providing opportunities for the exchange of ideas, SEJ is the pioneer of a new form of European public realm – a public realm that grows and is shaped from the people up; driven by citizens" (Anx1, 27). Metis' goal is "contributing to the debate rising from transformation in the world of work in Europe", it says "employment issues are at the heart of democratic life" and central to the European project. Metis hopes to give its readers the opportunity to read about "the Europe of the future" (Anx1, 28).

As is already observable from the introduction of webzines, the scope is not strictly on the EU but Europe at large and even further for *Telos* who "aspires to deliver grand global debates without partiality into the French space" (Anx1, 25). *Social Europe Journal* examines issues such as globalisation, political economy, industrial policy and international relations. Metis also points

out that “globalisation affects everyone” (Anx1, 28). The focus is also not simply political but the spectrum of topics is vast, though current affairs are reflected upon: the Greek and European debt crisis was discussed in all publications.

Webzines are partially bilingual. *Telos* and *The European* have English versions though they operate mainly in French and in German respectively. Others publish only in one language: English or French. Hence, I would assume the readership tends to follow linguistic lines, though *A Fistful of Euro*s has probably an international audience, since it is based in Brussels (like many EU related publications in the first category). *Social Europe Journal* has also probably a rather international audience considering its international group of writers, its clear political affiliation, and the fact that it has the whole of Europe in view. The number of readers was not published for the majority of magazines.

4. European volunteer media

Volunteer magazines are characterised by the voluntary nature of contributions and wide scope of issues covered both thematically and geographically. Such webzines are *Café Babel*, *EMAJ Magazine*, *E&M*, *Euros du Village*, *El Europeo, wEast Magazine*, *Europa451*, *27etc*, *Newropmag* and *Myeurop*. Most of the content in these magazines is produced by volunteers, a fact that impacts all the activities. Though some of these publications have full-time editors and hence the level of activity varies a lot from weekly to monthly, none of these webzines have day-to-day coverage of current events. They usually cover Europe in general or even wider, e.g. *EMAJ Magazine* reports “from both sides of the Mediterranean" (Anx1, 30). *WEast Magazine* has a regional focus on “Europe and its ‘Eastern’ neighbours” (Anx1, 37). Some focus more on the EU, e.g. *Euros du Village* and *27etc*. Topics covered not only include politics and economy but society in general along with cultural issues.

Interestingly enough, despite most the media being produced by volunteers, one finds most multilingual magazines in this category. Though *Café Babel* is the only to produce all its content in six languages simultaneously, *Euros de Village* has five different language versions, *Newropmag* has five but only three updated until the summer 2011, *Europa451* has three (though the French version has not been updated since August 2010) and the French *Myeurop* had an English version updated until February 2011. The number of language versions and the irregularity of their publishing is, on one hand, a sign of strong ambition and desire to write about European affairs and, on the other hand, a sign of little financial resources and

professionalism as not many people are willing to work as much as these webzines demand without any pay.

The ambition and desire to write about Europe is seen in the descriptions these webzines have about themselves. Their introduction pages tend to have more explicit ideological motives behind the publishing than the media in previous categories. Being 'European' is a very pronounced idea. According to *Café Babel*, "[a]t a time when the European Union is expanding and playing an ever more important role in our everyday lives, the evolution of a European identity is still in its beginning stages. As a forum for reflection and analysis, *Café Babel* encourages its readers to think as Europeans, bringing European politics back to the people" (Anx1, 29). For *E&M*, "Europe is a state of mind":

> *"We want to support the emergence of a young European public. We want to contribute to a new perception of the European community - beyond the category of a nation state. -- E&M is an online lifestyle magazine created by young Europeans for young Europeans. Its motto is to "make Europe personal", because Europe is often only identified with politics and bureaucracy." (Anx1, 31.)*

The motto of *Euros de Village* is "Open yourself to Europe". The magazine is

> *"all about being passionately interested in Europe and wanting to share that interest with others. Our "European dream" is to make Europeans conscious of the bond bringing them together, be it political, social, economic or cultural. The name "the Euros" therefore embodies the community spirit present among the association's members, together with an overriding mutual understanding and solidarity. All these values are those we cherish and hope to share amongst each other as European citizens, and with neighbouring countries." (Anx1, 32.)*

*WEast Magazi*ne aims at "narrowing the distance between Europe and its 'Eastern' neighbours" (Anx1, 37). This is a short description but it reveals more than previous descriptions about what kind of European and Europeanness is behind these publications: Western Europeanness. In addition, even though it might be due to lack of resources, the language versions of all webzines are in West-European languages, with a minor exception of *Café Babel* that also has a Polish version.

Nonetheless, the ideals of European community and identity are present as well as a sense of participation and this shows in practice: In six out of ten webzines, readers are explicitly invited to contribute to webzines by writing or translating. That is how the bulk of content in these

webzines is produced. In addition, commenting on articles is allowed in all webzines, except for *Newropmag*. Both *Café Babel* and *Euros de Village* have network of blogs that are promoted on the first page and profile systems where readers can register. In addition, in *Euros de Villlage* readers can contribute to the making of articles, e.g. by submitting questions for interviews.

Compared to the other online media, not only is volunteerism exceptional, but also the fact that content producers are young Europeans with a target audience of other young Europeans; Europeans in their twenties and thirties, usually students or young journalists. Readers tend to have the same background, though this could not be confirmed for all publications. The number of readers varies a lot from *Café Babel's* 300 000 unique visitors a month to around a thousand in *wEast Magazine* and *El Europeo*. Then again, resources vary a lot, too: where *Café Babel* has a team of ten full-time employees running the magazine, *E&M* and *EMAJ Magazine* have few editors but none are employed and paid. All in all, even though all webzines have the common denomitator, voluntarity, the result is different. European volunteer webzines come in all shapes and sizes.

5. News media with other regional focus

The online media with other regional focus do not write about the EU or Europe in the typical sense of the word. They have a regional focus on the Balkans (*Balkan Insight*), on South-eastern Europe (*SETimes*) and on the former communist countries of Europe and Central Asia (*Transitions Online, TOL*). Yet, they are similar to the EU news media in the first category as they value journalistic professionalism and cater for international audiences. These publications are mostly funded externally. In the first two, governmental support is significant, e.g. *SETimes* is entirely funded by a public institution: The US European Command; a military command. *TOL* funds increasing amount of its activities by self-generated income but in general, it appears, these publications do not attract or accept much commercial revenues.

All three publications provide content daily with *Balkan Insight* around 15 articles per day and TOL several articles daily. In the outlook, these online newspapers resemble the first category of the EU news media for international audience in professionalism and internationality. Writers are professional journalists and correspondents come from the target region. The number of readers, however, is not comparable to publications in the first category: *Balkan Insight* has 12 000 newsletter subscribers and *TOL* 7 000 registered users. Though the number of unique visitors is presumably larger, it hardly reaches hundreds of thousands. The profile of readers is

apparently alike for all publications: Policy-makers, academics, students, journalists, business people, government officials and international organisations with an interest in the region covered.

What is similar to publications in the first category is the apparent targeting of international audiences: all publish at minimum in English but also in other languages depending on resources (SETimes has everything in ten South-eastern European languages). These publications also stress professional journalistic values and pledge to provide "accurate" and "balanced" reporting, and do not speak of identities and citizenship like European volunteer webzines do. The focus is not only on politics but social issues at large and articles vary from news and reports to analyses and opinions. Variety is reflected in interaction with readers: Comments are allowed in *SETimes* and *Balkan Insight*. In the former, if in different language, comments are even translated in English. *Balkan Insight* and *TOL* also have blogs on their sites.

6. European press review media

The press review media are, as the term suggests, made of daily reviews of the European press. Short press reviews are common in the other European online media but for these publications all activities are based on reviewing and redistributing existing content to new audiences. The press review media includes *Eurotopics* and *Presseurop* focused on the EU and Europe (similar topics as in the EU news media), *Eurozine* and *Signandsight* with an orientation on cultural topics and *Le Courrier des Balkans* oriented towards the Balkans. Except for *Eurotopics* which publishes only short summaries, all other publications republish long texts, such as essays, editorials, opinions and analyses. Published texts are not news per se but mostly summaries of editorials and analyses from the national media. The majority of the press review media do not publish their own content. However, *Presseurop* publishes editorials and opinions and interviews written by editors or guest writers in a blog (or ten different blogs for each language versions with some similar, translated content). *Le Courrier des Balkans* publishes some articles written specifically for the magazine and has a blog.

The European press review media differ from content aggregators in the sense that they edit, rewrite and translate the material they publish. Many press reviews also publish articles extensively, not only short summaries. In addition, the media explicitly state that they are reviewing the press and bringing the best of it to the audience. The media used are also listed on a separate page with some information added (in most webzines). In any case, there is a clear

sign of cooperation between original sources and the press review media and this is why it is safe to assume original publishers are somehow compensated for the use of their material. Hence, it also means these publications have proper funding and resources, though varied. It appears that most of it is public support. *Presseurop* is completely funded by the European Commission (EC), *Eurotopics*, based in Bonn, is funded by German Federal Agency for Civic Education and other public partners, *Les Courrier des Balkans*, published only in French, has the support of French and Swiss public institutions, *Eurozine*, with its headquarters in Vienna, is supported by the EC and Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture. Sources of funding are sundry but apparently partly tied to location of headquarters of editorial offices.

As they have funding, they have resources but with varied magnitude. *Presseurop* has a team of 10 editors and two editors-in-chief and additional translators and publishes ten language versions (the ten largest languages according to population). The German *Signandsight* (English-language affiliate of Perlentaucher, a cultural online magazine in German language) has only two editors, *Les Courrier des Balkans* has five editors but translators of articles are volunteers. *Presseurop* published some eight articles per day, *Signandsight* some three per week. Topics covered vary according to the media: *Presseurop* follows the press of Europe at large (the EU, Balkans, Turkey, Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Russia), *Eurotopics* has the same scope, excluding Russia and Balkans. *Les Courrier des Balkans* follows the media in Balkan countries, and *Signandsight* translates and published articles on cultural topics but mostly from German papers. *Eurozine* has an extensive list of European cultural magazines including Europe at large, Turkey, but not Russia (nor Ukraine and Belarus; something that holds for all press review media). By collating texts from the European press in one forum, these press reviews make up small public spheres of their own and though there was no explicit information about the readership, I imagine it to be rather international.

It is worth noting the languages covered. *Presseurop* has the widest scope covering English, French, German, Polish, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Dutch, Romanian and Czech. *Eurotopics* translates its content into the five first mentioned languages. *Signandsight* operates only in English and *Eurozine* mostly in English, although texts have links to the original language versions and sometimes there are other translations.

7. News aggregators with some original content

The online media in this category typically have content aggregated from other news sites. These are *European Daily*, *Europenews* and *Fenêtre sur l'Europe*. The first two publish mainly in English (*Europenews* has also a German version) and the third in French. Typically, content originates from other media websites and it is either republished in total or like in *European Daily*, only the first paragraph. Links to originals are provided except for *Fenêtre sur l'Europe*. All publications are active: around 20 news posts per day. Additional common factors are apparent little resources and volunteerism. *Fenêtre sur l'Europe* and *European Daily* have some advertisements on their pages but considering the low prices of the internet advertisement, especially when the questions is about these relatively unknown publications, there is hardly much revenue generated. As to the readership, no information was available about the number and type of readers in any publications.

Similarly to the volunteer media these publications too have outspoken goals motivating the publishing: "We believe that Europeans need a common perspective on current events and a common platform for debate. Our vision is an emergent European public sphere symbolised by the European Daily"(Anx1, 47). *Fenêtre sur l'Europe* aims to inform the maximum number of citizens about Europe. *Europenews* claims to represent "the principles of freedom of the press, clarification & human rights against canons of religious intolerance and terrorism" (Anx1, 49).

Similarities end there: in content the publications are very different. *European Daily* represents a typical international news media. *Fenêtre sur l'Europe* publishes a lot of the European Commission's press releases and other content, also on French topics. *Europenews* is the most distinct: it focuses on topics concerning Islam and does this from a negative perspective which is very different from what you see in the mainstream media. Even though *Europenews* claims to "to show the diversity of viewpoints" and "a wide selection of articles about democracy & Islam Ideologies" (Anx1, 48), a lot of sources have a strongly Jewish or Christian background and sources are mostly English which somewhat undermines the idea of diversity and impartiality.

8. Niche news media

In the last category there is only one platform, *Cineuropa*, although this would be the category for the previously mentioned *European plastics news* and *European Motor News Online*, and surely there are more publications such as these. All have European scope but niche topics.

These media inform about the latest news in their specific scope of topics, e.g. European cinema or cars. Further elaboration on these media is not necessary as they are very specific in their topics and do not provide the typical journalism for general audiences. However, it is necessary to include them in the categories to show that also these kinds of publications exist.

4.4. General observations

The European online media come in all shapes and sizes. Though the medium is the same, there are a variety of missions, functions, actors and motives. Despite distinguishable types, it is useful to draw some general observations beyond strict categories.

There are observable tendencies: Publications with considerable economic resources focus on the EU, politics and economics, whereas publications made by volunteer efforts tend to have a wider scope of topics covered both in terms of geography (e.g. Europe at large) and themes (society and culture). Publications with more resources tend to have full-time staff and publish regularly compared to those with less resources. In addition, issues of identity and of Europeanness are typically addressed in the media with fewer economic resources and greater volunteer effort. The EU news media for international and national audiences, that finance their activities through commercial means, tend to be shorter in their description and emphasise journalistic professional values. They have a "business as usual" approach and might prefer to stay impartial in order not to scare off potential sponsors and advertisers with a strong ideological agenda. On the other hand, it seems logical that the volunteer media should express their motivation explicitly to excite other volunteers to participate. In general, categories one (the EU news media for international audiences) and four (the European volunteer media) are most distinct from each other, at the opposite ends whereas the rest are somewhere in between.

As to the use of different languages, the primary language is English. Even for the many multilingual sites, it is the English version that appears first when you type the address of a media's web page. English was used in 29 publications, French in 15 and Spanish only in nine and German in eight. By no means does this imply that writers and readers are native English, but that international equals English language. It is Europe's first common language. Though it is interesting that from all publications that had stated either their central office or their origin, the

majority, eleven, were from Paris. The second most common place was Brussels with eight publications and the third Berlin with four (plus one in Bonn).

The internet often implies interactivity and in 28 of the 50 publications commenting on content is possible. Eighteen publications have either blogs or discussion forums on their pages. A higher level of interaction with the readers, e.g. invitation to contribute, promoting readers comments to create debate, was mostly absent, though in some cases there was a separate box with links to readers' latest comments. For instance, in the opinion media (category 3), debate was created through experts' opinions. In the volunteer media, the situation was different as readers were explicitly invited to participate in writing or translating. As for the other media, there were some exceptions like Swedish *Europaportalen*, that published readers' articles and video questions to Swedish MEPs. This way of engaging the audience was unique. An interesting way to combine interactivity and languages is in *Presseurop* that shows all comments in all languages simultaneously, so one can follow a multilingual debate. In *Café Babel* you can click open comments in different languages without changing the language version of the whole site.

In this chapter I have defined eight categories of the European online media. In the following chapter, I choose few publications for closer scrutiny and examine how they have covered the sovereign debt crisis in Europe.

5. Analysing European online media

5.1. Topic: The European debt crisis

In this chapter, I analyse the news coverage on the European debt crisis and test the categories formulated in the previous chapter. The debt crisis is an interesting topic since it includes all the elements central to the European public sphere: it concerns all Europeans in the EU since economic troubles in the eurozone are felt all over Europe and because solutions proposed include further integration in economic policy and transforming the EU further into a federal union. The topic weaves Europeans together in a unprecedented manner: it is not inner politics of a particular country but includes very concrete and tangible issues such as money and debt which may make it easier to comprehend and talk about. Consequently, the crisis has evoked many reactions and a great deal of resistance.

In short, the debt crisis is a result of economic imbalances inside a common currency area. The euro and the recent global financial crisis have aggravated the differences which has resulted in economic troubles and rising debt levels, especially in Southern Europe. During spring 2010 the crisis broke out when investors lost confidence in Greece's ability to pay back its sovereign debt. For the last two years the EU has tried to tackle the crisis, mainly by eurozone countries giving loans for crisis countries, Greece, Ireland and Portugal. During the summer of 2011, the situation once again tightened: Greece asked for another loan and the world demanded decisive actions as a year had passed and no progress seemed to have occured. On the 21st of July, eurozone countries agreed on giving Greece the second bail-out package and on actions to increase economic integration. During the summer, there were also demonstrations all over the Europe.

