1 The Making of Europe: Mediation Communication and Culture. Introduction to the volume.

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European integration has traditionally been studied primarily by scholars of economics, politics, law and history. These disciplines have been 'present' in the attempt to analyse, understand and even predict 'Europe' almost from the very start of the European project. The study of the media, however, in the context of Europe flourished relatively recently, with research and analysis focusing on questions that established 'European Studies' have missed in their attention to institutions. Sociology, Cultural Studies and Media Studies have approached Europe as an anthropological field of study, where the people making Europe what it is today are equally to or sometimes even more important than the institutions that govern it. As an area of enquiry, the 'making of Europe' deserves to be explored for its history, politics and cultural dynamics that have shaped the ways in which European integration is taking place. Not a complete project but rather a process, the EU has rightly been explored in terms of its relation to social symbolic worlds, through its relation to the making and accessing audiovisual artefacts, arts and cultures. This strand of studying Europe- but also, as we will see of 'making' Europe - has progressed largely within national contexts. Of course, a lot of attention has been given to cross-national comparison, within and outside Europe, yet, still, in many ways research only seldom has exceeded its national character.

As scholarly attention to media and communication issues in Europe has grown significantly in the past 20 years, better, richer understanding and accounts of what 'Europe' *is* and what it *should be* emerge. These accounts consider not only structural, legal, political dimensions of the processes of integration, but also the role of representation of Europeans, or Europe and the European Union in the media, the role of culture in integration but also in

politics and the role of communication in questions of legitimacy. Before then, such research as there was on European 'communication' tended to focus on the issues common to political science : public opinion, state formation, issues of institution building, international relations and trade, and comparative politics. This can be explained by the nature and history of European integration, and by the status of media and communication studies within academe as a relatively new discipline in many EU states. Studies of communication in Europe have been few and far between. Early work in the 1960s arose from the systematic study of post-industrial societies where it was assumed that people would have more time to invest in activities not associated with the imperative of earning a living and providing for a family, the great stimulus for affective identity and loyalty building common to many theories of integration in the late 1950s and 1960s.

Consequently, attention focused on opinion polls – whether people saw 'Europe' as a 'good' or 'bad' thing. Eurobarometer reports from this period gradually shifted attention to trying to understand better how the public viewed the European Community, its activities and priorities. A striking mismatch between what the public expected the EC to do and what its actual constitutional powers were became evident. This gap was seen to be one of several causes for public disinterest in and/or disappointment with the EC. From this it was deduced that if the EC institutions had greater authority and legislative competence, public attitudes towards the EC/EU and integration would become more positive. Positive inclination was probed more deeply and the argument took hold that the better educated a person was (measured by the highest level of qualification a person possessed, or university attendance) the more likely it was that s/he would be favourably inclined towards the EC/EU. From the 1970s on wards, this was correlated with age, socio-economic status, state of residence and level of knowledge about the EC/EU [Inglehart and Rabier].

A particularly influential argument emerged during the 1970s in the run-up to the first ever universal elections to a supranational European 'Assembly' (later 'Parliament') to the effect that turnout in such elections would depend on the level of knowledge and awareness the public possessed about such an electoral opportunity. At that stage, the issue was not the existence or otherwise

of a European public sphere so much as what could or should supranational policymakers do in order to ensure that voters turned out to elect politicians to a little known, rather powerless (and therefore potentially pointless), consultative talking shop – the European Assembly. Were the elections merely to symbolise shared democratic norms or did they have transformative potential, both institutionally and vis-à-vis voters?

The 1979 elections to the European Parliament in the then nine member states constituted a momentous occasion in post-war European history. Getting out the vote, and persuading more people to vote in Euro elections than commonly voted in US Presidential elections challenged all concerned. And how do you persuade them that doing so is significant and worthwhile when those elections have no impact on the political colour of a government? And when no European level 'government' as such exists? Just because Euro elections were held did not mean that all EEC member governments were equally enthusiastic about the prospect of such elections. Quite the contrary. Some were concerned that elected Euro MP (MEPs) would eventually challenge their authority and that many of them in the meantime would simply be either less important than local councillors, Euro-bores, or a nuisance.

Worse still, when these elections took place, the Commission's role was contested in some member states. Some wanted the Commission to be no more than an administrative body, a civil service stripped of the right conferred on it by the Rome Treaty to initiative legislation in the European common interest. Some saw little point in giving the European Assembly the right to be elected when legislative decisions were taken by the Council of Ministers, without reference to the majority wishes of the Euro MPs, all of whom until then were their nominees. Others, however, wanted the occasion marked by a reasonable turnout as a symbol of democratic legitimation. All agonised over the question of getting out the vote. All had to tread carefully to avoid upsetting national laws on political campaigns.

