

Laura-Mariana PARASCHIV*
Monica-Florina GHERGHEL**

Mass Media – A Starting Point for Solving EU's Lack of Democratic Legitimacy

Abstract

European identity is seen by many communication scholars as a potential solution for the EU's lack of legitimacy. At the same time, the existence of a European public sphere is a prerequisite for the process of shaping a sense of belonging among European citizens which would eventually produce a common European identity. In creating a European public sphere, mass media play a central role as they make people aware of their common European rights, values and solutions and they orientate individuals towards feeling united in solving common problems and accomplishing common missions. The present article elaborates from a theoretical perspective on this complex cycle of European identity production (mass media, European public sphere, European identity) that should lead to solving EU's democratic legitimacy deficits. First, the focus is on mass media's role in telling European citizens what to think of and talk about in order to develop a sense of belonging to the wider European community. Second, the article discusses about mass media's power to increase or decrease public support for the EU, that the European public sphere needs in order to sustain the emergence of a European identity, by using positively or negatively valenced news frames in evaluating EU issues.

Keywords: news framing, lack of legitimacy, European identity, European public sphere, mass media.

1. Introduction

It is difficult to discuss about a solid European identity in a period of economic problems that seem to threaten the European project's viability, when every member state tries to avoid the effects of the Euro Zone crisis on its own economy and when the prospect of Greece's exit from the Euro Zone raises a lot of concern among European leaders regarding the possible repercussions on the single currency. Although there is a lot of discussion on how to help the debt-ridden European states, there are also debates on how to resist and avoid the spill-over effects and what is to be done in order to countermeasure these effects. The term of unity is challenged during these times and the idea of European identity is put under the greatest pressure bearing in mind the fact that the European project used to mean solidarity in the face of economic, political and social problems.

Despite of this context, we can talk about solutions and strategies which can lead to a sense of unity and a sense of European identity which can bring European states and people

* PhD candidate, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, College of Communication and Public Relations, Bucharest; paraschiv_laura@yahoo.com.

** PhD candidate, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, College of Communication and Public Relations, Bucharest; monica.gherghel@yahoo.com.

together in this fight against the economic crisis. Instead of thinking of its effects at national level, European states and people might think of solutions for the European project. Instead of a possible break-up of the Euro Zone, they might think of stronger cooperation in order to avoid such a financial disaster. There is an old proverb that says that *Many hands make light work* and that might be of great help for those who still believe in the viability of the European project. Therefore, European politicians should stop discussing about European problems in a national context and should frame European problems in a transnational context that transcends the national one but at the same time does not ignore it. European problems should be solved in a context of European solidarity, where every member state plays its role in identifying solutions and minimizing the effects of the problems. There is a need for a European transnational public sphere where people are interested in each other's issues and participate in the European decision-making process.

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that the articulation of a European public sphere is indeed a solution for solving the European communication deficit and, respectively, the democratic deficit of the European Union (EU) as a political project. In this sense, the article concentrates on the double role of mass media in the process of Europeanization of national public spheres that can converge into shaping a sense of European identity among the citizens of Europe. On one hand, the visibility of European topics in the mass media can lead to the creation of a European public sphere by raising interest towards these issues and awareness of common goals, values and symbolic destiny among Europeans. On the other hand, the way these topics are framed – in positive or negative terms – is what increases or decreases the support which European citizens offer to the European project, support that the European public sphere needs in order to trigger the emergence of a common European identity. The article starts by presenting the relevant theories on European identity and ways of constructing it (especially through positive personal experience and social interaction in the European space) and it continues with the solutions the media offer in setting a substantial European identity (as a way for strengthening the effects of positive personal experience and for giving those who cannot experience the civic benefits and cultural symbols of the European Union membership the opportunity of feeling Europeans).

Thus, the paper is constructed around a cycle of European sense of belonging production that can solve EU's deficits. First, the European identity as necessary for solving the EU's legitimacy deficit. Second, the creation of a European public sphere as essential in shaping a common European identity and solving the EU's democratic deficit. And third, national media in the EU's member states, which play a crucial role in creating a European public sphere, in influencing support for an emerging European identity and in solving the EU's communication deficit.

2. Shaping a common European identity

*"The quest for European identity
has always developed in times of crisis and war".
(Kamphausen, 2006, p. 27)*

After nearly sixty years of European integration, the European Union still suffers from a severe lack of legitimacy that makes the democratic one less likely to be solved. Some schol-

ars consider this lack of legitimacy the result of trust and support shortfall, that is translated into Euroscepticism (Medrano, 2009; Radu, 2011), of the absence of a European public sphere (Eriksen & Fossum, 2004), of the lack of communication between the European decision-making apparatus and ordinary people (Fligstein, 2009). However, the majority considers it to be the outcome of a lack of sense of belonging to the European project, more precisely of a lack of European identity (Medrano & Gutierrez, 2001; Kamphausen, 2006; Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009). Thus, the emergence of a European identity is meant to solve the problem of legitimacy the European Union suffers from and enable it to benefit from the existence of a political community that cultivates a common sense of belonging which stems from a background of shared values or more precisely from the existence of a coherent demos.

The European Union project is based on economic integration, but also on political, legal, and social cooperation among member states, but “legal and economic integration alone will not create a united Europe, thus the emphasis is on Europe as a cultural unit stemming from the history of the European nations and their long-standing cross-fertilization” (Sassatelli, 2002, pp. 435-6). Thus, as the traditional social contract theory states, every new political community needs the creation of a new political identity that connects its citizens and gives its fundamental institutions acceptability among people, or in short confers legitimacy to the new political project (Bruter, 2004).

In order to solve the EU's democratic deficit European citizens need to feel more attached to this political project, need to sustain it and, consequently, feel European. But as mentioned earlier, studies reflect “so little evidence of public attitudes that reflect more feelings of solidarity across Europe. Even among those who work in Brussels, there are mixed feelings about being European” (Fligstein, 2009, p. 132).

Scholars argue that European identity can be shaped in two ways: through the development of a sense of belonging to Europe or the development of a collective sense of what it means to be European (Medrano & Gutierrez, 2001), or through negotiation between civic and cultural identity (Inthorn, 2006).

