MEDIATIZED DISCOURSES ON EUROPEANIZATION AND THEIR REPRESENTATIONS IN PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

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MEDIATIZED DISCOURSES ON EUROPEANIZATION IN SPAIN

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Chapter 1

Theoretical Framework and Research Design

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1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. THE MEDIATIZATION OF POLITICS

A key concept in understanding the role of the media in the transformation of contemporary societies is "mediatization", which refers to the process of social change whereby the influence of media on all aspects of social life has significantly increased (Stromback and Esser 2014). Indeed, as Hjarvard notes, *mediatization* is "the process whereby society to an increasing degree is submitted to, or becomes dependent on, the media and their logic" (2008, 113). The author defines the *media logic* as "the ways in which the media distribute material and symbolic resources, and operate with the help of formal and informal rules" (Hjarvard 2013, 17).

One of the areas in which mediatization becomes especially notable today is the *mediatization of politics*. The latter represents "a long-term process through which the importance of the media and their spill-over effects on political processes, institutions, organizations and actors have increased" (Stromback and Esser 2014, 6). The mediatization of politics is believed to have a profound impact on modern politics through reshaping

"the fabric of politics" (Axford 2001, 3) and transforming political communication in its entirety (Negrine and Papathanassopoulos 2011). Moreover, it is suggested that the contemporary media are decisive in the promotion of reflexive modernity, which signifies the end of "real" politics (Axford 2001, 9). Scholars argue that in recent years "media democracy" has been developing across Europe and beyond, "in which the individual, media-savvy performance of politics seems to become more important than the political process" (Wodak 2021, 15). Besides, as powerful culture industries enter the scene, politics is increasingly "conditioned by the demands of image making and breaking, of product placement, niche marketing and the routine use of negative research" (Axford 2001, 8). Moog and Sluyter-Beltrao (2001) claim that in such conditions news coverage has become increasingly negative/cynical in its representation of politics, while also ushering in remarkable public alienation from both political processes and media.

From the perspective of the mediatization of politics the media that matter most are *news media*. These are television, radio, newspapers and news magazines in their traditional or digital formats. Building on the definition of media logic, Stromback and Esser (2014) identify three main dimensions of *news media logic*: professionalism, commercialism and media technology. *Professionalism* implies the differentiation of journalism as an occupation from other social institutions, which accounts for its autonomy from outside influences, its practicing of a particular set of norms and values, and its claim to serve the public interest. *Commercialism* refers to the media as commercial organizations that have a significant impact on the processes of news selection, production and presentation. Finally, *media technology* refers to how the communication technologies shape the processes of news production and presentation (Stromback and Esser 2014, 17-18). The mediatization of each dimension happens to a different extent: The media can be more or less autonomous from political institutions, more or less commercialized, more or less guided by media logic as opposed to political logic with variations across different media and different countries (*ibid*, 7). Although political institutions and actors might try to exert their influence over various media, in order to be successful they have to anticipate possible media actions and reactions. A key concept in understanding this process is *self-mediatization* (Meyer, 2002), which "captures the process through which political actors have internalized and adapted to the media's attention rules, production routines and selection criteria – that is, news media logic – and try to exploit this knowledge to reach different strategic goals" (*ibid*, 21). Self-mediatization might trigger what Asp calls *a spiral of mediatization* (Asp in Stromback and Esser 2014,

22), which implies that political institutions and actors can influence and manipulate the media though the main tool for such influence and manipulation is the internalization of media logic itself.

Based on the above understanding, news media logic is employed through the media's attention rules, production routines, and selection criteria. In other words, news media logic is performed via *priming* (that is, making a consideration salient), *framing* (that is, connecting a particular consideration to a political object) and *cueing* (that is, instilling a bias) (Hooghe and Marks 2005, 13). These strategies are implemented via various discursive tools, and hence it is essential to focus on the discursive use of media and scrutinize the "discoursal nature of media power" (Fairclough 1995, 3). According to Fairclough, media power is expressed through three main media outputs: *Representations, identities, and relations*. The author notes that media discourse is "simultaneously representing, setting up identities, and setting up relations" (*ibid*, 5), and is a powerful means of constructing a particular reality as well as particular identities with respective relations. This is relevant in any political context as "discourse serves to explain political events, to legitimate political actions, to develop political identities, to reshape and/or reinterpret political history and, all in all, to frame the national political discussion" (Schmidt and Radaelli 2004, 202).