Research material and time frame

For further scrutiny, I have chosen three online publications from four categories: 1. EU news media for international audiences, 3. European opinion media, 4. European volunteer media and 6. European press review media. I chose these because at the centre of my thesis is the idea of a *European* public sphere and as the debt crisis is an apparently intra-EU affair, it is a suitable test case. I dismissed the EU news media for national audiences, the news media with other regional focus, the news aggregators and the niche news media. The common nominator for the selected publications is the aspiration to address the international European audience (unlike the media in category 2), and the coverage of topics that are European in a larger sense than just national

or regional (as Balkans in category 5). In addition these media have original content unlike news aggregators in category 7. Dismissing the media with other regional focus, of course, means focusing on Europe of the EU which is justifiable as the European public sphere is often associated with the democratic deficit in the EU.

From the four categories, I selected three most actively publishing publications: From the first category, *Euractiv*, *Euobserver* and *European Voice*. They have large audiences and original content (unlike Eubusiness the news feed of which originates from a news agency) and are in earlier research (cf. chapter 4.1.2.) defined as important sources for EU news. The EU news media for national audiences is be analysed as I do not intend to make national comparisons. From the third category, I selected *A Fistful of Euros*, *The European* (the German version) and *Social Europe Journal* since they have most articles on the debt crisis. In the European volunteer media, I includede *Café Babel* and *Euros de Village* and *Myeurop*. *Presseurop*, *Eurotopics* and *Eurozine* are analysed from the sixth category as they have the most coverage on the debt crisis.

I collected articles on the crisis by searching for texts with words 'Greece' and 'eurozone' in English, French, Spanish and German depending on the source at hand. In addition, in some cases I used other search words to gather more material. The search words are listed in annex 2 as are the headlines of all articles analysed. The time frame is May-August 2011. During this time the crisis once again intensified and that is what makes it a fruitful topic. In addition, just over a year had passed since the crisis broke out ensuring general reflections on the topic. In the case of most dailies, I have limited my analysis to two weeks around the eurozone summit of 21st of July as there was plenty of material to go through and because events usually produce more material and highlight differences and opinions. As to those with fewer debt crisis articles, I have included either the whole of July or even longer time frame, May-August. I have used different time frames for publications as I wanted to have a big enough sample for publications rarely covering the debt crisis and not too big for publications that report it daily. This approach has weaknesses: the sample is not even and is too concentrated on a specific event in the case of dailies and this creates representational biases. Yet, considering the scope of this work, I have chosen to gather the data this way.

5.2. Research methods and operative questions

The main research question of this thesis is what kind of a European public sphere online publications construct. To answer this question in chapter six, I will first look at how the debt crisis unfolds in the selected European media. I am interested to find out what kinds of positions the different media take on the crisis, if any; what arguments are presented; whether the media try to generate a compromise, a consensus or encourage conflictual interaction of arguments and whether common European or individual national solutions are presented. I also research whether the European media bring about pluralism and whether they are critical of EU institutions or their mouth pieces. And as I defined categories in the previous chapter, I am interested to test whether they hold after a text analysis. Hence, I want to find out if there are similarities or differences inside and outside categories.

By probing these questions, I will perhaps be able to answer whether the European public sphere of online media is Habermasian, that is, deliberative and based on a compromise-centred path or goes along the forms outlined by Chantal Mouffe including conflictual and agonistic elements. In addition, I want to answer whether the operative model for EPS drawn on the basis of Marianne van de Steeg's and Erik Eriksen's ideas in chapter 3.4. is a functional and realistic way to describe the European public sphere?

To answer the questions posed above, I have formulated some indicators with which I will examine the texts. In chapter 3.3. I introduced Marianne van de Steeg's idea on communication dynamics in the European public sphere. It consisted of two elements: the system of meaning and the discursive interaction. Steeg outlined some practical indicators (2002, 513) to correspond to the two elements. Here, I have reformulated her original table, although it looks very alike.

System of meaning	Discursive interaction
1.Discussing the same topic, at the same time, at the same level of relevance Comparing: a.the number of articles on the debt crisis in each publications b.the most prominent themes and topics c. actors that populate the article (who is the subject and who is the object of an action)	*1. Direct contact: the transplantation of public opinion* a. outside author (=not an author from the editorial team, e.g. other country, other background, from expert public spheres) b. articles reprinted from another medium, statements from the other media c. actors that populate an article (whose arguments are presented) d. positions (who is or what arguments are criticised or defended)
2. Frame of reference Possible patterns: a. Frame of reference similar in all publications, b. Frame of reference specific to the category in question c.Frame of reference specific to the publication in question d. Frame of reference similar across categories and publications	*2. Virtual contact* a.referent of the 'we' (and possibly the 'them') in the text, indication of the community of fate b.the group with which the author or speaker identifies c.addressee, to whom the text speaks d.in whose interests an actor / an author of the text is speaking?

As to indicators in the section *System of meaning*, box 1 , I list the number of articles in a separate table in the next subchapter. Themes and topics, on one hand, and actors, on the other, are dealt with in later subchapters under corresponding headings: *Topics* and *Actors*. Box 2, *Frame of reference*, is an issue discussed in the end of each subchapter. *Discursive interaction* box 1, *Direct contact*, refers to issues discussed in subchapter *Sources* which in Steeg's terms translates to asterisks, i.e. points of discursive contact. Indicators in Box 2, *Virtual contact*, are discussed in subchapter under the same name.

All in all, there are four main indicators: *actors, topics, sources* and *virtual contact*. *Actors* refer to persons, organisations and institutions appearing in news coverage. I look at who these are and whether they are active (e.g. eurozone leaders *decided*) or passive (e.g. a loan was given *to* Greece). In case of *actors*, I have put the indicator both under the system of meaning and discursive interaction (in Steeg's model only in the latter) as actors are often topics, especially in the case where their opinions are not given, only their actions are described. As to *topics*, I have identified themes and issues most prominently discussed (=system of meaning). In this case there is also an occasional overlap with the virtual contact, especially when one speaks of the future of Europe and speaks of shared European values, i.e. issues both belonging to topics as much as indications of community of faith. The third, *sources*, is defined by first looking at direct citations from the media, reprints of articles, published articles of authors outside an editorial team, sources of information and news (where the news originates from), and also citations of opinions or direct quotes of someone, e.g. political leaders or citizens. In the latter case, there is an overlap with 'actors' as they give opinions and are cited.

The fourth is *virtual contact* where I look at indications of community of faith. Here, I would like to highlight the aspects of identity and the cultural public sphere because as the topic is very economic and political, the only indications of "soft topics" are likely to be found here. Hence, I look at if there are elements (on the level of topics, actors, etc.) that indicate shared values, or if there are there any references to history, or cultural elements. Is there any room for a cultural public sphere or is the discussion on the debt crisis purely associated with a political public sphere?

5.3. Analysis

In the following table I have listed all webzines analysed, how frequently they publish on average (=type), the number of articles published on the debt crisis and the time period of each sample.

Name	*Type*	*Number of articles on the debt crisis*	*Time period included*
EU NEWS MEDIA FOR INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES			
Euractiv	Daily	16	18.-31.7.2011
Euobserver	Daily	34	18.-31.7.2011
European Voice	Daily	29	18.-31.7.2011
EUROPEAN OPINION MEDIA			
A Fistful of Euros	Weekly	4	July 2011
The European	Daily	9	July 2011
Social Europe Journal	Daily	13	18.-31.7.2011
EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER MEDIA			
Café Babel	Weekly	11	May-August 2011
Euros du Village	Monthly	14	May-August 2011
Myeurop	Daily	16	May-August 2011
EUROPEAN PRESS REVIEW MEDIA			
Eurotopics	Daily	19	18.-31.7.2011
Presseurop	Daily	16	18.-31.7.2011
Eurozine	Weekly	3	July 2011

I shall now give a short introduction about news coverage of different types of media. From category 1, there were three publications; *Euobserver*, *Euractiv* and *European Voice*. These dailies typically focus on events reporting, bring political players, e.g. political leaders and financial actors to the centre of news instead of e.g. citizens, use the established mass media (e.g. *Reuters* and *The Financial Times*) as a source, concentrate on political decisions and institutional political structures and use experts as possible commentators responding to events. The dailies followed the debt crisis intensively with around two articles per day in *Euobserver* and

in *European Voice* and around one per day in *Euractiv*. Hence, the time frame is limited to two weeks around the summit of 21st July. *European Voice* had the most extensive coverage in terms of quantity since even though *Euobserver* had published more articles, they were mostly short in content. The difference may be explained also by the scope of coverage in general: e.g. *European Voice* focuses very strongly on politics and economics, whereas *Euractiv* covers a wider range of topics from consumer rights to language and culture.

Category three included *A Fistful of Euros*, *The European* and *Social Europe Journal*. They are characterised by commentary content written by experts instead of news and reports written by professional or volunteer journalists as in all other categories. Of these *A Fistful of Euros* and *Social Europe Journal* were mostly economics theory oriented, whereas *The European* had also more general commentary. In general, the European opinion media tend to speak the same language as the EU news media in terms of topics and the emphasis on economic aspects.

The European volunteer media include *Café Babel*, *Euros de village* (in all its language versions) and *Myeurop*. As they a cover wide range of issues, covering the debt crisis has not been on the daily agenda. Typically these webzines have a grassroots approach to issues. Actors such as citizens are much more present than e.g. in the dailies in category 1. Contrary to rather homogeneous news coverage of the EU news media, volunteer webzines had a lot of variety. *Myeurop* followed the situation and the unrest in Greece very closely, *Café Babel* reported about the growing discontent among young South-Europeans and the current political atmosphere inside Greece, whereas *Euros de village* commented on both the overall development of Europe and the debt crisis per se, though coverage was concentrated in Spanish and French language versions.

From the press review media, *Eurotopics* and *Presseurop* were very similar in news content: they concentrated on daily reporting of the European press' commentary of events. *Eurozine* on the other hand, published only three long, analytical articles probing a limited set of themes accompanied with ideological and intellectual reflections.

Next I describe according to each indicator, how the debt crisis is covered in the European online media, instead of proceeding from one category to another. At the end of each subchapter, I summarise my findings and end the whole chapter with closing remarks on my analysis.

5.3.1. Actors

The European online media's reality is very polarised if we look at actors populating the articles. The greatest difference is perhaps between EU news dailies that focus on political actors such as Angela Merkel and IMF and the volunteer media that brings young people and Greek citizens to the stage. Next I elaborate how the most prominent actors have been presented in the European online media.

Political actors

Political leaders and institutions are prominent actors mostly in dailies, both the EU news media for international audiences and the two press review media platforms, *Eurotopics* and *Presseurop*. There are clearly two kinds of actors: prominent and active actors and objects of action. Eurozone leaders, Germany, France, Angela Merkel, Nicolas Sarkozy, the European Central Bank, Jean-Claude Trichet, the International Monetary Fund and Christine Lagarde belong to the first group. Greek prime minister George Papandreou, Portugal, and Spain belong to the second. Next, we talk about the first group.

In *Euobserver*, *Euractiv* and *European Voice* above mentioned active political leaders are portrayed in motion: "eurozone leaders agree" and "leaders said" (EV, 13). This kind of positioning is somewhat unavoidable since during the emergency summit it indeed was the eurozone leaders taking decisions. The same applies to Germany and France, that is, chancellor Angela Merkel and president Nicolas Sarkozy: "German chancellor Angela Merkel, who set most of the terms of the agreement" (EO, 28), "French president Nicolas Sarkozy has pledged to get the budget deficit down" (EO, 29), "France and Germany have reached a deal" (EV, 9). This is partly due to the fact that Merkel and Sarkozy had a meeting before the actual summit where they came up with they own proposal. Yet, this only accentuates that France-Germany-axis is still driving the European integration. However, this prearrangement of the two big European powers did not evoke criticism among the EU news media, even though it might be considered undemocratic given that economic decisions are taken unanimously.

Eurotopics and *Presseurop* somewhat follow the lines of the EU news media but there is more bashing of these actors. The tone is critical as everything is filtered through the eyes of national newspapers and actors are not directly quoted. Criticism is pointed, for instance, towards eurozone leaders' inaction (as is actually in the EU news media).

German chancellor Angela Merkel is one of the central figures both in the EU news media and the two press review media platforms. In the latter, she is presented as the leading figure in resolving the crisis. "Merkel jeopardises rescue of euro", "Merkel makes minor progress", say headlines in *Eurotopics* (ET, 5; 8). She is also directly criticised: "Helmut Kohl: Merkel is destroying my Europe", quotes *Presseurop*. Angela Merkel's role is slightly more highlighted, also in *Euractiv* and *Euobserver*, possibly partly because of Merkel's initial unwillingness to attend the emergency meeting of 21st July. Often Merkel and Germany is presented as the same. Germany and hence Merkel's central role is understandable because Germany is the biggest payer of bail-outs which gives its statements more weight. And in *Eurotopics* sometimes even the EU and Germany is implied as being the same entity. In *Presseurop*, the pattern in more complex; Germany is less of an actor but part of a bigger picture and other themes.

Germany as a whole is observed critically and from multiple perspectives in *The European* which is somewhat understandable as it is written in German and by mainly German writers, hence, there is knowledge of the society from the inside. The opinion media in general, are not as centred on actors as the EU news media and the press review media, though of course, the main characters of this debt crisis spectacle are the same as in the other media, yet there are no similar divisions between active Germany and France and passive Greece as in the EU news media, but a stronger focus on topics and issues. *Eurozine*, though not an opinion media, has many similarities: actors are the same and they are mostly portrayed rather as objects of particular demands and criticism than actors in their own right. They are not given voice but rather they are objects of scrutiny and evaluation as in the opinion media. Finally, it is worth noting that two of three articles in *Eurozine* convey opinions of former political leaders: the former president of the EC and former Romanian finance minister. Hence, former leaders are acting as political experts and critics of today's leaders.

In *Café Babel*, these actors are hardly mentioned: Angela Merkel not at all and French president Nicholas Sarkozy only once. *Myeurop* follows the patterns seen in news coverage of the EU news media but there still is more variation and more exceptional prominent figures seen such as other political leaders (French socialist leaders, German liberals, former Portuguese minister of industry).

Central active political figures and institutions also comprise the ECB and its leader Jean-Claude Trichet, the IMF and its head Christine Lagarde and, to a lesser extent, the president of the

European Commission José Manuel Barroso and the president of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy. This applies especially to the EU news media and to *Eurotopics* and *Presseurop*, not so much for other publications. For daily papers it is understandable: the ECB has had an active role in the debt crisis and Trichet took part in the Franco-German meeting. *Euobserver* and *Euractiv* dedicate a whole article on what Trichet is saying on the summit results. In the EU news media, the IMF is typically presented as a father telling his child to do his or her homework, "IMF warns" and IMF "demands" are typical formulations. It is worth noting that the IMF's demands for austerity measures from Europe are not questioned in the EU news media as in the European volunteer media where the poor example of Argentina and its austerity programme enforced by the IMF is mentioned.

José Barroso is a topic of a separate article in the each EU news media platform (or part of an article as in *Euractiv*) because he made a statement about the seriousness of the crisis and urged the eurozone leaders to take action. It is worth noting that in all European media, the leaders of the Union, Barroso and Van Rompuy play a very minor role. The news coverage demonstrates that the EU is fully dependent on national leaders and cannot really force anything on countries unless they are willing to do so.

Markets and credit rating agencies

Markets and credit rating agencies are other specific actors present in all European online media, though in a very different light. In the EU news media markets are shown as either topics "private sector involvement" or as an object of action "Finance ministers seek to calm markets". But they are distant and mostly faceless. Especially in *Euobserver* and *European Voice*, markets are an unknown force speaking for themselves "Markets reacted well to the news" and "the financial markets have started demanding". *Euractiv* is somewhat an exception as it gives voice to concrete market players: it has interviews with economists or analysts. In general markets' sentiments are described but not explained, let alone questioned.

Credit ratings agencies that can be described as representatives of markets' interests play a very active role in the media of category 1. Credit rating agencies are portrayed as omnipotent and uncontrollable and European countries can do nothing but fear them: "Moody's credit ratings agency warned that it may downgrade Spain's government bonds (EO, 1)" and "Other countries are refusing to back this idea [of private sector involvement] for fear that it will be judged a default by credit-rating agencies" (EV, 7). There is no explicit criticism towards their action; it is

only stated with quotes from agencies' reports as explanations for their action. The idea of creating Europe's own credit rating agency, usually conceived as the needed counter-balance to the American agencies, is mentioned briefly in all three dailies, but only in the *Euractiv* column was the political reason given and criticism expressed: "to ensure that all these efforts are not undermined by rating agencies, which are not in line with transparent criteria of credibility" (EA, 1).

As to the other media, banks and credit rating agencies play a less visible role. The European volunteer media is critical of market players: In *Myeurop*, credit rating agencies' actions are questioned to some extent. In Euros de Village one will find very critical views. The private sector is plainly blaimed for the actual crisis starting from 2008 and it states that "they, only they have the moral obligation to pull us [Europeans] out of it" (EdeV, 13). In *Eurozine* and the opinion media the emphasis is on the topics, so markets are not a player per se but a concept to be analysed and criticised. In *Eurotopics* and *Presseurop* market players are also treated as a part of the bigger picture, but there are quoted critical articles saying rating agencies "are part of the guild of neoliberal charlatans. Their licenses should be withdrawn" (ET, 15).

