



# BREXIT AND THE EUROPEAN PUBLIC SPHERE

Europeanization in British public debates  
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## Abstract

This research undertakes an analysis of British public debates on the EU in the two weeks leading up to the Brexit-referendum. Based on a conceptualization of the public sphere, here understood as the public acts of political communication through which collective actors create an interactive medium and space of relationships among political institutions and citizens on issues of European integration, the purpose is to make sense of the evaluative British public debates.

There are multiple signs that point towards the existence of media effects on European democratic performance evaluations. Subsequently, the European Public Sphere is thought to contribute to a more visible 'European' public debate. However, the EPS might also coincide with an increase in negative evaluations of the EU, which likely has an unfavourable influence on EU public opinion. Therefore, it is important to investigate to what extent Europeanized public debates show a negative or positive image of the EU in the British public debate.

The method of claim analysis, provides almost all the information that is needed to execute an in depth examination of Europeanization in the British public sphere.

Furthermore, following the lead of other studies on the EPS, three quality, nationwide newspapers from British print media, with different political stances and attitudes towards the EU were selected for source gathering. The empirical findings show that Europeanized public debates are significantly more positive in their evaluation of the EU than non-Europeanized public debates. In addition, Europeanized public debates present a very explicit nature, while non-Europeanized public debates remain relatively ambivalent.

Overall, the findings challenge the current interpretations that the British media market is unusually Eurosceptic, especially with regard to the Europeanized selections. Moreover, the results further emphasize that an assessment of sentiment towards the EU, based solely on Europeanizing claims, falls short because it does not consider how the claim is posited in the debate.

# Brexit and the European Public Sphere

“The British people have voted to leave the European Union and their will must be respected.”

This quote, which derives from David Cameron’s resignation speech on June 24<sup>th</sup> 2016, demonstrates the unwillingness of the British people to remain in the EU, as well as Cameron’s conviction that the UK government must follow these instructions. A development which he, as outspoken remain campaigner, did not anticipate when he presented his plans for a referendum on British membership of the European Union on January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016. On that occasion, Cameron explained how public disillusionment with the EU was at an all-time high and people were feeling that the EU was heading in a direction that they never signed up to; “they resent the interference in our national life by what they see as unnecessary rules and regulation.”<sup>1</sup> He also added how the British people “see treaty after treaty changing the balance between member states and the EU. And note they were never given a say.”<sup>2</sup> The intention of Cameron by addressing these criticisms however, was not to gather support for leaving the EU, but to gain leverage for future negotiations with his European partners.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, past events show that those consultations failed to deliver, and meanwhile explanations as to why Britain voted to leave the EU appear inconclusive.

One such explanation focuses on the role of a perceived democratic deficit, usually understood as the notion that the governance of the EU in some way lacks democratic legitimacy. Johan Schot, Director of the Science Policy Research Unit from the University of Sussex, argues that public support for current designs of European and global governance is faltering and in need of localized solutions, and concludes that the EU needs to “reduce the democratic deficit of which Brexit is a symptom.”<sup>4</sup> Eric Posner, Professor of Law at the University of Chicago, connects to this view by stating that “Brexit only ratified a

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<sup>1</sup> Unknown Author, “David Cameron’s EU speech, full text,” Available at <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/jan/23/david-cameron-eu-speech-referendum>> Accessed on Oct. 15, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Unknown Author, David Cameron’s EU speech.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>4</sup> Johan Schot, “Lessons From Brexit,” *Nature*, 535 (2016) 487-489.

longstanding worry,”<sup>5</sup> because “worries about the democratic deficit in Europe are as old as European integration.”<sup>6</sup> At the same time, it is striking how preceding the final decision of the British electorate, the Leave Campaign fought under the banner of “Take back Control.”<sup>7</sup> which suggests that the promise of regained sovereignty, achieved by exiting the EU, played a significant factor in the British public debate. Yet, these considerations remain ambiguous and also inconsistent with past resolutions in the European political sphere, which addressed exactly those issues concerning the democratic process of the EU.

Indeed, intergovernmental conferences leading up to the signing of the Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice Treaties in respectively 1992, 1997 and 2001, tackled the issue of democratic legitimacy by giving “more powers to the European Parliament and extending the areas in which it had joint decision-making powers with the European Council.”<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the European Commission has long since realised and acted upon the issue of the democratic deficit, mainly in the form of improving information and communication flows.<sup>9</sup> In particular after the rejection of the European constitution by voters in France and the Netherlands, the Commission felt compelled to intervene with a new approach.<sup>10</sup> Thus, in October 2005, they proposed the activation of Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate, which promised to give citizens information and tools for active participation in the decision-making process and therefore “reinvigorate European democracy and help the emergence of a European Public Sphere.”<sup>11</sup>

Yet, while the development of a European Public Sphere can certainly prove important for addressing the EU’s democratic deficit, it is also subjected to the possibility of

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<sup>5</sup> Eric A. Posner, “Liberal Internationalism and the Populist Backlash,” *Public Law and Legal Theory Working Paper*, 606 (2017) 14-18.

<sup>6</sup> Eric A. Posner, “Liberal Internationalism and the Populist Backlash,” 14.

<sup>7</sup> Macer Hall, “Boris Johnson urges Brits to vote Brexit to ‘take back control’,” Available at <<http://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/681706/Boris-Johnson-vote-Brexit-take-back-control>> Accessed on Oct. 21, 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Unknown Author, “European Union Law definition of ‘Democratic Deficit’,” Available at <[EuropeanEurlex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/democratic\\_deficit.html](http://EuropeanEurlex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/democratic_deficit.html)> Accessed on Oct. 20, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Ruud Koopmans, “Who Inhabits the European Public Sphere? Winners and Losers, supporters and opponents in Europeanised Political Debates,” *European Journal of Political Research*, 46 (2007) 183-210.

<sup>10</sup> The European Commission, “Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate,” Brussels, 494 (13.10.2005). Action plan to improve communicating Europe by the Commission (2005), available at <[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/pdf/communication\\_com\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/pdf/communication_com_en.pdf)> Accessed on Oct. 20, 2016.

<sup>11</sup> The European Commission, Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate.

*unintended consequences*<sup>12</sup>. A public sphere, understood as the public acts of political communication through which collective actors create an interactive medium and space of relationships among political institutions and citizens on issues of European integration, can work in two ways. On the one hand, as was reiterated by the European Commission in Plan D, a European Public Sphere is beneficial to enhanced dialogue and public debate, and thus takes away some of the criticisms about the EU. On the other hand, such developments do not necessarily coincide with support for the EU.<sup>13</sup> In fact, a European Public Sphere might contribute to, facilitate and mobilize anti-EU sentiments, especially when the visible communication brings the EU into disrepute. In the continuation of this research, exactly the aforementioned element of possible negative consequences for the image of the EU plays a central role.

The flip side of a well-developed European Public sphere only becomes more alarming considering the contention of Professors of Politics, James Druckman and Michael Parkin; visible communication in media plays an important role in shaping citizens' political opinions.<sup>14</sup> In addition, Professor and political scientist John Zaller, who specializes in public opinion, has shown how opposing communication flows affect political evaluations of the citizenry.<sup>15</sup> Large political campaigns for instance, result in a shift of voters' political preferences, and even if the ultimate vote doesn't change, it certainly alters voters' issue positions.<sup>16</sup> Other acclaimed Professors in political science, Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro, argue that when people are less familiar with the topic, the tone of evaluative news content is more persuasive.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, several scholars have actually found a direct connection between the tone of EU coverage and people's opinion on EU matters. Pippa Norris concluded in 2002 that "extensive and sustained negative coverage of the Euro was significantly associated

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<sup>12</sup> Unintended consequences are outcomes that are not the ones foreseen and intended by a purposeful action. It derives from the social sciences and was introduced in the twentieth century by American sociologist Robert K. Merton in his article *The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action*.

<sup>13</sup> Claes H. de Vreese, "The EU as a Public Sphere," *Living Reviews in European Governance*, 2 (2007): 3, 6-20.

<sup>14</sup> James N. Druckman and Michael Parkin, "The Impact of Media Bias: How Editorial Slant Affects Voters," *Journal of Politics*, 67 (2005): 4, 1030-1049.

<sup>15</sup> John R. Zaller, "The Myth of Massive Media Impact Revived: New Support for a Discredited idea," in *Political Persuasion and Attitude Change*, ed. Diana C. Mutz, Paul M. Sniderman and Richard A. Brody (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 27.

<sup>16</sup> Zaller, "The Myth of Massive Media Impact Revived: New Support for a Discredited idea," 36.

<sup>17</sup> Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, "The Rational Public and Democracy," In *Reconsidering the Democratic Public*, ed. George E. Marcus and Russel L. Hanson (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 42.

with lowered levels of diffuse and specific public support for Europe.”<sup>18</sup> She also emphasizes that the effects are dependent on sufficient visibility of EU issues in the news, a condition that is definitely fulfilled in the period surrounding the Brexit-referendum.<sup>19</sup> Deliberations on the effect of framing EU affairs in the news by Andreas Shuck and Claes de Vreese similarly describe how opportunity and risk framing can have a potential impact on public opinion.<sup>20</sup>

Above considerations thus point towards the existence of media effects on European democratic performance evaluations. On the one hand, a European Public Sphere contributes to a more visible ‘European’ public debate, while on the other hand this might go together with an increase in negative evaluations of the EU, which consequently has a unfavourable influence on EU public opinion. Nevertheless, so far it remains unclear as to what extent the visible ‘European’ political communication, facilitated by the development of a European Public Sphere, shows a negative or positive image of the EU in the British public debate shortly before the Brexit-referendum. Therefore, this will be the main focus of this study.

### **Through the Looking Glass**

The preceding paragraph shows the relevance and importance of understanding how the EPS interacts with the British public debate. Yet it still remains unclear as to how the EPS is commonly applied and conceptualized and which aspects demand further attention. Accordingly, the following considerations explore how this study relates to other research in the field, in which way they seem lacking and consequently how these observations impact the thought process for the rest of this particular study.

The first point in question that should be addressed is the urgency of the topic with regard to how public debates interact with the EU’s image. Researchers such as Clare Llewellyn and Laura Cram exemplify this in their very recent analysis on the ‘Twittersphere debate on whether the UK should remain in or leave the European Union.’<sup>21</sup> By tracking the UK debate on the EU referendum in Twitter, they explore the various ways in which the

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<sup>18</sup> Pippa Norris, *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 206.

<sup>19</sup> Pippa Norris, *A Virtuous Circle*, 184.

<sup>20</sup> Andreas R.T. Shuck and Claes H. de Vreese, “Between Risk and Opportunity: News Framing and its Effects on Public Support for EU Enlargement,” *European Journal of Communication*, 21 (2006): 1, 9-32.

<sup>21</sup> <sup>21</sup> Clare Llewellyn and Laura Cram, “Brexit? Analyzing Opinion on the UK-EU Referendum within Twitter,” *ICWSM* (2016) 760-761.

public imagines the European Union. Llewellyn and Cram's results indicated that throughout the EU Referendum campaign, Leave supporters had a considerably higher visible presence on Twitter; between June 10<sup>th</sup> and June 23<sup>rd</sup>, the percentage of pro-Leave tweets hovered between 60 and 75 percent.<sup>22</sup> In addition to this observation, they emphasize how important it is to recognize that "identifying the target of sentiment expressed in a tweet or piece of text in general is a hard task."<sup>23</sup> Although there is software available that measures the strength and direction of sentiment in a segment of text, it is harder to identify what that sentiment is expressed towards.<sup>24</sup> Their research is interesting in several ways: Firstly, by observing the public debate on Twitter, they inherently stress the importance of understanding the publicly visible aspect of the public sphere. This is essential, because claims and positions mobilized in mass media, is the dimension of the public sphere which is visible to the citizens and therefore open to processes of resonance.<sup>25</sup> Secondly, they focus on the social media part of the public sphere, pose questions such as: "are people in the UK positive or negative about the EU?,"<sup>26</sup> and appreciate the difficulty of extracting the target of sentiment. Therefore, Llewellyn and Cram's approach can be considered as a refreshing addition to the usual *modus operandi* with regard to the European Public Sphere.<sup>27</sup>

Indeed, the highlighted aspect of evaluation in public debates by Llewellyn and Cram is lacking in former research on the EPS, but before going further into this assessment it is necessary to first provide a better outline of how the EPS is usually conceptualized. Until now two general concepts have been developed on how to identify the EPS. The first approach considers the appearance of an EPS as a Pan-European Public Sphere. It views the EPS as a singular, supranational communicative space, which "resembles an ideal form of a national public sphere, with a homogeneous audience and a media system that stretches to the same borders as the public sphere."<sup>28</sup> However, the second approach, and consequently the dominant conceptualization in EPS research, conceives an EPS as something that

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<sup>22</sup> Llewellyn, Clare and Laura Cram, "The results are in and the UK will #Brexit: What did the social media tell us about the UK referendum?," Available at <<http://www.referendumanalysis.eu/eu-referendum-analysis-2016/section-7-social-media/the-results-are-in-and-the-uk-will-brexite-what-did-social-media-tell-us-about-the-uks-eu-referendum/>> Accessed on Oct. 20, 2016.

<sup>23</sup> Llewellyn, Clare and Laura Cram, "Twitter Sentiment Analysis on the UK's EU Membership," Available at <<http://www.europeanfutures.ed.ac.uk/article-2583>> Accessed on Oct. 20, 2016.

<sup>24</sup> Llewellyn and Cram, Twitter Sentiment Analysis on the UK's EU Membership.

<sup>25</sup> Statham and Gray, "The Public Sphere and debates about Europe in Britain," 65.

<sup>26</sup> Llewellyn and Cram, Twitter Sentiment Analysis on the UK's EU Membership.

<sup>27</sup> Agnieszka Stepinska (ed.), *Media and Communication in Europe*, (Berlin: Logos Verlag, 2014), 13.

<sup>28</sup> Silke Adam, "European Public Sphere," *The International Encyclopedia of Political Communication* (2014) 2-9.

emerges as a result of Europeanization of the various national public spheres.<sup>29</sup> So instead of an all-enveloping manifestation of the EPS, this approach focuses more on Europeanization in separate nation-states. Typically, studies taking the latter approach as starting point, concentrate on the visibility and amount of attention to EU politics and issues in national media. Moreover, they base themselves on content analysis methods that “measure EPS by frequency of words that refer to EU affairs as proxy indicators of salience in European mass media.”<sup>30</sup> In an analysis of the news coverage of British, French and Dutch press, Lonneke van Noije compared relative EU attention in the respective countries, concluding that the EU gained a higher profile during and after the EU’s enlargement.<sup>31</sup> Although her method allows for valuable insights into the structure of media discourses on the EU, it fails to provide a detailed, qualitative analysis of media discourses in specific member states.<sup>32</sup> After all, she focuses on the relative amount of EU articles against the overall supply, but does not determine what happens within these ‘European’ articles. One would expect qualitative information to be more valuable than quantitative information, as the elements of tone and sentiment are much easier to deduce.

Nonetheless, this does not mean that EPS research disregards the evaluative aspect altogether, although they are still left wanting. Katharina van Königslöw included the aspect of evaluation exclusively in coding, allowing only for an indication on whether articles were favourable, neutral or critical.<sup>33</sup> Others, such as Pfetsch e.a. assess the positive and negative references in the media to reveal friend-enemy distinctions.<sup>34</sup> In their analyses on processes of Europeanization, they briefly discuss the media tone towards actors in different countries, which shows varying evaluations between the continental European group and

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<sup>29</sup> Olivier Baisnée, “The European Public Sphere Does Not Exist (At Least It’s Worth Wondering...),” *European Journal of Communication*, 22 (2007): 4, 495-503.

<sup>29</sup> Koopmans, “Who inhabits the European Public sphere?,” 187.

<sup>29</sup> Lonneke van Noije, “The European Paradox: a Communication Deficit as Long as European Integration Steals the Headlines,” *European Journal of Communication*, 25 (2010): 3, 260-272.

<sup>29</sup> Katharina Kleinen-von Königslöw, “Europe in Crisis? Testing the Stability and Explanatory Factors of the Europeanization of National Public Spheres,” *The International Communication Gazette*, 74 (2012): 5, 445-463.