Considering the abovementioned, a *Discourse Analytical Approach* is recognized as a useful tool for studying mediatized political communication in general, and that related to the EU and Europeanization in particular (Ekstrom and Firmstone 2017). In this context, discourse is defined as a set of ideas and as an interactive process through which these ideas are disseminated (Schmidt and Radaelli 2004), thus a rather inclusive understanding of discourse is applied. In order to empirically analyze EU-related discourses, scholars suggest combining various methods of analysis such as content analysis (press, TV programs, statements of interest group leaders and other influential actors in the media, etc.), semi-structured interviews with politicians and policy experts, and the bottom-up approach to Europeanization, that is, analyzing the public's responses through public opinion surveys (*ibid*, 205-206).

1.2. RESEARCH AIM & OBJECTIVES

Adopting the Discourse Analytical Approach, we consider the representations of the European project and Europeanization in various media in wider Europe, including the so-called Old and New European countries, as well as those of Eastern Partnership. The seven target countries

for MEDIATIZED EU include Belgium, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal and Spain. In particular, we investigate how the media discourses are constructed to foster or hamper the European project and how they resonate among the population. We examine this issue in a longitudinal perspective through focusing on the transformations of the European media landscape and their impact on the Europeanization discourses from the turn of the 21st century to the present day.

Thus, the **aim** of MEDIATIZED EU is to study the discourses of the traditional and new media on the European project and Europeanization as well as their representations in public opinion, focusing on the role of the media as a mediator between elites and citizens.

Scholarly literature identifies two main approaches to European integration and Europeanization: *rationalist institutionalism* and *constructivist or sociological institutionalism* (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2002). The former makes the basis of the *rational utilitarian or pragmatic* framework that focuses on the local actors' assessment of the gains and losses stemming from the country's Europeanization such as the strengthening of democratic institutions (including protection of human rights), the reinforcement of security and the economic benefits of the free trade area vis-à-vis certain political or economic drawbacks. Meanwhile, the latter makes the basis of the *value-based* or *identity* framework that focuses on the shared identity and cultural factors, in particular, the ascribed and achieved aspects of national and supranational attachment (Toshkov *et al*. 2014). Later the third approach of *discursive institutionalism* was introduced that focuses on how policy issues are constructed and interpreted by various actors, and how these visions and interpretations shape their preferences (Schmidt and Radaelli 2004). This approach becomes essential when dealing with the political actors' representations of the European project and their attempts to legitimize it in the eyes of citizens through discourses on pragmatic and identity considerations, as well as the citizens' responses to the elites' messages and their perceptions of the abovementioned considerations. Furthermore, this approach enables us to focus on the discursive "usage" (Jacquot and Woll 2003) of Europeanization by the local media, which act as a mediator between elites and citizens, and contribute to the shaping of respective public attitudes.

We integrate all three approaches in our research studying the representations of the pragmatic and identity factors in the Europeanization discourses by focusing on the elite-media-public triangle. Thus, the research **objectives** are as follows:

1. To study the framing of the pragmatic and identity factors related to Europeanization in the media and its representations in public opinion;

2. To explore the role of political and media elites in the media framing of the pragmatic and identity factors related to Europeanization;

3. To trace the interconnections between the political and media elites' discourses, EU framing, and public opinion.

In order to achieve the above aim and objectives, we use a mixed-methods approach integrating qualitative, quantitative and deliberative research designs. The research design consists of the following components: *Desk research* focusing on available knowledge about the changing media landscapes and their influence on the Europeanization discourses since the EU's Eastern enlargement; *media analysis* focusing on the quantitative and qualitative content analysis and critical discourse analysis of the traditional and new media outlets; *in-depth interviews integrating Q Methodology* with political and media elites (thus uniting qualitative and quantitative methods); and *public opinion surveys* with citizens residing in the seven target countries. Finally, *deliberative discussions* provide us with the opportunity to reflect on the research findings and obtain immediate feedback from the public.

One of the main assets of the project is the selection of target countries, which includes diverse parts of wider Europe: Belgium where the EU headquarters are seated, the Northern part represented by Ireland, the Southern part represented by Spain and Portugal, the countries of Eastern Enlargement represented by Hungary and Estonia, and an EaP country represented by Georgia. In this way, we aim to explore media discourses on the EU and Europeanization and their representations in the public opinion within the EU and beyond it, thus tracing the role of media in (re)shaping European political and cultural representations as well as in fostering or hampering the European project.

1.3. A DISCOURSE ANALYTICAL APPROACH TO THE MEDIATIZED EU POLITICS

As noted above, we adopt a discourse analytical approach to study the representations of the EU and Europeanization in the context of the elite-media-population triangle. However, it should be noted that this approach does not imply a single direction but unites several directions with specific features and a number of common characteristics. Five main analytical

directions are identified within the discourse analytical approach: Frame analysis, critical discourse analysis (CDA), the governance school, discursive institutionalism (DI), and the Copenhagen school (Lynggaard 2019, 6).