Greece and Greeks

Greece of course is discussed actively in all media. Yet, there are almost remarkable differences. In the EU news media, Greece is mostly portrayed as either a topic; "the second Greece bail-out" or as an object of action; "Amount in new loans to be paid to Greece". This is somewhat explanatory as the July 21st emergency summit's topic was whether or not to grant Greece the second loan. However, Greece was still surprisingly absent in prominence. The country's prime minister George Papandreou is referred to and quoted in only two or three articles in each publication. In all cases, it is mostly his comments on decisions made by the eurozone leaders. The EU news media do mention Greek people's dissatisfaction and rioting due to new austerity measures, but only briefly.

Eurotopics and *Presseurop* have a similar approach on Greece which "had to be rescued" (ET, 18). In *Presseurop*, Greece has a little more active role with an article mentioning "the contribution of Greece to European thought" (PE, 16), with another one summarising reactions of the Greek press after the second bail-out and a third one speaking about problems of Greece's intertwined political forces. However, in the other articles the pattern is the same. The Greeks as a people appear even less.

However, in *Myeurop,* Greek people gain the most prominence. There are six articles written from Athens, and in all of them Greek people appear in the singular (e.g. a case of a Greek engineer) or in plural. What is important is that the anger and criticism of Greek people against their government (not against the EU) is demonstrated. *Myeurop* shows Greek politics and leaders in a very critical light. The emotional reactions to the new loan package are not subdued: "The new loan means more economic austerity. We sell the country's heritage and bleed the people dry, it is a crime", says a representative of the Greek workers union (ME, 5). Yet, to some extent there is a dialogue built between political leaders of the country and other Greeks as in some cases what political leaders say is quoted, though mostly the government is in the background.

Greece and Greeks are central in *Café Babel* as well. Protests in front of the Greek parliament at the Syntagma Square in Athens are reported and protesters interviewed. They are given a chance to speak up directly in a vox pop. There is also an interview with a Greek TV presenter Aris Chatzistefanou who has become "a mentor for the movement of Syntagma Square" (CB, 10). Chatzistefanou talks about both the brutality of the Greek riot police forces and the political atmosphere in the country.

The European being a mainly German speaking webzine is an interesting case. In many articles, it seems like the whole debt crisis is between the two countries to solve: For Germany to save Greece, which is to some extent true, as discussed previously, but also a simplification of reality. The Greek case is discussed thoroughly; in this way it is rather a topic than an actual actor. Greece is presented with understanding: "The public debt of Greece is first and foremost due to the euro", states a text (TE, 6). The responsibility of resolving Greek plight is transformed partly to the IMF, ECB and EC to whom "it gradually dawns - - that Greece urgently needs an economic stimulus and investment prospects" (TE, 4). Empathy and concern about "securing the Greek democracy and social stability that are in acute danger" is shown in some articles (TE, 4). One article analyses how the German media portray Greece and Greeks. All in all, the approach to Greeks and Greece is much more insightful and realistic in the volunteer media and *The European* than in any other analysed media.

Eurogeneration and indignados

Taxpayers or Europeans as a group were not prominent in news coverage in any media. But young people were present, either as young Europeans, as a tech-savvy and internationalised

eurogeneration or as indignados part of the protest movement started in Spain. This applies specifically to the volunteer media.

Protesting young people, the "Indignant Ones" are central to *Café Babel's* coverage: five out of eleven articles deal with indignant protests. *Café Babel* focuses on people who in their speeches predominantly do not provide any practical solutions to the economic and debt crises (such as introducing Eurobonds or exiting Greece from the eurozone) but who merely express frustration and discontent with the political system in Europe and desire for more democracy. In one articles a few young Europeans were are asked about the protest movement. These young people are put in "expert position" when commenting on a movement generated by mostly young people. This way discussion is created between young Europeans.

Myeurop also has extensively covered indignant protests, with a section on the homepage. But as these articles did not appear in my initial searches they were not part of analysis; only two about the indignant movement in Greece. In these two, the messages of protests are delivered by quoting banners people are carrying.

To see if the other online media talk about the movement outside the set time frame, I did a quick search: *EUobserver* gives the movement the widest coverage of the EU news media, eight articles in May-July 2011. *Eurotopics* mentions indignados in five and *Presseurop* in three articles and *Euractiv* only in one article during the same period. *European Voice* and *Eurozine* do not refer to to movemet at all, at least no articles were found with search word "indignant".

Young Europeans were talked about e.g. in *Euros de Village* where they are occasionally labelled as the Erasmus generation, and their protest are treated with sympathy and understanding. As one article puts it, "all these people, especially young, that have become excluded from the economic system only ask to be able to participate in it" (EdeV, 5). In an editorial in *Presseurop*, concern is expressed for "the young people who have suffered so much in the crisis" (PE, 10), so too in *Myeurop* that points out "it is principally the young [Greeks] who are going to pay the damage caused" by austerity measures in the country.

The EU news media do not mention young people during the set time frame. Taxpayers' assumed opinions are briefly described e.g. when explaining political leaders' inaction as they are "wary of angering their own taxpayers" with more bail-outs (EA, 7).

Spain, Ireland and other supporting roles

Other countries in crisis or on the verge of it such as Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Italy are mentioned in almost all media. In the EU news media they are presented mostly as an object of an action, most often related to their credit rating or borrowing costs: "Rating agency takes aim at Spain, euro falls" (EA, 15), "Spain and Italy's funding costs rose on Monday" (EO, 28). Occasionally, they are topics of separate articles, e.g. Spain, because of the country's early elections, Cyprus, due to government resignation, Ireland and Portugal because their interest rates on bail-out loans were cut. *A Fistful of Euros* provides a thorough economic analysis on these countries as two out of four article focus on them.

New member states such as Poland, Czech Republic and Romania appear in *Eurotopics* and *Presseurop*. All these articles discuss whether respective countries should join the currency union or not. Eastern Europe appears in one thorough analysis in *A Fistful of Euros* which provides a news aspect to the debate where "economic realities on Europe's Eastern periphery have largely been escaping the close scrutiny of media and analyst attention" (FE, 4).

Media

The media is visible actor in the press review media as all content published is filtered through the eyes of the European press. The media' role as opinionmakers is highlighted in *Eurotopics* and *Presseurop* where analyses and opinions of the European media are published: "The Athenian press is divided" or "warns Die Welt", writes *Presseurop*. "That was to be expected, the business newspaper Il Sole 24 Ore believes and calls for the introduction of eurobonds to overcome the crisis", *Eurotopics* explains. *Eurotopics* includes a short description of newspapers in each article e.g. "the conservative daily Jyllands-Posten" or "the left-wing weekly WOZ" to clear the stance of particular papers. *Presseurop* provides a link to a description of a newspaper where the publication's background is explained.

Eurotopics and *Presseurop* is an interesting case as there is double gate-keeping: First, the European national press decides what to write about and, second, the press review media decide what to republish of that. All in all, the media appear omnipotent judges as their opinions are directly delivered. The press review media helps readers a bit to contextualise newspapers' opinions by providing background information about papers. The pattern is sometimes broken in *Presseurop* as there are online dailies' own editorials and some articles are republished in full as

they appeared in the original. Consequently some actors are given a voice directly, i.e. they are quoted.

Experts

The debt crisis coverage is permeated with expert opinion. There is less in the EU news media, though more in *Euractiv* where one finds expert opinions mostly of market analysts. In these media experts are presented as evaluators of political leaders' and markets actions. In *Eurozine*, thoughts of various economic experts and scientists of the Western world (and in particular of Greece in Greece focused article) are cited.

Myeurop expert opinions are not only short commentaries on news events, but present alternative solutions to the debt crisis in interviews. This role is direct in the opinion media where experts are not interviewed but they write their own analyses of the crisis. In the opinion media, as there are many different expert opinions on the same topics, the atmosphere is more debative. Experts are not telling the final truth about a matter but rather present different ways of looking at an issue.

Summary

The main actors are roughly grouped political leaders, markets and rating agencies, Greece and Greek people, young people, other countries, media and experts. The prominence varies significantly: In the EU news media, most prominent are political leaders and market players whereas experts are little referred to and citizens almost never at all. The pattern is similar to the press review media (except for *Eurozine*), yet as all information is filtered through the lenses of the European press, the attitude is much more critical and the European press itself is de facto the most important actor. The pattern of the EU news media is similar also to publications in the opinion media, but with a lesser emphasis as the opinion webzines concentrated on pondering on the problems rather than on actors. In addition, as most of articles were written by outside authors, the expert knowledge plays a major part.

The volunteer media is exceptional because citizens, whether European, Greek or young are omnipresent, being interviewed and quoted, unlike in the other media. The opinion media occasionally bring up citizens when defending their rights but it is only in the volunteer media where citizens get to open their own mouths. This analysis should be taken with some reservation because the time frame was very limited in some media. As we established, e.g.

Euobserver covered citizens' indignant movement at least with eight articles in May-August but they were not part of analysis.

Can we talk about similarity in systems of meaning? The most comparable frames of references are between the EU news media and the press review media (except for *Eurozine*) which is logical as the time frame was the same and because the press review media sources and the EU news media have the same timetable. The volunteer media, especially *Café Babel* and partly *Myeurop* share the same frames of reference when they give voice to non-elite Europeans. Yet, *Myeurop* has similarity with the EU news media when talking about economics and events. Finally, although the opinion media and *Eurozine* included many of the same actors as the EU news media, they were treated differently. The focus was on topics and expert opinion was more prominent, hence the media have similar frames of references.

5.3.2. Topics

The debt crisis topics can be divided between a few kinds depending on concreteness and timelessness: event-like topics such as the Greek bail-out, concrete debt crisis topics not tied to specific events such political leadership in Europe or the right level of the debt; and abstract and ideological topics such as democracy and solidarity. It is worth noting that dailies focus primarily on day to day topics and even if they mention such abstract notions as solidarity, they do not discuss and analyse them. On the other hand, those publishing less frequently talk about more abstract issues such as what is Europe and Europeanness. Somewhere in between you have e.g. the opinion media.

The debt crisis day to day

The media covering most day to day topics in the debt crisis were the EU news media, the press review media (exc. *Eurozine*) and to some extent *Myeurop* and *Café Babel*. In the EU news and the press review media topics are similar: the main focus was on the second Greek bail-out, the summit and issues related to it, e.g. private sector involvement, selective default of Greece, credit rating agencies' reaction to the new Greek deal, flexibility of eurozone rescue fund, budget balance, Franco-German deal, contagion and market calming measures. Minor topics were, e.g. the Cyprus government's resignation and economic troubles, Spain's announcement of early elections, the IMF warning to France on budget deficit and countries debt levels, bank stress tests.

EU news articles tend to concentrate on a typical news structure: what, who, when, how and why. These articles tend to be quite analytical covering a wide range of issues, though when looked at closer are somewhat limited with alternatives, perhaps due to limited time frame. Then again, when "something else" appeared, it was clearly from other discourse. *Euractiv* publishes an article where László Andor's, commissioner for employment and social affairs, criticises austerity measures demanded from crisis countries as "unsustainable" (EA, 2). This is the only article among all 79 articles in the EU news media that explicitly criticises austerity measures. This demonstrates how limited are the topics presented by the EU news media.

The press review media also discussed in addition to that previously mentioned, possible euro membership of the Czech Republic and Romania, Greek taxi licences, US support for Greece, criticism towards Angela Merkel, zloty's problems, increased demand for gold, banks stress tests and their weaknesses. The media also discussed the need for action from French president Nicolas Sarkozy and Angela Merkel and the need for further economic integration and development of Europe.

Myeurop is a mixed case as it writes about both the current political events on a European level, e.g. the second Greece bail-out and the downgrading of Portugal's debt obligations and about events in Athens, mostly the social unrest. The political news reports follow to some extent the patterns of news reporting similar to the EU news media. The topics are almost the same but as the time frame is wider and articles are published less frequently, there tends to be more information with the impression given of it being more plural in aspects and information provided. For example, when the EU dailies reported downgrading of a government debt by rating agencies, the reports did not include criticism. Then again in *Myeurop*, when Portugal was downgraded, the article not only described Portugal's reactions to the downgrading but also mentioned Europe's idea to set up their own rating agency "to counterweigh the American agencies" and pointing out certain commentators' opinions that Moody's engages in speculation (ME, 11). *Myeurop* seems to be clear in its formulation as it e.g. not only talks about the increased flexibility of the eurozone rescue fund (decided on 21st of July) but explains that it means, "buying [government debt] from private creditors who want to get rid of it" and analyses further stating that "[i]t is a first step, though timid, towards a certain type of mutualisation of debt of European countries" (ME, 14).

Myeurop's second topic was Athenian unrests and events that correspondents reported from the streets, providing detailed information about the protests and the atmosphere, Greek society today, about the austerity measures and what they mean in concrete terms for Greeks. Among these articles two talk about the indignant movement in Greece. *Myeurop* even has its own section for this European protest movement on its homepage. This leads me to *Café Babel* where events reporting concentrated on indignant protests around Europe, Spain, Greece, France and Belgium. In *Café Babel*, only one article between May and August dealt with the economics of the debt crisis, the rest was about the indignant movement in South Europe or social implications and reactions of Greek people to the crisis. These articles report about the protests, describe the participants and their goals and give voice to protesters by interviewing them and quoting them. In one of these articles opinions of young Europeans about the protest movement are sought. Hence, these are young people commenting on a movement generated mostly by young people, creating a discussion between young Europeans. Of the volunteer media, *Euros de Village* covers some news events as well, but they are similarly oriented in terms of topics as the EU news media: the Cyprus crisis, the election of a new president for the European Central Bank and the second Greece bail-out.

The debt crisis and the background

Topics on the middle level are tied to the debt crisis but have a longer timespan than just the two weeks or even some two years the crisis has been going on. Topics discussing the debt crisis on a more analytical level appear in almost all publications, in the EU news media as well as in the volunteer media.

In the EU news media these kinds of analyses concentrate mostly on eurozone leaders inaction, economic coordination and European governance. Most analyses are published in *European Voice* which in one article compares Europe to Belgium that functioned long and well without a government. Not surprisingly, the press review media talks about similar things: a lack of political leadership in Europe,the leadership of Angela Merkel and EU president Herman Van Rompuy. Yet, compared to the EU news media, the tone is sharper. For instance, an article in *Presseurop* "on the political paralysis afflicting EU policymakers" bluntly states that "EU functionaries have perfected the practice of responsibility-avoidance; in fact they have transformed it into an artform" (PE, 9). According to this article, "EU is a technocratic institution" which "was able to construct and promote its agenda without having to respond directly to popular pressure",

hence, the EU lacks the leadership that could "tell it like it is and go out and win support for the painful measures required to restore economic stability" (PE, 9). *Presseurop* publishes other articles that are straightforwardly critical of the EU and European political leaders. In one, bank stress tests are deemed to lack credibility because the institution doing the tests, the EBA, "has been forced to comply with the diktat of European governments and the European Central Bank, which insists that there will be no sovereign default by a eurozone state" (PE, 4).

In *Eurotopics*, the tone is occasionally just as faultfinding, e.g. in an article on the future of Europe that says how "terrible still is the speechlessness of its politicians - notably the young ones. Today's joint Europe is a blueprint drawn up by old men. … But … peace has long been taken for granted. But an alternative justification for the political union has never been found. And this is why the solution to the European crisis is not to be found among the old. It requires the vigour - and the language - of a new generation of politicians. Perhaps this is the greatest challenge" (ET, 8). Other issues *Eurotopics* raised in the European press are e.g. Southern European countries' oil dependence, difference of indebtedness between West and East Europe, bias of American credit rating agencies towards the US debt, Europe's reputation, the need for a transfer union, etc.

Economic analysis of the debt crisis and background is provided in the opinion media, especially by *Social Europe Journal* (SEJ) and *A Fistful of Euros*. The former talks about many similar topics like the EU news media but as the writers are experts, the articles tended to be very knowledgeable and specific and going on about the economic fundamentals of the crisis and economic theory in general. *SEJ* covers the second bail-out of Greece and its content, the debt crisis in general, and credit rating agencies. There were many topics outside the day-to-day news agenda such as, what is the right level of the government debt, ideologies on paying a sovereign debt, the effectiveness of wage depression to enhance competitiveness, how to bring about growth in an economy. *A Fistful of Euros* talks about the vulnerability of Eastern European economies and analyses economies of Southern European countries. Even those issues on the news agenda have completely new aspects when discussed in the opinion media. E.g. an article in SEJ points out that the 21 % write-down on private creditors debt agreed in the July summit is actually a gain as "the market discount was already 50 % for Greek debt" and that all private sector involvement actually amounts to "a gigantic wealth transfer from taxpayers to essentially the richest 5% of the world" (SEJ, 12). The reason the agreement turned so bad for taxpayers is as the article puts, "skill shortage in the finance ministry" in negotiating countries and "the

strong lobbying power of the banking sector" (SEJ, 12). It is important to point out that SEJ was the only publication where the July agreement was examined from this perspective.

