

CURRENT PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA RESEARCH

Edited by Laura Peja, Nico Carpentier,
Fausto Colombo, Maria Francesca Murru,
Simone Tosoni, Richard Kilborn, Leif Kramp,
Risto Kunelius, Anthony McNicholas,
Hannu Nieminen, Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt

edition lumière



CURRENT PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA RESEARCH

**Edited by: Laura Peja, Nico Carpentier, Fausto Colombo,
Maria Francesca Murru, Simone Tosoni, Richard Kilborn,
Leif Kramp, Risto Kunelius, Anthony McNicholas,
Hannu Nieminen, Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt**

Bibliographische Information der Deutschen Bibliothek

Die Deutsche Bibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliographie; detaillierte bibliographische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.ddb.de> abrufbar.

© edition lumière Bremen
ISBN: 978-3-943245-87-5

CURRENT PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNICATION
AND MEDIA RESEARCH

Edited by: Laura Peja, Nico Carpentier, Fausto Colombo, Maria Francesca Murru, Simone Tosoni, Richard Kilborn, Leif Kramp, Risto Kunelius, Anthony McNicholas, Hannu Nieminen, Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt
Series: The Researching and Teaching Communication Series

Series editors: Nico Carpentier and Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt

Photographs: François Heinderyckx

Print run: 600 copies

Electronic version accessible at: <http://www.researchingcommunication.eu> and
<http://www.comsummerschool.org>

The publishing of this book was supported by Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan, Italy) and the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECEA).

The 2017 European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School was sponsored by the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan, Italy) and supported by the Department of Communication and Performing Arts of Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Almed - graduate School in Media, Communication and Performing Arts, and Sky Italy.

An agonistic approach to the Europeanisation of national public spheres: From permissive consensus to empowering dissensus

Alvaro Oleart

Abstract

While a wide range of competences have been transferred from the national to the European Union (EU) level, the media reporting of political issues remains largely based at the national level. The lack of a single European public sphere (EPS) beyond national borders in the EU might not be a democratic problem ‘per se’ from a deliberative democracy point of view, as long as national public spheres are Europeanised enough for citizens to remain informed and able to participate in the EU policy-making process. However, empirical research has shown that, so far, executive actors (EU Commission and national governments) are overwhelmingly overrepresented in national media outlets when covering EU issues (Koopmans and Statham 2010). This poses a double democratic deficit for the EU. First, as has been suggested by a wide range of scholars, there is a lack of a public sphere where EU issues can be discussed and disseminated. However, the EPS literature fails to identify the second democratic deficit regarding communication flows: the lack of (agonistic) conflict. In the present chapter, it is argued that the role of conflict should be introduced into study of the Europeanisation of national public spheres from a normative perspective, combining a deliberative and agonistic approach with democracy. By doing so, despite the irreconcilable tensions of their respective ontological views, the democratic theories of Habermas (1989) and Mouffe (2000, 2013) will be treated as complementary, to a certain extent. Empirically, the argument suggests that cross-national media content analysis should be undertaken as the central methodology.

Keywords: Europeanisation, European public sphere, transnational democracy, politicisation, European Union, democratic legitimacy

