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Ph.D. in Political Theory and Political Science

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**ARE CRITICAL CITIZENS A THREAT TO
DEMOCRACY? POLITICAL TRUST AND ECONOMIC
CRISIS IN EUROPE.**

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*“Not I, nor anyone else can travel that road for you.
You must travel it by yourself. It is not far. It is within reach.
Perhaps you have been on it since you were born, and did not know.
Perhaps it is everywhere – on water and land.”*

Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass

*To my mother and my father,
for giving me both the idealism and the duty,
the water and the land.*

*To Francesco,
for walking down this road
by holding my hand.*

*To my friends Alessandro, Andrea, Cecilia and Raimondo.
“I can no other answer make, but, thanks, and thanks”.*

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Chapter one

1. Democratic crisis and organised distrust: what is the *democratic deficit*.

1.1 Introduction.

Political parties have always played a key role in defining the relationship between citizens and democratic institutions, to the extent that, as Schattschneider argued, “the political parties created democracy and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties” (1942, I).

Parties traditionally socialized citizens into politics, by aggregating their preferences and providing a mechanism for identification with the entire political system (Panebianco, 1988).

In the recent decades, parties, the “central institution of democratic governments” (Katz, 1986, p. 36), have been facing a process of deep transformation. Many authors talk about a crisis of democracies, with reference to the gradual disaffection of citizens in political life, the progressive erosion of ties of parties’ legitimation and the development of new types of linkage mechanism between citizens and the state.

In this perspective, the decline of traditional mass party has been accompanied by a general shrinkage in party membership and the erosion of party loyalties (Sarlvik and Crewe, 1983; Dalton, 1984, 2000), which can threaten the state of health of the same democratic systems. As noticed by Pierre Rosanvallon, “the democratic ideals now reign unchallenged, but regimes claiming to be democratic come in for vigorous criticism almost everywhere”. A clear paradox, in which “resides the major political problems of our time” (2006, p. 1).

Many scholars have interpreted the development of so-called *critical citizens* (Norris 1998, 2011) as a result of this paradox: on the one hand, in fact, the last decades have shown a veritable augmentation in the number of democracies all over the world. On the other one, we assisted to the development of widespread public discontent with the performance of democratic systems. In particular, fundamental democratic institutions such as political parties and governments have been facing decreasing levels of public trust and support. To use Dalton's words, "*the challenge comes from democracy's own citizens, who have grown distrustful of political, sceptical about democratic institutions, and disillusioned about how the democratic process functions*" (Dalton, 2004, p.1).

In the literature, the phenomenon of dissatisfied democrats has been analysed as a potential driving force in strengthening democracy and even as a driver of democratisation (Klingemann, 1999; Norris, 1999, Shin, 2011, Dalton, 2011). In line with this argument, Cook and Gronke, among the others, stress that the alleged decline of trust in institutions and authorities in some countries "would not necessarily be bad news. It would instead represent the rise of a public that is – perhaps as it should be – sceptical of many forms of power" (2005, p. 801). Authors who follow this line of argument often perceive distrust to be "an excellent working hypothesis in politics" (Hardin 2006, pp. 159-160). In this perspective, the weakening of traditional linkage mechanisms between citizens and the political system is accompanied by a more critical outlook, which is considered as a positive development in mature and healthy democracy. To use Norris' words, (1999, p. 27): "too much blind trust by citizens and misplaced confidence in leaders, for good or ill, can be as problematic for democracy as too little. The consequences of declining support for government institutions therefore remain open to debate".

By adopting an inverted perspective, this work wants to reconstruct the debate on the consequences of partisan dealignment and cognitive

mobilization upon political trust and system support. In particular, after reviewing the literature about critical citizens, the work wants to verify whether the erosion of partisanship as a tool for legitimation and as a source of political loyalties is accompanied by a broader democratic discontent, which may affect the general level of responsiveness as well as the level of stability of political systems.

The work will be focused on a specific timeframe, that is the economic crisis that hit most European countries in 2008, with a focus on its political consequences in times of *democratic malaise* (Kupchan 2012).

Following Russell Dalton (2004), the work will be focused around the so-called “correlates” of political support, a number of general explanations that may apply across industrial advanced democracies according three different perspectives:

- 1) Performance, with reference to both economic and political sides;
- 2) Value change and social capital, in line with the spread of post-material values (Inglehart 1990, 1997) and the consequent decrease of social capital (Putnam 1995, 2000);
- 3) Political effects, with mass media as “major factor in reshaping contemporary politics and promoting distrust” (Dalton, 2004, p. 71) and the relationship between trust in political institutions and patterns of Europeanization of political systems;

In the literature, the analysis of the transformation of the relationship between citizens and parties as well as the consequences those changes have on the quality of democratic regimes in terms of support and political trust has traditionally been organized around at least three areas (see Dalton and Wattenberg 2000 Norris, 2011):

1. A first micro-perspective or, to quote Norris, "on the demand side", links the process of dealignment to the development of

post-materialist values (Inglehart 1990, 1997) as well as to the erosion of traditional politics based on collective identities. In this framework, as Dalton and Wattenberg stress, “the growth of the welfare state, expanding employment in the tertiary sector, and increasing geographic and social mobility all contribute to the blurring of traditional political divisions based on an economic cleavage” (2000, p. 11). In this way, the decline of the cleavage-based vote, common to established Western democracies, is associated with an increase in the opinion vote, based on the salience of individual issues rather than on more abstract feelings of identification. The hypothesis of cognitive mobilization, as developed by Russell Dalton, belongs to this first direction of analysis. It inserts the phenomenon of dealignment in an evolutionary perspective, according to which the partisan linkages have undergone a general erosion as a result of a process of social and political modernization common to the most advanced industrial societies. This type of approach also includes all those theories that “focus upon enduring cultural shifts among the mass citizenry.” (Norris, 2011, p. 7). Finally, this perspective includes all the alternative theories of social capital - conceived, to use Putnam’s words, as “connections among individuals - social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.” (2000, p. 21) -, which “predict that a long-term erosion of social trust and community networks has undermined faith in democratic governance” (Norris, 2011, p. 7).

2. A meso-perspective (or, using again Norris’ typology, an *intermediary accounts* approach), which emphasizes the role of mass media and political communication in influencing how people learn about democracy and its performance. In this framework, the development of the so-called “electronic democracy” (Saldich, 1979)

is accompanied by a broader process of *mediatization* of political life, a process whereby “a political system to a high degree is influenced by and adjusted to the demands of the mass media in their coverage of politics” (Asp, 1986, 359). In this way political mediated language becomes a fundamental element in the construction of the identity of political subjects, in a strategy that includes many devices. We know that voters evaluate politics and political performance through a mechanism defined as “*political priming*”. This evaluation is based on a leader’s performance on issues that are considered important by voters. That is why “what the media decides, and how often they choose to cover a topic in their news stories, play a key role in making an issue politically salient, by priming voters on it” (Mutz, 1992, p. 8). In this way, as Jay Blumer already noticed in 1987, “at a time when the public’s confidence in many social and political institution has steeply declined, voters have become more dependent on media resources, for impressions of what is at stake, as previous suppliers of guiding frameworks have lost their credibility” (p. 170).

3. Finally, a macro-perspective, which is about the policy performance of democratic governments, as well as the institutional arrangements. This systemic perspective considers the influence of structural aspects of the regime, for example related to its typology - consensual vs. majoritarian (Lijphart, 1999) or to the electoral formula (Powell, 2000). As Miller and Listhaug show (1990), alienation from regime may arise from gradual discontent which is progressively targeted first towards the authorities, then the institutions, finally the politically system. This "systemic" strand also includes studies that analyse the role played by economic factors in the process of formation and reinforcement of cross-national determinants of system support (Crozier et al. 1975 Prezowski et al. 2000), as well as the analysis of the relationship between economic performance and

diffuse or specific support (Weil 1989). In this framework it is worth mentioning the analysis Leonardo Morlino (2003, 2011) conducted about the democratic responsiveness, conceived, at least from an ideal point of view, as “the linkage between citizens’ preference, voting behaviour, elections and government formation, and policy outcomes.” (Morlino and Quaranta, 2014, p 334). This perspective, as we are going to see below, identifies a strong association of macro-economic conditions with both political and economic responsiveness.

The three lines of analysis briefly presented, far from constituting three separate approaches to the topic, can instead be conceived as three interrelated components underlying the phenomenon that Norris called *democratic deficit* (1999, 2011).

The concept, coined to address the debate about the legitimacy of the European Union and its structures of decision-making (Weiler et al., 1995, Majone 1998, Moravcsik 2002), is used by Pippa Norris to define the measure of “reflecting how far citizens’ aspirations for democracy are out of kilter with their satisfaction with the way democracy works” (2011, p. 2). In Norris’ vision, this deficit can be explained by “the interaction of rising expectations, negative news, and failing performance” (2011, p. 3).

Not by coincidence, as noted by Peter Mair, in the last decades “the constraints on government have become much greater, the ability to respond to voters has been much curtailed, and the parties’ capacity to use their political and organizational resources to bridge or even manage the resulting gap has become severely limited” (2009, p. 16). This has led to a chasm ‘between what citizens might like governments to do and what governments are obliged to do’. The failure of parties in bridging or managing that gap, he concludes, “lies at the heart of the disaffection and malaise that now suffuses democracy” (2009, p. 17).

The implications of this model, as we are going to see in the following sections of this dissertation, calls in cause different element, starting from the phenomena of modernization and party dealignment common to all advanced western democracies to the institutional and systemic elements and their role in the process of erosion of political support in contemporary democracies.

1.2 The research project.

1.2.1 Guiding questions and methods.

This work firstly aims at investigating the cross-national determinants of system support and democratic responsiveness with reference to well-established European democracies in times of economic crisis. Traditionally, the determinants of political trust and system support rely on a complex set of economic, political, and social factors, which can be investigated within – at least - three theoretical perspectives: instrumental rationality, political mobilization, and equity/fairness (Bellucci and Memoli, 2012).

This project aims at answering to the following questions, by following both the above-presented economic and cultural perspectives:

- What is the relationship between party closeness, cognitive mobilization and system support in Europe? How has this relationship changed vis-à-vis the recent economic crisis? The hypothesis is that the medium and long-term consequences of partisan dealignment can result in a threat to the general state of health of European democracies, and alienation from specific institutions (such as political parties) may spill over to influence judgments of democratic regime as a whole.

- What is the role of economic crisis? How the recent sovereign debt crisis beginning and the implementation of tough austerity measures or programmes for structural reforms of the welfare state and labour market have

affected citizens' perception of democracy, with reference, in particular, to specific political trust and support for democratic institutions?

In this framework, the role of EU needs to be studied. In particular, how the impact of external constraints on domestic policy making and the loss of political manoeuvrability to external actors, such as EU and IMF, have been perceived by European citizens in terms of trust and support to European institutions? The hypothesis, in other words, is that the trends in trust in democratic institutions show a cross-national variation depending on each country economic and political features.

-What is the role of institutional factors, related to the degree of traditional party systems change? In particular, is it possible to trace a cross-level interaction between the degree of de-structuration of party systems and the different level of political support of so-called *critical citizens*? The aim of this section is to determine the existence of the same *party - system - related* factors associated with party dealignment and decrease of political support in each country, in other words if there are system differences which associate to different party systems different degree of support. In theory, following the literature, we would expect to find a strong correlation between support for protest parties and political dissatisfaction, and the dynamics of channelling discontent through protest parties should be facilitated by both political and economic variables. In particular, the economic crisis and the loss of political manoeuvrability to external European actors should have affected parties and party systems in terms of patterns of party competition. Not by coincidence, the first direct outcome of Europeanisation on the domestic stage – as envisaged by Peter Mair (2000) - is related to the emergence of new anti- European parties, or anti-European attitudes or stances within the already existing political parties.

In this perspective, EU could be framed as a renewed party cleavage, whose aim is – according the seminal Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan's

paradigm (1967) - to create a “structure of political alternatives” that constrains the orientations of political parties on newly arising issues.

Cases This study focuses on a set of European countries and therefore applies a *most similar systems design* (MSSD) (Przeworski and Teune 1970). The choice of such a strategy derives from its advantages: as a matter of facts, this method, facilitating the *ceteris paribus* rule, consents to reduce the variance of the control variables.

As stressed by many authors, the use of most-similar design for cross-national comparisons (in this case, for countries belonging to the same geographic area with relative similarity situations in terms of historical development and cultural attitudes) “enables an appreciation of the marginal difference and its causes” (Dogan and Pelassy, 1990, p. 334). The choice of this method, although questionable, consent to “parametrize” some factors (considered as constant) and instead check for the influence of other factors, in our case, for instance, the economic performance of countries during the Euro crisis, the subjection to austerity programs or the level of flexibility of party systems as well as the role and ideological distance between main competitors.

Data

The European Social Survey (ESS) represents the source of information for a secondary data analysis. It is an academically-driven multi-country survey, which has been administered in over 30 countries on a two-years base. The survey provides data from representative national samples of the publics of European countries and covers a full range of social, economic, cultural and religious variation as well as they way they interact with Europe's

changing institutions. Furthermore, it is conceived to advance and consolidate improved methods of cross-national survey measurement in Europe and beyond, and to develop a series of European social indicators, including attitudinal indicators. From 2002 till 2016, 36 countries altogether have participated in the first six rounds of the ESS: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

For the purpose of a MSSD and in order to parameterize key features of case studies (such as the level of democratic development and the age of democracies), the work will take into account consolidated Western European democracies and therefore: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

These countries will be analysed in a comparative perspective and according an area-approach, based on the United Nations geoscheme for Europe¹, which assigns countries to regions and sub-regions for statistical convenience. In particular, in our case:

- Northern Europe, including Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden;
- Western/Central Europe: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, Ireland;
- Southern Europe, that is Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain;

The research will be conducted on a three-steps' structure:

¹ The standard code is available at: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>

- In the first phase, the work will try to reconstruct, at the individual-level, the determinants of political trust, by testing the relationship between political trust and a number of variables, starting from party closeness, political interest and educational level (or better *cognitive mobilization*) as well as socio-economic individual perception in the different waves of survey;
- In the second phase, starting from the literature on the field, the work will try to identify the systemic economic and political characteristics in order to verify the existence of a cross-level interaction between the degree of economic wealth and the level of political support of so-called *critical citizens*. The aim is to determine if the same cross-national determinants are associated with political support in each country, how the trends vary across time and after the economic crisis and how different patterns of political behaviour are eventually associated with different institutional arrangements.
- Furthermore, the work focuses on the *supply side* of the model: political parties and party systems. In particular, the chapter is related to the relationship between dissatisfied democrats and support for anti-European parties. The hypothesis is that distrust in political institutions is directly related to the birth and success of new formations along two main cleavages: the *integration/demarcation* cleavage, in the case of territorial claims, and the functional cleavage between *winners and losers* of economic integration, in the case of the countries most affected by economic crisis. In both cases, the expansion and deepening of dissatisfaction at a mass level involves *in primis* parties' organization as much as their fundamental role in the public sphere.

1.3 General relevance and further directions.

The work aims to investigate the dimensions of system support and democratic responsiveness with reference to well-established democracies in times of economic crisis.

From the classical literature we know that satisfaction with national democracy (which can be conceived as a proxy for democratic responsiveness), increases when economic performance is resilient, when rule of law is well-implemented – and thus perceived corruption is low –, when citizens are politically engaged – or *cognitively mobilited* –, and when the electoral institutions are able to provide a sufficient and wide representation (Memoli and Bellucci, 2012). In these circumstances, satisfaction with national democracy is stable and increases over time.

However, this model of responsiveness could be challenged from several factors.

The first class of problems calls in cause what Peter Mair has defined *accountability*, that is that condition “whereby political leaders or governments listen to and then respond to the demands of citizens and groups” (2009, p. 11). With regards to this dimension, of course, there’s a problem of political opportunity. As Leonardo Morlino stresses, “elected leaders do not always seek to understand and respond to the perceptions and positions of the citizens.” Instead, they often aim to “maximize their own autonomy and influence citizens’ perceptions and understandings of what the most important issues are” (2011, p. 201).

But there is more. This first dimension acquires in fact a greater significance with the growing interdependence and structure of constraints derived by EU integration at the light of the current economic crisis. In this framework, “*troika* interventions have entailed a major challenge in terms of

programmatic decline, involving political actors losing their capacity to provide satisfactory policy responsiveness and the capacity to offer meaningful political alternatives” (Cordero and Simòn, 2015, p.5).

This calls in cause a second order of limits, which is the scarcity of economic resources governments have to implement policies that meet the demands of citizens (Morlino, 2011, p. 211).

The threat posed by increased domestic contestation over EU integration, the de-legitimation of decisions associated with supranational political actors as well as the persistent problem posed by the economic situation contributed to a de-legitimation of democratic systems in their fundamental institutions and encouraged the rise and electoral success of anti-systemic, populist forces.

In this perspective, the recent development of “anti-party” parties could be perhaps linked to the economic crisis as well as to the parallel progressive decline of traditional mass parties throughout Europe and it’s inserted in the broader debate about the consequences of economic globalization upon political systems and their institutions. As Kriesi *et al.* point out (2006, cit in Kriesi and Pappas 2015, p.3), “globalization has transformed the basis of politics in Western Europe by giving rise to what they have called a new ‘integration-demarcation’ cleavage: processes of increasing economic, cultural and political competition linked to globalization created latent structural potential of globalization ‘winners’ and losers’”. In this way, new political actors, based on populist mobilization, succeed in affirming with more or less stable organizations, by appealing to the “cultural anxieties” of the losers, thus contributing to the transformation of party systems in time of dissatisfaction and high volatility. In this framework, mass media, and more specifically, social media, originally conceived as a space for expressing attitudes of political efficacy (Norris 2001, Krueger 2002), offered the platform for political cynicism and public’s disenchantment with major political parties and support for new actors or movements.

Further directions in the analysis of system support and democratic responsiveness should be thus directed to the consequences of this *democratic deficit*. Contemporary trends may result in a temporary process, as a consequence of the current, economic crisis, or, vice versa, a long-lasting feature that will increasingly influence the dynamics of political trust options.

In other words, if the critic to democracy has until now conceived as a sign of democratic vitality, we may be in the beginnings of a new process where dissatisfaction with the output of the system contaminate the “reservoir of favourable attitudes and good will” that David Easton was talking about when defining the “diffuse” support to democracy (Cautrès, 2015).

Chapter Two

Change or crisis? Citizens, parties and institutions in advanced industrial democracies. Theoretical perspectives.

2. 1 Party crisis and ideological dealignment.

Contemporary democracies emerged as *party democracies*. Political parties, "the key institutions of democratic governments", in the words of Richard S. Katz, have held "*a number of key functions in the governing process, including mobilisation and channelling of support, formulation of alternatives, recruitment and replacement of leadership, and, when in power, implementation of policy and control over its administration*" (Katz, 1986, p.37).

The end of the twentieth century brought to light a number of problems and challenges for party governments, to the extent that Giovanni Sartori talked about "the era of confusion of Democracy" (1987, p.3).

The debate around the concept of crisis in Western representative democracies reached its climax in 1970s, when a number of scholars started to talk about *legitimation crisis* (Habermas 1973), *governability crisis* (Brittan 1975), when not openly of *crisis of democracy* (notably, among the others, Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki 1975).

From different perspectives, these scholars agreed on the growing incapacity of elected government to fulfil the new demands of citizens, while attributing this distancing to different causes.

In Habermas' view, for instance, the crisis of legitimation had to be located in the fundamental contradiction of late capitalist societies, with collective diffuse costs and private appropriation. In this perspective, the

stability of democracy is affected by external, interrelated challenges, derived by the growing economic international interdependence between countries, so that depression and more in general relevant changes in the distribution of economic resources could be not attributed to the policy choices of a given government and yet constitute a threat to the stability of the same regime.

Vice versa, Crozier and his colleagues focus their study upon the endogenous elements of the crisis, related to the *social structure* and the *social trends* of a country (Crozier, Huntington, Watanuki, 1975, p. 5). Within this framework, the development of an “adversary culture” among intellectuals and related groups disgusted by corruption and the inefficiency of democratic functioning is potentially accompanied by a shift in values, which could finally “pose an additional new problem for democratic government in terms of its ability to mobilize its citizens for the achievement of social and political goals”; to the point that “the more democratic a system is, the more the more likely it is to be endangered by intrinsic threats” (*ivi*, p. 7-8).

More recently, Kaase and Newton speak explicitly of “crisis of democracy”, with “reference to the disenchantment of citizens with political parties, the emergence of anti-party attitudes, and the growing incidence of more general dissatisfaction and anti-establishment attitudes” (1995, p. 150). This *internal crisis* of democracy is conceived as a process consisting of two related sub-dynamics, *de-anchoring* and *delegitimation* (Morlino 1998). This crisis involves the institutional effectiveness (Linz 1978) as well as the lack of confidence of citizens towards the political life and the consequent realignment of the relations between civil society, parties and government institutions.

In such “*dissatisfied democracy*” (Pharr and Putnam 2000), contemporary parties failed in performing their core representational and governmental functions linked to the transmission of the political demand (Easton 1965). The gradual disaffection of citizens in political life and the

consequent decrease in the degree of social participation are accompanied by new types of relationships between citizens and the state. Peter Mair (2002) introduces the expression “*partyless democracy*” to stress the progressive erosion of ties (or cleavages, in the words of Lipset and Rokkan) and the consequent process of dealignment, a general trend in Western democracies (Dalton 2007).

In this perspective, we’re assisting to a veritable transformation of the relationship between some voters and political parties, which is at the heart of the notion of contemporary representative democracy (Dalton, Mac Allister and Wattenberg, 2000).

First of all, this process meant a shift in voters’ preference, now related to short-term factors (Dalton et al., 1984, p. III): “*Without the reinforcement of habitual party ties, - the authors write - more voters are waiting longer to decide for whom they will vote, and in the countries where ticket splitting is possible, more are dividing their party choices. Candidate-centred politics appears to be on the rise, although this is much more pronounced in presidential than parliamentary systems, and signifying the different style of dealignment politics, participation in campaigns and volunteer work for political parties is decreasing.*”

This party crisis and the decline of the group cleavages on electoral choice have in fact clearly paralleled by a weakening of party identification, a key element of the traditional Michigan model of electoral choice, which was originally defined as “*the sense of personal attachment which the individual feels towards the (party) of his choice*” (Campbell et al. 1954, pp. 88-9; Campbell et al. 1960). From here the foundation for an era of dealignment, “*a period during which the portion of the electorate affiliated parties narrows in parallel with the disappearance of the traditional party coalitions*” (Dalton et al., 1984, 14).

The progressive decline of parties is accompanied in parallel by the gradual enfranchisement of voters from the traditional cues and the inevitable increase in electoral volatility. As Russell Dalton and his colleagues (1984, p. 451) stress: *"electoral alignments are weakening, and party systems are experiencing increased fragmentation and electoral volatility. Moreover, the evidence suggests that the changes in all of these nations reflect more than short-term oscillations in party fortunes. This decomposition of electoral alignments often can be traced to shifts in the long-term bases of partisan support- party identification and social cleavages. Virtually everywhere among the industrialised democracies, the old order is changing"*.

This concept of party identification has long been at the heart of a functional model of interpretation of the electoral behaviour of those individual, normally not able to deal with the complexity of political, cultural and economical enjeux.

In this way, acting as "perceptual screen", party identification has allowed the activation of mechanisms of personal attachment, functional to the exercise of the vote, thus providing to the voters a real shortcut.

Not surprisingly, as recognized by many, the mechanism of partisanship finds its full realization in the American political scene, in which the electorate is asked to express its voice in a variety of elections and constituencies, whose complexity is surpassed by the role of the party as an agent of ideological simplification (Borre e Katz 1973, Wattenberg 1998, Miller 1976).

In this framework, issues are traditionally presented to the public in "partisans" terms and, as shown by numerous studies, party identification emerges as a cost-saving device, in order reduce the cost of acquisition of multiple information (Fiorina 1981).

The issue becomes more complex moving in Europe. On the one hand it is true that party identification has had a very important role also in the European political scene, especially in those countries where parties have

played a fundamental anchoring role during the phase of democratic consolidation (Morlino, 2011).

On the other hand, we have to emphasize how this concept is applicable with more difficulties to the European model, for a number of different factors. Primarily because of the diversity of the political context in the old continent, based on a reduced number of elections, often not based on a candidate-centred logic (Thomassen and Rosema, 2011), and secondly for the different effect on voting behaviour of short-term factors, also related to those changes in the party systems unprecedented in the US political system.

Not surprisingly, following van der Eijk and Niemoeller (1983), some scholars have pointed out that the concept of ideological identification is most appropriate to interpret the European scene (D'Alimonte, De Sio, Maggini, 2011).

This would permit to explain the mechanism of multi-party identification, according to which many voters declare their proximity to a multitude of adjacent parties along the L / R¹ scale.

In this way, at the same time, one of the fundamental conditions of the Michigan's model, the amplitude of the time horizon, would be satisfied.

As Blais, Gidengil, Nadeau and Nevitte stress, in the original Michigan's school formulation we can distinguish two central elements of the concept of party identification (2001, p. 5).

The first is, clearly, identification. In particular: "This party identification is an attachment to a party that helps the citizen locate

¹ As it is well known, the spatial model of ideological self-placement along the left-right continuum has traditionally been used to interpret the mechanism for categorization of parties and candidates on the basis of the guidelines and policy proposals and to face their complexity of the political sphere (Fuchs and Klingemann, 1990). Not surprisingly, since the seminal model developed by Anthony Downs (1957: 114-141), the two-party systems are usually associated with a unimodal distribution of voter preferences along the left-right continuum, with the majority of voters concentrated in central positions of this scale politics, and political parties competing for the median voter.

him/herself and others on the political landscape. As thus conceived, partisans are partisan because they think they are partisan” (Campbell et al, 1986,100).

The second element is the time horizon. From the very beginning, party identification has been conceptualized as an enduring underlying orientation. The American Voter states that “some evaluations persist through time and so do certain dispositions to evaluate the elements of politics in a given partisan way. Most Americans have an enduring partisan orientation, a sense of party identification (...)” (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, 1960, p. 529).

This bivalent meaning of the concept gives the opportunity to reconstruct the important changes that have taken places in voters’ behaviour.

In both cases, there has been a gradual decline in the long-term predispositions related to the mechanisms of partisanship in the United States as well as a crisis of the traditional social segmentation (with the associated cleavages) in Europe.

In this way, we assisted to a gradual shift of the mechanism of electoral behaviour to short-term factors, such as the mediated image of the candidates or their position in relation to certain issue. From here the foundation for an era of dealignment, "a period during which the portion of the electorate affiliated parties narrows in parallel with the disappearance of the traditional party coalitions" (Dalton et al., 1984, 14).

In this way, the progressive decline of parties is accompanied in parallel by the gradual enfranchisement of voters from the traditional cues and the inevitable increase in electoral volatility.

This has led, at least with reference to the European scene, to a dual process, according to which the instability has been accompanied by a considerable degree of conservation (Mair 1997). In this way, while remaining tied to the family party in the broadest sense (or rather ideological orientation related to it), the voter can no longer feel any connection with any particular party within it.

It is in this perspective that new mechanisms of mobilization, associated with an electorate that can no longer be assimilated to the model of the school of Michigan, can succeed.

The dealignment exercises its effects on political behaviour in the broadest sense, going to set new trends in electoral and non electoral participation.

In this sense, the solution that associates exclusively to these dynamics what Putnam has identified the United States as a decline of "civic engagement", correlating to the gradual de-politicization of election campaigns (Milner, 2002), does not seem to be sufficient to delineate terms of new independent voters.

In other words, attributing the weakening of partisan ties exclusively to forms of social apathy or, in parallel, to mechanisms of de-politicization characteristic of what Colin Crouch has defined post-democracy (2004), in fact, is not to take into account a wide range electorate that manifests dynamics of participation which are alternative (but often parallel) to the party, and that, in the words of Russell J. Dalton, are based on mechanisms of cognitive mobilization.

It is here a phenomenon described by Dalton such as an abstract and psychological involvement in politics, which happens when individuals have the necessary resources to be politically mobilized, without the need for external support and guidance.

In this framework, the hypothesis of the dealignment is part of an evolutionary perspective, according to which the partisan ties undergo general erosion as a result of the modernization process of social and political common to most advanced industrial societies.

In other words, the functionalist model of partisanship would suggest that these social trends lead to the cognitive mobilization of some citizens as an alternative to partisan mobilization (Dalton 1984, 2007; Inglehart 1990).

In this framework, the process of modernization of industrial societies may have affected the functional calculus according to which individuals tailored their strategies of participation. The increase in the average level of education and the growing availability of political information provided by the media reduce the cost of acquisition and meet an electorate increasingly interested in politics and less tied in terms of functional constraints to political parties.

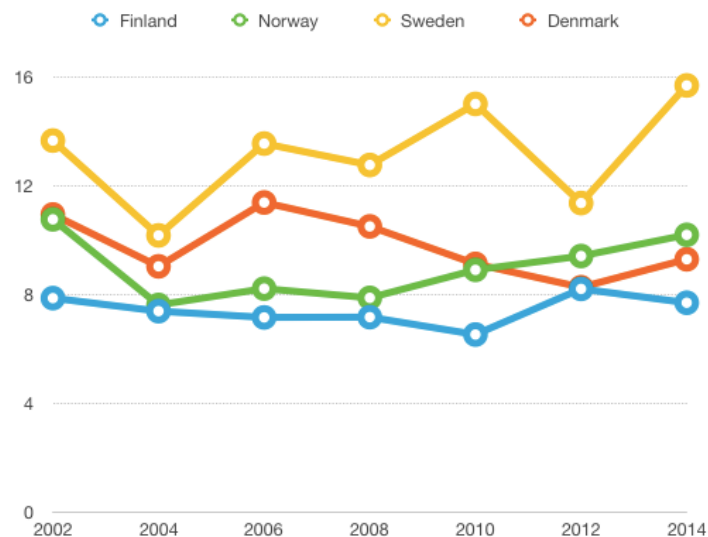


Figure 2.1 Trends in Party Closeness, Northern European Countries. Source: ESS 2002-2014 (percentage of citizens "very close" to political parties).

