

Contesting Europe: A Time-Series Cross-Sectional Analysis of
Euro-sceptic Influence over Mainstream Political Parties

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1. Introduction

From Nicolas Sarkozy and Francois Fillon calling for a renegotiation of the Schengen agreement or arguing that ‘Brexit’ criticism of the EU is justified¹, to CSU leadership praising AFD voters², and from David Cameron being pressed into offering a ‘Brexit’ referendum, to Federica Mogherini stating that recent election results show ‘there is a need to rethink the EU project’³, there is growing evidence that Europe’s moderate and hitherto pro-Integration political establishment is feeling ever more pressure from the Eurosceptic wave that is sweeping the continent. The process of European Integration is facing an unprecedented degree of challenge and contestation as successful Eurosceptic and fringe party mobilization are calling the project of „ever closer union“ into question. This dissertation investigates in what ways Eurosceptic policy entrepreneurs are able to influence traditional and mainstream politics in Western Europe.

While it is already taken for granted that the EU’s traditional permissive consensus⁴ has been replaced by a „constraining dissensus“, it is still an open question how Europe’s party systems will react to growing distrust towards the EU and the growing appeal of Eurosceptic parties. The central research question of this dissertation is thus “Does the electoral success of Eurosceptic Parties force other political parties in their countries to change their position on the issue of European Integration?”⁵

Do Europe’s mainstream parties maintain their standard discourse and policy positions unaltered, or are they forced to qualify their typical pro-integration stances when Eurosceptic challengers are successful at the ballot box? If such adjustments in policy positions occur, what lies behind them? Are some parties or party systems more susceptible to Eurosceptic „Contagion“ than others? These are just some of the timely questions that are tackled in this study. While tentative steps have been made in the past at theorizing the effects of populist parties from the Europeanization perspective, the topic has until very recently remained severely underdeveloped and understudied.

¹ Sarkozy, 2014; Sarkozy, 2016, Fillon, 2016

² Seehofer, 2014; Gauweiler, 2013

³ Mogherini, 2015

⁴ Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970

⁵ In the context of this project, ‘position’ refers to the general positions of the leaderships of political parties on the question of European Integration at the moments in time in which the data employed in this study were collected.

„*Hard, but hardly relevant*“. That is how Kris Deschouwer and Martine van Assche described Eurosceptic parties as recently as 2008 (Deschouwer and Van Assche 2008). Statements of this kind in the academic state of the art suggest that Eurosceptic Parties are not in a position to influence European politics. While debates about the EU and Europeanization have created, in the words of Mudde (2012, 196), a *cottage industry* of Integration and Euroscepticism studies, the jury is still out on whether Eurosceptic parties influence their more mainstream competitors (and party systems generally). Despite some contention over the influence that the EU issue can exert in national party systems, **this dissertation argues and shows that Eurosceptic parties actually manage to influence mainstream competitors, forcing them to qualify their traditional pro-European stance, even in a eurosceptic direction.** The idea that populist and challenger parties can influence an existing political ecology and determine it to co-opt elements of their discourse or position is well established in the field of party politics, and a wealth of previous work has explored how such phenomena occurs on related policy questions, usually associated with traditional populist themes. Oddly enough, this type of research question has traditionally not been applied to the question of European Integration, and only very recently has research begun to give the issue its due attention. Some views that dismissed the potential of the Eurosceptic ‘Threat’(Mair, 2000, 2007; Green-Pedersen, 2012) were founded on the assumptions that mainstream parties can control the politicization of the EU issue, or that Eurosceptic parties cannot be initiators of change but merely react to developments in the arena of party competition. Using inferences from proximity theory (Downs, 1957) and salience theory (Budge and Farlie, 1983; Petrocik, 1996) and employing a variation of the past election model (see Budge, 1994), I argue and show that Eurosceptic parties can influence their national party systems and ‘pull’ them in the direction of their policy preferences, provided they are successful enough at the ballot box. This occurs as a consequence of dynamics inherent to party competition wherein political parties attempt to gain votes or alleviate vote loss by responding to changing public preferences. While previous work in the state of the art have already contributed to expanding our understanding of the changing landscape of European and Western Politics, or the evolution of social cleavages that facilitate said landscape changes (Hooghe and Marks’ *Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration*, Kriesi *et al*’s *New Cleavage Hypothesis*, Cas Mudde’s *Populist Zeitgeist*) it has tended to take a wider, ‘bigger picture’ perspective of change in European Politics. The present work, however, more narrowly focuses on the behavior of

political parties in their attempts to imitate, or oppose, the policy positions and agendas of their rivals in the electoral race, offering a more ‘micro-level’ investigation of political change in Europe, as well as a corresponding theoretical contribution. By presenting empirical proof that Eurocritical fringe parties can influence mainstream parties and their national party systems more generally, it brings additional support to what De Vries (2007) termed the ‘Radical Party Hypothesis’, and contributes both to the literature describing mainstream adaptation to populist success (Harmel and Svåsand 1997, Meguid 2005, Van Spanje 2010, Schumacher and van Kersbergen 2014) as well as that describing party positional shifts as a reply to electoral performance (Budge 1994, Somer-Topcu 2009).

Despite a wealthy literature on the Europeanization of national politics, and a plethora of studies that have investigated how political parties adapt to populist success in other policy fields, there are views that Euroscepticism doesn’t actually matter, as referenced above. Even when the potential danger of Eurosceptic centrifugal forces for the process of European Integration was hypothesized (Bartolini, 2006, 2008), attempts to close the empirical gap have been inconsistent, few and in-between and focusing on single countries or moments in time (Baker *et al* 2008, Quaglia 2008, Van de Wardt 2014). This project thus contributes to the closure of the said empirical gap, and therein lays its main empirical contribution.

The dissertation brings together the specific literature on Europeanization and European Integration with more general theories of political party competition, Downsian proximity theory being the central one employed here. An information-via-elections model (similar to Budge’s Past Election model) underlies the causal mechanism at the heart of this project. According to it, voters give their votes to those parties whose policy positions lie closest to their own, and political parties try to establish policy positions that lie closer to the preferred position of voters than their competitors do in order to gain the all-valuable vote. Election results and changing support for various parties communicates to political actors important information about the distribution of voter preferences on various issues (attitudes and position on EU integration is one of them). When parties lose votes and register worse election results, they gather that their policy position is less attractive to the public than those of their competitors, and will adjust their policy proposals accordingly. The inference is that when Eurosceptic Parties register growing support among the electorate and attract voters from parties at the political center, the latter might deduce on the basis of electoral results and declining public support that they need to shift

their own policy positions in a direction that brings them closer to populist parties in order to stem voter defection. That inference and hypothesis is tested in this project in a cross-temporal, cross-national manner, and in exploring how political competition unfolds along the ‘vertical’ EU issue dimension, contributes to Hooghe and Marks’ Postfunctionalist research agenda. The aforementioned perspective argues that Europe has entered a new, post-functionalist, phase of Integration Politics in which hard, economic considerations are being replaced with soft, ideational, cultural factors as the determinants of the speed of European Integration, and in which populist Eurosceptic parties manage to politicize and mobilize the issue of European Integration to such an extent that it can no longer be ignored by traditional parties (Hooghe and Marks, 2009). The airwaves now abound with discussions about the present limits of and challenges to European Integration. The Euro crisis, the refugee crisis, Brexit, and growing support for populist parties have all worked to amplify debates and dissent within Europe among its members, within and across national borders. Opposition to the European community is at an all-time high. Questions about regional integration – and opposition to it – have acquired an importance that transcends the academic realm.

Why Eurosceptic Contagion Merits Exploration

Despite occasional hiccups (such as the empty chairs’ crisis, national EU referenda rejections, treaty opt-outs), European Integration has always seemed to run a somewhat steady course. Various reforms or events (the evolution from European Coal and Steel Community, via the European Economic Community, into EU, the adoption of a common currency, the enlargements into Central and Eastern Europe) have strengthened the impression over time that the Process of European Integration was set thoroughly on its tracks. This has now changed. The EU’s way of working, its logic, and purpose are being called into question. The Eurosceptic wave has become almost a normal and mundane element of daily political life, any article in the media that tackles elections in European Politics or the financial crisis make reference to Eurosceptic populism, and the challenge it constitutes. Political actors with the expressed desire to not only roll back the EU, but even withdraw their countries from it are leading in the polls in various member states.

This June witnessed the first secession from the block when British citizens voted to leave the EU.

In the realm of comparative politics, the EU (as well as the general process of European Integration) was often referred to as having a *Sui Generis* character. No other regional or transnational integration project has ever gone as far or has been as ambitious as the EC/EU in depth and breadth. It is popular to compare European Integration to a bicycle. The presumption behind such allegory was that if it does not advance or move forward, it will stall and then fall to the ground. Should EU policies or Integration be reversed, the suboptimal character of the current institutional set-up and centrifugal forces would tear it apart. The EU had never really experienced serious or sustained roll-back of Integration. While the speed of Integration has indeed varied across decades, there always seemed to have been a tacit understanding among policy and decision makers (in the European Community) that even if there are minor bumps here and there, these would be short lived, and that the journey towards „ever closer union“ would resume its course. Not only was the EU compared to a bicycle, its *sui generis* character meant that it was the only ‘bicycle’ in town, it being unclear whether this sole ‘bicycle’ could be brought back up if it ever should stall and fall. Such a stalling of the process was hard to imagine because it was for a long time unclear what could force the hand of politicians away from the integrative stance. It has been something of a taken for granted idea that the politicians who occupy the political center tend to be rather pro-European, more so than politicians from the fringes of the political spectrum, and even more than the electorate (De Wilde and Zurn, 2012; Mair and Thomassen, 2010). By extension, it has been equally taken for granted that mainstream centrist parties lacked a good incentive to move away from such policy preferences towards the EC/EU and be more responsive to the more euro-cautious public. Such incentives might now present themselves in the form of the success of Eurosceptic Parties. Due to their ever-growing success and visibility, they are offering those voters that are discontent with Integration (and have more Eurosceptic views than traditional parties) an outlet and electoral alternative that was previously not present, or as readily available. The result is a net loss of votes for mainstream political actors which are forced to respond somehow. These developments are possible because there is base for such political discourse among the public and electorate. There is growing discontent towards Europe and growing Integration fatigue among the electorate, and arguments

have been made that such mainstream policy shifts would *not* take place in the absence of Eurosceptic party pressure, even if the electorate at large reflects such views (De Vries, 2007).

For a variety of reasons, ranging from historical to social ones, support for populist Eurosceptic parties was weaker in the pre-Maastricht era than today, and opposition to integration was itself less of a politically salient issue. Previously parties opposed to European Integration (calling either for a fundamental reform of the entire process, of the treaties, or even outright roll-back of integration) never managed to make a consistent assault on the pro-European center of the political spectrum. The past two decades have shown us how this can change. According to Hobolt (2014, 1434), citizens in Europe have been becoming increasingly aware of the euro crisis and have become more likely to hold the European Union rather than their national governments accountable for various problems in their polities. Treib (2014, 1552) concludes that the potential for Eurosceptic support, for the proportion of voters declaring support for Eurosceptic parties may not have reached its peak and grow further over the coming electoral cycles, while others (De Wilde and Zurn 2012) suggest that the current trend of politicization of the integration issue is well past the point at which it can be reversed.

One might think that the last bastion of pro-European sentiment lies with the politicians of Europe's traditionally pro-European centrist parties. Declarations by various European politicians, a few of which were presented in the opening of this monograph, hint that they too are feeling the pressure of public apprehension with European Integration. As this project shows, there is mounting evidence that even they are starting to qualify their original pro-European positions in the face of growing public weariness with European Integration and Eurosceptic success.

The Growth of Euroscepticism: Popular Discontent, Mainstream Immobilism and Populist Pragmatism

Since the late 80's enthusiasm surrounding the Maastricht treaty and honeymoon phase of 'Ever Closer Union', populism in Europe has come a long way. Populist political parties and actors are doing better than ever, and have been steadily improving their performance over the past two decades. In between the last elections to the European Parliament and the most recent national elections, we have come to a situation wherein we are no longer talking about Eurosceptic

Parties merely improving their electoral showing. It has instead come to the point where we are discussing the possibility about those parties *winning* elections in some countries.

Populist and Eurosceptic Parties have with time gone from being a 'nuisance' to more recently becoming a legitimate threat to centrist parties' monopoly of political power. At the same time, there is a growing feeling that questions related to European Integration are becoming more contentious. If it was easier to keep away from discussing European Integration in the past, there is less escaping the debate now.

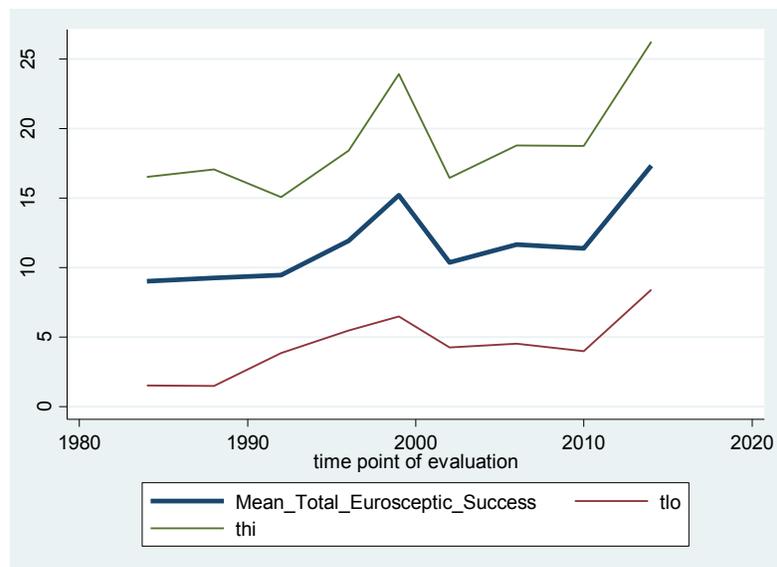
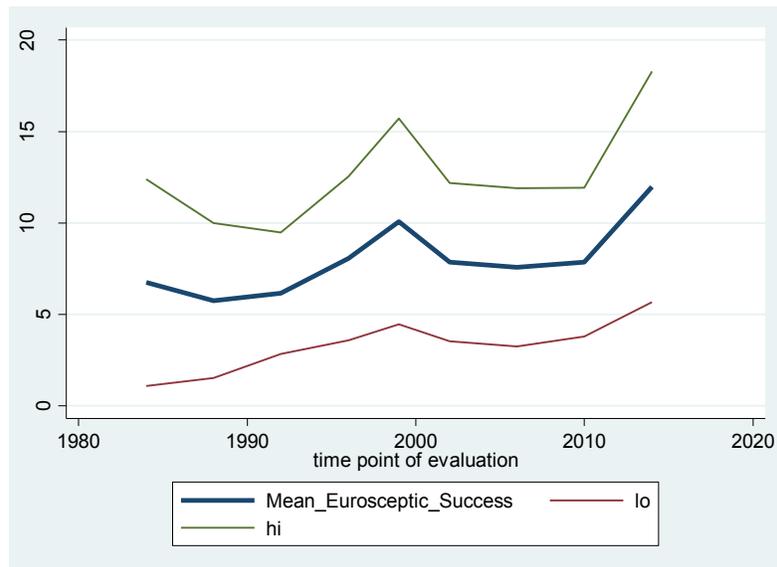
While it might be easy to attribute at first hand the current climate of advancing Euro-caution/pessimism to developments of the past half-decade, many indicators in fact show that public attitudes towards integration have been increasingly cold since the Maastricht days, and this problem has been exacerbated by the dissonance of preferences between the electorate and the elected. This divergence in preference was less consequential in the early days of European Integration leading up to, and through, the Maastricht period. Since populist parties have begun to reassert and re-legitimize themselves (and make increasing use of popular discontent about Integration), it has turned into an issue that political parties in Europe can no longer discount, and must instead respond to. From euro crisis, and refugee crisis to Brexit, Europe is now mired in a seemingly never-ending cycle of challenges, which make the 'boring' years of consensual muddling through look easy in comparison. Mainstream Parties and elites are now facing a national and supranational environment that has been mutating over the course of the last few decades. Whereas the original ECSC was largely market-centered, the transformation - through the EC and into the EU - has brought about integration with more implications for national policy and sovereignty, which were bound to make the EU more contentious as time passed. Compared to nowadays, the EU's previous incarnations seemed relatively unimportant and benign. National budgetary contributions were small, as was a range of policy areas in which the EC was involved. With decisions being made by unanimous accord, „the Community“ was seen as less threatening to the primacy of national states. With the end of the cold war, the Single European Act and then the Maastricht Treaty, the situation changed markedly. The range of policy areas under community control ballooned with time, as did the issues to be decided by majority vote. To top it off, Economic and Monetary Union became a very visible bone of contention, both between and within parties.

As European Institutions gained a bigger say in decision making, the question of Europe became increasingly salient, to the point where there is no hiding from it. EU issues no longer fall short of what Scharpf (1999, 23) refers to as „the threshold of political visibility“. Given the social consequences they generate, EU policies have become much more widely perceived and experienced by the general public, especially since the advent of the crisis. An increase in debate, discussion and contestation also bring with it increased awareness of the preference gap between electors and the elected, between the supply and demand of policy options. Hooghe and Marks (2005) suggest that the once permissive consensus has turned into a *constraining dissensus*. Since the signing of Maastricht Treaty and the growing number of issue areas under EU control, discussions about Europe are becoming harder to evade. At the same time, more democratic control over EU decision making has brought political parties and the public into EU decision making. According to the authors, political parties are now “in”, which means that the issue of integration has been politicized, electorally, to a degree which marks a clear breaking point with the past – mainstream parties now have to accept dialogue and confrontation with rivals and contestants on the EU topic. The EU issue has become a matter of party politics. Elites and party leaders in positions of authority now have to „*look over their shoulders negotiating European Treaties*“ and „*what they see does not reassure them*“. (Hooghe and Marks, 2009, 5).

As was already mentioned previously, warnings about populism and its political potential are not new, with Mudde’s warning of a ‘*Populist Zeitgeist*’ (2004) being perhaps one of the most sobering warnings about the ‘shallow’ ideology and its prospects for success in Europe. Two related phenomena have been gaining speed and worrying the continent’s political establishment. The first is the inescapable reality of public discussion and contestation of Integration, the second one is the electoral success of Eurosceptic Parties. The graph below shows how Eurosceptic parties have been performing over time in Western Europe, on average. Such parties have become the biggest single parties in some countries, and in others, they have won enough votes to qualify them among their countries’ biggest parties. The definition and operationalization of Eurosceptic Parties in this dissertation is data driven, and relies on the judgement of numerous national county experts who have weighed in on the policy position of political parties (the leaderships of political parties to be more precise) in their countries. Each countries’ political parties are thus placed on a scale with one end representing parties whose leaderships are entirely opposed to European Integration and the other represented by those

parties whose leaderships are very much in favor. All political parties deemed by the experts to be below an established ‘neutral’ mark⁶ are thus treated as Eurosceptic for the present purposes.

Figure 1: Eurosceptic Success over the years

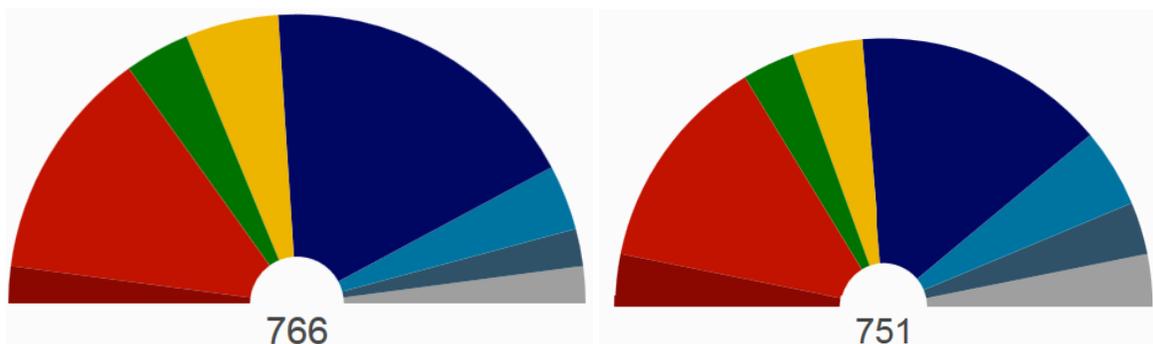
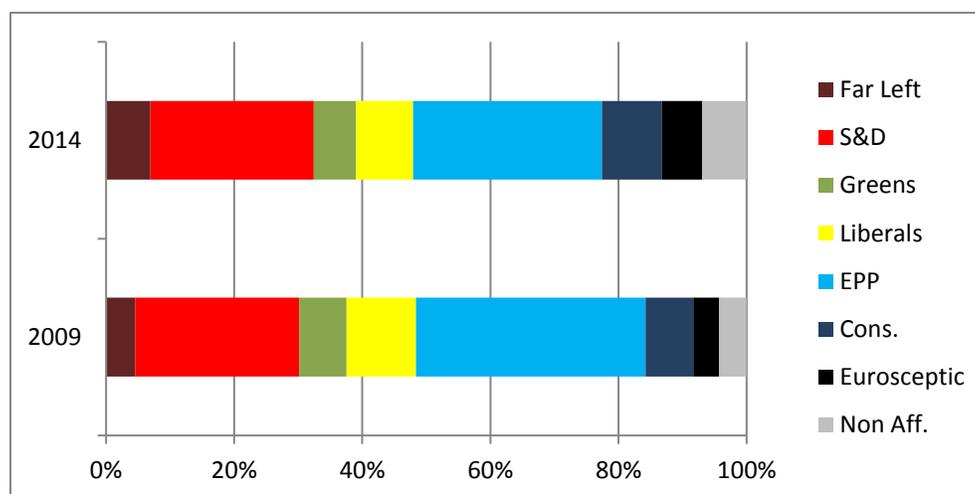


EU15 Eurosceptic electoral performance: Above - Biggest Eurosceptic Parties (Mean Eurosceptic Success); Below - All Eurosceptic Parties (Mean Total Eurosceptic success), averaged across countries, (with confidence interval of 1,96 SD)

⁶ The position ‘4’ on a 1-7 Eurosceptic-Europhile Scale

Not only have Eurosceptic Parties made impressive gains on the national arena, they gained a significant amount of votes at the supranational level as well. European Parliament elections have traditionally been regarded as second order national elections (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Hix and Marsh, 2007), but public apprehension of the EU, debate, divisiveness, and even disdain for some, surrounding Integration has turned the question of Europe into enough of an issue to make it electorally decisive, even at elections for the Strasbourg plenum. In an interview for *The Independent* published before the 2014 EP elections, Anthony Giddens predicted – with reference to the growing support for UKIP and populist parties in other countries – that by colluding and aiming to present a common eurosceptic front to the Electorate, these parties are in an odd way helping bring about true public, integration-oriented discussion about EU-matters. Such parties are turning the upcoming EP elections into the first genuinely “European” elections ever held, because “*for the first time, they are likely to be focused mainly upon transnational rather than local issues*” (Giddens, 2014). Whereas previously, European Elections were more about classical themes and issues, because of their second order status, the strength and visibility of Eurosceptic Parties meant that the electoral campaign actually presents the citizens with visible questions on the constitutive nature of Europe: do you want more or less Europe?

The results of the elections for the 8th European Parliament was painful for the centrist, traditionally pro-European political parties. Voters did not punish mainstream parties by transferring their votes to the ‘legitimate’ opposition, the government in waiting. Instead, votes were transferred to fringe and Eurosceptic Parties. While the winners of the most recent EP elections were, in absolute terms/numbers still the mainstream party groups (the Social Democrats, the EPP, the Liberals, the Greens), the ‘real’ winners have been the populist Eurosceptic parties who gained almost a third of votes. In fact, the most recent European elections produced a parliament of which almost a third of members reject the institution or wish to see its influence rolled back, as can be best seen from the bar chart in figures 2 and 3, where the centrist, pro-European space (EPP, S&D, Alde, Green) shrank to around 70 percent.

Figure 2: Changes between the 7th European Parliament (left) and 8th European Parliament (right)⁷Figure 3: Changes between the 7th and 8th European Parliaments⁸.

How was this possible? How were Eurosceptic Parties able to capitalize so strongly on this? In the literature on the EU's so called Democratic Deficit, much has been made of the discrepancy between voters' and representatives' opinions of EU integration. There are two elements to this divergence. First, over time there has been a lessening of public support for European Integration, a trend that can be identified as having started in the early 90's. The following

⁷ Data obtained from the website of the European Parliament : <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/20150201PVL00021/Previous-elections>

⁸ **Eurosceptics:** UKIP, 5 Star Movement, Sweden Democrats, etc

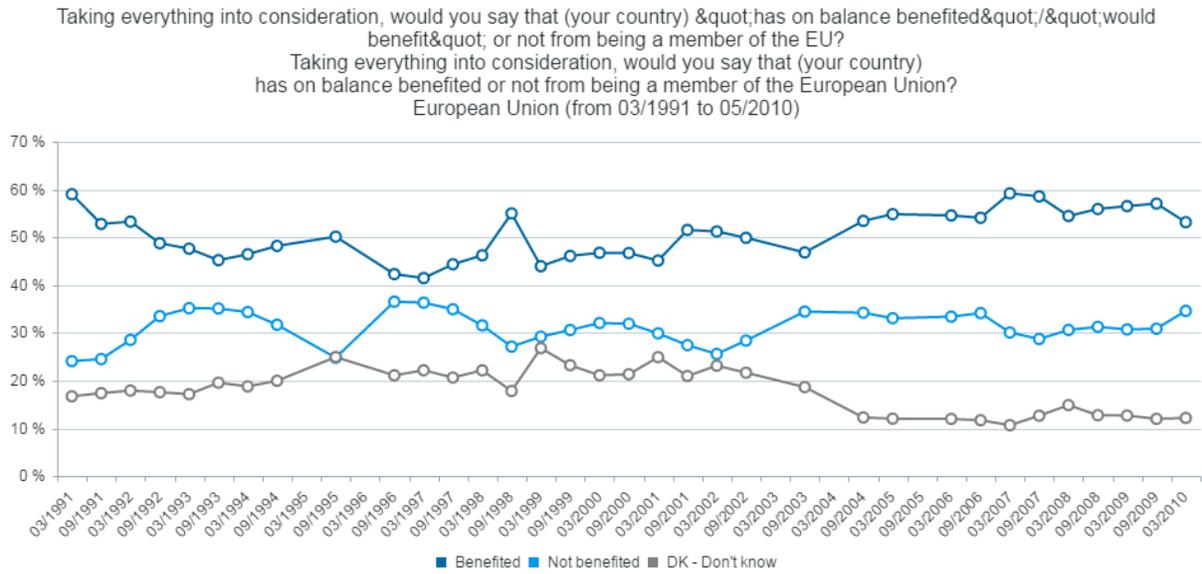
Non-Affiliated: Austrian FPÖ, Belgian VB, French FN, German DNP, Greek Golden Dawn, KKE, Lega Nord, Jobbik, Dutch PVV, etc

European 'Conservatives': British Conservatives, Danish People's Party, Finns' Party, German AfD, etc

Radical Left: People's Mvmt against EU, Syriza, Radical Left Parties

Graphs use Eurobarometer data to show public attitudes towards the EU and its institutions. As can be seen below, the percentage of people/respondents saying that their country’s membership of the EU is a good thing dropped strongly in the 1990’s, and then remained somewhat stable, zig-zagging between the 50 and 60 per cent areas. While that indicator remained somewhat stable in the 2000s, the percentage of people who said that they consider their country’s membership of the EU a bad thing registered a slow but steady rise, going from less than 10% in 1992 to 20% the last time the question was asked in the Eurobarometer.

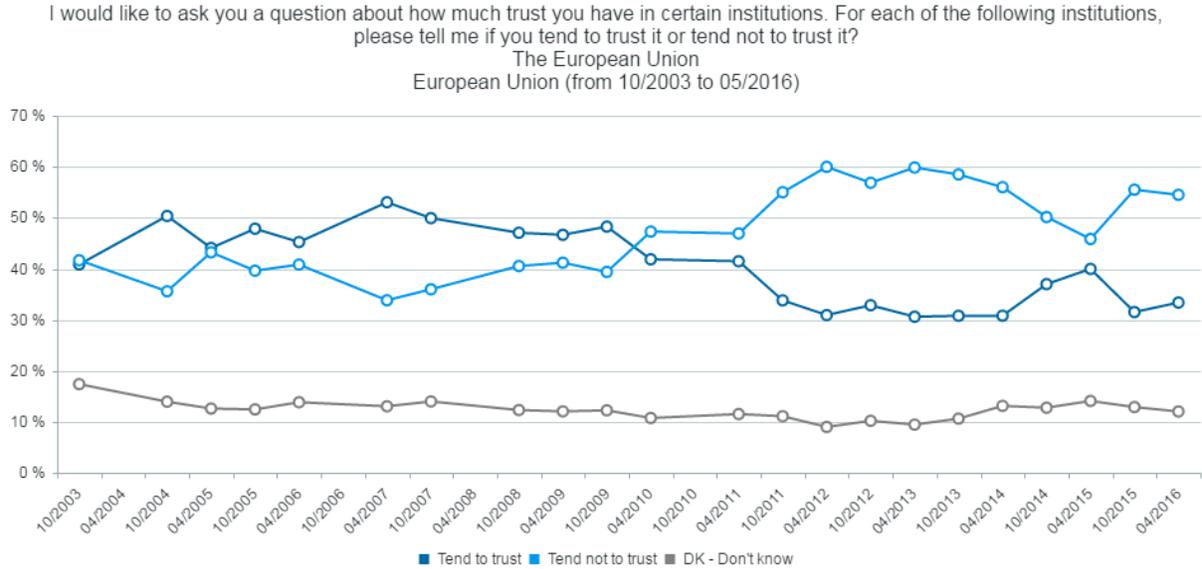
Figure 4: Public Opinion of EU membership, EU-wide⁹



It is not possible to measure public approval of EU membership with the same indicator after 2011, but one interesting set of data comes from another question of the Eurobarometer, which started being asked in 2003, and continues to this day: it asks respondents whether they trust the EU or not.

⁹ Data sourced from the Eurobarometer Website: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm. The question was last posed in 2011, when the euro crisis was at its peak. The data from the last few surveys shows that the indicator of EU approval entered a drop in 2009, and the indicator for EU disapproval was on an upward trend, with the two lines approaching each other. In 2011, question seized being asked.

Figure 5: Trust in the European Union



A similar trend can be found in the graph depicting people’s trust in the European Commission. Glancing at the period between 2004 and 2009/10, we can almost identify a replication of the trends from Figure 5. The indicators for respondents who tend to trust and not trust the EU hover in a zig-zaggy equilibrium until 2009, when the indicator for respondents who trust the EU begins to drop, while the indicator for respondents who do *not* trust begins to rise. In 2010/11, the two indicators swap places, around the same time as the Eurobarometer stops asking the original question. For the first time, there were more people in Western-Europe who *do not* trust the EU, than there are people who trust it, and things have remained so since.

Figure 6: Trust in the European Commission

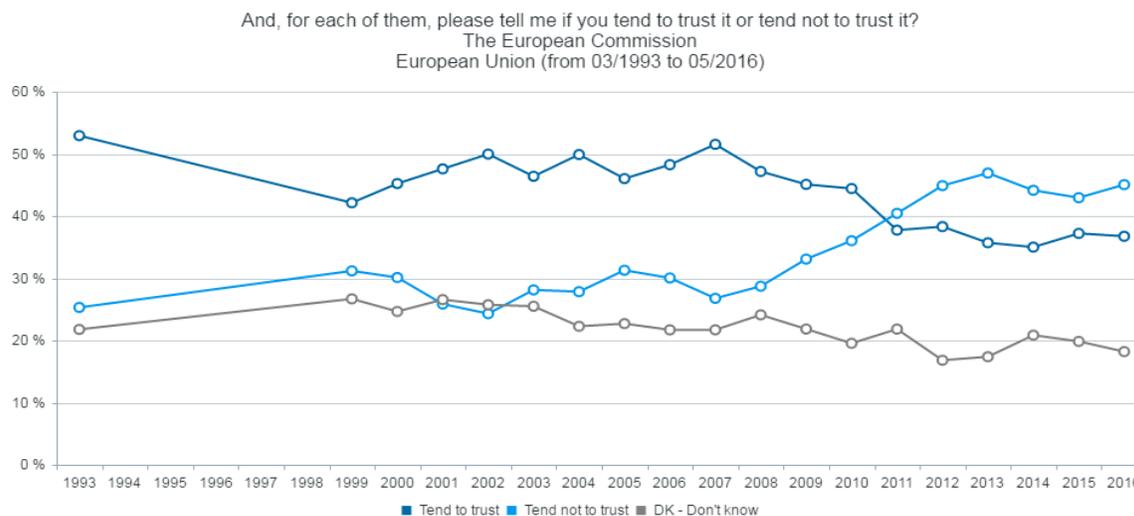
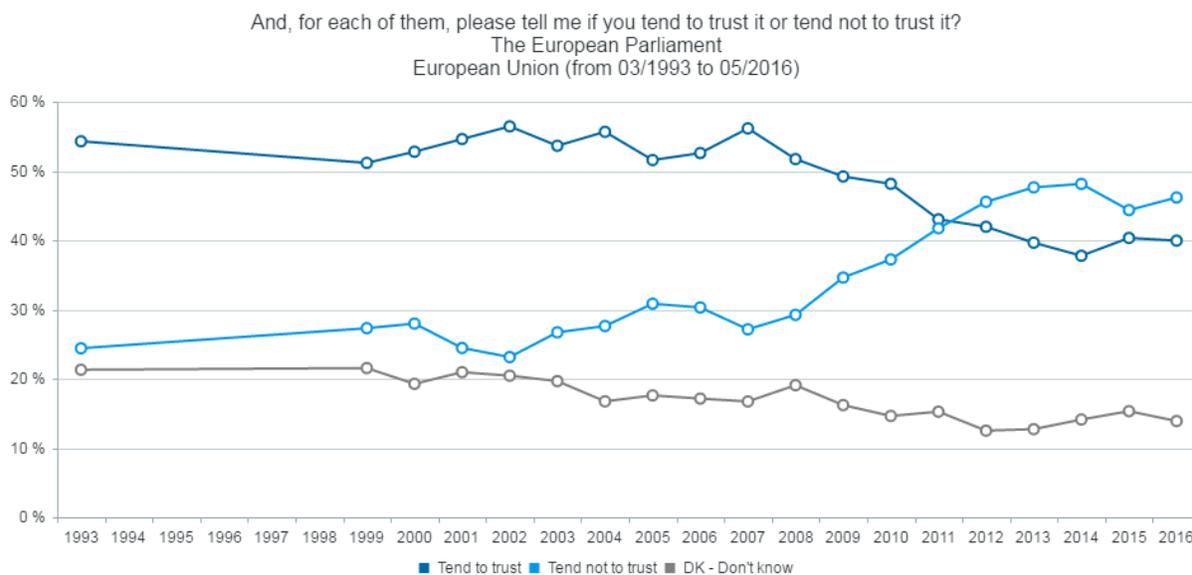


Figure 7: Trust in the European Parliament



In comparing citizens' and candidates' preferences on integration, Thomassen and Schmitt suggested that the electorate and the elites are living in „*different European worlds*“ (Thomassen and Schmitt 1997, 181). When comparing the views of members of national parliaments, European MEPs and citizens in a later study, the authors found that citizens appeared to be less pro-European than elites, regardless if the representatives came from national parliaments or the

European Parliament (Schmitt and Thomassen 2000). Van der Eijk and Franklin (2004, 32-50) have showed on the basis of the 1999 European Election Study (which asked voters to place themselves and parties on the pro/anti-EU integration dimension) that the diversity of opinion found in the electorate was simply not reflected at the level of political parties. De Vries and van Kersbergen (2007) reported that between 1991, when the Maastricht Treaty was being finalized, the period just prior to the outbreak of the economic crisis, popular support for the EU had fallen by over 15 % per cent across the EU-15. The decline was strongest in the Netherlands and France, but was also significant in the U.K., Germany, Italy and Belgium. Moreover, in a series of articles about divergence in preferences on the European question, Mattila and Raunio (2006) show that parties are closer to their voters on the left/right dimension, than on the European Dimension, with politicians being much more approving of integration than the public at large. The authors found that factors such as party size and membership of government or opposition tended to co-vary with a party's Euro-responsiveness towards its voters EU preferences. The authors concluded that central parties and those that spend long periods of time in power were found to be less responsive to voter opinions of the EU, suggesting that parties tended to be more pro Integration the more 'established' they are. In other words, a growing gap had taken shape in Europe's political landscape, which lay ripe for those political actors willing pursue anti-integration policies. A follow-up study conducted by the same authors (Mattila and Raunio, 2012) several years later showed that in 2009, political parties seemed to be even further away from their voters than in 2004. The larger distances on the EU dimension than on the Left-Right dimension again showed that political parties seemed much more 'in touch' with their electorates on the latter issue. Moreover, the discrepancy was found to be larger in the older member states than in the new ones. That should probably come as no surprise as EU and Euro-Atlantic Integration more generally were seen as real 'national projects' in central Europe in the 2000's, as a desire to 'rejoin the west'. It was much more of a gamble for parties in Central-Eastern Europe to be Eurosceptic than for those in the West, especially in the 90's and the 2000's, and the electorate in those countries was more pro-integration than in the EU15.

What does it mean to say that the gap was growing larger between elites and voters? On the one hand, it could be taken to mean that elites and people's preferred policy point had shifted away from each other in a Downsian sense, while the distribution of preferences maintained its shape. It could, however, also be taken to mean that the shape of the distribution had changed,

that it has flattened and that more people have been driven away from central/less strong views on EU integration. Down and Wilson found evidence that both phenomena are occurring (2008), with a shift in central tendency being accompanied by a flattening of the distribution of public opinion. Not only had there been a shift in the ideal policy preference of the median voter away from that of „elites“, (meaning all voters are on average less warm to integration) but the distribution has changed and flattened, which means that while a very small number of voters were more pro-European, many were even more susceptible to Eurosceptic discourse. The increase in polarization suggests an increase in issue salience across the electorate as well. This divergence of preference created the opportunity space which populist parties exploited to ever greater effect.

It is important to specify that the existence of a gap in policy preferences does not imply that there is no reaction by Mainstream Parties, i.e. no influence on them by Eurosceptics. The gap can grow even when Eurosceptic contagion happens, if voters move away from moderate parties faster than moderate parties can amend their own positions on the issue. This study has a cross-temporal design, because it seeks to find out if there is eurosceptic contagion occurring not only now, but also in the past. If we find that Eurosceptic Contagion occurred even in the past, when populist parties were not as threatening as they are today, then Europhiles might have precisely more so reason to worry about the near future, considering the ever stronger showing of fringe parties and growing salience of issues such as Integration or immigration.

Outline of the Study

The next chapter presents the theoretical framework of this project, which lies at the intersection of two strands of literature: European Integration and Political Party Competition. The study brings together debates about the history of European Integration, Eurosceptic movements, opposition to Integration¹⁰, voter discontent with the EU as well as ‘mainstream’ political actors with theories of electoral contests, inter-party competition, and party behavior. Chapter 2 is largely divided into two parts. The first one introduces the causal processes underpinning the study, describing the theory behind party positional shifts and the interplay between election

¹⁰ And implicit discussions about Europe’s democratic deficit

results and party behavior¹¹. Building on that, the chapter then presents the concept of electoral and political contagion and explores the mechanism by which fringe and challenger parties (radical, fringe, niche and single issue parties) influence their party systems – those two sections in effect spell out the causal mechanism of the study, according to which the electoral success of radical parties incentivizes other parties to adjust their own policy positions. The second part of the theoretical chapter returns to the (more) specific theory of Euroscepticism, combines it with the causal mechanism and premises of the previous section and generates the hypotheses that inform and lead this project. By plotting and hypothesizing the expected changes of mainstream parties' policy position on the European issue, the last section moves towards the 'left' side of the equation.

Chapter Three is dedicated to questions related to Research Design. At the origin of this project lies the desire to explore the influence of Eurosceptic Parties across various countries as well as across different time periods. The aim is to produce nomothetic, generalizable findings about the West European Community and to deliver robust results that can be used to describe the above mentioned influence in a *ceteris paribus* manner. Far too often the state of the field has relied – in endeavors aimed at answering related questions – on work analyzing one particular country or taking a single snapshot in time. This project is thus a large-N study employing a correlational logic, and the principal method of analysis is a variation of Time-Series Cross-Sectional Analysis. That chapter will begin by presenting the overarching logic behind the research design, which seeks to analyze whether and to what degree the evolution of electoral competition correlates with changes in the policy positions of political parties. A principal concern was that of finding data that actually permits cross-country and cross-temporal comparison and analysis, which also includes measures of parties' stances vis-à-vis regional integration. To that end I chose the Chapel Hill Expert Survey¹² administered by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which was purpose-designed to measure and follow political parties' inclinations towards the EU (Bakker, De Vries, Edwards, Hooghe, *et al* 2012, 2015). The Chapter discusses issues of estimation technique, sources of data, conceptualization and operationalization of the factors central to this dissertation and used to depict the process of Eurosceptic Contagion.

¹¹ The general theory: party competition

¹² Often referred to as 'CHES' in this text, for brevity's sake

The term *contagion*, already employed in the literature on populist politics (Van Spanje 2010, Rooduijn *et al* 2014), is used to describe the spread and adoption of Eurosceptic policy positions. It relies on the idea that a feeling, issue, idea, or discourse can spread through an ecology (in this case one consisting of party systems and political parties) and ‘contaminate’ its constituent parts, which then display it or some of its characteristics. The chapter also elaborates on the different ways in which EU issue dimensionality can be conceived of, the decision to stick with the CHES one-dimensional scalar measurement tool, as well as the tricky question of how to conceptualize and measure Eurosceptic Success. Should one look at Eurosceptic Parties’ election results in the static/absolute sense, or rather analyze such parties’ evolution and dynamic by measuring *changes* in electoral performance over time? Are we to look at number of votes, percentage of votes, or proximity to the electoral threshold? Is it better to look at the totality of Eurosceptic Parties and their cumulated electoral performance, or look more closely at how the biggest/strongest Eurosceptic Party in every country is performing? To that end, I coin the term ‘*Flagship Eurosceptic*’, to denote those populist Eurosceptic Parties which at one given time dominate the Eurosceptic area of a country’s political landscape and occupies the center of attention from the media, the public, and other parties as a token of Euroscepticism.

The empirical starting point of the dissertation is Chapter Four, which sets the theme of the analytical part by presenting and comparing Eurosceptic Party success across Western Europe’s individual states. It then proceeds to testing the Radical Party Hypothesis via the base regression model, which will be the core of all subsequent analyses. It shows that Eurosceptic Contagion is a real, existing phenomenon. When populist parties opposing European Integration register growing electoral success, mainstream parties react by shifting their own policy position in a slightly Eurosceptic direction.

After showing in chapter four that Eurosceptic Contagion actually happens, Chapter Five delves deeper into the issue and investigates *why* it happens. It takes the empirical effort in a slightly more explorative direction and asks who experiences Eurosceptic contagion, when, where, and why. Building upon the base model(s) of the project, the chapter investigates what factors influence the effect that Eurosceptic Party Success has on the other party’s policy positions, providing important information about the motivations of mainstream parties, and what it is about Eurosceptic success that actually makes them react in the manner that they do. The chapter suggests that the premises are there for Eurosceptic Contagion to strengthen with

time, with Eurosceptic success and the increasing salience of the EU issue growing with time in a manner akin to a self-reinforcing process. At the same time, I argue that the results can also be interpreted in a way that lend themselves to the belief that at least some of the euro-cautious shifts in position by mainstream parties the political mainstream are meant to keep Eurosceptic Parties out of power and at least to some degree to uphold and conserve integration.

The third and final empirical chapter stays in ‘when and where’ territory, with a twist. It challenges one of the core premises of the study (and literature on Europeanization in general), the second order election thesis. It looks into whether Eurosceptic Contagion can indeed only happen in the circumstances and as a function of national elections (which have been the main political arenas of European Politics), and not due to European ones (given the second-order assumption that they are not important enough). The chapter can be said to represent the institutional take on the analysis in that it looks into how much institutional design influences the effects of Eurosceptic success. While the second order election thesis may have long been held to the highest standards, evidence is emerging that they can take a first-order character in certain conditions. The inescapable growing salience and contention surrounding politics within the European Block are causing more EU issue voting, even at EP elections. Eurosceptic and populist parties have galvanized public opinion about Europe in preparation for elections to the 9th European Parliament in 2014. Eurosceptic mobilization – ironically – provided those elections with a distinctly transnational, European flavor, that previous ones had been lacking. Secondly European Elections can have a determining role in party systems characterized by low proportionality. Majoritarian party systems suppress the information carrying potential of national elections that this project is developed around, due to the incentive it offers voters to engage in strategic voting. I develop the argument in this last empirical chapter that the introduction of proportional supranational elections within the UK’s political system served to cancel the above mentioned information suppression effect, by offering fringe parties a platform/arena where they can display electoral results proportional to the support enjoyed among the electorate. While the United Kingdom Independence Party kept performing ever better at European Elections – which supplied the party with financial and institutional resources that allowed them to run in ever more constituencies at national elections – their national election results remained interestingly poor. I then explain this by showing that for majoritarian systems, Eurosceptic Contagion is more likely to occur due to populist success at EP elections, and less

likely due to such developments in national contests, while in proportional party systems it is the other way around, with the 2nd, European, level elections being less important. This provides further weight to the information-via-elections model used in this text because it points to the requirement that election results depict public preferences as closely and proportionately as possible.

The final chapter recaps the empirical results and discusses the results of this dissertation in light of the wider debates in academia surrounding more profound, fundamental changes in the political landscape of Western Europe. It is argued there that the (initially) depoliticized evolution of the EU went hand in hand and co-evolved with the transition from *mass parties* to *catch-all* and *'cartel'* parties in the West. These two parallel processes helped create the growing political space and capital available to Eurosceptic Parties, which can also be associated with the perception of limited possibilities for normal or 'traditional' opposition to the policies related to regional integration. It is posited that the development of the EU and its initial permissive consensus led to a decoupling of voter and elite preferences on the issue of regional integration. The depoliticization of the EU, however, carried with it the seed of its own undoing. On the national level, voter de-alignment, weakening class ties, globalization and major parties' shifts to the political center allowed populist policy entrepreneurs to deplore centrist parties' apparent decoupling from voters, lack of accountability and responsiveness and deride them as being 'out of touch'. On the trans-national level, the tacit and seemingly-unopposed development of regional integration allowed those same actors to claim that the EU was an elite project of those same 'out of touch and unresponsive' national elites. The ever growing political opportunity space of Eurosceptic parties did not go unexploited, it allowed them to draw voters from the centrist parties in increasing numbers, to draw more and more attention to these parties and their message, which helped reinforce their visibility and wish to politicize globalization and European Integration. Their electoral success not only repoliticizes the EU and increases public apprehension about Integration, but also exerts increasing pressure on moderate parties. Centrist, mainstream parties are forced to respond to these changes in order to stem the loss of votes. They do so by changing their policy position on the EU issue dimension, taking the electoral gains of Eurosceptics as cues on the direction they have to move in, in order to get closer to the mean voter. In doing so, in adjusting their policy positions, they become more responsive to the electorate again, because such changes in position are meant to shrink the gap that separates

voters from elites. One consequence of these processes is thus a shrinking of the gap between voters and elites. The downside is that by qualifying their own discourse on the EU and borrowing elements of Eurosceptic and Eurocautious discourse, mainstream parties can push themselves on a slippery slope of criticizing European Integration from which it might be hard to recover pro-EU positions anytime soon, or which might set the polity on a path towards EU secession, as was seen this summer in the UK.

Issue Disclaimer

Why should we look at European Integration? If we are concerned with the influence of fringe, extremist or populist parties on their party systems, could such a study not center on more general populist discourse, political shifts to „the right“ or opposition to immigration? What is different about opposition to European Integration that sets it apart from „other forms“ of populisms?

A typical critique that is leveled at this type of research question is that populist parties are not *only* Eurosceptic, and that their success and influence on national politics might be due to things other than opposition to the EU. That does not really matter here. This study is about how the other (moderate, non Eurosceptic) parties „think“ and act. If Eurosceptic parties „do well“ but the others do not react by moving on that particular policy dimension, it means that a) they don't think the Populists' success is due to the EU issue, and b) they will thus be „unmoved“ and unaffected by the Eurosceptic parties. If mainstream parties on the other hand *do* exhibit position changes, it means they thought that the issue of European Integration is relevant enough for national political competition, and they deemed it necessary to change their position on the issue in order to shore up voter support and prevent further voter defection.

There is no denying that such issues are closely intertwined, and that their use is often related in the forums of political competition, but they *are* distinct questions. There are numerous examples of political parties who had many of the traditional trait marks of populist, right-wing parties, but who were not much concerned with the EU initially (some of them actually had favorable views of the European Community given its potential liberal bias), but gradually developed and established strong anti-Integration positions to the point that they are now considered 'hard' or 'radical' Eurosceptic Parties. Alternatively, some parties that started out as being solely Eurosceptic, or began their lives as being almost single issue parties dedicated to the

fight against regional integration (the United Kingdom Independence Party started as the Anti-Federalist League when a historian opposed to the Maastricht Treaty, Alan Sked, sought to create a party aimed at taking the UK out of the EU; the German Alternative Für Deutschland was also borne mainly to counter European Integration, monetary union specifically) and then established positions and moved to the 'right' on other issues, taking up policy positions on questions of immigration policy, minorities, etc. While a country's immigration policy does have strong consequences for those living within its borders (and prospective migrants), halting or rolling back EU integration carries consequences that spill over and far beyond the boundary of the nation state, and whose effects might be harder to predict. It can be said in a way that moderate party adjustment on the EU issue has more and stronger consequences than adjustment such as a mere tightening of immigration policy.

2. Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The introductory part of this text has provided a foray in the discussion about rising Euroscepticism and corroborated that development with the gap in policy preferences between the electorate at large and political elites on the question of European Integration. Catching up with their traditionally pro-EU counterparts, parties opposing European Integration are forecast to provide a growing challenge to the political establishment, especially aided by the uncertain political climate that reigns today. Politics in Europe are heading in a direction not witnessed in the last half a century and it is not entirely clear where the path will lead or end. Mark Franklin and Cees van der Eijk (2004) have used the metaphor of a sleeping giant to describe the potential force of Euroscepticism in the European landscape since the 1990's. The issue was said to be a giant due to its potential power to disrupt the traditional political land, and it was said to be dormant because its potential was still yet to be unleashed. Concerns on a similar note were raised by Bartolini (2006, 2008), who noted the prospect of Eurosceptic and Nationalist Centrifugal forces reshaping the direction of European Integration. Such depictions of European politics have been countered by arguments that Europe could not become a point of contention in European Politics. Peter Mair (2000) went as far as saying that Europe's political elites had effectively managed to "*sedate*" the so-called giant and keep it dormant, while Green-Pedersen suggested in an article from 2012 titled "*A giant fast asleep*" that mainstream parties can maintain a measure of control over Euroscepticism. Such lines of reasoning predict either that Eurosceptic Parties would not become significant political actors, that the issue of European Integration would not become one that can impact national politics, or perhaps most importantly that moderate and mainstream parties would maintain their pro-European policy positions.

The present political reality, however, suggests that the giant has indeed awakened. And instead of being 'in control' of the situation, political parties are trying to find ways to respond to it. This text argues that despite their traditional, historical, inclination towards European Integration, political parties are finding themselves forced to adapt to a more Eurosceptic Environment which often requires that they themselves adopt more Eurosceptic policy positions in an effort to alleviate vote loss. The underlying assumption of this project is that political

parties are (at least to some degree) vote seeking rational actors trying to maximize their vote tally and, if possible, ‘win’ elections to become ‘formateur’ parties.

The project relies first on Anthony Downs’ (1957) spatial theory of party politics, according to which political parties seek to present their policy positions as being as close as possible to the preferences of voters. The rationality of political actors and parties is bounded by various factors. Parties operate in environments of imperfect information, and parties are not always on the same ‘page’ as voters with regard to political preferences, or the two side’s policy positions might differ¹³. Given sufficient opportunity and incentive structures (unhappiness with politicians’ position on important policy matters coupled with the possibility to cast a vote for an actor offering policy alternatives), voters can transfer their votes from their previous choice to a new preferred party. In the current landscape of European Politics, this means a growing recognition of ‘Europe’ as a contentious issue and of Eurosceptic parties as genuine alternative vote recipients. The new, beneficiary parties are more often than not turning out to be parties from the political fringes that take aim at the political establishment, and in the present case, at the mainstream’s pro-European policies.

The second base of this project is Budge’s past election model (1994), according to which political parties use election results to gain information on their proximity to voters’ own preference, as well as that of rival parties. Hence, this study is at its heart one whose model uses a causal mechanism based on information. One can boil the essential down to the question of whether political parties use the results from recent elections to deduce that they need to rectify their current positions on the EU issue, in order to stem voter defection.

As stated above, the latent potential of Euroscepticism as a political force *has* been theorized, and the mobilization of populist and chauvinistic discourse in electoral contests has not gone unnoticed (Bale, 2003; Mudde, 2004; Rooduijn, 2013; Taggart, 2004; Van der Brug and Van Spanje, 2009; Van der Brug *et al*, 2000, 2005, Loxbo 2010). Moreover, the causal logic used in this project (fringe parties altering the political agenda and influencing other parties) has likewise been used in other sub-fields in the domain of party politics. Yet, an empirical gap remained at the crossroads of European Union studies and the literature on populist political parties. That it has taken until now for the thesis of Populist Contagion to be put to the test in

¹³Moreover, that rationality is mitigated by the fact that while mainstream political actors wish to not only win elections, but have other political goals as well, such as preventing the dissolution of the EU/the continuation of the European Union

combination with the question of EU Integration is somewhat astonishing and all the more surprising considering that this type of research questions have been posed for other related topics and policy issues. Research into populist politics is not lacking, and neither is the literature on that which is sometimes referred to as political ‘contagion’ and ‘adaptation’. The blank spaces are only now beginning to be filled, and this project is part of a larger (very recent) movement to fill the empirical gaps about Eurosceptic influence. This chapter is divided in two parts. The first section resembles a literature review and presents the causal mechanism that underlies this thesis, addressing questions from the field of party politics more generally. The second half of this chapter hashes out the theoretical and empirical contribution of this dissertation by pointing to the empirical gap in the literature on Euroscepticism that this project fills.

The Causal Mechanism

Spatial (Proximity) Theory

The causal model employed in this project stands on two theoretical pillars: Downsian proximity theory and Budge’s past election model, and can be summarized as follows: Political Parties use election results (changes in election results between the most recent and the previous election, to be more precise) to update their map of the opinion landscape and determine how they should adjust their position on the issue of European Integration in the run up to the next election. In other words, parties rely on changes in election results to determine what they should ‘offer’ voters in preparation for the next election. Depending on how Eurosceptic parties have done at the ballot box (have they improved their electoral faring between the elections, or have they worsened it?), political parties will adjust their policy positions in the hope that they would reverse the gains that Eurosceptic parties have made at their expense.

Political Parties are central to most political processes in democratic systems, if not the most important elements in democratic politics. The study of political parties and their behavior is thus of great importance to comparative politics, and Downsian spatial theory, named so after its author Anthony Downs, is perhaps the most renowned strategic approach to party competition (Downs 1957). Downsian spatial theory (also known as proximity theory) depicts political

parties and voters as acting in an electoral marketplace, characterized by its own tendencies of supply and demand. Parties determine and adjust what they supply (in terms of policy positions) in response to the stimuli from voters and other parties. According to the model, on any given political issue, both voters and parties can be thought of as located at certain points across an ideological spectrum depicted as one dimension (Downs 1957, 115-117). While there might be multiple issues affecting politics, each of these issues can be treated singularly as one dimension; when there are multiple issues affecting each other or strongly correlated with each other, they are often collapsed into one, such as the GAL-TAN¹⁴ structure, or the (general) left-right dimension¹⁵.

The model assumes that each voter can locate herself at a point on that dimension reflecting the voter's ideal preference. The position of each party can also be represented by a point in that same space. The theory assumes that *under conditions of perfect information*, rational voters will choose the party which is closest to their ideological position on that same axis, and will in turn dismiss parties that are further away, hence it being referred to as 'Proximity Theory'. Voters look for political parties that lie closest to them on the issue dimensions that matter and are relevant to them. That is policy demand. Parties will seek to adjust their policy proposals, trying to attract voters with their product (policy proposals), vying for 'market share', in the process generating policy supply. A central prediction of this model is that parties will adjust their policy positions in response to shifts in public opinion, a hypothesis which springs from the logic that vote-seeking politicians tailor their policy promises to the policy preferences of voters (Sommer-Topcu, 2009, 826). Another prediction of the model is that parties adjust their policies in response to policy shifts by competitors.

This is where it becomes important to mention that political preferences are not static. If the public's ideal policy spots – and zones of acquiescence – change, the system loses its static character. Public preferences may shift in various directions. Various things can account for such changes in the position of the electorate. Such movements can occur naturally, due to socio-demographic factors, or can be caused by external shocks (economic downturns, enlargement of the EU to the east, increased immigration, terrorist attacks, etc). While parties try in principle to approach and approximate the positions of voters, it is possible for the overall positions of the

¹⁴ Green, Alternative, Liberal – Traditional, Authoritarian, Nationalist

¹⁵ which is distinct from the economic left-right dimension, the latter being just a function of economic policy preferences

electorate and of parties to find themselves drifting apart with time. History can cause voter preferences to change. This can be the result of cumulative and gradual influence of long term trends, strong sudden exogenous shocks, or persuasive arguments by politicians. Rational politicians wishing to maintain public support (and office) must move ‘along’ with that zone of *acquiescence*. If voters’ position on the policy dimension changes, that can result in a change of how votes are cast¹⁶, and parties will have to change their policy positions/proposals as well, in order to follow suit, and keep up with voters.