In respect of the collective sense perspective, Eriksen and Fossum (2004) propose a set of strategies that can be used to “repair” the EU's legitimacy deficits, more precisely its citizens' lack of identification with its objectives. These two scholars mention that one strategy is based on deepening “the collective self-understanding of EU citizens, so as to make the EU into a value-based community, founded on a common European identity and conception of the European heritage and value basis” (Eriksen & Fossum, 2004, p. 436). By extrapolating Checkel and Katzenstein's definition of identity (2009), European identity can stand for the development of a collective sense of what it means to be European, based on a common set of beliefs and representations shared by the majority of the community.

The feeling of belonging to Europe may be experienced in different contexts. From a psychological point of view, identity is a network of feelings of belonging to and exclusion from some human subgroups (Bruter, 2004). So, European identity may be defined in terms of inclusion and exclusion, in terms of belonging to a community and being different from other communities: “If there is going to be a European national identity, it will arise from people who associate with each other across national boundaries and experience that association in a positive way. [...] They will come to see that their counterparts in other countries are more like them than unlike them, and to relate to their counterparts as part of an overarching group in Europe, ‘Europeans’” (Fligstein, 2009, p. 133).

People tend to feel attached to a community through interaction with other humans and experiencing common political, social and cultural representations. The feeling of belonging to a wider European community may be also instated through cultural interactions: "The idea of a common European identity can be presented as either the result of the historical uncovering of a common past <Christian Europe, Enlightened Europe, and so on>, or as a more constructivist operation identifying the European roots in a narrative whose starting point is Europe's present" (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009, p. 36).

So, European identity can have civic and cultural, collective and personal, inclusive and exclusive dimensions that can be experienced in different ways by European citizens in solving the democratic deficit of a larger political project which is meant to solve economical, political and social problems of its member states.

2.1. European identity as a sense of belonging by negotiating civic and cultural identity

As mentioned earlier, European identity involves a sense of belonging to a community that is based both on affective or cultural, but also on utilitarian or civic experiences. In order to feel part of a wider European community, individuals have to identify with certain common cultural values and symbols, but at the same time they have to enjoy the same rights, habits, and advantages while becoming aware of the benefits that the European status offers: "A sense of identity, of belonging somewhere, is most of all created by habit – the experience of the usual and well-known over time, experience shared by some people, not by others. And the place where one belongs will of course be invested with more or less strong affection" (Gripsrud, 2007, p. 491).

Some scholars focus on the affective dimension (Sassatelli, 2002; Bruter, 2003; Bruter, 2004; Dufek, 2009; Medrano, 2009), while others concentrate on the utilitarian aspect (Kaelberer, 2004; Arts & Halman, 2006; Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009) of this sense of belonging to the European Union. Nonetheless, in order to adopt a legitimizing European identity, citizens have to experience both dimensions which generally make up an identity, "an ascriptive dimension resembling the concept of ethnic identity described in historical and theoretical literature, and a voluntarist dimension closer to the notion of civic identity". The civic model involves "a sense of political community for all its members, including common institutions and a single code of rights and duties. It also assumes a demarcated territory in which all its members live". The ethnic model implies "a community of common descent" (Jones & Smith, 2001, p. 105).

Named ethnic, cultural, affective or ascriptive dimension, on one hand, or civic, voluntarist, utilitarian or instrumental dimension, on the other hand, they are essential for acquiring a sense of belonging and shaping some kind of European identity. As Inthorn (2006, p. 75) states, European identity negotiates both civic and cultural identity, where "a European civic identity is more likely to reinforce the legitimacy of the European Union as a political system, while a European cultural identity is more likely to simply reflect the existence of a certain shared European historical and cultural heritage" (Bruter, 2007, p. 3).

Referring to the cultural identity, Bruter (2003) considers that exposure to the official symbols of the European political community (flag, anthem, national day, a common design for banknotes and so forth) creates a sense of affiliation with this particular group among individuals. In his opinion, symbols influence citizens' image of a certain community and the

likeliness of identifying with it: “In the case of European integration, symbols were selected to convey certain values and meanings that are consistent with the ‘idea’ of Europe which the institutions want to project. They are meant to convey positive, seductive perceptions of Europe to which people will identify” (Bruter, 2007, p. 6). In other words, common cultural experiences seduce people in an affective manner into a sense of belonging to a European community, but this has not proved to be enough.

Culture is a “static and bounded whole” (Sassatelli, 2002, p. 440), or we can say that it is the context in which European identity develops. Identity is a pro-active process that develops through interaction and changes at the same time with the context. Individuals need to experience the benefits of European integration (prosperity, free movement, democracy) in order to identify with the European project: “Being European nowadays is just as much about shopping across borders, buying property abroad, handling a common currency, looking for work in a foreign city, taking holidays in new countries, joining cross-national associations and a thousand other actions facilitated by the European free movements accords. [...] Apart from money and economy, European identity has to do with culture and politics, as well” (Kamphausen, 2006, p. 27). Studies conclude that those who have not benefited from these “psychic and financial rewards” are less supportive of the European project and implicitly less susceptible to feeling European (Fligstein, 2009, p. 133).

Therefore, positive social interaction and economic benefits may be regarded as mediators of European identity. While cultural identity gives shape to European identity, civic identity confers it consistency. Individuals may feel attached to a community that is bound together by common values and symbols, but they will identify with it once European narratives positively affect their everyday life and offer solutions to the problems they face with.

2.2. European identity, an instrumental orientation

As long as people are more likely to embrace European identity “if they perceive European integration as a benefic process that would positively affect their lives”, one can talk about an instrumental European identity (Frunzaru & Corbu, 2011, p. 38). In these terms, European identity stands for borderlessness, circulation of citizens, a common civic area, a new kind of policy making, and prosperity (Inthorn, 2006), while the condition for adopting it is represented by the assimilation of these elements into one’s national identity.

Those individuals who get to directly experience the costs and benefits that the quality of being citizens of a European Union member state offers for granted are said to be “agents of European identity”, as Fligstein (2009) calls them, or “Eurostars”, as Favel (2009) defines them. They are the most likely societal group that will become aware of its European identity and will embrace this new identity: “European economic integration has been good for jobs and employment across Europe. It has changed the patterns of social interaction around Europe. Over 100 million Europeans travel across national borders for business and pleasure every year, and at least 10–20 million go to school, retire, or work for extended periods across national borders. [...] These positive interactions have caused some of them to identify as ‘Europeans’” (Fligstein, 2009, p. 134).