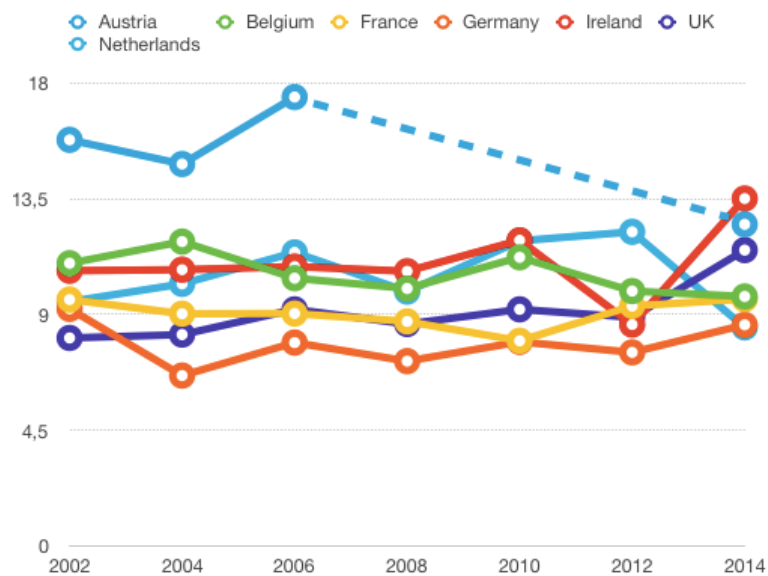


Figure 2.2 Trends in Party Closeness, Central European Countries. Source: ESS 2002-2014 (percentage of citizens "very close" to political parties). Dashed lines indicate missing data for the corresponding years.

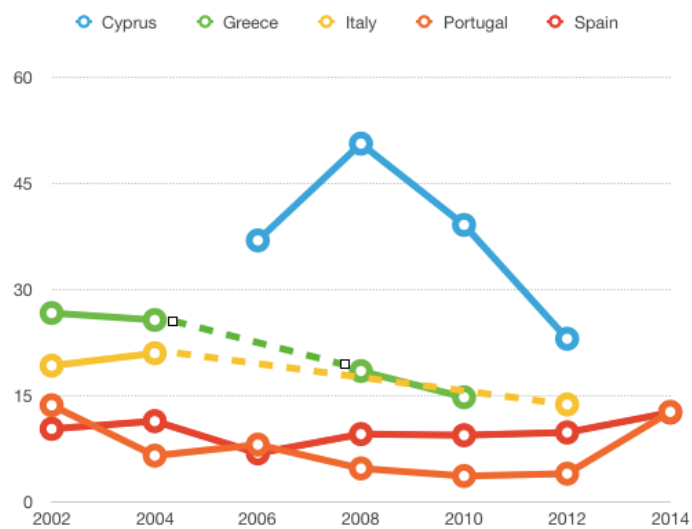


Figure 2.3 Trends in Party Closeness, Southern European Countries. Source: ESS 2002-2014 (percentage of citizens "very close" to political parties). Dashed lines indicate missing data for the corresponding years.

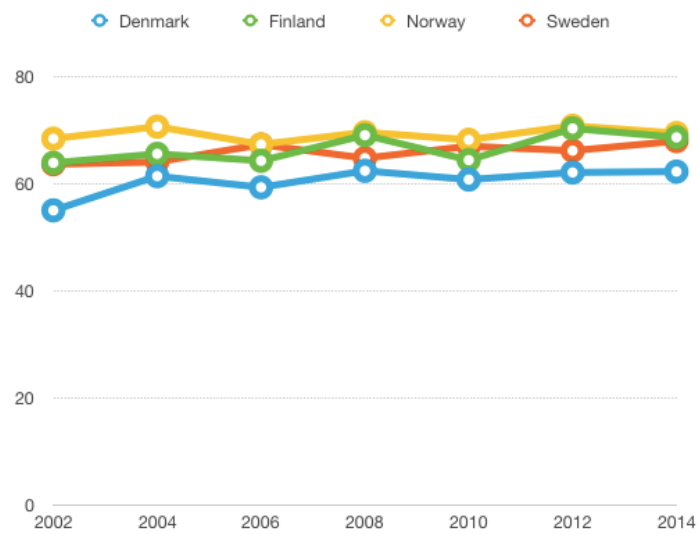


Figure 2.4. Trends in Party Closeness, Northern European Countries. Source: ESS 2002-2014 (percentage of citizens "quite close" to political parties).

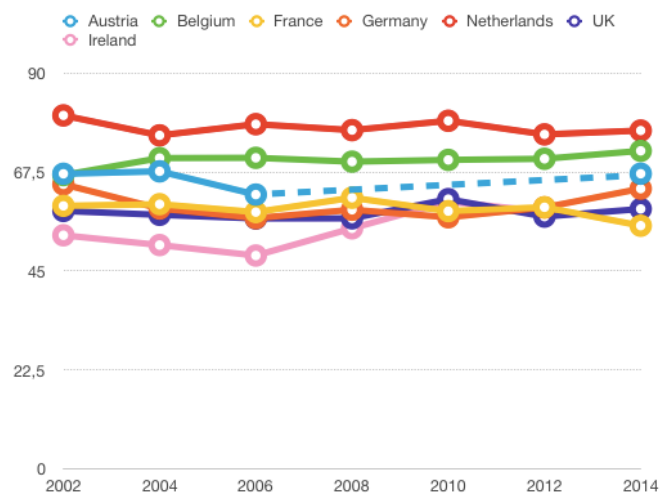


Figure 2.5. Trends in Party Closeness, Central European Countries. Source: ESS 2002-2014 (percentage of citizens "quite close" to political parties). Dashed lines indicate missing data for the corresponding years.

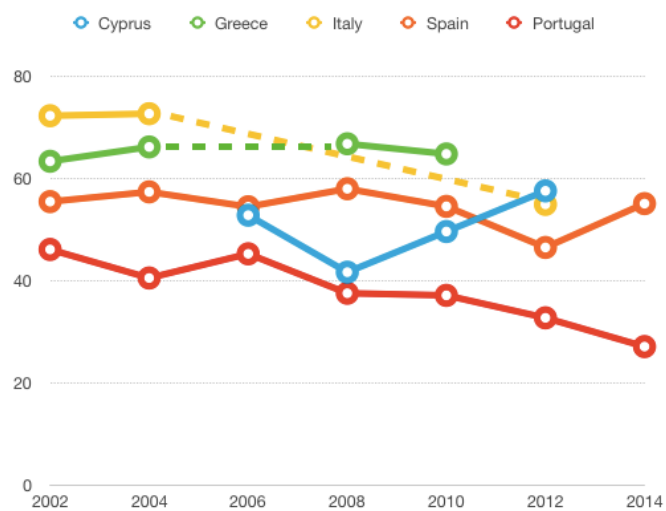


Figure 2.6. Trends in Party Closeness, Southern European Countries. Source: ESS 2002-2014 (percentage of citizens "quite close" to political parties). Dashed lines indicate missing data for the corresponding years.

2.2 Are parties still fundamental? The cognitive mobilization hypothesis.

At this crossroads lies the possibility of cognitive mobilization, which links the dealignment to a combination of individual and systemic factors at the basis of what Ronald Inglehart has called in 1977 a "silent revolution", related to the development of post-materialistic values and to the reduced propensity of more recent generations to accept the practices of delegation and inclusion in a traditionally hierarchical institutional order.

It is no coincidence Inglehart is the first to speak of cognitive mobilization and identify as a crucial element of this phenomenon "the development of the skills required to manipulate abstractions policies and, therefore, to coordinate the activities needed to address a wide political community" (1977, 295 - 297).

To use Dalton's words, "*Cognitive mobilization involves two separate developments. First, the public's ability to process political information has increased, as a function of higher levels of education and political sophistication among the electorate. Second, the cost of acquiring political information has decreased, such as through the expansion of the mass media and other information sources. Cognitive mobilization thus means that more citizens now possess the political resources and skills that better prepare them to deal with the complexities of politics and reach their own political decisions without reliance of affective, habitual party cues or other external cues.*" (2007, p. 76).

The result of the dealignment process has been analysed in a comparative and longitudinal perspective by Dalton and Wattenberg (2000), in a study on the modern industrial democracies. According to the two

authors, the increase in political capacity of citizens turned out to be a crucial factor in encouraging more independent voters and in weakening the ties between parties and the electorate.

This means that people with high levels of political sophistication should show a more unpredictable electoral behaviour, depending on the context of the various campaigns.

Party mobilization

Table 2.1 Type of mobilization and party identification. Source: Dalton, 2007.

Cognitive Mobilization	Independents	Weak/Strong PID
High	<i>Apartisans</i>	<i>Cognitive Partisans</i>
Low	<i>Apoliticals</i>	<i>Ritual Partisans</i>

The apoliticals show the same characteristics of the independents in the model elaborated by the school of Michigan (1960, 143-145). At the edge of the public sphere, they have a minimum level of sophistication and interest with reference to politics. In the study conducted by Dalton in 2007 on the American electorate, the percentage of this group has not undergone significant changes over the period 1964 - 2004 (from 16% to 18.8%). In the European case, in the period of time taken into consideration in our study, this group has been characterised by a considerable decline (from 24, 51% to 15,41%).

The different role of party cues in the American and European case seems to be confirmed by the trends in ritual partisanship, whose share fell from 47.1 to 26% in the 1964-2004 on the American scene, thus confirming the progressive weakening of the potential of party identification. In Europe,

though, the decline seems to be more moderate, from 35,51% to 31,59% (2004-2014).

The third group, the cognitive partisans, shows a low level of attachment to political parties; on the other hand, they are in possession of the "cognitive resources to be involved in politics even in the absence of political parties ties "(Dalton, 2007, 277).

In this case, since the cognitive dimension and the partisan one overlap, we can assume a dual influence on the perceptions and choices of the group: in other words, they tend to re-orientate their party identification on the basis of their political positions (eg compliance to a specific issue), following an evolutionary trend of partisanship already evidenced by similar research (Fiorina 1981, 2002). Their percentage of the American electorate has increased from 27.1 to 35, 4 per cent. In the European case we assisted to a comparable rise, from 26,52% to 32,88%.

The group of apartisans, in Dalton's typology, manifests many traits of interest. It is actually a segment of the population which possesses the knowledge and resources to orient themselves in politics, but without reference to political parties ties.

This group manifests a potential unconventional participation along with a broader political commitment. Its share has increased by ten percentage points over the period considered, from 10 to 19.9 per cent in the American scene; in Europe it passed from 13, 46% to 20, 12% in 10 years with a constant rise.

	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
Apoliticals	24,51%	19,91%	20,83%	24,41%	21,13%	15,41%
Ritual partisans	35,51%	34,51%	32,34%	32,45%	31,48%	31,59%
Apartisans	26,52%	29,83%	29,95%	27,4%	29,86%	32,88%

Cognitive partisans	13,46%	15,75%	16,88%	15,74%	17,53%	20,12%
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Table 2.2 The distribution of mobilization types in European Countries, 2004-2014.

Source. Personal elaboration on data ESS.

The typology of cognitive mobilization elaborated by Dalton has had notable repercussions in academic discussion. The first class of problems concerns the applicability of his model outside the American context, and namely in the European countries. The problems are related to the different nature of European politics, with different political parties and reduced electoral consultations. But there's more: as evidenced by our data (see Figure 2.1 – 2.6) in some European countries, party identification “has not dropped in any considerable way, and has even rise” (Alaminos, Penalva, 2012). This means, according to many authors, the necessity to reconsider the consequences of cognitive mobilization on party identification process. As Albright observes, in fact, in many European countries the two phenomena (Cognitive Mobilization and Party Identification) occur simultaneously, thus making impossible to determine, as a consequence of cognitive mobilization, any role in arising or undermining party identification. In 2005, Huber, Kernel and Leoni observed how changes in party identification may depend on the institutional context more than on changes in the electorate, for example the nature of competition between parties.

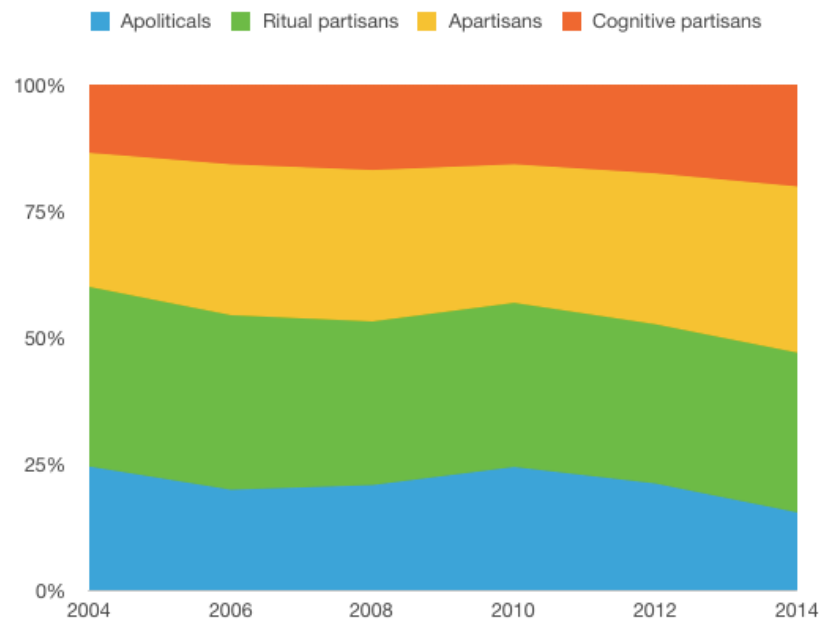


Figure 2.7. Distribution of mobilization types in European Countries, 2004-2014. Source: Personal elaboration from data ESS.²

As we have seen above, Dalton and Wattenberg write about the effects of dealignment on voting behaviour. But there's more. This *dealignment*, although related to the stable support for a specific party, has consequences for a broad range of political behaviour (Albright, 2009, p.250), going to undermine the same possibility of being related to the political system. If it's true that those with high levels of party identification are more inclined to vote, to support the political system and to have higher levels of political efficacy (Clarke and Stewart, 1984, Hooghe and Kern, 2013), then the the so-called *critical citizens* (Norris 1999) - who show high level of commitment or support for democracy as a system but a tendency to be negative or critical

² Following Dalton's typology, we built the cognitive mobilization index as a simple additive combination of educational level and interest in politics. The two questions are added together to yield a 10 points index (6+4) and then combined with levels of party closeness. Values of 8 or greater were codified as high cognitive mobilization.

toward the existing regime and political institutions, such as parties - should lack in political trust, a widely multidimensional phenomenon closely linked to both the dimensions of legitimacy and effectiveness of a political system (Easton 1965, Hooghe 2011).

2.3 Political trust and democratic responsiveness.

The traditional theoretical framework of system support has been established by David Easton, who, in 1965, defines legitimacy as “*the conviction on the part of the member that it is right and proper for him to accept and obey the authorities and to abide by the requirements of the regime. It reflects the fact that in some vague or explicit way he sees these objects as conforming to his own moral principles, his own sense of what it’s right and proper in the political sphere*” (Easton, 1965, p. 278).

In this perspective, political trust can be considered as the most basic form of diffuse support for a political system, since it refers to the fundamental values and institutions of a political system. It has been defined as “a blanket judgment, covering the functioning of the political system in general” (Hooghe and Kern, 2013).

Political trust is thus closely related to the sense of legitimacy of the entire system, or better, using Lipset’s words, “the capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society” (1966, p. 64).

In this sense, we can distinguish *objects* and *types* of support. It is clear that legitimacy is closely related to moral orientations, norms and values: it is understood as a psychological orientation (Norris, 2011, p. 20). It includes, to use Almond and Verba taxonomy, the internalized aspects of objects and relationship. According to the two scholars, in particular, we can distinguish

(1963, p. 15): (1) “cognitive orientation”, that is knowledge of and belief about the political system, its roles and the incumbents of these roles, its inputs and its outputs; (2) “affective orientation”, or feelings about the political system, its roles, personnel, and performance, and (3) “evaluational orientation”, the judgements and opinions about political objects that typically involve the combination of value standard and criteria with information and feelings.

In this way, the degree of legitimacy of a political system relies on the degree of *generalized* or *diffuse* support, which represents more abstract feelings towards the nation-state and its agencies. In this perspective, “*diffuse support is expected to be particularly important for stability in fragile state emerging from deep-rooted internal conflict, as well as for processes of regime transition, by strengthening popular acceptance of the legitimacy of new constitutional arrangements and the authority of officeholders*”. (Norris, *ivi*, p. 22)

The dimension of *specific* support as introduced by Easton, vice versa, is closely related to the *effectiveness* of political system according to an instrumental orientation. To use Lipset words, effectiveness refers to the “*actual performance, the extent to which the system satisfies the basic function of government as most of the population and such powerful groups within it as big business or the armed forces see them*” (Lipset, 1966, 77). In this perspective, specific support is closely related to satisfaction with day-to-day output, such as attitudes towards incumbent elected officeholders as well as support for particular political parties and authorities in other public sector agencies. Such specific support, in other words, is closely related to the short-term responses of citizens to the policy performances of government (Thomassen and van der Kolk, 2009).

There’s a little doubt about the different impact these types of support can exert upon the functioning of a democratic system. This would explain why, for instance, the continuity of established democracies is not jeopardised

by a temporally poor performance because they can rely on a diffuse support, a sort of reserve support that enables a system to weather the many storms when outputs cannot be balanced off against inputs of demands (Easton, 1965, 273).

Pippa Norris (2011, p. 24), ranging on a continuum from the most diffuse to the most specific levels of political support, distinguishes five distinct components of support in a nested model, each with a series of operational measures:

1. The most general and fundamental attitudes of citizens towards belonging to a nation—state, that is the system as a whole. It includes “such feelings as patriotism or alienation, such cognitions and evaluation of the nation as ‘large’ or ‘small’, ‘strong’ or ‘weak’ and the polity as ‘democratic’, ‘constitutional’ or ‘socialistic’” (Almond and Verba, 1963, p. 15);
2. Agreement with core principles and normative values upon which a regime is based, including approval of democratic values and ideals;
3. Evaluation of the overall performance of the regime, e.g, satisfaction with democratic governance;
4. Confidence in regime institutions, such as parliament, government, the army;
5. Approval of incumbent officeholders;

This continuum draws on a hierarchy between the several objects of support, from the more vital elements of democracy – expressed by trust in the community and trust in the regime, to the lower levels, namely specific political institutions and basic structure of democratic government.

Table 2.3 Political trust and system support. Source: Almond and Verba (1963), Norris (1999), Dalton (2004), Morlino (2011).

Level of analysis	Evaluational orientation	Affective orientations
<i>Community</i>	The best nation to live in	National pride
<i>Regime: principles and values</i>	Support for democratic values	Democratic values
<i>Responsiveness:</i> <i>a- Regime performance : norms and procedures</i> <i>Political institutions (specific roles or structures)</i> <i>b- Authority: Approval of the actors in power (incumbents of roles)</i> <i>c- Particular policies, decisions or enforcement of decisions</i>	Satisfaction for democratic performance; Satisfaction with the decision- making process; Performance evaluation; Candidate evaluations; Vote intentions; Output expectations	Political rights; Sistemic norms; Participatory norms; Trust in institutions; Trust in politicians; Party identification or closeness; Support for party government;

To sum up, as shown by the scheme above, the objectives of support coincide with the three components of the *eastonian* system as presented above: community, regime and authorities.

As explained by Morlino (2000, pp. 680-683), the expressed support can assume a broad form or a specific one. In the first case, the support takes

the form of trust in democratic principles, whose legitimation relies on a common interest as well as on a sense of identification of citizens in the political community. Vice versa, the specific support is directly connected with the decisions taken by the authorities.

The dimension of specific support is also closely linked to the concept - already briefly recalled above - of democratic *responsiveness*, one of the dimensions used to measure the quality of democracy in terms of results (Morlino 2011).

“Democratic responsiveness is what occurs when the democratic process induces the government to form and implement policies that the citizens want.” (Powell, 2004, p.91). In Powell’s perspective, democratic perspective should be considered as a complex process, “somewhat like a chain whose links are causally connected”, starting from citizens’ preferences and including stages like voting, elections outcomes, the process of policy-making and, finally, the outcomes in terms of public policies. In this framework, responsiveness is considered as “the capacity of government to satisfy the governed by executing its policies in a way that corresponds to their demands” (Morlino, 2011, p. 208). In this perspective, “perhaps the most effective method for assessing responsiveness is to examine the legitimacy of government, that is, citizens’ perception of responsiveness, rather than the reality” (*ibidem*). Trusting citizens are more likely to perceive political decisions as legitimate than distrusting citizens even if these decisions are unfavourable to their own particular interests (Rudolph & Evans 2005). Distrusting citizens, on the other hand, are more likely to calculate the costs and benefits of compliance and this might lead to free riding practices (Tyler 2006). As Gamson (1968, p. 127) states “if legitimacy is high, then there is a high potential for activating commitments and other, costlier forms of control may be avoided (...) a wide variety of unpleasant commitments may be accepted with good grace when there is a surplus of political trust (...)”. This leads back to the analysis of the diffusion of “attitudes favourable to existing

institutions and the approval of their activities suggesting indirectly that civil society pertains a certain level of *responsiveness*” (Morlino, 2015, p.9).

This assumption is confirmed by the fact that trust in various political institutions is highly correlated (Marian 2011), with a systematic, substantive difference in the levels of trust each institution receives from citizens, with institutions of the state (Denters et al. 2007) or impartial institutions coming out on top (Torcal 2015) and persisting, cross-national differences towards political institutions.

This class of tendencies of political trust in Europe has traditionally been attributed to cultural or attitudinal differences. Italy, for instance, has been considered “the country *par excellence* in which to study negative attitudes towards politics which seems to be culturally rooted” (Segatti, 2006, p.70). In this framework, “the correlations between mass attitudes and democracy are systematically higher when we use the long period because political culture is a better predictor of the long-term stability of democracy” (Inglehart, 2003, p.53).

More recently, the Great Recession and the related introduction of austerity measures in most European countries have reinforced the issue of economic and social determinants of political trust.

In parallel, the debate has been focused upon the institutional settings, as well as upon the different evaluations of the performance of the democratic institutions and the role of media. In the following sections, the work will explore this three-fold perspective, dealing first with the role of both with the economic and the political determinants of political trust, both at individual and systemic level.

2.4 From the civic culture to critical citizenship: an integrated approach to political culture.

In general, support for the political system has been analysed through two different perspectives, the first one related to the concept of *political efficacy*. The sense of political efficacy is crucial in the political science's analysis of participation in a wide sense. According to Campbell, it can be considered as the "feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political process, i.e. that it is worthwhile to perform one's civic duties" (Campbell et al, 1954, p. 187).

This sense of political efficacy has a direct, positive, influence on the level of political participation, as described by Almond and Verba in their well-known *The civic culture* (1965), a cross-cultural study of individual political attitudes and behaviour in five countries (Usa, Mexico, Great Britain, Italy, France and Germany).

What attitudes sustain successful democracy? How can its features be replicated? Using surveys and interviews conducted in Britain and the United States (as examples of successful democracies) and Germany, Mexico, and Italy (as examples of developing democracies), Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba attempted to answer these questions and, by doing so, to get to the heart of democratic political culture. They argued that the most distinctive characteristic of political life in the twentieth century is the newfound political power of the ordinary citizen. The two scholars use the term "political culture" for two reasons (1963, p. 13):

- 1) First of all, in order to refer exclusively to political orientation, thus ascertaining the relations "between political and non-political attitudes and development patterns";
- 2) Secondly, with regards to the term *culture*, "because it enables to utilize the conceptual frameworks and approaches of anthropology, sociology and psychology".

Within this framework, the political culture of a nation is a “particular distribution of patterns of orientation toward political objects among the members of the nation” (1963, p. 14-15).

The theoretical scheme proposed by Almond and Verba is founded on a classification of political cultures. In particular, the two scholars distinguish between:

- *Parochial political culture*, typical of African tribal societies or the Ottoman Empire, where orientations to all specialized political objects approaches zero, no specialized political roles and the substantial absence of expectations of change of the political system;
- *Subject political culture*, with “high frequency of orientations toward a differentiated political system and toward the output aspect of the system, but with orientation toward specific input objects, and toward the self as an active participant approach zero” (*ivi*, p. 19);
- *The participant political culture*, with “members of society explicitly oriented to the system as a whole and to both the political and administrative structures and processes and oriented towards an ‘activist’ role of the self in the polity” (*ivi*, p21);

Table 2.4 Political cultures. Source: Almond and Verba, 1963 with personal modification.

	System as General Object	Input objects	Output objects	Self as Active Participant
<i>Parochial</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Subject</i>	1	0	1	0
<i>Participant</i>	1	1	1	1
<i>Cognitive or critical</i>	1	0	0	1

This framework calls in cause both the internal and external dimensions of system support and legitimacy. In particular, the dimension related to active participation is closely related to that “internal efficacy”, which has been conceived as the “individual self-perception that they are capable and competent enough to participate in political acts” (Miller and Listhaug, 1990, p. 358).

On the external side, vice versa, political efficacy denotes “the judgement that an individual and the public can have an impact on the political process because government institutions will respond to their needs” (*ibidem*). In this perspective, the concept of external efficacy is closely linked to the one of *responsiveness*, as recalled above.

Not by coincidence, as Miller and Listhaug stress, measure of external efficacy and trust are usually highly correlated, showing similar trends across time, “thus supporting the assumption that they tap the same underlying and more abstract concept, system responsiveness”. Russell Dalton writes about the consequences of eroding political support along multiple political dimension (2004, p. 159). According to the American scholar, there are five theoretical effects of different nature, each one associated to a number of consequences in terms of political behaviour.

Table 2.5 The erosion of system support. Source: Dalton, 2004

Nature of effects	Type of consequence	Examples
Evaluative	Compliance	Voluntary tax reporting Respect for the law Bribery Lower political transaction costs
Affective	Allegiance	Voluntary campaign contributions Voluntary service Expressions of national pride Willingness to work for government

Cognitive	Information heuristic	Vote for the incumbent Interpretation of politics Policy positions
Participation	Conventional political action	Turnout in elections Campaign activity Participation in political groups
	Protest	Complaints to government agencies Protest activity Membership in “challenging groups”
Institutional	Structural changes	Institution of term limits Support for institutional change

Within this framework, the sense of political efficacy appears as an indicator of the health of democratic systems, given that any political system stability depends ultimately on the trust and legitimacy conferred upon it by the citizens (Easton 1965).

2.5 Media and political trust.

The public sphere has always been a crucial arena for political dispute. In a hyper-mediated society, the printed and electronic press as well as the Internet have acquired a crucial role in setting the public debate, framing the most relevant issues and highlighting different actors on the field, to the point that some scholars talked about “*audience democracies*” (Manin, 1998) or *age of manufactured images* (Newman 1999).

The emergence of the Internet, in particular, has reinvigorated the long-standing debate about the relationship between media and democracy, with particular reference to the Internet’s ability to deepen democratic functioning

through new channels for public participation and debate (Norris, 2001, Lévy, 2004, Dader, 2001, 2003, Colombo 2013). Jay Blumler already noticed in 1987 how “*at a time when the public’s confidence in many social and political institution has steeply declined, voters have become more dependent on media resources, for impressions of what is at stake, as previous suppliers of guiding frameworks have lost their credibility*” (1987, p. 170).

In this regard, some scholars, when investigating the political consequences of the rise of knowledge societies upon civil societies detect a general strengthening of democratic participation and civic engagement. According to this approach, new media could be framed as a renewed driver of democratic quality and political mobilization, to the point that “the primary impact of knowledge societies in democratic societies will be upon facilitating cause-oriented and civic forms of political activism, thereby strengthening social movements and interest groups, more than upon conventional channels of political participation exemplified by voting” (Norris, 2004, p.2).

On the other side, many scholars have stressed the risks of the Internet in terms of *mediatization* of the public space, a process whereby “a political system to a high degree is influenced by and adjusted to the demands of the mass media in their coverage of politics” (Asp, 1986, 359). The effects of this process of mediatization could “have a structural character, since they have an impact upon the structure of the whole political system” (Sorice, 2011, p. 16). According to the *media malaise hypothesis*, in other words, the media may play a role in creating, sustaining or undermining a general sense of trust in others and in government and politics (Postman 1985; Putnam 2000; Patterson 1994; Habermas 2006).

Those *political effects*, insisting on “the working arrangements of the political system itself (Mazzoleni, 1998), could favour social isolation, ideological radicalisation and increasing disparity between citizens interested

in politics and those who are completely disconnected (the so-called *apoliticals*, following the above-mentioned Dalton's theory).

Already in 1990, Davis stresses how "news consumers prefer to read about other people, not about abstract groups or remote bureaucracies and government agencies. To cater this preferences, news stories, especially those that appears on television, are routinely framed from the point of view of central actors. News consumers see an individual in action and are given information about his or her feelings and reactions. Inevitably, stories about groups are transformed into stories about leaders" (Davis 1990, p. 169).

The (not so hidden) risk is the oversimplification of the dialogical dimension of politics. Scholars have coined the term "*soundbites effect*" to indicate "the mechanism of fragmentation and oversimplification of political speech made by the media in order to 'bend' the complexity of policy at the time of the narrative formats and media)." (Sorice, 2011, p.56).