Based on the assumption that voters are rational and will support the party with policy preferences most similar to their own, political parties can choose from two possible strategies when they are faced with changing electoral fortunes: movement toward a certain competitor (also known as policy convergence) and movement away from the competitor (in other words policy divergence). Policy divergence occurs when a party feels it is too close to competitors, and needs to differentiate itself from it, or when it seeks to increase the apparent political conflict on certain policy dimensions. Such a strategy is closely tied to the salience logic of party politics, since policy divergence has, all things considered, a high likelihood of spurring conflict, debate and discussion about an issue, increasing public awareness and apprehension about the said issue. Policy convergence takes place when parties hope to ‘steal’ voters away from threatening competitors by copying its policy position or co-opting its discourse.

Influence Parties and Challengers

Whereas new parties are also intended to win elections, they are often more important as means of influencing the policies of previously existing parties. Since old, established parties can be ideologically immobile, they might not adjust rapidly to changes of voters distributions, and new parties can enter wherever it is most advantageous. Such parties can be ‘influence parties’, who may crop up when convergence has pulled a major party too much in a certain direction and certain political actors consider that they can ‘pull it back’ by threatening to hijack a part of its voters. The main purpose of influence parties or candidates is not to win elections but to

¹⁶ If party A lies closer to the mean voter than party B, more voters will vote for party A than B. If voters were previously closer to party A, but underwent a change in policy preferences (the preferences of electorates change with time) so that they moved closer to B, they will now take their votes to B because they feel it better represents their own position on that policy dimension.

influence an existing ecology of parties (Downs, 1957, 127)¹⁷. Such political actors attract just enough voters to hurt one party or another (or a group of parties). One of the parties on the losing end takes notice, infers that it has to amend its own position on that policy dimension and qualifies its position in a way it hopes will bring some voters back. Other previously center-convergent parties take notice themselves, decide to follow suite and induce momentum in the political system. By threatening to upset the electoral balance, such a fringe party can cause a shift in the entire political system even if it promises to steal only a minority of voters from other parties. Such parties thus attain their goal on a certain policy issue without needing to actually win power or form government.

Because the issue is only *then* starting to gain significant importance, it is not entirely certain how many more voters would ‘switch sides’ if the issue gained even more salience (if more voters would vote according to that issue, it is assumed that there is potential for more voters to defect granted sufficient salience). Things can get tricky if political parties suspect that the distribution of voter preferences (on that issue) does not overlap or conform to those of the other issues, those which determined elections thus far. Such can be the situation in the European question, where it is now known that a) voters have different preferences from the political leadership, and b) the distribution of these preferences are orthogonal to those on the left-right spectrum (van der Eijk and Franklin, 2004). That is also the premise of the ‘Sleeping Giant’ thesis, which suggests that the distribution of voters on the alternative potential conflict dimension is wherein the danger lies. In such circumstances, a shift in the political agenda whereby the new (previously unimportant) issue becomes decisive has the potential to massively uplift and disrupt the political status quo. Faced with such a situation and threat, political parties will try to downplay the issue if they can (that is only possible before the issue passes a certain threshold of salience, after which it becomes impossible to ignore). The relative salience of political issues can change with time, however, just as policy preferences do. These can be traced

¹⁷ This can happen when convergence has pulled parties too close to the political center, or too close to other competitors and disaffected members of the party threaten to harm the party by withholding/taking a part of the party’s constituency that is required for the party to perform against other centrist or mainstream parties. Alternatively a new political party can be founded to take advantage of dissatisfaction with the policy shifts of a traditional party when the founders of the new party believe there are enough voters of the traditional party that are discontent with the policy shift. In such a case, the new party threatens to position itself where the traditional party formerly stood, providing the large party’s dissatisfied voters with a viable alternative at their original preferred location. This puts the traditional party in the tricky spot of having to ‘navigate’ back to prevent the dissatisfied voters from defecting, or at least altering its policy position in such a way as to minimize losses given the new circumstances created by the new party.

back not only to impersonal, historical forces, but also be managed by political actors who stand to gain from the change in political discussion agenda. Such forces (natural and strategic) can work hand in hand, for example if a party feels it can use recent socio-economic developments to mobilize its preferred issues and raise awareness of it. If issue agenda control is no longer an option, parties will then try to qualify their position on the issue in a way that brings them closer to the policy preference of the mean voter¹⁸. This, they hope, reduces the potential for further voter defection, as well as (it is hoped) reducing the potential for a rearrangement of the political system by diminishing the distance between parties and the distribution of voters on that policy dimension.

A classical problem in such discussions is how parties can figure out what issue they actually won or lost votes on. This is not really a problem in this case. If parties consider that the EU issue, and positions on it, actually affects the distribution of votes (if they assume or believe that Eurosceptic parties are taking their voters on the back of their integration policy position), then they will do something about it, and find it worthwhile to change their position on it. The project is not concerned with ‘what issue actually wins or loses parties their votes’. It is not concerned with the factors that affect parties’ destinies. If parties don’t think that the EU issue affects whether they gain or lose votes (that it does not affect election results), then they will leave the issue be, and not spend time, energy and resources reformulating a strategy that nobody pays attention to anyhow.

The Past election model

It is not always easy for parties to gauge public opinion and identify the best policy position to take on various issues¹⁹. Parties work in conditions of imperfect information. In the case of ‘normal’ issue dimensions, parties try to obtain as much information as possible out of surveys and opinion polls, as well as direct communication via lower party members and offices at the local level. These instruments are nevertheless imperfect, and for any given issue, there is

¹⁸ This holds especially so for ‘catch-all’ parties, who rely on larger number of non partisan, non-aligned contested, swing voters

¹⁹ Things *are* a bit easier in the case of *Valence* issues, in which case parties simply try to present themselves as ‘owners’ of those given issues, or the most capable as possible to ‘deliver’ on those issues. Alternatively, they try to downplay the issue to reduce other parties’ advantages on the said valence issues.

a chance that a party will ‘misread’ where the mean voter stands (and thus misread what position it should itself present). They might overestimate their own proximity to the electorate’s ideal points, or they might overestimate the degree to which public preferences have changed, resulting in them shifting their own policy preferences too far. As is discovered over and over again (the most glaring recent examples being the last UK general election, the Brexit Referendum, or the recent American Elections), opinion polls can be very blunt and imprecise instruments, especially if the poll is conducted well in advance of the election. The closer to Election Day the poll is held, the higher the odds of it being more accurate. Organize the poll too close to an election, and one turns it essentially into an exit poll. Parties have to assess how far or close they are to the median voter and elections are a good instrument in this regard, helping parties learn where they and their voters are standing ‘relative’ to each other. Public opinion is not static. With time, individual persons can change their policy preferences, and so can the constituencies and electorates that those people compose. The challenge for parties is thus to establish correctly in which direction that change (in demand) has occurred, and how strongly. Then, they try to react to that change accordingly, by changes in their own policy proposals – these make up a large part of the variance in election manifestos and party programs, from one election to another.

Two useful retrospective sources of information that parties can use to gauge their position’s appeal, and that of rivals are: How parties changed their own policy position between the two most recent elections, and how the distribution of voter preferences changes (for the latter, information can come from vote-intention results in the build up to elections, or changes in election results in the course of one electoral cycle). Using this information, they try to deduce where the median voter actually lies, based on how votes were cast for various policy positions. They then attempt to amend/formulate a policy position that will bring them closer to the pursued voters, at least closer than their rivals are to the mean voter, on the assumption that the issues they amend positions on are salient. If they performed poorly from the previous election to the most recent one, and their rivals did well, parties will infer that they need to change what they offer to the voters. In such cases, we will see bigger changes in their policy position than otherwise. In what Budge (1994, 240) terms the ‘past election model’, past election results work as a mechanism for the acquirement of information (by parties) about their congruence with public opinion, and the public’s favor of its policy preferences. Under this model, a party

remains at the same position or provides more of the same (it continues further in the same policy direction as last time) if it gained votes in the last election; and changes its policy direction from last time if it lost votes. Empirical evidence seems to support the assertion that parties are likely to change position in order to win elections or recuperate electoral losses. Somer-Topcu (2009) demonstrates that parties change their positions more frequently after experiencing a bad showing in previous elections (see also Budge *et al.* 2010). A change in election results tells the party how it is situated vis-à-vis public opinion relative to other parties, how it has moved closer or further away from the median voter relative to other political competitors. Somer-Topcu (2009, 246) also notes that this effect dissipates strongly over time – the ‘lag’ is usually no larger than that of one election. Because of this moderating effect that time has, as time passes, leaders are less confident that they can extrapolate from past election results to a contemporary political situation that may be different; it is the most recent election (and changes in election results between the previous election and the most recent one) that parties stand the most to learn from.

Salience

Even though it long dominated discussion on party behavior, the spatial/positional perspective on party competition is not without its limitations. According to the main proponents of saliency theory (Budge, Klingemann, Robertson), the alternative is to distinguish between party positions at the level of specific issues and their general priorities across issues. Parties might endorse the same positions to a certain extent, but still prioritize them differently. Some parties might emphasize national defense and immigration in their electoral programmes and discourse, others might emphasize redistribution and equality while yet others might emphasize the environment²⁰. According to this perspective, parties do not directly oppose each other on an issue by issue basis (Somer-Topcu, 2009, 239). Very often, there is only one tenable position on a variety of issues, or one particular position that will gain the thick of the vote on the said issue dimension. What differentiates parties, then, is their credibility as handlers of different problems and issues, and their choice of issues to emphasize or downplay. That means some parties will (for example) try to make an election ‘be’ about the economy, others about foreign policy, etc. Parties devote

²⁰ Budge, Robertson and Hearl, 1987, 395

energy to emphasize those policy areas on which their credibility (to deliver) on those positions are strong enough to win them votes. The salience model assumes that voters' decisions rely not only on the proximity of political parties on a given issue dimension. There are several dimensions along which parties structure their fight (external policy, social security, economic growth, fiscal policy, environmental issues, etc), and these issues are not always equally important in the electorate's eyes. Their salience (or at least perceived salience) defining political space thus matters equally much as party positions. Voters will not be very impressed with the attractiveness (proximity) of a party's position if they find the overall issue not to be very relevant or important. Proximity to voters's policy preferences can thus be rendered irrelevant if the underlying policy dimension is not salient enough (Meguid, 2008, 25).

Another lesson from the theory is that all parties *can* all be in favor or all against a certain policy direction or position on any one specific issue. The political system displaying such characteristics can nevertheless gain dynamism because voters see some parties more able to carry through a particular policy than others. When voters face parties who are equally close to them on an important policy issue, the deciding factor is party issue credibility, or issue ownership (Petrotik, 1996). In other words, voters might deem liberal and right wing parties to be more capable of carrying out structural reforms or rolling back the state, they might see hawkish politicians as better able to deal with foreign threats (the 'Nixon goes the China' thesis), and socialist parties more capable to reduce poverty or inequality. Salience theory argues that most parties inhabit (largely) the same positions on various dimensions, they only emphasize them differently. The theory states that party competition often takes the form of a battle over agenda control. Parties try to influence which issues are on the agenda, selectively stressing those issues that are favorable to them and de-emphasizing and playing down those where they are at a disadvantage. Thus party competition involves the definition of the political space – i.e., what is important and what is not. Thus, liberal parties do not argue against the welfare state (which might prove unpopular), they are just said to emphasize low taxes, while social democrats are said to emphasize social security and equality while avoiding to themes.

Saliency and Niche Parties

While most of the literature has focused on the electoral fight over issue ownership between ‘volksparteien’, the degree to which issue manipulation explains party politics is also very important to the interaction between established parties and smaller challengers. Niche parties, extremist parties, and single issue parties (the name is self-explanatory) are often reliant on the importance of a more reduced number issue dimensions. If there is a marked reduction in the saliency of their core issues, these parties can find themselves losing many voters quickly. As Meguid (2008, 26) notes, those issues introduced by niche parties can be more susceptible to saliency manipulation generally, given that they are not the central economic dimensions along which political systems are often built, and around which the traditional parties were founded in the past.

Because of the character of such issues, it is argued here that it should be easier, at least on paper, for mainstream parties to jostle and adapt to issue position and saliency along these issues, than for example economic issues that underscore the ideological foundation of political parties. This implies that there is more fluidity on these issues in party systems, i.e. parties find it easier to copy each other and there is more adaptation taking place when such issues²¹ are concerned, which are promoted by fringe parties. If a new party (or a previously small party) manages to introduce a new issue, then for the time being, it will be regarded as the owner of that issue. The other parties can then try to downplay the issue, or promote it as well, in order to challenge the first party’s ownership of that issue. In a logic somewhat similar to that of positional competition, parties try to appear close to the voter. They want to show voters that they too are aware of the relevance of a policy issue, and that they can be relied upon to deliver change on it, that they too are responsive. In the absence of an issue entrepreneur that seeks to alter the agenda, the need to seem as ‘adapting to the voter’ is not as imperative.

This perspective on the saliency of issues introduces the concept of valence issues, which are issues on which all political actors and large segments of the electorate share common preferences (often finding themselves at the same poles of the issue dimension). These are issues such as criminality, unemployment, poverty, defense. There is little maneuvering space on these issues from a positional point of view, but parties will try to emphasize or de-emphasize such

²¹ Immigration, globalization, integration, environmental concerns

issues depending on whether they believe that that public regards them as more or less capable of dealing with these problems. Likewise, parties will try to de-emphasize those issues where they feel their policy position is less popular with voters than those of rival parties (Steenbergen and Scott 2004, 167). While many issues can be seen as valence issues, the question of European Integration is not one of them. There is no ‘obviously/universal right choice’ on the issue. This implies that the potential competition space on the European issue is quite large, and parties can maneuver both along spatial positions as well as issue salience.

Policy Divergence can be used as a tool to strengthen the perception of conflict surrounding a certain policy issue²². This applies when a party thinks that it stands to gain by underlining and stressing the differences in policy positions between them and their rivals. Meguid (2005, 2008) shows us that when a party (party “A” for ease of description) does not take the threat of a populist challenger too seriously, or does not consider it to pose a systemic threat, but views it nonetheless as a tool via which it could weaken its main center rivals (party “B”) relative to itself, it can employ policy divergence as an instrument of electoral tactics, in a more cynical way. There are two logics at work here, one which sees the party’s rival (B) trade votes with A, and one which sees both in the political center parties trade votes to the populist challenger, but where B loses more, thus giving party ‘A’ a relative boost. In the former logic, party A considers that the position of its rival, B, is unpopular with a large part of the electorate, and it would generate vote loss for that party if only voters cared more about that issue. Because the issue is presently of low salience, the election is contested over other issues, on which A does not have such an advantage. What party A has to do is to emphasize the differences in policy position between itself and its rival, spurring discussion on it. It seeks to amplify the importance of the issue, thus shifting the electoral competition to those issues it has ownership over- this is classical agenda setting.

In the 2nd logic, which makes use of *populist parties as intermediaries*, party A is aware that both parties stand to lose voters to the populist challenger, but B is likely to lose more than the former if the pariah party becomes stronger, thus strengthening A’s relative position in the center. A will in such a case emphasize position divergence (even if it means moving further

²² perceived among the public and electorate

away from the fringe challenger party that is finding growing favor with the electorate²³) in order to increase conflict on the issue in question, thereby amplifying issue salience. Because more voters now pay increased attention to the issue (and realize B's position does not lie in proximity to theirs), more voters are likely to abandon party B for the fringe party than would have been the case had the issue not been raised by party A via policy divergence. In such an instance, the salience of an issue interacts with the positions of the parties. All things considered, a framework combining these two major approaches to party politics (spatial theories and salience theories) best explains the strategic behavior of parties. Rather than regarding them as conflicting theories, they can be thought of as complementary, since they describe and address different aspects of party competition, which interact in producing the electoral contest we see around us (see Abou-Chadi, 2016).

An important lesson to take home at the end of this section is the idea that issue salience and the degree of issue contestation (and associated political convergence or divergence) can go hand in hand. If an issue is not important and lies at the bottom of the political agenda, parties will care very little about it and there will be little rush to adjust policy positions.

Populist Contagion

On the basis of Downsian Spatial Theory, Salience Theory, and the Past Election Model which describe and predict how parties try to position themselves relative to one another with the purpose of attracting voters, we can make sense of party systems' responses to fringe party challenges as moves to counteract their discourse, to ignore or downplay it, or to accommodate and include it in their own electoral platforms. Sometimes a party system adapts by displaying a hostile or dismissive reaction towards the challenger. The alternative scenario is the instance in which a party system validates a neophyte party's issue and position by adopting the issue and its position on it – effectively borrowing and incorporating that party's discourse into its own. It is such instances which the likes of Van Spanje (2010), Rydgren (2005), Mejjers (2015) and others term 'Contagion'.

²³ It considers that even if it pursued policy convergence with the neophyte challenger party, its position would still be too far away/the convergence too small to prevent vote loss. In that sense, it sees a certain degree as vote loss as being imminent, but it might as well ensure that its rivals in the center lose as many voters as possible/lose even more votes

Building on models for party convergence and divergence provided by Proximity theory and Salience theory, writers such as William Downs(2001, 2002) and Bonnie Meguid (2005, 2008) have over time presented frameworks which can model the different types of responses that mainstream parties can display when faced with the success of a more radical challenger party. Whereas Meguid and W. Downs developed their framework in an attempt to explain how various mainstream responses to far-right and far left challengers affect the *subsequent* success of such ‘pariah’ parties, I turn the argument on its head (one can also say that I follow those author’s models halfway through, then stop), in that I look at how recent populist success prompts one kind of response or another from the mainstream, i.e. to see how eurosceptic parties’ success has prompted other parties to respond to their challenge. Conceptually, the phenomena can be termed „contagion“ and adaptation, and describe the processes by which centrist parties move towards more extreme policy positions to stem or prevent a loss of votes to their fringe challengers. The term ‘contagion’ is used to suggest that a system is contaminated by an agent – in this situation it is implied that populist elements (populist discourse, frames, ideas, policy positions) ‘contaminate’ and spread through the political/party system of a country. The main idea behind the concept of adaptation is that parties have to react – somehow – when their political competitors (be they from the political center or new challengers from the fringes) threaten to do better than them electorally. Sometimes, parties adapt by copying or adopting part of the discourse of their challengers. They adapt by adopting the populist elements within their own policy position and discourse, in doing so they help spread those elements – that is how the political ‘contagion’ spreads.

The literature abounds in work with this type of analytical framework. Past authors have focused on how green parties influence the environmental issue (Spoon, Hobolt and De Vries, 2014; Meguid, 2005, Abu-Chadi 2014), others on welfare chauvinism (Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2014), while others yet, like Bale *et al* (2010), van Spanje (2010) and Harmel and Svåsand (1997) have looked into the more thorny issue of immigration.

Bale *et al* (2010) present a comparative analysis of developments in several Western and North European countries and show significant variation in the scope, substance and pace of strategic responses by social democratic parties - the authors argue that by adopting some of the far right’s themes, Europe’s mainstream legitimized them and amplified their salience and number of seats that far radical parties could bring into expanded right blocs (Bale *et al*, 2010,

70). Schain et al (2002) also present a comparative perspective on the ways in which mainstream parties respond to populist challengers, and argue that the co-optation of radical right issues in France, Britain or Germany has met with mixed success (Schain *et al* 2002). Schain states that political parties first gain attention not when they are born, but when they achieve an electoral breakthrough that is sufficient to have an impact²⁴ on the variation of support within the party system (Schain, 2002, 223). Such breakthroughs can be achieved in either of two ways: either through the conversion of voters who had previously voted for other parties, or by mobilizing new voters. If such a breakthrough endures, it can lead to electoral realignment within the party system. By altering the issue agenda, fringe challengers also alter the terms of conflict among political parties, and (potentially) the electoral cleavages and divisions. Thus, even if the upstart party does not endure, its impact can be important both in terms of the policy agenda and the organization of the political system (Minkenberg 2001, Schain et al 2002, 3). Naturally, should the populist challenger survive and prosper, its effect will be stronger. Populist or fringe parties who act as issue entrepreneurs could hypothetically be blocked out of power even if they become the largest political party in a country/if they acquire the most votes as long the other parties come together and succeed in forming grand coalitions that exclude the neophyte. Even if the centrist parties manage to block the Eurosceptics out of power, the latter still exert over the former's position, because these parties 'get the message' by looking at election results. A plurality of voters is not to be taken lightly, and the centrist/mainstream parties become well aware that more might follow if they allow themselves to appear too slow, unresponsive (and by extension unrepresentative). As a consequence, all such parties will shift their position on the EU issue not necessarily in order to gain votes relative to other established parties (even though that could be a part of the explanation), but to prevent further 'universal' migration of voters to the anti-establishment parties²⁵. The effect is there regardless of whether the populist challenger really 'wins' the election or not, the only potential difference lies in how strong the other parties' shift might be, but a shift will occur nonetheless. Even when fringe and niche parties failed to attain too many seats, their electoral fortunes have thus influenced those of others, draining larger parties of voters. Such parties like to prop up and underscore issues which are either novel, or do not coincide with existing lines of political division. They can even appeal to groups of

²⁴ The example of the UK

²⁵ On the assumption that parties seek not an immediate gain at the expense of their governing peers, but to remove the threat of eurosceptic policy entrepreneurs gaining more votes down the line

voters in a way that cross-cuts traditional partisan alignment, tilting the traditional political order. Harmel and Svåsand (1997) also point out that there are two significant ways in which fringe parties impact upon their party systems. One is for the new party itself to become large enough and successful enough to assume the status of a major player in the system. The other is for the new party to influence the major players, *while itself remaining in the minor league*. (Harmel and Svåsand 1997, 316). This is mirroring the idea of Anthony Downs (1957) who used the concept of ‘influence parties’ whose purposes and goals are not to win elections, but to influence and give a nudge to the party system in one direction or another by making other parties have to adjust their own policy positions and offers, or to raise an issue on the agenda, like a ‘message candidate’ would. The intuition drawn from the literature is clear: regardless whether populist parties endure and become major players in their party systems or merely make enough of an appearance to make a significant dent in moderate parties’ support, they are able to influence their party systems and the co-optation by that party system of policy positions approximating those the challenger’s is quite often the observed consequence.

The logic that this project employs is not novel, but its field of application (EU integration) is, and therein lays one of the main contributions of this dissertation. What is surprising is that it has taken so long for this kind of research strategy and question to be applied to the Europeanization debate, and while some have tried to answer it by exploring the phenomenon in only one time and place²⁶, the question is only now beginning to be looked at in a comparative cross sectional and cross temporal approach²⁷.

Populist Contagion and Euroscepticism - The Radical Party Hypothesis

Two kinds of predictions have emerged from the perspective that the ‘sleeping giant’ of Euroscepticism will *not* awaken. Some authors have stated that Eurosceptic parties cannot influence their party systems enough and that Europeanization effects on national party competition are weak (Sitter 2001, Deschouwer and Van Assche 2008) because European Integration does not matter to voters and Euroscepticism cannot muster enough political force to alter the political balance. Some have argued that Europe simply does not matter enough, at least

²⁶ . Part of this is due to assumptions that have previously been made about the politicization of Integration and the way this has been theorized, and will be discussed below in the sections that theorize contagion and integration

²⁷ See Mejers, 2015

not in comparison to other cleavages in order to affect politics, among them Green-Pedersen (2012) and even Mair according to whom Europe's influence on national politics is at best indirect (in his 2000 paper 'The limited impact of Europe on national party systems'), or Follesdal and Hix (2006, 552) who state that national elections avoid the content of EU policy.

A second view is that the 'European question' can become an issue of electoral politics, but that the perspective on populist contagion gets causality backwards. Addressing the more general literature of populist politics, Bonnie Meguid (2015) elaborated a model on the basis of which populist electoral success and survival can be viewed as a function of mainstream party behavior. For the author, mainstream parties' responses to populist parties are a means to compete against other mainstream parties and populist success is the result of interplay between mainstream parties. Dahlström and Sundell (2012) argued that the electoral success of populist parties depends on mainstream parties first politicizing an issue and legitimizing the former's policy directions. Echoing such arguments and applying them to the EU question, Green-Pedersen (2012) claimed that that mainstream parties are capable of sidelining Eurosceptic policy entrepreneurs and keeping eurosceptic discourse (and questions surrounding European Integration altogether) off the political agenda, that the mobilization of the EU issue by populist parties is limited by mainstream parties willingness (or reluctance) to put the issue on the agenda. Whether populist parties gain attention accordingly depends on centrist parties first mobilizing the issue, an idea similar to Hutter and Grande's (2014) suggestion that the EU problem can also be problematized by the mere conflict between government and opposition.

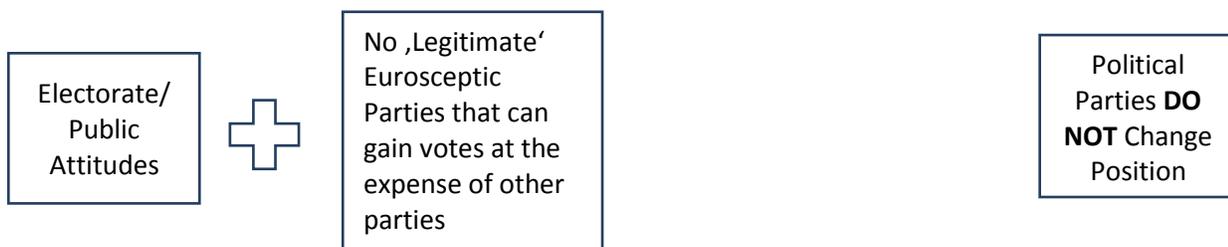
On the basis of intuition gained from Proximity Theory, Salience Theory and the literature on Contagious Populism, I apply the contagion and-past-election-results logic to the issue of European Integration and argue that Eurosceptic parties can and *do* influence their party systems and the policy positions of mainstream parties, determining the latter to shift positions in a more Euro-cautious or Eurosceptic direction - this is what De Vries (2007) refers to as the Radical or Extremist Party Hypothesis. The main idea underlying the hypothesis, contradicting the above referenced claims that Euroscepticism is not a factor in national politics, is that Eurosceptic parties *can* 'steal' voters from traditional parties and that when it happens, moderate parties will use changes in election results to decide how far and in which direction to adjust their EU positions because they use said election results to adjust their image of the electorate.

The assumption that the EU issue and opposition to European Integration can influence national politics is not novel. For Hooghe and Marks (2009, 5), Europe's once reigning tacit consensus has been replaced by a „constraining dissensus“ and Europe's usually pro-European leaders now have much less leeway in their conduct of European politics. European Integration is accordingly an issue with a growing potential to influence national politics in its own right. A similar note was struck by Vasilopolou (2013) who urged the field of comparative politics to also treat Euroscepticism as an independent variable, not just a dependent one, as a catalyst for political developments, not just response. Building on Carmines and Stimson's work on Issue evolution, De Vries (2007) shows that the question of Integration can become an important issue at election time provided certain conditions are met. The author argues that EU issue voting is conditional on the degree of EU issue salience among voters and the extent of partisan conflict over Europe. In other words, do citizens care about Europe, and do Parties provide them with a clear or meaningful choice? While such work offer as a base on which to assume that the Radical Party Hypothesis holds for the issue of European Integration, many studies have either focused on the salience of the issue (Eurosceptic parties can politicize the EU issue), or focused on country-based case studies (Baker *et al* 2008, for the UK; Quaglia 2008, for Italy, Van de Wardt 2015, in Denmark). What is missing in this picture is the extra final step – an analysis that goes beyond looking at how mainstream parties drive the EU issue, and one that looks beyond single countries in a cross sectional, cross-temporal manner, which is what this project is meant to do.

The Extremist or Radical Party Hypothesis of Issue Politicization stipulates that citizens do care about Europe, that they hold real preferences, but that these preferences are only tapped into by political parties (i.e. parties only provide them with a clear choice) when new parties, or previously smaller, challenger parties, initiate the discussion about any given issue. In other words, when they respond to the untapped electoral potential of the issue, fringe parties manage to politicize their favorite issue and force the other parties to take a stand on it. The tail wags the dog. According to the radical party hypothesis, B (Eurosceptic Parties doing well) causes C (change in other parties' position), and B can be traced back to A (electorate attitudes and position). In other words, A causes B, which in turn causes C, but A would not cause C in the absence of B – the Eurosceptic Parties' electoral tally. The radical Party hypothesis can thus be 'drawn up' as pictured below. In order for contagion to occur, there must be a 'legitimate' Eurosceptic alternative to whom voters can defect to. It is possible for voters to exhibit policy

preferences that are not reflected by the political landscape on a certain issue (in the present case the EU). However, as was the case with the EU issue, this discrepancy does *not* translate into more votes for Eurosceptic parties, at least not initially, (for a variety of reasons²⁸) and the other parties do not see an incentive to change their position on the EU issue until such a party arrives that can cash in on that discrepancy.

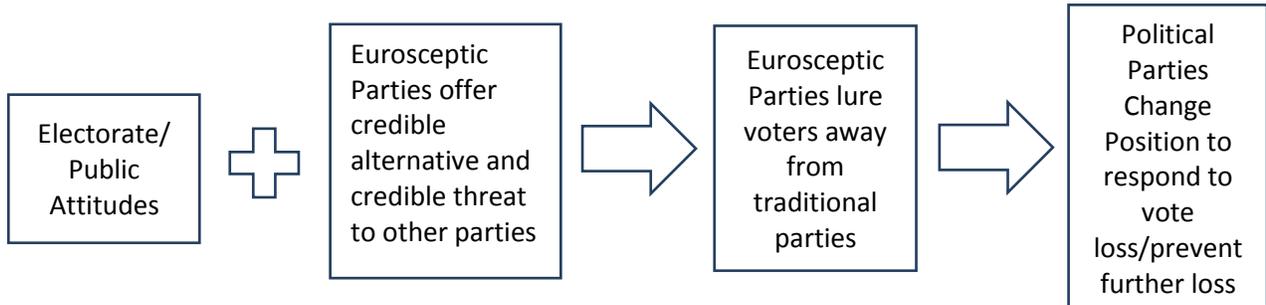
Figure 8: The 'Past Election' Model without the presence of a successful Eurosceptic party



With time, circumstances change. European Integration accelerates and deepens, generating more clear-cut distributional consequences and grievances, and amplified discussion. At the same time, riding the wave of discontent about globalization, economic change and immigration, populist parties start to legitimize themselves, and make opposition to European Integration a staple of their political platform. They amplify the salience of the EU issue and alter the political issue agenda. In doing so they gain more votes capitalizing on the (until then) latent potential of public distrust towards '*Europe*' ('the sleeping giant'), and steadily increase their vote tallies. Because of the increasing debate/discussion about the EU and the altered agenda, EU issue voting now becomes a reality. Voters are now also shown the possibility of voting for alternative EU policy positions (closer to theirs than to all other parties in the center of the spectrum), and they become increasingly willing to use that option. This results in more vote loss for the center parties, which now have to respond via policy position changes.

²⁸ Due to populist parties not yet being visible enough, due to voters not yet being ready/aggrieved/discontent enough to vote for nationalists, or due to such parties not offering visible/obvious anti-Integration policies as alternatives to the mainstream EU policy preferences, due to the issue not being salient enough to cast votes on

Figure 9: Graphical Depiction of the Causal Model

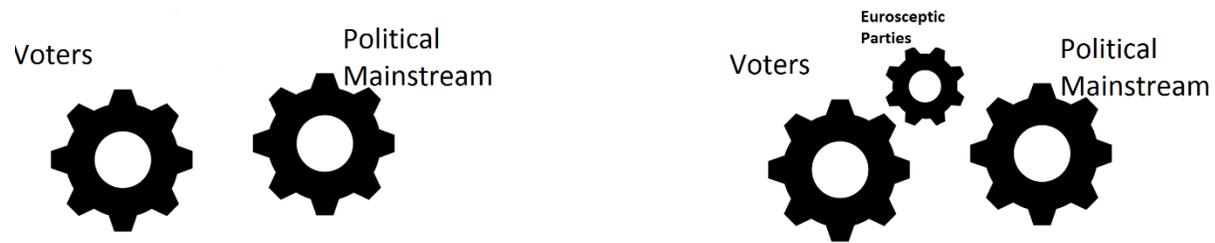


Graphical Depiction of the Causal Model characterized by the presence of a successful Eurosceptic Party

In a way, the extremist parties can be thought of as the ‘gears’ that connect the electorate to the political mainstream by forcing the latter to pay more attention and heed the political preferences of the former on issues that previously required little or no adjustment. Eurosceptic influence can be seen to have a certain democratic virtue in that they can force parties to be more accountable to voters and address the gap in preferences, and according to Treib, *“the success of Eurosceptic parties can be seen as the upshot of a more fundamental process of dissatisfaction with the political programmes, leaders and modes of decision-making of mainstream politics”* (Treib, 2014, 1542). De Wilde and Treiz argue on a similar note that *“Euroscepticism is, in this sense, part of the democratization of the EU. It results from the uncertainty about the quality and scope of the EU-Polity and the fuzziness of the underlying demos”* (De Wilde and Treiz, 2012, 550). These populist and Eurosceptic parties force the political mainstream to ‘re-engage’ with public attitudes and compete politically on questions of European Integration in an environment very different from the first decades of the European Community.

Figure 10: The Radical Party Hypothesis: The gears that move the system.

Populist Parties as the means by which Mainstream Politics is influenced by the opinion landscape of voters



The main hypothesis of this dissertation, a variant of the Radical Party Hypothesis is stated as follows:

Hypothesis 1: The more successful Eurosceptic Parties are at national elections, the more the other parties will adjust their policy position on the EU issue in an anti-EU direction.

While other studies (Meijers, 2015) have only focused on the cumulated votes gained by all Eurosceptic parties, I expect that political Parties should also focus on the ‘singular’ election results of a country’s biggest Eurosceptic parties. While the cumulated performance of populist parties is undoubtedly of much analytical use, I argue that parties and publics can also focus their attention on singular political parties when these dominate the populist corner of a country’s political landscape (like the UKIP, the Front National). I thus expect the radical party hypothesis to hold for both kinds of Eurosceptic indicators. Not directly pursuant to the radical party hypothesis, but following from the past election model is the expectation that political parties use the information drawn from changes in election results (in terms of percentages of votes gained by various parties) in order to learn more about public policy preferences, and not alternative instruments such as changes in the distribution of seats in parliament. While one might theoretically claim that parties could be concerned with gains and losses of legislative seats and use such changes as cues for positional shifts, such processes simply contain and transmit less information than the gains or losses of vote percentage points. As such, it is expected that while the past election model holds with regards to the actual numbers of election results, it should not when substituting raw election results for legislative seat change.

Not ignoring the competing views on the interplay between mainstream and fringe parties, this study also pays due attention to the hypothesis that the causal arrows runs in the

opposite direction. According to this inverse logic of populist parties (Green-Pedersen 2012, Dahlström and Sundell 2012) Eurosceptic Parties gain votes only after mainstream parties have themselves moved in a Eurosceptic direction because moderate parties must first politicize the issue and in a way ‘legitimize’ opposition to European Integration. If it is true that mainstream position changes actually precede the success (or failure) of Eurosceptic Parties, we would expect the following hypothesis to hold:

Hypothesis 2: Previous position changes in the position of Mainstream Parties in a Eurosceptic Direction results in subsequent electoral gains by Eurosceptic Parties.

The Circumstances of Eurosceptic Contagion

In the previous section I theorized that Eurosceptic contagion will occur because political parties use election results as a tool to learn more about the electorate, and that such adaptation occurs in order to secure votes and prevent vote loss in the future. That is one part of the explanation for the phenomenon explored here. A second part of the explanation must address the question of circumstances in which such contagion occurs. It has already been argued that European Politics have suffered from a discrepancy in opinion and policy preferences between elites and masses. Political leaders and mainstream politicians held views of European integration that did not reflect the opinions of the electorate, which was generally less inclined to view regional integration favorably. The logic of proximity theory and the intuition that political parties are vote-seeking dictates that parties should have adjusted to their less Europhile constituencies, and that this gap in positions should have not occurred. If political parties are using election results to adjust their positions in the present day, they should have done so previously as well. Alternatively, if parties were unresponsive to the masses on certain issues, such as the EU, one might expect them to care very little about those issues today as well. In explaining this apparent contradiction it must be remembered that the circumstances of European Politics have over the past few decades changed in certain important ways: the strength and appeal of populist and Eurosceptic parties on the one hand, and the salience of the European question on the other.

These two factors have gone hand in hand, and it is not unlikely that they have reinforced each other.

From Deschouwer to Green-Pedersen to Mair, those authors who dismissed the relevance of Euroscepticism did so because they did not think Eurosceptic Parties could make significant electoral gains, and that assessment as in part rooted in the assumption that the European issue is not salient enough to be of political consequence. Should populist parties make gains, they would do so on other issues (for example immigration) and contagion would likely occur in that area, but not expand to Integration. The Problem with that assessment is that Eurosceptic parties *have* been performing better and the salience of European Integration *has* gone up. These trends can be attributed to a multitude of things but the general gist of the idea is that as European Integration became more profound and affected ever more walks of life, voters became increasingly aware of it, its implications and redistributive effects. This activated a further niche for populist parties to exploit, which in turn provided them with more visibility. Such parties used the new platform and political capital to mobilize the issue and exert pressure on their party systems, further driving up the salience of the issue. Simply put, as time passed the salience of the EU issue as well as the electoral performance of Eurosceptic parties have gone up, and it is logical to assume that Eurosceptic Contagion could be a function of not only electoral outcomes but also the passage of time. If Eurosceptic parties have been ever more successful in mobilizing the issue as time went on, we might expect a similar relationship between electoral change and the degree to which Eurosceptic parties consider the European issue salient. An increasing body of literature attests to the increasing significance of the European Issue including the seminal work of Hooghe and Marks (2009) who argue that politics in Europe have entered a new phase in which mainstream parties have been forced to address and adapt to the simmering opposition to the EU that resides in Europe's polities. Hobolt (2014, 1534) argued that European citizens are becoming "*increasingly aware (of) the Euro crisis and more likely to hold the EU, rather than their national governments, responsible for the economic circumstances in their country*". Various pieces in the state of the art attest to the increased public contention over 'Europe' reported in the media in relation to electoral and political party competition (Hooghe *et al* 2002, Kriesi *et al* 2006, Schuck *et al* 2011, De Vries 2007, Kriesi 2007, van der Eijk and Franklin 2004), and according to the likes of De Wilde and Zürn (2012), attempts to combat and oppose the trends of EU issue politicization are doomed to be unsuccessful.

Changes in the electoral trends of populist parties coincide with trends of growth for the salience of the EU issue. Arguably, EU integration has not always been as important to political parties (populist and moderates alike) as it has been recently. Between the early 90's and now, questions about the desired shape of regional and transnational governance and integration have grown in importance, and the rise of Eurosceptic parties has gone hand in hand with that of the EU issue. Because the EU has become a more divisive and contentious issue as we move closer to the present day, one may expect the effect that Eurosceptic Parties have on other parties to interact with time, we can expect Eurosceptic contagion to be stronger as we come closer to the present day, in line with the New Cleavage Hypothesis according to which Europe is slowly but surely entering an era of 'novel political conflict'.

Hypothesis 3: The phenomenon of Eurosceptic contagion gained strength as time passed and moved closer to the present.

According to Gabel and Scheve (2007), and Szczerbiak and Taggart(2008) Eurosceptic ideas can find refuge even within large parties under the right circumstances. This can happen when a party needs to adopt an issue which can turn around their worsening fortune, or when internal conflict within the party 'transpires out' and makes the world aware of the potential friction within the party. In this regard, Szczerbiak and Taggart are not arguing the mainstream parties in question are pioneering the issue, but that they find themselves in an environment where the issue has been put on the political agenda already. Adam and Maier (2011) have showed that EU issues and their articulation are more prominent in countries with many (or visible) Eurosceptic parties. Such arguments suggest that the likelihood of EU-related questions landing on the media agenda (all things being equal) is greater when domestic political actors give the issue a "face", and this is in turn more likely to happen when Eurosceptic parties are pushing the issue through. Evidence that inter-party conflict can drive media reporting of European issues can further be found in De Vries *et al* (2011, 24-25) Wonka (2015, 135) and Schuck *et al* (2011 43-49). All this suggests, moreover, that a self-reinforcing process may be at play with regards to political cueing, since voters also respond to parties and the political agenda and positions they promote. Such a top down view is promoted by Ray (2003), and while parties in general try to cue and influence the electorate, Steenbergen, Edwards and De Vries (2007, 29) have shown that the disconnect between masses and elites is particularly strong in mainstream parties, and that

radical parties are the strongest and most effective political cues. Accordingly, what matters most for the politicization of European Integration is the degree to which populist parties are willing to mobilize the EU issue. If the integration is a very salient topic for them, there should be more Eurosceptic Contagion than otherwise.

In the first part of this chapter in which I presented the more fundamental literature and theory on party competition, I have argued that electoral politics can be seen as being not only a function of policy positions, but also entailing a degree agenda setting struggle. The salience perspective on electoral contests can be seen as complementary to proximity theory. As stated above, Eurosceptic policy entrepreneurs try to promote the issue of Integration to the agenda, as it is a dimension of competition where they enjoy certain advantages. Moreover, if a populist party has a somewhat Eurosceptic policy position but does not care *that* much about Europe, and does not prioritize the issue, it will not have such a strong effect on other parties, since those parties will themselves deduce that it is not the EU issue that is costing them votes.

Hypothesis 4: The phenomenon of Eurosceptic contagion is stronger when the EU issue highly is salient for Populist Parties.

Following the same logic as above, there might be an interaction effect between how well Eurosceptic Parties do and how ‘extreme’ or radical Eurosceptic parties are. A softer Eurosceptic doing well might elicit a different response from a hard Eurosceptic gaining the same votes because the difference in position (on the EU issue) between the two types of parties would tell different stories to the mainstream parties that are losing votes: in one case their voters are defecting to a party that lies far away from them on the ‘vertical’ EU issue at an extreme ‘anti-EU’ position. In another case, voters are abandoning the party for another party that lies somewhat closer to the center, just ‘somewhat’ opposed to European Integration.

Hypothesis 5: The effect of Eurosceptic success on mainstream party positions depends on how strongly opposed to European Integration the former are.

This hypothesis is not directional because both types of responses from mainstream parties could be observable. On the one hand, moderate parties might respond more strongly (in an anti-

integration direction) if the Eurosceptic party is a hard Eurosceptic, because the distance to its own position would communicate to it just how far away it was from those voters that did defect. On the other hand, parties might employ a more tactical approach, whereby they see a moderate Eurosceptic party as a party that can be seen as a legitimate alternative by more voters than if it were very radical. In such circumstances, the moderate party might deem that it stands more to lose in an upcoming election to a soft Eurosceptic than to a hard Eurosceptic and display more energetic position shifts.

What Motivates Parties to co-opt Eurosceptic positions?

Previous sections of this theoretical section addressed the Radical Party Hypothesis, applied to the issue of regional integration. While that takes us some distance in filling the empirical gap in the field, there are more questions that remain to be asked. What are the dynamics of mainstream (and other moderate) parties' response to Eurosceptics? If parties do change their position on the EU question, do some parties do it more than others? Is there a difference in parties' susceptibility to Eurosceptic discourse? Ultimately, what motivates parties in their responses?

The literature on party-based Euroscepticism has largely tended to focus on two kinds of explanations for the phenomenon: explanations grounded in ideological foundations on the one hand, and explanations of a strategic/tactical nature on the other. This underlies a deeper question of whether political parties view European Integration as a matter of principle, or whether they see it as just another piece in the tactical toolbox. The implications of this question can be huge, answering them could shed some light on the direction in which European Politics are heading in. While the central focal point of this study is to fill the empirical gap surrounding Eurosceptic Contagion, and does not seek primarily to do justice in the ideology and conviction vs tactics and strategy debate, the project takes turns in analyzing and assessing the predictions made by one side or the other vis-à-vis the EU issue and party based Euroscepticism. The dichotomy can be a useful heuristic to structure the analysis.

The tactical/strategic/pragmatic explanations (Meguid, 2008; W.Downs, 2002; Sitter, 2001) stress the idea that parties do not have any sort of 'natural' or de facto tendencies towards more or less Europe and Euroscepticism, but will rather borrow elements of eurocautious or eurocritical discourse in an opportunistic manner, to gain an advantage over their main

competitors. According to such a position, parties want to win elections, win office, and keep a hold of voters, and the pursuit of European Integration is not intrinsically important to them. And if turning their back on EU integration or somehow helping Eurosceptic parties damage their rivals, they would do so. It is expected in this line of reasoning that parties will make use of this issue in order to maximize their chances of becoming formateur party or at least a part of the governing coalition, even if that means strengthening support for Eurosceptic parties (because that added Eurosceptic strength damages rivals more than it does them).

The Radical Party hypothesis can be seen to address the question of contagion on a more basic level, since it postulates that moderate parties would respond to Eurosceptic electoral success, irrespective of where the latter gain their votes (i.e. it does not address the issue of whether parties need to lose votes to the populist challenger in order to respond to the latter's gain). The 'micro-logic' of the past-election model employed in this project argues that political parties use changes in distribution of votes across the political spectrum to gauge public opinion, and implies that a political party will deduce on the basis of electoral change how public opinion has evolved. Two indicators it will put to use are the electoral gain/loss of Eurosceptic parties, and its own electoral gain/loss. I theorize that Eurosceptic Contagion should be stronger if the electoral gain of populists is coupled with the electoral loss of the centrist party (generating a zero-sum dynamic) than if the centrist party does not register any vote loss at all. Both instances will communicate to the political party that there is an overall change in the electorate, but in the case of zero-sum loss, a further lesson is drawn: that it is one's own voters that are fueling the Eurosceptic Party.

Hypothesis 6: The more votes political parties lose compared to previous elections, the stronger their shift in a Eurosceptic direction as a consequence of Eurosceptic Success.

What happens, however, if Eurosceptic parties gain votes and the moderate party (party "A") observes that it has *not* lost votes, but other mainstream parties have? Or what happens when both lose votes, but "A" much less so than other competitors from the political center (thus generating a relative gain for "A")? If moderate parties do not instrumentalize European Integration as a means to damage their moderate opponents, if they only care about general vote loss/defection to Eurosceptic Parties, and are only interested in limiting own voter defection to

Eurosceptic parties, then the only two factors that will matter are their own electoral performance and those of the Eurosceptic challengers, ignoring the other mainstream parties. They will adjust their position to reverse the flow of supporters between themselves and populist parties, regardless whether such a position shift from their behalf helps or damages other centrist parties - this might suggest a more natural and intrinsic inclination towards transnational governance. If a tactical or strategic approach to populist Eurosceptic challengers is taken, then other factors, such as relative political gain or incumbency status would determine the phenomenon of Eurosceptic Contagion.

EU Integration as Opposition Politics?

One strategic view on radical party contagion and adaptation, whose primary proponent is Bonnie Meguid, argues that whether or not a mainstream party will move to copy the discourse of eurosceptics and populists depends on whether it believes it can gain votes relative to other mainstream contenders, regardless of its government/opposition status.

Hypothesis 7: The way and degree to which mainstream parties react to Eurosceptic success is a function of strategic considerations.

Hypothesis 7 can be further operationalized as a set of sub-hypothesis, corresponding to the predictions made by the hypothesis. Sometimes, the growth of a populist/Eurosceptic challenger can be more damaging to a rival than to oneself. Parties will try to oppose the radical party (so in this case argue in favor of ‘more Europe’), even if they lose voters to Eurosceptic challengers, as long as their centrist competitors lose even more votes to the aforementioned populist policy entrepreneur, because their loss is actually a relative gain within the political center, they gain in relative strength. Thus, if a party (for example the Greens) loses 5% compared to its last electoral performance, but the largest party in the country (the Christian Democrats for example) loses 10%, then the first party will have *gained* 5% relative to its larger rival. As a consequence, more interparty competition and higher salience on an issue will favor the party that registers relative gains, and that party will seek to amply conflict by arguing *against* Eurosceptic positions. This would work because by opposing the Eurosceptic party, the mainstream party spurs greater debate on the issue of integration. This increases the visibility of the Eurosceptic party, amplifies

the salience of the issue and makes even more voters defect their centrist competitors and move to the political fringes. Because a party might feel confident that it has less to lose than its rivals, *it could seek to maximize issue salience* by opposing the Eurosceptic Party. On the flipside, according to the same view, if parties feel that they are losing more voters to the Eurosceptic challenger than their centrist competitors do, they will actually shift position in a more Eurosceptic direction to draw back the voters they are losing (as a sort of damage limitation measure). These parties realize that they cannot win the shootout, and have to ‘accommodate’ to the more Eurosceptic positions to mitigate voter defection and limit damage. This explanation is intrinsically tied to the salience approach to party politics, since the choice of position divergence relies on the expectation that more debate leads to more salience, which in turn leads to more voters for the populists. According to such an explanation, I expect that:

H7b: Political Parties’ will change their policy position in a pro-EU direction if they are gaining votes relative to their biggest rivals, and will change their policy position in an anti-EU direction if they are losing votes relative to their biggest rivals.

The same logic can be taken one step further. One could look at parties’ vote changes relative to their rivals, but instead of comparing the changes in percentage of votes that each gained from the 100 per cent possible at each election, compare the changes considering how much percent of a party’s previous total vote the change between elections represented. So if in a hypothetical scenario, at the previous election the Greens won 10% of the overall vote, and at the most recent one only gained 5%, while the CDU went from 40% to 30%, the Greens gained 5% relative to the CDU in absolute terms. But because 5 is 50% out of 10, the greens will have lost half of their previous voters. If the CDU lose 10% between elections and go from 40 to 30, they will lose 25% of their voters. The question presents itself: will the Greens be emboldened by the fact that it gained 5% relative to the CDU, or distraught by the fact that it lost 50% of its voters, compared to only 25% of the CDU?

H7c: Political Parties’ will change their policy position in a pro-EU direction if they lost a smaller share of their own previous vote tally than their biggest rivals did, and will change their policy position in an anti-EU direction if they lost a larger share of their own previous vote tally than their biggest rivals did

A number of recent works (Taggart and Szczesniak, 2008, Sitter 2001, Crum, 2007, Hutter and Grande 2014, Van de Wardt 2015) supports the ‘strategic’ perspective that government-opposition dynamics govern the tug of war on questions of regional integration. Parties in opposition have less policy commitments to respect, and as such can be more critical towards policies on Europe (or policies which can be associated subsequently with the EU). They have more leeway to criticize the EU, and they are freer to criticize the policies of whoever is in power because they are not themselves represented in the European policy circles of Brussels. For parties in government, on the other hand, it is a bit harder to qualify their traditional pro-integration stance, and they are also under pressure to defend many policies that might seem pro-integration. On the one hand, they might be the co-authors of such policies in the European Council and Council of Ministers. On the other hand, even if they do not support policy provisions made in Brussels and Strasbourg. EU rules tend to impose certain policy constraints on governing parties. Lest they appear impotent on the transnational scene, or self-contradictory towards policies they have themselves designed, governing parties will try to cast such policies or policy constraints in a good light. They are thus at a tactical disadvantage compared to those in opposition because fewer strategies are open to them. While the arguments which opposition parties make against the EU may be cynical and an attempt to order to piggy-back on the populist wave, it allows them greater freedom and flexibility in qualifying their discourse on the benefits of EU policy. If Eurosceptic contagion is just as strong amongst opposition and governing parties, there is reason to believe that parties are not as willing to go all the way to get back into office.

H7d: Eurosceptic contagion will happen to a higher degree for parties in opposition than for parties in government.

An Ideological Take

While tactical/instrumental explanations argue that electoral pragmatism is what dictates how parties handle the success of Eurosceptic policy entrepreneurs, others have argued that we should look into the ideological orientations of parties in order to find the answers. Most often, such views are associated with work by Marks and Wilson (2000), Hooghe, Marks and Wilson

(2002), E. Edwards and Catherine de Vries (2009), who suggest that the debate on Europe is grounded in domestic political cleavage and conflict. They argue that questions on European Integration are assimilated by party leaders, activists and constituencies into already existing cleavages, which reflect longer standing commitments on fundamental policy issues. Marks and Wilson's Cleavage Theory of Party Positions on European Integration (2000) and Hooghe and Marks' Postfunctionalist Theorys are maybe the foremost examples of work along these lines. For Lachat and Kriesi(2008a, 2012), Euroscepticism is not simply part of 'politics of opposition' – they suggest that the question of Europe is part of a new structural conflict, which they define as integration versus demarcation. Integration is understood by the authors more broadly as globalization/integration into the European and Global Community and demarcation refers to that of the national community. Based on the more ideological perspective²⁹ on party-behavior vis-à-vis the European Question, a more general hypothesis is formulated in the first stage:

Hypothesis 8: Political Parties' propensity to change their policy position on the question of European Integration due to Eurosceptic success is a function of ideological orientations

Should the hypothesis *not* hold, one would expect to find no interaction between party ideology and election result changes. The hypothesis is left non-directional on purpose because of the complex relationship that the left and right have had with European Integration over time. The Left and the Right have faced integration logics in reverse: parties on the left have generally been more pro-state and multiculturalist in orientation, while parties on the right brought together pro-market and monoculturalist positions (Van Elsas and Van de Brug 2015, 198). Seeking to protect the national social space, the center left was more likely to oppose regional integration in its incipient phases. As negative integration came about and market liberalization became ever more a reality, the utility functions for the two political sides changed. Social democrats saw the 'possibility curve' turning from national social democracy to single market competition regime to the prospect of a European organized social space (Marks and Wilson 2000, 444) while

²⁹ The left-right axis can to some degree be seen as sub-optimal for measuring party ideology in a broader sense, since it is often used as a short-cut for positions on public expenditure and economic policy. A more recent and possibly better alternative is the GAL-TAN axis (Hooghe, Marks and Wilson, 2002) which measures party stances less from an economic and more from a cultural standpoint. Unfortunately, the main dataset used in this project, the Chapel-Hill expert survey does not include GAL-TAN measurements for all the years required. Fortunately, the survey also includes different variables/questions that distinguish between economic left-right positions (the more traditional usage) and general left-right positions of parties, which also touch upon more fundamental ideological issues, beyond the pure economic field.

neoliberals and nationalists began to oppose the prospect of supranational regulation or supranational governance (454). It would thus be possible in principle for both the center right and the center left to be more susceptible to Eurosceptic contagion than the other.

To say that party responses to Eurosceptic success depend on the ideological dimension is not the whole story. One may theorize that how ‘centrist’ or politically moderate a party is influences how susceptible it is to Eurosceptic contagion. While such an explanation continues along the line of reasoning that party ideologies matter, it suggests that another important question is that of parties’ distance from the center/poles regardless whether left or right. It is by now almost taken for granted that fringe parties are more skeptical of European Integration than centrist parties (Hooghe, Marks and Wilson 2002). But are parties closer to the political pole also more immobile and less susceptible to Eurosceptic contagion? While the typical Eurosceptic party is one that lies at the fringe of the economic dimension, there are exceptions to this rule, and not all pro-EU or moderate parties lie at the very center of the economic or general left-right axis. This begs the question, does proximity to the political center affect a party’s tendency to react to Eurosceptic success?

Thus, the ideological hypothesis is specified further in a set of sub-hypotheses:

H8b: The effect of Eurosceptic success on mainstream party positions on the EU issue is different for parties left and right of the ideological center.

H8c: The effect of Eurosceptic success on mainstream party positions on the EU issue is stronger for parties in the ideological left-right center.

A prediction that political parties will be particularly responsive to policy shifts by fellow members of their ideological family is what Somer-Topcu (2009, 826) refers to as the ‘Ideological families’ thesis, an inference drawn straight from Downsian proximity theory. According to such a view, mainstream parties on the left will be more affected by the Eurosceptic success of far left and left wing parties, while mainstream parties to the right of the political center will be more sensitive to the success of far right parties. Because each type of moderate party has certain fringe challengers that it would be more responsive to but not others, there should be no overall trend or tendency for some mainstream parties to be more afflicted by Eurosceptic success. An alternative view to that on ideological mediators of the phenomenon of Eurosceptic contagion would be that either the center left or the center right would be more

susceptible (than the other side of the political spectrum) to Eurosceptic contagion not because of some intrinsic aspect of party ideology that defines how parties react, but by different electoral dilemmas that the left and right are faced with. In one example from the recent literature which carries a similar research design to this but carries certain methodological and analytical differences to the one present here, Mejjers (2015) argues that Center-Left and Center-Right parties are subject to different electoral kinds of pressure, this being also a function of the difference between the far right and the far left. The author argues that Eurosceptic contagion carries different strengths on the two sides of the spectrum, and that parties on the left side are more strongly influenced by Eurosceptic Party success than those on the right side of the center: right-wing Eurosceptic parties are hypothesized to have an advantage over left-wing populists because their ideological baggage is more flexible. Left-wing parties traditionally promoted economic protectionism, while right-wing parties promoted cultural protectionism, but right-wing parties easily incorporated part of left wing discourse (concerns about economic liberalization) into their own under the form of welfare chauvinism; the left wing, it is argued, had no possibility of mirroring such a move. Thus, the implication is that right wing populists steal votes from both center right and center left parties, while left wing populists attract only from the center-left, putting social-democrats under more pressure than parties from the center right, and thus a stronger incentive to shift position, contagion being stronger on the left.

