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**Euroscepticism in Southern Europe: Relevant Factors
Influencing the Anti-European Sentiment**

Master Thesis



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1. Introduction

From the early 1990s, when the Treaty on European Union (TEU) or Maastricht treaty was negotiated and ratified, the project of European integration – understood as ‘increased transfer of powers and sovereignties to a supranational level in order to achieve policy outcomes’ (Topaloff, 2012, p. 11) - took a critical turn. Because of the European Union’s increasingly expanding policy competence, sources of friction that may have given rise to form of euroscepticism multiplied and EU policy choices were targets of an increasing level of public examination and a higher predilection for the expression of dissent.

Scepticism toward the process of European integration has become increasingly mainstreamed in the last two decades when the last major crisis affected Europe in general and Southern Europe in specific. In fact, Europe became, from the early 1990s onwards, a regular political issue that can be traced clearly throughout the media discourse, the public opinion, the ideas and manifestos of political parties and civil society groups within political environments at the national levels as well as at the EU level. The evolution of the debate on European integration is evident, for example, on the national level, where national policy-making of the EU led parties to deal with European issues increasing the importance of the European dimension within national political environments. Because political parties are ‘the main conduit of policies and politics in European democratic systems’ (Topaloff, 2012, p. 5) they are regarded as the main actors and vehicles in order to spread scepticism and raise questions over the European issue. Parties that were dealing with the EU issue rose in prominence due to their populist anti-EU point of view, gaining positions in the governments around the continent and a no longer marginal role in the international realm. The European issue gave these marginal and peripheral political elite the opportunity to gain control over the direction of the debate implementing their own personal agenda.

Because of the importance of the economic factors, such as the last crisis, and political changes, such as the raising of new eurosceptic parties, the question that will underlie this work concerns the way in which euroscepticism develop in Southern Europe in the last 15 years related to this political and economic factors. The research question is a direct consequence of my interest in the phenomenon in the southern part of the continent, where the major crisis of the last 15 years had a huge impact on the national environments. I believe that analysing in depth the national political structures, the economic performances and the consequent level and shape of euroscepticism present, comparing three relevant countries of the area, could be a good addition to the already extended literature on the topic.

The focus of this research will be, therefore, on the development of the phenomenon specifically in the area of Southern Europe. The reason behind this choice is the interesting eurosceptic tradition of the area. Before the Maastricht treaty, Southern Europe was regarded as the most pro-European region. After the early 1990s, with the Maastricht Treaty and the following treaties, Nice in 2001, the European Constitution in 2005, failed due to the referenda in France and in the Netherlands, and the Lisbon Treaty in 2008, national sovereignty was challenged on policies, national identity and national economies. The consensus for the European integration process has seen a reduction, leading to the emergence of the Postfunctionalist point of view upon public opinion. We moved, in fact, from a 'permissive consensus' to a new phase of 'constraining dissensus', from a thin involvement and interest of the public opinion on the European level work, not engaging with the EU and the election for example, to a spreading dissensus throughout the public opinion about the accountability of the supranational leaders. In this new perspective, the public acts as an actor on the European stage (Hooghe and Marks, 2009).

In Italy and Spain for example, between 1970s and 1980s, the pro-integrationist consensus was large and included all parliamentary parties. During the post-Maastricht era though, a broad range of soft eurosceptic positions emerged, in Italy in the new centre-right bloc with the Northern League, and in Spain with regional autonomist movements. Greece also experienced the surface of new eurosceptic waves, such as the founding of a party of radical right (LAOS), belonging to the new trend of populist and anti-immigrant parties in Western Europe. The public opinion registered by the Eurobarometer dropped in the post-Maastricht era when the public that regard the EU membership as a 'good thing' became a minority since 1973. Even after the EU enlargements of 2004 and 2007 levels of euroscepticism increased.

The analysis of the Southern European area focuses on the specific characteristics of their environment. In order to do so, I took as a basis the theory of political opportunity structure of Kitschelt (1986), arguing that a specific set of variables existing in a country can be most useful for explaining the variation in a policy. In his work, he examined whether a country's political opportunity structure has an influence on the impact of protest movements. This theory is believed to be useful also with regard to the different political opportunity structures in a country that may cause variations in the shape and level of euroscepticism of that specific environment. The different political opportunity structures that will be taken into account will concern factors of the political system of three of the countries of the area: Italy, Spain and Greece. The process that will be analysed is the way these political structures can influence the level and type of euroscepticism. Then, another kind of factors are going to be taken into

consideration, the economic ones, in order to see to which extent the economic factors have an impact on the anti-European sentiment. Studying the phenomenon in these countries will be interesting because of the already mentioned story of enthusiasm toward EU until the 1990s as well as the fact that Southern Europe has been the area most affected by the major crisis of the last fifteen years, such as the European debt crisis and the European migrant crisis. Understanding the evolution of euroscepticism in these three different countries could be useful in order to have a deeper understanding of the evolution of it in the part of Europe most affected by the crisis and what was the role of the different national political and economic features that could have influenced the emergence of the phenomenon. Furthermore, the literature about the topic did not focus much on the post-crisis period, and a new research related to the evolution and differences from the period of time before the crisis until 2015 could be interesting for the issue in general.

The research will be structured as follows. In the second and next chapter I outline the theoretical framework existing on euroscepticism. First, a general view of the term and story of the phenomenon is presented, from its British origins to the different continental connotation given, recalling the different positions and conceptualizations made of euroscepticism. Then, an overview of the theories most important for the topic is presented: first, the distinction between hard and soft euroscepticism (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 1998, 2008a, 2008b); then, the different levels of contestation (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008a); and, finally, the difference between permissive consensus and constraining dissensus (Hooghe and Marks, 2009). After the general overview, I present the different type of factors that may cause euroscepticism to grow. The third chapter of the work will outline the methodology used for the research, highlighting the manner in which the cases and the time frame were selected, the actual design I intend to use and the variables involved, as well as the sources used for gathering the data and the limitations of the research. The fourth chapter concerns the actual empirical analysis of, first, the dependent variable, then, the independent variables. At the end of it I will describe to which extent the factors influence the anti-European sentiment supported by a correlation analysis. Then a critical reflection is presented regarding what it has been found from the analysis comparing the results to what have been presented in the theoretical chapter, looking at the similar patterns and the incongruences. Finally, the work will end with the conclusion in which I answer the initial research question, going through the different phases of the work, highlighting the relevance of the theories for the purpose of the research, and identifying further possible research that can follow this work.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Euroscepticism: a General Overview

The opposition to European integration, called euroscepticism, started as an English phenomenon highlighting their feeling of non-belonging to the European continent and hostility towards the project of political and economic integration. The concept first appeared in the mid-1980s when the *Oxford English Dictionary* defined a 'Euro-sceptic' as 'a person who is not enthusiastic about increasing the powers of the European Union' citing an article published in *The times* in which the term was first used (Harmsen and Spiering, 2004, p.15). The usage of the term made by the British people intended a harder opposition to European integration, meaning an opposition to UK membership in the European Union. Harmsen and Spiering emphasize in their article (2004) also the importance of political, economic, and cultural factors that influence the British feeling towards Europe, based on a view of alterity as regards the Continent seen as 'the Other' linked, on the other hand, to a feeling of solidarity with the community of English-speaking countries.

The ratification of the Maastricht treaty (Council of the European Communities, 1992), signed in Maastricht on 7 February 1992 and entered in force on 1 November 1993, represented a new phase in European integration. In fact, after the treaty, the process of decision making on European integration entered the disputatious realm of elections, referendums and party competition. The attention regarding the European issue in national electoral campaigns increased and became a salient matter to a growing range of citizens across the continent (Hooghe and Marks, 2009, p.7). On the other hand, it represented also the growth of the eurosceptic discourse during the debates over the ratification of the Treaty. The usage of the term in the two different realms, the British and the continental one, needs to be differentiated though. Throughout the continent, the term euroscepticism meant an opposition towards the particular political forms assumed by European integration and not the cultural feeling characterizing the British euroscepticism. As well explained by Spiering (2004), Britain is characterized by 'a tradition of literal Euro-scepticism, a long established wariness not just of European integration, but of all things European'. Moreover, differences in the terminology can be found in the different debates arose first in candidate states during the run-up to the 2004 enlargement concerning the virtues of the membership itself and, secondly, after 2004 when referendums on the Constitutional Treaty took place in France and the Netherlands. Both these phases can be seen as a popular anxiety toward the EU and the integration process (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008a, p.1).

In Taggart and Szczerbiak's opinion (2008a, p.3), three are the main factors that contributed to the increasing interest in the phenomenon. First, the decline of the permissive consensus, which I am dealing with in the following paragraphs, carrying difficulties in ratifying the Maastricht Treaty and the consequent referenda on European issues. The second factor regards these referenda, which gave the opportunity to raise the expression of eurosceptic sentiments. The last factor was the enlargement of the European Union increasing the scope of the integration project and bringing into the debate a new group of states and patterns of political debate on euroscepticism. These three factors together fostered the relevance of the eurosceptic debate and opened the way to the increasing literature on the topic.

Also Susan Milner (2000) sees the origin of euroscepticism in the British debate and the origin of it as a significant political force in the French and Danish referendums on the Maastricht Treaty. In her opinion these two sources led the path towards and increasing interest in the importance of the public opinion in the process of European integration. Observing the differences in public support both in countries that just joined the EU and in the founding ones, she noticed the importance of the party system and other social factors on the level of support. Her findings, in the end, showed that 'embedded cultural factors are important but these are mediated through factors such as wider social attitude and the nature of representative structures' (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008, p.4).

Regarding the conceptualization of euroscepticism, beside the hard and soft one made by Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008a, 2008b) that will be dealt with later on, Kopecky and Mudde (2002) theorized an alternative categorization of the phenomenon. The two authors distinguished between 'specific support for the European Union on the one hand and diffuse support for European integration in general' (Harmsen and Spiering, 2004, p.18). Following this categorization, we will have a fourfold distinction. First, there are the 'euroenthusiasts' supporting the project of European integration and being optimist regarding the path of the European Union's development. Secondly, the 'europragmatists' who do not support the integration project but are overall positive towards the EU, seen as relevant in fulfilling national interests. Then, the authors present the 'eurosceptics', who, on the other hand, hold a positive opinion in the EU integration project but are critical of the European Union's development. The last category is the one of the 'eurorejects' that oppose both ideas of a project of European Union and the form taken by the EU. This categorization leads us to a specific definition of eurosceptic sentiment criticizing the EU (Harmsen and Spiering, 2004, p.19).

Another attempt to conceptualize euroscepticism comes from Flood (2002). Flood, conversely to what Kopecky and Mudde (2002) theorized, conceives a six-point categorization, all of which include

support for or opposition to EU policies or institutions. In this, the first pole of the spectrum created by Flood (2002) is the ‘rejectionist, in which the opposition regards EU membership or the participation in EU institution or policy. On the end of the spectrum there is the ‘maximalist’ perspective in which the view of further EU integration is strong and positive. In between these two points of view, four different positions can be found: ‘revisionist’, in which there is an attempt to return to the situation before the beginning of the integration project; ‘minimalist’, accepting the current situation but denying future integration; ‘gradualist’, believing in the integration process but at a slow speed; and, finally, ‘reformist’, demanding improvements of the existing arrangements.

It can be noticed, after having showed different conceptualizations, categorizations and definitions of the term, how dealing with the phenomenon is not an easy task, because of the lack of a common and accepted usage and its multidimensional characteristic. The most relevant conceptualizations for the topic of the research are the ones taken from Taggart and Szczerbiak (2000, 2002, 2008a, 2008b) and Hooghe and Marks (2009), because they take into consideration different aspect of the phenomenon, giving rigorous parameters to define the different level of euroscepticism. In the following part of this work, these theories will be presented.

2.1.1. Hard and Soft Euroscepticism

One of the most important definitions of the term euroscepticism comes from Taggart (1998). While looking at the phenomenon in different western countries, presenting a comparative analysis in the national party systems of the fifteen European Union’s members states and Norway, he formulated that euroscepticism ‘included the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration’ (Taggart, 1998, p. 366).

This definition was then developed in the following works of the author together with Szczerbiak (2000, 2008a, 2008b). In these works, they extended their focus also to Central and Eastern Europe, analysing the way the phenomenon developed in this part of the continent. For a more comprehensive definition of the term they realized that it would have been useful to break the definition into two: hard euroscepticism and soft euroscepticism.

The first type is described as a ‘principled opposition to the EU and European integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think that their counties should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European

integration as it is currently conceived' (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008a, pp. 7). This opposition can take the form of the willingness to exit the EU, in the case of existing member states, or opposition to become a member, in the case of candidate states. Hard euroscepticism involves a rejection of both political and economic integration because the EU may embody a previously identified enemy, for example capitalism for the communist parties, and socialism for the right wing parties.

On the other hand, the second type, soft euroscepticism is linked to a situation in which there is not a principled opposition to 'European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that *national interests* is currently at odds with the EU's trajectory' (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008a, p. 8). Soft euroscepticism, therefore, may take the form of contestation over the European issue used as a party political repertoire. This position interests the point of view of scepticism about the way European integration is currently developing. It is not an opposition of the transferring powers to the EU supranational body, but an opposition to the future projected trajectory based on the further extension of competencies that the EU is planning to undertake. Soft euroscepticism see the EU as problematic because its development may run against some interests or policies that they support.

Throughout the works of Taggart and Szczerbiak (1998, 2008a, 2008b) an overview of euroscepticism in the continent has been well provided. It can clearly be noticed in the Table A.1 in the annex that the majority of eurosceptic parties in the member countries have soft eurosceptic sentiments while hard euroscepticism is far less common than its soft counterpart. Moreover, in five member states (Luxemburg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Austria), three of which are the founding countries of the EU, the hard eurosceptic sentiment is completely lacking in each political system. Nevertheless, per each country of the table we witness soft eurosceptic parties, an aspect that has to be borne in mind because it is relevant for the future of the phenomenon after 2002 (year of the source of the table). Another characteristic that comes from the analysis made in Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008a) is the relative absence of parties in the government related to eurosceptic sentiment, even though factional forms of the parties tend to appear as for the German Christian Democratic Union. An exception to this last characteristic are the Freedom Party in Austria, the Northern League in Italy, and the Conservative Party in the UK regarded as new populist parties. In the end of their discussion, Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008a) arrive at the conclusion that the pattern most prevalent around Europe is one in which European integration is not an issue of party competition among the major parties in government. Nevertheless, this conclusion does not mean that euroscepticism is completely absent within the party system around

the continent but that, on average, is confined to the peripheries of it and perhaps to limited party factionalism (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008a).

2.1.2. Different Levels of Contestation

After comparing the different patterns of contestation over the European issues, in the conclusion of the first volume on the phenomenon of opposing Europe (2008a), Taggart and Szczerbiak introduced three patterns of party competition in Europe. This is a relevant distinction that needs to be highlighted in dealing with the literature about euroscepticism because it provides a framework for analysing the way the European issue is embodied into the party system. The three patterns of contestation over Europe are: System of Limited Contestation; System of Constrained Contestation; and System of Open Contestation.