1. A European public sphere: a democratic aspiration for the EU

In an earlier chapter in 2015 (Polownikow 2015), it was suggested to add a normative dimension to the study of the Europeanisation, or transnationalisation (Fraser 2007), of (national) public spheres. The increasing importance of political institutions beyond the nation-state requires, from a deliberative democracy point of view, building a public sphere (Habermas 1989; Calhoun 1992) beyond the nation-state, in such a way that there are mechanisms to control the policy- and decision-making of those institutions. This is of particular relevance at a time when issues such as climate change, tax evasion or regulation of the financial system cannot be tackled only by the nation-state. In Europe, however, while a wide range of policy competences have been transferred from the national level to the European Union (EU) level, the media reporting of political issues remains largely based at the national level.¹ A number of prominent authors have argued for the need to create a European public sphere (EPS) to make the EU more legitimate (Koopmans and Erbe 2004; Fossum and Schlesinger 2007; Conrad 2010, 2014), although the lack of a European public sphere beyond national borders in the EU (Nieminen 2008) might not be a democratic problem ‘per se’, as long as national public spheres are Europeanised (Risse 2003, 2010; Koopmans and Statham 1999, 2010; Trenz and Eder 2004; Trenz 2009) or ‘transnationalised’ enough for citizens to remain informed and able to participate in the EU policymaking process. Habermas (1996: 360) defined the public sphere as “a network for communicating information and points of view”. Steffek conceived a public sphere as a communicative space “is not necessarily circumscribed by national boundaries, but rather by the boundaries of communication flows” (Steffek, 2010: 57), while Risse (2003: 16) defined it as “a social construction constituting a community of communication”. Such a public sphere would be a space where issues of common concern are discussed by a wide range of actors, and therefore the policy outcomes of decisions taken by supranational or international organisations would be more legitimate, given the role of the public sphere in connecting ordinary citizens and the political institutions that lead the policy- and decision-making process, a process by which institutions gain democratic legitimacy. In this context, the lack of a transnational public sphere is a democratic deficit for those institutions, given that a public sphere is necessary for a democratic polity, in that it sets “the frame for the range of what the public of citizens would accept as legitimate decisions in a given case” (Habermas 2006: 418).

In the EU, the EPS has been a subject of interest for a long time, within both EU institutions and academia (Eriksen 2005, 2007). The European Commission

1 Although the public sphere englobes more than the media, media outlets remain central platforms of the public sphere.

(2006: 4) expressed its interest in encouraging a European public sphere of communication through a White Paper on a European Communication Policy, where a new approach was suggested that “should be based on genuine dialogue between the people and the policymakers and lively political discussion among citizens themselves. People from all walks of life should have the right to fair and full information about the European Union, and be confident that the views and concerns they express are heard by the EU institutions”. It can however, hardly be argued that such a European public sphere of communication exists, given the national fragmentation of mainstream political debates. The national fragmentation of public spheres and the lack of European mainstream media are what explain that the more logical approach to a European public sphere is to focus on the extent to which diverse national public spheres in Europe become Europeanised, as has been pointed out by several authors (Risse 2003, 2010; Koopmans and Statham 1999, 2010). By referring to the Europeanisation of national public spheres rather than the creation of a common European public sphere, it is assumed that the perspective of building a single European public sphere is unlikely to be realised due to cultural and linguistic differences, and that the more likely scenario is the progressive introduction of issues from the EU and the international arena into national public spheres, and having a certain degree of convergence between countries on issues of common concern. In the words of Bohman (2007: 21), the transnationalisation of national public spheres implies “a transition from a singular to a plural subject, from *dêmos* to *dêmoi*”. However, so far, empirical studies on the Europeanisation of national public spheres indicate a clear conclusion as put forward by Statham (2010: 291): “the only actors who are systematically over-represented in Europeanised claim making are government and executive actors. (...) Generally, it seems that Europeanisation enhances the discursive power of the already powerful: national and EU executive elites. The evidence strongly supports the idea that after the permissive consensus, we are well on the road to an elite-dominated Europeanised public sphere.”

2. The politicisation of the EU: the central role of (agonistic) conflict for a democratic polity

From a Habermasian perspective, the public sphere is meant to be a space for rational and deliberative debate, where participants in the debate aim to reach a consensus that is accepted by everyone. However, as argued by Chantal Mouffe (2000, 2013), conflict is inherent to politics, and therefore there is no democracy without conflict. Both Habermas and Mouffe are pluralists but, as pointed out by Mouffe, “for them (Habermas and other deliberative democracy academics),