Such hypotheses merit attention and will be duly tested, but one should not discard alternative explanations about who draws votes from whom. While it is true that center left and left-wing parties have traditionally been proponents of economic protectionism, the left side of the political spectrum has also been the one pursuing cultural liberalization; with the right favoring cultural protectionism and economic liberalization, many right wing parties (Lega Nord, The Progress Party) started out as parties with a pro-market, anti-tax, anti-statist focus) – a policy position inimical to left-wing voters. Such explanations question the ideological backbone of left/GAL voters and their consistency³⁰, ignoring the fact that it is more likely, and probable for far right Eurosceptic parties to draw their voters from the center right (in line with predictions of the ‘ideological families’ thesis), and for far-left parties to draw their voters from the center left. Mejjers’ explanation also ignores the fact that in southern Europe (and not only, see for example

³⁰ To argue in layman’s terms, the argument made is that while traditional voters from the right side are chauvinistic, those who typically voted for the left are protectionists _and_ chauvinists, hence the ease with which their switch allegiance

Ireland), leftist populist Parties have traditionally been stronger, and have also made electoral gains that dwarf those of right wing parties (Podemos in Spain, Cinque Stelle in Italy, etc).

H8d The effects of right-wing Eurosceptic success on mainstream party positions is stronger than the effect of left-wing Eurosceptic success

H8e: Right-wing Eurosceptic success has a bigger impact on center right parties and Left-wing Eurosceptic success has a bigger impact on center left parties.

A Geographical Take

The view that left wing and right wing success could generate entirely different contagion dynamics is not unfounded, but something else might underlie it. Previous research suggests that south Europeans tend to be more pro-European in the general outlook than citizens from other countries (Conti *et al* 2010), and it has been shown that Euroscepticism in Italy has tended to be more of the ‘economic’ kind (Quaglia 2011). Based on such argumentation, one could postulate that different types regions of Europe (in the sense of a North-South Divide) might be more sensitive to different types of integration (economic versus cultural and political). Such a difference in the manifestation of Euroscepticism between North and South European countries was noted by Treib (2014, 1549) who states that austerity measures implemented in southern EU countries and related public discontent increased the potential support for left-wing or centrist Eurosceptic Parties, while fears of economic and financial risk associated with bail-outs for the South were a driving force for support for parties on the right of the political spectrum. Val Elsas and Van Der Brug (2014, 211) argued similarly that on the right citizens in more affluent Northern Countries are discontent with monetary integration due to concerns that they have to pay for Southerners’ claimed economic mismanagement.

Hn-s: The dynamics of Right-Wing and Left-Wing Eurosceptic Contagion are different in Northern and Southern Europe.

The Circumstances of Eurosceptic Contagion Revisited – an Institutional Take

According to Hix and Marsh (2007) ‘European Effects’ are negligible in EP elections, with the EU position of parties being irrelevant to its electoral faring, and 40 per cent of the volatility in party vote shares being attributed to transfer from governing parties to opposition parties. Hobolt, Spoon, and Tilley (2009) advocate for the opposite view, according to which voters can defect from governing parties because those are deemed to be too European. Hobolt and Wittrock (2010) subsequently argued that while voters would likely base their party choice at EU elections on domestic issue preferences, the base on which the vote is cast could change provided contexts with sufficient information. European Elections have often been referred to as second-order national elections (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Reif 1997). If one takes the idea at face value, she could be forgiven for deducing that European elections simply matter ‘less’ for political parties, and hence, that their results have less, or no effect on parties’ positions on various issues, including the EU one. Testing such a hypothesis is easy and straightforward: one simply substitutes the change in election results of Eurosceptic parties between the two most recent national elections with change in election results of Eurosceptic parties between the two most recent EP elections.

H10: If Eurosceptic parties are successful at European elections, their mainstream competitors will co-opt their policy positions and shift their own position in an anti-integration direction/Eurosceptic contagion follows.

Institutions and institutional design are crucial to the running of political systems. Some of political science’s most solid axioms are those derived from the differences between proportional and majoritarian electoral systems. While Duverger’s law (Duverger 1954, Riker 1982) teaches us, as an axiom of political science, that majoritarian and proportional rules will produce party systems with differing structures, there is more that can be said and expected beyond such differences in institutional design. Previous research shows that majoritarian electoral systems and systems of proportional representation produce different electoral outcomes because they can favor different types of parties (in the sense of their ideological orientation). Cox (1990) noted that different types of electoral rules can generate various types of policy-taking incentives

for parties and candidates, which in turn can result in some political systems being varyingly centripetal or centrifugal.

Abramson *et al* (2010, 63-64) argue that there is little difference between proportional and FPTP systems with regards to the likelihood of spurring tactical, or insincere voting, others have shown that the differences in outcomes between the types of electoral systems can extend far beyond the number-of-parties equilibrium, with significant consequences for the types of political parties and coalitions they favor and all the way to the types of welfare states that are thus facilitated (Manow 2009, Iversen and Soskice, 2006). One of the most important effects of majoritarian systems is the increased likelihood of strategic, or tactical, voting occurring, which tends to suppress the vote tallies of small and fringe parties. Empirical evidence has accumulated over time to show that what Downs (1957) and Riker (1982) refer to as *sophisticated* voting does indeed occur to a high degree (Neto and Cox, 1997; Franklin, Niemi and Whitten, 1994; Niemi *et al* 1992), most often to the disadvantage of third parties (Riker 1982, 764). The strategic voting thesis postulates that voters who are afraid of “wasting” their vote on a non-winning party will instead vote for a party that is not their ‘first choice’ but instead for one which they think has a chance of transforming their vote in a representative seat. Since simple plurality and single ballot systems tend to generate a “winner take all” outcome, it is further postulated that voters in such systems are more likely to ‘vote with their mind, not with their heart’. Meffert and Gschwend (2011) refer to ‘insincere voting’ and demonstrate that it can occur for a variety of reasons. Most importantly perhaps, voters are likely to defect from their preferred party or candidate if they have no chance of winning, an idea in line with the argumentation that winner-take-all first past the post systems might generate more strategic voting. This kind of mechanism was also described by Anthony Downs, in which he referred to as sophisticated voting “ *A rational voter first decides what party he believes he will benefit him most; then he tries to estimate whether this party has any chance of winning. He does this because his vote should be expended as part of a selection process, not as an expression of preference. Hence even if he prefers party A, he is “wasting” his vote on A if it has no chance of winning, because very few other voters prefer it to B or C. The relevant choice in this case is between B and C. Since a vote for A is not useful in the actual process of selection, casting it is irrational*” (1957, 48). Because voters are less likely to cast votes for the parties truly closer to their position, elections results don’t reflect the opinion landscape or public opinion dynamics as well, and the information

mechanism is altered or weakened. Mainstream parties are then given less of a nudge in the Eurosceptic direction themselves. On this basis, one would predict less expressions of Eurosceptic contagion in majoritarian systems; the more proportional a party system is, the stronger the phenomenon of Eurosceptic contagion we expect to be.

While I expect this interaction to have that direction with regards to national elections, there is reason to believe that an inverse interaction is at play when it comes to European elections. If a country organizes its parliamentary elections according to first-past-the-post rules, but is involved in a multi-level system (the EU) whose other-level elections are held on a proportional basis, then those other-level elections (the EP elections) might be the ones whose outcome better reflect the distribution of policy positions among the electorate because there is less strategic voting going on at European Elections than in National elections. There are bases in such systems for fringe, niche, and populist parties to do better in the supra-national elections than in the national ones and those extra-level elections might be better at conveying the information needed for Eurosceptic contagion to occur (thus rendering the political system of the country quasi-proportional). It is hence only natural to ask whether proportional and majoritarian systems generate different patterns of Eurosceptic contagion.

H11b: Eurosceptic contagion resulting from the national electoral contest will be stronger in more proportional systems, and weaker in less proportional ones

H11c: Eurosceptic contagion resulting from European Parliament elections will be stronger in more majoritarian systems than in proportional ones

As was argued previously, the most recent European Elections were a resounding success for soft and hard Eurosceptic parties. According to the old view that European elections are second-order national elections, parties and politicians don't pay much attention to EP elections and voters use them as a means to commend or condemn governing parties by punishing them in the 'mid term'. A question begs, whether we can find evidence that voters used EP elections to punish parties on the basis of their positions on the EU issue. That voters punish governing parties in mid-term elections is no secret. The question is whom do they transfer votes to. If moderate parties are replaced with other moderate parties, it would imply that it is not discontent with EU position, but some other factors, that explain the outcome, perhaps just the desire to cast a negative vote. Alternatively, it could be that the EP election really is about Europe. More

precisely, if voters were unhappy with governing parties' position European Integration, have they tended to transfer their votes to Eurosceptic parties via EP elections? In practice, this means measuring whether gains or losses by Eurosceptic parties at EP elections correlate with the distance in policy position between the electorate and the average position of governing parties. The assumption/thesis is that the fate of Eurosceptic parties at EP elections correlates with the dissonance in policy preferences between governing parties and the electorate. The corresponding alternative hypothesis for this is:

H12: Eurosceptic parties gain votes at EP elections when there is a large dissonance in EU preferences between the more eurosceptic electorate and more pro-Integration governing parties.

Rounding up and Coming Round again

The Sleeping Giant Metaphor of Franklin and Van der Eijk rests on certain premises about present-day politics in Europe, all of which can be tested. Firstly, do voters hold real attitudes about European Integration? Secondly, have elites displayed differing positions from (and is there a lack of response to) voters' attitudes? In other words, is there a gap in preferences, a discrepancy between policy supply and demand? As opinion polls and surveys have showed repeatedly over the past decade and half, the public is increasingly cautious of European Integration, and political parties have not reflected such moods in their own policy positions fast enough to alleviate voter concerns. In most countries of the European Union, inter-party competition on the topic of European Integration has been weaker than on the traditional left/right issues, and party positions have tended to better reflect voters' left-right preferences than on alternative issues (Mattilla and Raunio, 2010). Among voters however, the divide on Europe seems to be as strong as the left/right one. Franklin and Van Der Eijk (2004) posit that a surprisingly large proportion of the electorate hold „real“ attitudes and display meaningful variation in EU preferences. To a large degree, these preferences criss-cross traditional lines of party affiliations (and are even orthogonal to the left-right orientation). Thirdly, are Eurosceptic parties in a position to promote the question of Europe within the larger political system? In other words, are populist parties able to influence the agenda of political discussion and turn the

EU into a salient issue? The sleeping giant thesis assumes that inter-party contestation on the EU is most likely to spur when Eurosceptic political entrepreneurs mediate public apprehension towards integration. This is because, so argue Van der Eijk and Franklin, even though most voters would be prepared to vote on the basis of EU preferences (be they for or against), elites (political parties, politicians) have largely had a tendency to downplay the EU issue (Pennings 2006, 268). A key point made by Van der Eijk and Franklin is that „voter readiness is not enough“ – as mainstream parties would continue to „ignore“ Europe in elections – some policy entrepreneur has to come along and be willing to capitalize on these preconditions for the purpose of winning votes that otherwise would have gone to other parties (this is essentially the Extremist (or Radical) Party Hypothesis of issue politicization).

The answer to that third question, too, is affirmative. Populist parties have over the past twenty years become increasingly aware of the potential weapon of Eurosceptic discourse. European Integration has by now become one of their premier tools, and one of the issues that is most important for them. One can say that fringe parties have gone from being mere populist to populist Eurosceptic parties over the past two decades. They noticed the political gap between masses and elites, occupied that niche and took advantage of its political potential. The final step that needs to be taken now is to see how mainstream parties themselves reacted to these (successful) moves by their fringe challengers. Is there evidence that Eurosceptic discourse has contaminated the political systems of Western Europe? And will Europe’s political establishment react in a way that suggests continuous belief in ‘ever closer union’, or just opportunistic drive that will result in them turning their backs on Brussels when the going gets too tough?

3. Research Design

Introduction

This study is cross sectional and cross temporal in design, and makes use of a panel dataset to explore party position changes over time. As argued when describing the empirical gap addressed by this project, research designs following similar logics - whereby it is analyzed whether changes in parties' positions correlate with measures of support for parties (such as electoral results) - have been used previously (for example Van Spanje 2010; Dahlström and Sundell, 2012; Schumacher *et al*, 2013), but only for the investigation of related phenomena (position on immigration, environmental issues) and attention has only recently begun being given to Eurosceptic Contagion in a large N manner. The main idea behind it is that if we can measure various parties' positions (on a certain policy issue) at regular intervals and measure the degree of public approval towards populist parties (or in this case, Eurosceptic parties in particular) likewise at regular intervals, we can measure the degree to which they correlate with each other. It is thus possible to test whether higher approval rates for Eurosceptic parties are consistently and repeatedly followed by changes in the other parties' positions on the question of the EU (or the other way around). The aim is to strive for a logic whereby change between T1 and T2 on the independent variable correlates with changes between T2 and T3 on the dependent variable.

Before delving more profoundly into questions of Research Design, some specifications must be made with regards to the underlying logic of the study. It is important to note that the weight of this investigation falls on the behavior of the mainstream/centrist parties, and not the challenger/populist parties. It is not intrinsically concerned with what Eurosceptic Parties did that led to their heightened levels of support (albeit the issue is discussed in the closing part of this project), the focus being on the consequences of that support. An often recurring argument is that populist parties owe their success not only to opposition to European Integration, but also other political contentious issues that they have fringe or radical positions on, and indeed the argument is extended that their position on the EU might be barely marginal to that success. That is not an unfounded argument, and empirical data shows that populist parties have not always cared this much about Europe – the level of salience they attribute to the issue of European Integration was

rather low at first. But it *has* grown with time, and it is now one of the most important issues for these parties (Hooghe and Marks, 2009).

On a related note to the objection above, the point is sometimes raised that even if these parties do make an issue out of Europe, the electorate actually votes for them not due to their opposition to Brussels, but again due to other questions, like immigration, globalization, worsening economic situations and welfare state retrenchment. So why should we see changes in EU position of the other parties, if populist success was not caused by the EU? Indeed, why should we? The answer, simple as it may seem, is that *we shan't*. If questions and objections about European Integration are not responsible for the fate of Eurosceptic parties (and vote loss at the political center), the mainstream ones will infer as much from the political debate and discussion. And they will deduce that their own position on the EU issue is not consequential for their future electoral performance, ergo they will not exhibit such shifts in position. On the other hand, if they believe that their own position on the EU might make them less attractive with voters, if they believe that what they say and where they stand on the EU issue will affect whether populists take voters from them or not during the coming electoral contests, it follows that they believe their discourse and stance on the EU actually matters, as does that of the neophyte challengers. And in such cases, we will observe shifts in position. The issue in a way takes care of itself. If political parties did not think that it is important to display shifts in position, they would not do so³¹. And if they did not think that the EU issue causes them to lose votes, such changes would not systematically follow particular trends of Eurosceptic success.

Another point typically raised in such discussions is related to the well-known statement that correlation is not causation. As was already espoused in the theoretical chapter, previous research on the radical party hypothesis has argued that voter readiness is not enough to change the position of mainstream parties. Political parties pro-Integration stance can co-exist with the electorate's anti-euro attitude, given an absence of a credible and legitimate eurosceptic alternative at the ballot box. When populist parties finally manage to make a credible challenge on the political center, and start luring voters away, that is when the parties in the center realize they can no longer ignore the position of voters. As such, the cause of change in position is – indirectly- the electorate, but the success of Eurosceptic parties is necessary for this to happen. It

³¹ especially considering the traditional pro-EU bias associated with catch-all parties in the middle of the political spectrum

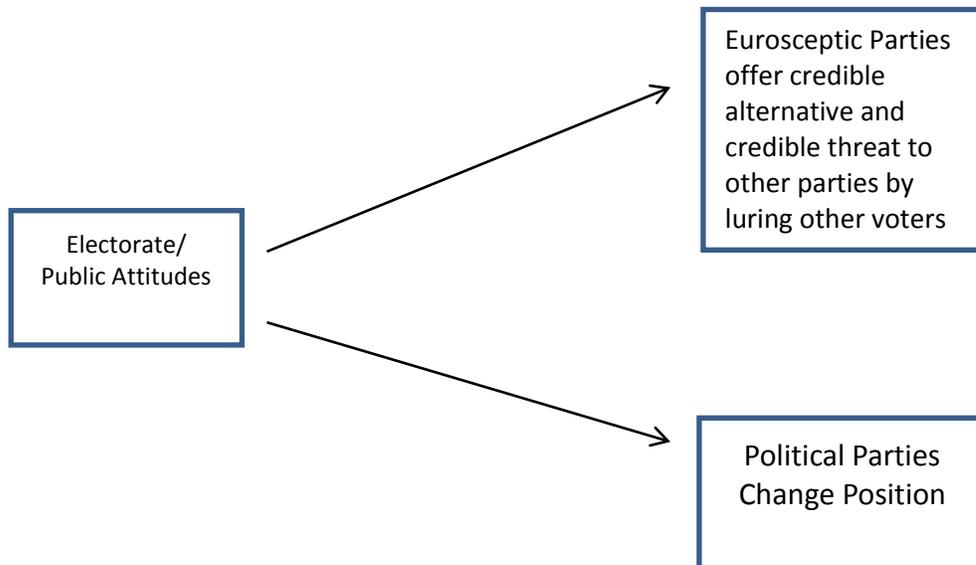
is legitimate to ask, and take up the question of whether the relationship looked at in this study is a spurious one.

The main argument in this project is that B (Eurosceptic Parties doing well) causes C (change in other parties' position). Furthermore, A (electorate attitudes and position³²) is what enables B and B causes C (ergo, A-> B-> C), but A would not cause C in the absence of B (election results).

If the argument were fallacious and the relationship spurious, we would observe that whereas Eurosceptic parties might gain favor in the polls, mainstream parties are at the same time changing their position on the EU issue not because of the former, but because they are reacting out of their own initiative to the populace becoming increasingly Eurosceptic. That is indeed the main alternative theoretical explanation to the Radical Party Hypothesis, that political systems and their parties are experiencing position shifts directly due to the evolution of their electorate's preferences and those of their members and not due to how the fringe parties are doing). In such a situation, the two phenomena would be simultaneous processes, both having the same cause, and not causing one another. Parties' changes in position would be a direct result of public attitudes towards Integration, not of how Eurosceptic parties are performing.

³² Naturally, the salience of the EU issue can also reasonably be expected to play a role. While citizens might hold a skeptical view of the EU, they might not consider it important at one time point or another, and at such time points would not vote for a Eurosceptic Party/on the basis of Eurosceptic policy preferences. Issue Saliency and populist success could arguably reinforce each other – as citizens care more about European Integration, they are more likely to vote for Eurosceptic parties, and as Eurosceptic parties do ever better, the EU issue is more likely to rise in the issue agenda

Figure 11: A model for a spurious relationship



A model for spurious relationship between Eurosceptic party success and mainstream party position

There are two ways around this problem, both of which are a function of research design. First, it is possible to control for public opinion. By complementing the model(s) with a control variable that describes public support towards Integration at the same time points as the observations in the dataset, one can observe the correlation between eurosceptic success and the position changes of the other parties, all else being else constant i.e. *when controlling for public support for integration*. If Eurosceptic Success ceases to be a significant predictor of party position change when popular opinion is added to the model, the relationship would indeed be spurious. Secondly, the temporal order of measurements is an important element to relationship control. The dataset was designed in such a way as to ensure that changes in electoral results are anterior to changes in party positions. It is of course possible that the relationship goes in the other direction, i.e. that changes in position of mainstream and other parties are followed by changes in the success of eurosceptics. In such a case, one can talk about changes in the policy offer of mainstream parties ‘legitimizing’ the populists, as one of the hypotheses predicts. This can easily

be tested by inverting the model – using (prior) party position changes as a predictor and the (ulterior) electoral faring of Eurosceptic parties as a dependent variable.

The Project makes use of data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey, which collects data (issues its waves) at certain set points in time (1999, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014). The survey is a built in a manner that mimics Leonard Ray’s expert survey³³ (1984, 1988, 1992, 1996), with identical questions and indicators, which encourages the appending of the two datasets into one. Every observation in the dataset is a party at one of these waves. A hypothetical observation would be a party X in 2010 – in such a case the main Dependent Variable is that party’s change of its position between 2006 and 2010 (assuming the party was in the 2006 dataset, otherwise the observation is dropped).

Unfortunately elections in Europe’s member states have electoral cycles that differ from the time intervals of the CHES. The Expert Survey also mentions for each observation in the dataset what was the most recent election in its country prior to that measurement wave. So in the hypothetical example above, a country might have seen its most recent election prior to 2010 be in 2008, and the most recent election prior to 2006 be in 2004. In this scenario, the observation would have as its main predictor (X) how Eurosceptic parties performed between 2004 and 2008, and Y (the position change 2006-2010) is regressed on the fate of Eurosceptics 2004-2008. For every observation/case in the dataset, it is made sure that the period in which change occurs on the dependent variable (position changes from one CHES wave to another) is ulterior (does not begin and end prior) to the period in which change occurs on the predictor (change in results from one election to another). For each country/CHES wave group, there is an election that is most recent to when the wave was collected and composed. It is change between those elections that provides the right side of the equation³⁴. This provides a consistent way to operationalize which electoral cycles are most suitable for each change between CHES waves.³⁵

³³ Ray, 1999

³⁴ A table describing this in more detail is provided in the appendix.

³⁵ Having the same identical observation years on both variables would have been the advantage of using Manifesto data, since manifestos in every country are issued/published in time for elections. The measurements for party positions – and changes in said positions – would have a temporal structure that overlaps perfectly with that of elections. As such, using the same hypothetical example of party X above, it would have been possible to regress change in party position between 2004-2008 on change in Eurosceptic performance between 2000-2004. As I will show below, however, Manifesto data has certain inherent characteristics that render it unusable for such purposes as those present here.

Estimation Technique - Cluster Robust Prais-Winsten Regression

A standard problem of working with longitudinal data is serial autocorrelation. Measurements on a time series (or a panel) are bound to be strongly correlated with previous measurements of the same series, and a party's position at one moment in time is likely to correlate very strongly with its position at the previous moment. If parties do not exhibit wild ideological swings from one pole to the other, party position change is then incremental. In such cases, the best predictor for party position is a party's previous position. Due to this, taking the raw values of a party's position and looking at them is not very helpful. In the process of explaining the change in parties' position over time, this project deals with variation between parties, across countries and across time. A model is needed which handles both the cross-sectional characteristics of the data (panel differences based on parties and countries) as well as the time-related issues (which carry the risk of serial autocorrelation) in it. I am interested in change between measurement periods, both for the dependent as well as independent variables, instead of their absolute values. It makes both theoretical and methodological sense to use the first difference of the data on both sides of the equation. By differencing data, one is essentially subtracting the value of the variable at T2 from T1 (in effect creating a variable for change). Taking first differences on the values of the variables is a good way to help reduce problems of serial autocorrelation, especially when dealing with a panel given the prospect of serial autocorrelation.

Nonetheless, the model might still run into problems of serial autocorrelation, in the sense that parties' changes from one time to another correlate with each other, so the use of simple OLS regression is still not warranted. To deal with the issue, similar projects typically make use of a lagged dependent variable on the right hand side of the equation. Following Plümper, Troeger and Manow (2005), I will instead use a Prais-Winsten solution to deal with the panel-specific error structure, since introducing a lagged dependent variable on the IV side can bias estimates and absorb much of the theoretically interesting time-series variance in the data. Furthermore, unlike solutions like the Cochrane-Orcutt estimation (which was for a time considered the standard practice in such situations), the Prais-Winsten option does not drop the first observation, which can be significant in the absence of large samples.

One further problem that can occur with panel data is error clustering (Cameron and Miller, 2015). The cases and data points are nested within countries and within time points. Besides the risks of autocorrelation mentioned above, there is also a chance that errors might be correlated within certain measurements periods. Every political party has its own position on EU integration, separate from that of its peers, and each will have its own value on the indicator that measures their position. That measurement is thus ‘intrinsic’ to the party. That, however, is not case for the indicator for Eurosceptic success. At each election, the biggest Eurosceptic Party (and all Eurosceptic parties cumulated) gain a percentage of votes that can be represented by one value – that one value will represent the electoral performance of the Eurosceptic party and will be value that each observation in the dataset will receive on the variables describing Eurosceptic Success. So if the 2014 CHES wave in one country has, for example, 5 parties, all of them (bar the Eurosceptic party, which is deleted from the dataset) have their own individual values for the dependent variable and will have one common/identical value on the main predictor variable, because that value is intrinsic to the elections, not the parties themselves. Similar situations exist for those variables that describe socioeconomic conditions, public opinion, etc – these are all values related to a country at a point in time. There might be something about a particular election that makes it different, and makes measurements based on that idiosyncratic election result in an abnormal distribution of errors. By using cluster robust standard errors in combination with the Prais-Winsten option, one is in a way controlling for ‘freak election periods’ in one country or another.

The base model of the project is thus as follows:

$$\Delta \text{ Moderate Party EU Position} = \beta_1 (\Delta \text{ Eurosceptic Success}) + \beta_2 (\text{Extremes of Eurosceptic Parties}) + \beta_3 (\text{Salience of EU issue of Eurosceptic Parties}) + \beta_4 (\text{Public Opinion of EU Integration}) + \beta_5 (\text{national unemployment level}) + \beta_6 (\text{Moderate Parties' Left-Right Orientation}) + \beta_7 (\text{Moderate Parties Government/Opposition status}) + \beta_8 (\text{Individual Moderate Party vote\%}) + \beta_9 (\Delta \text{ Individual Moderate Party vote\%}) + \beta_{10} (\text{Country Dummies}) + \beta_{11} (\text{Time})$$

Given that standard regression tables are not particularly helpful in assessing whether moderating or intervening variables have conditional effects on the dependent variable when reporting interaction effects, I will also provide the marginal effects of Eurosceptic electoral success on

mainstream party EU position at various mean values of the main predictor (Brambor *et al*, 2005).

Data and Measurement

What is European Integration? What is opposition to European Integration? How does one measure and operationalize them? What is the best source of data to use when one seeks to accomplish said measurement? Is a one-dimensional scalar indicator the right choice in such a situation? Due to its intrinsic connection with the Chapel Hill Expert Survey that provided most of the data used in this project, the EU/Integration dimension is treated as a single, continuous dimension, ranging from support for full national independence at one end to support for further European Integration at another. The backbone of the dataset was created on the basis of two expert surveys which I appended into one: The Expert Survey conducted by Leonard Ray (1999) covering the years 1984-1996 and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey, which picked off where the other left off in 1999. The dataset covers 224 political parties in 14 „West“ European countries (the EU15 minus Luxemburg) in the period 1984 – 2014³⁶. The Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) asked country specialists (political scientists) across Europe to estimate the position of political parties in their country at regular intervals. The Survey provides the data for the main dependent variable, Party Position on EU integration. Unlike other analytical frameworks that use qualitative and categorical distinctions to classify party positions and types of Euroscepticism (for example Taggart and Szczerbiak’s soft Eurosceptic/hard Eurosceptic framework), the CHES relies on a one-dimensional scale, numerical description of party positions, that ranges from 1 to 7³⁷.

There has been some debate about which is the best source of data when measuring party positions on the issue of European Integration, and the best way to collect it. In fact, *Electoral Studies* dedicated an entire special issue in 2007 to questions of EU issue dimensionality and measurement. Some attempts to describe EU issue dimensionality have gone about by simply asking where parties lie – such has been the approach of Taggart and Szczerbiak, whose

³⁶ As many parties came and went, not all of them are present at every time point.

³⁷ Given that a party’s values for a country are averaged across that country’s experts, the values end up being non-integers

collection of country case studies was each written by one or two country experts, or the approach of the team from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, who also asked experts (just many more) where parties lie on the EU questions. Alternatively, some have coded the positions of political parties based on various types of documents, relying not on the judgment of individuals, but on textual evidence.

A dataset that is widely used in lieu of expert surveys (and considered something of a best-alternative out there for similar research foci) is that of the Comparative Manifesto Project, which uses quantitative content analysis to evaluate parties' election manifestos. While an election manifesto is indeed a rich source of data about the discourse and pledges of a party, it does not tell the whole story. It can be seen as a list of pledges, and measuring manifestos does not equate with measuring what a party says and does outside of the times when it is running in the electoral horse race. In a nutshell, one can always wonder whether they 'said one thing, but did another'. This sort of critique does not imply that parties are knowingly/intentionally untruthful or dishonest in their election pledges. If that was the case, such data sources would be largely invalid. The arguments against their use for research questions with similar orientations stem mostly from the fact that they offer a temporary snapshot of the behavior and positioning of a party during an electoral cycle (at the very beginning of it).

After elections, parties often have to contend with factors that 'deflect' or alter their exact policy position after elections, like coalition membership, government participation, economic and historical exogenous shocks, and so on. The fact that manifestos are documents intrinsically tied to the electoral campaign means that they have a strong 'public consumption' orientation. Statements made by members of parliament in house debates, party members' claims in the press, elected officials' legislative or executive behavior, all these can deviate more or less from the 'vows' published by parties ahead of election campaigns.

This brings us to the question of what it actually is that one seeks to measure. If one wants to analyze only the public vows of a party ahead of election campaigns, then party manifestos might be a good way to proceed. This presumes that the researcher adopts a time-bound definition of party position, equating it with the party's stated position at the onset of the electoral horserace. If, on the other hand, one defines a party's position on an issue, its policy preferences, as being described by the aggregate of what the party (especially its leadership) says beyond the immediate pledge before the election, then one must find a way to factor in the

totality of statements, positions and acts of a party and its leadership. The question of operationalization is closely tied to that of choice of dataset.

Any data source has its strengths and weaknesses, and expert judgements are no exception. In one article from the seminal *Electoral Studies* issue, Gary Marks, Liesbeth Hooghe, Marco Steenbergen and Ryan Bakker (2007) cross-validate various measures of party positioning in order to establish the validity of EU position measurements. Enumerating the weaknesses of expert data, the authors mentioned subjective judgment, informational asymmetry, temporal constraints and the conflation of preferences and behavior. On the point of subjective assessment, a question that one can raise is that of positional equivalence and comparability across countries. What if country experts in Sweden or the UK have a different understanding of what ‘Euro sceptic’ means compared to somebody in Italy or Spain? And the fact that the operationalization of the issue dimension is rather broad (and only one-dimensional) leaves much to the intuition of country experts to decide how to award scores in the survey. As I argue below when tackling the question of discretion, that is in reality an advantage. This was also a point recognized by the authors when describing the advantages of expert surveys, among them flexibility: “*The researcher may gather information on any topic for which there are no bona fide experts, including topics that do not surface in electoral manifestos.*” (Marks *et al* 2007, 26). Another advantage of expert surveys is Direct Quantification. Given that experts are asked to assess party positions on a structured scale, quantification becomes easy for projects such as this. One other, related advantage enumerated by the authors is the high validity of the data, given that experts rely on multiple information sources about the party when forming their judgment, as well as the consistency of expert judgments (Whitefield *et al* 2007)

When describing the strengths of Manifesto Data, Marks *et al* (2007) mentioned the objectivity of the data (the scores/indicators are a result of documents and texts issued directly by the parties), the long time series going back far beyond the time scope of the first expert survey, and the fact that they are good measurement tools for the assessment of salience. This last strength is, I argue, intrinsically tied to its biggest weakness. The biggest drawback to manifesto data perhaps lies with the fact that, as the authors note, “*it may be difficult to code electoral manifestos on a single category that encompasses a large and diverse issue such as European Integration*” (Marks *et al* 2007, 33). The manifesto project uses quantitative, not qualitative text analysis, to code the data and it does so in one dimension – just like in the case of the CHES.

Without any qualitative weighting, such a mechanical approach might be too rigid for the fine assessments that go into assessing where parties lie with precision. To ensure a high standard of validity and reliability, the analysis of Election Manifestos employs (a systematic) quantitative content analysis. In the manifestos, phrases and sentences are broken down into quasi-sentences and each of the quasi-sentences is checked for mentions on a list of political issues. If an issue is mentioned in a quasi-sentence, this mention can either be positive or negative. The total number of positive mentions of an issue is then added up, as are negative ones. That produces a ratio of positive mentions (for that particular issue) to the total number of political mentions in the manifesto, and that holds for negative mentions as well. If a manifesto has 200 political mentions, of which ten are positive mentions of European Integration, and twenty are negative, the manifesto will have a score of 5(%) on the EU Positive indicator and 10(%) on the EU Negative indicator. The ratio of positive to negative mentions (5/10) is then taken to describe the position (pro/anti EU) of the party.

The system is more useful as a measure of political salience, and the CMP project has been directly intertwined with work on the development of Salience Theory (Budge, Klingemann, Volkens³⁸), with the work resulting in the Magnus Opum “*Mapping Policy Preferences: Estimates for Parties, Electors and Governments 1945 - 1998*”. Many issues in politics are valence issues, or can be treated like valence issues. In such cases, word counting and measurements of salience can provide legitimate instruments for measuring party positions. However, when it comes to measuring party positions on issues like the EU, the CMP is less well suited.

As a pure mental exercise, imagine two manifestos, one belonging to UKIP and one belonging to Germany’s Christian Democratic Union. Furthermore, imagine that both manifesto’s are equally long (word, sentence, and mentions-count wise). Both manifestos mention EU integration only once. In the CDU manifesto, there is a negative reference to something very specific, like the anti-crisis ‘Six-Pack’. The UKIP manifesto also has one reference of Integration, a negative one, which criticizes the EU as a whole. The CMP dataset would code both manifestos as having the same values (0 positive, 1 negative, and the same ratio), without weighting the political mentions. Clearly that raises an entire set of problems, since we know that such political mentions in the two manifestos cannot have empirical

³⁸ Klingemann et al, 2006; Volkens et al, 2013

equivalence. The fact that dataset only counts references to the EU, without weighting them is a major drawback of the dataset. Coders and evaluators *should* be able to exercise qualitative discretion, since there is much qualitative information out there. This discretion, this qualitative information, is put to use when country experts decide that a party should be assigned a particular value on the CHES survey scale, and not another, which makes the CHES scale more comprehensive.

The Chapel Hill Expert Survey contains a variety of variables pertaining to EU party politics. Besides describing party EU issue salience and internal party dissent, the survey also offers party positions on a set of sub-issues, such as EU foreign policy, cohesion policy, or positions on the question of expanding EP powers among others. The most important variable in the dataset – the one the survey is maybe best known for – is the one aggregated dimension that asks experts to compresses all information into one indicator. While that one variable constrains EU politics to one dimension, just like the Manifesto Project does, it does not suffer from the latter's problems because of expert discretion in awarding scores on that one dimension.

While treating the EU policy space in this way is obviously a simplification (European Integration does indeed cover a host of issues, such as reducing barriers to the single market, promoting social and employment policy, the creation of a common currency, foreign policy), and while it is in principle possible to be in favor of some aspects of integration and against other ones, it seems that a general underlying coherence exists which allows us to talk about party attitudes towards the EU in an aggregated fashion. The data of the CHES benefits from rather high within-measure validity. After performing factor analysis on the variables of the CHES dataset, it was found that a single factor explains over 75% of variance in party positioning on issues such as fiscal policy, EU employment policy, EU cohesion policy, EU environmental policy, EU asylum policy, EU foreign and security policy, or extending the power for the EU Parliament (Marks et al, 2007). That factor is associated positively and strongly ($r=0.85$) with the main general measure of party position on the EU issue that lays at the core of the CHES. Asking country experts to estimate the position of parties is helpful because it allows them to weigh in all pieces of information they have on that party. In effect, it gives country experts the discretion to 'fill out' the survey with what they really think about a political parties, not limiting them to basing that estimation solely on the information from one instrument or document. In the Expert

Survey, experts are usually asked to fill in the: “overall orientation of the party leadership towards European Integration in the year X “.

Naturally, it is to be expected that to some degree country experts will tend to be affected in their evaluation of parties’ positioning not only by electoral promises, but also by the behavior of the parties, and *that* is good. The more information the experts use when they evaluate parties’ positions, the better the likelihood that the experts evaluation is correct and valid. It also offers a solution to the ‘what they did, not what they said’ dilemma. While Budge (2000, 103) has raised concerns regarding the criteria on the basis of which experts estimate party positions, and the very fact that it is not entirely clear if experts evaluate intentions, behavior, or reputation, Steenbergen and Marks (2007, 349-352) have alleviated such fears by pointing to the guidelines that experts are given when filling out the survey, as well as the small variation across experts. Given that experts also rely on acts as much as statements, and statements in different forums/circumstances (press, legislature, campaign), they will attain a better rounded, and more exact picture on where the parties (and their leadership) actually ‘stand’.

The Dimensionality of the EU Issue

Is it in order to treat positions on European Integration as one-dimensional? Arguments can be made that one should not define as Eurosceptic somebody who opposes ‘this current Europe’ but proposes instead a different vision for Europe. The underlying idea in Kopecky and Mudde’s ‘Two Sides of Euroscepticism’ (2002) is that Euroscepticism can indeed be a multifaceted phenomenon, and it might in some circumstances even be correct to speak of several Euroscepticisms. Even in their own conceptualization, those who reject the EU but support European Integration in principle are called ‘Eurosceptics’ (as opposed to ‘Europragmatists or ‘Eurorejects’, two of their three other analytical categories). Numerous other works have treated ‘Euroscepticism’ and ‘Opposition to European Integration’ as multifaceted or multidimensional concepts, one of the most acclaimed of which is Paul Taggart’s seminal article on Euroscepticism and Political Parties, *A Touchstone of Dissent*, in which he defined it as expressing ‘the idea of contingent opposition as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European Integration’(1998:336). While Taggart refined his definition (together with Szczerbiak, 2008) by differentiating between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’

Euroscepticism, other scholars proposed alternative conceptual and analytical maps. Kopecky and Mudde's work (2002) - another celebrated page in the debate surrounding the concept - relied on Easton's concepts of specific and diffuse support to offer a two-dimensional typology. Rovny (2004) insisted on differentiating between the motivation and the magnitude of opposition to the EU. At the level of public opinion, similar debates took place with regard to the definitions of Euroscepticism. Krouwel and Abts (2007) developed a two-dimensional conceptualization based on the 'targets' and 'degree' of popular discontent toward 'Europe'. Taggart's initial definition ('contingent and conditional opposition to European Integration, as well as total and unconditional opposition to it') covers a broad range of attitudes towards the EU, and was later broken down into two different forms of opposition by him and Szczerbiak. Whereas 'hard Euroscepticism' referred to 'principled opposition to the EU and European Integration' (as it is articulated by those parties or actors advocating a withdrawal out of the EU or opposing EU accession), 'soft Euroscepticism' expresses a 'qualified opposition' to the EU reflecting dissatisfaction with 'core' EU policies or with the current EU trajectory, perceived to be contrary to the 'national interest'.

I, however, believe it is possible to talk about Opposition to (current and further) European Integration on an aggregate level just as it is possible to talk about something like the EU or European Integration on an aggregate level. While it is obviously not easy to pinpoint exactly what support and opposition to European Integration are, it is clear that at any one moment in time, we can talk about and assess to what degree a political actor is advocating *more* European Integration or less, and that is well-captured by a one-dimensional measurement. It does not help us very much for an actor to claim that they are not Eurosceptic 'because whilst they might oppose the current European architecture, they are not opposed to an alternative and counterfactual one' or for an actor to claim that 'they are against the EU, not against Europe'³⁹. It would not surprise anyone for Nigel Farage to claim that '*he is not against Europe*' or for him to claim that '*he doesn't have a problem with Europe, just Eurocrats deciding for other people*'. Neither would it surprise somebody to hear M. Le Pen claim that she is '*pro Europe*', or that she wants to '*save Europe*' especially after a discourse about returning to '*traditional core European*

³⁹ which would presumably conform to their particular wishes or fantasies about what Regional Integration should look like - almost all political parties, even nationalist, communist or populist ones have some potentially alternative vision of what Europe should look like

values'. Still, nobody would hesitate to term these political leaders as 'Eurosceptic'. Part of the problem lies with the fact that 'opposing this Europe, not any or every Europe' is a convenient way to argue for anybody who wants to roll back integration. The shadow of the future lies far enough in the future that political entrepreneurs can be insincere in their discourse. While there might be a promise for a different, better Europe, first comes the need to demolish the present one - to roll back integration, and that is what various eurosceptics have in common.

What soft and hard Eurosceptics have in common, be it Parties like the UKIP, FN, PVV (hard) or the United Left in Spain and Sinn Fein (soft) is that they would like to see certain policies or the current extent of European Integration rolled back. Some might want it abolished completely (the FN) some might want it turned into nothing more than a market (UKIP) and others might actually not mind the idea of solidarity between Europe's nations (often parties on the left) but oppose the freedoms of negative integration that erode their welfare states or the capacities of their states to regulate travel, trade, etc. Even if a party is exhibiting contestation of the Integration project because it has a different integration project in mind ("we are not against Europe, we are just against *this* European Union"), that is still manifested as contestation of the current integration project. Unless one argues that there should be more integration (fiscal Union, wealth transfers, complete political Union, etc) that actor will argue that the current architecture of integration has gone too far and needs to be stripped down before the other one architecture (which conforms to her wishes) will take shape and form. And assuming that all parties who contest the current integration project (be it because it exerts downward pressure on their welfare states, or interferes too much with their lax business environment) would win elections or have their way, the policy outcome would largely look the same: rolling back of Integration.

Unlike other analytical frameworks that use qualitative and categorical distinctions to classify party positions and types of Euroscepticism (for example Taggart and Szczerbiak's well-known soft Eurosceptic/hard Eurosceptic framework), the CHES relies on a scalar, numerical description of party positions, that ranges from 1 to 7. These are not treated as distinct or categorical, but the codebook of the CHES does provide a description of the values to aid specialists in their estimation. The survey question for the main variable asks experts to fill out the indicator for party positions in the following way: POSITION = overall orientation of the party leadership towards European integration in YEAR, and the seven values given are: 1 =

Strongly opposed, 2 = Opposed, 3 = Somewhat opposed, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Somewhat in favor, 6 = In favor, 7 = Strongly in favor.

One could conceptualize values lying between 1 and 2,5 as being equivalent to Taggart and Szczerbiak's hard eurosceptic, while values lying between 2,5 and 3,5-4 as equivalent to their soft eurosceptic. Since there are many country specialists filling out the survey for each country at every wave, parties' positions in the main dataset are averages that take non-Integer values (for example 3,54...). While one can turn a ratio scale into categories (by defining and labeling for example parties in the 1-2 range as 'hard Eurosceptics') it is harder to work in the other direction. Using a non-discrete scale has many advantages, and allows a researcher to track more precise and minute changes of party positions. Empirical data as well as history show that positions on the EU (and the categories these positions are ascribed to) can be fluid and change with time. In between policy position shifts, political parties can lie in a grey, fuzzy zone that renders the borders of such categories fuzzy as well. Parties like Lega Nord or the FPÖ to some extent started out as pro EU integration parties precisely because the EU was seen as a counterweight to their countries respective states, their centralized character or social orientation. The EC's neo-liberal, market creating, negative integration appealed to them as it was consistent with their opposition to centralization or the national welfare state. In the 1990's they began to evolve and turn into ever more Eurosceptic parties. The point at which they could be classified as soft Eurosceptic and at what point as hard Eurosceptic is not easy to define, and a continuous measure is the more so useful in such circumstances than a categorical one, as it allows one to trace the evolution in more incremental shifts over various measurements. Such changes happen not only in one direction: a hard Eurosceptic can become a soft Eurosceptic can become a 'neutral' and vice versa.

Further Conceptualization and Operationalization

The main dependent variable is operationalized as change on the 1-7 CHES scale from one measurement point to another. At every Chapel Hill Expert Survey wave, country experts are asked to rank political parties' positions vis-à-vis the EU on a 1-7 scale, with 1 being the most Eurosceptic position possible (entirely opposed to European Integration) and 7 being the opposite (all in favor). The scores given by country experts are then used to create an average for

every party. In this study, the change in position is operationalized as the first difference between each parties' average from one survey point to another.

Data for the main independent variable (Electoral Results) come from Philip Manow and Holger Döring's ParlGov Database (Döring and Manow, 2012), and was amended with information from sources such as individual countries' electoral commissions or The European Election and Referendum Database of the Norwegian Center for Research Data⁴⁰. The independent variable is operationalized in two ways, both of which will be used. Firstly, it is operationalized as the change in percentage of votes gained by a country's biggest Eurosceptic Party between the two most recent elections prior to the that wave of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey that offers the data point. The main Eurosceptic party is identified as the Eurosceptic party which at the most recent elections got the most votes. Secondly, it is operationalized as the change in cumulated percentage of votes gained by all Eurosceptic parties between the two most recent elections prior to the that wave of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey that offers the data point. The same source of data is used when analyzing the effect of EU election results on mainstream party positions, with measurements for the main predictor in this case simply coming from a different set of elections.

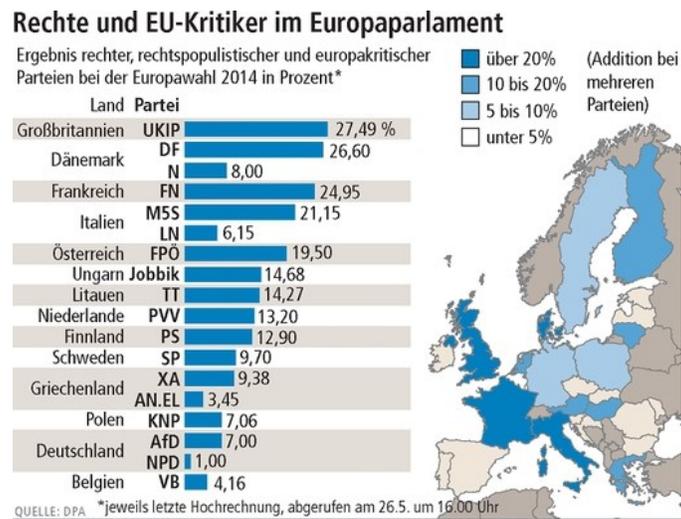
Which Eurosceptic parties should one talk about? Eurosceptic success can be measured in two ways, both of which have arguments speaking in their favor. One could focus on how well the biggest Eurosceptic Party is doing, or could focus on how all Eurosceptic Parties are doing - I will now go through the arguments in favor of both operationalizations, beginning with the former.

There might be more Eurosceptic parties in any one country, but only one is usually large enough to count to any degree, while most of the others don't even make it into Parliament. While in some countries there are several Eurosceptic parties, at any one time there is one main Eurosceptic party which I argue is a measure of Eurosceptic success, or of the appeal of Eurosceptic discourse for voters in that party system – that party which I call a country's **'flagship' Eurosceptic party**. Some Eurosceptic parties are often so small that they do not even feature in various election results databases (even some countries' own national electoral databases lump them together with other parties under the category „other parties“ or „other extreme right/left“ parties). That one large party which is large enough to count usually ends up

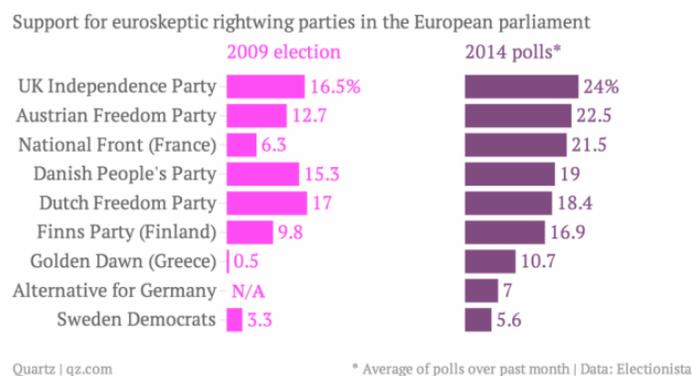
⁴⁰ http://www.nsd.uib.no/european_election_database/

becoming the *flagship* Eurosceptic party of a country (the True Finns in Finland, the FN in France, so on), and how these parties perform is usually taken as the indicator for how prone to Eurosceptic ideas a party system is.

Despite the existence of the BNP in Britain for example, most analysts and observers are looking at what the UKIP does to gauge public acquiescence of Eurosceptic Ideas. The evolution of Eurosceptic politicians is usually ‘read off’ the UKIP, regardless of what minuscule parties like the BNP do. While Austria has had – like most of Europe - its share of far right parties in the past few decades, it was Jörg Haider’s Austrian Freedom Party that rang the alarm bells in Brussels when it became a dominant force in Austrian politics, and has remained the focus of attention ever since. The Dutch Freedom Party, the Front National, the (former) True Finns and other such parties are equated with populism or Euroscepticism in their respective countries. While the Lega Nord was for a long time considered the prime Populist Party in Italy until recently, all eyes turned on B. Grillo’s Five Star movement after it overtook Lega Nord to become the main anti-system threat to established parties. Likewise, despite the existence of parties like the NPD or the Republikaner, it is the AfD that is considered a gauge for German public disapproval with integration (and before it, die Linke was the only serious contender). The examples can go on. The main idea is that the media, the public, and most political actors will often focus on one political actor at a time as being *the* eurosceptic alternative in a political system, and will view that party as a barometer for public disenchantment with European Integration. To exemplify the point made above, consider these two excerpts from the media in the lead-up to the 2014 European Elections. They were both meant to convey to readers how strong Eurosceptic parties are becoming – the first is the result of exit polls on the day of the election (and thus more accurate than the other) while the second graph offers numbers according to polls made some months in advance of the election (and focuses on right wing Eurosceptics).

Figure 12: Graph from German Media on the day of the 2014 EP elections ⁴¹

Both graphics are meant to convey the same idea, how well Eurosceptic Parties⁴² are doing in Europe, despite disregarding the fact that there are more such parties out there. The second graph only presents the support for one such party in each country, while the other does the same but offers poll numbers for two parties in 4 of the countries presented.

Figure 13: Graph in English Media with vote intention polls prior to 2014 EP election⁴³

⁴¹ <http://www.wz.de/home/politik/rechte-in-europa-auf-dem-vormarsch-1.1647324>

⁴² the graphs more accurately describes the (single) Eurosceptic Party (no plural) is faring

⁴³ <http://qz.com/177876/more-and-more-europeans-are-keen-on-destroying-the-eu-from-the-inside/>

It is obvious that there is more than one eurosceptic (right wing) party in each of those countries (the first graph even acknowledges it in the upper right corner) but each uses indicators for one party (in 4 countries two parties) as a description of how well ‘Eurosceptic parties are doing in general’. While other parties exist which espouse similar policy positions, these flagship Eurosceptic Parties ‘capture attention’. If one admits that they capture the attention of the media, one might wonder whether maybe other political actors also use the electoral performance of these same ‘key’ parties to estimate the potential for Euro-pragmatic discourse, instead of looking at all such parties. There is thus a strong case for measuring not only the total degree of support for Eurosceptic parties in a country, but also focusing on the one party that takes center stage, and using its electoral performance (and change) as the model’s main predictor. It is conceivable that moderate parties compete not against the sum of Eurosceptic votes, but against that one populist party that can make a difference in the formation of governing majorities in the legislature. Even if a Eurosceptic party declines or dies out and makes room for another (as happened in the UK, with the Referendum Party dissolving itself and then the UKIP moving in to fill the niche), it is usually one party that occupies that niche. If the title of the so called flagship Eurosceptic passes from one party (A) to another (B) between elections, the measurement in the dataset for how well the main Eurosceptic party did at the polls in the ‘latter’ election is operationalized as the % of votes that went to party B in the 2nd election. The measurement for ‘Change in vote for Eurosceptic party’ is then measured as the change in vote % from party A (at the first election) to party B (at the next election).

Alternatively, it is also possible that mainstream parties look not only at how well the biggest Eurosceptic party has done, but also at other (second biggest, third biggest) Eurosceptic Parties. It is possible for a country to have a ‘flagship Eurosceptic’ party that hovers somewhere at around 7 or 8 per cent of votes and another few Eurosceptic parties that lie somewhere around the 3%-4% mark. Altogether, the cumulated total percentage of votes cast for Parties that are Eurosceptic would go well above ten percent and it is right to ask whether the other parties will look at how the flagship party is evolving from its 8% or at how the cumulated number of votes for all Eurosceptic parties changes in order to read support for Eurosceptic policy positions. In some countries, the Eurosceptic scene has identified with one specific party across the years and decades⁴⁴, while in others, several small Eurosceptic parties have each contributed a bit to the

⁴⁴ where the difference between that Eurosceptic leader and other parties was very big

cumulative vote total of populist-anti EU actors, wherein no individual party stands out but the aggregated percentage of votes these parties received does. In the former situation, the trend line describing the evolution of the biggest Eurosceptic Party is almost identical to the one describing the evolution of total cumulated votes going to Eurosceptic parties. In the latter, the two trends are distinct. All things considered, it seems wise to also conduct analyses of the Radical Party Hypothesis in which the assumption is that moderate parties look not at how the biggest Eurosceptic party is doing, but at the entire Eurosceptic scene. In the empirical analyses that follow in the next chapters, each analysis will be performed twice – once with the electoral results and evolution of the flagship Eurosceptic party as the main independent variable, and once with the cumulated results of all Eurosceptic parties serving that function.

Eurosceptic Parties

The decision on whether a party belongs on the left side or right side of the equation was based on the EU position variable of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey as well as Taggart and Szeczerbiak's *Opposing Europe*, a real 'Encyclopedia Eurosceptica'. The wish to triangulate to some degree with another existing source had a strong influence on the decision of what constitutes a Eurosceptic Party and what does not, as well as the wish to not let the design of research be driven only by the data in the CHES⁴⁵.

Firstly, I asked if a party's position above or below the '4' (neutral on Europe⁴⁶) mark in the CHES. Secondly, do the case studies and in depth analyses agree with the positions? Are there any Eurosceptic parties named in *Opposing Europe* that do not feature in the CHES dataset? Fortunately, there is nigh-universal agreement between the data in the CHES and the literature on who is a Eurosceptic and who is not. The only notable exception is the Belgian New Flemish Alliance. While the party is a 'very soft' Eurosceptic according to *Opposing Europe*,

⁴⁵ In Finland, the average position of political parties on the EU issue in the 80's was far lower than in other countries, denoting a more hostile attitude towards EU integration, even among mainstream parties. Most parties actually score below 4, and the choice was used to denote those parties as Eurosceptic challengers that lie *not below 4, but one standard deviation below the average value of the Finnish Party scene*. While those data points do not make it into the actual analysis because Finland's observations are only used after the country joined the EU, at which time the average position of political parties came more in line with those from other countries, I specify this since this transformation of the DV on Finnish observations was carried out and was used to decide who had been a Eurosceptic actor prior to the mid 90's.

⁴⁶ In the CHES, the 4 value marks the neutral neither-pro-nor-anti EU party position

in the CHES data it is a markedly pro-European party, across survey waves. Had the party had positions that were more ambiguous and close to neutral point in the CHES data, I would have had second thoughts about it, but because its positions are so far away from the center and close to the pro-EU poll (and because Taggart, Szczerbiak, Deschouwer *et al* agree that it is a very soft Eurosceptic), I decided to go with the data in the CHES, and place the party on the left side of the equation. Secondly, if a party was below the neutral 4 mark but very close to it, and the qualitative and in depth data did not deem it as Eurosceptic, or there was no reference to it as being Eurosceptic in the case studies (the French Greens had a CHES position of 3.88 at one point in the 80's), its election results were not considered to contribute to the Eurosceptic total. This consideration was made only rarely, and for parties with values very close to the neutral cut-off point, 4. It was not made for parties (usually very small) who were omitted in the *Opposing Europe* case studies but had distinctly Eurosceptic CHES scores (they remain on the right side of the equation).

Position consistency is important. For a party to be considered a Eurosceptic party (and belong on the right side of the equation), it must be consistent for a period of time in its position. Those parties whose position was constantly higher than 4 (4 meaning 'neutral towards Europe') but once or twice slipped below 4 and then moved back up are not considered Eurosceptic challenger parties. They are instead moderate/centrist parties whose position shifts at one time or another was strong enough to bring them below the neutral mark. To classify them as Eurosceptic Parties at that point (and imply that they belong on the right side of the equation) would mean that we should no longer look at their position shifts in response to the 'classic' populist/Eurosceptic issue entrepreneurs, but see *their* election results as contributing to the vote tally of Eurosceptics. Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia and the British Conservative Party are two parties whose position was sometimes below the value 4 mark. These parties are, however, anything but 'challenger parties, since they formed government and held power as their countries biggest parties, not just mere junior parties. They belong on the left side of the equation, not on the right (IV). I am interested in the effect of other parties' success on their position, even if it means they move from a value below 4 even further down as a consequence.

A similar attitude is taken below the line of the neutral '4' value. If a populist party were consistently Eurosceptic, but at one wave 'slipped' above 4, after which it moved back down, that would not make it a non-Eurosceptic party for the present purposes. Before the late 90's, the

Lega Nord was a pro-integration party, and then moved to an anti-EU position (and remained there). It was not deemed a Eurosceptic Party until the time of its shift, after which its electoral results began to contribute to the independent variable. The Austrian Greens were consistently Eurosceptic for a time, and their party's position moved above 4, and stayed there. Their electoral results contributed to the IV until they switched, after which their vote tally is no longer considered when constructing the value on the IV. Both parties changed sides one and only once, staying put after the shift.

Those parties whose electoral results were used to construct the independent variable all have positions lower than 4 on the CHES EU dimension, with one exception. Taggart and Szczerbiak identify the (very) 'soft Eurosceptic' United Left as the most important Eurosceptic Party in Spain, a fact which is supported by the data in the CHES, where it is a Eurosceptic Party on most waves. In most waves, it is the only Spanish Eurosceptic party in the survey. There are some waves, however, in which the IU's score on the EU position indicator goes ever so slightly above 4. In those instances, it seems that the country experts deemed the United Left was basically 'neutral'. Even when the party had a neutral position, I still used its election results to construct the Eurosceptic elections results variable for Spain. While its position was indeed at the 4 mark, all other parties had positions that were *very* pro integration. Basically, in a country where all political forces were very Europhile, the experts decided that the I.U. is 'undecided'/not convinced on the EU question. I argue that its distance from the other parties (in the anti-EU direction) rendered it as something akin to a 'voice of caution and pragmatism towards Europe' in Spain (even for those years when it is at or slightly above 4), and that it still fulfilled the role of party where voters could go to when they wanted a policy position that differs from the strong pro-EU orientation of the others, and when they wanted to send a signal of disenchantment with integration policies.