Usually the young, those with higher income and higher education are the society’s strata that get to interact with people from other European countries through travelling, either for business, education or simply having fun (Arts & Halman, 2006; Fligstein, 2009; Favel, 2009). They get to perceive themselves as being Europeans by acknowledging common civic values

– as prosperity, free movement, or democracy-, similar ways of lives, mutual economic benefits, and practical opportunities. Once they start seeing citizens of other countries as being more like them than unlike them they will become aware of the advantages of being Europeans and start feeling Europeans. Enjoying European rights and common civic values might be a starting point for feeling European, as long as “if there is going to be a European national identity, it will arise from people who associate with each other across national boundaries and experience that association in a positive way. [...] It is the people involved in these routine interactions who are most likely to come to see themselves as Europeans and involved in a European national project” (Fligstein, 2009, p. 136).

It is through interaction that the European Union might attain “entitativity” or the fact that “an imagined community becomes real in people’s lives when they increasingly share cultural values, a perceived common fate, increased salience, and boundedness” (Risse, 2005, p. 297). Risse (2003, p. 490) mentions that “EU as an imagined community still lacks entitativity because of its low ‘realness’ in people’s daily lives and because of its fuzzy boundaries”. In other words, as long as individuals do not feel the beneficial impact of the European integration on their lives, they cannot accede to a project that lacks practicality and, more precisely, actual existence for its citizens.

There are also some limits in regard to this instrumental European identity. The fact that in general it is about the educated, the young, the professionals, the ones with higher income that get to positively interact with people from other European countries, being it for business, education or leisure, and get to feel European, it is the older, the less educated, the blue-collar, and the less financially privileged societal groups that will not experience these advantages and will stick to the national identity, opposing the new European identity (Arts & Halman, 2006; Fligstein, 2009). Another disadvantage that scholars talk about is the fact that once returned home, these privileged social strata forget about European identity and return to their national identity. Therefore, instrumental experience seems to lead to a short term European identity (Favel, 2009).

However, personal experience is a powerful instrument of determining a sense of belonging among European citizens, the one which convinces them that being European citizens stands for benefits, advantages and freedoms, which unites them, and at the same time differentiates them from others. It is the practicality of a political project that authorizes its viability and makes people unite in adopting a new evolving identity.

2.3. “We” vs. “Others”

As previously stated, it is through positive social interaction that individuals experience a sense of belonging to a certain group that resembles themselves politically, socially, and culturally. Thus, people start feeling part of a certain social group and exclude themselves from others that do not share the same cultural and civic benefits specific to their own group. It is through this process that group identities are constructed. Starting from this idea, identity can be defined in terms of inclusion, but also of exclusion, of in-groups and out-groups, of sameness and difference, being “not only a mirror but [...] also a wall, which empowers the group’s self and differentiates it from others” (Kamphausen, 2006, p. 25).

Scholars talk differently about identity construction: through awareness of sharing the same values with a community and attaining to it or by constructing the identity of “others” as distinct from “we” (Banchoff, 1999; Bruter, 2003; Kaelberer, 2004; Castiglione, 2009). It

is often about labelling the “others” as lacking the advantages that “we” benefit from that defines our identity, about what “we” are not. Or one can talk about an internal and an external dimension of identity, “it is what binds the group together and what situates it with respect to others” (Banchoff, 1999, p. 268). This is what happens with European identity, too. Europe stands for cultural values as peace, harmony, and cooperation, but also for civic ones as prosperity, free movement, and democracy, in other words, for European communities meant to differentiate themselves from others who do not share these values. As Castiglione (2009, p. 36) specifies “the idea of a common European identity can be presented as either the result of the historical uncovering of a common past (Christian Europe, Enlightened Europe, and so on), or as a more constructivist operation identifying the European roots in a narrative whose starting point is Europe’s present. [...] the political identity of a European super-state seems nonetheless to require not only strong positive identification, but also a certain sense that such an identity is distinct from that of others”.

Previous studies show that European political identity becomes salient when faced with the prospect of future enlargement. The European community’s members become aware of their European values by positioning themselves in contrast to the new possible members: “Citizens imagine themselves as members of a European community of values when faced with the prospect of further EU enlargement. They express their European identity by distinguishing themselves from potential newcomers” (Inthorn, 2006, p. 72). The concept of otherness is the one that makes European citizens aware of what the new political European community means for their national identities in terms of difference from others, while underlining emotional and utilitarian similarities and concordances among its member states.

2.4. Multiple identities

Favel (2009, p. 181) says that “when Europeans go home, they go home to their primary national identities”, meaning that feeling European is not about giving up national identity. European identity stands for unity in diversity, as the European Union’s motto states it, and differentiation in relation to others. While national differences are united under the same common project, states and their citizens maintain their peculiarity while taken individually: “European identity is closely tied to national identity, but it can and does move beyond it, in two ways. First, European identity is – obviously – common to all Europeans, it complements national and regional identities. As a composite identity made up of a large number of national identities, it is both the same as and more than each individual national identity. European identity ”does not [...] level national distinctiveness, but creates a sense in which EU nationalities are less exclusive in relation to each other than they are to outside nationalities” (Mayer & Palmowski, 2004, p. 591).

European identity does not exclude national identities, but explores and capitalizes on their cultural, social, political and economical similarities and corresponding features in order to recreate them and give birth to a new identity intended to legitimize the European project. Thus, individuals can hold multiple identities that come to surface depending on the social context. Feeling European does not stand for lack of patriotism, but for feeling part of a wider political project that is built on unity while valorising its member states’ diversity: “European and national identity can coexist as a part of hybrid identities. There is no intrinsic trade-off between national and European identity. While these two forms of identity may compete with each other, they are certainly not mutually exclusive. Precisely because European iden-

tity can only be based on diversity and inclusiveness, it can coexist with national, subnational and other identities. It has to continue to grow alongside other identities, rather than to replace them” (Kaelberer, 2004). Starting from the perspective of multiple identities, Risse (2003, pp. 490-1) offers a classification of these that relates to European identity: “First, identities can be nested. [...] Mass publics in most countries hold national and regional identities as their primary sense of belonging, while Europe runs a distinct second. [...] Second, identities can be crosscutting. In this configuration, some, but not all, members of one identity group are also members of another identity group. One can feel a strong gender identity and a strong European identity, but not all members of one’s gender group will feel the same way about Europe. A third way of conceptualizing the relationship between European and other identities which people might hold could be called the ‘marble cake’ model. Accordingly, the various components of an individual’s identity cannot be neatly separated on different levels as the concepts of nestedness and of crosscutting identities both imply”. These three categories can also be considered possible scenarios for shaping European identity: a practical one (“nested identities”), in which individuals hold their national identity in the first place and perceive European identity in the second one. A second more possible scenario (“crosscutting”), in which some groups of society feel Europeans through positive social interaction and their personal experience in sharing views with other fellow Europeans. This is the case of the young, the educated, and the ones with higher income that have the opportunity and availability of interacting with people from other EU member states through education, business, or leisure. And finally an ideal one (the “marble cake” model), in which national and European identities merge perfectly making it impossible to separate them in a precise way, while “political and cultural discourses relate Europe and the nation-state to each other” (Risse, 2003, p. 491).