The system of limited contestation is illustrated by the authors (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008a) as having three main characteristics. First, this type of system includes the major parties in the party system being committed to the European project. Following the first feature, the authors noticed that the issue of European integration will not be an issue of party competition because no party will gain advantage for pushing it. Consequently, the country portrayed as having a system of limited contestation will have limited historical record of euroscepticism. The last characteristic of this first type of system is the fact that the phenomenon of euroscepticism will not be completely absent in the public and political sphere but it might be confined to the peripheries of the party system and limited party factionalism. Following the comparative analysis made throughout their first volume, the authors concluded that most European party systems are characterized by limited cases of euroscepticism. Therefore, the most common system of contestation existing in Europe, at the time of the redaction of the volume before 2008, was the one of limited contestation.

The second type of system identified in the volume (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008a) is the one of constrained contestation. In this system the European issue is certainly present and euroscepticism plays a role in the political system, but these do not affect domestic party competition directly (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008a, p.349). The underlying feeling in these systems is the one of being inevitably involved in the European integration process, as in the cases of the post-communist Central and Eastern Europe (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia).

The third system suggested by Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008a) is the system of open contestation. In this type of environment, one or more parties in the government have taken a eurosceptic position.

Moreover, in a system of open contestation the issue of European integration has been an important feature of the competition between the various parties, which they defined themselves on the basis of their opinion on the integration project. The final characteristic identified by the authors is related to the formation of the government and whether the European issue had a role in it and in determining the leadership of a major party. Furthermore, the authors try to make three final observations related to the characteristics of this system. First, the party system more inclined to alternation and binary competition will be more likely to show open contestation on the European issue. Secondly, 'the interaction of domestic party politics, the actual nature of European integration, and wider geopolitical factors may come together to create conditions particularly conducive to open contestation over the European issue' (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008a, p.358). Lastly, they observe that the feeling towards the European integration project depends deeply on domestic as much as European circumstances.

The final statements made by Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008a) at the end of the volume highlight the exogenous factors relevant in determining the emergence of the European issue as a one of party competition. The first one is the particularity of the party system and its historical and institutional specificities which have a role in how the European issue will be conceived in a country's party system. The second and final consideration regarding the specific structural and historical positions of the European countries towards EU and the European project. The different relationships with the EU, and the difference between membership and candidacy are also relevant in the form that the European issue plays in the country.

2.1.3. Permissive Consensus and Constraining Dissensus

The last important dimension in which euroscepticism becomes manifest derives from Hooghe and Marks (2009). In their article "A postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus", they analysed the domestic patterns of conflict throughout the European Union and how these constrain the process of European integration. The concept of governance is paramount in their research, because it is seen both as a means to achieve collective benefits by coordinating human activity and as an expression of the community. Moreover, they build their discourse over three claims. First, they argue that European integration became politicized in elections and referenda. Consequently, the decisions and preferences of the public and of national political parties

became crucial for jurisdictional outcome. Finally, in the Hooghe and Marks' opinion, identity is critical in shaping contestation on Europe.

After analysing the various data from European countries throughout the last decades, Hooghe and Marks arrive at the conclusion that there were two different phenomena happening. The period before 1991 was characterized by a *permissive consensus*. The deals at the national and European level were cut by elites, meaning that the implications of European integration were limited or not transparent for people. In other words, political elites were able to pursue their own policy interests regarding EU policies due to the ill-informed and disinterested public (Carrubba, 2001, p. 141). On the other hand, the period after 1991 can be described as one of *constraining dissensus*. During these years the debate over European issues started to be politicized and elites, party leaders in position of authority, had to look over their shoulder and pay attention to the public opinion when dealing and negotiating European issues.

2.2. Causes Generating Euroscepticism

After having presented the origin of the concept and the main theories of euroscepticism found in the literature, it is time to understand which are the main factors causing the evolution of the phenomenon. Two main type of factors will be taken into consideration, and are the ones regarded as the most important in dealing with the phenomenon in the area chosen. From one side, the political factors are going to be taken in consideration, from the characteristics of the political system, through the stands taken by the different wings of the governments, to the importance of the national politician in the parliament as representatives of the public opinion. Then, I will present the most important positions supporting the relevance of the performance of the national economies when dealing with the support for the EU, and how events like crisis and austerity measures have an impact on the public opinion.

2.2.1. Political Factors

Focusing on the so-called political opportunity structures is important in analysing the phenomenon of euroscepticism, because of the fact that the national political realm is the direct link between the public opinion and the European Institution. It is paramount, therefore, to highlight the existing literature about these causes in order to have a complete view of the phenomenon. As Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008a, p.2) stated, 'political parties are key gatekeepers in the process of political representation' playing a

relevant role in the selection of members of the European institutions, the council of Ministers and the European Parliament and, indirectly, the Commissioners. Parties can mobilize agenda-set and sentiment and call for referenda on European issues. Political parties, moreover, exercise a key role in structuring the shape and content of politics at the national level, determining the way Europe becomes a political issue. Their role is crucial in representing euroscepticism also because of the decline of the permissive consensus, explained in the paragraphs above. Furthermore, with the process of enlargement of the European Union, the role of the domestic political factors becomes a central feature in the integration process because the European Commission and the member states are the ones giving their consent on the accession (Taggart, 2002, p.25).

An important feature of the national political environments is the categorization of the party system, meaning the number of parties involved in the government and in the decision making process. As Sartori (1976) suggests, the number of parties is relevant to understand the dynamics of a party system and the characteristics of the competition they give rise to. The most used differentiation between models of party system is Sartori's (1976) one, which distinguishes between bi-polar competition and multi-polar. The first type of competition is structured between two sets of parties tending to form coalitions, such as the bipolarity between right and left wing blocks. The multipolar party systems are characterized by political environments in which coalitions alter and vary in composition and no single party is dominant (Taggart, 2002). Taggart (2002) suggests that in a multi-polar system there will be more space for expressing euroscepticism than a more closed bi-polar system. In other words, it can be expected that a multi-polar system may cause the presence of eurosceptic sentiments rather than a bi-polar one. Moreover, he argues that the European integration issue can be used by peripheral parties in multi-polar system in order to differentiate themselves from other more established parties. Multi-polar systems are also produced by proportional representation electoral system, in which, in Lees's opinion (2008, p.38), it will be more likely to find political parties mobilizing around a eurosceptic point of view. A proportional system is potentially more likely to provide a voice for minority positions, including eurosceptic ones.

Another important source that needs to be taken into account when dealing with political factors is the reasoning behind the article of Lees (2008). He argues that variables of state and administrative structures impact upon party-based euroscepticism. In other words, some political systems are more keen to develop a eurosceptic sentiment rather than others depending on their specific features. For example, one of those variables may be the division between federal and unitary states and the propensity of the

first one of causing a growing sentiment opposing European integration. Moreover, it can be stated that federal systems may cause the presence of more political opportunities structures for eurosceptic parties because they usually operate at the margin of politics. Federal arrangements may provide more means and a better platform for eurosceptic parties to constrain the pro-European centre. Furthermore, decentralized states provide constitutionally protected platforms from which eurosceptic parties can launch more formal and institutionalized opposition strategies (Lees, 2008, p.33). In federal countries, the sub-national party system is also importance as well as the ‘complex system of constitutionally codified checks and balances between different tiers of government which characterize such state’ (Lees, 2008, p. 31).

Furthermore, reasons behind the support of euroscepticism of the electorates of political parties are caused by different reasons, depending on the position of the parties themselves. For example, Treib (2014), argues that the electorate on the left may be disappointed with the EU because of the austerity measures imposed during the Eurozone crisis. In fact, the restriction posed by the Growth and Stability Pact on economic policies, public deficits, and public economic intervention may have caused the scepticism towards the EU of the left-wing supporters. In more general words, left wing oriented voters will not be inclined towards the political-economic institutional framework that the EU embodies, perceiving the project of European integration as a threat of these channels of national coordination (Llamazares and Gramacho, 2007, p.214). While, on the right side of the political spectrum, the electorate and parties are concerned ‘over the financial risks of credit guarantees for crisis countries and economic anxieties resulting from Eastern European immigrants boosted support for eurosceptic parties’ (Treib, 2014, p. 1551). At the side of this dichotomy there are the populist eurosceptic parties, attractive for that part of the electorate that does not feel affinity for mainstream parties, political programmes, and leaders.

Finally, another theory has to be borne in mind when dealing with euroscepticism: the theory of second-order election formulated by Reif and Schmitt (1980). It is believed that the elections for the European Parliament are the main institutional channel for the public to participate in the European politics. Consequently, through these elections, we are able to understand the nature of popular support for different European issues, such as the European Monetary Union, the future of European Federalism, the question of enlargement of the Union, and the problems of a democratic deficit of the EU institutions. Then, they distinguish between *first-order* elections and *second-order* ones, when the first type regards the choice of who should govern the country, while the second type concerns the outcome for lesser offices, regional, municipals and local officials. In the second category fall also the European Parliament

elections. In the authors' opinion, European elections are not about Europe anymore but will be used to express the public discontent with national governance performance. Following this reasoning, the support for eurosceptic parties will be an expression of protest against unpopular domestic governments. In other words, the support for eurosceptic parties and the following growing euroscepticism may be caused by a discontent regarding the national government and domestic issues (Treib, 2014). Nevertheless, it has to be pointed out that support for eurosceptic parties and euroscepticism in general have a European dimension as well as a domestic one. In Treib (2014), the French and the English eurosceptic environments are analysed in order to understand the causes of the dissatisfaction with the EU. The hard euroscepticism of the French National Front, for example, sustains the aversion towards the membership of the European Union and the exit from Eurozone returning to the Franc. An overall feeling of reluctance towards the European integration project is at the basis of the party's motifs. Consequently, the vote of the National Front electorate served to show dissensus towards both Hollande and EU politics. On the other hand, the support of Ukip, in the UK, were clearly just opposing the EU, in particular the 'free' immigration from states like Bulgaria and Romania and UK's membership in the EU.

2.2.2. Economic Factors

Other types of causes that are going to be taken into consideration in analysing euroscepticism are the economic ones. The literature concerning the relation between economic factors and level of support for the EU institutions and EU integration process focuses especially on the last major economic crisis. As in Brain and Tausendpfund's (2014) opinion, during periods of crisis, economic factors have key roles in causing trust or distrust in the EU. In their article they try to study if the crisis erodes the public support for the European Union and the integration process. Throughout their analysis they note that, for example, in Greece, Portugal, and Spain the support for the EU is higher than the average in the period before the Euro crisis, as it has been noticed earlier when talking about the Euro-enthusiast tradition of Southern Europe. Then, after 2009, in these countries they discover a persistent decline in support for the EU indicating that the economic climate in a country may influence the public support.

A previous general study on the implication of macroeconomic forces on citizen support for European integration comes from Eichenberg and Dalton (2007), who analysed data from 1973-2004 on support for the EU. One of the conclusions was that the decline in support began in 1991 was a reaction

to the Economic and Monetary Union and its budgetary implications. In other words, it can be argued that economic factors such as the EMU and its budgetary implications may be a source of discontent towards the EU institutions, leading to a growing level of euroscepticism. The authors also note that macroeconomic performance and trade integration are linked to public support for EU integration. In general, perceptions of economic outcomes can cause different orientations towards the European Union. One of the main goals of the European integration project is the improvement of the economic situations of Europeans, so the public will judge the EU on the basis of the outcome of this process on their personal circumstances. Individuals' judgements will, therefore, be based on their socio-demographic characteristics, such as their income and education level, and on the performance of national economies (Llamazares and Gramacho, 2007, p.214).

Furthermore, in the working paper No 1774 made by the European Central Bank (2015) it is studied the causal relationship between fiscal austerity and public opinion. Looking into the data of 26 European Union countries, it is explored the impact of fiscal austerity on several dimensions of public opinion: the overall life satisfaction and confidence; the attitude towards national authorities; and, the trust towards European Institutions. The researchers tried to find out if the fluctuation of specific macroeconomic factors of the countries can cause changes in the public opinion as a consequence. They conclude that, in the end, the effect of fiscal measures on public opinion mainly operates through their effect on the macroeconomy. In fact, one of their findings emphasized the fact that, on average, when a country's economy is doing good, the unemployment rate and inflation are low, trust and confidence are higher. In specific, real GDP growth affects positively all public opinion variables as well as the unemployment rate is statistically negative for life satisfaction, confidence and trust in the institutions. Moreover, another important finding in the working paper relevant in my regard is the fact that high public debt to GDP reduces trust in European Institutions and attitudes towards the EU. Lastly, they found out that fiscal measures have little negative impact on trust in national parliament, in the European Commission and the general attitude towards Europe. The conclusion of these working papers are paramount in my regard as a theoretical basis of the relationship I am interested in for the research on euroscepticism in Southern Europe.

Finally, in Mezini (2014) I find another confirmation regarding the relevance of economic factors upon support for the EU. Economic conditions and economic benefits are determinant for the support issue which is primarily driven by concrete utilitarian interests. According to the author, citizens calculate the cost-benefit trade-off in the context of welfare losses and gains associated with European

integration, reflecting their evaluation of the economic situation (Mezini, 2014, p.20). Utilitarian source of EU, therefore, can be divided into national economic performance and the benefits citizens gain from the integration process. Again, as it has already been mentioned analysing the working paper in the paragraph above, the way the national economy performs has a relevant influence on the citizens' consideration upon European integration. If the national economic is performing well, individuals will perceive the EU as positive, on the other hand, if it is performing poorly, they will see the integration project not as an improvement of their economic performance. This point of view can be found as well in the economic voting literature where it is theorized that national economy has an impact on the political choices of individuals (Lewis-Back, 1988). In the literature regarding the relationship between economic performance and EU support, the national economic performances were measured using macroeconomic indicators such as the rate of growth, the inflation and unemployment rates, and country net benefits from the EU (Mezini, 2014). Concluding, it can be seen as well in this example how the economic factors are paramount when dealing with the level and shape of the eurosceptic phenomenon in the continent.

2.3. Expectations

After having presented the overview regarding the theoretical framework of euroscepticism, its shapes and its causes, I can draw a final evaluation of it has been shown so far, trying to understand what could be expected from the analysis that will follow. First of all, I can expect different level of euroscepticism on the basis of the political opportunity structures existing in the countries. There are several characteristics of the political systems that are expected to cause a harder sentiment towards the EU, such as: the multipolar competition system compared to the bipolar one; the position of the parties in power in which usually the right wing has a harder stand toward the EU compared to the left one; and, finally, the federal or partitioned system compare to the unitary one. I decided to take into consideration the first two characteristics since they are the ones in which the literature on euroscepticism have been mostly focused about. Following these characteristics, two expectations have been formulated, which will be then assessed within the analysis, regarding the way different political opportunity structures influence euroscepticism:

A multi-polar competition system leads to higher level of contestation. The opposition of the parties in the national parliament towards European integration leads to hardening of euroscepticism.

Secondly, it was observed how the economic features are paramount in dealing with the sentiment of the public opinion towards the EU. Citizens' support for the integration project and citizens' trust in the EU institutions can be seen as reflecting the sentiment of euroenthusiasm. This sentiment will, therefore, reflect their evaluation of the economic situation, the national economic performance and the benefits they gain from the integration process. As a consequence, it is expected that the economic crisis has an impact on the level of euroscepticism throughout the continent, diminishing the trust citizens have in the EU institutions.