Similarly *Myeurop* published a few articles in which the debt crisis was elaborated from a more theoretical point of view. In one of them "europeanisation" of the Greek debt was seriously discussed, i.e. taking all the Greek debt under the responsibility of eurozone countries as a solution to the debt crisis. Other two non day-to-day articles offered a new perspective on the crisis. One compared Greece to Lithuania where austerity measures did put the economy back on the track but did not ease the severe unemployment. The other introduced an alternative currency system, the local Bavarian currency called Chiemgauer.

One single topic was Greece. Its political system was analysed e.g. in *Presseurop*, that criticised "the labor-centric jobs-for-votes system" created partly by the prime minister George Papandreou (PE, 5). *Eurozine* as well addresses corruption and other problems of the Greek political system and the country's history of bankruptcies. *Café Babel* talks about the increase in suicide in Greece, a consequence of economic difficulties. Interestingly, only in *Presseurop* the theme was raised during May-August. In another *Café Babel's* article, a young Greek woman expresses her frustration with Greek "politicians' apathy for people's problems" and criticises them for "cutting pensions, wages, creating an instable fiscal system and executing blindfold economic theories that have nothing to do with the reality of the country" (CB, 6). An article in *Social Europe Journal* analyses Greece from a economic perspective saying that instead of the claimed oversize of public sector the problem is "the quality of the domestically produced goods relative to their cost and on the ability of domestically produced goods to reach foreign markets" i.e. the share of exports (SEJ, 4). *The European* analyses the Greek economy from multiple perspectives and points out that current dealing with crisis and intervening with its inner politics looks like "their country is being transformed into a protectorate" (TE, 4).

The debt crisis included other than strictly Greece related topics. *Euros de Village* focused generally on Europe and the economic crisis (not only the debt crisis). The webzine discussed e.g. problems of Southern European societies and the young (Erasmus) generation's frustration at the current state of affairs and points out that "economic, social and political systems have continued to act in the same way as usual, unwilling to perceive the changes in society" (EdeV, 2). Young people are a topic in another article that discusses the democracy movement of young people that started off in Spain saying that young people that "feel excluded from economic

system ask to be able to participate in it. Far from being anti-system discourse, it is a demand to be part of society with all its possibilities" (EdeV, 5). Other topics were, for instance, eurosceptism, protectionism and European governance, though clearly the themes in the background are the democratic deficit, the future of Europe and the EU.

Ideology and ideals

There are not many abstract topics that are explicitly discussed, I would discern three: democracy, Europe and solidarity.

Democracy is mentioned explicitly almost in every article in *Café Babel*. It is not exactly analysed theoretically but treated as an unquestionable value per se. Hopes, demands and disappointment are directed towards it: "Democracy should give us a choice, but we don't have one" (CB, 8), "reclaim the true meaning of democracy" (CB, 5), "no to the betrayal of democracy" (CB, 8). The message delivered by young people in *Café Babel* is as blunt as it is direct: "They defend democracy but feel that the current system is not a real democracy because the people don't have the power. That's why the emphasis is on 'real' democracy" (CB, 3). There is also idealism about the concept: "Discussion between citizens in public places is the true spirit of democracy" (CB, 4). Idealistically democracy is seen as key to resolving problems: "using the spirit of the ancient Greek democracy is the only solution for the rotten political system", says an interviewee (CB, 10). But there are sobering thoughts as well: democracy is still a concept that is as romantic as it is utopian" (CB, 5).

Euros de Village talks about European democracy, the need to "regain the value of representational democracy and complement it with participative democracy" and that it depends on "quality of political discussion" (EdeV, 3). *Eurozine* reflects critically the relationship between democracy and markets saying that "the power exerted by high finance and the erosion of the middle class are bad for the functioning of checks and balances, for securing the social glue and the social capital (in Robert Putnam's words) that underpin a democratic order" and "When economic conditions deteriorate and social despair rises while moral values are trampled on, democracy is threatened" (EZ, 2).

Europe is another important topic appearing in all publications but usually briefly when speculated about the future of Europe in case the euro disintegrates. *Eurozine* takes contemplation on Europe further in a republished interview with the former president of the

European Commission Jacques Delors who talks about "the soul of Europe", "a European way of thinking" and "awareness of our shared [European] values" that are "deeply rooted in Greek democracy, Roman law, the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the Reformation and, in France of course, the Revolution". Delors emphasises that " the formulation of shared interests that Europe can exist and can renew itself" and as there are no more wars, "we have to find other ideas to mobilize Europeans" (EZ, 1). *Euros de Village* discusses the future of Europe in a few opinion articles, one pointing out that "we must not lose the North, nor the South" and that the crisis is chance to re-evaluate Europe (EdeV, 3). *Presseurop* also touches the topic in several articles, e.g. pointing out that despite the ideas of two Europes, the North of strict budgets and the South with deficits, "the destiny of Europe as a historical power has always been bound to the Mediterranean" (PE, 16).

A third notion that kept on appearing in news coverage was solidarity. "EU moves out of crisis with solidarity", writes *Eurotopics* when the eurozone countries agreed to grant another loan to Greece in the July summit (ET, 9). During the summit it was decided also to lower interest rates of eurozone countries' loans given to Greece, Ireland and Portugal which the conservative business Les Echos hails as "a transfer of wealth and a genuine show of solidarity among European taxpayers" (ET, 9). Similar understanding of European solidarity, giving money to countries in crisis, appears in many other media. A sign of solidarity would also be to go a step further and "Europeanise" the Greek debt, i.e. mutualise the whole of it "to avoid the risk of Greece defaulting and the contagion of the banking system" (ME, 8). It is interesting that there is very little questioning of this "European" way of resolving the crisis, when the resolution can be interpreted as helping the banks that gave Greece loans in the first place. Though there are separate discussions about involving private sector, they are not included when discussing *solidarity*.

Another way of framing solidarity is in the coverage of the indignant movements; there you also have *de facto* European solidarity. As indignant protesters in Brussels put it, "from the start our aim was to show our solidarity with the organised passive resistance going on at the moment in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia" (CB, 4). Protesters in Spain show support for the movement in Greece in their banners "Real democracy now. In Greece too" (ME, 3). Finally, there is Jacques Delors' vaguely defined solidarity which is "solidarity that really counts and not just solidarity that is profitable" and though Delors admists there is always a "tension between power and

solidarity", in a "Europe based on shared interests you cannot win at the expense of others" (EZ, 1).

Summary

Day-to-day, eventful topics were covered by the EU news media and by the press review media (except for *Eurozine*). They touched on the same topics and approached them mainly through reporting (with occasional analysis and opinions as an exception). However, in the press review media, there was more explicit criticism about what was subdued or even lacking in the EU news media.

Opinion webzines also touched similar issues to the EU news media but there were more theoretical topics included, plus, everything was dealt from a contemplative point of view as was the case in *Eurozine*. Opinion webzines, especially *A Fistful of Euros* and *Social Europe Journal* had an economics point of view. In general the topics of *Eurozine* and opinion webzines were analysed in-depth and with criticism. In addition there was also a lot variation in topics that were discussed and the scope of issues was larger and included more general topics than e.g. the EU news media and the press review media.

European volunteer webzines covered both ideological and theoretical topics such as the future of Europe and democracy but also events such as the second Greek bailout. Yet, there were alternative topics such as European protest movements that were covered very little or not at all by the other media considering the frequency of their news publication in general. There were significant differences in the volunteer media: *Euros de village* had a lot of general contemplation on the crisis, hence, it was similar to *The European* (the opinion media). *Myeurop* had a lot of in-depth reporting of events and economics of the crisis which brings it closer to the EU news media. Then again, it had on-the-ground reports from Greece, which brings it closer to *Café Babel*.

To summarise, there were variations in patterns of frames of reference. The most inherently similar as a group were the EU news media and the press review media (except for *Eurozine*). The most different, with the most variety of frames of reference in terms of topics was the volunteer media.

5.3.3. Sources

In the European online media there are five types of visible sources: the other media, political leaders and institutions, market players (e.g. credit rating agencies, banks), experts (academic or market analysts) and citizens. Sources include different references to external discourses, such as articles reprinted, information cited in the other media, opinions published elsewhere, quotes from people whether said directly to the specific publications (an interview) or e.g. in a press conference. In order to get a better view of differences in media, the sources are described by media categories.

EU news media

There are three types of sources for news for *Euractiv*, *Euobserver* and *European Voice*: political leaders and political institutions with their press releases and press conferences and anonymous political sources, the other media, market players such as credit rating agencies and market information provided by market players and other sources, such as market analysts and other experts . It is sometimes difficult to distinguish these sources, for instance, in cases when it is cited what a political leader has said in other media. In addition some actors such as Angela Merkel and Jean-Claude Trichet are presented both as actors and sources simultaneously.

As to the first type of the sources, the trend is similar to that mentioned in section "Actors". Sources are mostly leading politicians, e.g. Angela Merkel, José Manuel Barroso, that are often prominent actors. As to other sources, credit rating agencies play a very prominent role, comparable to prominent political actors and sources. Nonetheless, it is surprising how infrequently direct market sources are used, such as analysts and economists considering the fact that "market" as an actor is very prominent in news coverage. In *Euobserver* there was not one economist or analyst mentioned during the two weeks of July. *European Voice* had six references with only two direct quotes. *Euractiv* was different, there was around 15 quotes or citations with economic expert opinions and a whole interview with an economist on the financial transactions tax. Market sentiments are most often described by referring to market information, that is, via the rise or fall of borrowing costs in particular countries, i.e. whether yields on the Italy's government debt increase or decrease.

In many cases, the EU news media resorted to the established Western news media such as *Reuters* and *The Financial Times* which were by far the most cited in all three online dailies. *European Voice* had the fewest media references, only three: *The Financial Times*, *Associated*

Press and *Reuters*. *Euractiv* used the other news media services the most (or at least the most explicitly). In *Euractiv* seven articles out of 16 were republished from *Reuters*. This was clearly stated "Euractiv with Reuters". In addition, there were references to German *Bild* and *Focus*, Greek *Kathimerini* and the Irish *Sunday Business Post*. *Euobserver* cited mostly *Reuters* and *The Financial Times* but there were also references to the German media, *Bild*, *Tageszeitung*, *Die Welt*, *Hamburger Abendblatt* and *ARD*, the American *The Wall Street Journal* and French *AFP*. All in all there were 18 references in 34 articles. In most cases, the media was cited for information or for a politician's interview, not for sharing particular media's opinion on a matter as is the case in the press reviews *Eurotopics* and *Presseurop*.

It is worth observing that if there were opinions written by outside authors, they tended to be experts, politicians or journalists.

Opinion media

The majority of articles are written by experts outside the editorial team. And in most cases, at least in *A Fistful of Euros* and *Social Europe Journal*, the articles were already published on some other site and printed again supposedly through cooperation with the other media or by agreement with the writer. Hence, experts are the most important source.

In addition, there are references to the other media. In *The European*, writers refer mostly to the German media, German journalists, writers and thinkers. In *A Fistful of Euros*, references are mainly made to the international Western news media such as *Bloomberg*, *The Financial Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. In *Social Europe Journal* there are occasional references to some European philosophers and two references to a book by two economists. In general, references were occasional and do not play such a central role as they do, for instance, in *Euractiv*.

Volunteer media

In the volunteer media, sources vary according to publication. In *Café Babel* they are actors, citizens, young Europeans and protesters in different countries. Direct quotes from people constitute a great part of the body text of all articles: There is one interview, a vox pop, three reports with some quotes, an opinion from a young Greek woman (outside author), a "commentators vox pop" where *Café Babel* asked young people around Europe about their views on the protest movement. There is also one direct media source: a press review from *Eurotopics*, that *Café Babel* publishes four times a month; this one was about the debt crisis.

As to sources in *Myeurop*, they vary from academic experts, market actors and governmental institutions to Greek citizens and media sources. In four news reports on recent events, e.g. the second Greek bail-out, there are links to media sources (mostly French language sources and media, e.g. *Le Monde*, but also *Reuters* and the European media such as *Euractiv* and *Toute l'Europe*). Of the other 12 articles, there are interviews with Greek people in Athens or interviews with economic experts but no external media links. In general, in all articles there is quite a lot of expert opinion.

In *Euros de Village*, there are almost no direct links or references to particular media or institutional sources and no direct quotes, but considering the topics, EU institutions have probably been a source of information and as language versions are separate with different content, it is safe to assume that the national media might have served as a source. In one of the Spanish articles, there was a reference to a Spanish language site with EU news, hence it is possible that the other EU media have been a source as well.

Press review media

Obviously the number one source for the press reviews is the press. *Eurotopics* had most articles coming from German newspapers (5), Spain (4 of which 3 were from El País), Greece (3 of which 2 were from Ta Nea) and France (3). Two articles were published from the Czech Republic, Switzerland and the UK. There was also one article from each of the following countries: Poland, Slovakia, Portugal, Romania, the Netherlands, Hungary, Denmark and Italy. *Presseurop* demonstrated a similar pattern of articles published from mostly Greek (7 of which 4 were from Ta Nea) and German (5) papers, but also from France (2), the UK (2) and Poland (2). Also one article was published from the Netherlands, Switzerland and from the US. All in all out of 27 member states articles were only from 15 countries.

The prominence of big countries whether in the eurozone or not, is easy to observe. In addition, many countries outside the eurozone are included but many inside it, such as Finland, Belgium, Austria and Ireland are excluded. However, despite some leaning on particular countries, the sources of news are varied; all in all 37 different papers were consulted.

It is worth noting that newspapers consulted include mainly the established media that have their own news agenda, framing and values. However, there were some exceptions in both, e.g. *Eurotopics* published an excerpt from French left-wing journalist Jean Quatremers' blog (writing

for left daily Libération) and Romanian online paper *Acum*. *Presseurop* published long articles from English online paper *Spiked* and French online paper *Mediapart*, both with articles critical of the EU. As to sources of the cited media, they are pretty much the same as actors, so they are not described separately.

Summary

The main sources are political leaders and institutions (eurozone leaders, Angela Merkel, ECB), markets players (e.g. banks, credit rating agencies), experts (academic experts, economists, and analysts), citizens (Greek people, young people, Europeans) and media. Their prominence varies according to categories: In the EU news media, the most prominent are political leaders and market players and countries, whereas experts are seldom referred to. In the press review media, the European press is the most important source. Most of the articles in the opinion media were written by outside authors and their expert knowledge played the greatest part. The volunteer media are the most exceptional and even internally varying. However, the distinct feature of these publication is the reliance on citizens whether European, Greeks or young people as a source.

All in all, there are fewer common features in sources. Publications had some similar visible media sources, mainly the big Western media and the German press. Market players were a source in the EU news media, partly *Myeurop* and the press review media. Expert sources permeated all media but they were always different experts. Political leaders were quoted to varying extent in almost all media. European webzines functioned as a source only in the volunteer media.

5.3.4. Virtual contact

In this section, I look at indications of community of faith. I also look if there are indications of shared values, references to history, cultural elements or any elements relevant to identity or the cultural public sphere. In this section as well, the text is divided by categories as there are more internal similarities.

EU news media

As to references of the 'we' or indication of the community of faith, there was no explicit sign of this. There is an addressee: the international audience that is interested in 'high politics', economics and politics, and in keeping itself up to date with the current events on the grand

stage of international relations and the EU. The target audience was made clear already at the stage of categorisation where the online media's readership was explained. There is some talk about solidarity but it was not significant and not a theme per se, or a theme that would have been pondered upon, hence, there is no sense of priority with the community of faith.

The news coverage seems distant, as from an outsider's point of view. There are no quotes from inside Greece or Greeks. The prime minister George Papandreou's occasional quotes are mostly comments on decisions made by other eurozone countries. There also no insights into the minds of e.g. Germans and Germany, save for Angela Merkel and her political comment. Hence, it seems the virtual contact is somewhat thin; it leaves the reader feeling as an outsider, which is, on the other hand, a characteristic of today's mass media. However, the somewhat invisible virtual contact, or indication of the community of faith corresponds with the traditional values of quality journalism: objective and independent. Of course, one can question the ideal of objectiveness but it is not relevant in this case.

Opinion media

As the opinion media was made of expert commentaries, the tone was analytical and somewhat distant. Nonetheless, in these publications, especially *Social Europe Journal* and *The European*, sympathy for European taxpayers or Greeks was evident and there was outspoken criticism of the banks and private sector. Yet, despite the sympathy expresses towards the European taxpayers or Greeks, these are not the communities with which one identifies when reading the webzines. *A Fistful of Euros* was more concentrated on making an economic analysis of the current situation, and was less so focused on people.

The articles in *The European* were clearly written for a German audience and when they said "we", they meant, "we, the Germans" but in the same breath in some cases they say "we" as part of Europe, e.g. "We need a vision of what we want to do with the continent" (TE, 2). *In A Fistful of Euros* or in *Social Europe Journal*, there was no explicit references to community of faith but as writers were mostly European or American experts, academics and politicians and topics complicated, I assume, on some level, the readers are invited to an imagined Western cosmopolitan intellectual sphere.