The prevalence of these techniques, as Brian Mc Nair stresses, has opened a strong debate about the progressive, inescapable, degradation of political culture whose rise is the effective manipulation of audience through a *meta-coverage* (McNair, 131), of events (or *pseudo-events*, to use the expression Daniel Boorstin coined already in 1962).

When talking about media effects on political trust, scholars have traditionally relied on two explanatory approaches (Zmerli, Newton, Schmitt-Beck (2013): a top-down perspective, which studies the influence of institutional, systemic and cultural attitudes upon trust and a bottom-up approach, which focuses on individual psychological and social characteristics that have an effect on trust levels of citizens (Zmerli and Newton 2008; Newton and Zmerli 2011). Following a two-fold perspective, some scholars have hypothesized the presence of "rainmaker" effects (Putnam, 2000, p. 26) of media. According to this approach, the nature of the system itself, and the way in which the population of the country as a whole use the media available to them, will have an effect on individual levels of

trust independently of how those individuals use the media themselves. In this way, the formal characteristics of national media systems, especially their news media, and the aggregate characteristics of media consumption in a country will have an impact on both individual and aggregate levels of political trust and confidence in that country (Lazarsfeld and Menzel 1962).

APPENDIX

Country	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	Variation (2002-2014)
Austria	15,78	14,84	17,44				12,5	(-3,28)
Belgium	10,99	11,83	10,41	10,01	11,22	9,91	9,7	(-1,29)
Cyprus			36,95	50,65	39,15	23,04	na	(-13,91)
Denmark	10,95	9,04	11,39	10,51	9,13	8,27	9,3	(-2,68)
Finland	7,87	7,39	7,16	7,17	6,53	8,21	7,7	(-0,17)
France	9,58	9,03	9,04	8,73	7,98	9,33	9,6	(-0,02)
Germany	9,22	6,63	7,91	7,19	7,94	7,53	8,6	(-1,69)
Greece	26,68	25,70		18,47	14,76			(-11,92)
Ireland	10,70	10,74	10,86	10,68	11,88	8,61	13,5	(+2,8)
Italy	19,23	20,99				13,74		(-5,49)
Netherlands	9,50	10,19	11,41	9,89	11,86	12,21	8,5	(-1)
Norway	10,77	7,62	8,22	7,88	8,91	9,42	10,2	(-0,57)
Portugal	13,63	6,50	8,06	4,69	3,62	3,95	12,7	(-0,93)
Spain	10,29	11,38	6,83	9,55	9,39	9,78	12,6	(+2,31)
Sweden	13,67	10,18	13,56	12,77	15,02	11,37	15,7	(+2,03)
UK	8,09	8,22	9,20	8,63	9,20	8,89	11,5	(+3,41)

Table A1. Party closeness in European consolidated democracies, 2002-2004. Percentage of citizens claiming to be "very close" to any political party.. Source: ESS.

Country	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	Variation (2002-2014)
Austria	67,08	67,64	62,36				67,1	(+0,02)
Belgium	66,79	70,65	70,71	69,84	70,24	70,49	72,3	(+5,51)
Cyprus			52,83	41,67	49,63	57,60		(+4,77)
Denmark	55,05	61,45	59,36	62,45	60,81	62,14	62,3	(+7,25)
Finland	63,94	65,62	64,32	69,11	64,45	70,36	68,7	(+4,76)
France	59,80	60,17	58,38	61,65	58,60	59,48	55,3	(-4,5)
Germany	64,69	59,19	57,01	58,91	57,21	59,44	63,7	(-0,99)
Greece	63,39	66,20		66,82	64,83			(+1,44)
Ireland	53,12	50,90	48,52	54,70	60,76	58,51		(+5,38)
Italy	72,31	72,71				54,95		(-17,36)
Netherlands	80,34	75,81	78,35	77,00	79,12	76,03	76,9	(-3,44)
Norway	68,45	70,71	67,38	69,66	68,24	70,87	69,5	(-1,05)
Portugal	46,12	40,53	45,27	37,55	37,13	32,73	27,1	(-19,02)
Spain	55,49	57,40	54,49	58,01	54,56	46,51	55,1	(-0,39)
Sweden	63,67	64,11	67,35	64,81	67,05	66,21	68	(+4,33)
UK	58,64	57,76	56,94	56,96	61,33	57,36	59,1	(+0,46)

Table A2. Party closeness in Europe, 2002-2004. Percentage of citizens claiming to be "quite close" to any political party. Source: ESS.

Chapter Three.

3. Cross-national determinants of political trust and democratic responsiveness.

3.1 The economic perspective.

In analysing the trends in responsiveness and political support, recent research has turned its lens towards the output side of politics. From this view, support and legitimacy are, at a large extent, a function of the actual policy performance of the political system.

Within this framework, as Dahlberg, Linde and Holmberg stress, “government performance has been measured by indicators of different aspects of economic performance –i.e. in terms of actual economic outcomes” (2015, p. 22).

Although the role of economic factors seems to be obvious in measuring policy performance, the picture becomes more complex with reference to the broader variables of the system support. In fact, as McAllister notices (1999, p.188), “studies focusing on the role of the economy in shaping confidence in democratic institutions are comparatively rare”.

The issue becomes more relevant when analysing the European situation, with European countries severely hit by sovereign debt crisis beginning in 2008, and the implementation of tough austerity measures or programmes for structural reforms of the welfare state and labour market. This meant, in general, a huge impact of external constraints on domestic policy making and a loss of political manoeuvrability to external actors, such as EU and IMF, whose financial assistance has been explicitly made conditional to the strict implementation of their directives. All European democracies had thus to face a pressing need: coping with public expenditure reduction or reallocation, and, moreover, adapting public and private

institutions to a partially new, uncertain environment (Armingeon and Guthman, 2013).

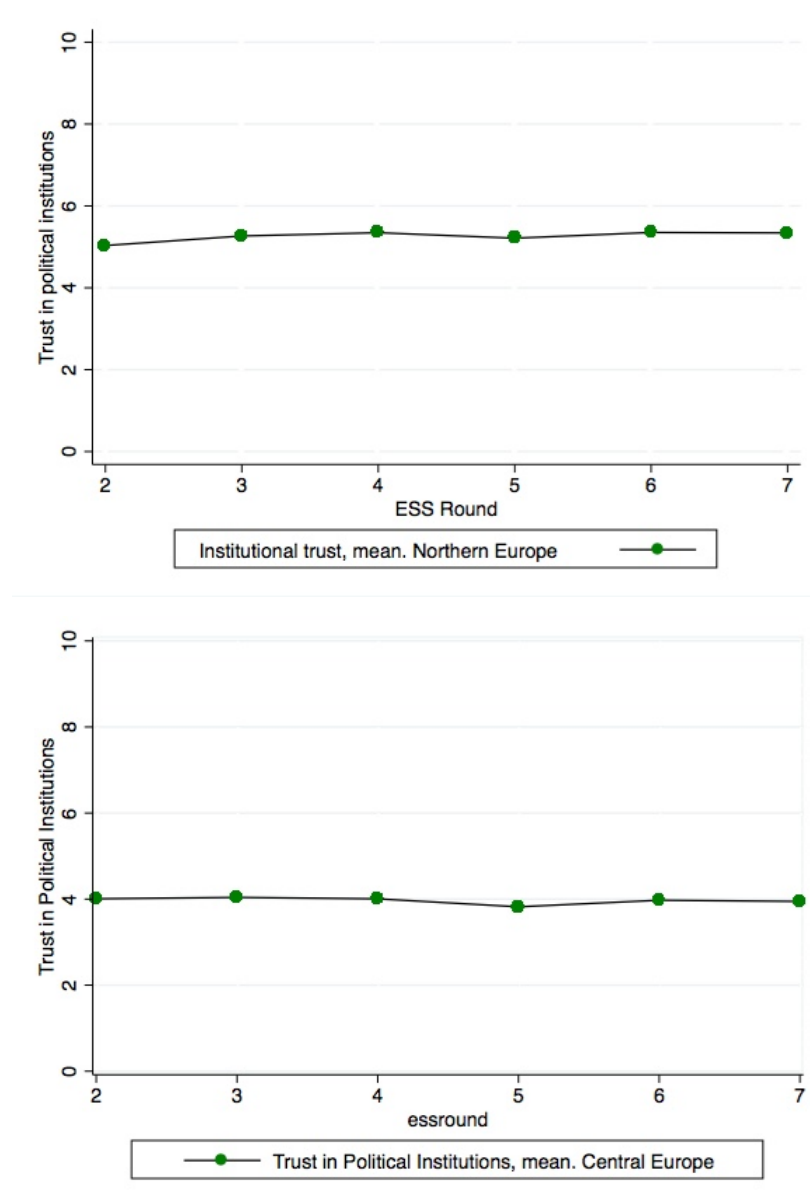
The question here is how this process has affected citizens' perception of democracy, with reference, in particular, to both electoral behaviour and support for democratic system as a whole.

In this perspective, "support for national democracy should therefore be closely related to an assessment of the living conditions in a country, as partially reflected in actual and perceived economic outcomes, both of which deteriorated considerably during the crisis" (Armingeon and Guthman, 2013, p. 427).

Economic stewardship is typically identified as a leading driver of specific political trust: when citizens are dissatisfied with economic performance, distrust in government ensues, while the reverse effect is produced when economic prosperity abounds (Listhaug 2006).

Not by coincidence, if we look at the trends of support for democratic institutions in European countries in time of the Great Recession (Figure 3.1 – Figure 3.2) we can see how the decline has not been a general phenomenon. Vice versa, as Norris has argued, longitudinal trends in political trust vary in direction and size by country without showing a general, structural decline (2011). The only exception concerns Southern European countries, such as Greece, Spain, Portugal, and Italy and – but to a lesser degree – Ireland, which was also affected by economic crisis (cfr. Torcal 2015, p. 10-12). In all these countries, "trust in impartial institutions is higher than that in representative institutions", with a "specifically 'southern European' syndrome of low confidence in political institutions" after 2008 (*ibidem*).

Figure 3.1 Trends in trust in political institutions in Europe 2004-2014 by regions (mean on a “0”, no trust at all, to “10”, complete trust, scale)



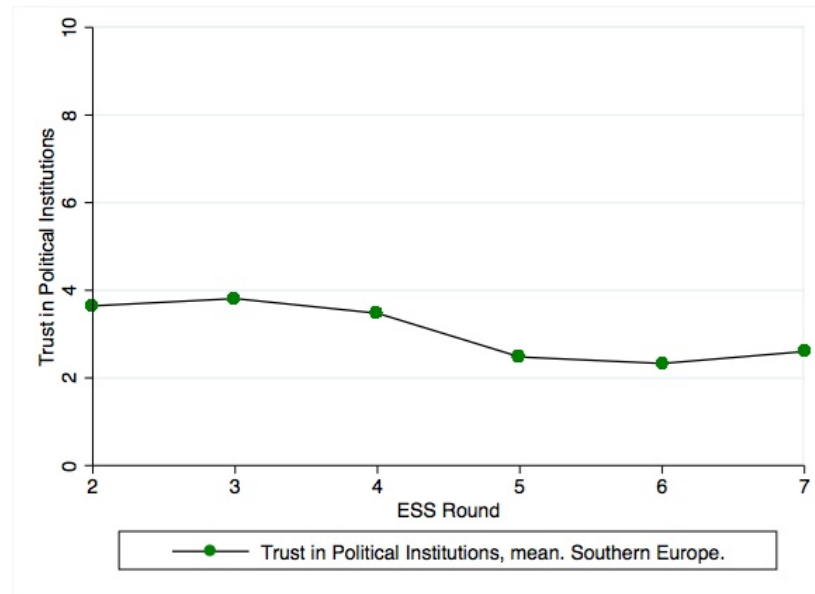
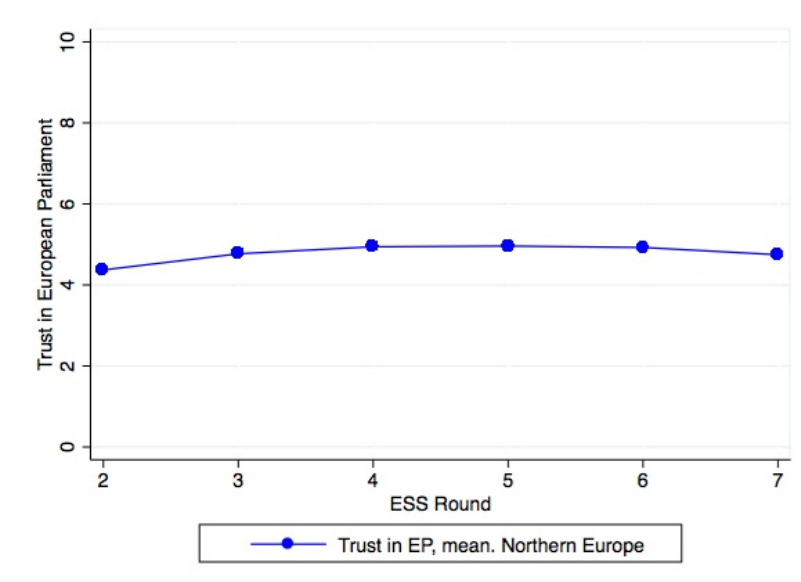
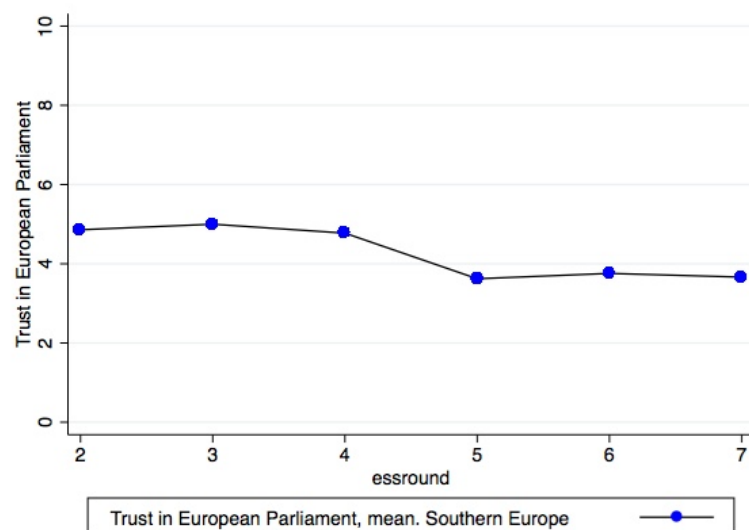
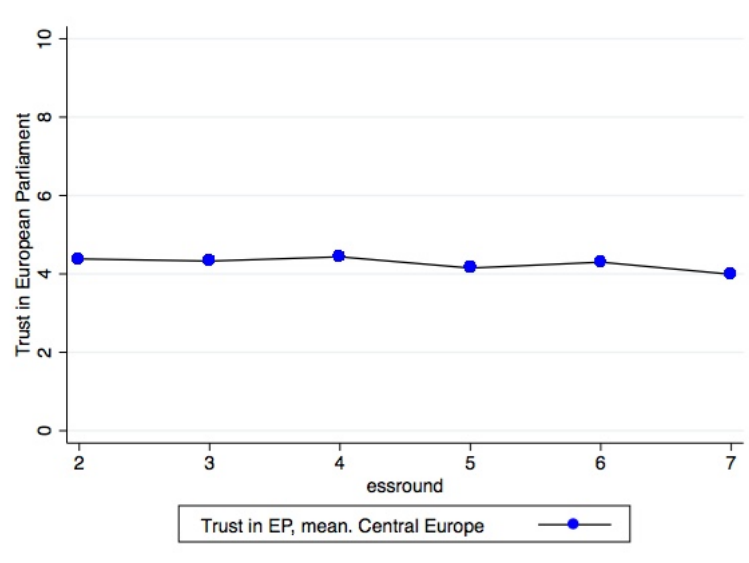


Figure 3.2 Evolution of trust in EU parliament in Europe 2004-2014 by regions (mean on a “0”, no trust at all, to “10”, complete trust, scale)





The recent decline in political trust in some countries, especially in southern Europe, as stressed by the figures above, is thus fostering a lively new debate among European scholars about whether the increasing cross-national differences in political trust can be attributed primarily to the crisis

and the subsequent austerity measures (Polavieja 2013; Van Erkel and van der Meer, 2015).

This systemic perspective acquires a greater relevance with reference to the satisfaction with the performance of democracy, which seems to be more vulnerable to structural mid-term characteristics of modern societies such as the level of well-being and economic disparity, the quality of political institutions and civil, the heterogeneous nature of the population. As demonstrated by Zmerli and Newton (2011), for example, the so-called "winners" in society, which have major economic, social and intellectual resources, are more likely to support the system which allowed them to be located on the winning side of society. Similarly, the study - already mentioned before - of Morlino and Quaranta (2014) on non-procedural determinants of democratic and economic responsiveness - shows that a number of economic variables, such as public debt, unemployment and inflation are negatively associated with levels of satisfaction with democracy. The same goes for the level of inequality - measured by the well-known Gini index -, demonstrating how the economic situation might affect the satisfaction with the political regime, since "one of the underlying principles of democracy itself is the reduction of inequality" (Morlino and Quaranta 2014, p. 351).

Additionally, these negative perceptions could also be exacerbated by the problem of citizens' increasing awareness of political corruption (Anderson and Tverdova 2003; van der Meer and Hakhverdian, 2015) and a perceived lack of fairness to all interests in society in the political process (political impartiality) (Rohrschneider 2005).

Not by coincidence, "the second factor that—according to an instrumental perspective—could affect citizens' evaluations of the way democracy works is the extent to which the rule of law is exercised in their respective polities" (Bellucci and Memoli, 2012, p.25). Citizens in countries with higher levels of corruption –or at least perceived corruption - tend to

express less confidence in the political system and less satisfaction with the way democracy works.

We are here in the realm of the *rule of law*, the first procedural dimension of analysis of *democratic quality* (Morlino 2011). Not by coincidence, “the existence and implementation of the comprehensive legislative framework to prevent and fight corruption” (Morlino, 2011, p. 198) is one of the main sub-dimension when analysing the level of rule of law. Similarly, Della Porta (2000) stresses how an inadequate responsiveness derives from a growing lack of confidence in government associated to a scanty application of law. Dahlberg, Linde and Holmberg (2015), by their part, stress how subjective representation and perception of corruption are the most important determinants of political trust in established democracies. In old democracies, in other words, there’s a high connection between the rule of law—or rather the absence of its guaranteed application—and the incapacity of governments to respond to the demands of their citizens, for whom the guarantee of law takes precedence over other needs or preferences. To the point that, the authors stress (2015, p.31), “it could be argued that in old democracies the satisfaction with democracy measure is strongly correlated with moral principles, which in David Easton’s (1975) framework is closely related to ‘diffuse support’”.

3.2 The institutional perspective.

Scholars of political culture generally agree about considering support for democracy largely conditional on both economic and political performance, with particular importance given to the system of political

representation. In this perspective, the classical claim is that proportional representation facilitates the inclusion of the relevant societal and ethnic groupings far more effectively than electoral systems based on plurality rules, thus fostering feelings of fairness of representation (Lijphart 1999). This evidence is scientifically rooted from an electoral point of view: vice versa, research about the effect of electoral systems on democratic responsiveness showed no unequivocal results.

On the one hand, Anderson and Guillory (1997), analysing Eurobarometer data, identify a positive relationship between proportional representation and satisfaction with democracy. On the other hand, using a different dataset (World Values Study), Pippa Norris (1999, p. 233) stresses that “majoritarian institutions tended to produce greater institutional confidence than consociational arrangements”. Aarts and Thomassen (2007), by their part, write that perceptions of representation are higher among people living in majoritarian systems, so that “macro-level satisfaction with democracy is primarily affected by the age of the democracy one lives in” (p. 5). More recently Dahlberg, Linde and Holmberg (2015), following this perspective, tested the impact of institutional consolidation on political support, confirming the relevance of the institutional maturity. Their analysis shows how dissatisfaction among new democracies citizens is mainly driven by evaluations of government performance and basic welfare demands, while in established democracies problems of corruption and public misconduct are the most relevant determinants, in particular as regards to political class and representative institutions in general.

Not by coincidence, a recent but consolidated trend in the study of the current decline of political trust is directly related to the actors of representations, with a particular reference to party system supply and electoral conflict (Norris, 2011). In this perspective, as Torcal stresses (2015, p. 6), it could be argued that political trust “may also be affected by an absence of a comprehensive and diverse ‘party supply’ (the political and

policy proposal by the main existing parties), so that when citizens dislike the dominant ideological content of this supply, they also tend to distrust the institutions of representation more”.

The process is progressive and can be influenced by the context, giving rise to different outcomes in different countries. As Miller and Listhaug showed (1990), alienation from regime may arise from gradual discontent which is progressively targeted at first the authorities, then the institutions, finally the political system. As the two authors demonstrated, there's a correlation between the structural features of party systems and the trends in political trust in different countries. In other words, if it's true that nowadays the development of critical citizens and the trends in dealignment are widespread phenomena in Western democracies, a second class of problems involves the existence of party-system-related differences which can determine different outcomes in political support as well as to explain the trends across time. In Miller and Listhaug's works, the degree of flexibility of party systems proved to be related to the growth of political alienation among people who were discontented with all the established parties and to the formation of protest parties which would help channel dissatisfaction back into the electoral arena. As the same scholars stressed in 1990 (p. 384), “primary importance to this concern is knowledge about how change in political attitudes at the mass level affects the structure of political institutions – or how institutional factors influence the development of political attitudes which subsequently have consequences (...) for the stability of the political regime and it's also indicative of how adaptive the system is to social change”.

The same argument can be applied to a more contemporary framework. How observed by Morlino and Piana, with reference to European democracies during the current economic crisis, - with a particular reference to the Italian case - (2014, p. 14) “the distance between civil society and political parties is growing, but at the same time, the protest parties are

permitting an institutionalisation of that dissatisfaction and are accordingly keeping unconventional participation fairly low, with violence being limited to a few circumscribed episodes”.

Chapter 4

Political disaffection and political performance: economic crisis and political trust.

The chapter analyses the dimension of political trust in European Countries in the light of the recent economic Recession.

By adopting an *instrumental rationality* approach, the work aims at investigating the individual determinants of political trust, with reference, in the first place, to the economic perspective. In particular, the chapter will firstly explore the association between discontent with political institutions and economic satisfaction. In this perspective, legitimacy is conceived as a function of policy performance and the discussion is inserted in the more general framework of the political consequences of the economic crisis, with reference to different dimensions of *democratic quality* (Morlino 2011).

Secondly, the chapter will deal with cultural determinants, according a *political mobilization* perspective. In particular, following the cognitive mobilization approach, we would expect educational level and political sophistication to be related to different patterns of system support.

The chapter is conceived as following. In the first part, we will reconstruct the debate about the role of economy upon democratic quality and support for European and national institutions.

Secondly, the work will deal with the orientations of citizens towards democracy before and after economic crisis, by identifying

individual and systemic determinants of political trust. In particular, economic stewardship, on the one hand, and cultural variables, on the other, will be taken into account.

4.1 Economic crisis and democracy. The European case.

While European Countries are still struggling with the economic and social effects of the Great Recession, started in 2008, the debate about the potential political effects of economic hardship upon democracy is still wide open. From the classical literature we know that economic crises can deeply affect democratic regimes, their institutions as well as their stability, to the point that economic wellness can be considered a primary driver of democratic stability. As Lipset wrote already in 1959, *“from Aristotle down to the present, men have argued that only in a wealthy society in which relatively few citizens lived in real poverty could a situation exist in which the mass of the population could intelligently participate in politics and could develop the self-restraint necessary to avoid succumbing to the appeals of irresponsible demagogues”* (1959, p. 75).

Not by coincidence, economic crisis facilitated the rise and affirmation of the non-democratic regimes, such as in the case of the Weimar breakdown and Hitler’s dictatorship in Germany (Evans, 2003); less radically, it has led to a process of internal reforms and new policy introduction. This is the causal mechanism that led, among the other cases, to *“the building of the public sector of the economy, such as the New Deal in the USA; the democratic integration of the northern European Socialist parties as a political consequence of the*

economic crisis in the early 1930s (...) or the development of neo-corporatist arrangements, complemented by policies of privatization and deregulation, at the end of the 1970s as a way to respond to and seek to resolve the crisis of those years” (Morlino and Quaranta, 2016, pp.618-619).

The recent economic crises, which affected the Euro-zone since 2007, spread itself from financial sphere to the social and economic ones, finally converging into a state debt crisis. In this context, the issue of the economic and political consequences of the economy upon representative democracies structure and institutions became more and more relevant, involving different dimensions of *democratic quality* (Morlino 2011).

In addition to economic research on the crisis (see, e.g. Lane, 2012), traditional political science analysis involves the impact of the crisis on elections and party competition. We are here in the realm of the *economic voting* literature, based on the hypothesis that, in times of economic turndown, citizens punish political parties in government for their bad economic performance (Lewis-Beck and Stegmeier 2000, Duch and Stevenson, 2008).

In this perspective, the economic voting theory considers economy as the main predictor of voters’ choice to punish the incumbents. As Singer recently pointed out, economic issues become dominant for voters under economic recession. This salience of the economy, far from being constant, grows up dramatically when a country is involved with instability and recession, especially for the most vulnerable citizens, personally affected by the crisis. Not by coincidence, to use Singer’s words, “the most important factor that guides the weight voters gives issues (...) is the degree to which an issue is seen as being *personally important*” (2010, p. 3). Consequently, “the degree to which the economy shapes the

behaviour of voters and their issue priorities is dependent on the political context and the characteristics of individual voters” (*ivi*, p. 20).

In this perspective, incumbent parties are punished when there is an economic crisis (see Kriesi, 2014) in majoritarian systems, where the attribution of responsibility is easier. As a matter of facts, in majoritarian systems, citizens’ preferences are translated into parliamentary seats within a small number of political parties, thus favouring the possibility to hold politicians accountable (Powell, 2000) and generate higher levels of trust.

In this chapter, we expect the recent economic crisis to have affected the political preferences of European citizens not only in terms of electoral choice and voting behaviour, but also with reference to the dimension of support for democracy. Since economic hardship limited governments’ expenditure capacity as well as their autonomy of decision in terms of policy implementation due to inter-governmental higher interconnectivity and interdependence, we expect economic crisis to have led to relevant changes in citizens’ attitudes with respect to the many facets of the democratic process (Clarke, Dutt, and Kronberg 1993; Anderson and Guillory 1997).

4.2 The winners-losers hypothesis: Economic crisis and political trust.

When dealing with the very complex relation between democratic support and the economy, most studies adopt a classical logic of reward/punishment, so that the electorate is able to reward or punish political authorities with its support as a function of personal or national economic conditions (Clarke, Mishler, and Whiteley 1990).

In this perspective, “general economic recession or a personal feeling of economic insecurity within even a stable economy results in voters paying more attention to the current state of the economy and giving retrospective considerations more weight in their political calculations” (Singer, 2011, p.20).

As Morris Fiorina already pointed out in 1981, “in order to ascertain whether the incumbents have performed poorly or well, citizens need only to calculate the changes in their own welfare” (p.5).

If it is the case of political trust and system support, the evaluation of democratic institutions can be thus influenced by overall evaluation of policy performance and personal wellbeing. In particular, citizens who have been the most affected by the economic recession are expected to show a support for democratic institutions based on personal economic grievances. The question is here how crisis-related grievances have affected citizens trust for democracy and its representative institutions and whether personal characteristics (such as political attitudes or cultural level or media exposure) mediate the effects of economic evaluation.

In this *competence* perspective, many scholars studied the relationship between countries’ performances and political trust. Cross-national studies have shown the relevance of different aspects of economic performance, such as the level of economic development (McAllister 1999) and, with reference to mature democracies, economic growth and unemployment rates (Miller and Lishtaug 1999).

Partisanship, of course, is the dimension more easily threatened by economic recession and dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy (Dalton, and Wattenberg 2000).

The issue becomes more complex when dealing with political trust, whose nature remains controversial and unclear. In general, we

know that those with the highest socio-economic status and incomes are also the most trusting in society (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002; Newton and Delhey, 2005). According to this *winner hypothesis*, “*like social trust, political trust is positively associated with happiness and life satisfaction, civic engagement, subjective health and social class, education and income, and with the financial situation of the household*” (Zmerli and Newton, 2011, p. 77).

With the economic crisis of the last years, the traditional cultural approach to political trust seems to be not sufficient to explain cross-national variations in levels of system support. That is why, more recently, many scholars have adopted an *instrumental rationality* approach in analysing trends in trust.

Instrumental rationality simply “*assumes that when the general context in which people live is positively (negatively) evaluated, citizens express their support for (criticism of) the political system*” (Memoli and Bellucci, 2012, p. 26).

Within this perspective, political trust is based on the institutional capacity to meet and represent citizens’ socio-economic claims, according a “social contract whereby government performs certain functions in exchange for popular support” (Dalton, 2004, p. 63). According to some scholars, however, it is difficult to correlate aggregate economic indicators with confidence in political institutions (Mc Allister 1999, Dalton 2004), while there would be stronger evidence when taking into consideration the individual-level relationship. In particular, personal income levels (and satisfaction with it) would be correlated to political support.

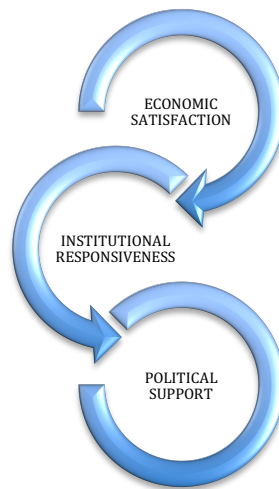


Figure 4.1 The chain of political trust

In the following paragraphs, the work will deal with an analysis of the current situation of political trust and system support in Western European Countries. The hypothesis we want to verify is whether economic personal situation has undermined citizens' support for representative institutions and if alienation from specific institutions (such as political parties) is associated with diffuse political distrust.