It is important to address the claim that the reason populist parties are doing ever better at the polls is *not* Euroscepticism per se, but opposition to immigration, or that anti-immigration is their main selling point, there is no denying there is truth to that argument. Opposition to migrants is indeed a big issue and a big factor in such parties' success, and there is a general congruence between opposition to EU integration and opposition to immigration (Kriesi *et al* 2012, 99). As I have argued above, that is a not a real problem. While opposition to immigration and European Integration tend to load on common factors and tend to overlap in the ideological

party landscape, there is something different, even all encompassing about the EU issue. As Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson (2002, 976) argue, New Right parties oppose a series of perceived threats to the national community of fate, such as immigration, foreign cultural influences, international agencies and cosmopolitanism – EU integration, however, is different, because it combines several of these threats and poses an additional one: undermining national sovereignty. The issue of immigration, while not entirely synonymous with integration, overlaps with the latter to a large degree, and many political parties have made opposition to immigration from within the EU their primary message in the battle against pooled sovereignty. When such parties complain about immigration from the EU and the fact that the current structure of the EU facilitates or encourages immigration, they are essentially blasting against European Integration. They are deploring the fact that the EU facilitates immigration, that there is more immigration because of the European Union⁴⁷. The argument exists that the largest part of anti-EU discourse is actually anti-immigration discourse, and that if a mainstream party does indeed move to copy such discourse, that change would respectively feature a lot of talk about immigration, ergo we should not be talking about the EU, but immigration instead. So the question arrives: are we still talking about European Integration, or is this about something else? Opposition to immigration from within the EU is opposition to EU integration. If a populist party complains about CEE migrants and workers, they are criticizing the mechanism which made it possible for those foreigners to move to their countries and enjoy the benefits of home national. And if politicians in the host nation co-opt certain elements of that position *and* experts consider that a party became more eurosceptic as a result, we are talking about a policy shift that is *anti-EU integration*.

A common theme of the likes of David Cameron, I. Duncan Smith or Nigel Farage is that of EU migrants' benefits. As David Cameron called his controversial EU summit to negotiate the UK's position ahead of the Brexit Referendum, and as the UK sought to reduce worker benefits for EU migrants, other western European leaders began to flirt with the idea of doing the same or something similar, until East European Countries threatened to torpedo the British position (a la '*only the UK gets the opt-outs, or nobody gets them*'). This idea which some governments entertained shortly (among them Austria and Germany) was an anti-immigration

⁴⁷ Due to open borders, integrated market, worker mobility and equal access to benefits for non-nationals/ non-discrimination against EU nationals

measure (cutting benefits for foreign workers) but it was in essence an anti-integration one. As such, we would be hard pressed to find a party that is pro-EU and anti immigration, but such a party would for example be one which is in favor of European Integration and opposed to immigration from outside the block (but not from within)⁴⁸.

Cases and Data Points Omitted from the Analysis – ‘The East’

Central and East European members of the EU were not included in this study for a variety of reasons. First, the late accession to the EU (2004 the earliest) means for one thing that there would be few observations for each party, starting with the 2006.

Secondly, given the relative youth of democracy in the region, the party systems in these countries are not as settled as in older member states. A large body of work in the field of party politics attests to the ‘idiosyncrasies’ of politics in Central and Eastern Europe. As Rovny noted in 2014, “*An influential view of Eastern European party competition points to instability, ideological underspecification, and personalistic politics as defining characteristics*” (Rovny, 2014, 671). While some authors, such as Geoffrey Evans and Stephen Whitefield, have argued that there is some evidence that post-communist societies do contain structured social and ideological division that shape party choices (Whitefield 2002, Evans and Whitefield 1993, Evans and Whitefield, 1998), it is generally recognized that party systems are not as structured and much more fluid. Party building in such circumstances is an elite dominated process (Zielinski, 2002) which leads to open and fluid party-systems (Ost, 1993) and where top-down party design negatively affects the robustness of party organization and leads to a high-degree of party-switching, general political noise and continuous rise of new parties and political actors (Kreuzer and Pettai, 2003, Bielasak 2005). This leads to a higher effective number of parties on the national scene (Bielasiak, 2005) and the lower level of party system institutionalization. To ensure a measure of stability, east European party systems experience a stronger penetration of the state to secure financing and often rely on the adoption of broad catch-all strategies vis-à-vis

⁴⁸ While possible at least in theory it is possible in Western Europe, such combinations of characteristics are much more common in Eastern Europe, where there is growing unease at the prospect of migrants from the middle east settling there.

the electorate. The ideological landscape is further muddled by the exigencies that EU generated during the long accession period (Rovny 2015, 3). Political parties are often short lived, ideological leap-frogging is much more prevalent and some political parties are built as vehicles for individual political figures and personalities. Party mergers, dissolutions and re-foundations are much more common, and the lack of an ideological shadow of the past, of long ideological histories means parties' ideological identities are less clear. Elections are much more contested around valence issues (in some countries in the late 90's and early 2000's candidates were fighting to portray themselves as the ones under which the country would accede to the EU sooner), corruption is often the number one issue around which voters voted. On a related note, the electorate in Eastern Europe had a positive image of European Integration because it saw political leaders in Western Europe as a potential counterweight to and salvation from more corrupt local elites.

The drive to „rejoin the West“ transformed EU membership into real national projects for many of these countries, meaning that the issue of EU integration for a long time had a different dynamic in these party systems. In the CEE context, EU membership was associated with modernization both in terms of living standard increases as well as a means of strengthening the institutional basis for democracy (Chichowski, 2000). While the recent immigrant crisis has fueled some outcry over 'Brussels-imposed' immigrant quotas, for most countries in the regions the 1990's and 2000's were races to prove their European credentials. Even for conservative, nationalist or xenophobic parties, discourse was most often framed in terms of proving the worthiness of the nation by rejoining the West⁴⁹. Opposition to European Integration was a far less tenable position in these countries than in Western Europe.

Euro-sceptic parties are dropped because leaving them in would mean that I measure the effect of Euro-sceptic parties' electoral success on their own position changes.

⁴⁹ using the 'East' (the former USSR, Balkan and Ottoman history) as the 'other' against which nationalist sentiment is framed

Further Variables and Indicators

A variety of other variables are used in the analysis. '**Government/Opposition**' is a 0-1 dummy variable that is coded as 1 if the party was in government at the time of the wave and 0 if the party was in opposition.

Parties' positions on **the Left-Right** scale was also taken from the CHES, and is represented on a 0-10 scale with 0 meaning Left and 10 meaning Right. The scale used is the General Left-Right scale, as opposed to the Economic one, the latter being an evaluation of parties views towards economic policy using the traditional left to right continuum. The expert survey asks for both scales (economic and general), with the general left right scale denoting a party's overall ideological orientation that goes beyond economic issues as well.

The OECD recorded level of **unemployment** in each country is used as a proxy control for socio-economic conditions which might make parties more amenable to change their policy positions towards integration.

The variable **Time** is introduced into the analysis to control for the possibility of party position changes on the EU issue being simply a function of time passing, or natural trends. Instead of using the year's number as an indicator on every observation, the time points in the analysis are identified with the data waves of the CHES. Every wave in the survey is assigned value from 1 to 9, with 1 being the 1984 wave and 2014 being denoted as 9.

The Survey contains a variable which denotes how important the EU issue is for political parties, and measures the **issue's salience** for the party's leadership. That data is used to measure how important/salient the EU issue is for Eurosceptic parties – to what degree opposition to European Integration is an important part of their political message. Salience is coded on a 5 point scale, with 5 being the highest possible salience. I focus on the salience of integration for Eurosceptic Parties keeping in line with the overall approach of this project that sees Eurosceptic policy entrepreneurs as agents and initiators of change in the party system. The Radical Party Hypothesis at the heart of this investigation specifies that voter readiness or a certain existing opinion landscape will not be enough to determine political parties to change their position as long as there is no political alternative to which the public can take their votes to. It is only after such an alternative appears on the political stage, gains votes *and* makes a real issue out of a certain policy question, like international governance, that changes in party positions will follow.

For those analyses and models in which the main predictor is change in the total cumulated vote percentage of all Eurosceptic Parties, the value for the variable Eurosceptic Parties' EU Issue Saliency is given by averaging the saliency of all Eurosceptic Parties.

One extra variable was created to denote the position of Eurosceptic parties – **how 'extreme' or 'radical'** a Eurosceptic party is, acknowledging that the effect of its success on the other parties might vary depending on whether it is strongly Eurosceptic or only mildly Eurosceptic. The values on this variable are given by simply taking the position of the biggest Eurosceptic party on the EU issue on the standard CHES 1-7 scale for the flagship Eurosceptic and by taking the average from the values of all Eurosceptic parties (as is done with issue saliency) in the case of the cumulated Eurosceptic Independent Variable.

It is also important to control for **public attitude** towards European Integration. The argument tested in this study is that mainstream parties were 'pushed' into shifting their position on European Integration not polling the electorate, but by the success and threat of Eurosceptic challenger parties. It is often repeated that the voters are more eurosceptic than the parties' leaderships that have dominated Europe's political arena, and the gap in preferences is growing. The model thus shows the effect of Eurosceptic parties' success on the position of mainstream parties when controlling for public perception of the EU. Data for public opinion of European Integration come from the Eurobarometer⁵⁰. The values on the variable in question are given by the percentage of respondents in the year of the survey wave who answered with "Benefited" to the Eurobarometer question "Taking everything into consideration, would you say that (your country) has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the European Union? (with possible answers being a)Benefited, b)Not Benefited and c)Don't know)".

By adding **country dummies to the regression**, one is controlling for history /controlling away variance that might be there due to country specific idiosyncrasies, and holding their unobserved effects fixed. A **regional dummy** is created for an analysis in the second empirical chapter, which replaces the country dummies and is used to test whether there is a difference in how Northern and Southern Europe reacts to right wing and left-wing Euroscepticism.

⁵⁰ Data for public opinion of European Integration for Finland, Sweden and Austria comes from the 1992 EFTA Barometer

Variables are created from the same data to construct indicators for the electoral performance of **right wing and left wing** Eurosceptic parties (both in terms of biggest single party, and cumulated vote tally for all left and right wing Eurosceptic Parties). In those analyses relying on European election results instead of national election results, the principles remain the same, but data on how well populist parties performed from one **European Election** to another is used, instead of data from the national ones.

„**Party votechange**“ indicates the change in vote tally for the party in question between the most recent and a previous election – in essence a first difference. ‘**Relative Vote Change**’ is a variable designed to measure whether a party has gained or lost votes relative to the biggest other party in its party system compared to last election. It could be that both parties lose votes to a Eurosceptic challenger party, but one party gains power relative to its main rival, if that rival ‘bleeds’ more votes.

‘**Relative vote change**’ is operationalized by comparing each party’s vote change between elections with that of the biggest party (that party which at the previous election had gained the most votes in a country). If a party had been the one with the most votes at a recent election, its performance is measured against that of the second highest rated party in terms of % at that previous election. The idea behind the initial ‘raw’ relative vote change variable is that a centrist/mainstream party might lose some vote percentage points, but lose less than its biggest rival, in which case it would gain relative to it. The variable subtracts from each party’s change in electoral tally (change in vote %) the vote tally of that party which was the largest at the last election (and for that party which was the largest party at the last election, the change in vote tally of the second largest is subtracted). For each party, the vote tally of the largest ‘rival’ party is equal to the vote tally of the largest political party in that country other than itself, for each political party. A further variable which measures **relative ‘per cent’ in vote change** is created. How much per cent of a party’s *previous total vote tally* does *change at the most recent election* amount to? A party (Y) that previously had 10% and now gained only 5% thus lost one half of its votes. If the biggest party in the country (Z) went from 25% to 20%, it too lost 5% in absolute terms, but only lost one fifth of its votes, compared to half of the previously mentioned party. For party Y, ‘*Relative Vote Change*’ (the first variable) would equal 0, because they both lost 5%, but ‘**Relative Per Cent Vote change**’ would be -30%. ($1/5 - 1/2$). Time is added as a control variable to make sure that one controls for history – it is possible for Party Position changes to

occur simply as a natural trend, and not because of the success of Eurosceptic Parties. Likewise, it might be that Parties' position changes are caused by worsening socio-economic conditions which lead political parties to 'blame Brussels'.

Used in testing Hypothesis H12, **Dissonance** is a variable in which popular opinion of EU membership is compared to that of the average party position on the EU of those parties that are in government. The scores from the Eurobarometer (where 100 is the highest possible, i.e. 100% of respondents thinking EU membership is a good thing) are recoded 1-7 (to imitate the 1-7 CHES scale, if one assumes that a 100% pro-EU response rate by the public would be similar to a political party having the position 7 on the CHES scale (being completely in favor of integration)) and then compared to that of the governing coalition. Since and both public opinion and the average position of governing parties is then measured on the same scale, one can calculate the difference. Higher positive scores equals higher dissonance between the governing parties and the electorate (Governing parties average position – public opinion/position).

In Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to describe and explain the decisions made in relation to research design, in particular the issue of operationalization of the variables employed in the study. The data for the main dependent variable (change in party policy positions on the issue of European Integration) was mostly data driven, but it is argued that there are very good reasons (as previous research on the measurement of party positions has shown) to define and operationalize attitudes towards the EU using the one-dimensional scale of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey.

While previous research that has investigated Eurosceptic party influence (Meijers, 2015) has only focused on the cumulated effect of all Eurosceptic parties in the EU's member states, I distinguish between the effect of cumulated Eurosceptic performance, and that of the 'flagship Eurosceptic parties', which I argue can be used equally well as a measure of Eurosceptic popularity. A variety of other sources was used to measure either country and time-specific factors (such as socio-economic conditions) or those pertaining to individual political parties, which are meant to provide the control variables needed to properly isolate and explore the effect of Eurosceptic contagion. The following chapter is the first empirical step of this dissertation. After presenting descriptive information regarding Eurosceptic evolution in Western Europe, it proceeds to analyzing the effect of populist influence over moderate party behavior.

4. Eurosceptic Trends and Eurosceptic Contagion

Introduction

Before analyzing the data and testing the main hypothesis of this study, it is important to note that the evolution of Euroscepticism in the countries of Western Europe has not had a linear character, and that it has also been expressed through various types of Eurosceptic parties. While this project is meant at its core to provide nomothetic, *ceteris paribus* results that answers the research question for Western Europe as a whole⁵¹ and makes the argument that the shift in policy positions is an EU15 wide phenomenon, it is worthwhile to see how the fate of Eurosceptic Parties has risen and waned at various times. The descriptive data reveals various noteworthy things. First, the success of Eurosceptic parties has not evolved similarly in all countries over time. In some countries, it has been growing slowly but steadily while in others it has experienced more sudden changes in support. In some countries, the Eurosceptic scene has identified with one specific party across the years and decades (where the difference between that Eurosceptic leader and other parties was very big), while in others, several small Eurosceptic parties have each contributed a bit to the cumulative vote total of populist-anti EU actors. In the former situation, the line describing the evolution of the biggest Eurosceptic Party is almost identical to the one describing the evolution of total cumulated votes going to Eurosceptic parties. In the latter, the two trends are distinct. In some instances, both types of evolution can be found in one country, where one period was characterized by Eurosceptic voters split among various populist parties and where one party managed with time to establish itself as the go-to anti EU alternative: that which I described in the previous two chapters (theoretical framework and research design) as being the ‘*Flagship Eurosceptic*’ party. The following descriptive section provides information on five indicators from each country: Total Vote Percentage for all Eurosceptic Parties (Total EP), Total Vote Percentage for Left Wing Eurosceptic Parties (Total LEP), and Right Wing Eurosceptic Parties (Total REP), as well as well as information on the percentage of votes gained at every election by the then biggest left wing (Biggest LEP) and biggest right wing (Biggest REP) Eurosceptic Party.

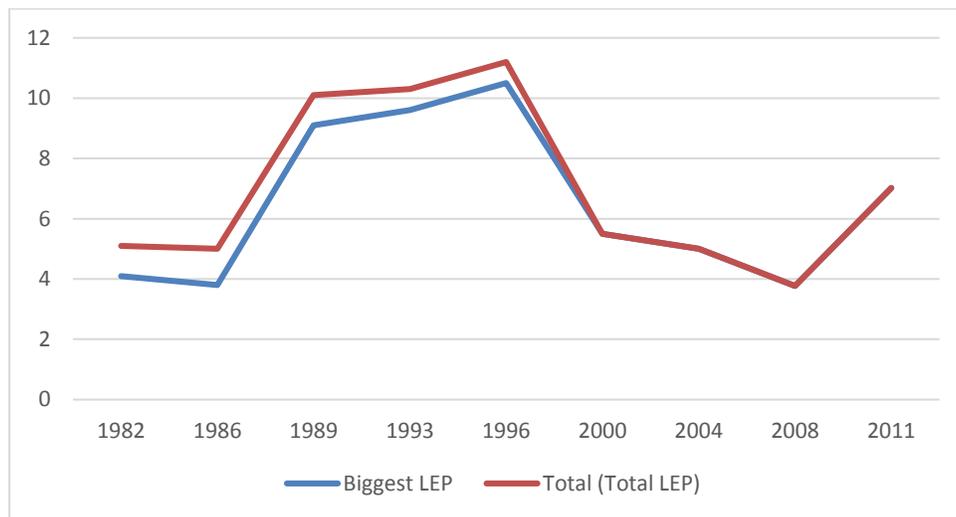
⁵¹ and generalize for the region

Trends and Cross-Country Comparisons

Spain and Portugal

Spain and Portugal stand out as countries where Euroscepticism has been a territory dominated by the left-wing. Neither country has had a far right Eurosceptic scene of sorts. In Spain the most important Eurosceptic party until the 2000's has been the left-wing United Left (I.U.) and after 2000, the party basically 'embodied' Spanish skepticism and caution towards European Integration. Like most other separatist/regional parties in Spain, the Eurosceptic-leaning basque party Herri Batasuna was a left nationalist/left-wing party. At the most recent election (not figured in the graph, the IU scored only 3.6% of votes as Podemos positioned itself as the main left-wing populist party). Vox, a rare sight on the Spanish political scene as a party closer to the left end of the political spectrum, has formed recently (2013) and ran for office the first time at the recent 2015 elections, where it gained ~ 0.2 % of votes.

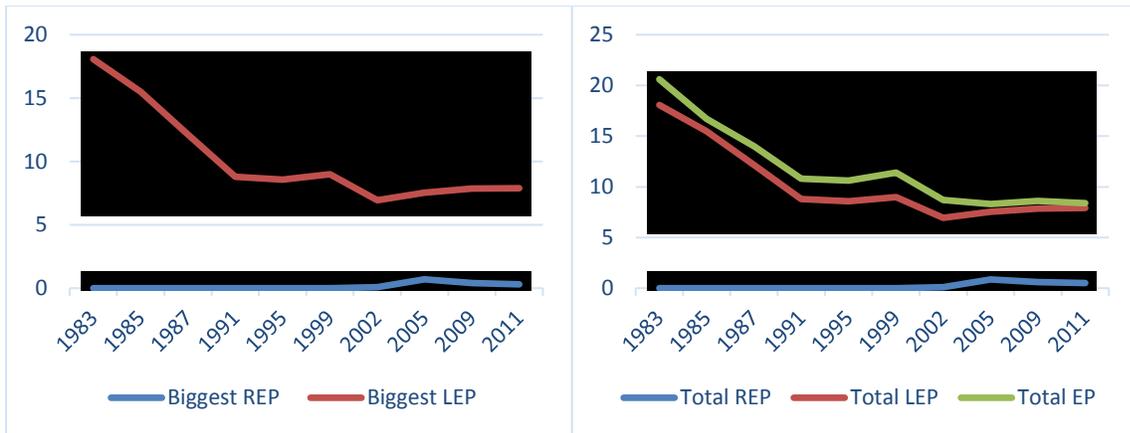
Figure 14: Euroscepticism in Spain



Vote % in national elections for Spain's biggest left-wing Eurosceptic party and cumulated vote % for all Eurosceptic parties

While Portugal has had some minuscule right wing Eurosceptic Parties, the biggest opponents of European Integration have come, just like in Spain, from the far left in the form of the CDU-APU, whose electoral results have waned since the 1980's.

Figure 15: Euroscepticism in Portugal

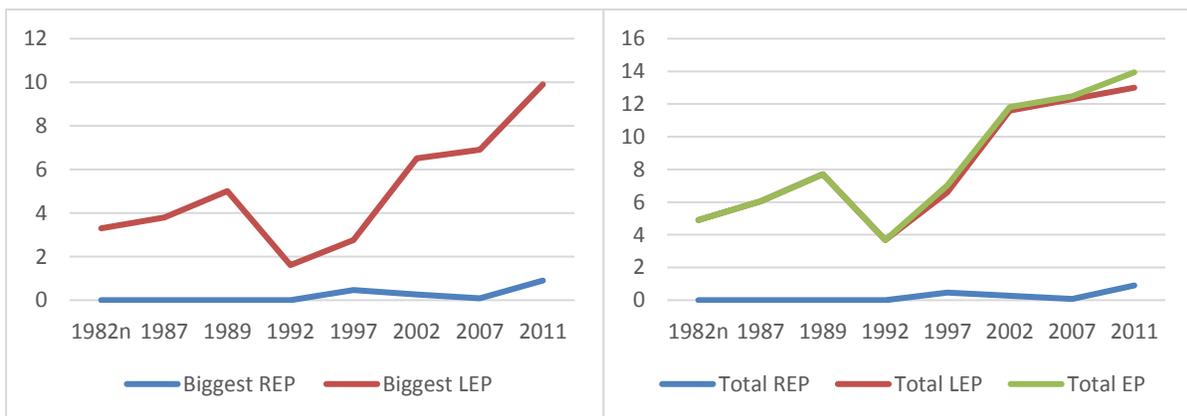


A)Vote % in national elections for Portugal’s biggest Left Eurosceptic and biggest Right Eurosceptic Parties and B) cumulated vote % totals of all Eurosceptic Parties

Ireland

Similarly to the Iberian countries, Ireland experienced opposition to the EU mostly in its Left-wing variety. The main Eurosceptic party in the past two decades has been the Left-Nationalist Sinn Fein. While a number of smaller left-wing parties did oppose EU integration, the lead held by Sinn Fein means that the party’s vote total has largely been almost the same as the entire cumulated % of votes for Eurosceptic parties in Ireland.

Figure 16: Euroscepticism in Ireland

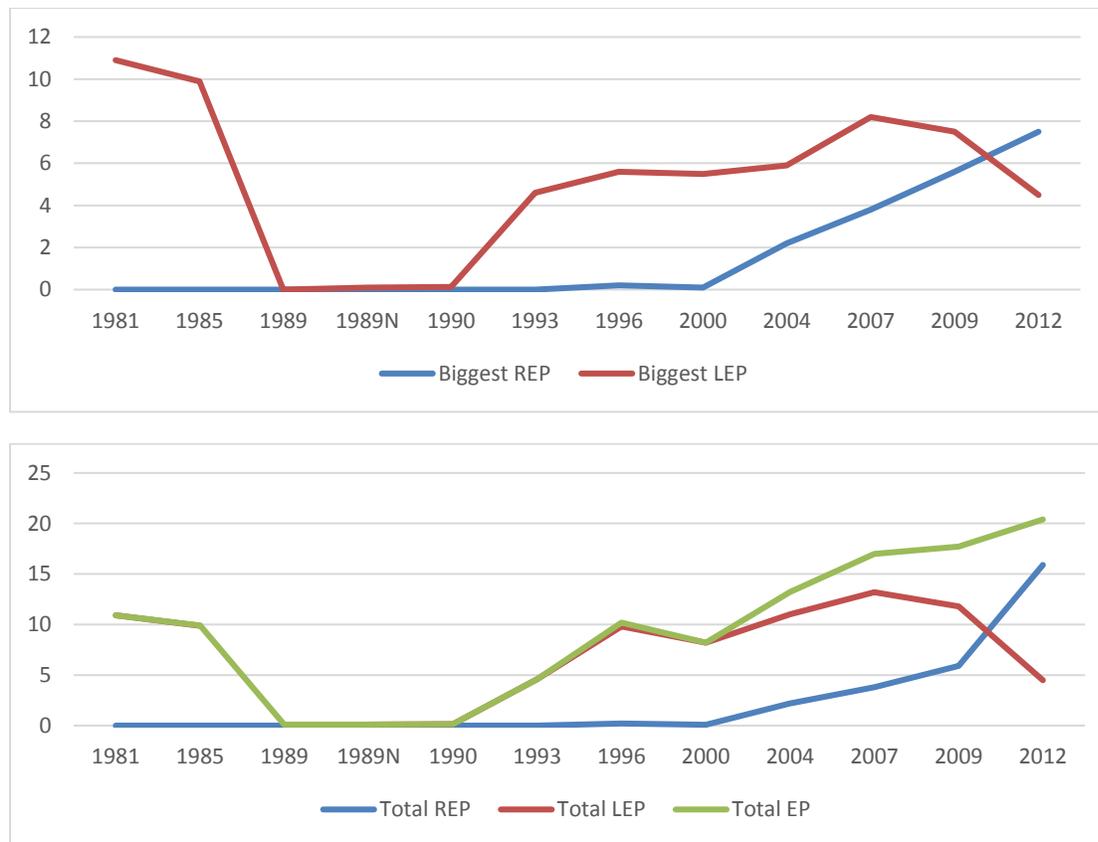


A) Vote % in national elections for Ireland’s biggest left-wing Eurosceptic and biggest right-wing Eurosceptic Parties and B) cumulated vote % totals of all Eurosceptic Parties

Greece

In the early 80's, a strong KKE in Greece meant that Hellenistic opposition to European Integration was much stronger on the left than on the right of the political spectrum. Following a political shake-up in Greece in the late 80's, the KKE split into various warring factions and its electoral appeal dropped to nil until the early –mid 90'. Like in the case of Spain, Portugal and Ireland, Eurosceptic parties were much stronger on the left of the political spectrum, a situation which in Greece lasted until after the accession to the Eurozone, at which point parties from the right wing (LAOS, ANEL, Golden Dawn) started to play catch-up. By 2012 right-wing Eurosceptic parties overtook the left in terms of total vote percentage gained (not counting and including in this case Syriza whose Eurosceptic credentials are debatable given its policy demands after it took power in the wake of the Greek Crisis).

Figure 17: Euroscepticism in Greece

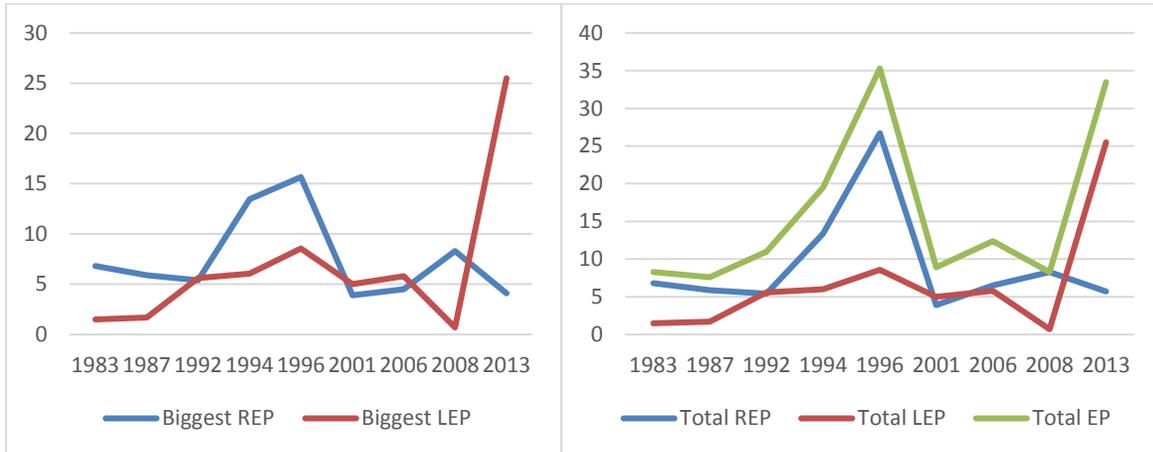


A) Vote % in national elections for Greece's biggest left-wing Eurosceptic and biggest right-wing Eurosceptic Parties and B) cumulated vote % totals of all Eurosceptic Parties

Italy

Italy stands out somewhat amongst the PIIGS as the only country that has always had a consistent degree of right-wing anti-EU sentiment since the 80's.

Figure 18: Euroscepticism in Italy



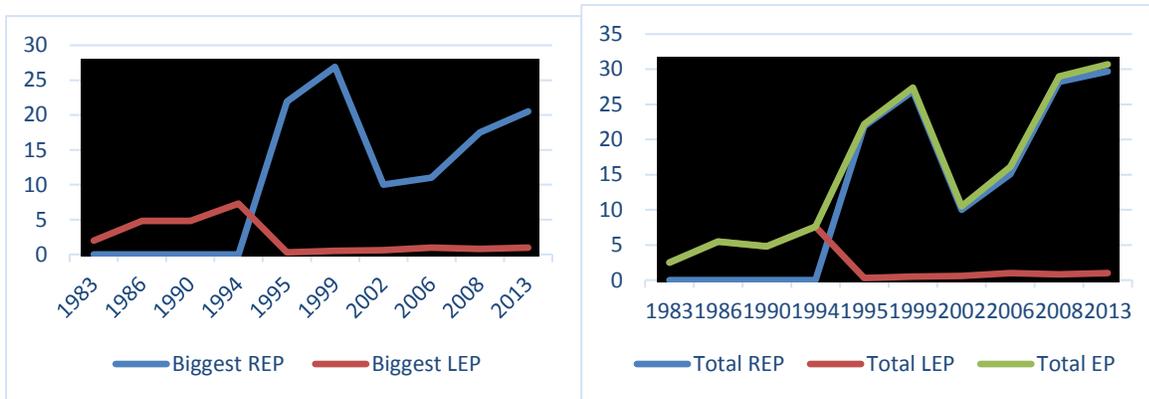
A) Vote % in national elections for Italy's biggest left-wing Eurosceptic and biggest right-wing Eurosceptic Parties and B) cumulated vote % totals of all Eurosceptic Parties

The Italian communist party – and later the Party of Communist Reconstruction – has been visible enough in Italian politics to give a distinct face to Italian left-wing Euroscepticism. On the far right edges of the political spectrum, the now (in)famous Lega Nord has together with the MSI/NA been the main proponent of far right Eurosceptic populism. While the MSI tamed down its tone as it morphed into the NA, the Lega Nord mutated in the other direction. Like the FPÖ in Austria, it started as a right-wing pro-market, pro-EU party. In addition to its goals of greater economic freedom for the North, the Lega Nord also saw the EU and continental federalism as a means to counteract the influence of Rome in northern Italy. The party began the turn from pro-EU to anti-EU in the mid-90's and by the turn of the century, it had become the most staunch opponent of European Integration in Italy. While it can be discussed to what degree the 5 Star movement of Beppe Grillo can be seen as a left-wing party, its GAL (GAL-TAN) credentials are rather strong and it not only became the biggest Eurosceptic Party in Italy at the most recent elections, but also gained the more votes (per cent wise) than any other Eurosceptic Party had done so in Italy until that moment.

Austria

The Graphs describing the fate of Eurosceptic parties in Austria can be misleading, and in a way they can be thought of as an artifice of who was Eurosceptic at which time point (the graphs can also be thought of as being accurate after Austria joined the EU).

Figure 19: Euroscepticism in Austria



A) Vote % in national elections for Austria's biggest left-wing Eurosceptic and biggest right-wing Eurosceptic Parties and B) cumulated vote % totals of all Eurosceptic Parties

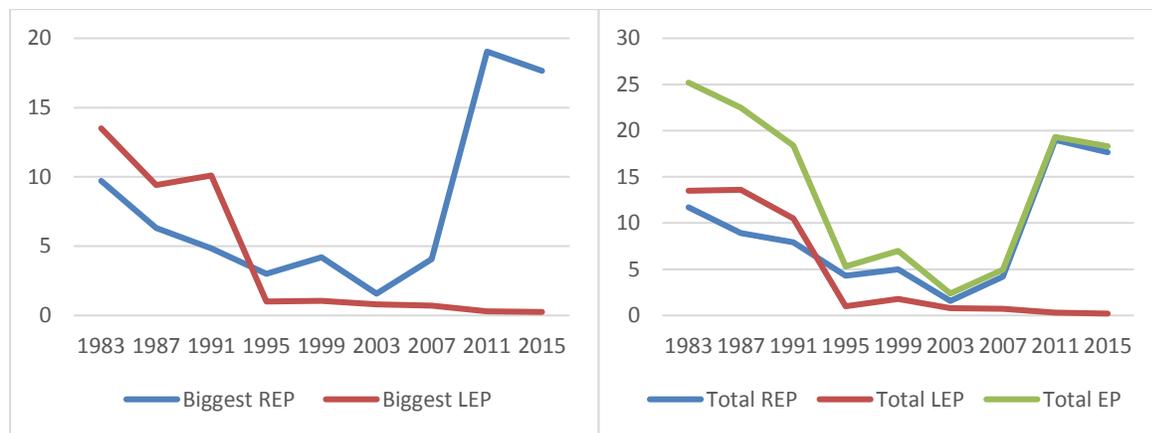
Until the mid 90's the populist right-wing Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) was rather pro EU, having a rather strong pro-market orientation, as opposed to the Green party which was opposed to European Integration (and until 1995 the only significant voice against accession). After membership of the bloc became a fait accompli and it became apparent that a majority of the public supported integration, the Austrian greens became – like many green parties elsewhere in Europe – a pro-Integration party. The FPÖ is only considered a Eurosceptic Party beginning with the 1995 election, while the Greens counted as a Eurosceptic party until then, hence the sudden swing between left and right on the graph. After 1995 Euroscepticism on the left side of the political spectrum in Austria has been on life support, with the communists gaining scant votes, while on the right the FPÖ is joined by parties like the BZÖ and Team Stronach in expressing scepticism towards further integration.

Finland

Finland should be seen in the context of its late entry to the EU. In the 80's parties opposing EU membership accounted for around a quarter of votes, and opposition to the EU was more of a 'mainstream' attitude than elsewhere. As its accession to the bloc approached and it became

clear that EU membership is a largely accepted position, socialist opposition to the EU began to decline as the far left SKDL abandoned its anti-EU stance, leaving only the communist SKP and the VSL on the left Eurosceptic barricade. Both parties were struggling to reach 1% of voters, and leaving the SMP agrarian/rural party as the ‘only game in town’ on the right edge of the political spectrum. Finland joined the Eurozone, the SMP evolved into the True Finns Party (recently rebranded as ‘The Finns’ Party ‘), and after the outbreak of the financial crisis, it became an influential element of Finnish politics, becoming one of Europe’s best known Eurosceptic parties.

Figure 20: Euroscepticism in Finland



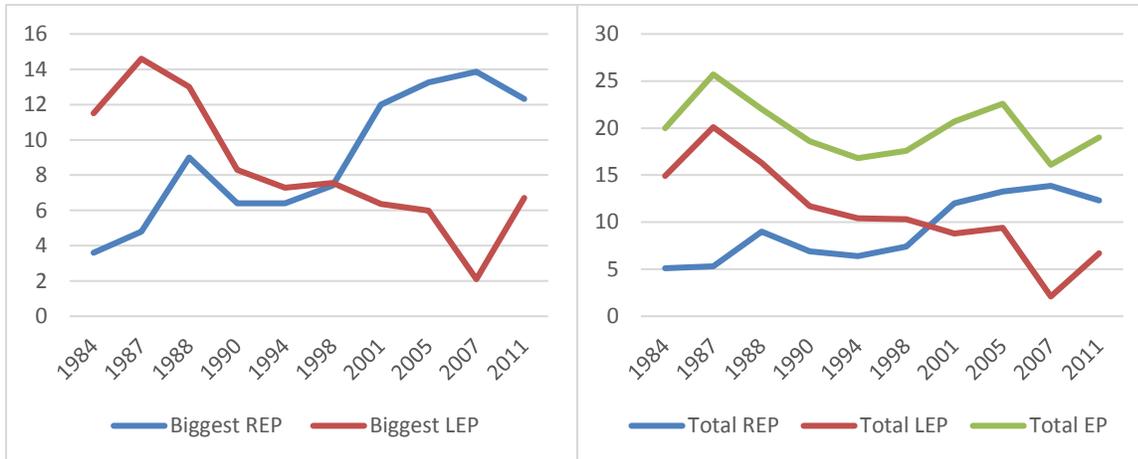
A) Vote % in national elections for Finland’s biggest left-wing Eurosceptic and biggest right-wing Eurosceptic Parties and B) cumulated vote % totals of all Eurosceptic Parties

Denmark

Like in Finland, opposition to European Integration was mostly an affair of the far left in Denmark in the 1980’s, with the Socialist People’s Party oscillating at between 10 and 15 per cent of vote, and being the number one Eurosceptic party in the period, while other parties hovered in the 2-3 per cent region. The right wing Progress Party was the main right wing Eurosceptic party, and despite scoring 9 per cent at the 1988 elections and doing increasingly better in the 90’s, it did not manage to steal the Eurosceptic spotlight, even while the Socialist People’s Party was doing ever worse. Right wing Euroscepticism eventually overtook left wing Euroscepticism in 2001, when the Danish People’s Party (DFP) splintered from the Progress Party and overtook the Left. Since then, the DFP has remained the main anti-EU voice in Danish

politics, and while the combined votes of Left Eurosceptic Parties managed to overtake the combined total of the far right in 2007, the DFP remains Denmark's flagship Eurosceptic party.

Figure 21: Euroscepticism in Denmark

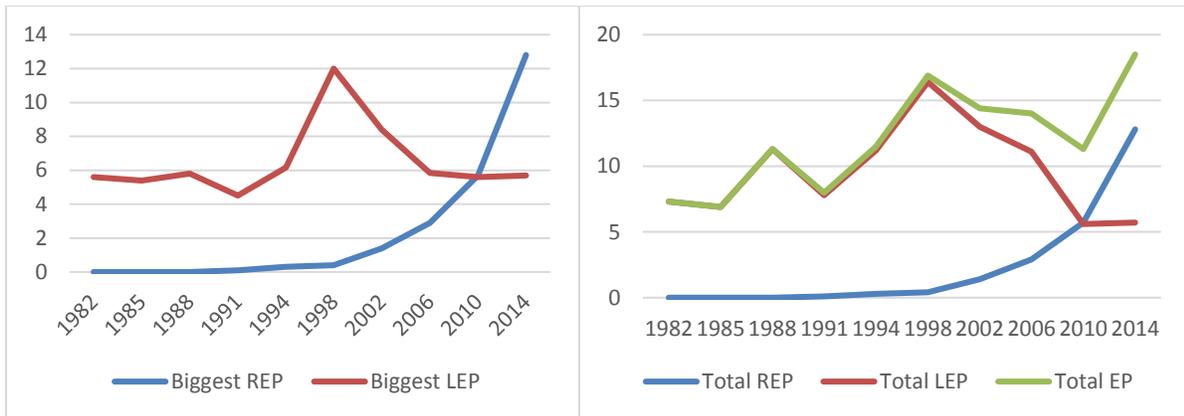


A) Vote % in national elections for Denmark's biggest left-wing Eurosceptic and biggest right-wing Eurosceptic Parties and B) cumulated vote % totals of all Eurosceptic Parties

Sweden

In Sweden opposition to the European Integration from the far right was nigh inexistent until the current millenium, anti-EU discourse being for a long time the domain of the left side of the spectrum, with the Left Party and the Greens being the main actors in that area. While Left-Wing Euroscepticism has remained at rather constant levels in terms of number of votes it commands in national elections (with the exception of a spike in 1998), the right-wing Sverigedemokraterna became one of Sweden's political powerbrokers after 2010 and is currently one of the biggest parties in Sweden.

Figure 22: Euroscepticism in Sweden

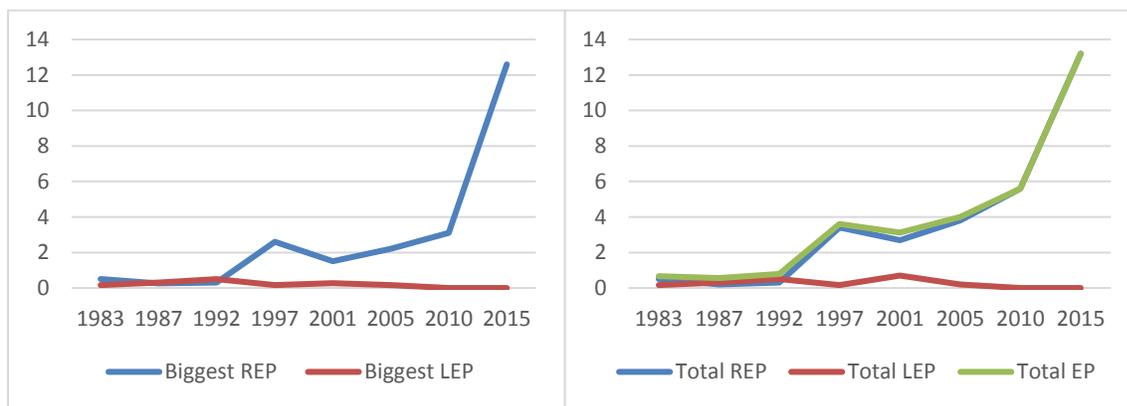


A) Vote % in national elections for Sweden's biggest left-wing Eurosceptic and biggest right-wing Eurosceptic Parties and B) cumulated vote % totals of all Eurosceptic Parties

The United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom the Westminster system took its toll in on the performance of fringe parties due to the incentive to vote 'strategic'. Until 1999 Eurosceptic parties were nigh' inexistent at the polls, and even after that year (when the rules for European Elections in Britain changed to a proportional system), the vote tallies for UKIP were suppressed by the rules that govern the race.

Figure 23: Euroscepticism in Britain



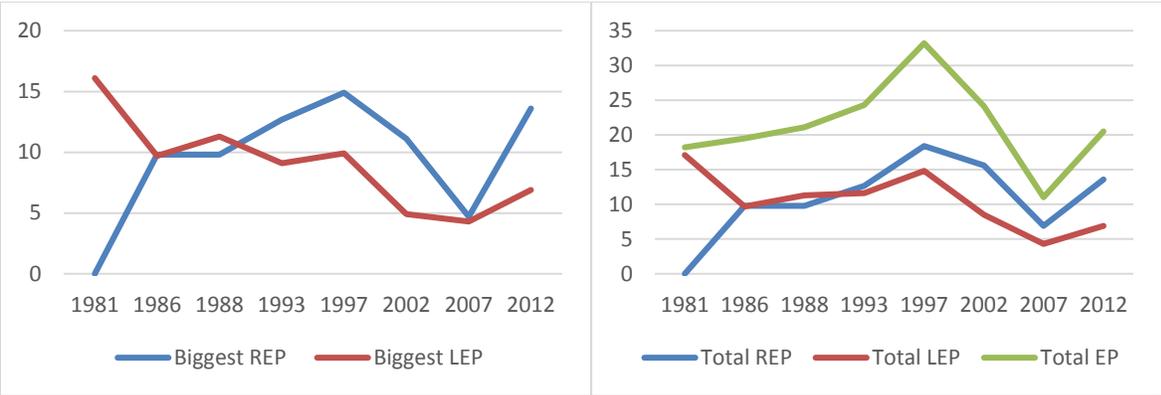
A) Vote % in national elections for Britain's biggest left-wing Eurosceptic and biggest right-wing Eurosceptic Parties and B) cumulated vote % totals of all Eurosceptic Parties

While some fringe parties flirted with and espoused Eurosceptic discourse (the Greens, the Democratic Unionist Party, the British National Party, the Socialist Labor Party later on), the rules of the electoral system prevented any of these from breaking 1% in the polls until 1997, when the Referendum party stood for election. After gaining around 3% of votes, the party soon dissolved leaving center stage on the Eurosceptic Right Wing to the UKIP. The latter actually formed in the early 90's, prior to the Referendum Party, but it never managed to make an impact in the 90's. At the '99 EP elections it managed to come 4th and gained enough attention to help push it above 1% of votes at the next national election (2001). While it still didn't equal the votes that the Referendum Party had obtained four years prior, it comfortably laid claim to the niche and title of only serious Eurosceptic party; there was no other 'big' party on the right and the British far left was too weak to matter. After 2001, it did increasingly better at every election, although its results in the Westminster race paled in comparison to the numbers it put up in European elections (6%, 16%, 16% and 27%) – until 2015.

France

France also has a majoritarian electoral system whereby every circumscription sends one representative to the National Assembly in Paris. What sets it apart from the UK is the fact that there is a two-round system, with the candidates with the most votes from the first round competing in a run-off in the second round. This allows voters to vote with 'their hearts' in the first round, as they need not worry that voting for the party they deem closest to them will cost their most preferred *large* party against their least preferred competitor. The second round gives voters a chance to vote strategically and avoid a 'worst case scenario'. Just like in the United Kingdom, radical and fringe parties have a hard time entering the parliament, despite robust election results. Because of this, the results of the first rounds of voting in France's legislative elections look very much like results from proportional political systems, and it is possible to interpret the results of the first round as a window into the minds of voters.

Figure 24: Euroscepticism in France



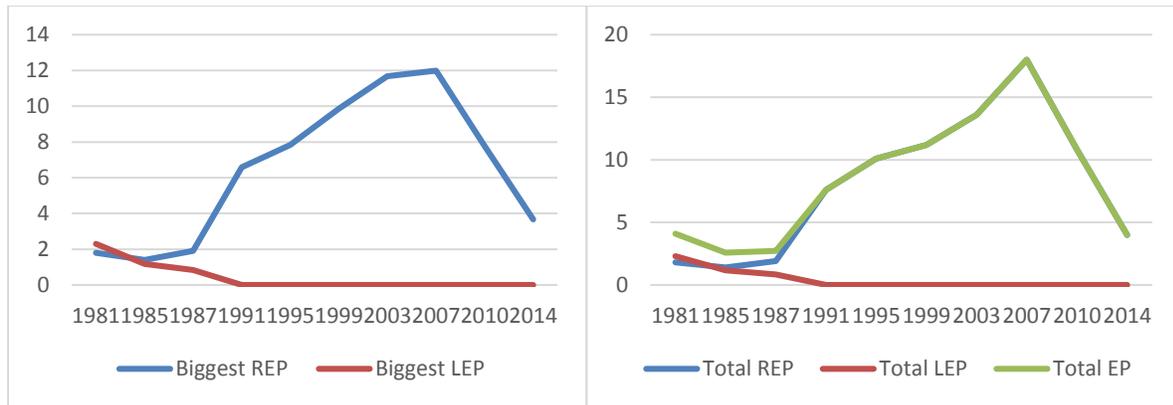
A) Vote % in national elections for France’s biggest left-wing Eurosceptic and biggest right-wing Eurosceptic Parties and B) cumulated vote % totals of all Eurosceptic Parties

Until the early 1980’s, the French Communist Party was the main opponent to European integration, and the far right opposition was very much in its infancy. The National Front became a household name after 1986 when it approached 10% in the first round (it had previously failed to score 1%) and kept building on its performances from year to year until 2002, when it took its first electoral loss relative to its previous run (-3.8%) and in 2007 again (-6.8%). In the meantime, the French far left always kept faring worse with time, but managed to stabilize above the 4% mark after 2000. While the Front National did dip at one point to under 5 per cent, right wing Eurosceptic parties overall always maintained a lead in the 90’s over left wing ones due to a plethora of small right wing Eurosceptic parties who hovered below 1% (Rally for France, Movement for France and Independence of Europe, Citizens and Republican Movement). The Front National has over the past two decades established itself as the biggest and most authoritative anti-EU party in France.

Belgium

The Eurosceptic niche has been decidedly taken over by right-wing populism in Belgium. The late 80’s represented the swan song of Belgian left-wing Euroscepticism, and various right-wing parties have since advocated anti-Integration positions, like The Belgian Front National, the VB, and the Lijst Dedecker. The VB (Vlaams Belang, initially Vlaams Block), a Flemish nationalist party has in comparison to other Eurosceptic parties been large enough to ensure that the total cumulated vote % garnered by all anti-EU parties ‘moved along’ with its own election results.

Figure 25: Euroscepticism in Belgium

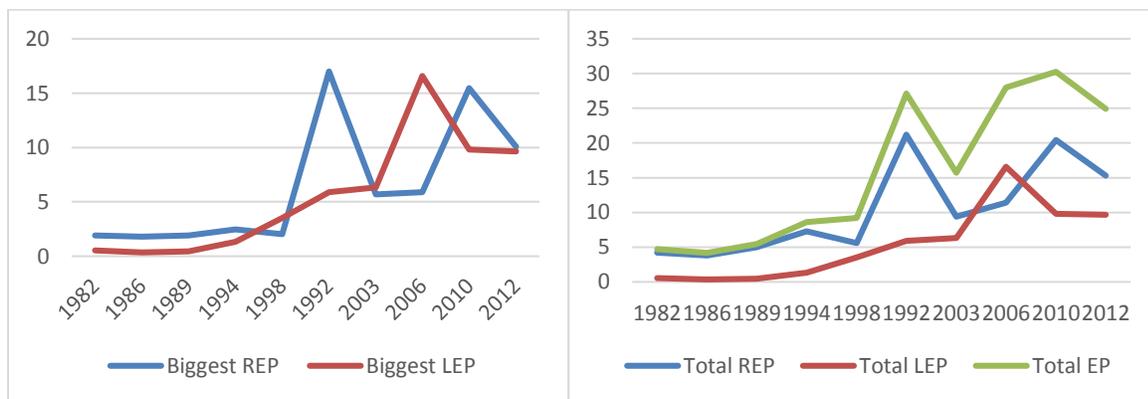


A) Vote % in national elections for Belgium's biggest left-wing Eurosceptic and biggest right-wing Eurosceptic Parties and B) cumulated vote % totals of all Eurosceptic Parties

The Netherlands

Holland has perhaps been the environment least dominated by a single Eurosceptic party. While it is common today to think of Geert Wilder's PVV and associate them with a dominating position as opponents of integration (what I call the "flagship Eurosceptic" effect), half a dozen Eurosceptic parties have over the past 25 years held that distinction. While the right wing has traditionally been stronger than the left, like in Belgium, the socialist SP managed to consistently score above 5% after 2000 (and once even above 10%, when right wing Eurosceptic parties took a dive in public support).

Figure 26: Euroscepticism in the Netherlands



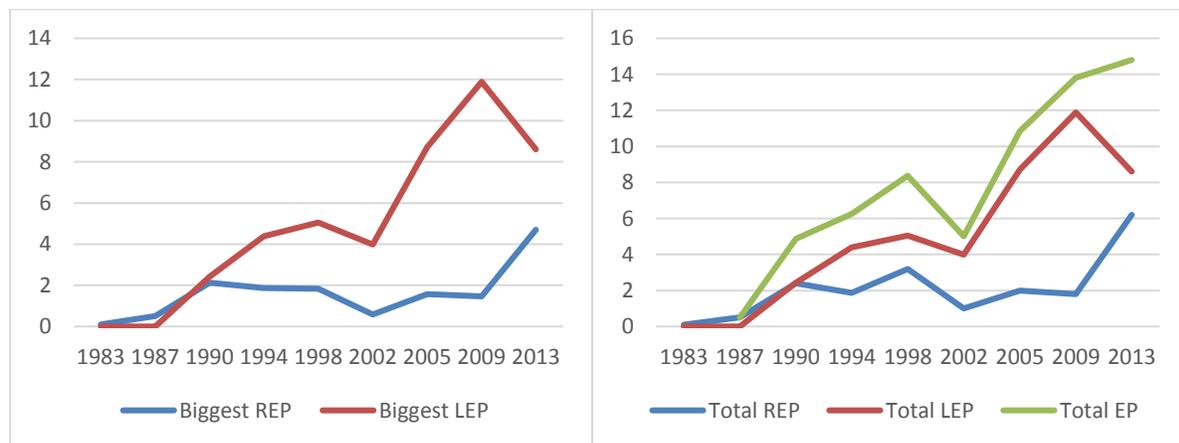
A) Vote % in national elections for the Netherlands's biggest left-wing Eurosceptic and biggest right-wing Eurosceptic Parties and B) cumulated vote % totals of all Eurosceptic Parties

Until 2002 a number of small Eurosceptic parties shared votes between them (RPF, SGP, GPV, CD) on the right without one standing out with distinction. That changed when the Lijst Pim Fortuyn surprised everybody by winning around 17% of votes, and although the party fizzled out with the disappearance of its leader, its ‘seat’ has been taken by the PVV under the leadership of Geert Wilders.

Germany

With its central role as one of the engines of European Integration, Germany has not seen much success from hard Eurosceptic parties. Parties like the NPD, Die Republikaner and the DVU struggled regularly on the right with scores of around 1%. Soft Euroscepticism of the left-wing variety has been the most visible in Germany with Die Linke being for a long time the only serious alternative to pro-Integration political parties. The AfD brought a change to that, and after it positioned itself ever closer to the right, it has lately managed to spark a stronger debate on issues other than regional governance and European Institutions.

Figure 27: Euroscepticism in Germany



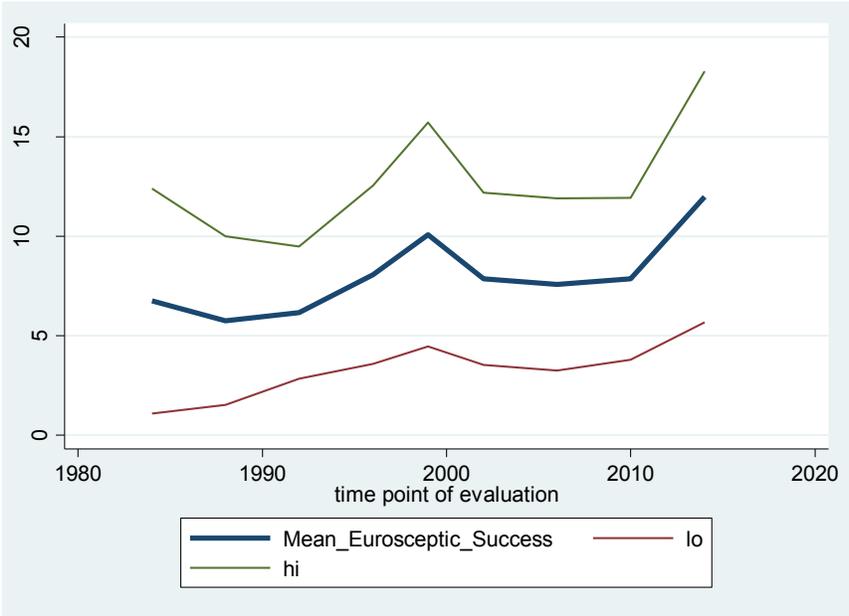
A) Vote % in national elections for Germany’s biggest left-wing Eurosceptic and biggest right-wing Eurosceptic Parties and B) cumulated vote % totals of all Eurosceptic Parties

Electoral cycles and election years don’t overlap nicely across countries. It is hard to graph the election results of Eurosceptic parties in all countries within the same figure because the data points are spread over different years in various countries. A disaggregated (in the sense of each county being present in the graph with its very own line and time points) year-by-year trend line is thus not very informative.

If one wishes to visualize a ‘clean’ trend presentation for Eurosceptic success over the years, it helps to aggregate the data into groups of years, or time points/periods. The nine time points of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey each has data on the most ‘*recent election in country, prior to the year of the survey wave in given country*’. Elections most often take place in years that are not CHES waves, but in between, and because the waves are typically set four years apart (in two cases the interval is three) it is easy to produce a trend line which aggregates election results in all 14 countries because each country has a value on each of those nine waves.

The graphs below provide just that kind of useful visualization. They are constructed out by averaging for each time point the values taken from the 14 countries from their ‘most recent elections’ values. Biggest EP gives the European average vote % for the ‘flagship’ Eurosceptic. Total REP and total LEP breaks down the data in total percentages of votes that went to Left Wing and Right Wing Eurosceptic Parties, while Main REP and main LEP describe the same information as ‘biggest LEP & REP’ above: how many votes on average the biggest single Left Wing and Right Wing Eurosceptic Party gained at each time point.