<sup>30</sup> Giuseppe Alessandro Veltri, “Information Flows and Centrality Among Elite European Newspapers,” *European Journal of Communication*, 27 (2012): 4, 355-375.

<sup>31</sup> Van Noije, “The European Paradox,” 268.

<sup>32</sup> Benjamin Hawkins, “Nation, Separation and Threat: An analysis of British Media Discourses on the European Union Treaty Reform Process,” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 50 (2012): 4, 562-577.

<sup>33</sup> Königslöw, “Europe in Crisis?,” 450.

<sup>34</sup> Barbara Pfetsch, Silke Adam and Barbara Berkel, “The Voice of the Media in the European Public Sphere: Agenda Setters, Shapers of Conflicts and Bridges of Cross Border Communication,” *IPSA World Congress* (2006) 20-34.

Mediterranean countries.<sup>35</sup> A consequential drawback is the broad focus of the study, which does allow them to reveal something about the different levels of criticism in various member states, but prevents a better understanding of the dynamics within Europeanized public debates.

De Vreese explains how those debates are easier to understand, as he points to essential components being left out in the research of Europeanization in national media: context and consequences. In line with Llewelyn and Cram's assertion that the extraction of certain sentiments from a sentence is difficult and should therefore be inspected closely, he argues that the importance of framing in the national public sphere "should be central in future assessments of Europeanization of media content and the public sphere."<sup>36</sup>

These reflections are partly exemplified by the study of Paul Statham and Emily Gray, who undertake an analysis of British public debates on European integration, based on the conceptualization of the public sphere as a space where citizens interact through their acts of public communication.<sup>37</sup> They see claims-making acts as interactive communicative links; claims from national or European actors linking different political levels and different types of actors to different "purposeful views on European integration".<sup>38</sup> Statham and Gray then connect these claims to a score, as it gives them an indication as to whether a claim is against or in favour of the EU.<sup>39</sup> It becomes clear however, that they do not consider the circumstances; they look at the valence of the Europeanizing claim as the sole indicator for a positive or negative evaluation of the EU, thus disregarding the way in which this claim is positioned in the debate. In other words, in their view a visible act of political communication in the public debate is not self-contained, but part of an overarching message.

The discussed research adds relevance to an in-depth analysis of Europeanized public debate within the British public sphere. After all, it is clear that elements such as the tone and sentiment, as well as the aspect of framing in Europeanized articles are still underrepresented in EPS research. Furthermore, based on the assumption that exposure to slanted visible communication in the public sphere shapes citizens' political opinions, further

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<sup>35</sup> Pfetsch, Adam and Berkel, "The voice of the Media in the European Public Sphere," 20.

<sup>36</sup> De Vreese, "The EU as a Public Sphere," 10.

<sup>37</sup> Statham and Gray, "The Public Sphere and debates about Europe in Britain," 61.

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem, 65.

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem, 69.

scrutiny of the British public debates seems justifiable. In addition, the examined literature shows that focus on the national public sphere of Britain coincides with the prevailing conceptualization of the EPS; Europeanization of national public spheres. In line with previous findings and further explained in the theoretical framework, this research maintains that the EPS can be identified by visible communicative links, observable in the public debates taking place in the British media. The following division between 'Europeanized' articles and non 'Europeanized' articles allows for insights as to how the EPS relates to the public debate, but also shows the possible significance of such a sphere. Ultimately, this leads to the central question of this study as to what extent these Europeanized public debates in the British public sphere, two weeks before the Brexit-referendum, correlate a favourable or harmful evaluation of the EU. Supported by a qualitative analysis of the selected articles, the intention is to identify whether different communicative interactions, bring different evaluations while also taking into account that the observed sentiment of a Europeanizing claim does not signify a negative or positive depiction of the EU.

## **Theoretical Framework and Methodology**

The most frequently used framework for determining the existence and peculiarities of the European Public Sphere is conceived by Ruud Koopmans and Jessica Erbe, who see Europeanization as a consequence of interlinked communicative spaces. They differentiate between two forms of communicative linkages. Firstly, the model of vertical Europeanization, which consists of communicative linkages between the national and the European level.<sup>40</sup> Within this model, a number of varieties may be distinguished. In the bottom-up variant, the simplest form concerns national actors directly addressing European actors or institutions, as was the case when David Cameron demanded a better EU deal from the European Parliament in November 2015.<sup>41</sup> Also more complex patterns can appear, where national actors address national authorities, asking them to promote the group's interest at European level. A good example is the letter from 100 Financial Times Stock

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<sup>40</sup> Ruud Koopmans and Jessica Erbe, "Towards a European Public Sphere?," *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 17 (2004): 2, 101-118.

<sup>41</sup> Traynor, Ian. "David Cameron's EU demands letter explained." Available at <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/nov/10/david-camerons-eu-demands-letter-explained>> Accessed on Oct. 15, 2016.

Exchange chief executives and chairmen appealing to the British people and government for remaining in the European Union, after the Prime Minister's renegotiation in February 2016.<sup>42</sup> The top-down variant involves European actors or institutions intervening into national politics by criticizing or supporting national actors, based on European regulations and common interest, as was the case in June 2016, when the European Commission claimed that the decision by Britain to impose a right of residence test to access certain family benefits amounted to direct discrimination against citizens of other EU member states.<sup>43</sup>

The other form of Europeanization of public communication and mobilization is presented as Horizontal Europeanization, which consists of communicative linkages between different member states.<sup>44</sup> This model has a weak and a stronger variant. The weaker variant of horizontal Europeanization occurs when British media report on what happens within the national political spaces of other member states. It is similar to purely British claims, but here they transport non-British claims into the British public sphere.<sup>45</sup> The stronger variant of horizontal Europeanization is brought about by direct communicative linkages between two member states' political spaces, as for instance when on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December, Angela Merkel told David Cameron there was no chance of a deal on free movement and migrant benefits ahead of EU referendum crunch talks.<sup>46</sup>

Koopmans and Erbe's approach has both strengths and shortcomings. Evaluating the EPS on the basis of interlinked communication can be regarded as restrictive, because only when national actors make the European dimension visible to public view, are these debates treated as Europeanized. Without knowing whether the EU was involved, so they argue, citizens will determine that it is a purely national debate.<sup>47</sup> In other words, Koopmans and Erbe's concept takes on a strict user perspective. This focus on actors and their

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<sup>42</sup> Koopmans and Erbe, "Towards A European Public Sphere," 103-104.

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>43</sup> Travis, Alan. "EU court to back UK limits on migrants' access to child benefits." Available at <<https://www.theguardian.com/law/2016/jun/14/european-court-back-uk-limits-migrants-access-child-benefits>> Accessed on Oct. 16, 2016.

<sup>44</sup> Koopmans and Erbe, "Towards A European Public Sphere," 101.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem, 104.

<sup>46</sup> Wilkinson, Michael. "Angela Merkel tells David Cameron no chance of deal on free movement and migrant benefits ahead of EU referendum crunch talks." Available at <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/12052929/eu-referendum-brexite-fears-ahead-of-david-cameron-jeremy-corbyn-pmqs-live.html>> Accessed on Oct. 17, 2016.

<sup>46</sup> Koopmans and Erbe, "Towards A European Public Sphere," 104.

<sup>47</sup> Ibidem, 101.

interconnectedness could lead to the neglect of potentially important information, since not everything is included. At the same time their model provides a firm foundation for precise analysis. Firstly, because it considers the importance of determining which actors gain access to Europeanized politics, which positions they take up and whether participation in the mediated field of communication belongs mainly to EU actors or national ones.

Furthermore, the model allows for a relational perspective in the sense that those Europeanized articles or debates, are compared to national or international communication. For these reasons, this research chooses to undertake an analysis of British public debates by recourse of Koopmans and Erbe's framework of interlinked communicative linkages.

In practice, this is accomplished by following a set of sub-questions, consistent in every chapter, which will lead the discussion. Firstly, to what extent does the debate about the EU in Britain show signs of a European Public Sphere? As was explained earlier, a public debate remains purely national oriented, when there is no observable interactive communicative linkage connecting a national actor to a European one, or the other way around. When the nature of the public debate is determined, the relational perspective emerges: do the Europeanized articles exhibit a different dynamic than those which do not meet the requirements? Within this overarching categorization, attention is paid to how the EU is discussed while taking the different dimensions of Europeanization into account. In other words, do the debates established as vertical and horizontal Europeanization, show a different evaluation of the EU? Conducive to distinguishing between the vertical and horizontal form of Europeanization and resolving the remaining questions, is information on what is discussed, by whom, to whom and in whose interests. Details which traditional content analyses at article level are unable to convey. At most, these traditional methods offer insights into the frequency of appearances of actors and issues, and possible co-occurrences. The necessary information, needed for differentiating, is covered by the methodology of political claim analysis, which was introduced by Koopmans and Erbe.

Their claim-making method provides the requirement of exposing the interactive dimension of political communication by virtue of the functioning of claims. Claims usually consist of elements such as a claim maker or claimant, who makes a demand, proposal, appeal, or criticism; an addressee, who is held responsible for implementing the claim, or is the target of criticism or support; an object actor, whose interests are or would be positively or negatively affected by the claim; the issue, i.e. the substantive content of the claim,

stating what is to be done and why. A claim analysis based on these elements will reveal almost all that is needed to execute an in depth examination of Europeanization in the British public sphere. Yet, as was specified earlier in this introduction, in order to get a full picture as to how the European Public Sphere interacts with positive and negative evaluations, focus cannot be placed solely on the claims. By including the aspect of framing, it should become clearer as to what extent the evaluation of the Europeanizing claim corresponds with the tone of the article.

The foundation for this part of the research elaborates further on the typologies defined by Statham and Gray, and Mathieu Petithomme, as they evaluate the Europeanizing claims as positive, neutral or negative and conversely reach conclusion on the valence of the claim by aggregating the mean from the position scores of all claims of that type. The research presented here, also ascertains the valence of the article and adds the following factors; Firstly, are the evaluations of the author exclusively positive neutral or negative? In other words, does it merely have an accusatory style of writing or is there also leeway for the alternative perspective? The second factor is the overall tone of the article, does the author reveal a positive, neutral or negative opinion about the EU? The final evaluation of the article is dependent on the combination of these two factors. For instance, when an article is written solely in an accusatory style and the overall tone also is negative, it is regarded as 'very negative'. When the article is not written in an accusatory style, the allocation of the article to a certain category is reliant on the overall tone.

The theoretical framework is rather defining for the method, as well as which sources should be selected. Focus on a field of communication that is accessible to mass public, but also on public discourse therefore plays a central role. The relevance of the discursive part of public communication finds itself in the assumption that public discourse is regarded as the "primary medium for the development of public knowledge, values, interpretations, and self-understandings, and for change and innovation as well as reproduction or transmission over time in the inventory of ideas and arguments that are available in a given public sphere."<sup>48</sup> Considering the approach of my research, this focus on discursive public communication is deemed fitting. A debate consisting of the exchange of opinions and backed up by arguments is a rather demanding form of public discourse, and most likely to

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<sup>48</sup> Peters et al., "7 National and Transnational Public Spheres: The Case of the EU," *European Review*, 13 (2005): 1, 141-160.

be found in the quality press.<sup>49</sup> Following the lead of other studies on the EPS, three quality, nationwide newspapers from British print media, with different political stances and attitudes towards the EU were selected; The Guardian is considered as liberal, The Times as moderately conservative and The Daily Telegraph as a conservative newspaper. The latter two have a larger circulation than The Guardian, but they are considered as the largest broadsheet newspapers in the British media. It is important to keep in mind that the choice for these newspapers involves two major biases. Firstly, Europe looks different through the windscreen of quality press than tabloid press or television.<sup>50</sup> Secondly, when analysing processes of Europeanisation, media may serve as agenda setters or frame and select issues in accordance to the editorial line.<sup>51</sup> By first analysing every newspaper separately, and finally all together, I hope to bring nuance to the conclusions.

Furthermore, since this research focuses more on what happens within the Europeanized public debates, the chosen time frame is rather short. In this case it is the period leading up to the Brexit referendum. First a large sample is recovered from the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2016 until the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2016, so the two weeks leading up to the Brexit-referendum. Consequently all the articles mentioning the EU/Europe are selected. Mere news is excluded, so as such only the discursive articles such as letters and opinion columns were selected for the final analysis. These articles are usually written by concerned British citizens, but also include submissions from political actors such as Members of Parliament. The length of the articles generally varies between five-hundred and fifteen-hundred words.

As for the structure, the first chapter is set to provide an in-depth conceptualization of the European Public Sphere, and should be regarded separately from the other chapters. Due to the fundamental role of the EPS in this research, it remains very important that the complexity of the EPS as a term and theoretical concept is addressed. By tackling questions such as how the EPS emerged as a concept, why there are so many different interpretations and why this particular research chose to use the approach of interlinked communicative linkages, these matters are hopefully clarified. For the sake of establishing a certain frame of reference, the final aspect this first chapter touches upon, is the issue of how the process of

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<sup>49</sup> Brüggemann and Königslöw, "Let's talk about Europe," 8.

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem, 33.

<sup>50</sup> Hans-Jörg Trenz, "Media Coverage on European Governance: Exploring the European Public Sphere in National Quality Newspapers," *European Journal of Communication*, 19 (2004): 3, 293-319.

<sup>51</sup> Pfetsch, Adam and Berkel, "The Voice of the Media in European Public Sphere," 3.

Europeanization in British newspapers is interpreted by other studies on the EPS. After all, this ultimately allows for a comparison between the findings. Chapter two, three and four are set up analogously. The purpose of this system is to provide a proper foundation for objective analysis. Within these chapters every different form of Europeanization is examined. Comparing the findings from every newspaper should thus lead to a well-rounded conclusion and is qualified to say something about Britain as a whole. One exception is the sub-chapter in Chapter 2 on internalized communicative linkages, which is meant to introduce an important element of Europeanization.

# Chapter 1: The European Public Sphere

In search for signs of the existence or development of a European Public Sphere, many explorations on the subject have already materialized. Understanding the coming about and complexity of the EPS as a term and theoretical concept lies at the foundation of seeing through these earlier studies and ultimately helps to put this research into perspective. Firstly therefore, this chapter expands on those facets. The second part points out some of the deliberations put forward by other studies on the dynamics of Europeanization. In addition, it elaborates further on the prevalent understanding of how the EU is represented by British press. After all, this research is not just meant as a study on its own, but also aspires to add on current academic debate, thus strengthening or questioning current interpretations.

## From Public Sphere to European Public Sphere

Ever since the ground-breaking work of Jürgen Habermas with “The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere”, the notion of ‘public sphere’ has become a recurrent subject. Habermas himself termed this sphere as a place where private people come together as a public, to discuss political issues and positions and “engage in debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor.”<sup>52</sup> Nowadays, the public sphere has become a “highly complex network of various public sphere segments, which stretches across different levels, rooms and scales.”<sup>53</sup> A public sphere can be divided into subaltern, municipal, regional, national and international spheres, but also contain different arenas, “where elite and mass, professionals and lay-people, prophets and critics can meet and cooperate.”<sup>54</sup> Moreover, the advent of internet, social media and other modern means of communication have added additional intricacy to the concept.

Such conceptualization of the public sphere can, to some extent, be extrapolated to a

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<sup>52</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991 [1989]), 27.

<sup>53</sup> Erik O. Eriksen, “Conceptualizing European Public Spheres; General, Segmented and Strong Publics,” *Centre of European Studies* (2004) 5-35.

<sup>54</sup> Eriksen, “Conceptualizing European Public Spheres,” 5.

more European context. Notwithstanding or perhaps by virtue of the numerous ramifications which arise when contemplating an approach and appliance towards a 'European Public Sphere', two strands of research can be distinguished from accomplished literary works.