In conclusion, producing a common European identity represents a complex process which does not exclude, but valorises national identities, creating at the same time new ones, which are based both on a cultural and a civic dimension, and which can be analysed from an affective but also from a utilitarian point of view. However, previous studies demonstrate that European identity is a form without substance, that the concept exists, but lacks support and concreteness.

3. Setting a European public sphere

“A functioning European public sphere has been seen as both a solution and an instrument for producing a European identity that might motivate more participation.”
(Gripsrud, 2007, p.479)

As direct personal experience is not enough for a sustainable European identity to crystallize and people forget about it once they return home, developing a European public sphere is necessary for individuals to be informed and have the opportunity of expressing their opinions on European affairs. Understood in Habermasian terms, a European public sphere is “a network that gives citizens of all member states an equal opportunity to take part in an encompassing process of focused political communication. Democratic legitimation requires mutual contact between, on the one hand, institutionalized deliberation and decision-making within parliaments, courts and administrative bodies and, on the other, an inclusive process

of informal mass communication. The function of the communicational infrastructure of a democratic public sphere is to turn relevant societal problems into topics of concern, and to allow the general public to relate, at the same time, to the same topics, by taking an affirmative or negative stand on news and opinions” (Habermas, 2001, pp. 17-8). A public sphere is the place where individuals are offered the opportunity of talking and debating, where common issues or goals are identified and where individuals get or not the feeling of unity in solving common problems. In this way, they gain the feeling of belonging to a certain community or being different from it.

Scholars argue that a European public sphere can be a remedy for the legitimacy and democratic deficits (Habermas, 2001; Eriksen & Fossum, 2004; Medrano, 2009) by solving the problem of communication among European institutions and citizens and by “producing a European identity” (Gripsrud, 2007; Fligstein, 2009). Being in close touch with the European decision-making process and being able to react to these decisions, becoming aware of the actions that might affect their everyday lives is what will determine individuals identify with Europe and participate in discussions on European affairs. A healthy and sustainable European democratic project is based on a good bidirectional communication: both from European institutions towards its citizens and the other way round (Radu, 2011; Bârgăoanu & Durach, 2011) because “closing the communication gap between EU institutions and its citizens is a starting point for addressing legitimacy deficits” (De Vreese, 2007, p. 281).

European Parliament’s “Resolution of 7 September 2010 on journalism and new media – creating a public sphere in Europe” proposes a first official definition of a European public sphere, “whereas a public sphere can be understood as a space in which public policies may be better understood by, and discussed with, all EU citizens and all sections of the population, in all its diversity, with a view to meeting their expectations more effectively, and whereas it must be a venue both for the provision of information and for wide-ranging consultations transcending national borders and fostering the development of a sense of shared public interest throughout the EU”. Thus, the need for communication between the EU and its citizens means more than communication between decision-makers of every member state and EU, it also stands for direct interaction between the population and European politicians through means of mass communication, while mass media play a critical role in the promotion of the developments at European level and in making easier the process of understanding these developments beyond the technical details of the decisional process.

In spite of the fact that the European Parliament recognized (2010) the lack of a European public sphere, “whereas the creation of a European public sphere is closely related to the existence of pan-European or transnational media structures; whereas there is no overarching European public sphere at present, but whereas there are very lively national public spheres between which synergies should be developed”, scholars argue that there are three models of European public spheres: the first one talks about an unique, supranational European public sphere (the “heavy” European public sphere), the second one refers to Europeanized national public spheres (the “light” European public sphere), and the third one proposes the idea of an ad hoc European public sphere, as aggregation of opinions on common European themes and preoccupations (Bârgăoanu, 2011). The most realistic and plausible model is the second one which stands for national interest towards the important themes on the European agenda, but also for European themes’ visibility and prominence on the media agenda of every EU member state. The concept of Europeanized national public spheres means “receptivity,

reciprocal responsiveness, attention towards the events, debates and actors from other member states of EU" (Bârgăoanu, 2011, p. 68).

It is about simultaneously and similarly talking about common problems in order for a European public sphere to take shape and to create awareness of common objectives and missions among European citizens (Bârgăoanu & Durach, 2011) that would partially forget about their national identities and embrace a European one: "A real advance would be for national media to cover the substance of relevant controversies in the other countries, so that all the national public opinions converged on the same range of contributions to the same set of issues, regardless of their origin" (Habermas, 2001, p. 18). That means that the creation of a European public sphere does not necessarily imply pro-European debates or opinions in favour of EU integration. A European public sphere stands for common topics discussed at the same time inside all EU's member states in order for them to become interested in issues of common interest and in order to react to each others' problems as members of the same political community. As Bârgăoanu (2011) states, a European public sphere stands for common frames of reference, common meanings, common interpretative schemes whereas the given answers can be strongly diverging.

Thus, mass media represent the democratic institution meant to play a central role in keeping citizens informed about European affairs and support Europe's public visibility. In order for individuals to know what to think of and talk about, they have to be directed towards the important subjects, their attention has to be oriented in order for them to react and their opinions and attitudes to be changed. Otherwise stated, one can talk about the role of mass media in shaping a European public sphere and hence their power of legitimizing the European project by producing a sense of belonging among European citizens. As a consequence, mass media are considered by many scholars to be responsible for supporting EU and for shaping a European collective identity (Trandafiroiu, 2006; Inthorn, 2006; De Vreese, 2007; Trenz, 2010; Schuck, Xezonakis, Elenbaas, Banducci & De Vreese, 2011; Radu, 2011).