Secondly, the work examines the consistence of cultural determinants of critical citizenship, and namely the levels of social capital and sophistication, within an opposite perspective of political mobilization. In this framework, the chapter aims at verifying whether the economic crisis and the implementation of the austerity measures introduced since 2008 have reinforced the role of economic determinants of political trust or, vice versa, persisting cross-national differences in Europe can be still associated with cultural or attitudinal differences.

Following Dalton's perspective, we start our analysis from the individual level: "the strongest evidence of the economic performance theory might be found in individual-level relationship" since

“individuals’ economic satisfaction should be linked to their feeling of political support if economic performance is really the driving force posited by theory” (Dalton, 2004, pp. 63-64). Finally, in order to have a full picture there is another level to be considered, and namely the supra-national dimension of the crisis, which “may blur responsibility and blame attribution” (Giugni, 2014, p.12). Following Bellucci, Costa-Lobo and Lewis-Beck (2012), for instance, we know that the blaming of political actors is conditional on the perceived responsibility of the European Union; vice versa, the level of support for the European project will be directly related with the perceived responsibility in the context of the economic crisis.

In other words, if it’s true on the one hand that citizens could attribute to external actors (such as the EU) the paternity of the crisis, on the other hand citizens could address their distrust towards the internal actors, who seem to have irreparably succumbed to supra-national authorities and global politics in general.

For this reason, attitudes towards EU need to be studied in parallel to trust for representative, national institutions. Summarizing, this work starts from these main hypothesis:

- **Hypothesis1a (H1a):** The economic crisis and the implementation of austerity measures since 2008 have reinforced the role of economic and social determinants of political trust;
- **Hypothesis1b (H1b):** Vice versa, increasing political distrust may not be a result of the Great Recession and persisting cross-national differences in Europe can be attributed to cultural or attitudinal differences;

4.3 The role of EU: conditionality and intergovernmental bargaining.

The recent economic hardship re-invigorated the issue of EU involvement in member state policymaking, and, more generally, reinforced the debate about the effect of Europeanization upon internal political arenas, with particular reference to the economic integration and management. In parallel, many authors have raised the question of how to conceptualize and theorize political conditionality, in this context of accelerating globalization and more connected and intertwined markets and people (Blanchard & Ripsman, 2013), starting from a liberal-intergovernmental approach. As a matter of fact, the liberal-intergovernmental framework offers “an essential first cut in explaining the major steps toward European integration taken in euro zone crisis” (Schimmelfennig, 2015, p. 178)

In this perspective the euro area’s responses to the crisis can be explained plausibly as a result of intergovernmental bargaining based on partly converging and partly diverging member state interests and designed to strengthen the credibility of member state commitments to the common project. Within this theoretical framework, liberal intergovernmentalism conceives “European integration as a series of rational choices made by national leaders” (Moravcsik 1998, p.18) in response to international interdependence. In this way, integration is based upon three steps that translate the incentives created by international interdependence into collective institutional outcomes: “the domestic formation of national preferences, intergovernmental bargaining to substantive agreements and the creation of institutions to secure these agreements.” (Schimmelfennig, 2015, p. 178). In other

words, Europeanization, likewise globalization, is here conceived as “a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the *spatial* organization of social relations and transactions”, (see Held, McGrew et al, 1999, p. 16).

According to this approach national preferences are shaped by the economic interests of powerful domestic interest groups in a situation of international interdependence; substantive agreements reflect the constellation of national preferences and bargaining power and the design of international institutions is a function of the kind and size of cooperation problems they are supposed to manage (Schimmelfennig, 2015).

Domestic economic interests most clearly shape state preferences on the “more intense, certain, and institutionally represented and organized” issues (Moravcsik 1998, p.36), such as commercial or economic policy, thus reducing “uncertainty about cause-effect relations” between EU rules and individual welfare. Vice versa, “the weaker and more diffuse the domestic constituency behind a policy” (Wallace et al. 1999, p. 171) and the more uncertain and modest “the substantive implications of a choice’, the less predictable are national interests and the more likely ideological preferences will prevail” (Moravcsik 1998, pp. 486-9).

This mechanism influences the shaping of the playing field of politics, now increasingly determined by multilevel games played on multi-layered institutional playing field, above and across, as well as within, state boundaries (Cerny, 1997). This calls in cause the mechanism of EU conditionality, which had a particular effect in defining economic internal measures in response to the euro-zone crisis, thus reducing national government space for policy definition and accountability to their own citizens. Stokke (1995) defined political conditionality as “the use of pressure, by the donor government, in terms of threatening

to terminate aid, or actually terminating or reducing it, if conditions are not met by the recipient” (Stokke, 1995, p. 12). In the case of Eurozone crisis, in particular, we can identify a wide range of instruments deployed by the EU commission:

- *Formalized conditionality*, based on Memorandums of Understandings, (MoUS) and financial assistance, based on the European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism (EFSM), the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and the European Stability Mechanism (ESM);
- *Implicit conditionality*, based on “an implicit understanding of the stakes and sanctions, involved, underlain by some measure of power asymmetry” (Sacchi, 2015, p. 77-78).

The typology below distinguishes between positive and negative conditionality as well as between direct and indirect (implicit) instruments of conditionality.

	Positive	Negative
Direct conditionality	Pre-ratification conditionality Selectivity	Sanctioning conditionality
Indirect conditionality	Incentiving conditionality	Intensifying conditionality Oversight conditionality

Table 4.1 Types of conditionality, personal elaboration on Stokke, 1995 and Sacchi, 2015.

In the first case, conditionality has traditionally been conceived as “the placement of policy conditions on the disbursement of financial resources to national governments” (Babb and Carruthers, 2008, p. 15). This kind of measures was implemented

with the Eurozone crisis in the cases of Ireland, Greece and Portugal¹ and partially Cyprus, whose Economic Adjustment Programme was formally agreed in May 2013.

Implicit conditionality, on the other side, is based on an unwritten or informal understanding between two parties involved for the recipient nation to follow a determined policy in order to be deemed “credit-worthy” (Sacchi, 2015). Within this framework, Italy committed since 2011 to an array of structural reforms, in order to avoid explicit conditional lending programmes with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Spain, in parallel, resorted to the financial assistance programme for the recapitalisation only of financial institutions in January 2014, with a Memorandum of Understanding which included both bank-specific conditionality, in line with State aid rules, and horizontal conditionality.

¹ In particular, Greece has been receiving financial support from euro area Member States and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to cope with its financial difficulties and economic challenges since May 2010. In August 2015 a third assistance programme was launched under the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) framework.

In 7 April 2011, Portugal requested financial assistance from the EU, the euro area Member States and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). An Economic Adjustment Programme was negotiated in May 2011 between the Portuguese authorities and officials from the European Commission (EC), the European Central Bank (ECB) and the IMF.

Finally, from 2011 until the end of 2013, Ireland was provided financial help from the EU and the IM. (Source: European Commission).

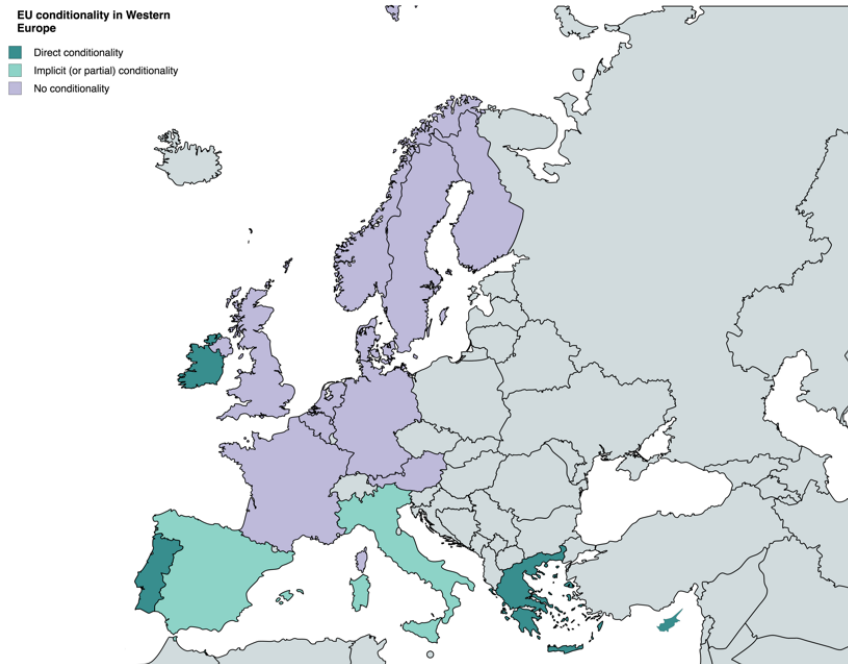


Figure 4.2 EU conditionality in Western Europe, source: European Commission

Hypothesis2a (H2a): Citizens of Countries under EU Conditionality, as “losers of economic integration”, tend to perceive internal and external institutions as unable to provide policy responses and their same legitimacy is questioned. On the other side, citizens of Countries without a plan of structural reforms under EU surveillance will be less dissatisfied with their own institutions and more confident in the role of EU parliament;

Hypothesisb (H2b): The economic divide among *Winners* and *Losers of Economic integration* (Hloušek, 2010, Bartolini 2001, 2005) is not associated with levels of trust in political institutions and cross-national trends and fluctuations in levels of dissatisfaction are not related to economic and social anxieties of the “losers”.

Summary statistics of the variables for the overall sample (N=133590)

Variable	Description/Operationalization	N	Code	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Dependent Variables							
trstprl	Trust in Parliament. Source: European Social Survey.	132918	0-10	4.737274	2.474776	0	10
trstplt	Trust in Politicians. Source: European Social Survey.	133590	0-10	3.785508	2.33783	0	10
trstprt	Trust in Political Parties. Source: European Social Survey.	133590	0-10	3.806318	2.312349	0	10
trstep	Trust in European Parliament. Source: European Social Survey.	133590	0-10	4.44549	2.371441	0	10
index of Trust in Rep. Inst.	Trust in Representative Institutions ² . Source: European Social Survey.	132918	0-10	4.173468	2.067811	0	10
Individual Level Independent Variables							
polintr	Level of Political Interest. Source: European Social Survey.	133590	1-4	2.51301	.9056208	1	4
clsprt	Level of Closeness To a Party. Source: European Social Survey.	133590	1-2	1.454405	.4979186	1	2
stfec	Satisfaction with Economy. Source: European Social Survey.	133590	0-10	4.666427	2.526103	0	10
gnr	Gender.	133590	1-2	1.509335	.4999147	1	2
agea	Age.	133590	18-85	47.74656	17.02387	18	85
edulv	Educational level.	133590	0-6	3.16079	1.419708	0	6
Country-Level Independent Variables							
gini	Gini Index, cumulative percentages of total income received against the cumulative number of recipients. Source: OECD.	128993	0-100	9.905003	6.081335	1	26
eu_cond	Formal conditionality to EU. Source: OECD.	126657	0-1	.0831774	.2761513	0	1

² Parliament, Politicians, Political Parties

surplus	General government net lending as a percentage of GDP. Source: OECD.	125694	-	-	3.436357	5.276931	-	32.3	6.8
cpi	Perceived corruption Index. Source: Transparency International.	133590	0-10	7.59884	1.31147	3.5	9.6		
stability	Government stability, number of years without a change in government. Source:	133590	2.631-100.	73.0097	31.43027	1.08	100		
Gdp Growth	Gdp per capita Growth. Source: OECD	128445	-	.9552647	2.14431	-5.6	5.09		

Table 4.2 Summary statistics for the overall sample, Source: ESS 2004-2012 integrated dataset, ESS 2014.

4.4 Data, methods and variables

The individual-level analysis is based on data provided by the European Social Survey (ESS Integrated dataset, 2002-2012, plus ESS 2014). The ESS is a biennial cross-national survey of attitudes and behaviour established in 2001 and conducted by both academics and social research professionals. ESS questionnaire consists of a collection of questions with a core common section and a series of rotating sections. The core section (also known as the “core module”) focuses on a range of different themes that are largely the same in each round and are related to media and social trust, politics, subjective well-being, gender, household, socio demographics, human values, immigration, citizen involvement, health and care, economic morality, family, work and well-being, timing of life, personal and social well-being, welfare attitudes, ageism, justice, democracy, health inequalities, climate change and energy use. The rotating sections (or “rotating modules”) are dedicated to specific themes, which are sometimes repeated in later rounds of the ESS. 2012 rotating module, for instance, was specifically dedicated to democracy, with a double

perspective: on the one hand, in fact, the survey investigated people's beliefs, understandings and expectations about a democratic regime. Secondly, the module wanted to investigate how people evaluated their own democracies, in terms of performance and responsiveness. For what concerns the core modules, from 2002 till 2016, 36 countries altogether have participated in the first seven rounds of the ESS: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

Specifically, we do take into account, for the purpose of our research, Western European Countries and specifically:

- Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, Netherlands, Ireland and United Kingdom, for Central Europe;
- Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, for Northern Europe;
- Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain, for Southern Europe.

It has to be specified that certain Countries did not take part into every survey. In particular, we miss data from: Austria (missing in 2012), Cyprus (missing in 2002, 2004 and 2014), Greece (not available in 2006, 2012 and 2014) and Italy (which did not take part in the survey in 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2014). However, following similar studies, we think missing data will not affect the possibility of conducting a cross-national and cross-temporal analysis (Torcal 2015, Memoli and Bellucci, 2012). The entire sample was composed by n. 133590 observations. In parallel, the models take into account country-level, measurements, as specified in the following paragraphs as well as in the Appendix to this chapter.

Operationalisation of Dependent Variable: Political Trust.

To test our argument, in the analysis of ‘political responsiveness’ and political trust we employ two different measures:

1) The first measure is an index of the confidence levels of respondents in their countries’ **political institutions**. As previous research show, in fact, the political trust scale in most survey is strongly one-dimensional (Hooghe and Zmerli, 2014, p.4). This means that the judgments made on the individual trust scale are not necessarily based on the actual performance of individual institutions, but “rather reflect a kind of general assessment of the prevailing political culture within a country” (*ibidem*). Following the consolidated methodology, we use standard indicators that are usually present in survey research to enquire about the level of confidence in three political institutions: trust in **political parties, government and parliament**. Given that the three items are highly correlated, we summarise them into one index using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). This analysis should demonstrate how the traditional objects of political trust, measured in population surveys, are loaded on a single dimension and that this one-dimensional conceptualisation of political trust holds for all the considered countries. More in particular, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) “explores the variation and co-variation among the trust judgements of the different political institutions and identifies the number and nature of latent variable(s) that account for this variation” (Brown 2006, cit in Marien 2014, p. 17). In this way, the

different items (such as, in our case, trust in political parties, in government and in parliament) should be loaded on one latent factor, which can be named “trust in political institutions”;

Figure 4.3 shows the result of a structural equation model, typically used for performing confirmatory one factor analysis. This kind of models posit one or more unobserved, factor-like latent variables that cause variation in observed variables. In the table above, we can notice how the three indicators taken into account, and namely trust in parliament, trust in politicians and trust in political parties are highly correlated and can be loaded on a single dimension. This output gives us standardized factor loading values for each of the three observed variables as well as their standard errors. The hypothesis of a common latent variable is accredited, thus consenting to postulate a common, dependent variable, that we called Trust in Political Institutions. In order to test whether the model provides a good description of data, we run some tests. On one hand, it is true that χ^2 is the typical goodness-of-fit measure. On the other, the large size of the dataset make it difficult to rely to such indicator: as it is known, in fact, it usually rejects large N models (Hooghe and Zmerli, 2011, p. 17).

So we associate the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Since not all the variables were included in the first wave of Survey (2002), we decided to take into account all the waves between 2004 and 2014):

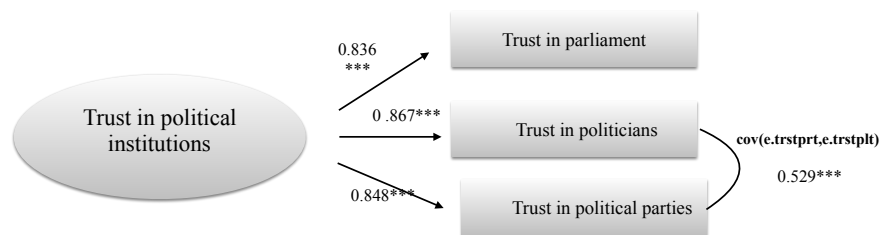


Figure 4.3 SEM of factor-like latent variable: Trust in Political Institutions, Source: ESS 2004-2012 integrated dataset, plus 2014

Notes: Unstandardized factor loadings resulting from a CFA with test for metric equivalence (the factor loadings are constrained to be equal across the countries). Fit indices: $\chi^2 = 703.34$, RMSEA= 0.074 CFI= 0.998 N= 127831

2) The second measure is about the **confidence in the EU**. As one of the hypothesis is related to the blame-shifting mechanism and the conditionality effect of economic measures imposed by external institutions, we want to test here how the economic crisis as affected the trust in the European Union as supra-national institution. In this perspective, the only measurement we can take from the ESS is Trust in the European Parliament. It's a standard indicator, whose values range from 0 (no trust) to 10 (complete trust).

Independent Variables

Previous research has stressed how higher socio-economic status and incomes are often associated with higher levels of social and general trust. In particular, following the so-called “rainmaker hypothesis” (Newton and Norris, 2000, Putnam 2000), the so-called winners in society are more trusting because they are typically surrounded by trustworthy people who are themselves trusting.

Following this perspective, we would adopt, at individual level, the following variables:

- **Socio-economic status-related factors**, such as *Satisfaction with national economy*. As Newton (2007) notices, among the others, “winners in society” have more reasons to trust the system that rewards them so generously.

- **Political variables**, and namely: *Party closeness* (as an indirect indicator of legitimacy of the entire system, cfr Panebianco 1980); Plus, political trust is often associated with identification with the party in government and with political interest and knowledge (Newton 2001, Zmerli and Newton 2014). As literature has shown, in fact, the most highly educated in society are generally the most trusting (Putnam 2000, Dalton 2007).

That is why we need to take into account the role of *Cognitive mobilization* (with variables taken individually and not aggregated as an index as in Dalton 2004, 2011):

- a) The **educational level** is expressed by the following question:
*What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?*³
- b) The level of **political interest**, conceived as the “degree to which politics arouses a citizen’s curiosity” (van Deth 1990: 278) and the “attentiveness to politics” (Zaller 1992, p. 18), as well as the potential readiness to participate.

In the end, the model takes into account traditional control variables such as age, gender, religiosity etc.

Systemic (country-level:)

At country-level, we selected the independent variables according to our review of the literature and hypotheses. In particular, we included in the analysis some **macro-economic indicators**⁴ and specifically:

- **GDP per Capita Growth**, normally used in comparative analysis, since it shows the relative performance of the countries in a span of time.
- **Gini Index**, commonly used to indicate the level of inequality of a Country in comparative analysis.
- **Government deficit/surplus as a percentage of GDP**, measured as the difference between government receipts and government spending in a single year.

In parallel, the model uses **Political indicators**, such as

³ The respondent’s educational level is coded according to a five-level ladder:

1	Less than lower secondary education (ISCED 0-1)
2	Lower secondary education completed (ISCED 2)
3	Upper secondary education completed (ISCED 3)
4	Post-secondary non-tertiary education completed (ISCED 4)
5	Tertiary education completed (ISCED 5-6)

⁴ For full analysis of systemic indicators and their trends see Appendix to this Chapter.

- **The Stability of Government**, which measures the number of days that the government was stable as a share of the remaining possible period.
- **The Perception of Corruption Index**, based on expert multiple surveys per Country and measured by Transparency International.
- **EU Conditionality**, that measures the implementation of direct programs of economic reform under EU conditionality⁵.

Those variables provide a general overview about some of the general economic and political characteristics of each country. In particular, we would expect that a high degree of instability and economic dissatisfaction would be accompanied by a decrease of party membership in mature democracies on the one hand and to lower levels of political trust on the other one.

On the other hand, the hypothesis is that the implementation of direct programs of economic reform under EU conditionality will be associated to major discontent about national and supranational political institutions, while citizens without an explicit reform program will be more satisfied about the functioning and the policies provided by their representative institutions.

⁵ In order to measure EU Conditionality a dummy variable was introduced. Both direct and implicit conditionality were codified “1”, no conditionality “0”.

Methods

In order to investigate the individual and systemic determinants of political trust in Europe we propose a hierarchical linear regression model, and specifically a random-intercept model. This model is typically used to study data with a group structure. The group structure is defined by the presence of micro observations embedded within contexts (macro observations), and specification at both of these levels. This kind of random-intercept model is appropriate when testing macro–micro hypotheses of the kind investigated in this study (Hox and Roberts 2011).

In our case, we have individuals (micro) at the first level (N: 133590), nested into countries (N: 16), nested into country-waves (N: 96). The same regressors are used in each context, but the micro regression coefficients are free to vary over contexts. At the second level, the micro coefficients are treated as functions of macro regressors. Taking into account the clustered nature of the data (clustering by country), multilevel analysis allows for a more accurate estimation of the standard errors. All independent variables are centred on the grand mean for the multilevel analyses.

4.5 Analysis

- Trust in national political institutions

As specified above, we employ multilevel analysis, as it combines individual - and country - level characteristics. In particular, we first establish a base-line three-level model of trust in political institutions (with no determinants) in order to verify variance estimates (Model 1). Then, in order to test for the EU conditionality effects we run a first model using just country-level variables as determinants of trust in political institutions (Parliament, Politicians, Political Parties) with traditional control variables at the individual-level: age, gender, educational level, religiosity. As we can see from the table, citizens from countries under no conditionality program are more trustful in national political institutions. We thus confirm the hypothesis that in those countries economic wellbeing is a traditional driver of system support, as it increases accountability and reliability of political institutions. This assumption seems to be confirmed by the fact that countries with best performances in terms of government deficit as a percentage of GDP have citizens more trustful and satisfied with their representative organs.

Model 3 includes cultural and economic individual-level determinants of political trust with no interaction terms. The aim of this model is twofold: on the one hand, we want to verify the role of citizens' subjective assessment of economic performance (perception of *competence*, or rather evaluations of the performance of political and economic institutions). On the other hand, the model would test for relevance of cultural and political variables, with particular reference to the cognitive mobilization index, as theorized by Dalton (1984, 2007). In order to test for each determinant, we took into account

single variables without recurring to the additive index used by Dalton. In particular, the role of party closeness is investigated, in parallel with the educational level and political interest. The results show how those more interested in politics are more likely to be supportive of political institutions, as well as citizens with lower levels of religiosity. With reference to party closeness, we can see how citizens closer to political parties are also more trustful of parties as institutions themselves, thus confirming previous research on the subject (Hooghe and Kern 2013, Hooghe 2015). The same applies to people with higher levels of education, thus reinforcing the theory according to which individual determinants of political trust are a combination of subjective evaluation of personal, economic wellbeing and cognitive mobilization.

In order to investigate whether evaluation of political institutions is determined by individual and systemic characteristic and also to explain the relationship between systemic factors and individual ones, models 4 and 5 introduce cross-level interactions. In particular, we test for interaction between personal perception of economic satisfaction – which proved its relevance at individual level in model 3 - with the presence of EU conditionality and with level of surplus in government expenditure. Finally, we test the interaction among our economic variables (at individual level, satisfaction with economy, at country level, EU conditionality and Government deficit/surplus) in order to test the impact of economic crisis upon individual perception of wellbeing and trust in political institutions.

The results seem to confirm our hypothesis: the presence of programs of economic conditionality driven by EU institutions contribute to the mitigation of the role of individual determinants of economic wellbeing. Vice versa, in countries free from EU conditionality and with higher performances on public expenditures and lower deficits,

economic perception is reinforced and a stronger predictor of system support. Finally, models 5 and 6 test for the role of political mobilization variables in their relationship with EU conditionality and public expenditure. The two models show how higher levels of political involvement are associated with greater support, while the interactions between closeness to party and the systemic variable isn't statistically relevant. If we compare this result with the coefficient provided by model 3 we can stress the individual relevance of political engagement, independently from the economic condition of the country (e.g. being under explicit conditionality or not, having higher or lower levels of government deficit/surplus).

Finally, we want to test direct effect of economic crisis with another indicator, directly related to the impact of economic hardship independently from the implementation of austerity measures and from the role of EU conditionality. A consolidated way focuses on the economic shifts of the post-2008 period. In other words, in order to assess the effects of this current economic crisis, a dummy variable for "Euro crisis" organising ESS Rounds is included, with all the survey from 2008 = 1, while Rounds before coded as 0. In particular, Rounds 2-3-4 (before 2008) were coded as "before crisis", 5-6-7 as "after crisis" and we tested the interaction terms of economic satisfaction and political sophistication with the EU crisis. The results given by model 7 and 8 suggest that the economic crisis had a role in exacerbating the role that evaluative indicators (such as economic evaluation) excerpt upon trust in representative institutions. Conversely, cultural and political determinants, although relevant, seem to have a minor role in time of economic hardship in predicting patterns of support for actors of representation.

- Trust in European Institutions.

As specified above, to test the determinants of trust in European institutions we employed the measure of “trust in European Parliament” from the ESS integrated dataset (2004-2014).

As in Model 1 above, we first established a base-line three-level model of trust in EP (with no determinants) in order to verify variance estimates (Model 1b).

In the second model (2b), we tested the relationship of the EU conditionality effects, by running a model with country-level variables as determinants of trust in EP with individual classical control variables: age, gender, educational level, religiosity. The results show analogous trends to trust in national political institutions: as a matter of fact, citizens from countries under no explicit conditionality program are more trustful of European Parliament’s role and legitimacy. Again, the consistency of economic determinants seems to be confirmed by the fact that countries with the best performances in terms of government deficit as a percentage of GDP have citizens more trustful and satisfied with European organs. We run model 3b in order to test the direct effect of cultural and economic individual level determinants of trust in EP. The results seem to confirm the trends already emerged for trust in national institutions: in particular, subjective assessment of economic performance (perception of *competence*, or rather evaluations of the performance of economic institutions) turns out to be a strong predictor of trust in EP. Furthermore, with reference to the cognitive mobilization index, as theorized by Dalton (1984, 2007), we can see how, once more, citizens with higher political sophistication (thus more interested in

politics⁶ and more likely to be supportive of political institutions) are associated with higher level of trust in EP. On the contrary, religiosity is again inversely related to trust in European institutions. Trends in party closeness seem to confirm already quoted research strand on the theme: we can see how that people closer to political parties and with higher levels of education are also more trustful of parties as institutions themselves. For these citizens, in other words, partisanship provides a mechanism for identification and legitimation of the entire political system (Panebianco, 1988). Again, the very complex nature of political trust relies on a combination of subjective evaluation of personal, economic wellbeing and cognitive mobilization.

Models 4b introduces cross-level interactions, respectively between personal perception of economic satisfaction with the presence of EU conditionality and with the the advent of the financial crisis of 2008 in order to test the impact of economic crisis upon individual perception of wellbeing and trust in EP and more in general EU institutions.

The results seem to confirm, in particular, the relevance of the programs of economic conditionality driven by EU institutions: in countries under structural reform programs the role of individual determinants of economic wellbeing turns out to be stronger. The last models, 5b and 6b, test for the role of political mobilization variables in their relationship with EU conditionality and public expenditure. If we look at the results we can see that, as in the case of national institutions, on the one hand higher levels of political sophistication are associated with stronger trust. On the other one, nevertheless, the interactions between partisanship and the systemic variable aren't statistically relevant. Again, a quick comparison between models 5b

⁶ As we have seen above, negative coefficients on political interest are due to the codification of the indicator in the ESS, that is codified 0-1 more interested, 2-3 low or no interest.

and 6b and model 3b offers an argument in favour of modernization theories, with both political engagement and cognitive mobilization relevant independently from temporary poor economic performance of a country.