## Theories on the European Public Sphere

One of these strands is focused on the notion of a singular, pan-European Public Sphere. Jürgen Habermas, among others, argues that the national public spheres need a space running parallel to them. A European-wide public sphere was meant to be imagined as a projection of a design from the national onto the European level, but "emerged from the mutual opening of existing national universes to one another, yielding to an interpenetration of mutually translated communications."<sup>55</sup> Exactly this mutual communication has been criticized by Dieter Grimm. He contends that communication systems, which report on European topics in national media, are directed at a national public and therefore attached to the respective habits and viewpoints.<sup>56</sup> However, Grimm does not completely exclude the achievability of a nation-transcending communicative context, presupposing a public with language skills enabling to utilise European media where "there would be newspapers and periodicals, radio and television programmes, offered and demanded on a European market."<sup>57</sup>

Whereas Grimm introduces some harsh requirements with a common language, Philip Schlesinger disregards the feasibility of a pan-European Public Sphere altogether. He asserts that nation-states continue being the most significant spaces for political communication, with media institutions strongly influenced by domestic factors.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, in spite of internationalizing tendencies in European television, press and audio-visual markets, they remain incompatible and unable to create a homogeneous media system.<sup>59</sup> Productions are supposedly not comfortable with work outside of their language

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<sup>55</sup> Jürgen Habermas, "Why Europe Needs a Constitution," in *Developing a Constitution for Europe*, ed. Erik Oddvar Eriksen, John Erik Fossum and Augustin José Menendez (London: Routledge, 2004), 18.

<sup>56</sup> Dieter Grimm, "Does Europe Need a Constitution?," *European Law Journal*, 1 (1995): 3, 295-302.

<sup>57</sup> Grimm, "Does Europe Need a Constitution?," 295.

<sup>58</sup> Philip R. Schlesinger, "Europe's Contradictory Communicative Space," *Daedalus*, 123 (1994): 2, 31-52.

<sup>59</sup> Schlesinger, "Europe's Contradictory Communicative Space," 31.

area and seem to be primarily preoccupied with a stronger position within their national markets.<sup>60</sup> Schlesinger is convinced that “linguistic and sociocultural differences substantially account for the failure to create a pan-European televisual market.”<sup>61</sup> In addition he describes the press as incapable in providing a “framework for the national culture to be reproduced in ways accessible to the generality of citizens.”<sup>62</sup>

These discussions show the notion of a monolithic, singular and pan-European Public Sphere is highly implausible. Failed attempts of the EU like the newspaper in creating a pan-European media illustrate this even more clearly, seeing that the newspaper ‘The European’ and the heavily subsidized ‘Euronews’ never took off.<sup>63</sup>

## The Realist View

The second strand of research thus moves away from contextualizing the EPS in this manner and reveals another fundamental idea.<sup>64</sup> This new concept, supported by an acclaimed author on the subject such as Jürgen Gerhards, proposes to view the European Public Sphere as one that emerges as a result of Europeanization of public spheres of the EU member states.<sup>65</sup> In Gerhards’ view, Europeanization would take place when an increase in reporting on European decisions and elites taking decisions is observable in the national public sphere.<sup>66</sup> His first criterion for Europeanization of national public spheres, is an increased proportion of coverage of European themes and actors; does the media mention the European Commission or the European Court of Justice? How visible are Federica Mogherini, Jean-Claude Juncker and Martin Schulz? The second criterion asks whether the evaluation of these themes and actors go beyond the perspective of their one country and its interests.<sup>67</sup>

Whereas authors such as Koopmans and Erbe agree that an increased presence of European actors and themes in national media is an important criterion, they also regard the

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<sup>60</sup> Schlesinger, “Europe’s Contradictory Communicative Space,” 34.

<sup>61</sup> Ibidem, 35.

<sup>62</sup> Ibidem, 37.

<sup>63</sup> De Vreese, “The EU as a public sphere,” 8.

<sup>64</sup> Jürgen Gerhards, ‘Westeuropäische Integration und die Schwierigkeiten der Entstehung einer Europäischen Öffentlichkeit,’ *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 22 (1993): 2, 100-110.

<sup>65</sup> Jürgen Gerhards, “Das Öffentlichkeitsdefizit der EU im Horizont Normativer Öffentlichkeitstheorien,” *Transnationale Öffentlichkeiten und Identitäten im*, 20 (2002) 142-158.

<sup>66</sup> Gerhards, “Das Öffentlichkeitsdefizit der EU im Horizont Normativer Öffentlichkeitstheorien,” 142.

<sup>67</sup> De Vreese, “The EU as a public sphere,” 9.

latter assessment as too restrictive; “it demands an orientation on a European good in order for an act of public communication to qualify as ‘Europeanized’.”<sup>68</sup> Europeanization in Gerhards’ view presupposes a form of Europeanization of policies and politics along similar lines as those in the traditional nation state, but this perspective misses an important element; “the EU has some supranational features, yet many of its policies have an intergovernmental basis.”<sup>69</sup> Ultimately, so they argue, this comes at the expense of Europeanization of public debates and mobilization in other member states. This is important because the influence of an election in another member state, or a new kind of policy on an intergovernmental polity can be significant.<sup>70</sup> The recent Brexit referendum has only exemplified this argument, as it clearly fuelled anti-EU discourse in other EU member states.<sup>71</sup> Thus, Koopmans and Erbe arrive at a certain distinction between forms of Europeanization, where vertical Europeanization refers to national actors addressing European actors and issues or European actors or institutions intervening into national politics, and horizontal Europeanization is referred to as national media covering issues in other EU member states and national actors addressing issues or actors in another EU member state.<sup>72</sup> Not surprisingly, Koopmans and Erbe’s approach towards assessing Europeanization in the national public sphere, has been a foundation for several other studies on the EPS.

## **Europeanization in the British public sphere**

One such example, is the research of Paul Statham, which is also based on the assumption that understanding the processes of Europeanization, how these occur and their likely outcome, requires more than a study of political institutions and policy-making, but also a certain focus on the public sphere. Accordingly, he describes: “a European Public Sphere will build itself, and be built, through the interactions of collective actors who politically engage

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<sup>68</sup> Koopmans and Erbe, “Towards a European Public Sphere,” 100.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibidem*, 101.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>71</sup> Ramirez, Luis. “Brexit Fuels Hungary’s Anti-EU Fire.” Available at <<http://www.voanews.com/a/brexit-fuels-hungary-anti-eu-fire/3404391.html>> Accessed on Oct. 17, 2016.

<sup>72</sup> Koopmans and Erbe, “Towards a European Public Sphere,” 101.

over European issues, both between and within different levels of polities,”<sup>73</sup> His analysis is particularly interesting since it discusses the dynamics of Europeanization in the British public debates.

Statham’s findings suggest that bottom-up, vertical claims-making does not make up a significant part of the overall distribution of claims in Britain, and puts forward a rather strong Eurosceptic position.<sup>74</sup> The same observation is made in a joint study with Emily Gray, and further reinforced through the results of Mathieu Petithomme.<sup>75</sup> The latter results also show that claims from the head of government are usually more pro-European in character than claims from other claim-makers.<sup>76</sup> These verdicts imply that relatively seen, British actors have failed, or are reluctant in establishing a channel of communication that directly addresses European institutions. Bottom-up claims-making however, can assume different forms.

Koopmans and Erbe have explained the different patterns which can occur in the bottom-up variant of Europeanization. A direct form where national actors address EU institutions or actors directly, and one more complex; national claimants and addressees have a national character, but the issue is European.<sup>77</sup> When the latter form has the upper hand, this is evidence of a so called ‘internalized’ national political debate on European issues.<sup>78</sup> According to Petithomme, “in the UK, the “internal” national claims-making over Europe is always dominant.”<sup>79</sup> Statham arrives at the same conclusion, arguing that “the more ‘closed’ type of claims-making that communicates neither upwards supra-nationally, nor trans-nationally across EU national borders, remains internalized within the nation-state of Britain”<sup>80</sup> Consequently, this less direct communicative engagement with supranational EU institutions has been connected to a public sphere, less open to “processes of scrutiny,

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<sup>73</sup> Paul Statham, “Forging Divergent and “path Dependent” Ways to Europe?: Political Communication Over European Integration in the British and French Public Spheres,” *EurPolCom-Institute of Communications Studies* (2005) 84-140.

<sup>74</sup> Statham, “Forging Divergent and “path Dependent” ways to Europe,” 109.

<sup>75</sup> Mathieu Petithomme, “Framing European Integration in Mediated Public Spheres: an Increasing Nationalization and Contestation of European Issues in Party Political Communication?,” *The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 23 (2010): 2, 163-168.

<sup>76</sup> Petithomme, “Framing European Integration in mediated public spheres,” 161.

<sup>77</sup> Koopmans and Erbe, “Towards a European Public Sphere,” 104.

<sup>78</sup> Statham and Gray, “The Public Sphere and Debates about Europe,” 69.

<sup>78</sup> Petithomme, “Framing European Integration in mediated public spheres,” 163.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibidem*, 163.

<sup>80</sup> Statham, “Forging Divergent and ‘Path Dependent’ Ways to Europe,” 110.

accountability and responsibility,”<sup>81</sup> with as consequence that British citizens conceive the EU politics made visible to them primarily as a national affair.<sup>82</sup>

In congruence with above observations, the vertical top-down variant of claims-making doesn't seem to get much attention in the British public debate. Statham and Gray's measurements indicate a limited diffusion of European institutions and actors. They subsequently argue that it supports the claim of a democratic deficit, as the EU does not appear visibly enough as a “driver of European integration processes to the extent that it clearly is.”<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, it is pointed out that when the top-down claims do reach the national public spheres, they appear to be a strong advocate of European integration.<sup>84</sup> Whereas Petithomme's analysis likewise suggests that the visibility of European actors to represent, give voice and obtain resonance for the discourses of European institutions is limited, he does offer more potential explanations as to why this is the case.<sup>85</sup> Apart from the possibility that European institutions and actors have been ineffective in promoting their political communication in national member states, another reason might be the role of national media as “active filters, selecting issues and marginalizing the declarations of European actors.”<sup>86</sup> In addition, top-down claims might also have “remained secondary given the active concurrence of national actors in the framing of public discourses.”<sup>87</sup>

The horizontal variant of claims-making also barely gets any visibility in the public debates, accounting for less than 10 % of the total instances in Petithomme's research. Together with the top-down variant, this means that three modalities remain consistently marginalized below 15%.<sup>88</sup> A verdict which concurs with the rejection of Statham and Gray on a possible development of political communication across borders between EU member states over European integration.<sup>89</sup> Ultimately their results lead them to the conclusion that “so far it appears that there is little transnational communication that would be indicative of an EU of interacting nation states.”<sup>90</sup> However, when these instances do take place, they

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<sup>81</sup> Statham and Gray, “The Public Sphere and Debates about Europe in Britain,” 68.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibidem*, 77.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem*, 69.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>85</sup> Petithomme, “Framing European Integration in Mediated Public Spheres,” 164.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibidem*, 164.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibidem*, 163.

<sup>89</sup> Statham, “Forging Divergent and ‘Path Dependent’ Ways to Europe,” 110.

<sup>89</sup> Statham and Gray, “The Public Sphere and Debates about Europe,” 70.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibidem*.

present quite a favorable sentiment towards the EU.<sup>91</sup>

What above observations suggest, is that preceding studies on political communication in the British public debate, have reached a form of consensus on the lacking visibility of the EU as stimulator in the European integration processes. Conjointly, they point out that communication in the public debate between EU member states leaves room for improvement. In fact, the main focus of political communication seems to be inward looking, which leads to a perception of EU politics by British citizens merely in the context of the national perspective. Of additional importance, is the consideration that those instances where the bottom-up variant of vertical Europeanization does not apply, exhibit a far more positive evaluation of the EU than the remaining modalities. These findings have given some insights about what is known concerning the dynamics of interlinked communicative linkages in the British public debates. Yet, considering the ensuing research elaborates on how the EU is represented in British press, it should also prove useful to acquire a more thorough impression of current perceptions with regard to this issue.

## **Euroscepticism in UK Press**

The general conception is that the United Kingdom has always had deep reservations with regard to the idea of an integrated Europe, further exemplified by the title of Stephen George's book 'An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community'.<sup>92</sup> Although it would be foolish to argue otherwise, this should not lead to the assumption that the EU appeared out of nowhere. Andrew Geddes befittingly describes; "Europe' does not just happen when government ministers fly to Brussels, Luxembourg or Strasbourg to meet ministerial and official colleagues from other member states, or deal with EU institutions located in those cities."<sup>93</sup> Ultimately British governments have consciously chosen European integration because they perceived such a decision to be in the UK's best interest.<sup>94</sup> Neither, should one ever imagine the existence of "some kind of predisposition in Britain to

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<sup>91</sup> Statham and Gray, "The Public Sphere and Debates about Europe," 69.

<sup>92</sup> Menno Spiering, *A Cultural History of British Euroscepticism*, (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 3.

<sup>93</sup> Andrew Geddes, *Britain and the European Union*, (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 15.

<sup>94</sup> Geddes, *Britain and the European Union*, 15.

Euroscepticism, as though it were some kind of national trait or characteristic.”<sup>95</sup>

Nonetheless, British governments have failed to either make the case in Britain for Europe, or have not had the intention to make the case. The first statement refers to the New Labour government between 1997 and 2010, while the latter applies to the Conservative-Liberal Democratic coalition led by David Cameron since 2010.<sup>96</sup> Whether the reasons for this situation were the changes in EU institutions, other member states, pressure groups, or sub national governments becoming more deeply involved in the decision-making process, or the exposure to “the dynamics of new forms of supranational political integration that challenge some of the core underlying premises of British politics,”<sup>97</sup> it hasn’t helped the Eurosceptic sentiment in the British print media.

According to Oliver Daddow, ever since the outbreak of the Eurozone crisis, the UK newspaper market has expounded a form of ‘hard Euroscepticism’.<sup>98</sup> He contends that elite Europhile opinion is seeping away in elite political discourse and policy, with the UK press as significant factor in agenda setting on European issues policy, as it has “generated a ‘climate of fear’ against the public espousal of pro-European narratives.”<sup>99</sup> Later he nuances his assertion slightly by stating that Britain is home to an unusually Eurosceptical media market especially when compared to other areas. Yet, ultimately the message remains the same; the press is Eurosceptical, nationalistic and even xenophobic in its coverage.<sup>100</sup> As he sets out to document how the UK newspapers reported on David Cameron’s Bloomberg speech, it hardly comes as a surprise that the conclusion reads as follows: “press coverage of the Bloomberg speech can be treated as part of the ongoing cultural ‘performance’ of Euroscepticism in Britain which has strongly structural effects on how newspapers frame European policy debates for their readers.”<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, it leads him to the verdict that UK press coverage on European affairs is one-sided and does not allow much permeation of pro-European voices.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Geddes, *Britain and the European Union*, 35.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*, 12.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>98</sup> Olivier Daddow, “Performing Euroscepticism: The UK Press and Cameron’s Bloomberg Speech,” in *The UK Challenge to Europeanization: The Persistence of British Euroscepticism*, ed. Karine Tournier-Sol and Chris Gifford (Springer, 2016), 151.

<sup>99</sup> Daddow, “Performing Euroscepticism,” 151.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibidem*, 151-152.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibidem*, 153.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibidem*.

In consonance with this line of thought, Benjamin Hawkins argues that the clearest of articulation of anti-EU sentiment is to be found within the British print media. Consequently, he maintains that this is “of crucial importance as the media is citizens’ principal source of information on EU affairs.”<sup>103</sup> This is even more relevant when the potential impact of news frames is assumed to have an influence on affecting real policy decisions. Following Andreas Schuck and Claes de Vreese, such prospects are legitimate; “Based on our findings, we have good reason to believe that public opinion about EU integration could shift in one or the other direction if either of the two frames received more emphasis within news coverage.”<sup>104</sup>

Such frames however, are thought to deviate for each newspaper. In his research on the British public debate on the EU, Hawkins concludes that from all the articles he reviewed, only one article from the right-wing press could be described as overtly favourable of the EU.<sup>105</sup> Fundamentally, his findings show that right-wing newspapers like The Daily Telegraph and The Times are plainly recusant of the EU, while The Guardian is far more positive. Moreover, in contrast to the sole Eurosceptic discourse of the right-wing press, The Guardian also presents certain themes from the Eurosceptic rhetoric instead of only positive coverage.<sup>106</sup>

Overall, these accounts demonstrate that although no such thing as predisposition in Britain to Euroscepticism should be assumed, British governments have been unable to sell the European Project as something beneficial to the British citizen. With regard to the latter especially, the same can be said for the British press. Britain accommodates an unusually Eurosceptic media market, further exemplified by recent findings that UK press coverage on Cameron’s Bloomberg speech was a one-sided affair. At the same time, it remains important to realize that newspapers inhabit and facilitate different opinions. Right-wing press is connected to Euroscepticism, while left-wing papers such as The Guardian mainly, but not exclusively, present a more positive image of the EU. Lastly, understanding how the EU is framed, is essential considering the high influence probability on public opinion.