4. Mass media's double role: shaping a European public sphere and instating support for the EU

"If we assume that people indeed develop attitudes at least to some degree based on information from the news, we can expect that the way in which news media report about European matters would influence opinions about the EU and its policies". (Vliegthart, Schuck, Boomgaarden & De Vreese, 2008, pp. 415-6)

In the process of European identity production, mass media can play a double role: on one hand, offering visibility to European issues and in this way leading to the creation of a European public sphere and, on the other hand, increasing or decreasing the support which European individuals feel for the EU and which the European public sphere needs in order to determine identification with the EU and eventually produce European identity.

First of all, by offering visibility to EU topics, media can contribute to the creation of a European public sphere, fact that would solve the communication deficit between European institutions and their people. Once exposed to EU news, European citizens might get interested in issues that can affect their lives as members of the same larger community and become aware of their collective identity and resemblance in sharing common goals and rights, common affective and civic values which build on their national uniqueness. Simultaneous-

ly and similarly talking about common European problems is what leads to the creation of a European public sphere and it can sustain the emergence of a common European identity through the support it offers to everything that the European Union stands for (Schuck et al., 2011; Trenz, 2004). Second, the way in which media portray EU topics is responsible for increasing or decreasing support for the EU. We consider that evaluating European issues in positive or negative terms – or valenced frames as they are called in literature – is what creates or ruins support for the EU (Schuck & De Vreese; 2006 Vliegenthart et al., 2008). This support is what the European public sphere needs in order to bring identification with EU, produce European identity and solve the legitimacy deficit.

Every EU member state's national media can lead to the existence of a European public sphere by giving visibility to European themes, as media can influence people's perception of the important topics in society and can indicate the topics of interest which can affect individuals' lives. "Much of what citizens know about the European Union stems from the mass media and EU citizens consistently identify newspapers and television news as their most important sources of information about the EU" (Vliegenthart et al., 2008, pp. 415-6), inducing a sense of identification with the European community and reacting to topics of interest for this in-group. But this way of instating a sense of allegiance to the EU can produce a more sustainable and powerful effect on individuals..

When talking about media's role in shaping a European public sphere that would eventually induce a collective sense of belonging to the European project, we take into account the idea of visibility of the European themes in every EU member state's national media in order for these themes to turn into salient issues in the public's perception and for individuals to consequently become aware of the common European political, economic, social, or cultural issues they confront with: "The visibility of communication is the necessary precondition of the public sphere: it denotes that European media and the public observe communication with reference to European politics. The connectivity of communication is the minimal requirement of the European public sphere: it denotes that European media and the public observe communication with reference to the same political issues" (Trenz, 2004, p. 292). The absence of European themes or their low visibility in the media is what leads to a lack of interest from European citizens for these issues, effect that prevents the creation of a European public sphere (Radu, 2011), which would make Europe visible and intelligible (Bârgăoanu & Durach, 2011).

Because certain events cannot be directly experienced by the public, mass media play a role of mediator in communicating individuals as many details as necessary on these occurrences in order for them to indirectly participate and form opinions about them. Lippmann considers that people live in a "pseudo-environment" made up of the "pictures in our head" and they depend on the raw materials and basic information the media transmit as a basis for their opinions and attitudes (Lippmann, 2009/1922, pp. 30, 37). This is also the case of the European topics, as people do not have a direct contact with the decision-making process, with the procedures of integration, or, more precisely, with the political regulations of the European Union. Although being influenced by these decisions, individuals cannot become aware of their European membership without being informed about it and constantly exposed to European news, they cannot form opinions on European political issues when they are not aware of their existence or their functionality. Through interaction, the European Union might obtain the entitativity Risse (2005) talks about or the concreteness it suffers from in its citizens' lives.

However, European themes' visibility is not enough to increase interest. The degree of significance individuals associate with the topics exposed to is also related to their personal expectations. Individuals will primarily remember themes that directly affect their lives, as "an issue is relevant for us: because it touches our particular sphere of interests [...] or because it touches our collective identity" (Trenz, 2004, p. 309). By constantly and systematically being exposed to news that invoke national or European collective references (affairs, rights, cultural symbols, opportunities, costs, and benefits), every news that exposes details regarding individuals' national identity or their European belonging becomes salient and individuals will unconsciously start reacting and ultimately feeling part of the European community.

Mass media have also to express the public's wishes. As an example, it is when individuals are not satisfied with the activity of national politicians and the way their decisions affect the nation's faith that they start searching for solutions. A solution for national problems might be identified in the civic values of the European project, because "support for the EU and even satisfaction with democracy at the EU level are affected by citizens' experiences with domestic political reality" and it is "the amount and prominence of EU coverage" that "increases as levels of satisfaction with domestic democracy decrease. This reasoning may also hold for the visibility of EU officials as embodiments of a potentially better political system. Thus, the greater the dissatisfaction with domestic democracy in a particular country, the more politically relevant EU officials are" (Peter & De Vreese, 2004, p. 7).

In addition to salience, the new information mass media disseminate has to do with costs and benefits, be it material, affective, or civic, in order to become an element of interest for the public. An abstract topic will hardly have a powerful effect on the public, as it lacks a concrete representation in people's mind and a real functionality in their lives. This is what happens with the European topics, too. As long as individuals are not aware of their advantages as European citizens they will never get involved in fighting for their common rights, but in defending their national ones. Mass media can have a strong impact on individuals' self-perception as Europeans by reinforcing European civic values which have a tangible representation in their own national civic values, "whereas civic identity is more likely to refer to the European Union, cultural identity may, for many, refer to a European civilization at large, which is less likely to be affected by specific news on the European Union" (Bruter, 2003, p. 1169).

Thus, media's role is essential in determining European citizens to discuss and be interested in decisions and events important for the European community as a whole, while becoming aware of other member states' problems, as EU has been created in order to solve their common political, economic, and social problems. This is how a European public sphere takes shape and consequently European identity starts to emerge. Let's not forget that the EU has the final goals of peace, harmony, and cooperation, on one hand, and prosperity, free movement, and democracy, on the other. And the objectives of this political project cannot be attained without its citizens' support and awareness of their common values and beliefs.