pluralism goes without antagonism” (Carpentier and Cammaerts 2006: 972). For Mouffe, pluralism only exists if we recognise conflictual relations between actors holding different views of how society should be. Plural does not only mean that there are different views, but also that there are different views that are in conflict with each other, and that they cannot be reconciled. Mouffe rejects the emphasis that Habermas puts on rationality and consensus, given that, for her, it neglects the conflictual and emotional dimension that is inherent to politics. Democracy, however, cannot be based only on conflict, but rather on a particular way of channelling conflict, which Mouffe (2013: XII) labels ‘agonism’: “a central task of democratic politics is to provide the institutions which will permit conflicts to take an ‘agonistic’ form, where the opponents are not enemies but adversaries among whom exists a conflictual consensus”. Therefore, the essential difference between antagonistic and agonistic conflict is that, in the latter, the opponents recognise each other as legitimate participants, while remaining adversaries.

Mouffe (2013) has developed her theory of democracy based on the recognition of conflict by describing the non-existence of a progressive internationalist left that would challenge the Neoliberal global order, arguing that, under the pretext of “adapting themselves to a globalised world”, the mainstream Socialist parties have completely capitulated to a neoliberal world. Following Mouffe, a democratic polity requires more than a ‘public sphere’,² namely, an outline of different political choices between different alternatives where different actors put forward their ideas. Even if the EU was more present in national public spheres, as long as executive actors are overrepresented and there are no counter-hegemonic discourses circulating, it can hardly be argued that there would be an improvement in the democratic legitimacy of the EU at the national level. Therefore, a democratic polity requires politicisation in order to be more legitimate. According to Zürn, Binder and Ecker-Ehrhardt (2012: 74), politicisation “means making collectively binding decisions a matter or an object of public discussion”. Politicisation does not appear in a vacuum, but rather as the consequence of strategic action triggered by political actors. In fact, issues are not politicised in general, but become politicised through “episodes of contention” (De Wilde 2011: 563), whereby political actors polarise the debate.

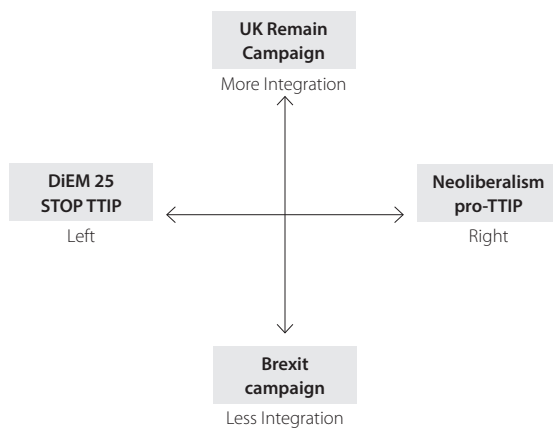
The politicisation of the EU has generally not been assessed in a positive light. Notably, Hooghe and Marks (2009) argue that the politicisation of EU issues has led from a ‘permissive consensus’ to a ‘constraining dissensus’ between EU member states. In this sense, politicisation is viewed as a threat to the European

2 In fact, Mouffe uses the term ‘public space’ in order to avoid any connection with Habermas.

project as a whole, in that relevant national political parties no longer support unequivocally the EU and in fact some use the EU as a scapegoat for popular discontent and harsh economic policies, such as austerity. However, other authors, such as Risse (2010), argue that the politicisation of EU issues is a precondition for the Europeanisation of politics at the national level, and for the democratisation of the EU. Therefore, the literature is not yet clear in defining the relationship between politicisation, Europeanisation and democracy. Applied to the study of the (lack of a) European public sphere (s), the view of the present article is that the fundamental question to be posed is *what type of politicisation can lead to the Europeanisation of public spheres and the enhancement of EU democracy?*

While national-level politics is often politicised in a left-right cleavage, regarding the European integration process and EU issues, politicisation can take different forms. In fact, there are different models of political conflict with regard to European integration (Marks and Steenbergen 2004; Hutter, Grande and Kriesi 2016). According to the Hix-Lord model (which is thought to be applied to political parties in the European Parliament), political conflicts over the EU are two-dimensional, including on the one hand a left-right³ dimension, and a more-less European integration dimension, while on the other hand the relationship between the two dimensions is orthogonal. The Hix-Lord model serves well to differentiate between agonistic and antagonistic conflict. In order to distinguish between the different types of politicisation, I will use the Mouffian concepts of agonism and antagonism.