Originating from Erving Goffman's theory (1974), frame analysis looks at the context clues that establish a frame for us to interpret and react to what is going on. It is based on the premise that the way an issue is presented/framed to the audience influences the choices people make about how to process this information. Using Goffman's theory for the analysis of the interrelation between the media and politics, framing is described as "the process by which a communication source, such as a news organization, defines and constructs a political issue or public controversy" (Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson 1997, 221). Such a construction has a profound impact on the perception of the news, as the audience is told not only what to think about (agenda-setting) but also how to think about this issue (framing). Although this approach is not explicitly formulated as a discursive one, it still offers a useful tool to deconstruct various discursive frames. If we apply this approach to the study of EU-related topics, it will focus on "the study of the role of knowledge and expertise in EU politics, political communication, public opinion, or broader meaning systems variously conceptualized as policy frames, paradigms (Hall 1993), belief systems (Sabatier 1998) or narratives (Patterson and Monroe 1998)" (Lynggaard 2019, 8).

The CDA approach originates from Michel Foucault's ideas and its main focus is on how discourse is constructed and how those behind these constructions exercise control over public opinion. As Foucault puts it in his "Politics and the Study of Discourse" (1991), it is crucial to know not only what is said but also who makes the decisions of what should be said. Through controlling what is said the decision-makers also control public knowledge, and through controlling access to particular knowledge they also control what people think and how they act. Thus, discourse is a powerful tool to structure and control human thinking and action, and because of this, it is necessarily political. CDA employs a comprehensive approach looking not only at texts as the products of discourse but also at discursive practices, that is, the processes of text production and text consumption, as well as sociocultural practices, that is, the wider social and cultural context in which the communication takes place (Fairclough 1995, 57). If we apply this approach to the study of Europeanization, it will focus on media discourse (Fairclough, van Dijk, etc.) and its role in the formation of the European public sphere (Ekstrom and Firmstone, Coleman and Ross, etc.), European and national political identities (Wodak, Krzyzanowski,

etc.), the everyday practices of EU institutions and actors (Wodak, Coleman and Firmstone, etc.) and so on.

The governance school closely linked to the CDA approach studies EU governance based on discourse analysis and is often inspired by Foucault or Habermas. As Lynggaard notes, "[t]hose highlighting the structural side of discourse, or 'the power of discourse,' in EU governance tend to be inspired by Foucault, while studies emphasizing discursive agency, or 'the power in discourse', in EU governing tend to lean towards Habermas" (2019, 7). However, it is also common to encounter a mixture of the discursive structure and agency approaches. The governance school focuses on the discursive construction of Europeanization, that is, the impact of European integration on national policies and practices, as well as on how the EU and the Europeanization process are discursively legitimized. In this context, the use of pragmatic and identity considerations for the legitimization or delegitimization purposes plays a particularly important role.

DI can be considered a continuation of the governance school. Based on the title of discursive institutionalism, it connects discourse analysis and institutional research; in particular, it focuses on the role of ideas and discourse in their institutional context and their political consequences. According to Lynggaard, "[i]deas concern the substance of discourse, whereas discourse conveys and transforms ideas, making discourse a key mechanism of political change. DI thus emphasizes the transformative power of discourse as essential in understanding the politics of change" (*ibid*, 9). When applied to the study of EU politics, this approach focuses on discourse as a tool for triggering or hindering political reforms, as an instrument for political elites to justify certain policy choices, as well as a means to capture public perceptions about EU policies and their impact on the national ones.

Finally, the Copenhagen school focuses on how the perceptions of the nation and the state relate to the concepts of Europe and how these perceptions shape the EU member states' policies towards European integration. This approach originates from international relations and security studies, and its main argument is that domestic perceptions of the nation and the state are projected into national EU policies and the views about the prospects of European integration (*ibid*, 6).

Our research aims to integrate the elements of the abovementioned discourse analytical approaches. However, the main emphasis will be on CDA with some elements of frame analysis in order to look at how media

discourses about the EU and Europeanization are framed and how they contribute to the construction of a particular reality, that is, whether they aim at reproducing or challenging the status quo, thus exploring the transformative power of discourse that is also the focus of the DI approach. In this context, the governance school approach will also be integrated to reveal how particular discourses are used by the media, elites and citizens for the legitimization or delegitimization of the European project and Europeanization, and what role the pragmatic and identity factors play in this process. We are less interested in the Copenhagen school approach that is specific to international relations and security studies, and focuses on the discursive aspects of shaping the EU member states' policies towards European integration.