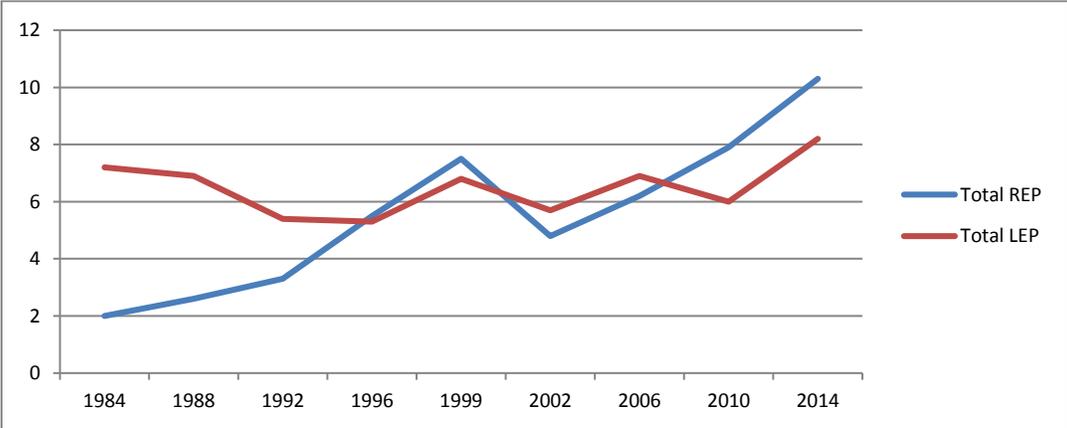
Figure 28: Average % of votes obtained in the EU 15 across time



Mean Eurosceptic success over time (with confidence interval of 1,96 SD)

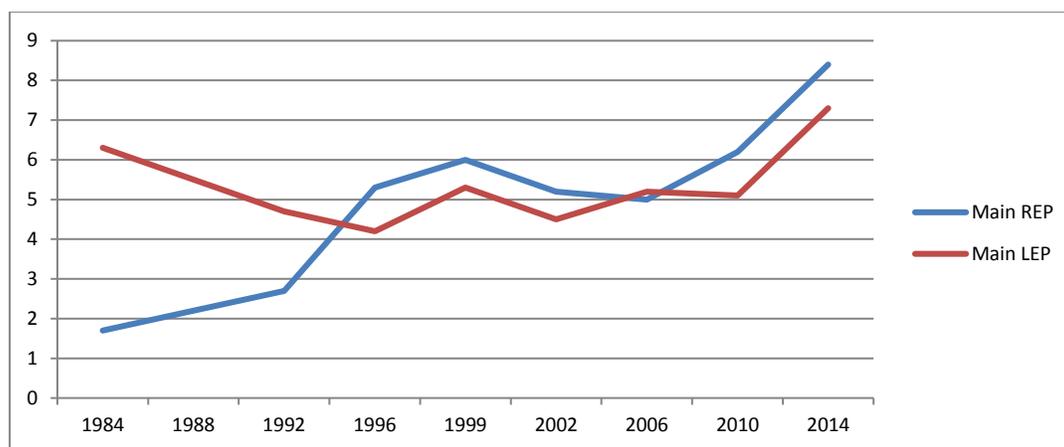
The second and third graphs in this section describes the evolution of left and right wing Euroscepticism. In the 1980's left wing Euroscepticism was much stronger than the right-wing variety on average, and while left-wing opposition to EU integration has remained at rather constant levels over the years, the right wing variety has been much more dynamic, starting at the bottom, rising strongly in the run up to the introduction of the common currency in the mid 90's, falling once again below the Left-Wing in the early 2000's and then picking up steam again. As it stands today, Parties from the right fringes of the political spectrum have monopolized discussion and media attention, and when people tend to speak of populist opposition to European Integration, it has become synonymous with right-wing populism (PVV, Front National, FPO, UKIP, True Finns, Vlaams Belang), unless debate focuses on Southern Europe.

Figure 29: Aggregated Right Wing and Left Wing Euroscepticism (A)



Average % of votes obtained in the EU 15 across the waves of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey, Total Right-Wing Eurosceptic Parties and Left-Wing Eurosceptic Parties

Figure 30: Aggregated Right Wing and Left Wing Euroscepticism (B)



Average % of votes obtained in the EU 15 across the waves of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey, Biggest Right-Wing Eurosceptic Parties and Left-Wing Eurosceptic Parties

Testing the Main Hypothesis

The first, underlying, and principal hypothesis of this study is that the success of Eurosceptic parties leads to changes of policy position/preferences by the other parties (H1). Should the hypothesis be confirmed, we would find that *position changes* of centrist parties on the EU issue *correlate* with the *electoral success of Eurosceptic Parties* in those aforementioned parties' countries, when controlling for a variety of factors, such as public opinion/sentiment on EU integration, socioeconomic factors, time, as well as characteristics of those parties whose position-changes we are measuring: their size, their ideological orientation, their electoral fate, and government/opposition status.

Having said that, there are a few different ways in which the electoral success of Eurosceptic Parties can be operationalized. To say that Eurosceptic Parties are successful can be taken to mean a number of things. Firstly, one could refer to what overall percentage of votes the flagship Eurosceptic Party gained in a country at the most recent elections. In the same vein, one could refer to the total cumulated % gained at the most recent elections by all Eurosceptic parties in a country, taken together. Alternatively, one could refer to how Eurosceptic parties have fared at the most recent election *when compared to the previous one*. From that point of view, one could operationalize Eurosceptic Success as either change in vote percentage for all Eurosceptic

parties in a country, or change in vote % (between the two most recent elections) of the biggest Eurosceptic party in a country – this latter operationalization is the one that this project set off from and is used as a benchmark: the very first model in the dissertation, M1. Given this, the very first set of analyses test four related models. The models are all identical, bar the very first predictor – the measure for Eurosceptic performance. The four models in table can be thought of in a 2x2 framework. Two of the models (M1 and M3) deal with *change* in electoral outcomes between elections as main independent variables, while the other two (M2 and M4) use the vote result of the most recent election prior to each CHES wave as the main predictors, regardless of what that number is like compared to the previous value.

This very first table confirms that the Radical Party Hypothesis is correct, and that it holds when one uses *change in vote from one election to another* as the main Independent Variables. The coefficients for the main predictors in M1 and M3 are statistically significant, mirroring De Vries' (2007) findings about the necessity of Radical Parties for the politicization of the EU issue. The base model as such is robust, the coefficients for the other variables (which in this chapter are used as mere control variables) remain similar across the 4 iterations of the models. Interpreting the regression table, we learn that mainstream parties do not react to the absolute levels of Eurosceptic party vote tallies. Instead, they react to vote gains or losses by such populist parties relative to the last election at each point in time. It is change in the main Independent Variable from T1-T2 ($\Delta\beta_1$) that is significant, not the absolute level of the indicator (β_1). The negative sign in front of the coefficients (Votechange_BiggestEuroscepticP and Votechange_all_ES_Parties) is to be expected, and indicates that as Eurosceptic parties *gain* votes, the other parties position will move in a negative direction on the EU issue on the 1-7 Chapel Hill Scale. If the Front National goes from 11% in one election to 11,5% in the next election, that might not be as big a reason to panic for French parties as Sinn Fein going from 3% to 6% would be for Irish parties. The political establishment in a country that has gotten used to a Eurosceptic party gaining around 10% at every election will expect such a party to gain another 10, all things considered. If the Eurosceptic party succeeds and lives up to that expectation, it will be just that: confirming expectations. That communicates to the parties on the political center that the Eurosceptic appeal is not increasing among the electorate, that it is not drawing more votes away and the fact that the EU issue is not a significant one, or at least not a decidedly significant one. If populist Eurosceptics in a country gain 6 or 7 per cent of the vote, one might

be tempted to think that there should be less cause for alarm than the situation described above, where they obtained 10.

However, if the 6 or seven per cent come on the back of an improvement from 2 or three, it points to a change and disruption in the equilibrium of the political system, a change in the mood of the electorate and a possible distribution of voters. The fact that the other variables (in this case control variables) retain their coefficient signs, strength and significance speaks to the robustness of the model. In all four instances, mainstream parties Left-Right orientation, their participation in government/opposition and their own electoral performance relative to the last election are significant predictors. While parties' government/opposition status is the strongest of the three coefficients (.13), it is a dummy variable, which limits the possibility of policy drift from one election to another to a certain boundary. The positive sign indicates that all things considered (when controlling for all variables, including Eurosceptic electoral performance or success) parties in government are more likely to experience a positive change in attitude towards the EU. Party_votechange indicates that for every extra one per cent in votes that a moderate party improved compared to its previous electoral performance, it will by default adopt a position that is more pro-EU by .01 on the 1-7 CHES scale. The strongest effect among the control variables belongs to the Left-Right placement of parties. The negative sign indicates that the further to the right a party lies, the more skeptical of integration it will be, all else equal (higher values on the indicator indicates right wing ideologies and lower values indicates left-wing ones). The coefficient suggests that for every one point further to the right a party lies on the 0-10 left right scale, its change in EU position will be default be .06 in the negative direction.

Table 1: the first regression analysis, disaggregated models

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model	(3) Model	(4) Model
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.02** (0.007)			
Totalvotes_Biggest_EuroscepticP		-0.01 (0.009)		
Votechange_All_ES_Parties			-0.02** (0.006)	
Totalvotes_All_ES_Parties				-0.00 (0.008)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties			0.03 (0.042)	0.05 (0.045)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties			-0.04 (0.088)	-0.02 (0.087)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.05 (0.043)	0.06 (0.042)		
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.03 (0.086)	-0.01 (0.088)		
Time	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.01 (0.025)	-0.02 (0.023)	-0.02 (0.024)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)
unemployment	0.03 (0.015)	0.03 (0.014)	0.02 (0.016)	0.03 (0.015)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.06*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.06*** (0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.15** (0.054)	0.13* (0.056)	0.15** (0.055)	0.13* (0.056)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01* (0.004)	0.01** (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)	0.01** (0.004)
Country Dummies Not Reported				
Constant	0.73 (0.672)	0.64 (0.669)	0.78 (0.611)	0.69 (0.603)
Observations	527	533	527	533
R-squared	0.16	0.15	0.17	0.14
Adj. R-squared	0.13	0.11	0.13	0.10

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

So far, it seems that both variables predict position change among the mainstream parties, and almost equally well. It is fairly easy to see from the graphs in the first part of this empirical chapter that the line describing how well Eurosceptic parties are doing in a country often runs hand in hand with how well the *biggest* Eurosceptic party in that country does. This is the “Flagship Eurosceptic Party” phenomenon – Eurosceptic success is often synonymous with one party’s fate. Sometimes however, the Flagship Eurosceptic phenomenon can coexist with the effect of cumulated Eurosceptic parties’ success, in instances when a Eurosceptic party *does* command sufficient electoral clout to dominate public attention, but is surrounded by some Eurosceptic parties whose electoral tally added together can match that of the flagship Eurosceptic (and thus double the overall value of Eurosceptic success).

The mechanism I use here works on the assumption that mainstream political parties react to the defection of voters towards anti-EU or euro-critical political actors. There will be a noticeable effect if these parties lose ten per cent to a populist Eurosceptic party, and less so if they lose another one per cent to a small fringe party. But if instead of losing an extra one per cent (besides the original 10% to the big populist), they lose an extra nine per cent spread across three smaller Eurosceptic parties (say, for example each with 3%), then the effect is bound to be much stronger because while each of these parties are only gaining 3%, the mainstream are losing voters at a high cumulated rate. All things considered, there are arguments in favor of looking at the success of the biggest Eurosceptic Parties of a country *as well as* the success of all such parties.

Table 2 combines the models (models 1 and 2 in one and models 3 and 4 into one). It shows that the coefficient for `Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP` (from one election to another) retains its coefficient and significance when controlling for the absolute percentage of votes gained by the Eurosceptic Party. It reinforces the conclusion that it is $\Delta\beta_1$ (the change in votes) that matters, not the value of β_1 by itself. The same holds true when analyzing the cumulated vote tally of all Eurosceptic parties. As before, `Left-Right`, and `Gov_Opposition` remain significant.

Table 2: the first regression analysis, aggregated models

VARIABLES	(5) Model	(6) Model
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.02* (0.009)	
Totalvotes_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.00 (0.011)	
Votechange_All_ES_Parties		-0.02* (0.008)
Totalvotes_All_ES_Parties		0.00 (0.009)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties		0.04 (0.046)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties		-0.04 (0.085)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.04 (0.043)	
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.03 (0.088)	
Time	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.02 (0.023)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01* (0.006)	-0.01 (0.005)
unemployment	0.03 (0.014)	0.03 (0.015)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.15** (0.054)	0.15** (0.056)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)
Country Dummies not reported	(0.184)	(0.183)
Constant	0.76 (0.641)	0.69 (0.564)
Observations	527	527
R-squared	0.16	0.17
Adj. R-squared	0.12	0.13

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

The inverse model

According to the likes of Green Pedersen (2012), Mair (2000), Dahlström and Sundell (2012) or Meguid (2008) mainstream parties create or eliminate the opportunities and political agenda that allow radical parties to thrive, and the latter are supposed to only flourish when their party positions and preferred issues are first validated and legitimized by mainstream parties via policy position changes by the former. Models 7 and 8 test the hypothesis in the opposite direction (Hypothesis 2) – it asks whether change in how many votes a) the biggest Eurosceptic party (m7) and all Eurosceptic parties (m8) receive is determined by how the other parties, the political mainstream, previously change their position on the EU issue. In both models, the coefficient for mainstream parties 'Change_Position_on_EU (typically the dependent variable in the other models) is insignificant, contradicting the 'alternative' hypothesis that mainstream party shifts occur first. In model 7, the dependent variable is change in votes for the country's biggest Eurosceptic Party, and in model 8, it is change in the cumulated vote tally for all Eurosceptic parties. Some variables (pertaining to individual characteristics of mainstream parties, such as their Left_Right orientation, and Government status, etc) were dropped since there was no need to control for them, as was their own position that is the dependent variable. The variables in the regression tables carry the prefix 'lead' because the values on those indicators were lead into the next time point (the opposite of taking a lag).

Table 3: testing whether Eurosceptic success is actually a function of mainstream party position change

VARIABLES	(7) Model	(8) Model
Change_Position_on_EU	0.07 (0.773)	-0.31 (1.018)
leadextremeness_biggestES	-1.27 (1.232)	
leadsalience_biggestES	-0.62 (1.326)	
leadextremeness_allES		-1.36 (1.141)
leadsalience_allES		0.26 (1.328)
Time	0.26 (0.307)	0.24 (0.354)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	0.10 (0.085)	0.15 (0.107)
unemployment	0.17 (0.222)	0.26 (0.290)
Country Dummies not reported		
Constant	-3.90 (10.290)	-9.88 (11.085)
Observations	421	421
R-squared	0.09	0.11
Adj. R-squared	0.05	0.06

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Eurosceptic Contagion and the Electoral Threshold

Table 4 includes the output from two models/regressions, one (model 9) in which the main IV in the equation, ‘Votes over electoral threshold’ denotes how far over (or under) the electoral threshold the country’s Eurosceptic Party scored at the most recent elections (if there is no electoral threshold, then the score on this variable is given by how many votes per cent the flagship Eurosceptic gained at said election, i.e. 0 is taken as a default base value); the other

variables are identical to those in models 1 and 3. The second regression (model 10) adds the variable ‘Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP, the main IV, thereby testing the effect that ‘‘Votes over electoral threshold’’ has on party position change, while controlling for this study’s main predictor.

Table 4: testing the radical party hypotheses when controlling for Eurosceptic proximity to the electoral threshold

VARIABLES	(9) Model	(10) Model
Votes_Over_Electoral_Threshold	0.11 (0.575)	0.30 (0.527)
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP		-0.02* (0.009)
Totalvotes_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.12 (0.578)	-0.30 (0.529)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.06 (0.042)	0.04 (0.043)
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.01 (0.090)	-0.03 (0.090)
Time	-0.01 (0.028)	-0.01 (0.027)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01* (0.006)
unemployment	0.03 (0.014)	0.03 (0.014)
Left_Right	-0.06*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.13* (0.056)	0.15** (0.054)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01** (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)
Country Dummies Not Reported		
Constant	1.19 (2.792)	2.29 (2.574)
Observations	533	527
R-squared	0.15	0.16
Adj. R-squared	0.11	0.12

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

In both cases the coefficient '*Votes over electoral threshold*' is insignificant, while '*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP*' retains its properties when added to the model – the model becomes identical to M1 plus the added predictor of '*Votes over electoral threshold*'. In effect, the regression is testing the main model, when controlling for the threshold factor as well. The reverse is also true, the model is testing for the effect of '*Votes over electoral threshold*' when controlling for Eurosceptic success as measured in votechange of the biggest party (testing for the influence of the threshold factor only makes sense for the individual, largest parties, the flagship Eurosceptics: as for the change in cumulated vote tally of all parties, it is hard to relate it analytically to the above mentioned threshold). Eurosceptic Success relative to the Electoral Threshold is not a significant predictor of other parties' positional changes. Attesting to the robustness of the original model, the strength of the other coefficients remains the same as in previous models, as is their statistical significance. Adding the one extra predictor produces negligible changes.

The electoral threshold determines, among other things, what parties don't make it into the legislature. A country's threshold might prevent a country from gaining seats even if it scored some votes (for example 3%). To say that a populist party's proximity to entering parliament is what makes the other parties react, but not their actual vote tally would suggest that parties are not really concerned with Eurosceptic challengers if these are 2 or 3 % away from entering parliament. Let's assume for a moment a situation in which a Eurosceptic party gains a lot of votes compared to the last election (maybe even getting into the 5% region) but falls just short of the electoral threshold (akin to how the AfD narrowly missed out on Bundestag representation at the most recent national elections in Germany). Analogously we could assume a situation in which several small Eurosceptic parties all gain votes, but all stop short of passing the electoral threshold – in such a situation the combined votes of all Eurosceptic parties would constitute a cumulated total that is well above the threshold, and that cumulated total might be comparable to the vote tally of the biggest parties.

Such an electoral performance would not change the distribution of seats in the parliament. If we were to assume that ΔSeats (change in number of seats) is what political parties react to, the value on ΔSeats following such an election would be zero. There would be no information on the changes in voters' preferences because such changes did not materialize in representation. Naturally, we would not assume based on such an election that nothing is

happening in the electorate. And of course, neither would the centrist parties that lost the votes. Even if they have not lost seats, they are losing votes and become aware of the need to adjust their own policy position, even if a Eurosceptic party gains 2% of votes, and finds itself another 2-3% away from a possible threshold.

For the same reason, it would not make much sense to look at changes in the distribution of seats within parliament and changes in said distribution over electoral cycles. Data on seat gains and seat changes can mask vote % changes if parties gain votes without translating such gains into seats (and the corresponding lack of seat loss from other parties). It would be folly of political parties to dismiss information about a 3 or 4 per cent change in the distribution of votes (their loss and populists' gain) as 'no information'⁵². Such a change is valuable information about the changing preference of voters, even when not accompanied by changes in the distribution of seats.

Yet another reason why electoral performance relative to the electoral threshold is not useful as an information mechanism is institutional. It is hard to compare across countries. Some countries have high elector limits to parliament entry. In some countries, the threshold equals the % of votes required to win one seat (below 1% in the Netherlands), while other countries have no national threshold, and finally, majoritarian systems impose a de facto threshold that depends on winning a constituency. It thus becomes hard to compare the effect of proximity to the electoral threshold cross-sectionally, because the values on the variable mean very different things across country contexts – being within one percent of the threshold can mean very different things in Holland, Germany and Italy, while I argue that a one per cent increase in the overall vote tally for Eurosceptic parties has meaning which is more easily and meaningfully compared across these countries.

Conclusion

This first empirical part of this project was structured along two themes. The first part dealt with presenting some of the trends of Eurosceptic performance in Western Europe over the past three

⁵² especially if that happens with several Eurosceptic Parties whose cumulated vote tally goes well over the electoral threshold, to repeat what was said above

decades, comparing the success of Eurosceptic parties across countries as well as political poles. There are differences across time within and between countries with regards to the type of Eurosceptic Parties that have been the most preeminent critics of regional integration, as to whether and when the ratio of left wing and right wing populism swung one way or another. From an aggregate cross-sectional perspective, in the 1980's left-wing Euroscepticism held center stage, as such parties were faring much better at the polls than right wing ones. In the early 90's, far left populism began to lose its appeal, at the same time as right wing parties were registering growing voter support, eventually overtaking left-wing populism as the strongest Eurosceptic fringe parties. Right wing Eurosceptic parties have been on an improving trend (vote count wise) since the early-mid 2000's, while a similar upward trend in left-wing Eurosceptic party support started to materialize in the mid to late years of the previous decade. The second part of the chapter took on the radical party hypothesis and tested it in various iterations, in doing so it looked at different ways to describe and operationalize Eurosceptic success, with the conclusion that change in success from one election to another, both in the case of the Flagship Eurosceptic as well as that of the cumulated vote tally of all Eurosceptic Parties, is the best way to describe such an indicator. The results show a robust, statistically significant coefficient for the main predictor, which confirms the radical party hypothesis (hypothesis 1) and proves that **Eurosceptic Parties can and do influence their national party systems by forcing other parties to adopt and co-opt parts of their policy positions.** The results stood even in models which mixed the first differenced values with the absolute ones (essentially testing the two indicators while controlling for one another), showing that moderate and mainstream parties react first and foremost to change to the political status quo. Political parties use changes in electoral outcomes from one election to another to 'update' their map of the electoral landscape, the attractiveness of various policy positions and the distribution of voter preferences. Two models in this chapter tackled what can in a way be described as 'the opposite' to the radical party hypothesis, i.e. question of direction of causality. That section showed that contrary to those theoretical standpoints that place Eurosceptic success on the left side of the equation (treating them as a function of mainstream party behavior) there is no evidence to support the hypothesis (hypothesis 2) that party system position shifts come first and cause Eurosceptic success.

5. The Circumstances and Dynamics of Eurosceptic Contagion

Introduction

The very first empirical chapter concerned itself mostly with testing the Radical Party Hypothesis: finding out if there actually is an effect that Eurosceptic parties have on the other parties. This second empirical chapter delves deeper into the question of Eurosceptic populism, by asking whether the Effect of Eurosceptic Contagion is itself contingent on other factors. The first section of the chapter explores when and where contagion happens and ties this to discussion about temporal trends, the premises for self-reinforcing processes (is contagion a recent phenomenon, has it always been there and happened to the same extent?), and to the characteristics of the Eurosceptic parties (how Eurosceptic must a populist party actually be to make an impact, and to what degree does the EU issue have to be an issue of importance for those Eurosceptics?). The second section looks into *why* contagion happens, it takes the first look at the motivations of pro-EU mainstream parties when they are confronted with the growing public appeal of Eurosceptic policy entrepreneurs. It investigates how centrist parties treat that threat in various sets of circumstances: if they lose or gain votes, if their rivals perform poorly, or if Eurosceptic contagion is contingent on parties being either government or opposition parties. All in all, it represents the first steps in the discussion between tactical-cynical and conviction-ideological motivations behind parties' responses to the Eurosceptic rise. The third section of this chapter tackles the ideological element of the phenomenon, looking into what kind of Eurosceptic Parties the mainstream reacts to, and whether we can discern any important difference in how Eurosceptic Contagion manifests itself based on ideological differences.

The previous empirical chapter has shown that both measurements depicting the electoral progress of the biggest Eurosceptic Party in a country as well as measurements describing the progress of all Eurosceptic parties are useful indicators of Eurosceptic success. I believe here that there is real analytical value in investigating further the phenomenon of Eurosceptic contagion through the lens of both independent variables, and the further analyses conducted here will include both predictors. The regression models in this chapter use the same variables as the base model from the previous chapter, with the main difference that some of the variables that were used previously as control variables are allowed one at a time to interact with the main predictor.

The Circumstances of Eurosceptic Contagion

In what circumstances does Eurosceptic Contagion happen? This section tries to assess to what degree the process studied in this project is itself influenced – mitigated or amplified – by the decorum in which Eurosceptic Parties do well, and in the process will test the corresponding hypotheses from the theoretical framework. This contributes to completing the picture of the ‘Radical Party Model’ in several ways. As was already suggested, the rise of Eurosceptic actors has been a dynamic phenomenon, closely intertwined with the later development of the European Union, as well as more general socio-economic processes that took place within member states.

The theoretical part of this project alluded to the possibility of a self-reinforcing mechanism existing in the case of Eurosceptic Contagion, whereby growing public discontent with integration, growing popularity of anti-systemic fringe parties and the growing salience of the EU issue might go hand in hand, strengthening each other’s effect over time. It is stated that Eurosceptic Parties have not always been as opposed to European Integration as they presently are (some where even pro-Integration as a counterweight to statist socialist policies on the national level). As these parties became more aware of the political and electoral potential that public policy positions opposing further or current Europeanization could convey, they added the EU issue to their repertoire and began to promote the issue ever more. Simultaneously, some of these parties doubled down on their anti-EU position, thus becoming more extreme in their opposition. With growing success at the ballot box came more public attention to the issues they promoted, further driving electorate interest in their positions, and thus increasing the potential voter base of these parties.

The factors looked at in this section are exogenous to the mainstream parties that undergo shifts in position on the EU issue, they pertain to the election itself or the characteristics of the populist challengers. I will here look at the effects of time, how radical Eurosceptic Parties are, and the degree to which the latter promote the EU issue in the electoral contest. This will be followed by a discussion on multilinearity – how well must Eurosceptic parties do, to actually force the mainstream to respond? Answering such questions will provide a closer and more minute look at the mechanism behind the information via elections mechanism, and the kind of information that parties actually employ when responding to Eurosceptic Success.

Table 5: The Circumstances of Eurosceptic Contagion (A)

VARIABLES	(11) Model	(12) Model	(13) Model
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	0.01 (0.025)	-0.04 (0.021)	0.03 (0.036)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.05 (0.045)	0.05 (0.043)	0.05 (0.043)
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.03 (0.087)	-0.02 (0.087)	-0.03 (0.086)
Time	-0.01 (0.026)	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.01 (0.025)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)
unemployment	0.03 (0.014)	0.02 (0.013)	0.02 (0.014)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.15** (0.054)	0.15** (0.054)	0.16** (0.055)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01 (0.004)	0.01* (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)
Time*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.00 (0.003)		
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP		0.01 (0.008)	
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP			-0.01 (0.010)
Country Dummies Not Reported			
Constant	0.60 (0.683)	0.66 (0.681)	0.70 (0.669)
Observations	527	527	527
R-squared	0.17	0.17	0.17
Adj. R-squared	0.13	0.13	0.13

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 6: The Circumstances of Eurosceptic Contagion (B)

VARIABLES	(11b) Model	(12b) Model	(13b) Model
Votechange_All_ES_Parties	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.03 (0.022)	0.03 (0.039)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties	0.04 (0.043)	0.03 (0.043)	0.03 (0.043)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties	-0.04 (0.089)	-0.04 (0.088)	-0.03 (0.089)
Time	-0.02 (0.025)	-0.02 (0.022)	-0.02 (0.023)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01* (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)
unemployment	0.03 (0.016)	0.02 (0.015)	0.02 (0.016)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.15** (0.055)	0.15** (0.055)	0.16** (0.056)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)
Time*Votechange_All_ES_Parties	-0.00 (0.003)		
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties*Votechange_All_ES_Parties		0.01 (0.008)	
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties*Votechange_All_ES_Parties			-0.01 (0.011)
Country Dummies Not Reported			
Constant	0.75 (0.632)	0.77 (0.607)	0.75 (0.617)
Observations	527	527	527
R-squared	0.17	0.17	0.17
Adj. R-squared	0.13	0.13	0.13

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

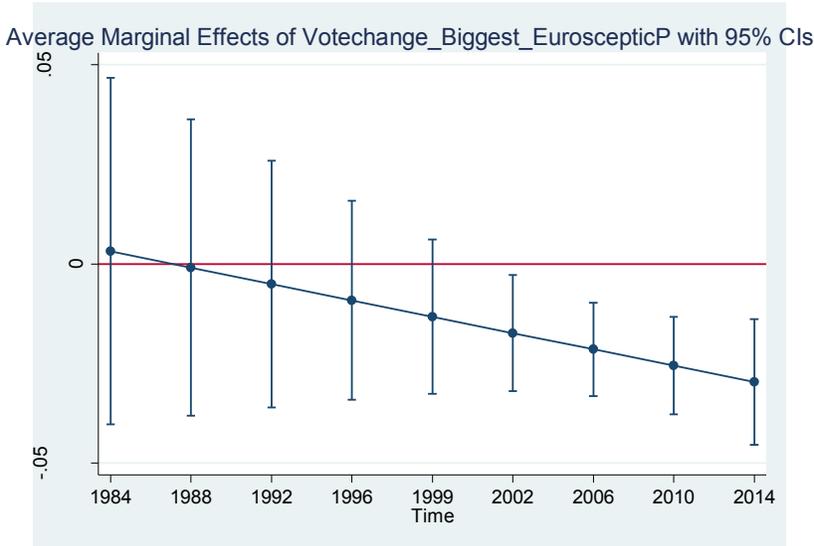
*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Euroscepticism and Time

Does time matter for Eurosceptic Contagion? Is the phenomenon a function of the passing of time and various trends? Figures 31 and 32 show us that the phenomenon of Eurosceptic

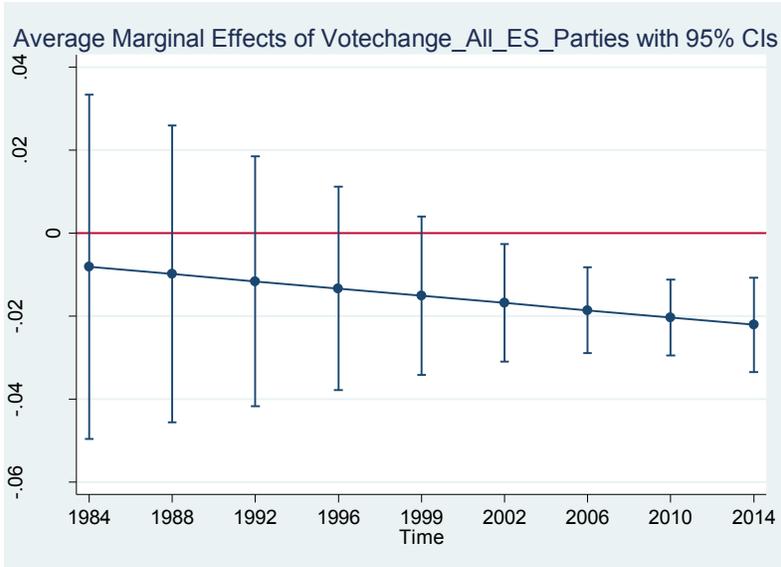
Contagion becomes strong and significant enough to matter after the middle of the period in analysis in this study. Until 1999, there was little to no contagion, and mainstream parties were less likely to pay attention to Eurosceptic performance, or to adjust their policy position as a consequence of said performance.

Figure 31: Time and Eurosceptic Contagion (A)



The Interaction Between Eurosceptic Success (Flagship Eurosceptic Party) and Time

Figure 32: The Interaction Between Eurosceptic Success (Flagship Eurosceptic Party) and Time (B)



The Interaction Between Eurosceptic Success (All Eurosceptic Parties) and Time

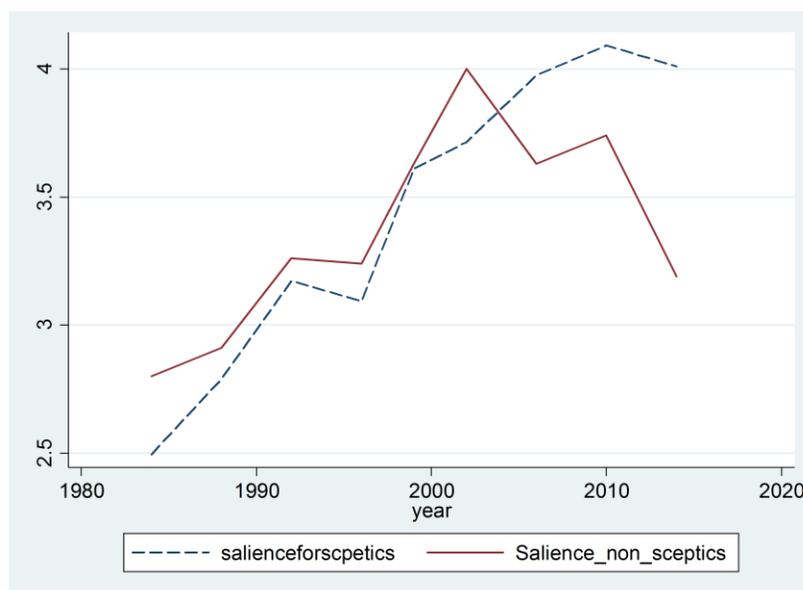
That is around the same time as the period of the adoption of the single currency, the setting in motion of attempts to draw up a European constitution, and the ever stronger materializing prospects of Central and East European countries to join the Union.

As time passed, as the European Communities became ever more coalesced into one, currency Union abolished national monetary power and eastern expansion brought in ever more immigrants from the CEE's. With the financial crisis came the Euro crisis, the strains caused by the refugee crisis and the ever better performance of populist parties. All these contribute to make the impact of Eurosceptic Success on other parties' positions ever stronger as we move forward in time. The literature on the topic at hand as already alluded to the growing salience of regional integration, as well as the growing likelihood of EU issue voting increasing with time (Hooghe and Marks, 2009; Kriesi *et al*, 2008, De Wilde and Zürn, 2012). If we consider the growing effect of Eurosceptic Success with time in light of the evolution of the salience of European Integration, we get a more complete picture of how issue has come to influence party politics in the way it does.

Euroscepticism and EU issue Salience

In discussing Eurosceptic influence, it merits asking whether the phenomenon of Eurosceptic contagion is stronger for higher values of issue salience. After all, salience theory teaches us that if an issue is not important, it will not generate political interest and debate, and there will be less conflict around it. Moreover, in keeping with the underlying idea of this dissertation, if mainstream parties don't think that the question of Integration matters, they would not address it, and would not undertake efforts to appease their electorate and to shift their position on it. Figure 33 paints a compound picture. Firstly, European Integration was not always the contentious, inescapable issue that it is today. On a scale running from one to five, where five means that the EU issue is the most important issue of all for a political party, both Eurosceptic and moderate parties were less attentive to the integration question in the past. As time passed and the EC morphed into the EU, more attention was being awarded to the EU in national political contests.

Figure 33: The Saliency of the EU issue over time for Eurosceptic Parties and Non-Eurosceptic Parties



With time, populist parties turned from being just populist to becoming populist-Eurosceptic. Secondly, after the adoption of the common currency, and the debates it generated, moderate parties tried to ‘turn down the fire’ and quiet the debate about Europe – the issue became less salient for these parties. As the Euro crisis erupted, EU integration was again forced onto their open agenda, and while they have tried overall to tone down discussion about the EU, for Eurosceptic parties there was no going back. These parties have made opposition to Integration an internal part of their armory since the 90’s, and are unwilling to give it up. While various accounts attest to the growing politicization of European Integration (Hooghe and Marks, 2009; De Wilde and Zurn, 2012), some authors chose to leave the door on the issue open for debate (see Hoeglinger, 2016).

A series of regressions were performed, amongst them also a pair in which the Saliency of the EU Issue was used not only as a control variable, but as part of an interaction with the main predictor (Models 13 and 13b). The variable describing the Saliency of the EU issue is the same as the one from Model 1 in chapter 1: it describes how salient the issue of Integration was for the flagship Eurosceptic party. *Avg_EU_Saliency_all_ES_Parties* is an average of the values of the saliency of the EU issue of all Eurosceptic Parties that contribute to the value of the ‘*Votechange_All_ES_Parties*’ variable. Figures 34 and 35, describing visually the interactions

from those respective models, show that a) the effect/impact of Eurosceptic success on the other parties positions becomes stronger as the issue of Integration gains in importance, and b) the effect is insignificant if the salience is of the EU issue not high enough.

Figure 34: Eurosceptic Contagion and the Salience of the EU issue for Eurosceptic Parties (A)

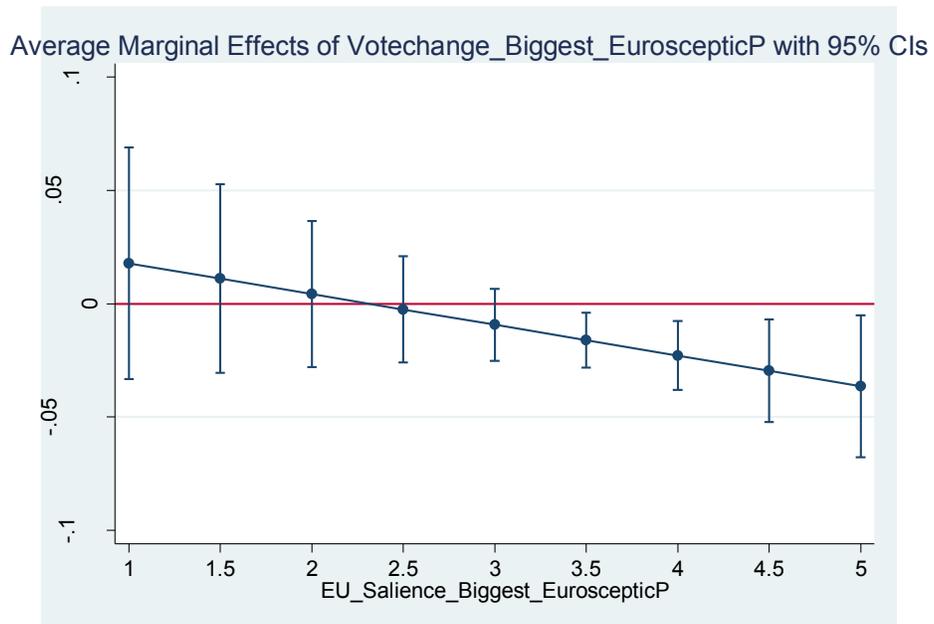
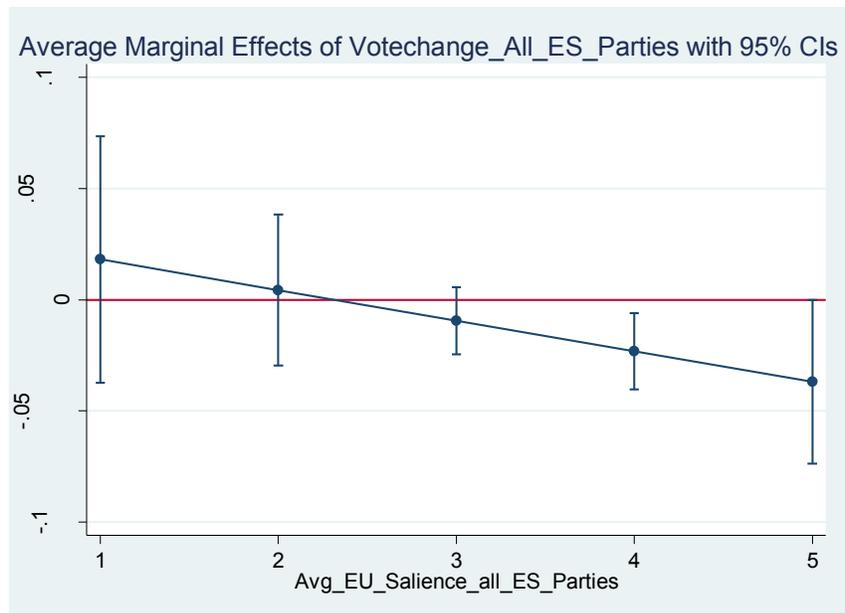


Figure 35: Eurosceptic Contagion and the Salience of the EU issue for Eurosceptic Parties (B)



This plays in rather well with the previous two analyses: as time goes, the EU grows in importance as an issue of political contest, and Eurosceptic contagion became a significant phenomenon after the issue became important and contentious enough. An issue needs to be politically salient in order for it to ‘matter’ for the political contest. When Eurosceptic parties mobilize the issue and increase apprehension about European Integration, they raise awareness among the population about the debate, stir discussion and provoke political conflict around the issue at hand.

The fact that the effect is stronger at higher levels of salience also points to another thing: the effect is lessened when Eurosceptic parties do not care about Europe. If a populist who barely cares about the EU gains votes, the moderate parties will be less likely to change their own position on the issue, because it is harder to infer from such a case/situation that the electorate has a different policy position from them, than from a scenario where to populist party actually cares strongly about stopping EU integration. These results suggest that a) Eurosceptic contagion is more likely and grows as we approach the present and b) populist parties must be not just populist, but also care about Europe in order for contagion to occur, supporting hypotheses H3 and H4.

In models 12 and 12b, the variable *Extremeness of Eurosceptic Party* describes the position of the flagship Eurosceptic on the classic 1-7 (in this case 0-6) EU position, and describes just *how* Eurosceptic a party actually is. The variable describing the average Extremeness of Eurosceptic parties is the average position of all Eurosceptic Parties that contribute to the value of the cumulative Eurosceptic indicator – again constructed using the same 1-7 scale. It simply describes the average ‘euroscepticness’ of populist parties for each CHES wave/country set. Graphs 36 and 37 show that the more ‘radical’ or anti-Integration Eurosceptic parties are, the bigger the impact of their electoral results.

Figure 36: Eurosceptic Contagion and the Extremeness of Eurosceptic Parties (A)

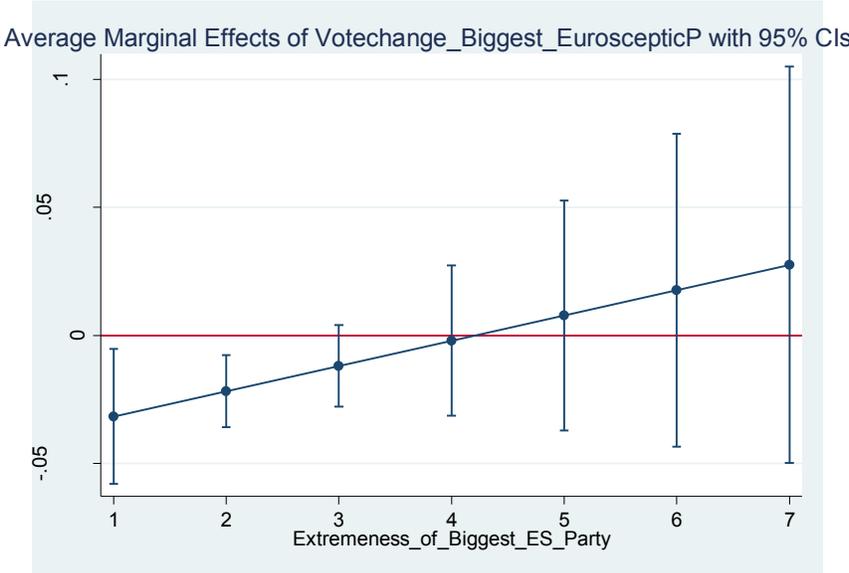
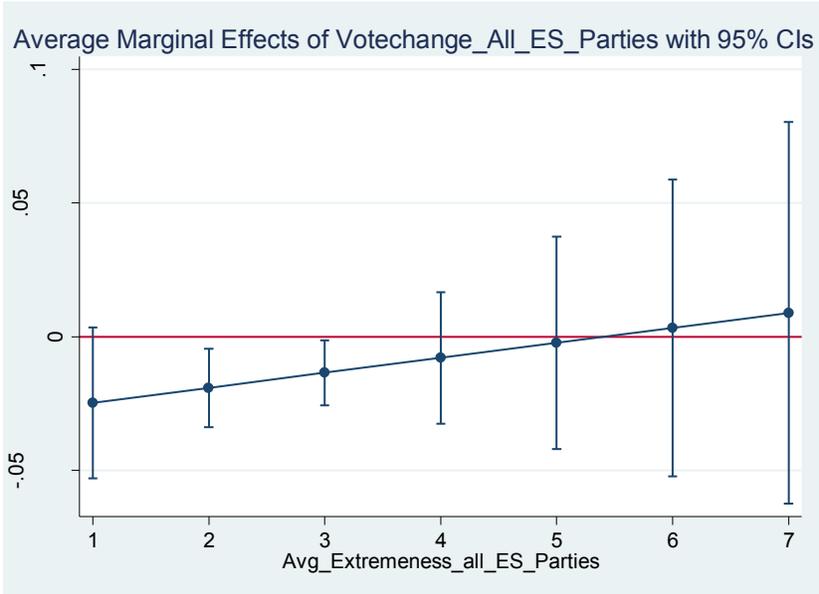


Figure 37: Eurosceptic Contagion and the Extremeness of Eurosceptic Parties (A)



If Eurosceptic parties are ‘hard’ Eurosceptics, the effect is stronger than if it were a soft Eurosceptic. This project uses continuous measures for most indicators in its analyses to avoid the loss information associated with categorical indicators, and uses the CHES EU position indicator to construct the indicators for the *euroscepticness* of populist parties. The state of the

art and literature on Europeanization and populism does include examples of research where Eurosceptic Parties are split in (qualitative) categories, the most famous one being perhaps Taggart and Szcerbiak's (2008) soft-and-hard-Eurosceptic framework. While that approach is not used here, one could attempt to ease interpretation by drawing parallels between Taggart and Szcerbiak's framework and the 1-7 CHES scale.

The Chapel Hill scale runs from one to seven, with 1 denoting "overall orientation of party leadership towards European Integration" that is *Strongly Opposed*, while 7 denotes an orientation that is *Strongly in Favor*. 2 Denotes *Opposed* and 3 denotes *Somewhat Opposed*. In the middle of the scale, 4 denotes *Neutral*. As such, the 3 interval wide space that runs from 1 to 4 is the area denoting Eurosceptic Parties on the scale. If we were to divide that analytical space into 'hard' and 'soft' Eurosceptics we would classify parties in the 1-2,5 space as hard Eurosceptics and those parties between 2,5-3,5/4 as soft Eurosceptics. When looking at Figure 38 we see that the interaction holds (in the same fashion as in Figure 37) for the cumulated electoral results of all Eurosceptic parties, with the interaction being significant for hard Eurosceptics, then the effect loses significance as it approaches 3 and enters 'soft Eurosceptic' territory.

At first, these findings might seem a bit counter-intuitive. One could argue that mainstream parties should not feel as threatened by hard Eurosceptics as by soft ones, since the soft ones are bound to look less 'scary' to the swing voters, and thus 'more electable'. Undecided voters should be able to vote with an easier conscience for a party that flirts lightly with populism than one who is a hard-core populist, and as such, centrist parties might feel that there is less potential for a hard-core Eurosceptic to lure their voters because of a lower ceiling on potential maximum votes. A soft Eurosceptic should appear acceptable to more voters, so that when a soft Eurosceptic gains votes, more alarm bells should go ringing for the political mainstream in theory.

There are, however some good reasons why the reverse is highly plausible. Firstly, if the mainstream parties are abandoned by voters for parties who lie *not that far away from them* (or not that far close to the pole), the parties that lose votes learn that the mean policy position of voters does not lie that far off from where they currently are. In other words, they do not need to shift their own position as much to keep up with public sentiment, especially that part of the public which has already taken the decision to transfer their votes. This fits in nicely with

information via elections model, whereby parties use electoral results to learn how far they need to adjust their policy positions, and in which direction.

Secondly, when a populist party that is *very* opposed to European Integration is being successful at their expense, it is likely that centrist, moderate, traditionally pro-European politicians will be more worried about the future of European Integration than in a situation in which the party luring away their voters is mildly or barely Eurosceptic. A party that is growing in the polls and states its intent to withdraw the country out of the EU is higher a cause for concern than a party that set on the journey to abolish 'only' the single currency or roll back the common agricultural policy. When the former scenario happens, centrist politicians have a choice: to stay put and either hope for the best, or accept that their policy position is increasingly unattractive to voters, and admit the need to qualify their former pro-Integration position. Via such a position shift, they reduce the potential of future gains by the Eurosceptic pariah by capping it closer to those voters that it has already attracted away, they might even claw back some voters by showing they are responsive and accountable, and perhaps most importantly, they try to maintain control of European Integration. If the country is to be governed by parties that are less warm to the idea of European Integration, centrist parties think that it might as well be them, instead of the populist 'pariahs'.

In the hypothetical nuclear scenario, mainstream parties don't adapt, the electorate drifts further and at the next election a Eurosceptic Party does well enough to become formateur party (provided the EU salience is high enough) and gains massive leverage of over a country's position within the EU. From the moderates' perspectives, it is better if they themselves stop being as pro-European as they were before, but at least retain control of the harness. Research has already addressed the theme of political elites and actors of the political establishment being by default more pro-Integration, often even more so than the electorate (Wessels; 1995; Mattila and Raunio 2006; Mattila and Raunio, 2012). It is assumed that mainstream parties usually do not want to see European Integration rolled back, in any case not as much as the electorate and populist parties, and if that (integration roll-back) needs to happen to any degree, it should at least happen under their aegis, instead of under that of populist political actors. The urgency to act and display a change of policy position is greater when a hard Eurosceptic is being successful than a soft Eurosceptic, because the former scenario is more dangerous from their perspective. It is entirely possible, of course, for both explanations to apply. It is possible that when more

radical Eurosceptic parties gain votes, mainstream take notice of the greater change in electoral preference than would otherwise be the case (ergo it would be a sincere policy adjustment in pursuit of constituency support), *and* are panicking more about the potential nuclear scenario of a party such as the Front National or the Dutch PVV winning elections.

In graphs 36 and 37 showing the interactions of Eurosceptic electoral success with ‘average Eurosceptic extremeness’ and ‘average sceptic salience’, the confidence intervals widen at the left edges of the graph. This suggests that such indicators are better suited for analyses with the electoral tally of the flagship Eurosceptic performance. In graph 38 the confidence interval approaches 0 as ‘*Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties*’ approaches 1, while significance is not an issue at such values in graph 36⁵³. Mainstream parties do pay attention to the total percentage of votes gained by all Eurosceptic parties, and not only the flagship Eurosceptic, but it seems that more attention is given to the policy position of the flagship Eurosceptic. They will care more strongly about whether the flagship Eurosceptic party is a strong or soft Eurosceptic, but will spend less time analyzing the positions of the smaller Eurosceptics that contribute to the total tally. Hypothesis 5 is confirmed.

The analysis so far shows an interaction between the time variable and the phenomenon of contagion, with the success of Eurosceptic Parties becoming a significant phenomenon at the turn between centuries. At the same time it was shown that a) Eurosceptic parties were not always as concerned with European Integration as they are today (in effect populist parties have become Eurosceptic with time) and b) there is an interaction between how salient the issue of European Integration is for populist parties and how strong their Eurosceptic contagion effect will be. If the EU issue not salient for a Eurosceptic Party, the other parties in its country will not adjust their own position on the EU issue, even if the populist challenger is successful, because they have more grounds to assume that the populist builds its success on other issues as well (the ‘it’s not about EU Integration, it’s about other issues’ argument). If a populist party does however make opposition to EU integration a staple of its policy position and ideology, the other parties will be more inclined to attribute its success to its opposition to EU integration and update

⁵³ The larger confidence intervals in the ‘cumulated Eurosceptics’ figures might be due to the characteristics of the data: the indicators ‘*average_EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP*’ and ‘*Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties*’ are averages of the values of ‘*Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party*’ and ‘*EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP*’ of all Eurosceptic parties in a country at a CHES time point. This moves the values of the two (cumulated/aggregated) variables away from the absolute possible value, the poles of the scale, providing less observations with values closer to the poles.

their image of the distribution of voter preferences accordingly. It is shown that as populists care more about the EU issue, the effect of their own electoral success grows stronger. This generates a sort of self-reinforcing process, whereby Eurosceptic parties become more visible and stronger as they gain votes, which help amplify the salience of their favorite issues more, which in turn creates the basis for further voter defection from the other parties. This self-reinforcing process is in line with the state of the art on the development of policy issues such as European Integration, globalization, or ‘denationalization’ (Kriesi, 2007; Kriesi *et al*, 2008, 2012) as factors in electoral politics, as well as the post-functionalist thesis more generally.

Linear Contagion?

Chapter 4 includes a discussion of why the electoral threshold (proximity to it, over or under) is not a suitable instrument for measuring Eurosceptic success, or at least not as suitable as the change in vote % from one election to another. So far, this chapter has tested to what degree the impact of Eurosceptic success is contingent on other factors. The following analysis tests to what degree the impact of the change in percentage of votes gained or lost by the biggest Eurosceptic Party (the flagship Eurosceptic) is amplified or mitigated by where the party is situated relative to the electoral threshold. Model 14 is essentially the same as model 10 from Chapter 4, but includes an interaction term. In model 14, *Votechange_Biggest_Eurosceptic* is added to an interaction term with the variable *‘Votes_over_electoral_threshold’*, while in model 15 one has the variable interact with itself, essentially forming a quadratic.

Table 7: Non-linear and Threshold Contagion

VARIABLES	(14) Model	(15) Model
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.02 (0.015)	-0.02** (0.007)
Votes_Over_Electoral_Threshold	-0.00 (0.013)	
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.04 (0.048)	0.05 (0.044)
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.03 (0.085)	-0.02 (0.085)
Time	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.01 (0.024)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01* (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)
unemployment	0.03 (0.014)	0.03 (0.014)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.15** (0.054)	0.15** (0.054)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01* (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)
Votes_Over_Electoral_Threshold*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	0.00 (0.001)	
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP		-0.00 (0.001)
Country Dummies Not Reported	0.76	0.67
Constant	(0.655)	(0.654)
Observations	527	527
R-squared	0.16	0.17
Adj. R-squared	0.12	0.13

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Figure 38 shows that it does not matter if a Eurosceptic party is below the electoral threshold or immediately at or above it, but that the effect approaches significance as one moves further towards high values on the right (the higher above the electoral threshold, the stronger the

effect). This is the view that as Eurosceptic parties do better and better, their impact on other parties' subsequent position shifts is likely to be significant. However, at such high values above the threshold, one ponders whether the threshold still matters, or maybe parties are reacting to the high number of votes that Eurosceptic parties are gaining. Recall the discussion from chapter 4 about the insufficiency of the electoral threshold indicator as a variable for this study. The somewhat similar kind of relationship (does the impact of vote gains by Eurosceptic parties differ at different values of such vote gains?) can be more easily plotted by letting the main predictor interact with itself. As is to be expected, the average impact Eurosceptic success is stronger if that success is higher.

Figure 38: Eurosceptic contagion and national electoral thresholds

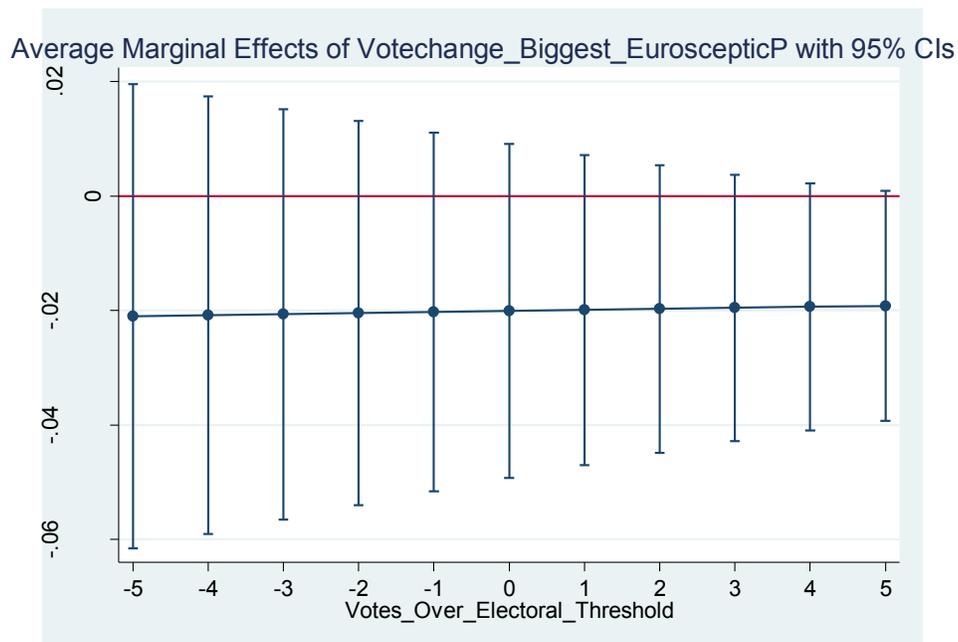
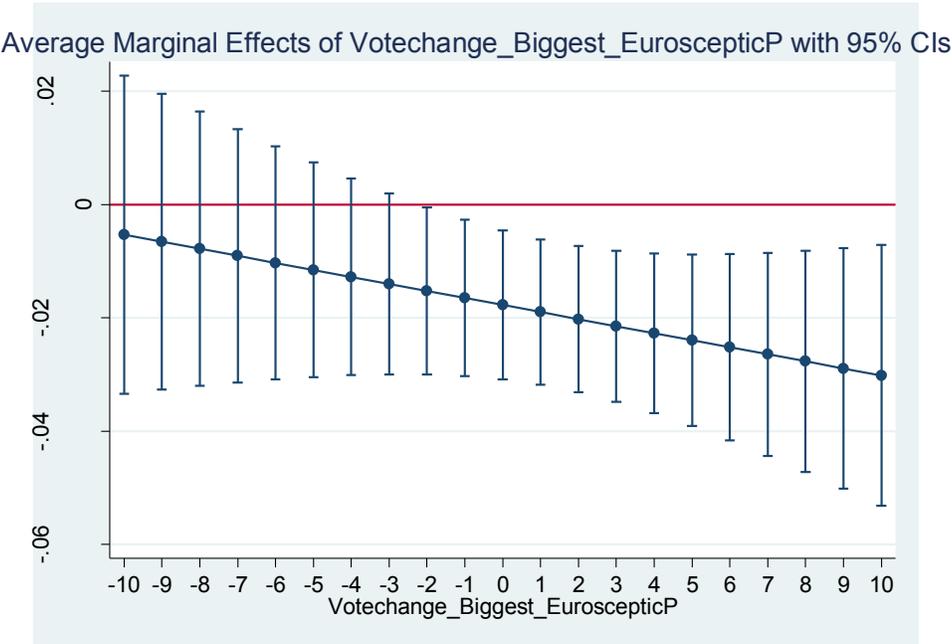


Figure 39: The non-linear character of Eurosceptic Contagion



Eurosceptic contagion does not interact with the success of Eurosceptic Parties relative to their countries electoral thresholds, and the effect of Eurosceptic success is not mediated by a party’s position relative to the threshold.. At 5% points below to 5% above the threshold, there is no significant interaction between Eurosceptic vote gain and parties position vis-à-vis the ‘Sperrklausel’. In a range of 5 percent below the threshold and 5 percent above the threshold, there was no significant interaction between the variables, and the average marginal effects maintained a slopeless, horizontal line across the ranges. Eurosceptic Contagion is however stronger when the gains of Eurosceptic parties are larger in terms of voteshare. The average effect of electoral improvement by the populists is stronger at higher vote tallies than if they are barely ‘scratching the surface’. The relationship is non-linear – in other words, the bigger the gain of a Eurosceptic Party compared to previous elections, the stronger the effect of said success on the position of the other parties.