The fluctuation of macroeconomic factors, in my case the Gross Domestic Product and unemployment rate, are believed to cause a consequent fluctuation in the support for EU institutions. GDP is believed to be a good representation of the trend of the national economy, because it is an aggregate measure of total economic production for that country. It represents the market value of services and goods produced by a national economy within one year. On the other hand, the unemployment rate, as the percentage of unemployed workers in the total labor force, is believed to be a key measurement for labor market performance. These characteristics of the two indicators were the key reasons that lead me to decide to use them for the analysis of the research. Concluding, in order to show how the economic performance of a country is expected to have a directed relationship with EU support I formulated this expectation:

Lower levels of national GDP and higher unemployment rates will harden euroscepticism.

3. Methodology

In this chapter I will outline the methods and the design of the analysis that will follow, which will try to answer my initial research question, meaning how did euroscepticism develop in Southern Europe in the last 15 years related to political and economic factors. The literature review made in the previous chapter explains well the Euro-enthusiast tradition of the area and how it changed throughout the years. In order to answer my research question, I formulated, following the study of the literature on the topic, two expectations. I believe that the results gathered from the analysis will help answer the initial question regarding the evolution of euroscepticism.

3.1. Case Selection and Time Frame

As I mentioned before, the research will focus on the phenomenon of euroscepticism in the Southern European area and the selection of the countries to study was therefore focused on this very part of the continent. The reasons behind the selection were numerous. The most important one is related to the tides of the different countries to the European Union project. Looking at the years of entry of the different countries in the European Union helped me in the selection process. First of all, just one of the countries of Southern Europe, Italy, is also one of the founders of the EU, entering it in 1958. Therefore, it is believed to be interested to study. Then, Greece was the only one entering the Union in 1981, five years before the Iberian countries of Spain and Portugal which became members together in 1986. As a consequence of this analysis, the selection of countries was determined. Italy and Greece were easy to select, because the only country of the area entering the Union in the respective year. Then, I decided to choose only one country of the Iberian Peninsula in order to have some contrast also regarding the geographic location between the cases. Spain was then chosen between the two because it differs in the characteristic of its eurosceptic parties. In fact, it is the only Southern country in which regional autonomist movements emerged with a critical orientation towards the EU contrasting the countries' Euro-enthusiast past.

Table 1 Year of entry of the member countries of the EU¹

Year of entry	Member countries of EU
1958	Belgium; France; Germany; Italy; Luxembourg; Netherlands
1973	Denmark; Ireland; United Kingdom
1981	Greece
1986	Spain; Portugal
1995	Austria; Finland; Sweden
2004	Cyprus; Czech Republic; Estonia; Hungary; Latvia; Lithuania; Malta; Poland; Slovakia; Slovenia
2007	Bulgaria; Romania
2013	Croatia

¹ Data available at <http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm>

Lastly, the non-random selection of the three countries was also a consequence of a practical reason. Because of the knowledge of both Italian and Spanish languages, it was decided that it would have been easier to take as cases these two countries in order to read in their original language official documents, party manifestos, and information and data in general. Choosing Spain over Portugal it is believe would bring, consequently, to an easier and more comprehensive research. As a consequence of the selection process, the research will be characterized by a Small-N analysis in order to study in depth the phenomenon in the three countries and be able to compare them.

The decision regarding the time frame of the analysis was determined after researching in depth the phenomenon of euroscepticism, as well as reading and studying the literature already existing on the topic. A lot of research has been done in the 1990s and before, when major events involved the European Union, as the Maastricht treaty in 1992, and the turnout for the European Parliament elections started to fall going from a 58.41% of the 1989 elections, through the 49.51% of the 1999, to the 45.47% of the 2004 one². The literature written in the early 2000s concerned the phenomenon and its growing relevance in the public opinion while the theories I pointed out in the theoretical framework were developed and made the ground for further research on the topic. At the end of the 2000s the European debt crisis stroke the continent's economy, hitting the Southern area the most (Braun and Tausendpfund, 2014). Literature has been written on linking the crisis and euroscepticism but not as a comparative analysis in the aftermath of the crisis. Moreover, during the last couple of years another crisis has been added, most of all, on the shoulders of the southern European countries, meaning the migrant crisis. I believe that studying the period of time in which these two crisis took place will be an added value to the literature on the topic. Consequently, taking as a time frame the nine years before the economic crisis and the six years after, including the years in which the migrant crisis started (so, from 2000 until 2015), is believed to be a good period of time to understand the evolution of the phenomenon related to political and economic factors.

3.2. Research Method

The research developed throughout this work is a longitudinal comparative analysis conducted to highlight the differences in the public support toward the EU integration project in Southern Europe resulting from the different political opportunity structure and national economic performance of the

² Turnout results available at <www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/turnout.html>

three countries taken into consideration. It is believed that the longitudinal description made will give solid insights of the three countries, explaining the variations in level and shape of euroscepticism present at the national level. Furthermore, the research approach chosen to prove the correlation between the variables used is a co-variational analysis (COV) in which usually Small-N cases are analysed. This approach is used to contribute evidence of the existence of co-variation between an independent variable X and a dependent variable Y. The method behind co-variational reasoning should make easier to determine whether a factor has an effect or makes a difference on another phenomenon (Blatter and Haverland, 2012). This approach will be applied after having presented the data gathered regarding the dependent variable and the independent one in order to understand the actual influence that the political opportunity structures and the economic performance have on the level of euroscepticism.

3.3. Variables and Indicators

In order to answer the research question and understand the development of euroscepticism in Southern Europe related to different factors, I hold two main expectations. As it has been showed in detail in the parts above, two dimensions will be taken into consideration: the political factor and the economic factor. Each of these dimensions contains two different independent variables that will be studied.

Regarding the political dimension, it has been shown in the literature review how political opportunity structures are important in the shape of the support of EU existing in specific countries. I also presented the difference between hard and soft euroscepticism and the consequent difference in level of contestation theorized by Taggart and Szczerbiak (1998, 2008a, 2008b). Therefore, I expect that different political opportunity structures lead to different shapes of euroscepticism.

A multi-polar competition system leads to higher level of contestation. The opposition of the parties in the national parliament towards European integration leads to hardening of euroscepticism.

The first independent variable of this expectation comes directly from the study of the literature. I saw, in fact, that the type of party competition system existing in a country is related to the space available for expressing euroscepticism (Taggart, 2002). Therefore, per each country it will be taken into consideration the competition system, if it is a multipolar or a bipolar one. The data regarding the type of competition system will be taken from governmental websites looking for the composition of the parliaments after the national elections. The dependent variable can be formulated as the level of contestation existing in a country, measured with the Eurobarometer.

Then, for the second part of the first expectation the analysis moves to the study of the position of the parties in each country. In order to do so, I intend to look at the backgrounds, core constituencies, ideologies and role in the domestic electoral system of the parties in question. This analysis will enable me to understand which level of euroscepticism exists in each country, and if it had an evolution throughout the time frame. The independent variable will be, consequently, the position of the parties in the National Parliament towards the EU and the European Integration project, while the dependent variable will be the level of the phenomenon. In order to understand the shape taken by the phenomenon, I will rely, again, on the data taken from the Eurobarometer.

Furthermore, concerning the economic dimension, it has been explained in the theoretical framework how important is the national economic performance upon the level of euroscepticism. Consequently, I expect that negative performance of the national economy has a negative effect on support for the EU. In order to understand the performance of the national economies I decided to take into account two different indicators that, in Southern Europe, and, consequently, in the cases selected are most relevant. GDP and unemployment rate were chosen between the macroeconomic indicators because they mirror the most relevant issues faced by Southern Europe throughout the time frame taken into account.

Lower levels of national GDP and higher unemployment rates will harden euroscepticism.

The independent variables in the second expectation are the level of the national GDP and the rate of unemployment. For the dependent variable, the level of euroscepticism will be taken from the data gathered from the Eurobarometer surveys.

I believe that studying and analysing all these aspects of the political opportunity structures and the economic factors of each country will give deep insights on their effect on the phenomenon of euroscepticism in general. From the analysis regarding the political and economic factors I expect to gather information concerning the shape of the phenomenon of euroscepticism in the three cases throughout the period in consideration. I believe that at the end of the study of the political opportunity structures and the national performances in each country I will be able to assess the evolution of the phenomenon each country and in the Southern European area in general.

3.4. Measurement and Sources

The data related to the independent variables in the expectation regarding the political aspect of the analysis will be gathered from the official documents and websites of the governments in question. It is believed that the type of competition system existing in a country can be easily assessed looking at the formation of the government for each country throughout the time frame. For Italy the data regarding the national elections from which I deduct the type of political system, have been found on the official website of the ministry of Interior³ under the section of the historical archive of the elections. For Spain the data regarding the general elections are taken directly from the website of the Chamber of Congress⁴, under the section concerning the results of the elections. Finally, the data regarding the national elections in Greece are taken from the website of the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction⁵ under the section Elections. In order to calculate the correlation between the competition system and the anti-European sentiment it has been decided to give a value 1 when the multipolar competition system was present, and value 0 for the bipolar competition system.

For the other independent variable, the opposition of the parties in the National Parliament, I will make use of the manifestos of the parties, the speeches and interviews of their representatives and the official websites of the parties themselves. When the main party or coalition in the government is considered eurosceptic, the value conferred in order to calculate the coefficient of correlation is 1, on the other hand, if the party or coalition is supportive of the EU the value given is 0.

Concerning the second expectation, the data regarding my economic independent variables, the GDP and the unemployment rate, is going to be gathered from the World Bank Dataset, a free and open access dataset about development in countries around the world. Going through all the indicators they assess in the dataset it can be noticed that they are divided by topic. Under the topic *Economy and Growth*, I choose the indicator I need for the GDP per capita. Under the topic *Social Protection and Labor* I choose the indicator of Total Unemployment, as referring to the share of the labor force that is without work but available for and seeking employment. Selecting the countries and the time frame being considered, the data needed for the research is gathered. Nevertheless, the World Bank Dataset lacks the data for the year 2015 for the unemployment indicator. Therefore, I decided to use a second source for

³ Data available at <<http://www.interno.gov.it/it>>

⁴ Data available at <<http://www.congreso.es/>>

⁵ Data available at <<http://www.ypes.gr/en/>>

the 2015 unemployment rate that is the [tradingeconomics.com](http://www.tradingeconomics.com)⁶ website which provide accurate information for 196 countries for different economic indicators based on official sources.

On the other end for the dependent variables, meaning the shape of euroscepticism, I will make use of the Eurobarometer survey, established by the European Commission in order to study the public opinion regarding different topics concerning the European Union. For each survey and, consequently, for each topic circa thousands of interviews are made for each country twice a year, in spring and in autumn. This Commission's survey has always been the main resource in order to check the level of euroscepticism in a country, most used by governments all over Europe and by the European Institutions as well. It is believed to be a valid a reliable source since is made by the European Commission itself.

In order to calculate comprehensively the level of euroscepticism, three different indicators are used. The first indicator is the perception of the EU citizens regarding the EU. The question of the Eurobarometer survey is related to the *Image of the European Union*, which is formulated as follows: “*In general, does the European Union conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?*”. The data collected concerns just the percentage of the negative answers (“fairly negative” and “very negative”), that were then added. The data for the three countries is available from all the time frame.

As a second indicator, I gather the data regarding the level of satisfaction with EU democracy. The data can be found under the question in the survey related to the *Satisfaction with EU democracy* and the related question that is formulated as follows: “On the whole, are you very satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in (your country)? Would you say you are...? How about the way democracy works in the European Union?”. The data collected concerns just the percentages of the negative answers (“not very satisfied” and “not at all satisfied”) that were then added. The data for the three countries is available from all the time frame, with the exception of the 2008.

Finally, in order to understand the magnitude of euroscepticism in the cases, the last indicator is the level of trust citizens have in the EU institutions. The adoption of this specific question as an indicator of the eurosceptic sentiment can be found throughout the literature on the topic (Kalbhenn and Stracca, 2015) and, consequently is believe to be a reliable indicator also in my regards. In order to find the data needed for the research I go through the different topics of the survey and find the one about the *Trust in*

⁶ Data available at <<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/about-te.aspx>>

European Institutions and the related question that is formulated as follows: “And, for each of them, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?”. The questions are related to eleven institutions, including The Council of the European Union (Council), the European Commission (EC) and The European Parliament (EP). These last three institutions were chosen to be the source of data for my research. The reasoning behind the decision was based on the importance of the institutions in the daily life of European citizens. The Council, the EC and the EP are the main institutions involved in EU legislation. The EP represents directly the EU’s citizens and is elected by them; the Council represents the governments of the member states; and the EC represents the interests of the Union as a whole. Detaining the legislative power of the European Union, these three institutions together produce the policies and laws that are applied all over the European Union territory and implemented by the EC and the member countries (European Union, 2014). Consequently, when I had to decide which institution base my research on, the decision fell upon the Law-making institutions. Per each country the data is gathered for all three institutions from 2000 to 2015 and then per each year I calculate the average between these three. In this way I were able to collect an average percentage of distrust in EU institutions in general per each year and each country. The data for the three countries was available for all the time frame. Finally, it has to be highlighted also that the data for the Council was available only from May 2005 until May 2013, for the years before and after, the average has been calculated just between the EC and the EP.

In order to calculate the coefficient of correlation between the dependent variable and the independent variables, it has been decided to proceed in this way. Per each of the independent variables (the type of competition system, the opposition of the parties, the GDP, and the unemployment rate) I calculated the coefficient of correlation with the data of each of the indicators selected for the dependent variable. The result of this process gave me three coefficients of correlation for each independent variable. At this point I calculated the average between the three coefficients, resulting in one figure per each of the political and economic factors taken into consideration. All the figures for this process can be found in the tables A.7, A.8 and A.9 in the annex.

3.5. Limitations

The method with which I will try to answer my research questions has, as it happens in social science, some limitations. First of all, it has to be highlighted that, as for what concerns the external validity, the extent to which a research can be generalized to other circumstances and cases, one may say that the

degree of generalization of the research is limited. The reasons behind that lays on the fact that the research is based on three cases, which were not randomly selected, but chosen because of their location, their eurosceptic tradition, and their role in the last major event of the time frame considered. Moreover, the factors that are believed to influence scepticism in the cases have been chosen on the basis of the case selection because believed to be the most relevant for the area studied. It could be that for other areas or countries, the factors I chose do not have influence on their level of support or opposition. Nevertheless, it has to be highlighted that the cases are believed to have been selected according to a good pattern and on the basis of an aspect, the ties to the EU, that is paramount in the study of the phenomenon of euroscepticism. Therefore, I believe that this aspect strengthens the validity of the research since the model may be used for other Southern European countries as well.

Concerning the other type of validity, the internal validity, aimed to understand if there are other variables that could explain the outcome one is studying, some observations need to be done. When developing a research one need always to be sure that he is measuring what he thinks is measuring (King, Keohane, Verba, 1994, p.25). Maximizing the validity of the measurements means ‘adhering to the data and not allowing unobserved or unmeasurable concepts to get in the way’ (King et al.,1994, p.25). In order to follow this guideline, I believe it is worth to mention one variable that has not been taken in consideration but may have an influence in the phenomenon of euroscepticism in the period take into consideration. The migrant crisis that started in 2014 and stroke the European continent in the following years is believed to have had a huge impact on the sentiment of the citizens towards the EU. Because of the inability of the EU institutions and the EU as a whole to deal with the issue properly, the crisis became a relevant issue for the European citizens, especially the one in the first arrival countries, as Greece, Italy and, on a minor level, Spain. It has not been possible to take into account also this variable in the research, also because it would not be relevant to the aim of it since the focus is on political and economic factors.

