



**PhD Program in
Political Science**

Ph.D. THESIS

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Party-based Euroscepticism

abstract

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Institute for Political Science

Ph.D. Thesis

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Table of contents

I. The subject and questions of the study	4
I.1. Definition of Euroscepticism	4
I.2. Types of Euroscepticism	11
II. Applied methodology	12
III. The results of the thesis	17
IV. Main references.....	25
V. Author's publications	30

I. The subject and questions of the study

I.1. Definition of Euroscepticism

In recent years, party-based Euroscepticism has become one of the hottest topics of not only the media, but also of the political science. The economic crisis – first of all the crisis of the Eurozone – and the strengthening of Eurosceptic parties have contributed to this fact, illustrated for example by the Finnish parliamentary election in 2011, the two Greek legislative elections in 2012 and the Italian one in 2013. In addition, the issue of the European integration has become more and more important for both parties and voters: it is enough to think of the ratification problems of the Lisbon Treaty, the fall of the Slovak government in 2011 because of the voting on the European Financial Stability Facility or the restructuring of the Greek party system in 2012.

However, the topic is not new for political science: political scientists have been dealing with Euroscepticism since the mid-1990s. Euroscepticism was defined by Paul Taggart (1998) for the first time, when he analysed the parties' positions on the European Union. Later the concept was imported to the area of the examination of public opinion (Serricchio et al, 2013: 52), and

nowadays it is commonly used for all negative attitudes towards the EU and the European integration (Boomgaarden et al., 2010).

I analysed party-based Euroscepticism in my dissertation, however, I consider it important to present the other approaches of political science. Krouwel and Abts (2007) created their 5 categories along the trust in the integration, of which – in terms of Euroscepticism – the disbelief in the functioning of EU institutions and fatalism about the future of the European project (eurocynicism), and the full disillusionment and rejection of the integration (euro-alienation) are relevant (Krouwel and Abts, 2007: 262-263). Weßels (2007) classifies Eurosceptic voters into three groups according to their level of identification with the European Union and the extent of their EU identity. According to him, there are adamant Eurosceptics, Eurosceptics and critical Europeans.

The other dimension of the analysis of voters' attitudes is the exploration of the reasons of Euroscepticism. In this field of the researches, the study of Lubbers and Scheepers (2005) played a pioneer role. They distinguish political and instrumental Euroscepticism. The authors think that the researches on Eurosceptic voters focus too much on the latter aspect, namely on voters' beliefs whether their country's EU membership is beneficial. In opposition to this, political Euroscepticism means the rejection of the EU and any further transfer of power. Sørensen (2007; 2008)

differentiates four types of public Euroscepticism: economic, sovereignty-based, democratic and social Euroscepticism.

I examined party-based Euroscepticism in my dissertation, I pay attention to the most important definitional and research problems below. As far as the analysis of party-based Euroscepticism is concerned, according to Cas Mudde (2012), basically there are two schools. The first approach – called Sussex school by Mudde – is related to Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak. Although Taggart (1997; 1998) interpreted Euroscepticism as a party of a broader populist politics, around the turn of the millennium, he and Szczerbiak (2000; 2008) elaborated the most common definitions and grouping of Euroscepticism. The authors distinguish hard Euroscepticism, referring to the outright rejection of the whole European economic and political project or opposing the EU membership, and soft Euroscepticism, which means contingent or qualified opposition of the European integration (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2000: 6)

First serious criticism of this concept was drawn up by Petr Kopecký and Cas Mudde (2002). According to them, soft Euroscepticism is defined in a broad manner, the distinction between hard and soft Euroscepticism is blurred, the criteria of the two forms of Euroscepticism are unclear and these two categories do not distinguish the relation to the European Union and the relation

to the European integration enough. Due to this fourth reason, Kopecný and Mudde created another grouping scheme (table 1). The authors differentiate the relation to the ongoing integration process (EU-optimist, EU-pessimist) and the idea of any European integration (Europhile, Europhobe).