Without genuine transnational political parties to mobilise the electorate, steps had to be taken to inform the electorate about the elections without simultaneously persuading voters to elect one particular candidate over another. This was a tall order. Small units in the secretariat of the European Commission and the European Assembly accordingly had to draft common,

objective (i.e. non-ideological) neutral information leaflets to be made available throughout the member states in more or less uniform formats, translated into the official languages and using identical illustrations. Electioneering as such was left to national parties, with a little funding being given to the European Assembly's party groups for similar types of information. The result? Not the stuff to make the heart beat faster. Not the stuff to turn heads and make people feel they were all Europeans together.

While the European research landscape has changed dramatically since 1979, the question of affective identification with the 'European project' continues to be asked.

In 2009, the 'human face' was not missing as it had been in much of the information material produced for the first Euro elections. But scepticism and a lack of understanding of the genuine impact of the work of the European Parliament and other EU institutions remained. The importance of democratic elections, as understood in Western liberal democratic polities, to the conduct of government and to the relationship between government and citizens was further fuelled in the interim by the EU's expansion and anticipated further enlargement. The normative values of what it meant to 'be' or 'identify' oneself as an EU 'citizen' and with its goals assumed greater importance among researchers. Simultaneously, the EU's legislative competence had grown and culture had been recognised as part of the EU's legitimate, if contested, sphere of activity. It is also probably of no coincidence that the development of media and cultural policy in the EU went hand in hand with the development of European Parliament's legislative powers and symbolic standing. Ever since the 'internal' identity of the Assembly – and later Parliament- surfaced as truly European, media and culture became significant objects of debate, even though the polity did not recognise them as a matter of its jurisdiction until their real market value emerged in the technological r/evolution of the 1980s and 1990s [Sarikakis 2004; 2010; 2010b].

Nevertheless, the slow reaction to the media as an emerging and powerful industry in the European Union was accompanied by somewhat simplified cause-and-effect studies of media and communication that nevertheless pointed out important issues: from the 1970s, psephological studies of Euro elections, parties and processes grew. Column inches, ratio and television broadcasts

within member states and by members of the European Broadcasting Union were measured. The conclusion was that 'communicating Europe' suffered from:

(i) A lack of coherence and cohesion - The preparation of campaign material for the elections was left in the hands of national parties fielding national candidates in their own member state according to electoral rules that either mirrored or slightly amended national general election rules from rules on voter and candidate eligibility criteria, to campaign, television and financial criteria.

(ii) Invisibility - It was hard to discern the quintessential Europeanness of the world's first supranational elections to an 'Assembly' intent on being more than a mere 'talking shop' in an institution (the EEC) that the Soviet Union regarded as the hostile economic arm of NATO and the USA.

(iii) Unintelligibility - Levels of knowledge and awareness about the EEC were low and even lower regarding the existence let alone role of MEPs. The question for potential MEPs and the Commission (which was debarred from 'politics') was how to get the vote out. Since the European Parliament's nominated outgoing members had claimed that Euro elections were essential to boost the EEC's democratic legitimacy (and with it their quest for legislative authority and executive accountability), getting as high a turnout as possible was seen as important. It still is, thirty years later.

(iv) A lack of common symbols for affective identity building – Euro campaign manifestos and logos were controversial per se. The first Euro-elections were a common electoral event, but the campaigns resembled parallel national elections rather than a distinctive European event. A marked lack of coherent organisation, programmatic coherence, funding or sense of purpose among the politicians contesting the elections persisted into the 1990s.

Devoid of the usual spin and ideological rhetoric, which could be seen as 'influencing' the outcome, the material for 'communicating Europe' from any EC/EU institution had to meet the criterion of neutral, objective information, presented in 'safe' ways. At the same time, the communication industries in Europe were gaining ground in shaping Europe's media and cultural landscape. Yet, any legislative or regulatory provision to allow for the substantial and

comprehensive mediation of what Europe is about or even about visions of what Europe should become were never materialised.

The diffusion of responsibility and accountability in the supranational polity was recognised as imposing additional challenges for the diffusion of information to voters, as well as for taking responsibility and initiative for the field of media and culture. For national political reasons this did not translate into an information stategy to mobilise the electorate or develop a related European media agenda. Why? The member governments and national parliaments had a vested interest in limiting 'their' voters' interest in an institution that neither wished to see acquiring genuine legislative authority and the capacity to query them effectively let alone rival their own authority generally: the multi-level supranational system allowed them to use its institutions (most commonly the European Commission) as a scape-goat to blame for measures unpopular with domestic electorates but measures that they had often covertly approved in the Council of Ministers. They could also, in an atmosphere of generalised public ignorance take credit for all manner of measures.

