



The Eurozone crisis: also a crisis of trust?

*An analysis of the link between the Eurozone crisis
and citizens' trust in the European Parliament.*

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Abstract

The Eurozone crisis has manifested itself differently in different euro zone countries. The input-legitimacy of the European Union is deteriorating and it might be argued that this is connected to the occurrence of this Eurozone crisis. However, the declining levels of trust in the EU, the used indicator for input-legitimacy, differ among the countries and this might be caused by other factors than the crisis. Therefore in this research project, an attempt is made to explain these differences by means of empirically investigating factors on country and individual level and within the domestic context. It turns out that the investigated variables have a low impact on the relationship between the level of trust and the Eurozone crisis. It is also argued that the role of the media and domestic politicians, which is not part of this research, is worth studying.

Acknowledgements

Hereby the report of a rounded off Master thesis is presented. What initially seemed to be the most difficult stage of my Master in International Public Management and Policy, namely to produce a solid research project in a relative short amount of time, turned out to be a period during which I learned a lot and, most importantly, it turned out to be a period which I really enjoyed.

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Table of contents

1. Introduction	8
1.1 Problem analysis	8
1.2 Academic relevance	9
1.3 Practical relevance	9
1.4 Research questions	10
1.5 Overview of the chapters	10
2. Key concepts	12
2.1 Legitimacy	12
2.2 The legitimacy of the European Union	13
2.3 Citizens' trust as the indicator of input legitimacy	13
2.4 The European Parliament	15
2.5 Citizens' trust in the European Parliament	15
3. Theory and hypotheses	16
3.1 General theories of people's attitudes towards politics	16
3.2 Explaining trust at the national level	17
3.3 Explaining trust at the individual level	19
3.4 Explaining trust within the domestic context	21
3.5 Flow chart	24
4. Operationalization, measurement	25
4.1 Unit of Analysis	25
4.2 Operationalization and measurement	25
4.2.1 Independent variable: the Eurozone crisis	25
4.2.2 Dependent variable: Citizens' trust in European Parliament	27
4.2.3 Moderating variable: Indirect and direct benefits from EU membership	29
4.2.4 Moderating variable: The economic starting point of the country	30
4.2.5 Moderating variable: Individual educational level	31
4.2.6 Moderating variable: Individual political awareness	32
4.2.7 Moderating variable: Euroscepticism of domestic political parties	33
5. Research design	34
5.1 The multiple-case study	34
5.2 Methods of inquiry	35
5.2.1 Data collection	35
5.2.2 Data analysis	36
6. Case selection and the introduction of the cases	38
6.1 Case selection	38
6.2 Introduction of the cases	39
6.2.1 Spain	40
6.2.2 Portugal	41
6.2.2 Greece	42
7. Citizens' trust in European Parliament	44
7.1 Eurobarometer	44

7.2	ESS	45
7.3	Differences and similarities between the surveys	46
7.4	The decline of citizens' trust in other European institutions	46
8.	Spain	48
8.1	Benefits from EU membership	48
8.2	Economic starting point	49
8.3	The educational level	49
8.4	Individual political awareness	50
8.5	Euroscepticism of the Spanish political parties	51
8.5.1	Share of votes of the Spanish political parties	54
9.	Portugal	55
9.1	Benefits from EU membership	55
9.2	Economic starting point	56
9.3	The educational level	56
9.4	Individual political awareness	57
9.5	Euroscepticism of the Portugese political parties	58
9.5.1	Share of votes of the Portugese political parties	60
10.	Greece	61
10.1	Benefits from EU membership	61
10.2	Economic starting point	62
10.3	The educational level	62
10.4	Individual political awareness	63
10.5	Euroscepticism of the Greek political parties	64
10.5.1	Share of votes of the Greek political parties	66
11.	The countries compared	67
11.1	Benefits from EU membership	67
11.2	Economic starting point	67
11.3	Individual educational level	68
11.4	Individual political awareness	69
11.5	Euroscepticism of the Greek political parties	70
12.	Conclusion	72
12.1	Sub questions	72
12.2	Central research question	74
12.3	Recommendations	76
12.4	Reflection	76
13.	List of references	78
14.	Annexes	88

Abbreviations

B.E.	Bloco de Esquerda
BNG	Bloque Nacionalista Gallego
CDS-PP	Partido Popular (Portugal)
CDU	Coligação Democrática Unitária
CiU	Convergència i Unió
CC	Coalición Canaria
EAJ-BNP	Partido Nacionalista Vasco
ECB	European Central Bank
EEC	European Economic Community
EP	European Parliament
ERC	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya
ESM	European Stability Mechanism
ETA	Euskadi Ta Askatasuna
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IU	Izquierda Unida
KKE	Kommunistiko Komma Elladas
LAOS	Laikós Orthódoxos Synagermós
MS	Member states of the European Union
ND	Nea Dhimokratia
Pasok	Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima
PCP	Partido Comunista Português
PEV	Partido Ecologista "Os Verdes"
PS	Partido Socialista
PSD	Partido Social Democrata
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español
PP	Partido Popular (Spain)
Syriza	Synaspismós Rizospastikís Aristerás
UPyD	Unión Progreso y Democracia

List of figures, graphs and tables

Figure 1. Different levels of explaining citizens' trust in EU

Figure 2. Flow chart

Figure 3. Relationship between hypotheses

Figure 4. Spain

Figure 5. Regions of Spain

Figure 6. Main characteristics of Spain

Figure 7. Portugal

Figure 8. Regions of Portugal

Figure 9. Main characteristics of Portugal

Figure 10. Greece

Figure 11. Regions of Greece

Figure 12. Main characteristics of Greece

Graph 1. Net trust in European Parliament in EU15 (Eurobarometer)

Graph 2. Net trust in European Parliament in Greece, Portugal and Spain (Eurobarometer)

Graph 3. Net trust in European Parliament in EU15 (ESS)

Graph 4. Net trust in European Parliament in Greece, Portugal, and Spain (ESS)

Graph 5. Average net transfers from EU budget as percentage of country's GDP

Graph 6, 7. Import from and export to EU countries as % of total import of the country

Graph 8, 9, 10, 11. The economic starting point

Graph 12. Educational level in Spain

Graph 13, 14, 15, 16. Spain: Political awareness

Graph 17. Average net transfer from EU budget as percentage of country's GDP

Graph 18, 19. Import from and export to EU countries as % of total import of the country

Graphs 20, 21, 22, 23. The economic starting point

Graph 24. Educational level in Portugal

Graph 25, 26, 27, 28. Portugal: Political awareness

Graph 29. Average net transfers from EU budget as percentage of country's GDP

Graph 30, 31. Import from and export to EU countries as % of total import of the country

Graph 32, 33, 34, 35. The economic starting point

Graph 36. Educational level in Greece

Graph 37, 38, 39, 40. Greece: Political awareness

Graph 41, 42, 43. Net trust in European Commission, ECB and Council of the EU in EU15

Table 1. Cumulative share of the vote for party based Euroscepticism in Spanish parliamentary elections for lower chamber

Table 2. Cumulative share of the vote for party based Euroscepticism in Portuguese parliamentary elections for lower chamber

Table 3. Cumulative share of the vote for party based Euroscepticism in Greek parliamentary elections for lower chamber

Table 4. Hard or soft Eurosceptic political parties in Spain, Portugal and Greece.

Table 5. Cumulative share of the vote for Eurosceptic parties in parliamentary elections for lower chamber

Table 6. Factors influencing the relationship between the Eurozone crisis and the decline in the Spanish, Portuguese and Greek citizens' trust in EP.

1. Introduction

'Citizens from many member states are losing trust. But let's face the issue: is it just trust regarding Europe, or is it a more complex and deeper problem of trust in the political or financial elites? There is a gap that is widening between the men and women on the streets and the leaders. But at the same time, the crisis showed our interdependence, and showed how connected we are. So that is why I really believe that we need to address this issue of democracy and legitimacy.' (European Commission President Barroso, during the Ombudsman seminar 'Europe in crisis: the challenge of winning citizens' trust' 24 April 2012)

During the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the later European Union (EU), the founders aimed at creating a European project being democratic and legitimate. Concerns about a lack of democracy and legitimacy were first expressed during the creation of the Single European Act in 1986. By then, especially policy-makers and politicians argued that that the EU had now received more powers which were not sufficient controlled by the European Parliament (EP) or by the judicial branch (Hix, 2008: 67). Over the years, these concerns became louder and especially at times when significant decisions need to be taken at the European level, these questions revives. Currently, European leaders try to find a way to solve the Eurozone crisis, while the average EU citizen often does not even understand what this crisis is about. Consequently, the decisions made by European policy-makers with regard to the crisis, may not be totally understood by all European citizens.

The founding of the EU has both been praised and cursed. Many if not most decisions impacting particular member states (MS) and even particular European citizens are taken in Brussels, which makes it indispensable that the EU is both democratic and legitimate. Nevertheless, it is often argued that the EU is not democratic at all since only the European Parliament is democratically chosen. This infringes the legitimacy of the EU, whereby other forms of legitimacy must be sought: the trust of EU citizens in Europe. This trust might be influenced by a variety of factors.

One of these eventual factors which is studied in this research is the Eurozone crisis, also often referred to as the Euro-crisis. Nevertheless, the term Euro-crisis is misleading as the crisis does not focus solely on the euro itself. The crisis is rather an economic and political crisis of the European currency area. Economically, it is a European sovereign debt crisis. From a political perspective, it is the inability of Europe's political institutions to deal with the crisis properly and quickly and a third aspect emerges from the former two, namely a crisis of trust (Scholz, 2011). Given the lasting of the current Eurozone crisis and the amount of decisions taken at the European level to solve the crisis, it is likely that this might influence the opinions and trust citizens have in Europe. Nevertheless, one should be careful linking the crisis directly to the citizen's trust and should take into account other factors influencing citizens' trust.

1.1 Aim of the research

The Eurozone crisis has manifested itself differently in different euro area countries. The legitimacy of the European Union is deteriorating and it might be argued that this is connected to the occurrence of this Eurozone crisis. As the crisis was heating up, the level of trust dropped in almost all of the EU15 Member States. Overall, levels of trust

are heterogeneous across these Member States (see chapter 7) and not all of these countries experienced an immediate drop in the level of trust at the start of the Eurozone crisis in 2008. Consequently, the overall decline in trust cannot be explained solely by the occurrence of the crisis (Bursian & Fürth, 2012). Therefore in this research project, an attempt is made to explain these differences by means of empirically investigating factors on country and individual level and within the domestic context.

In order to try to solve the Eurozone crisis, EU politicians need to make decisions. These decisions are mostly received by the public as unpopular, which in turn questions to what extent the citizens' trust is effected by these decisions and the crisis in general. As said, a decline of citizens' trust implies a decline of democratic accountability within the EU. Also, a lack of trust undermines the legitimacy of these institutions. Without being legitimate, the EU would not have a right to exist. The citizen's trust is therefore crucial, and it is of great importance to know the factors this trust is based on. Therefore, the main question in this research is:

**Can the decrease of legitimacy of the European Union
be explained by the Eurozone crisis?**

1.2 Problem analysis

As just mentioned, without being legitimate, the EU would not have a right to exist. Over the years, especially at times when significant decisions which influences the European citizens need to be taken at the European level, it is debated to what extent the EU can be considered democratic and legitimate:

'Trust is an issue when you realize it matters. Trust wasn't an issue until the EU actually was perceived as being important and started deciding things that matters in people's lives. It is similar to the Spiderman principle: with great power comes great responsibility.. So with power comes the need to get trusted' (Respondent 2).

The relationship between citizens and EU institutions can be described as a principal-agent model, whereby citizens are the principal and EU institutions the agent. In the domestic context, citizens will vote for change when they lose confidence in the ability of the political party to carry out its mandate. Although EU citizens can only vote during EP elections, the EU institutions still must earn the trust of citizens, they must maintain it, and they must do so on the basis of observable factors (Wälti, 2011: 1, 2).

1.3 Academic relevance

This research tries to provide insight and give a better understanding of public trust in European institutions, and in particular the EP. This is done through presenting empirical evidence on the eventual factors influencing citizens' trust in the European Parliament.

It is argued by Ehrmann, Soudan & Stracca (2010) that the crisis has an immense impact on public opinion in at least two dimensions. From an economical perspective, the crisis caused a reduction of consumer confidence and spending. Second, the crisis has led to a *'reconsideration of long-held beliefs about the role of the market and the state as well as of the public image of financial intermediaries and central banks'* (Ehrmann, Soudan & Stracca, 2010). These two dimensions are important and have been subject of

the media and in the public debates. Surprisingly, there is very little empirical evidence available on the effect of the crisis on public opinion and citizens' trust in the EU institutions. Most of the research related to this subject, focuses on trust in the ECB (see for example Roth, 2009; Gros & Roth, 2010; Ehrmann, Soudan & Stracca, 2010; Wälti, 2011). Besides, most researchers mainly pay attention to the financial crisis rather than the Eurozone crisis or combining them. Also, the scope of the analysis is quite limited, not all levels (country and individual level, domestic context) are taken into consideration or combined with each other. For example, Roth (2009) noted an erosion of trust in European institutions, but did not explain them by using personal or country characteristics. Hellwig and Coffey (2009) studied the effect of the financial crisis on the British public opinion. They found that education and political orientation influences citizens' perception of who is to blame for the crisis. However, the scope of their analysis is quite limited.

1.4 Practical relevance

In the absence of citizens' trust in (policy-making) institutions, the legitimacy of those institutions is endangered and the probability that citizens commence to undermine the authority of those institutions becomes more likely (Roth et al, 2011b). If it turns out that trust in Europe is eroded as a result of the Eurozone crisis (or as a result of other factors studied) and the reasons for this erosion are understood, measures can be developed that will address those reasons. Given that anything decided on EU level to address the crises needs to be endorsed by national governments and parliaments, it is important to take measures that can count on maximum support of the EU countries' civilians.

1.5 Sub questions

In order to answer the main research question stated above, several sub questions need to be answered before:¹

1. What is the Eurozone crisis?
2. What is the role of the European Parliament within the European Union?
3. What is the position of Greece, Spain and Italy in the Eurozone crisis?
4. What is the theoretical answer for differences in EP support?
5. Do the benefits achieved from EU membership influence the citizens' trust in EP?
6. Does the economic starting point influences the influence of the Eurozone crisis on the citizens' trust in EP?
7. Do individual characteristics influences citizens' trust in EP?
8. Does the Euroscepticism of the domestic of the domestic government influences citizens' trust in EP?

1.6 Overview of the chapters

This chapter focused on an introduction to the subject and the academic and practical relevance of this research.

¹ In the thesis proposal, the question 'To what extent are the outcomes of the case studies recognized by Spanish, Italian and Greek MEPs?' was included. It turned out that it was not beneficial to only talk with MEPs about this project. Besides, it is chosen to include the outcomes of the interviews throughout the thesis, rather than discussing these outcomes in one particular chapter. Therefore, the question is left out. Also, 'To what extent does the Eurozone crisis influences the citizens' trust in EP?' is left out, is this will be discussed when answering the main research question.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of the key concepts in order to better understand the research question and its core concepts. In chapter 3, an overview of general theories of people's attitudes towards politics is given. Studies concerning support of and trust in the EU and the EP in particular are discussed. Also, the eventual factors influencing the legitimacy of the EP are here presented in the form of hypotheses. These several hypotheses are based on concepts, which need to be operationalized into indicators in order to measure them. This is done in chapter 4. Also, the measurement validity and reliability of the indicators is discussed. The chapter starts off with stating the unit of analysis.

In chapter 5, the design of this project is set out. This is done by showing why the multiple-case study is applied and why this design is preferred. The construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability of the multiple-case study are discussed, followed by an overview of how empirical data is gathered and analyzed. In chapter 6 is showed which cases in this research are chosen and for what reason. Also, the three cases are introduced.

Chapter 7 shows the decline of the European citizen's trust in European Parliament between 2005 and 2011. This is done by using the statistics of both the Eurobarometer and the ESS. Afterwards, similarities and differences between the two surveys and its outcomes will be discussed.

Chapter 8, 9 and 10 discusses to what extent the factors which might explain the decrease of legitimacy in the European Union can be found in successively Spain, Portugal and Greece. Data is provided and discussed, as well as the value of the several factors. The outcomes of these three chapters are compared and discussed in chapter 11.

At last, a conclusion is presented in chapter 12, followed by the list of references in chapter 13 and the annexes in chapter 14.

2. Key Concepts

To better understand the research question and its concepts, theoretical knowledge is provided in this chapter. First, the core concepts are provided, followed by an overview of general theories of people's attitudes towards politics. At last, studies concerning support of and trust in the European Union and the European Parliament in particular are discussed.

The main research question is *'Can the decrease of legitimacy of the European Union be explained by the Eurozone crisis?'*, whereby the question is narrowed down by focusing on the European Parliament and whereby citizens' trust is used as an indicator for legitimacy. These specifications are explained by means of presenting the main concepts related to the research question: (input) legitimacy, citizens' trust and the European Parliament. The Eurozone crisis, also part of the main research question, will be described in chapter 4.

2.1 Legitimacy

Before discussing the legitimacy of the European Union, it is explained what is meant with this concept. *Democratic legitimacy* is described by Suchman (1995: 574) as

'the assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable and fit within a structured system of social norms, values, beliefs and thoughts'.

A difference is made between input legitimacy, through-put and output legitimacy (Scharpf, 1970). *Input legitimacy* refers to a decision or an action which represents the preferences of the so-called 'target group'. Input legitimacy derives from *'government by the people'*, whereby citizens are able to articulate their will within policy-making. *Through-put legitimacy* deals with the quality of the decision-making process. *Output legitimacy* results from *'government for the people'* and this kind of legitimacy does not depend so much on the process of decision-making, but more on the quality of its final outcome. Political choices are legitimate if they effectively promote the common welfare of the constituency in question. It derives its legitimacy from *'its capacity to solve problems requiring collective solutions because they could not be solved through individual action, through market exchanges, or through voluntary cooperation in civil society'* (Scharpf, 1970).

The system theory designed by Easton (1957) tries to show why and how authoritative decisions are made and executed for a society. In a political system, inputs (demands or support) are given by the environment (citizens, lobby groups etcetera). These inputs are converted by the processes of the system into outputs (policies), which have in turn consequences both for the system and for the environment in which the system exists. These consequences then will lead to new inputs. The main idea of this theory is that the more the political system is able to listen to the inputs given by citizens, the more likely it is that the designed policy will represent the demands and wishes of the citizens. This in turn will increase the overall support for the political system (Easton, 1957).

Besides recognizing input, through-put, output, outcome legitimacy, a distinction can also be made between *indirect* and *direct* legitimacy. In multi-level governance systems such as the EU, decisions are often made by using co-operation mechanisms. Within these mechanisms, individual organizations are participating in the decision-

making. Here, the legitimacy of these decisions itself is not so much questioned, but the legitimacy question rather aims at the specific organizations involved. This is called indirect legitimacy (Bekkers et al., 2007: 46).

2.2 The legitimacy of the European Union

For more than two decades academic and politicians are debating about whether the EU, as currently designed, is a democratically legitimized system or not. Various authors have argued that there is a '*democratic deficit*' in the European Union (Milev, 2004: 10). The '*democratic deficit*' refers to the idea that the EU and its various bodies suffer from a lack of democracy and that these bodies seem inaccessible to the ordinary citizen because their method of operating is so complex. There is no single, precise definition of the democratic deficit, although a set of '*standard claims*' can be recognized (Hix, 2008). One of these claims is that there is a gap between the policies that citizens want and the policies they actually get, whereby EU adopts policies that are not supported by a majority of citizens in many or even most member states. This claim is challenged by Moravcsik (2002: 605):

'Constitutional checks and balances, indirect democratic control via national governments, and the increasing powers of the European Parliament are sufficient to ensure that EU policy-making is, in nearly all cases, transparent, effective and politically responsive to the demands of European citizens.'

Nevertheless, decisions at EU level are usually taken within technocratic, not democratically elected bodies such as expert committees or regulatory agencies, which are not directly accountable to EU citizens (Krapohl, 2007). The democratic deficit then refers to a perceived lack of accessibility to the ordinary citizen, and/or a lack of representation of the ordinary citizen, and/or a lack of accountability of EU institutions (Europa.eu, 2011).

Actions or decisions made by an EU institution are legitimate as long as sufficient support for that action or decision can be found among EU citizens. Legitimacy is an important concept: without being both input and output legitimate, the EU would not have a right to exist. Measuring output legitimacy is difficult, but should be done by examining the policymaking, process and implementation and by defining to what extent goals are reached. Defining to what extent the EU is '*input legitimate*' is even harder. Input-legitimacy can be reached by having the EU citizens participate, which is hard as there is a long distance between the average citizens and the decision-making process. The common view is that the European institutional set-up is dominated by the Council of the European Union, an institution combining legislative and government powers and the European Commission, an institution that lacks democratic legitimacy (Europa.eu, 2011). Both the Council and Commission represent the EU citizens indirectly. The one directly chosen EU body, the European Parliament, usually has a low turnout during elections which puts its democratic legitimacy into question.

2.3 Citizens' trust as the indicator of input legitimacy

Scharpf (1970; 1997) argues that under modern conditions, input legitimacy has come to rest almost exclusively on *trust in institutional arrangements* which should ensure that governing processes are representing the preferences of the governed. Social scientists from all fields agree that a sufficient level of institutional trust plays a crucial

part in the stability and maintenance of social, political and/or economic systems such as the EU (Roth, 2009).

Surprisingly, some authors neglect to define trust when using the concept as a theoretically important variable. For example, researchers who investigated citizens' trust in Europe or those who looked in particular at the effect of the Eurozone crisis on citizens' support for the European Central Bank (ECB), did not explicitly define trust (Wälti, 2011; Muñoz, Torcal & Bonet, 2011). Nevertheless, a working definition of trust is desirable as the concept trust plays an important role in this research. Trust has a variety of forms and causes and three concepts of trust are defined. These concepts are (1) *fiduciary trust*, which is notable for asymmetric relationships and attendant opportunities for malfeasance; (2) *mutual trust*, which develops between individuals who repeatedly interact with one another; and (3) *social trust*, which is embedded within institutions we know in common and take for granted (Thomas, 1998: 170). As fiduciary trust is most applicable to citizen's trust in European institutions, this concept is further explained.

Fiduciary relationships consist of an individual placing trust in another to act in his or her capacity. Fiduciary trust emerges in principal-agent relationships when principals (EU citizens) are unable to monitor the performance of their agent (European Parliament). The asymmetric relationship is supported by the obligation of the EP to act in the EU citizens' interest (Thomas, 1998: 171, 172). Fiduciary trust is an important component of trust in public institutions, called *institutional or systemic trust*, meaning 'the confidence people have in certain institutions' (Roth, 2009: 104).

Trust implies a risk to the one who trusts. In some instances the risk may be so low that the label confidence would be more applicable. In other instances, the risk is so high that the one who trusts is seen as naïve (Levi, 1998: 79). According to Coleman (1990),

'Trust is the expectation of gain or loss which determines whether one will grant trust or not.'

Granting trust is then seen as calculative and rational behavior: trust is a strategy to maximize one's utility (Bouckaert et al, 2002: 11). This is not so relevant for *institutional trust*, as the individual is not necessarily rationalizing whether or not they can trust the EU to carry out a political act for them. Rather they are considering the extent they trust the institution to fulfill its role in a satisfactory manner (Hudson, 2006: 46). Therefore, with regard to EU citizens' trust in the EP, it is chosen to follow the above mentioned reflection of trust as described by Mishler and Rose (2001).

A concept closely linked to trust, is political support (for example with regard to European integration). Support is by Easton (1975: 436) described as

'An attitude by which a person orients himself to an object either favorably or unfavorably, positively or negatively'

It should be noted that, although they resemble each other, trust is not equal to support: it is possible to trust the EP but not support it; to both trust and support the EP, to support but not trust the EP, and at last, both not to support and trust the EP.

As said, to be input-legitimate all EU institutions should be trusted by all EU citizens. The EU has several institutions, of which the most well-known ones are the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council of the European Union and

the European Central Bank. To keep this research feasible, it is chosen to define the influence of the Eurozone crisis on citizens' trust in one specific European institution: the European Parliament, which is the only directly elected EU institution. Most Europeans only have little knowledge about EU institutions. It is expected that citizens' knowledge about the European Parliament and their ability to have an opinion about the EP will be greater than in the case of the non-elected institutions (Muñoz, Torcal & Bonet, 2011). Also, trust in the European Parliament is chosen because of data availability.

2.4 The European Parliament

The European Parliament is, together with the Council of the European Union, a legislative body. It consists of 736 members, who are organized together in transnational political groups. It amends and adopts EU legislation and the budget, and monitors the work of other EU institutions. The EP can approve or reject a nominated Commission President and the team of Commissioners, and has the right to censure the Commission as a whole (by two-thirds majority vote). The EP's committee and party meetings are held in Brussels and plenary sessions are located in Strasbourg and Brussels. Part of the secretariat is in Luxembourg (Hix and Høyland, 2011: 8,9).

Originally, the EP was a consultative rather than a legislative body, whereby the Council had to seek the EP's opinion, but without obligation, before deciding on a Commission proposal. The legislative powers of the EP were substantially increased by the Single European Act (1986), the Maastricht (1992) and Amsterdam (1997) treaties. Currently, the co-decision procedure is the ordinary legislative procedure, which means that legislation can be adopted at first reading if the EP and Council already agree at this stage. Also, at the last stage, a conciliation committee is set up consisting of an equal number of representatives of the Parliament and Council (Hix and Høyland, 2011: 52, 53).

2.5 Citizens' trust in the European Parliament

Trust in EU institutions is particularly important at times when uncertainty increases significantly, such as during the current Eurozone crisis (Wälti, 2011). According to Roth (2009) and Roth et al (2011a) trust and confidence in European governmental institutions (European Commission and European Parliament) have declined during the crisis. This is shown by the Eurobarometer: The average net trust of the EU citizens in the European Parliament declined with 10 percentage point from 2005 until 2011 (see chapter 7 for a detailed description of the decline of the EU15 citizens' trust in the European Parliament). The decline in citizens' trust between 2005 and 2011 is also found among most of the EU15 countries when looking at the numbers for the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the Council of the European Union (see appendix, graph 41 until 43 for an overview of the decline of EU citizens' trust in these European institutions).