1.4. THE CDA APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF EUROPEANIZATION

As noted above, our main approach to the study of the representations of the EU and Europeanization in the context of the elite-media-population triangle is CDA that originates from Michel Foucault's ideas. Foucault focuses on the specific conditions of producing political discourses, as well as their relations with the past and contemporary discursive and non-discursive events. For this purpose, he provides a framework for analysis that consists of "the set of rules which at a given period and for a given society define the limits and forms of" the *sayable, conservation, memory, reactivation, and appropriation* (1991, 59-60). If we contextualize these five aspects of producing and spreading discourses within the Europeanization framework and especially with regard to our project objectives, we have to address the following major questions:

1. Sayable – what discourses on the EU and Europeanization are dominant? What pragmatic and identity considerations are high-lighted in these discourses and what is the role of the media in framing these issues?

2. Conservation – which discourses related to the EU and Europe-anization have remained prevalent over time or disappeared from the media, political and public rhetoric? How have the rep-resentations of pragmatic and identity factors been manipulated in these discourses?

3. Memory – which discourses have been recognized as valid and invalid or even foreign and by which actors? What is the role of pragmatic and identity factors in depicting certain discourses as invalid or foreign?

4. Reactivation – which past discourses have persisted and what transformations (if any) have they undergone, especially in terms of representing pragmatic and identity considerations?

5. Appropriation – which actors/groups have competed to maintain their control over these discourses, especially in terms of depicting identity and pragmatic considerations?

The Foucauldian model once again confirms that discourse is a powerful means of constructing a political reality, in our case the EU's political reality. Indeed, some scholars consider the move from the cultural definition of a European identity to its sociological and political construction as one of the key shifts of the present times (Ifversen 2002). This sociological construction of the European identity and more generally of the European project is exactly what authors mean when focusing on the "usage of European integration" and especially its discursive usage (Jacquot and Woll 2003). Based on the above considerations, a theoretical framework for the analysis of EU discourses and their role in the construction of the European project and the European identity has been developed.

The first major point in this framework is "to investigate the formation of different constructions and images of Europe" (Wodak and Weiss 2005, 128), that is, how Europe is invented (Delanty 1995). As Wodak and Weiss underline, there are various "regional, local, national and European identities, which are constantly re-negotiated and co-constructed by different elites and social groups" (2005, 128). The second point that can be derived from the first one is that these negotiations of identities are context-dependent and discursively co-constructed through various interactions. In this process, one of the key factors influencing the construction of identities is hierarchical and institutional power (*ibid*). Thus, asymmetrical power relations among the EU states and beyond them play an important role in the (re-)negotiation and (re-)construction of the European project and the European identity. The third point is that "new public spaces, media, and communication technologies have changed the basic rules for discourses by shaping the space-time-structures" (*ibid*, 129). The question that is necessarily asked in this context is: "Who uses these public spaces, who is included, who is excluded?" (*ibid*, 129). The fourth point is based on the idea of diversity vs. standardization: Although many political activities are controlled at the local, regional and national levels, major policy decisions are still made by the centralized institutions in the EU's headquarters (*ibid*).

Wodak and Weiss argue that the listed dimensions are used for legitimizing the political construction of the EU and Europeanization with the main forms of legitimization resonating with the respective dimensions: "*Legitimization through idea* (identity, history, culture); *Legitimization through procedure* (participation, democracy, efficiency), and *Legitimization through 'standardization'* (of social standards, economic standards)" (*ibid*, 131). The dimension of *inclusion and exclusion* as the major principle of group demarcation is relevant in the case of all three legitimization strategies. To connect these forms of legitimization to the EU-related pragmatic and identity factors that represent the main focus of our project, the first form of legitimization that refers to the idea of Europe and focuses on the identity and cultural dimensions fosters the value-based or identity approach to the EU, while the other two forms legitimize/delegitimize the EU based on the rational utilitarian or pragmatic views that have to do with democratic, economic and other outcomes stemming from Europeanization.