Figure 1. Hix and Lord (1997) model, situating a number of campaigns in a graph



3 While the left-right cleavage is no doubt an oversimplification, it remains the best-known concept to differentiate between fundamentally different ideological positions.

In such an ideational perspective on the politicisation of EU issues, it is crucial to take into account the resilience of Neoliberalism as an economic paradigm (Blyth 2013; Thatcher and Schmidt 2014) in EU policy-making, given that Neoliberal ideas have travelled across the spectrum and become mainstream among both ‘centre-right’ and ‘centre-left’ actors in the EU. In fact, Neoliberal ideas have been resilient in Europe, including after the 2008 financial crisis and the Eurozone crisis (2010-11). Considering Neoliberalism as right-wing, the horizontal cleavage is politicised when the EU is accepted as a playing field, while criticising the Neoliberal proposals put forward by institutions. An example of left-right politicisation of EU issues is the contestation in Europe against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP): while criticising TTIP, the STOP TTIP coalition did not question the European project as a whole nor the capacity of EU institutions to negotiate international trade agreements. Another example in a similar vein is the Democracy in Europe Movement (DiEM), a pan-European political organisation whose aim is to unite the European left through a common anti-austerity and pro-European programme for the 2019 EU elections. The European Neoliberals and the Euro-peanist left have two discourses that reflect two paradigms that have different understandings of how the economy should function. Whereas Neoliberal discourse understands the economy as essentially self-referential, the left understands the economy as a matter of collective concern, which must be regulated in such a way that it does not only serve the narrow interests of those in control of the ‘market’.

As reflected by the cases of the anti-TTIP coalition and DiEM, while contesting the policies put forward, EU institutions are considered legitimate participants of the debate, even if some of their (Neoliberal) policies are opposed. Then, we can consider this type of conflict as agonistic.

On the other hand, the vertical cleavage (more-less European integration) tends to be politicised by a nationalist discourse that comes mainly from the right, although not exclusively.⁴ The most recent example is perhaps the 2016 British referendum on membership of the EU, where the central slogan of the ‘Leave’ campaign was to “take back control”. A second example is the campaign of the French Front National during the 2014 EU elections, where the following slogan was used: ‘Non à Bruxelles. Oui à la France.’ The two examples make clear that EU institutions are not seen as legitimate participants in the debate. This type of conflict can therefore be labelled as antagonistic.

4 A nuance is needed, however, in differentiating those opposing the EU from the left and those on the right. Whereas those on the left see the EU as inherently Neoliberal and tend to project themselves as ‘internationalists’, those on the right tend to be fuelled by a greater degree of nationalism. That said, despite the different reasons for which they oppose the EU, both have in common the rejection of EU institutions as legitimate participants in the debate.

In sum, the distinction of the two cleavages (left-right and more-less European integration) fits well with Mouffe's distinction between agonistic and antagonistic conflict. Whereas the left-right cleavage could lead to an agonistic debate, the more-less European integration can in fact lead to a 'constraining dissensus'. Therefore, rather than identifying politicisation as inherently positive or negative for the democratic legitimacy of the EU, the ideational dimension of such a process needs to be taken into account in order to define whether politicisation enhances the (input) democratic legitimacy of the EU or is harmful to it. According to the Mouffian model of democracy, the politicisation of the left-right cleavage can lead towards an 'empowering dissensus' (Bouza and Oleart Forthcoming), a concept that refers to the situation in which EU issues are controversial, but not in such a way that the foundations of the European project are questioned, but in a form that the EU is accepted as the playing field. In this way, politicisation could be good news for European democracy.