In terms of content validity, it has to be highlighted that the research shows some vulnerability. Because I base the analysis also on documents, I cannot be sure that the content of the documents, manifesto, or interviews, are the actual position that the parties are going to take in their day-to-day work.

Finally, I have some concerns regarding the reliability of my project. Because I selected specific cases for the study and specific factors that are believed to influence the outcome, I believe that apply the same study in another area could not have a relevant outcome and maybe relevant results because of the non-random selection of cases and indicators. On the other side, reliability also means that ‘applying the same procedure in the same way will always produce the same measure’ (King et al., 1994, p.25).

The procedure used, the collection of the data, and the reasoning used in producing conclusions are believed to have been well presented, in a way that the research could be replicated by different researchers in the future. Moreover, the data used for the study are believed to have been taken from reliable institutional sources from which one is going to be able to get data at any time and for any other country in Europe, for what concerns euroscepticism, and in the world, for what concerns the economic variables of GDP and unemployment.

4. Empirical Analysis

This chapter of the work will focus on the analysis of the data regarding the dependent and independent variables that have been chosen in order to study the influence of political opportunity structures and the performance of the national economy on the anti-European sentiment in the three cases selected. The observations that will be made regarding the similar patterns between the indicators of the dependent variable and the independent variables will be then proven doing a correlation analysis. In this way I will be able to understand the actual extend of the influence of the independent variables on the dependent one.

4.1 Dependent Variable

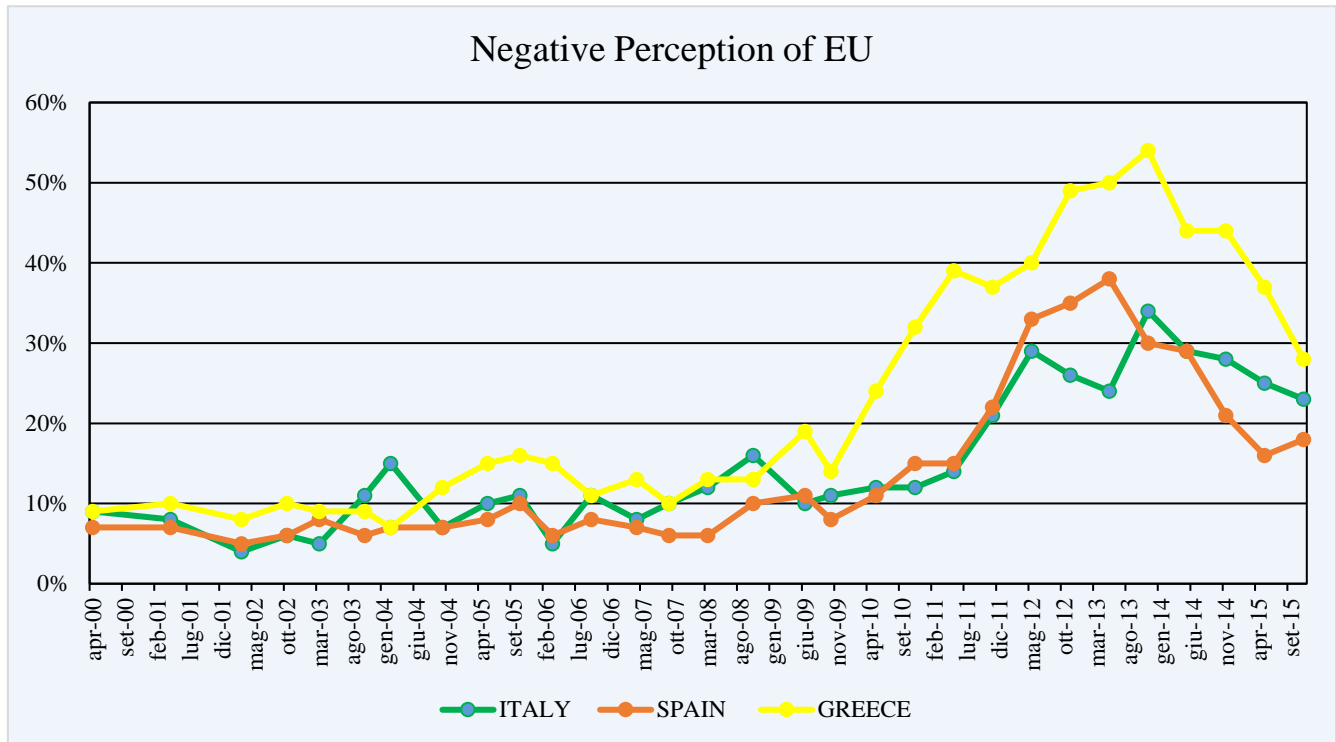
Before looking at the possible causes of opposition towards the European project, I will present the actual extend of the changes occurred in Italy, Spain and Greece. To understand the magnitude of the phenomenon of euroscepticism, as it has been mentioned in the earlier chapter, it has been decided to focus on the variations between hard and soft euroscepticism taken as a dimension for the phenomenon in the three cases and throughout the time frame. In order to give a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon three different indicators have been selected, each of them related to a question found in the Eurobarometer survey. The first indicator contemplates the perception of the image of the EU, the second the level of satisfaction with EU democracy and, finally, the third concerns the trust in EU institutions.

4.1.1. Indicator 1: Image of the EU

In table A.2 and figure 1 I present the data collected regarding the perception of the image of the EU by the citizens in Italy, Spain and Greece. The question, formulated as follows: “In general, does the

European Union conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?”, gives the possibility for several different answer between which just the negative ones have been selected.

Figure 1 Trend of the negative perception of the EU⁷



For what concerns **Italy**, the trend of negative perception of the EU starts in 2000 with a low percentage of 6% and tends to increase until February 2004. In March 2002 the trend marks its lowest point, registering 4%. In the period from October 2004 and September 2007 the trend tends to rest between the 5% and the 11%. From March 2008 the Italian trend starts increasing again gradually, reaching 21% in November 2011 and its highest point, 34%, in November 2013. After this peak, the trend tends to decrease again reaching 23% in the final point of the time frame, November 2015.

Regarding the second country taken into consideration, **Spain**, the percentage of citizens with a negative image of the EU rests between 5% and 8% for the beginning of the time frame, April 2000, and May 2005, with the lower point, of the entire time frame in March 2002 and the highest in March 2003 and May 2005. Then, the trend tends to increase 11% in June 2009. After May 2010, the percentage of

⁷ Data retrieved from <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/themeKy/19/groupKy/102>

Spanish citizens with a negative image of the EU starts to increase with a fast pace, reaching 22% in November 2011 and 33% in May 2012. In May 2013, the Spanish trend has its highest point registering 38%. After this peak, the trend is decreasing gradually, going from 29% in May 2014, trough 21% in November 2014, to 18% in November 2015.

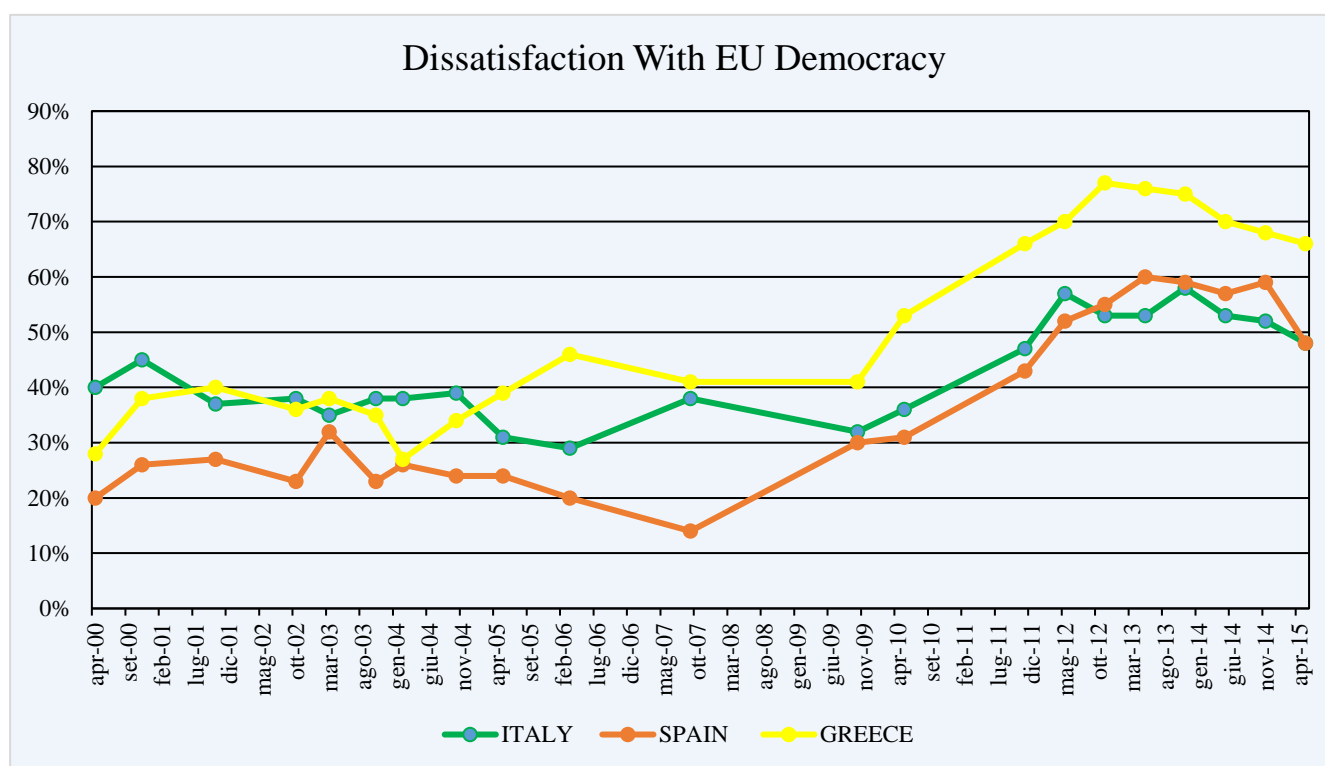
The last case, **Greece**, has an initial percentage of citizens with a negative image of the EU of 9%, which is the average percentage of the period from 2000 until February 2004, which is the lowest point of the entire timeframe. The trend exceeds the threshold of 10% already in October 2004 and tends to increase gradually for the rest of the time frame. May 2010 marks the point in which the percentage exceeds the 20% threshold to which will not return for all the time frame. From November 2010, the trend starts to increase rapidly, going from 32%, through 37% in November 2011, to 49% in November 2012. November 2013 marks the highest point of the Spanish negative perception of the EU. After the peak, the percentage decreases gradually, registering 44% in May 2014, 37% in May 2015 and, finally, 28% in November 2015.

For all the three cases, the initial percentage of population holding a negative image of the EU is similar, averagely around 8%. Italy, compared with the other two countries is the one with the lower percentage in the first three years, with lowest points of 4% and 5%. In the same years Greece and Spain registered percentages a couple of points higher. Nevertheless, it has to be noticed that, on the other hand, is Greece the one case to first have a trend of growing negative perception of the image of the EU, registering constant double figures percentages from October 2004. Compared to Greece and Italy, Spain has a delayed growing trend, reaching the constant double figure just on May 2010. Despite the delay just reported, Italy and Spain will have a similar pace regarding the growing trend of the percentage of population with a negative image of the EU. The peak of Spain and Italy, registered respectively in May 2013 and November 2013, is also similar, 38% in Spain and 34% in Italy. It has to be highlighted that for all the three countries the peak of negative perception of the EU is registered in 2013, where the Greek one is 54%. It can be noticed how the Greek figure is undoubtedly higher than in the other two cases. This is the main characteristic of the Greek trend. From October 2004 the trend in Greece is evidently growing with a different pace respect the one in Spain and Italy. On the contrary to this difference in the growing trend of the three countries, I notice that the decreasing trend of the negative perception registers a similar pattern. In fact, for all the three cases the percentage starts to decrease in the same survey in May 2014. From that survey onwards, the trend for all three countries will decrease on a similar pace.

4.1.2. Indicator 2: Satisfaction with EU Democracy

In table A.3 and figure 2, I present the data collected regarding the satisfaction with EU democracy by the citizens in Italy, Spain and Greece. The question in the Eurobarometer, formulated as follows: “On the Whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in (your country)? Would you say you are...? How about the way democracy works in the European Union?” gives the possibility for several different answer about the satisfaction of citizens around Europe between which I selected just the negative ones.

Figure 2 Trend of dissatisfaction with EU democracy⁸



The initial level of dissatisfaction with EU democracy in **Italy**, registered in the first survey of the timeframe on April 2000, is 40%. Then, the trend tends to decrease and rest between the 37% and 39% from October 2001 and October 2004. A further decrease is register in May 2005 when the dissatisfaction with EU democracy is 31%. March 2006 marks the lowest point of dissatisfaction of the time frame, with just 29% of dissatisfaction in EU democracy. From September 2007 the percentage of

⁸ Data retrieved from <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/themeKy/2/groupKy/228>

citizens not satisfied with EU democracy will grow constantly until November 2013, which marks the highest point of the time frame for the Italian case. After the peak of November 2013 the trend tends to decrease on a regular pace registering 48% in the last point of the time frame, May 2015.

The percentage of citizens in **Spain** not satisfied with EU democracy at the beginning of the time frame, April 2000, is 20%, followed by an increase in the following years. Then, it is registered a gradual decrease in the Spanish dissatisfaction for the period from 2002 until 2007, when the percentage reaches the 14%, lowest point of the Spanish trend. From this point onwards, the trend tends to grow rapidly, recording 30% in 2009, 43% in 2011, and 55% in November 2012. May 2013 marks the highest point of dissatisfaction throughout the time frame with 60% of the population not satisfied with EU democracy. After the highest point, the trend tends to decrease until the end of the time frame, May 2015 when the percentage registered is 48%.