Mass media can indeed offer visibility to European topics and determine European citizens discuss and be interested in them once they realize that these topics can influence and affect their lives as members of the European community. Indeed, mass media have a role in shaping a European public sphere and instating a sense of belonging to a common destiny and joint goals among European citizens once they are constantly exposed to European news (Trenz, 2004; Trenz, Conrad & Rosen, 2009; Schuck et al., 2011). But what if media predominantly evaluated European topics in negative terms? What if media concentrated on framing EU topics in terms of risks and disadvantages and not on framing them in terms of

opportunities and benefits? What might happen in those cases with the support for the EU and the sense of belonging to the European community?

Media can convey a specific message and induce a certain attitude towards a given subject by selecting and emphasizing some elements which describe the revealed topics. Scholars call the way in which the media report about news framing. Entman (1993, p. 52) defines the process of framing as selecting “some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation”. McCombs (2005) considers news framing the process of selecting some specific attributes that are included on media agenda when talking about a certain issue. For McCombs, the concept of frame stands for certain attributes that define a topic, issue or person and that media decide to emphasize or dismiss in presenting the object under consideration. For Schuck and De Vreese (2006, p. 5), “framing refers to the observation that media can portray one and the same topic in very different ways, emphasizing certain evaluations or only parts of an issues at expense of others”.

On news framing, Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007, p. 11) state that the way “an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences”. For Scheufele (1999) framing is both a macrolevel and microlevel construct. In terms of macroconstruct, framing refers to the techniques the journalists use so as the new information resonates with the public knowledge and stands for „a necessary tool to reduce the complexity of an issue” and become accessible to the public (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 12). As a microconstruct, framing refers to the way in which individuals use the information and the attributes the media present in order to form opinions and shape attitudes. In conclusion, news frames are techniques that help mass media present topics in a accessible way to the public and that lead to shaping opinions and positions towards the presented issues based on the elements that media choose to emphasize and paradoxically on the absence of those elements that media overlook.

We consider that, whereas news visibility contributes to the existence of a European public sphere by raising interest among European audiences towards topics of common interest determining them to debate those topics being it in a favourable tone or not, news framing or the the way European news is presented influence support for the EU and all the elements which define EU membership – advantages, benefits, civic and cultural values, multiple identities, instrumental and affective experiences, similarities inside the European in-group and differences in regard to the states outside the European community.

In the literature there is a variety of news frames typologies – thematic and episodic frames (Iyengar, 1991), strategic frames (Capella & Jamieson, 1996), dominant news frames as conflict, human interest, attribution of responsibility, morality and economic consequences (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000), issue-specific and generic frames (De Vreese, 2005). But for the purpose of our paper we have decided to discuss about a more recent type of frames: valenced frames.

Relatively recent studies show that framing Europe in negative or positive terms is what decreases or increases support for the EU, media having the possibility of playing “a double role in both fuelling and reducing Euroscepticism” (De Vreese, 2007, p. 280). Evaluating a topic in negative or positive terms is called in the literature “valence framing” and it is responsible for producing higher or lower levels of support for the discussed topics as the “valence of news frames directly affects opinion” (De Vreese, Boomgaarden & Semetko, 2011, p. 180). That’s why media have an essential role in fuelling support for the European proj-

ect. Visibility of European affairs is not so important at this point, but the way these topics are presented and which elements media choose to emphasize. The image the media offer to EU is what determines European citizens affectively adhere to this community or consider it a risk, civically sustain the advantages it stands for or fight against the disadvantages it might instate. Support for the EU – that is a prerequisite for the production of a European sense of belonging understood in identity-related terms – can shift “in one or another direction if either of the two frames received more emphasis within news coverage” (Schuck & De Vreese, 2006, p. 21).

Thus, the frequency of using positive (opportunities and advantages) or negative (risks and disadvantages) frames in debating European topics by the media is also a relevant factor. Using predominantly negative frames in presenting EU proved to have stronger effects on people’s perceptions than framing EU on positive terms (De Vreese et al., 2011). Surely EU integration does not only stand for positive aspects, but one has to become aware of all the positive and negative elements of a problem, understand political, economic and social issues that define the European Union and then decide to be in favour or against it.

Political apathy, the lack of a common European identity, Euroscepticism are just a few negative attitudes towards the EU which are produced by an inadequate communication between European institutions and its citizens and which are fuelled by a lack of or improper information on European issues in the media, as “Euroscepticism is, at least partially, a function of the diet of information that citizens consume about European affairs” (De Vreese, 2007, p. 280). As an example, Vliegenthart et al. (2008) mention that holding an exclusive national identity is negatively related to EU support. In this case, the focus has to be put on the fact that European identity does not mean giving up the national one, people can have multiple identities and feel as much patriotism for their own country as they used to. European identity does not mean excluding national identities, but it develops on their cultural, social, political and economical similarities so as to give birth to a new collective identity meant to legitimize the European project. At the same time, media can capitalize on Eurostars’ positive personal experiences abroad so as to strengthen their feelings of belonging to the European community once returned home to their own national identity. Eurostars’ positive personal experience can also be publicised by the media as concrete examples of what European integration stands for and of people that hold their national identity but at the same time can enjoy more rights and benefits by affectively adhering to the European community and embracing the status of European citizens. Framing European experience in positive terms or in terms of advantages can result in more support from those people that do not have the opportunity of directly interacting with individuals from other EU member states, but have the opportunity of observing the benefits of European integration and ultimately achieve them by being aware of them as a positive attribute.

As mentioned earlier, support for the EU also depends on people’s expectations in regard to costs and benefits of the EU integration. Framing EU topics in terms of advantages can lead to stronger support and identification with the costs and benefits which the status of European citizens confers. At the same time, framing EU in terms of disadvantages and losses can only result in lack of support and reluctance towards EU. This is the case of presenting European integration using the opportunity and risk frames: “The ‘risk’ frame raises concerns and emphasizes potentially negative consequences of the enlargement process such as high costs, increase of crime and instability. The ‘opportunity’ frame raises hope and confidence and emphasizes potentially positive consequences of the inclusion of new countries into the

EU, such as the spread of democracy, freedom and human rights or economic growth" (Schuck & De Vreese, 2006, p. 11). So, the valenced frames media associate with European topics is one element in creating or decreasing support for the EU and instating among European citizens the need to defend and stand for their rights and utilitarian advantages as members of a larger community that must and can hold a collective identity. Framing, in our case positively or negatively valenced frames, is what creates or not the so much needed support for a European public sphere to eventually produce a common European identity.