This question of legitimacy, which was visible in and ranged from the ways in which decisions emanating from the European Community were presented to the public, and how much they were reflected in traditional media, fed the core debate among theorists of European integration on the one hand, as to the nature, structure, consequences, and implications for publics of the ensuing democratic deficit. It also fed the debate on the extent to which the EC had or should acquire the legal right to 'intervene' in cultural matters, such as in regulating the media industries by supporting media pluralism or strategies and funding for the development of the film industry. Whereas political scientists and to a lesser extent legal scholars reflected on structural aspects of Euro elections, a complementary way of assessing Euro elections was put forward Jay Blumler, reflecting on their 'newsworthiness' and on programming decisions made before the start of the campaign proper. News consumption was shown to be positively correlated with education, socioeconomic status, political interest, knowledge and involvement, and negatively correlated with age thereby reinforcing the model of public engagement presented by opinion pollsters. The flirtation with the idea of a supranational political space of

communication, a European public sphere was a goal that was seen as realisable by virtue of the self-interested, self-mobilisation of elite consumers of news.

Later, Cultural and Media studies developed rich approaches to the political, cultural and sociological problems associated with the complexity of economic integration, political integration and social cohesion [Sarikakis 2008; Roche 2010; Sassatelli 2008]. They also brought together their earlier questions of identity and questions of belonging to the discussion on integration, which reflects upon media constructions of 'Europeanness' for example as well as the construction of Otherness vis-à-vis a European heritage and common culture. Within this strand of enquiry, public sphere, cultural diversity and cultural underpinning of social cohesion are themes that transverse the boundaries of disciplines but also, significantly, the concerns of policymakers and political leaders [Shore 2003; Littoz-Monnet 2009]. In addition, interdisciplinary approaches to European integration sought to analyse the underlying institutional dynamics and their impact on the media and the impact of the EU on emerging media sites such as those in Eastern Europe and accession countries.

However, a great deal of the interest developed around how and why and what form the EC/EU and its interaction and relationship with publics and citizens took is linked to the evolution of the legislative role and activities of the European Parliament. This took place in many ways. The first direct election of the European Parliament led to the first empirical studies of the role of the EC Commission and the European Parliament's press and information offices in the dissemination of information to citizens. Lodge and Herman's review of the tortuous, political sensitivities surrounding the two offices collaborating in Brussels and in the member states, and their delicate balancing roles vis-à-vis national governments and media revealed the extent of structural, political and communication problems. The most intractable were political. However, many continued to see the 'fault' lying with the structure of European media, including the European Broadcasting Union, and with editorial content. All this fed an emerging discourse over the nature and development of Euro citizenship as is shown in this book.

This book aims provide a range of readings for the scholar and student of European integration and Communication and Culture that illustrate some of

the latest directions of analysis of the EU as a process of construction. The book therefore explores the complex relation of the polity and its communication systems on two fronts. First, first it explores critical issues in relation to the ways in which the polity 'communicates' with its citizens through either its own strategic goals and actions or through the effects of media activity on Europe's 'public sphere/s'. Second, it explores, in specific ways, Europe's approach to the development of its media in especially volatile times where marketisation and liberalisation of communications has raised many concerns about the democratic basis of the media landscape and its impact for the polity. Indeed through these two analytical categories, communication and media as an object of policy and communication as a strategy, crucial questions about the EU are discussed. In particular, we focus on the realisability of and obstacles to the normal functioning of a public sphere in the EU [Kleinen, Littoz-Monnet, Lodge, Sarikakis] and what this means for EU citizens, residents and third country nationals [Perez; Tsaliki]; the new mediatised 'democratic deficit' [Kaitatzi-Whitlock]; and the EU's strategies to boost its own 'identity' through communication and through financial and programmatic support for European content within and beyond the EU [Baltruschat, Crusafon, de Vinck & Pauwels].

The book is organised in three parts that aim to emphasise these debates and offer discussions around the most current and topical themes. Part one focuses on variations of representation of Europe: Europe as a polity, as an economic social and political community, Europe in its margins and Europe of the 'Other'. This section is concerned with the impact of media representations and mediations of certain images of Europe in these facets for citizens, including democracy and social well being. Section two is concerned with the ways in which Europe as a polity has an impact on shaping the development of the media landscape in the current climate of marketisation, crisis, and competition. The chapters here address central issues in the making of media policy through attention to subsidies for European content and market mechanisms, the internationalisation of its support programmes for 'indigenous' material and alliances with other regions of the world, and the outcome of Europe's involvement in processes of global production. Part three deals anew with the question of European identity as an overarching theoretical,

empirical, historical and socio-politico-legal concern through the lenses of communication and culture. It shows how the development of an internalised sense of community – the 'affective identity formation' discussed by early integration theorists – can be encouraged but cannot be forced. The rich diversity of culture and peoples, and the concomitant tolerance, are to be prized. A homogeneous, single people was never the aim: mutual respect, common recognition of shared destiny, values, ideals and cooperative problem solving and conflict resolution were central to Jean Monnet's approach to European integration. While this was embodied first in politico-economic- legal integration, much can be learned from the important role that communication and culture play in sustaining and enriching integration, a sense of we-ness and an appreciation of how working together helps to perpetuate and develop values and practices to which many outside the aspire, and which many inside it take for granted. The common cultural heritage and communication of European diversity has many facets. This book attempts to provide a taster of just a few of them.

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