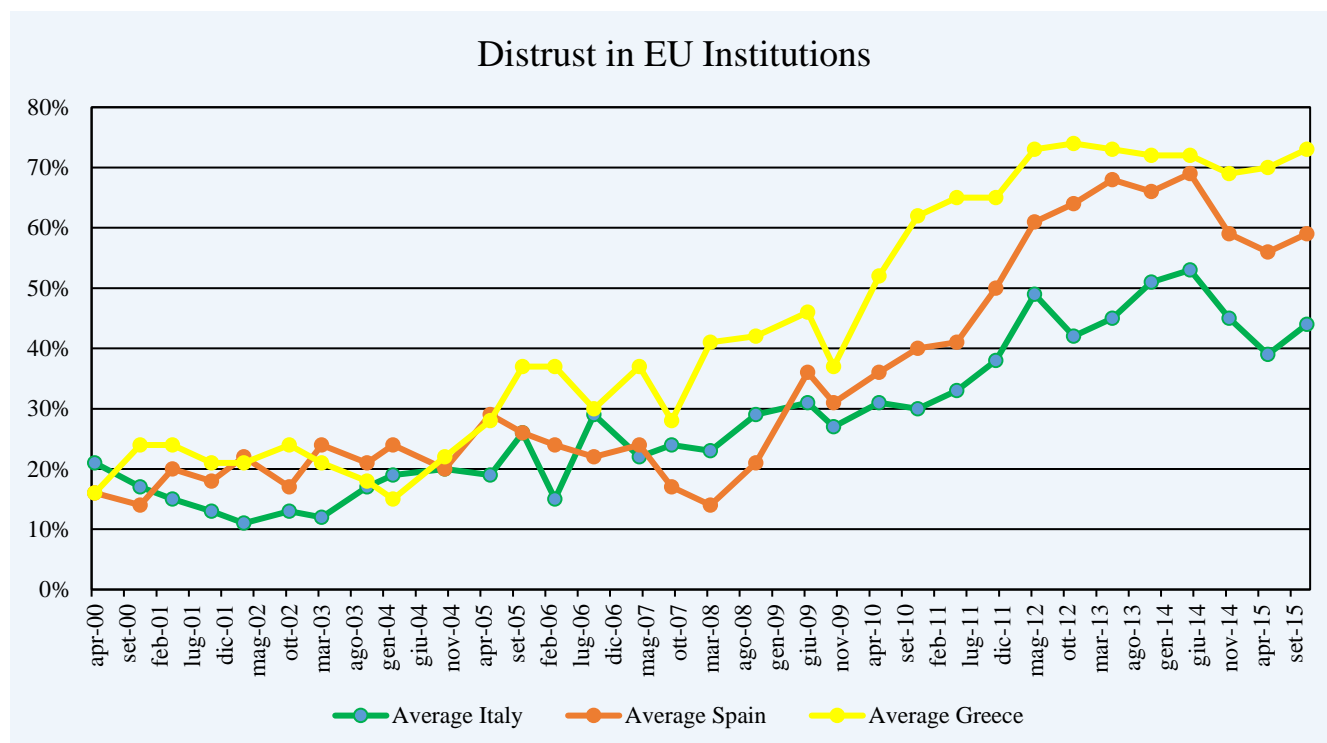
The level of dissatisfaction with EU democracy registered in **Greece** in the first survey, in April 2000, is 28% and will tend to grow gradually until the peak of the time frame. In fact, already in the following survey, in November 2000, the percentage increases of ten points reaching 38%. In the period from 2002 to 2004 the Greek trend tends to decrease until 27% in February 2004, which is its lowest point of the time frame. After this, the level of dissatisfaction tends to increase rapidly, reaching 46% in 2006, 53% in 2010, and 70% in May 2012. November 2012 marks the highest point of dissatisfaction of the time frame with 77%. After the peak, the trend decreases gradually but with a slow pace, registering 66% in the last year of the time frame, 2015.

Between the three cases, Italy is the one with an initial percentage of dissatisfaction higher than the others, almost double of the Spanish one. In November 2000, Italian dissatisfaction already reaches the 45%, threshold that for Spain and Greece will be reached just in 2012 and 2006 respectively. Despite this initial high trend of the Italian dissatisfaction, Greece will tend to have, in general, a higher level of dissatisfaction respect of Italy and Spain starting from 2005. Moreover, it can be noticed that the peak in dissatisfaction registered in Greece, 77%, is higher than the peak of Italy and Spain, 58% and 60% respectively. Nevertheless, the three cases have in common the period of time in which this peak is registered, between November 2012 and November 2013. Furthermore, for all the three cases, after their respective peak, the level of dissatisfaction will tend to decrease gradually until the end of the time frame. Finally, it is interesting to notice also that the Spanish trend tends to be lower than the Italian one throughout the period of time taken into consideration until November 2012, point in which Spain dissatisfaction exceeds the Italian one.

4.1.3. Indicator 3: Trust in EU Institutions

In table A.4 and figure 3, I present the data collected regarding the trust in EU institutions by the citizens in Italy, Spain and Greece. The question, formulated as follows: “And, for each of them, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?” gives the possibility for several different answer about the trust citizens around Europe put in the hands of the EU institutions. The data collected concerns the percentages of the negative answers (“Tend not to trust”). Between all the different EU institutions, I took into consideration just the Council, the EC and the EP.

Figure 3 Trend of distrust in EU institutions⁹



In 2000 the percentage of citizens in **Italy** that tend not to trust EU institutions is 21%. Then, the trend tends to decrease until October 2003, with the lowest point of the entire time frame registered in March 2002. October 2003 marks the point in which the trend starts to grow again, going from 19% in February 2004, through 26% in October 2005, to 29% in September 2006. In June 2009 the trend reaches 31%, followed by 38% in November 2011. The trend keeps increasing rapidly until its highest point in

⁹ Data retrieved from < <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Chart/index>>

May 2014 with 53% of the Italian population not trusting EU institutions. After the peak, the trend rests on an average of 42% until the end of the time frame.

Spain is characterized by an initial level of distrust in EU institutions of 16% which tends to increase in the following years, recording 20% in April 2001 and 22% in March 2002. From April 2001 and October 2008, the trend rests on a level of distrust between 14% and 29%, with its lowest point in March 2008. From October 2008 onwards, the Spanish trend tends to increase gradually, going from 36% in June 2009, through 40% in November 2010, to 50% in November 2011. From May 2012 until May 2014 the percentage of distrust registered is between 61% to 69%, which is the highest point of the Spanish trend throughout the time frame. After the peak, the distrust in EU institutions tends to decrease despite remaining on a high trend, recording 59% in November 2015.

The percentage of population in **Greece** at the beginning of the time frame, April 2000, that tend not to trust the EU institutions is 16%. Despite this initial low level, the trend tends to increase and reach the 20% threshold already in the following survey in November 2000 with 24%. In the period from March 2003 to February 2004, it is observable a little decrease in which the Greek trend reaches its lowest point of 15% in February 2004. From October 2002, the trend tends to increase with a fast pace, going from 28% in May 2005, through 37% in April 2007, to 41% in May 2008. The trend reaches 62% in November 2010 and 73% in May 2012. November 2012 marks the highest point in the Greek distrust for the time frame considered, with 74%. After the peak the trend tends to decrease until 69% in November 2014, just increase again for the last year of the time frame, 2015, in which the percentages are 70% and 73% for the two surveys, respectively.

Comparing the data regarding the three cases, different observations can be done. First of all, Italy is the country with the highest level of distrust at the beginning of the time frame, even though it will be soon exceeded by Greece. The latter is the one country that, on average, has a higher level of distrust, respect Italy and Spain, throughout all the 15 years taken into consideration. All the three case have an increasing trend throughout the time frame, even though with different paces. Greece is the first case reaching the 50% threshold of distrust in May 2010, while Italy is reaching it in November 2013 and Spain in November 2011. For all the three cases the growing trend will increase the speed visibly after October 2009. On the other hand, it can be noticed that the peak of distrust in the countries cannot be completely regard as similar. In Italy the peak registered is 53%, while in Spain and Greece is comparably higher, 69% and 74%, respectively. Finally, for all the three countries it can be noticed that there is little,

or no, tendency of decrease for the level of distrust in the EU institutions after their respective peak, resting on 40% for Italy, 58% in Spain and 70% in Greece.

Concluding, in this part of the research, I presented the data gathered regarding the three indicators of the dependent variable. In order to conclude this section, some observations need to be made. First of all, it is evident that Greece has always higher level of euroscepticism than the other two countries. Even if, sometimes, one of the other two countries has an initial level higher than Greece there is always a point in the time frame in which the Hellenic country exceeds by far the other two, usually also this point coincides with the year 2009. Secondly, for all the three indicators, Italy is the case with the highest initial level and Spain the lowest. Finally, it can be observed as for all the three indicators there is a tendency to increase considerably in the year 2009 until the year 2013/2014.

4.2. Independent Variables

After having presented the data gathered regarding the extend of the change in the public opinion towards the EU occurred in Italy, Spain and Greece, I now look at the possible causes of the evolution. Two are type of factors on which I will focus: the political factor and the economic one. Per each of the dimension two indicators are taken as independent variables, of which, later on, will be calculated the correlation with the indicators of the dependent variable presented above.

4.2.1. Political Opportunity structures

In the theoretical framework chapter above, I mentioned the importance of some feature of the political environment in the emergence of eurosceptic sentiments. The features that will be dealt with in the next part of the research and believed to be the most relevant are two: the type of competition system, and the level of opposition of the parties in the national parliament. It is believed that in a multi-polar system there will be more space for expressing eurosceptic sentiments, respect to a system in which the structure is composed just by two sets of parties (Taggart, 2000). In order to understand the type of competition system existing in the cases, it has been decided to look at the results of the elections that took place in the timeframe considered. In this way, one is able to understand the number of parties or coalitions involved in the government and in the decision-making process. Then, the role of the national parties in the European issue is relevant as well because of their importance in mobilizing agenda-setting and sentiment, structuring the shape and content of politics, selecting the members of the European

institutions, etc. It is believed that these two aspects of the national political realm have an influence on the level and shape of euroscepticism registered in the countries.

4.2.1.1. Type of Competition System

In table 2, I present the result of the national elections that took place in **Italy** from 2000 until 2015. In the first elections of the time frame, 2001, it can be observed how the bipolar competition system, main characteristic of the Second Republic¹⁰ period, is still strongly present. The centre-right coalition, called House of Freedom, won the election against the opposing coalition, called The Olive Tree. For three different elections the two coalitions fought for the majority of votes and the power in the Italian parliament, ending up in an alternation of power each election. In fact, in the second election of the time frame, in 2006, the centre-left coalition won gaining the majority of the seats. In the next one, in 2008, the results were reversed again, with the centre-right coalition gaining the power. The last elections of the time frame happened in 2013, following the resignation in 2011 of the then Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, head of the centre-right coalition, because of his inability to face the European sovereign debt crisis. After his resignation a technocratic Prime Minister took power, Senator for Life Mario Monti, and governed until the election in 2013. In the last election we witnessed the emergence of an important new party in the Italian political realm, which gained a relevant number of votes putting an end to the perfect Italian bicameralism. The Five Star Movement, a populist party, in fact, gained 25,56% of the votes becoming the third party in Italy.

Table 2 Results of the Italian national elections¹¹

	Chamber of Deputies	Senate of the Republic
2001 Elections		
House of Freedom	45,57%	42,53%
The olive tree	43,15%	38,70%
2006 Elections		
The Union	49,81%	48,96%
House of Freedom	49,74%	50,21%

¹⁰ Period of time starting in 1994 marked by a bipolar system in which we witnessed an alternation of the two main coalitions, the centre-left and the centre-right. It followed the First Republic (1946-1993) characterized by a “imperfect bipolarism”, a tripolar party system in which the only major opposition party, the Communists, was prevented to have any sort of control over the government. After the major “Tangentopoli” scandal in 1992 and following inquest, the Italian political order was left disintegrated and new parties and a new bipolarism raised.

¹¹ Data retrieved from <<http://www.interno.gov.it/it>>

2008 Elections		
Centre-right Coalition	46,81%	47,32%
Centre-left Coalition	37,55%	38,01%
2013 Elections		
Italy Common Good	29,55%	31,63%
Centre-right Coalition	29,18%	30,72%
Five Star Movement	25,56%	23,80%

The political system in **Spain** has been characterized by a bipolar competition system in which the two main parties used to gain more than 80% of the seats (Orriols and Cordero, 2016). For three decades Spain had a two party system that saw the People’s Party (PP), a conservative and Christian democratic party, opposing the social-democratic party known as Spanish Socialist Worker’s Party (PSOE). The minor groups existing in the Spanish political realm can be divided in statewide, as the ex-communist United Left (IU), and non-statewide, as the Catalan and Basque nationalists (Orriols and Cordero, 2016). In table 3 are presented the result of the elections that occurred in the time frame considered. It can be observed that the bipolar tradition of the Spanish system continues also in most of the time frame with an alternation of the two main parties. In 2000 the PP gained most of the votes just to lose the election in the 2004 to the PSOE. In the following two elections, in 2008 and 2011, the PP took power again winning both the election against the PSOE. The last election of the time frame took place in November 2015 and saw the rise of two new parties: the Party of the Citizenry – Citizens, a centre or centre-right party, and We Can – Podemos, a left-wing party. The 2015 general elections are believed to have put an end to the bipolar party system in Spain, because of the over 10% of the vote gained by the two new parties which challenged the dominant position of the traditional mainstream PSOE and PP. It has to be highlighted, though, that, since the election in which the two new parties gained power in the parliament took place just at the end of 2015, they may not have an influence on the time frame considered. On the other hand, it must be mentioned also that it is believed that the two-party system started to be under threat at the 2014 EP elections when Podemos obtained 1.3 million votes, the 8% of the vote share, marking their support growth and leading the opinion polls (Orriols, 2016).

Table 3 Results of the Spanish general elections¹²

	Congress of Deputies	Senate (No. Seats)
2000 Elections		
People's Party (PP)	45,24%	125
Spanish Socialist Worker's Party- Progressive (PSOE)	34,71%	48
2004 Elections		
Spanish Socialist Worker's Party (PSOE)	43,27%	102
People's Party (PP)	37,81%	81
2008 Elections		
People's Party(PP)	39,86%	101
Spanish Socialist Worker's Party (PSOE)	37,72%	88
2011 Elections		
People's Party (PP)	41,89%	117
Spanish Socialist Worker's Party (PSOE)	25,32%	42
2015 Elections		
People's Party (PP)	26,84%	123
Spanish Socialist Worker's Party (PSOE)	18,92%	47
Citizens – Party of the Citizenry (C's)	14,04%	-
We Can – In Common-Commitment – In Tide (Podemos)	12,69%	8

The political system in **Greece** has also been characterized by a two-party system from 1981 onwards in which the two main parties were alternating the parliamentary power. In fact, since 1981, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), a social democratic political party, and the New Democracy (ND), a liberal-conservative party, have controlled the majority of vote casts and parliamentary seats (Pappas, 2003). In table 4, I present the results of the Greek elections in the time frame considered, from 2000 until 2015. For the first four elections, in 2000, 2004, 2007 and 2009, the bipolar competition system is evident. PASOK and ND, gained for most of the time frame considered most of vote casts, acquiring the right to govern the country. In the 2000 and 2009 governments the majority went to PASOK, while ND ruled in 2004 and 2007. From May 2012, elections in which no party gained enough votes to rule, it can be contemplated how the competition system changes. In fact,

¹² Data retrieved from <<http://www.congreso.es/>>

next to the two mainstream parties we see the growth of the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA), a left wing political party, which gained 16,78% of the votes in May 2012 and 26,89% in the following June 2012 elections. Following the 2012 election, SYRIZA becomes the second party in Greece gaining the majority of votes in the following 2015 elections, both in January and September. Nevertheless, it can be observed that from the election in 2015 there is a re-emergence of the bipolar party system, with SYRIZA and ND fighting for the majority in the Greek parliament.