Table 1. Grouping of Kopecný and Mudde

	Europhile	Europhobe
EU-optimist	Euroenthusiast	Europragmatist
EU-pessimist	Eurosceptic	Euroreject

Source: Kopecný and Mudde, 2002: 303.

Naturally, the category of Euroenthusiast is not a subject of the examination of Euroscepticism. It is quite clear as well, that the class of Eurosceptic is not principal opposition of the European integration, it only refers to some worries about the current form of the EU, so this type fits into the category of soft Euroscepticism of Taggart and Szczerbiak. On the other hand, the category of Euroreject opposes both the European Union and the idea of the European integration, so it is not hard to classify it as hard Euroscepticism.

Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008b) see three problems of the grouping of Kopecný and Mudde: the category of Eurosceptic is

defined in a too narrow way, the class of Europragmatist is illogical and the category of Euroenthusiast is too broad because there are different degrees between the parties that support the current integration process.

As a result, the definitions of Taggart and Szczerbiak become more concrete in 2008. Hard Euroscepticism is the principled opposition to the EU and European integration. Parties that think their countries should withdraw from the EU or ‘whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed the whole project of the European integration as it is currently conceived’. (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008a: 7). Soft Euroscepticism is ‘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 interest» is currently at odds with the EU’s trajectory’ (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008a: 8).

In my dissertation, I also present in detail further theories related to the Sussex school, such as Flood (2002); Fuchs, Roger and Magni-Berton (2009) and Kaniok (2009); however, these concepts are not as significant as the above mentioned ones.

Mudde (2012) considers the other relevant school the North Carolina school, which is connected to Leonard Ray. Ray (1999) measures Euroscepticism in a seven-grade scale by expert surveys. However, he does not define Euroscepticism. Marks et al.

(2000; 2002) try to fit Euroscepticism into the cleavage theory based on the data base that Ray started to build. Authors belonging to this school came up with the theory that the European cleavage is derivable from the opposition of the green-alternative-liberal and traditional-authoritarian-nationalist standpoints. This approach has become the origo of the North Carolina school. I think that this theory covers reality poorly critic because there are several critics of the European Union among the new left and green parties as well, while conservative parties in Scandinavia are traditionally in favour of the further deepening of the European integration. In addition, this theory does not explain why there are a significant number of established Eurosceptic parties and Eurosceptic factions within them.

Nick Sitter (2002) concludes that Euroscepticism can be described with the classic divides, which are consequences of the parties' strategies, not – as the North Carolina school states – of the parties' ideologies and programs. Hix (2007) says that the phenomenon of Euroscepticism can be perceived as an anti-centralization effort. Hix expounds that every political actor will weigh up whether the EU policy regime is closer to or further away from its preferred set of policies and to what direction the policy area will change at domestic and European level. In my opinion, Eurosceptic parties do not make any cost-benefit anal-

yses, but – depending on the party – the source of their Euroscepticism is derivable from either its ideology or its strategy.

It is clear, that there are not any unified definitions about Euroscepticism, even any unified approach. Researchers consider different parties as Eurosceptic, or they say different things about the same parties. The second problem is that researches do not aim to explore the reasons (ie. the arguments and their drivers) of the Eurosceptic parties, only try to perceive it as one or maximum two trends (soft and hard).

In this context, there is another huge problem in most researches, namely that they make snapshots about the phenomenon instead of examination in a historical context within its (domestic) environment. What is to say, researches do not deal with the fact that both the parties and the European Union are always moving, the standpoints are changing and other topics are taking centre stage.

Because of these arguments, I use my own definition on Euroscepticism which – in my opinion – defines the phenomenon in a much better way. Eurosceptic party is a party which oppose or criticise the current European integration, some parts of it, or its decision-making process or mechanism, where the criticism is basically principal-based, not policy-based.