Based on the abovementioned framework, Wodak and Weiss offer three main perspectives – historical, communication, and participation and representation – towards the discursive analysis of the European project and the European identity, which are closely interrelated to the Foucauldian five-dimensional model. Each perspective is accompanied by the respective questions, as in the case of the Foucauldian model. The *historical perspective* searches into "[w]hat historical Europe-concepts underlie the national discourses? And how are the concepts and images […] reproduced in modern fields of discourse (political speeches, media discourses, everyday discourses)?" (2005, 132). To contextualize this historical perspective within the Foucauldian model, it addresses the limits and forms of *sayable, conservation and reactivation*. To further scrutinize it in the context of our project aim and objectives, it inquires what images of the EU are offered by the media and how the media discourses resonate with the political and popular ones. The *communication perspective* asks the following questions: "How are the respective images of Europe transmitted or communicated inter-culturally and multi-modally?" What is the role of elites, the media (traditional and new), and the public in constructing and transmitting these images? "How and which new public spaces are created by these new media?" (*ibid*). This perspective resonates with the Foucauldian limits and forms of *appropriation* focusing on various actors' agency in constructing and maintaining control over particular discourses. As for our project aim and objectives, the inter-cultural (seven target countries) and multi-modal (the elite-media-public triangle as well as the traditional and new media) perspectives are integrated. Besides, by addressing how new public spaces are created by the media we also look at how the media contribute to the

abovementioned dimension of inclusion and exclusion, especially in relation to the European identity. The *participation and representation perspective* is interested in the implications of the images of Europe/the EU projected through national discourses for the questions of political legitimization at the supranational level. In this way, it attempts to respond to the question of how the discursive relationship of "*identity-legitimization-representation*" is understood beyond the nation-state (*ibid*). Indeed, it is argued that the search for the EU's political legitimacy entails a search for a redefinition of a European (institutional) identity (Krzyzanowski 2005, 138). This perspective resonates with the Foucauldian limits and forms of *memory* focusing on the labelling of certain discourses as valid or invalid for the purpose of their legitimization or delegitimization. As clear from the abovementioned aim and objectives, the project focuses on how the European identity, the European project and Europeanization are legitimized or delegitimized through the media-elite-public discourses.

Wodak and Weiss's ideas closely resonate with those of van Leeuwen, who also underlines the role of discourse in legitimizing certain practices and lists four categories of legitimization that he believes are especially relevant in the present conditions: 1. *Authorization* is legitimization by reference to the authority of tradition, custom or persons who are attributed a certain kind of authority; 2. *Moral evaluation* implies legitimization by reference to certain (often quite vague) value systems; 3. *Rationalization* is legitimization by reference to certain goals and an institutionalized social action to achieve them; and 4. *Mythopoesis* is legitimization "through narratives whose outcomes reward legitimate actions and punish non-legitimate actions" (2008, 106). If we contextualize these four categories of legitimization within the Europeanization research, it is obvious that the first two categories legitimize certain EU-related practices based on identity considerations, while the last two legitimize them based on pragmatic considerations. This once again confirms that the identity and pragmatic considerations are discursively used for the legitimization or delegitimization of the EU and Europeanization, and as noted above, they can serve as a means of manipulation by the media, elites, and various social groups.

When it comes to the issues of legitimization and identity politics, the study of myths and emotions related to the EU is considered essential. In this context, two types of myths are identified: "foundational myths" and "functional myths" (Della Sala in Lynggaard 2019, 116). The first type is used to explain the feelings of solidarity and public support for common political institutions. Due to the fact that Europe lacks the territorial and cultural unity, the presence of foundational myths in the EU is questioned. Instead,

it is believed that the EU's legitimacy and the idea of European identity rely on functional myths that, in contrast to foundational myths about, say, "the birth of the nation", relate to policy ideas, political events and actors. It is argued that "a political myth is discourse in the sense that it is made up by collective understandings of causal relationships, the roles of involved actors and links between events in an area of politics", and it works only if it is emotionally appealing to the members of a particular society (Lynggaard 2019, 117). Thus, in order to better understand the discursive legitimization of the European project and identity politics, it is inevitably necessary to explore the role of myths and emotions in the construction of various images of the EU, as well as in the different actors' perceptions of identity and pragmatic considerations.

No doubt, the media is one of the most influential tools for constructing and disseminating these myths and respective emotions and by doing so, fostering particular images of the EU. The media can do this via deciding "what to include and what to exclude, and what to 'foreground' and what to 'background'" (Fairclough 1995, 4). This is exactly what Fairclough means when he talks about the "discoursal nature of media power" (*ibid*, 3) and focuses on how media language might work ideologically. The author notes that "the ideological work of media language includes particular ways of representing the world" (say, certain representations of the EU and Europeanization), "particular constructions of social identities" (say, certain representations of EU officials who feature on radio or TV programs), "and particular constructions of social relations" (*ibid*, 12) (say, certain representations of relations between politicians and citizens in the course of implementing EU reforms). Through these representations the media foster particular images of the EU and Europeanization and invoke respective emotions among the audience. In this process, foregrounding and backgrounding are used as a means of manipulation via overstressing certain images or concealing others. Hence, we deal with the "normative use" or "creative use" of media discourse (*ibid*, 60) – the former contributing to the reproduction of the status quo, and the latter contributing to its transformation.