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<sup>103</sup> Hawkins, “Nation, Separation and Threat,” 562.

<sup>104</sup> Andreas R.T. Shuck and Claes H. de Vreese, “Between Risk and Opportunity: News Framing and its Effects on Public Support for EU Enlargement,” *European Journal of Communication*, 21 (2006): 1, 9-32.

<sup>105</sup> Hawkins, “Nation Separation and Threat,” 572.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibidem*, 570.

## Conclusion

This chapter started with a closer look at the origin of the European Public Sphere. Firstly, the concept of public sphere has been described as an increasingly complex concept. Especially the contemporary perception explains it as multi-segmented, active in different arenas and dynamic idea. Since the appliance of the public sphere in a European context, this has led to several theories, of which the notion of a pan-European variant clearly cut short. Instead, the second strand of research, based on the idea of a European Public Sphere emerging as a result of Europeanization of public spheres of the EU member states, took hold as the preeminent approach. However, Gerhards' view left room for improvement, as Koopmans and Erbe rightly pointed out the importance of making a distinction between a vertical and horizontal form of Europeanization. After all, this enabled them to not just cover political communication within the nation state, but also public debates in other member states. Other studies have taken their method of interlinked communicative linkages so they could gain more insights into the dynamics of different forms of communication. It turns out that within the British public debate, the EU lacks visibility as stimulator in the European integration process. Furthermore, also public debate between EU member states or on issues in other member states receive little attention. Instead, most debates are rather internally focused, thus preventing the perception of British citizens about EU politics to fully transcend the national perspective. This is particularly troubling for the image of the EU, as the bottom-up variant of Europeanization tends to be more negative than the top-down or horizontal modalities. At the same time, a review of recent literature on the subject of British press sentiment towards the EU, shows quite a Eurosceptic media market. Despite differences between right and left-wing press in particular, this remains a disquieting situation, because in the end there is a high probability that public opinion is influenced by negative or positive evaluations.

# Chapter 2: Europeanization in The Daily Telegraph

This chapter sets out to visualize the British EU debate in The Daily Telegraph, with a particular interest in the makeup of sufficiently Europeanized articles, based on the theory of interlinked communicative linkages. Furthermore, in pursuance of a clear explanation on the dynamics of the public debate within the various dimensions of Europeanization, it will also seek to illustrate the respective patterns of communication. In addition, considering the importance this research attributes to context, attention is given to the positioning of the Europeanizing claim in the respective article. The selection of this newspaper consists of forty-seven articles, of which twenty-five have been labelled Europeanized articles.

## First insights

### Europeanization in the British Public Sphere

Valence	Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very Negative	OVERALL
EPS	4 %	16 %	8 %	40 %	32 %	100 % (25)
NOT EPS	0 %	9.5 %	47,6 %	23.8 %	19,1 %	100 % (22)
No distinction	2.2 %	13 %	26,1 %	32.6 %	26,1 %	100 % (47)

**Table 1.1 (Based on the final selection of articles from The Daily Telegraph)**

Looking at Table 1.1, what first comes to mind is the rather even distribution of articles conforming to the requirements of the EPS in comparison to those which do not. Such diagnosis does not hold up when attention is shifted to the valence of the articles. The EPS articles show a rather unfavourable evaluation of the EU, considering 40 % of the articles exhibit a negative valence and 32 % rests on a very negative disposition. Within the non-EPS

selection a substantial amount of articles also show negative evaluations, but it distinguishes itself from the EPS selection by the difference in neutrally valenced articles, which implies that non-EPS articles are more likely to take a nuanced position. Likewise, note that although the EPS articles present a more negative image of the EU than the non-EPS articles, they also include more positive frames.

When no distinction is made between EPS and non-EPS articles, more than 50 % still consists of a negatively valenced frame. This suggests that the European discursive space of the Daily Telegraph is more inclined towards a negative portrayal of the European Union. With regard to just the EPS selection, the table makes clear that the European Union is primarily conceived as more negative, an observation that connects to Hawkins’ claim that anti-EU sentiment, found in the British print media, is particularly detectable in the right-wing press.<sup>107</sup> Another conspicuous aspect, is the higher perceptible polarization in the EPS selection, in comparison to the non-EPS selection. In furtherance of a more profound understanding of how Europeanizing communicative linkages relate to the portrayal of the EU, attention is now shifted towards the various dimensions of Europeanization.

**Europeanization in the British public sphere – Different dimensions (EPS)**

Valence	Very positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very Negative	Overall
Vertical Top Down	20%	20%	0	40%	20%	100% (5)
Vertical Bottom up	0	5,2%	10,5%	47,4%	36,8%	100% (19)
Horizontal Weak	7,2%	21,6%	0	35,6%	35,6%	100% (16)
Horizontal Strong	0	0	0	0	0	0

<sup>107</sup> Hawkins, “Nation, Separation and Threat,” 562.

## Table 1.2

Table 1.2 shows that merely a presentation of dominant evaluations of the public debate in the EPS and non-EPS categorizations is important for the overview, but remains rather generic. It is no surprise therefore, that the distribution of evaluations is different when the dimensions of the EPS come into play. Above results don't seem to coincide entirely with the findings from the literature discussed in chapter one. The low visibility of top-down Europeanization is no surprise, however, also the horizontal dimension was expected to be negligible. Both Petithomme as well as Statham and Gray came to the conclusion that information about issues in other member states, as well as communication between national actors play an insignificant role in the British public debate. However, these findings illustrate that such an observation is not applicable on this situation. That being said, the total absence of the strong variant of horizontal Europeanization also draws attention.

### **Beyond the Numbers: Top-Down Dimension**

Starting with the top-down 'vertical' category, where European actors or institutions interfere in national affairs, one can see the relatively modest amount of communicative linkages. This finding coincides with Statham and Grays' measurements of top-down claims, and indicates a limited diffusion of European institutions and actors.<sup>108</sup> In fact, it supports the claim of a democratic deficit, as the EU does not appear visibly enough as a "driver of European integration processes to the extent that it clearly is."<sup>109</sup> Moving on, communicative linkages from the top-down variant seem to inherently suppose a more positive tone concerning the European Union. After all, as Michelle Pace argues, although the EU is conceived as a normative power, it "often comes across as a player which excels in evading a great deal of responsibility for its actions."<sup>110</sup> Yet, table 1.2 shows that only 2 out of 5 articles identified as Europeanized through the top-down variant, were positively valenced, while the remaining articles display negative or very negative percentages.

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<sup>108</sup> Statham and Gray, "The Public Sphere and Debates about Europe," 69.

<sup>109</sup> Ibidem, 69.

<sup>110</sup> Michelle Pace, "The Construction of EU's Normative Power," *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 45 (2007): 5, 1060-1064.

One of the articles displaying a form of vertical top-down Europeanization, discusses the German fight for supremacy over the European Court of Justice (ECJ).<sup>111</sup> Germany's top judges supposedly warned in a landmark case that they will not tolerate any measure or legal finding from the European Union that would clash with the higher principles of the German basic law; "The legitimacy given to state authority by elections may not be depleted by transfers of powers and tasks to the European level."<sup>112</sup> The response of the ECJ was to call the bluff of the German court, thus sweeping aside the pre-judgement 'unceremoniously'. The exchanges in this public debate make the EU visible, but although the fundamental claim is neutral, the context remains negative. The author doesn't leave much for interpretation; "Germany has retreated on a crucial issue and have in reality bowed to EU primacy,"<sup>113</sup> thus implying that the ECJ is bad for the UK.

Another debate in the Daily Telegraph, delves deeper into the question whether the creation of a European army is in the interest of the UK or not. Here, the author mentions a German led initiative to form a European Defence Union. An ambition supported by Federica Mogherini, the EU's chief of foreign affairs and security affairs, who wants to set up a joint headquarters, overseeing the shared military assets provided by the member states. Also Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker seemed to agree, since it would "enable the Union to be taken more seriously as an international force."<sup>114</sup> Yet, the tone of the article is in stark contrast to the intentions of both EU actors, as it contends that "EU officials try to conceal from the British public which poses the gravest threat to our future security is their proposal to establish a European Defence Force."<sup>115</sup> It concludes that the EU's Global Strategy on Foreign Security Policy is "both dangerous and unworkable, together with the presumption that Brussels will ultimately control the military assets of member states, rather than member states retaining the authority to decide whether they wish to involve themselves in a particular EU initiative."<sup>116</sup>

This doesn't mean that all the articles conforming to the top-down variant misrepresent the claims from European actors or institutions. As Table 1.2 shows, one is

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<sup>111</sup> The Daily Telegraph, Germans back down in fight for supremacy over EU court, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

<sup>112</sup> Telegraph, Germans back down.

<sup>113</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>114</sup> The Daily Telegraph, Creating a European army is not in our interests, June 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>115</sup> Telegraph, Creating European army.

<sup>116</sup> Ibidem.

categorized as 'positive'. The debate presented here illustrates that direct communicative links can also be the basis for a favourable EU image. Ironically, the communicative linkage originates from Donald Tusk, the former Polish Prime Minister and current EU president, and is self-critical. He states that the EU must "depart from utopian dreams," and "forces lyrical and in fact naïve Euroenthusiastic visions of total integration, which is not a suitable answer for the member states."<sup>117</sup> The author subsequently uses this claim to connect it to comments from other EU member state actors. Initially these seem to imply a negative connotation; "Wolfgang Schauble, the German finance minister acknowledged that the EU must adapt," or "Enrico Letta, the former Italian prime minister, argues for reforms of the EU". However, the issue is framed in a positive way, as the article illustrates that the UK should remain in the EU for a chance to reform it.<sup>118</sup>

Based on the observations from the Europeanized articles of the top-down variant, there are several comments to be made. Firstly, the earlier assumption, based on the assertions from Michelle Pace and Statham and Gray that top-down claims are inherently pro-EU is too simplistic. Even the nature of the claim doesn't signify a negative or positive portrayal of the EU. Moreover, two out of five top-down Europeanized articles are negative or very negative in their evaluation of the EU, which suggests that the visible communicative linkages between national and European actors in The Daily Telegraph are not to the benefit of the EU's image.

## **Beyond the Numbers: Bottom-Up Dimension**

For the articles meeting the requirements of the bottom-up variant of Europeanization, a glimpse at the presented data shows that almost every single unit of analysis has a negative or very negative valence. Following the conceptualization of the public sphere by Koopmans & Erbe, citizens interact through their acts of public communication. These acts, or claims, decide whether the article can be regarded as sufficiently Europeanized or not. The sentiment put forward in those claims is expected to be reliant on the political convictions of the claimant and should, given that not just anti-EU actors participate in the debate, have an

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<sup>117</sup> The Daily Telegraph, If Europe refuses to bend, it will break instead, June 16<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>118</sup> Telegraph, Europe refuses to bend.

equalizing effect on the tone of the debate.

The actual discussions in the newspaper show a different situation however. Although after adding up all instances of the bottom-up variant exhibits a rather even distribution of positive and negative claims made by national actors, the positioning of these claims is nearly always negative. The positive claims are mostly originating from former Prime Minister David Cameron, who tried to convince the UK citizens to view the EU in a positive light, using different arguments. Sometimes he would focus on the EU-deal; “The UK would be stronger, safer and better off in a reformed European Union.”<sup>119</sup> Or mention economic reasons; “Leaving the single market puts a bomb under the British economy,”<sup>120</sup> and “It would be madness for the UK to cut immigration by leaving the single market, because it will trash our economy.”<sup>121</sup> Even security passes the revue, “if the UK votes to leave, then no one will be more pleased than President Putin and the fanatical followers of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.”<sup>122</sup> Yet, every one of these claims were either refuted or rebuked. The EU deal was described as not sufficient, or it was mentioned that to date there hasn’t been any meaningful reform.<sup>123</sup> With regard to the economic claims, reference is made to the bad economic situation in Greece, Spain and Italy and the serious economic decline in France.<sup>124</sup> Implying that leaving the EU would please Russia was equally unconvincing for the author of the respective article; “the odious tactics employed by the Remain camp has been to scare the voters into believing that voting for Brexit will abandon us to the mercy of Russian storm troopers and Isil butchers.”<sup>125</sup>

Only one of the positive claims corresponds with a positive framing of the EU, which is coincidentally not David Cameron. In this particular discussion, the Chief of the MI6 contends that the EU provides a valuable and legal framework for sharing information and data, furthering his argument with the statement that without the EU, the French would have taken two months instead of 15 minutes to pass fingerprints of the Paris bombers.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> The Daily Telegraph, A reformed EU is not on the Agenda, June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016.

<sup>120</sup> The Daily Telegraph, Status Quo is not an option with the EU, June 13<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>121</sup> The Daily Telegraph, The ‘Single Market’ – two little words that mean something very different, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

<sup>122</sup> The Daily Telegraph, Putin and Isil have nothing to fear from the EU, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

<sup>123</sup> Telegraph, A reformed EU.

<sup>123</sup> The Daily Telegraph, There has been no meaningful reform of the EU, June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016.

<sup>124</sup> Telegraph, No meaningful EU reform.

<sup>125</sup> Telegraph, Putin and Isil.

<sup>126</sup> The Daily Telegraph, There’s no simple way to make Britain safer, June 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

Another possibility is a debate where both negative and positive claims come to the fore, but the ultimate conclusion is left to the readers themselves; “This is a difficult, fraught decision with no perfect options. But whatever decision we make, it ought to be based on a genuine judgement about the pros and cons of the case.”<sup>127</sup> However, both situations are rare occurrences.

One of the justifications for including direct communicative linkages is the increased believability or impact when the presented words don’t derive from the author themselves, but from an actor supporting the authors case (excluding the opinion articles or letters written by national actors.<sup>128</sup>) Nonetheless, the discussed material above again shows that the originator of the claim or intention of the claimant is irrelevant when it comes to how it is inserted in the debate; the authors don’t take these aspects into account or decide not to let it influence their choice of claims. This suggests that the valence of the ‘Europeanizing’ claim, is not a reliable indicator. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of considering how such claims are framed in the public debate.

## **Internalized Communicative Linkages**

Koopmans & Erbe have explained the different patterns which can occur in the bottom-up variant of Europeanization. A direct form where national actors address EU institutions or actors directly, and one more complex; national claimants and addressees have a national character, but the issue is European. When not the first but the latter is more apparent, this is evidence of ‘internalized’ national political debates on European issues.<sup>129</sup>

Nearly every claim in the public debates exposes such an internalized national political debate. Michael Gove called out the group of economic experts who dismissed Britain’s chances of success outside of the EU and compared them to Nazi propogandists in pay of the government.<sup>130</sup> General Sir Michael Rose addressed the government, arguing that the UK’s best contribution to maintaining security in Europe will be achieved by standing

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<sup>127</sup> The Daily Telegraph, Where were you before, Baroness Warsi?, June 21<sup>st</sup> 2016.

<sup>128</sup> The Daily Telegraph, Here’s the genuine version of Farage’s Britain, June 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>128</sup> Telegraph, There’s no simple way.

<sup>128</sup> The Daily Telegraph, Please vote to leave on Thursday – we’ll never get this chance again, June 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>129</sup> Statham and Gray, “The Public Sphere and Debates about Europe in Britain,” 69.

<sup>130</sup> The Daily Telegraph, Gove’s ‘Nazi’ jibe at Remain, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

apart and forming strong alliances.<sup>131</sup> Another debate, instigated by Boris Johnson, argues that Britain has to vote remain in the EU, as otherwise it would continue to be subject to “an increasingly anti-democratic system that is now responsible for 60 percent of the laws going through Westminster.”<sup>132</sup> Later, he mentions that the ‘hierarchs’ of the European Commission “make us prisoners of a trade regime that will not allow this country to negotiate with America or China or India or any of the other growth economies of the world.”<sup>133</sup>

All these instances still show Europeanized communication, but the link between the EU and its citizens appears to be less visible and explicit. A less direct communicative engagement with the supranational EU institutions has been connected by Statham and Gray to a public sphere, less open to “processes of scrutiny, accountability and responsibility,”<sup>134</sup> with as consequence that British citizens conceive the EU politics made visible to them primarily as a national affair.<sup>135</sup> Considering the lead up to the Brexit referendum is the main focus of this study, such findings are to be expected, but nonetheless important to acknowledge.