Volunteer media

When it comes to identification and indication of community of faith in the volunteer media, there is no one clear answer. In *Café Babel*, Greek people interviewed speak about Greece and refer to themselves as belonging to that community. However, when discussing protest movement, young people are often mentioned. And as the protest movement of young people around Europe is commented upon by young people around Europe and reported by young people in Europe, the reference group is undeniably the young people around Europe. Even though, especially in Athens, there were other people, not only young, protesting on the streets, they are not strongly present in articles. *Café Babel*, branding itself as the magazine of eurogeneration, does claim the title.

There is no explicit 'we' in *Myeurop*. But in the articles from Athens, the sympathy clearly falls on the Greek people, the journalist shows how difficult the situation is for common Greeks. *Myeurop* not only shows what happens in Greece and on the European institutional level but also discusses economic alternatives. There appears to be no particular political agenda or particular views held, however, it seems those alternatives that are more "European" e.g. europeanisation of the Greek debt, i.e. making EU absorb all the Greek debt at once and Eurobonds; that is issuing common government bonds in all of theeurozone, are slightly favoured. The target audience of the publication is quite clear: French-speaking readers interested in European affairs. But Greek plight is shown in an empathetic way and the debt crisis is presented as a European problem, there is no "French" perspective despite the majority of French readers. This implies the French readers are invited to the invisible European community, feel compassionate about the Greek problems and take part intellectually in resolving the common debt crisis.

Depending on the writers, the community of faith is more or less explicit. Opinions published in Spanish, especially, had a very strong reference to community of faith referring to Greek aid and how we, Europeans, should give "as fellow European countrymen" (EdeV, 13) and how "we are in front of a first grand opportunity of 21st century" to do something about the "weaknesses of our EU" (EdeV, 10). Another point of communal bonding is supposedly the citizens as opposed to political leaders and the finance world. Banks and the private sector are criticised for their action and EU leaders are demanded to correct this.

Press review media

As the press review media covers the whole of the European press and allocates it for the reader to explore one cannot but identify him or herself with Europe at large. Again, we are talking about Europe on a very intellectual level as topics and the way they are treated is serious. The press review media transfers the quality media for everyone's observation.

Yet, as in *Eurotopics* and *Presseurop* articles are reprinted from various sources. This is notable because there are occassional references to 'we' the Greeks or 'we' the Czech people but 'we' the Europeans only occasionally; the European community of faith is rather week and ambiguous. One can compare it to *Café Babel* that has a clearly defined target group with which one can identify much stronger. Yet, there is the 'we' apart from actors such as Germany, eurozone leaders and Greece as their actions are filtered through critical lenses of the European media. The sense of 'we' is stronger in the articles speaking of the idea of Europe.

In *Eurozine* 'we' the Europeans is brought up in the interview with Jacques Delors who constantly refers to "our history", to "sense of kinship, of similarity between us", "our thoughts and our actions", "solidarity between us", "our shared values" and describes Europe as a whole as 'we' (EZ, 1). Delors indicates the community of faith very explicitly saying "we are part of a community", which is not seen in other articles. In another article in *Eurozine*, the writer positions himself among the Greek people saying "we Greeks" and "our country" (EZ, 3). In addition, in all articles financial markets and many political leaders are criticised and thus positioned as 'them' and as the writers talk about what to alter in society, so that not only elite, benefits. This way they position themselves as speaking in the interest of society and the people. The reader can likewise identify him or herself with the interest of European society and people.

5.4. Final remarks on analysis

The idea of chapter five was to research how the debt crisis debate unfolded in these online publications. I also wanted to test the categories made in chapter four. Having analysed news coverage, I conclude that publications comply well with the categories made earlier. Yet, there are differences inside categories when looking at different indicators and, by some standards, some publications could be placed in other categories as well. Next, I will sum up my observations.

EU news media

The EU news media act according their name: They report news on international level. The sources are mainly political leaders, institutions or the mass media such as *Reuters* or *The Financial Times* compared to which news coverage looks alike. The voices of citizens are missing completely. *Euractiv*, *Euobserver* and *European Voice* are very alike. But *Euractiv* had the most "alternative" views; it reported about financial transaction tax and made criticism of the austerity measures. There are no clear positions that could be labelled explicitly national. Rather news coverage appears to reflect ideological interests and values, reporting about political leaders and credit rating agencies, instead of citizens and organisations.

Opinion media

The European opinion webzines publish critical expert commentaries on current European affairs. They are critical of EU leaders' actions, austerity measures and the situation in the financial world. The *Social Europe Journal* had the most critical and economics-oriented (thus very well argued) texts, but then again it is an outspokenly leftist publication. However, the shortage of such critical positions in the EU news media shows how imbalanced the mainstream EU media's coverage is. The opinion media is similar to the press review media in topics and critical positions but commentary webzines are more detailed and analytical. Compared to the volunteer media, there are even more differences: the volunteer media is not at all commentary, not at all as focused on hard core economics and places actors, especially non-elites, Greeks and young Europeans in the centre, whereas opinion webzines' discussions are theoretical and intellectual, analysing economic problems froma an economic theoretical point of view.

Volunteer media

The European volunteer media was the most internally varied in its approaches to the debt crisis. *Café Babel* focused on the protest movement and discussions on democracy, *Myeurop* published reports from Greece, current events analyses and interviews with economic experts. *Euro de village* was centred on analyses and on general reflections both the debt crisis and the economic crisis and the future of Europe. Common to all are their striking differences to other categories. Then again, the volunteer media covered a very large period of time where as other media's text samples covered shorter period. Due to irregular coverage reporting seemed occasional and somewhat unsystematic, especially *in Café Babel* and *Euros de Village*. All in all, citizens and young people were present. Coverage focused not only on economics and politics,

but included questions of Europeanness, the future of Europe, democracy, etc. It is interesting that despite a variety of language versions (some independent), there were no national aspects to be seen. If all articles were translated in the same language, one could not make a difference.

Press review media

There were two groups: dailies, *Eurotopics* and *Presseurop* that focus on politics and economics and one weekly, *Eurozine* that focuses largely on society and culture. The dailies followed the same patterns as the EU news media in terms actors and topics. Yet, generally articles are more critical towards political leaders and market players than the EU news media. Though through *Eurotopics* and *Presseurop* one can follow the European press commentaries, it is difficult to make a generalisation e.g. of the attitude of the French press because published articles are short and reflect rather a variety than a consistency of opinions. *Eurozine* published long analytical articles on the evolution of European integration and the market system.

Interestingly, with the press reviews we are talking about double gatekeeping: the national media choose what to comment on or write about and the press review media chooses what to republish. Generally, the picture of the debt crisis is rather colourful. All publications are critical of Germany, eurozone leaders, the EU and Greece. So *Presseurop*, financed by the European Commission does demonstrate editorial independence as it claims.

6. The public sphere in European online media

In chapter five I analysed the debt crisis coverage in selected publications. Next, I compare empirical results with the initial model of the European public sphere that I drew in chapter three. Then I will answer my original research question: What kind of a public sphere do the European online media construct?

6.1. The internet enables diversity

One of the most important observations of both categorisation and analysis of the European online media is its diversity in topics, actors or political opinions. One of my initial hypotheses was that the internet enriches EU debate as it decreases publishing costs and therefore barriers. In view of my empirical results, the internet really does do that. There is a plurality of arguments and the arguments presented in the mainstream media (or in this case the EU news media) are not the only valid ones.

What was on some level surprising was the lack of nationalistic features in publications, even in the media linguistically bound and targeting national rather than European audience. The only exception was *The European* in which there were references to German thinkers and the German media (though references to Europe were numerous as well). In this sense the European media are rather "European", or "cosmopolitan" and "global", as there were no references to "Europeanness" per se. Yet, there were few references to shared values, so either the shared values are so inherent they do not need reminding or "European" values are not important but general political values, the difference between left and right politics, are and they clearly do not recognise national boundaries.

The division between left and right wing values was quite present when comparing the news coverage as a whole. It was more subdued in e.g. the EU news media where differences in opinions were turned into not the debate of values but into debate of who is paying for what and what is technically the right solution. The EU news media does not talk about values as it so strongly tries to be "neutral". Though not quite, as it does talk about values, it talks about "solidarity" between countries, it portrays e.g. the decision to go ahead with the second bail-out of Greece as a show of European solidarity but does not talk about what sort of political choices are made. As if it is a technical question, not a question of political choice.

Euractiv published Poland's comissary's critique towards austerity measures and mentioned his socialist background as if explaining his critique. Other opinions are not portrayed in such a way, as if this kind of (supposedly right-wing) thinking is the norm and criticising austerity measures as ineffective an exception in public discourse (which is apparently is, at least in the EU news media). *Presseurop* and *Eurotopics* through the eyes of the European press are more critical of the political establishment yet the real criticism – the most outspoken – comes from the volunteer media and the opinion media that criticise both the principles behind economic decisions made during the crisis (e.g. *Social Europe Journal*) and the state of affairs where citizens are paying for mistakes made by banks and government (e.g. *Café Babel*).

This quick glance over results shows how profoundly political the debt crisis and its solutions are. The European online media also demonstrate how the EU is permeated with 'the political' and passions as is brought up by Mouffe. The EU is not boring, it is political; there are conflicts of interests which are quite frank and palpable. Of course, the structure of the EU does not make this division easy to perceive and this is partly the reason why the EU is seen as so dull and complicated on the national level.

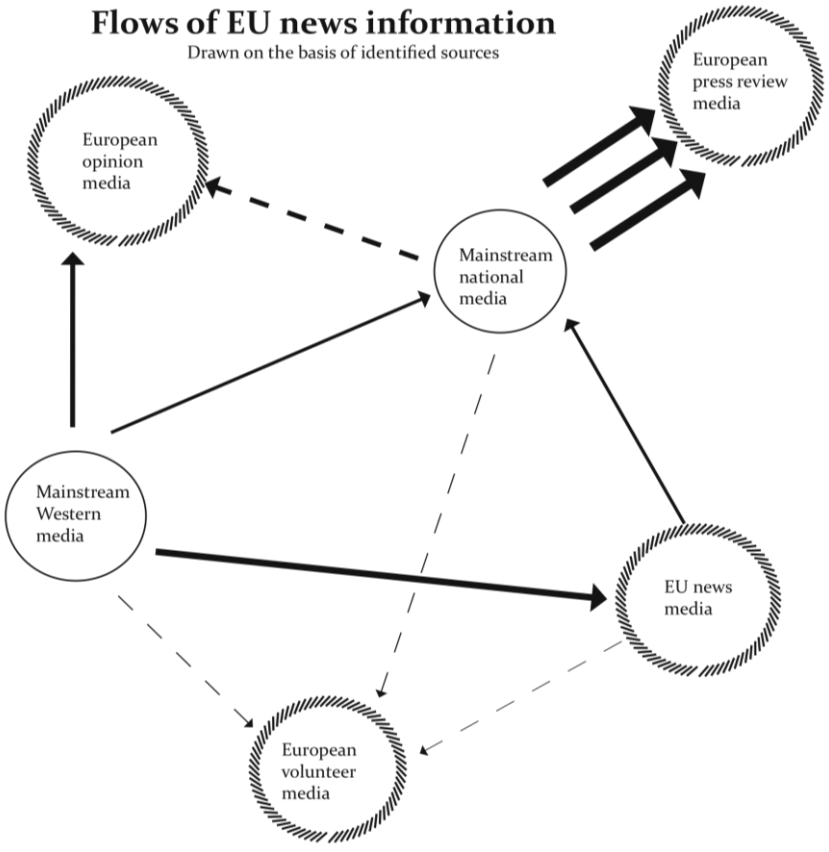
One of my operative questions was what positions do the different media take (e.g. accommodative, disjunctive, mediatory, distant or participatory) and do they try to generate some mutual understanding (e.g. for the sake of European unity), some unanimity or are they partial. Firstly, none of the European online media platform was seriously disruptive in a sense that there was an anti-system discourse;, on the contrary the system was supporet by wanting to change it (as in *Café Babel*). There were differences though: The EU news media is the least disruptive and most distant considering the reader. *Café Babel* does not talk economics or provide technical solutions but voices the concerns of the young and the Greek people making it participatory. *Social Europe Journal* and *A Fistful of Euros* provide an alternative economics commentary.

Keeping the variety in mind, who is able to grasp it? As earlier research on the European online media shows (cf. 4.1.2.), the EU news media is known in Brussels and read by the EU administration; but what about others? *Café Babel's* 300 000 unique monthly visitors constitute mostly European students and young professionals, the 'euro-generation'. Where as of 200 000 monthly readers of *Euractiv* only 22 % fall in to the category education, research and think tanks of which the amount of young Europeans is not clear but surely not all. Hence, there cannot be

too many overlapping readers. In addition, the EU covers 500 million Europeans, so even there would be no overlapping readers; the European media is read by a fraction of whole population.

6.2. Diversity reconsidered: EU information news flows

Diversity should be reconsidered. In the two following graphs I have tried to visualise the information flows of EU news in analysed the European online media based on both actors and sources (as we have earlier established, in many situations they are the one and same). The national media and the international news agencies are included as they play an important role in the news making of the European media. The pictures try to convey the impression I obtained about the relative importance or rather the interconnectedness of the EU news media. Here it is worth noting that the opinion, the press review and volunteer media do not send information flows in any direction. The EU news media is sending information and influences to the national media (conclusion based on research on EU correspondents' sources used for everyday work) and to the European volunteer media because in it there were occasional references to the EU news media. The volunteer media, the opinion media and the press review media was not cited in the EU news media. But the international news media served as a source for many articles signifying the dominance institutions such as *Reuters* have on agenda-setting and opinion-formation.

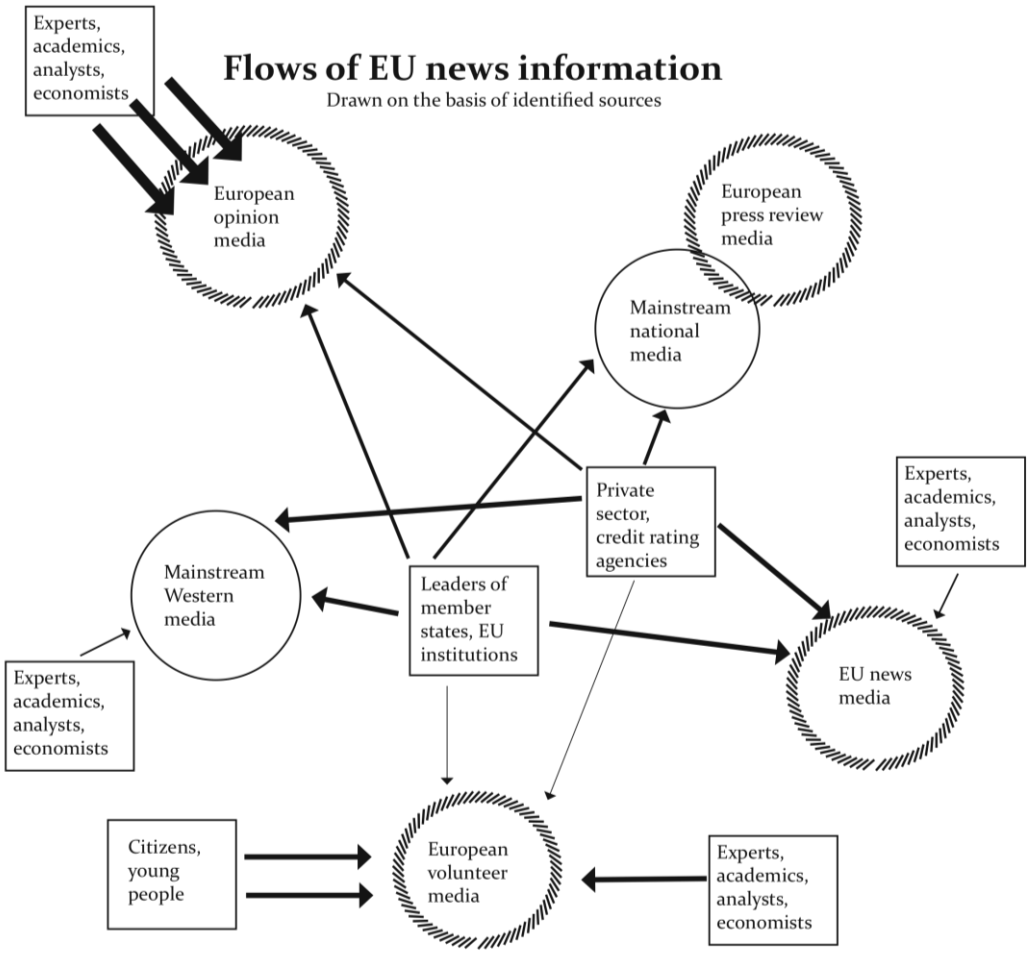


In the first picture, only the media players are visible. This is to show the relative importance of the so called non-European online media. Arrows' thickness is suggestive, but not conclusive as that would demand a bigger sample of texts and more quantitative measuring. Nonetheless, it gives an idea of how (surprisingly) important the international news agencies and the national media is to the European online media. Especially the

former is what Sifft et al. (2007) refers to as Westernisation as opposed to Europeanisation. Of course, I am lacking invisible sources, meaning I don't know whether writers in the volunteer media read the opinion media or the press review media. I only know what is clearly stated by referencing or quoting. Were I to know this, the strength of information influence could be different. I am also not analysing readership and readers' experiences of news reading and their interpretations.