The crisis which Europe is facing, is one that the EU has not seen before. The EU has to deal with specific circumstances which require a concrete and specific approach which should be supported by the citizens. The measures taken are therefore unprecedented and the need for trust is greater than ever before. It is not unlikely that this crisis may affect the confidence of EU's citizens. The Eurozone crisis calls for appropriate policy solutions. As citizens base their trust on the measures that are taken by European policymakers, less confidence means that those measures taken in the context of the Eurozone crisis are seen as not good enough.

3. Theory and hypotheses

In recent years a growing number of scholars have dealt with the issue of citizens' support in the European Union. However, defining the factors influencing trust in the EP has not been the subject of empirical studies often yet (Roth et al, 2011a: 5; Bonet, Muñoz & Torcal, 2007: 14). Therefore, studies concerning support of and trust in the EU as opposed to the EP are discussed, as complementarities are expected between the two. This chapter starts off with an overview of general theories of people's attitudes towards politics.

3.1 General theories of people's attitudes towards politics

The European institutions have gained more power and the policy agenda of the EU has expanded over the years, and at the same time EU citizens have become more questioning and critical. Understanding how citizens' attitudes towards EU politics are formed in general is essential before citizens' trust can be investigated.

Until the early 1990s, the EU was a consensual system of governance, a '*permissive consensus*', whereby citizens delegated responsibility to their national leaders to deal with the European integration project (Taylor, 1991). At that time, most European civilians were not so interested in the EU. In the early 1990s, this permissive consensus transited into the current '*constraining dissensus*', a process which is nevertheless not uniform across all Member States (Hooghe & Marks, 2008). The transition is due to changing geopolitical relations in Europe and the ratification process of the Maastricht Treaty which made the EU more than just an economic integration project. This led to much more contested attitudes towards the EU among Europe's citizens. These contested attitudes are challenged by what is called '*Europeanization*', which can be defined in multiple ways: changes in the external boundaries (enlargement of the EU), developing new EU institutions, the central penetration into national systems of governance, the political unification project and exporting forms of political organization (Olsen, 2002). In either way of defining, Europeanization has to do with the expansion of Europe.

Easton (1965a, 1975) established a set of ideas in political science about what determines support for political institutions. These ideas were originally developed to explain variations in the legitimacy of national institutions but apply well to the EU. Easton identified two main types of support which he saw as related to each other: *utilitarian support*, which is based on rational calculations of material costs and benefits, and *affective support*, which is based on an ideological, sociological or cultural attachment. Affective support is grounded in Easton's (1965b: 273) broader notion of *diffuse support* for political institutions, which he defines as

'a reservoir of favorable attitudes or good will toward an institution that helps individuals to accept or tolerate outputs to which they are opposed or the effects of which they see as damaging their wants.'

Affective support arises from a sense of political identity which makes it hard to measure the value (Mahler et al., 2000: 431). Affective support provides a reservoir of good will towards a political system, while utilitarian calculations determine whether this basic reservoir of support goes up or down. These calculations can be economic, in terms of whether an individual gains or loses financially from the EU. They can also be

political, in terms of to what extent an individual agrees with particular EU policies (Hix and Høyland, 2011: 106).

Variations in levels of citizens' trust can be found both within and across nations. Theories providing patterns and determinants of this trust mainly aim either at the individual or national level. Individuals may have certain characteristics relevant to their attitude toward trust in EU institutions, but they also live in countries with specific and variable political and economic contexts (Anderson, 1995: 238). Using either micro- and macro-level considerations does not give a full picture of explaining variations in the level of citizens' trust, which is the reason for combining these levels in this research. Besides using variables taken from the individual and national level, the level of trust might also be influenced by the domestic context, which includes actors such as political parties and the media. These actors are *'irreducible political contexts that interact with individual attributes to produce political effects'* – in this case, the level of trust in the European Parliament (Hooghe and Marks, 2005: 427).

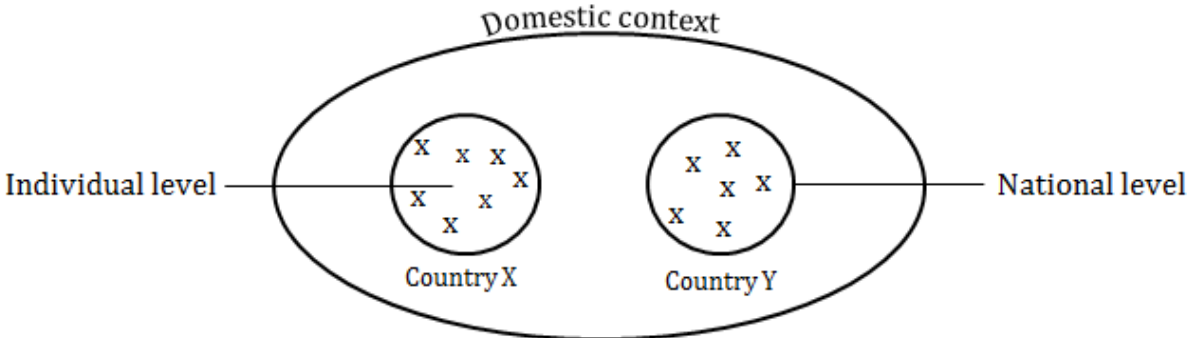


Figure 1. Different levels of explaining citizens' trust in EU.

The theories supporting the five hypotheses which are shown below, belong to different research traditions. The premise of this research is to confirm whether the decline in citizens' trust is caused by the Eurozone crisis. In order to explain this theories from different research approaches are deemed necessary. This means that there is no one theory leading.

3.2 Explaining trust at the national level

As mentioned in the introduction of this research, differences exist among Member States in the level of trust in the European Parliament. There are a wide range of interests and traditions that differ across the Member States that could explain these national-level variations. According to Mahler et al. (2003), nation-states are a major source of Europeans' political identity and support, as for example *'even a person who is personally well off may perceive problems of public significance if his or her nation is suffering serious economic dislocation'* (Mahler et al., 2000: 433). These interests and traditions are divided into two categories, namely political and economic differences.

The first category of *political differences* consists of differences such as countries with a weak or strong national identity, with long or short democratic traditions, or a majoritarian or consensual system of government. Hix and Høyland (2011) found that a higher level of satisfaction with national democracy is related to more EU support, but there is no relationship found between EU membership length and EU support. Political differences on its own are not fully able to explain different levels of trust, as none of the relationships are particularly strong at explaining variations in national levels of support (Hix and Høyland, 2011: 113). Therefore, and in order to keep this research feasible, political differences among the Member States are not taken into consideration.

The second category is *economic differences*, such as characteristics of being a rich or poor country, being a net EU contributor or receiver, countries having an industrial or agricultural focus, and countries facing high or low unemployment or level of public debt. Hix and Høyland (2011) argue that richer countries are slightly more pro-European than poorer countries and that net exporters are more supportive than net importers. As with the political differences, economic differences on its own are not able to explain differences in levels of trust. But since the EU has essentially consisted of an economic project, embodied in the development of a monetary and economic union, it is expected that citizens evaluate the EU more in economic terms instead of in political terms (Sanchez, 2000: 149). Hooghe and Marks (2005) have shown the importance of economic factors in determining citizens' trust in the EU, by using the Eurobarometer data to measure the relative impact of economic aspects on European public opinion. Moreover, the mentioned utilitarian models of public support for the European Union have stressed economic performance as the basis of evaluations (Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993: 511).

An important economic factor which is often used by citizens when determining their trust in the EU, is the benefits a country receives through the EU membership. EU membership is not necessarily a positive sum game where everyone wins; instead, it frequently involves both winners and losers. It generally is assumed that winners are more supportive of the EU and its institutions than those who lose from it. Benefits from EU membership can be achieved either directly or indirectly. *Direct benefits* associated with membership are returns from the EU budget; *indirect benefits* associated with EU membership are benefits obtained through EU trade (Anderson & Reichert, 1995). Citizens have been found to be more supportive of their country's involvement in the integration process if the country benefits to a greater extent from EU membership than others (Eichenberg and Dalton 1993; Gabel and Palmer 1995; Tsoukalis 1993). It is hypothesized that this relationship between (in)direct benefits and support for European integration also can be found between (in)direct benefits and trust for the European institutions, in particular the European Parliament.

Hypothesis 1:

The higher the indirect and direct benefits gained from EU membership, the higher the citizens' trust in the European Parliament.

The economic conditions of a country are often used by citizens to evaluate national political institutions (Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993: 511). Macro-economic models hypothesize that this also counts for international political institutions: support for the EU is influenced by the economic performance of member states (Ehin, 2001: 34). Fischer and Hahn (2008) investigated citizens' trust in the ECB and found that macroeconomic variables (inflation, gross domestic product (GDP), unemployment benefits) influence citizens' trust in the ECB. Roth et al (2011a) show evidence that public debt, inflation, and unemployment influence citizens' trust in the ECB only in crisis periods. It is reasonable to think that macroeconomic variables not only influence trust in the ECB, but also in other European institutions such as the European Parliament, although Ehrmann et al. (2010) conclude that in crisis and non-crisis periods trust in the ECB are in the same way affected by macroeconomic performance.

The central question in this research is whether the decline in citizens' trust in the EP can be explained by the Eurozone crisis. Without investigating, it can be assumed that the economic situation of the countries at the beginning of the crisis to be studied in this research, are not the same. If the economic situation then influences EU support and, in this research, the trust in the EP, this situation explains the differences in the decline of the trust. It is expected that the worse the economic starting point, the bigger the impact of the crisis and therefore the bigger the decline in trust in the EP.

As just mentioned, Fish and Hahn (1998) used the macroeconomic variables inflation, GDP and unemployment benefits in order to measure the economic position of a country, whereas Roth et al (2011a) used public debt, inflation, and unemployment. In this research, the economic starting point is defined by using the variables GDP per capita, inflation, unemployment and public debt per capita. GDP per capita measures the overall living standard in a nation and is thus the most global measure of economic well-being (Mahler et al, 2000: 438). Unemployment and inflation are measures of economic hardship (Eichenberg, 1993: 513). The variable public debt per capita is added, as public debt plays an important role in the Eurozone crisis, which is often called the sovereign debt crisis.

Hypothesis 2:

The worse the economic starting point of the country, the lower the citizens' trust in the European Parliament.

3.3 Explaining trust at the individual level

Part of the reason that variations in the national levels of support are difficult to explain is that the 'real story' is at the individual level (Hix and Høyland, 2011: 115). Public awareness of the different institutions is an important factor influencing perception, just like the socio-economic context and/or personal characteristics of the respondent (Eurostat, 2008). It is difficult to define whether or not and why civilians tend to trust the European institutions as '*people make up their minds in different ways*' (Sniderman et al. 1991: 8). Nevertheless, an attempt is made.

Following McLaren (2002), the lower the level of education of a person, the less support with regard to the EU is expected. Anderson & Reichert (1995) found that education is a consistent predictor of support for the EU: those with higher levels of formal education are more supportive. According to Hix and Høyland (2011), people with university degrees are significantly more supportive of the EU than people with only secondary school education. They argue that it is impossible to know whether this effect is due to higher cognitive skills, as Inglehart (1970) predicted (this theory will be explained further on), or whether it is due to the fact that people with university degrees have more social and economic capital that they can trade in the single market (Hix and Høyland, 2011: 120, 121).

Hypothesis 3:

The higher the educational level of an individual, the higher the trust in the European Parliament.

According to the Eurobarometer, the level of trust in particular institutions is linked to the level of knowledge of that institution and how people feel generally about the European Union (Standard Eurobarometer 66). The trust of citizens in the EP may be more difficult to define for citizens who are not familiar with the European system, while citizens who are well aware of European affairs might be more able to do so. They know certain aspects of the EU and these aspects are crucial for their level of support for the EU (Wagner, 2008: 3). Inglehart (1970) argues that high cognitive mobilization, characterized by a high level of political awareness and well-developed skills in political communication, enables citizens to identify with a supranational political community. Political awareness can be described as *'the general interest in politics'* (Conge, 1988: 246). This awareness of the political process is not equal to being involved in that same process, but it is rather a precondition for political participation (Conge, 1988: 246). For instance, higher levels of cognitive mobilization are associated with more trust in the EP because, according to the argument, the more information one receives about the EU, the less threatening the organization becomes (McLaren, 2002: 552). A distinction can be made between general political awareness and particular knowledge about the EP. It is possible to be political aware without being familiar with the EP, and the other way around. Nevertheless, as it is more likely that there are people who are political aware will also have knowledge about the EP, than that there are people who understand the EP well but do not have political awareness, and in order to keep this research feasible, the fourth hypothesis will focus on political awareness.

The mentioned theory of Inglehart (1970) is based on two assumptions. First, he argues that well-developed cognitive skills are necessary for understanding information about European integration because this information is often at a high level of abstraction. Second, this information is message independent - all information about integration promotes support. Thus, as a citizen's 'cognitive mobilization' increases, he or she is more familiar with and less threatened by the European Parliament (Inglehart, Rabier, & Reif 1991: 147). Inglehart, Rabier, and Reif (1991) and Janssen (1991) provided evidence supporting this hypothesis by using Eurobarometer surveys. However, these studies did not include necessary control variables for alternative explanations (Gabel, 1998: 335). Also, developing cognitive skills may not always lead to more sympathy for the EP, as a better understanding of the institution enables people to see the imperfections. More than once it is shown that citizens in Europe do not understand well the role of the EP and how much capacity it has to influence decision making and controlling executive power (Torcal, n.d.: 3). Anderson (1998) then wonders, in the face of the mentioned utilitarian model, how individuals without proper EU knowledge are supposed to make decisions about whether they are supportive of the European Parliament or not. His idea supports the idea that citizens' trust should not be based on determinants of the individual alone.

Hypothesis 4:

The more individual political awareness, the higher the trust in the European Parliament.

Inglehart (1977) even supposes that younger people are more supportive than elderly. This is based on his idea that support for international integration is related to post-materialist political values. Inglehart's thesis proposes that the economic and social changes that have taken place in the industrial societies after the Second World War

caused the just mentioned 'cognitive mobilization' of the European public, characterized by a value shift from *'overwhelming emphasis on material well-being and physical security toward greater emphasis on the quality of life'* (Inglehart 1987: 3). These post-materialists values are expected to be more prevalent among younger and higher educated individuals.

The post-materialist hypothesis is seen by many scholars as a valuable theory. For example Almond (1990) states that *'Inglehart's work is one of the few examples of successful prediction in political science'*. On the other hand, the hypothesis is the subject of recurrent debates (see Abramson (2011) for an overview of the critiques and counter-critiques of the past 34 years). One of the most mentioned critiques is the measurement of whether someone is materialist or post-materialist value orientated. Using this measurement, a person is either post-materialist or materialist. This consequently rules out the possibility of having 'mixed' value orientations (Steel et al. 1992: 64). Flanagan, *'the most persistent of Inglehart's critiques'* (Abramson, 2011: 4), suggests that there are *'two distinct kinds of value change taking place in the advanced industrial democracies'* and he argues that Inglehart has *'obscured this distinction by collapsing indicators of both into a single scale'* (Inglehart & Flanagan, 1987: 1303). He argues that the post-materialist dimension alone cannot explain the most important value changes occurring in modern society. Rather, Inglehart should also distinguish between 'authoritarian' and 'libertarian' values. Also, Flanagan makes a distinction within the post-materialist values by pointing out the New Right and New Left political view. Inglehart argues that the rise of the New Right is nothing more than a reaction by materialists against modernity (Inglehart & Flanagan, 1987: 1308).

Several researchers (for example Janssen 1991, Anderson and Reichert, 1996, Gabel 1998a, see also Abramson, 2011 for an overview) have tried to find a relationship between support for European integration and age, but found that age and post-materialists values have no effect on evaluations of EU institutions. For this reason, and for keeping this research feasible, age is left out as an eventual determinant of trust.²

Gabel (1998) argues that individuals take into account the economic individual benefits when defining their trust in the EU. These benefits are for example the free movement of goods, the opportunities created by trade liberalization, the possibility of working in other EU countries, new investment opportunities, and benefits through CAP subsidies. Defining the relationship between individual economic benefits and citizens' trust is certainly interesting, but in order to keep this research feasible, this possibility is left out.

3.4 The domestic context

In general, EU citizens are not well informed about the EU, which leaves room for other sources influencing citizens, such as the national media and political parties. In other words, the *'information deficit'* means that citizens' attitudes towards the EU are influenced by their national context (Brinegar and Jolly 2005; Hooghe and Marks 2005; Sanchez-Cuenca, 2000).

It is thought that domestic media are able to influence citizens' opinion about the EU. When citizens are confronted by negative news reports about EP actions, their opinions should reflect these influences, just as positive reports about the EP should

² Originally, a hypothesis based on the age of citizens was included in the thesis proposal. This hypothesis is excluded for the reasons stated above. Also, the hypotheses concerning the educational level and political awareness were combined in the thesis proposal. The concepts are now separated as it turned out that these two concepts are too different.

improve public evaluations (Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993: 514). For example, as argued by Diez Medrano (2003), the populist and anti-European newspapers in the UK and Austria have contributed to the low levels of support for the EU in these two countries. The way in which the EU is portrayed in the national media and the amount in the volume of coverage of EU politics and events varies considerably. The effects of those variations on individual attitudes towards the EU are therefore difficult to identify. Also, pro-European citizens tend to consume more pro-European media, and anti-European tend to consume anti-European media. This poses the question if media are shaping citizens' opinions, or are the media simply reflecting the opinions of their readers and viewers? (Hix and Høyland, 2011: 129). Although very interesting, the influence of the domestic media on citizens' trust is a research project on its own and therefore not further investigated in this research.

Another factor which might influence the degree of citizens' trust in the European Parliament is the level of Euroscepticism of the domestic political parties. According to McLaren (2002), Euroscepticism motivates institutional distrust. Political parties are important gate keepers in the process of European integration and a useful tool for promoting Europe. Political parties as domestic political actors have begun to incorporate Europe as an issue into their political agendas. This is partly because of the decline of the mentioned *permissive consensus* about European integration, which means that the political forces expressing skepticism or opposition to aspects of European integration has risen. Moreover, to some extent, Europe is used as an issue in domestic party politics to reinforce domestic identities (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2002a: 25).

The basic meaning of the term 'Euroscepticism' refers to a neutral or negative attitude towards the European Union and everything linked to the EU. For Flood (2002: 73), Euroscepticism '*carries the meaning of doubt and distrust on the subject of European integration*'. Kopecky and Mudde (2002) describe Euroscepticism as one of four ideal types produced by combining orientations towards the European Union (optimism/pessimism) with orientations towards the idea of European integration (Europhilia /Europhobia.) This produces four ideal types; '*Eurorejects*' who oppose the ideal of integration and the reality of the EU, '*Euroenthusiasts*' who support both the EU and the ideal of ever closer union, '*Europragmatists*' who do not support integration, but view the EU as useful, and '*Euroskeptics*' who support the idea of integration, but not its realization through the current EU. Although this conceptualization of Euroscepticism is certainly creative and extensive, it seems unlikely that the distinction between European integration as an ideal, and the European Union as an existing set of institutions is often used in reality.

In this research the conceptualization of Taggart and Szczerbiak (2003) is used. They argue that both Flood's (2002) and Kopecky and Mudde's (2002) conceptualization are ambitious attempts to conceptualize Euroscepticism, but that the more complex the typology, the more difficult it is to operationalize and categorize parties (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2003: 8). Taggart and Szczerbiak (2003) make a distinction between '*hard*' and '*soft*' Euroscepticism. *Hard Euroscepticism* is equal to

'A principled opposition to the EU and European integration and can be seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived' (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2003: 3)'.

A political party is defined as a *hard-Eurosceptic* if it is a single issue anti-EU party. A party would only mobilize solely against the EU if it were opposed to it on principle (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2002b: 7). In theory hard Euroscepticism encompasses those with principled objection to the idea of any European economic or political integration. In reality such a position is too abstract to be applicable. In practice, hard Euroscepticism can be identified by the principled objection to the *current form* of European integration in the EU. The principled objection comes from belief that the EU is counter to deeply held values or, more likely, is the embodiment of negative values. Examples of this would be the objection that the EU is too liberal/capitalist/socialist (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2002a: 27).

On the other hand, *soft Euroscepticism* is recognized when

'A principled objection to European integration or EU membership is absent, but where concerns on one or a number of policy areas leads to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that national interest is currently at odds with the EU trajectory (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2003: 3)'.

Soft-Euroscepticism does not imply an opposition to integration on principled grounds but does imply that if there were alterations to either a policy area or a shift in national interest, European integration in its current form could be supported or even encouraged (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2002a: 28). As distinct from being a hard- or soft-Eurosceptic party, political parties can also be defined as *'pro Europe'*.

The relationship between parties and their supporters is a two-way interaction: parties are responding to voters and voters are responding to parties. It is argued that voters take *'cues'* from party leaders about what positions to take on European issues (Druckman, 2001; Zaller, 1992: 97–117). That is, the party shapes its supporters' attitudes toward these issues independent of their personal characteristics (e.g. occupation and values) that might influence both their choice of party and support for integration (Gabel, 1998: 338). Political parties connect elites to the public, and, as Steenbergen and Jones (2002) argue, individuals who say that they support a particular party will tend to follow that party's position on Europe and their trust in European institutions. As cues are likely to be strongest when elites conflict over an issue, and *'Europe'* is controversial, the political cue approach is applicable (Ray, 2003; Steenbergen and Scott, 2004).

Hypothesis 5:

The higher the degree of party-based Euroscepticism within the domestic country, the lower the degree of citizens' trust in the European Parliament.

Note that, although they may sound similar, the concepts *'Euroscepticism'* and *'trust'* are not equal to each other. Trust should rather be seen as being part of the concept Euroscepticism. Euroscepticism refers in general to, as just mentioned, a neutral or negative attitude towards the European Union and everything linked to the EU. This attitude may embody an institutional distrust towards for example the EP. But, other aspects are also included, such as the fear of the loss of national identity or the dissatisfaction with the way the EU develops itself.

3.5 Flow chart

The overview of this research project is shown schematically in figure 2.

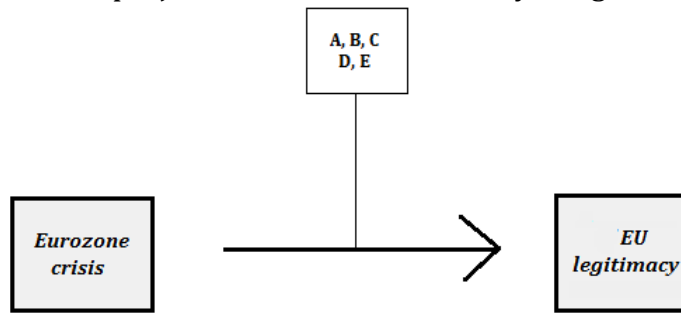


Figure 2. A = benefits EU membership, B = Economical starting point of the country, C = individual educational level, D = individual political awareness, E = Euroscepticism domestic government.

In figure 2, the research project is schematically shown in a flow chart. The dependent variable in this research is the (decrease of the) EU legitimacy. The independent variable is the Eurozone crisis. The aim of the research is to find out whether the decrease of EU legitimacy can be explained by the Eurozone crisis. The letters A until E are *moderating variables*, meaning they are variables having an eventual effect on the relationship between the independent (Eurozone crisis) and dependent variable (decrease of EU legitimacy). The moderating variables cannot be considered as control variables, because the variables in their self cannot cause the decline of citizens' trust, as the decline is a trend. Rather, if the variables should function as control variables, they should be used to measure the influence of those variables on citizens' trust at a certain moment of time.

The five variables are, although not all of them, related to each other. An overview of these relationships is given in figure 3:

↗	A	B	C	D	E
A	X	Indirectly. The EU benefits could contribute to a better starting point of a country.	No influence	The more benefits a country receives, the more visible the EU is in the country ('This project is sponsored by ...'), which adds to the political awareness of the citizens.	The more benefits, the more the EU is appreciated by a government, the less Eurosceptic this government will be.
B	No influence	X	No influence	No influence	Very indirectly. A bad starting point can be explained as a consequence of decisions on the EU level.
C	No influence	No influence	X	The higher the educational level, the higher the political awareness.	No influence
D	No influence	No influence	No influence	X	More political awareness makes you able to better evaluate EP on your own instead of being guided by the Euroscepticism of the government.
E	No influence	No influence	No influence	No influence	X

Figure 3. Relationship between hypotheses. A = benefits EU membership, B = Economical starting point of the country, C = individual educational level, D = individual political awareness, E = Euroscepticism domestic government.

4. Operationalization and measurement

In the previous chapter the theoretical framework of the research is set out, including the several hypotheses which are based on concepts. In order to measure these concepts, they are turned into operational definitions, which describe what kind of empirical observations should be made to measure the occurrence of the concepts (Johnson & Reynolds, 2008: 90). Therefore, the operationalization of the concepts into indicators is here discussed, followed by describing the validity and reliability of the indicators. An overview of the operationalization and measurement of the concepts can be found in the codebook on page 97 and 98. The chapter starts off with stating the unit of analysis.

4.1 Unit of analysis

A unit of analysis is the entity being studied in the research (Trochim, 2006). The units of analysis in this research are the individual and the country, which makes the analysis multi-leveled.

4.2 Operationalization and measurement

This section shows how the main concepts are operationalized into indicators in order to obtain empirical information which can be used to analyze the hypotheses.

4.2.1 The independent variable: The Eurozone Crisis

The Eurozone crisis, the independent variable in this research, is considered as a given, meaning that this variable is not operationalized.

The Eurozone crisis, or European debt crisis, refers to the region's struggle to pay the debts it has built up in recent decades. Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Italy, and Spain were, to varying degrees, not able to generate enough economic growth to pay back bondholders guarantees. Although these five countries were seen as being the countries in immediate danger of a possible default, the crisis has far-reaching consequences for the EU as a whole (Nemeth, 2012). In order to better understand the Eurozone crisis, an overview is given of the financial events happening during the period 2008 until 2012.

2008

In 2008, the world faced a global financial crisis, of which the head of the Bank of England referred to it as *'the most serious financial crisis at least since the 1930s, if not ever'*, in October 2011 (The Guardian, 2011). The global financial crisis also hit Europe, and in December 2008, the EU leaders agreed on a plan of 200 billion euros to stimulate European growth (BBC, 2012a).

2009

In April 2009, France, Spain, the Irish Republic and Greece are ordered to reduce their budget deficits. In October 2009, Greece revised its 2009 budget deficit to 12.5 percent of GDP from 3.7 percent (Der Spiegel, 2011). In December 2009 Greece's debts have reached 300 billion euros, which is equal to almost 113% of GDP, which is in turn nearly double the Eurozone limit of 60% (BBC, 2012a).