## **Beyond the Numbers: Horizontal Dimension**

Besides vertical Europeanization, also the horizontal form of Europeanized public communication and mobilization could be identified. The horizontal variant distinguishes itself from vertical Europeanization with regard to one particular trait; it shows what happens in the national political space of other member states. Regardless of the earlier conclusion for bottom-up Europeanization that the identity or intention of the claimant, proved irrelevant factors as to how these were inserted in the debate, this does not mean that the same logic can be applied to the horizontal dimension.

Indeed, the discussions in the newspaper point towards a different dynamic. Public debates containing a horizontal linkage with a positive association, also portray a positive

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<sup>131</sup> The Daily Telegraph, Our best defence is to stand apart and save Europe by our example, June 21<sup>st</sup> 2016.

<sup>132</sup> Telegraph, Please vote leave on thursday.

<sup>133</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>134</sup> Statham and Gray, “The Public Sphere and Debates about Europe in Britain,” 68.

<sup>135</sup> Ibidem, 77.

image of the EU. One of such examples was presented by the Chief of MI6, whom mentioned that the Belgians and French have found ways of sharing valuable information, which is supposed to be a huge advantage to the security of Europe. He then argues that this would have been impossible without the legal framework provided by the EU.<sup>136</sup> On the other hand, when issues or events in other member states are revealed with a negative connotation to the EU, the overall tone of the article appears to be negative. For instance, in a debate about issues in the EU, the author decides to emphasize that some member states perform very poorly; “The one area where the EU is to blame, of course, is the Euro, which has been a complete disaster for the Italian economy; Italy is still experiencing problems with inflation, but unable to depreciate the currency.”<sup>137</sup>

When the horizontal linkage neither implies a negative or positive connotation to the EU, the observed articles actually do change the nature of the claim in their interest. One such claim emerges in an article where the Danish rejection of the Maastricht Treaty referendum is discussed. Here, the author uses the example to point out the subsequent “optouts from the monetary union, the common defense and security policy, from justice and home affairs harmonization and from citizenship of the EU.”<sup>138</sup> Although the event in itself doesn’t necessarily hurt the image of the EU, the author implies that the EU can and should be manipulated, where if a Brexit comes about, it would “shake the EU out of its arrogant complacency”.<sup>139</sup> Naturally, a claim could also be framed in a positive context. Depicting Germany as a country with a world view, the author notices how Germany had a world plan; “It reunited Germany to have the biggest population in Europe, changed voting according to population weight and reduced the voting threshold to pass EU law.”<sup>140</sup> He then contends that if the UK wants things to change for the better, the EU is the way to go; “it will take a while. Let’s start now. Let the Prime Minister and his successors show the people of Europe what Britain has to offer as leader.”<sup>141</sup>

For the horizontally Europeanized articles, the nature of the linkage seems to be much less sensitive to framing when it consists of an explicit valence. When the revealed

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<sup>136</sup> Telegraph, There’s No Simple Way.

<sup>137</sup> The Daily Telegraph, Italy’s failure to thrive puts the boot into Eurozone goal, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>138</sup> The Daily Telegraph, In Brussels no never means no. Britain will be offered a better deal, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

<sup>139</sup> Telegraph, In Brussels no never means no.

<sup>140</sup> The Daily Telegraph, In my Eutopia, Britain will lead the Union, June 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>141</sup> Telegraph, Britain will lead the Union.

issue or event in another member state, is considered as a negative or positive influence for the EU's image, the frame corresponds; or in other words, it supports the authors main argument. However, when the meaning of the issue or event is open for interpretation, this is exactly what transpires. The latter observation points to a public debate based on controversy and dissidence, which thus allows less room for nuances. In a way, the indicated situation connects to the earlier internalized discourse. After all, national public debates, especially in the case of a massive issue like the Brexit referendum, have a tendency to emphasize only certain aspects.<sup>142</sup>

### **Beyond the Numbers: Non-EPS Selection**

Understanding the dynamics of the EPS can also be achieved by comparing the categories of EPS and Non-EPS articles. This relational perspective allows for more insights because differences in the categories wouldn't appear when focus is aimed at just one classification.

One of the major discrepancies between both categorizations, is the high percentage of 'Neutral' articles in the articles classified as not sufficiently Europeanized. An important factor in deciding whether an article is listed as 'Neutral', is the absence of an obvious positive or negative positioning of the respective author. Yet, this does not rule out the presence of negative and positive evaluations. In fact, these 'Neutral' articles demonstrate a more balanced debate about which aspects of the EU are considered as benefits, and which are thought to be to the detriment of the UK.

Above observations are based on the more or less "decide by yourself" character of the debates. One of the neutrally categorized articles acknowledges that the EU is 'unreformable' and therefore a "threat to Europe's future peace and prosperity."<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, reference is made to the sacrifices of the grandfather, who fought in the First World War, and her husband, killed while on active service in the RAF; "Freedom comes at a cost."<sup>144</sup> On the other hand, the author also admits that she realizes "how effective EU projects can be at kick-starting economic regeneration."<sup>145</sup> Her conclusion is that people

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<sup>142</sup> Peters, "7 National and transnational public spheres," 155.

<sup>143</sup> The Daily Telegraph, The EU debate goes right to the heart of Britain's historic freedoms, June 21<sup>st</sup> 2016.

<sup>144</sup> Telegraph, Britain's historic freedoms.

<sup>145</sup> Ibidem.

should vote for what they sincerely believe to be the best for the country, a recurring motive in the other instances with a neutral valence, although sometimes in different fashion. For instance, in a debate about the believability of experts, the following author argues that some contemplations are facts, such as how the British economy had the slowest growth rate among the G7 group of rich countries before joining the EU and the fastest since.<sup>146</sup> Afterwards he asks his readers to think by themselves; “Don’t like what an expert or an institution is saying? Fine; challenge the research, the methods and assumptions.”<sup>147</sup>

Naturally, the self-critical and nuanced perspectives brought forward in the neutral articles are not exclusive to the Non-EPS articles, yet here they are far bigger in number. Furthermore, the non-Europeanized articles represent a more balanced debate. Instead of trying to convince the reader to choose for or against the EU, these public debates are more focused on facilitating different perspectives. They provide information, and let the reader decide which argument is more reasonable. These findings do not necessarily imply that visible political communication in the debate, vertical or horizontal, automatically leads to polarization. However, it does suggest that when the media shows an increase of interlinked communicative spaces, which are the requirements of a functioning EPS, a polarized debate is also more than likely to be present. Whether this works in favor or to the detriment of EU’s image depends on which dimension of Europeanization is dominant in the debate and to what extent claims or issues are framed by the respective authors.

## **Conclusion**

The discussed material from The Daily Telegraph has provided a glimpse into the British public debate on the Brexit issue. More important however, are the new insights these findings bring with regard to the dynamics of the EPS. Looking at the difference between EPS and non-EPS articles, it can be concluded that when interlinked communicative linkages come into play, articles also tend to give a more explicit evaluation of the EU. In contrast to the non-EPS articles, which are for the most part neutrally valenced, self-critical and quite nuanced, EPS articles in The Daily Telegraph demonstrate a very negative image of the EU. In

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<sup>146</sup> The Daily Telegraph, It’s common sense; we have to trust our experts, June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016.

<sup>147</sup> Telegraph, We have to trust our experts.

that sense, the effect, or characteristics of Europeanized articles do not seem to work in favor of the EU. Such an assessment coincides with the general contention of Daddow that press coverage on European affairs is Eurosceptic. Also Hawkins' advancement that right-wing press favors anti-EU sentiments seems adequate.

On the other hand, relatively seen, the EPS selection contains a higher amount of positively valenced articles in comparison to the Non-EPS selection, thus implying a small positive influence on the evaluation of the EU. When the different dimensions of Europeanization are scrutinized, it can be deduced that in the context of a general tendency towards a negative representation of the EU, particularly the top-down and weak horizontal variants show a more positive evaluation. This suggests that an increase in top-down and horizontal Europeanization contributes to a more positive image of the EU in the media. For bottom-up Europeanization the opposite applies.

In addition, the results clearly confront current understandings on the dynamics of the EPS. Certainly, similarities were found in the observation that bottom-up Europeanization represents an internalized discourse. Communication within the British public debate, is mostly taking place between national actors, thus resulting in a dominating national perspective on European issues. At the same time, this observation is challenged by a far more visible horizontal Europeanization than expected. Therefore, it can also be argued that although political communication is still turned inward, attention in the public debate to other member states at least partly makes up for that. Furthermore, speculating on how the EU is evaluated within the EPS based solely on the Europeanizing claims is precarious. Especially the claims which indicate a top-down or bottom-up form of Europeanization, do not seem to have a structural relation between the original sentiment of the claim, and how this claim is consequently discussed in the public debate. This suggests that the valence of the 'Europeanizing' claim is not a reliable indicator of measuring a positive, ambivalent, or negative sentiment in the respective articles. It also emphasizes the importance of understanding how such claims are framed in the public debate.

### Chapter 3: Europeanization in The Times

In similar fashion to Chapter two, this chapter sets out to visualize the British public debate on the EU. The first sub-question leading this investigation asks to what extent the debate about the EU in Britain shows signs of a European Public Sphere. By following the theory of interlinked communicative linkages, it will be possible to distinguish between sufficiently Europeanized articles and those which are not. This foundation allows for an interpretation on the differences in dynamics between the respective selections. A thorough examination of the source material also exposes whether Europeanized articles in The Times are more inclined towards a positive or negative image of the EU, or rather ambivalent. Subsequently, because attention is paid to how these findings correlate to the sentiment put forward by the Europeanizing claims, it will reveal whether the valence of these claims are consistent with the tone of the article. Furthermore, by distinguishing between vertical and horizontal Europeanization, even more information about how the EU is discussed in the different dimensions is uncovered. The selection of discursive articles on The Times consists of forty-eight articles, of which 20 have been designated as sufficiently Europeanized. A meticulous analysis of the findings is presented in the following paragraphs.

#### First insights

##### Europeanization in the British Public Sphere

Valence	Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very Negative	OVERALL
EPS	15 %	75 %	5 %	5 %	0	100 % (20)
NOT EPS	3,6 %	21,5 %	60,7 %	7,1 %	7,1 %	100 % (28)
No distinction	8,3 %	43,7 %	37,5 %	6,3 %	4,2 %	100 % 48

Table 2.1 (Based on the final selection of articles from The Times)

While the chapter on Europeanization in The Daily Telegraph presented a rather negative image of the EU in the public debate, results from The Times show a rather different picture. Table 2.1 demonstrates a similar distribution of EPS articles in comparison with the selection of The Daily Telegraph, but the valence of the EPS articles is quite one sided. With positive percentages of 15 % and 75 %, the opposing side of the spectrum becomes practically insignificant. In the non-EPS selection, this discrepancy is less accounted for. Here, the public debate shows a very moderate positioning. Without making a distinction between EPS and non-EPS articles, the debate is still inclined towards a positive representation of the EU, since more than 50 % consists of a positively valenced frame.

Indeed, when these findings are considered with respect to the data from The Daily Telegraph selection, it becomes rather clear that the British public debate is not merely oriented towards a mere negative representation of the EU. In general, above results go against the contention of Daddow that UK press coverage on European affairs is completely Eurosceptic, because these articles obviously are more aligned with the Europhile position. Even though Hawkins was right to point out the difference of opinions between British newspapers, he made a distinction between right- and left-wing press. In view of The Times being considered a right-wing newspaper, also his conclusions are contentious. Another quite astonishing discovery, is the overly positive evaluation of the EU in the Europeanized articles, especially when these are compared to the non-EPS selection. This suggests a positive influence of Europeanization in the public debate. However, information about the interaction between different forms of Europeanization and the sentiment within the public debate is still unclear. In addition, these findings convey naught as concerns the claims themselves.

**Europeanization in the British public sphere – Different dimensions (EPS)**

Valence	Very positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very Negative	Overall
Vertical Top Down	25 %	50 %	0	25 %	0	100 % (4)
Vertical Bottom up	7,7 %	84,6 %	7,7 %	0	0	100 % (13)
Horizontal Weak	25 %	75 %	0	0	0	100 % (4)
Horizontal Strong	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Table 2.2**

Before taking an in depth look at the articles themselves however, it should first be determined what the results of the different dimensions indicate by making sense of just the numbers. Most notable in table 2.2, is the dominant presence of the bottom-up variant of Europeanization and therefore few instances of the top-down and horizontal modalities. These findings partly correspond to the assembly from The Daily Telegraph, although data from this newspaper had no lack of visible issues in other member states. Another interesting aspect, is that precisely the top-down variant manifests a negative evaluation of the EU. In contrast to the Daily Telegraph, this output coincides almost completely with the discussed secondary sources in chapter 1, which pointed out the limited diffusion of European institutions and actors, as well as the barely visible political communication across borders.

**Beyond the Numbers: Top Down Dimension**

Instances of vertical top-down Europeanization, where European actors or institutions interfere in national affairs, make up a small percentage of the overall sample. Earlier, it was pointed out by Petithomme that when this form of political communication does reach the national public sphere, it usually comes with a positive stance towards the EU. Yet, the results from the Daily Telegraph proved otherwise. Although it should be taken into account

that the examples from the top-down variant in The Daily Telegraph represented the few exceptions to the general negative line of the whole sample. This situation doesn't apply to the Times however, where almost every article has a positive evaluation. Thus, the negative valence of the identified article in table 2.2 is even more striking.

The respective 'article' is a response to an earlier submitted letter, which reported that Donald Tusk, the president of the European Council, said that "Brexit could be the beginning of the destruction of not only the EU but of western civilization."<sup>148</sup> This claim implies that the collapse of the EU is the worst possible outcome and could as such be interpreted as a positive reference. Nevertheless, the author explains it differently, arguing that if Donald Tusk really believes the Brexit to be so catastrophic, this doesn't justify why the European leaders did not help David Cameron to negotiate a "much more palatable deal,"<sup>149</sup> instead of sending him home with nothing. So whereas the Europeanizing claim by itself wasn't necessarily negative, it does address the subject as such.

Another debate, which discusses the significance of the Brexit referendum, demonstrates the opposite possibility. Namely that a 'negative' claim, can also be part of a rather positive evaluation on the EU. Here, Donald Tusk appears again as involved EU actor, stating that Britain, and his other colleagues should take note of the "spectre of breakup" which haunts Europe, as it will tear apart if everyone "remains obsessed with the idea of total integration."<sup>150</sup> To Britain, such a declaration is naturally quite convenient, since it aligns with many of their critiques on the EU. The author subsequently argues that Mr. Juncker must heed these words, as well as Britain, because giving up on the "fantasy of a federal superstate", is in everybody's best interest.<sup>151</sup> After all, without these necessary changes to the EU, the project might fail and this would be disastrous to "the completion of the single market services so vital to Britain."<sup>152</sup>

Only one of the articles shows a corresponding Europeanizing claim with a positive evaluation of the EU. Here, a group of members of Parliament, argue that people are misinformed about the effect on workers' rights if the UK left the EU. The EU, so they contend, provides international mobility and the collaboration of researches and helped

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<sup>148</sup> The Times, Britain's destiny 'is to secure Europe's peace', June 16<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>149</sup> The Times, Secure Europe's peace.

<sup>150</sup> The Times, Day of Breckoning, June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016.

<sup>151</sup> The Times, Breckoning.

<sup>152</sup> Ibidem.

foster the UK's leadership in research.<sup>153</sup> In addition, the letter mentions how the European Court of Justice compelled Mrs Thatcher's government to strengthen the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts, while stressing that "the British Equal Pay Act in 1970 was too narrow of a measure to pass muster under EU law because it did not require equal pay for women and men doing work of equal value."<sup>154</sup>

Based on above observations, it again becomes clear that the assumption of inherently positive pro-EU claims in the top-down variant of Europeanization is inaccurate. Furthermore, seeing as the nature of the claims themselves appear to have no influence on the evaluation of the EU by the respective author(s), it can be argued that these claims are no symptoms of the positive or negative tone of the article. In addition, these findings signify that this applies to both The Daily Telegraph and The Times. Thus, the general line of the newspaper doesn't seem to have any influence on how a claim from a claimant is inserted in the debate.