Table 4.3 MULTILEVEL LINEAR MODELS OF TRUST IN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN EUROPEAN CONSOLIDATED DEMOCRACIES

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
<i>Individual variables</i>				
Party closeness			0.264*** (0.013)	
Interest in politics		-0.546*** (0.006)	-0.299*** (0.007)	-0.482*** (0.006)
Satisfaction with economy			0.338*** (0.003)	0.384*** (0.003)
Religiosity		-0.420*** (0.012)	-0.216*** (0.013)	-0.291*** (0.011)
<i>Control variables</i>				
Gender (male)		-0.026*** (0.012)	0.273*** (0.012)	-0.118*** (0.010)
Age		-0.005*** (0.000)	-0.016*** (0.000)	-0.004*** (0.000)
Education			0.072*** (0.005)	
<i>Country-level variables</i>				
Gdp growth			-0.013* (0.006)	-0.038*** (0.005)
EU Conditionality		-0.671*** (0.053)		-0.013 (0.121)
Government deficit/surplus		0.024*** (0.002)		0.007** (0.002)

<i>Interaction terms</i>				
stfeco x eu_cond				-0.094*** (0.026)
stfeco x surplus				-0.005*** (0.000)
eu_cond x surplus				0.068*** (0.015)
stfeco x eu_cond x surplus				-0.017*** (0.004)
(Intercept)	4.305*** (0.215)	6.485*** (0.193)	3.688*** (0.122)	4.233*** (0.139)
Var(~1 cntry)	0.491	0.486	0.329	0.353
Var(~essround cntry)	0.091	0.062	0.039	0.032
Var(~1 essround)	0.010	0.004	0.015	0.016
Var (Residual)	3.828	3.601	2.909	2.943
-log likelihood	-267300.3	-247975.9	-249773.3	235845.0
Observations	133590	133590	133590	133590
Number of waves	6	6	6	6
Number of countries	16	16	16	16
Number of country-waves	96	96	96	96
Unstandardized coefficients, standard error in parenthesis * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01				

Table 4.4 MULTILEVEL LINEAR MODELS OF TRUST IN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN EUROPEAN CONSOLIDATED DEMOCRACIES

	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
<i>Individual variables</i>				
Party closeness	0.434*** (0.014)			0.377*** (0.034)
Interest in politics	-0.480*** (0.007)	-0.511*** (0.007)	-0.4.82*** (0.006)	-0.509*** (0.006)
Satisfaction with economy			0.405*** (0.015)	
Religiosity	-0.398*** (0.012)	-0.422*** (0.012)	- 0.277*** (0.011)	-0.404*** (0.012)
<i>Control variables</i>				
Gender (male)	-0.036** (0.011)	-0.017 ** (0.011)	-0.127** (0.010)	-0.020 (0.011)
Age	-0.006*** (0.000)	- 0.003*** (0.000)	-0.004*** (0.000)	-0.003*** (0.000)
Education		0.105*** (0.005)		0.134*** (0.006)
<i>Country-level variables</i>				
Gdp growth	0.061*** (0.006)	0.069*** (0.006)	- 0.045*** (0.005)	0.075*** (0.005)
EU Conditionality (dummy)	-0.174 (0.118)	-0.010 (0.161)		-0.111 (0.060)
Government deficit/surplus	0.011*** (0.002)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.018 (0.006)	
Economic crisis (dummy)			0.340** (0.118)	0.548*** (0.137)

INTERACTION TERMS				
clsprty x eu_cond	0.019 (0.130)		-	
clsprty x surplus	0.001 (0.002)			
eu_cond x surplus	0.063*** (0.014)	0.062** (0.021)		
clsprty x eu_cond x surplus	-0.005 (0.019)			
edulvla x eu_cond		-0.042 (0.042)		-0.104*** (0.014)
edulvla x surplus		0.005*** (0.001)		
edulvla x eu_cond x surplus		0.001 (0.006)		
stfecox d_crisis			-0.026*** (0.005)	
stfecox eu_cond			0.024** (0.009)	
edulvla x d_crisis				-0.070*** (0.008)
(Intercept)	5.942*** (0.202)	5.802*** (0.206)	3.979*** (0.152)	5.387*** (0.238)
Var(~1 cntry)	0.434	0.473	0.386	0.150
Var(~essround cntry)	0.036	0.037	0.032	0.038
Var(~1 essround)	0.019	0.022	0.007	0.010
Var (Residual)	3.555	3.583	2.936	3.551
-log likelihood	-247221.2	-247692.9	-250367.0	-262523.9
Observations	133590	133590	133590	133590
Number of waves	6	6	6	6

Number of countries	16	16	16	16
Number of country-waves	96	96	96	96
Unstandardized coefficients, standard error in parenthesis * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01				

Table 4.5 MULTILEVEL LINEAR MODELS OF TRUST IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN EUROPEAN CONSOLIDATED DEMOCRACIES

	Model 1b	Model 2b	Model 3b	Model 4b
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Individual variables				
Party closeness			0.264*** (0.013)	
Interest in politics		-0.435*** (0.006)	-0.299*** (0.007)	-0.338*** (0.007)
Satisfaction with economy			0.338*** (0.003)	0.358*** (0.004)
Religiosity		-0.355*** (0.014)	-0.216*** (0.013)	-0.228*** (0.013)
Control variables				
Gender (male)		-0.190* (0.013)	-0.273*** (0.012)	-0.266*** (0.012)
Age		-0.017*** (0.000)	-0.016*** (0.000)	-0.015*** (0.000)
Education		0.364*** (0.010)		0.074*** (0.005)
Country-level variables				
Gdp growth			-0.013* (0.006)	-0.013* (0.005)
EU Conditionality (dummy)		-0.443*** (0.062)		-0.236 (0.121)

Government deficit/surplus		0.033*** (0.002)		
Economic crisis (dummy)		0.237 (0.177)		0.488* (0.207)
Interaction terms				
stfeco x eu_cond				0.039*** (0.011)
stfeco x d_crisis				- 0.042*** (0.006)
(Intercept)	4.500*** (0.155)	6.928*** (0.189)	4.412*** (0.167)	4.404*** (0.195)
Var(~1 cntry)	1.553	1.013	1.010	0.282
Var(~essround cntry)	0.086	0.065	0.042	0.038
Var(~1 essround)	0.022	0.017	0.047	0.037
Var (Residual)	5.202	5.042	4.482	4.493
-log likelihood	-288262.0	-269555.7	-278726.8	-278895.8
Observations	133590	133590	133590	133590
Number of waves	6	6	6	6
Number of countries	16	16	16	16
Number of country-waves	96	96	96	96
Unstandardized coefficients, standard error in parenthesis * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01				

Table 4.6 MULTILEVEL LINEAR MODELS PREDICTING TRUST IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN EUROPEAN CONSOLIDATED DEMOCRACIES

	Model 5b	Model 6b
	b/se	b/se
<i>Individual variables</i>		
Party closeness	0.284*** (0.022)	
Interest in politics	-0.366*** (0.011)	-0.389*** (0.008)
Satisfaction with economy		
Religiosity	-0.333*** (0.020)	-0.359*** (0.014)
<i>Control variables</i>		
Gender (male)	-0.174** (0.018)	-0.178*** (0.011)
Age	-0.016*** (0.001)	- 0.015*** (0.000)
Education		0.123*** (0.006)
<i>Country-level variables</i>		
Gdp growth	-0.014 (0.014)	0.084*** (0.007)
EU Conditionality (dummy)	-0.174 (0.118)	-0.514** (0.189)
Government deficit/surplus	0.011*** (0.002)	0.020*** (0.004)
Economic crisis (dummy)		
INTERACTION TERMS		
clsprty x eu_cond		
clsprty x surplus	-0.012* (0.005)	

eu_cond x surplus		-0.031 (0.001)
clsprty x eu_cond x surplus		
edulvla x eu_cond		0.080 (0.050)
edulvla x surplus		0.001 (0.001)
edulvla x eu_cond x surplus		0.016* (0.007)
stfeco x d_crisis		
stfeco x eu_cond		
edulvla x d_crisis		
(Intercept)	6.833*** (0.154)	6.362*** (0.171)
Var(~1 cntry)	0.529	0.917
Var(~essround cntry)	0.035	0.038
Var(~1 essround)	0.000	0.047
Var (Residual)	4.896	5.017
-log likelihood	-134300.5	-269276.9
Observations	133590	133590
Number of waves	6	6
Number of countries	16	16
Number of country-waves	96	96
Unstandardized coefficients, standard error in parenthesis * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01		

4.6 Conclusion

The chapter explores the determinants of support for representative institutions - national parliament, political class and political parties on the one hand and European Parliament on the other one - in the decade 2004-2014 and at the light of EU financial crisis. In particular, looking at trends in EU western democracies, the results show differentiated patterns in terms of support, with more stable measurements in Northern Countries and more instability in Southern European Countries. In this subgroup of nations, a lower level of political support is associated with explicit or implicit conditionality to EU programs and lower GDP levels. In this countries, not by coincidence, the rise of critical citizens is often deeply intertwined with a transitional phase, characterised by de-structuration of previous party systems, the economic crisis and by the emergence on new forms of parties. More in general, in all the countries considered economic satisfaction has been confirmed as a powerful predictor of political trust, and different trends in support seem to reinforce the hypothesized cleavage between winners and losers of economic integration (in Kriesi 2006, Kriesi and Pappas 2015), as a result of the processes of increasing economic, cultural and political competition at EU level as well as internally.

In this way, Southern European citizens seem to be more sensitive to the economic hardship and individual evaluation of personal well-being has constituted a strong predictor of disillusionment and distrust. On the other hand, individual cultural determinants confirmed their relevance, independently from the implementation of EU

economic conditionality plans. The relevance of political individual features reinforces the cultural hypothesis: in contrast with Dalton's theorization, citizens with higher levels of sophistication and party closeness tend to show higher support for the democratic system they live in as well as for their internal and external institutions. Nevertheless, actors of representation showed poorer performance with the deepening of the EU crisis and the emergence of the so-called *critical citizens* can be considered a result of this *democratic deficit* which needs to be investigated in its political consequences.

On the one hand, in fact, we know in fact that the basic general principles of liberal democracy – voluntarily excluded from the analysis conducted in this chapter - are less likely to be affected by temporary economic and political crisis (Norris 2011). On the other hand, nevertheless, all the recent research show how citizens' evaluation of democracy is endogenous to the political process. This endogeneity is more evident with reference to the performance of democratic regimes, to the point that "poor democratic performance not only increases the dissatisfaction with democracy, but at the same time it also raises the citizens' attention to the principles of democracy" (Ferrin and Morlino, 2016, p. 310). In other words, evaluations and general expectations about democracy are linked by a biunivocal relationship and the levels of satisfaction with democracy rely on a sets of multi-level factors, from higher expectations and general conception of democracy to the day-by-day assessment of political and economic performance. Since the relatively short time-period as well as the limited geographical area do not consent for wider generalization, further directions of this analysis should be directed to the impact of critical citizenship upon political behaviour at both national and EU level.

In this perspective, the economic cleavage could have been effective in re-shaping the landscape of European party systems, giving rise to intense social unrest, and leading to the affirmation of political extremism on both the right and the left side of political spectrum, which meant – in some cases, such as in Greece, – the collapse of the entire party system.

The development of diffuse anti-systemic stances constituted the rhetorical basis on which outsider populist movements succeed in the political arena, by transposing at European level renewed anti-establishment feelings. In this way, political and economic issues seem to mix, in the name of the war against “the dictatorship of parliamentarism” (Ellinas 2013, p. 8) driven by EU institutions. The Eurozone sovereign debt crisis, in other words, could have further widened the existing *democratic deficit* (Weiler *et al.*, 1995, Majone 1998, Moravcsik 2002) in the European Union and translated the anti-European sentiment into real party platforms, especially in those countries most affected by the crisis. This mechanism lead to a multi-directional movement, which made populism and Euro-scepticism rebound magnificently on both the left and the side of the political spectrum. In this way, “with the populist constituency having dispensed with its old loyalties and already up for grabs, new parties took advantage of the situation by both revamping the discursive-symbolic groundwork laid by populism’s early pioneers and arousing the biased beliefs it had created in society (Pappas, Aslanidis, 2015, pp. 181-182)”.

APPENDIX.

Some economic and political indicators of the crisis: an overview.

GDP per Capita Growth

As it is well known, the Gross Domestic Product⁷ is one of the primary indicators of a country's economic performance. With reference to our research, we took into account the measure of real GDP per Capita Growth⁸, calculated as the ratio of real GDP to the average population of a specific year.

As we can see from the following table, all European Countries experienced a downward trend in the 2008-2009 period, with different trend in the previous years and in the more recent period. In particular, with reference to Southern European Countries, Greece experienced the most dramatic decline, with its apex in 2011, and the lower increase of the area from 2012 onwards. In all the other countries in the area, however, the GDP declined drastically in the period 2008-2009, with minor fluctuations and different lowest point (for instance, Italy reached it in 2013, after the establishment of a technocratic government and the implementation of tough austerity measures based on implicit conditionality program).

⁷ It is calculated by either adding up the annual incomes of all working-age citizens or by totalling the value of all final goods and services produced in the country during the year.

⁸ It is often used as an indicator of how well off a country is, since it is a measure of average real income in that country. However, it is not a complete measure of economic welfare, since it couldn't capture most unpaid household or clandestine work, nor the negative effects of economic activity, such as environmental degradation.

Source: World Bank national accounts data and OECD National Accounts data files.



Figure A1: GDP per Capita Growth 2002 - 2015, Southern European Countries, (Annual %)

In Central European Countries, GDP generally declined during the period 2008-2009, and slightly increased in the following years with physiological fluctuations, with the exception of Ireland, under explicit conditionality, which successfully completed the EU-IMF financial assistance programme in December 2013, with the vast majority of policy conditions under the programme substantially met and investor confidence restored, as it is shown by the steady increase in GDP per capita growth:

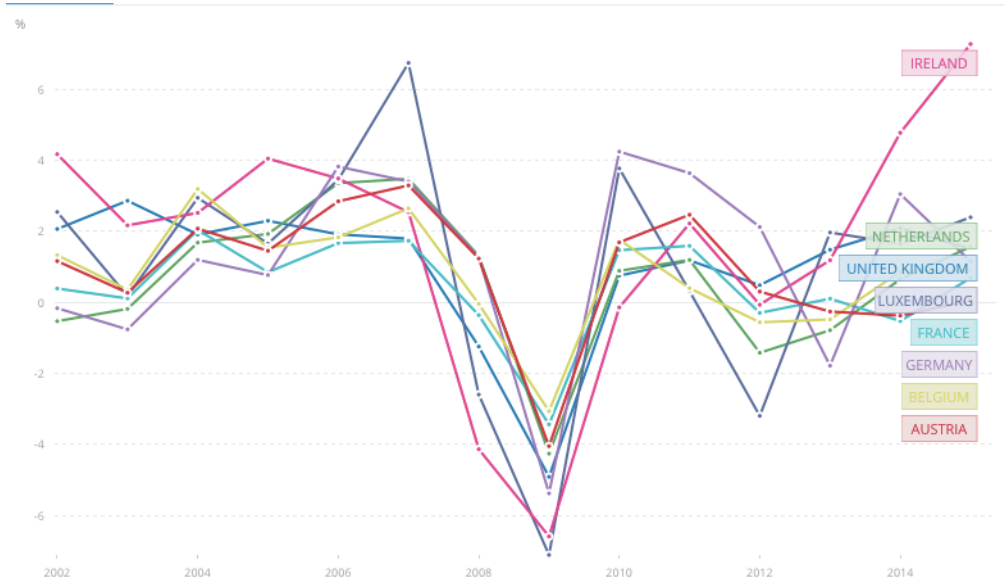


Figure A2. GDP per Capita Growth 2002 - 2015, Central European Countries, (Annual %)



Figure A3 GDP per Capita Growth 2002 - 2015, Northern European Countries, (Annual %)

The same general trend applies to Northern European countries, which experienced a sharp arrest in the two years of the crisis, before recovering and continuing the physiological, regular growth trend

with the exception of Sweden, which has experienced a significant growth spurt in 2010, as a reaction to the recession.

Gini Index

Gini index⁹ measures the extent to which the distribution of income (or, in some cases, consumption expenditure) among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. It's commonly used to indicate the level of inequality of a Country in comparative analysis. Within our time period, inequality seems to have hit mostly Southern European Countries, whose austerity reforms also meant a cut in public expenditure levels, thus affecting welfare State assistance programs and measures¹⁰. In general, inequality increased more during the financial crisis than in the years before the crisis, also because of the impact of labour market outcomes, such as changes in unemployment or participation rates.

⁹A Lorenz curve plots the cumulative percentages of total income received against the cumulative number of recipients, starting with the poorest individual or household. The Gini index measures the area between the Lorenz curve and a hypothetical line of absolute equality, expressed as a percentage of the maximum area under the line. Thus a Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality (Source: OECD).

¹⁰ There are other factors to be taken into consideration when measuring levels of inequality. For instance, countries seriously affected by the economic crisis experienced a strong decrease in actual wages, which has resulted in a relative increase of the minimum to average (median) wage ratio. Thus, the great recession has affected minimum wages by lowering real purchasing power, especially for lower segments of population (Source: OECD, Europarl).

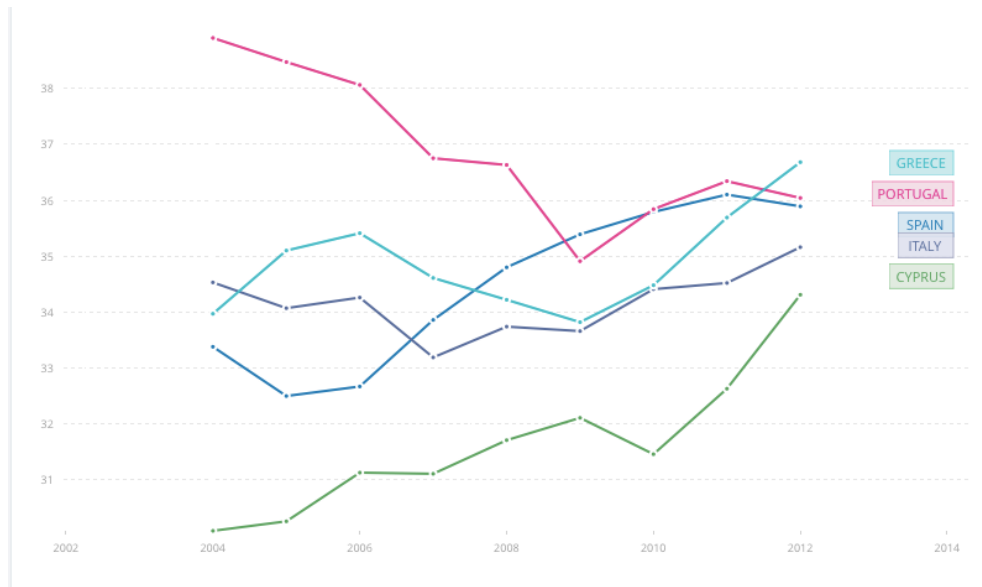


Figure A4. Gini Index in Southern Europe, 2002-2014. Source OECD

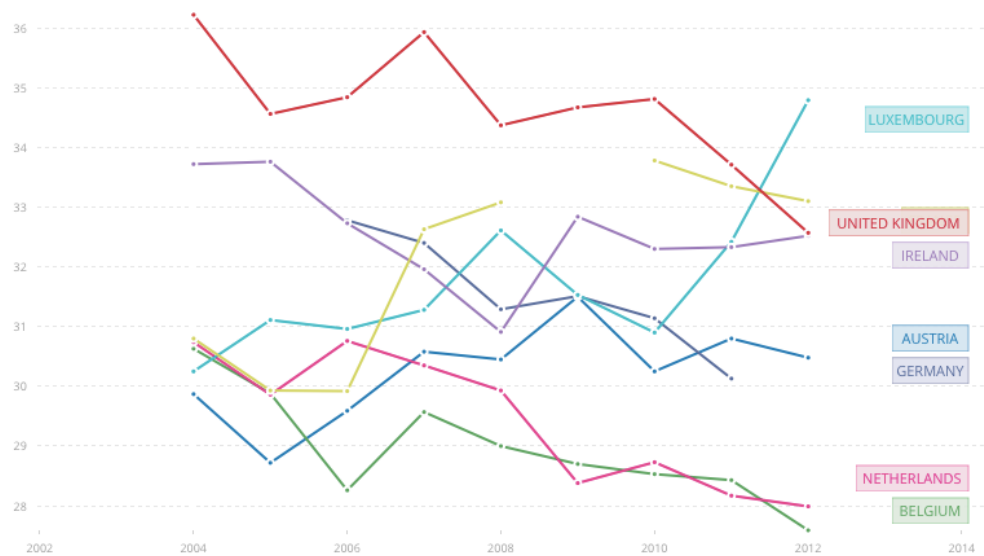


Figure A5 Gini Index in Cental Europe, 2002-2014. Source OECD

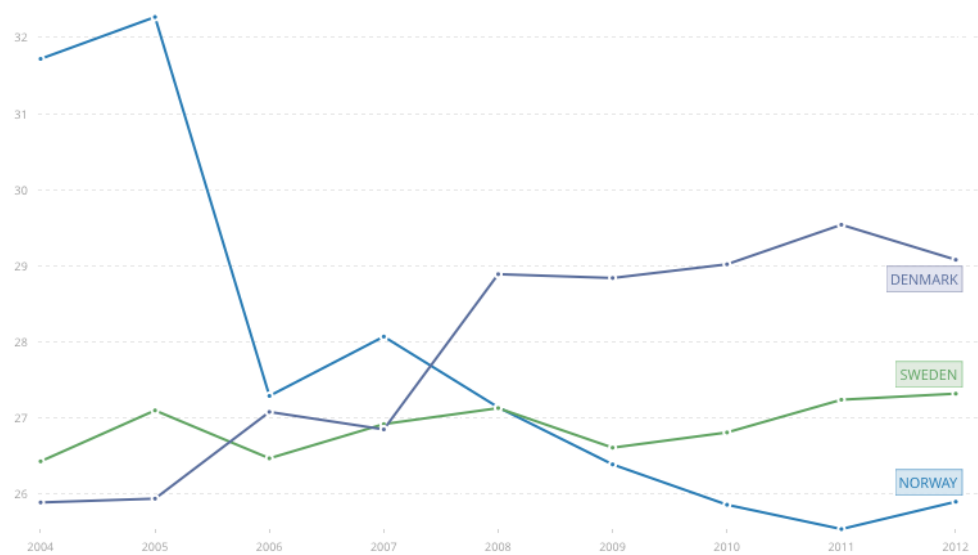


Figure A6 Gini Index in Northern Europe, 2002-2014. Source OECD

Government deficit/surplus as a percentage of GDP

Another economic indicator taken into account in the analysis is government deficit as a percentage of GDP¹¹, which measures as the fiscal position of government after accounting for capital expenditures. "Net lending" means that government is providing financial resources to other sectors, while "net borrowing" means that government requires financial resources from other sectors (OECD). In the time-period of analysis, government deficit as a percentage of GDP increased

¹¹ General government net lending is calculated as: gross savings plus net capital transfers (receivable minus payable) minus gross capital formation, followed by the subtraction of acquisitions minus disposals of non-produced, non-financial assets. This indicator is measured as a percentage of GDP (Source: OECD).

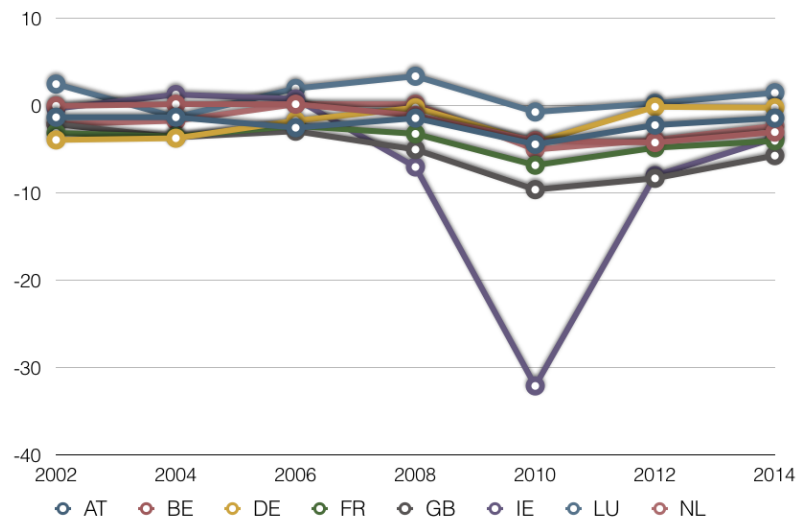


Figure A7. Government deficit/surplus as a percentage of GDP, Central European Countries

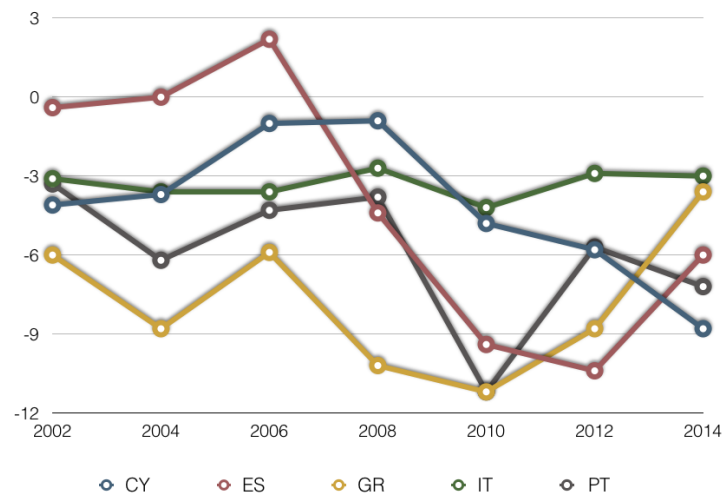


Figure A8. Government deficit/surplus as a percentage of GDP, Southern European Countries

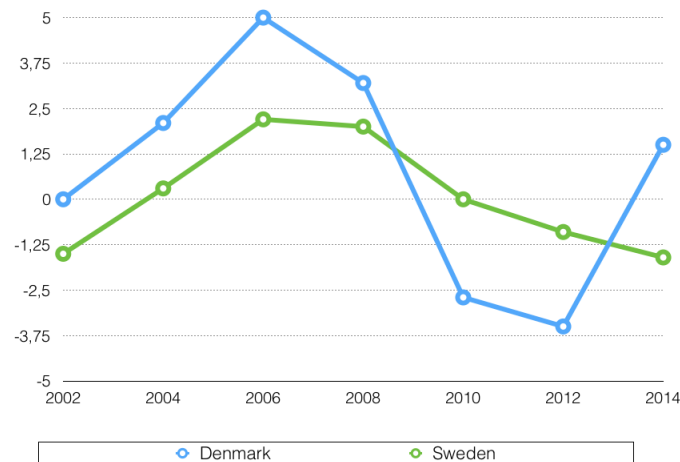


Figure A9. Government deficit/surplus as a percentage of GDP, Northern European Countries (data for Norway not available)

CPI, Corruption perception Index

The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) was established in 1995 as a composite indicator used to measure perceptions of corruption in the public sector in different countries around the world. Over the years the index has undergone numerous refinement and adjustments, which involved both the sources used to compile the index and the methodology has been adjusted and refined. After the last revision in 2012, the CPI is an aggregate index, which draws on relevant questions from a number of different data sources that capture business and expert views.

Globally, a ranking of countries according to the level of perceived corruption includes almost 200 countries on a scale of zero to 10, with

zero indicating high levels of corruption and 10 indicating lower levels.

Table A1 Corruption Perception Index in Europe, 2004-2014. .

	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
Austria	8,4	8,6	8,1	7,9	6,9	7,2
Belgium	7,5	7,3	7,3	7,1	7,5	7,6
Cyprus	5,4	5,6	6,4	6,3	6,6	6,3
Denmark	9,5	9,5	9,3	9,3	9,0	9,2
Finland	9,7	9,6	9,0	9,2	9,5	8,9
France	7,1	7,4	6,9	6,8	7,1	6,9
Germany	8,2	8,0	7,9	7,9	7,9	7,9
Greece	4,3	4,4	4,7	3,5	3,6	4,3
Ireland	7,5	7,4	7,7	8,0	6,9	7,4
Italy	4,8	4,9	4,8	3,9	4,2	4,3
Netherlands	8,7	8,7	8,9	8,8	8,4	8,3
Norway	8,9	8,8	7,9	8,6	8,7	8,6
Portugal	6,3	6,6	6,1	6,0	6,3	6,3
Spain	7,1	6,8	6,5	6,1	6,5	6,0
Sweden	9,2	9,2	9,3	9,2	9,1	8,7
UK	8,6	8,6	7,7	7,6	7,4	7,8

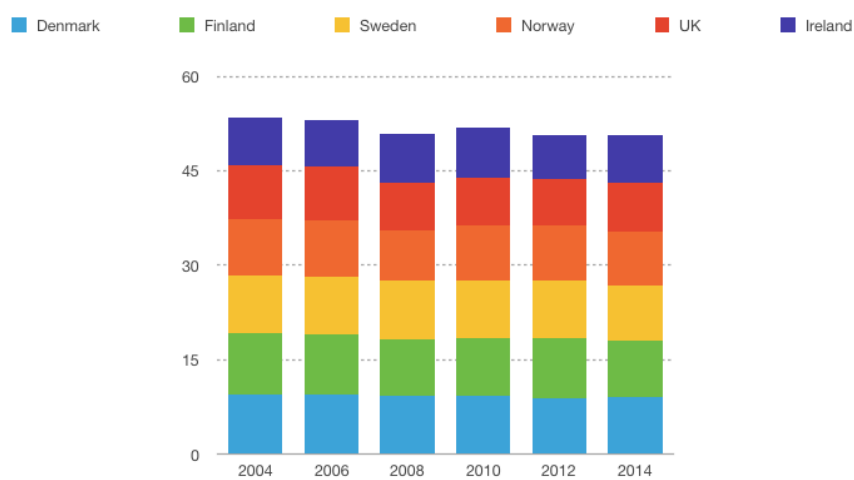


Figure A10 Corruption Perception Index in Northern Europe, 2004-2014

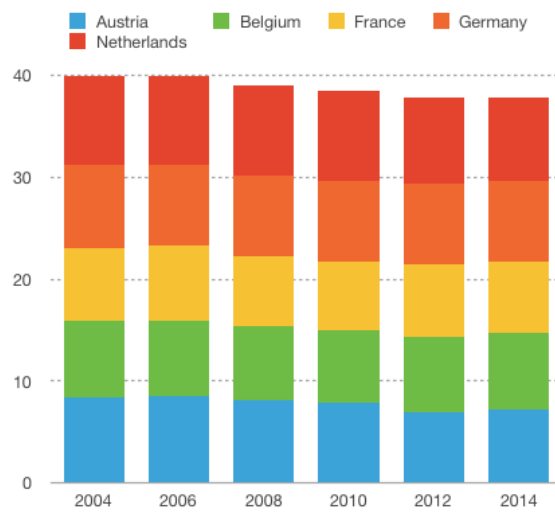


Figure A11 Corruption Perception Index in Central Europe, 2004-2014

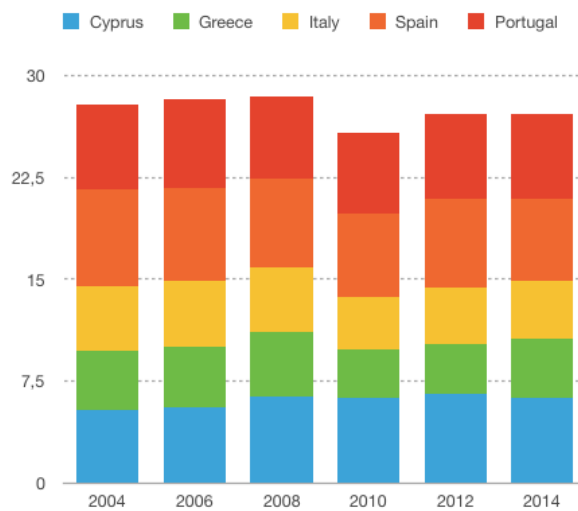


Figure A12 Corruption Perception Index in Southern Europe, 2004-2014

Stability of Government

Government stability is based on change of party composition within a cabinet during a whole legislative period. In this perspective, only

relatively short governments, i.e. interim governments ($-1/6$ of the legislation), are excluded from the analysis. The indicator assumes a 0-100 value, where 100 indicates no change in the government composition for all years within a legislative period.