2010

Early 2010, an EU report wrote about 'severe irregularities' in Greek accounting procedures. Greece's budget deficit in 2009 is revised from 3.7% to 12.7%, which is more than four times the maximum allowed by EU rules. In February 2010, Greece promotes austerity measures aimed at reducing the deficit, which causes strikes and riots in the streets. Concern starts to build about other EU countries: Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain. In March 2010, the Eurozone and IMF agreed a safety net of 22 billion euros to help Greece, but loans are not included. It turned out that the Greek deficit is even worse than thought: 13.6% of GDP. Finally, on 2 May 2010, the Eurozone members and the IMF agreed a 110 billion euro bailout package to rescue Greece. Other EU member states' debt started to come under scrutiny, starting with Ireland. In November 2010, the EU and IMF agreed to a bailout package to the Irish Republic of 85 billion euros. The Irish Republic soon passes the toughest budget in the country's history (BBC, 2012a).

2011

In February 2011, a permanent bailout fund of around 500 billion euros was set up: the European Stability Mechanism (ESM). In April 2011, Portugal asked the EU for help which they received: in May 2011 the Eurozone and the IMF approved a 78 billion euro bailout for Portugal. The Greek parliament voted in favor of a round of austerity measures in July 2011 and the EU then approved the latest tranche of the Greek loan of 12 billion euros. The Eurozone also agreed a comprehensive 109 billion euro package designed to resolve the Greek crisis and to prevent contagion among other European economies. On 7 August 2011, the ECB announced it will buy Italian and Spanish government bonds to try to bring down their borrowing costs, as concern grew that the debt crisis may spread to the larger economies of Italy and Spain. In September 2011, Spain passed a constitutional amendment which should limit future budget deficits. Also, Italy passed a 50 billion euro austerity budget to balance the budget by 2013. Greek Finance Minister Venizelos said his country has been '*blackmailed and humiliated*' and used as a '*scapegoat*' for the EU's incompetence. Financial markets are boosted by the news on 8 October 2011 that the leaders of Germany and France have reached an agreement on measures to help resolve the debt crisis. Relief in the markets that the authorities will help the banking sector grew on 10 October 2011, when struggling Franco-Belgian bank Dexia received a huge bailout. On 21 October 2011, the Eurozone finance ministers approved the next tranche of Greek bailout loans of 8 billion euro, potentially saving the country from default. On 26 October 2011 European leaders reached a 'three-pronged' agreement and declared that some private banks holding Greek debt have accepted a loss of fifty percent. On 9 December 2011, former French President Nicolas Sarkozy announced that Eurozone countries will press ahead with an intergovernmental treaty enshrining new budgetary rules to tackle the crisis. Attempts to get all 27 EU countries to agree to treaty changes fail due to the objections of the UK and Hungary. The new agreement is to be agreed by March 2012 (BBC, 2012a).

2012

The 'fiscal pact' agreed by the EU in December 2011 is signed at the end of January 2012. The UK and the Czech Republic abstained. On 10 February 2012, Greece's coalition government finally agreed to pass the demands made of it by international lenders. On 12 February 2012, Greece passed the unpopular austerity bill in parliament - two months before a general election. A month later, the Eurozone finally backed a second

Greek bailout of 130 billion euros. On 12 April 2012, Italian borrowing costs increased: in an auction of three-year bonds, Italy pays an interest rate of 3.89%, up from 2.76% in a sale of similar bonds in March. On 6 May 2012, Greek parliamentary elections were held. A majority of the Greek citizens vote for political parties that reject the country's bailout agreement with the EU and IMF. Shortly thereafter, Greece announced new elections for 17 June 2012, after it was unable to form a coalition government. On 9 June 2012, Spain's Economy Minister Luis de Guindos declared that the country will shortly make a formal request for up to 100 billion euros in loans from Eurozone funds to try to help its banks. On 12 June 2012, optimism over the bank bailout evaporated as Spain's borrowing costs rise to the highest rate since the launch of the euro in 1999. On 17 June 2012, Greek citizens voted again, with the pro-austerity party New Democracy getting most votes (BBC, 2012a). On 27 June 2012, Cyprus became the fifth EU country seeking for economic assistance from Europe (BBC, 2012h).

Currently, a collapse of the Economic and Monetary Union seems unlikely, not in the least because the Greek bailout has for the moment eased the pressure exerted on the euro. But even more importantly, the Treaties do not allow for an exit procedure and there is no political will to push even a small country like Greece out. Pushing Greece out would be a sign that commitment to the euro is fading, which would only reinforce the speculation over an eventual break-up. What is at stake is so important to the interests of capitalists in the EU core countries that they would rather come to bitter compromises than see crumble the European integration that they have built over the last few decades (Georgiou, 2010).

4.2.2 Dependent variable: Citizens' trust in European Parliament

The measure of citizens' trust in the European Parliament is based on evidence gathered from Standard Eurobarometer surveys and European Social Survey (ESS). The Standard Eurobarometer surveys were established in 1973 and consist of approximately 1000 interviews for each member state at each survey.³ Eurobarometer surveys are always carried out twice a year but the fieldwork does not always happen in the same months (European Commission, 2012). The Eurobarometer is studied carefully by the European Commission, the EU governments and by the MEPs to estimate the level of support for or opposition towards the EU in general, European integration or specific EU policies (Hix and Høyland, 2011).

Previous researchers identified the following Eurobarometer survey question as general indicator of citizens' trust:

A17: For each the following bodies [European Parliament], please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it⁴ (Tend to trust it/tend not to trust it/don't know).

The best measure of trust when comparing the level of citizens' trust between countries is 'net trust', which is obtained by subtracting the percentage of those who do trust from those who do not trust the institution. Thus, the indicator definition is as following: *The share of positive (people who declare that they 'tend to trust') opinions minus the share of*

³ Except Germany (1500 interviews), Luxembourg and Malta (500 interviews) and the United Kingdom (1300 interviews including 300 in Northern Ireland).

⁴ The Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the ECB are also mentioned, but they are not relevant in this research.

negative (people who declare that they 'tend not to trust') opinions about the European Parliament.

Besides the Eurobarometer, the European Social Survey is used. The ESS is established in 2001 and is *'an academically-driven social survey designed to chart and explain the interaction between Europe's changing institutions and the attitudes, beliefs and behavior patterns of its diverse populations'* (European Social Survey, 2012). The objective of the survey is to *'design, develop and run a conceptually well-anchored and methodologically bullet-proof study of changing social attitudes and values. Achieving these aims in a cross-national context requires optimal comparability in the operationalization of the study within all participating countries'* (European Social Survey, 2012). The survey comprises a face-to-face interview questionnaire plus a short supplementary questionnaire and consists of approximately 1500 interviews for each participating European country at each survey. The ESS currently consists of 5 rounds, which are held every two years since 2002. Question B9 is used as a general indicator of citizens' trust in the EP:

B9: Please tell me on a score of 0-10 (or don't know) how much you personally trust the European Parliament I read out. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust.

In order to be able to define the net trust of the countries, 0-5 is defined as 'tend not to trust' and 6-10 as 'tend to trust'. Then, as with the Eurobarometer question, 'net trust', is obtained by subtracting the percentage of those who trust from those who do not trust the institution.

Reliability and validity

An operational measure of a concept is said to be reliable when applying the same measurement rules to the same case, identical results are produced (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2009: 92). Eurostat (2008) states about the above mentioned question A17 of the Eurobarometer:

'The indicator reflects the level of citizen's [...] support to policy implementation. Ultimately, it expresses the level of legitimacy granted to EU institutions by EU citizens. The level of confidence is an expression of the public response to efforts of EU institutions to become more modern, open and citizen-oriented'.

The comparability of the Eurobarometer questions over time and across countries is high, since the same methodology has been applied in every member state since spring 1973 (with some minor changes due to the introduction of new member states and candidate countries). Nevertheless, survey results are estimations, the accuracy of which, everything being equal, rests upon the sample size and upon the observed percentage (Eurobarometer, 2008). Also, using interviews and surveys in itself should always be interpreted with care. The lack of standardization that it implies raises concerns about the reliability of the survey, as biases are difficult to rule out (Robson, 2002: 273).

The structure of the ESS is similar to the Eurobarometer. The survey consists of around 1500 interviews per participating country. The results of these interviews will always be an estimation, as this number of 1500 respondents is a sample size. With surveys and

interviews it is impossible to guarantee the reliability. As the respondents are human beings, it is unlikely that they will always respond to a certain question in the same way. Also, one should take into consideration that their stated preferences are not always equal to their revealed preferences, meaning that the statements of interviewees might not always be equivalent to their actions (Samuelson, 1948). Nevertheless, as ESS and the Eurobarometer are held since 1973 (Eurobarometer) and 2002 (ESS), it is expected that both of the institutions take into consideration the drawbacks of conducting interviews, and that they make sure the surveys are as reliable as possible. Also, especially the Eurobarometer, is widely used among academics as a tool to answer all sorts of questions regarding the European Union and public opinion.

A measure is valid if it accurately represents the concept that it is supposed to measure (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2009: 94). Kellstedt & Whitten (2009) make a distinction between face validity, content validity and construct validity. In this research, content validity is most important, which is the degree to which a measure covers the (range) of dimensions of a concept. In both of the questions, the precise word 'trust' is used. This is important, as in the literature 'trust' and 'support' are sometimes used interchangeably. On the other hand, the indicator should be interpreted with care, as trust is not precisely defined in both of the surveys and could leave some room for interpretation to the interviewees.

4.2.3 Moderating variable: Indirect and direct benefits gained from EU membership

Benefits from EU membership can be achieved either directly or indirectly (Anderson & Reichert, 1995; Mahler et al., 2000). *Direct benefits* associated with membership are returns from the EU budget (Anderson & Reichert, 1995). To measure these returns, the budgetary impact of the membership on a member state has to be taken into account (Mahler et al., 2000: 436). The direct benefits are measured with the help of EU budget return figures, which indicate to what extent a country is benefitting from paying into, and receiving from, the EU budget. The EU budget return figures are measured by *the average net transfers from the EU budget as a percentage of the country's GDP (receipts minus contributions as percentage of national GDP)*. By measuring net transfers as a percentage of the country's GDP the country's size is controlled for (Anderson and Reichert, 1995: 240, 241). The budget return data are taken from Eurostat and the EU's Court of Auditors Annual Report.

Indirect benefits associated with EU membership at the national level are benefits obtained through EU trade. The indirect benefits are measured with the help of a trade variable that measures the extent to which the country's economy is open towards its EU neighbors, meaning a country's trade with other EU members. This trade with other EU members is measured by *the percentage of total external trade (import and exports) that is conducted with other EU member states (EU trade as a percentage of total trade)* (Anderson & Reichert, 1995). Data is taken from Eurostat.

Reliability and validity

For both the indicator of direct and indirect benefits, it is necessary to write down every single step of the measurement in order to make the indicators as reliable as possible. When being clear about the measurement process, the process is likely to be repeatable. Any other person using the same data and taking the same steps should be able to produce identical results.

The concept of *direct benefits* associated with membership are returns from the EU budget (Anderson & Reichert, 1995). The indicator measures the receipts from the EU minus the contributions to the EU as a percentage of the GDP, which is equal to the return from the EU budget. The concept of *indirect benefits* refers to benefits obtained through EU trade (Anderson & Reichert, 1995). The indicator of this concept, EU trade as a percentage of total trade, clearly measures what the trade benefits for an EU member state are. Therefore, both of the indicators are clearly valid.

4.2.4 Moderating variable: The economic starting point of the country

As written in the theoretical chapter, the variables public debt per capita, GDP per capita, the inflation rate and the unemployment rate of a country are used in order to define the economic starting point in 2008 of that country.⁵

The *public debt per capita* per country is measured by using Eurostat data. Public debt is defined by Eurostat as '*the debt obligations of the public sector*'. Public debt per capita shows the amount of debt per inhabitant, which is the result of dividing the total public debt among the number of the country's inhabitants (Eurostat, 2012c).

The *GDP per capita* per country is also measured by using Eurostat data. The GDP represents the total value of final goods and services produced within a country during a specified time period. It is the most commonly used single measure of a country's overall economic activity. Eurostat defines GDP as '*The value of an economy's total output of goods and services, less intermediate consumption, plus net taxes on products and imports, in a specified period*' (Eurostat, 2012c). GDP can be broken down by output, expenditure or income components. The main expenditure aggregates that make up GDP are household final consumption, government final consumption, gross fixed capital formation, changes in inventories, and imports and exports of goods and services (including intra-euro area trade)(Eurostat, 2012c).

The *inflation rate* is the '*percentage change in the price level in a country in a given period*' (Eurostat, 2012c). The inflation rate of the countries is measured by using Eurostat's monthly Harmonized Indices of Consumer Prices (HICP) indicator. The HICPs are constructed to measure the changes over time in the prices of consumer goods and services acquired by households. They provide the official measure of consumer price inflation in the euro-zone for the purposes of monetary policy in the euro area and assessing inflation convergence as required under the Maastricht criteria. HICP is used for example by the ECB for monitoring of inflation in the EMU and for the assessment of inflation convergence (Eurostat, 2012a).

The *unemployment rate* represents '*the unemployed persons as a percentage of the labor force*' (Eurostat, 2012b). The labor force is the total number of people employed and unemployed (Eurostat, 2012b). The unemployment rate of the countries in 2008 is defined by using data from Eurostat. The main source used by Eurostat for unemployment figures is the European Union Labor force survey (EU LFS). This household survey is carried out in all EU-27 Member States and it provides figures at least each quarter (Eurostat, 2012b).

Reliability and validity

⁵ It can be debated what the starting point of the Eurozone crisis is. In this research 2008 is chosen, as in December 2008 a 200 billion euro stimulus plan was created to help boost the European growth (BBC, 2012a).

As with the measurement of the benefits from EU membership, it is necessary to write down every single step of the measurement. When being clear about the measurement process, the process is likely to be repeatable. Any other person using the same data and taking the same steps should be able to produce identical results.

The measurements of the four concepts public debt per capita, GDP per capita, inflation rate and unemployment rate are valid. All data is derived from Eurostat, which is explicit about the definitions of the concepts. These working definitions are similar to the definitions provided by literature.

4.2.5 Moderating variable: Individual educational level

The concept 'educational level' is described as the '*gradation of learning experiences and the competences which the contents of an educational program require of participants if they are to have a reasonable expectation of acquiring the knowledge, skills and capabilities that the program is designed to impart*' (ISCED, 2012). The level of education is related to the degree of complexity of the content of the program. This does not imply that levels of education constitute a ladder where the access of prospective participants to each level necessarily depends on having successfully completed the previous level (ISCED, 2012).

In order to measure the educational level of an individual, question F16 of the ESS is used:

F16: What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?

The three countries all have their own school system with different names for the stages within that system. Also, the used names within the same school system change over time. Therefore the ISCED system (International Standard Classification of Education), created by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2012), is used to label these different stages in order to make them comparable (see page 92 for the list of labels). Also, the absolute numbers are translated into percentage numbers, in order control for the different sizes of the groups of respondents.

A question about the educational level of the respondent is not included in the Eurobarometer. The one that comes closest inquires the current occupation of the respondent.

Reliability and validity

The discussion of the reliability of this question is similar to the discussed reliability of the ESS in general (see 2.1.1.). The concept 'highest level of education' seems straightforward. Answers to the question are translated into the mother language of the respondent, which makes it likely that the respondent will understand the question. Nevertheless, with every interview or survey, it should be taken into account that the respondent is always influenced by external factors (such as a bad mood or the possibility of giving socially-desired answers), which consequently influences the given answers. ESS has included both a question about the trust in Parliament and a question about the educational level, which makes it possible to compare the two variables. The comparability over time and across countries is high, since the question has been asked in every survey since 2002.

It can be said that this indicator is valid. The aim of the indicator is to ascertain the educational level of the respondent, which is exactly asked with question F16 of the ESS.

The different labels and names of the stages within the school systems of Spain, Portugal and Greece are ruled out by using the above mentioned ISCED classification structure.

4.2.6 Moderating variable: Individual political awareness

As written in the theoretical chapter, political awareness is described as *'the general interest in politics'* (Conge, 1988: 246). To measure to what extent the individual political awareness influences citizens' trust in the European Parliament, questions of the ESS survey are used. Several questions of the Eurobarometer dealing with political awareness are not asked frequently and/or recently, which makes it impossible to include the questions in this research.⁶ Fortunately, the ESS includes four useful questions:

QA2: *On an average weekday, how much of your time watching television is spent watching news or programs about politics and current affairs?*

QA4: *On an average weekday, how much of your time listening to the radio is spent listening to news or programs about politics and current affairs?*

QA5: *On an average weekday, how much time, in total, do you spend reading about politics and current affairs in the newspapers?*

QB1: *How interested would you say you are in politics, are you very interested/quite interested/hardly interested/not at all interested/don't know?*

The absolute numbers are translated into percentage numbers, in order control for the different sizes of the groups of respondents.

Reliability and validity

Again, the discussion of the reliability of these questions is similar to the discussed reliability of the ESS in general (see 2.1.1.).

This indicator is valid if it accurately represents the concept 'political awareness'. Out of the four above mentioned questions, QB1 is literally asking about the interest in politics, which is equal to the definition of 'political awareness'. The other three questions measure the actual amount of time the respondent is spending on watching about, reading about or listening to political news programs or items. These questions are therefore not exactly measuring the concept of 'political awareness' but can nevertheless be considered as valid indicators.

4.2.7 Moderating variable: Euroscepticism of domestic political parties

⁶ These questions are QA8 (*And as far as European politics are concerned, that is matters related to the European Community, to what extent would you say that you are interested in them?*), Q14 (*Have you heard of the European Parliament?*), Q21 (*Have you recently seen or heard in the papers, or in the radio or TV, anything about the European Parliament, that is the parliamentary assembly of the European Community?*) and QAC2 (Political interest index).

The last variable to be operationalized is 'Euroscepticism of domestic parties', with which is usually meant the neutral or negative attitude towards the European Union and everything linked to the EU. As has been written in the theoretical chapter, the definition of Taggart and Szczerbiak (2002) is used, which makes a distinguish between hard and soft Euroscepticism:

'Soft Euroscepticism is a principled objection to European integration or EU membership is absent, but where concerns on one or a number of policy areas leads to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that national interest is currently at odds with the EU trajectory (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2003: 3).'

'Hard-Euroscepticism is a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and can be seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived' (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2003: 3).'

The measurement of these concepts is done according to Taggart and Szczerbiak's (2002b) way of measurement. They defined political parties as either hard or soft Eurosceptic according to the party's position towards the EU by scrutinizing their political programs. Data is collected through desk research, by means of using websites of the political parties.

When one knows who the Eurosceptic parties are, one can begin to attempt to measure levels of party-based Euroscepticism. Therefore, besides mapping the parties' ideologies with regard to European issues, the share of votes of the parties at the parliamentary elections between 2005 and 2011 are also listed. This simple but clear indicator gives some idea of the relative current importance of the parties within their party system (Taggart and Szczerbiak (2003: 11). The share of vote for hard Eurosceptic parties illustrates how opposition to EU membership *currently finds expression* in the particular party system.

Reliability and validity

As the data for this indicator is collected by the author herself, it is of crucial importance to explicitly write down which steps are taken in order make this indicator reliable. The report of taken steps should make it possible that when applying the same measurement rules to the same case, identical results will be produced.

This indicator is valid if it represents the concepts 'hard and soft Euroscepticism'. The decision to use the definition of Taggart and Szczerbiak (2002) is already explained in the theoretical chapter. Since the same operationalization is used as the scholars use themselves, it is expected that the operationalization accurately represents both concepts.

5. Research design

In this chapter, the design of this research project is set out by showing why the multiple-case study is applied and why this design is preferred over e.g. the single case study design. The construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability of the multiple-case study are discussed, followed by an overview of how empirical data is gathered and analyzed.

5.1 The multiple-case study

The choice for a particular research design is a crucial factor for the overall quality of the research since only an applicable design enables to draw sound conclusions that are supported by evidence (Buttolph Johnson, Reynolds & Mycoff, 2007). As it is not feasible to study whether the crisis can explain the decline in trust of all EU citizens from all 27 member states (especially when taking into consideration the fifth hypothesis), and in order to develop a thorough and detailed analysis, three particular cases are chosen (these cases are introduced in chapter 6. The decision to use these cases is also explained in this chapter). Therefore, the multiple-case (or comparative) study will be used.

The comparative or multiple-case study design allows for an intensive study of a few cases. According to Yin (2009: 18), a case study is

‘an empirical enquiry which is used when you want to understand a real-life phenomenon in depth, but such understanding encompasses important contextual conditions – because they were highly relevant to your phenomenon of study. It copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result it relies on multiple sources of evidence, and it benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis’.

A multiple-case design is chosen over a single-case design, because it is more compelling, and therefore the overall study is considered as more robust (Herriott & Firestone, 1983). By studying more than one case, a direct replication of the analysis is possible: conclusions independently arising from two or more cases will be more powerful than those coming from a single case alone. According to Goertz (in Blatter, Janning & Wagemann, 2007: 55), case studies are helpful when searching for a quasi-complete explanation of particular events and results. They are able to highlight the ‘causes of effects’ contrary to quantitative studies that focus on the universal effects of certain factors of influence (‘effects of causes’). In this research project, the causes of effect are central, namely the factors that help to explain the decline in citizens’ trust in the European Parliament.

In order to judge the quality of a case study design, the concepts construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability should be taken into account (Yin, 2009: 40). In this section the validity of reliability of case studies in general is discussed, as in the previous chapter the validity and reliability of the indicators are set out already.

The *construct validity* deals with identifying the correct operational measures for the concepts being studied. The construct validity of a case study research is mostly

criticized, by emphasizing the development of a 'subjective' operational set of measures. Therefore, multiple sources of evidence are necessary and it is useful to have the research report checked by key informants, such as the persons being interviewed. Also the feedback of the students of the thesis group and the supervisor is used (Yin, 2009: 42).

The *internal validity* seeks to establish a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are believed to be connected to other conditions (Yin, 2009: 40). The main problem with internal validity is that of making inferences: an investigator will 'infer' that a particular event resulted from some earlier occurrence. It is important to think about to what extent the inference is really correct, and whether all rival explanations and possibilities are considered. There are several ways to deal with the internal validity, of which *the pattern matching logic* is chosen in this research. This logic compares empirically based patterns with a predicted pattern (derived from theory), or several with several alternative predicted patterns. The *pattern matching logic* is described by Trochim (1985: 575) as:

'all social research is based on the relationship between the ideal and the real, theory and observation, the conceptual and the optional. Typically there is a theory, and the research essentially consists of an attempt to determine the degree to which observations correspond to or 'fit' this theory'.

The internal validity is strengthened by the degree the predicted pattern will match with what is found in the empirical reality (Yin, 2003a: 116). Also, a careful case selection and an elaborate explanation for picking the particular cases is necessary (which can be found in chapter 6).

The *external validity* defines the domain to which the findings of this research can be generalized (Yin, 2009: 40). Whereas internal validity can be achieved through the above mentioned selection of cases and the pattern matching logic, there is no obvious technique to improve the external validity. Consequently the external validity of this multiple-case study is weak, as generalization can only be made to cases that share the same characteristics of Spain, Greece and Portugal. To increase the external validity the data is presented per case rather than per variable. This makes it easier for other researchers conducting this same research to include other cases.

The *reliability* demonstrates to what extent repeating the operations of a study will lead to the same results (Yin, 2009: 40). In order to reach the highest reliability possible, all procedures followed and decisions taken, should be documented in a case study database or, in this case, the research project:

'The general way of approaching the reliability problem is to make as many steps as operational as possible and to conduct research as if someone were always looking over your shoulder' (Yin, 2009: 45).

5.2 Methods of inquiry

In this section it is set out how empirical data is gathered and analyzed by discussing the collection (4.2.1) and analysis (4.2.2) of the data.

5.2.1 Data collection

Chapter 4 gave a description of the data sources per indicator. Yin (2009) mentions an important principle of data collection within case studies, namely the use of multiple

sources of evidence. The rationale behind this principle is *triangulation*: to collect and process information based on more than one data source, method or perspective. This will assure that the research and conclusions drawn are as valid as possible. When findings are based on multiple sources, a case study '*will be less prone to the quirks derived from any single source, such as an inaccurate interviewee or a biased document*' (Yin, 2003b: 83). Therefore, two data sources are used.

The first source of evidence is *documentation*, meaning a literature scan and desk research, such as the survey data of the Eurobarometer and the ESS survey. This data source has both strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, it is stable since it can be reviewed repeatedly. Also, it usually contains a broad coverage: a long span of time, many events, and many settings. On the other hand, documentation makes it impossible to go 'behind the facts'.

In order to meet the principle of triangulation which consequently makes this research more valuable, it is chosen to also conduct *interviews*. Within the interviews, facts found through desk research are checked, but the main objective is to obtain non-factual information (beliefs and perceptions).⁷

Based on the form of an interview, three types can be distinguished: the unstructured interview, semi-structured interview and structured interview. The degree of structuring the questions and their formulation defines the type of the interview (Boeije, 2006: 57, 58). In this research is opted for conducting *semi-structured interviews*. This means that the content, formulation and the order of the questions is defined on the forehand and they are based on the theoretical framework and findings presented in chapter 7 until 11. There is also room left within the interview for related topics suggested by the interviewee.⁸

The main advantage of conducting semi-structured interviews is, as said, to gain non-factual information, which cannot be found in documents and through desk research. Nevertheless, the disadvantages should be taken into account. Although interviews may be a rich source of information, they should always be considered as verbal reports only. Interviewees' responses are subject to the common problems of bias, poor recall, and poor or inaccurate information (Yin, 2009: 108). Also, to transcribe the interviews is labour intensive. In interviews, the researcher is responsible for obtaining the material, which places a high demand on the researcher. Knowledge about the content of the topic and interview skills are therefore necessary (Boeije, 2006: 114). An interviewee may produce socially desirable answers. Therefore, the challenge of the interviews was to get answers from the respondents that are not simply the politically correct ones. Therefore, the questions had to be asked in a genuinely naive manner in order to allow the respondent to provide fresh insightful comments about the subject (Yin 2003a: 91).