3. Empirical considerations for an agonistic approach to the Europeanisation of public spheres: cross-national media-content analysis

The responsibility for creating the conditions for agonistic (national) public spheres on EU issues lies with different actors, including the media, political parties, interest groups or governments themselves. However, from an empirical perspective, the national media are a necessary source for any research on Europeanisation and politicisation, given their central role in the public sphere. As argued by Statham and Trezn (2013: 3), politicisation "requires the expansion of debates from closed elite-dominated policy arenas to wider publics, and here the mass media play an important role by placing the contesting political actors in front of a public". Given the role of the media as an interface between political elites and the general public, the media are a platform through which political conflicts are mediated and reflect to a certain extent the discourses that are circulating in society, while also influencing them. There are other spaces in society that are part of the public sphere, but the media are the most evident platform, given their capacity to reach a wide range of social groups.

Assuming that the EPS should not be conceptualised as a supranational layer of communication that is autonomous and separated from national public spheres, an empirical analysis of the Europeanisation of national public spheres should aim to undertake cross-national media-content analysis as the central methodology. An empirically useful definition of the Europeanisation of national public spheres is that given by Risse (2003: 1), who argues that "an ideal typical European public sphere would then emerge

1. if and when the same (European) themes are discussed at the same time

- at similar levels of attention across national public spheres and media;
2. if and when similar frames of reference, meaning structures, and patterns of interpretation are used across national public spheres and media;
 3. if and when a transnational community of communication emerges in which speakers and listeners recognize each other as legitimate participants in a common discourse.”

While the first two dimensions put forward by Risse are relatively straightforward, the third one is more complex, and it is crucial in distinguishing between agonism and antagonism. In an antagonistic debate, actors do not perceive each other as legitimate participants of the debate, whereas in an agonistic debate the different actors might oppose each other, but they do not question the legitimacy of the opposition actors to put forward their views. Connecting such an idea to the ideational cleavages that are prevalent regarding EU issues might be a good idea to allow differentiating those EU-critical actors from the anti-EU.

The argument put forward in the present chapter is that, in addition to a normative perspective on the Europeanisation of national public spheres, a further dimension is required: (agonistic) conflict. From a normative point of view, it is not only necessary to have a plurality of views vis-à-vis EU issues, but to have fundamentally opposing points of view that cannot be reconciled, in such a way that citizens do not get the sense that ‘there is no alternative’. However, the alternatives to the resilient Neoliberalism in EU policy-making have to promote an ‘agonistic’ type of conflict in order for the EU to be more democratic. If, instead, the alternatives take the form of antagonistic conflict through ultranationalism and/or anti-immigrant discourse, the democratic legitimacy of the EU can, as argued by Hooghe and Marks (2009), be harmed. This is because the drivers of this type of conflict do not aim to bring pluralism to the public debate, but in fact put up obstacles to it by excluding non-national speakers. Therefore, even if this type of antagonistic conflict was Europeanised, in the sense that the same type of conflict and discourse circulates in different countries at the same time, it would not improve the democratic legitimacy of the EU as a polity.

In this context, the independence of the media in relation to executive actors and other powerful actors is thus very important, given that the media are supposed to put forward and amplify different voices, rather than be dominated by a certain group of actors while excluding others. Nevertheless, it is not enough for the media to put forward different ideas on subjects, rather it must be ensured that the framework of ideas is diverse enough to be open to different types of actors with, on many occasions, opposing views. For this reason, cross-national media content analysis

of the media reporting on EU issues (Koopmans 2002; Statham and Trenz 2013) should be considered as central for the study of the Europeanisation of national public spheres, including the ideational dimension that necessarily implies a certain degree of qualitative analysis, potentially combined with quantitative methods.