Otherwise, in case of change, government stability measures the number of days that the government was stable as a share of the remaining possible period. According to the methodology used by the LIVEWHAT research, when there were more than two governments within one single election period, and the last government ended due to normal general elections the last government does not receive 100 per cent, but the value of the longest government in the respective period. This is valid unless the third or later government was the only government in the election period which lasted for more than $1/6$ of legislation. Missing values from interim governments are completed with closest value of the respective election period (if two values have the same distance, the earlier value is taken). If there are two values in one year the mean is taken. Values are copied to the entire government period. Values above 100 are set to 100. (SOURCE: LIVEWHAT Codebook).

Range of values (standardized in the LIVEWAHT Codebook): minimum = -2.6311; maximum = 100. Period covered: 2004-2014 Missing: None Source: Democracy barometer.

	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
Austria	53,3	78	42,8	42,8	42,8	100
Belgium	100	100	25,6	26,2	26,2	72,1
Cyprus	100	100	100	100	100	25,6
Denmark	80,1	68,3	34,1	92,8	92,8	64,9
Finland	97,8	97,8	79,4	99,3	99,3	23,5
France	59	96,8	96,8	96,8	75,1	1,3
Germany	72,6	96,1	96,1	96,1	96,1	100
Greece	87	87	51	51,4	25,1	85,7
Ireland	99,2	99,2	67	67	67	3,2
Italy	77	37,8	44,1	46,1	46,2	29,7
Netherlands	77,8	77,8	74,8	38,8	38,8	18,2
Norway	97,4	97,7	97,9	97,7	97,7	100
Portugal	57,3	100	100	40,1	40,1	97,9
Spain	97,3	97,3	90,2	90,2	90,2	99,85
Sweden	99	99	99	99	99	100
UK	78,1	42,8	100	100	100	58

Table A2 Stability of Government European Countries. 2004-2014. Source: Democracy Barometer.

Chapter 5.

The institutional perspective: the political consequences of economic crisis.

5.1 Introduction

The debate about the effects of the Euro-crisis upon European Countries has been gradually intertwined with the one about the legitimacy crisis of contemporary democracies. As we have seen in previous chapters, this crisis involved primarily the “output legitimacy” and the political agents and institutions, especially in poorly performing democracies.

In this perspective, political parties and party governments seemed to be more vulnerable to this lack of legitimacy, to the extent that many scholars talk about *party crisis* to stress the progressive de-structuration of party systems throughout Europe, which have become substantially more fragmented and less capable of activating long-term mechanisms of identification and support.

In this way, the recent development of “anti-party” parties can be linked to the economic crisis as well as to the parallel and progressive decline of traditional mass parties throughout Europe and it’s possibly inserted in the broader debate about the consequences of economic globalization upon political systems and their institutions. As Kriesi *et al.* point out (2006, cit in Kriesi and Pappas 2015, p.3),

“globalization has transformed the basis of politics in Western Europe by giving rise to what they have called a new ‘integration-demarcation’ cleavage: processes of increasing economic, cultural and political competition linked to globalization created latent structural potential of globalization ‘winners’ and losers’”. In this way, new political actors, based on populist mobilization, succeed in affirming with more or less stable organizations, by appealing to the “cultural anxieties” of the losers, thus contributing to the transformation of party systems in time of dissatisfaction and high volatility. In this framework, mass media, and more specifically, social media, originally conceived as a space for expressing attitudes of political efficacy (Norris 2001, Krueger 2002), offered the platform for political cynicism and public’s disenchantment with major political parties and support for new actors or movements.

The chapter analyses the relationship between political trust and Euro-scepticism in times of economic crisis in Europe. More specifically, the work aims at investigating the role of both individual and systemic factors, related to the degree of traditional party systems change. In particular, the chapter aims at answering at the following questions:

- 1) What is the relationship between political trust and vote for Euro-sceptic parties?
- 2) Furthermore, at systemic level, it possible to trace a cross-level interaction between the degree of de-structuration of party systems and the different level of political support of so-called critical citizens? The aim of this section, basically, is to determine the existence of the same party-system-related factors associated with party dealignment and decrease of political support in each country, in other words if there are system characteristics which associate to

different party systems different degree of support and differentiated political behaviour. In theory, following the literature, we would expect to find a strong correlation between low political trust and support for protest parties and political dissatisfaction, and both political and economic variables should have influenced the process of channelling discontent through protest parties. In particular, the economic crisis and the loss of political manoeuvrability to external European actors should have affected parties and party systems in terms of patterns of party competition. Not by coincidence, the first direct outcome of Europeanisation on the domestic stage – as envisaged by Peter Mair (2000) - is related to the emergence of new anti-European parties, or anti-European attitudes or stances within the already existing political parties.

In this perspective, as already recalled in this dissertation, the EU could be framed as a renewed party cleavage, whose aim is – according the seminal Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan's paradigm (1967) - to create a “structure of political alternatives” that constrains the orientations of political parties on newly arising issues, such as the European Economic and Political Integration and the European policy towards Immigration.

The work focuses on both the demand and the *supply side* of the model: in particular, the chapter is related to the relationship between dissatisfied democrats and support for anti-European stances and anti-immigration issues. The hypothesis is that distrust in political institutions is directly related to support of new formations along two main cleavages: the *integration/demarcation* cleavage, in the case of territorial claims, and the functional cleavage between *winners and*

losers of economic integration, in the case of the countries most affected by economic crisis. In both cases, the expansion and deepening of dissatisfaction at a mass level involves *in primis* parties' organization as much as their fundamental role in the public sphere.

5.2 Theoretical and conceptual framework

5.2.1 Political trust, Euro-scepticism and Attitudes towards Migration.

Chapter 4 explored the individual and systemic determinants of political trust and democratic responsiveness, conceived as “the capacity of government to satisfy the governed by executing its policies in a way that corresponds to their demands” (Morlino, 2011, p. 208) with a focus upon representative institutions (political parties, parliaments, politicians) before and after the economic crisis (2004-2014). In particular, the work explored the association between trust in political institutions (Norris 2011), conceived as a function of policy performance, economic satisfaction and cognitive mobilization (Dalton, 2007).

In line with previous research, it appeared clear how citizens in countries particularly hit by the Great Recession and under programs of EU conditionality suffer most of the so-called *democratic deficit* deriving from the gap between their stable democratic ideals and their deteriorating evaluation of the actual functioning of democratic institutions.

These findings open to a wider uncertainty about the impact of political dissatisfaction upon political behaviour and attitudes of

European citizens. The core question, in other words, is now whether and to what extent the development of critical citizenship is associated with diffused political attitudes between European citizens, and in particular with the increasing Eurosceptic attitudes and anti-immigrations stances in the aftermath of the Euro-Crisis.

Not by coincidence, with the growing development of multilevel European politics, the role of Europeanisation in terms of impact on the key political actors and party systems acquired a crucial importance. In this perspective, the first effect Europeanisation seems to have exerted upon parties and party systems is thus related to patterns of party competition. As Robert Ladrech notices (2002, p.397), “To the extent the EU itself becomes politicized in national politics, new voters may be targeted in an opportunistic strategy, either in a pro - or anti - EU position”.

These anti-European attitudes are often accompanied by negative perceptions towards immigration, in a veritable strong populist backlash, to use the words employed by Paul Taggart already in 1997, to stress the relationship between Euro-scepticism and wider populist politics.

Following the literature, we know that political trust can be empirically associated to a variety of political behaviour (cfr. Marc Hooghe, Sofie Marien, Teun Pauwels, 2011).

First of all, lower levels of political trust can be determinants of a more or less stable decline in voter turnout. To use the very well known theoretical framework developed by Albert Hirschman in 1970, the most dissatisfied citizens would consider the “exit” as the most preferable option as a response to quality decline. Under these conditions, in Hirschman’s view, “the more massive the exit the greater the losses following upon any given quality drop” (1970, p.23). This is why “low levels of electoral turnout might, in the long

run, have a negative effect on the legitimacy of the democratic process” (Hooghe, Marien, Pauwels, 2011, p. 250).

Exit, of course, is not the only option. In some circumstances, citizens could express their dissatisfaction by simply devoting their trust and attention towards new actors and mechanisms of transmission of political demand. To use again Hirschman’s business analogy, voice “could be considered an attempt at changing the practices, policies, and outputs of the firm from which one buys or of the organization to which one belongs” (*ivi*, p. 30). In other words, critical citizens could devote their attention to new options, thus favouring the rise and the affirmation of a cross-national panorama of newly-born anti-systemic forces, often based on populist mobilization. In this context, voice is defined as “*any attempt at all to change, rather than to escape from, all objectionable state of affairs, whether through individual or collective petition to the management directly in charge, through appeal to a higher authority with the intention of forcing a change in management, or through various types of actions and protests, including those that are meant to mobilize public opinion*” (Hirschman, 1970, p.30).

This propensity is often expressed in support for anti-systemic stances: as Hetherington suggests already in 1999, distrustful citizens, when opting for *voice*, tend to “favour candidates who challenge existing political norms” (p. 318). In this perspective, a vote for an anti-systemic party could be framed as a vote against traditional political actors, more than a support for specific parties, to the point that “the party is not chosen for its program or its policy potential, but for the pain it causes to the established parties” (Mudde, 2007, p. 227).

Here, the birth and rise of Eurosceptic parties belongs to the broader debate about the political effects of economic supra-national integration upon political systems and their representative institutions.

Not by coincidence, as we have seen in the previous chapters, the de-structuration of previous party systems is one of those challenges to contemporary democracies' legitimacy which have led Kaase and Newton to talk about a general "crisis of democracy, with *"particular reference to the disenchantment of citizens with political parties, the emergence of anti-party attitudes, and the growing incidence of more general dissatisfaction and anti-establishment attitudes"* (1995, p. 150).

The development of those anti-systemic stances constituted the rhetorical basis on which outsider populist movements succeed in the political arena, by transposing at European level those anti-establishment feelings. In this way, political and economic issues seem to mix, in the name of the war against "the dictatorship of parliamentarism" (Ellinas 2013, p. 8) driven by EU institutions. The Eurozone sovereign debt crisis further widened the existing *democratic deficit* (Weiler *et al.*, 1995, Majone 1998, Moravcsik 2002) in the European Union, and was able to translate the anti-European sentiment into real party platforms, especially in those countries most affected by the crisis. This mechanism lead to a multi-directional movement, which made populism rebound magnificently on both the left and the side of the political spectrum. A *thin* ideology, which offered a platform to unleash to growing attitudes among European citizens, such as dissatisfaction with the European project and its boundaries, anti-immigration attitudes, based on both economic and cultural perceived threats and their interrelation.

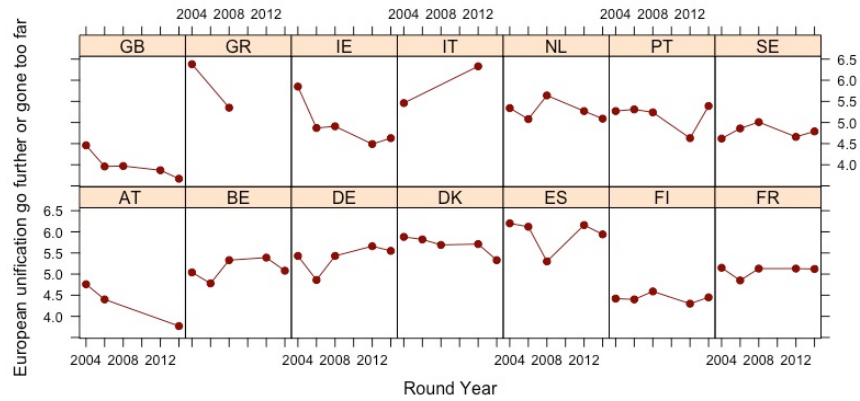


Figure 5.1 Attitudes towards EU integration in European Countries. Source ESS: 2004-2014.

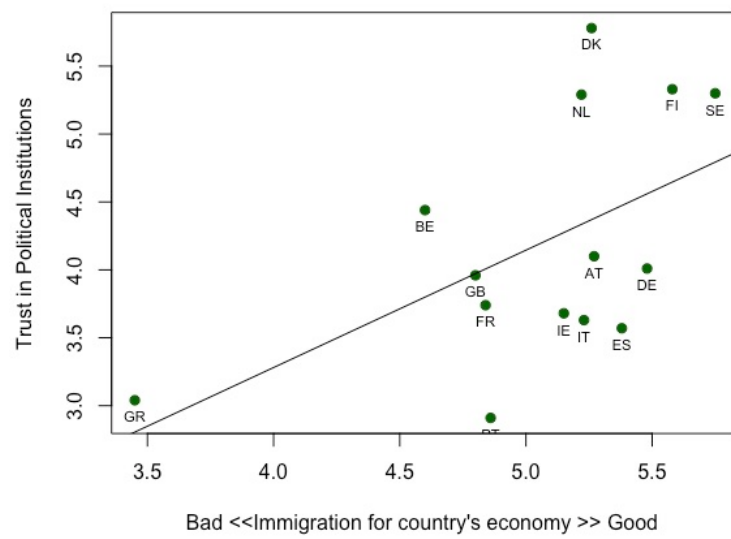


Figure 5.2 Correlation between Trust in Political Institutions and Perception of economic threat from Immigration in European Member States. Source: ESS 2004-2014.

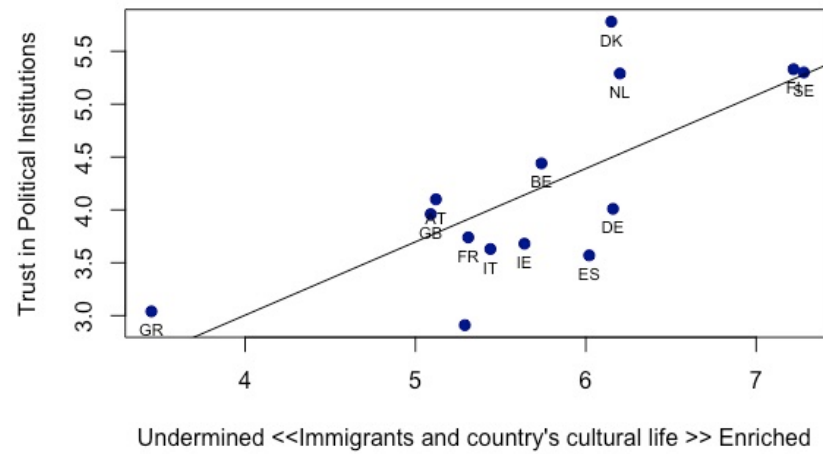


Figure 5.3 Correlation between Trust in Political Institutions and Perception of cultural threat from Immigration in European Member States. Source: ESS 2004-2014.

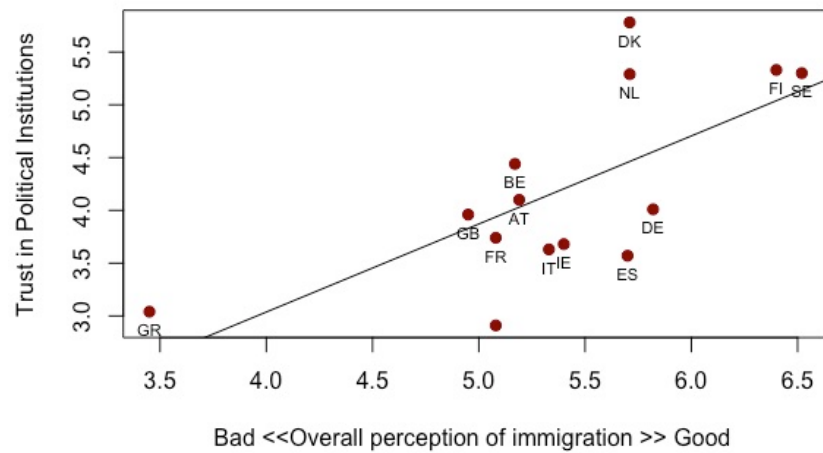


Figure 5.4 Correlation between Trust in Political Institutions and Overall perception of Immigration in European Member States. Source: ESS 2004-2014.

The following considerations lead to our first hypothesis about the relationship between dissatisfaction with political institutions and support for anti-EU parties at individual level:

H1: Low levels of political trust (towards the actor of representation, and namely parties, politicians and parliaments) are associated to a higher support (or likelihood to vote for) anti-systemic forces, such as Eurosceptic-parties and negative attitudes towards migration.

5.2.2 Political opportunity's structure: party systems in the EU crisis.

The term *Europeanisation* has been used in literature to indicate a number of different phenomena related to the process of influence of European institutions on member states' policies and institutional structures.

Ladrech (1994) provides one of the first and most cited definition of Europeanisation, a phenomenon that occurs when EU political dynamics become part of the logic and norms of domestic policy-making. Using his words, Europeanisation can be defined as an “*incremental process*, re-orienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making” (1994, p. 69).

Within this framework, the notion of *Europeanisation* in its relation to national political parties and party systems has developed only recently as a separate academic field. According to Ladrech, “*the emergence of a research area that combines the concept of Europeanisation with a focus on political party activity can be*

attributed to a broader turn in comparative politics toward incorporating European integration dynamics into explanations of domestic political change” (2009, p. 4).

With the growing development of multilevel European politics, Europeanisation has been conceived in a bi-directional way (Mair, 2000, Cowles et al, 2001).

On the one hand, the conceptualization has considered the phenomenon as an external factor, and the analysis has been focused on the impact of “something European” on national political systems and to the process of adaptation of domestic political actors or institutions to the pressures of European integration.

In this framework, Europeanisation implies the “*a) construction b) diffusion and c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, «ways of doing things » and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies*” (Radaelli, 2003, p. 30).

The classic analysis of the impact of Europeanization upon parties and party systems can be inserted in the broader framework of the Political Opportunity Structure, conceived as the “consistent, but necessarily formal or permanent, dimensions of the political environment” that facilitates the affirmation and rise of new political forces (Tarrow, 1998, p. 19-20). This theoretical framework, although originally conceived for the study of social movements and contentious politics, could be useful in analysing the impact Europeanisation have had in domestic fields as well as to test the importance of country-level factors in mitigating or exacerbating those effects. Political or economic crisis, in other words, could facilitate the propensity to support anti-systemic forces; as Piven and

Cloward stress, “the political impact of institutional disruptions depends upon the electoral conditions. Even serious disruptions, such as industrial strikes, will force concessions only when the calculus of electoral instability favors the protestors” (1977, pp. 31–32). Of course those effects could have a temporary nature: in this case, as recognised by many authors, the focus is upon the opening up of “windows of opportunities” that may encourage collective actors to form or reinforce already existing political forces on the basis of changes in the institutionalized political system or the configuration of power (e.g. McAdam 1999; Tarrow 1989, Giugni 2009). On the other hand, nevertheless, there could be “more stable aspects of political opportunities, trying to account for cross-national differences in the forms, levels, and outcomes of social movements and protest activities (e.g. Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1995)” (Giugni, 2009, p 362).

In analysing the impact of European rules, norms and directives into the domestic sphere, Peter Mair (2007, p. 156) introduces the two variables of *institutionalization* and *penetration*, in order to identify different outcomes of Europeanisation. This distinction is associated with the one, commonly accepted by Europeanisation scholars, between direct and indirect effects. In particular, *direct effects*¹² are related to the key defining features of party systems: format and mechanics. The issue of the format is strictly connected to the number of parties on the field and to the level of fragmentation of political systems, while mechanics is linked to the impact of Europeanisation on the ideological distance or on the patterns of competition among parties. To use Mair’s words, “*the mechanics of a party system*

¹² Peter Mair identifies also *indirect effects* of Europeanisation, which constraint the range of policy-making thus reducing the scope of policy proposals that parties could offer at elections (2000). Here, we will limit the discussion to the direct effects of European Integration in the domestic sphere, related to the birth of new parties along the European dimension.

concerns the modes of interaction between the relevant parties.” In this perspective, “any evidence of the direct impact of Europeanisation might first be sought by attempting to align the various parties competing in domestic elections on a pro/anti-European integration dimension” (2000, p.31).

In other words, the mechanics of a party system is influenced whether there is a direct correlation between the degree of politicization or de-politicization of the pro/anti European issue and the degree of shaping of party competition within national party systems. Not by coincidence, as already pointed out before, many authors have identified the emergence of new anti-European parties as the first direct outcome of Europeanisation upon parties and party systems, as a result of a process of politicization of the EU integration issue (Mair, 2002; Ladrech, 2002).

With the old cleavages - individuated in 1967 by Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan as institutive of parties and party systems in Western Countries - no longer frozen, the issue of Europe EU can be capitalized on by exploiting the new centre-periphery cleavage, thus giving birth to new anti-European parties. As Kūlahci stresses, (2012, p.183), an “important country-level factor that mediates the process of Europeanisation is the weight of Eurosceptic party (or parties) in a given EU member state”.

Scholars of political trust have made different hypothesis about the relationship between structural aspects of parties and party systems and political trust. In particular, the 1990 study made by Miller and Lishtaugh already quoted before in this work postulates, at least at a theoretical level, a propensity to higher trust in government in “political systems where citizens feel that their preferences are represented in the political arena by a party which reflects their interests” (1990, p. 364).

In other words, according to the two authors, the degree of *flexibility* of party systems proved to be crucial in the process of re-institutionalisation of political dissatisfaction. As they notice, “in a society with a flexible party system, discontent with government might lead to the formation of protest parties which would help channel dissatisfaction back into the electoral arena” (*ibidem*). The theme of flexibility is thus somehow intertwined with electoral market. In other words, a reduced difference of party offer is somehow related to the growing discontent among the citizens. This would promote the growth of “political alienation among people who become discontented with all the established parties if there is little hope of alternative parties being founded to represent their preferences”. (*ibidem*)

Leonardo Morlino identifies a paradoxical consequence in this context of “*declining parties: on the one hand, there is still an individual need for the external control of reality, as well as a desire for a ‘secondary control’, but on the other hand the parties no longer offer a credible response in terms of their organization, identification, and ideologies.*” (2011, p.133).

The paradox emerges from the fact that “*the weaker the parties become in their anchoring effects, the stronger the possible demand for party-like organization and rules*”. The physiological result, in the absence of a response from the political parties, is the affirmation of “*other kinds of anchor, or simply anchoring effects, proposed by old and new elites*”. (*ibidem*)

From this paradox to the actual affirmation of new anti-system formations to absorb new conflicts and instances arising from societies it is but a short step: in this perspective, the support for anti-systemic parties rely upon the complex interaction of public demand

and party supply under “conditions of imperfect competition in a regulated electoral marketplace” (Norris, 2004, p.5).

The hypothesis of electoral marketplace’s failure has been extensively exploited in literature to identify the structural explanations for the rise of radical right-wing parties (Norris 2004, Mudde 2007). In theory, supply and demand operate within a regulated electoral marketplace: in conditions of perfect electoral competition, both voters and parties can be located at ideal points across an ideological spectrum ranging from left to right. This *Downsian* proximity model assumes, as it is well known, a condition of perfect rationality according to which rational voters will choose the party whose position is closest to their own ideological preference and rational parties will seek to maximize their share of votes and seats by adopting the ideological position closest to the median voter, thereby generating party supply (Downs 1957, Norris 2004). This model, far from being static, could be easily challenged in times of political change (De Sio 2011) as well as in response to ‘shocks’ to the status quo (Norris 2004)¹³. In a context of electoral market failure, the rising salience of cultural protectionism, in a backlash against globalization and population migration, has altered the equilibrium, providing sporadic openings for new right-wing populist parties. This scheme could be applied to Euro-sceptic parties, at least at the beginning of their affirmation: as recognised by many authors,

¹³ Norris (2004, p. 21) exemplifies some shocks at the roots of electoral market failures: “1) the impact of external events (such the 9/11 events and their impact on American perceptions of threats to national security); 2) public reactions to major changes in government policies (for instance, the implementation of drastic reductions in public spending or taxation); 3) the gradual and cumulative influence of long-term cultural trends (as in the post-materialistic theory, the growing public concern about the environment, rising support for gender and racial equality, or greater tolerance of homosexuality); or the persuasive arguments and rhetoric of politicians”.

(Hooghe and Marks 2009, Bell 2012) the opposition between pro and anti-European forces is likely to overlap with the more conventional opposition between left and right, with more left-wing parties increasingly pro-European and right-wing parties generally sceptic.

The issue became more complex with the deepening of the Euro-crisis and the growing affirmation of scepticism and disaffection towards the EU institutions and policy implementation, accompanied by a general spread of populist parties across Europe (Kriesi and Pappas 2015). As the two authors notice (2015, p.2), “*in several countries, new political actors emerged forcefully during the crisis on both the radical right and the radical left (e.g., Syriza in Greece or the True Fins in Finland), while already established parties of the radical right were reinforced (e.g. FN in France)*”.

In this perspective, the economic cleavage proved to be more effective in re-shaping the landscape of European party systems, giving rise to intense social unrest, and leading to the affirmation of political extremism on both the right and the left side of political spectrum, which meant in some case the collapse of the entire party system.

This movement calls in cause the level of convergence of traditional mainstream parties in dealing with the recession and in implementing economic and political reforms imposed by European institutions: this lack of responsiveness has been causing, in many cases, the emergence of *niche parties* in response to this reduced ideological distance between the main competitors.

Not by coincidence, rather than emphasizing their positive competence, Euro-sceptic populist parties traditionally seek to undermine support for the political system by negative attacks, especially those directed against the performance and record of the main party or party coalition in government, or by sowing general

mistrust of political institutions and politicians as a class (Norris 2004). Populist rhetoric directed against ‘all of the above’, fuelling popular resentment about the political system, is commonly used by outsiders to “set themselves apart from the ‘centre’ of politics” (Taggart, 1998, p. 384). This is why polarization could be related to support for protest parties in time of political dissatisfaction: the ideological convergence of main competitors renders it much more difficult to identify who exactly is responsible for the state of affairs in a political system and might provide a breeding ground for populist parties. In a situation of multilevel governance and party systems instability, in other words, the degree of polarization, more than the number of effective political parties or the electoral formula, could result more conducive to the formation of new parties. Protest parties can be effectively used, therefore, to channel economic and political discontent back into the decision - making arena, and Europe would provide the ideological platform to express the manifold facets of frustration of dissatisfied democrats. In this way, the issue of Europe can be framed in a perspective of traditional cultural threat, along the territorial cleavage (*State Territorial Defenders/ European Identity*) or, alternatively, it could be inserted on the functional dimension of cleavages, as an expression of the economic perceived menace (*Winners/Losers of Economic integration*) (Hloušek, 2010, Bartolini 2000, 2005).

Following this argumentations, the work aims at verifying two other hypotheses at country-level;

H2: The relationship between trust and support for anti-EU parties is influenced by systemic characteristics (*political opportunity structure approach*). In particular, political polarization and reduced ideological distance between the main competitors on the field is

positively associated with support for Eurosceptic and anti-immigration forces;

H3: Political dissatisfaction has a stronger impact upon support for anti-EU stances in Countries hit by Economic Crisis and under EU conditionality;

Table 5.1 Main Anti-European parties and last electoral performances. Self-elaboration from European Parliament and National Parliaments data.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Anti-European Parties</i>	<i>Seats in National Assembly¹⁴ (most recent national elections)</i>	<i>Seats in EP (previous European elections)</i>	<i>Seats in EP (2014 European elections)</i>
<i>Austria</i>	<i>Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs</i>	40/183	2/17	4/18
	<i>Team Stronach für Österreich</i>	11/183	None	None
<i>Belgium</i>	<i>Vlaams Belang</i>	12/150	2/22	1/21
	<i>Libertair, Direct, Democratisch</i>	1/150	1/22	None
<i>Denmark</i>	<i>Folkebevægelsen mod EU</i>	None	1/13	1/13
	<i>Enhedslisten – De Rød-Grønne</i>	12/179	None	None
<i>Finland</i>	<i>Finns Party</i>	38 / 200	1 / 13	2/13
<i>France</i>	<i>Front National</i>	2 / 577	3 / 74	24/74
	<i>Front de gauche</i>	10 / 577	4/74	3/74
	<i>Debout la République</i>	2/577	None	None

¹⁴ In bicameral systems, only the Chamber of Deputies is taken into account.