Table 4 Results of the Greek National Elections¹³

	Hellenic Parliament
2000 Elections	
Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	43,79%
New Democracy (ND)	42,74%
2004 Elections	
New Democracy (ND)	45,36%
Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	40,55%
2007 Elections	
New Democracy (ND)	41,84%
Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	38,10%
2009 Elections	
Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	43,92
New Democracy (ND)	33,47%
May 2012 Elections	
New Democracy (ND)	18,85%
Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA)	16,78%
Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	13,18%
June 2012 Elections	
New Democracy (ND)	29,66%
Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA)	26,89%
Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	12,28%
January 2015 Elections	
Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA)	36,34%
New Democracy (ND)	27,81%

¹³ Data retrieved from <<http://www.ypes.gr/en/>>

September 2015 Elections	
Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA)	35,46%
New Democracy (ND)	28,10%

Concluding this part regarding the type of competition system existing in the three cases, few observations can be made. First of all, all the three cases, from the beginning of the time frame, present a record of bi-polar competition system, in which two main parties or coalitions alternated the majority of votes and seats. Secondly, it can be noticed that the transition from bipolar system to a multi-polar one happens almost during the same period of time: 2013 for Italy, 2014 (if I take into account the EP elections) for Spain, and 2012 for Greece. Finally, it is interesting to notice that Greece is the only case returning to a bipolar system during the time frame.

4.2.1.2. Degree of Opposition of National Parties

Describing the position of the main parties or coalition in **Italy** towards European integration is interesting and easier to understand looking at table 6 in which the government formation is presented. It has been presented that, after the elections in 2001 and 2008, the centre-right coalition gained the majority in the government, coinciding with the re-emergence of opposition towards the EU amongst the political parties. The centre-right coalition was composed by parties such as Forza Italia, led by Silvio Berlusconi, and the populist Northern League, led by Umberto Bossi. The latter is known for its eurosceptic position, criticizing the fact that Italy joined the EMU without a referendum, defining the EU as ‘the Soviet Union of Europe’ (Quaglia, 2011). Therefore, during the centre-right coalition government, some eurosceptic policy outcomes developed, as the reluctance towards the agreement on the European Arrest Warrant¹⁴ and the criticisms of the Stability and Growth Pact (Quaglia, 2011). It is believed that, during the centre-right coalition governments, the project of European integration was not a priority for the country’s foreign policy anymore while the raising of Italy’s profile internationally took precedence. On the other hand, the Olive Tree, the centre-left presented itself as in favour of EMU membership remaining loyal to Italy’s Euroenthusiast tradition. In the manifesto¹⁵ of the main party in the centre-left

¹⁴ The European Arrest Warrant (EAW), applied throughout the EU, replaced lengthy extradition procedures within the EU’s territorial jurisdiction. It improves and simplifies judicial procedures designed to surrender people for the purpose of conducting a criminal prosecution or executing a custodial sentence or spell in detention. (Information available at <http://ec.europa.eu/justice/criminal/recognition-decision/european-arrest-warrant/index_en.htm>)

¹⁵ Information available at <<http://www.partitodemocratico.it/gCloud-dispatcher/d2fd1f91-96df-4808-8f89-600f3148f3e2>>

coalition, the Democratic left, is indeed stated that one of the motifs of the party is indeed the unity of Europe, as an extraordinary project that must be implemented. Lastly, the Five Star Movement, the populist and eurosceptic new party, has presented itself as questioning the central aspect of European Integration, such as all EU economic constraints, for example the Fiscal Compact, and demanding a referendum on Italy's membership in the euro¹⁶.

As for what regards the stance that national parties in **Spain** have regarding European integration, the position of the two main parties is somehow similar. The attitude of PSOE and PP is believed to always have been positive and stable over time (Jimenez and de Haro, 2011). For PSOE the benefits deriving from being member of the EU, as the cohesion and structural funds, were a rationale to support the integration project in order to deal with the economic situation of Spain and the limited development of its welfare states (Gomez-Reino, Llamazares and Ramiro, 2008). For what regards PP, it had to 'combine liberalizing and deregulating agendas with the compromise of maintaining the welfare state' (Gomez-Reino et al, 2008: pp.137) in order to gain the median voter. Another party that has been mentioned in the previous part is PODEMOS. Regarded as a eurosceptic party, in its program¹⁷ it criticizes one of the fundamental policies of the EU of the last years, the austerity programs, as well as the institutional design of the Eurozone, which it is believed to have lost the democratic control and legitimacy over the economic politics. On the other hand, CITIZENS had showed tendencies to support the EU and its policies. In fact, in its program¹⁸, the party explicitly supports the European Institutions in their foreign policy, recognizing the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security policy as the representative for the European interests. The party also supports the Schengen treaty and the project of a common European Defence unit, showing their support for the EU integration project.

Lastly, for what regards **Greece** the eurosceptic sentiments do not characterize the two main parties that alternated the parliamentary power for most of the time frame. In fact, the issue of European integration was regarded as an integral part of the agenda of the governments in power of both sides (Verney, 2011). From the treaty of Amsterdam (European Union, 1997), signed in 1997, PASOK and ND were the parties supporting EU treaty ratification in the Greek parliament. On the other hand, SYRIZA, the party gaining relevance in the Greek political system since 2012, is often described as eurosceptic, following the obvious opposition of the fiscal austerity measures imposed on Greece and the dominant

¹⁶ Information available at <<https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/materiali-bg/7punti.pdf>>

¹⁷ PODEMOS program available at <<http://lasonrisadeunpais.es/programa/>>

¹⁸ Information available at <<https://www.ciudadanos-cs.org/nuestro-proyecto>>

extreme neoliberal policies, criticizing the non-democratic characteristic of the EU¹⁹. Moreover, it showed its eurosceptic sentiment voting against both the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe and the Lisbon treaty.

In order to conclude this part regarding the degree of opposition of the parties in the national parliament, some observations can be made. First of all, the main parties in Spain and Greece for most of the time frame were regarded as Euroenthusiast towards the project of EU integration, as the centre-left coalition in Italy, while, on the contrary, the centre-right one was composed by eurosceptic parties, such as the Northern League. Secondly, it is interesting to notice that for all the three cases, the new parties raising from 2012-2014, the Five Star Movement, Podemos and SYRIZA, are characterized by eurosceptic sentiments and opposition towards the EU institutions.

4.2.2. Economic Dimensions

In the part of the theoretical framework concerning the causes of euroscepticism I presented different theories according to which the economic performance of a country has an impact over the sentiment towards the EU. Then, it has been explained which macroeconomic variables are believed to be the most relevant for the research, meaning the level of GDP and the unemployment rate. In this part of the analysis, I present the data gathered for these two independent variables, highlighting the similar or different patterns registered for the three cases.

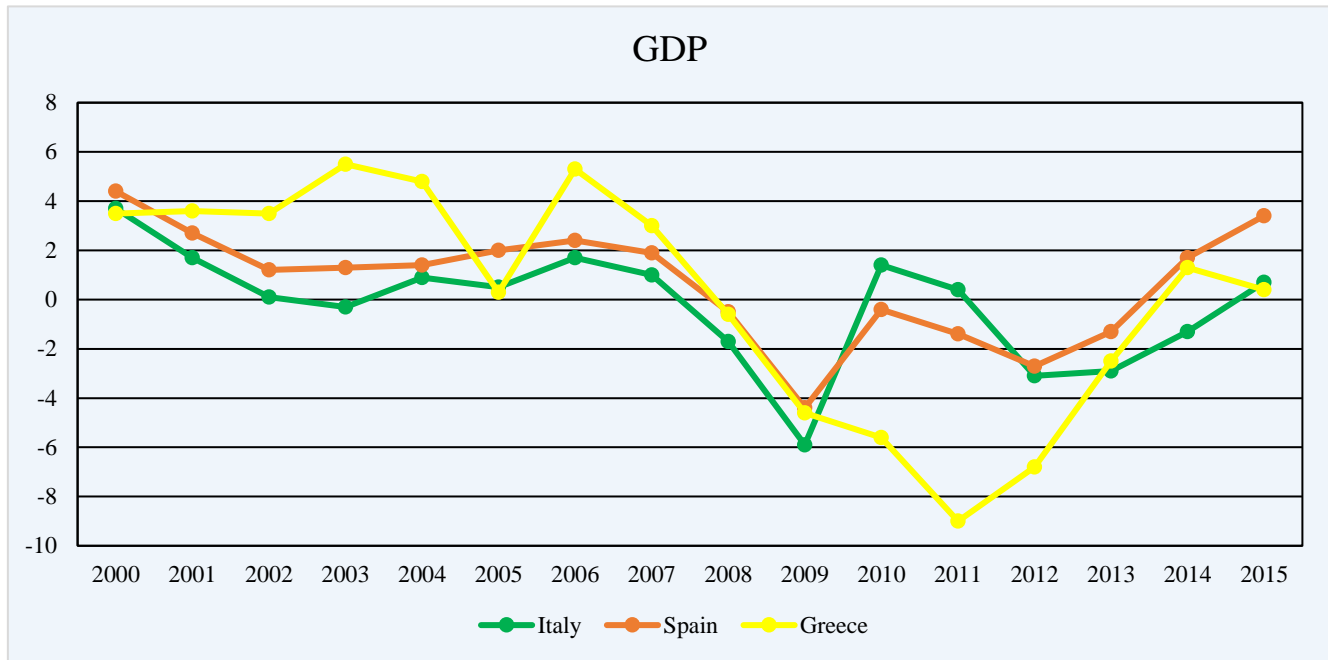
4.2.2.1. GDP

The first dimension that will be taken into consideration concerning the economic factors that are believed to influence euroscepticism is GDP. This variable will be studied on a per capita growth basis. The source for the data is the World Bank Dataset in which the GDP is described as the ‘sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products’²⁰. In table A.5 and figure 4 I present the data gathered for all the three cases during the time frame taken into consideration.

¹⁹ Information available at <<http://www.syriza.gr/page/who-we-are.html#.V5d4tbiLTIU>>

²⁰ Information available at <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD.ZG?view=chart>>

Figure 4 GDP per capita growth (annual %)²¹



For **Italy**, at the beginning of the time frame, the initial GDP is 3,7% but tends to decrease for the following 3 years, reaching -0,3% in 2003. From the following year, in 2004, the percentage tends to grow registering a 0,9% and 1,7% in 2006. The 2007 GDP marks the point in the time frame in which the GDP starts to decrease and will not exceed that threshold for the rest of the period considered. In 2008 the level of GDP is -1,7% followed by the lowest point of the time frame -5,9% registered in 2009. The high percentage of 2010, 1,4%, together with the 2011 data,0,4%, form a couple of positive years for the growth. In fact, in 2012, the Italian GDP goes again under the 0% registering a -3,1% followed by a -2,9% in 2013 and -1,3% in 2014. The last data for the time frame, the year 2015, registers a little growth exceeding the 0% and resting on a 0,7%.

The GDP registered in **Spain** in 2000 is the highest point of the entire time frame with 4,4%. In the following couple of years, the GDP tends to decrease registering a level of 2,7% in 2001, 1,2% in 2002. Then, it can be observed an increasing trend from 2004 with 1,4%, through 2005 with 2% and 2006 with 2,4%. The level of GDP registered in 2007,1,9%, is the last positive data until 2014. In fact, in 2008 the percentage is -0,5 followed by the lowest point of my time frame in 2009 with -4,4% of GDP. After this lowest point, the level of GDP tends to grow again to -0,4% in 2010 but just to fall again to -

²¹ Data retrieved from < <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD.ZG?view=chart>>

1,4% and -2,7% in 2011 and 2012 respectively. After 2012, the Spanish GDP has an increasing trend going from -1,3% in 2013, trough 1,7% in 2014, to 3,4% in the last year of the time frame, 2015.

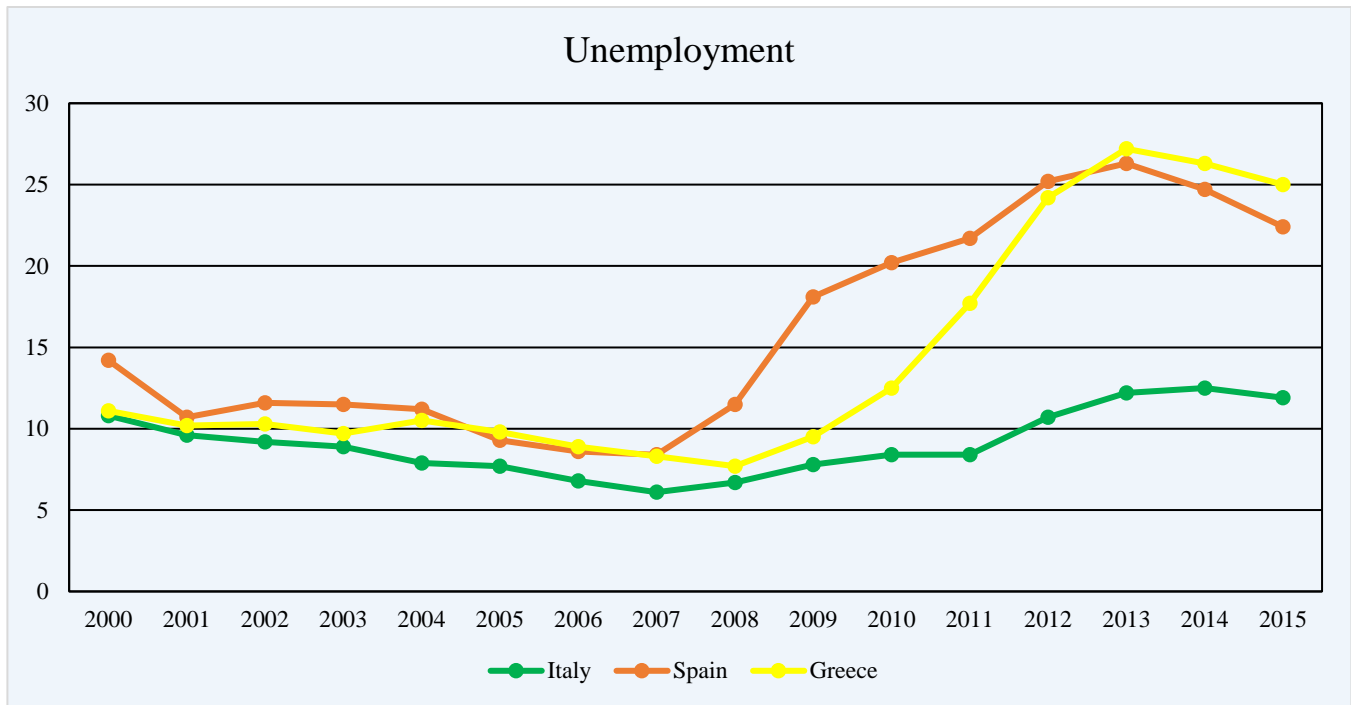
The first data concerning the GDP in **Greece** is 3,5% and will be the average one for the first three years of the time frame. In 2003 the level increases of 2 points reaching 5,5%, highest level of GDP for the entire time frame, from 2000 until 2015. After the peak, there is a decrease in the GDP going from 4,8% in 2004 to 0,3% in 2005. Then, the Greek GDP increases again to 5,3%, but just to decrease again to 3% in 2007. The 2007 GDP is the last positive data registered until 2014. In fact, from 2008 until 2011 the GDP will constantly decrease. In 2008 the percentage is below the zero with -0,6%, followed by -4,6% in 2009. 2010 GDP is -5,6% and in 2011 is -9%, the lowest level of GDP registered throughout the entire time frame. After this peak, the GDP tends to increase again, going from -6,8% in 2012, through -2,5% in 2013, to 1,3% in 2014. The data of the Greek GDP in the last year of the time frame, 2015, registers one more decrease, 0,4%.