I.2. Types of Euroscepticism

In the dissertation I emphasise the importance of the arguments about the European Union of the Eurosceptic parties. This topic does not have as far-reaching literature as the definition of the Euroscepticism has, however, its importance cannot be emphasised enough.

Taggart classified Eurosceptic parties according to party families, which he identifies with types of Euroscepticism. He created four categories: single-issue Eurosceptic parties, protest-based Eurosceptic parties, established Eurosceptic parties and parties with Eurosceptic faction (Taggart, 1997: 11-12). Although this classification is relevant, there are debates about party families.

Similarly to Taggart, one of Riishøj's grouping (2007) is focusing on party families. Riishøj concludes that there are three types of Eurosceptic parties: liberal conservative (or neo-liberal), traditional conservative and left-populist. His other classification is much more innovative, though, it does not concentrate on parties. In my opinion, it is important to present it because it focuses on the drivers of Euroscepticism. He created nine categories of Euroscepticism: identity-based, cleavage-based, policy-based, institutionally based, national interest-based, experience-based,

party-based, Atlantic-based and practice-based Euroscepticism (Riishøj, 2007: 508-509).

These classifications inspired me to create my own categories. The second important aim of my research is to examine the nature of the reasons with which Eurosceptic parties criticise the European Union. In addition, I examined Eurosceptic parties in government position, and that whether Euroscepticism changed in time – particularly as a result of the crisis of the Eurozone.

II. Applied methodology

The largest part of the dissertation is the empirical part. I examined the state, logic and changes of party-based Euroscepticism in all 28 member states. Whereas the research directed on the parties, they were my units of observation. I analysed Eurosceptic parties that had representation in the national or European Parliament on October 31th 2013. Party programmes was my baseline, moreover, parliamentary votings on European issues are available in most member states. My data covers the entire population of relevant Eurosceptic parties. Research was carried out from the foundation of the European Economic Community (1957) in time, but only parties above were examined thoroughly.

The most important part of the dissertation is the analysis of the parties' relation to federalism. Associated to this, the appropriate indicator has to be chosen. No debate has unfolded yet about the indicators of Euroscepticism in the literature, although its antecedents are coeval with the literature. Taggart argues in his first study on Euroscepticism that the relation to the Maastricht Treaty is a good indicator of Euroscepticism because it reappraised the European Union, Eurosceptics could express their opposition this way and general support of the EU declined in public opinion (Taggart, 1998: 366-367). I think, Taggart's suggestion is basically good, and this method is useful later as well because of the changes of Euroscepticism can be followed easily through 2-3 treaties within a decade.

In my opinion, the expert survey used by the North Carolina School is not enough by itself. Data received from the survey – beyond that subjectivity cannot be excluded – are unreliable in the case of low response rate.

The most serious question in connection with the indicator is its operationalizability. My aim was that the indicator should be simple and easily operationalizable (Taggart and Szerzbiak, 2008b: 246). The examination of party programmes could be misleading: it can happen, that a hard Eurosceptic party moderates itself in government or neutralises the European issue and changes

its European policy, like the French Communist Party did in 1997 (Benedetto and Quaglia, 2007: 482; Grunberg, 2008: 42). Similar problem could be caused by the analysis of parliamentary votings: the two green parties and the People's Union (VU) in Belgium rejected the Nice Treaty simply because they did not feel it European enough (Deschouwer and Van Assche, 2008: 82). 'Honest' voting can come to the European Parliament, but parties becoming relevant that time (e.g. Sweden Democrats, Independent Greeks) would be omitted from the research in this case.

During the research, I relied basically on primary data collection. Most important data were made up by the collection of available party programmes and parliamentary votings. In addition, naturally, I used secondary sources (literature) as well to check the primary sources. Moreover, I took into the research some parties which do not belong to the population of the purpose of illustration, comparison and the historical arc of the dissertation by secondary sources.