The analysis is in line with the expectations of the past-election model as well as that of the radical party hypothesis. Political Parties use election results (in terms of the distribution of votes across parties, and changes in said distributions) to gauge changes in public opinion. Using merely the knowledge of whether a political party crossed the hurdle of parliamentary threshold

or not to gauge changes in the landscape of opinion would communicate far less information (and in cases where a party makes significant strides but barely misses the threshold, it would communicate downright false information) than looking at changes in the percentage of votes received compared to the last election. Because they are interested in obtaining said information, they will disregard the threshold, and will at the same time be particularly interested in the salience of those political issues promoted by challengers as well as the latter's positions on said issues. This tells political parties a) who gained votes compared to last time, b) what issues these parties advertise (and by inference, what voters seem to care about), and c) what positions (how extreme) on these issues are popular.

Would a political party decide to adjust its position every time a Eurosceptic Party gains votes? The inference in this project is that if a political party gains votes (or at least does not lose votes), the information that the election result is communicating to it is that it is doing something well. A party might take notice of the fact that populists are growing across the board (stealing voters from other parties present on the political scene) but decide according to the 'if it's working, don't fix it' logic that it should not adjust its own position, because voters are telling it that its own position or choice of issues to 'push' is fine. According to the same logic, it would be important, in order for the past election model and radical party hypothesis to hold, that a political parties will react, or will react more virulently, when it is losing votes itself at the same time as a Eurosceptic challenger is gaining them. The next section of this chapter explores precisely that dynamic, and investigates how parties adapt to fringe party improvement when they or their mainstream rivals are losing votes.

The Motivations and Dynamics behind party policy adjustments

Elections are a zero sum game and the gain of one party equals the loss of another party. Likewise the vote gains of some groups of parties have parallel losses among other party groups. When Eurosceptic parties are successful pro-European parties lose votes. As the theoretical chapter shows however, various predictions exist as to what the result of that eurosceptic electoral fate is, depending on how the other, pro-european, parties are doing electorally. Political Parties do not operate in isolation. Meguid (2008) offers an in depth investigation into

the reaction of mainstream parties to populist success in France, using the example of Socialist Party behavior vis-à-vis the Front National in support of a strategic behavior thesis according to which some mainstream and centrist parties might be willing to act in such ways that increase the short-term support of fringe parties as long as these hurt other mainstream parties (in the French case the center-right) more than they hurt them. In a nutshell, maybe it is not only the electoral results of Eurosceptic parties matter for EU issue position changes, but also the electoral results of the other political actors and the environment around them. In this second section, I ask whether it makes a difference to political parties how the other parties' vote gains or losses are distributed while the Eurosceptic challengers gain votes. These models test hypotheses 6 and 7. The eight models that follow (four for the *Flagship Eurosceptic* independent variable, four for the *Cumulated Eurosceptic Success* variable) and the graphs depicting their associated interaction terms tackle the issues of vote loss and vote change on the side of mainstream parties.

There are different ways to conceptualize change in votes for political parties and each of the following models specifies it in a slightly different way. In the very first regression models of this dissertation (those of chapter one), the variable *Party_votechange* simply denotes for each case/observation what percentage of votes each party got at the most recent election prior to the CHESwave compared to the previous election. That variable is used in models 17 and 17b, in which the *Party_votechange* variable interacts, in turn, with *Votechange_Biggest_Sceptic* and *Votechange_all_Scpetics*.

Relativevotechange is a variable which also measures how parties have done compared to the last election, but with a twist - they compare their votegain/loss from the last election relative to their rivals' votegain/loss from the same previous election. Thus, if a party (for example the Greens) loses 5% compared to its last electoral performance, but the largest party in the country (the Christian Democrats for example) loses 10%, then the first party will have *gained* 5% relative to its larger rival. This indicator is used because it is a good way to test the hypothesis according to which mainstream parties will not be upset by Eurosceptic success as long as their mainstream rivals lose more votes than they do, thereby strengthening their position at the political center. Not only does it go towards directly testing a hypothesis and theory of party behavior under certain conditions, it also adds evidence to the discussion about the degree to which mainstream political parties view EU integration (and rollback) more with a measure of conviction or instrumentally.

Relativepercentvotechange takes the same logic one step further. It looks at parties' vote changes relative to their rivals, but instead of comparing the changes in percentage of votes that each gained from the 100 per cent possible at each election, it compares the changes considering how much % of a party's own previous total vote the change between elections represented (in other words, controlling for own party size).

Models 16 and 16b see the main IV's interact with the *Gouvernement_Opposition Dummy Variable*. This provides the test to the sub-hypothesis that Parties are more likely to respond to the Eurosceptic challenge with their own shift in a Euro-critical direction if they are in opposition. There is a fundamental difference between the interaction of the two main IV's with *Party_votechange*, and the other two measures measuring relative performance (*relative and relativepercent*): because the latter ones describe a party's performance relative to its peers in the political center, they describe a facet of party behavior that is much more strategic/cynical, that has more to do with strategic/tactical consideration. As theorized previously, if the results of the analysis show that Eurosceptic contagion does not affect those parties who stand to gain (relative power in the political center) due to the populist surge, it would lead credence to the view that political parties ultimately use shifts on the integration issue as a way to maximize their utility, with less conviction with regards to the European project than if we discovered that parties don't care how their rivals are doing.

Table 8: Eurosceptic Contagion and Strategic Considerations

VARIABLES	(16) Model	(17) Model	(18) Model	(19) Model
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.02* (0.010)	-0.02** (0.007)	-0.02** (0.007)	-0.02** (0.007)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.04 (0.044)	0.05 (0.043)	0.05 (0.045)	0.05 (0.046)
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.03 (0.086)	-0.02 (0.086)	-0.02 (0.090)	-0.02 (0.091)
Time	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.02 (0.025)	-0.02 (0.025)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01* (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)
unemployment	0.03 (0.015)	0.03 (0.015)	0.02 (0.015)	0.03 (0.015)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.015)	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.06*** (0.015)	-0.06*** (0.016)
Gov_Opposition	0.15** (0.056)	0.15** (0.055)	0.15* (0.057)	0.15** (0.057)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01* (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)		
Relative_Votechange			0.00 (0.003)	
Relative_Percent_Votechange				0.00* (0.000)
Gov_Opposition*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	0.01 (0.012)			
Party_votechange*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP		0.00 (0.001)		
Relative_Votechange*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP			0.00 (0.000)	
Relative_Percent_Votechange*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP				-0.00 (0.000)
Country Dummies Not Reported				
Constant	0.74 (0.673)	0.70 (0.670)	0.76 (0.688)	0.72 (0.704)
Observations	527	527	508	497
R-squared	0.16	0.17	0.17	0.17
Adj. R-squared	0.12	0.13	0.13	0.12

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 9: Eurosceptic Contagion and Strategic Considerations (B)

VARIABLES	(16b) Model	(17b) Model	(18b) Model	(19b) Model
Votechange_All_ES_Parties	-0.02** (0.008)	-0.02** (0.006)	-0.02** (0.007)	-0.02** (0.007)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties	0.03 (0.043)	0.03 (0.043)	0.04 (0.042)	0.04 (0.044)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties	-0.04 (0.088)	-0.04 (0.088)	-0.03 (0.092)	-0.03 (0.092)
Time	-0.02 (0.023)	-0.02 (0.023)	-0.02 (0.023)	-0.02 (0.023)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01* (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)
unemployment	0.03 (0.016)	0.02 (0.016)	0.02 (0.016)	0.03 (0.016)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.015)	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.06*** (0.015)	-0.06*** (0.015)
Gov_Opposition	0.14* (0.057)	0.15** (0.055)	0.15* (0.058)	0.15** (0.057)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)		
Relative_Votechange			0.00 (0.003)	
Relative_Percent_Votechange				0.00* (0.000)
Gov_Opposition*Votechange_All_ES_Parties	0.01 (0.010)			
Party_votechange*Votechange_All_ES_Parties		0.00 (0.000)		
Relative_Votechange*Votechange_All_ES_Parties			0.00 (0.000)	
Relative_Percent_Votechange*Votechange_All_ES_Parties				-0.00* (0.000)
Country Dummies Not Reported				
Constant	0.77 (0.615)	0.78 (0.611)	0.81 (0.622)	0.78 (0.632)
Observations	527	527	508	497
R-squared	0.17	0.17	0.18	0.18
Adj. R-squared	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

I discuss the output from models 17 and models 17b first – dealing with the interaction of the main predictors and the ‘basic’, absolute vote-change variable.

Figure 40: Party Votechange and Eurosceptic Contagion

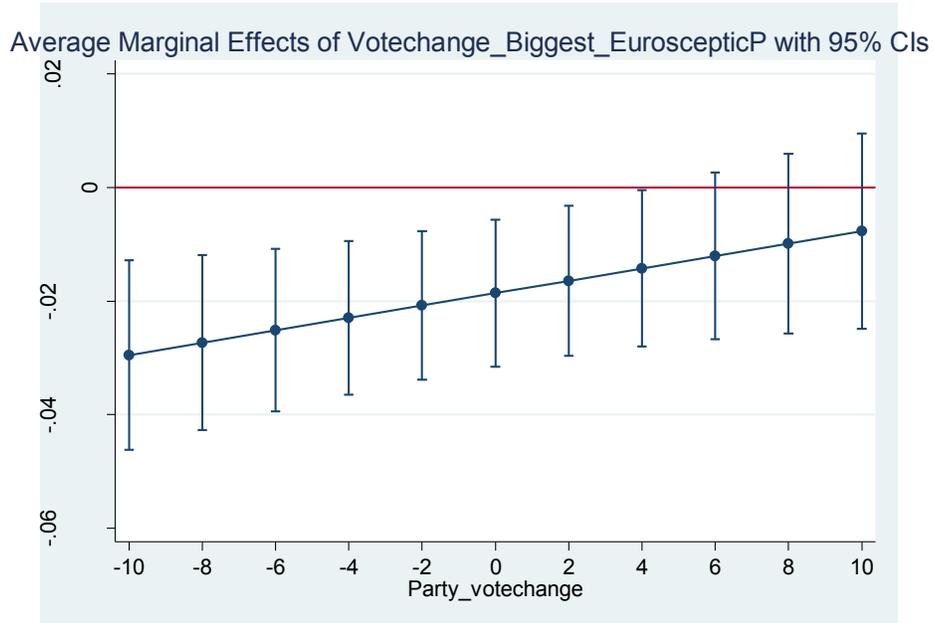
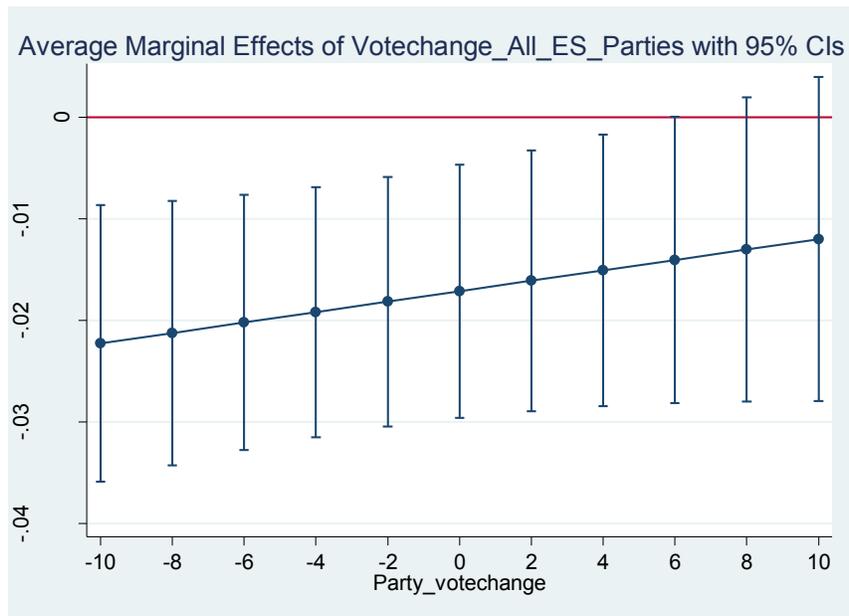


Figure 41: Party Votechange and Eurosceptic Contagion (B)



The conditional effect of *Party_votechange* on the impact of predictors *Flagship Eurosceptic Votechange* and *Cumulated Eurosceptic Votechanges* shows that Eurosceptic Success generates more Eurosceptic contagion upon a mainstream party when that party loses votes. In the case of the flagship Eurosceptic (Graph 40), the effect ‘lasts’ until the moderate party has gained around 5% more votes at this election than at the previous one, at which point the influence of Eurosceptic success ceases. As one moves to higher values of *Party_votechange*, the effect of Eurosceptic success stops being significant, meaning that if a mainstream party gains enough votes compared to the last election, its sense of urgency and need to change its position on the EU issue simply washes away. This makes sense if one considers the fact that the information gained in elections in such cases consists of somewhat of a mixed message: on the one hand the gains of Eurosceptics prompt parties to change their position, but when they are themselves successful enough, they can be hesitant to do so. There is, however, a caveat. The fact that Eurosceptic success results in Eurosceptic contagion even between values of 0 and +5 for *Party_votechange* shows that mainstream parties can be truly concerned with the challenge of Euroscepticism even if they are doing marginally moderately well, and are not losing votes themselves. In the case of the Effect of the cumulated success of all Eurosceptic Parties (Graph 42), that conclusion is strengthened. Mainstream parties will be prompted into shifting their position on the EU even if they gain as much as 6%, if the Eurosceptic parties are doing well enough; the confidence interval only intersects 0 at around the 6 mark. This suggests that political parties use not just the information drawn from their own electoral faring, but will also ‘look around’ and will also take notice of what is going on in their national political system more generally in updating their map of the constituency. If they observe that Eurosceptic Parties are making significant gains at the expense of all parties, they will infer a general shift in the electorate in a more Eurosceptic direction, and will only ignore such signals provided that they themselves are doing well, meaning that their position is not yet a reason for voters to punish it. The ‘if it isn’t broken, don’t fix it’ logic only works up to a certain point. In instances where Eurosceptic success occurs at the same time as a party is losing votes, the effect on that party will be stronger, and the bigger the loss of the centrist party, the bigger the effect of Eurosceptic Contagion will be. It is shown that parties use not only their own electoral score to decipher the state of the political system, but also look at what is happening around them when deciding what to do next. Parties are mindful of what is going on around them, and they take notice of changes

in voter distribution or preferences that is sweeping their party system. Having concluded that parties a) are more susceptible to reconsider their position on the EU position when they lose votes, and b) will up to a certain point also take cues from their political environment when adjusting position, the time comes to analyze how parties react to said cues.

The tactical (or strategic) perspective on party responses predicts that political parties will try to use the advent of populist parties to strengthen their relative position among moderate parties at the center of the political spectrum, even if they themselves are losing some voters. As a consequence, one would expect (in line with sub-hypotheses 5b and 5c) to find a difference in how parties respond to Eurosceptic success depending on the performance of their rivals. The next two figures (42 and 43) present graphically the interactions in models 18 and 18b, and plot the average marginal effects of Eurosceptic success at various values of *Relativevotechange*. The conditional effect of *Relativevotechange* on the two main predictors is significant at all ranges, and it does not matter whether they are gaining or losing relative strength, the effect of the Eurosceptic challenge is the same. There is no difference in strength or significance of Eurosceptic Contagion at various values of *relative votechange*, which goes against the strategic behavior thesis (Sitter 2001, Crum, 2007, Meguid, 2005, 2008, Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008). How parties respond to eurosceptic success does not seem to depend on whether that success is altering the balance of power at the top, which permits the rejection of sub-hypothesis 7b.

One reaches the same conclusion when investigating the interaction between Eurosceptic Success and *Relativepercentvotechange*. There is barely any difference in the effect of Flagship Eurosceptic Votechange and Cumulated Eurosceptic votechange, regardless whether parties' relative performance is good or bad vis-à-vis their rivals. Similar conclusions are reached when investigating figures 44 and 45, which present similar types of interactions, for relative *percent* votechange – political parties' reaction to Eurosceptic success or failure does not depend on the performance of their largest national rivals.

Figure 42: Relative Electoral Performance and Eurosceptic Contagion

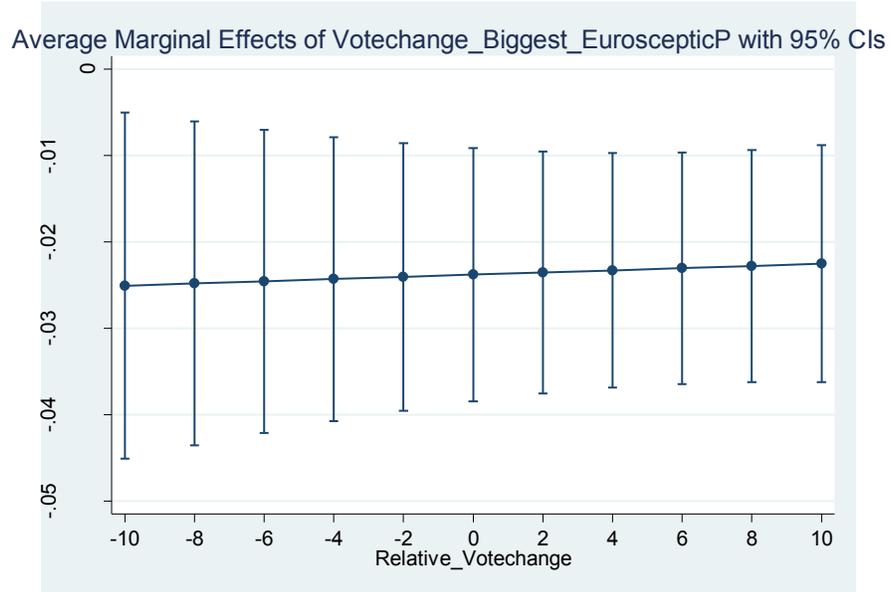


Figure 43: Relative Electoral Performance and Eurosceptic Contagion (B)

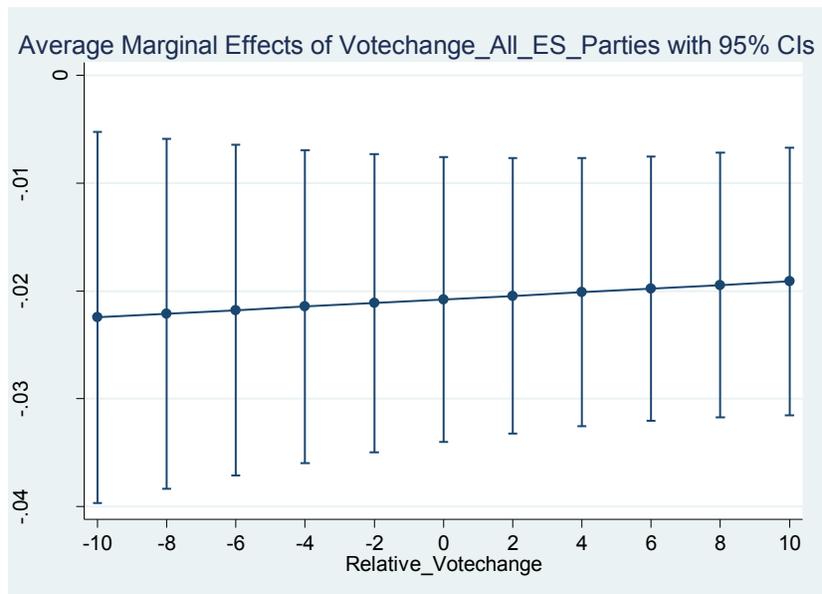


Figure 44: Relative % Electoral Performance and Eurosceptic Contagion

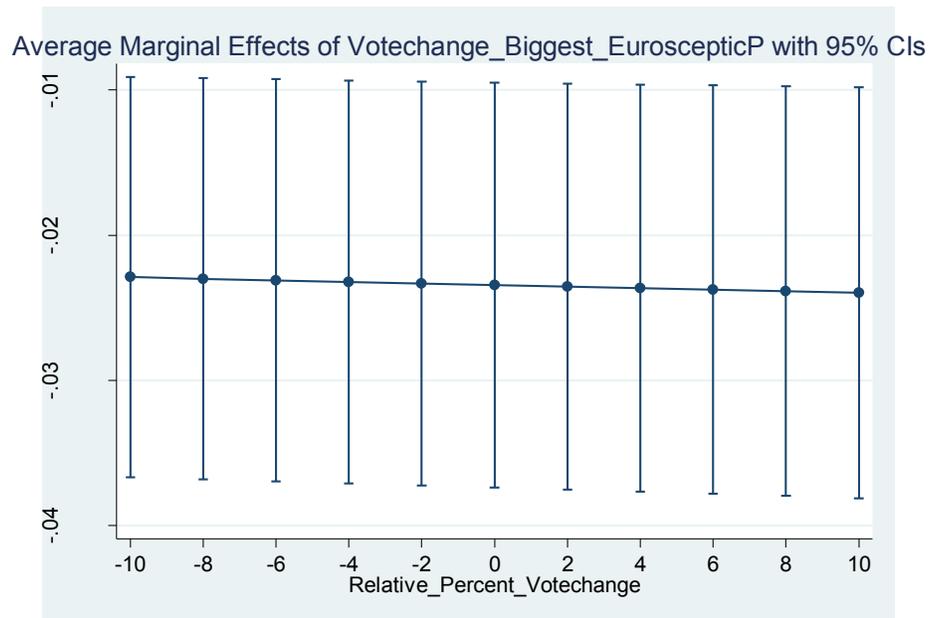
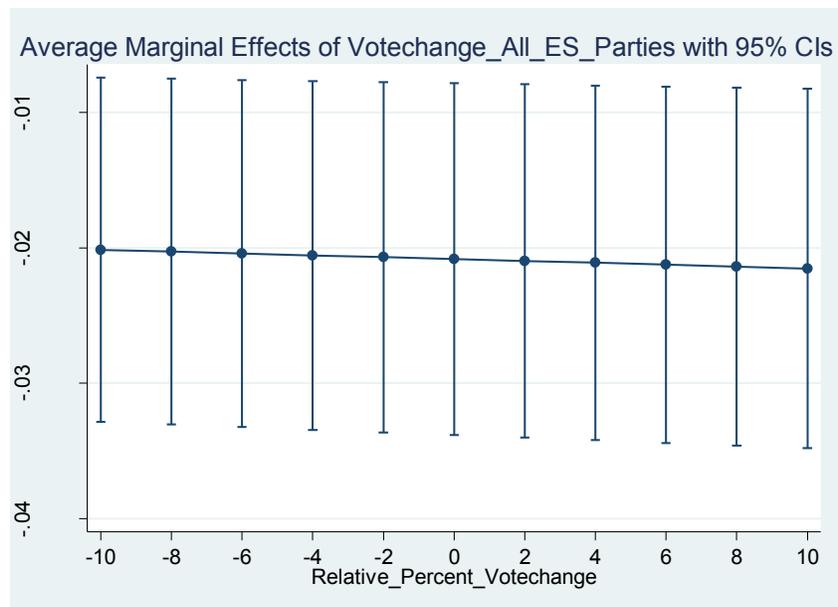


Figure 45: Relative % Electoral Performance and Eurosceptic Contagion (B)



Finally, it is time to look at how parties Government/Opposition status influences parties' responses to Eurosceptic pressure (On the *Gov_Opp dummy*, 1 signifies government parties at the time of the CHES wave).

Figure 46: Government/Opposition Status and Electoral Performance

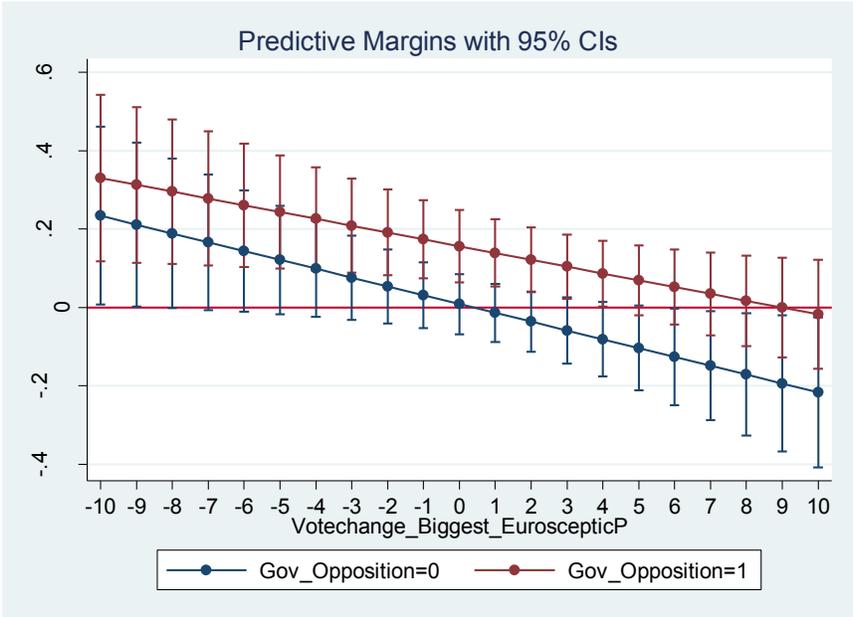
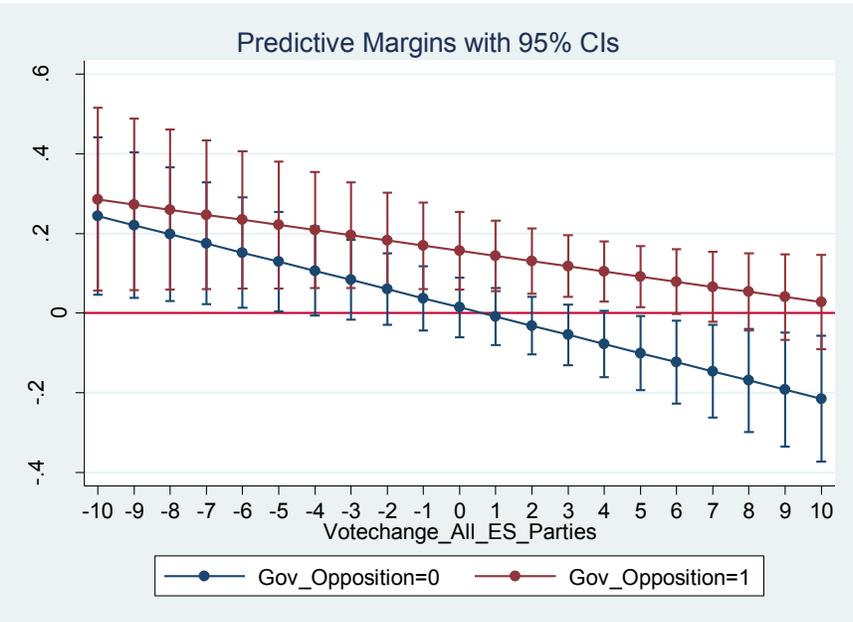


Figure 47: Government/Opposition Status and Electoral Performance (B)



Figures 46 and 47 show what the effect of Eurosceptic success has on EU position changes at various values of the main predictor for government parties as well as parties in opposition. In figure 46, when looking at the effect of the flagship Eurosceptic’s electoral fate, the prediction

for Opposition Parties becomes significant at the right edge of the graph. For Government parties, the prediction is positive and significant when Eurosceptic parties are losing votes (i.e. when the flagship Eurosceptic loses votes). The linear prediction points down in the expected direction (stronger negative prediction when Eurosceptic parties do better) but on that (positive) side of 0 on the horizontal, the prediction loses statistical significance for Governing Parties.

When it comes to the cumulated electoral results of all Eurosceptic Parties (Figure 47), both types of parties get a significant, positive prediction when Eurosceptic Parties lose votes, but only opposition parties' have a significant negative linear prediction when Eurosceptic parties are doing well. In other words, when the cumulated performance of Eurosceptic parties improves past a certain degree, opposition parties adjust their own position in a Eurosceptic direction but not governing ones. The two slopes differ in steepness, with the one for Governing parties is much milder, suggesting that Governing parties are slower in adapting their position in a Euro-critical direction as the Opposition parties are.

In the case of both interactions the results must, however, be taken with a grain of salt, given the constant overlap in confidence interval. While non-overlapping confidence intervals would indicate a definite significant difference between the two groups, overlapping intervals leave much room for doubt, making it hard to provide a conclusive, definitive answer. Hypothesis 7d is tentatively rejected, in contradiction to views presented by the likes of Sitter (2001), Crum (2007), Hutter and Grande (2014) and Van de Wardt (2015), who provide backing for the 'opposition politics' perspective of party-based Euroscepticism.

The lesson to take home from this section is that political parties are not as interested in cynical power play as the strategic hypotheses about Eurosceptic contagion predict. Had these been proven true, we would have found that mainstream parties don't mind the rise of populists when these are sabotaging their rivals and increasing their relative strength. That is obviously not the case. All things considered, these results reject Hypothesis 7, which purports that Eurosceptic contagion is a function of opposition politics and tactical motivations. If Eurosceptic Parties do well and a mainstream party gains plenty of votes, that party will not change its own position on the EU issue. If Eurosceptic parties are doing well, and they gain a few votes, or lose votes, it 'learns' that it must adapt its own policy position in a direction that is less pro-EU. While there is a bit of output to support the idea that opposition parties are more mobile and likely to adjust their positions to Eurosceptic success, the evidence is scant. So far, there seems to be a

real measure of conviction that influences political parties' behavior towards Europe, not strategic/tactical zero-sum considerations.

An ideological Take on Eurosceptic Contagion

Authors of what Mudde (2012) has termed the “North Carolina School on Euroscepticism” have tended to associate party-based Euroscepticism and party behavior vis-à-vis European Integration with parties' ideological backgrounds (Marks and Wilson, 2000; Hooghe, Marks and Wilson, 2002; Edwards and De Vries, 2009). According to such perspectives, how political parties react to Eurosceptic success is not a function of opposition politics and strategic considerations, but a function of their more general ideological stance.

What kind of parties respond to Eurosceptic Success: what is their ideological orientation, and to what degree are they catch-all parties? Models 20, 21 and 22 (for the Flagship Eurosceptic predictor) and 20b, 21b, 22b (for the predictor pertaining to all Eurosceptic parties) introduce a set of interaction terms whose aims is to learn to what degree the impact Eurosceptic success (and phenomenon of contagion) is conditional on parties' Left-Right orientations, and parties' GAL-TAN positions.

Table 10: Eurosceptic Contagion and Ideological Considerations

VARIABLES	(21) Model	(22) Model
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.02 (0.019)	-0.01 (0.011)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.05 (0.044)	0.10 (0.075)
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.03 (0.086)	-0.12 (0.110)
Time	-0.01 (0.024)	0.01 (0.027)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.00 (0.005)
unemployment	0.03 (0.015)	0.02 (0.016)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.014)	
Gov_Opposition	0.15** (0.055)	0.09 (0.068)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01 (0.004)	0.02*** (0.004)
Left_Right*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.00 (0.003)	
galtan		-0.03** (0.010)
galtan*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP		-0.00 (0.002)
Constant	0.73 (0.672)	0.23 (0.562)
Observations	527	340
R-squared	0.16	0.17
Adj. R-squared	0.12	0.11

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 11: Eurosceptic Contagion and Ideological Considerations (B)

VARIABLES	(21b) Model	(22b) Model
Votechange_All_ES_Parties	-0.01 (0.016)	-0.01 (0.011)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties	0.03 (0.043)	0.06 (0.084)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties	-0.04 (0.088)	-0.06 (0.091)
Time	-0.02 (0.023)	0.00 (0.025)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.00 (0.006)
unemployment	0.02 (0.016)	0.03 (0.017)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.014)	
galtan		-0.03** (0.010)
Gov_Opposition	0.15** (0.056)	0.11 (0.070)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01 (0.004)	0.01** (0.004)
Left_Right*Votechange_All_ES_Parties	-0.00 (0.003)	
galtan*Votechange_All_ES_Parties		-0.00 (0.002)
Country Dummies not reported		
Constant	0.78 (0.612)	0.11 (0.515)
Observations	527	340
R-squared	0.17	0.16
Adj. R-squared	0.13	0.10

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Does a party's ideological orientation matter to the way it reacts to Eurosceptic Parties? Figures 48 and 49 show the conditional effect of a party's left-right orientation on the impact of populist Eurosceptic success on that party. The Left-Right indicator used in this project is the general

Left-Right orientation, not the economic one (which focuses more on parties' preferred economic policy) – since the general Left-Right spectrum includes more aspects of party ideology than just economic orientation, using this option it reduces the risk of looking adopting too narrow a view of ideological stance. Hypothesis 8 is tested here.

Figure 48: Left-Right Placement and Eurosceptic Contagion

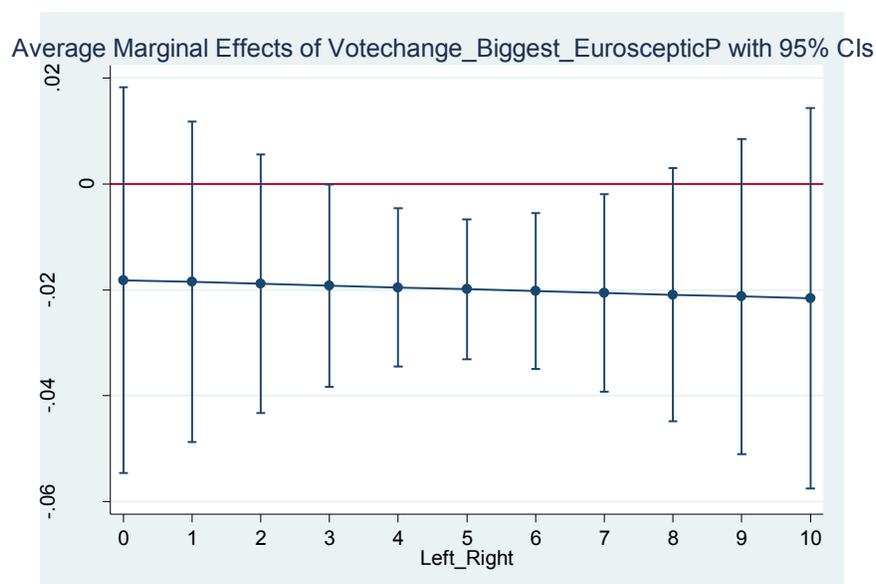
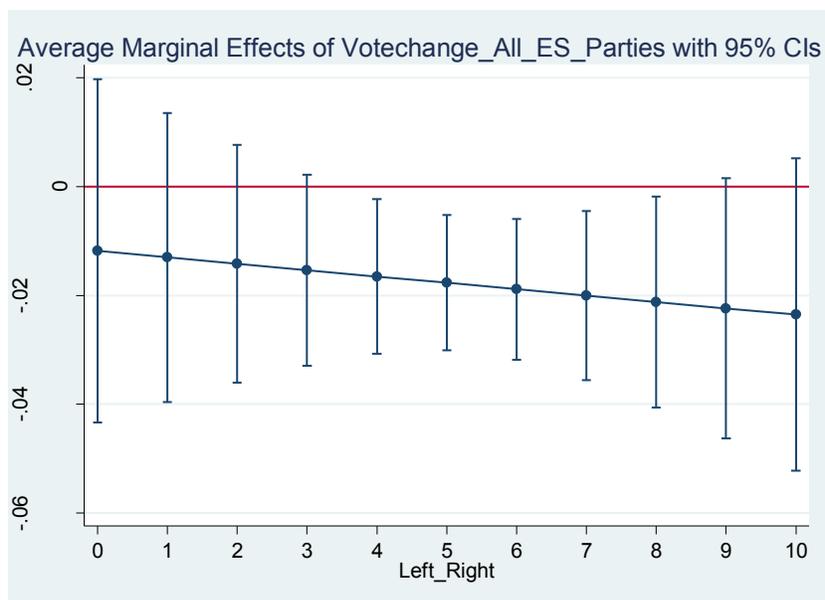


Figure 49: Left-Right Placement and Eurosceptic Contagion (B)



For both Flagship Eurosceptic and cumulated Eurosceptic success, the effect is significant in the middle, and ceases to be so towards the poles where the confidence interval steps over the zero mark. This supports the idea in sub-hypothesis 8c, which predicts that contagion should be stronger in the political center. Two explanations for this are equally plausible, and might also both be true. Firstly, if (non-Eurosceptic) parties are on the fringes of the left-right spectrum, they might not be the catch-all kind of party that is interested in adapting and qualifying its stance on the EU issue, because its rigid ideological position at one extreme of the political pole renders it more inflexible. This might also be due to the fact that contagion can be weaker for parties that are not part of the mainstream. Since parties closer to the political poles are smaller, they would not feel the catch-all pressures of larger parties. Secondly, there aren't that many parties on the political fringes and are *not* Eurosceptic. As shown by Hooghe, Marks and Wilson's 'U-Curve' of party positions, centrist parties are typically pro-European and fringe parties Eurosceptic (Hooghe, Marks, Wilson, 2002, 970) - hence there are too few observations on the edges of the spectrum in the dataset that are left to analyze on the left side of the equation.

In Figure 48, the effect is significant in the 3-7 range and for Figure 49, in the 4-8 range. These numbers show a slight skew towards the right: parties closer to the right pole are affected in model 21b than ones closer to the left (where the effect ceases to be significant short of 3). There is a slightly larger ideological range on the far right than on the far left in which parties are affected by Eurosceptic success.

It must also be recalled from Chapter 4 (and even models from chapter 5) that a variable with one of the biggest coefficients in the regression tables (and consistently significant) is parties' Left-Right orientation, which always carries a minus sign – that tells us that *ceteris paribus*, the further to the right a party is on the left-right scale, the bigger its shift on the EU issue in a Euro-critical direction (controlling for all other things, including Eurosceptic support). All things being equal, there are some reasons to believe that parties on the right are more naturally Eurosceptic (or have become so) than parties on the left. As a possible consequence of this, when Eurosceptic parties do well, parties on the right might feel more threatened and consider that they stand to lose more voters. European Integration has often been associated with political orientations such as Christian Democracy or market creating policies, and Social Democratic Parties have in the past tended to be more cautious towards it. Nevertheless, the relationship of the political left and right with European Integration has changed with time

(Marks and Wilson, 2000; Hooghe, Marks and Wilson, 2002). As regulated capitalism has come more on the European political agenda, social democratic parties have increasingly dropped their opposition to integration and became more pro-European, while parties on the right opposed regulating capitalism at the national and supranational levels, leading them to selectively oppose Integration (Hooghe, Marks and Wilson 2002, 974). For social democratic parties, the possibility curve of social policy evolved from national social democracy, through single market regime competition to the prospect of ‘European organized space’, and “*by mid to late 1980’s social democrats came to the conclusion that the European Community was the only game in town*” (Marks and Wilson 2000, 446). This was an evolution similar to that of Green parties: Green and environmentalist parties have with time become more in favor of integration following a similar change in opportunity structure as that faced by social democratic parties: the prospect of concerted environmentalist policy at continental level (Hooghe, Marks, Wilson, 2002, 983). As center-left parties slowly became more pro-European, center right parties underwent a movement in the opposite direction. Neoliberals wish to prevent supranational institutions from diminishing regime competition, and while most neoliberals support economic and monetary integration, they are opposed to further integration, regardless if it is to democratize the Euro-polity or to shift competences to the continental level. Their fear is the social democrats hope, or goal: the prospect of political integration creating the authoritative capacity for market regulation at the EU level (Marks and Wilson 2000, 454). National opposition to regional integration can both complement and simultaneously conflict with the neoliberal view, because while nationalists share the neoliberal opposition to political integration at the European level, they oppose some neoliberals’ willingness to tolerate less national sovereignty (Marks and Wilson 2000, 455). The same authors also noted that parties on the right experienced struggles just like parties on the left, only in reverse, whereby nationalists oppose the dilution of national sovereignty, while neoliberals were more ready to accept it. Such struggles were apparent in parties like Fianna fail, the RPR and British Conservatives, that experienced struggles between neoliberals and more nationally oriented conservatives (Marks and Wilson 2000, 455). Such tensions where parties on the same side of the ideological dimension might have rather different policy preferences contributed to the adoption and employment of the GAL-TAN⁵⁴ policy scale in place of the more

⁵⁴ Gal-Tan is a way to measure party positions that is alternative to the traditional Left-Right dimension. GAL stands for Green Alternative Libertarian and TAN stands for Traditional Authoritarian Nationalist

traditional left-right one. Banking on the intuition that parties' EU positions correlate with their 'new politics' position Hooghe, Marks and Wilson (2002, 978) investigated the relationship and concluded that there is a distinct relationship between the two policy dimensions, with parties closer to the Traditional, Authoritarian and Nationalist pole being more likely to oppose European Integration.

The Chapel Hill Expert Survey also includes information on parties GAL-TAN positions, and while GAL-TAN correlates with the Left – Right dimension, it does not overlap perfectly. Hence, it might be possible to gain additional analytical leverage by investigating to what degree the effect of Eurosceptic contagion is itself influenced by parties' GAL-TAN orientation. It is important to note that CHES only started collecting information on parties' GAL-TAN orientation starting in 1999. As such, there is a loss of information and statistical power in Models 22 and 22b as the N/number of observations in the regression drops by around 200. In Model 22 (corresponding to figure 51), GAL-TAN's interaction with Eurosceptic success (of flagship Eurosceptics) is significant in the 3 to 9 range. The linear prediction does point down towards right, as in the models depicting Left-Right orientations. In model 22b (interaction effect represented graphically by figure 52) things become more interesting. The confidence interval tightens down and more area of the graph lies in the area of statistical significance, which is wider one the TAN side of the center.

Figure 50: GAL-TAN placement and Eurosceptic Contagion

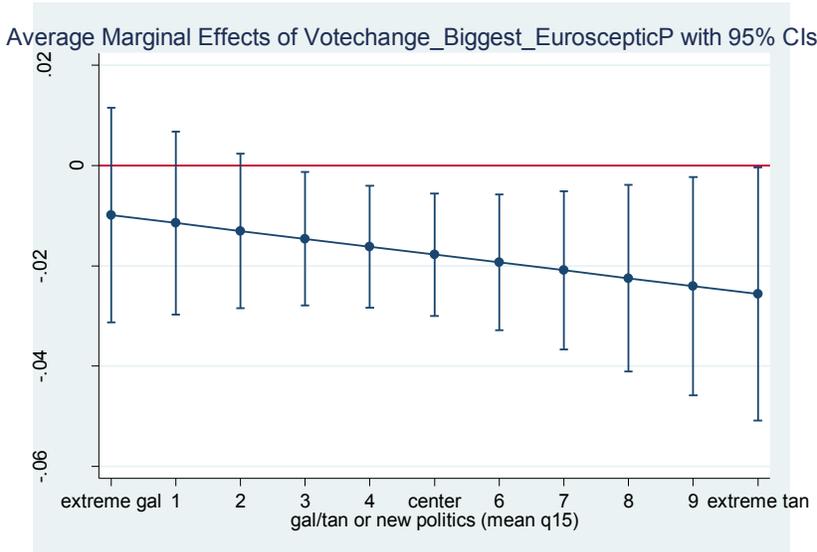
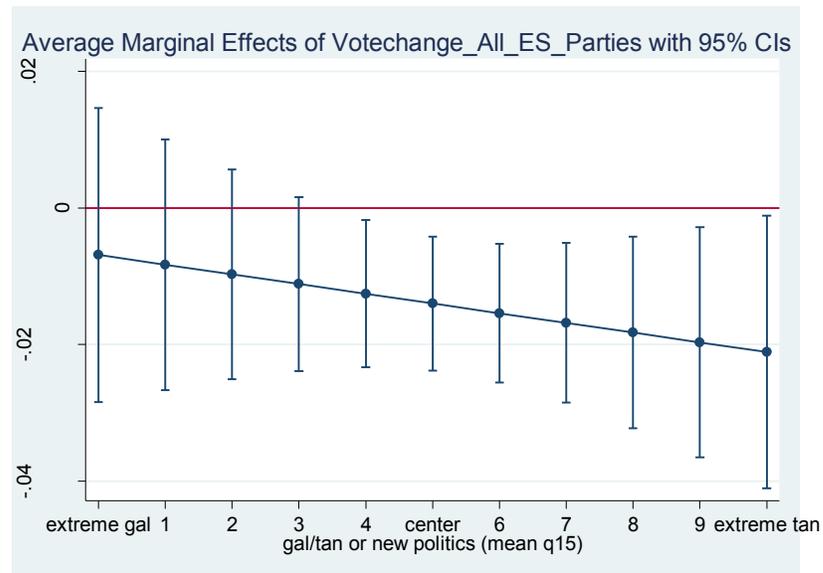


Figure 51: GAL-TAN placement and Eurosceptic Contagion (B)



All things considered, it would seem based on these observations that there is some evidence in favor of the ideological hypothesis of Eurosceptic contagion: the fact that the linear predictions are always sloping in a negative direction on the right side of the continuum suggests that overall Eurosceptic success has a mildly bigger effect over the right side of the political ecology. It was suggested above that this might provide some backing to the ideological families approach (Somer-Topcu, 2009), as parties on the right of the spectrum might be more susceptible to Eurosceptic ideology, especially if they have high TAN scores. In the existing piece of research which to date has come closest to investigating Eurosceptic Contagion in a similar fashion, Meijers (2015) argues and shows that political parties on the left side of the political spectrum should be more influenced by Eurosceptic success than those on the right, in contradiction to findings here. The author goes on to investigate which type of Eurosceptic parties affect which type of mainstream parties, and suggests – on the basis of right wing populists higher ideological flexibility which also allows them to attract voters from the left – that center-left parties should feel under heavier strain than center-right parties, because they compete against both ideological poles. The next section will address that perspective.

The targets of Eurosceptic challengers

Previous studies have argued the left-wing and right-wing should have unequal influence and be unequally powerful in generating Eurosceptic contagion, with issues promoted by the far right influencing parties both right and left of the political center (Bale *et al*, 2010; Van Spanje, 2010; Meijers, 2015). After all, right-wing populism has been more successful than left wing populism overall in the past decade and half (Kriesi *et al*, 2008; Kriesi, 2009), with right-wing populists being able to adopt elements of left wing discourse (protection of the welfare state/workers' rights via welfare chauvinism for example) while the left was less flexible. One thus might expect right wing-populists to have a greater influence over moderate parties than the left-wing variety (or to wield influence over a wider array of moderate parties).

The regression table below (and afferent 4 graphs below) describes the interactions from models 23, 24, 25 and 26 in which the effect of Eurosceptic success is disaggregated in two independent variables: one describing the fate/success of Right-Wing Eurosceptic Parties, and one Describing the Success of Left-Wing Eurosceptic Parties. This split is made for both predictors describing Eurosceptic success: that describing the electoral performance of the flagship Eurosceptic as well as that describing the cumulated electoral performance of all Eurosceptic parties. This results in the following predictors: *Votechange_Biggest_Right_ES* and *Votechange_All_Right_ES* (Rightwing), *Votechange_Biggest_Left_ES* and *Votechange_All_Left_ES* (Leftwing).

Table 12: Eurosceptic Contagion and Ideological Considerations (C)

VARIABLES	(23) Model	(24) Model	(25) Model	(26) Model
Votechange_Biggest_Left_ES	-0.01 (0.021)	-0.03** (0.010)		
Votechange_Biggest_Right_ES	-0.01 (0.007)	-0.01 (0.019)		
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.05 (0.045)	0.05 (0.045)		
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.01 (0.089)	-0.01 (0.090)		
Time	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.02 (0.022)	-0.02 (0.022)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01* (0.006)	-0.01* (0.006)
unemployment	0.03* (0.015)	0.03* (0.015)	0.02 (0.017)	0.02 (0.017)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.015)	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.13* (0.054)	0.14* (0.055)	0.14* (0.053)	0.14* (0.054)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01* (0.004)	0.01* (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)
Votechange_Biggest_Left_ES*Left_Right	-0.00 (0.004)			
Votechange_Biggest_Right_ES*Left_Right		0.00 (0.004)		
Votechange_All_Left_ES			-0.02 (0.022)	-0.03** (0.010)
Votechange_All_Right_ES			-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.018)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties			0.04 (0.044)	0.04 (0.044)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties			-0.04 (0.086)	-0.04 (0.087)
Votechange_All_Left_ES*Left_Right			-0.00 (0.004)	
Votechange_All_Right_ES*Left_Right				0.00 (0.003)
Constant	0.57 (0.700)	0.57 (0.698)	0.82 (0.619)	0.82 (0.617)
Observations	517	517	525	525

R-squared	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18
Adj. R-squared	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Models 23 and 24 show us whether the impact of the largest right-wing parties, and then the impact of left-wing parties, is contingent on the left-right placement of those parties who they are supposed to impact. In other words, it shows us who reacts to whom, and by extension who perceives that they are most under threat by whom. Corresponding to these models are graphs 52 and 54.

In three of the graphs, the linear prediction slopes right in a negative direction, suggesting again that center-right parties are under more pressure to adjust their position, in contradiction to what Meijers observes in 2015. The only interaction effect with the same tendencies as those predicted by previous literature is that which models the effect of Cumulated right wing Eurosceptic (figure 53), and even there there is no statistical significance among the marginal effects.

Figure 52: Right-wing Eurosceptic Success and Eurosceptic Contagion

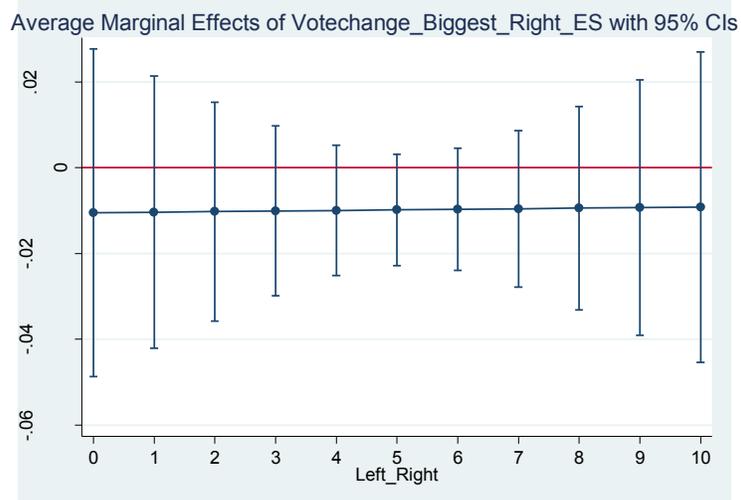


Figure 53: Right-wing Eurosceptic Success and Eurosceptic Contagion (B)

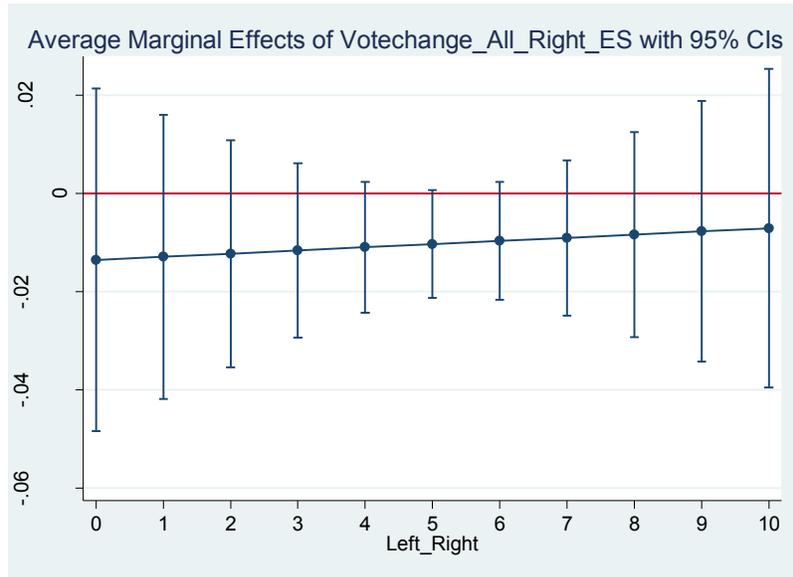


Figure 54: Left-wing Eurosceptic Success and Eurosceptic Contagion

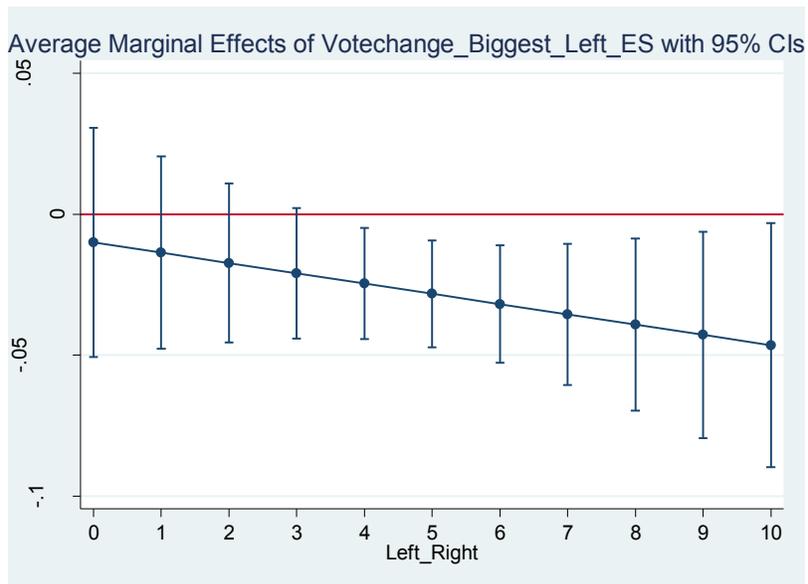
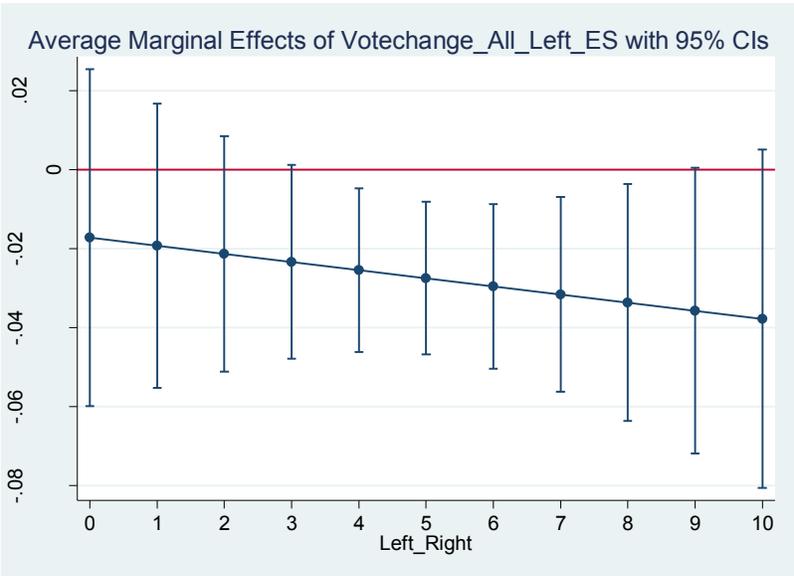


Figure 55: Left-wing Eurosceptic Success and Eurosceptic Contagion (B)



Strangely, and in contradiction to the ‘ideological families’ approach, it appears that center-right parties are also influenced by left-wing populist parties, which one would not expect. The combination of the two disaggregated predictors is cause for confusion: the results seem to indicate that political parties are more likely to react and respond to parties from the other extreme of the political spectrum than their own. In other words, while some would not feel threatened by populist challenges from their side of the spectrum, others would feel threatened by the entire spectrum of populist eurosceptic actors, a finding which begs credulity. H8d seems to be rejected, while we find mixed support for the ‘Ideological Families’ (H8e) thesis (Somertopcu, 2009). It seems it is hard to pronounce a definitive judgement with regards to many of the ideological sub-hypotheses. How can we explain these results?

One possible answer is that such results are obtained here due to the limitations of the data. Recall the descriptive first section of Chapter four, which describes how far right and far left Euroscepticism have had the upper edge at various times in various countries. Some countries, like Ireland, Spain, Portugal, and Greece until recently have experienced a Eurosceptic scene that was almost exclusively the territory of the far left, while having very anemic, nigh-inexistent right-wing Eurosceptic population. In other countries, like Belgium or the UK,

Euroscepticism was almost always strongly associated with the right wing of the political spectrum. In other North-European countries, left-wing Euroscepticism was dominant in the 80's and 90's, and was later eclipsed by right wing Euroscepticism, and yet in other countries, the two extremes of the political spectrum have taken turns alternating as the more prominent national forces opposing European Integration. In other words, there is only a rather weak equivalence between left-and right wing Euroscepticism with regards to when the values of their electoral success have been high or low. It is hard to undertake a disaggregated analysis of the effects of far right and far left Euroscepticism because while it might seem that one is comparing their effects across the same observations, the fact that their values are distributed differently across observations/cases means that the comparison is a flawed one⁵⁵.

Many observations in the dataset have high values for left wing populists and low ones for the opposite pole, and many observations face the opposite situation. In such instances, the values de facto create situations in which there 'in no euroscepticism of the other kind'. It is hard to investigate to what degree political parties of the center left or center right react to either left wing or right wing Euroscepticism, when they only have one of these two types of Euroscepticism to contend with. In an ideal situation, all observations would stem from countries in which there is at least a half decent Eurosceptic Party from both the left and the right, and one could in such a situation properly investigate which mainstream parties react to whose success and failures. Unfortunately, that is not the case all over the dataset.

Another factor to take into account is that left-wing and right wing Euroscepticism are not entirely similar in the degree to which they are radical. As I have shown earlier in the chapter, the salience that populists award to the EU issue is a factor that can influence Eurosceptic contagion, as is the degree to which Eurosceptic parties are hard or soft Eurosceptics. Figures 59 and 60 describe a difference between right-wing and left wing Euroscepticism which might explain why it is hard to get any expected results when splitting the main Predictors among the left wing and right wing. Right-wing Eurosceptics have always been more opposed to EU integration than left-wing Eurosceptic parties have, and the split has gotten larger with time.

⁵⁵ It must be added that the only other current existing study of Eurosceptic contagion, that of Meijers (2015) does not take into consideration the effects of flagship Eurosceptic parties, focusing only on the effects of cumulated Eurosceptic performance, which restricts the scope of that project; that may also influence the analytical steps of said study, providing a further explanation for the divergent conclusions

While the EU issue was more salient for the left fringe in the past, after 2000, the far right has mobilized around the issue of EU integration more than the left fringe did.