Despite such an important role of media power, the media does not only affect but is also affected by power relations – both political and economic – within a society. Thus, political and commercial pressures on the media might have a significant impact on how certain political and economic issues are framed, and hence how certain reality is represented. As Fairclough notes, because of the mobilizing power and the ideological potential of the media, "[t]he state does have an interest in controlling media output" (*ibid*, 45). Furthermore, "[m]edia texts and programmes are […] symbolic, cultural

commodities, produced in what is effectively a culture industry, which circulate for profit within a market, and they are very much open to the effects of commercial pressures" (*ibid*, 42). These two aspects – the politics of media and the economics of media – have a substantial influence on whether media discourse is used in a normative or creative way, as well as on what themes and issues are foregrounded or backgrounded by the media. Another important aspect the politics and economics of media influence is "choice relations" (though it is not about actors' free choices as the selection among alternatives is socially conditioned) vis-à-vis "chain relations", that is, what communicative events "are chained together" and "how earlier texts in the chain are embedded in later ones" (*ibid*, 64-65). The former has to do with what discourses (in our case, the ones about the EU and Europeanization) are represented by various actors (elites, media, citizens) and how they are interrelated, as well as how diverse they are. If we refer to the Foucauldian framework, this aspect matches with the forms and limits of *sayable, memory* and *appropriation*. The latter has to do with how the present discourses are related to the past ones and what transformations they have undergone over time. Again, referring to the Foucauldian framework, this aspect matches with the forms and limits of *conservation* and *reactivation*. In order to empirically explore these questions, Fairclough considers necessary "to specify the repertoire of voices, discourses and genres within the order of mediatized political discourse, the relationships of choice and alternation within each of these repertoires, and how particular voices, discourses and genres are articulated together in different types of media output" (*ibid*, 185). For this purpose, the author introduces his three-dimensional model with the following elements: *text, interaction*, and *social context*. In order to capture a holistic picture, he analyzes the intersections of these three elements via focusing on the *description* of text, the *interpretation* of the interrelation between text and interaction, and the *explanation* of the interrelation between interaction and social context (Fairclough 2015, 128-176).

Thus, Fairclough's CDA framework is very useful for the empirical analysis of media discourses, from the simple level of utterance to the wider context and intertextual analysis, as well as for the exploration of how media language works ideologically. As noted above, the concept of ideology is inseparable from that of manipulation, and both represent key notions in Teun van Dijk's socio-political discourse analysis (2001). According to van Dijk, manipulation is used in an attempt to persuade others. At the cognitive level, manipulation is used as a means of controlling others' thinking, while at the discursive level, manipulation implies various forms of ideological discourse. Therefore, discourse should be analyzed as a means of rhetorical performance of a certain ideology. Based on this assumption, van Dijk

develops an *ideology schema* that organizes the beliefs of an ideology and consists of the following major categories (2013, 178):

- Identity: Who are we? Who belongs to us? Who is a member and who can join?

- Activities: What do we (have to) do? What is our role in society?

- Goals: What is the goal of our activities?

- Norms and values: What are the norms of our activities? What is good or bad for us?

- Group relations: Who are our friends and our enemies?

- Resources: What material or symbolic resources form the basis of our (lack of) power and our position in society?

If we contextualize the above ideology schema within the Europeanization research, we should focus on the concept of European identity underlined in Wodak and Weiss's framework (2005) along with the European norms and standards and respective implementation activities aiming at Europeanizing the EU's member and aspirant states. As noted by the abovementioned authors, one of the key factors influencing the construction of identities is hierarchical and institutional power; therefore, it is essential to focus on how the power asymmetry among the EU member states and beyond influences group relations of inclusion and exclusion, as well as who are perceived as friends and enemies. No doubt, all of these aspects have a considerable impact on the constructions and images of the EU. Thus, an ideology schema can offer particular representations of the European project with respective social identities and social relations.