5.2.2 Data analysis

In order to analyze the empirical data, the mentioned *pattern matching logic* is used. The collected data will be subject to a comparison with the hypotheses extracted from the theoretical framework and which describe the expected 'match' between theory and reality.

The analysis of the statistical data gathered through the Eurobarometer and ESS, meaning the analysis of data which has already gathered by other researchers, is called *secondary analysis* (Van Thiel, 2007: 127). The main problem with this kind of data is the

⁷ An overview of the interviewees can be found in the annex.

⁸ The list of topics can be found in the annex.

process of operationalization. As data from both of the surveys are used, it is important to take into account the conditions under which the data was produced, as well as its accuracy (Yin, 2009: 105, 106). For example, within the Eurobarometer, it was directly asked to what extent the respondent tends to trust the EP (tend to trust/tend not to trust/don't know). In the ESS, the respondent had to show his or her amount of trust in the form of a number (from 1 until 10). In order to use the data of both of the surveys, it was necessary to rearrange the data of the ESS.

The interviews are recorded, transcribed and ordered on the basis of an index system, which consists of different codes based on the topic list (the index system can be found in the appendix). The questions and answers of the interviews are ordered according to this list of codes. Statements with regard to the same topic obtain the same code, which makes it possible to compare these statements (Boeije, 2006, p. 161). The judgments are reviewed in the context of the entire interview in which the statement is made, because a quote in itself might be remarkable, but can be interpreted in a wrong manner if it is read without its context. Therefore, with every statement, an attempt is made to estimate the extent to which a statement is representative of the whole interview.

6. Selection and introduction of the cases

In this chapter, it is described which cases in this research are chosen and for what reason. Also, the three cases are introduced.

6.1 Case selection

As described in the previous chapter, the multiple case study is used as the design for this research. As the charts 7.1 and 7.2 will show in chapter 7, the degree of trust varies among the different countries and also over the years. Overall, the trust in the European Parliament has been declining among all EU citizens from October 2005 until May 2011. As it is not feasible to study all 27 member states and in order to develop a thorough and detailed analysis, particular EU countries are chosen.

When choosing specific cases, a *most similar systems design* or *most dissimilar systems design* can be used, whereby with the former design homogenous cases are picked, and with the latter contrasting cases are the subject of study (Van Thiel, 2007: 104). The underlying concept is that when you want to find similarities between cases, dissimilar cases should be picked. But if the goal of research is to find differences between the cases, similar cases should be used. In this research, the intention is to figure out whether or not the decline in citizen's trust in the EU is caused by the Eurozone crisis and why the decline of trust of the EU countries did not develop in the same way over the years. The aim is not to find similarities between the cases but it leaves open the possibility of finding differences between the cases. For this reason, the *most similar systems design* is applied to this research.

In this research, the cases chosen are: Spain, Italy and Greece. They form the Southern part of Europe and thus are located in the same region. But more importantly, a common characteristic of the three countries is that they are relatively heavily hit by the crisis. In order to determine the relative position of Spain, Italy and Greece with respect to the other EU member states, a survey showing the development of the citizens' trust of the EU15 countries is included (see chapter 7). This survey also shows that the three countries all faced a striking substantial decline in citizens' trust in the EP between 2005 and 2011, which adds to the goal of picking homogenous cases which characterizes the most similar systems design.

Spain, Italy and Greece are part of the so-called *PIIGS countries*, which is the popular abbreviation for the troubled and heavily-indebted countries of Europe: Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain (BBC, 2012b). However, the reasons differ why the countries are referred to as troubled.

Portugal's economic boom in the second half of the 1990s was fed by a sharp decline in borrowing costs, based on the mere prospect of EU membership. Rapid wage inflation made it hard for local firms to compete with foreign companies. By 2000, Portugal's current account had sunk into a deficit of 10% of GDP. In the 2000s, Portugal's growth was under European average, and of all EU member states income per capita was only lower in Slovakia and Malta. Portugal asked the EU for help after the opposition refused to support the minority government's fourth austerity package, and the government of José Sócrates, the Socialist prime minister, finally fell. On 5 May 2011 Euro commissioner Olli Rehn announced that the EU will support Portugal by providing a bailout of 78 billion euros (Europa.nu, 2012).

Italy is Europe's fourth-largest economy and its bond market is the world's third largest. Italy's debt, at 2 trillion euros, is five times larger than what Greece owes

(Hopkin, 2012). Former Premier Berlusconi stated that the cause of Italy's financial problems has to do with speculating investors. Nevertheless, if Italy had been more eager to reform their economic policy in the past, it would have been less hit by the Eurozone crisis (De Jong, 2011). In short, the fundamental cause of Italy's economic problems is political, namely that there is no coherent electoral coalition that can sustainably support economic reform. Recently, a step in the right direction might have been made. In November 2011, Premier Berlusconi, a media tycoon often associated with corruption and sex scandals, resigned. Shortly after, the new Premier Mario Monti, a former Euro commissioner, presented a new cabinet consisting of non-politicians (Hopkin, 2012).

Ireland was hit hard by the global financial crisis after having enjoyed nearly two decades of economic recovery and development. Its property bubble built up since 2002 exploded during the crisis. Its banking system collapsed through overexposure to loans from the cheap credit which coincided with the introduction of the euro. There was an immediate impact on state revenues when property-related windfall taxes collapsed under this pressure, exposing a gap between current expenditure and revenues (Gillespie, 2012). In November 2010, the EU and IMF agreed to a bailout package to the Irish Republic of 85 billion euros. The Irish Republic soon passes the toughest budget in the country's history (BBC, 2012a).

Greece is suffering from its huge spending and finds itself unable to cope with its huge debt loads and meet EU deficit rules. Also, tax evasion is contributing to Greece's low tax rate (tax revenues as a share of GDP) of 31.3% of GDP. The main cause for Greece's financial problems is what an EU report refers to as the 'severe irregularities in Greek accounting procedures', or what is called corruption (BBC, 2012a).

The pillars of the **Spanish** economy were tourism and a booming housing market and construction industry, and so the global economic crisis also hit this country hard. The bursting of the housing bubble brought Spain into a severe recession and by the end of 2011 the country had an unemployment rate of nearly 23% - the highest jobless rate in Europe. Yet much of the fault lies with Spain's labor market rules. Wages are set centrally and most jobs are protected, making it hard to shift skilled workers from dying to blooming industries. Recession revealed how dependent public finances had been on housing-related tax revenues. Austerity measures imposed by the government in an effort to reduce the level of public debt sparked a wave of protests (BBC, 2012c).

As a *most similar systems design* is used, the five PIIGS countries could be picked based on the characteristic of being 'countries in economic trouble'. Nevertheless, Ireland is different from the other countries as it is the only country not being located in the southern part of Europe. For this reason, Ireland is not selected as a case in this research. Also, Italy is left out based on data availability. An important source of data is the ESS survey (see chapter 4 operationalization and measurement). Unfortunately, data on Italy is not available in this survey. It should be noted that also for Greece data is not fully available: only in round 4 (2008) and 5 (2010). However, as the available data for Greece is more comprehensive than for Italy, and as besides the ESS survey other data sources are used (for example the Eurobarometer and Eurostat, again: see chapter 4), it is decided to include Greece as a case.

6.2 Introduction of the cases

Before continuing the research, some background information on the chosen countries is provided in this section.

6.2.1 Spain

Spain became a world power in the 16th century, and it maintained an overseas empire until the early 19th century. Spain's modern history is marked by Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, and the 36-year dictatorship of General Francisco Franco (BBC, 2012c).

After Franco's death in 1975, Spain made the transition to a democratic state and built a successful economy. The constitution of 1978 enshrines respect for linguistic and cultural diversity within a united Spain. The country consists of 17 regions which all have their own directly elected authorities. Each has its own parliament, regional president, government, and supreme court. Nevertheless, the level of autonomy afforded to each region is not uniform. For example, Catalonia and the Basque Country have special status with their own language and other rights. Andalucía, Valencia and the Canaries in turn have more extensive powers than some other regions. The country's regional picture is a complex and evolving one (BBC, 2012c).



Figure 4: Spain



Figure 5: Regions of Spain

Spain is a constitutional monarchy, based on the 1978 Constitution, which established it as a social and democratic state being subject to the rule of law. It states the King to be the Head of State, currently Juan Carlos I. The 1978 Constitution established three powers as the form of government: the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. Executive power is exercised by the Council of Ministers, which is integrated by the prime minister (currently Mariano Rajoy Brey), the deputy prime ministers, and other ministers. Legislative power is vested in the *Cortes Generales* (General Courts), a bicameral parliament constituted by the Congress of Deputies and the Senate. The Senate has 259 members, 208 directly elected and 51 appointed as regional representatives, but with little influence; the Congress of Deputies has 350 members, elected from closed party lists in individual constituencies. The judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature, administering justice on behalf of the King by several judges and magistrates (Solsten and Meditz, 1988).

One of Spain's most serious domestic issues has been tension in the northern Basque region. A violent campaign by the Basque separatist group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) has led to nearly 850 deaths over the past four decades. ETA declared a ceasefire in March 2006 saying it wished to see the start of a democratic process for the Basque region. The move divided opinion in Spain. ETA carried out a deadly bomb attack at Madrid's international airport at the end of the year. In June 2007, ETA called off its ceasefire. The group announced another ceasefire in September 2010, but this

time, the government said it was not prepared to enter into negotiations unless ETA renounced violence for good. International negotiators urged ETA to lay down its weapons at a conference in October 2011, seen as a possible prelude to Eta's dissolution. Neither the Spanish government nor Eta was officially represented (BBC, 2012c).

Full name: Kingdom of Spain
Population: 46.4 million (UN, 2011)
Capital: Madrid
Area: 505,988 sq km (195,363 sq miles)
Major languages: Spanish (Castilian), Catalan and its variant Valencian, Gallego (Galician), Euskera (Basque)
Major religion: Christianity
Life expectancy: 79 years (men), 85 years (women) (UN, 2011)
Monetary unit: 1 euro = 100 cents
Main exports: Transport equipment, agricultural products
GNI per capita: US \$31,750 (World Bank, 2010)

Figure 6: Main characteristics of Spain (Source: BBC, 2012c).

6.2.2 Portugal

For almost half of the 20th century Portugal was a dictatorship led by Antonio de Oliveira Salazar. The dictatorship's refusal to give up its grip on the former colonies resulted in expensive wars in Africa. This period was brought to an end in 1974 in a coup, known as the Revolution of the Carnations, which led to a new democracy. By the end of 1975 all of Portugal's former colonies in Africa were independent (BBC, 2012e).



Figure 7: Portugal



Figure 8: Regions of Portugal

Portugal is a parliamentary republic based on constitution of 1976, which was amended most recently in 2004. It is a democratic, unitary state of Law which respects the principle of autonomy of local government and the democratic decentralization of its public administration. The archipelagos of the Azores and Madeira form autonomous regions, with their own political and administrative status and organs of government(BBC, 2012e).

The system of the central government is based on three political organs: the President of the Republic, the Parliament of the Republic and the Government. In addition, the Courts are also sovereign organs, and their formation, composition and areas of competency are laid out in the Constitution. The *Unicameral Assembléia da República* (parliament) consists of 230 members, who are elected for a maximum term of four years. The President is directly elected for a maximum of two consecutive five-year terms. The current President is Aníbal Cavaco Silva, who was elected to his second term on January 23rd 2011 (Assembleia da República, 2012).

Full name: Portuguese Republic
Population: 10.7 million (UN, 2011)
Capital: Lisbon Area: 92,345 sq km (35,655 sq miles)
Major language: Portuguese
Major religion: Christianity
Life expectancy: 77 years (men), 83 years (women) (UN, 2011)
Monetary unit: 1 euro = 100 cents
Main exports: Textiles and clothing, wood products, electrical equipment
GNI per capita: US \$21,880 (World Bank, 2010)

Figure 9: Main characteristics of Portugal (Source: BBC, 2012e).

6.2.3 Greece

With restoring the democracy in July 1974, the military regime that had ruled the country since 1967 collapsed. Greece has long been at odds with its close neighbor, Turkey, over territorial disputes in the Aegean and the divided island of Cyprus. Although the disputes remain unresolved, the Greek government gives strong backing to Turkey's EU bid. It is believed that membership will increase regional stability (BBC, 2012d). Also, Greece has been in dispute since the early 1990s with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Greece states that the use of the name Macedonia by the neighboring country implies a territorial claim over Greece's own region of the same name (BBC, 2012d).



Figure 10: Greece



Figure 11: Regions of Greece

Since the Constitution was signed at the 11th June of 1975 (amended in March 1986), the democratic Greek system is working like a parliamentary republic with the Prime Minister and the Cabinet at the top of the executive branch. The President is elected by Parliament for a five-year term and appoints the Prime Minister. The Cabinet is appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. Legislative power is held by the *Vouli ton Ellinon* (unicameral Parliament), of 300 seats, which members are elected for a four-year terms by direct popular vote. The legal system is based on a codified Roman law and is judiciary divided into civil, criminal and administrative courts (Hellenic Parliament, 2012).

Full name: The Hellenic Republic
Population: 11.4 million (UN, 2011)
Capital: Athens
Area: 131,957 sq km (50,949 sq miles)
Major language: Greek
Major religion: Christianity
Life expectancy: 78 years (men), 83years (women) (UN)
Monetary unit: 1 euro = 100 cents
Main exports: Textiles and clothing, food, oil products

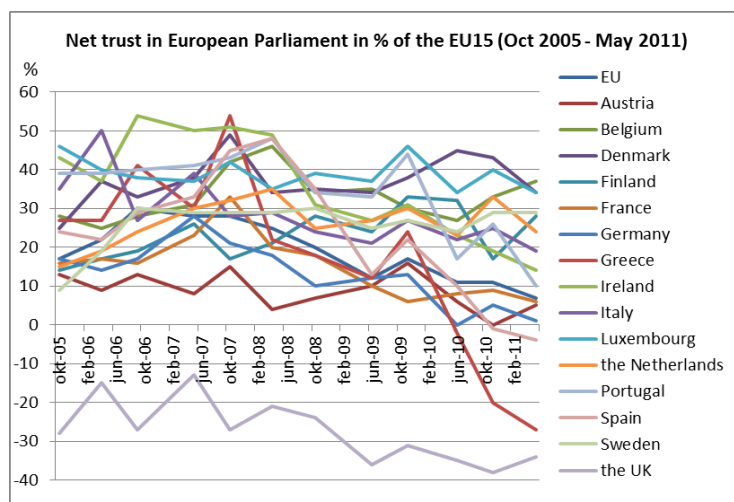
Figure 12: Main characteristics of Greece (Source: BBC, 2012d).

7. Citizens' trust in European Parliament

In this chapter, the European citizen's trust in European Parliament between 2005 and 2011 is shown. This is done by using the statistics of both the Eurobarometer and the ESS. Afterwards, similarities and differences between the two surveys and its outcomes are discussed.

7.1 Eurobarometer

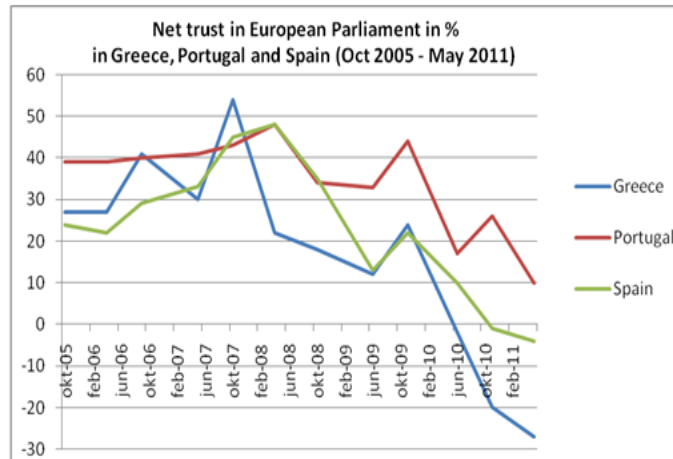
The best measure of trust over time is 'net trust', which is obtained by subtracting the percentage of those who trust from those who do not trust the EP. Graph 1 gives an overview of the citizens' trust in European Parliament during the period 2005-2011.⁹



Graph 1. Net trust in European Parliament in percentage in the EU15 (October 2005 – May 2011)
(Source: Eurobarometer, Standard EB Nos. 64-76)

Taking a closer look at the graph, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden are the countries with an overall increased net trust, of which Belgium (37%) has the highest net trust. It is striking that these countries are all located in the northern part of Europe. Besides, all countries can be found in the top 10 of richest European countries (when basing this on GDP per capita)(Eurostat, 2011). Among the countries with a decreased net trust, Greece is outstanding with a decrease of 54 percentage point. Portugal, Ireland and Spain are following with a decrease of around 30 percentage point. Portugal, Ireland, Spain and Greece are sharing the characteristic of being considered as a PIIGS country (see chapter 6). The other member of the 'group', Italy, faces a decline of 16 percentage point.

⁹ EU15 is chosen. EU27 is not possible, as Bulgaria and Romania accessed the EU right before the financial and Eurozone crisis. EU25 is not an option because the accession of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland Slovakia and Slovenia is also considered as too close to the beginning of the financial and Eurozone crisis. This would not give a fair view of the countries.

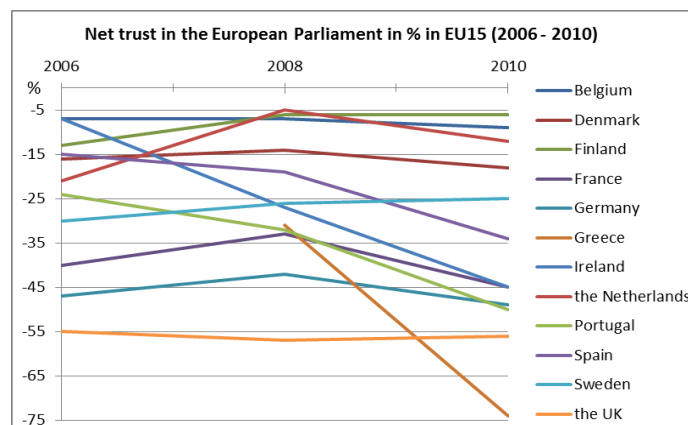


Graph 2. Net trust in European Parliament in Greece, Portugal and Spain in percentage (October 2005 – May 2011) *Source: Eurobarometer, Standard EB Nos. 64-76.*

Graph 2 shows the decline in EP net trust of the Greek, Spanish and Portuguese citizens. In June 2007, all three countries faced an increase of EP net trust (see table 6 in the annex for the exact numbers). In October 2007, Greece faced a heavy decrease, which continued until June 2009, and whereby Portugal and Spain joined the decrease in April 2008. In June 2009 until October 2009, the net trust increased in all three countries. For Greece and Spain, their net trust declined heavily until October 2010, then followed by a moderate decline until -27% (Greece) and -4% (Spain). Portugal also faced a decline, but its net trust increased in June 2010 again. After October 2010, its net trust decreased heavily again until 10% in March 2011.

7.2 ESS

Graph 3 gives an overview of the citizens' trust in European Parliament during the period 2005-2011 according to the ESS.¹⁰

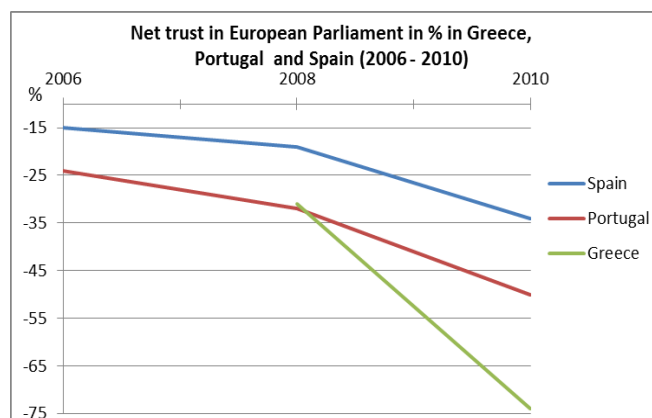


Graph 3. Net trust in European Parliament in percentage in EU15 (February 2006 – March 2010) *(Source: ESS, Round 3-5 2006-2010).*

The graph shows that none of the countries ends with a positive net trust in 2010 and, except for the Republic of Cyprus, none of the countries even started with a positive net trust in 2006. Only Finland, Sweden, Poland, Ukraine and the Netherlands faced an increased net trust over the period 2006 until 2010, of which Finland (-6%) has the

¹⁰ Austria, Italy and Luxembourg are excluded, as these countries did not participate in rounds 3 until 5 of the ESS.

'highest' net trust. Among the countries with a decreased net trust, Greece is outstanding with a decrease of 43 percentage point, followed by Ireland (minus 38 percentage point), Slovenia (minus 33 percentage point), Slovakia (minus 28 percentage point) and Portugal (minus 26 percentage point). Out of this five countries, Portugal, Ireland and Greece are sharing the characteristic of being considered as a PIIGS country (see chapter 6). Spain has a decrease of 19 percentage point, which is still a substantial decline.



Graph 4. Net trust in European Parliament in Greece, Portugal, and Spain in percentage (February 2006 – March 2010) (Source: ESS, Round 3-5 2006-2010)

Graph 4 shows the citizens' trust of Spain, Portugal and Greece in particular (see table 7 in the annex for the exact numbers). The Spanish citizens' trust decreases from -15% in 2006 to -19% in 2008 and ends at -34% in 2010. Portugal follows almost the same 'rhythm', but starts at -24% in 2006, goes to -32% in 2008 and decreases until -50% in 2010. At last, Greece starts at -31% in 2008 and decreases until -74% in 2010.

7.3 Differences and similarities between the surveys

A main difference between the two surveys is the fact that ESS contains much more negative numbers than the Eurobarometer. Also, the starting point of the countries in the ESS is more negative than the starting point of those same countries in the Eurobarometer. On the other hand, the decreases in the ESS are less, although there are some exceptions (Greece, Ireland, Portugal).

In both of the surveys, the net trust of the UK citizens in the EP did not decrease much, but the country continued having the lowest level of trust over the years: around -56% in the ESS and around -33% in the Eurobarometer. Finland, Sweden, Netherlands faced an overall increased net trust in both of the surveys, although the countries reached a positive number in the Eurobarometer, in contrast to their results in the ESS. Among the countries with a decreased net trust, Greece is outstanding in both of the surveys with a decrease of 54 percentage point in the Eurobarometer and 43 percentage point in the ESS. In both of the surveys, Greece is followed by Portugal and Ireland.

7.4 The decline of citizens' trust in other European institutions

Graph 41, 42 and 43 (see annex) show the evolution of net citizens' trust in the European Commission, the ECB and the Council of Ministers.¹¹ The statistics unveil that citizens' trust is not only declining in the EP, but also in these other three European institutions.

¹¹ ESS does not provide data about the evolution of these European institutions.

Citizens' trust in the European Commission declined in the EU15 countries except for the northern European countries Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands and Belgium. The biggest decline is found among Greek (-61 percentage point), Portuguese (-38 percentage point), Irish (-34 percentage point), Spanish (-28 percentage point) and Italian (-22 percentage point) citizens. EU -10

The average EU citizens' net trust in the ECB declined with 14 percentage point. Except for Sweden and Finland, the citizens' trust declined in all EU15 member states. The biggest declines are seen in Greece (-63 percentage point), Portugal (-48 percentage point), Ireland (-42 percentage point) and Spain (-22 percentage point).

Graph 42 (see annex) shows that the net citizens' trust in the Council of Ministers increased in the Northern European countries Sweden, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. The net trust declined in the other EU15 countries (most striking are Greece: -44 percentage point, Ireland: -26 percentage point, Spain: -20 percentage point and Portugal: -12 percentage point).

The combination of these statistics with the statistics of chapter 7.1 show a clear trend. The citizens of Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands have the highest trust in the four European institutions, and this trust increased between 2005 and 2011. On the other hand, the net trust of the Greek, Irish, Portuguese and Spanish citizens (four of the PIIGS countries) in the four EU institutions declined most heavily between 2005 and 2011.

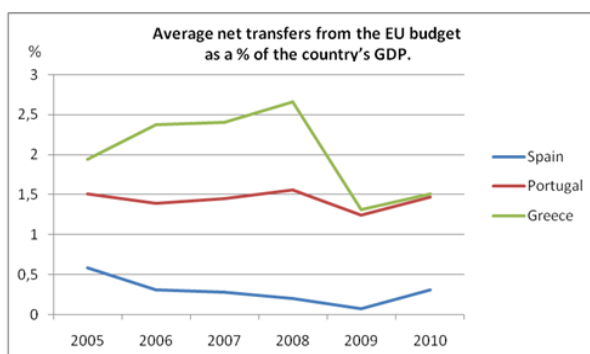


8. Spain

In this chapter, the five hypotheses set out in chapter 4 are applied to Spain. In 8.1 the benefits Spain has received from EU membership are shown, followed by a discussion of Spain's economic starting point in 8.2. The individual educational level of Spanish citizens is depicted in 8.3. In 8.4 we take a closer look to the political awareness among the Spanish citizens and finally, in 8.5, the Euroscepticism of the Spanish political parties is discussed.

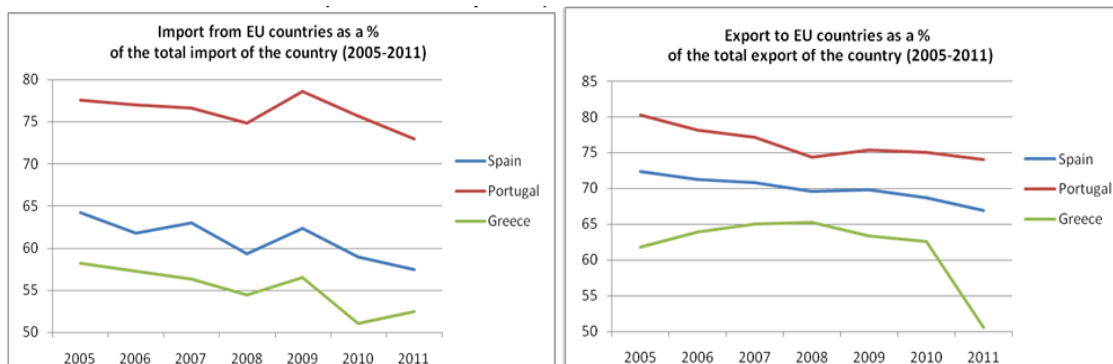
8.1 Benefits from EU membership

As written in the chapter operationalization and measurement, benefits from EU membership can be achieved either directly or indirectly: *Direct benefits* are returns from the EU budget, while *indirect benefits* are benefits obtained through EU trade (Anderson & Reichert, 1995; Mahler et al., 2000).