## **Beyond the Numbers: Bottom-up Dimension**

The Europeanized articles of the bottom-up category make up the largest sample in The Times. In contrast to the findings in The Daily Telegraph, these instances only display a positive evaluation of the EU. The samples from each newspaper, can therefore be regarded as polar opposites. However, this might not be the case concerning the internalized discourse addressed by Petithomme and Statham and Gray. The easiest way to find out, is to take a look at the source material.

Statham's findings indicated that bottom-up claims-making puts forward a rather strong Eurosceptic position, yet, in this sample only 4 out of 13 claims produce a negative reference towards the EU and are subsequently framed as neutral or positive by the respective authors. A perfect example of how the valence of Europeanizing claims do not embody the intended message of the author, is a discussion on the referendum battle between camp Brexit and camp Remain. Firstly, mention is made of Michael Gove's claim that "the government will not be able to exclude Turkish criminals from entering the UK

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<sup>153</sup> The Times, Scientific Research, workers' rights and health, June 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>154</sup> The Times, Scientific Research.

when Turkey joins the EU.”<sup>155</sup> Then, the author refers to Nigel Farage’s warning of sex assaults on British women by immigrant men, and his following statement that he is “pleased that Boris Johnson and Michael Gove now support the same policy I’ve advocated for years.”<sup>156</sup> Afterwards, the author labels those claims as irresponsible and concludes that “the leave campaign has wrapped the monster in a myth that Brexit will deal with voters’ every concern, from immigration to inequality, struggling public services to unaccountable elites.”<sup>157</sup> So although no obvious negative or positive evaluation of the EU is visible in this piece, the negative claims on the EU are still debunked.

The Europeanizing claims can also be neutrally valenced. In an opinion article from the Chief of Secret Intelligence Service, John Scarlett mentions his appeal to the UK government to include an article in the Lisbon Treaty, which heralded that “in particular, national security remains the sole responsibility of each member state.”<sup>158</sup> His intention with this change, was to provide the UK some weight in their dealings with EU-wide security and intelligence structures. He then emphasizes that this article is now part of the Lisbon Treaty, which insinuates that the EU is open for debate and willing to change agreements.<sup>159</sup>

Above patterns show a mismatch between the intention of the claims and how these are subsequently posited in the debate, but most occurrences of bottom-up Europeanization actually do reciprocate. In addition, with very few exceptions, the whole public debate demonstrates an internalized discourse. In an opinion article, Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale, also former Labour first minister of Scotland between 2001 and 2007, argues that the EU is a force for good in the world and a force for good in Scotland.<sup>160</sup> His assertion is based on his experience as first minister in dealing with the institutions of the EU, which “showed us how Europe can be flexible and work to the benefit of Scotland.”<sup>161</sup> What’s more, he claims that “the EU commissioners at the highest level understood the issues affecting nations and regions at the sub-state level better than national governments.”<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> The Times, MPs need to drain the swamp they created, June 21<sup>st</sup> 2016.

<sup>156</sup> The Times, Drain the swamp.

<sup>157</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>158</sup> The Times, Leaving the EU puts our security at risk, June 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>159</sup> The Times, Security at risk.

<sup>160</sup> The Times, Force for good that creates a better world, June 21<sup>st</sup> 2016.

<sup>161</sup> The Times, A better world.

<sup>162</sup> Ibidem.

Other debates are also positive, but remain focused on the national perspective. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June for instance, a letter representing nine hundred and ten small and medium sized businesses, claims that Britain leaving the EU “would mean uncertainty for our firms, less trade with Europe and fewer jobs, while Britain remaining in the EU would mean the opposite: more certainty, more trade and more jobs.”<sup>163</sup> In another example, Lord Bramall, former head of the army, calls out his respected colleague Lord Guthrie, stating that irrespective of a few speculative proposals from bureaucrats in Brussels, this shouldn’t result in the UK abandoning the EU.<sup>164</sup> Such a development “would lead to the unravelling of the EU and sliding back to extremes of left and right.”<sup>165</sup> Also a group of scientists joins the public debate, as they address all players involved arguing that if the UK were to leave the EU, the UK would “lose its driving seat in this world-leading team. Free-flow of talent and collaboration would likely be replaced by uncertainty, capital flight and market barriers.” Furthermore, 93 % of the research scientists and engineers proclaim that the EU is a major benefit to UK research.<sup>166</sup>

The deliberated content in the preceding paragraph has demonstrated a more perceptible symmetry between the sentiment put forward by the claimants and the subsequent positioning of these claims in visible public debate. Although it is hard to pinpoint why this is the case, one thing is for sure; the valence of the Europeanizing claim is no reliable indicator. Furthermore, in congruence with the secondary sources and the findings in *The Daily Telegraph*, also this sample indicates the internalized state of the British public debate. Lastly, considering the results, this research has reason to challenge Statham’s claim that bottom-up claims are generally Eurosceptic.

## **Beyond the Numbers: Horizontal Dimension**

The sample of horizontally Europeanized articles is rather small, but not irrelevant. Especially against the relatively dominant national perspective in the category of vertical Europeanization. According to the secondary sources, horizontal claims-making barely gets

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<sup>163</sup> The Times, British Business benefits massively from EU, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

<sup>164</sup> The Times, Talk of an EU army is just a distraction, June 21<sup>st</sup> 2016.

<sup>165</sup> The Times, Talk of an EU army.

<sup>166</sup> The Times, Science superpower, June 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

any visibility in the public debates. Based on the initial findings, such a conclusion can also be extrapolated for the sample in The Times. This is interesting, because The Daily Telegraph has demonstrated the opposite. There, the horizontal variant of Europeanization maintains equivalent numbers to the vertical bottom-up modality. Another observation from Statham and Gray, was the expected favourable sentiment towards the EU in those claims. Following paragraph shows whether this is the case or not, while also taking into account whether there is any indication of claims corresponding to the evaluation of the articles.

Indeed, the public debates in The Times containing horizontal linkages, also describe the EU as a positive factor with regard to Britain's prosperity. One such example is preceded by the Former Minister of Trade, Sir Richard Needham, whom argues that Lithuania should inspire the UK to be faithful to the EU.<sup>167</sup> He subsequently contends that ever since the accession of Lithuania, the country has "exceeded every expectation, both economically and politically and used their freedom from communist oppression to mark a huge gain for world peace and stability in our region."<sup>168</sup> On another occasion, an author discusses the reasons why the EU rescued Britain from failure. He describes how ever since nineteen-seventy three, the UK grew faster than Germany, France, Italy and even the US.<sup>169</sup> Later, in the Single Market era, the UK even managed to outgrow Germany and Switzerland in the Single Market era by respectively twenty-seven and fourteen per cent.<sup>170</sup> Interesting is the authors emphasis on the comparison to other member-states, as he argues that the economic model of the UK is different to their partner; "it admits that the EU does not dictate our laws and economic model. We have been able to diverge, rather than converge, with our neighbours."<sup>171</sup>

One public debate even presents a very positive picture of the EU. Here, the author takes up the challenge to argue in favour of the European project. He describes it as an enterprise which puts in a conscious effort to spread its core values, from human rights to democracy.<sup>172</sup> In similar manner to the other discussed debate, he asserts that these values have helped the Baltic states.<sup>173</sup> Furthermore, it also helps to fight back against

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<sup>167</sup> The Times, A vote that will reverberate through the years, June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016.

<sup>168</sup> The Times, A vote that will reverberate.

<sup>169</sup> The Times, Let's face it, the EU rescued us from failure, June 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>170</sup> The Times, EU rescued us from failure.

<sup>171</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>172</sup> The Times, Brexit would put hard-won freedoms at risk, June 16<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>173</sup> The Times, Freedoms at risk.

superpowers, because the EU represents half a billion people; “Some measures, like Russian sanctions, hit countries such as Poland and Lithuania hard, but they stand with us because the EU wants, as we do, democracy, fairness and rules-based free markets.”<sup>174</sup>

Above contemplations show that even though there is a rather limited amount of horizontal linkages, they remain quite convincing and provide a satisfying change of perspective by zooming in on the issues or achievements of other EU member states. Furthermore, in congruence with Statham and Gray, the horizontal claims exhibit a positive evaluation of the EU. In addition, for the first time all claims correspond perfectly with the tone of the article. Very striking however, is the total absence of the stronger variant of horizontal Europeanization. Although this coincides with the perspectives of the secondary sources, the issue of Brexit also provides a different context. In the very least, it can be considered conspicuous, because other member states have a lot at stake in the scenario of a real Brexit. Logically speaking, this would incite national actors from, for instance, The Netherlands, to speak up. Perhaps these instances of political communication have been unable to find their way into the British public debate of The Times, but it is still curious that none have been identified.

### **Beyond the Numbers: Non-EPS Selection**

The importance of the Non-EPS selection derives from the opportunity it provides to compare with the Europeanized articles. Furthermore, the lack of focus by other studies on this ‘hidden’ aspect of Europeanization within the national public sphere, adds on its relevance. Another interesting facet of this selection, is the status; they are usually in some way connected to the subject of the EU, but are not considered sufficiently Europeanized because of the absence of interlinked communicative linkages. As insinuated earlier, this allows for a better analysis on how such articles evaluate the EU, in comparison to those where political communication does become visible in the public debate.

In similar fashion to the findings in The Daily Telegraph, this particular selection contains a very high percentage of ‘neutral’ articles. The remaining sample is divided quite evenly among the valenced frames, although ‘positive’ has a slight edge. These ‘positive’

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<sup>174</sup> The Times, Brexit would put hard-won freedoms at risk, June 16<sup>th</sup> 2016.

non-EPS articles don't seem to evaluate the EU much differently than the EPS articles do. For instance, one author states that "unlike the UK the EU is not, despite fevered proclamations to the contrary, a sovereign state. Its co-operation is premised on co-decision making on strictly limited areas of competence,"<sup>175</sup> thus clearly demonstrating a positive evaluation. Also examples with a negative valence do not diverge much; "I don't believe for a moment that the UK, the world's fifth-largest economy, will fail to prosper outside the EU. In the last analysis, however, I'd rather be poor and free than rich and enslaved."<sup>176</sup>

The biggest difference, naturally, is the absence of visible political communication between national actors and European actors, but also the amount of explicitly valenced opinions is noteworthy. The non-Europeanized articles have a tendency to be more balanced with regard to the benefits and detriments of the EU, as demonstrated by a discussion on the National Healthcare Service. Here, the author contends that both sides are wrong, because according to a study by the University of Oxford last year, higher immigration in an area led to lower waiting times because "immigrants are younger and use less healthcare."<sup>177</sup> Also the other side is highlighted; "but only 10 per cent of doctors come from other EU countries."<sup>178</sup> The author closes with the statement that if Britons want to live longer and more fulfilled lives, they will have to pay for it.<sup>179</sup>

Even more striking however, is how the sentiment in most of these articles is more sceptical or indifferent. One such example is given by an author claiming that in the end, the accuracy of the claims from each political camp doesn't matter, because whatever happens, happens.<sup>180</sup> Another is more pronounced; "What difference will leaving or staying in the EU make to our economy? It's hard to know because, when push comes to shove, economic arguments don't really matter,"<sup>181</sup> and follows it up with the contention that "there are no facts, only guesses. No one, myself included, can tell you how to vote, because none of us knows."<sup>182</sup>

Thus, similar to the outcome of The Daily Telegraph analysis, it can be concluded that

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<sup>175</sup> The Times, Unionism is being part of something bigger?, June 16<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>176</sup> The Times, We're choosing between freedom and serfdom, June 21<sup>st</sup> 2016.

<sup>177</sup> The Times, Leave or Remain, the NHS is in its death throes, June 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>178</sup> The Times, Leave or Remain.

<sup>179</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>180</sup> The Times, We'll all pay dearly for EU referendum lies, June 10<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>181</sup> The Times, There are no facts, only guesses in this vote, June 17<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>182</sup> The Times, There are no facts.

neutrally valenced articles are far more likely to find themselves in the category of Non-EPS articles. Although articles presenting a negative or positive evaluation are also observable in the Non-EPS selection, they are far lower in number. What remains, is the neutrally valenced selection, in which authors mostly assume either a sceptical or indecisive position. Both are possibly the result of a democratic, or communication deficit; their current knowledge, or rather, lack of knowledge about the EU leads them to embrace a position of irresoluteness. Simultaneously it suggests that a deeper integration of the EPS by an increase in communicative linkages, would result in more defined positions in the British public debate on the advantages or disadvantages of the EU.

## **Conclusion**

The preceding paragraphs have given an entirely different view on how the EU is imagined within the visible public debate. Contrary to the prevalence of negative evaluations in The Daily Telegraph, these results demonstrate an overwhelmingly positive representation of the EU. This is surprising, not only because secondary literature describes the British public debate as strictly Eurosceptic, but also because The Times is considered as a right-wing newspaper. Hawkins' left-right distinction therefore becomes questionable, in particular when it comes to Europeanized articles. Similar to the results from The Daily Telegraph, there is again a clear difference observable between the non-EPS and EPS articles. It further illustrates the adamant character of Europeanized articles, while those which do not comprise of interlinked communicative linkages remain conspicuously ambivalent. Both selections contain very few negatively valenced articles. Still, proportionally the non-EPS selection is more negative, which suggests the beneficial influence of the EPS concerning the portrayal of the EU by British print media.

An interpretation based on the different dimensions of Europeanization proved a little bit more difficult because of the matching results. Practically all of the Europeanized articles, whether these were vertical, or horizontal, presented a positive valence. This by itself connects to earlier findings that top-down and horizontal Europeanization has a propensity towards a positive evaluation of the EU. However, such readings were not expected from the bottom-up variant. After all Statham indicated these instances are usually

inclined towards a Eurosceptic position, a statement which was further strengthened by the conclusions from Chapter two. Even more striking however, is the distribution of the different forms of Europeanization. Less than twenty percent shows the horizontal form of Europeanization, and not even one of those comes from the strong variant. The absence of political communication between national actors from other member states is fascinating, considering the significance of the Brexit issue to those countries.

Moving on to the question of framing, the data shows a slight deviation from the results in The Daily Telegraph. For the bottom-up and top-down claims, there is still no direct connection observable between the nature of the claim and the position of this claim in the discussion, although this time they seem to be a little bit more harmonious. However, all of the horizontal claims do correspond with the tone of the respective articles. This suggests that when it comes to using Europeanizing claims as indicators for the assessment of EU's image, only horizontal linkages are more or less reliable.

## Chapter 4: Europeanization in The Guardian

In line with the preceding chapters, this section seeks to illustrate the British public debate on the EU in The Guardian. By following the theory of interlinked communicative linkages, it will be possible to distinguish between sufficiently Europeanized articles, and those which are not. This distinction is important, because it allows for an examination between possible differences in dynamics. After all, it would be interesting to see how articles with a more ‘European’ character, discuss the EU in comparison to those which are supposedly less European. Besides taking note of the different categories however, attention is also paid to the different forms of Europeanization. As has been explained before, Koopmans and Erbe make a distinction between vertical and horizontal Europeanization. How the EU is discussed differently in subsequent dimensions is evaluated further in the coming paragraphs. In The Daily Telegraph, the selection of Europeanized articles presented a rather negative image of the EU, while the results from The Times implied the opposite. Following these results, also the selection from The Guardian will be closely scrutinized, as to answer the question whether there is an inclination towards a positive, ambivalent or negative portrayal of the EU. Furthermore, another point of interest is the conjunction between the sentiment put forward in the Europeanizing claims, and how these claims are consequently posited in the debate. The selection of discursive articles from The Guardian is substantially bigger, consisting of eighty-five articles. Forty-seven have been designated as sufficiently Europeanized, while thirty-eight are marked as non-EPS.