Figure 56: The Salience of the EU issue for Right wing and Left Wing Eurosceptics

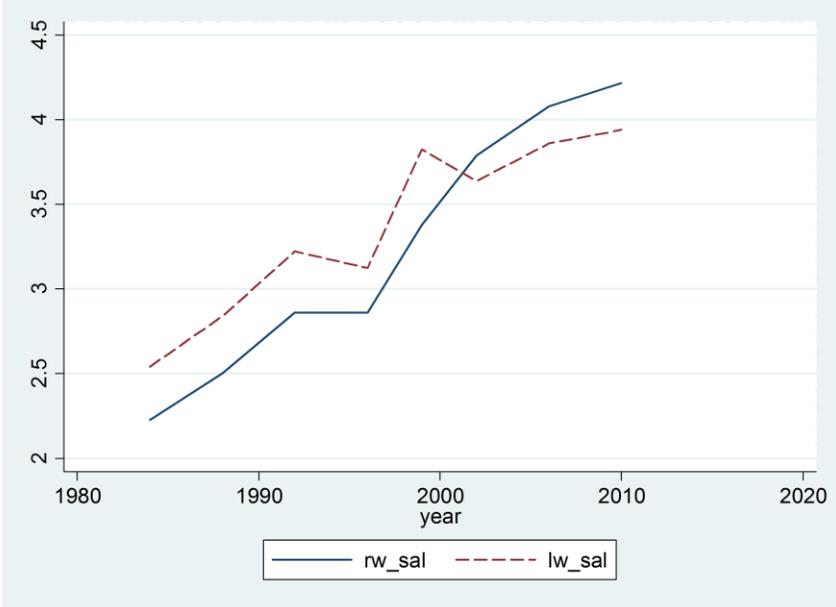
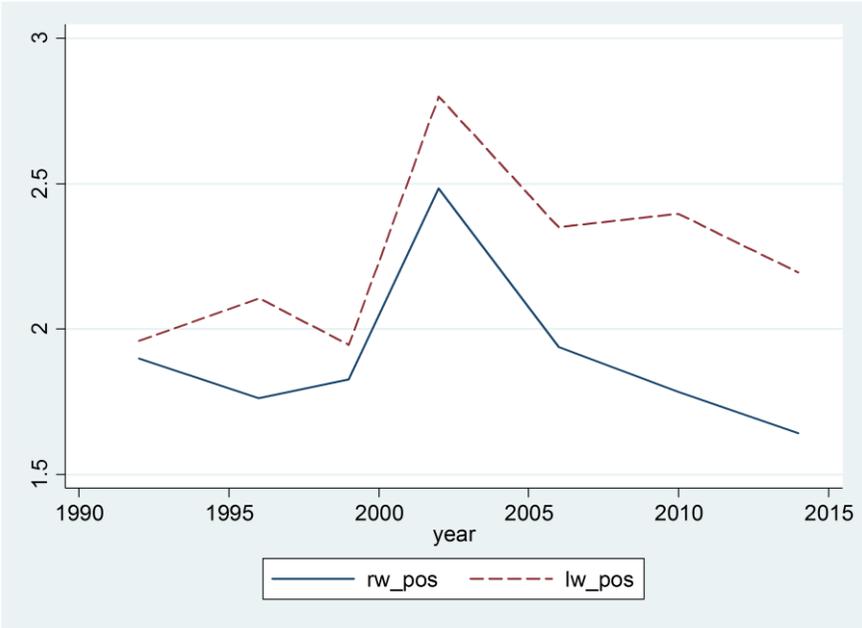


Figure 57: The average Positions of Right wing and Left Wing Eurosceptic parties



Graph depicting the average Positions of Right wing and Left Wing Eurosceptic parties. The scale is the normal 1-7 CHES scale, low values indicate harder opposition to EU integration

One must not ignore the heterogeneity that marks the continent, even within the core of the EU15 (Conti *et al*, 2010; Quaglia, 2011). When considering the ways in which the Euro crisis affected Europe, it must be kept in mind that the crisis dynamised different political forces in the North and South of the EU. In the south, where austerity and sense of top-down imposition from the North galvanized anti-capitalist sentiment, it strengthened the hand of left-wing Parties. In the North, where rhetoric often surrounded the idea of bailing out the slack or indolent South, and losing tax-payers money in the process, the nationalist far right was better able to use the situation to its benefit (Treib, 2014; Van Elsas and Van Der Brug, 2011). Thus, one might ask if it is not better to maybe analyze the effects of left-wing and right-wing Euroscepticism with an eye to the difference between regions? Maybe Left-Wing and Right-Wing Euroscepticism affect the other parties differently in the two parts of Europe. If the intuition is correct that left-wing and right-wing Euroscepticism carry different weight in different countries (the first empirical chapter already hinted to that) we should be able to see some sort of interaction between geography and Eurosceptic success, and differences between the regions.

The Geographical Take on Eurosceptic Contagion

Does Eurosceptic contagion manifest itself differently depending on geography? Does the effect of Eurosceptic parties depend on where they are? Models 27-29 and 27b-29b replace the 14 country dummies with a regional one, and then take turns letting the dummy interact with the indicators for Eurosceptic success. The next graphs below include the predictive margins for the two aggregate models, which do not distinguish between the success of Left-Wing and Right-Wing Eurosceptic parties. The first graph presents the interaction in model 27 where the regional dummy interacts with *Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP*, and the second one the interaction of the regional dummy with *Votechange_All_ES_Parties* (model 27b).

Table 13: Eurosceptic Contagion and Geographical Variation

VARIABLES	(27) Model	(28) Model	(29) Model
South_EU	-0.14 (0.092)	-0.12 (0.093)	-0.12 (0.091)
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.02* (0.007)		
Votechange_Biggest_Left_ES		-0.03 (0.015)	-0.02** (0.008)
Votechange_Biggest_Right_ES		-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.007)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	-0.00 (0.035)	-0.00 (0.037)	-0.00 (0.035)
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.01 (0.053)	-0.01 (0.051)	-0.01 (0.051)
Time	-0.02 (0.022)	-0.02 (0.023)	-0.02 (0.023)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01 (0.004)	-0.01 (0.004)	-0.01 (0.004)
unemployment	0.02 (0.011)	0.02 (0.011)	0.02 (0.011)
Left_Right	-0.04** (0.014)	-0.04** (0.014)	-0.04** (0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.17** (0.056)	0.16** (0.057)	0.16** (0.058)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP*South_EU	0.01 (0.012)		
Votechange_Biggest_Left_ES*South_EU		0.01 (0.017)	
Votechange_Biggest_Right_ES*South_EU			0.01 (0.008)
Constant	0.62 (0.433)	0.60 (0.455)	0.60 (0.441)
Observations	527	517	517
R-squared	0.11	0.12	0.12
Adj. R-squared	0.09	0.09	0.09

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 14: Eurosceptic Contagion and Geographical Variation (B)

VARIABLES	(27b) Model	(28b) Model	(29b) Model
South_EU	-0.13 (0.090)	-0.11 (0.090)	-0.11 (0.090)
Votechange_All_ES_Parties	-0.02* (0.008)		
Votechange_All_Left_ES		-0.04** (0.013)	-0.03** (0.009)
Votechange_All_Right_ES		-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.007)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties	-0.01 (0.033)	0.00 (0.033)	-0.00 (0.034)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties	-0.02 (0.055)	-0.03 (0.051)	-0.02 (0.051)
Time	-0.02 (0.020)	-0.02 (0.020)	-0.02 (0.020)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01 (0.004)	-0.01 (0.003)	-0.01 (0.003)
unemployment	0.02 (0.011)	0.01 (0.011)	0.02 (0.011)
Left_Right	-0.04** (0.014)	-0.04** (0.014)	-0.04** (0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.17** (0.058)	0.15** (0.055)	0.16** (0.057)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)
Votechange_All_ES_Parties*South_EU	0.00 (0.009)		
Votechange_All_Left_ES*South_EU		0.03 (0.015)	
Votechange_All_Right_ES*South_EU			0.01 (0.010)
Constant	0.62 (0.403)	0.61 (0.387)	0.63 (0.394)
Observations	527	525	525
R-squared	0.12	0.13	0.12
Adj. R-squared	0.10	0.11	0.10

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Figure 58: Geographical Variation and Eurosceptic Contagion

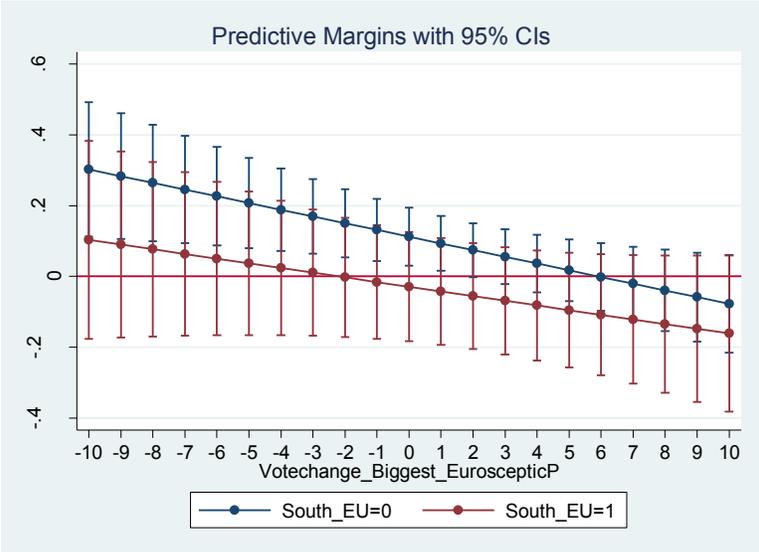
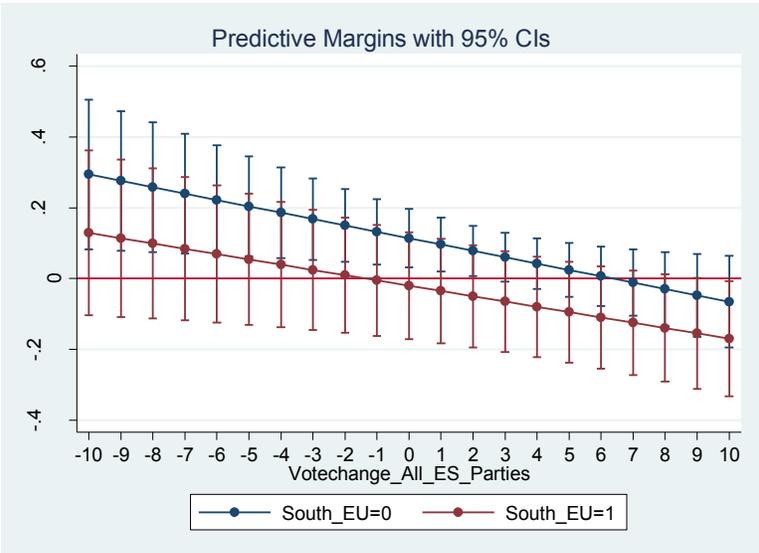


Figure 59: Geographical Variation and Eurosceptic Contagion (B)

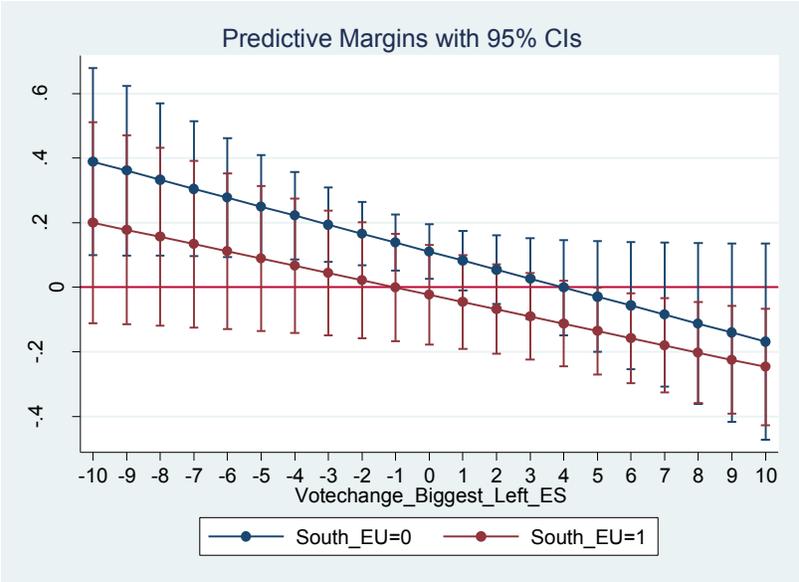


It seems at first sight that the regional dummies do not add much predictive power. While the slopes of the linear prediction are ‘correct’⁵⁶, the confidence intervals don’t help the evidence

⁵⁶ In both graphs, the data would tend to conform to the intuition of the radical Party Hypothesis. On both lines (one depicting the prediction for *SouthEU*, the other for the rest) the linear prediction goes into negative (Eurosceptic) territory as the values on the X increase (as Eurosceptics gain more votes). And as one moves further left on the X, meaning situations in which Eurosceptic Parties *lose* votes, the predicted change in position of centrist parties goes into positive (pro-Integration territory), which also conforms to

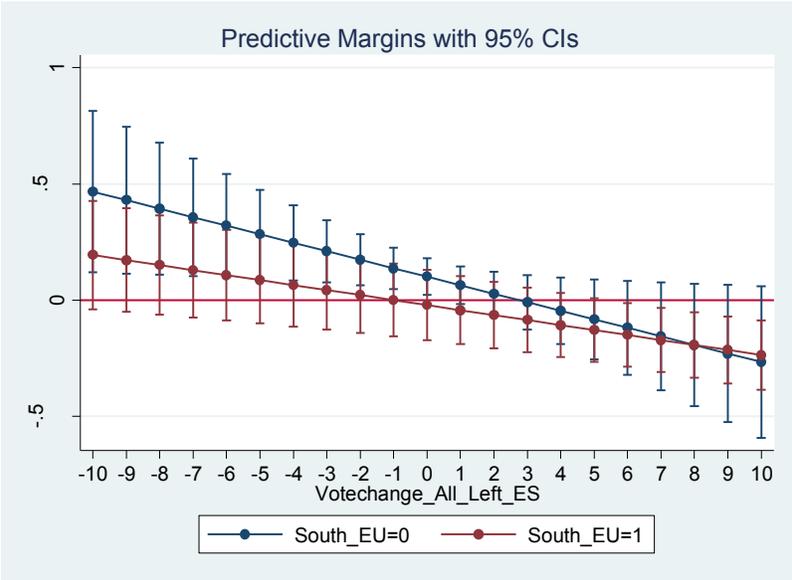
present itself as too strong or robust. In both cases, the confidence interval for Eurosceptic electoral performance in Southern Europe crosses zero, not enabling us to draw any solid conclusions about the area. In the rest of Europe, the confidence interval stays above 0 in regions of the graph that describe electoral loss for Eurosceptic Parties, but once these parties' performance turns positive and they gain votes, the interaction is no longer statistically significant. The regional dummy does not seem at the moment to make a difference on Eurosceptic contagion when the populist challengers are doing well. While it might be tempting to argue that the effect is stronger in Northern Europe than in Southern Europe, because at least part of the effect for the region (when SouthEU = 0) is significant, the evidence so far seems to scant to draw unambiguous conclusions. When the effect enters into 'positive vote gain for Eurosceptics' territory, the prediction loses significance. We might, however, be able to gain more insight and leverage by disaggregating at this point the effect of Right-Wing and Left-Wing Eurosceptic Parties in Europe. The graph below, for the interaction from Model 28, shows what happens when Left Wing Eurosceptic Parties do well. In both cases (SouthEU 0 and 1) the predictions slope to the right (negative prediction when Eurosceptic parties do well, and positive prediction (change in a pro-EU direction) when the populists fare poorly).

Figure 60: Geographical Variation and Left-wing Euroscepticism (A)



the intuition of the Radical Party Hypothesis because Eurosceptic Parties losing voters communicates to the other parties that voters are defecting/going away from Eurosceptic discourse

Figure 61: Geographical Variation and Left-wing Euroscepticism (B)



Unlike in the aggregated models (which did not distinguish between left wing and right wing success), the effect is significant and the confidence interval fully dips below 0 for southern Europe in those cases when left wing Eurosceptic Parties do well. In other words, in Southern Europe, when left wing flagship Eurosceptic Parties gain votes, the other parties adjust in an anti-integration direction.

Figure 62: Geographical Variation and Right-wing Euroscepticism

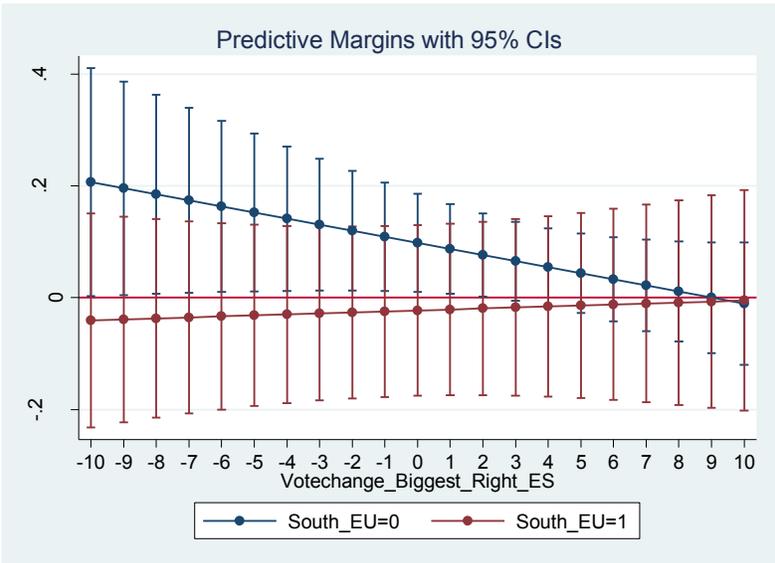
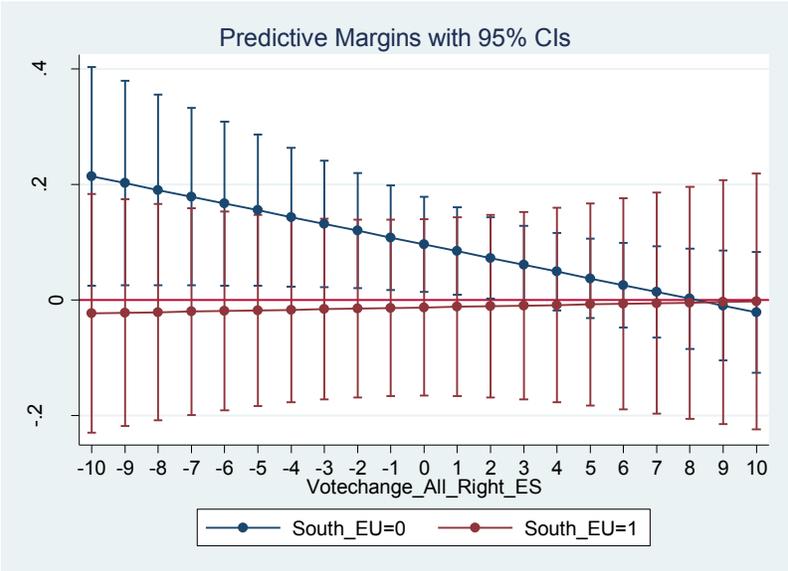


Figure 63: Geographical Variation and Right-wing Euroscepticism (B)



Left-Wing Eurosceptic has a tendency to influence the mainstream in Southern Europe, and less so in the North, which conforms to the intuition presented above about the differences between regions (confirming Hypothesis Hn-s). In Graph 61 (plotting the interaction between the regional dummy and cumulated left-wing Euroscepticism), both linear predictions slope downward on the right side of the graph, meaning that the tendency is for Political Parties both in North and South Europe to react to the success of Left-Wing Eurosceptic Parties by moving in a Eurosceptic Direction. However, *only the linear prediction for Southern Europe* is statistically significant. Again, as was the case with the interaction of the regional dummy and the results of the biggest Left-wing Eurosceptic Parties, (m27) Left-Wing success is more likely to prompt a response in southern Europe.

Figure 62 includes similar information, but this case describes to what degree the impact of Right-Wing Euroscepticism is a function of regional setting. The linear prediction for North Europe, like in the previous graphs, slopes down when Eurosceptic parties gain votes. The effect starts out and ends with statistical insignificance, and the confidence interval flirts with above-zero values shortly in low positive values of *Votechange_Biggest_Right_ES*. The linear prediction for Southern Europe (SouthEU = 1) never approaches statistical significance.

In the case of the success of Right Wing Eurosceptic Parties, the linear prediction is negative when Eurosceptic Parties gain votes. While the situation is the opposite in Southern Europe, the large standard errors however, render the prediction insignificant on both sides of 0 on the X axis – no robust conclusion can be drawn about Right-Wing Eurosceptic Parties in Southern Europe regardless of whether the Eurosceptic are gaining or losing votes. In northern Europe, there is some measure of response from mainstream parties to right wing party success: according to the last interaction term (figure 63): when Eurosceptic electoral performance is in the negative (they lose votes), the linear prediction for other parties' position changes is positive, meaning they change their position in a pro-European direction. As right wing Eurosceptic vote loss is reduced and their performance improves, the mainstream parties' pro-EU response weakens. No such response to right-wing Euroscepticism is seen in the South.

To sum up this section, tentative evidence is found to support the geographical hypothesis. Right-wing and Left-wing Eurosceptic Contagion is mediated to some degree by geography, with Right-Wing Eurosceptic parties eliciting some responses from the mainstream in Northern Europe and none significant ones in the South, and Left-Wing Eurosceptic Parties eliciting party responses in the South but not in the North. The results must again, however, be interpreted with a bit of caution, given the overlapping confidence intervals. While they do not outright discredit the information obtained in this section (especially in light of the fact only one of the two confidence intervals sometimes crosses zero), it reduces our confidence in the results gained.

Conclusion

After the first empirical chapter showed us that populist parties are mounting an increasingly successful assault on the mainstream of European politics, and that the threat of anti-Integration discourse spreading across the continent is real, in this chapter it was time to learn the 'when, where, and why' of this contagion.

Is Eurosceptic contagion a phenomenon that applies everywhere in Europe generally, equally and linearly? Are all mainstream parties equally susceptible to feeling the threat and pressure of Eurosceptic challenge? Is there a trend to Eurosceptic Contagion? Is it a phenomenon

that is accelerating or slowing down? And what does that tell us about the near future of European Integration? What motivates those parties that adjust and qualify their pro-EU position, and what are their incentives? These were just some of the questions tackled here.

I discussed what type of elections contagion is likely to be strongest after. These were shown to be elections where Eurosceptic parties mobilize the EU issue, where Eurosceptic parties are vehemently and strongly opposed to EU integration, and elections that are... recent. The main predictors of this study interact with the time variable in a meaningful way: Eurosceptic Contagion not a significant phenomenon in the 80's and 90's, but became a reality as integration deepened more and more. One of the two interactions with time showed that the phenomenon is picking up speed as we move closer to our present day, which some would interpret as a worrisome prospect for the future of European Politics and Integration.

The fact that the impact of Eurosceptic electoral gains is likely to be stronger when hardcore Eurosceptics threaten to win elections, as well as the fact that mainstream parties do not distinguish between situations when populist advances are actually benefitting them vis-à-vis other moderate parties indicate that centrist parties actually care about European Integration. These parties are not just using the issue as a means to expand their power and electability, and look further than just the horizon of office/government attainment. There seems to be a real measure of concern with Europe among these parties, which should not surprise, given that were long time associated with default pro-integration positions. When eurosceptic policy entrepreneurs are good enough at bleeding them of votes, they will respond and seek to mitigate damage by copying the policy position of the fringe party, even if they might be better off tactically stimulating pro-anti EU debate and forcing voter defection from across the political center towards the populist fringes.

This chapter also looked into how ideology interacts with Eurosceptic success in predicting contagion. The first set of analyses does confirm that parties at the political Left_Right center are impacted by populist progress, as well as supporting the ideological families hypothesis (*Somer-Topcu* 2009), in contradiction to prior research on Eurosceptic Contagion. When splitting the predictors and dividing them into variables that indicate right-wing and left wing eurosceptic success, the evidence was murky. In some cases, there was no statistical significance that would facilitate inference and conclusions, in other cases the evidence was counter-intuitive. I discussed shortly the pitfalls of disaggregating the indicators describing

Eurosceptic success into left and right-wing populism, and why cross-sectional differences make it hard to use this approach. A proposed solution, to see if Eurosceptic success differs in its impact in north and southern Europe did produce some results which tempted with analytical clarity in light of the differences between Euroscepticism in various countries: evidence, meager as it is, suggests that Left-Wing Euroscepticism is likely to be more potent (in inducing Eurosceptic Contagion) in Southern Europe, while right wing populism seems to be a more likely culprit in northern Europe. The evidence was, however, inconclusive. An option for future research focusing on this question might employ an interrupted time series design to better address the limitations of the data.

6. An Institutional Take on Eurosceptic Contagion

Do European Elections matter to the centrifugal forces unleashed by populist success? Do they matter with regards to rise of Eurosceptic parties and associated phenomena? At the onset, this project assumed that the main arena for political struggle is the national one. One of the most influential approaches in the study of European and European Union politics has been the second order election thesis (Reif and Schmitt, 1980) according to which elections to the European Parliament have actually functioned as somewhat less important national elections (hence second order, akin to US midterm elections), and according to which the main arena for political conflict over EU policy lies at the national level. This study has largely shared these assumptions and premises, and has as a consequence focused on the effect of Eurosceptic Parties' success at national elections on the positions of moderate and mainstream parties. That does not mean, however, that one should outright discount the possibility of Eurosceptic contagion being initiated by competition on the supranational level, or that the information carrying mechanism of the past election model could not also work on that level as well. It is possible, that political parties use not only national, but also European elections as part of the information-gaining mechanism, and that the Radical Party Hypothesis might also hold for elections that decide who goes to Strassbourg.

This chapter addresses a set of queries and issues regarding conditions of Eurosceptic contagion, beginning with an assessment of the utility of European Elections as a conducive medium for Eurosceptic contagion. While there are arguments – especially against the background of increasing politicization of the EU issue – for assuming possible contagion in the future, it is shown below that EP elections for the moment continue being less impactful than national ones. In discussing the circumstances under which EP elections could become significant, an added perspective is taken into consideration - the institutional one. It is argued and shown that under certain conditions (those of low electoral system proportionality), EP elections actually function as the medium which convey information about landscape of public opinion, and not national elections. This is shown by using the example of British politics over the past two decades (perhaps the most dramatic instance of Euroscepticism shaking the national system given the recent occurrence of *Brexit*) where majoritarian rules distorted the information delivering mechanism of past election results for mainstream parties, and muffled the potential of

Eurosceptic Contagion. With the switch to proportional European Elections in 1999, an avenue was created in which political parties could proportionately approximate public preferences as well as providing a clearer image of the opinion landscape in the British electorate. Moreover, employing the example of British political developments adds to the insights of this project regarding the radical party hypothesis. It shows again the importance the past election logic has for Eurosceptic Contagion, and brings added support for the Radical Party Thesis, strengthening the argument that it is necessary for a fringe party to be successful in some electoral medium for other parties to adjust their policy position on the EU. The argument made in this sense is that the change to proportional European Elections created the arena necessary for a fringe party to show mainstream ones how ‘out of touch’ they are with public opinion. It is suggested that one might thus draw a connection between institutional set-up and the role of European Elections, and it is inferred that EU elections might actually fulfill the role that national ones do in propagating populist contagion when the national elections do not follow proportional rules. As elaborated upon in the theoretical part of the dissertation, one gains a more complete image of the phenomenon of European contagion when taking into account, firstly, the multi level nature of the European Polity, and secondly the fact that different kinds of electoral systems are likely to lead to different manifestations of political competition.

European Elections Revisited

The second-order elections thesis was first formulated by Reif and Schmitt (1980) and has received strong empirical support since in the exploration of European Elections (Gabel 2000, Hix and Marsh 2007, Marsh and Mikhaylov 2010) being often compared to US mid-term elections. One of the main ideas behind the second-order argument is that voters do not treat EP elections as they are in principle meant to (deciding who should represent them in the Strasbourg plenum on the basis of ‘Euromanifestos’), but as a means to punish or reward political parties in the middle of the electoral cycle based on their national performance⁵⁷. The EU-issue-voting model (De Vries *et al*, 2011, Hobolt *et al*, 2009) was developed as a response to the second order approach and posits that EU Parliament elections are not just about domestic issues but have

⁵⁷ Relative to their national election promises and policy propositions.

increasingly become contests about different visions of Europe (Treib, 2014, 1547). While more evidence is somewhat mixed, Treib (2014, 1547) notes that aggregate election results (even for the most recent elections) seem to match the expectations of the 2nd order model, but argues further that there might be more to the story, and that the hypothesis should not be cast aside outright. The author further observes (Treib, 2104, 1551) that the surge of electoral support for Eurosceptic parties in recent European Parliament Elections cannot be dismissed as mere protest vote against unpopular governments.

The very first analysis in this chapter tests a radical party and Eurosceptic contagion version of the second order election thesis. Table 15 presents similar models (30 and 31) to those that were presented in the first empirical chapter, but the main predictors describe not how well Eurosceptic parties have done between the previous and the most recent national election. Instead of the usual main IV, the predictors (*EP_Votechange_Biggest_Euroscepti*) measures Eurosceptic vote gain/loss between the previous and the most recent EP election. Like in the case of previous analyses, the hypotheses are tested for both vote gain of the biggest Eurosceptic party (30) as well as cumulated vote gain of all Eurosceptic parties (31).

As can be seen in table 15, neither vote change of the biggest Eurosceptic Party, nor cumulated vote change of all Eurosceptic parties have a significant effect on the position of mainstream parties towards EU integration, rejecting hypothesis H10. That would seem to suggest that when it comes to European Elections, political parties do not use changes in election results to update their position on the EU issue, and the Eurosceptic contagion does not occur as a result of EP election results, adding further weight to the second order election perspective.

Table 15: Eurosceptic Contagion and European Elections

VARIABLES	(30) Model	(31) Model
EP_Votchange_Biggest_Euroscepti	-0.01 (0.005)	
EP_Votchange_All_Eurosceptics		-0.00 (0.004)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.11** (0.042)	
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	0.02 (0.076)	
Time	0.03 (0.015)	0.02 (0.016)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	0.00 (0.004)	-0.00 (0.004)
unemployment	0.03** (0.011)	0.03** (0.012)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.013)	-0.04*** (0.013)
Gov_Opposition	0.10* (0.052)	0.08 (0.053)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votchange	0.02*** (0.004)	0.02*** (0.004)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties		0.09* (0.037)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties		-0.00 (0.076)
Constant	-0.67 (0.525)	-0.46 (0.439)
Country Dummies not Reported		
Observations	519	526
R-squared	0.13	0.12
Adj. R-squared	0.09	0.08

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Does that mean that one can discard the effect and influence of European elections for good? I argue that before drawing a categorical conclusion about the entirety of Western Europe, there might be certain circumstances in which EP elections *can* have a role to play, if we adopt an

institutional take on the phenomenon (that it might again be wrong to aggregate, just as in the case of the investigation regarding ideological contagion from the previous chapter). Before proceeding with an analysis of Eurosceptic Contagion that takes into account institutional differences among electoral settings, the following section represents an invitation to contemplate the role that various election rules and electoral systems might have on the past election model.

Strategic Voting, Euroscepticism and Contagion

Previous Research has already postulated that proportional and majoritarian electoral systems differ in the kinds of political behavior they elicit (Lijphart 1990; Neto and Cox 1997; Manow 2009), and that proportional and majoritarian systems may favor different kinds of political parties. Depending on the different electoral rules present in a country, political parties might behave differently, as may voters. In the case of voters, the biggest difference maybe found in the area of voting incentives, which are changed by the phenomenon of strategic voting. Such points of view depart from what Riker(1982) has termed Duverger's Law: the idea that "the simple-majority single-ballot system [i.e., simple plurality rule in single-member districts] favors the two-party system" (Duverger, 1954, 217), and have been shared by other scholars over the years, including Anthony Downs (1957, 48) who alluded to 'sophisticated voting' as a mechanism by which voters would not vote for the party that lies closest to their own policy preferences, thus muddling the image and information about the 'true' landscape of public opinion in a country. While some authors (Abramson *et al*, 2010, 63-64) have doubted there is much difference between proportional and FPTP systems vis-à-vis strategic voting, the work of other authors others (Niemi *et a,l* 1992; Meffert and Gschwend, 2011; see also Iversen and Soskice, 2006, 169) have offered strong support to the argument that third parties stand to lose the most from strategic voting.

When strategic voting happens to a high degree, the results of elections are in a way „skewed“, and not only in the commonly accepted sense that the distribution of seats in the elected body does not optimally represent political preferences, but also in the sense that the election does a less good job -compared to proportional systems- of communicating the distribution of policy preferences among the electorate. In layman's words, in first past the post

and single constituency system, past elections are not as good at revealing to politicians what the true landscape of public opinion looks like because when voters are afraid of wasting their votes when their preferred candidate stands little chance in winning the constituency, they will opt for one of the strongest two or three candidates, even if they are a lesser preference for the voter.

Until 1999, UK elections to the British Parliament and the European Parliament were held according to majoritarian rules. The initial set-up (pre-'99) mirrored national elections, and made it harder for the contagion effect of Eurosceptic discourse to manifest itself. A highly majoritarian system, or one with single member constituencies, increases the incentives for strategic voting. A voter might see party "A" as her ideal policy choice, in the sense that it lies closest to her own policy preference, and party "C" as the party most distant from her own preference. If she does not believe that her party/candidate stands any real chance of getting elected or forcing the other parties to change their position with the threat of vote defection (from the latter), then that voter will vote for party "B", which it might see as the lesser evil, just to prevent "C" from winning. Such tendencies are even stronger when the distance between A and B are smaller than between B and C, or if the former lie on the same side of the political spectrum, in which case the voter might already have some sympathies for Party B. In such a scenario, a voter who votes for party A (the smaller one) would essentially be taking votes away from another party she sympathizes (B) relative to the party she likes least (Party C), thus increasing C's chances of getting the all precious seat that is the object of the contest. All things considered, the voter is incentivized to vote for a party other than the one representing her ideal policy position. A voter may thus cast a strategic vote in order to support the candidate she supports most of the electable ones, or may cast a vote to keep the 'most disliked candidate' out of office (Heath and Evans, 1994). There are constituencies where, for example, voting for the Labor candidate reduced Labor's chances to win elections because in those circumscriptions (where the two strongest candidates were conservative and liberal-democratic) a vote for Labor meant a loss for the Liberal Democratic Candidate and a relative gain for the Tories (Green and Prosser, 2015). In such cases, voting for Labor meant a larger chance of the Conservatives winning the elections.

The tendency to vote strategically is mitigated by a few factors. One is the degree to which a voter is a partisan of the small party in question. She might consider voting for A to be so important that she will not alter her vote in favor of B, even if it means that C will win.

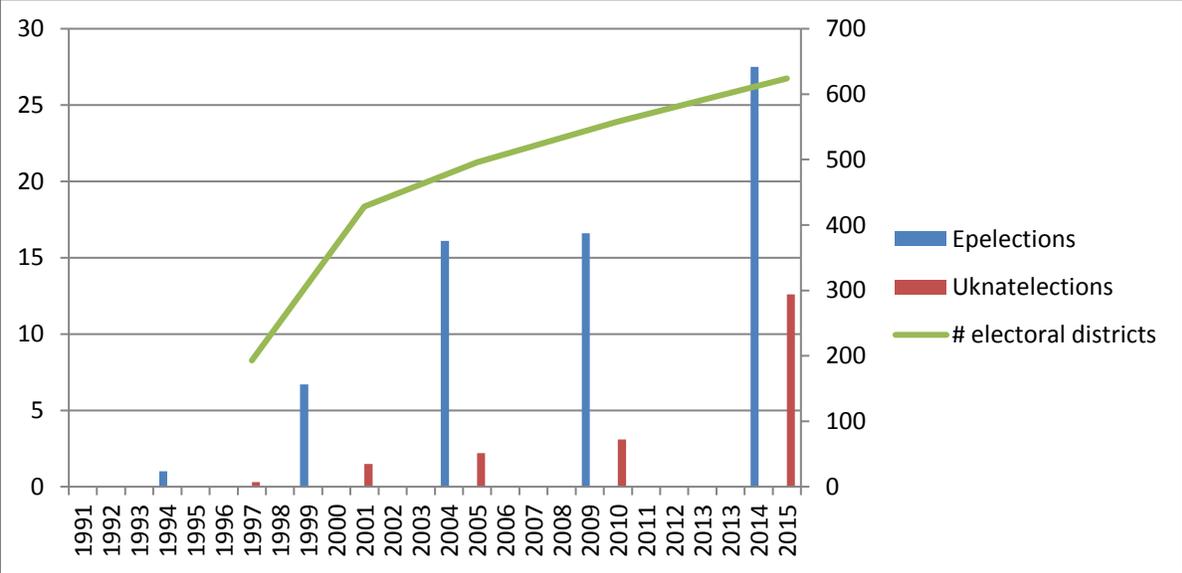
Another might be whether party A manages to overcome a crucial „threshold of attention“, and even though it is credited with lower chances than the front runners to win the contested seat, still retains some chance of winning the election. Even if it is not a front runner, it means that the party is not one of the plethora of small candidates who go unobserved, but is instead large enough to receive media attention, and prompt discussion among the large parties („B“ and „C“) about the potential to lose votes relative to each other due to the „A“ appearance. Where exactly this threshold lies (how big must party „A“ be before it is large enough to attract attention, while at the same time still being small enough to not be one of the favorites) is debatable, and might even differ with every constituency, but once that threshold is passed the voter might abandon strategic voting, in the knowledge that voting for her favorite party will firstly force the other parties to adjust their own policy preference, and secondly will attract more attention to party A, which might make it a serious contender at future elections.

The problem is that if a party does not manage to cross that „influence“ threshold, or the rules of the electoral system do not change in a more proportional direction, the incentive for strategic voting remains high, as is the likelihood that a party will remain in the „lower league“ of national politics. That deprives the system of information about voters' preferences, and muffles the effect of Eurosceptic parties unless an alternative avenue is given for such parties to show the true extent of support they have in the public perception. If such an avenue is given, however, Eurosceptic parties can exert their influence even in a majoritarian system, because they no longer rely only on the original majoritarian system to show how much sympathy voters have for its policy position. That in turn emboldens it to field more candidates, which in turn makes it more visible, which results in more support, thus helping set up a self-reinforcing process. The introduction of a proportional system for the 1999 EP elections reduced the insulation that the Westminster system provided to Labor and Conservatives against electoral threats by Eurosceptic parties. It gave smaller parties an outlet and means to punish the bigger parties with real losses of seats, even if it was not in the House of Commons. The effect of the change in rules for EP elections did not take place instantaneously, although the UKIP started doing ever better from one election to another for the EU parliament.

The change in the system is not only crucial because of the enhanced influence it afforded to the UKIP in Brussels, but also because it reduced the threshold effect of the Westminster system on UK politics. After 1999, UKIP started to add more and more pressure to the British

electoral system, despite not entering the national Parliament for a decade and a half until this year. The UKIP could continue to retain public attention and exert pressure on the other parties despite not being present in the British Parliament. It can be argued similarly, to some degree, that the Afd in Germany managed to stay clear of oblivion because it managed to secure seats in the European Parliament in 2014. At the 2013 national elections, it narrowly failed to get into the German Parliament, and there was real discussion about the party's dissolution, having lost the possibility to access parliament. Whether the Afd's presence in the EP will have any effect on national elections in Germany can, however, be contested, since the German national electoral system is more proportional than the British one. At the 1999 EP elections held 2 years after elections to Westminster the UKIP obtained a stunning 7 percent of the vote in Britain, making it the 4th best represented British party in Brussels and Strasbourg. The 1999 EP election was a strong vehicle for transmitting information towards politicians, information that until then had not been communicated as well through national elections. As such, it acted in correspondence with the Past-Election model, and can be thought of as the first time that the model applied to the UK. It told Labor and the Tories how much support there is among the electorate for the Eurosceptic position, and how distant they are themselves from the position of a significant part of the electorate. When considering also those voters who were not yet voting in consideration of the EU issue, who were less interested or undecided until the UKIP grabbed their attention, that election helped the mainstream parties get a clearer picture where they stood relative to the median voter (on the EU question), and it acted as a confirmation for the UKIP to „keep going“.

Figure 64: The performance of the UK independence party in national and European elections



Graph showing the performance of the UK independence party in national and European elections, and the number of electoral districts they have competed in national elections in.

After the 1999 EP election, UKIP started fielding candidates in ever more of the UK’s single-member constituencies (from a total of 650 seats presently in the House of Commons). It is important to note that while this meant they were fielding significantly more candidates in national elections, their performances kept improving at EP elections. That showed that there was real support among the electorate for its policy positions, but that voters (still) regarded their vote as too precious to use on them in elections to the House of Commons.

The British political scene nevertheless exposed to proportional representation, and the results for the EP elections that followed since strengthened the message to the mainstream about where the heart of the public lies with regards to Europe, and offered a clearer view of the opinion landscape present at the time. The UKIP could now more efficiently work as a Downsian „influence party“, painting the picture of the electorate for the mainstream parties, something that was harder to accomplish in a more „restrictive“, single constituency system. It also acted as a means to increase public visibility of the UKIP, as well as the issue they promote the most, the question of integration. Leaving aside voters who had previously refrained from voting for them out of strategic consideration (as described above), that election also helped introduce and make UKIP and Nigel Farage more popular with voters who might have been less informed, politically

engaged and disinterested previously. Eversince the 1999 EP elections, the UKIP has been on a roll ever since. It became the third best represented party of the UK in 2004, obtaining 16 per cent of the vote at that election. The 2004 and 2009 Elections to the European Parliament strongly displayed the growing appeal of a hard line Eurosceptic discourse in Britain and signified that an important line had been crossed electorally. The party's tally increased by less than one per cent from the 2004 to the 2009 EP election, but the distribution of voters among the other parties made the UKIP the 2nd strongest British party in the EP, achieving what many would have found impossible a few years prior – breaking the monopoly of Labor and the Conservatives on the top two positions in British politics. The UKIP not only registered another rise in vote count, but also managed to outperform one of the two traditional dominating parties in Britain. It became Britain's second best represented party in the EU Parliament, and subsequently – at the most recent EP elections, the biggest British party in Strassbourg.

The fact that at national elections the UKIP was still polling in numbers below their figures at the European Elections showed that strategic voting was still going on to some degree among the British electorate. Nonetheless, its support was growing, as was its influence. In 1997 it had scored 0,3%, in 2001 1,5%, in 2005 it past the 2% mark and in 2010, eventually, passed 3% for the first time. As its tallies were adding up in national elections (and more so in European elections) its influence on the mainstream parties started to become ever more noticeable. The argument made here is that European elections made a difference in Britain due to the Westminster system (a difference they would not have made if Britain had had proportional representation). Because in such a system it is harder for political parties to gauge the policy preferences of the electorate, the role of conveying such information to mainstream politicians was taken over by European Elections, an avenue that opened when elections to the EP in Britain became proportional in 1999. In a way, Britain's EP (multi-level) elections have turned the country's electoral system into a quasi-proportional one, where the proportionality comes not from the contest for Westminster, but the one for Strassbourg and Brussels. As for the information mechanism that underlies the theoretical (and analytical) framework of this project, the EP elections fulfill that role in majoritarian systems. It is thus inferred that the less proportional a country's national electoral rules are, the more likely it is that Eurosceptic Contagion will manifest itself through European Elections. While EP elections (and the performance of Eurosceptic Parties there) might not normally matter for centrist parties' EU

position (as was evidenced by regression models 30 and 31), they might do so in political systems that are *not* proportional. In those circumstances, we should find that there is an interaction effect between how well Eurosceptic parties do at EP elections, and a country's electoral system, in line with hypothesis H11b.

Before conducting that actual test which looks at the interaction of EP elections and Electoral Proportionality, I first present a very similar analysis, where I look at the interaction of *national* election results and the above-mentioned proportionality. This is in keeping in line with hypothesis H11a, and with the overall spirit of this project which started with the assumption that it is Eurosceptic national performance that determines EU position change. If one assumes that – and tests whether- Eurosceptic success at EP elections interact with the type of electoral system, it is only rational to test whether such an interaction might hold for the main Independent Variable in this dissertation (election results at national elections). Models 32 through 33 test precisely that. The first two models imitate the original models (m1 and m3) while adding the variable System_Proportionality – basically the original models while controlling for one extra factor. The models also include an interaction term of the respective main IV and the proportionality variable. Below table 16, the interactions are presented graphically.

Table 16: Eurosceptic Contagion and Electoral Proportionality

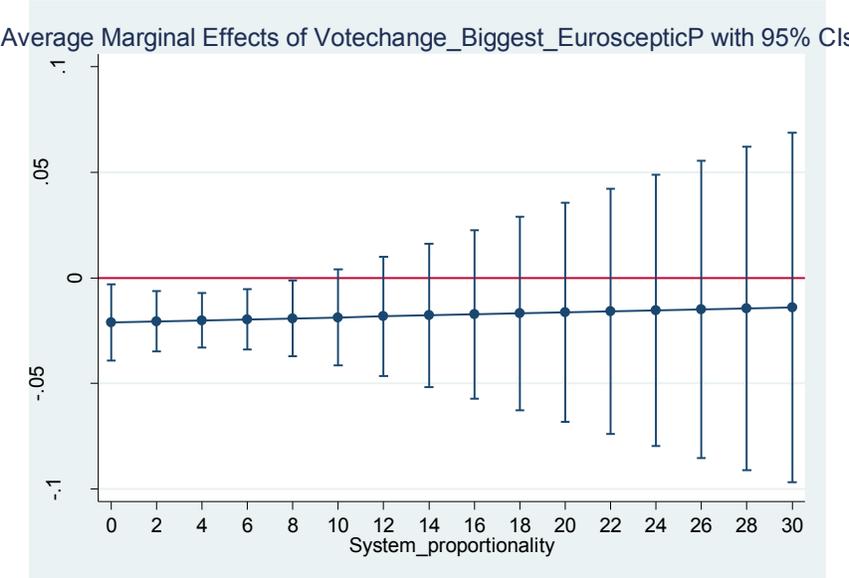
VARIABLES	(32) Model	(33) Model
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.02* (0.009)	
System_proportionality	-0.03* (0.013)	-0.04** (0.012)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.02 (0.045)	
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	0.00 (0.087)	
Time	-0.02 (0.025)	-0.02 (0.023)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01* (0.006)	-0.01* (0.006)
unemployment	0.02 (0.015)	0.02 (0.016)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.16** (0.051)	0.17** (0.051)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)
System_proportionality*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	0.00 (0.002)	
Votechange_All_ES_Parties		-0.02** (0.008)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties		0.01 (0.044)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties		0.00 (0.090)
System_proportionality*Votechange_All_ES_Parties		0.00 (0.001)
Constant	0.99 (0.706)	1.05 (0.640)
Country Dummies	Not Reported	
Observations	527	527
R-squared	0.17	0.19
Adj. R-squared	0.13	0.15

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Figure 65 shows how strong the effect of *Votechange_Biggest_Sceptic* is for different values of *System_Proportionality*. Because the latter variable is constructed using the ParlGov Proportionality (Dalton) index, low values (to the left) indicate a system that is highly proportional, while high values (to the right) indicate majoritarian systems like Britain and France). There is no slope to the linear prediction – the effect would seem to be equally strong for all values for ‘*System Proportionality*’, but at high values, the confidence interval expands until it crosses and includes zero, rendering the interaction insignificant.

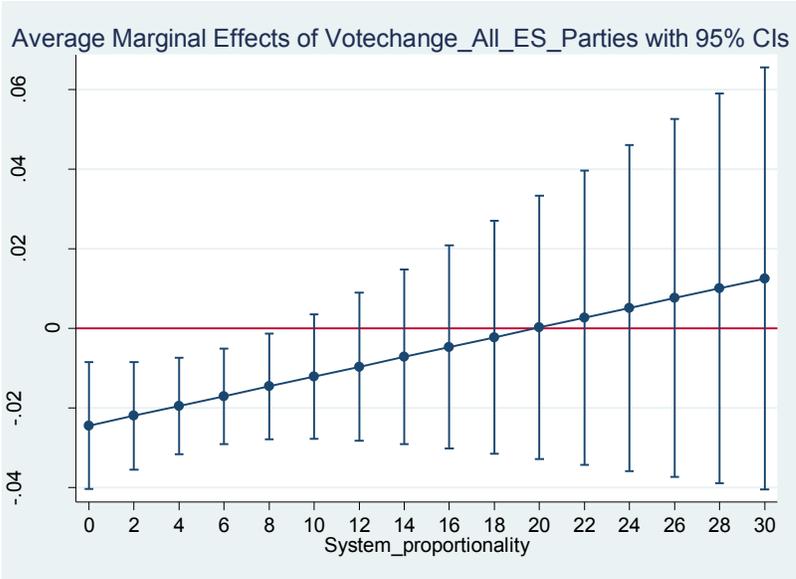
Figure 65: Eurosceptic Contagion and Electoral System Proportionality



This can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, we need to remember the fact that most of Europe’s polities are highly proportional – that means that very few of the observations/cases in the Chapel Hill database that actually score high on that variable (only those from the UK and France). For a certain value range, there are simply too few observations, and the regression lacks the power to provide numbers with certainty, hence the large Cluster-robust standard errors and broad confidence intervals that grow to include zero. The lack of statistical significance on the right side of the graph might also be an artifact of the numbers/data. On the other hand, it

might actually be due to the fact that majoritarian systems suppress the information carrying potential of election results because of the incentives for strategic voting, and we should not expect contagion in the absence of proportionality. Figure 66_sheds a bit more light in that direction and shows how strong the effect of *Votechange_all_Sceptics* is for different values of *System_Proportionality*. As was the case above, the confidence interval crosses zero and renders the interaction non-significant at high values of ‘*System Proportionality*’.

Figure 66: Eurosceptic Contagion and Electoral System Proportionality (B)



One difference from the former graph is the presence of the linear prediction pointing to the bottom left corner. The graph suggests that when operationalizing the main IV as cumulated vote gain for all Eurosceptic Parties, the effect is stronger in highly proportional systems (to the left on the graph). Arguably, in less than perfect proportionality, very small Eurosceptic parties (which would contribute to the total number of votes going to all Eurosceptic parties) might not raise as many eyebrows because mainstream parties are more focused on the flagship Eurosceptic Party. In extremely proportional systems, even small parties that contribute to the Eurosceptic overall tally but would otherwise lie well in the shadow of the flagship Eurosceptic stand a chance to gain attention, and hence their influence might *just* be stronger because of this in such systems. Moreover, as I argued above already, the less proportional a system is, the

stronger the incentive is to vote strategic, and not with ‘the heart’. Some voters are disincentivised from voting for their preferred (potentially eurosceptic) party and the election does not convey the complete picture to the other parties about the electorate’s preferences vis-à-vis Europe.

So far, I have argued that the proportionality of an electoral system can interact with the Eurosceptic performance at national elections with regards to the influence it casts over moderate parties, confirming hypothesis H11b. Returning to the question that I raised earlier in the chapter, how does it interact with European Elections? In other words, does the proportionality of national elections amplify or mitigate the effect of Eurosceptic success at supranational elections?

In models 34 and 35, I let Eurosceptic performance at EP⁵⁸ elections interact with the Proportionality variable (again, maintaining the dual single Eurosceptic/all Eurosceptic format). Figures 67 and 68 plot the two interaction effects and hint at some interesting prospects. In both cases, the linear prediction turns negative towards the right, suggesting that the effect of Eurosceptic gains (at EP elections) on party position changes tends to be stronger in *less* proportional systems (as was argued above).

⁵⁸ In the regression table “EP_Votechange_Biggest_Euroscepti” and “EP_Votechange_All_Eurosceptics”

Table 17: Eurosceptic Contagion and Electoral Proportionality

VARIABLES	(34) Model	(35) Model
EP_Votchange_Biggest_Euroscepti	-0.00 (0.007)	
System_proportionality	-0.01 (0.011)	-0.01 (0.012)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.10* (0.041)	
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	0.04 (0.080)	
Time	0.02 (0.016)	0.01 (0.016)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.00 (0.004)	-0.00 (0.004)
Unemployment	0.04** (0.011)	0.03** (0.012)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.013)	-0.04*** (0.013)
Gov_Opposition	0.11* (0.051)	0.09 (0.052)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.02*** (0.004)	0.02*** (0.004)
System_proportionality*EP_Votchange_Biggest_Euroscepti	-0.00 (0.001)	
EP_Votchange_All_Eurosceptics		-0.00 (0.005)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties		0.07 (0.039)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties		0.02 (0.082)
System_proportionality*EP_Votchange_All_Eurosceptics		-0.00 (0.001)
Constant	-0.63 (0.531)	-0.39 (0.448)
Country Dummies Not Reported		
Observations	519	526
R-squared	0.14	0.12
Adj. R-squared	0.09	0.08

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

In both cases, the lack of observations for the right side of the graph expands the confidence interval greatly for high values on the horizontal. In *both cases*, the confidence intervals cross the zero mark at all values of ‘System Proportionality’ – the interaction isn’t significant anywhere. However, the fact that the linear prediction again turns negative on the right, and the fact that the only observations from France and Britain populate the database with values high enough to be in that region leads me to suspect that the large standard errors are in this case not a consequence of a lacking relationship but of the small number of cases. I suspect that had there been similar numbers of cases/observations for majoritarian systems as we do for proportional ones, we might have found a significant interaction, in line with my hypothesizing about the influence of EP elections above, where discussing the UK situation. As it stands, there is not enough robust evidence to confirm H11c.

Figure 67: European Elections and Electoral System Proportionality

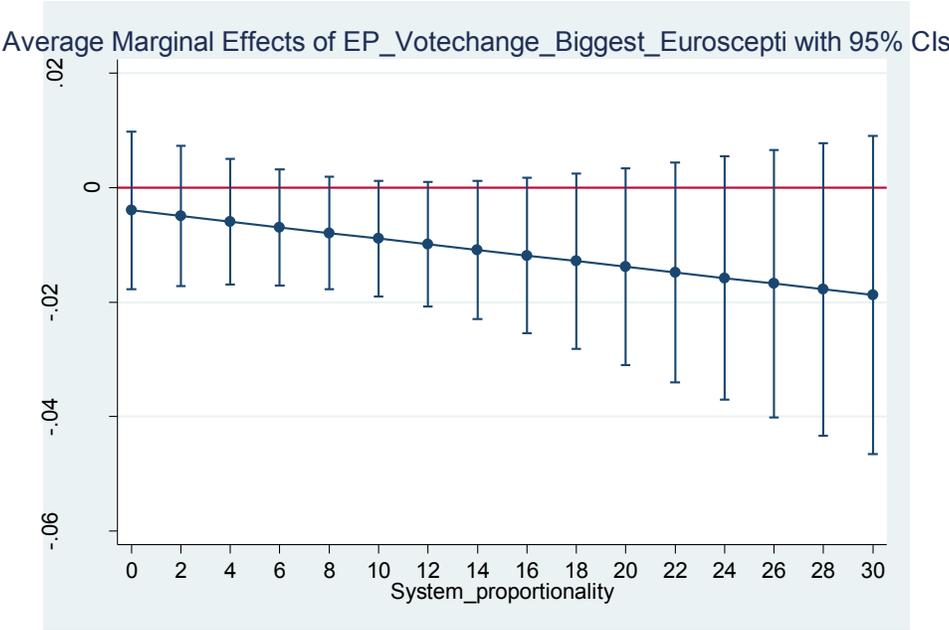
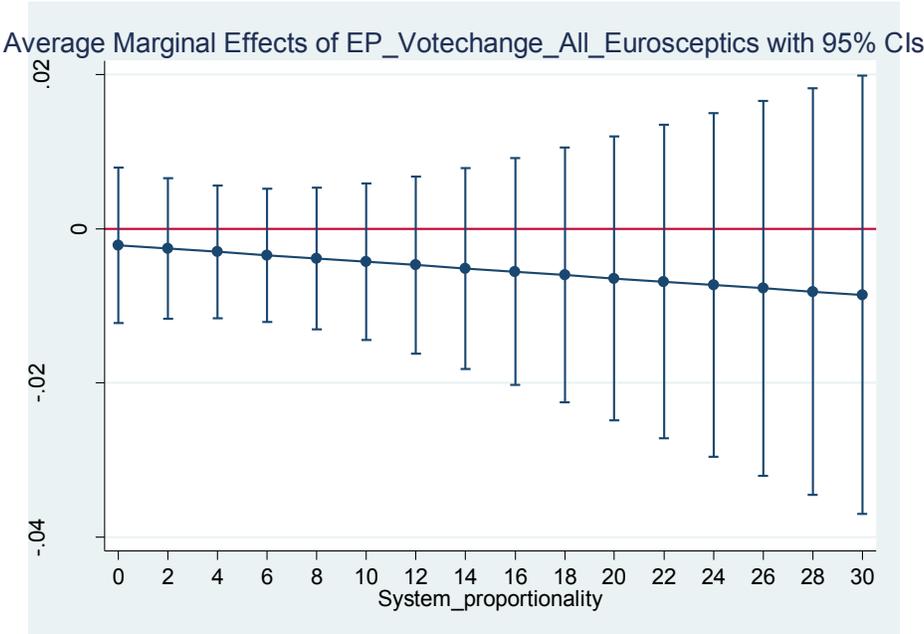


Figure 68: European Elections and Electoral System Proportionality (B)



European Elections as Protest Voting or EU Issue Voting

In the first empirical chapter, the hypothesis was tested that the success of Eurosceptic policy entrepreneurs is actually a function of how the moderate parties manage the EU issue and question. An analogous hypothesis (analogous in the sense that Eurosceptic success is again the dependent variable) is H12, according to which the success of Eurosceptic parties (or lack thereof) at *European elections* is the result of factors pertaining to voter disenchantment with the mainstream on the topic of integration. The hypothesis states that EP elections are a mechanism by which the public can punish incumbent governing parties by taking away votes from the previous winners (the current governing parties) and giving them to the populist parties. An inference from the ‘second order elections’ literature is that European elections can be used by national electorates as a stick or carrot against ruling parties. The difference in the mechanism tested here, however, lies in the hypothesis that the public punishes the ruling parties not by taking away their votes and giving them in exchange to other moderate parties, but instead by giving these votes to Eurosceptic populists. The former would imply that casting a vote against the government in EP elections is a form of protest voting. The latter would indicate that the EU

issue voting is occurring in ample manner and that people are not voting so much against their government in the traditional sense of second-order mid-term recoil, as much as penalizing their government parties for their EU positions. If the public is discontent with the government's positions and finds these too pro-European, so the inference goes, we might see that the public sends a signal of discontent to governing parties – by voting for the Eurosceptic Parties. Treib (2014, 1542) has stated that at the 2014 EP elections, more voters than ever chose to vote for parties advocating radical reforms of the EU, campaigning for an exit from the Union, or pushing to scrap the entire EU project. Research has shown that while governing parties tend to underperform at European elections compared to domestic ones, Eurosceptic Parties perform better in EP elections (De Vries *et al*, 2011; Hobolt and Spoon, 2012; Hobolt *et al*, 2009).