Graph 5. Average net transfers from the EU budget as a percentage of the country's GDP (2005-2010) (Source: Eurostat, 2012)

Graph 5 shows the direct benefits through EU membership received by Spain, Portugal and Greece (see also annex, table 8). Spain's net transfer is positive between 2005 and 2010. A declining trend is visible from 2005 until 2009, but in 2010 the net transfer increases again since five years. Overall, the direct benefits declined from 0.58% in 2005 until 0.31% in 2010.

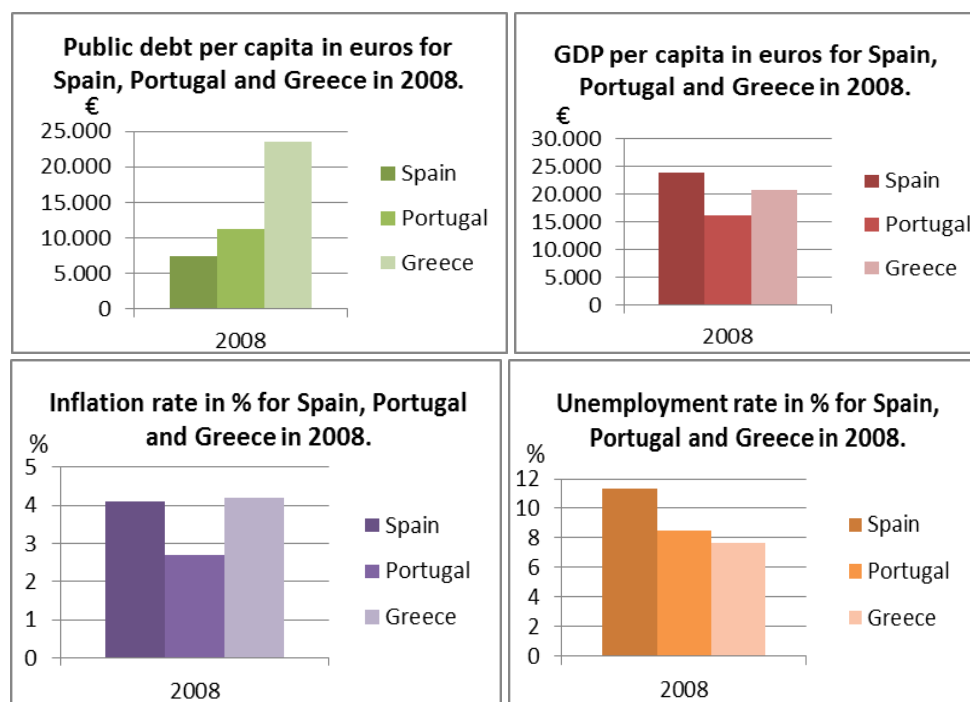


Graph 6 and 7. Import from and export to EU countries as a percentage of the total import of the country (2005 - 2011) (Source: Eurostat, 2012)

Graph 6 and 7 show the indirect benefits through EU membership received by Spain, Portugal and Greece. Spain's import from EU countries as a percentage of its total import declined between 2005 and 2011 with 6.7 percentage point (see annex, table 9). This decline is not constant over the years: an increase is visible in 2007 and 2009. Spain's export with other EU countries shows a constant decline between 2005 and 2011: it declined from 72.4% to 66.9% (see annex, table 10). Concluding, both Spain's import to and export from EU countries declined between 2005 and 2011.

8.2 Economic starting point

As written in the theoretical chapter, the variables public debt per capita, GDP per capita, the inflation and the unemployment rate of a country are used in order to define the economic starting point of that country.

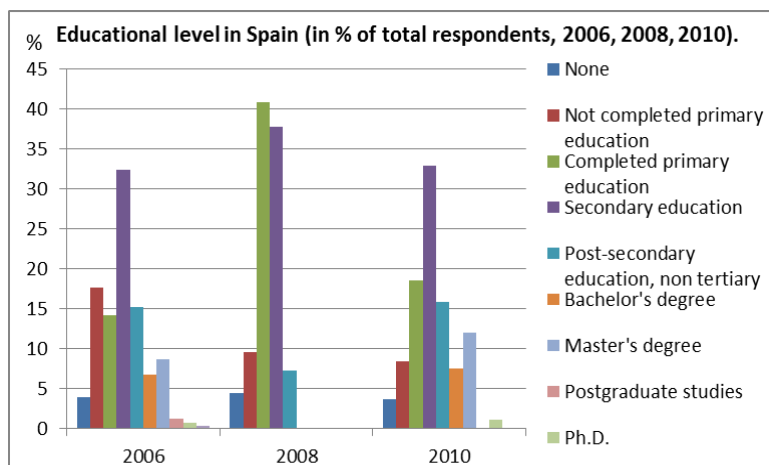


Graph 8, 9, 10, 11. Spain, Portugal and Greece: public debt per capita, GDP per capita, inflation rate and unemployment rate of 2008 (Source: Eurostat, 2012)

The above graphs show the public debt per capita, the GDP per capita, the inflation rate and the unemployment rate of Spain, Greece and Portugal in 2008 (see annex, table 11 for the exact numbers). Spain's public debt per capita was €7,398,- in 2005, while the GDP per capita in that same year consisted of €23,900,-. In 2008, the inflation rate in Spain was 4.1%, and the amount of unemployed persons as a percentage of the labor force, the unemployment rate, was 11.3%.

8.3 Individual educational level

As written, part of the reason that variations in the national levels of support are difficult to explain is because the 'real story' is at the individual level (Hix and Høyland, 2011: 115). Anderson & Reichert (1995) found that education is a consistent predictor of support for the EU: those with higher levels of formal education are more supportive. As the support in the European Parliament between 2006 and 2010 declined heavily for each of the three countries according to the ESS survey, it is expected that the level of education among the respondents decreased during the same period of time.

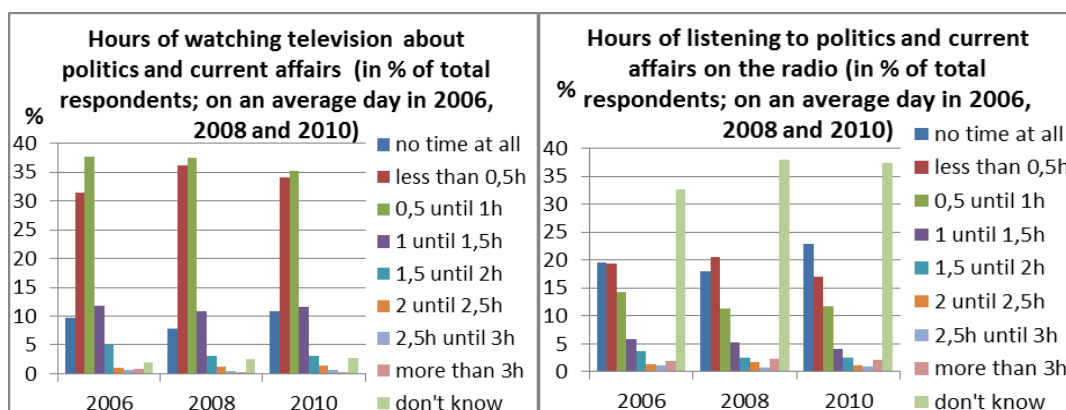


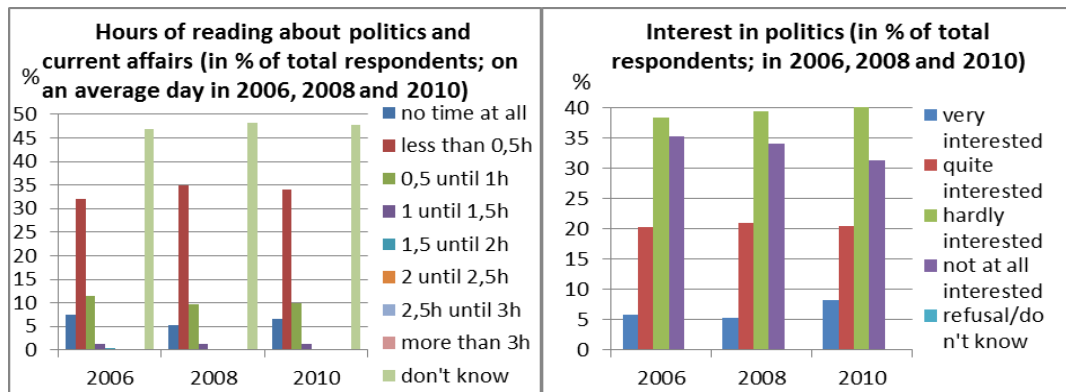
Graph 12. Educational level in Spain (in percentage of total respondents, in 2008 and 2010)
 (Source: ESS, 2006, 2008, 2010)

The Spanish respondents not having completed any education remained almost the same between the period 2006 to 2010, namely 3.6% (see graph 11 and annex, table 12). The group without completed primary education halved: from 17.6% to 8.4%. On the contrary, the group with completed primary education increased from 14.2% to 18.5%. Respondents having completed secondary education and post-secondary education remained almost the same over the years: 15.9% and 7.5%. Respondents having a Bachelor's degree, a Master's degree or Ph.D. increased (6.8% to 7.5%, 8.7 to 12% and 0.7 to 1.1%). The group of postgraduates consisted of 1.2% in 2006, but decreased to 0% in 2010.

8.4 Political awareness

As mentioned in chapter 4, the level of trust in EU political institutions is linked to the level of knowledge of that institution and how people generally feel about the European Union (Standard Eurobarometer 66). Higher levels of political awareness are associated with more trust in the European Parliament because, so the argument goes, the more information one receives about the EU, the less threatening the organization becomes (McLaren, 2002: 552).





Graph 13, 14, 15, 16. Spain: Political awareness (Source: ESS 2006, 2008, 2010)

Overall, the division of percentages among the answers with regard to watching television about politics did not change much between 2006 and 2010, meaning there are no clear trends found among the numbers (see annex, table 12).

Most of the respondents watch between 0 and 1,5 hours television (90.5% in 2006, 92.3% in 2008 and 91.7% in 2010). More than one third of the respondents did not know how much of their time on an average day they spend on listening about politics and current affairs on the radio (see annex, table 13). Again, clear trends cannot be found among the numbers. Most of the respondents who filled in an answer, said to spend between 0 and 1 hour a day on listening to politics on the radio (53.1% in 2006, 49.4% in 2008 and 51.7% in 2010).

When it comes to reading about politics and current affairs, almost half of the respondents does not know how much time they spend on that activity (see annex, table 14). Again, most of the respondents who filled in an answer, said to spend between 0 and 1 hour a day on listening to politics on the radio 51% in 2006, 48.3% in 2008 and 47.7% in 2010).

In contrast to measuring the amount of time the Spanish citizens' spent on listening and reading, the respondents are quite capable in estimating to what extent they are interested in political affairs. The answers *'hardly interested'* and *'not at all interested'* show even two trends. While the first increases with 1.8 percentage point, the latter shows an decrease of 4 percentage point (see annex, table 15). This decrease means that 4 percent of the respondents became more interested in politics over the years 2006 until 2010, as the other groups of answers all increased at the same time. Nevertheless, the majority of the respondents is still not or hardly interested in politics.

8.5 Euroscepticism of the Spanish political parties

Hooghe & Marks (2007: 13) define Southern Europe as *'the EU's most pro-European'* region. According to Gómez-Reino, Llamazares & Ramiro (2008: 134), *'the incorporation of Mediterranean countries into the European Union was preceded, accompanied, and followed by a wide consensus on the positive effects of European integration'*. When examining popular Euroscepticism in Greece, Spain and Portugal, Llamazares and Gramacho (2007: 212) note that respondents from these countries, together with the Italians, rank *'among the most euro-enthusiast'* in Europe. Chapter 6 has shown that this is not the case anymore today.

Taggart and Szczerbiak (2002b) investigated the amount of soft or hard-Eurosceptic parties in the European member states and candidate member states. Without giving an elaboration or explanation, they mention that Spain neither has hard

or soft Eurosceptic parties.¹² This research will not follow their opinion without investigating it. In this section, it is investigated whether the Spanish political parties active between October 2005 and May 2011 can be considered as soft- or hard-Eurosceptic, or whether they are supporting the European Union.¹³

- **Partido Socialista Obrero Español**

The Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) is a social-democratic party and was founded with the purpose of representing the interests of the working class and is inspired by the revolutionary principles of Marxism. Currently, the party has moved away from left-wing politics, supporting free-market policies, including reforms to curtail the Spanish welfare state (Europa.nu, 2012). Experts have systematically perceived PSOE as having a strong positive attitude toward European integration, and this attitude has been perceived as stable over time (Ruiz Jiménez and Egea de Haro, 2011). PSOE is therefore considered as a *pro-European* party. In the European Parliament, the PSOE MEPs join the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats.

- **Partido Popular**

Partido Popular (PP) is a conservative party set up in 1989. It is a re-foundation of the Alianza Popular, a party led by Manuel Fraga Iribarne, a former Minister of Tourism during Franco's dictatorship (Partido Popular, 2012). Like PSOE, PP is considered by experts as a *pro-European* party and this attitude remained stable during the past years (Ruiz Jiménez & Egea de Haro, 2011). Following their electoral program of 2011, PP fully supports the EU: '*The European Union is the PP's mission*' and '*We will coordinate action by all the levels of government in accordance with the strategic priorities and criteria of the European Union*' (Partido Popular, 2011: 23). The PP is a member of the center-right European People's Party.

- **Izquierda Unida**

Izquierda Unida (IU) is a party founded in 1986, bringing together several political organizations opposed to Spain joining NATO. It was formed by a number of groups of leftists, greens, left-wing socialists and republicans. IU is committed to the European integration, but wants to make this happen in a different form than the existing mode, whereby the ideology of IU is matching the concept of *soft-Euroscepticism*. Presenting an alternative European economic model was the main aim of their electoral EP program in 2009 (Izquierda Unida, 2009). MEPs of IU are members of the left-wing political European United Left/Nordic Green Left. It is plausible to characterize IU as *soft-Eurosceptic* (in contrast with Taggart and Szczerbiak 2002b).

- **Convergència i Unió**

Convergència i Unió (CiU) is a Catalan, center-right, nationalist party striving for the highest possible level of autonomy for Catalonia. It is usually seen as a moderate

¹² It should be emphasized that they wrote that in 2002.

¹³ The Spanish political parties Coalición Andalucista, Eusko Alkartasuna, Chunta Aragonesista, Equo, Partido Animalista Contra el Maltrato Animal, Escaños en Blanco, Partido Andalucista, Plataforma per Catalunya and Partido Regionalista de Cantabria are left out of this analysis. These parties participated in either the 2008 or 2011 elections, but all of these parties did not win seats in the Spanish Lower Chamber, meaning that even if these parties are Eurosceptic, the Spanish citizens do not recognize themselves in these parties.

nationalist party, both in Catalonia and in the rest of Spain (CiU, 2012). CiU is supporting the EU, whereby the party emphasizes that the EU is comprised of diverse people, all having their own history, culture and traditions. They support the Lisbon Treaty and feel that using this Treaty is the right way to modernize the European Union. This modernization is necessary if the EU wants to deal with the changes the world is facing nowadays. CiU is a *pro-European* party (CiU, 2008).

- **Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya**

Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) is a left wing Catalan political party in Spain, striving for independence of Catalonia and is the oldest Catalan political party (ERC, 2012). According to the 2011 electoral program of ERC, the party is *pro-European* (ERC, 2011):

‘The European Union is a priority and must be an element of Catalan politics. We therefore need to develop a public policy aiming at achieving a voice in the EU and to assure our responsibility to construct a supranational stronger Europe’.

- **Partido Nacionalista Vasco**

Partido Nacionalista Vasco (EAJ-BNP) is a center-right, Basque political party that supports greater autonomy for the Basque Country within Spain. It is considered as a *pro-European* party, it for example supported the European Constitution proposal during the referendum which was held in February 2005 in Spain. Also, it supported the Lisbon Treaty in the Spanish Cortes Generales. The delegates of EAJ-BNP to the European Parliament are members of the European People’s Party (EAJ-BNP, 2012).

- **Bloque Nacionalista Gallego**

Bloque Nacionalista Gallego (BNG) was founded in 1895 as a Catholic separatist party for the restoration of self-government. Currently, it describes itself as Basque, democratic, non-confessional and humanist. It is a moderate nationalist party which favors greater autonomy for the Basque region but opposes violence (LPI, 2012). It wants Galicia to be recognized as a nation, both by Spain and the EU. As the EU wants to represent all its citizens, there should be room for Galicia to represent itself in the various European institutions (Bloque Nacionalista Gallego, 2009). BNC is considered as *soft-Eurosceptic* (in contrast with Taggart and Szczerbiak 2002b). Their main concern has to do with regional representation at the EU level. Reinforcing central governments the European Constitution would not respect pluri-national states (for example their right to self-government and having their own language). For this reason, they opposed the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in 2008 (Ruiz Jiménez and Egea de Haro, 2011).

- **Coalición Canaria**

Coalición Canaria (CC) is a Canarian nationalist, center-right political party in the Canary Island of Spain. The party strives for greater autonomy, but does not aim for independence. CC supports the European Union, mainly because the Canarian Islands benefit from the EU through EU funding. Also, CC is for example defending the current text of the European Constitution, because this text reaffirms the specific status as outermost region of the Canary Islands and contains a recognition of the uniqueness of the Canary Islands. CC is therefore considered as a *pro-European* political party (Coalición Canaria Política, 2011).

- **Unión Progreso y Democracia**

Unión Progreso y Democracia (UPyD) is founded in 2007 and considered as a progressive and social liberal party. The party supports more European integration: it would like to create a common European tax policy, whereby tax systems of Member States are integrated and whereby a so-called 'EU Treasury' is able to intervene effectively in monetary and financial crises (UPyD, 2011). UPyD is considered as a *pro-European party*.

8.5.1 Share of votes of the Spanish political parties

Besides mapping the parties' ideologies with regard to European issues, the share of votes of the parties at the most recent parliamentary elections is also listed. This simple but clear indicator gives some idea of the relative current importance of the parties within their party system (Taggart and Szczerbiak (2003: 11). The share of vote for Eurosceptic parties illustrates how opposition to EU membership *currently finds expression* in the particular party system. In Spain, the amount of votes for (soft-)Eurosceptic parties increases from 4.6% in 2008 until 7.7% in 2011.

Date of election	Hard	Soft	Total
9 March 2008	0	4.6	4.6
20 November 2011	0	7.7	7.7

Table 1. *Cumulative share of the vote for party based Euroscepticism in Spanish parliamentary elections for lower chamber by type of Euroscepticism and in % (Source: Álvarez-Rivera, 2012)*

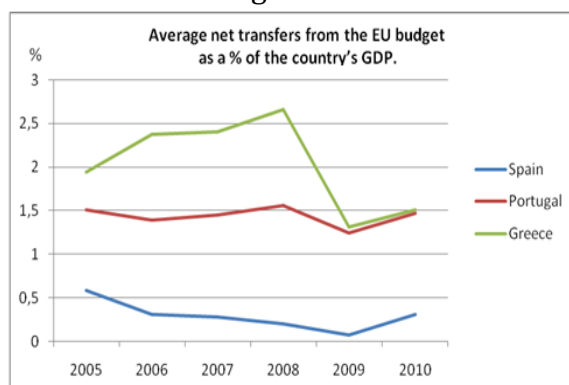


9. Portugal

In this chapter, the five hypotheses set out in chapter 4 are applied to Portugal. In 9.1 the benefits Portugal has received from EU membership are shown, followed by a discussion of Portugal's economic starting point in 9.2. The individual educational level with regard to Portuguese citizens is depicted in 9.3. In 9.4 we take a closer look to the political awareness among the Portuguese citizens and finally, in 9.5, the Euroscepticism of the Portuguese political parties is discussed.

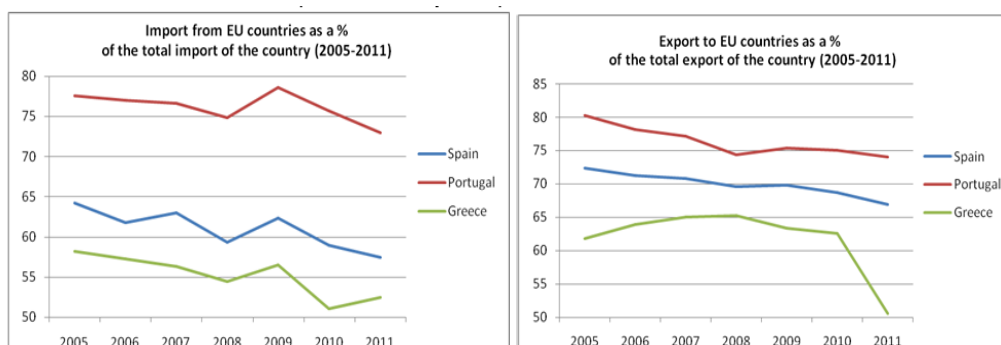
9.1 Benefits from EU membership

Graph 17 shows the direct benefits Portugal has received from EU membership.



Graph 17. Average net transfers from the EU budget as a percentage of the country's GDP (Source: Eurostat, 2012)

Portugal's direct benefits gained from EU membership do not show a clear trend between 2005 and 2010: it alternately increased and decreased (see annex, and table 8). Almost similar as with Spain, the direct benefits increased with 0.23 percentage points in 2010. Comparing the percentages from 2005 with 2011 shows an overall small decline: 1.51% in 2005 and 1.47% in 2010.



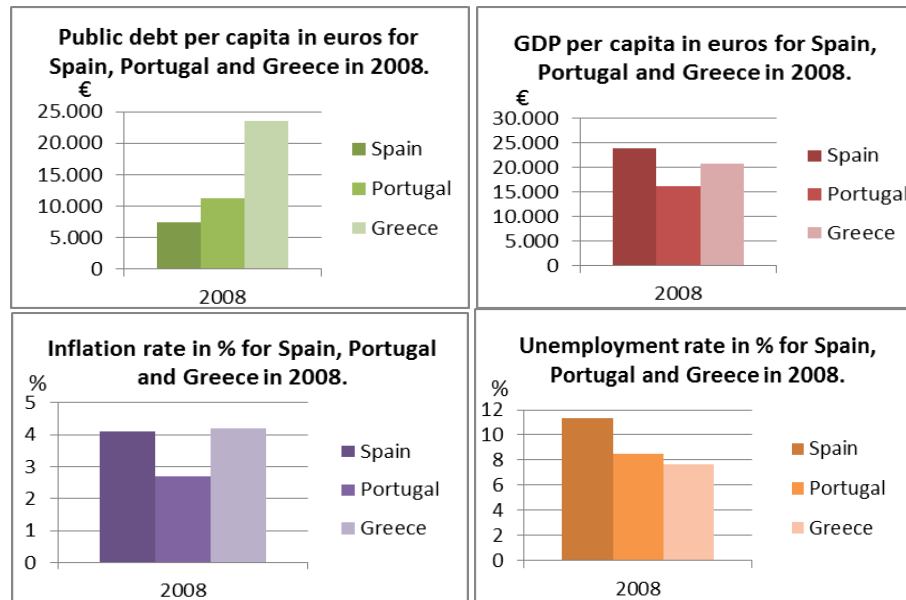
Graph 18 and 19. Import from and export to EU countries as a percentage of the total import of the country (2005 - 2011) (Source: Eurostat, 2012)

Portugal's import from other EU countries as a percentage of its total import declined with 4.6 percentage point from 77.6% in 2005 until 73% in 2011, with an increase of the number only in 2009 (see annex, table 9). Compared with Spain and Greece, Portugal

has the highest number of export to other EU countries (see annex, table 10). This number declined from 80.% in 2005 until 74% in 2011, with a small increase in 2009.

9.2 Economic starting point

Graphs 20 until 23 show the economic starting point of the countries.

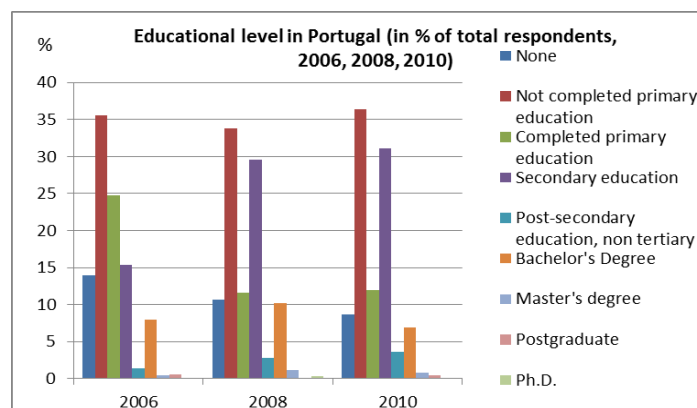


Graphs 20, 21, 22, 23. Spain, Portugal and Greece: the economic starting point 2008
(Source: Eurostat, 2012)

The above graphs show the public debt per capita, the GDP per capita, the inflation rate and the unemployment rate of Spain, Greece and Portugal in 2008 (see annex, table 11 for the exact numbers). Portugal's public debt per capita was €8,461,- in 2005, while the GDP per capita in that same year consisted of €14,600,-. In 2008, the inflation rate in Portugal was 2.1%, and the amount of unemployed persons as a percentage of the labor force, the unemployment rate, was 8.6%.