In the second picture, I include other sources and erase media news flows. The graph is more confusing but it shows how interconnected the actors and sources are. Also, in defence of relative importance of expert, citizen and other sources, these crosses do not fully convey the relative influence, though in the opinion media the dominant link is clearly stated and in the volunteer media the relative importance of citizens' influence is drawn.

Once again, it is easy to see the singular cases. Citizens and young people are each a source and an active actor only in the volunteer media (though compassion and concern for the rights of citizens are expressed e.g. in *Social Europe Journal*). To be noted: experts look as if they are very important as the boxes are many. The plurality of boxes just goes to show that each group of

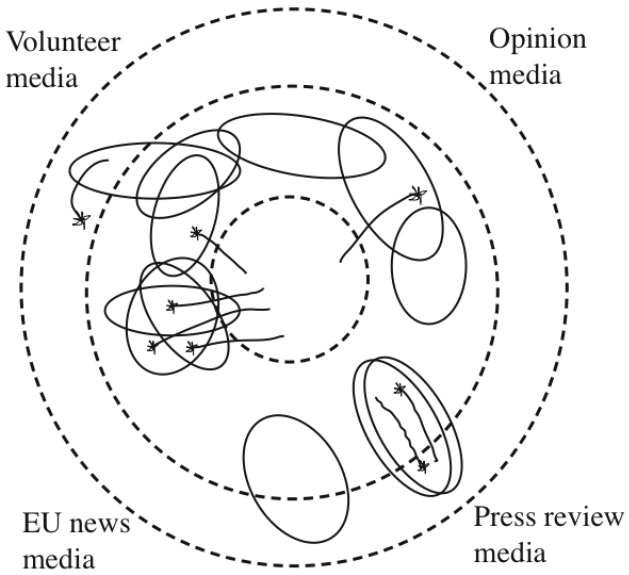


publication uses different experts, whereas political leaders or institutions (e.g. Angela Merkel, European Central Bank) or market players (e.g. credit rating agencies) are functioning as the same source/actor in all publications. The graphs above point out an important issue which somewhat undermines the previous appraisal of plurality: the lack ofplurality. The relative importance of news agencies and political and market players and the unimportance of citizens demonstrates how focused the European online media is on particular sources and actors.

6.3. Many layers, little interaction?

In this subchapter I discuss whether my initial definition of the European public sphere is at all valid when looking at the European online media. The ideal definition of the European public sphere was as a space where European affairs are discussed by all Europeans concerned. Issues and intakes are not necessarily only political but cultural, emotional, etc. As there is discursive interaction between all levels, strong publics of EU institutions, Pan-European media and the national media spheres, concerns voiced by citizens e.g. in national perspectives can reach strong publics. As there is all this discursive interaction, citizens are aware of different options and how other people view the same topic.

Admittedly the reality does not correspond to the ideal. Firstly, there are the communication dynamics formulated by Steeg i.e. the discursive interaction and systems of meaning. In the previous section I looked at discursive interaction, that is, references to other opinions or media outside that particular medium. As seen, it was not balanced and not all opinions were heard. The second issue is convergence of systems of meaning, that is, overlap of topics and perspectives: Do online the media speak about the same issues, at the same time with the same frame of reference? The drawings in the previous section give a visual hint: no or only partly yes.



In the following picture, I have drawn a new sketch of EPS. Ellipses describe the discourses developed in the particular media. As it shows, frames of references are not at all similar in all

media. The EU news media are the most alike; the volunteer media are most different. Then again, do we need similarity in frames of references? Doesn't it mean there would then be no alternatives, no plurality? Would it be satisfying if all framed the debt crisis as the EU news media? Hence, it seems, it is really the discursive interaction that is more important in communications dynamics. Then again, through this interaction frames would converge and diversify.

As to the structure of the European public sphere into different layers, strong publics, segmented public, the European media and the national public spheres, it appears working enough a description. There is no reason to dismiss any public. In the course of this thesis, Pan-European media has, in my opinion, demonstrated its importance and defended its place in this model of EPS. Pan-European media is, as previous research demonstrates, a source of information for EU correspondents writing for national media and the point of view of national media is conveyed to the Pan-European level by the press review media. In addition, Pan-European media has different readerships and ways to organise their publications. Many are volunteer and participatory; indicative of a European civil society. European media is more than just about the hypothetical.

6.4. Online publications and the public sphere

In this chapter I will briefly discuss what kind of a European public sphere each of four categories of online publications construct.

6.4.1. Long live Brussels - International EU news media

The EU news media focus on the official EU institutions and European leaders. Western news agencies play a major role in their news making and in fact, their own articles do not look much different. Generally, the EU news media tend to follow the traditional journalistic values of neutrality and objectivity. But how objective are they? Citizens' voices are not heard nor alternative views on how to deal with the debt crisis. The EU news media criticise European leaders and institutions, but in similar tone: the EU is lacking leadership, the EU not doing enough. Not one media platform questions the deal made on July 21st as it was questioned in *Social Europe Journal*: banks get off the hook and the burden of payment transferred to taxpayers. Differences between opinions between the political left and right are not visible, save from one article in *Euractiv*.

The EU news media presents the debt crisis as play of big actors what the reader is looking upon from the audience, as an outsider who has no possibility to participate. It looks similar to the presentational public sphere of absolutism in the 16th and 17th century, before the emergence of civil society. There is no sense of empowerment. One might deem the EU news media consensus centred, but then the concept would be misunderstood, as before reaching one there should be plurality of actors and opinions, but there is none.

In an interview by Jean-Sébastien Lefevbre (2010), a journalist from the French left-wing newspaper *Libération* terms the EU news media specialised media that have no opinion, because they are neutral when people actually need opinions. This is exactly what Mouffe warns about. She wants to bring forth different poles of action, to render differences visible. In order to achieve even a little opinion-formation described by Habermas, these media platforms would need a thorough radical-pluralist shake-up. In my personal opinion, the debt crisis coverage of the media was incredibly tedious as it lacked angles and thus left an illusionary view of the situation as quite resolved when in fact there were numerous approaches that could habe veen taken as other publications have demonstrated.

6.4.2. Alternative commentary - European opinion media

Though speaking the same language as the EU news media, opinion webzines managed to enrich the debate with rationally argued expert opinions where positions where clear and criticism explicit. Citizens lacked voice as well, though sympathy in shape of e.g. criticism towards austerity measures was expressed. All in all, the opinion media demonstrated perfectly the prevalence of certain hegemony by providing perfectly argued and – at least on the outset – reasonable and applicable alternative solutions to the debt crisis problems. If only these voices could reach a wider public. I could not gather information on the number of readers in these publications but I would suggest the EU news media have a larger audience share.

Despite being debative and inclusive at the outset, it has exclusivity in the sense that it is often detailed and complicated and written by experts; an elite discourse although alternative one. But it is important to note that if there were no internet, it would be possible that this elite but still alternative discourse would not be as easily reachable – if you know where to look for it – as it is now.

6.4.3. Alternative views - European volunteer online media

Probably the greatest single example of the European online media is the volunteer media. The role of citizens is completely different, in *Café Babel* it is at its "extreme": participatory journalism, citizen journalism. The volunteer media is a perfect example of questioning the hegemonic journalistic values and media discourses. Especially in *Café Babel*, young people are there right at the front of the stage, though they might not have a perfectly elaborated and eloquently expressed solution to the debt crisis. They just say that they worry for democracy. This can be compared to what Habermas says about trying to understand each other even though the other party does not speak in the same terms. And actually, when looking at it from another perspective, democracy is exactly the very point we should be talking about. Despite the public outcry about austerity measures and now the global Occupy Wall Street movement – critical of a lack of regulation in global financial sector – very little, if nothing has been done to appease the concerns of citizens. Instead of discussing technical issues as in the EU news media, *Café Babel* goes right to the heart of the problem and provides explicit alternative perspectives. The voices concerned about democracy in *Café Babel* demonstrate also that democracy is not just only reason but also about emotions. Society is a matter of the heart – that is why there are street demonstrations. This observation is parallel to what Mouffe means when she talks about passions in politics.

Finally, the volunteer media's coverage of the debt crisis is a good example of participatory citizenship that Habermas vouches for. In these media platforms citizens' demands to take part in this society are conveyerd; to have the rights to influence decisions as is described in the Habermasian ideal situation. Yet, as readership surveys show and what content analysis demonstrates is that the volunteer media is not read (at least in large numbers) by those who make decisions. Readers tend to be young Europeans, usually educated, hence elitist to some extent.

6.4.3. The public sphere of the European press - press review media

The press review media is technically an interesting example as it fulfils one of the conditions set by Habermas for shaping of a common public sphere and further European identity: They cover relevant controversies in other countries "so that all the national public opinions converged on the same range of contributions to the same set of issues, regardless of their origin". This would help "mutual opening up of existing national universes to one another" resulting in

"interpenetration of mutually translated national communications" (2001, 18). Though *Presseurop* or *Eurotopics* is not national media it functions with the same principle: it shows "national" perspectives on European issues. I say "national" because the coverage consisted mostly of just different perspectives without them being strictly national. In some case you would rather see political differences on a left-wing–right-wing range. The question is, if there really are that many national differences in European issues as is assumed or whether editorial teams leave out strictly national references. Habermas' idea of covering controversies translates into Steeg's formulation of overlap of systems of meaning and even further in the press review media of discursive interaction. The press reviews are made of discursive interaction, they are pure asterisks.

Though it would require analysing a wider range of issues, not only the debt crisis, to see the wealth of topics and views reprinted, I would still say that from a structural point of view, the press review media, especially *Presseurop* that translated everything in 10 languages (other to fewer) and has editorials, and readers comments whether written in the French or Romanian language versions that are visible at the same time, is as good a European public sphere as it gets in one single medium. Of course the national media are in the dominant position as it is mostly their editorials and opinions that are published. Then again, citizens are rarely given a direct way to speak up. On the other hand, the press review media make readers acutely aware that media are also opinion-makers and not at all objective: the variety of views published on the same topic is a testament to that. In this sense, the press review media keep us aware of the media's power to affect our opinions and be aware of other possibilities: if there are all these opinions, surely there are others. The press review media concretises the fact that there is not one truth but many and that decisions are political choices and this in itself is an empowering fact but whether it has an influence on decision-making is another question.

6.6. Public sphere far from ideal

An previously mentioned, an EU correspondent of a French left-wing daily Libération, Jean Quatremer says in an interview that both media like *Euractiv* and *Café Babel* are neutral, without a point of view (Lefebvre 2010). In his view, when seeking for a European perspective such European have the danger of stumble upon consensus of "Europe of reconcialition". It seems according to Quatremer, that the interesting and controversial conflicts of Europe originate from

differences in national perspectives. It is true that the EU has in its structure an inbuilt undemocratic dimension: Firstly, the EU commission is elected by European governments, so if commissioners want to be re-elected, they will not do anything controversial. This applies especially to the post of the president which is filled by a unanimous decision of European leaders. Secondly, almost all decisions are made together with the EU council representing European governments and European Parliament (EP) elected by European citizens. Hence, if the only democratically elected institution the EP wants to function effectively in regards to the EU council, it has to reach majority decisions, what means a lot of compromises, even bad. Thirdly, as the European Commission is not elected from the EP, it is not responsible for it as in normal parliamentary politics. Hence, there is no governing party – the oppositional party structure in the EU that in other countries lives up the political discussion and highlights political differences.

Despite these inherent structures, considering the EU only interesting in terms of national differences reflects superficial understanding on variety of the European online media. The debt crisis coverage is a perfect example of how much there are conflicts of interest on left-wing—right-wing level, not just national versus national. Indeed, Germany's unwillingness to pay for the Greek debt was reported in the European online media but it was not the primary concern. However, the interest of the eurozone and the future of Europe was the most important issue. And although the EU news media was lacking political alternatives, all in all they were very present in the whole of the analysed European media. This brings us back to Mouffe and the need to be aware of alternatives and other perspectives though they are not visible in the mass media.

So what kind of a European public sphere do the European online media construct? It is difficult to give a definite answer as the online media have different positions in the EU sphere. The EU news media is close to EU decision makers, *Café Babel* is close to young Europeans, *Presseurop* is close to the national media. Do they interact? As a conclusion of my previous analysis, not really. The opinion and volunteer media that represents the views of potential civil society are not channelled to the EU news media nor to the press review media even though potentially the latter could follow all European media, not only the national. So it is by no means an ideal public sphere, as experts and especially citizens are marginalised.

The European online media are neither really synchronisers nor mediators between strong publics and the national spheres because they are highly segmented. MEPs and other actors in Brussels read the EU news media that do not deliver the views of the national media nor any of the aforementioned online publications. Then again, there is no evidence that this readership belonging to the strong public sphere reads other European online publications. *Café Babel* caters primarily for young Europeans and functions as source of identity building, citizen approach and participation. *Presseurop* does not have a specifically defined target group but it functions as an aggregator of the European press opinion, a special functions as well.

All in all, the European online media is a niche media considering all the categories. Even though the *Euractiv* media network covers an audience of over 600 000, it is still a minority considering the 500 million people living in the EU and even more in Europe. In addition, most of these media cater for expert elite audiences already inside the EU sphere. Though, there are the volunteer media with the objective of creating European identity, *Café Babel* has only 300 000 monthly readers. Whenever I mentioned any of the publications to my friends in Finland they did not know any of them though they generally travel a lot, are interested in Europe and speak several languages. The European online media is also an elite media, it must be admitted. It serves the EU and Europe's educated and computer-savvy class of Europeans, not every Tom, Dick and Harry. All in all, there is a great lack of citizens' participation in the European online media (save for some examples in the volunteer media), so if one refers to Lingenberg's (2006) definition that "the citizens' participation in public discourses on EU-political issues and the communicative actions based on the media reporting that are fundamental to the emergence of the European public sphere" (ibid., 127), there is surely no question about a real emergence of a European public sphere.

One of my initial presumptions was that the European online media would be a sign of an emerging European civic culture. My analysis of the European online media was very brief and concentrated only on the debt crisis and the conclusion might be different if analyzing for a longer period and different topics. Now it seems that at least the EU news media's potential to function as a watchdog of EU institutions is rather weak. If citizens' participation is a condition for e.g. an ideal Habermasian public sphere, the EU news media is far from that; it is rather a question of a presentational public sphere known in the absolutist monarchies in the 17th century where citizens followed from a distance the display of public power. Then again, the alternative media such as *Myeurop*, *The European* and *Social Europe Journal* have a greater

arsenal of criticism and opinions. In this sphere, it seems there is a greater potential or rather an actual European civil society. It does not seem to have organised structures, at least there were no organisations giving opinions on the debt crisis. Yet, I would be inclined to think these other publications actively gather around themselves people interested in European politics who are willing to educate themselves about various alternatives to form an informed opinion. In addition, as these publications function mostly by volunteer effort as opposed to the EU news media run by professional paid journalists, it reinforces the idea of an emerging European public sphere. Citizenship and civic society is supposed to emerge through a self-willed act.

All in all the European online media functions best all together since then you are being bombarded by different views as envisioned by Chantal Mouffe. In addition, these media are existing proof that it is possible to politicise the EU (or Europe) and the EU generates enough of output for all these publications to write about. Having read the articles, it also seems to be not a Herculean effort to write about the issues in an interesting manner and bringing about the politics into it.

Finally, the debt crisis coverage demonstrates a potential for larger pan-European debate. It also demonstrates the points of views do not need to be national to be interesting; that there can be a common European perspective on issues and that there is a lot of politics involved. The European online media also shows that the idea of Europe as a place of dull unanimity is illusionary: there are clear political differences, the left and right in Europe is just as left and right as in nation-states though it has been subdued from the general public spheres due to the EU's political structure. It needs to be brought back, as Mouffe says. Then again, Europe should not only be about politics and the EU. Focusing on the institutions is probably one of the reasons why political differences are subdued. The European online media should also not serve only the goal of legitimating the existing political order as then some political alternatives are excluded. Finally, as long as citizens play as small role as they do in the European online media, we are far from establishing anything close to ideal spheres of public debate and decision-making.

7. Discussion

This research attempted to fill a gap in current the European public sphere research that has not paid much attention to the European online media in empirical studies. Having made thorough research and gathered 50 publications and having categorised them, this research serves as a good introduction to the realm of cyberworld of European journalism. The thesis attempted to further grasp the meaning of these publications in relation to the European public sphere by analysing the debt crisis coverage.