	<i>Mouvement pour la France</i>	1/577	1/74	None
	<i>Parti communiste français</i>	7/577	1/74	3/74 ¹⁵
	<i>Parti de Gauche</i>	1/577	1/74	3/74
<i>Germany</i>	<i>Alternative für Deutschland</i>	No seats	No seats	7/96
<i>Greece</i>	<i>Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδας KKE</i>	15 / 300	2 / 22	2/21
	<i>Χρυσή Αυγή (Golden dawn)</i>	17 / 300	None	3/21
	<i>ΣΥΡΙΖΑ¹⁶</i>	149 / 300	1/22	6/21
	<i>Α.Α.Ο.Σ (LAOS)</i>	0/300	2/22	0/21
<i>Ireland</i>	<i>Sinn Féin</i>	5 / 18 (NI)	1/3 (NI)	3/11
<i>Italy</i>	<i>Movimento 5 Stelle</i>	104/630	0/73 ¹⁷	17/73
	<i>Lega Nord</i>	20/630	9/73	5/73
<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>Partij voor de Vrijheid, PVV</i>	12/150	3/26	4/26
	<i>Socialistische Partij, SP</i>	15/150	2/26	2/26
	<i>SGP</i>	3/150	1/26	2/26 ¹⁸
	<i>ChristenUnie, CU</i>	5/150	1/26	1/26
	<i>Partij voor de Dieren (PvdD)</i>	2/150	None	
<i>Portugal</i>	<i>Partido Comunista Português, PCC</i>	14/230	2/22	3/21
	<i>Bloco de Esquerda</i>	8/230	2/22	1/21
	<i>Centro Democrático e Social/Partido Popular¹⁹</i>	24/230	2/22	7/21
<i>Spain</i>	n.a.			
<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Vänsterpartiet,</i>	19/349	1/20	1/20
	<i>Sverigedemokraterna</i>	20/349	None	2/20
	<i>Centerpartiet</i>	23/349	1/20	1/20
	<i>Miljöpartiet de Gröna</i>	25/349	2/20	3/20
<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>UK Independence Party,</i>	1/650	9/73	20/73

¹⁵ Coalition “Front de gauche”, which comprehended PCF, Parti de Gauche, Ensemble and Front de Gauche.

¹⁶ Syriza – Coalition of the Radical Left- is a coalition of thirteen parties, whose aim is to reform European basis, without exiting from the UE.

¹⁷ Never participated in EP elections

¹⁸ SGP and ChristenUnie formed a Coalition in 2014 EP.

¹⁹ Soft-Euroscepticism.

	(UKIP) <i>British national Party</i>	None	1/73	0/73
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5.3 Data and methods.

The chapter aims to explore the individual and systemic determinants of support for Anti-European parties in the decade around the Euro-crisis. In particular, at individual level, the work investigates to what extent trust in representative institutions at both national and supra-national level can predict attitudes towards Eu in terms of support for anti-European parties. The hypothesis is that the rise and affirmation of Eurosceptic parties is closely related to both economic and political crisis and the issue of Europe is deeply intertwined with the socio-economic location of individuals, such as economic position, education or integration (Gabel, 1998). In order to guarantee an adequate level of comparability and to generalize results, the chapter employs, as in the previous sections of the thesis, individual-level data from the European Social Survey (ESS)²⁰. In

²⁰ As specified in previous chapters, the European Social Survey is “a cross-national aiming to map the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of the various populations in Europe. The questionnaire includes two main sections, each consisting of approximately 120 items; a 'core' module which remains relatively constant from round to round, plus two or more 'rotating' modules, repeated at intervals. The core module aims to monitor” (Source: re3data.org: European Social Survey; editing status 2017-02-01)

particular, questions from the core module will give us the chance to analyse continuity and variance of attitudes upon a wide range of social variables, including media use, social and political trust, political interest and participation, socio-political orientations, governance and efficacy, moral, political and social values, social exclusion, national, ethnic and religious allegiances, well-being; health and security, human values, demographics and socio-economic positions.

With reference to the time frame, the work takes into consideration the period 2004-2014, from wave 2 since wave 7 provided by the European Social Survey. Specifically, we do take into account, for the purpose of our research, Western European Countries and specifically:

- Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, Netherlands, Ireland and United Kingdom, for Central Europe;
- Denmark, Finland and Sweden, for Northern Europe;
- Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain, for Southern Europe.

It has to be specified that certain Countries did not take part to every survey. In particular, we miss data from: Austria (missing in 2012), Greece (not available in 2006, 2012 and 2014) and Italy (which did not take part in the survey in 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2014). However, following similar studies, we think missing data will not affect the possibility of conducting a cross-national and cross-temporal analysis (Torcal 2015, Memoli and Bellucci, 2012). The entire sample was composed by n. 79307 observations.

In order to test our main hypothesis we take into consideration the question concerning the party voted at the last national elections as dependent variable. In particular, the literal question as expressed by the ESS is: *“Which party did you vote for in that election?(Country)”*. Since the purpose of the study was to verify the support for Euro-

sceptic parties, we re-coded the answers by recurring to a dummy variable (0-1), indicating the dichotomy between a vote for a anti-EU party and a pro-European one²¹.

Furthermore, in order to verify this first hypothesis we employ different individual-level measurements: economic satisfaction, which is expected to have a role in the case of losers of Economic Integration, and attitudes towards migration, whose relevance is supposed to involve both the territorial and the functional cleavages, calling in cause the variable of national identity and its multifaceted nature (civic or ethnic).

Here we employ two different batteries of questions; the first one, as in the previous chapter, is expressed by the question: “*On the whole how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in [country]? ”*”.

With reference to attitudes towards immigration, the ESS offers a wide range of questions, covering different aspects of the immigration issue.

With regards to the perceived economic threat posed by migration, the ESS includes in all its waves the following question: “*Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country]’s economy that people come to live here from other countries? ”*“, measured through a scale from 0 (bad) to 10 (good).

The second question, used to measure the perceived cultural threat from migration and included again in all the ESS rounds (from 2002 to 2014) was: *Would you say that [country]’s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from*

²¹ Parties’ classification was conducted following the measurement of Pro/Anti EU positions provided by Döring, Holger and Philip Manow. 2016. Parliaments and governments database (ParlGov): Information on parties, elections and cabinets in modern democracies. Development version.

other countries? Analogously, the item is measured through a scale, ranging from 0 ('undermined') - 10 ('enriched').

Since the two items are correlated ($r=0.63$) they will be treated as an unique variable called *anti-immigration attitudes*.

At the system level, the chapter analyses party-system supply's structure, by using the measurement of polarization, number of effective parties and controlling for the EU crisis and subjection to EU conditionality and programs of structural reforms.

In the literature, one of most widely examined properties of party systems is the number of parties and the linkage between the representation of social cleavages in voting behavior, turnout in elections, and more in general political behaviour (e.g. Miller and Lishtaug 1990; Blais & Dobrzynska, 1998; Norris, 2004; Dalton 2008). In this work we will take into account the level of polarization of party systems, following the methodology adopted by Dalton (2008), who conceptualize parties as aligned along a single ideological dimension and estimate their ideological position of parties as well as their vote shares. Unlike Dalton, who resorts to data offered by the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems - CSES – the present analysis is based on the Manifesto Project Database, which analyses parties' policy positions through a content analysis of parties' electoral manifestos. The database includes over 1000 parties from 1945 until today in over 50 countries on five continents and analyses parties' policy preferences as well as their share and attributes a position along the left-right scale.

The index follows Dalton methodology and is therefore based upon the following measurement:

$$PI = \text{SQRT} \left\{ \sum (\text{party vote share}_i)^* \right. \\ \left. ([\text{party L/R score}_i - \text{party system average L/R score}]/5)^2 \right\},$$

where i represents individual parties. As Dalton explains, the index is comparable to a measure of the standard deviation of a distribution; it has a value of 0 when all parties occupy the same position on the Left–Right scale and 10 when all the parties are split between the two extremes of the scale (2008, p.906).

The following table presents the Polarization index for all the Western European Countries taken into account in our analysis from 2004 to 2015.

Country	ESS ROUND 2 (2004)	ESS ROUND 2 (2006)	ESS ROUND 3 (2008)	ESS ROUND 4 (2010)	ESS ROUND 5 (2012)	ESS ROUND 6 (2014)
Austria	0,26	0,65	0,7	0,7	0,7	0,7
Belgium	1,1	1,1	2,2	1,99	1,99	1,99
Denmark	2,36	2,53	1,52	1,42	2,68	2,68
Finland	1,74	1,74	1	1	1,65	1,65
France	1,31	1,31	1,26	1,26	1,76	1,76
Germany	2,46	2,53	1,42	1,42	2,68	2,68
Great Britain	0,61	0,73	0,73	0,78	0,78	0,89
Greece	0,66	1,26	2,45	2,24 ²²	2,26	2,42
Ireland	0,73	0,73	0,33	0,33	0,76	0,76

²² Greece had two elections in 2012. We did take into account the polarization score after the second election.

Italy	1,53	3,23	0,82	0,82	0,82	2,23
Netherlands	1,31	1,28	1,28	0,99	1,51	1,51
Portugal	0,92	1,02	1,02	1,18	1,39	1,39
Spain	1,05	1,05	0,9	0,9	1,2	1,28
Sweden	2,18	1,47	1,47	1,62	1,62	1,62

²³ Table 5.2 Party systems' polarization in Europe (2002-2014). Personal elaboration on data provided by Manifesto Project Database.

Since we want to verify whether the number of parties is associated with different patterns of political behaviour we introduce a further indicator of the number of parties, in order to give weight to the relative size of parties and not just their absolute numbers.

We take into account the Effective Number of Electoral Parties, as measured by Laaakso and Taguepera, 1979. This index has become the standard numerical measure for the comparative analysis of party systems, as it gives the possibility to consider simultaneously both the number of parties and their relative weights into account to compute a unique variable. The following formula shows how the ENP is computed:

$$N = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^n p_i^2}^{24}$$

The following tables show measurements of effective number of electoral parties (ENEP) in the countries in analysis. From a purely descriptive perspective and independently from the electoral formula, the table clearly shows some change of ENEP in the aftermath of the

²³ Norway has not been taken into account, as it is not a member of EU. The score of each country was attributed with reference to previous national elections.

²⁴ In the equation, n is the number of parties with at least one vote/seat, while p_i^2 indicates the square of each party's proportion of all votes or seats.

EU crisis, not exclusively in those countries most affected by economic and financial hardship and under EU conditionality. Greece went through the most significant change, with gradual de-structuration of previous party system²⁵. As we can see in the table, in this country the ENEP was 2,66 in 2004, while it reaches 8,95 in 2012, with two elections in the same year (respectively on May, 6th and June, 17th), going to partially settle down in 2014 (5,2).

Table 5.3 Effective Number of Parties (2002-2014) in Western European Countries. ²⁶

Country	ESS ROUND 2 (2004)	ESS ROUND 2 (2006)	ESS ROUND 3 (2008)	ESS ROUND 4 (2010)	ESS ROUND 5 (2012)	ESS ROUND 6 (2014)
Austria	3,02	3,71	3,71	4,79	5,15	3,02
Belgium	8,84	8,84	9,04	10,04	10,04	9,62
Denmark	4,69	5,19	5,41	5,41	5,71	5,71
Finland	5,65	5,65	5,88	5,88	6,47	6,47
France	5,22	5,22	4,32	4,32	5,27	5,27
Germany	4,09	4,09	4,09	4,09	4,09	4,09
Great Britain	3,33	3,33	3,33	3,33	3,33	3,33
Greece	2,66	2,66	3,02	3,16	8,95	5,2
Ireland	4,13	4,13	4,13	4,13	4,77	4,77
Italy	6,32	5,69	3,82	3,82	3,82	5,33
Netherlands	4,17	3,04	3,07	3,07	3,15	3,27
Portugal	3,03	3,13	3,13	3,83	3,66	3,66
Spain	3	3	2,79	2,79	3,34	3,34
Sweden	4,51	4,66	4,66	4,79	4,79	5,41

In parallel to the party systems' stability, following Laaakso and Taguepera, we consider in our analysis governmental stability, which is usually considered, as the two authors argue, as a proxy for general, political instability: "By 'political instability' people usually seem to

²⁵ Traditional parties like ND and PASOK, in particular, went through relevant losses. The left-right PASOK, who had 43.9% of votes still in 2009, had only 4,68 of votes in 2015 Elections. On the other side new parties, like anti-establishment coalition of thirteen left-wing parties SYRIZA, passed from 4.6% in 2009 to 36,34% of votes in 2015.

²⁶Data available at:

https://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/staff/michael_gallagher/EISystems/Docts/ElectionIndices.pdf

mean governmental instability, be it caused by party system instability or other factors” (1979, p. 20). A government is considered stable if its party composition does not go under change during a whole legislative period. If there is a change, vice versa, government stability measures the number of days that the government was stable as a share of the remaining possible period²⁷.

COUNTRY	ESS ROUND 2 (2004)	ESS ROUND 2 (2006)	ESS ROUND 3 (2008)	ESS ROUND 4 (2010)	ESS ROUND 5 (2012)	ESS ROUND 6 (2014)
Austria	53,3	78	42,8	42,8	42,8	100
Belgium	100	100	25,6	26,2	26,2	72,1
Cyprus	100	100	100	100	100	25,6
Denmark	80,1	68,3	34,1	92,8	92,8	64,9
Finland	97,8	97,8	79,4	99,3	99,3	23,5
France	59	96,8	96,8	96,8	75,1	1,3
Germany	72,6	96,1	96,1	96,1	96,1	100
Greece	87	87	51	51,4	25,1	85,7
Ireland	99,2	99,2	67	67	67	3,2
Italy	77	37,8	44,1	46,1	46,2	29,7
Netherlands	77,8	77,8	74,8	38,8	38,8	18,2
Norway	97,4	97,7	97,9	97,7	97,7	100
Portugal	57,3	100	100	40,1	40,1	97,9
Spain	97,3	97,3	90,2	90,2	90,2	99,85
Sweden	99	99	99	99	99	100
UK	78,1	42,8	100	100	100	58

Table 5.4 Government Stability in European Member States.

²⁷ For more exhaustive explanation about the operationalization of Government Stability see appendix to Chapter Four.

	Round 1 [2002]	Round 2 [2004]	Round 3 [2006]	Round 4 [2008]	Round 5 [2010]	Round 6 [2012]	Round 7 [2014]	Round 8 [2016] ²⁸
Austria	•	•	•	•	•		•	•
Belgium	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Denmark	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Finland	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
France	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Germany	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Greece	•	•		•	•			
Ireland	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Italy	•	•				•		•
Netherlands	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Norway	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Portugal	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Spain	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sweden	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
United Kingdom	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Table 5.5 Countries participating to the ESS by Year. Source. ESS.

5.4. Analysis

Summary statistics of the variables for the overall sample (N=79307)

Variable	Description/Operationalization	N	Code	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Dependent Variable							
Vote for Euro-sceptic parties	Vote for one anti-establishment anti-EU party. Source: European Social Survey, personal codification.	79307	0-1	0.05	.22	0	1
Individual Level Independent Variables							
trstprl	Trust in Parliament. Source: European Social Survey.	79307	0-10	4.99	2.39	0	10
trstplt	Trust in Politicians. Source: European Social Survey.	79307	0-10	4.05	2.27	0	10
trstprt	Trust in Political Parties. Source: European Social Survey.	79307	0-10	4.07	2.24	0	10
trstep	Trust in European Parliament. Source: European Social Survey.	79307	0-10	4.52	2.29	0	10

²⁸ At the moment we write (2016), round 8 has not been released.

index of Trust in Rep. Inst.	Trust in National Representative Institutions ²⁹ : Source: European Social Survey.	79307	0-10	4.37	2.10	0	10
clsprty	Closeness To a Party. Source: European Social Survey.	79307	1-2	1.35	0.48	1	2
stfec0	Satisfaction with Economy. Source: European Social Survey.	79307	0-10	4.79	2.42	0	10
gndr	Gender, Source: European Social Survey.	79307	1-2	1.50	0.50	1	2
agea	Age, Source: European Social Survey.	79307	18-85	50.72	16.29	18	85
eiscd	Highest level of education, ES - ISCED *. Source: European Social Survey.	79307	0-7	2.97	2.40	0	7
euftr	European unification go further or gone too far. Source: European Social Survey.	66057	0-7	5.06	2.56	0	10
prtdgcl	How close to a party. Source: European Social Survey.	52136	1-4	2.16	0.63	1	4
lrscale	Self-Placement on left right scale. Source: European Social Survey.	79307	0-10	5.09	2.16	0	10
imbeco	Immigration bad or good for country's economy	79307	0-10	5.14	2.31	0	10
imueclt	Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants	79307	0-10	5.93	2.44	0	10
Anti-Immigration attitudes	Index of immigration-related economic and cultural perceived threat	79307	0-10	5.53	2.14	0	10
Country-Level Independent Variables							
eu_cond	Formal or informal conditionality to EU. Source: OECD.	79307	0-1	0.07	0.26	0	1
cpi	Perceived corruption Index. Source: Transparency International.	79307	0-10	7.76	1.29	3.5	9.7
stability	Government stability, number of years without a change in government. Source:	79307	1.08-100.	71.34	31.91	-1.08	100
Gdp Growth	Gdp per capita Growth. Source: OECD	79307	-	1.10	2.10	-5.6	5.09

²⁹ Parliament, Politicians, Political Parties

Party system polarization	Polarization of party systems. Source: Manifesto Project Database.	79307	-	1.45	0.64	.26	2.68
ENEP	Effective Number of Electoral Parties.	79307	-	4.82	1.74	2.66	10.04
Gini Index	Measure of the income distribution of a country's residents.	79307	-	0.29	0.04	.23	.38

s8

Table 5.6 Summary statistics for the overall sample, Source: ESS 2004-2012 integrated dataset, ESS 2014.

The work is based on multilevel logistic regression models. The use of this model is grounded on a two-fold necessity:

- First of all, since the multilevel nature of our data, with individuals nested within countries and countries nested in waves, we need to employ a hierarchical model;
- Secondly, the binary nature of the dependent variable, a categorical variable that can take on exactly two values (in our case, as we have seen, in order to predict anti EU-parties vote intention we recoded the DV by attributing values of 0 and 1) we need to recur to a logit model. As firstly explained by Cox in 1958, the binary logistic model we are employing consents to estimate the possibility of a binary response based on several predictors (our independent variables). This method gives the possibility to estimate whether a risk factor (such as the economic crisis in our model) could increase the possibility of a given outcome.

Table 5.7 LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODELS OF VOTE FOR ANTI-EU PARTIES

	Model 0	Model 1a	Model 1b	Model 2
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
<i>Individual variables</i>				
Institutional confidence		-0.033*** (0.009)		
Trust in EP			-0.156*** (0.008)	
Party closeness		-0.127*** (0.037)	-0.156*** (0.037)	-0.131*** (0.036)
Interest in politics		-0.194*** (0.020)	-0.208*** (0.020)	-0.240*** (0.020)
Satisfaction with economy		-0.154*** (0.008)	-0.121*** (0.007)	-0.139*** (0.007)
Religiosity (Attendance)		0.180*** (0.012)	0.154*** (0.012)	0.186*** (0.012)
Anti-immigration attitudes (Index)				-0.117*** (0.008)
<i>Control variables</i>				
Gender (male)		0.072* (0.034)	0.102** (0.034)	0.078* (0.034)
Age		0.015*** (0.001)	0.012*** (0.001)	0.013*** (0.001)
Education (Eisced)		-0.194*** (0.008)	-0.190*** (0.008)	-0.184*** (0.008)
(Intercept)	-17.460*** (0.001)	-2.936*** (0.139)	-2.296*** (0.139)	-2.401*** (0.140)
Var(~1 centry)	216.139			
Var(~essround centry)	0.631			
Var(~1 essround)	0.094			
-log likelihood	-7342.3	-14827.8	-14618.6	-14723.5
Observations	79307	79307	79307	79307
Number of waves	6	6	6	6
Number of countries	14	14	14	14
Unstandardized coefficients, standard error in parenthesis * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01				

Table 5.8 MULTILEVEL LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODELS OF VOTE FOR ANTI-EU PARTIES

	Model 3a	Model 3b	Model 4	Model 5a
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
<i>Individual variables</i>				
Institutional confidence	-0.085*** (0.015)			-0.005 (0.012)
Trust in EP		-0.105*** (0.012)		
Party closeness	-0.127** (0.045)	-0.143** (0.045)	-0.141** (0.045)	-0.126** (0.045)
Interest in politics	-0.123*** (0.025)	-0.147*** (0.025)	-0.157*** (0.026)	-0.149*** (0.026)
Satisfaction with economy	-0.055*** (0.012)	-0.021 (0.011)	-0.038*** (0.011)	-0.056*** (0.012)
Religiosity (Attendance)	0.027 (0.014)	0.015 (0.014)	0.020 (0.014)	0.026 (0.014)
Anti-immigration attitudes (Index)			-0.048*** (0.012)	
<i>Control variables</i>				
Gender (male)	-0.102* (0.042)	-0.061 (0.042)	-0.105* (0.042)	-0.094* (0.042)
Age	0.010*** (0.001)	0.008*** (0.001)	0.009*** (0.001)	0.008*** (0.001)
Education (Eiscsd)	0.003 (0.013)	0.023 (0.013)	0.051*** (0.013)	-0.082*** (0.014)
<i>Country-level variables</i>				
Economic Crisis	-0.857 (0.473)	-0.099 (0.491)	0.494 (0.474)	
EU Conditionality	-11.805 (216.157)	-20.568* (9.630)	-21.126** (7.527)	
Government deficit/surplus				

ENEP				1.625*** (0.263)
Party system polarization				-31.846*** (3.197)
Government stability				-0.002 (0.002)
Interaction terms				
ist confidence x eu_crisis	0.193*** (0.022)			
ist confidence x eu_conditionality	-2.605 (684.427)			
trust EP x crisis		0.016 (0.019)		
trust EPx eu_cond		-2.181 (6.727)		
Anti-immigration attitudes x crisis			-0.148*** (0.019)	
Anti- immigration x eu_conditionality			-1.929 (12.701)	
(Intercept)	-15.265** (4.812)	-16.168*** (3.032)		
Var(~1 centry)	83.304	157.991	177.173	6.411
Var(~essround centry)	0.395	0.483	0.506	1.780
Var(~1 essround)	0.094	0.079	0.073	1.105
-log likelihood	-7214.5	-7191.0	-7174.7	-7111.9
Observations	79307	79307	79307	79307
Number of waves	6	6	6	6
Number of countries	14	14	14	14
Unstandardized coefficients, standard error in parenthesis * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01				

Table 5.9 MULTILEVEL LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODELS OF VOTE FOR ANTI-EU PARTIES

Model 5b	
	b/se
Individual variables	
Institutional confidence	0.099* (0.043)
Party closeness	-0.124** (0.045)
Interest in politics	-0.148*** (0.026)
Satisfaction with economy	-0.060*** (0.012)
Religiosity (Attendance)	0.025 (0.014)
Control variables	
Gender (male)	-0.100* (0.042)
Age	0.008*** (0.001)
Education (Eisced)	-0.074*** (0.014)
Country-level variables	
Party system polarization	-28.856*** (2.268)
Interaction terms	
ist confidence x partypol	-0.115* (0.045)
(Intercept)	5.267 (5.755)
Var(~1 cntry)	13.325
Var(~essround cntry)	2.266
Var(~1 essround)	1.203
-log likelihood	-7128.2
Observations	79307
Number of waves	6
Number of countries	14
Unstandardized coefficients, standard error in parenthesis * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01	

We firstly establish a baseline model with no determinants (model 0) in order to verify variance estimates. The variance estimates indicated in model 0 show how the most difference in vote for anti-EU parties can be found at country-level³⁰. The high value of variance coefficients is an ulterior confirm to the necessity to perform a multi-level analysis: multilevel modelling, in fact is the natural choice if the interest is in the effects (c) of country-level predictors or the variance component structure. This is why “non-economist social scientists have tended to favour the multilevel modelling approach, assessing country ‘effects’ in terms of either country fixed effects or in terms of the proportion of the outcome variance explained by the country variance component(s)” (Bryan and Jenkins, 2016, p. 6). The same two scholars, however, stress the importance to approach variance estimates in multilevel logit models with very caution, due to possible imprecision in determine variance.

As a matter of fact, the number of countries in multi-country data sets is crucial: “if the number of groups is small, and even if the group sizes are large, - they write -, estimates of the variance components and of their SEs are imprecise and likely to be biased downwards³¹ (Raudenbush and Bryk, 2002: p. 283; Hox, 2010: p. 233)” (*ivi*, p.7). In the end, we need to take variance with great

³⁰ As Bryan and Jenkins (2016) notice, a small number of countries in most multi - country data sets limits the ability of multilevel regression models to provide robust conclusions about ‘country effects’.

³¹ According to the two authors, in particular for random coefficient variances (if specified) and especially the country- level variance, at least 30–35 countries may be required to derive accurate estimates—which is more countries than is usually available.

caution and and further verify the direct and indirect role of country-level variables in our models.

Model 1a and 1b include, as a second step, individual determinants of vote for anti-EU parties. In line with the literature on the field, the model shows how support for anti-EU parties is related to socio-economic position. In particular, low levels of trust for both national political institutions (parliament, political parties and politicians) and European ones appear to be related to support for these party organizations, with higher coefficients with trust in EP as determinant.

Furthermore, the results of both models show how those more interested in politics are less likely to be supportive of anti-EU parties, as well as citizens with higher levels of education. Satisfaction with economy proves to be, once again, one of the stronger indicators of system support and stability: the higher satisfaction with the economic situation of a country, in fact, the lower propensity to vote for an anti-EU party. Again, the results of the empirical research seem to confirm the *winner hypothesis*: those who are at the top in social, economic and political life are the more trusting in political institutions and, more in general, traditional party-organizations. The coefficients related to the role of party closers need to be considered with more caution: according to our model, party closers are more likely to support anti-EU organizations. It has to be noted here that the model itself only partially provide indications about the direction of causality, which would consent the identification of a causal mechanism linking party closeness and support for anti-EU party in terms of cause and effect, also because of the de-stabilization of party systems and the complicated operationalization of the same concept of party closeness in Europe (see chapter 2).

In general, nevertheless, following a consolidated literature about the subject, our model shows how having a clear preference for a specific political party allows citizens to make choices in the political decision-making process, it provides them with (more or less stable) cues and party closeness can serve as a cost-saving device which is functional to the stability of the entire system (cfr Hooghe and Kern, 2014) because it consents the institutionalisation of new political issues and demands.

On the contrary, as we have seen in the previous chapter, lower political trust, low level of education and dissatisfaction with the economy is often associated with radical positions, and distrust and frustration are often channelled by anti-EU organizations, with populist organizations and programs.

Summarizing, the salience of economic determinants is empirically confirmed at individual level; the same applies to the traditional theory of *social differentiation* of people — which links political and voting behaviour to socio-economic status, religion, and, according to the original theorization (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee, 1954), eventually race and place of residence (variables not taken into consideration in this analysis).

Model 2 introduces the attitudes towards migration as determinants of vote for anti-EU parties, with the two items – the one related to perceived cultural and the one concerning economic threat – threatened as a unique variable through an index. Increasing attitudes against immigration appear to have a statistically significant relationship with Euro-sceptic vote; as in models 1a and 1b, individual's satisfaction with economy, as well as years of education, party closeness and, with more relevance, political interest, have proven to be significant predictors. In our model, in other words, immigration appears to be a positional issue dividing different

ideological stances across voters and parties, with higher perceived salience within supporters of anti-EU parties and crosscutting nature of immigration attitudes vis à vis established ideological dimensions of political competition. Not by coincidence, party closeness plays a significant role in determining the likelihood to vote for an anti-systemic party, as in the previous models.

All these findings, taken together, support our hypothesis H1.

Model 3a and 3b checks for the direct effects of both EU economic recession and EU conditionality (e.g. implementation of implicit or explicit programs of structural reforms driven by EU institutions) as well as for the interaction between these two variables (both operationalized through a dichotomous variable) and trust in representative institutions and EP parliament as predictors of Euro-sceptic parties support.

It's important to stress that, at least with the two dummy variables employed, the direct effect of EU crisis and EU conditionality seem to have no statistical significance; a simple comparison between these results and the ones related to the indicator of personal satisfaction with the national economic situation allows us to stress the relevance of individual economic perception rather than the actual economic perception of a country. The results suggest that the introduction in the model of macro-economic indicators (such as GDP/cap or GDP growth) would have been more useful in testing the role of additional effects of the GDP upon political trust and levels of support (cfr. Morlino and Quaranta, 2014). These findings offer partial confirmation to our hypothesis 3.

Vice versa, the interaction between institutional confidence and EU crisis shows how the emergence of the financial and economic crisis increased the effect of both institutional trust and trust in the EP upon the probability to vote for an anti-EU party. In parallel, as model

4 stresses, the role of anti-immigration attitudes in predicting anti-EU vote is reinforced by the economic hardship.

Model 5a specifies the direct effects of political country-levels indicator upon our hypothetical effect of trust on Euro-scepticism. Both the effective number of political parties (ENEP) and the level of polarization of party systems proved to be effectively related. In the case of polarization, such a negative interaction indicates that high polarized contexts tend to reinforce the relationship between trust and anti-EU vote: the more trustful, the less likely to vote for anti-EU parties, thus confirming the evidence that the higher level of trust the less support for anti-systemic stances. In other words, polarization and ENEP, as already stressed in the literature with reference to anti-systemic and populist parties (Miller and Lishtaug, 1990, Abedi, 2004) would help in the process of “voice” of new political demands, by channelling back into the electoral arena social cleavages and citizens, otherwise at the edges of the public sphere. Model 5b, finally, tests for interaction between party system polarization and institutional trust in their relationship with AEU vote. The results offered by these models let us confirming hypothesis two: systemic political variables, related to party system supply, proved their relevance in defining the mechanism of political voice of critical citizens in times of economic hardship.

5.5 Conclusion

The study above presented, far from exhausting the debate on the matter, wanted to constitute a contribution to the reflection about the relationship between political trust and vote for anti-systemic (and in particular anti-EU) parties in times of Economic recession in Europe.