4. Conclusion: an agonistic Europeanisation of public spheres leading towards an empowering dissensus?

The present article has argued that the normative perspective on the Europeanisation of national public spheres has, so far, ignored the importance of (agonistic) conflict for the democratic legitimacy of the EU. Given the general lack of public debate in the EU policy-making process, the politicisation of EU issues and a Europeanisation of public spheres would increase the legitimacy of the EU, as long as the type of conflict is agonistic, rather than antagonistic. Normalising political conflict over EU issues at the national level normalises the EU as a polity, and it is therefore good news for European democracy, given that it can normalise the EU as a polity through political conflict (Oleart and Bouza 2017). The blockage of agonistic debate might in fact have negative consequences for the public debate, leading towards an antagonistic debate. The goal of a democratic debate should therefore be to express conflict in an agonistic way, rather than in an antagonistic way.

Such a process could be understood as an ‘empowering dissensus’, a concept that refers to the situation in which EU issues are controversial, but not in such a way that the foundations of the European project are questioned, but in a form that the EU is accepted as the playing field (Bouza and Oleart Forthcoming). In this way, dissensus is understood as empowering actors to understand the EU as the legitimate framework for decision-making on a range of subjects, while contesting the policy paradigm put forward by EU institutions (currently, Neoliberalism). The empirical implications for such research are to undertake cross-national media content analysis, assess the extent to which EU issues are discussed at the national level in different countries, and on the basis of which cleavage (if any) issues are politicised, and evaluate whether the conflict is agonistic or antagonistic.

References

- Blyth, Mark (2013) *Austerity: The History of a Dangerous Idea*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bohman, James (2007). *Democracy across Borders. From Dêmos to Dêmoi*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Bouza, L., and Oleart, A (Forthcoming) 'From the 2005 Constitution's 'permissive consensus' to TTIP's 'empowering dissensus': the EU as a playing field for Spanish civil society'. *Journal of Contemporary European Research*.
- Calhoun, Graig (ed.) (1992) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge (Mass.) and London: MIT Press.
- Carpentier, N., Cammaerts, B. (2006) 'Hegemony, democracy, agonism and journalism: An interview with Chantal Mouffe', *Journalism Studies*, 7(6): 964-975.
- Conrad, M. (2010) 'The Missing Link in EU Democracy? Why a Transnational Public Sphere Matters', *Stjórnmal go stjornsysla – Icelandic Review of Politics and Administration*.
- Conrad, M. (2014) *Europeans and the Public Sphere: Communication without community?* Stuttgart & Hannover: Ibidem Press.
- De Wilde, P. (2011) 'No polity for old politics? A framework for analyzing the politicization of European integration', *Journal of European Integration*, 33(5): 559-575.
- Eriksen, E. O. (2005) 'An Emerging European Public Sphere', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 8(3): 341-363.
- Eriksen, E. O. (2007) 'Conceptualising European Public Spheres. General, Segmented and Strong Publics' in J. E. Fossum and P. Schlesinger, Philip (Eds.) *The European Union and the Public Sphere. A Communicative Space in the Making?* London: Routledge.
- European Commission (2006) 'White Paper on a European Communication Policy'. Downloaded on 9 August 2017 from http://europa.eu/documents/comm/white_papers/pdf/com2006_35_en.pdf
- Fossum, J. E., Schlesinger, P. (Eds.) *The European Union and the public sphere: A communicative space in the making?* London: Routledge.
- Fraser, N. (2007) 'Transnationalizing the Public Sphere. On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 24(4): 7-30.
- Habermas J. (1989) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. (1996) *Between Facts and Norms: Contribution to a Discursive Theory of Law and Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. (2006) 'Political Communication in Media Society: Does Democracy Still Enjoy an Epistemic Dimension? The Impact of Normative Theory on Empirical Research', *Communication Theory*, 16: 411-426.
- Hix, S., Lord, C. (1997) *Political parties in the European Union*. New York: St. Martin's.
- Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2009) 'A postfunctionalist theory of European integration: From permissive consensus to constraining dissensus', *British Journal of Political Science*, 39(1): 1-23.
- Hutter, S., Grande, E., Kriesi, H. (2016) *Politicising Europe: Integration and Mass politics*. Cambridge University Press.