Some cautionary remarks should be made about the results. The material was very uneven (in terms of frequency of publication, target audience, etc), which made it difficult to make generalisations. It would be better to focus on fewer publications over a longer period of time, e.g. one publication from each category. But as this was a first study on the topic and as the European online media has been researched only a little such an overarching approach is justified.

Keeping the limitedness of analysed material in mind, I believe the results gave strong indications of the nature of different media. Even though more definite results would demand researching wider topics and for a longer period of time, my suggestive results can server as guiding observations for further research. My research gathered a significant number of online publications and revealed the abundance of material. An example of continuing this research topic could be analysing national coverage of the debt crisis and comparing it with coverage in the European news media.

I believe the European online media will gain more importance and reputation as the online media in general will become more important and as European integration will continue as it seems now. Many of the European media platforms seem to have a functioning economic basis, though from what I have heard from *Café Babel* and *Euractiv* (from people working there), there is not enough resources, so additional funding seems necessary. The biggest challenge to these media publications is to reach wide national audiences who do not speak English and are not necessarily interested in finding out how the EU functions. It would demand at least national channels, either publishing in many more languages or establishing national versions like *Euractiv*. All in all, the European public sphere researchers should not resort only to the national print press when there is plenty to explore in the Europe Wide Web.

References

AIM Research Consortium (ed.) (2007) "Theory Building: 'European Identity Building/European Public Sphere'". http://www.aim-project.net/uploads/media/D6_Theorie_Building.pdf. Retrieved 20.1.2010.

AIM Research Consortium (ed.) (2007) *Comparing the Logic of EU Reporting. Transnational Analysis of EU Correspondence from Brussels*. Adequate Information Management in Europe (AIM) – Working Papers, 2007/4.

APCO Worldwide (2008) *Media relations and Europe – from the journalist's perspective*. Survey.

Arendt, Hannah (1998) *The Human Condition*. The University Chicago Press, Chicago.

Baisnée, Olivier (2007) "The European Public Sphere Does Not Exist (At Least It's Worth Wondering…)" in *European Journal of Communication*, 22 (4): 493–503.

Bee, Cristiano (2008) "The 'Institutionally Constructed' European Identity: Citizenship and Public Sphere Narrated by the Commission" in *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 9 (4), 431–450.

Bee, Cristiano & Bozzini, Emanuela (eds.) (2010) *Mapping European Public Sphere: Institutions, Media and Civil Society*. Ashgate Publishing, Farnhamn.

Bondebjerg, Ib & Madsen, Peter (eds.) (2008) *Media, Democracy and European Culture.* Intellect Books, Bristol.

Brüggeman, Michael & Schulz-Forberg, Hagen (2009) "Becoming Pan-European? : Transnational Median and the European Public Sphere" in *International Communication Gazette* 71 (8), 693–712.

Calhoun, Craig (1992) "Introduction" in Calhoun, Craig (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. MIT Press, Cambridge.

Calhoun, Craig (ed.) (1992) *Habermas and the public sphere*. MIT Press, Cambridge.

Cammaerts, Bart & Van Audenhove, Leo (2005) "Online Political Debate, Unbounded Citizenship, and the Problematic Nature of a Transnational Public Sphere" in *Political Communication* 22, 179–196.

Carpentier, Nico & Cammaerts, Bart (2006) "Hegemony, Democracy, Agonism and Journalism. An interview with Chantal Mouffe" in *Journalism Studies* 7 (6), 964–975.

Dahlgren, Peter (1991) "Introduction" in Dahlgren, Peter & Sparks, Colin (eds.), *Communication and Citizenship: Journalism and Public Sphere*. Routledge, London.

Dahlgren, Peter (2004) "Civic Cultures and Net Activism: Modest Hopes for the EU Public Sphere". Conference Paper.

Dahlgren, Peter (2005) "The Internet, Public Spheres, and Political Communication: Dispersion and Deliberation" in *Political Communication* 22, 147–162.

Delanty, Gerard (2007) “European Citizenship: A Critical Assessment” in *Citizenship Studies* 11 (1), 63–72.

Downey, John & Koenig, Thomas (2006) “Is There a European Public Sphere? The Berlusconi–Schulz Case” in *European Journal of Communication*, 21 (2), 165–187.

Edelman (2009) *Capital Staffers Index 2009: Capital Staffers Index. A Trans-Atlantic Analysis of Digital Media’s Impact on Shaping Policy.*

Erman, Eva (2009) ”What is wrong with agonistic pluralism. Reflections on conflict in democratic theory” in *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 35 (9), 1039–1062.

Erbe, Jessica (2005) “’What do the papers say?’ How press reviews link national media arenas in Europe” in *Javnost - the Public* 12 (2), 75–92.

Eriksen, Erik O. (2005) “An Emerging European Public Sphere” in *European Journal of Social Theory* 8 (3), 341–363.

Eriksen, Erik O. (2008) “Conceptualizing European Public Spheres. General, Segmented and Strong Publics” in Fossum, John Erik & Schlesinger, Philip (eds.) *The European Union and the Public Sphere. A communicative space in the making?* Routledge, London.

European Commission (2006) *White paper on a European Communication Policy*. Brussels 01.02.2006. COM (2006) 35 final.

Fleishman-Hillard (2009) *European Parliament Digital Trends Survey.* Survey.

Fossum, Jon Erik (2001) “Identity-politics in the European Union” in *ARENA Working Papers*, 17/2001.

Fossum, Jon Erik & Schlesinger, Philip (2007) *The European Union and the Public Sphere: A communicative space in the making?* Routledge, Abingdon.

Fraser, Nancy (2007) “Transnationalizing the Public Sphere” in *Theory, Culture & Society* 24 (4), 7–30.

Gleissner, M. & de Vreese, C. H. (2005) “News about the EU Constitution: Journalistic challenges and media portrayal of the European Constitution” in *Journalism* 6 (2), 221–242.

Gripsrud, Jostein (2008) “The Cultural Dimension of Democracy” in Bondebjerg, Ib & Madsen, Peter (eds.), *Media, Democracy and European Culture.* Intellect Books, Bristol.

Guiraudon, Virginie & Favell, Adrian (2007) “The Sociology of European Integration”. Conference paper. EUSA 2007 Montréal.

Habermas, Jürgen (2001) “Why Europe needs a Constitution” in *The New Left Review* 11 (09–10), 5–26.

Habermas, Jürgen (2004 [1962]) *Julkisuuden rakennemuutos: tutkimus yhdestä kansalaisyhteiskunnan kategoriasta*. Vastapaino, Tampere.

Habermas, Jürgen (2005 [1996])) *The Inclusion of the Other*. Second edition. Polity Press, Cambridge.

Habermas, Jürgen (2005) "Religion in the Public Sphere". Lecture presented at the Holberg Prize seminar, 29.11.2005; downloaded at http://www.holbergprisen.no/images/materiell/2005_symposium_habermas.pdf#nameddest=habermas. Retrieved 20.5.2011.

Habermas, Jürgen (2006) "Political Communication in Media Society: Does Democracy still enjoy an Epistemic Dimension? The Impact of Normative Theory on Empirical Research" in Communication Theory 16 (4), 411–428.

Habermas, Jürgen (2009) Europe: The Faltering Project. Polity Press, Cambridge.

Hansen, Peo (2000) "'European Citizenship', or Where Neoliberalism Meets Ethno-culturalism. Analysing the European Union's citizenship discourse" in European Societies 2 (2), 139–165.

Heikkilä, Heikki & Kunelius, Risto (2006) Understanding the Logic of EU Reporting in Mass Media: The Case of Finland. in AIM Research Consortium (ed.), *Understanding the Logic of EU Reporting in Mass Media*. Projekt Verlag, Bochum.

Heikkilä, Heikki (2007): Reporting the EU from Brussels: The Case of Finland in AIM Research Consortium (ed.), *Understanding the Logic of EU Reporting from Brussels. Analysis of interviews with EU correspondents and spokespersons*. Adequate Information Management in Europe (AIM) – Working Papers, 2007/3. Projekt Verlag, Bochum.

Van Horn Melton, James (2005) *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Karppinen, Kari (2008) "Yhtenäisyyden ja moninaisuuden paradoksi julkisuusteoriassa" in Nieminen, Hannu, Karppinen, Kari & Mörä, Tuomo (eds.), *Onko Eurooppaa olemassa ? Näkökulmia eurooppalaiseen julkisuuteen ja demokratiaan*. Gaudeamus, Helsinki.

Karppinen, Kari, Moe, Hallvard & Svensson, Jakob (2008) "Habermas, Mouffe and Political Communication. A Case for Theoretical Eclecticism" in *Javnost – The Public* 15 (3), 5–22.

Karppinen, Kari (2009) "European public sphere(s) and the challenge of radical pluralism" in Salovaara-Moring, Inka (ed.), *Manufacturing Europe: Spaces of diversity, democracy and communication*. Nordicom, Göteborg.

Koljonen, Kari & Kunelius, Risto (2005) "On vain yhteinen suru. Onnettomuusjournalismin suuntia Kuurilasta Konginkankaalle 1957-2004" in Rahkonen, Juho (ed.) *Journalismikritiikin Vuosikirja* 2005. Journalismin tutkimusyksikkö, Tampere.

Koopmans, Ruud & Erbe, Jessica (2003) "Towards a Europeanised Public Sphere? Comparing Political Actors and the Media in Germany". Arena working paper 23/03.

Kunelius, Risto & Sparks, Colin (2001) "Problems with a European Public Sphere: An Introduction" in *Javnost - the Public*, *The Emergence of the European Public Sphere?* 8 (1), 5–20.

Kunelius, Risto (2008) “Journalism and the EU: A relationship in contexts” in *Journalism* 9 (4), 371–376.

Kurpas, Sebastian, Brüggeman, Michael & Meyer, Christopher (2006) “The Commission White Paper on Communication. Mapping a Way to a European Public Sphere”. CEPS Policy Brief, No. 101 / May 2006, Centre for European Policy Studies.

Lefebvre, Jean-Sébastien (2010) *L’information européenne nécessite-t-elle de nouveaux médias? Etude sur la relation médias nationaux / information européenne et l’émergence de nouvelles publications comme Euractiv.com et cafebabel.com.* Master’s thesis, College of Europe.

Lingenberg, Swantje (2006) “The audience’s role in constituting the European public sphere: A theoretical approach based on the pragmatic concept of John Dewey” in Carpentier, Nico, Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, Pille, Nordenstreng, Kaarle, Hartmann, Maren, Viha-lemm, Peeter & Cammaerts, Bart (eds.), *Researching Media, Democracy and Participation*. The Researching and Teaching Communications Series. Tartu University Press, Tartu.

Machill, Marcel, Beiler, Markus & Fischer, Corinna (2006) “Europe-Topics in Europe’s Media. The Debate about the European Public Sphere: A Meta-Analysis of Media Content Analyses” in *European Journal of Communication* 21 (1), 57–88.

McGuigan, Jim (1998) “What price the public sphere?” in Thussu, Daya Kishan (ed), *Electronic Empires: Global Media and Local Resistance*. Arnold, London.

McGuigan, Jim (2005) “The Cultural Public Sphere” in *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 8 (4), 427–443.

Meyer, Christoph (2005) “The Europeanization of Media Discourse: A Study of Quality Press Coverage of Economic Policy Co-ordination since Amsterdam” in Journal of Common Market Studies 43 (1), 121–148.

Mouffe, Chantal (1999) “Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?” in *Social Research* 66 (3), 745–758.

Mouffe, Chantal (2008) *On the Political*. Routledge, London.

Mörä, Tuomo (2008) “Julkisuuden ihanteet ja journalismin arki: Brysselin kirjeenvaihtajat EU-koneiston ja kansalaisten välissä” in Nieminen Hannu, Karppinen, Kari & Mörä, Tuomo (eds.), *Onko Eurooppa olemassa? Näkökulmia eurooppalaiseen julkisuuteen ja demokratiaan*. Gaudeamus, Helsinki.

Nieminen, Hannu (2008) “Eurooppalainen julkisuus tutkimuksen kohteena. Neljä plus yksi näkökulmaa” in Nieminen, Hannu, Karppinen, Kari & Mörä, Tuomo (eds.), in *Onko Eurooppaa olemassa? Näkökulmia eurooppalaiseen julkisuuteen ja demokratiaan*. Gaudeamus, Helsinki.

Nieminen, Hannu, Karppinen, Kari & Mörä, Tuomo (eds.) (2008) *Onko Eurooppaa olemassa? Näkökulmia eurooppalaiseen julkisuuteen ja demokratiaan*. Gaudeamus, Helsinki.

Nieminen, Hannu (2009) “The European Public Sphere as a Network? Four Plus One Approaches” in Moring-Salovaara, Inka (ed.), *Manufacturing Europe: Spaces of Democracy, Diversity, and Communication*. Nordicom, Göteborg.

Van Os, Renée, Jankowski, Nicholas W. & Vergeer, Maurice (2007) "Political Communication about Europe on the Internet during the 2004 European Parliament Election Campaign in Nine EU Member States" in *European Societies* 9 (5), 755–775.

Pantti, Mervi & Husslage, Karin (2009) "Ordinary people and emotional expression in Dutch public service news" in *Javnost - the Public* 16 (2), 77–94.

Pantti, Mervi & Sumiala, Johanna (2009) "Till death do us join: Media, mourning rituals and the sacred centre of the society" in *Media, Culture & Society* 31(1), 119–135.

Payrow Shabani, Omid A. (2002) "Who is Afraid of Constitutional Patriotism? The Binding Source of Citizenship in Constitutional States" in *Social Theory and Practice* 28 (3), 419–443.

Raeymaeckers, Karin, Cosijn, Lieven & Deprez, Annelore (2007) "Reporting the European Union: An analysis of the Brussels press corps and the mechanisms influencing the news flow" in *Journalism Practice* 1 (1), 102–119.

Ransome, Paul (1992) *Antonio Gramsci. A New Introduction*. Harvester Wheatsheaf, London.

Salovaara-Moring, Inka (ed.) (2009) *Manufacturing Europe: Spaces of diversity, democracy and communication*. Nordicom, Göteborg.

Shore, Cris (2004) "Whither European Citizenship? Eros and Civilization Revisited" in *European Journal of Social Theory* 7 (1), 27–44.

Sifft, Stephanie, Brüggeman, Michael, Kleinen-V. Königslöw, Katharina, Bernhard, Peters & Wimmel, Andreas (2007) "Segmented Europeanization: Exploring the Legitimacy of the European Union from a Public Discourse Perspective" in *Journal of Common Market Studies,* 45 (1), 127–155.

Statham, Paul (2006) "Political Journalism and Europeanization: Pressing Europe?" Centre for European Political Communications, Working Paper Series, Issue 13/06.

van de Steeg, Marianne (2002) "Rethinking the Conditions for a Public Sphere in the European Union" in *European Journal of Social Theory*, 5 (4), 499–519.

van de Steeg, Marianne (2006) "Does a public sphere exist in the European Union? An analysis of the content of the debate on the Haider case" in *European Journal of Political Research* 45, 609–634.

van de Steeg, Marianne (2010) "Theoretical reflections on the public sphere in the European Union: A network of communication or a political community?" in Bee, Cristiano & Bozzini, Emanuela (eds.), *Mapping European Public Sphere: Institutions, Media and Civil Society*. Ashgate Publishing, Farnhamn.

Thomass, Barbara (2010) "Deficits and Potentials of the Public Spheres" in Trappel, Josef, Meier, Werner A., d'Haenens, Leen, Steemers, Jeanette & Thomass, Barbara (eds.), *Media in Europe today.* Intellect, Bristol.

Trappel, Josef, Meier, Werner A., D'haenens, Leen, Steemers, Jeanette & Thomass, Barbara (eds.) (2010) *Media in Europe today*. Intellect, Bristol.

Trenz, Hans-Jörg (2004) "'Quo vadis Europe?' Quality newspapers struggling for European unity". Paper presented at the Workshop "One EU – Many Publics?", Stirling 5.-6.2.2004.

Trenz, Hans-Jörg (2004) "Media Coverage on European Governance: Exploring the European Public Sphere in National Quality Newspapers" in *European Journal of Communication* 19 (3), 291–319.

Trenz & Vetters (2006) "No News from Brussels: Comment of the Commission's White Paper on a European Communication Policy". Arena Paper. http://www.arena.uio.no/cidel/Varia/No%20News%20from%20Brussels.pdf. Retrieved 29.3.2010.

Trenz, Hans-Jörg (2008) "In the search of the European public sphere: Between normative overstretch and empirical disenchantment". Arena working paper, No. 12 June 2008.

Williams, Raymond (1988) *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Fontana Press, London.

Wright, Scott (2007) "A virtual European public sphere? The Futurum discussion forum" in *Journal of European Public Policy* 14 (8), 1167–1185.

Annex 1: European online media

All information was gathered in June 2011, only the main web address is listed. In the text, when publications are described in general, they are referred to with numbers, e.g . (Anx 1, 3).