### First Insights

#### Europeanization in the British Public Sphere

Valence	Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very Negative	OVERALL
EPS	14,9 %	53,2 %	19,1 %	6,4 %	6,4 %	100 % (47)
NOT EPS	5,3 %	34,2 %	50 %	10,5 %	0 %	100 % (38)
No distinction	10,6%	44,7%	33,9%	8,2%	3,5%	100 % (85)

### **Table 3.1 (Based on the final selection of articles from The Guardian)**

Whereas the chapter on Europeanization in the British public sphere, visible in The Daily Telegraph, was overwhelmingly negatively valenced, a first look at the results from The Guardian shows more of an overlap with The Times, which was far more affirmative of the EU. Table 3.1 demonstrates that the sample from The Guardian has relatively more instances of Europeanized articles, although the difference is small. Considering the general perception of The Guardian being more focused on the EU, this is to be expected. With percentages of 14.9 % and 53,2 %, the articles demonstrate a positive inclination towards the EU. Similar to the findings in The Times, but slightly less dominating. Interesting is how almost one-fifth of the articles are covered by the 'Neutral' category, especially because it diverges from the very low percentages found in The Daily Telegraph and The Times. The non-EPS selection also appears to be quite positive, although there is again a large amount of articles with a neutral valence. In particular the latter observation is a recurrent proceeding in all samples.

In chapter one, a review of recent literature demonstrated that the British media market is usually conceived as Eurosceptic. The findings presented here, particularly from the EPS selection, but also the non-EPS items, point towards a different situation. Most articles show a positive inclination towards the EU, while only a small percentage is Eurosceptic. This corresponds to Hawkins' insistence on left-wing newspapers being much more favourable on the EU, while also leaving room for Eurosceptic rhetoric. Even though it is not so surprising that the public debate in The Guardian is rather positive towards the EU, there is an important difference between the EPS and non-EPS selection. While both samples are inclined towards a positive valence, the EPS articles display a higher percentage. This suggests that Europeanization has a positive influence on the public debate. However, differences between the different forms of Europeanization still have to be considered, as well as the way in which Europeanizing claims are positioned in the debate.

### Europeanization in the British public sphere – Different dimensions (EPS)

Valence	Very positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very Negative	Overall
Vertical Top Down	40 %	60 %	0	0	0	100 % (5)
Vertical Bottom up	13,3 %	50 %	26,7 %	6,7 %	3,3 %	100 % (30)
Horizontal Weak	0 %	70,6 %	5,9 %	5,9 %	17,6 %	100 % (17)
Horizontal Strong	0	0	0	0	0	100 %

**Table 3.2**

Zooming in on the different dimensions illustrated in table 3.2, it can be observed that the bottom-up variant of Europeanization is still the most prevalent. The Top-down variant is less frequently visible, which suggests a rather constrained circulation of political communication from European institutions and actors in the British public debate. On the other hand, the occurrence of the horizontal modality is quite common. This is surprising, because both Petithomme, as well as Statham asserted that political communication across borders between EU member states and about EU issues was rarely noticeable. In addition, it is striking that just like in The Daily Telegraph and The Times, the strong horizontal form of Europeanization is completely absent in the public debates.

### Beyond the Numbers: Top Down Dimension

For the first time, the instances of vertical top-down Europeanization, which involves European actors or institutions intervening into national politics by criticizing or supporting national actors, based on European regulations and common interest, all show a positive evaluation of the EU. The positive line of The Times thus persists. It also coincides with the claim of Petithomme and Statham and Gray that these cases usually appear to be a strong

advocate of the European project. At the same time, the lacking amount of top-down classifications further strengthens their contention that the EU does not show up as the driver of European integration process. A closer look at the actual articles supports these observations, and will also reveal how the Europeanizing claims are positioned in the public debate.

Practically every Europeanized article demonstrates a corresponding positive claim to the tone of the article. One such occasion is the opinion article of Jonathan Hill, the British European Commissioner. Here, he advances the argument that there is no such thing as an isolated UK; “the myth that Britain has no influence holds no truth.”<sup>183</sup> He then connects this assertion to the claim that much of the agenda pushed in the European Commission, like the single market, more free trade, less legislation and less interference is “an agenda long championed by the UK.”<sup>184</sup> Hill also refutes the claims from leaders of the leave campaign that there will be an EU army, or that the UK will be forced into the Euro, or that Turkey will be joining the EU any time soon. In fact, he maintains that these declarations are simply absurd.<sup>185</sup> It should be noted that framing does not apply when the respective Europeanizing claims originate directly from the claimant. This is usually not the case however. Most articles transport these claims into the public debate, which leaves room for interpretation.

This is also the case in a discussion about how the Brexit could damage the health sector in Britain. Here, the author emphasizes that European health insurance cards have guaranteed many emergency treatment for Britons in the EU, a prerogative of the being part of the EU.<sup>186</sup> Moreover, he asserts that without the substantial EU research budget, the UK would probably not be the world centre for health and medical research.<sup>187</sup> Subsequently, the European Court of Justice is brought into the debate, which according to the author justly intervenes into British politics by “chasing the UK government on air quality standards in London, which are falling below EU required standards.”<sup>188</sup> Such intervention could be interpreted as the meddlesome business of the EU, however the author chooses to stress the importance of EU tampering.

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<sup>183</sup> The Guardian, The Strange Death of Scepticism in the Leave Campaign, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

<sup>184</sup> The Guardian, The Strange Death of Scepticism in the Leave Campaign, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

<sup>185</sup> The Guardian, The Strange Death of Scepticism in the Leave Campaign, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

<sup>186</sup> The Guardian, How Brexit Could Damage Our Health, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

<sup>187</sup> The Guardian, How Brexit Could Damage Our Health, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

<sup>188</sup> The Guardian, How Brexit Could Damage Our Health, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

Another issue brought forward in *The Times*, delves deeper into the importance of the EU for British and European security. It is stressed that the security benefits of the EU are very clear to see; the techniques and knowledge of MI6 provide great protection, but collaboration between Britain, France and other member states remains necessary nonetheless.<sup>189</sup> The author tries to convey that it is paramount to understand that examples such as the Paris and Brussels attacks are no reason to think that a Brexit makes the situation any safer. He backs this up with the claim from Europol director, Rob Wainwright, whom argued that “the UK would be more vulnerable to attacks and organised crimes if a Brexit were to happen.”<sup>190</sup>

In contrast to the findings in *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*, above contemplations demonstrate that Europeanizing claims can also have a form of consistency with the tone of the article. An important addition to this observation, is the significance of the claimants identity. When the Europeanizing claim is made visible in the public debate by the claimant themselves, framing is much less likely to happen. In practice however, most Europeanizing claims are carried into the debate by someone else, thus leaving the possibility for a different context than intended by the claimant.

## **Beyond the Numbers: Bottom-up Dimension**

The selection of articles meeting the requirements of the bottom-up variant of Europeanization yet again make up quite a big portion of the overall sample. In the analysis of both *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*, it was concluded that the British public debate demonstrates a strong internalized discourse. Such a situation is therefore also expected to be present in *The Guardian*. In a similar manner to the findings in *The Times*, the data shows that most articles are favourable of the EU, although it includes some striking features as well. For instance, almost one in four cases present a neutral valence. This suggests that Hawkins’ assertion about room for Eurosceptic rhetoric holds true. However, only a closer look at the actual articles will reveal whether this is actually the case. In addition, it unearths the way in which Europeanizing claims are positioned in the debate pertaining to this

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<sup>189</sup> *The Guardian*, Tightening the UK’s Borders Wouldn’t Change Anything, June 10<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>190</sup> *The Guardian*, Tightening the UK’s Borders.

particular modality.

The debates where the author does not assume a clear position with regard to the EU, indeed sometimes demonstrate the character of a balanced discussion. Mostly however, the ‘neutral’ label derives from the focus on British national actors, instead of interest in the EU. One such example, is a discussion which does contain Europeanizing claims, but without any intention to weaken or strengthen the image of the EU. The author describes how Boris Johnson tries to use the referendum campaign as an opportunity to display his credentials for the job as prime minister, and therefore makes claims like: “Brussels bureaucrats were trying to unify Europe, as Hitler had done.”<sup>191</sup> Cameron hits back to Johnson and Gove, accusing them of “resorting to total untruths to con people into taking a leap in the dark.”<sup>192</sup> Another article discusses the position of Labour leader, Jeremy Corbyn, on the EU. According to the author, Corbyn is definitely not an unequivocal believer of Leave. Corbyn’s loyalty to his principles apparently make him “see enough of a case for the EU to be able to prioritise party unity on this issue. But there is little point adopting such a position if voters conclude that deep down Corbyn backs “out”, or have no idea whether Labour has a position or not.”<sup>193</sup> So instead of making a case on whether the EU is good for the UK or not, attention goes to the national actors. These examples suggest that even though Europeanizing claims usually indicate a debate about the advantage or disadvantages of the EU, this is not always the case. In fact, the indicated findings further strengthen the idea of an internalized discourse in the British public debate.

Indeed, apart from a few exceptions, inwardly oriented political communication is also dominant in the sample of The Guardian. One of those special cases, is an opinion article about the sovereignty aspect of the EU referendum in the UK. Here the author maintains that the UK commits a grave mistake. Among other things, because in the case of a potential admission of Turkey, Britain would be able to exercise a veto, thus giving them massive protection concerning influential decisions.<sup>194</sup> He then backs it up with the claim from Supreme Court judge Lord Read, that “the European Court of Justice is a far cry from the all-powerful supremo that is frequently maintained.”<sup>195</sup> Instead, there is a “collaborative

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<sup>191</sup> The Guardian, David Cameron and Boris Johnson, the Friends Who Fell Out, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

<sup>192</sup> The Guardian, David Cameron and Boris Johnson.

<sup>193</sup> The Guardian, Jeremy Corbyn must be true to his party on the EU, if not to himself, June 10<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>194</sup> The Guardian, If you think the UK will be in control after Brexit, dream on, June 17<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>195</sup> The Guardian, Control after Brexit.

rather than a hierarchical or competitive relationship between national apex courts and the court of justice,”<sup>196</sup> thus implying the existence of a healthy and important association with a European institution.

Another instance where the internalized discourse is circumvented, comes from a reference where the British Trade minister insists to the European Commission that “investor-state dispute settlements should remain in the TTIP.”<sup>197</sup> According to author this is a perfect example of the EU being the best alternative among only bad options. Whereas the EU is described as a matchmaker for wealth and power; “by comparison with the British system, however, this noxious sewer is a crystal spring.”<sup>198</sup> These cases present a situation where claims are corresponding to the tone of the respective articles, as well as an alternative to the internalized discourse. Both these observations however, do not hold true for the greater part of sample.

One debate mentions Johnson’s claim that if the UK citizens vote to leave the EU, this would stop “uncontrolled immigration,”<sup>199</sup> which is subsequently rebuked by the author, as he contends that if Britain was to retain a free trade agreement with the EU, then in effect this would mean that all free trade had to stop, with serious consequences for the UK economy.<sup>200</sup> In another example, Michael Gove claims that it would be better for the UK to leave the EU because it would affirm our faith in democracy; “the way we will help international cooperation is by saying we believe Britain stronger, freer and fairer as a progressive beacon for the whole world.”<sup>201</sup> Also this statement is refuted by the author, as he asserts that this beacon is dangerous and hugely speculative.<sup>202</sup> Lastly, a group of members of Parliament join the debate by addressing the UK government on the issue of disabled people.<sup>203</sup> They want the UK to promote their interests because they believe that remaining in the EU is best for this part of the community; “rights opportunities of disabled people are best protected and advanced by the UK’s continued membership of the European

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<sup>196</sup> The Guardian, If you think the UK will be in control after Brexit, dream on, June 17<sup>th</sup> 2106.

<sup>197</sup> The Guardian, The European Union is the worst choice – apart from the alternative, June 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>198</sup> The Guardian, The European Union is the worst choice.

<sup>199</sup> The Guardian, Leaving the EU would not bring immigration under control, June 10<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>200</sup> The Guardian, Immigration under control.

<sup>201</sup> The Guardian, I challenged Michael Gove because Brexit flies in the face of true British values, June 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>202</sup> The Guardian, The face of true British values.

<sup>203</sup> The Guardian, Disabled people’s rights will be better protected if we remain in the EU, June 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

Union.”<sup>204</sup>

The deliberated content in the preceding paragraph, illustrates that Europeanizing claims do not always indicate a discussion about whether the EU is good or bad. About one-fifth of the sample has shown that these cases are more focused on national issues and national actors. This further emphasizes the strong internalized discourse which is yet again very evident in the sample. Whereas the findings in *The Times* demonstrated a slightly more perceptible symmetry between the sentiment put forward by the claimants and the subsequent positioning of these claims in the visible public debate, such observation cannot be reproduced in this particular sample. In addition, similar to the conclusion from chapter three, the bottom-up claims show no particular disposition towards Eurosceptic sentiments, thus challenging Statham’s assertion that aforementioned is usually the case.

### **Beyond the Numbers: The Horizontal Dimension**

The earlier observed focus on the national perspective is partly challenged by the rather large amount of horizontal Europeanization cases. In that sense, the public debate in *The Guardian* shows similar results as the right-wing oriented *Daily Telegraph*, with as sole exception that these articles are far more positive towards the EU. It will be interesting to see whether the trend of close symmetry between the valence of the Europeanizing claims and the tone of the articles persists. Another focus point, is the expected favourable sentiment towards the EU in the claims which expand the perspective beyond the boundaries of the nation state. Striking features of this selection is the relatively high percentage of negatively valenced articles and the absence of the strong horizontal variant of Europeanization.

Those cases where an observation of circumstances in other member states results in a negative evaluation of the EU, do not try to refute the good developments in Europe, but choose to address those issues they deem worrisome. One author addresses the question of mass unemployment and mass migration, stressing that youth employment in Greece, Spain and Croatia is respectively fifty-one, forty-five and forty percent.<sup>205</sup> Consequently he

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<sup>204</sup> *The Guardian*, Disabled people’s rights.

<sup>205</sup> *The Guardian*, Remain and Reform is Wishful Thinking – The left should vote leave, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

claims that the EU is mistakenly envisaged as structure for cooperation and solidarity; “Greece has been cast aside, in Italy an elected prime minister was forced out of power for an unelected technocrat, and in Portugal, leftwing anti-EU parties were prevented from forming a government pursuing their anti-austerity policies.”<sup>206</sup> Connected to this line of thinking, a separate discussion mentions how our continent’s southern neighbours indeed endure youth unemployment levels close to fifty percent.<sup>207</sup> This leads him to conclude that “it is obvious that Europe isn’t working for workers any more. Millions of Labour’s voters have noticed and are voting to leave the EU as a result.”<sup>208</sup> On another occasion an author mentions the ‘bureaucratic idiocy’ of the EU with regard to the wildlife habitat rules; “across Romania, farmers are beginning to realise that they can make money simply by cleansing land, not for any productive purpose, but just to meet the European rules.”<sup>209</sup>

Undeniably above articles do establish some legitimate points, but this ‘Euro-sceptic’ perspective is still largely overshadowed by more positive evaluations, which also happen to show a strong harmony between ‘Europeanizing’ claim and the overall tone of the articles. The other perspective is exemplified by an article about Greece, where the author concedes that Greeks have become more sceptical towards EU as a result of the countries crisis, but are nonetheless for the greater part in favour of being part of the EU.<sup>210</sup> He then proceeds with the contention that “Greeks continue to view the union as a way to remain stable in what is often an insecure region, but also to bolster their strength in a globalised world and the challenges that comes with that, such as migration.”<sup>211</sup> A similar view on the complex relationship with the EU, comes from a debate focused on the ‘bigger picture’. By that, the author implies the very thing the Coal and Steel Community was designed to prevent; “A possible reintroduction of the military draft and an autonomous defence industry by the AfD.”<sup>212</sup> The general message thus reads that the EU, Britain and liberal Germans, need a unified Europe so that it can contain dangerous rhetoric in member states such as Germany.<sup>213</sup> Conjointly, an article refers to the inevitable imperfection of the European

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<sup>206</sup> The Guardian, Remain and Reform is wishful thinking.

<sup>207</sup> The Guardian, Brexit would help us control immigration. Like me, many Labour voters want out, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

<sup>208</sup> The Guardian, Brexit would help us control immigration.

<sup>209</sup> The Guardian, The shocking waste of cash even leavers won’t condemn, June 21<sup>st</sup> 2016.

<sup>210</sup> The Guardian, Greece has its problems with the EU, but it is in no hurry to leave, June 13<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>211</sup> The Guardian, In no hurry to leave.