Framing EU integration in terms of advantages and opportunities has a positive impact on European individuals' opinions and availability of embracing European identity, fact that does not happen while being exposed to news that frame European Union in terms of risks and disadvantages. This leads to Euroscepticism and resistance to affective and civic integration within the European community. European people's support for the EU is essential for the emergence of a common European identity and consequently for solving EU's legitimacy deficit, so media can both play a role in creating a common European issue agenda by offering visibility to EU issues and in shaping or decreasing support for the emergence of a common European identity by focusing on the positive or negative aspects, advantages or disadvantages, risks or opportunities of EU integration.

In this cycle of European identity production, media, in addition to or along with ones' own expectations, personal experience, cultural and political background, may raise interest in and consciousness of belonging to a European community which shares cultural and civic values and which can benefit from unity during hard times, once people are affectively involved in this ambitious project. Exposure to European topics can determine people to be focused on and discuss about issues of European interest, leading to the creation of a European public sphere. But framing this news in negative or positive terms is what can compel individuals feel part of this larger community and adhere to the emergence of a common European identity or reject it as a menace for their national identity and integrity. Whereas debates and opinions expressed as part of a European public sphere do not necessarily have to be pro-European in order for it to exist, framing European issues in positive or negative terms is essential for increasing or decreasing public support for the EU and ultimately producing or not European identity.

5. Conclusions

Communication and media sciences scholars focus on the deficits that the European Union deals with, being it democratic, of legitimacy, or of communication. The purpose of the current article has been to debate on solutions for these three deficits of the European project by concentrating on a cycle of sense of belonging production among European citizens. We consider that this cycle is based on European identity, European public sphere and mass media. First, European identity is necessary for solving the EU's legitimacy deficit. Second, the creation of a European public sphere is essential in shaping a common European identity and solving the EU's democratic deficit. And third, national media in the EU's member states play a crucial role in creating a European public sphere made up of Europeanized national public spheres and in solving the EU's communication deficit.

European identity can be understood in terms of in-groups or out-groups, of civic or cultural values, or of utilitarian or affective attachment. It can be directly experienced through

positive social interaction or through secondary means of information, as mass media. For those who cannot benefit from a direct European experience, national media might represent the means through which citizens discover the themes of interest, the costs and benefits, and the issues they face with as members of a wider European project. In this way, citizens might start feeling Europeans, without renouncing their national identities, while adopting multiple social identities. Only after realising that they are part of the European community, they might become interested in accomplishing common missions and objectives and they might feel united in diversity.

By giving visibility to European issues, mass media might lead to the creation of a European public sphere by triggering people's interest in debating these topics, as they realize that these affairs can affect their lives, once they are part of the European project. A European public sphere may be created by EU member states' national media simultaneously and similarly talking about topics of European interest in order for these issues to become salient and be debated by the European public. Thus, a European public sphere is the place where interest for European issues and the feeling of belonging to the European community foster, after European individuals become aware of their common benefits, goals and missions as members of this community.

In addition to offering visibility to European affairs, mass media also have the ability of influencing individuals' support for the EU by framing the European project in positive or negative terms. When mass media present European issues by using positively valenced news frames, like opportunities and advantages, individuals' support for the EU might increase. This might not happen when being exposed to European news framed in negative terms, as risks and disadvantages. Public support is essential for a European public sphere to determine the emergence of a common European identity. Whereas debating European topics in a European public sphere does not necessarily imply that those discussions have to be pro-European, increasing public support for the EU is more than necessary for the production of European identity.

Rezumat: Identitatea europeană este considerată de mulți specialiști din domeniul comunicării o potențială soluție pentru deficitul de legitimitate a Uniunii Europene (UE). În același timp, existența unei sfere publice europene constituie o condiție fundamentală pentru instituirea sentimentului de apartenență în rândul cetățenilor europeni, care, în cele din urmă, va conduce la conturarea unei identități europene comune. Mass-media joacă un rol esențial în crearea unei sfere publice europene, deoarece aceasta îi determină pe indivizi să devină conștienți de drepturile și valorile europene comune și îi orientează spre unitate în soluționarea problemelor și în îndeplinirea misiunilor comune. Articolul abordează din perspectivă teoretică acest proces complex de producere a identității europene (mass-media, sferă publică europeană, identitate europeană) care ar trebui să conducă la soluționarea deficitelor de legitimitate democratică a UE. Lucrarea are în vedere, pe de o parte, rolul mass-mediei de a comunica cetățenilor europeni la ce să se gândească și despre ce să discute pentru a dezvolta un sentiment de apartenență la comunitatea europeană. Iar, pe de altă parte, se axează pe capacitatea mass-mediei de a intensifica sau diminua sprijinul opiniei publice față de UE, de care sfera publică europeană are nevoie pentru a susține apariția identității europene, prin utilizarea de cadre mediatice cu valențe pozitive sau negative în evaluarea subiectelor legate de UE.

Cuvinte-cheie: încadrare mediatică, deficit de legitimitate, identitate europeană, sferă publică europeană, mass-media.