Different treaties deepening the European Union – more precisely parties' standpoint on them – create very good bases sufficiently dense clues and opportunities for operationalization. Therefore, classification according to the relation to the federal Europe has a benefit because it is always current as the reform of the European Union is continuously on the agenda – which cannot

be said about the relation to the membership (hard and soft Euro-scepticism).

I see the synthesis of the three methods: considering party program as a base, I examined the reason if a party did not vote according to its party programme. It happened whether the party was in government, whether changed its standpoint, or maybe some other domestic factor affected it. Kaniok argues that it is important to examine parties' rhetoric (Kaniok, 2009: 166), however, I dispute this statement. Rhetoric is for voters, but a party which supports the deepening of the European integration while its leader criticises the European Union in some other issues cannot be deemed as Eurosceptic.

The largest part of the dissertation is clearly the empirical chapter and it was the basis of the temporal segmentation of the Euroscepticism. However, I did not want to avoid the questions needing hypotheses. I tried to create hypotheses to complete the classification – which was the spine of the research – with relevant information.

H1: *Eurosceptic parties moderate their Euroscepticism in government.*

During the testing of the hypothesis, I examined every case when a Eurosceptic party was part of the government. I did not deal with those cases, when a Eurosceptic party was in government before the EU accession. Its reason is that Eurosceptic parties focus much more on the question of membership which could be misleading because if a party opposed to join the EU, it does not mean that the party is hard Eurosceptic (e.g. Estonian Centre Party). Operationalization was made by the way that was used in the case of the examination of the classification.

H2: The nature and changes of the European integration influence the nature and appearance of Euroscepticism.

In connection with this hypothesis, I primarily supposed that new Eurosceptic parties can emerge as an effect of treaties deepening the integration or some other events (e.g. economic crisis). Conversely: whether existing parties have responded to these changes, or perhaps none of these options occurred. In my opinion, it is relevant to examine that whether the phenomenon of Euroscepticism is constant or continuously changing. During the testing of the hypothesis I took into consideration, to what extent one or another party thanks its success for Euroscepticism, how

emphatic the critique of the European Union has been in its policy, and what other factors could play a role.

I closed my dissertation on October 31th 2013, so all parliamentary elections organised in 2013 were included in it.

III. The results of the thesis

The primary goal of the dissertation was the solving of the problems of definitions and classifications described above. I tried to give a complete picture on Eurosceptic parties existing in member states. Based on the case studies I state that the most important difference between Eurosceptic parties is the advocate of the intergovernmental cooperation and the support of a tighter integration. A special case is formed by those – mainly left-wing – parties which do not support the current European integration for ideological reasons, but they can imagine another tighter cooperation.

As a result, three groups of Eurosceptic parties wanting to unbuild the European integration can be differentiated. The first set – with the smallest number of clusters (cardinality) – is made up by hard Eurosceptic parties. Anti-federalist parties in favour of intergovernmental cooperation belong to the second. Vast majority of these parties justify the rejection of a deeper integration with

the defence of the national sovereignty. Parties that reject the current integration because they consider other values important pertain to the third group called supporters of an alternative integration. In this case, parties oppose not the idea, but the practice of a tighter cooperation. Among the Eurosceptic parties which accept the general economic and/or political framework (conformist Eurosceptic parties) major differences cannot be found. Basically, these parties criticise or reject one (or a number) of typically important part of the European Union.

Table 2. Classification of Eurosceptic parties (with one example)

Hard	Anti-federalist	Supporting alternative integration	Conformist
United Kingdom Independence Party (GB)	Danish People's Party (DK)	Coalition of Radical Left (GR)	Labour Party (M)

The international car sign of the country within the party exists can be found behind the party's name in parentheses.

As far as the relevance of the classification is concerned, I found that there are only 10 significant hard Eurosceptic parties existing in the European Union. Out of the 63 analysed parties, 15 parties are clearly conformist Eurosceptic, in addition, 12 mainly left-wing Eurosceptic parties think in terms of another type of

integration. There are 26 antifederalist soft Eurosceptic parties in my sample.