Furthermore, ideological discourse is socially situated, that is, embedded in the social, political and institutional context, which can be made explicit when ideologies are used by political parties or mass media. Therefore, analyzing media discourse, especially news stories, is a useful means of deconstructing any ideology schema. As van Dijk notes, "[i]deologically news implicitly promotes the dominant beliefs and opinions of elite groups in society". This happens through the *perlocutionary or persuasive dimension* of news, that is, "the formulation of meanings in such a way that they are not merely understood but also accepted as the truth or at least as a possible truth" (1988, 83). This is what Fairclough calls the politics of media. Besides the perlocutionary dimension, one more aspect that is important for the selection of news items, their framing and their outreach is *news values*, which are often "formulated in the economic terms

of news production in different market systems and within profit-oriented organizations" (*ibid*, 119). This is what Fairclough calls the economics of media. Thus, the politics and economics of media play a key role in the construction of media discourses (making it necessary to study the impact of political and economic elites on media discourses) and as noted in the introductory part, are themselves governed by the media logic that results in the spiral of mediatization. On their side, elites and media jointly contribute to the construction of public views, and hence it is necessary to focus on the elite-media-public triangle while analyzing the mediatized discourses about the EU and Europeanization.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to achieve the project's aim and objectives, we have used a mixed-methods approach integrating qualitative and quantitative research. As we focus on the media-elite-public triangle, our empirical research consists of the following three stages:

- Quantitative and qualitative content analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA) of traditional and new media outlets;

- In-depth interviews integrating Q methodology with political and media elites;

- Nationwide representative surveys with the population.

Each of these stages are explained in detail in the following sections.

2.1. MEDIA ANALYSIS

The media analysis phase lasted from July 2021 to March 2022, and between 6-8 selected media outlets were analyzed per country.

As media outlets that are considered more credible and enjoy higher popularity have more power to influence the audience's perspectives on political issues, the most popular outlets based on their readership and ratings were selected with both Euro-optimistic and Euro-critical, or, where relevant, with pro-European and anti-European rhetoric. We analyzed the EU framing offered by these outlets regarding the pragmatic and identity factors related to Europeanization, their reflections on the future prospects of the European project, and their discursive maneuverings to promote or hinder a certain agenda. We analyzed both traditional media (TV programs/talk shows on EU-related topics and newspapers covering respective issues) and new/online media (items on EU-related issues in digital media outlets).

Based on the Foucauldian theoretical framework, we looked at how the traditional and new media define and construct the European project and Europeanization, what discourses are offered by the media (agenda-setting) and how these discourses are constructed (framing). We analyzed both overt and latent discourses offered by the selected media outlets to identify the context clues that establish certain frames and detect their dependency on respective political practice. We also looked at how these frames are utilized for different purposes by diverse media outlets and how they could be deconstructed through the analysis of the limits and forms of *sayable, conservation, memory, reactivation* and *appropriation.*

The common criterion for the media selection is their popularity. The most popular media in all the target countries are television and online media. The consumption of radio has considerably fallen all around the EU and this trend is even more visible in the case of printed press (European Commission 2019). It should be stressed that the consumption of radio and printed press has been traditionally quite low in Georgia. However, it should also be emphasized that since the rise of digitalization of media and growing internet use by media consumers, most traditional media outlets (especially printed press) have also created online platforms in all the target countries, where the majority of audiences access their online versions. Another crucial aspect is the popularity of particular media outlets within both traditional and online media. The question is what makes certain TV channels or online newspapers/magazines more appealing to audiences than others? Alongside general criteria such as consumption rates (access/views by audience) and ownership (public vs. private), there are certain culture-specific aspects that are of crucial importance. These include the availability of the media outlet in different languages (in the case of Belgium and Estonia), the role of ideological divisions (such as, for instance, right/left in the case of Spain and Portugal or liberal/conservative in the case of Estonia and Georgia), and a strong division between pro-governmental and pro-oppositional media (in the case of Georgia and Hungary). Therefore, while adopting certain common criteria (in particular, popularity and ownership) as the key media selection principle, each target country also based its media sampling on local specificity.

In the case of TV channels, primetime news programs and major political talk shows were selected, while ideological divisions or Euro-optimistic and Euro-critical sentiments were considered crucial in the case of selecting printed/online newspapers. Special keywords were used to quickly locate relevant information in each country's sample, such as 'European Union', 'European Parliament', 'European Commission', 'European market', 'EU budget', 'EU aid', 'EU standards', 'EU regulations',

'European integration', 'European Neighborhood Policy', 'Eastern Partnership', 'Association Agreement', 'DCFTA', 'visa-free movement', 'migration', 'seasonal workers', 'LGBTQ', 'human rights', 'European identity', 'national identity', 'populism', 'Euro-optimism', 'Euroscepticism', 'misinformation', 'disinformation', etc. The materials from selected media outlets were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative content analyses and CDA.