<sup>212</sup> The Guardian, German Nationalism can only be contained by a united Europe, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

<sup>213</sup> The Guardian, A united Europe.

project, but accentuates that “its very existence has done much to spread democracy on the continent. It acted as a magnet for Greece, Portugal and Spain when they rejected dictatorship. It deployed soft power to help reform countries that broke out of communist totalitarianism.”<sup>214</sup> She then closes with the statement that if we’d leave the EU, this would be a devastating blow to “whatever is left of moderate, common-sense views in Europe – and send an encouraging signal to extremists of all stripes.”<sup>215</sup>

As expected, the horizontal Europeanization sample shows that the Europeanized British public debate also has room for different perspectives. Not just in the sense that it offers an alternative to the internalized discourse, but also with regard to the Eurosceptic voice. This observation connects to Hawkins’ assertion that The Guardian, or left-wing newspapers usually also accommodate opposing views. Above findings likewise correspond with Statham and Gray’s insistence on the congruity between favourable evaluations of the EU and the horizontal dimension of Europeanization. It could be argued that, as a result of an expanded public debate into ‘unknown’ territory, read: situation in other member states, leads to more balanced decision-making. For some such deliberation leads them to argue against the EU, whilst others are convinced of the opposite. This hypothesis would also better explain why the instances of horizontal Europeanization have such a strong harmony with the tone of the articles; the author wants to share with his or her readers, what brought them to their position on the issue.

## **Beyond the Numbers: Non-EPS selection**

A complete understanding with respect to the dynamics of the EPS requires insights into the workings of the public debate in non-Europeanized articles as much as Europeanized articles. Differences in these categories can reveal much more than focus on just one selection. The full sample only includes discursive public communication, but this does not necessarily concur with explicit opinions about the EU. Still, the Europeanized selections in The Daily Telegraph, The Times, but also in The Guardian, show that the presence of interlinked communicative linkages does correspond with a far lower percentage of neutrally valenced

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<sup>214</sup> The Guardian, The aftershocks of a vote to leave the EU will rebound on Britain, June 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>215</sup> The Guardian, The aftershocks of a vote to leave the EU.

articles. In the Daily Telegraph the public debate demonstrated an inclination towards the facilitation of different perspectives, while in The Times authors mostly seemed sceptical or indecisive.

An in depth look at the sample from The Guardian demonstrates that part of the neutrally valenced category is indecisive rather than sceptical or indifferent. For instance, one author stresses how there is no 'right answer' to the question posed in the Brexit referendum.<sup>216</sup> She thus concludes that "whatever the result, both Britain and Europe will carry on facing gargantuan problems, being imperfect, getting some things wrong and even, occasionally, getting some things right. Whichever way things go, there will be regrets."<sup>217</sup> This observed deficit of knowledge about the EU is further exemplified by another author who argues that within the final days of campaigning, the British people need more facts about the benefits of leave and or remain.<sup>218</sup> After all "we would like a much greater appreciation of how staying or leaving the EU might affect the life chances of everyone, no matter their colour or background."<sup>219</sup> In other words, they expect to be informed rather than inform themselves. This lack of knowledge results in articles in which no explicit position is taken.

Most articles present more balanced deliberations however. One author describes how there is some truth in the Brexit camp's blame on Brussels with regard to the current mass immigration, both from EU member states and beyond.<sup>220</sup> The foundation of this accusation, she explains, is attributed to the removal of internal borders by the EU.<sup>221</sup> Also the other perspective is reviewed however, as she discusses how the Remain camp perceives the EU as legitimate alternative being "stuck with increasingly inward-looking, regressive national politicians who seek to march the country back in time in their own quest to "make Britain great again""<sup>222</sup> In a similar manner, someone else depicts a situation where if the UK stays in the EU, "we will have done so in full knowledge that staying entails a commitment to free movement of workers in the EU, both in principle and practice,"<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> The Guardian, Understanding the death of Jo Cox requires nuance, not agendas, June 17<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>217</sup> The Guardian, The death of Jo Cox.

<sup>218</sup> The Guardian, Why we recreated the Bullingdon club image – with a diverse twist, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>219</sup> The Guardian, The Bullingdon club image.

<sup>220</sup> The Guardian, Don't understand Brexit? Try replacing Brussels with Beltway, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

<sup>221</sup> The Guardian, Don't understand Brexit?.

<sup>222</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>223</sup> The Guardian, Stay or go, this vote gives us the chance to reset immigration policy, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

while if they decide to leave the EU, “we will have rejected that, and we can indeed “take control” of migration policy.”<sup>224</sup> These examples, show how the authors present different options and consequences, thus enabling the reader to make a measured choice.

The scrutinized content shows that the non-EPS selection consists for the greater part of neutrally valenced articles. Furthermore, despite some indications that authors are rather uninformed about the EU, most articles do not fit this description. Just like in The Daily Telegraph, authors choose to facilitate different perspectives. Instead of trying to convince their readers of the advantages or disadvantages of the EU, they let them decide for themselves. Hence, the existence of a possible communication deficit, as was suggested in Chapter three, remains questionable.

## **Conclusion**

A review of the public debate in The Guardian has further strengthened the idea that Europeanized articles are more explicit than non-Europeanized articles. The evaluative discrepancy between the Non-EPS and the EPS selection suggests that an increased diffusion of communicative linkages incites a more pronounced expression of opinion. In practice, this dynamic seems to work in favour of the EU’s image, considering more than seventy percent of the articles evaluate the EU positively. Whether there is much room for more outspoken articles is doubtful however. A closer look at the neutrally valenced articles from the non-EPS selection, revealed that most of these authors intend to provide different perspectives for their readers, so that they can decide for themselves. The absence of visible political communication therefore does not necessarily mean that authors are uninformed about the EU. Instead, it might be left out deliberately, because it is too challenging for the author to retain the neutral tone of the article.

When the different dimensions of Europeanization are considered, several features stand out. Firstly, the presence of Europeanizing claims does not automatically signify a discussion about the image of the EU. Secondly, the internalized character of bottom-up Europeanization is something that recurs in every newspaper. The assertion that this form of Europeanization is more disposed towards Eurosceptic sentiment does not appear to hold

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<sup>224</sup> The Guardian, Stay or go.

true here either. Moreover, similar to the results from The Daily Telegraph sample, this strong focus on the national perspective is compensated by the relatively high presence of horizontal Europeanization. A striking feature from this particular modality, is the relatively high amount of negatively valenced articles. Although such a dynamic could be partly explained by Hawkins' observation that left-wing newspapers usually accommodate antagonistic views, it still doesn't explain why these contending views appear mostly in the horizontal dimension. An imaginable explanation is that authors which include horizontal linkages, possess a broader point of view. After all, contemplating on what happens within the national political spaces of other member states, does allow for more well-rounded opinion formation. Therefore these authors are less sensitive to one-sided assessments.

Another interesting finding is how just like in The Daily Telegraph and The Times, Europeanizing claims from the horizontal variant demonstrate a strong consonance with the tone of the articles. In other words, framing does not apply to these instances of Europeanization. A hypothesis for this dynamic, connects to a key difference between horizontal and vertical communicative linkages. Vertical linkages always refer to an actor versus actor relationship, while horizontal linkages also contain descriptions of issues or situations in other member states. Apparently it is much simpler to dispute or misinterpret the Europeanizing claim of an actor, than the implications of an issue or situation in another member state. In any case, the findings suggest that horizontal linkages are reliable indicators for the assessment of EU's image in British print media.

## Conclusion

This study set out with the purpose of finding more explanations as to why the people of Britain voted to leave the EU. More concretely, this meant an in depth analysis of Europeanized public debates within the British public sphere and the insurmountable evaluations of the EU in those debates. The research that followed, demonstrated that understanding the extent in which Europeanized public debates correlate to a favourable or harmful evaluation of the EU, demands more than a one-dimensional approach. Therefore, although the overall results show that Europeanized public debates in the British public sphere, two weeks before the Brexit referendum, coincide with significantly more favourable than harmful evaluations of the EU, it remains important to first address the sub-questions.

Firstly, the public debate about the EU in Britain shows rather strong signs of an EPS. After all, in all three case studies, nearly half of the published articles mentioning the EU or Europe, showed interactions of actors, who engaged in European issues between and within different levels of politics. These findings thus allow for a rather balanced analysis between the different case studies and the categorizations between EPS and non-EPS.

In furtherance of the foregoing observation, the second aspect arises, namely to what extent Europeanized debates exhibit a different dynamic than those which do not meet the requirements. To begin, the earlier statement that Europeanized public debates in the British public sphere show favourable evaluations of the EU, is based on the conjunction of all three case-studies. When observed separately, it shows a slightly different image. Particularly the Europeanized articles in The Daily Telegraph demonstrate a negative image of the EU. Yet, the non-Europeanized articles, are for the most part neutrally valenced, self-critical and even quite nuanced. This is an important finding, as it suggests that when an article transfers claims from national or European actors into the debate, this goes together with a more explicit evaluation of the EU. Such a dynamic is also observable in The Times and The Guardian, with as main difference that here, the Europeanized articles are overly positive about the EU, especially in the former. Concurrently, the non-Europeanized articles, so without visible interactive communicative links, remain far more neutral in their evaluation of the EU. Another notable element, which was mostly apparent in The Guardian, is how the non-Europeanized selection is not necessarily less 'European'. The observed

public debates revealed how most authors intended to provide different perspectives for their readers. The absence of visible political communication in these debates therefore does not mean they are uninformed about the EU, but could also mean they are deliberately left out.

Moving on to the third aspect; differences in the evaluation of the EU between debates established as vertical or horizontal Europeanization. In order to adequately assess whether Europeanization of public debates is favourable or harmful for the image of the EU, the results show that it is indeed necessary to differentiate between the different dimensions of Europeanization. Particularly the Europeanized articles of The Daily Telegraph show a general tendency towards a negative representation of the EU. Alternative perspectives which emphasize the positive aspects of the EU, do get showcased however, but this is limited to the top-down or weak horizontal dimension of Europeanization. In the sample of The Times it proves more difficult to interpret which form of Europeanization is more inclined towards a positive evaluation of the EU, because every observed debate presents a positive evaluation. Nonetheless, the findings do demonstrate that bottom-up Europeanization does not necessarily indicate a Eurosceptic sentiment. With regard to The Guardian, the most notable finding is the absence of the strong horizontal variant of Europeanization, which implies that the Brexit-referendum did not lead to any visible political communication between national actors from other member states. This is odd, considering the significance of the Brexit issue to those countries. Another interesting element from The Guardian case-study, is the distribution of positive and negative evaluations coming from the horizontally Europeanized debates.

Lastly, this research looked into the dynamic between the sentiment brought forward by the claimant in their Europeanizing claim, and how this claim was subsequently posited in the debate. The findings demonstrate that Europeanizing claims are sensitive to framing; the intention of the claimant is regularly overruled by the tone of the article, or counteracted by how it is posited in the debate. Therefore the valence of the claims cannot be regarded as a reliable indicator for measuring the tone of the article, or the image of the EU in general. When the claimant is the author of the article, such deliberations naturally do not hold true. Moreover, in all case-studies, Europeanizing claims from the horizontal variant demonstrate a strong consonance with the tone of the articles. This signifies that when one tries to assert whether the Europeanized public debate is positively or negatively valenced towards the EU,

also the aspect of framing has to be taken into account, especially when it concerns anything besides horizontal Europeanization.

Above considerations illustrate that Europeanized public debates are far from straightforward. Europeanization comes in many forms, each with a different dynamic and posited in varying conditions. Ultimately, the observed material leads to five adjoining conclusions.

First off, the findings of this research challenges but also verifies current interpretations on Europeanized public debates in the British public sphere and EU sentiment in the UK press. With regard to the latter, the general contention in the discussed literature states that Britain accommodates an unusually Eurosceptic media market. Oliver Daddow describes the UK press coverage of European affairs as one-sided. Benjamin Hawkins adds that it is mainly the right-wing newspapers like *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* which are plainly opposed to the EU, and that in his study only one article was favourable of the EU. The results from the three case-studies show an entirely different story however, particularly the Europeanized selections. Perhaps most telling, are the exclusively positive evaluations of *The Times*, which Hawkins characterized as a right-wing newspaper. Notwithstanding that even without the selection between Europeanized and non-Europeanized, they would both be proven otherwise, this yet again shows that the EPS has the potential to counter the Eurosceptic discourse of the British press.

Secondly, current interpretations on the dynamics of Europeanized public debates in the British public sphere are also up for debate. Paul Statham and Emily Gray observe that British actors have failed in establishing a channel of communication that directly addresses European institutions. In other words, they see that there is strong evidence of an internalized national political debate on European issues. Mathieu Petithomme agrees that in the UK, national claims-making over Europe is always dominant. These findings are further confirmed in all three case studies presented here, since the internalized bottom-up variant is very visible in the public debates leading up to the Brexit referendum. Yet, whereas Statham, Gray and Petithomme argue that British citizens conceive the EU politics made visible to them primarily as a national affair, this research indicates otherwise. They base themselves on data about the horizontal variant of claims-making, which according to them barely gets any visibility in the public debates. Nevertheless, especially in *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian*, there was a strong permeation of horizontal Europeanization

observable in the British public debates. Thus, their contention that the main focus of political communication in the British public sphere is inward looking does not apply here.

Thirdly, Mathieu Petithomme attempts to explain why European institutions and actors are ineffective in promoting their political communication in member states, and comes to the conclusion that top-down claims might remain secondary to the strong national discourse. He also mentions the role of national media as active filters, selecting issues and marginalizing the declarations of European actors. Considering the findings of the three case-studies, his latter point cannot be disregarded. Even though there is a clear difference between Europeanized articles and non-Europeanized articles, it is very possible that the editorial position of the newspaper has a big influence in the selection of published articles. Yet, although this might explain the relatively low permeation of top-down claims, it says nothing about the reason why the different dimensions of Europeanization have a different dynamic. Earlier, it was mentioned how horizontally Europeanized articles in *The Daily Telegraph*, as well as *The Guardian*, provide both positive and negative evaluations of the EU. A likely explanation is that the authors of these articles are more critical because they have broader perspectives. After all, when one contemplates what happens in the national political spaces of other member states, as is the case with the horizontal variant of Europeanization, this does allow for well-rounded opinion formation. Therefore, these authors are less prone to provide one-sided assessments. Such an interpretation would also explain the very one-sided evaluations from the bottom-up selections in every case study, and connects to the overwhelming presence of an internalized British public debate.

Fourth, the EU and its institutions can, by actively engaging with the media, benefit from media attention. For this to work in their favour, it would be beneficial to focus mainly on the weak-horizontal and top-down dimension of Europeanization. In other words, it requires a media strategy which increases visibility of EU member states in the news media of other member states, as well as more visible claims from EU actors or institutions.

Lastly, the choice that was made in this research to also take the aspect of framing into account, shows that the method of Statham, Gray and Petithomme is not completely reliable when one wants to say something about how the EU is evaluated in the EPS. At the same time, it further demonstrates the restrictions of assessing the EPS by recourse of interlinked communicative linkages and claims-making. Statham, Gray and Petithomme focus merely on the Europeanizing claims as a qualitative indicator, but do not consider how

this claim is posited into the debate. The case-studies show that the tone of the articles does not necessarily correspond with the Europeanizing claim, which means that the proper context is key in providing a well-balanced interpretation. But the question remains whether something should only be regarded as Europeanized if there is a visible form of political communication. This research shows that Europeanized articles are more outspoken, yet they are not inherently more 'European'. Many non-Europeanized articles demonstrate nuanced debates with a European dimension, but are not regarded as part of an EPS. Furthermore, the method of claims-making is very time-consuming and therefore limits the research field and the studied time frame, thus diminishing the legitimacy of the research to a certain degree.

Despite or perhaps for the sake of these considerations, further research is important. Using the results from this research, one could further look into the impact of positive or negative evaluations in the media in the formation of public opinion. This will support a better understanding of the influence of communicative linkages in public debates. Moreover, as the possibility of this research being self-governing is present, a similar study with a different time-frame, can serve to strengthen or weaken the findings presented here.

Finally, this research began with the issue of different possible explanations concerning the outcome of the Brexit-referendum. One such explanation focused on the role of a perceived democratic deficit, which was put aside in order to focus on the EPS. Ironically, the findings demonstrate that although the British public sphere still tends towards internalized public debates, there is also a strong presence of horizontal Europeanization. Even the non-Europeanized articles were not necessarily uninformed about the EU. This suggests that the democratic deficit has become less of a problem, now that information and communication flows have improved. One thing is certain however, the development of a European Public Sphere was not enough to prevent the Brexit.

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