Comparing the data for the three cases, it can be observed that the level of GDP at the beginning of the time frame is high in all the cases, with the higher one registered in Spain. It is interesting to observe also that, between the cases, the most similar trends are the Italian and the Spanish one, while the Greek trend tends to distance itself. In fact, while the first two decrease regularly in the first years, the latter increases considerably for decreasing later in 2005, reaching the level of Italy and Spain. All the three cases register a huge decrease in 2009, but, while Spain and Italy tend to grow again, Greece keeps losing points until its lowest point in 2011. Finally, for the three of them, 2012 is the year in which the trends start growing again.

4.2.2.2. Unemployment

The second dimension I take into consideration in order to understand the causes of the opposition towards the European Union project is the unemployment rate. As I mentioned before, it is considered to be a key measurement for labor market performance and, consequently, a good representation for the trend of the national economy. The data was gathered from the World Bank Dataset for the years 2000-2014 and from the Trading Economy website for the year 2015. In table A.6 and figure 5, I represent the percentages registered per each country per each year.

Figure 5 Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)²²



The unemployment rate in **Italy** in the first year of the time frame, 2000, is 10,8% and tends to decrease gradually for most of the time frame, until 2009. In 2006 the percentage of unemployed citizens in Italy is 6,8% and in 2007 6,1%, which is the lowest point of the period taken into consideration. From the following year, 2008, the rate has an increasing trend until the very last data of the time frame, 2015. In 2009, the Italian rate is 7,8%, growing to an 8,4% in 2010 and 2011. 2012 is characterized by a new increase in which the rate reaches 10,7%, followed by 12,2% in 2013 and 12,5% in 2014, which is the peak of the time frame. The last data for the time frame, as has been mentioned before, is lower than the previous year, registering 11,9% of unemployment rate.

Spain's initial unemployment rate is 14,2% and has a decreasing trend until 2008. The average unemployment rate in the following four years is, in fact, 11,2%, with a higher point of 11,6% in 2002 and a lower point of 10,7% in 2001. From 2008 onwards, the rate tends to increase on a fast pace, going from 11,5% in 2008, through 18,1% in 2009, to 20,2% in 2010. In 2011 the rate is increasing again to 21,7%, followed by 25,2% in 2012. 2013 marks the peak of the Spanish rate during the time frame,

²² Data retrieved from <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?view=chart>>

registering 26,3% of unemployment. After the peak the rate tends to decrease, with 24,7% in 2014 and 22,4% in 2015.

My last case, **Greece**, has an unemployment rate at the beginning of the time frame, 2000, of 11,1%. From 2001 until 2005 the rate tends to remain between the 10,5% and 9,8% with an average of 10,1%. The Greek rate in 2006 is 8,9%, decreasing again to 8,3% in 2007. 2008 marks the point of the time frame in which the rate is at its lowest level with 7,7%. After this year, the rate will start growing picturing the increasing unemployment until 2014. In 2009, in fact, the data registered is 9,5% followed by 12,5% in 2010. Growing of 5 points the rate in 2011 is 17,7%, increasing to 24,2% in 2012. In 2013 the Greek unemployment rate is at its highest point with 27,2%, after which the rate starts decreasing registering 26,3% in 2014. The last data for the time frame in 2015 is 25%, again picturing the decreasing trend.

Comparing the unemployment levels in the three cases, different observations can be made. First, the trends of the three cases start from a similar level, between 10% and 14%. Then, they all tend to decrease in the period from 2004 and 2007, after which they all increase but on a different pace, with Spain and Greece having a larger increase respect to Italy. In 2013/2014, in fact, Spain registers 26,3% of unemployment and Greece 27,2%, while the Italian unemployment level is 12,5%. Therefore, in general, it can be stated that Italy has the lowest trend of unemployment between the three cases. On the other hand, Spain is the one having the highest trend until 2012, when the Greek trend exceeds it. For all the three cases, the lowest point of the trend happens around 2007/2008 which marks also the point in which they all start to increase. Then, also the peaks of all the three cases happen in the same period of time, 2013/2014.

4.3. Influence of Political and Economic Factors on Public Sentiment towards the EU

In this section I put some order regarding the outcomes of the analysis made in the previous parts of the research, making visible the similar patterns that have been highlighted throughout the analysis both for the independent variables and the indicators of the dependent one. The outcome of the analysis made above will support or oppose the expectations I formulated at the beginning. In order to see to what extend these outcomes are correct, I will make use of the correlation analysis made between the data of

the independent variables and the dependent one. The results of the correlation analysis can be observed in table A.7, A.8, A.9 in the annex.

First of all, I will take into account the political opportunity structure that have been considered. For what regards the type of competition system existing in the cases, one may say that there is one main observation concerning this factor. First of all, it can be observed that all the three cases, at the beginning of the time frame until 2012/2014, have a bipolar system and a similar trend of euroscepticism. In fact, they, on average, all start on a same level of opposition toward the EU, displaying a same trend of growth. Highest levels of euroscepticism are registered in the years 2013 and 2014, while the change in the political systems happen in 2013 for Italy, 2014 (if I consider the EP elections relevant, as has been mentioned before) in Spain, and 2012 for Greece. One could observe, then, that the peak of euroscepticism coincides with the period in which the competition system switches from a bi-polar system to a multi-polar one.

In order to prove if this observation is correct, I measure the correlation coefficient between the competition system and each of the indicator used for the dependent variable. For Italy and Greece, the analysis reveals a strong correlation with a coefficient of 0,7 for both cases. On the other hand, the analysis of correlation reveals that for Spain the correlation between the competition system and the sentiment towards the EU is not as strong as for the other cases. In fact, the coefficient is just 0,4. So the observation can be regard as correct in the cases of Italy and Greece, but not entirely accurate in the Spanish one.

The second political factor that has been taken into consideration was the degree of opposition of the parties involved in the government toward the EU integration project. It has been noticed that, when there is a presence of eurosceptic parties in the government, the level of euroscepticism tends to grow. This is observable in two out of three of the cases. For Italy for example, when the majority in the government is composed by the centre-left coalition the level of euroscepticism tends to decrease or tend to stagnate. When, on the other hand, the majority is composed by the centre-right coalition, and the new populist movement, the level tends to increase, as can be noticed between 2001 and 2006 and after 2008. For the Greek case, the government will be formed also by eurosceptic parties from 2012, when the eurosceptic sentiment between the population tends to grow visibly again. For the Spanish case the relation between the presence of eurosceptic parties in the government and the growing level of euroscepticism is not as evident as in the other two cases, since for most of the time frame the government is formed just by two euroenthusiast parties. However, it has to be mentioned that the year in which the

eurosceptic party entered the government in Spain is too near to the end of the time frame, and the results are going to be visible just from the Eurobarometer 2016.

Again, in order to check if these observations are valid, the correlation coefficient is calculated, resulting in really interesting numbers. If it was observed that for Italy the presence of parties opposing the EU coincides with the growing of the eurosceptic sentiment, the correlation coefficient does not support this observation, lying just on 0,2. As for the Spanish case, it has been mentioned before that the relation between the parties in the national parliament and the anti-European sentiment was not that evident. In fact, also in this case the correlation coefficient is weak, 0,4. On the other hand, when measuring the correlation in the Greek case, the result points to a different outcome. Here the correlation is strong having a coefficient of 0,8.

The second part of the analysis regarding the independent variables focused on economic factors and two different indicators, GDP and unemployment rate. It can be contemplated that, for all the three cases the trend for GDP are similar, mostly for Italy and Spain, in which they tend to decrease until 2009, the lowest point for Italy and Spain and second lowest point for Greece. Then it grows again followed by a second huge fall in the years 2011 and 2012. A similar trend is visible regarding euroscepticism. The year 2009 marks the point of the time frame in which the opposition starts growing faster, while the period between 2012 and 2014 registers the highest points of euroscepticism. Also the final increase in the level of GDP in the three cases coincides with a general increase in support for the EU project. One may say that the data shows that when the level of GDP is at its lowest, the eurosceptic sentiment will be at its highest.

The correlation analysis in this case shows a different outcome. For Italy and Spain, the correlation is weak having a coefficient of -0,3 in both cases. For only the Greek case the analysis shows a strong correlation between the level of GDP and the eurosceptic sentiment with a coefficient of -0,6.

Finally, for what concerns the analysis of the unemployment rates for the three cases considered, it has to be highlighted that their trends cannot be considered similar. Italy has visibly a different trend respect the other two countries, with just a little increase when compared to the unemployment levels experienced by Spain and Greece. Nevertheless, for all the three countries the point in which the unemployment rate starts to increase is the period of 2008/2009. This period is also considered the starting point of growing euroscepticism in the three cases, when the growing pace of the eurosceptic trends becomes faster. Furthermore, it is also interesting that when the unemployment rate starts

decreasing, after 2013, also the eurosceptic sentiment tends to decrease. One may say that it is observable that when the unemployment rate tends to increase, the eurosceptic sentiment will grow accordingly.

Lastly, in order to prove the observation made above regarding the correlation between the unemployment rate and the opposition towards the EU the correlation coefficient has been calculated. For all the three cases the correlation is proven to be strong. The Italian coefficient is 0,7, while for Spain and Greece is 0,9, confirming the observation of the relation between the two variables.

4.4. Critical Reflection

The first part of the empirical analysis chapter took into consideration the type of competition system existing in the different cases. The decision to look at this particular characteristic of the political system was taken because of the literature on the topic. As it has been shown in the theoretical framework, different authors (Sartori, 1976; Taggart, 2002) confirmed the relevance of studying the dynamics of a party system linking it to the space to express eurosceptic sentiments. I decided to follow their approach and analyse the competition system in the three cases and the level of contestation towards the EU that followed. At the beginning of my research, my expectation was that *'a multi-polar competition system leads to higher level of contestation'*. Following the analysis of the party system and the levels of opposition towards the EU, I observed that the peak of euroscepticism coincides with the period in which the competition system switch from bi-polar one to the multipolar one. The correlation analysis confirms partly my first expectation. In fact, the correlation between the type of competition system and the trend of the anti-European sentiment is strong in two cases out of three, Italy and Greece. Moreover, I can say that the theories cited before can apply to Italy and Greece but not to Spain, in which case the correlation has been found to be weak.

Then, I decided that a second factor that was paramount to analyse was the actual position of the parties in the government. Political parties play a key role in the national environment, because they are the channel through which the European issue arrives at the national public. I showed this characteristic in the second chapter of this work, citing Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008b) and their view of the importance of the national political parties. After the study of the literature, my expectation for the result of the analysis was that *'the opposition of the parties in the national parliament towards European integration leads to hardening of euroscepticism'*. In order to understand if the theory is applicable to the cases during the time frame, I analysed the political views of the main parties and the level of

euroscepticism felt, observing that, in general, the presence of eurosceptic parties in the government leads to higher level of euroscepticism. Contrarily to this observation, the correlation analysis showed us another outcome. The coefficient of correlation between the opposition of the parties and the sentiment towards the UE was strong in just one of the cases, the Greek one, but not in the Italian and Spanish ones. This means that the theory according to which the sentiment will harden related to the stand of the parties in the government is not applicable on two out of three of the cases chosen. Concluding, in Southern Europe the anti-European sentiment of the parties in the government will not have a relevant impact on the public sentiment towards the EU.

It can be observed that for the Spanish case, nor one of the political opportunity structures chosen as a factor influencing the public sentiment is relevant. In fact, neither the type of competition system or the degree of opposition of the parties in government have a strong correlation with the level of euroscepticism registered. The reason behind this non correlation may lie on the fact that the competition system changed just in 2014/2015 when new eurosceptic parties gained a position in the Spanish government. It may be the case that with the next Eurobarometer surveys after 2015, last year of my time frame, the correlation between the political opportunity structures and the level of euroscepticism will be stronger

Following the analysis of the political opportunity structures of the three cases, I analysed the possible economic factors that may influence the eurosceptic sentiment within the countries. It has been showed in the literature review that several authors (Bain and Tausendpfund, 2014; Eichenberg and Dalton, 2007; European Central Bank, 2015; Mezini, 2014) confirmed that economic factors, like the EMU and its budgetary implications, the crisis and the satisfaction with the personal economic situation are sources of discontent towards the EU. In order to check if this theory is applicable to the area of study of the research and the time frame, I took into consideration two macroeconomic variables expecting that *'lower levels of national GDP and higher unemployment rates will harden euroscepticism'*.

Following the analysis of the level of GDP in the three cases during the time frame, I observed that the level of GDP and the eurosceptic sentiment have a strong inversed correlation in just one case, Greece. In fact, for Italy and Spain the correlation analysis revealed that the level of GDP and the anti-European sentiment have a weak correlation. Therefore, one can say that in Southern Europe the macroeconomic variable GDP, as an indicator of the national economic performance, is not as influential

on the level of support for the EU as one would have imagined after the study of the literature mentioned above.

The last independent variable considered was the unemployment rate. In this case, contrarily to the independent variable considered before, the trend of the unemployment rate for three countries cannot be considered similar, because of the really low level of Italy, compared to Spain and Greece. Nevertheless, it has been observed the presence of similar patterns in the tendency of the three rates. In fact, when the unemployment rate tends to increase, the eurosceptic sentiment hardens accordingly, confirming the second expectation. The correlation analysis confirmed the expectation as well, revealing a strong correlation between the two variable for all the three cases chosen. Unemployment is, therefore, the most influencing factor, between the four chosen, for the Southern European area, the one with the strongest correlation with the level of opposition towards the EU. Concluding, the theory regarding the relevance of macroeconomic factors, and specifically the unemployment rate, on the level of euroscepticism, can be applied adequately to Italy, Spain and Greece, contrarily of what we observed for the GDP variable.

Concluding, if one has to look at the Southern European area in general a couple of observations can be made. First of all, it can be observed that the trend of eurosceptic sentiment is similar for the three cases. On the other hand, for what concerns the political and economic factors, the main difference in the trends lays in the unemployment variable, in which Italy has a visible lower level of unemployment respect Spain and Greece. Nevertheless, in general, the main factor influencing the level of euroscepticism in Southern Europe is the macroeconomic variable of unemployment. It has been revealed that the level of unemployment registered in the cases has a strong correlation with the public anti-European sentiment. It is interesting to notice that, on the other hand, the GDP, one of the main economic variable used to understand the performance of national economy, has a weak correlation, showing that this factor is not as influencing for euroscepticism as one may think. Regarding the political opportunity structures chosen, one of them has a stronger correlation respect the other, meaning the type of competition system present in the cases. For Italy and Greece, the correlation between the competition system and the level of opposition is strong showing that this political variable has a visible relevance in Southern Europe. One may say that, if there was the possibility to have more data regarding Spain, this would apply also in this case. Unfortunately, the political changes in the Iberian country happen just in 2014, which is too late for us to extract applicable remarks. The last observation regards the Greek case. It is interesting to see that all the four factors chosen for the research have a relevant influence on the

Greek sentiment towards the EU, showing that both the political opportunity structures and the performance of the national economy are important for the sentiment of the public in the country.