During the research I examined with what reasons Eurosceptic parties criticise or reject a part of or the whole European integration. Based on this, I created five categories.

Sovereignty-based Euroscepticism means if a party opposes to the integration or a part of it because it impairs its country's sovereignty, or if the national sovereignty and/or the real or perceived occurrence of the national interest's damage stands in the centre of the party's critique.

Democracy-based Euroscepticism based on the 'democracy-deficit' in the European Union and it is in connection with the critiques of the bureaucratic institutions and decision-making. Regionalist and separatist parties criticising that the regions are excluded from the most important decision-making mechanisms belong to this category as well.

Leftist Euroscepticism rests on two pillars. One of them is that anti-capitalist attitude, which aims at socialism or the creation of a kind of proletarian union. It is the Marxist-Leninist and Trotskyist parties' own. On the other hand, a kind of leftist Euroscepticism stand out along the new left parties' classical values (anti-globalisation, social sensitivity, anti-capitalism in some cases, pacifism).

Periphery-based Euroscepticism is the critiques of the Eurosceptic parties in the periphery countries of the European Union which originate from the fact that these countries are poorer than the countries at the centre of the EU. So these parties experience the FDI from the centre as colonisation. Usually these parties criticise the decision-making process dominated by France and Germany. In the case of the post-communist countries, it is coupled with the fact, that these member states joined the EU later and with worse conditions.

Redistribution-based Euroscepticism is when a party's critique against the EU is drawn up by a redistribution issue. On the one hand, the source of these criticisms is the fact that some policy areas have a decreasing share from the EU budget (e.g. Common Agricultural Policy). Therefore, part of the defenders of these policy areas has been interested in the maintenance of the status quo. The other subtype of this category has become visible in connection with the crisis of the Eurozone. Its essence is that according to Eurosceptic parties of richer member states these countries should not finance the countries in trouble.

These five categories are illustrated by Table 3.

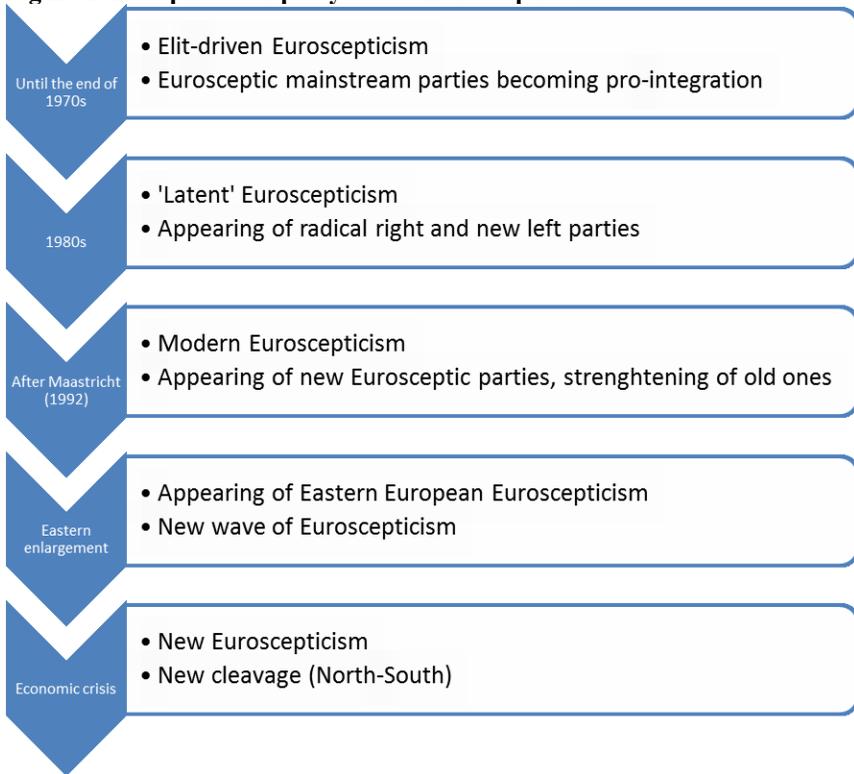
Table 3. Main groups of critiques of Eurosceptic parties

Sovereignty	Democracy	Leftist	Periphery	Redistribution
Conservative and Unionist Party (GB)	Environment Party – The Greens (S)	French Communist Party (F)	Golden Dawn (GR)	Freedom and Solidarity (SK)

The international car sign of the country within the party exists can be found behind the party's name in parentheses.