9.3 The individual educational level

The educational level of the Portugese respondents is shown in graph 24:



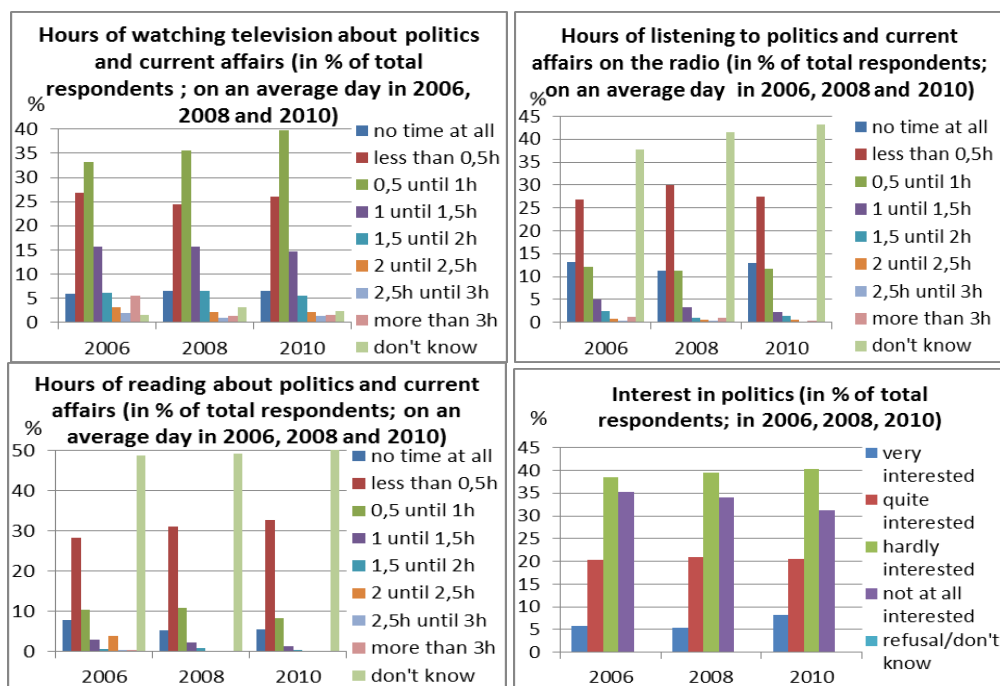
Graph 24. Educational level in Portugal (in percentage of total respondents, in 2008 and 2010)
(Source: ESS, 2006, 2008, 2010)

The Portugese respondents without education decreased from 13.9% in 2006 to 8.7% in 2010 (see annex, table 13). Respondents without completed primary education

increased marginally with 0.8 percentage point (35.6% in 2006 to 36.4% in 2010). In the same period, the group of completed primary education decreased heavily: from 24.7% to 11.9%. Respondents having completed secondary education doubled: from 15.3% in 2006 to 31.1% in 2010. The group of post-secondary education also increased (1.4% to 3.6%). Respondents having a Bachelor's degree decreased slightly with 1.1 percentage point (from 8% in 2006 to 6.9% in 2010). On the contrary, the respondents having a Master's degree doubled: from 0.4% to 0.8%. The postgraduates and the Ph.D. group remained almost the same (0.8% and 0.1%).

9.4 Political awareness

In this section, the political awareness of Greek respondents is discussed. Graph 37 until 40 shows the hours spent on political issues and the interest in politics.



Graph 25, 26, 27, 28. Portugal: Political awareness (Source: ESS 2006, 2008, 2010)

As with Spain, most of the Portuguese respondents watch between 0 and 1.5 hours television about politics and current affairs on an average day. This percentage increased over the years with 6.3 percentage point (see annex, table 19).

Taking a look at the graph showing the percentages of listening to the radio about politics, it seems at first that the Portuguese respondents listened less to the radio over the years. Nevertheless, this decrease in percentages is traced back at the increase of the percentage of persons not knowing how much time they spend on this activity: from 37.7% in 2006, 41.5% in 2008 up to 43.2% in 2010 (see annex, table 20).

The graph concerned with reading about politics shows the same pattern as mentioned with Spain. All the percentages decreased (*'less than half an hour'* as an exception), but at the same time the percentage of *'don't know'* increased (see annex, table 21). This makes it impossible to find a trend among the percentages. Also, the group of respondents not knowing how much time they spend a day on reading about politics is remarkably high (almost half of the respondents).

The Portuguese respondents became less *'hardly interested'* over the years 2006, 2008 and 2010, but at the same time *'quite interested'* and *'not at all interested'* increased

(see annex, table 22). Nevertheless, the decrease and increases are very small and therefore not considered as significant. The majority of the Portuguese respondents is not or hardly interested in politics.

9.5 Euroscepticism of the Portuguese political parties

Taggart and Szczerbiak (2002b) mention that there are two Portuguese parties who can be considered as Eurosceptic: the Communist Party and the Greens. The investigation below, taking into consideration the Portuguese political parties, shows that this is still correct for the Communist Party, but the Greens are not labeled as Eurosceptic in this research.¹⁴

- **Partido Social Democrata**

Partido Social Democrata (PSD) is founded in 1974 and is not, as the name suggests, a traditional social democratic party, but it comes close to the right-wing. The party is the Portuguese equivalent of the Spanish Partido Popular. The political program is clear about the position of PSD towards the European Union (Partido Social Democrata, 2012: 11):

'The fact is that the PSD defends deepening the economic, monetary and political union of the European space [...] The historic deeds already achieved by the European communities[...] strengthen us in our commitment to a more united Europe.'

The statement shows that PSD is committed to a more united Europe and is therefore considered as a *pro-European* political party.

- **Partido Socialista**

Partido Socialista (PS) is founded in 1973 and center-left oriented. It is a member of the Socialist International and the Party of European Socialists. PS is *pro-European*. The objective of the PS is to have Portugal participating in the core of the process of European integration. European integration is in the interest of the stability of Portugal. The PS thinks that the EMU will not survive without a real political union, and it is therefore necessary to give the EU more financial resources and leadership (Partido Socialista, 2011).

- **Partido do Centro Democrático e Social/Partido Popular**

'O Partido Popular é europeísta' (*'The Partido Popular is Europeanist'*). The Partido Popular (CDS-PP), Christian Democrat oriented and founded in 1974, has historically been close to the Roman Catholic Church (LPI, 2012). It is clearly *pro-European* oriented. It supports the European economic integration and the party believes that the future of Portugal is unequivocally associated with the process of intensifying collaboration with other member states (Partido Popular, 2012):

¹⁴ The Portuguese political parties Partido Comunista dos Trabalhadores Portugueses, Partido pelos Animais e pela Natureza, Partido da Terra, Movimento Esperança Portugal, Partido Nacional Renovador, Partido Trabalhista Português, Partido Popular Monárquico, Nova Democracia, Portugal pro Vida, Partido Operário de Unidade Socialista, Partido Democrático do Atlântico and Partido Humanista are left out in this analysis. These parties participated in the 2009 and 2011 elections (Movimento Mérito e Sociedade and Frente Ecologia e Humanismo only in 2009 and Partido Humanista only in 2011), but all of these parties did not win seats in the Portuguese Lower Chamber, meaning that even if these parties are Eurosceptic, the Portuguese citizens do not recognize themselves in these parties.

'We believe in Europe as a major area of progress. We believe in the creativity of Europe, underlined by the great figures of history of culture. Portugal is a member of the European Community and will remain so. It was the right choice and should be shared by all the Christian Democrats'

- **Coligação Democrática Unitária**

Coligação Democrática Unitária (CDU) is an electoral coalition between Partido Ecologista "Os Verdes" and Partido Comunista Português. The coalition was formed for the first time in 1987 in order to participate in the national and EP election which were held that year. Since the beginning of the coalition, the member parties have never participated separately in any election anymore.

Partido Comunista Português (PCP) is a communist party founded in 1921. Its MEPs are members of the United Left - Nordic Green Left group. It voted, as the only Portuguese party, against the ratification of the Single European Act, the Treaty of the European Union, the Treaty of Amsterdam, the Treaty of Nice and the Treaty of Lisbon (Verney, 2011a). The party argues that the serious situation Portugal is facing right now, is the result of the capitalist process of EU integration, enhanced by the growing alienation of national sovereignty. As the PCP warned, the Euro, EMU and the EU are an obstacle to develop Portugal. Twenty five years of integration increased the problems and weaknesses of the national economy, increased their dependence and structural deficits. The problems are inseparable from the structural process of abandonment of the national production, privatization, submission to the impositions of the European Union and the accession to the euro. The PCP therefore proposes a policy of defense and promotes the national production (PCP, 2012). PCP is found to be a *soft-Eurosceptic* party. Although heavily criticizing the EU, the EMU and the euro and proposing change, the party is not a single-issue party, such as the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and the June Movement in Denmark that are opposed to European integration *per se* (Usherwood and Startin, 2011: 6).

Partido Ecologista 'Os Verdes' (PEV) is the Portuguese Green Party and was founded in 1982. It is closely allied with the Portuguese Communist Party and has no separate leader. Its association to the Communist Party explains their nickname "The watermelons": green outside, red inside. PEV is a member of the European Greens (LPI, 2012). PEV is considered as *pro-European*. It is mainly concerned about ecology and nature, which is reflected in their electoral program.

- **Bloco de Esquerda**

Bloco de Esquerda (B.E.) is a left-wing party, founded in 1999 and described by Verney (2011a: 15) as '*a new addition to the South-European Eurosceptic radical left*'. According to Usherwood and Startin (2011: 7), Bloco de Esquerda is a Eurosceptic party, falling in the category of left-wing parties who are opposed to the neo-liberal direction in which European integration is progressing, and who believe that the EU is '*increasingly being run as a capitalist club on behalf of capitalists*'. Bloco de Esquerda criticizes the EU heavily, especially with regard to the Eurozone crisis (Bloco de Esquerda, 2011: 11,12):

‘The unfair conditions imposed on Portugal leads to a postponed bankruptcy. [...] Contrary to the assertion of the troika, the divergence between the North and South cannot be explained as countries being "good and disciplined" and other "incompetent and lazy". It was not just in competence and bad government that the average incomes of the Portugese began to lag behind the European average. The whole EU shares responsibility. The EU can only be redeemed when focusing on the future, just like we already do’.

The party proposes several adjustments to the European monetary en fiscal policy. For example, it would like to see the Union creating a ‘Pact for Employment’ and a new European investment bank, because these instruments prevent and correct the imbalances created by the Euro. Based on the above, the Bloco de Esquerda is considered to be a *soft-Eurosceptic* party. The party is not labeled as hard-Eurosceptic, because, coming back to the definition of hard-Euroscepticism, it would rather see a different interpretation of the EU, than a total withdraw from the European project.

9.5.1 Share of votes of the Portugese parties

The share of votes of the parties at the parliamentary elections in 2009 and 2011 is listed in table 2. It shows that the amount of votes for (soft-)Eurosceptic parties decreased from 17.7% in 2009 until 13.1% in 2011.

Date of election	Hard	Soft	Total
28 September 2009	0	17.7	17.7
5 June 2011	0	13.1	13.1

Table 2. *Cumulative share of the vote for party based Euroscepticism in Portugese parliamentary elections for lower chamber by type of Euroscepticism and in % (Source: Álvarez-Rivera, 2012)*

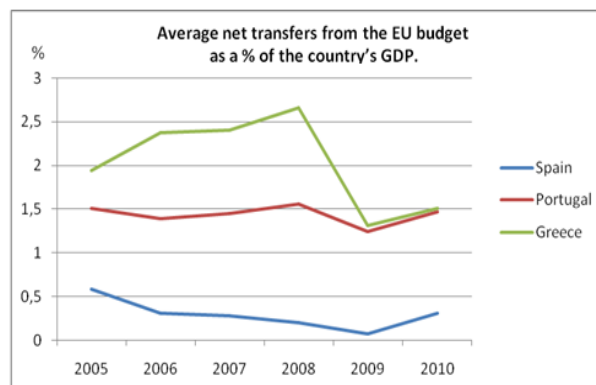


10. Greece

In this chapter, the five hypotheses set out in chapter 4 are applied to Greece. In 9.1 the benefits Greece has received from EU membership are shown, followed by a discussion of Greece's economic starting point in 9.2. The individual educational level with regard to Greek citizens is depicted in 9.3. In 9.4 we take a closer look to the political awareness among the Greek citizens and finally, in 9.5, the Euroscepticism of the Greek political parties is discussed.

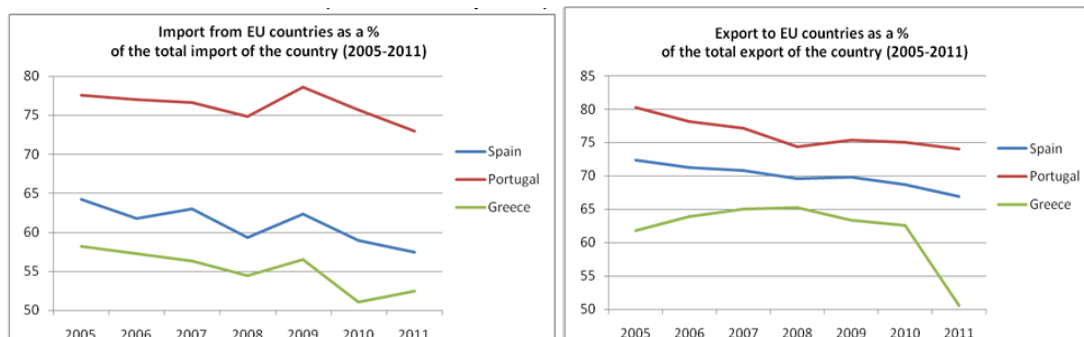
10.1 Benefits from EU membership

Graph 17 shows the direct benefits Greece has received from EU membership.



Graph 29. Average net transfers from the EU budget as a percentage of the country's GDP (Source: Eurostat, 2012)

Greece has the highest average net transfers from the EU budget when compared with Spain and Portugal (see graph 29, annex table 8). It increased from 2005 until 2008, but declined heavily in 2009 with 1.35 percentage point. As Spain and Portugal, it continued to decline in 2010. Overall, the direct benefits are declined with 0.43 percentage point: from 1.94% in 2005 until 1.51% in 2010.



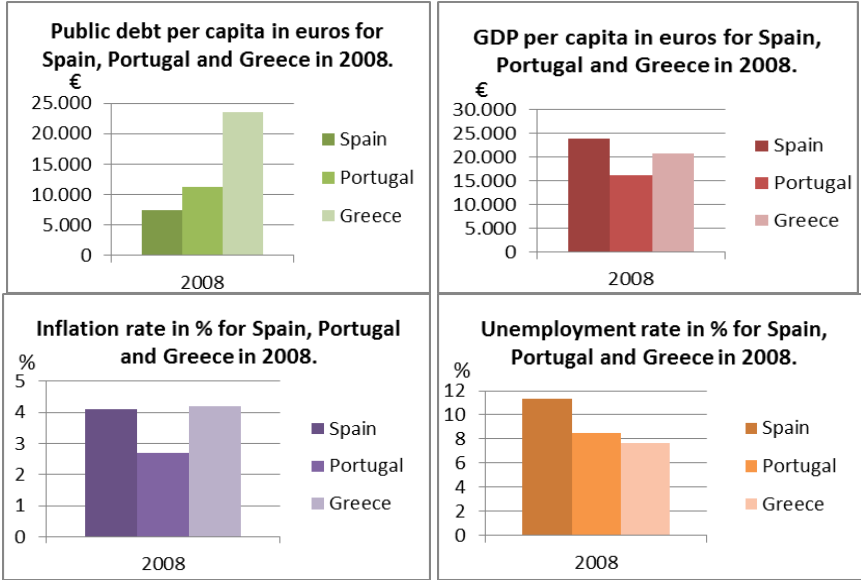
Graph 30, 31. Import from and export to EU countries as a percentage of the total import of the country (2005 - 2011) (Source: Eurostat, 2012)

Greece's import with other EU countries between 2005 and 2011 declined with 5.7 percentage point (see graph 30 and 31 and annex, table 9 and 10). In contrast with Spain

and Portugal, Greece's import increased in 2010. Its export to other EU countries was 61.8% in 2005 (see annex, graph 10 and table 8). It then faced an increase of several years but in 2010 it was close to the level of 2005. Finally, in 2011, the export to other EU countries declined heavily with 12 percentage point, ending at 50.6%.

10.2 Economic starting point

The variables public debt per capita, GDP per capita, the inflation and unemployment rate of a country are used in order to define the economic starting point of the countries.

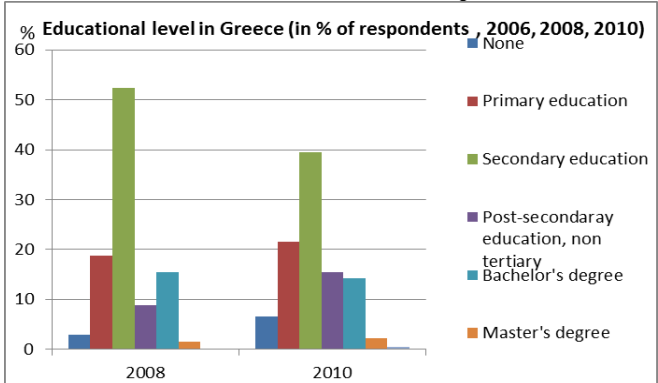


Graph 32, 33, 34, 35. Public debt per capita, GDP per capita, inflation rate and unemployment rate of 2008 (Source: Eurostat, 2012)

The above graphs show the public debt per capita, the GDP per capita, the inflation rate and the unemployment rate of Spain, Greece and Portugal in 2008 (see annex, table 11 for the exact numbers). Greece's public debt per capita was €17,659,- in 2005, while the GDP per capita in that same year consisted of €17,400,-. In 2008, the inflation rate in Greece was 3.5%, and the amount of unemployed persons as a percentage of the labor force, the unemployment rate, was 9.9%.

10.3 Educational level

Graph 36 shows the educational level of the Greek respondents in 2008 and 2010.

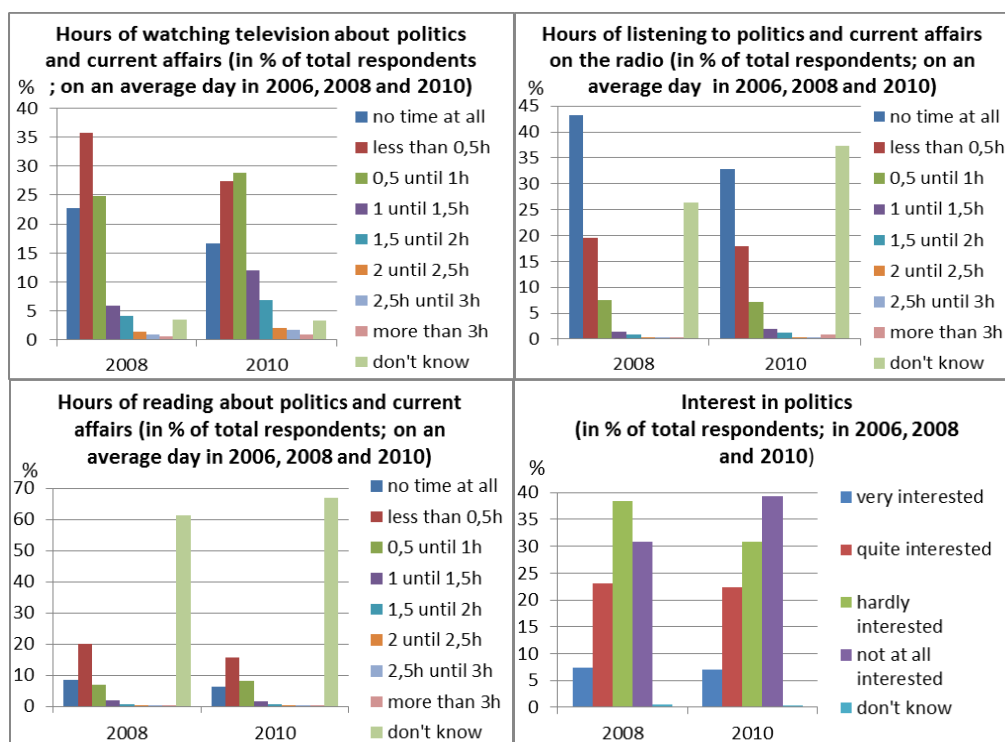


Graph 36. Educational level in Greece (in percentage of total respondents, in 2008 and 2010) (Source: ESS, 2008, 2010)

The Greek respondents without education increased with 3.6 percentage point (2.9% in 2008 to 6.5%) (see graph 36, and annex, table 14). In this same period the group with primary education also increased from 18.8% to 21.6%. The respondents having completed secondary education decreased from 52.4% in 2008 to 39.5% in 2010. The post-secondary education group almost doubled: from 8.9% in 2008 to 15.4% in 2010. The Greek respondents having a Bachelor's degree decreased slightly: from 15.4% in 2008 to 14.3 in 2010. On the contrary, the group with a Master's degree and the Ph.D. group increased marginally during the same period: from 1.5% to 2.2% and from 0.1% to 0.5%.

10.4 Political awareness

In this section, the political awareness of Greek respondents is discussed. Graph 37 until 40 shows the hours spent on political issues and the interest in politics.



Graph 37, 38, 39, 40. Greece: Political awareness (Source: ESS 2006, 2008, 2010).

Data for Greece is only available of 2008 and 2010. The differences in percentages between these two years are bigger compared with Spain and Portugal. The Greek respondents watched more politics on television in 2010 than in 2008 (see annex, table 25). As the two lowest groups 'no time at all' and 'less than half an hour' decreased during the period 2008 until 2010, the group 'don't know' increased at the same time.

Looking at the graph concerned with listening to politics and current affairs on the radio, the decline of percentages 'no time at all' and 'less than half an hour' are striking (see annex, table 26). One might think that this decline means that these respondents became more interested in listening to politics on the radio in 2010. Nevertheless, the Greek persons filling in that they don't know how much time they listen to the radio, increased heavily.

Most respondents spend no time or less than half an hour on reading about politics (see annex, table 27). The percentages of 'no time at all' and 'less than half an hour' decreased in the graph of reading about politics, but at the same time an increase

is seen among the respondents saying that they do not know how much time they spend on reading. The high numbers for *'don't know'* in both 2006 and 2008 are remarkable. When looking at the graph of political interest, it is striking that *'hardly interested'* decreased with 7.5 percentage point, while *'not at all interested'* increased with 8.5 percentage point (see annex, table 28). This might indicate that the Greek respondents became less interested in politics between 2008 and 2010, but as this is only found for 2010, it is not properly to conclude this yet. It would be interesting to see what the numbers of 2012 will show. Over all, most of the respondents are hardly interested or not interested at all in politics (69.2% in 2008 and 70.2% in 2010).

10.5 Euroscepticism of the Greek political parties

At last, the political parties of Greece are examined.¹⁵ According to Taggart and Szczerbiak (2002b), namely the Coalition of the Radical Left, the Communist Party, the Democratic Social Movement (which is part of the Coalition of the Radical Left nowadays) and Political Spring (a former conservative party).

- **Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima** (Pan Hellenic Socialist Movement)

Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima (Pasok) is a social democratic political party founded in 1974. Its founding principle is *'National Independence, Popular Sovereignty, Social Emancipation, Democratic Process'* (LPI, 2012). Pasok is considered to be *pro-European* (Eurotribune, 2012). Right before the 2012 elections, Evangelos Venizelos, the leader of Greece's socialist party reiterated that Pasok would seek to be part of a 'progressive government of pro-European forces' after the vote (The Irish Times, 2012). If Greece wants to be a truly equal state of the Eurozone and the European Union, a national reconstruction plan is needed (Pasok, 2012).

- **Nea Dhimokratia** (New Democracy)

Nea Dhimokratia (ND) was founded in 1974 by Konstantínos Karamanlís, who became the first Prime Minister after the military regime. ND is one of the main conservative Greek political parties. After an initial period of success, ND spent most of the 1980s and 1990s in opposition. ND is a member of the European People's Party (LPI, 2012). ND supports a free economic market and wants to see the government's role as small as possible. In the area of foreign policy, the party is committed to a united and federal European Union. Therefore, like Pasok, ND is considered as being *pro-European* (Eurotribune, 2012).

- **Dimokratiki Aristera** (Democratic Left)

Dimokratiki Aristera is a social-democratic political party and was founded on 27 June 2010. As the KKE and Syriza, Dimokratiki Aristera is against the bailout for Greece, but is considered as a more moderate anti-bailout party. Their electoral program shows that the party is *pro-European*. For example, they describe the aim of the Greek foreign policy as restoring the role of Greece as a member state of the EU. According to the party, 'the European Union, despite the deep crisis and the conservative fold, continues to be the cornerstone on which the Greek foreign policy must be based' (Democratic Left, 2012).

¹⁵ The Greek political parties Ecologist Greens, Popular Orthodox Rally, Democratic Alliance and Recreate Greece are left out of this analysis. These parties participated in either the 2007, 2009 or 2012 elections, but all of these parties did not win seats in the Greek Lower Chamber, meaning that even if these parties are Eurosceptic, the Greek citizens do not recognize themselves in these parties.

- **Laikós Orthódoxos Synagermós** (Popular Orthodox Rally, or LAOS)

LAOS calls itself a 'Hellenocentric' party. It was founded in 2000 and has a radical right-wing populist orientation. It is a member of the Europe of Freedom and Democracy group in the EP (LAOS, 2003). LAOS emphasizes the threat to national identity posed by illegal immigration, globalization and the wrong kind of European integration. Before the 2007 elections, LAOS challenged Greece's Eurozone membership, calling for a referendum on the issue. LAOS voted against the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty and the Treaty of Lisbon. Given this views, LAOS is labeled as a *soft-Eurosceptic* party. LAOS initially started as a protest party, but appeared to have become consolidated, after winning second terms in both the European and national elections of 2009. By consolidating, the party moved from a hard- to a soft-Eurosceptic view (Verney, 2011b).

- **Kommunistiko Komma Elladas** (Communist Party of Greece)

Kommunistiko Komma Elladas (KKE) is the major Greek communist party and was founded in 1918, although, with a few exceptions, it was banned from 1918 to 1974. In the EP they are part of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left group (LPI, 2012). KKE voted against ratifications of the Single European Act, the Treaty of the European Union, the Treaty of Amsterdam, the Treaty of Nice, the Treaty establishing a European Constitution and, at last, the Treaty of Lisbon (Verney, 2011a: 8). According to KKE, the EU is a choice of the capital, which promotes measures in favor of the monopolies. Their statement in the face of the 2009 EP elections included: '*NO to the EU of the monopolies and militarism, YES for a Europe of prosperity for the people, of peace, social justice and democratic rights, of socialism*' (KKE, 2009). At this stage the KKE is not a single-issue party, but it certainly expresses its dissatisfaction with the current state of the EU. However, during the recent elections in June 2012, KKE expressed the following statement: *The KKE represents the working people with its political proposal for a pro-people way out from the capitalist crisis, its clear position on the withdrawal from the EU and NATO with people's power, while it underlines that there are no easy solutions* (KKE, 2012). As the party denies the usefulness of being a member of the Union per se, it is considered as *hard-Eurosceptic* (which is in line with Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2002b).