- Koopmans, R., Erbe, J. (2004) 'Towards a European Public Sphere?', *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 17(2): 97-118.
- Koopmans, R. (2002) 'Codebook for the analysis of political mobilization and communication in European public spheres'. Europub.com (HPSE-CT2000-00046). Downloaded on 4 September 2016 from <http://europub.wz-berlin.de>
- Koopmans, R., Statham, P. (1999) 'Political Claims Analysis: Integrating Protest Event and Political Discourse Approaches', *Mobilization*, 4(2): 203-221.
- Koopmans, R., Statham, P. (Eds.) (2010) *The Making of a European Public Sphere: The Europeanization of Media Discourse and Political Contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marks, G., Steenbergen, M. R. (2004). *European integration and political conflict*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mouffe, C. (2000) *The Democratic Paradox*. London: Verso.
- Mouffe, C. (2013) *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically*. London: Verso.
- Nieminen, H. (2008) 'Europe of Networks or the European Public Sphere? Four plus One Approaches', *Sociology. Thought and Action* (Sociologija. Mintis ir Veiksmas), 3/2008: 10-27.
- Oleart, Á., Bouza, L. (forthcoming) 'Democracy at stake: multi-positional actors and politicisation in the EU civil society field', *Journal of Common Market Studies* doi:10.1111/jcms.12687.
- Polownikow, A. (2015) 'Bringing qualities back in. Towards a new analytical approach for examining the transnationalization of public spheres', pp.119-130 in L. Kramp, N. Carpentier, A. Hepp, I. Tomanić Trivundža, H. Nieminen, R. Kunelius, T. Olsson, E. Sundin and R. Kilborn (Eds.) *Journalism, Representation and the Public Sphere*. Bremen: edition lumière.
- Risse, T. (2003) 'An Emerging European Public Sphere? Theoretical Clarifications and Empirical Indicators'. Downloaded on 15 September 2016 from http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~atasp/texte/030322_europe_public.pdf
- Risse, T. (2010) *A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Schmidt, V., Thatcher, M. (2013) *Resilient Liberalism in Europe's Political Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Statham, P. (2010) 'What Kind of Europeanized Public Politics?', pp. 277-306 in R. Koopmans, and P. Statham, P. (Eds.) *The Making of a European Public Sphere: The Europeanization of Media Discourse and Political Contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Statham, P., Trenz, H.-J. (2013) *The Politicization of Europe. Contesting the Constitution in the Mass Media*. London.
- Steffek, J. (2010) 'Public Accountability and the Public Sphere of International Governance' *Ethics & International Affairs*, 24(1), 45-68.
- Trenz, H.-J., Eder, K. (2004) 'The democratising role of a European public sphere. Towards a model of democratic functionalism', *Journal of European Social Theory*, 7(1): 5-25.
- Trenz, H.-J. (2009) 'In search of a European public sphere: Between normative overstretch and empirical dis-enchantment', pp. 35-52 in I. S. Moring (Ed.) *Manufacturing Europe: Spaces of Democracy, diversity and Communication*. Nordicom: Göteborg.

Zürn, M., Binder, M., Ecker-Ehrhardt, M. (2012) 'International Authority and its Politicization', *International Theory – A Journal of International Politics, Law and Philosophy*, 4(1): S. 69-106.

Biography

Alvaro Oleart has an MA in communications from the VUB (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), an executive master in European political communication from IHECS (Institut des Hautes Études des Communications Sociales) and is currently undertaking a PhD in political communication at the ULB (Université Libre de Bruxelles). He is part of the ARC project VaEUR (<http://valeur.ulb.be>) at the Institute of European Studies of the ULB, where he is a doctoral researcher.

Email: alvaro.oleart@ulb.ac.be