References

1. Arts, W. & Halman, L. (2006). Identity: The case of the European Union. *Journal of Civil Society*, 2(3), pp. 179-198.
2. Banchoff, T. (1999). German Identity and European Integration. *European Journal of International Relations*, 5(3), 259-289.
3. Bărgăoanu, A. (2011). *Examenul Schengen. În căutarea sferei publice europene*. București: Comunicare.ro.
4. Bărgăoanu, A. & Durach, F. (2011). Sfera publică din România – între europenizare și tendințe parohiale. Cazul Schengen. In A. Bărgăoanu & E. Negrea (Eds.), *Comunicarea în Uniunea Europeană. Modele teoretice și aspecte practice* (pp. 126-149). București: Comunicare.ro.
5. Bruter, M. (2003). Winning hearts and minds for Europe: news, symbols, and civic and cultural European identity. *Comparative Political Studies*, 36(10), 1148-1179.
6. Bruter, M. (2004). On what citizens mean by feeling 'European': Perceptions of news, symbols and borderlessness. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 30(1), 21-39.
7. Bruter, M. (2007). *Symbols, Media and the Emergence of a Mass European Identity*. Paper presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago.
8. Castiglione, D. (2009). Political identity in a community of strangers. In J. T. Checkel & P. J. Katzenstein (Eds.), *European identity* (pp. 29-51). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
9. Checkel, J. T., & Katzenstein, P. J. (2009). The Politicization of European Identities. In J. T. Checkel & P. J. Katzenstein (Eds.), *European identity* (pp. 1-25). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
10. De Vreese, C. H. (2005). News framing: Theory and typology. *Information Design Journal+ Document Design*, 13 (1), 51-62.
11. De Vreese, C. H. (2007). A Spiral of Euroscepticism: The Media's Fault?. *Acta Politica*, 42, 271-286.
12. De Vreese, C. H., Boomgaarden, H. G., & Semetko, H. A. (2011). (In)direct Framing Effects: The Effects of News Media Framing on Public Support for Turkish Membership in the European Union. *Communication Research*, 38(2), 179-205.
13. Dufek, P. (2009). Fortress Europe or Pace-Setter? Identity and Values in an Integrating Europe. *Czech Journal of Political Science*, 1, 44-62.
14. Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51-58.
15. Eriksen, E. O. & Fossum, J. E. (2004). Europe in Search of Legitimacy: Strategies of Legitimation Assessed. *International Political Science Review*, 25(4), 435-459.
16. European Parliament (2010). *Resolution of 7 September 2010 on journalism and new media – creating a public sphere in Europe*. Retrieved July 6, 2012, from <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2010-0307&language=EN>.
17. Favel, A. (2009). Immigration, Migration, and Free Movement in the Making of Europe. In J. T. Checkel & P. J. Katzenstein (Eds.), *European identity* (pp. 167-189). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
18. Fligstein, N. (2009). Who Are the Europeans and How Does This Matter for Politics?. In J. T. Checkel & P. J. Katzenstein (Eds.) *European identity* (pp. 132-166). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
19. Frunzaru, V. & Corbu, N. (2011). In Search of a European Identity: An Instrumental Approach. *Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations*, Vol. 13, no. 4(24), 37-48.
20. Gripsrud, J. (2007). Television and the European Public Sphere. *European Journal of Communication*, 22(4), 479-492.
21. Habermas, J. (2001). Why Europe Needs a Constitution. *New Left Review*, 11, pp. 5-26.
22. Inthorn, S. (2006). What Does It Mean to Be an EU Citizen? How News Media Construct Civic and Cultural Concepts of Europe. *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, 3(3), 71-90.
23. Jones, F. L. & Smith, P. (2001). Individual and Societal Bases of National Identity. *European Sociological Review*, 17(2), 103-118.

24. Kaelberer, M. (2004). The euro and European identity: symbols, power and the politics of European monetary union. *Review of International Studies*. 30, 161-178.
25. Kamphausen, G. (2006). European Integration and European Identity: Towards a Politics of Difference?. *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*. 15(1), 24-31.
26. Katzenstein, P. J., & Checkel, J. T. (2009). Conclusion – European Identity in Context. In J. T. Checkel & P. J. Katzenstein (Eds.). *European identity* (pp. 213-227). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
27. Lippmann, W. (2009/1922). *Opinia publică* [Public Opinion]. Translated by G. Mihăiță & D. Flonta. București: Comunicare.ro.
28. Mayer, F. C. & Palmowski, J. (2004). European Identities and the EU- The Ties that Bind Peoples of Europe. *Journal of Common Markets Studies*. 42(3), 573-598.
29. McCombs, M. E. (2005). A Look at Agenda-Setting: Past, Present and Future. *Journalism Studies*. 6(4), 543-557.
30. Medrano, J. D., & Gutierrez, P. (2001). Nested identities: national and European identity in Spain. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 24(5), 753-778.
31. Medrano, J. D. (2009). The public sphere and the European Union's political identity. In J. T. Checkel & P. J. Katzenstein (Eds.). *European identity* (pp. 81-107). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
32. Peter, J. & De Vreese, C. H. (2004). In Search of Europe – A Cross-National Comparative Study of the European Union in National Television News. *Press/Politics*. 9(4), 3-24.
33. Radu, L. (2011). Sfera publică și multiplele ei transformări”. In A. Bârgăoanu & E. Negrea (Eds.), *Comunicarea în Uniunea Europeană. Modele teoretice și aspecte practice* (pp. 100-125). București: Comunicare.ro.
34. Risse, Th. (2003). The Euro between national and European identity. *Journal of European Public Policy*. 10(4), 487-505.
35. Risse, Th. (2005). Neofunctionalism, European identity, and the puzzles of European integration. *Journal of European Public Policy*. 12(2), 291-309.
36. Sassatelli, M. (2002). Imagined Europe: The Shaping of a European Cultural Identity Through EU Cultural Policy. *European Journal of Social Theory*. 5(4), 435-451.
37. Scheufele, D. A. (1999). Framing as a theory of media effects. *Journal of Communication*. 49(1), 103-122.
38. Scheufele, D. A. & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, Agenda-Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Models. *Journal of Communication*. 57, 9-20.
39. Schuck, A. R. T. & De Vreese, C. H. (2006). Between Risk and Opportunity – News Framing and its Effects on Public Support for EU Enlargement. *European Journal of Communication*. 21(1), 5-32.
40. Schuck, A. R. T., Xezonakis, G., Elenbaas, M., Banducci, S. A. & De Vreese, C. H. (2011). Party contestation and Europe on the news media: The 2009 European Parliamentary Elections. *Electoral Studies*. 30, 41-52.
41. Trandafiroiu, R. (2006). The Whole Greater than the Sum of Its Parts: An Investigation into the Existence of European Identity, Its Unity and Its Divisions. *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*. 3(3), 91-108.
42. Trenz, H. J. (2004). Media Coverage on European Governance: Exploring the European Public Sphere in National Quality Newspapers. *European Journal of Communication*. 19(3), 291-319.
43. Trenz, H. J., Conrad, M. & Rosen, G. (2009). Impartial mediator or critical watchdog? The role of political journalism in EU constitution-making. *Comparative European Politics*. 7(3), 342-363.
44. Trenz, H. J. (2010). In Search of the Popular Subject: Identity Formation, Constitution-Making and the Democratic Consolidation of the EU. *European Review*. 18 (1), 93-115.
45. Vliegenthart, R., Schuck, A. R. T., Boomgaarden, H. G., & De Vreese, C. H. (2008). News Coverage and Support for European Integration, 1990-2006. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*. 20(4), 415-429.