- **Chrysi Avgi** (Golden Dawn)

Chrysi Avgi is a Greek far-right fairly new political party, as it used to be an organization. It expresses nationalist, anti-immigrant views and is known for its militancy. It is also commonly described as neo-Nazi and fascist although the group rejects these labels (BBC, 2012f). Still, the leader of Chrysi Avgi, Nikos Michaloliakos, is an open admirer of Hitler (he has called him 'a great personality of history'), and Michaloliakos has adopted the Nazi salute and a version of the swastika as his party's emblem (The New Zealand Herald, 2012). The party does not have any defined political programs, and takes a mainly ideological stance about building a '*Greece for the Greeks*'. It is against the bailout program for Greece. It wants to create a country that is going to take care of the people, and cast themselves as a political group of '*people for the people*'. Chrysi Avgi is labeled as *soft-Eurosceptic*, as it is not as single-issue party putting the exit of the EU central.

- **Anexartitoi Ellines** (Independent Greeks)

The party was founded on 24 February 2012 by Panos Kammenos, a former member of the New Democracy. Kammenos had been expelled from New Democracy after voting against Lucas Papademos' coalition government in a vote of confidence (Athens News,

2012). The party is called an ‘*ultranationalist party*’ (The Independent, 2012). Anexartitoi Ellines can be considered as *soft-Eurosceptic* in general, although, in the light of the Eurozone crisis, it gets close to hard-Eurosceptic. The Troika, in cooperation with the Papandreou government, implemented reforms that would make the Greek economy creditworthy. According to this party, the objectives have not been achieved at all: Greece remains outside of international financial markets, the Greek deficit is still increasing, and the Troika is continuously revising the set objectives. At the moment, with the way the EU decides policies and treats the vulnerable countries, Anexartitoi Ellines wants Greece to exit the EU (Anexartitoi Ellines, 2012). But, as the party is not a single-issue party and their opinion to exit the EU could change when another EU issue comes up, it is difficult to define the party as being hard- or soft-Eurosceptic.

- **Synaspismós Rizospastikís Aristerás** (Coalition of the Radical Left)

Synaspismós Rizospastikís Aristerás (Syriza) is radical left oriented and founded in 1922. Syriza calls itself democratic socialist, green, feminist and anti-militaristic. In the EP they are part of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left group (LPI, 2012). Syriza voted against the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe and the Lisbon Treaty (Verney, 2011b). Syriza does not support the Greek bailout. Nevertheless, they are not against Europe in general, but rather want to renegotiate the terms of the bailout package (Aljazeera, 2012). Syriza is labeled as *soft-Eurosceptic* (which is in line with Taggart and Szczarbiak, 2002b). It criticizes the current form the European Union heavily, but rather than abolishing it, they strive for reforms (Syriza, 2012):

‘Pasok and New Democracy and their like-minded partners in the EU and the IMF are trying to intimidate and blackmail the Greek people. We are proud because we belong to the family of the Left in Europe. We are resisting. Our success in Greece does not mean isolation, but we want changes, and we will find supporters. Our goal is to break with the neoliberal policy which dominates the EU, and to build a front to fight for a different Europe, a Europe of peace, labour, social rights and ecology, equality between the sexes, democracy and solidarity, a socialist Europe. We can and must change them all’.

10.5.1 Share of votes of the Greek parties

The share of votes of the parties at the parliamentary elections between 2007 and 2012 is listed in table 3. It shows that the percentages of votes going to soft-Eurosceptic parties significantly increased from 2009 until 2012. In 2012, almost half of the votes went to soft-Eurosceptic parties.

Date of election	Hard	Soft	Total
16 September 2007	8.2	8.8	17
4 October 2009	7.5	10.2	17.7
6 May 2012	8.5	21.5	29
17 June 2012	4.5	42.9	47.4

Table 3. Cumulative share of the vote for party based Euroscepticism in Greek parliamentary elections for lower chamber by type of Euroscepticism and in %. (Source: Álvarez-Rivera, 2012).

11. The countries compared

In this section, the outcomes of chapter 8, 9 and 10 are compared. Similarities and differences are shown and if possible, explained.

11.1 Benefits from EU membership

As mentioned, EU membership is not necessarily a positive sum game where everyone wins. It generally is assumed that winners are more supportive of the EU and its institutions than those who lose from it.

Hypothesis 1:
The higher the indirect and direct benefits gained from EU membership, the higher the citizens' trust in the European Parliament.

As chapter 6 has shown, Greece faced the biggest decline in EP trust between 2005 and 2011. Applying this fact to hypothesis 1, Greece should have the biggest decline in direct and indirect benefits gained from EU membership, followed by Spain and Portugal. When using the same definition of (in)direct benefits for the three countries, Greece indeed faced the largest decline for both the direct and indirect benefits and these declines are much larger than the declines of the two other countries.¹⁶ Spain follows Greece when it comes to the direct benefits and the numbers of EU import, but the numbers of EU export show a decline of 5.5 percentage point for Spain and a decline of 5.7 percentage point for Portugal (see annex tables 9, 10 and 11). Apart from this exception, it is seen that the declining trend of citizens' trust in EP goes together with a declining trend of the indirect and direct benefits gained from EU membership.

In order to make the analysis of this hypothesis more complete, it would be useful to include a research on the individual judgments of the EU membership benefits: *'The average citizen takes into consideration the economic benefits for his own purse. But the two [economic benefits for the country] go together of course'* (Respondent 2). As said in chapter 4, Gabel (1998) argues that individuals take into account the economic individual benefits when defining their trust in the EU. Llamazares and Gramacho (2005) found that at the individual level, the judgment on the benefits derived from EU membership is a strong predictor of the EU orientations of Southern Europeans (Spanish, Greek and Portuguese citizens). They argue that economic downturns affect these EU orientations negatively. It would be interesting to find out to what extent their argument also goes for the level of trust of the Southern Europeans.

11.2 Economic starting point

As mentioned in chapter 2, macro-economic models hypothesize trust in the EU is influenced by the economic performance of member states (Ehin, 2001: 34).

¹⁶ One could argue that the conclusion that Greece is the 'biggest loser' when it comes to the (in)direct benefits, depends on the chosen definition of these benefits. To rule out this possibility as much as possible, the definitions are chosen with care and based on theoretical grounds (see chapter 4.2.3).

Hypothesis 2:

***The worse the economic starting point of the country,
the lower the citizens' trust in the European Parliament.***

As the Eurobarometer and ESS survey have shown, Greece faced the biggest decline in trust in the European Parliament during 2005 and 2011 (Eurobarometer) and 2008 and 2010 (ESS survey), followed by Spain and Portugal (see chapter 6). The theory suggests (see chapter 2.2) that the worse the economic starting point, the bigger the impact of the crisis and therefore the bigger the decline in trust in the EP is. The economic starting point of Greece should then be the worst, followed by the starting point of successively Spain and Portugal. This order of countries is found with the inflation rate. The public debt per capita is the highest for Greece, but is then followed by Portugal instead of Spain. The GDP per capita is the lowest for Portugal and the unemployment rate is the highest in Spain, although including Spain may be questionable, as its unemployment and labor market rules are one of Spain's biggest problems with regard to the Eurozone crisis (see chapter 6). Without taking Spain into consideration, the unemployment rate is the highest for Greece.

Concluding, the unemployment rate (again leaving Spain out), the inflation rate and the public debt per capita are highest for Greece. The GDP per capita is the exception, as this is lowest for Portugal. But when taking the four variables together, Greece has the overall worst starting point. Nevertheless, it was expected that Greece would be followed by successively Spain and Portugal. This is not found as Portugal has a lower GDP per capita and a higher debt per capita than Spain.

11.3 Educational level

Following the expectation of the interviewees and McLaren (2002) in chapter 2, the lower the level of education of a person, the less support with regard to the EU is expected. This means that the level of education, and in particular the group of respondents having university degrees, should have decreased between 2006 and 2010, because the net trust in the European Parliament of the Greek, Spanish and Portugese respondents decreased during the same period (Spain: -15% to -54%, Portugal: -24% to -50% and Greece: -31% to -74%, see chapter 5).

Hypothesis 3:

***The higher the educational level of an individual, the higher
the trust in the European Parliament.***

Looking at the Spanish numbers, this decrease of level of education cannot be found. Respondents having a higher education (meaning a university degree) increased from 17.9% to 36.5%, whereas respondents having lower education (all education less than a university degree) decreased from 83.3% to 63.5% (see annex, table 12).

The Portugese numbers show that the respondents saying that they completed higher education decreased from 9% to 8.2% over the years, and the group of respondents having lower education increased from 91% to 91.8% (see annex, table 13). Although there is a decrease in the level of education, it is only 0.8 percentage point which is not enough for a conclusion.

Surprisingly, the level of education among the Greek respondents remained exactly the same: the group of respondents having a university degree consists of 17%, which means that the group with lower education consists of 83% (see annex, table 14). Concluding, the decrease in the level of education is not found in Spain, Portugal and Greece.

11.4 Political awareness

Overall, most respondents in all three countries do not watch or watch less than half an hour to political programs on the television. This low interest in watching political programs is also found for listening to political programs on the radio: most respondents don't listen or listen just 0,5 until 1 hour on an average day. The high number of citizens who do not know how much they spend on listening to political events on the radio is striking. When it comes to reading about politics, the citizens from all countries do not read or read about politics between 0,5 and 1 hour on an average day. Again, the high level of citizens who do not know how much time they spend on this activity is extremely high. At last, in all three countries, citizens are mainly not at all interested or hardly interested in politics, although the group of quite interested persons is still around 20% in every country.

Hypothesis 4:
*The more individual political awareness, the higher
the trust in the European Parliament.*

Looking at hypothesis 4, the political awareness should have been decreased, as this decrease should then have led to the decrease in trust in the EP. The decrease in political awareness should be largest among the Greek citizens, followed successively by the Spanish and Portugese citizens. It turns out that, although the opposite was expected by both the theory and the interviewees, the variable 'individual political awareness' is not a factor that can explain the large decrease in the Spanish, Portugese and Greek citizens' trust in the EP. Trends among the numbers can barely be found, changes in the numbers over the years are not significantly. And when a decrease was found, most of the time the answer 'don't know' increased at the same time.

It should be noted that the overall level is remarkably low. And even though a decline of the level of political awareness is not found, this variable might still be important with regard to citizens' trust and the Eurozone crisis:

'Europe is a gift with 70 years of peace on the continent. A lot of people ignore the value of this fact, and I am disappointed with peoples' attitudes of giving up when facing our first real crisis. Ordinary people do not understand and do not know what is actually going on. (President of EP Martin Schulz, during the Ombudsman seminar 'Europe in crisis: the challenge of winning citizens' trust' 24 April 2012)

EP President Schulz is disappointed with people giving up when facing Europe's first real crisis. But as he says himself the vast majority of the EU does not know what is currently going on within the EU. In fact, President Schulz is referring to EU's struggle with the democratic deficit, meaning among others that the EU seems inaccessible to the ordinary citizen because of the complex methods of operating (Hix, 2008).

11.5 Euroscepticism of the domestic political parties

In table 4, an overview is given of the hard- en soft-Eurosceptic political parties in Spain, Portugal and Greece.

Country	Hard	Soft
Spain	- None	- Izquierda Unida - Bloque Nacionalista Gallego
Portugal	- None	- Bloco de Esquerda - Partido Comunista Português
Greece	- Kommunistiko Komma Elladas	- Anexartitoi Ellines - Laikós Orthódoxos Synagermós - Synaspismós Rizospastikís Aristerás - Chrysi Avgi

Table 4. Political parties considered as hard or soft Eurosceptic in Spain, Portugal and Greece.

As shown in chapter 8 until 10, the share of votes of the parties at the most recent parliamentary elections is also listed:

Country	Date of election	Hard	Soft	Total
Spain	9 March 2008	0	4.6	4.6
	20 November 2011	0	7.7	7.7
Portugal	28 September 2009	0	17.7	17.7
	5 June 2011	0	13.1	13.1
Greece	16 September 2007	8.2	8.8	17
	4 October 2009	7.5	10.2	17.7
	6 May 2012	8.5	21.5	29
	17 June 2012	4.5	42.9	47.4

Table 5. Cumulative share of the vote for Eurosceptic parties in parliamentary elections for lower chamber by country and type of Euroscepticism and in %. (Source: Álvarez-Rivera, 2012).

The table shows the relative current importance of the parties within their party system (Taggart and Szczerbiak (2003: 11). In both Spain and Greece the degree of party-based Euroscepticism increased, which is not the case for Portugal.

Hypothesis 5:
The higher the degree of party-based Euroscepticism within the domestic country, the lower the degree of citizens' trust in the European Parliament.

The degree of party based Euroscepticism should have been increased and should be highest in Greece, followed by successively Spain and Portugal. Table 3 shows an increase of party based Euroscepticism in both Greece and Spain. Portugal is the exception: the share of votes for soft-Eurosceptic parties in the parliamentary elections in 2009 and 2011 decreased with 4.6 percentage point.

As mentioned, Greece, Portugal, and Spain are traditionally considered as highly pro-European. The preferences of Mediterranean citizens used to reflect the view that EU membership brought prosperity, democracy, and influence in the world or at least in Europe (Hooghe & Marks, 2007: 123). Except for Greece, the percentage of the share of votes for Eurosceptic parties in the last Portugese and Spanish elections were quite low:

'Euroscepticism is a very North-European concept. Europe means different things in different countries and it is the mechanism that brought democracy to the Spanish, Portugese and Greeks after dictatorships..' Why should anyone be skeptical of an institution that has been giving them money to develop their economy for decades? You find the skepticism in other countries. Although, now you also find them in Greece, because the money is coming in the wrong kind of way. (Respondent 2)

The share of votes for Eurosceptic Greek parties increased significantly in just one month (6 May 2012 to 17 June 2012). This might be related to the huge amount of austerity measures implemented by the former Greek government (see chapter 4.2.1), which the Greek citizens are now experiencing personally as the reform of the pensions, salaries and taxes are also part of the austerity package.

As agreed in May 2011, Portugal will get 78 billion euros under the bailout. Portugal has already cut public sector wages and raised taxes to reduce its budget deficit. These measures hit public sector workers particularly hard, with many people facing a steep reduction in income (BBC, 2012g). In Spain, Economy Minister Luis de Guindos announced that the country will shortly make a formal request for up to 100 billion euros in loans from Eurozone funds (see chapter 4.2.1). Seeing how the Greek citizens responded in the last elections in June 2012, it would be more than interesting to see what will happen during the next elections in Spain and Portugal, once the citizens realize what the implications of the crisis are with regard to their own personal life:

'It [Euroscepticism] is not important in Spain.. but for the time being. Things are changing. Because in the case of Spain, we were really much a supporter of the European project at the beginning. For us it was a name, an objective to become part of the process. We received a lot, not only in terms of support and money, but also in terms of openness, modernization and political freedom. But now citizens discover that we have not only rights but also obligations..' (Respondent 1)

An overview of the factors influencing the relationship between the Eurozone crisis and the decline in the Spanish, Portugese and Greek citizens' trust is given in table 6. The relative importance of the factors differ. It turned out that the individual factors and the economic starting point were of no importance for explaining the differences in citizens' trust. The factor 'Euroscepticism of domestic political parties' is then found most important. It turned out that the general political awareness of individuals is very low. This leaves room for other sources influencing citizens, namely the domestic political parties. It is thought that citizens are relatively more influenced by these parties rather than by benefits through EU membership.

	Spain	Portugal	Greece
Benefits EU membership	X	X	X
Economic starting point	0	0	0
Educational level	0	0	0
Political awareness	0	0	0
Euroscepticism domestic parties	X	0	X

Table 6. Factors influencing the relationship between the Eurozone crisis and the decline in the Spanish, Portugese and Greek citizens' trust in EP. X = yes, 0 = no.

12. Conclusion

'We should not justify to our citizens that we need another kind of parliament to solve our problems. But we could justify that we use the existing one a little bit better...' (Respondent 2)

In this research, it has been investigated whether the decrease of legitimacy of the European Union can be explained by the Eurozone crisis, and in particular whether the decline in citizens' trust in the European Parliament can be explained by the occurrence of the Eurozone crisis. Also, it has been tried to figure out why differences in the decline exist among the citizens of Greece, Spain and Portugal. Again, the central research question of this research project is *'Can the decrease of legitimacy of the European Union be explained by the Eurozone crisis?'*

12.1 Sub questions

In order to answer the main research question stated above, several sub questions needed to be answered before.

1. *What is the Eurozone crisis?*

In 2008, the world faced a global financial crisis which also hit Europe, and this crisis is thought as accelerating the Eurozone crisis. The Eurozone crisis refers to the region's struggle to pay the debts it has built up in recent decades. Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Italy, and Spain have, to varying degrees, failed to generate enough economic growth to make their ability to pay back bondholders the guarantee it has intended to be. Bailouts were granted to Greece, Ireland and Portugal, in exchange for implementing austerity measures within the countries. Although these five countries were seen as being the countries in immediate danger of a possible default, the crisis has far-reaching consequences for all the members of the EU, as also for the European project itself. As Respondent 2 has put it: *'The crisis puts in question the whole set-up of the economic monetary union and the EU'* (Respondent 2). Currently, a collapse of the EMU seems unlikely, not least because the bailout has for the moment eased the pressure exerted on the euro. But even more importantly, there is neither a provision in the treaties for an exit procedure nor the political will to push even a small country like Greece out.

2. *What is the role of the European Parliament within the European Union?*

The EP is, together with the Council of the European Union, a legislative body. The Parliament consists of 736 members, who are organized together in transnational political groups. It amends and adopts EU legislation and the budget, and monitors the work of other EU institutions. The EP has the power to approve or reject the nominated Commission President and the team of Commissioners, and also has the right to censure the Commission as a whole. It holds committee and party meetings in Brussels and plenary sessions are located in Strasbourg and Brussels. Part of the Parliament's secretariat is in Luxembourg (Hix and Høyland, 2011: 8, 9). The legislative powers of the EP were substantially increased by the Single European Act (1986), the Maastricht (1992) and Amsterdam (1997) treaties. Currently, the co-decision procedure is the ordinary legislative procedure, which means that legislation can be adopted at first reading if the Parliament and Council already agree at this stage. (Hix and Høyland, 2011: 52, 53).

3. *What is the position of Greece, Spain and Italy in the Eurozone crisis?*

Portugal's boom in the second half of the 1990s was fed by a sharp decline in borrowing costs, based on the mere prospect of EU membership. Rapid wage inflation made it harder for local firms to compete with foreign companies. By 2000, Portugal's current account had sunk into a deficit of 10% of GDP. In the 2000s, Portugal's growth was under European average, and of all EU member states income per capita was only lower in Slovakia and Malta. Portugal asked the EU for help after the opposition refused to support the minority government's fourth austerity package, and the government of José Sócrates, the Socialist prime minister, finally fell. On 5 May 2011 Euro commissioner Olli Rehn announced that the EU will support Portugal by providing a bailout of 78 billion euros (Europa.nu, 2012).

Greece is suffering from its huge spending and finds itself unable to cope with its huge debt loads and to meet EU deficit rules. Also, tax evasion is contributing to Greece's low tax rate (tax revenues as a share of GDP) of 31.3% of GDP. The main cause for Greece's financial problems is what an EU report refers to as the '*severe irregularities in Greek accounting procedures*', or what is called corruption (BBC, 2012a).

The *Spanish* economy was built on tourism, a booming housing market and construction industry, and the global economic crisis hit the country hard. The bursting of the housing bubble brought Spain into a recession and by the end of 2011 the country had an unemployment rate of nearly 23%. Yet much of the fault lies with Spain's labor market rules: wages are set centrally and most jobs are protected. Recession revealed how dependent public finances had been on housing-related tax revenues. Austerity measures imposed by the government in an effort to reduce the level of public debt sparked a wave of protests (BBC, 2012c).

4. *What is the theoretical answer for differences in EP support?*

Based on the theory described in chapter 4, variables are used which are taken from the individual and national level and the domestic context.

According to Mahler et al. (2003), nation-states are a major source of Europeans' political identity and Europe's support. These interests and traditions are divided into political and economic differences. An important economic factor which is often used by citizens when determining their trust in the EU, is the benefits a country receives through the EU membership. Benefits from EU membership can be achieved either directly or indirectly. It is hypothesized that this relationship between (in)direct benefits and support for European integration can also be found between (in)direct benefits and trust for the European institutions, in particular the European Parliament.

Macro-economic models hypothesize that trust in the EU is influenced by the economic performance of member states (Ehin, 2001: 34). Without investigating, it can be assumed that the economic situation of the countries at the beginning of the crisis to be studied in this research, are not the same. If the economic situation then influences EU support and, in this research, the trust in the EP, this situation explains the differences in the decline of the trust. It is expected that the worse the economic starting point, the bigger the impact of the crisis and therefore the bigger the decline in the EP.

At the individual level, and following McLaren (2002), the lower the level of education of a person, the less support with regard to the EU is expected. It is hypothesized that the higher the individual educational level, the higher the trust in the EP. According to the Eurobarometer, the level of trust in particular institutions is linked to the level of knowledge of that institution and how people feel generally about the

European Union (Standard Eurobarometer 66). It is hypothesized that the more individual political awareness, the higher the trust in the EP.

Another factor which might influence the degree of citizens' trust in the European Parliament has to do with the Euroscepticism of the domestic political parties. According to McLaren (2002), Euroscepticism motivates institutional distrust. Political parties are important gate keepers in the process of European integration and a useful tool for promoting Europe. It is hypothesized that the higher the degree of party-based Euroscepticism within the domestic country, the lower the degree of citizens' trust in the EP.

5. Do the benefits achieved from EU membership influence the citizens' trust in EP?

Apart from one exception, it is seen that the declining trend of citizens' trust in EP goes together with a declining trend of the indirect and direct benefits gained from EU membership. When compared to Spain and Portugal and using the same definitions of indirect and direct benefits, Greece faced the largest declines for both the direct and indirect benefits and these declines are much larger than the declines of the other two countries.

6. Does the economic starting point influence the influence of the Eurozone crisis on the citizens' trust in EP?

The unemployment rate (leaving Spain out), the inflation rate and the public debt per capita are highest for Greece. The GDP per capita is the exception, as this is lowest for Portugal. But when taking the four variables together, Greece has the overall worst starting point. Nevertheless, it was expected that Greece would be followed by successively Spain and Portugal. This is not found as Portugal has a lower GDP per capita and a higher debt per capita than Spain.

7. Do individual characteristics influence citizens' trust in EP?

Neither the individual educational level nor the level of individual political awareness clearly decreased during the same period of the decrease of citizens' trust in the three countries. Striking is the overall remarkable low level of political awareness.

8. Does the Euroscepticism of the domestic government influence the citizens' trust in EP?

In both Spain and Greece the degree of party-based Euroscepticism increased, which is not the case for Portugal. The share of votes for Eurosceptic Greek parties increased significantly in just one month (6 May 2012 to 17 June 2012), which might be related to the idea that the Greek citizens are now experiencing the crisis personally as the pensions, salaries and taxes are also part of the austerity package.

12.2 Central research question

With having answered the above sub questions, an answer to the main research question is stated below.

**Can the decrease of legitimacy of the European Union
be explained by the Eurozone crisis?**

The first question to be answered is whether the decline in citizens' trust is related to the Eurozone crisis. The relationship between these two is very likely. The crisis became more complicated over the years and extended from Greece to Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Italy and recently Cyprus. The crisis had and still has far-reaching consequences for the other members of the EU, as also for the European project itself which is among others reflected in the decline of citizens' trust in the EU. This decline is fed by the inability of the ordinary citizens to understand the large amount of difficult decisions taken at the European level (this inability is noted and pronounced in public by the EP President Martin Schulz) which are affecting many Europeans' daily lives. The decrease of the citizens' trust, indicator for input-legitimacy, is a threat to the EU, as the EU has no right to exist without being legitimate.

The next question, and thereby we are reaching the main research question, is whether the decline in citizens' trust can be explained by solely the Eurozone crisis. As the crisis was heating up, the levels of trust dropped in almost all of the EU15 member states. However, these levels of trust are quite heterogeneous and not all of these MS experienced an immediate drop in the level of trust at the start of the Eurozone crisis in 2008. This makes it unlikely that the decrease in citizens' trust is only caused by the occurrence of the crisis. Several factors influencing the relationship between the crisis and the decline in trust were therefore investigated. The individual and country level as well as the domestic context of the country were hereby taken into consideration by studying the benefits gained from EU membership, the economic starting point of the country, the individual educational level and political awareness and at last the level of Euroscepticism of domestic political parties. As can be read above, it turned out that these factors, except for the benefits gained from EU membership and in contradiction with the theoretical support, should not be used as explanations for the differences in the decline of the Spanish, Greek and Portuguese citizens' trust.

As written in the theoretical framework, due to feasibility it was impossible to include a seemingly important factor, namely the role of the (domestic) media. Several researchers (Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993: 514; Diez Medrano 2003) found a causal link between the reports of the media and the level of citizens' trust in the media. Also, the respondents remarked that we should not underestimate the role of the media:

'There is no such thing as the European demo which was the basis of all democracy and all decision-making. There is no European city. This also goes for media. There is no one media that all of Europe reaches. The media will inevitably always have a restricted view on things with which it gives the citizens also a restricted view' (Respondent 2).

'The media makes it possible for the politicians to explain it the way they want it' (Respondent 1).

The second quote leads to another eventually important factor which influences the relationship between the Eurozone crisis and the level of trust of the EU citizens, namely the role of the domestic politicians. As Respondent 1 has put it:

'I am convinced that the negative situation has been explained as caused by the EU or the decisions at the EU level. Probably that is the reason why many citizens think that the EU is not as good as they thought a time ago'.

As the analysis of the descriptive statistics show that it is unlikely that the decline in citizens' trust is caused by the Eurozone crisis alone, these outcomes suggest that there is room for further investigation. This will be elaborated in the next section.

12.3 Recommendations

The first research recommendation has to do with what is stated above. More research could be done with regard to the position of the media and domestic politicians on the way of presenting Europe in their own country. Also, if it turns out that both of these factors are influencing the level of citizens' trust, it might then be interesting how the factors relate to each other.

Secondly, as Italy and Ireland were not chosen as cases in this research, but as they both are considered to be part of the PIGGS countries being in trouble, they serve as good cases for conducting a similar research.

The current Eurozone crisis demands that, in order to tackle the crisis, adjustments should be made within the European constellation. As these adjustments are related to transfer power of decisions to European institutions, they should be supported and endorsed by national governments and parliaments. Creating support among the Member States is extremely difficult. As respondent 2 puts it:

'With the European Stability Mechanism.. they are going to run through the same problems, it is not going solve anything. A more effective way to establish democratic legitimacy would be a Europe-wide mandate. A similar but different alternative is the European Monetary Fund. This is a community based mechanism which is decided properly in the co-decision framework. But of course, the money that is involved is a huge amount so all the national governments have fear to lose control.'