Quantitative content analysis focused on the occurrence and frequency of the used words/terms/concepts, which provided an initial insight into the data. It allowed for considerable reduction of a large amount of data to a smaller subset of organized segments, simplifying the subsequent qualitative content analysis. The data collected from the target media outlets were coded via the following stages:

- Developing a coding frame related to the theoretical framework;

- Testing and updating the coding frame in the process of data collection;

- Coding the selected texts and creating a data file for analysis;

- Creating a codebook that explains the following aspects: 1. The specifics of the coding frame; 2. The frequency of the revealed codes; and 3. The reliability of the coding process.

The basic codebook consisted of the following items:

Type of media	Name of media outlet	Date of produc-tion	Unit of analy-sis	Theme	Actor	Pro-European/ Euro-optimistic discourse	Anti-Euro-pean/Euro-critical dis-course

Quantitative content analysis was followed by the qualitative stage that focused on thematic analysis of the coded texts. The latter aimed to show how the target media outlets set a particular agenda. Furthermore, CDA was performed to reveal the framing of the agenda set by the selected media outlets. We followed the CDA approaches developed by Fairclough (2015), Wodak (2021), and van Dijk (2013), and ultimately, contextualized the analyzed data within the Foucauldian framework.

2.2. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS INTEGRATING Q METHODOLOGY

Media analysis was followed by in-depth interviews with political and media elites that took place from autumn 2022 to spring 2023. We interviewed 25 representatives of political elite (MPs, governing and oppositional parties) selected based on purposive sampling (so that they represented the most popular political parties in each country) and 25 representatives of media/media business elite (owners, editors and journalists of influential media outlets) selected based on positional sampling. In the course of in-depth interviews Q methodology was integrated. Despite its quantitative focus, Q methodology is typically used with rather small samples allowing a deeper analysis of individual cases (McKeown & Thomas 2013). In the course of research, the participants are provided with pre-formulated statements that should be placed on a Q grid based on the respondents' perception of their importance/unimportance and concurrently their agreement/disagreement to them. A limited number of cells on a Q grid forces the respondents to select the most prioritized statements, while the least prioritized ones are left for the neutral category.

Q methodology implies four stages of data analysis: correlation analysis, factor analysis, factor rotation, and calculation of factor scores (Z-scores). Based on correlation analysis, consensus-dissensus is measured between two categories of variables assessed on the scale from +1 to -1. A strong positive correlation, say, +0.70 means that the respondents who have a high score on one variable also have a high score on another variable; while a strong negative correlation, say, -0.70 means that those who have a high score on one variable have a low score on another variable. As a result, a correlation matrix involving all Q columns (Q sorts) is developed that shows similarities and differences between the respondents' views. At the next stage, the major factors are identified in the abovementioned matrix and all the factors whose value is above 1 are selected for factor rotation upon which the most important factors are grouped to enable a better interpretation. Finally, the factor scores are measured showing the value of each statement within each factor, as well as the consensus-dissensus among the factors (Watts & Stenner 2014). The Ken-Q Analysis online software is used for the data analysis[1].

As Q statements are derived from the previous research that suggests the discourses for further testing and analysis, each country team identified the most dominant discourses related to the European project based on the former stage of media analysis. Both the most widespread common statements across country contexts and country-specific ones widely

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1.   https://shawnbanasick.github.io/ken-q-analysis-beta/index.html#section1

ESTUDIOS

The volume provides a cohesive summary of the MEDIATIZED EU research and findings overall to readers unfamiliar with the project or interested in comparative research on Europeanization drawing on interdisciplinary scholarship and perspectives. It is composed of nine chapters, including a theoretical framework chapter, seven country case study chapters and a conclusion chapter. Country case study chapters offer deeper dives into particular national contexts, while applying a coherent analytical approach that allows for comparison and contrast. The concluding chapter synthesizes key findings from country case studies to advance a comparative analysis of the key discourses on Europeanization and their perceptions across national contexts. It reviews the similarities and differences in how pragmatic and identity factors shape media representations, elite discourses and public perceptions of the European Union. It also offers recommendations for key policy interventions informed by the research in light of the key EU strategic priorities.

Overall, the edited volume offers a comprehensive summary of the project's key research outputs and findings, and signals its significance and impact for scholarly, policy making and governance stakeholders. The edited volume is aimed at readers familiar with the overall domain of European studies and EU integration literature, but highlights the project's groundbreaking methodological innovations and theoretical contributions showcasing how the project research moves beyond the state-of-the-art of existing scholarship.