1. EurActiv.com, www.euractiv.com

2. Eubusiness, www.eubusiness.com

3. Euobserver, euobserver.com

4. Eureporter, www.eureporter.co

5. European Voice, www.europeanvoice.com

6. New Europe, www.neurope.eu

7. TheParliament.com, theparliament.com

8. EurActiv.fr, www.euractiv.fr

9. EurActiv.de, www.euractiv.de

10. Euractiv.es, www.euractiv.es

11. EurActiv.cz, www.euractiv.cz

12. EurActiv.hu, www.euractiv.hu

13. EurActiv.pl, www.euractiv.pl

14. EurActiv.sk, www.euractiv.sk

15. Euractiv.com.tr, www.euractiv.com.tr

16. EurActiv.ro, www.euractiv.ro

17. EurActiv.gr, euractiv.gr

18. Dnevnik Evropa, www.dnevnik.bg/evropa

19. EurActiv.lt, euractiv.lt

20. EurActiv.rs, www.euractiv.rs

21. Europaportalen, www.europaportalen.se

22. Toute l'Europe, www.touteleurope.eu

23. euroXpress, euroxpress.es

24. A Fistful of Euros, fistfulofeuros.net

25. Telos, www.telos-eu.com

26. The European, www.theeuropean.de

27. Social Europe Journal, www.social-europe.eu

28. Metis, www.metiseurope.eu

29. Café Babel, www.cafebabel.co.uk

30. EMAJ Magazine, emajmagazine.com

31. E&M, www.europeandme.eu

32. Les Euros du Village, www.eurosduvillage.eu, www.theeuros.eu, dieeuros.eu, glieuros.eu, loseuros.eu

33. El Europeo, eleuropeo.es

34. Europa451, www.europa451.es

35. Myeurop, fr.myeurop.info

36. NewropMag, www.newropeans-magazine.org

37. wEast Magazine, www.weastmagazine.net

38. 27etc, blog.slate.fr/europe-27etc

39. Balkan Insight, www.balkaninsight.com

40. SETimes, www.setimes.com

41. Transitions Online, www.tol.org

42. Le Courrier des Balkans, balkans.courriers.info

43. euro|topics, www.eurotopics.net

44. Eurozine, www.eurozine.com

45. Presseurop.eu, www.presseurop.eu/en

46. signandsight.com, signandsight.com

47. European Daily, europeandaily.com

48. EuropeNews, europenews.dk

49. Fenêtre sur l'Europe, www.fenetreeurope.com

50. Cineuropa, cineuropa.org

Annex 2: List of analysed articles

EU news media for international audiences

EUobserver, 18-31.7.2011, greece*, eurozone*, references: (EO, 30.)

1. Divisions remain ahead of EU debt summit, 18.7.2011

2. Clinton praises Greek 'resilience' in tackling debt, 18.7.2011

3. Merkel wants EU ratings agency, 18.7.2011

4. Tax on banks 'considered' to finance Greece, 19.7.2011

5. Greek finance minister says European debt deal possible, 19.7.211

6. Merkel lowers summit expectations, 20.7.2011

7. IMF chief to join euro-summit, 20.7.2011

8. Sarkozy to meet Merkel in Berlin ahead of summit, 20.7.2011

9. German 'wise men' call for Greek default, 20.7.2011

10. EU values under threat, says Greece, 20.7.2011

11. Barroso lays down the line for EU summit, 20.7.2011

12. France and Germany reach deal ahead of crucial summit, 21.7.2011

13. Greek taxi drivers clash with police ahead of euro-summit, 21.7.11

14. UK tells euro-leaders to 'get a grip' on the crisis, 21.7.2011

15. Sarkozy drops bank tax idea, report says, 21.7.2011

16. Eurozone leaders want to keep private sector out of other bailouts, 21.7.2011

17. Ireland and Portugal may get lower interest rates, 21.7.2011

18. ECB may be ready to accept temporary Greek default, 21.7.2011

19. Greece may get new loans at 3.5% interest rate, 21.7.2011

20. Euro states set to agree second loan for Greece, 21.7.2011

21. Greece deal delayed by debate on figures, 21.7.2011

22. Euro leaders agree second Greece bailout and overhaul of rescue fund, 21.7.2011

23. Ireland and Portugal get lower interest rates on bailouts, 21.7.2011

24. European Central Bank chief does not exclude Greek default, 22.7.2011

25. Fitch rates Greek bailout as proof of 'restricted default', 22.7.2011

26. Greece to face 'restricted default' as bailout details emerge, 22.7.2011

27. Moody's downgrades Greek debt further, 25.7.2011

28. Greek credit downgraded amid concerns about EU debt plan, 26.7.2011

29. IMF warns France on budget deficit targets, 28.7.2011

30. Oettinger has plans for Europe's pensioners, 28.7.2011

31. Greece starts buyback talks, 28.7.2011

32. Eurozone economic confidence drops, 29.7.2011

33. Cyprus government resigns amid economic woes, 29.7.2011

34. Spain calls for early elections as market confidence erodes, 29.7.2011

European Voice, 18-31.7.2011, greece*, eurozone*, references: (EV, 1.) / (EV, 23.)

1. Back in action, 18.7.2011

2. Can military might save the eurozone?, 20.7.2011

3. Looking over the edge, 20.7.2011

4. Lessons from a state without a government, 20.7.2011

5. Tests fail to cut stress levels, 20.7.2011

6. Commission sets up taskforce to oversee Greek reforms, 20.7.2011

7. Time runs out for eurozone leaders, 20.7.2011

8. Barroso demands eurozone decisions, 20.7.2011

9. Merkel, Sarkozy reach deal on Greek bail-out, 21.7.2011

10. Eurozone leaders confident about new rescue deal, 21.7.2011

11. Central banker warns of Cyprus bail-out, 21.7.2011

12. Another Greek bail-out in the offing, 21.7.2011

13. Eurozone leaders agree new bail-out for Greece, 21.7.2011

14. Bail-out conditions eased for Ireland, 21.7.2011

15. Trichet welcomes compromise deal, 21.7.2011

16. Greek bail-out would lead to default, says ratings agency, 22.7.2011

17. Papandreou calls new Greek loans 'eurobonds', 27.7.2011

18. Time to go, 28.7.2011

19. Germans out in front, 28.7.2011

20. Playing the eurozone name game, 28.7.2011

21. Eurozone may regret wasted six months, 28.7.2011

22. Helping Greece prime the pump, 28.7.2011

23. All eyes on long-term economic plans, 28.7.2011

24. Facts and figures, 28.7.2011

25. Rates cut for Ireland and Portugal, 28.7.2011

26. Sales season in Europe, 28.7.2011

27. Talks pull eurozone back from the brink, 28.7.2011

28. Cypriot cabinet resigns, 29.7.2011

29. Finance ministers seek to calm markets, 29.7.2011

Euractiv 18.-31.7.2011, 2011, greece*, eurozone*, filtered, references: (EA, 8.)

1. The deal we need to overcome the eurozone crisis, 18.7.2011

2. Andor opposes 'unsustainable' austerity measures, 18.7.2011

3. European bank stress test results raise doubts, hopes, 18.7.2011

4. Merkel draws red lines ahead of eurozone summit, 18.7.2011

5. Economist: 'FTT will dampen speculation', 20.7.2011

6. EU builds case for finance tax ahead of draft proposals, 20.7.2011

7. Germany, France reach accord on Greek bailout, 21.7.2011

8. Greece shuns EU rules in rush for lottery tax revenue, 21.7.2011

9. Banks to shoulder €37bn in fresh Greek bailout, 22.7.2011

10. The Greek crisis: An opportunity for Europe?, 25.7.2011

11. Cyprus rating downgraded, no comment from Commission, 27.7.2011

12. Conflicting statements aggravate eurozone doubts, 27.7.2011

13. IMF warns France on deficit target, 28.7.2011

14. Cyprus government resigns amid bailout rumours, 28.7.2011

15. Rating agency takes aim at Spain, euro falls, 29.7.2011

16. Spain goes to snap poll, 29.7.2011

European opinion webzines

A Fistful of Euros, July 2011, eurozone*, greece*, references, e.g. (FE, 3)

1. Can Italy grow its way out of debt?, 3.7.2011

2. Smoke on the East European horizon?, 10.7.2011

3. Simple and repellent: update, 16.7.2011

4. Recession warning on Europe's periphery, 25.7.2011

The European, (GE), July 2011, Griechenland, Euro-Mitglieder, Euro-Staaten, Griechenland-Krise, eurozone, references, e.g. (TE, 8)

1. Malen nach Zahlen, 5.7.2011

2. Morgenthau oder Marshall, 06.7.2011

3. Rette sich, wer kann, 7.7.2011

4. Tunnelblick bis zum Tellerrand, 11.7.2011

5. Sommerschlussverkauf, 14.7.2011

6. Geld macht Politik, 18.7.2011

7. Voll daneben ist nicht nur knapp vorbei, 21.7.2011

8. Griechischer Wein, schenk nochmal ein, 25.7.2011

9. Der Plumpsack geht um, 27.7.2011

Social Europe Journal, July 2011, greece*, eurozone*, references, e.g. (SEJ, 8)

1. Europe needs to cast off shackles of the past and build a stronger future, 18.7.2011

2. The eurozone: what needs to be done, 19.7.2011

3. The eurozone's last stand, 19.7.2011

4. Depressing wages, 21.7.2011

5. The battle of the bonds, 21.7.2011

6. A call to action: EU leaders must act to save the Euro and avoid a ecession, 21.7.2011

7. Debt and delusion, 22.7.2011

8. Short term gain and long term pain, 26.7.2011

9. Keeping Greece afloat and hoping for dupply-side growth…, 26.7.2011

10. The perverse politics of financial crisis, 27.7.2011

11. The future of economic growth, 27.7.2011

12. Europe's €200 billion reverse wealth tax explained, 28.7.2011

13. The storm after the calm, 29.7.2011

European volunteer media

Café Babel May-July 2011, greece*, eurozone*, economical crisis*, economy*, debt crisis*

1. Romanian, Swedish and German press on Greece leaving eurozone, eurotopics, 10.5.2011

2. 'Real democracy NOW!': #spanishrevolution becomes #europeanrevolution, 23.5.2011

3. Go on, say it. It's the Spanish spring, 24.5.2011

4. Pan-European indignant revolution viewed from Brussels, 1.6.2011

5. Indignant ones': left-wing populism or politics of the underdog?, 21.6.2011

6. Indignant Athens: 'get your tax off my ass', 23.6.2011

7. Modern crisis: more Greeks turn to suicide, n- ost, 7.7.11

8. Artists, freaks, revolutionaries: what remains of protests in Greece, 18.7.2011

9. Eurozone: Greece's junk in Europe's trunk, 19.7.2011

10. 'Debtocracy' director Aris Chatzistefanou: 'Greece should exit eurozone', 26.7.2011

11. Yes we camp guide: summer of revolutions 2011 (10 images), 30.8.2011

EUROS DE VILLAGE, THE EUROS, LOS EUROS, May-August 2011, greece*, eurozone*

1. Shock result in Finland as eurosceptic vote skyrockets, 9.5.2011

2. Revolutions in the South of Europe and the economic crisis, 26.5.2011

3. Reiniciar Europa, 7.6.2011

4. La nueva (des)unión europea, 14.6.2011

5. Generación gastada, 20.6.2011

6. Un ”orthodoxe” italien à la tête de la BCE, 29.6.2011

7. ¿Qué pretenden los euroescépticos alemanes?, 22.7.2011

8. La Grèce et l’euro sont-ils vraiment sauvés?, 26.7.2011

9. Chypre, le prochain plan de sauvetage sur la liste?, 26.7.2011

10. Tras la crisis económica, la oportunidad para ser más Europa, 3.8.2011

11. 2883 millones de euros, 5.8.2011

12. La evolución de los mercados de deuda soberana de Italia y España son causa de profunda preocupación, 5.8.2011

13. La Hipocresía en la Ayuda a Grecia, 7.8.2011

14. Alemania y Francia proponen un gobierno económico europeo, 19.8.2011

MY.EUROP. May-August 2011, greece*, eurozone*

1. Dette grecque: l'euro dans la balance, 4.5.2011

2. La Grèce, un pays en désespérance, 12.5.2011

3. Après les indignés espagnols, les exaspérés grecs, 26.5.2011

4. Portraits d'Indignés: Michalis, ingénieur pour 800 euros, 31.5.2011

5. La Grèce de Charybde en Scylla, 8.6.2011

6. “La résistance des Grecs a atteint ses limites”, 15.6.2011

7. La Grèce à la rue, 15.6.2011

8. Achetons la dette grecque pour sauver l'Europe!, 16.6.2011

9. Crise grecque: le pire est à venir, 21.6.2011

10.La Grèce toujours sous haute tension, 30.6.2011

11.Portugal: l’uppercut de Moody's avant le chaos?, 7.7.2011

12. Le sommet de la dernière chance… avant le prochain, 21.7.2011

13.Le “modèle Letton”, un exemple à suivre pour la Grèce?, 21.7.2011

14.Un plan de sauvetage qui n'est pas sans défaut, 22.7.2011

15.Sarkozy et Merkel refusent l'euro bond en avant, 17.8.2011

16.Une autre monnaie que l'Euro, c'est possible, 30.8.2011

European press review media

Eurotopics, 18-31.7.2011, greece*, eurozone*, references: (ET, 8.)

1.Gazprom wants to control Europe, Heti Világgazdaság - Hungary, 18.7.2011

2.Athens can rely on the US, Ta Nea - Greece, 18.7.2011

3.Euro crisis a test for Van Rompuy, Elsevier - Netherlands, 18.7.2011

4.Tests ignore sovereign bankruptcy Les Echos - France, 18.7.2011

5.Merkel jeopardises rescue of euro, Blog Coulisses de Bruxelles – France, Die Welt – Germany, El País – Spain, Corriere del Ticino - Switzerland, 20.7.2011

6.Taxi licence as investment in Greece, Kathimerini - Greece, 20.7.2011

7.Conversion to euro too dodgy for Romania, ACUM - Romania, 21.7.2011

8.Merkel makes minor progress, El País – Spain, The Guardian – United Kingdom, Die Zeit – Germany, Jornal de Negócios - Portugal, 21.7.2011

9.EU moves out of crisis with solidarity, Frankfurter Rundschau – Germany, Hospodářské noviny - Czech Republic, Les Echos – France, Ta Nea – Greece, El Mundo – Spain, 22.7.2011

10.Cyprus slides into debt crisis, The Financial Times - United Kingdom, 22.7.2011

11.Western Europe can learn from Bulgarians, Süddeutsche Zeitung - Germany , 25.7.2011

12.Indebted states too dependent on oil, El País - Spain, 25.7.2011

13.Greek rescue weakens economy, Jyllands-Posten - Denmark , 25.7.2011

14.Eurobonds to save EU, Il Sole 24 Ore - Italy , 26.7.2011

15.Elmar Altvater sees rating agencies as neoliberal charlatans, WOZ - Die Wochenzeitung - Switzerland , 26.7.2011

16.No alternative to euro for Czechs, Hospodářské noviny - Czech Republic, 26.7.2011

17.Rating agencies turn a blind eye to US, Hospodárske noviny - Slovakia, 27.7.2011

18.France's debts endanger euro rescue, The Financial Times Deutschland - Germany, 28.7.2011

19.Finally introduce euro bonds, Gazeta Wyborcza - Poland, 29.7.2011

Eurozine, May-August 2011, greece*, eurozone*, references: (EZ, 2.)

1. In search of Europe, Jacques Delors, 01.7.2011

2. Markets and society, Daniel Daianu, 21.7.2011

3. Monsters in the mist, Victor Tsilonis, 28.7.2011

Presseurop, 18-31.7.2011, eurozone crisis*, greece*, eurozone*, references: (PE, 9.)

1. Clinton gives Athens moral support, 18.7.2011

2. Eurozone and US crisis threaten zloty, 18.7.2011

3. Helmut Kohl: Merkel is destroying my Europe, 18.7.2011

4. Stress tests fine, now move along, MEDIAPART PARIS, 18.7.2011

5. Papandreou fights his left-wing family, THE NEW YORK TIMES NEW YORK, 19.7.2011

6. Bild announces new gold rush, 20.7.2011

7. No more hide and seek, TA NEA ATHENS, 20.7.2011

8. Merkel and Sarkozy must rise to the occasion, LE MONDE PARIS, 21.7.2011

9. No more working behind closed doors, SPIKED LONDON, 21.7.2011

10. New deal, 22.7.2011

11. An expensive breather, DIE WELT BERLIN, 22.7.2011

12. Monetary union – the European time bomb, THE GUARDIAN LONDON, 22.7.2011

14. The miracle that lasted just three days, TA NEA ATHENS, 26.7.2011

14. Greeks relieved but mistrustful, PRESSEUROP, 22.7.2011

15. A painful Greek lesson, 22.7.2011

16. Without the South, the North loses Europe, LE TEMPS GENEVA, 27.7.2011