5. Conclusion

The focus of this research was the evolution of euroscepticism in Southern Europe during the period between 2000 and 2015, when major events happened throughout the continent. What made me choose this topic was the traditional enthusiasm toward the EU that characterized this area, which has been decreasing considerably. Opposition towards the EU integration project became mainstreamed, bringing the European debate to a new level. The Maastricht treaty and the Lisbon treaty, together with the other agreements taken between them, led the path for the debate over the EU to be opened to the public, which could now act as an actor on the European stage. The opinion of the public over supranational policies and regulation became suddenly a crucial variable in the day-to-day work of the national and European Institutions. Because of this new phase of the debate over the EU issue, I believed that it would have been interesting to study how the phenomenon evolved in the last 15 years, analyzing also the political and economic variable that could have been involved in the process.

After presenting the exhaustive literature on my topic, I came up with the research question at the basis of my work that concerns the way euroscepticism developed in Southern Europe in the last 15 years related to political and economic factor. In order to answer the research question, I first took into consideration how the sentiment changed during the years, using the data of the Eurobarometer. This gave the reader an overview of the extend of the skepticism felt in the countries before going through the political and economic factor. Then the factors have been analyzed one by one that, following the study of the literature, were the most relevant to study related to the area chosen. The analysis made draws a nuanced picture of what influenced the sentiment evolution throughout the time frame. I have observed that two main points in the time frame need to be borne in mind to see the evolution of the phenomenon in Southern Europe, 2008/2009 in which euroscepticism starts to grow, and 2013/2014 in which it has its highest point and then tends to decrease. During this two points in the time frame it can be observed that the independent variables have indeed an importance for the understanding of the reasons behind the growing of euroscepticism. When in the last 15 years we have witnessed a change in the political competition system, the level of euroscepticism was at its highest in all the three cases. The correlation between the competition system and the anti-European sentiment is indeed strong in two out of three of

the cases, and can be regarded as a relevant factor in the evolution of the phenomenon in Southern Europe. The position of the parties in the National Parliament has a strong influence in the evolution of the phenomenon just in Greece, while for the Spanish and Italian case cannot be considered as strong. Regarding the two macroeconomic variables I decided to study, the most interesting finding is that the level of GDP does not have a relevant influence on the sentiment in Southern Europe in general. In fact, in two cases, Italy and Spain, the correlation between the two variables is weak and cannot confirm the theory according to which the economic performance of a country influences the level of euroscepticism registered. On the other hand, an important finding of the research is that the unemployment rate is a paramount factor to look at in dealing with opposition towards the EU. The fact that Southern Europe was affected by a growing level of unemployment had an important impact on the public perception of the EU.

The theory used for the research cannot be considered entirely applicable to all the cases. Following the literature, in fact, it was expected that the political opportunity structures and the national economic performance had an influence over the sentiment towards the EU. Nevertheless, this cannot be considered valid for all the cases or all the factors. In just one case, Greece, the theory applies for all the four factors considered with strong correlation coefficients. The theory regarding the political factors can be considered applicable to the Southern European area when one considers the type of competition system present in the case, but not concerning the stand of the parties in the national government. Regarding the other factors considered, the economic ones, one may say that the predictions made following the theory cannot be considered utterly valid. In general, the macroeconomic indicators have indeed an influence on the anti-European sentiment in Southern Europe, but just thanks to the significant impact of the unemployment variable and not for the GDP one.

I believe that the fact of not having a complete picture of the Spanish political realm after the growing in prominence for the eurosceptic parties influenced the findings regarding the political opportunity structures part of this research. Therefore, one may predict that for the future of the Spanish sentiment towards the EU, the new competition system born after the election in 2015 will bring a new wave of dissent. Regarding the Southern European area in general, since there is a trend of decrease in the unemployment rate, the most important factor according to the analysis, it can be predicted that also euroscepticism will decrease accordingly. On the other hand, it has to be borne in mind the emergence of new parties in the political systems of all the three cases in the last years of the time frame and the

consequent change of the competition system. This will continue to be a relevant factor influencing the anti-European sentiment in Southern Europe in the years to come.

Concluding, I believe that it would be interesting to see if the results of this research will apply to the period of time after the time frame selected as well, period in which the EU will undergo several new difficulties, as, for example, the aftermath of the Brexit vote of June 2016 from which a bandwagon effect of new waves of euroscepticism may arise. Carrying out a similar research either with the same factors but different time frame, or with different factors but same time frame, could be an interesting suggestion for further research on the phenomenon of Euroscepticism in Southern Europe.

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7. Annex

Table A.1 Political parties with Hard and Soft Euroscepticism in EU member states, 2002²³

	Hard	Soft
Austria		Freedom Party
Belgium	Flemish Block Belgian Labour Party Communist Party	Francophone Christian Democrats New Flemish Alliance Front National
Denmark	People's Movement against the EU Unity List	Socialist People's Party Danish People's Party Christian People's Party June Movement True Finns
Finland	Communist Party Forces for Change in Finland	
France	Communist Lutte Ouvrière Revolutionary Communist League National Front (Le Pen) National Movement (Mégret)	Citizens Movement (Chevènement) Movement for France (de Villiers) Rally for France and Independence of Europe (Pasqua)
Germany	Republicans German People's Union German National Democratic Party	Party of Democratic Socialists Christian Democratic Union (faction) Social Democratic Party (faction) Free Democratic Party (national-liberal faction) Christian Social Party
Greece	Communist Party	Democratic Social Movement Political Spring Synaspismos (faction)
Ireland	Sinn Fein Socialist Workers' Party	Green Party Christian Solidarity Party Socialist Party Workers' Party
Italy	Northern League	National Alliance Communist Refoundation
Luxembourg		Action Committee for Democracy and Pensioners Justice The Left
The Netherlands		Green Party Socialist Party Reformed Political Federation Political Reformed Party Reformed Political League
Portugal		Communist Party Greens
Spain		United Left Galician Nationalist Bloc
Sweden	Green Party Left Party New Future KALE (faction in Christian Democratic Party) Centre No to EU (faction in Centre Party)	Norrbottnen Party Social Democrats Against EMU (faction in Social Democrats) Centre Party
United Kingdom	UK Independence Party Socialist Labour Party British National Party	Green Party Conservative Party Scottish Socialist Party Socialist Alliance Democratic Unionist Party

²³ Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008a

Table A.2 Percentage of citizens holding a negative perception of the EU²⁴

	ITALY	SPAIN	GREECE
apr-00	9%	7%	9%
apr-01	8%	7%	10%
mar-02	4%	5%	8%
oct-02	6%	6%	10%
mar-03	5%	8%	9%
oct-03	11%	6%	9%
feb-04	15%	7%	7%
oct-04	7%	7%	12%
may-05	10%	8%	15%
oct-05	11%	10%	16%
mar-06	5%	6%	15%
sep-06	11%	8%	11%
apr-07	8%	7%	13%
sep-07	10%	6%	10%
mar-08	12%	6%	13%
oct-08	16%	10%	13%
jun-09	10%	11%	19%
oct-09	11%	8%	14%
may-10	12%	11%	24%
nov-10	12%	15%	32%
may-11	14%	15%	39%
nov-11	21%	22%	37%
may-12	29%	33%	40%
nov-12	26%	35%	49%
may-13	24%	38%	50%
nov-13	34%	30%	54%
may-14	29%	29%	44%
nov-14	28%	21%	44%
may-15	25%	16%	37%
nov-15	23%	18%	28%

Table A.3 Percentage of citizens not satisfied with EU democracy²⁵

	ITALY	SPAIN	GREECE
apr-00	40%	20%	28%
nov-00	45%	26%	38%

²⁴ Data retrieved from < <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Chart/index>>

²⁵ Data retrieved from
<<http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/themeKy/2/groupKy/228>>

oct-01	37%	27%	40%
oct-02	38%	23%	36%
mar-03	35%	32%	38%
oct-03	38%	23%	35%
feb-04	38%	26%	27%
oct-04	39%	24%	34%
may-05	31%	24%	39%
mar-06	29%	20%	46%
sep-07	38%	14%	41%
oct-09	32%	30%	41%
may-10	36%	31%	53%
nov-11	47%	43%	66%
may-12	57%	52%	70%
nov-12	53%	55%	77%
may-13	53%	60%	76%
nov-13	58%	59%	75%
may-14	53%	57%	70%
nov-14	52%	59%	68%
may-15	48%	48%	66%

Table A.4 Percentage of distrust in EU institutions²⁶

	Average Italy	Average Spain	Average Greece
apr-00	21%	16%	16%
nov-00	17%	14%	24%
apr-01	15%	20%	24%
ott-01	13%	18%	21%
mar-02	11%	22%	21%
ott-02	13%	17%	24%
mar-03	12%	24%	21%
ott-03	17%	21%	18%
feb-04	19%	24%	15%
ott-04	20%	20%	22%
mag-05	19%	29%	28%
ott-05	26%	26%	37%
mar-06	15%	24%	37%
set-06	29%	22%	30%
apr-07	22%	24%	37%
set-07	24%	17%	28%
mar-08	23%	14%	41%
ott-08	29%	21%	42%
giu-09	31%	36%	46%
ott-09	27%	31%	37%
mag-10	31%	36%	52%

²⁶ Data retrieved from < <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Chart/index>>

nov-10	30%	40%	62%
mag-11	33%	41%	65%
nov-11	38%	50%	65%
mag-12	49%	61%	73%
nov-12	42%	64%	74%
mag-13	45%	68%	73%
nov-13	51%	66%	72%
mag-14	53%	69%	72%
nov-14	45%	59%	69%
mag-15	39%	56%	70%
nov-15	44%	59%	73%

Table A.5 GDP per capita growth (annual %)²⁷

	Italy	Spain	Greece
2000	3,7	4,4	3,5
2001	1,7	2,7	3,6
2002	0,1	1,2	3,5
2003	-0,3	1,3	5,5
2004	0,9	1,4	4,8
2005	0,5	2	0,3
2006	1,7	2,4	5,3
2007	1	1,9	3
2008	-1,7	-0,5	-0,6
2009	-5,9	-4,4	-4,6
2010	1,4	-0,4	-5,6
2011	0,4	-1,4	-9
2012	-3,1	-2,7	-6,8
2013	-2,9	-1,3	-2,5
2014	-1,3	1,7	1,3
2015	0,7	3,4	0,4

Table A.6 Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)²⁸

	Italy	Spain	Greece
2000	10,8	14,2	11,1
2001	9,6	10,7	10,2

²⁷ Data retrieved from < <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD.ZG?view=chart>>

²⁸ Data retrieved from <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.U>

2002	9,2	11,6	10,3
2003	8,9	11,5	9,7
2004	7,9	11,2	10,5
2005	7,7	9,3	9,8
2006	6,8	8,6	8,9
2007	6,1	8,4	8,3
2008	6,7	11,5	7,7
2009	7,8	18,1	9,5
2010	8,4	20,2	12,5
2011	8,4	21,7	17,7
2012	10,7	25,2	24,2
2013	12,2	26,3	27,2
2014	12,5	24,7	26,3
2015	11,9	22,4	25

Table A.7 Summary of the data of the analysis regarding Italy

	Indicator 1: negative perception	Indicator 2: Dissatisfaction with EU democracy	Indicator 3: Distrust in EU institutions	Type of competition system	Party Opposition	GDP	Unemployment
2000	9	42	19	0	1	3,7	10,8
2001	8	37	14	0	1	1,7	9,6
2002	5	38	12	0	1	0,1	9,2
2003	8	36	14	0	1	-0,3	8,9
2004	11	38	19	0	1	0,9	7,9
2005	10	31	22	0	1	0,5	7,7
2006	8	29	22	0	0	1,7	6,8
2007	9	38	23	0	0	1	6,1
2008	14		26	0	1	-1,7	6,7
2009	10	32	29	0	1	-5,9	7,8
2010	12	36	30	0	1	1,4	8,4
2011	17	47	35	0	1	0,4	8,4
2012	27	55	45	0	1	-3,1	10,7
2013	29	55	48	1	1	-2,9	12,2
2014	28	52	49	1	1	-1,3	12,5
2015	24	48	41	1	1	0,7	11,9
Coefficients of correlation							
Indicator 1				0,778204	0,280506	-0,42452	0,712655
Indicator 2				0,651784	0,3541	-0,27582	0,799221

Indicator 3				0,726914	0,174757	-0,4823	0,595543
Average				0,718968	0,269788	-0,39421	0,702473

Table A.8 Summary of the data of the analysis regarding Spain

	Indicator 1: negative perception	Indicator 2: Dissatisfaction with EU democracy	Indicator 3: Distrust in EU institutions	Type of competition system	Party Opposition	GDP	Unemployment
2000	7	23	15	0	0	4,4	14,2
2001	7	27	19	0	0	2,7	10,7
2002	5	23	19	0	0	1,2	11,6
2003	7	27	22	0	0	1,3	11,5
2004	7	25	22	0	0	1,4	11,2
2005	9	24	27	0	0	2	9,3
2006	7	20	23	0	0	2,4	8,6
2007	6	14	20	0	0	1,9	8,4
2008	8		17	0	0	-0,5	11,5
2009	9	30	33	0	0	-4,4	18,1
2010	13	31	38	0	0	-0,4	20,2
2011	18	43	45	0	0	-1,4	21,7
2012	34	53	62	0	0	-2,7	25,2
2013	34	59	67	0	0	-1,3	26,3
2014	25	58	64	1	1	1,7	24,7
2015	17	48	57	1	1	3,4	22,4
Coefficients of correlation							
Indicator 1				0,308923	0,308923	-0,42535	0,887278
Indicator 2				0,538067	0,538067	-0,36629	0,936649
Indicator 3				0,548164	0,548164	-0,36738	0,929492
Average				0,465051	0,465051	-0,38634	0,917806

Table A.9 Summary of the data of the analysis regarding Greece

	Indicator 1: negative perception	Indicator 2: Dissatisfaction with EU democracy	Indicator 3: Distrust in EU institutions	Type of competition system	Party Opposition	GDP	Unemployment
2000	9	33	20	0	0	3,5	11,1

2001	10	40	22	0	0	3,6	10,2
2002	9	36	22	0	0	3,5	10,3
2003	9	36	19	0	0	5,5	9,7
2004	9	30	18	0	0	4,8	10,5
2005	15	39	32	0	0	0,3	9,8
2006	13	46	33	0	0	5,3	8,9
2007	11	41	32	0	0	3	8,3
2008	13		41	0	0	-0,6	7,7
2009	16	41	41	0	0	-4,6	9,5
2010	28	53	57	0	0	-5,6	12,5
2011	38	66	65	0	0	-9	17,7
2012	44	73	73	1	1	-6,8	24,2
2013	52	75	72	1	1	-2,5	27,2
2014	44	69	70	1	1	1,3	26,3
2015	32	66	71	0	1	0,4	25
Coefficients of correlation							
Indicator 1				0,80719	0,825914	-0,65877	0,92506
Indicator 2				0,742681	0,833323	-0,64142	0,917517
Indicator 3				0,663327	0,792585	-0,72302	0,862641
Average				0,737733	0,817274	-0,6744	0,901739