As the respondent mentions, many national governments are fearing they will lose control within the EU when decisions towards a closer union are proposed. Besides, domestic political leaders should guide the citizens through the process of European integration, but they also take the voting polls into consideration. This consequently brings that political leaders listen to the citizens and act according their will to win votes. It is therefore of crucial importance that the EU leaders convincingly convey their vision towards the citizens and political leaders within the European Union. On the one hand, a clear and strong vision will stimulate national governments to support decisions on the EU level to deal with the crisis. Also, it helps domestic political leaders to convince citizens that those decisions are necessary. On the other hand, a strong vision carried out by all the EU institutions will be beneficial for restoring citizens' trust in the EU. As respondent 1 has summarized:

'Demonstrating that the EU is a useful project is crucial. And the other thing is, correct the way of the national politicians who are explaining what happens and who are giving the right message which fits the reality.'

12.4 Reflection

In this section, the decisions made with regard to the theoretical framework and the methods of inquiry and their consequences are critically discussed.

It is easy to state afterwards that more variables should have been part the research. This was not feasible, and therefore with help of the *pattern matching logic*, the most suitable and executable variables were chosen. Nevertheless, as both the theory

and the interviewees suggested the media might be an important variable, it feels as an opportunity is missed.

Chapter 7.4 showed that the decline of citizens' trust between 2005 and 2011 is not only found for the EP, but also for the ECB, the Council of Ministers and the European Commission. Also, the heaviest declines are found among citizens in the same countries (Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Spain). This suggests that causes for the decline in these institutions could be related, especially taking into consideration that the knowledge of EU citizens about the EU is generally low, which questions whether citizens are able to evaluate each EU institution on its own.

I would decide not to include the variable 'economic starting point' when doing this same research again. The variable was based on the assumption that the worse the economic starting point of the country, the bigger the impact of the Eurozone crisis and therefore the bigger the decline in citizens' trust would be. Although this is not unreasonable, the relations between the economic starting point and the decline in citizens' trust might be too indirect. For example it is more likely that citizens link the unemployment rate or the public debt per capita to the Eurozone crisis, but when doing the research again, I would rather look at these economic variables over time instead of at the beginning of the Eurozone crisis.

Regarding the method of inquiry, it has to be noted that inserting conducting interviews was a good decision. These interviews broadened the view and gave the opportunity to go 'behind the facts'. If only time would have allowed it, more interviews would certainly have been added.

The aim of this research was not to test hypotheses statistically, and this is not regular in social researches. The outcomes therefore cannot be underpinned with 'hard' data. Therefore and although opinions of the researcher are excluded (as much as possible), the outcomes of this research should be interpreted with care.

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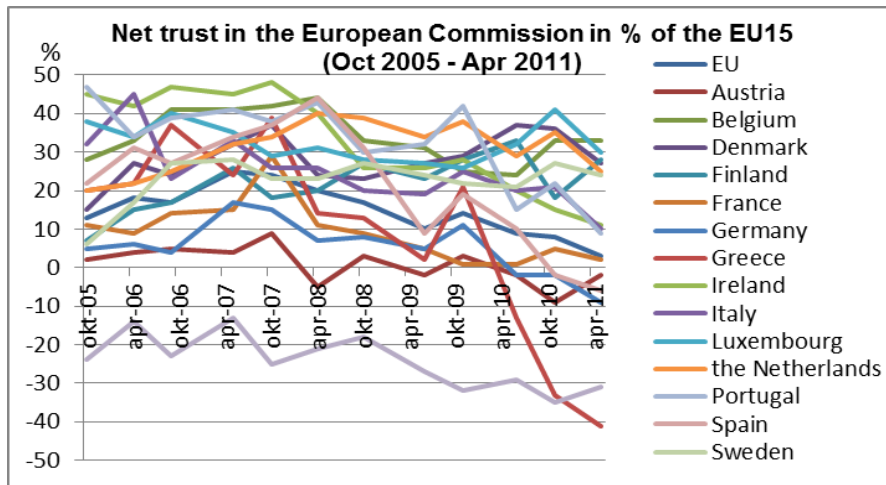
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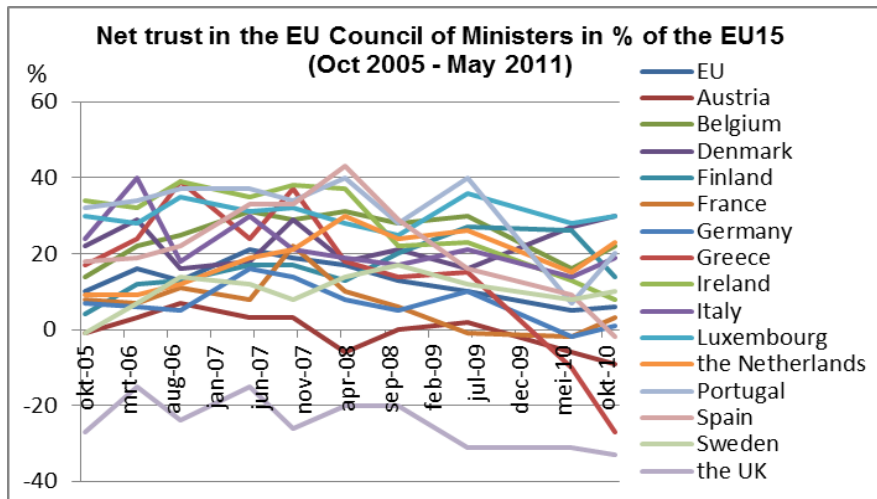
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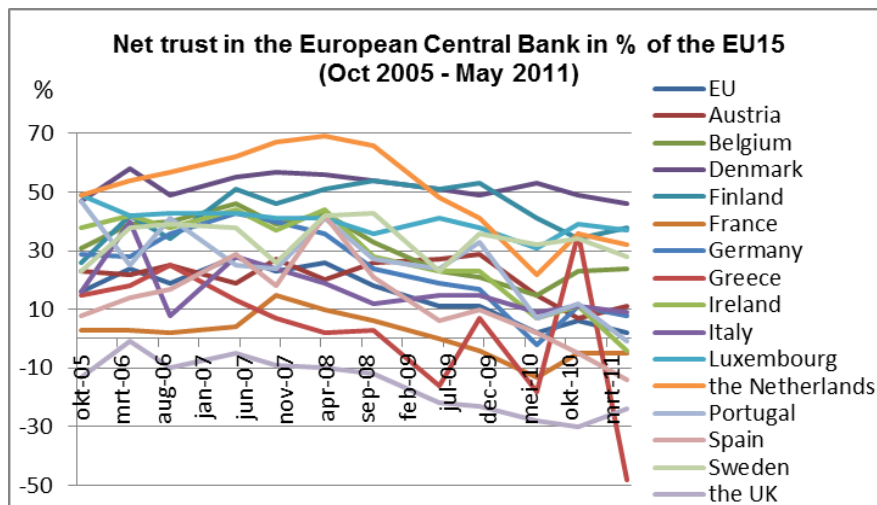
14. Annexes



Graph 41. Net trust in European Parliament in percentage in the EU15 (October 2005 – May 2011)
(Source: Eurobarometer, Standard EB Nos. 64-76)



Graph 42. Net trust in Council of Ministers in percentage in the EU15 (October 2005 – May 2011)
(Source: Eurobarometer, Standard EB Nos. 64-76)



Graph 43. Net trust in European Central Bank in percentage in the EU15 (October 2005 – May 2011)
(Source: Eurobarometer, Standard EB Nos. 64-76)

Interviewees

- Ms. Milagros Candela Castillos, head counselor for science and innovation, Permanent Representation of Spain to the European Union. As Ms. Castillos is working with the European Union and is related to Spain, she is able to give her opinion about which factors can explain the heavy decline of the trust of the Spanish citizens in the European Parliament. The goal of the interview was to check facts found in the literature and to research the research question.
- Mr. Arttu Mäkipää, administrator of the Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON). The ideas and statements of Mr. Mäkipää are useful for this case study, as he is working within the EP and focusing on making the EP more transparent. The goal of the interview was to check facts found in the literature and to research the research question.
- Mr. Felix Roth, research fellow and postdoctoral lecturer. Mr. Roth's research focuses among others on the evolution of public trust towards the Euro and this interrelationship with trust towards the EU institutions and the national political institutions (governments, parliaments). With his knowledge, Mr. Roth is able to give useful insights about both the theoretical and empirical part of this case study. The main goal of the interview was to check facts found through desk research.

Topic List

- Citizens' trust in EP
- Democratic deficit
- Approach of individual characteristics – country-level – domestic context
- Direct en indirect benefits from EU membership
- Economic starting point of the country
- Individual educational level
- Political awareness
- Party-based Euroscepticism in Spain, Greece and Portugal
- Importance of influencing factors
- Methodological questions

Net trust EP			
	Spain	Portugal	Greece
October 2005	24	39	27
April 2006	22	39	27
September 2006	29	40	41
May 2007	33	41	30
October 2007	45	43	54
April 2008	48	48	22
October 2008	35	34	18
June 2009	13	33	12
November 2009	22	44	24
June 2010	10	17	-2
November 2010	-1	26	-20
May 2011	-4	10	-27

Table 6. Net trust citizens of Spain, Portugal and Greece in percentage.
(source: Eurobarometer, Standard EB Nos. 64-76).

Net trust EP			
	Spain	Portugal	Greece
February 2006	-15	-24	X
February 2008	-19	-32	-31
March 2010	-54	-50	-74

Table 7. Net trust citizens of Spain, Portugal and Greece in percentage
(Source: ESS, Round 3-5, 2006-2010).

Year	Spain	Portugal	Greece
2005	0.58	1.51	1.94
2006	0.31	1.39	2.38
2007	0.28	1.45	2.4
2008	0.2	1.56	2.66
2009	0.07	1.24	1.31
2010	0.31	1.47	1.51

Table 8. Average net transfers from the EU budget as a percentage of the country's GDP
(Source: EU's Court of Auditors Annual Report, 2012 and OECD, 2012)

Year	Spain	Portugal	Greece
2005	64.2	77.6	58.2
2006	61.8	77	57.3
2007	63	76.6	56.3
2008	59.3	74.8	54.4
2009	62.3	78.6	56.5
2010	59	75.7	51.1
2011	57.5	73	52.5

Table 9. Import from EU countries as percentage of total import of a country (Source: Eurostat, 2012).

Year	Spain	Portugal	Greece
2005	72.4	80.3	61.8
2006	71.2	78.1	63.9
2007	70.8	77.1	65.0
2008	69.6	74.4	65.2
2009	69.8	75.4	63.4
2010	68.7	75	62.6
2011	66.9	74	50.6

Table 10. Export to EU countries as percentage of total export of a country (Source: Eurostat, 2012).

	GDP per capita (euros)	Public debt per capita (euros)	Inflation rate	Unemployment rate	
2008	Spain	21,400	7,362	3.4%	9.2%
	Portugal	14,600	8,461	2.1%	8.6%
	Greece	17,400	17,659	3.5%	9.9%

Table 11. Economic starting point. (Source: Eurostat, 2012)

	2006	2008	2010
None	3.9	4.4	3.6
Not completed primary education	17.6	9.5	8.4
Completed primary education	14.2	40.9	18.5

Secondary education	32.4	37.8	32.9
Post-secondary education, non-tertiary	15.2	7.3	15.9
Bachelor's degree	6.8	0	7.5
Master's degree	8.7	0	12
Postgraduate studies	1.2	0	0
Ph.D.	0.7	0	1.1
No answer	0.3	0.1	0.1

Table 12. Educational level in Spain (in percentage of total respondents, in 2008 and 2010).
(Source: ESS, 2006, 2008, 2010).

	2006	2008	2010
None	13.9	10,6	8.7
Not completed primary education	35.6	33.8	36.4
Completed primary education	24.7	11.6	11.9
Secondary education	15.3	29.6	31.1
Post-secondary education, non-tertiary	1.4	2.8	3.6
Bachelor's degree	8	10.2	6.9
Master's degree	0.4	1.1	0.8
Postgraduate studies	0.5	0	0.4
Ph.D.	0.1	0.3	0.1
No answer	0.1	0	0.1

Table 13. Educational level in Portugal (in percentage of total respondents, in 2008 and 2010).
(Source: ESS, 2006, 2008, 2010).

	2008	2010
None	2.9	6.5
Primary education	18.8	21.6
Secondary education	52.4	39.5
Post-secondary education, non-tertiary	8.9	15.4
Bachelor's degree	15.4	14.3
Master's degree	1.5	2.2
Ph.D.	0.1	0.5
No answer	0	0

Table 14. Educational level in Greece (in percentage of total respondents, in 2008 and 2010). (Source: ESS, 2008, 2010).

	2006	2008	2010
No time at all	9.8	7.9	10.9
Less than 0,5h	31.4	36.2	34
0,5h until 1h	37.6	37.4	35.2
1h until 1,5h	11.7	10.8	11.6
1,5h until 2h	5	3.1	3.1
2h until 2,5h	1	1.3	1.5
2,5h until 3h	0.7	0.5	0.7
More than 3h	0.9	0.3	0.2
Don't know	1.9	2.5	2.8

Table 15. Spain: Hours of watching television about politics and current affairs (in percentage of total respondents) (Source: ESS 2006, 2008, 2010)

	2006	2008	2010
No time at all	19.6	18	22.9
Less than 0,5h	19.3	20.5	17
0,5h until 1h	14.2	11.4	11.8
1h until 1,5h	5.8	5.2	4.1
1,5h until 2h	3.7	2.6	2.5
2h until 2,5h	1.3	1.7	1.2
2,5h until 3h	1.2	0.8	0.9
More than 3h	1.9	2.3	2.2
Don't know	32.8	37.9	37.4

Table 16. Spain: Hours of listening about politics and current affairs on the radio (in percentage of total respondents) (Source: ESS 2006, 2008, 2010)

	2006	2008	2010
No time at all	7.5	5.2	6.7
Less than 0,5h	32.1	35	34.1
0,5h until 1h	11.4	9.7	9.9
1h until 1,5h	1.4	1.2	1.2
1,5h until 2h	0.5	0.3	0.2
2h until 2,5h	0.1	0.2	0.1
2,5h until 3h	0.1	0.04	0.1
More than 3h	0.1	0.04	0.1
Don't know	46.9	48.3	47.7

Table 17. Spain: Hours of reading about politics and current affairs (in percentage of total respondents) (Source: ESS 2006, 2008, 2010)

	2006	2008	2010
Not interested at all	35.3	34.1	31.3
Hardly interested	38.4	39.4	40.2
Quite interested	20.3	21	20.5
Very interested	5.8	5.3	8.3
Don't know	0.2	0.2	0

Table 18. Spain: interest in politics (in percentage of total respondents) (Source: ESS 2006, 2008, 2010)

	2006	2008	2010
No time at all	6	6.6	6.5
Less than 0,5h	26.8	24.5	26.1
0,5h until 1h	33.2	35.6	39.8
1h until 1,5h	15.7	15.7	14.6
1,5h until 2h	6.2	6.5	5.5
2h until 2,5h	3.1	2.1	2.2
2,5h until 3h	1.9	1	1.4
More than 3h	5.6	1.4	1.6
Don't know	1.5	3.1	2.3

Table 19. Portugal: Hours of watching television about politics and current affairs (in percentage of total respondents) (Source: ESS 2006, 2008, 2010)

	2006	2008	2010
No time at all	13.1	11.2	13
Less than 0,5h	26.9	29.9	27.5

0,5h until 1h	12.1	11.3	11.7
1h until 1,5h	4.9	3.4	2.2
1,5h until 2h	2.4	1	1.4
2h until 2,5h	0.8	0.5	0.5
2,5h until 3h	0.4	0.3	0.1
More than 3h	1.3	0.9	0.4
Don't know	37.7	41.5	43.2

Table 20. Portugal: Hours of listening about politics and current affairs on the radio (in percentage of total respondents) (Source: ESS 2006, 2008, 2010)

	2006	2008	2010
No time at all	7.8	5.3	5.5
Less than 0,5h	28.3	31.1	32.7
0,5h until 1h	10.4	10.9	8.4
1h until 1,5h	2.9	2.2	1.3
1,5h until 2h	0.7	0.8	0.5
2h until 2,5h	4	0.2	0.1
2,5h until 3h	0.3	0.1	0.1
More than 3h	0.3	0.1	0.1
Don't know	48.9	49.3	51.3

Table 21. Portugal: Hours of reading in newspapers about politics and current affairs on the radio (in percentage of total respondents) (Source: ESS 2006, 2008, 2010)

	2006	2008	2010
Not interested at all	39.5	38.6	41.7
Hardly interested	31.6	30.9	28.7
Quite interested	23.3	25.5	24.1
Very interested	5.3	4.8	5.4
Don't know	0.3	0.2	0.1

Table 22. Portugal: interest in politics (in percentage of total respondents) (Source: ESS 2006, 2008, 2010)

	2008	2010
No time at all	22.7	16.6
Less than 0,5h	35.7	27.4
0,5h until 1h	24.9	28.9
1h until 1,5h	5.9	12
1,5h until 2h	4.2	6.9
2h until 2,5h	1.5	2
2,5h until 3h	1	1.8
More than 3h	0.6	1
Don't know	3.5	3.4

Table 23. Greece: Hours of watching television about politics and current affairs (in percentage of total respondents) (Source: ESS 2008, 2010)

	2008	2010
No time at all	43.2	32.9
Less than 0,5h	19.5	17.9
0,5h until 1h	7.5	7.1
1h until 1,5h	1.5	1.9
1,5h until 2h	0.9	1.3

2h until 2,5h	0.4	0.4
2,5h until 3h	0.3	0.3
More than 3h	0.3	0.9
Don't know	26.4	37.3

Table 24. Greece: Hours of listening about politics and current affairs on the radio (in percentage of total respondents) (Source: ESS 2008, 2010)

	2008	2010
No time at all	8.6	6.2
Less than 0,5h	20	15.6
0,5h until 1h	6.9	8.3
1h until 1,5h	2	1.7
1,5h until 2h	0.6	0.7
2h until 2,5h	0.2	0.3
2,5h until 3h	0.2	0.1
More than 3h	0.1	0.2
Don't know	61.4	66.9

Table 25. Greece: Hours of reading in newspapers about politics and current affairs on the radio (in percentage of total respondents) (Source: ESS 2008, 2010)

	2008	2010
Not interested at all	7.3	7.1
Hardly interested	23	22.4
Quite interested	38.4	30.9
Very interested	30.8	39.3
Don't know	0.5	0.3

Table 26. Greece: interest in politics (in percentage of total respondents) (Source: ESS 2008, 2010)

	ESS labels 'level of education' Spain - 2006, 2008, 2010	ESS labels 'level of education' Portugal - 2006, 2008, 2010	ESS labels 'level of education' Greece - 2008, 2010
ISCED level 1 <i>(Not) completed primary education, first stage of basic education</i>	2006, 2008: 0 = No schooling, 1 = Not completed primary education, 2 = General Basic Education, no Graduate. 2010: 0 = Sin estudios, 1 = Primarios sin completar, 2 = Certificado de Estudios Primarios, 3 = Hasta 5º de EGB, 4 = LOGSE, 5 = Grado Elemental en Música y Danza, 10 = Grado Medio en Música y Danza.	2006: 1 = Nenhum, 2 = 1 ciclo. 2008: 1 = None, 2 = Basic Level 1. 2010: 1 = Nenhum, 2 = Ensino Básico 1, 3 = Ensino Básico 2.	2008: 0 = Analphabetic, 1 = Primary education. 2010: 1 = Merikes taxeis Dimotikou.
ISCED level 2a, 2b, 2c <i>Lower secondary education, Second stage of basic education</i>	2006, 2008: 3 = Five years of General Basic Education, 4 = Former primary education, 5 = General Basic or Compulsory Secondary Education, 6 = Former lower secondary education. 2010: 6 = F.P. de Iniciación, 8 = EGB, 9 = ESO.	2006: 3 = 2 ciclo, 4 = 3 ciclo. 2008: 3 = Basic level 2, 4 = Basic level 3. 2010: 5 = Ensino Básico 3, 8 = Ensino Secundário -	2008: 2 = Lower secondary education. 2010: 2 = Apolytirio Dimotikou.
ISCED level 3a, 3b, 3c <i>(Upper) secondary education</i>	2006, 2008: 7 = Vocational training I, 8 = Higher secondary education, 9 = Vocational training II. 2010: 13 = PREU, 14 = BUP o COU, 15 = Bachillerato.	2006: 5 = Secundario. 2008: 5 = Vocational Training, 6 = Secondary School. Training in Technological Specialization. 2010: 9 = Cursos tecnológicos, artísticos.	2008: 3 = Upper secondary education, 4 = Post-compulsory Secondary Education. 2010: 3 = Apolytirio Gymnasiou, 4 = Apolytirio Genikou.
ISCED level 4a, 4b <i>Post-secondary non-tertiary education</i>	2006, 2008: 10 = Post-secondary, non-tertiary. 2010: 11 = F.P. Oficialía, 12 = F.P. de 1er Grado, 16 = C.F. de Grado Medio, 17 = C.F. de Grado Medio en Artes Plásticas y Diseño, 18 = F.P. Maestría, 19 = F.P. de 2º Grado, 20 = C.F. de Grado Superior, 22 = Peritaje, Enfermería, Magisterio, Asistente Social.	2006: 6 = Superior politecnic. 2008: 7 = Training in Technological Specialization. 2010: 4 = Cursos de educação de tipo 1, 6 = Educação de tipo 2, 7 = Educação de tipo 3 e 4, 10 = Cursos de especialização tecnológica, 11 = Ensino superior politécnico: bacharelato, 12 = Ensino superior politécnico: licenciaturas de 3-4 anos.	2008: 5 = Higher Education. 2010: 5 = Epagelmatikis Ekpedefsís, 6 = Apolytirio Epaggelmatikou Lykeiou, 7 = Pistopoitiko Epangelmatikis Katartisis epipedou 1, 8 = Diploma epagelmatikis katartisis epipedou metadefterovathmi, 9 = Sxoles Anoteris.
ISCED level 5a, 5b, 5c <i>First stage of tertiary education, Bachelor's/Master's degree, postgraduate studies</i>	2006, 2008: 11, 12 = University degree 3 years (technical), 13, 14 = University degree 5 years (technical), 15 = Postgraduate studies. 2010: 21 = Grado, 24 = Máster.	2006: 7, 8 = Superior universitario, 9 = Mestrado. 2008: 8 = Bachelor, 9 = Degree, 10, 11 = Master (Before, after Bologna), 2010: 13 = Superior universitário: licenciaturas de 3-4 anos, 14 = MBA, 15 = Superior universitário: licenciatura com mais de 4 anos, 16 = Mestrado.	2008: 5 = Higher Education, 6 = MA Degree. 2010: 10 = ATEI, 11 = AEI, 12 = Metaptychiako diploma, 13 = AEI, Polytechniou, 14 = Metaptychiako diploma.
ISCED level 6 <i>Second stage of tertiary education</i>	2006, 2008: 16 = Ph.D. 2010: 25 = Doctor.	2006: 10 = Doutoramento. 2008: 12 = PhD. 2010: 17 = Doutoramento.	2008: 7 = PhD degree. 2010: 15 = Didaktoriko Diploma.

Table 27. ISCED labels (Source: ISCED, 2012).

Concept	Trust	Direct benefits from EU membership	Indirect benefits from EU membership	Public debt per capita	GDP per capita
Definition	<i>'The expected utility of institutions performing satisfactorily'</i> (Mishler and Rose, 2001).	Returns from the EU budget (Anderson & Reichert, 1995).	Benefits obtained through EU trade (Anderson & Reichert, 1995).	The debt obligations of the public sector (Eurostat, 2012c)	The value of an economy's total output of goods and services, less intermediate consumption, plus net taxes on products and imports, in a specified period (Eurostat, 2012c).
Indicator	Net trust	EU net transfers	EU trade	The amount of debt per inhabitant, which is the result of dividing the total public debt among the number of the country's inhabitants.	The amount of GDP per inhabitant, which is the result of dividing the total GDP among the number of the country's inhabitants.
Measurement	The share of positive (people who declare that they 'tend to trust') opinions minus the share of negative (people who declare that they 'tend not to trust') opinions about the European Parliament.	The average net transfers from the EU budget as a percentage of the country's GDP (receipts minus contributions as percentage of national GDP).	The percentage of total external trade (import and exports) that is conducted with other EU member states (EU trade as a percentage of total trade) (Anderson & Reichert, 1995).	Eurostat data	Eurostat data

Concept	Inflation rate	Unemployment rate	Educational level	Political awareness	Soft/Hard Euroscepticism of domestic political parties
Definition	The percentage change in the price level in a country in a given period (Eurostat, 2012c).	The unemployed persons as a percentage of the labor force. The labor force is the total number of people employed and unemployed (Eurostat, 2012b).	The gradation of learning experiences and the competences which the contents of an educational program require of participants if they are to have a reasonable expectation of acquiring the knowledge, skills and capabilities that the program is designed to impart' (ISCED, 2012).	The general interest in politics (Conge, 1988: 246.	Soft Euroscepticism is a principled objection to European integration or EU membership is absent, but where concerns on one or a number of policy areas leads to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that national interest is currently at odds with the EU trajectory (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2003: 3)'. 'Hard-Euroscepticism is a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and can be seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived' (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2003: 3)'. '
Indicator	Harmonized Indices of Consumer Prices (HICP) indicator	European Union Labor force survey (EU LFS) indicator	ESS question <i>F16</i>	ESS questions QA2, QA4, QA5, QB1	a. Soft-Euroscepticism and Hard-Euroscepticism, b. Share of votes
Measurement	Eurostat data: Harmonized Indices of Consumer Prices (HICP) indicator	Eurostat data: European Union Labor force survey (EU LFS) indicator	The different educational systems are equalized by using the ISCED system. The absolute numbers are translated into percentage numbers.	The absolute numbers are translated into percentage numbers.	a. Defining political parties as either hard or soft Eurosceptic according to the party's position towards the EU by scrutinizing their political programs. b. The share of votes of the soft/hard Eurosceptic parties in percentages at the parliamentary elections between 2005 and 2011