I sectioned Euroscepticism in time based on the country studies. I found that the Maastricht Treaty has been the most important turning point, however, other important events – e.g. Eastern enlargement starting in 2004 and the crisis of the Eurozone – are also major phase borders. Based on this, I differentiated five phases of Euroscepticism (Figure 1)

Figure 1. Five phases of party-based Euroscepticism



In the dissertation, I also examined the behaviour of Eurosceptic parties in government. Although in opposition to the statement of the hypothesis (H1) – these parties moderate its Euroscepticism in government – I experience moderation only in the half of cases, there were other factors which can explain the fact that several parties did not give up their Euroscepticism. On the one hand, systemconforming Eurosceptic parties would have be-

come pro-European, if these parties had moderated their Euro-scepticism. In some cases, it is hard to state sure about Euro-sceptic parties because of the short government term. I also experience in some cases, though there were not moderating, but the party simply neutralised the question of European integration in government.

I found three unequivocal cases against H1 hypothesis. The reason in one case is the characteristic Euro-sceptic leader. During De Gaulle's presidency, Euro-scepticism gained ground in France, followed by moderation after the fall of the leader: they accepted the British, Danish and Irish intention to join the Community. In the other two cases (Northern League 2001-06, Conservative Party 2010-), Euro-scepticism has appeared as a determining part of the party's character. The anti-euro attitude and Euro-scepticism of the Northern League became more emphatic in the years of millennium. If they had abandoned Euro-scepticism, it would have led to the loss of the party's identity. It is similar to the British Conservative government standing up in 2010. Prime minister David Cameron has been trying to take the European issue on of the most important topic, moreover, Tories had to emphasise their Euro-scepticism because lots of its voters started to support UKIP.

In connection with the second hypothesis (H2), it was necessary to examine whether on the one hand, the nature of Euroscepticism changed and, on the other hand, whether Eurosceptic parties could respond to the changes caused by the European integration, or these changes contributed to successes of new Eurosceptic parties. I found that arguments of Eurosceptic parties have changed partly, emphases can shift, however, the ‘core’ of Euroscepticism consists of the same arguments (sovereignty, anti-capitalism, social dimension, democracy-deficit). As a result of the Eastern enlargement, periphery-based Euroscepticism has come into view not only in new member states, but also in Southern-European countries. Due to the economic and debt crisis, the situation of the redistribution-based Euroscepticism is very similar within the Eurozone.

Appearance of Euroscepticism has also changed: single-issue Eurosceptic parties are decreasing, while new parties (e.g. Team Stronach) have broken into the political arena along one (or a number of) question of the European integration. Basically, those Eurosceptic parties could become successful, which could find any new European issue (e.g. anti-euro). When they did not do this, the key of their success was the fact that their Eurosceptic rivals have been radical parties unacceptable for some groups of the voters. There are also new Eurosceptic parties, whose success

has not been only due to their Euroscepticism, but also due to the protest mood (e.g. Five Star Movement).

The research could be continued – besides extending it beyond the borders of the EU – into two directions. One of them is the change of the salience of the European issue. It could show what role Euroscepticism played in the success of the party. The other dimension could be the change of the voters' relation to the European integration. In connection with it, a hypothesis can be drawn up: European issue is increasingly important for voters. In other words: they are increasingly willing to vote along the European issue. At the examination of the voters' level, referenda could be involved into the research as well.

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