The point of departure of the study is the growing concern about the impact of democratic views and democratic evaluations on the political behaviour of Europeans (Kriesi and Morlino, 2016). The work has been organised around a main question, concerning these views and evaluations of democracy affect citizens' vote choice in times of dealignment and in poor performing established democracies.

In particular, the hypothesis is conducted through the analysis of individual and systemic determinants of vote for Eurosceptic parties', a relatively new and spread common character of European political arena, which acquired a crucial importance, as the 2014 European Elections dramatically showed. A "touchstone" of dissent, to use Taggart's words (1998), whose development from the peripheral areas of party systems has been consolidating at the very centre of the stage.

The chapter showed how, following Mair's prevision, the diffusion of anti-European populist parties in the European public sphere affected both the key defining features of party systems, and namely format and mechanics. In particular, the results showed how the likelihood to vote for an anti-EU party is related to the effective number of parties on the field and to the level of fragmentation of political systems; the same applies to the mechanics of party systems, related to the impact of Europeanisation on the ideological distance or on the patterns of competition among parties. In this perspective, the

mechanics of a party system has been influenced whether there is a direct correlation between the degree of politicization or de-politicization of the pro/anti European issue and the degree of shaping of party competition within national party systems.

In this perspective, the economic cleavage proved to be more effective in influencing the process of de-structuration and re-shaping of European party systems, giving rise to intense social unrest, and leading to the affirmation of political extremism on both the right and the left side of political spectrum, which meant – in some case – the collapse of the entire party system.

In this framework, economic dimension confirmed its salience, at both individual and systemic level and it appears to have exacerbated a process already *in fieri*, related to the increase in electoral volatility (Dassonneville, 2013) and the progressive erosion of traditional party cleavages and the long-term identities associated to them (Franklin, 1992).

Summarizing, the economic crisis, the disenchantment of citizens with political parties, the emergence of anti-party attitudes, and the growing incidence of more general dissatisfaction and anti-establishment attitudes have contributed in shaping the condition of emersion of these new actors and patterns of competition

Further directions of research should be directed on a deeper analysis of cross-national differences in political trust and support for anti-EU parties, beyond the cleavage between *winners* and *losers* of economic integration. We suggest some ways to continue the search for the mechanism underlying trust in institutions and voting choice.

The first one would be by enriching the model with more individual-level variables, possibly related to *post-materialistic* values and attitudes: media consumption, social trust and personal happiness, among the others.

The second innovation, at the country-level, would be to enrich cross-national analysis with a *political culture* approach, with aggregate indicators of regime performance and expected trust in different institutional and cultural contexts.

Finally, a further direction of analysis should involve the issue ownership voting and its direct impact on the electoral success of these anti-EU parties, on important issues such as migration and attitudes towards the EU project.

Chapter 6

A threat from below? Critical citizenship in times of economic crisis. A tale from European Countries.

The debate on the state of health of contemporary advanced democracies has acquired crucial importance in the last decades.

The veritable augmentation of the number of democratic regimes around the world, accompanied by the spread of post-materialistic values - that emphasize self-expression and quality of life over economic and physical security - have opened the door to a number of questions about the internal functioning of democratic regimes and the quality of their performances (Diamond and Morlino 2005; Morlino 2011).

Contemporary representative democracy is founded on the basic idea that citizens choose representatives who will advance the interests of their constituents or of the country (Manin, 1997; Manin et al., 1999; Pitkin, 1967). Parties play a crucial role in the affirmation of this democratic method: “Parties make for a “system”, then only when they are parts (in the plural); and a party system is precisely the *system of interactions* resulting from inter-party competition. That is, the system in question bears on the relatedness of parties to each other, on how each party is a function (in the mathematical sense) of the other parties and reacts, competitively or otherwise, to the other parties” (Sartori, 1976, p.44).

More recently, the growing disaffection towards political parties – and, more in general, representative institutions - has become a core

theme of the debate around the state of performance of contemporary democracies. Diamond and Gunther (2001) underline a fundamental paradox, which characterizes the “third wave of global democratization”. On the one hand, there’s the continuing or even increasing centrality of political parties as key institutions of modern democracy; on the other one, contemporary parties have shown an increasing failure to perform their core representational and governmental functions, seen as essential to a healthy performance of democracy.

The growing dissatisfaction about representative institutions and their performance have led some authors to talk about *democratic deficit*, to identify the growing gap between citizens’ evaluation of democracies and their actual functioning. Pippa Norris (1999; 2011) talks about a “critical citizen syndrome”, characterized by a bi-directional process: on the one hand, citizens in advanced industrial democracies have a high level of commitment or support for democracy as a system and democratic values and procedures; on the other hand, the very same citizens show a constant tendency to be negative or critical toward the existing regime and political institutions.

The present dissertation adopts as a reference point the theoretical framework developed by Pippa Norris to investigate the political and economic determinants of system support and democratic responsiveness, conceived as “the capacity of government to satisfy the governed by executing its policies in a way that corresponds to their demands” (Morlino, 2011, p. 208) with a focus upon representative institutions (political parties, parliaments, politicians).

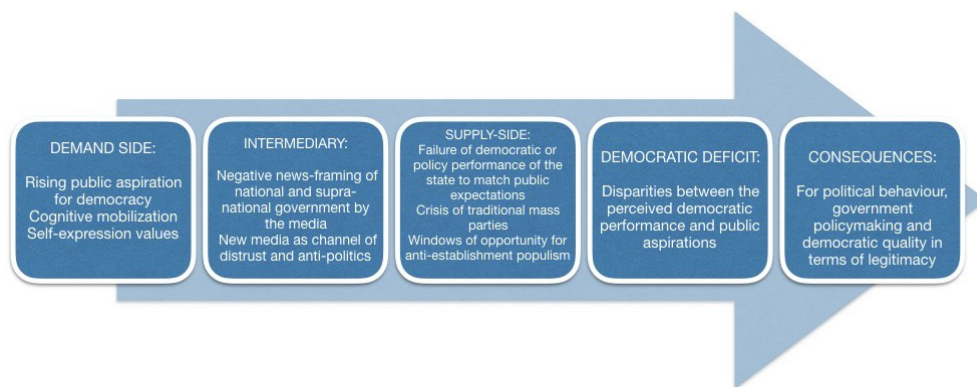


Figure 6.1 General model of democratic deficits. Personal elaborations on Norris, 2011.

Essentially, according to this general perspective, there is a causal mechanism at the roots of the so-called democratic deficit, which can be explained, in Norris' view, by the combined interaction of rising expectations, negative news, and failing performance and whose consequences involve the process through which people think about politics, become politically engaged, and make their political decisions.

As we have already recalled in this work, the dimension of support for political actors and institutions is one of the components of the more general framework of system support that was firstly established by David Easton in 1965 as "*the conviction on the part of the member that it is right and proper for him to accept and obey the authorities and to abide by the requirements of the regime*" (p. 278).

In this sense, the concept of democratic legitimacy involves different objects and dimensions. The framework offered by David Easton first distinguishes between *generalized* or *diffuse* support and *specific* support.

The dimension of diffuse support involves the democratic ideals and feelings of identity; its sedimented nature, “representing as it does attachment to political objects [such as regimes] for their own sake, will not be easily dislodged because of current dissatisfaction with what the government does” (Easton 1975, p. 445). On the other side, the evaluation of democratic performance should clearly affect *specific support*, directed to “the perceived decisions, policies, actions, utterances or the general style of (...) authorities” (Easton 1975: 437). Of course, citizens’ conceptions of democracy and evaluation are deeply intertwined in a mutual relationship, which could activate, at least at theoretical level, a spill-over effect. Since the two mechanisms may operate simultaneously, in fact, citizens with higher (maximalist) conceptions about democracy (Kriesi and Morlino, 2016) could be more sensitive to poor temporary democratic performances. In other words, if we assume that in high – quality democracies citizens are able to “perform a rational calculation of whether the authorities’ actions address their needs and demands” (Torcal and Moncagatta 2011: 2564), then the long-term consequences of low specific support could involve democratic legitimacy in its broader conception.

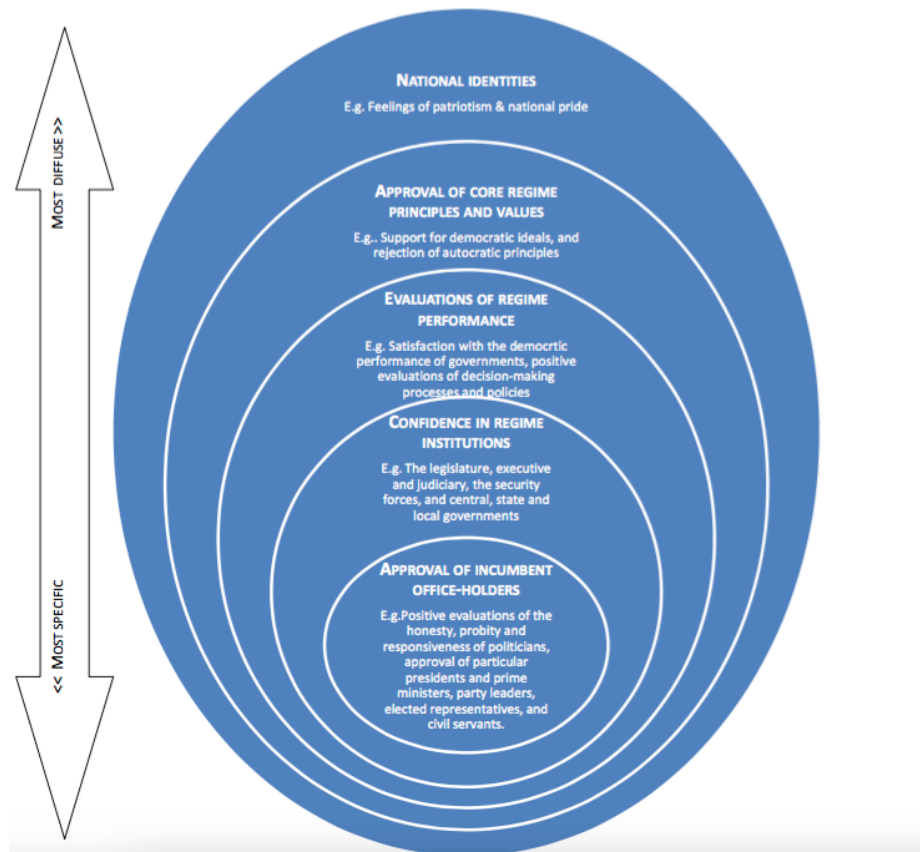


Figure 6.2 Indicators of system support. Source: Norris 2011.

Starting from the literature on the field, the work aimed at answering to the following questions, by following both the demand-side and supply-side of the model:

- What is the relationship between party closeness, cognitive mobilization and system support in Europe? Did this relationship change following the recent economic crisis?

- Secondly, the work investigated whether the recent sovereign debt crisis beginning and the implementation of tough austerity measures or programmes for structural reforms of the welfare state and labour market have affected citizens' perception of democracy,

with reference, in particular, to specific political trust and support for democratic institutions. In this framework, the dissertation dealt with the impact of external constraints on domestic policy making in order to verify whether the loss of political manoeuvrability to external actors, such as EU and IMF, have affected European citizens' democratic evaluation in terms of trust and support to both national and European institutions.

- Finally, the work was focused, on the supply-side of the model, upon the role of institutional factors, related to the degree of traditional party systems de-structuration and instability. Here, the work hypothesized a cross-level interaction between the degree of de-structuration of party systems, different level of political support of so-called *critical citizens*, and, consequently, different patterns of political behaviour in terms of electoral choice. The aim of this section was, in other words, to determine whether electoral choice is to some extent affected by the political opportunity structure. In theory, following the literature, we expected a strong correlation between support for protest parties and political dissatisfaction, and the dynamics of channelling discontent through protest parties should have been facilitated by both political and economic variables. In particular, following the literature about Europeanisation, we hypothesize the economic crisis and the loss of political manoeuvrability to external European actors to have affected parties and party systems in terms of patterns of party competition, following Peter Mair's paradigm (2000), according to which the first direct effect of EU integration upon parties and party-systems had to be the emergence of new anti- European cleavage, capable of offering to newly arising issues a more or less stable "structure of political alternatives" (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967).

The dissertation adopted a Most Similar System Design

(Przeworski and Teune, 1970) and integrated individual-level data provided by European Social Survey with country-level economic and systemic indicators from cross-national datasets. In order to parameterize the key features of our case studies we only took into account consolidated European democracies and therefore: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, (Norway)³², Portugal, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

The debate about critical citizens has been organised around two main directions; some scholars, in fact, inserted the development of dissatisfied democrats in a broader perspective, linked to the development of post-materialistic values, the diffusion of welfare state as well as media pluralistic systems and universal education. In this framework, the gap between higher expectations about democratic functioning and day-by-day performance of institutional arrangements have been considered as a function of citizenship's evolution, according an evolutionary approach. In this perspective, as we have recalled before in this work, critical citizens have been considered as an asset of contemporary democracies: to use Klingemann's words, *"The fact of dissatisfaction does not imply danger to the persistence or furtherance of democracy. A significant number of people spread around the world can be labelled 'dissatisfied democrats' /.../ The dissatisfied democrats can be viewed as less a threat to, than a force for, reform and improvement of democratic processes and structures"* (1999, p. 32).

Not by coincidence Russell Dalton, among the others, attributes to this new kind of citizenship the ability to orientate themselves in the world of politics without relying on traditional party cues; on the

³² Norway has been excluded from Chapter 5 analysis since it is not a member state of the European Union (EU).

contrary, they would develop a *cognitive mobilization*, conceived as the cultural and political ability of high-status, sophisticated, citizens, to abandon partisanship.

The present dissertation follows a more critical perspective: to use Morlino's words, "*the idea that educated, informed, and politically engaged citizens always know their own needs and desires is at best an assumption, especially tenuous in situations where citizens might need specialized knowledge to accurately identify and evaluate those very needs and desires*" (Morlino, 2011, p. 209).

Therefore, within this perspective, the work explored the growing scepticism towards political institutions – expressed by party dealignment and discontent with the functioning of democracy – as a possible threat to representative democracy and the development of critical citizenship as a potential, growing, electoral constituency of widespread populist parties in Europe.

6.1 Main findings

The present dissertation started with a brief review of the literature about the transformation of citizenship in contemporary industrial democracies, from the process of party dealignment and cognitive mobilization to the more general framework of political trust and system support.

In this perspective, the analysis of democratic dissatisfaction has been inserted in the broader framework of *democratic quality*, conceived as "*a stable institutional structure that realizes the liberty and equality of citizens through the legitimate and correct functioning of its institutions and mechanisms*" (Morlino, 2011, p. 195). Within this framework, the operationalization of specific political trust followed the conceptualization of *democratic responsiveness*

proposed by Morlino as an indicator of a broadly legitimated regime, that completely satisfies citizens (*quality in terms of result*). According this methodology, the most effective method for measuring responsiveness are: (1) to examine the citizens' perception of responsiveness, that is the diffusion of attitudes favourable to the existing democratic institutions and the approval of their activities; (2) to identify the limits a government to respond to the needs of its citizenship as in terms of resources' scarcity (2011, p.220). In this way, the work firstly looked at the individual and systemic determinants of political trust, while keeping into consideration a specific time-frame, that of the economic crisis, which imposed to European countries economic constraints and forced European advanced democracies – perhaps more dramatically than ever – to face a reduced space for political manoeuvres in a multi-level context and to deal with increased dissatisfaction and electoral instability.

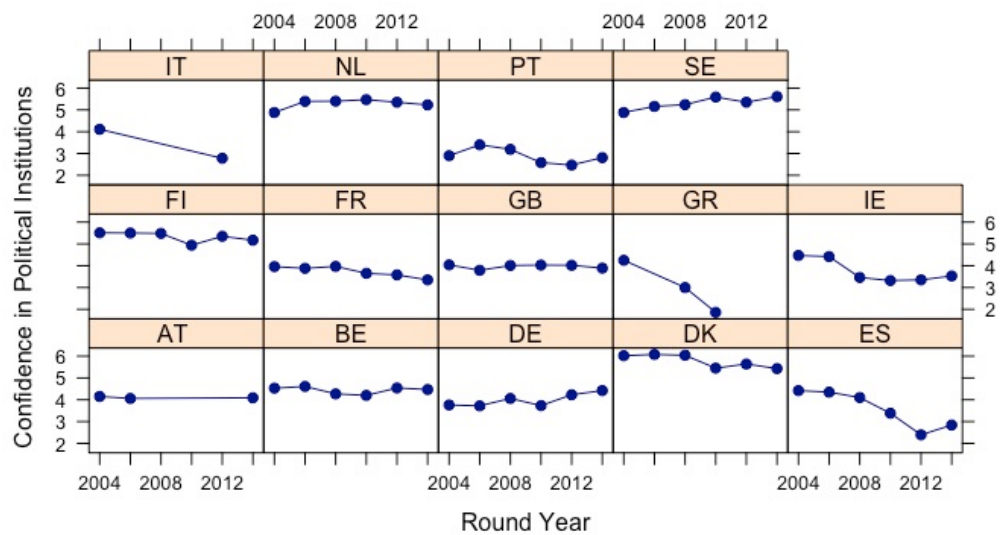
The cross-national trends in trust for political institutions³³ (treated as a unique, continuous variable, due to their high correlation) gave us some indication of interest.

First of all, in the decade around the EU financial and economic crisis, specifically support has not dropped uniformly in Western EU countries (cfr figure 6.3 and figure 6.4). Vice versa, clearer patterns of decline could be identified with reference to Southern European Countries, such as Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal, with analogue tendency – and even higher coefficients - with reference to trust in European parliament. In all these countries, the Economic hardship was accompanied by a political instability, with recent electoral success - at both European and National level - of *outsider* forces. In this perspective, the growing frustration by the vast majority of the

³³ In particular, the indicators used were: trust in Parliaments, in Politicians and in Political Parties. For more details, see chapter 4.

Southern European countries' electorate towards the continuing policies of austerity and fiscal discipline imposed by EU institutions, and accepted by traditional parties, has been accompanied, in parallel, by a process of internal devaluation which hit the middle class and the lower strata of the population, giving rise to extreme unemployment and limited spending.

Figure 6.3 Trust in Political Institutions, 2004-2014. Source: ESS.



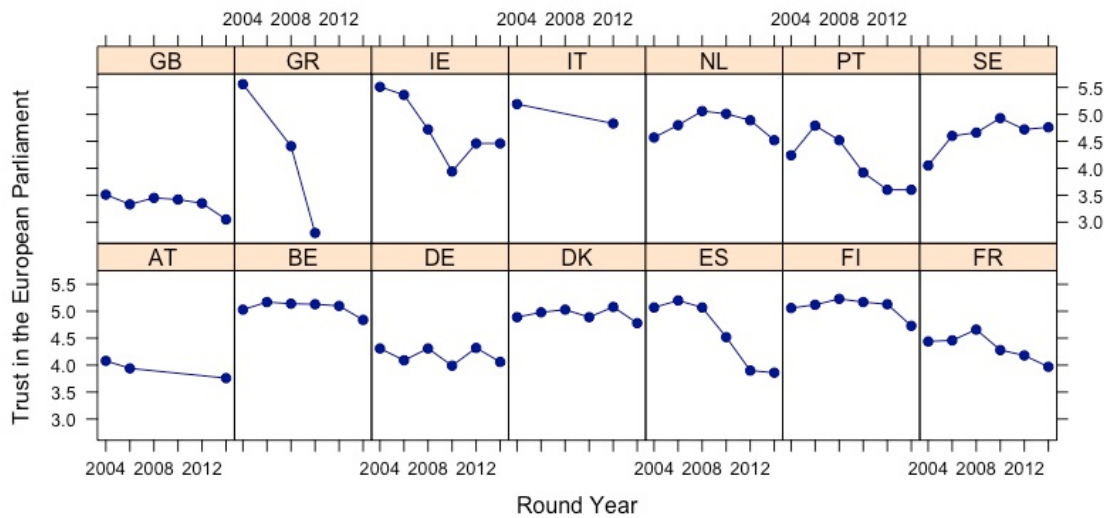


Figure 6.4 Trust in European parliament, 2004-2014. Source: ESS.

This is why our multilevel linear models investigated primary – at both the individual and systemic level – the hypothesis of a cleavage between *winners and losers* of Economic Integration.

The results of our models³⁴ seem to confirm the theoretical hypothesis: following a pattern already defined by the literature, the strongest evidence of the economic cleavage has been found in the individual-level relationship and economic performance – expressed by individuals' economic satisfaction - confirmed itself as a driving force in strengthening system support. In other words, winners in society tend to support the institutions that facilitated their success and satisfied their demands. These findings can be inserted in the broader framework offered by social-dominance theory, according to which high-status individuals have higher stakes in the institutional arrangements that constitutes the status quo in their society (Sidanius, Pratto, 1999).

Furthermore, with reference to cross-national perspective, the

³⁴ For more details about the model and complete data see Chapter 4.

presence of explicit programs of economic conditionality driven by EU institutions contributed to the mitigation of the role of individual determinants related to economic wellbeing. Vice versa, in countries free from EU conditionality and with higher performances on public expenditures and lower deficits, economic perception was reinforced and it turned out to be a stronger predictor of system support. In parallel, cultural determinants, related to political sophistication and closeness to political parties seemed to have a role in predicting support for democratic system, independently from the implementation of direct conditionality measures. Finally, the chapter tested for interaction terms of economic satisfaction and political closeness with the EU crisis. The results suggest that the economic crisis somewhat exacerbated the role of evaluative indicators (such as economic evaluation) on trust in representative institutions. Conversely, cultural and political determinants (such as political interest and party closeness) seemed to be less relevant in time of economic hardship.

Chapter 5 investigated both the political consequences of political trust, according to a *political opportunity structure* approach. In other words, assuming that citizens' preferences are coherent enough to allow one to speak in a meaningful way of "what they want" and to evaluate responsiveness accordingly, we took into consideration, as suggested by many, (Miller and Lishtaug, 1990, Powell, 2004), the party-choice side of the structuring problem, that is how party systems allow citizens to express their preferences.

In this perspective, chapter 5 adopted logistic regression models³⁵ in order to investigate the relationship between political trust and attitudes towards EU in terms of support for anti-European parties, a common features of EU party systems in last decades.

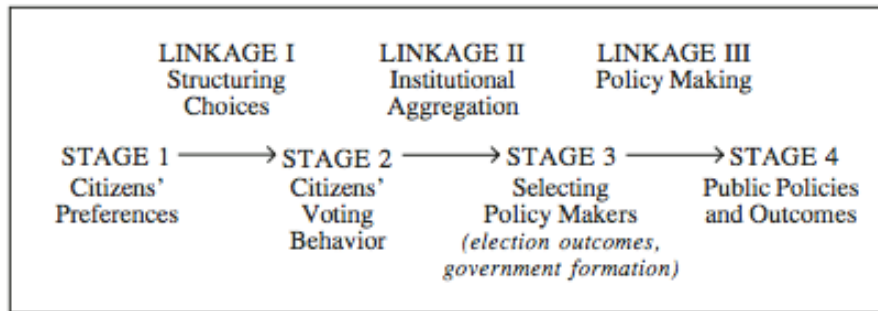


Figure 6.5 The chain of responsiveness. Stages and Linkages. Source: Powell 2004.

We are here at linkage 1 of the “chain of responsiveness” (see figure 5) as theorized by Powell (2004), which connects the preferences of citizens to their behaviour in elections. At systemic level, as recognised by the same Powell (2004, p. 94), there are some conditions to be fulfilled, with reference to supply side of the model: first of all, the existence of a coherent national policy offerings, through nationally organized political parties or coalitions.

Secondly, there needs to be some degree of stability in the party offerings and levels of support, in order for voters to vote rationally in using elections to support their policy preferences. Finally, according to this model, the main competitors on the field should offer reasonable alternatives of some kind - at least between incumbents and credible opponents -. In this way, the recognizability of party

³⁵ The choice of a model was due to the binary nature of dependent variable, and namely vote for anti-EU party. For more details about the methodology and its limitations, see Chapter 5.

responsibility would “enable voters to exercise retrospective “vertical” accountability by punishing incumbents who fail to keep their promises” (*ibidem*).

In this perspective, the support for anti-systemic parties rely upon the complex interaction of public demand and party supply under “conditions of imperfect competition in a regulated electoral marketplace” (Norris, 2004, p.5).

In order to test our hypothesis, we firstly dealt with individual determinants. Again, economic determinants empirically proved their salience at individual level: low levels of trust for both national political institutions (parliament, political parties and politicians) and European ones revealed to be related to support for these party organizations, with higher coefficients with trust in EP as determinant. On the systemic side, the interaction between institutional confidence and EU crisis showed how the emergence of the financial and economic crisis increased the effect of both institutional trust and trust in the EP upon the probability to vote for an anti-EU party.

At the country-level, the results of the models showed how the degree of polarization of party systems is related to support for protest parties in time of political dissatisfaction: as suggested by the literature, the ideological convergence of main competitors reduced the possibility to identify who exactly is responsible for the state of affairs in a political system and might have provided a breeding ground for populist, anti-EU parties. In a situation of multilevel governance and party systems instability, in other words, the degree of polarization, more than the number of effective political parties or the electoral formula, resulted more conducive to the success of new parties. As suggested by Miller and Lishtagh (1990), protest parties were used, therefore, to channel economic and political discontent back into the decision - making arena, and Europe provided the

ideological platform to express the manifold facets of frustration of dissatisfied democrats. The same mechanism, as we have seen in the models, seemed to have affected the mechanics of party systems, related to the impact of Europeanisation on the ideological distance or on the patterns of competition among parties.

Having a clear preference for a specific political party allows citizens to make choices in the political decision-making process, it provides them with (more or less stable) cues and party closeness can serve as a cost-saving device which is functional to the stability of the entire system (cfr Hooghe and Kern, 2014), since it consents the institutionalisation of new political issues and demands.

In this way, new political actors, based on populist mobilization, succeed in affirming with more or less stable organizations, by appealing to the “cultural anxieties” of the losers, thus contributing to the transformation of party systems in time of dissatisfaction and high volatility.

6.2 Where do we go now? Future perspectives of research.

The present dissertation, far from exhausting the debate on the subject, wanted to contribute to the literature about critical citizenship by adopting a cross-national approach in a specific time-frame, the years before and after the Economic crisis that affected European democracies since 2008. As recognised by many, the prevailing approach, in literature, has been focused upon the individual characteristics; this methodology has lead to “the neglect of so-called ‘cross-level interactions’ (...) which has often led to weak, inconclusive or contradictory results” (Kriesi and Morlino, 2016, p. 321).

The work tries to expand the literature by adopting a multi-level approach in a Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD). This approach consented to reduce the variance at country-level, while testing for systemic determinants of political trust as well as for the impact of democratic evaluations upon the political behaviour of Europeans.

The results indicated the salience of an economic-cleavage between winners and losers of economic integration, with economic determinant as primary definer of system support and lower propensity to vote for anti-EU parties. In this perspective, the individual socio-position of citizens seemed to have a role in facilitating this mechanism; on the other side, victims of asymmetrical economic developments – at both individual and country level – seemed to constitute the electoral ground that helped the anti-EU, populist parties to set themselves out in most European party systems.

Here, the rise and development of anti-EU parties can be framed as a result from the “functional/economic divide between groups whose economic interests are threatened or fostered by integration. It can also be conceptualized as a cultural opposition to Brussels' bureaucracy and its standardizing practices, administrative procedures and political culture” (Bartolini, 2005, p.240).

In this perspective, Taggart's postulate, (1998), according to which there's a very strong link between the adoption of Eurosceptic position and the status of a party as a peripheral party, seems to be partly overcome, and further directions of analysis would both involve the supply and the demand side of this model.

A first expansion of the present analysis could imply the extension of the model to other countries – e.g. Eastern European ones –, to test for relevance of systemic determinants such as the age of democracy, levels of corruption, the structure of governments or the degree of freedom of the media. This expansion would consent, in a

comparative perspective, to measure determinants of political trust also in countries which have not yet joined the European Union as well as attitudes towards accession to EU. Such an extended sample would provide useful information about the perception of EU legitimacy in Countries not yet affected by direct EU policy or conditionality; it would be possible, in this way, to identify additional and specific contextual characteristics that may account for the cross-national variation in democratic responsiveness and specific support, as well as for different political consequences.

Such an expansion would help in reducing the methodological issues we have dealt with in Chapter Five, related to the employ of multilevel logistic models with such limited number of cases (cfr Bryan and Jenkins 2016), which usually provide imprecise estimates of the variance components at country-level (cfr chapter 5).

Another perspective of analysis would involve time. The dissertation is focused upon a very narrow time-frame (about 10 years) and involves almost all data provided by the European Social Survey – except for round 1, which did not include the very same set of indicators.

However, in order to expand country-comparison over time, it could be possible to refer to national surveys, with comparable items. This time-extension would give the possibility to assess the middle-term consequences of the Great Recession upon democratic legitimacy and support for challenger parties and their strategies of mobilization.

In parallel, a more extended time perspective would give insight about the degree of institutionalisation of the European cleavage within European party systems. In other words, if the economic crisis, the disenchantment of citizens with political parties, the emergence of anti-party attitudes, and the growing incidence of more general

dissatisfaction and anti-establishment attitudes have contributed in shaping the condition of emersion of these new actors and patterns of competition, further directions of research would necessary involve the long-term consequences of the Great Recession on the state of health of representative democracy and its traditional institutions. The data provided in these pages showed how dissatisfied democrats do not chose predominantly to withdraw from democratic politics. Vice versa, they seem to be looking for new democratic choices (Dalton, 2007). If contemporary representative democracies will be able to implement fundamental reforms in their democratic processes, and whether these reforms will be eventually enough to ensure their own survival: these will be the questions Western political science will have to deal with in further decades.

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