The hypothesis is thus that the electoral results of Eurosceptic parties is correlated to the dissonance between the position of governing parties and the measured public opinion of European Integration. Assuming that the public does use this dissonance between its position and that of the ruling coalition in deciding how to cast the ballot, then if the public and the government have similar policy positions/preferences on European integration, there should be no increase in votes for Eurosceptic parties. If the government and the public lie far apart, the punishment in European Elections should be stronger. nCurrent Public Support of EU integration is measured using the well known Eurobarometer question that asks people if they think their country's membership of the EU is a good thing, and has a scale going from 0 to 100 (%), with 0 meaning nobody in the country is happy with EU membership and meaning all voters are behind it. The average current position (on the EU) of parties in government is measured on the classic 1-7 CHES scale, 1 equals positions completely against Integration and 7 completely in favor. By dividing the values of the Public Support variable by 14.2 ($10/7 = 1.42$), one can obtain an indicator for public support of the EU that runs on the same 1-7 scale as the one describing the position of parties in government⁵⁹. The former is subtracted from the latter to create in indicator (“Dissonance”) of the gap between public support for integration and that of the average government party. Model 36 tests whether Dissonance predicts *subsequent* vote gains or vote losses by Eurosceptic Parties.

⁵⁹ If 7 is the most pro-European position a party can have, and 100 is the most european position an electorate can have, the 0-100 scale is converted into a 1-7 scale on which 7 corresponds to 100 per cent of respondents having favorable views of European Integration.

Table 18: Government-Public Dissonance and European Elections

VARIABLES	(36) Model	(37) Model
Dissonance	-0.10 (0.369)	-0.25 (0.502)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.13** (0.039)	-0.13* (0.054)
unemployment	0.11 (0.069)	0.34*** (0.094)
eu_salience	-1.05** (0.323)	0.02 (0.441)
Constant	10.35*** (3.019)	5.31 (4.119)
Observations	568	568
R-squared	0.18	0.17
Adj. R-squared	0.15	0.15

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

The dependent variable measures the Electoral success (when running for EU parliament) of the flagship Eurosceptic parties, while model 37 measures the cumulated vote gains or losses of all Eurosceptic Parties. The two indicators are constructed by creating a lead for the ‘*EP_Votechange_Biggest_Eurosceptic*’ and ‘*EP_Votechange_ALL_Eurosceptics*’ indicators from the beginning of this chapter. Instead of looking at the change in votes between the two most recent elections, the regression uses change in votes between the most recent EP election and the next EP election lying in the future. The coefficient for Dissonance is not significant, and there is little evidence to be found here for a ‘eu issue vote’.

Conclusion: Second Order Elections and Eurosceptic Contagion?

In this third empirical chapter of the project, I looked more closely at European elections and their relationship to Eurosceptic dynamics. Two of the analyses performed looked first at whether the Radical Party Hypothesis holds when substituting Eurosceptic success at national with success at European elections, and secondly at whether European elections are ‘about

Europe' in the sense that voters unhappy with their governments' position on the issue of Integration would cast their votes at EP elections for more Eurosceptic Parties. In both cases, there was little evidence to support the hypotheses that EP elections are used either by voters or political parties to shape or influence EU positions. The large N analysis in which Eurosceptic results at supranational elections interact with the proportionality of party systems did not produce any statistically significant outcomes. It was argued that the lack of statistical significance, the small number of cases exhibiting low proportionality, and the shape of confidence intervals (following the interactions in models 34 and 35) combine to suggest that the average marginal effects tend to grow stronger towards the less proportional end of the spectrum. Moreover, while the evidence at hand would suggest that EP elections are a non-factor in the larger picture of mainstream-Eurosceptic interplay, there are reasons to think that this state of affairs might change in the near future. The second-order election thesis has for a long time held center view, but recent research into European Parliament elections are beginning to paint a nuanced picture, and while the debate between the second order perspective and the EU issue voting one has been robust in the past, it remains to be seen to what degree that will remain so and whether the second-order perspective will still command attention in the years to come. It must be remembered that this study analyzes elections and party behavior retrospectively, over a period a large part of which EU integration was not as salient. The time periods contained in the dataset can suppress results due to the evolution of the EU issue over time (which was not as salient or electorally influential previously), and contagion could grow stronger in the near future as a feature of both national and supranational elections. As recent research has shown (De Vries *et al*, 2011; Hobolt and Spoon, 2012) EP elections can be 'about Europe' in the eyes of voters provided sufficient contextual information and politicization of European questions exists. In other words, we should not exclude the possibility of first order European elections in the near future. As Giddens (2014) noted, the most 'European' movement was perhaps – ironically – that of the Eurosceptic parties as they tried to put up a common front of European nationalists opposed to the EU, in which they timed and co-ordinated their campaigns in such a way as to give an impression of 'people across Europe united against integration'. Sensing the public weariness and apprehension about integration, these parties tried to influence the issue agenda of the elections and frame the elections as 'putting Europe to the vote'. Whether these parties attained their goals remains an open question, but it has not been uncommon to ascribe the 2014

EP election results to ‘integration fatigue’ on the part of the electorate, Treib (2014) noted that more voters than ever backed parties opposed to regional governance and integration. Such findings imply that this was an election in which the electorate used the European mid-terms to punish not by transferring votes to the regular opposition, but to the anti-EU one. Whether the other parties – those that have lost votes massively to populist parties⁶⁰ – will react the same way they do vis-à-vis national election loss and use the election to update their position remains a task for research in the years to come. While I suspect that a similar analysis of EP election outcomes might with time yield significant results given data from the next electoral cycles, I have argued in the this last empirical chapter that there are certain circumstances in which EP elections already play a major role: in less-proportional party systems. The presence of proportional supranational elections (beginning with 1999) kick-started a self-reinforcing process in Great Britain which facilitated the eventual rise of the UKIP as one of the country’s three biggest parties and the accelerated evolution of EU issue conflict in the UK. The majoritarian rules of the British electoral contest typically worked to suppress the electoral potential of fringe parties because of the built-in incentives for strategic voting. The incentives ‘broke’ the information mechanism that works in more proportional systems. In majoritarian systems, the effects of the second level (EU level) electoral contest has been to turn the majoritarian system into a quasi-proportional one, where European elections represent a parallel proportional arena of conflict to the traditional national one. This also generates a self-reinforcing process, whereby Eurosceptic Parties gain more visibility, legitimacy, and resources⁶¹, which helps them better conduct subsequent national elections, and which in turn puts them in a better position for the next supranational elections.

⁶⁰ turnout was similar to 2009

⁶¹ Which they might otherwise not have gained

7. Conclusion

It would seem that European Politics are currently enrolled in a constant flux of uncertainty and anxiousness. The rapid succession of crises seems to be taking its toll on the EU, its unity in decision making, as well as countries' commitment to ever closer Union. After the Euro crisis shook the financial footing of the block and brought its economic order into question, after waves of refugees fleeing war and violence put pressure and tested member states' commitment to European open borders, Europe has now experienced its first secession by a member state. Against the background of wave of success that populist political actors have had over the past few years, the continent's politics are contemplating the prospect of further gains by Eurosceptic parties (and in nuclear scenarios, new EU secessions) in upcoming elections across the continent. This project centered on studying how political parties and politicians react to these changing circumstances, and whether they amend, qualify and change their traditional 'pro-European' and pro-integration stances in the face of growing electoral pressure by populist Eurosceptic parties who take advantage regional integration fatigue among the public to alter the dynamics of Europe's party systems.

Discussions about Eurosceptic and populist success are currently a rather timely topic (Mudde, 2012), but policy positions opposing European Integration are not an entirely new feature of the politics of the continent. Eurosceptic success was, however, more incremental and grew more slowly in the past. Given that the data used in this study goes back to the 80's, the project explores Eurosceptic contagion in times and circumstances which were less conducive or favorable to Euroscepticism than today. For a range of reasons, opposition to European Integration has not been used as a political weapon to its full potential from the get go, its salience was rather low even if the premises among the electorate were there for more conflictual positions on the issue. The salience of regional integration has grown over time, and the issue has gone from being a marginal one in the 80's to one of the most important ones over the past decade. Given that we find evidence for Eurosceptic contagion even in times when the social and political ground was less fertile for it⁶², then what is in store for Europe now and in the near future when populist parties seem set to influence the political agenda even more? Under the

⁶² across the period described by the CHES, including the late 80's and early 90's

right circumstances, contagion might grow and accelerate with hard to predict consequences for the EU.

In investigating the interplay between populist behavior and the question of regional integration, this study contributes to the growing literature on populist programmatic contagion (Mudde, 2004; Rydgren, 2005; Meguid, 2008; Van Spanje 2010, Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2014), general party position shifts (Somer-Topcu, 2009; Ezrow et al, 2011; Adams et al, 2012) as well as that on the growth of Euroscepticism (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008; Hooghe and Marks, 2009, De Vries and Edwards, 2009). It provides further evidence that fringe parties can and do influence the political systems in which they operate, as well extending the argument about the growing potential of Euroscepticism as a political force. Moreover, given the this study's focus on fringe party performance, the text also contributes directly to the literature on the influence of Niche Parties over the political mainstream, including that on Green and Environmentalist Parties (Spoon, Hobolt and De Vries, 2014; Abu-Chadi 2014). The state of the art on populist parties and parties' position shifts is in constant enrichment, nevertheless, no other studies have taken up an investigation of Eurosceptic Contagion (to my knowledge), besides the one present here and that of Meijers (2015), which has a more reduced scope. By touching upon issues of wider and consequential political change in Western Europe, the present dissertation offers a link to each of these literatures while at the same time linking up with theories on more ample social and political evolution (Mudde, 2004; Hooghe and Marks; 2009; Kriesi et al, 2012)

After recapping the empirical findings of this project, I will discuss how changes in Europe's political environment and the EU's development helped set the scene for the Eurosceptic and populist onslaught witnessed today, and made it easy for such parties to take aim at the EU. I argue that the evolution of political parties from mass parties to catch-all parties (and their ideological convergence in the ideological center) in combination with the depoliticized character of integration, especially in the pre-Maastricht period, helped create a niche for anti-polity, anti-establishment and anti-EU political positions. The tacit and consensual approach to regional integration sidelined the need to cater to public attitudes towards the EU, and that in turn helped foster the public impression of it being distant, unresponsive and unaccountable. Social, economic and historical changes helped bring back populist parties, and gave them a new lease on life. All these parties had to do was to tap into public discontent about catch-all

mainstream parties, the EU, and globalization in order to benefit from the niche and political capital that was available. In threatening the established political order, Eurosceptic parties thus forced mainstream parties to be more reflective of the electorate's less Europhile attitudes (mainstream, moderate parties now finding themselves forced to adjust their positions in order to cater to voters' own policy preferences). Thus, political conflict is ignited (and grudgingly accepted) on the dimension of Integration. The final part of the section discusses the implications of multi-dimensional political conflict in Europe, the literature on Europe's new fault lines and what the future holds.

Recap and Empirical Review

The first empirical chapter of this project confirmed the radical party hypothesis of Eurosceptic Contagion, and found it to hold when exploring the effects of both flagship Eurosceptic parties as well as the cumulative effect of all Eurosceptic parties. Significantly, it was found that mainstream parties react not the absolute level of support for populist challengers, but to change in support for the latter, suggesting there is a certain dynamism at play, with political parties using election results to gauge the direction in which public opinion is shifting. It was further revealed that parties react not to the change in the distribution of seats in parliament, but to the change in distribution of votes, which, as was argued above, reinforces the belief that political parties use election results to measure public support for Euroscepticism. The distribution of votes can change without having an effect on legislature seat distribution, and thus carries more information. While the age old adage that correlation is not causation holds true, various measures were taken here to ensure that the analysis gets the relationship between the predictors and explanandum as correctly as possible. First of all, the estimation technique and temporal structure of the dataset were chosen so as to minimize the chances of serial autocorrelation or reverse causation. Moreover, various control variables were added, such as Public Opinion of the EU and socio-economic variables, meant at reducing the chances of exploring a spurious relationship and controlling in the actual estimation for all factors that might account for change in party EU position other than that specified in the radical party hypothesis. Last but not least, this project also tested an 'alternative' model in which the temporal ordering of change in party

position and election results is swapped, meaning that it directly tested whether the causal direction between the main variables runs in the other order as that assumed throughout the project. Further confirming the radical party hypothesis, the alternative model failed to generate significant effects for its respective predictor.

The second chapter moved on to the circumstances and more minute causation of Eurosceptic contagion. A double dynamic was exposed in which the strength of Eurosceptic contagion increases with the passing of time as well as the degree to which Eurosceptic parties promote the salience of the issue of European Integration. With the passage of time in the post-Maastricht-Treaty era, as the redistributive consequences of European Integration became more evident and tangible, and as voters became more aware of the mismatch between their policy preferences and those of elites, the opportunity space for populist parties to take advantage of Euroscepticism grew bigger. Such parties tapped into said available capital which contributed their already growing popularity and electoral performance on the basis of other political issues, such as opposition to immigration. This promotion of the EU question to the top of the political agenda in turn helped fuel further voter defection towards them, which then further amplified the importance of the EU issue, strengthening the cycle. As Eurosceptic Parties become more Eurosceptic, as Eurosceptic parties mobilize and politicize their opposition to the EU ever more, the shifts of mainstream parties in response to populist success become stronger, and this also reflects itself in the fact that the effect of Eurosceptic success over moderate political actors grows with time. Such phenomena have already been attested to in the literature which describes or postulates populist or anti-cosmopolitan tendencies in Kriesi *et al's* New Cleavage Hypothesis (2008, 20012) or Cas Mudde's Populist Zeitgeist (2004), but unlike this project have tended to focus either on wider societal predisposition towards said political changes due to the evolution of social cleavages, or focused on anti-globalist sentiment more broadly without zeroing in more precisely on the EU issue or the interplay of political contagion. The second empirical chapter further took a step into the realm of the motivation or centrist parties that adjust their policy positions. It was shown that parties do not undertake policy shifts as a measure of opposition politics, and that they will react not to the voter defection from their mainstream rivals, but to their own vote loss in combination with Eurosceptic success. This shows that they are concerned with what they learn about how their constituency views their position, and will react to their voters' preferences, but not engage in strategic power-play behavior. When exploring the role of

ideology in the process of Eurosceptic success, the outcome of the analysis was somewhat murky and conclusive evidence scant, with the ideological families hypothesis receiving the most support. It must be mentioned, as was noted in the beginning of the fourth chapter and further on in the empirical section looking into geographic effects in the fifth chapter, that it might be very difficult to disaggregate the effects of left-wing and right-wing Euroscepticism due to the different roles and trajectories of the two fringes, which might account for the results of that section.

The premise of this work – along the lines of the second order election thesis, is that national elections (and not EU elections) are the main arena for interparty competition, even when the political agenda includes questions of European Integration. The third and final empirical chapter challenges that premise and looks into whether Eurosceptic contagion can also take effect in the competition over the European legislature. While adding to the existing evidence in favor of the second order election thesis, the chapter cautions that in the right circumstances (under disproportional electoral systems), European elections can be the electoral arena that parties use to poll the electorate via recent election results. The past election model requires that elections transmit an accurate as possible a picture of electorate preferences, which is easier in proportional systems. It is implied that mainstream position shifts in a Eurosceptic direction would not occur following majoritarian national elections, but would do so if the former are supplemented with proportional supranational ones. The final empirical chapter thus delves deeper into the micro-level logic characterizing the past election model, describing how the growing threat of UKIP and further voter defection helped contribute to the evolution of British politics that eventually lead to the UK's secession from the EU.

Discussion

Europe Evolving

Ever since David Marquand coined the term „Democratic Deficit“ in reference to yesteryear's European Community in 1979, it has become a widely discussed topic in the literature on European Politics. Discussion surrounding the democratic deficit is multi-faceted, and refers among other things to the unelected position of various offices in Brussels, lack of input

legitimacy, the weakness of representative institutions such as the EP, the insulation of technocratic decision-making, and last but not least, the seeming absence of political conflict and choice over Europe in its incipient phases, something that has alienated many citizens over time.

According to those who worry about the aforementioned democratic deficit, the continuous, slow but steady integration of the European Union witnessed in the second half of the 20th century has been an 'elite project', driven by a Europhile, pro-Integration political elite (so common wisdom dictates), which maintained a consensual discourse on the European level. This period in the development of the EU is often referred to as the so called *Permissive Consensus* (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970) of the incipient stages of the European Community. As Mair (2007, 1) noted: *"In the absence of any serious outbreak of opposition, agreement was taken as given. This was the essence of the so-called permissive consensus: there was a consensus in the sense that there was agreement across the political mainstream that European integration should be furthered, and it was permissive in the sense that high levels of trust in the political elites during these years ensured there was almost always popular deference to their commitments."*

The initial 'quiescence' of the masses (especially pronounced in the immediate post-war period) and the apparent consensus (sometimes referred to as collusion) within the mainstream political elites that more integration is intrinsically desirable fed into themselves in a sort of self-reinforcing process whereby lacking discussion, debate, and conflict over Europe and overlapping policy preferences by political actors strongly hampered party competition over 'Europe'. For some authors (Katz and Mair, 1995), developments on the EU level (whose influence feeds back into the national arena) can also be seen as symptomatic of a greater change in national democratic politics. The democratic deficit can also be seen as an interaction between the trans-national level of Union building and distinctive processes of party evolution at the national levels. Political parties are intrinsic to modern representative democracy as we know it, and the nature of political parties has changed over time. The characteristics of parties have changed, their modus operandi evolved, as well as the behavior of their leaderships and target constituencies. According to Katz and Mair, some of these key characteristics of party behaviour that have varied over periods have cast a strong influence on the terms of inter-party competition.

Originally, the mass parties evolved from forms closer to grass-roots manifestations, often built around well-defined social groups (for example the working class), being in a way a

part of civil society. Political parties evolved as agencies through which these groups (implicitly their members) participate in politics and make demands of the state, hoping even to put their own representatives in key offices. This however, started to change with the appearance of Kirchheimer's⁶³ so called „catch-all party“, which challenged the idea of the party as a representative of a pre-defined social group, sector or strata of society. With time traditional, established political parties in Europe have – simultaneously – lost most of their initial grass-roots manifestations and increasingly changed from being organizations meant to represent constituencies into organizations whose main role has become the formation of government and running of the state. Concomitantly, the main objective for most parties became the winning of as many votes as possible in elections, to effectively „catch all“ votes, hence the tag. Parties, and the governments they formed, are being faced with increasingly many principals. Besides their standard constituencies of partisan voters, catch all parties are now vying for as large a segment as possible of the electorate that is growing increasingly de-aligned (see Andre, Depauw, and Beyens, 2015). The prospect of government necessitates that parties are at the same time responsive to a swath of private and public organizations, within national borders and outside them. There is plethora of international fora which states must comply with today (most importantly the EU), not to mention the commitments towards other countries, all the while the electorate is ever more fragmented. On the one hand, the proportion of partisans and non-partisan voters in society is changing. As society is becoming more atomized, and as traditional clusters of social groups are drifting apart, parties have to respond to an ever diverse electorate, wherein people are less committed to voting consistently for only one party (due to personal family or class histories, as was common in the past) which encourages voter dealignment.

In their vying for as great a share of the distribution of votes as possible parties have moved increasingly more towards the center of the political spectrum, in their attempt to cover as wide a political space and reach as many voters as possible. The upshot has been that by doing so, most of these parties helped accentuate the perception that party leaderships are sealed off from society, that they (their members, their leaders, i.e. the political elite) have started to resemble each other increasingly more and ever less with their constituents. As the parties have moved closer together and the supply of policy alternatives shrank in terms of range, especially so on the issue of Integration which was limited to begin with, so did the alternatives available to

⁶³ Kirchheimer, 1957; Kirchheimer in Krouwel, 2003

voters to the point of limiting the apparent scope for a real choice on EU issues. Those “elites” held responsible for maintaining a consensual discourse on the EU level were the same ones charged with creating the seemingly depoliticized architecture of the European Union, the mainstream politicians and the leadership of catch-all parties. The fact that they seemed to function ever less as representative entities (but as governing and administrative ones instead) for the masses did not help matters, especially when viewed in combination with the reduced competition space for EU policy preferences.

Opposition to ‘Europe’

From the Eurocautious, or Eurosceptic perspective, the development of the European level of decision making played a role in the hollowing out of policy competition between parties at the national level. Firstly, „Europe“ limited the policy space available to competing parties when policies are harmonized and different policy areas face convergence within the Union. Europe was charged with also limiting the capacities of national parties in government by reducing their policy repertoire and their range of available policy instruments. While national governments may still vary from one another in how they interpret the demands for policy convergence (within a certain margin), the result is often policy that seems to differ too little across moderate/mainstream parties. When decision making is delegated from the national to supra-national level, it is most often delegated to non-majoritarian institutions, from which parties and politics are excluded by design. When this happens, policy is usually decided according to various legal and expert principles, but not subject to opposition politics. This has thus helped reduce the stakes of competition between political parties, to mute the potential differences brought by successive governments, (and to limit the scope for classical opposition). When policy competition is dampened down in this way, elections become less decisive in policy terms. This also has the effect of making political parties converge, increasing the potential political space/niche for parties willing to criticize the system.

Part of the appeal of populist anti-system Eurosceptic Parties can and should be viewed also from the perspective of avenues made available for opposition of different kinds with time. The development of opposition in Europe (in relation to the processes of European Integration

and Enlargement) can be made sense of from a perspective based on Kirchheimer's now widely quoted and famous essay about the „waning“ of Opposition in Western Europe (1957). In it, Kirchheimer described various types of political opposition. The first one, defined as „classical“ opposition, reflects a system where those who are not in government opposed and offered alternatives to the policies pursued by the government. The opposition accepts the constitutional order of the polity, it accepts the right of those in power to govern, and acts as a shadow (or potential) government which could itself find itself in power in the near future. What it opposes are the individual policies themselves. „Opposition of principle“ on the other hand is referred to by Kirchheimer as being opposition to the polity itself. This opposition rejects the constitutional order „out of principle“ and rejects the right of government to govern, in other words, it denies the legitimacy of the system of government, and does not wish to be a part of it. Anti-system opposition, or opposition of principle, is undermined when more scope is afforded to classical opposition. People are less likely to oppose a political system when they are afforded the alternatives to choose from within it (and the possibility to say yes or no to various elements and policies within that political system). When voters are able to express opposition to policies within the polity, or are offered an electoral choice that represents opposition, they are less likely to be swayed by opposition *to* the polity. When the possibilities to organize classical opposition are limited, the likelihood grows that critics will mobilize around an opposition to the polity itself, *out of principle*, hence the name.

In its incipient phases, the lack of real consistent opposition to European Integration (whole, or parts of it) enhanced the feeling of „elimination of opposition“. The growing salience of Europe and the initial convergence of political parties in the middle of the political space created a growing niche for „opposition of principle“. As the weight of the EU grew, as its reach into the domestic sphere extended into and impacted national politics, that too helped foster the sentiment of democratic deficit and implicitly the perception of limited possibilities for traditional opposition in relation to the apparent collusion of mainstream politics and lack of critical alternatives at the ballot box. Because of the lacking possibility for real opposition ‘within the system’ – i.e. the mainstream parties -, the political niche was opened to opposition „to the system“, which new political entrepreneurs are more than happy to exploit it in the wake of growing concerns about state sovereignty, integration, immigration and economic woes. Such

Eurosceptic policy entrepreneurs have also speculated⁶⁴ the seeming lack of accountability of decision-making at the EU level, accountability which – as Gustavsson, Karlsson and Persson (2009, 171) have argued – has been of questionable strength. Cathernie De Vries (2007, 364) states that *„European Integration has motored full speed ahead“* with the expansion of the Union’s jurisdictional authority over a range of policies (from market integration and employment policy to immigration and the adoption of the single currency, Eastern Enlargement and the negotiation of a proposed *„Constitution“* for the entire bloc). At the same time, Loveless and Rohrschneider argue that: *„at the core, the democratic deficit is founded on the idea that it is difficult for Europeans to care about a Union whose identity was for so long nebulous or at least limited, but which over time appears to increasingly impinge upon every aspect of their existence“* (Loveless and Rohrschneider, 2008, 15). The development of EU has been characterized by long periods of absence of political conflict on questions of European Integration. More often than not, political contestation on the issue of Europe was muted, and traditionally there was basically little to no Eurosceptic option available to the voter unless she was prepared to go completely outside of the mainstream, an option that was rarely utilized for a variety of reasons.

In the past, it was harder for populist parties to legitimize themselves, given that less time had passed since the 2nd world war. It was harder to vote *„nationalist“* and to justify voting for populists. The extreme right was discredited by the memory of the 1930’s and 40’s, and the left (to some degree) by the ongoing reality of the cold war. Arguably, the presence of external geopolitical threat helped gel the then members of the EEC together. Due to the outside threat, the permissive consensus was better legitimized. This helped *„enshrine“* the consensus, as it not only made politicians more amenable to consensus on the EEC, but the *„people“* more amenable to compromise on the existence and the workings of EU. As one moves further through time though, the safety cushion of cartelized mainstream politics eroded, and certain types of political actions or concepts underwent a change in their acceptability and interpretation, aided by certain exogenous developments. Firstly, memories of past years faded, the cold war (and communism as a perceived threat) fizzled out, nationalists distanced themselves from the World War, and ever larger populations of immigrants helped give a new lease on life to those parties promoting populist or nationalist stands. Time and historical change offered a new platform for those

⁶⁴ especially in light of the growing politicization of the European question

promoting the nationalist ideas not as an expansionist message, but a more communitarian one, wishing to „conserve“ the nation, its ethnic unity and its values. The losers of globalization saw transnationalism sap into their livelihood, supranational decision-making was presented as encroaching upon communities (Kriesi *et al*, 2008), and the new far right made the master stroke of promoting welfare-chauvinism (De Lange, 2007; Kitschelt, 2004, 1): protecting the welfare state and its social-democratic policies against immigration, foreigners, globalization, and its strongest expression: the EU. The re-legitimized fringe parties of the far right and far left now had the potential to offer a credible challenge and alternative to the mainstream that designed Europe as we know it. Increasing visibility and contestation of the integration process brought to light the discrepancy between voters and the voted on the desired speed of integration, and this perception of discrepancy perfectly plays into fringe parties' populist ideology, whose core tenets likewise use the claim that 'ordinary politicians don't represent the people'.

Cas Mudde (2004, 543) has referred to populism as a '*thin-centered ideology*' and "*an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonte generale**". Central to populist discourse is an 'us versus them' categorization of political forces and political relations. When the 'them/they' group is constituted and constructed to mean the political leadership of a country (the members of moderate political parties) and equated with elites, the charge is made that the group is unrepresentative and unresponsive to 'the people' (or worse, opposed to furthering the interests of the latter) and that the situation – the political landscape of the polity - must be rectified. When the members of grass-roots, fringe or radical parties brand themselves as being part of the 'us', a collection of potential politicians un-tainted and corrupted by the 'elitism' of those in the political center, they are attempting to present themselves as being on the side of the people, the 'us' in the struggle against the out-group of elites.

Successful challengers

Norris suggests (2005, 15) that the spatial spread of mainstream parties all across the ideological spectrum constrains the opportunities for the radical right or left to expand. It is in those countries where the major parties of the left and right converge in the moderate center of the

political spectrum, and where major parties failed to address the issues of race relations, immigration, and free market economics (that concern the electorate), that the most space is allowed for the radical right or left to maximize their support in. Such a policy space with a large open niche for policy entrepreneurs opened with ever growing Europeanization.

Following the work of Hooghe and Marks (2009), and Meguid (2005), issue promotion is more often than not the territory of small parties or parties on the fringes of the political spectrum (most often, these go hand in hand). Hobolt and De Vries (2015) argue that the most likely issue entrepreneurs tend to be fringe and radical parties (while the mainstream – especially governing parties – are less mobile and innovative). These new political parties typically lie on the periphery of political party systems, often displaying more grass-roots characteristics than mainstream parties and offer an alternative policy position to the central parties EU position that was previously missing. Thus, they exploit the demand for opposition to Integration, for an alternative position previously missing. Moreover, parties on the fringes of the political spectrum have a strong interest in restructuring contestation to broaden their voter base, because their extreme position on the left/right dimension is likely to provide a low ceiling to their support base. As a result, these parties have an incentive to „find some alternative issue that that beats the winner. Problematizing European Integration and an attitude more skeptical of the EU offers them a weapon with which to punish the political mainstream for its lack of flexibility over Europe. The sort of issues that parties on the extreme left and right can be expected to pick up would be those maximizing consistency with their ideological platforms, while at the same time minimizing positional distance to some untapped concern of the public. The EU issue shapes up nicely to be such an issue because Euroscepticism is ideologically consistent with these parties’ general scepticism of the economic and political status quo, and public opinion is generally more Eurosceptic than mainstream elites (Costello, Thomassen and Rosema 2012) – a situation which Hooghe (2003) refers to as „Europe Divided“. Thus, opposition to European Integration should enhance extremist parties’ credibility, since it fits well with their existing ideological profile (although euroscepticism is not exclusively limited of the far right or far left), and taps into voters positions on the issue. The erosion of the permissive consensus (and other conditions) set the scene for these parties to capitalize on the situation, and capitalize they have. Eurosceptic parties have in various ways managed to surprise the establishment with their results at the ballot box, and with every passing election, surprise is slowly turning into panic.

The growing success of populist parties has not remained undocumented in the field of electoral politics. Pippa Norris (2005) offers a detailed account of why conditions have become so ripe in Western European politics to make possible the threat of Mudde's Populist Zeitgeist (Mudde, 2004). Formulated in Downsian Parlance, the position of the mean voter is not static, but changes with time (sometimes more rapidly, sometimes more slowly for a variety of reasons. Such changes can be gradual, cumulative long term shifts, or induced by external shocks and changes in the political economic environment. Norris argues that the impact of globalization acts like such a 'shock' to public opinion, driving the rising demand for cultural or economic protectionism (Norris, 2005, 23). The rising salience of cultural protectionism, with its affiliates, globalization, immigration, etc has altered public agendas in various countries, across countries. It is developments such as these that inform theories like those of Marks and Wilson (2000) according to which the new concerns about Europeanization are assimilated by fringe parties 'worked on top and into' the pre-existing political ecology.

For Norris, (2005, 24), radical right parties have best responded to this change in public opinion by articulating concerns and supplying policies about cultural protectionism, thereby meeting public demand. Rydgren (2004, 475) argues that the new populist right has managed – in the wake of new fears induced by globalization, immigration and the likes, to promote a new 'master frame' of issues which distinguished it from the old European right, and managed to draw voters away from more established parties. According to the author, this success was contingent and dependent on certain political opportunity structures provided by the political system in the form of catch-all party convergence. Facilitating demand side explanations for such changes in the electorate, one cannot discount the phenomena of partisan de-alignment and increasing political dissatisfaction, which make it easier to defect from the traditional mass parties. Survey evidence indicates a loosening of the lifelong bonds tying loyalists to mainstream parties in many established democracies (Norris, 2005, 13). The dynamics of party support have changed insofar as the electorate consists ever less of party partisans. Parties themselves, in their conversion to catch-all parties (see Katz and Mair, 1995) have relinquished their dependence on a certain core of devoted voters. In the process, everyone has become a potential voter for every party and a swing voter. These weakened ties of voters to certain particular parties have made it easier for voters to become dissatisfied with politicians, as they felt are no longer represented by them. Thus, the convergence of catch all parties, voter de-alignment and the depoliticized

architecture of EU integration helped reinforce one another and, under the auspices of globalization and discontent with it, offered fringe parties the targets required for populist discourse and attacks.

A Changing Landscape

At the beginning of the new millennium, Mark Franklin and Cees van der Eijk (2004) used the metaphor of a sleeping Giant to warn about the perils of Euroscepticism and the potential it had to disturb traditional European Politics. It was said to be asleep because it had not yet been activated, and tapped in as a political force, it was not yet properly relevant to political competition. It was a giant because of the great potential power it harbored, to uproot and change politics in Europe – if awakened. The authors claimed that the distribution of voter preferences according on an alternative issue and dimension of political conflict does not overlap with that on the traditional, economic dimension of politics, but is instead orthogonal to it. The implication was that if elections were actually run the basis of such political conflicts and issue agendas, it could unearth the structure of politics in Europe as we know it. While many may deem such changes and evolution of Europe's political landscape as unfortunate, some have not missed the opportunity to specify that Euroscepticism is in a sense part of the democratization of the EU (De Wilde and Trenz, 2012). According to them: *“Euroscepticism points towards the emergence of elements of popular democracy in a system that is not fully reached or accessed by conventional procedures of representation“* (De Wilde and Trenz , 2012, 550).

Opposition to regional integration is becoming a relevant political topic and position, the electorate and public are voting in accordance, moderate parties are losing their voters and power base while populist Eurosceptic parties are turning into a determining force of political competition. Hooghe and Marks' (2009) Post-Functionalist Theory of European Integration has at its heart the idea the European Integration, the EU and European politics have entered a new (post functionalist, post economic) phase of political engagement and dynamics. According to their thesis, future conflict about European Integration will be no longer be determined by economic considerations, but by questions of identity (see also Borzel and Risse, 2008, Schmitter 2009). In a rejoinder to Hooghe and Marks, Kriesi (2009) compares the former's depiction of

identity as the basis for new political conflict to his own assessment of culture (the cultural dimension) as the catalyst for new political dynamics.

Whether one refers to culture, identity, or some other concept that can be applied to the contest, it is clear that European Politics has entered an era where political parties have far less room to maneuver and are under more pressure with regards to their political message and actions towards Europe. These changes vis-à-vis support and opposition to European Integration are mirroring those described by the likes of H. Kriesi, Romain Lachat or Edgar Grande, when discussing political and social changes in Western Europe from a wider perspective. In a way, the entire problem of Eurosceptic Contagion can also be seen as a part/parcel of this wider perspective. In the view of Edgar Grande (2012), globalization has led to a ‘fundamental’ change of cleavage structures, parties and party systems in Western Europe. These changes occurred at several levels – at that of societal conflicts (their structure and conflict-determined political space), that of political parties, and even that of entire party systems and their respective competitive dynamics. While globalization has long been seen as a result and outcome of agency, of decision making, the phenomenon has now begun to transform the very basis of politics in Western Europe. For Lachat and Kriesi (2008b, 275), the basis for this change has been a transformation of political party competition “from an essentially economic to an increasingly culturally determined confrontation”. Globalization has fueled and set the basis for a new line of conflict whose characteristic, specific issues are with time picked up, used and articulated by various political parties. Cultural issues have become ever more relevant for explaining the structure of party positions, and such issues that materialize around problems of globalization (such as questions of European integration) become increasingly salient. These changes and transformations are said to reflect changes taking place in the structure and political attitudes within the electorate. These changes, the new line of conflict, are turning Europe’s political landscape into one that is moving away from the old one-dimensional (economic) one towards one that is multi-dimensional. The new, second dimension is one that Kriesi *et al* term ‘the integration-demarcation’ dimension, and this line of conflict will – the authors argue – determine not only voters attitudes but also their voting choices. This is the basis of the now famous ‘New Cleavage Hypothesis’, which states that the new Cleavage will cast a strong influence on European Politics from now on. This new political cleavage, this new political fault of conflict, which pits the supporters of globalization against those of re-nationalization and

those of integration against those of demarcation, is predicted to influence politics in Western Europe in the years to come. Looking at the current presidential race in the United States of America, we might have reasons to assume that the New Cleavage Hypothesis could even hold across the ocean.

The findings in this dissertation show that the alternative political dimension is already influencing politics in Europe in line with the above mentioned work referring to the multidimensionality of European Politics. The political establishment in Western Europe is forced to acknowledge the electorate's fatigue and irritation the project of ever closer Union, and forced into political choices it was able to avoid until the present day. For better or worse, European Integration is now politicized. While the work referenced above describes the wider changes to those social cleavages that inform and influence politics in the Western world, this project focused instead on a narrower and more minute aspect of these changes in European Politics: how Eurosceptic policy position spread in Europe's party system simply due to the rational vote-seeking logic followed by political parties. It focuses on the behavior of political parties and the factors that influence the manner in which they adjust and adapt to the challenge of Eurosceptic policy entrepreneurs. While work such as those of Kriesi *et al* paint the entire socio-political landscape, this study attempts to draw the portrait of some of the actors in that landscape and – in the process – explore their interactions and their behavior in the electoral contest.

Given mainstream and moderate parties traditional attachment to European Integration, this dissertation also argues that while Eurosceptic contagion might be happening, while mainstream parties are indeed sliding in a Eurosceptic direction, the fact that such changes are not tactically instrumental gives advocates of European Integration some measure of hope. If moderate centrist parties adjust in such a way that steals the populists' thunder and maintain enough public support to keep the latter locked out of power (which is no longer a definite given, considering the continent's volatile political environment) we could see not a rollback of European Integration, just a stalling and halting of it. Even in such a scenario the near future might be a bumpy ride. In the introduction to this dissertation I brought up the bicycle metaphor often used for the European Union, based on the assumption that it must constantly progress in order to not fall. Progress is becoming immensely more difficult as present developments around us are showing.

An Invitation to Contemplation

As a closing remark, and as an invitation to future research and contemplation, I would like to bring up the idea of the changing structure of inter-party conflict. Recent elections and election forecasts have given us many a reason to pause and think about the evolution of the political landscape in Europe and beyond. In a number of countries, political parties and actors that lay on the fringes of the political scene are mounting an ever growing challenge for the center stage of the electoral race. The causes are multiple and intertwined, ranging from voter dissatisfaction with the cartelization of politics, to the erosion of party-constituency ties, to growing apprehension about globalization. One of the consequences of said developments is the growing success of populist or fringe parties, and growing polarization of policy preferences within the landscape of public opinion.

Consider Austria, where the most recent presidential election produced a run-off result so close that the country's constitutional court has decided that the second round of the election must be repeated. While this in itself might seem news-worthy and enough to attract attention to a national political scene that rarely makes the world headlines, it is not the most interesting or noteworthy aspect surrounding it. More important perhaps is the fact that neither of the two candidates come from one of the two main, established parties of Austrian politics (the candidates of the SPÖ and the ÖVP came 4th and 5th respectively). Not only was there a poor showing by the historical Volksparteien, but the two candidates that made it to the second round represent what is arguably the poles of the political landscape: Norbert Hofer of the right-wing Austrian Freedom Party and Alexander Van der Bellen, nominally an independent candidate but actually a member of the Green Party.

The landscape of public opinion and political preferences has become such that voters are abandoning the political center for the fringes of the political spectrum. This phenomenon is not isolated. It is instead part and parcel of a larger wave of political discontent with mainstream politics combined with an apparent polarization of public opinion and political preferences (especially/more so along the lines of alternative political dimensions). This manifests itself as growing voter defections whereby individuals are taking their all precious vote either to a resurging populist far right that espouses communitarian, conservative, anti-immigrant, anti-

globalization as a political message, or a left wing scene (often populist as well) that combines a traditional focus on social equity and redistribution with progressive positions on immigration, environment, bottom-up decision making.

While Austria might be a particularly expressive example of this phenomenon (because the second round run-off forces candidates out of the race and both remaining candidates were interestingly ‘fringe’ candidates), such tendencies can be detected in many other western polities. A process of a somewhat similar flavor is animating German politics, where current forecasts predict that the coming legislative elections will see significant losses by both the CDU as well as the SPD, with the AfD and the Green Party gaining at their expense. Opinion polarization has been galvanized by issues such as the Euro crisis and the recent refugee crisis, with political actors and segments of society taking sides on a cleavage defined seemingly ever more by a cosmopolitan-nativist (pro/anti – immigration, refugees, EU) divide where the AfD stands at one pole and more progressive, left-leaning forces (The Greens, Die Linke) at the other.

In the USA, among the last three persons vying for nomination as presidential candidates (D. Trump having already secured Republican nomination and B. Sanders and H. Clinton fighting over the Democratic one) one advocated policy views often decried as far-right populist, while another ran on a populist left-wing platform. Both presented the idea of ‘turning away’ from mainstream politics in a break with the past and the political establishment. In Great Britain, UKIP has not only mobilized the issue of European Integration and forced debate about it to the very center of the political agenda, it has managed to achieve and accomplish its *raison d’être*: the United Kingdom has voted to leave the European Union. At the same time, the two main political parties (reflecting developments across the ocean) are forced to put up with internal tensions that reflect wider voter apprehension with mainstream politics. The main center-left party is rebelling against its leader whom some deem to be too far to the left (but appears to have the backing of the masses), while on the center-right the Tories are struggling to balance the competing demands of moderation and opposition to integration.

In Southern Europe, the relative strength and influence of the far right and the more progressive far left is somewhat reversed compared to the rest of the continent, with right wing populism being the weaker pole. The Lega Nord in Italy was for a long time the country’s ‘flagship’ Eurosceptic party and its leader, Umberto Bossi, was perhaps the face of Italian Euroscepticism until Giuseppe Grillo initiated the Five Star Movement. While being a populist,

anti-establishment, anti-EU party, the latter is also characterized by a focus on sustainability, environmentalism, and grass-roots orientation (the party is sometimes even referred to as an ‘e-party’). While the Lega Nord has maintained its position and supporters on the far right of Italian politics, the Five Star Movement has been a juggernaut in Italian politics drawing large numbers of voters from other parties – only a few years after its birth, it has become the largest opposition party in Italy, and the second largest behind the social-democratic PD (the PD itself resulted after a series of mergers by various smaller center-left parties).

In Greece, the social fallout of the Euro crisis and the election of Alexis Tsipras has produced a situation that is simultaneously a tragedy and fairy tale of socialism and the far left in Europe. Syriza’s left wing leader became Prime Minister in the economically embattled country, but the political scene there has had to contend with populist forces from the other edge of the ideological landscape as well: right wing parties such as Golden Dawn and The Independent Greeks have contributed to the sap in support for traditional, more established parties. Spain seems to have been spared the fight with right-wing populism. While the left-wing anti-establishment Unidos Podemos has managed to become the third best represented party behind the established PP and PSOE, the other party that is attracting voters at the expense of other, traditional, political actors is the moderate Ciudadanos.

These are just some examples from Europe’s (and beyond) more important national political arenas, where the ideological center is losing to both the right and the left. Historically, the structure of political conflict and the shape of political parties has often also been a function of wider societal political change. From Weltanschauungsparteien to the Mass Party in the era of expanding enfranchisement, and from Kirchheimer’s Catch-all Party to the Cartelization of Parties in more recent times, the nature of the contest between parties has been a function of the changing landscape of constituencies and dynamics of public opinion. Western polities are increasingly characterized by the simultaneous weakening of party ties, discontent with traditional politics and the growing gap between supporters and opponents of globalization, integration, denationalization. The main conclusion, or take-away of this project is that as Eurosceptic parties grow successful enough, the other parties will move to copy, at least to some degree, elements of their discourse or policy positions. It is further implied that while this might slow down the process of Integration, it will not reverse it, provided that mainstream, Europhile

parties manage to remain at the helm of political decision making and keep Eurosceptic parties out of power. That however is no certainty in the present environment of European Politics.

A set of questions springs from this set of circumstances. If current trends of political defection from historical political parties to alternative, less established parties continue; and if the trends of defection continue to be multi-directional (in other words, if voters move towards political entrepreneurs on both the right and left wing, resulting in voter distributions that are ever less bell-shaped and ever more flat), what consequences might this hold for electoral politics and inter-party competition in the near and mid term future? Is this a mere temporary weakening of large center parties, or a more lasting effect? If current polarization and divisiveness over cultural and 'vertical'/non-economic policy issues remain (or grow) what will that mean for the future of catch-all politics in 'the West'? Moreover, if the foreseeable future will be characterized by ever stronger alternative fringe parties and ever weaker mainstream, centrist parties, is there any base on which to talk about a new era of party politics? One of ideological-families' style contagion and adaptation where the center left and center right are ever more drawn apart by their respective fringe neighbors? Or one where moderate parties converge even more towards the center (increasing cartelization) and fringe parties populate an ever larger space? One where increased divisiveness between the proponents and opponents of globalization, integration and supranational governance reduce the possibility space for consent and compromise, or one where grass-roots, partisan politics and populism on both sides of the political spectrum generates a reversal of political cartelization and professionalization? All this is, of course, mere postulation at best and speculation at worst, but it is undoubted that Western politics are undergoing certain transformations with regards to the parameters (issue agenda, trends in party support) of political competition that could provide interesting avenues of future research. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that their party systems and the nature of political party competition in Europe might also undergo significant changes.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 – The temporal structure of the dataset

Belgium

Election results between _ and _	Affect party positions between CHES waves
1981 - 1987	1984 - 1988
1987 - 1991	1988 – 1992
1991 -1995	1992 – 1996
1995 - 1999	1996 – 1999
No Election between 99 and 02	1999 – 2002 – Cases Dropped
1999 - 2003	2002 -2006
2007 - 2010	2006 – 2010
2010 - 2014	2010 - 2014

Denmark

Election results between _ and _	Affect party positions between CHES waves
1984 – 1987	1984 - 1988
1988 – 1990	1988 – 1992
1990 – 1994	1992 – 1996
1994 – 1998	1996 – 1999
1998 – 2001	1999 – 2002
2001 – 2005	2002 -2006
2005 – 2007	2006 – 2010
2007 - 2011	2010 - 2014

Germany

Election results between _ and _	Affect party positions between CHES waves
1983 – 1987	1984 - 1988
1987 – 1990	1988 – 1992
1990 – 1994	1992 – 1996
1994 – 1998	1996 – 1999
1998 – 2002	1999 – 2002
2002 – 2005	2002 -2006
2005 – 2009	2006 – 2010
2009 – 2013	2010 - 2014

Greece

Election results between _ and _	Affect party positions between CHES waves
1981 – 1985	1984 - 1988
1985 – 1990	1988 – 1992
1990 – 1993	1992 – 1996
1993 – 1996	1996 – 1999
1996 – 2000	1999 – 2002

2000 – 2004	2002 -2006
2004 – 2009	2006 – 2010
2009 - 2012	2010 - 2014

Spain

Election results between _ and	Affect party positions between CHES waves
1982 – 1996	1984 - 1988
1986 - 1989	1988 – 1992
1989 – 1993	1992 – 1996
1993 -1996	1996 – 1999
1996 - 2000	1999 – 2002
2000 - 2004	2002 - 2006
2004 – 2008	2006 – 2010
2008 - 2011	2010 - 2014

France

Election results between _ and	Affect party positions between CHES waves
1981 – 1986	1984 - 1988
1986 – 1988	1988 – 1992
1988 – 1993	1992 – 1996
1993 – 1997	1996 – 1999
1997 – 2002	1999 – 2002
No election between 02 and 06	2002 - 2006 – Cases Dropped
2002 – 2007	2006 – 2010
2007 – 2012	2010 - 2014

Ireland

Election results between _ and	Affect party positions between CHES waves
1982 – 1987	1984 - 1988
1987 – 1989	1988 – 1992
1989 – 1992	1992 – 1996
1992 – 1997	1996 – 1999
1997 – 2002	1999 – 2002
No election between 02 and 06	2002 – 2006 – Cases Dropped
2002 – 2007	2006 – 2010
2007 – 2011	2010 - 2014

Italy

Election results between _ and	Affect party positions between CHES waves
1983 – 1987	1984 - 1988
1987 – 1992	1988 – 1992
1992 – 1994	1992 – 1996
1994 – 1996	1996 – 1999
1996 – 2001	1999 – 2002

2001 – 2006	2002 -2006
2006 – 2008	2006 – 2010
2008 - 2013	2010 - 2014

Netherlands

Election results between _ and _	Affect party positions between CHES waves
1982 – 1986	1984 - 1988
1986 – 1989	1988 – 1992
1989 – 1994	1992 – 1996
1994 – 1998	1996 – 1999
1998 – 2002	1999 – 2002
2002 – 2006	2002 -2006
2006 – 2010	2006 – 2010
2010 - 2012	2010 - 2014

UK

Election results between _ and _	Affect party positions between CHES waves
1983 – 1987	1984 - 1988
1987 – 1992	1988 – 1992
No election between 92 and 96	1992 – 1996 – Cases Dropped
1992 – 1997	1996 – 1999
1997 – 2001	1999 – 2002
2001 – 2005	2002 -2006
2005 – 2010	2006 – 2010
No election between 2010 and 2014	2010 – 2014 – Cases Dropped

Portugal

Election results between _ and _	Affect party positions between CHES waves
1983 – 1987	1984 - 1988
1987 – 1991	1988 – 1992
1991 – 1995	1992 – 1996
1995 – 1999	1996 – 1999
1999 – 2002	1999 – 2002
2002 – 2005	2002 -2006
2005 – 2009	2006 – 2010
2009 - 2011	2010 - 2014

Austria

Election results between _ and _	Affect party positions between CHES waves
1983 – 1986	1984 - 1988
1986 – 1990	1988 – 1992
1990 – 1995	1992 – 1996
1995 – 1999	1996 – 1999

1999 – 2002	1999 – 2002
2002 – 2006	2002 -2006
2006 -2008	2006 – 2010
2008 – 2013	2010 - 2014

Finland

Election results between _ and	Affect party positions between CHES waves
1983 – 1987	1984 - 1988
1987 – 1991	1988 – 1992
1991 – 1995	1992 – 1996
1995 – 1999	1996 – 1999
No election between 99 and 02	1999 – 2002 – Cases Dropped
1999 – 2003	2002 -2006
2003 – 2007	2006 – 2010
2007 – 2011	2010 - 2014

Sweden

Election results between _ and	Affect party positions between CHES waves
1982 – 1988	1984 - 1988
1988 – 1991	1988 – 1992
1991 – 1994	1992 – 1996
1994 -1998	1996 – 1999
1998 – 2002	1999 – 2002
2002 -2006	2002 -2006
2006 – 2010	2006 – 2010
2010 - 2014	2010 – 2014

Appendix 2

List of Parties

The following list contains three categories/types of parties for every country: 1) The ‘normal’ parties, pro-EU or EU-neutral parties whose changes in position is measured as the dependent variable (ergo the left side of the equation). 2) Eurosceptic Parties – those parties whose (changes in) election results provide the values of the independent variable (ergo the right side of the equation). 3) Parties that are dropped from the analysis because they do not feature in the Expert Survey in consecutive years – these parties did not run in consecutive elections or were not deemed important enough by the survey administrators to be included in the original datasets.

Belgium

Europhile and Euromoderate Parties (Left side of the equation)

PS Parti Socialiste Socialist Party

SP; SPA Socialistische Partij; Socialist Party; Socialistische Partij Anders-Spirit Socialist Party Different-Spirit

ECOLO Ecolo Ecolo

AGALEV; Groen Agalev; Groen! Agalev; Green!

PRL; MR Parti Réformateur Libéral; Liberal Reformist Party; Mouvement Réformateur Reformist Movement

VLD Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten Flemish Liberals and Democrats

PSC; CDH Parti Social Chrétien; Christian Social Party; Centre Démocrate Humaniste Humanist Democratic Centre

CVP; CD&V Christelijke Volkspartij; Christian People’s Party; Christen-Democratisch & Vlaams Christian Democratic & Flemish

VU; NVA Volksunie; Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie People’s Union; New Flemish Alliance

FDF/RW Front Démocratique des Francophones Francophone Democratic Front

Eurosceptic Parties (Right side of the equation)

VB Vlaams Blok; Vlaams Belang Flemish Bloc; Flemish Interest

FN Front National National Front

LDD Lijst DeDecker List Dedecker

PVDA Partij van de Arbeid in Belgie Workers Party of Belgium

NA Communist Party PCB/KP

PP Parti Populaire People’s Party

Parties in the dataset but not used by the analysis

MCC Mouvement des Citoyens pour le Changement Citizens’ Movement for Change

ID21 ID21

SLP Sociaal-Liberale Partij Social-Liberal Party

Denmark

Europhile and Euromoderate Parties (Left side of the equation)

SD Socialdemokraterne Social Democrats

RV Det Radikale Venstre Radical Left-Social Liberal Party

KF Konservative Folksparti Conservative People’s Party

CD Centrum-Demokraterne Centre Democrats

KRF Kristeligt Folkeparti Christian People’s Party

V Venstre, Danmarks Liberale Parti Venstre, Liberal Party of Denmark

LA Liberal Alliance Liberal Alliance (in 14)

Eurosceptic Parties (Right side of the equation)

SF Socialistisk Folkeparti Socialist People's Party (until 02)
 FP Fremskridtspartiet Progress Party
 EL Enhedslisten Unity List-Red/Green Alliance
 DF Dansk Folkeparti Danish People's Party
 JuniB Junibevegelsen June Movement
 FolkB Folkebevægelsen mod EU People's Movement Against the EU
 Justice Party RF
 Greens GRONN
 Danish Communist Party DKP
 Common Course FK
 Left Socialist Party VS

Germany

Europhile and Euromoderate Parties (Left side of the equation)

CDU Christlich Demokratische Union Christian Democratic Union
 SPD Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands Social Democratic Party of Germany
 FDP Freie Demokratische Partei Free Democratic Party
 Grünen Bündnis '90/Die Grünen Alliance 90/The Greens
 CSU Christlich Soziale Union in Bayern Christian Social Union in Bavaria

Eurosceptic Parties (Right side of the equation)

REP Republikaner Republikaner
 PDS; Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus; Party of Democratic Socialism; Linkspartei/PDS Die Linkspartei/
 Left Party/ Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus Party of Democratic Socialism
 DVU Deutsche Volksunion German People's Union
 German Communist Party KPD
 AfD Alternative für Deutschland Alternative for Germany

Parties in the dataset but not used by the analysis

Piraten Piratenpartei Deutschland Pirate Party of Germany
 DieTier Mensch Umwelt Tierschutz Human Environment Animal Protection

Greece

Europhile and Euromoderate Parties (Left side of the equation)

PASOK Panellinio Sosialistikó Kínima Panhellenic Socialist Movement
 ND Néa Dimokratía New Democracy
 POLA Politiki Anixi Political Spring
 Democratic Renewal DIANA/DA
 Ecologist-Alternatives EA

Eurosceptic Parties (Right side of the equation)

SYN; SYRIZA Synaspismós tis Aristerás kai tis Proódou; Coalition of the Left and Progress; Synaspismós's
 Rizospastikís Aristerás Coalition of the Radical Left (Until 2010)
 DIKKI Dimokratiko Kinoniko Kinima Democratic Social Movement (after 1996)
 KKE Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas Communist Party of Greece
 LAOS Laïkós Orthódoxos Synagermós Popular Orthodox Rally
 NA New Left Current NAP

ANEL Anexartitoi Ellines Independent Greeks
 XA Laïkós Sýndesmos—Chrysí Avgí Popular Association—Golden Dawn

Parties in the dataset but not used by the analysis

Potami To Potami The River
 DIMAR Dimokratiki Aristera Democratic Left
 OP Oikologoi Prasinoi Ecologist Greens

Spain

Europhile and Euromoderate Parties (Left side of the equation)

PSOE Partido Socialista Obrero Espa sol Spanish Socialist Workers' Party
 PP Partido Popular People's Party
 CiU Converg ncia i Uni  Convergence and Unity
 PNV Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea/ Partido Nacionalista Vasco Basque Nationalist Party
 EA Eusko Alkartasuna Basque Solidarity
 PAR Partido Aragones Aragones Party
 ERC Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya Republican Left of Catalonia
 UV Uni n Valenciana Valencian Union
 BNG Bloque Nacionalista Galego Galician Nationalist Bloc
 VERDE Los Verdes The Greens
 VE Green party
 PA Partido Andalucista Andalusian Party
 CC Coalicion Canaria Coalicion Canaria
 CHA Chunta Aragonesista Aragones Council
 UPD Union Progreso y Democracia Union, Progress, and Democracy
 Centre Democrats CDS, CDS/UC
 Basque Left EE, PSE-EE

Eurosceptic Parties (Right side of the equation)

IU Izquierda Unida United Left
 EH Euskal Herritarrok We Basque Citizens
 Podemos Podemos We Can

Parties in the dataset but not used by the analysis

IC Iniciativa per Catalunya Initiative for Catalonia
 PSC Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya Catalan Socialist Party
 CpE Coalicion por Europa Coalition for Europe
 EdP-V Europa de los Pueblos-Los Verdes Europe of the Peoples-Greens
 Amaiur Amaiur Amaiur
 Cs Ciudadanos—Partido de la Ciudadan a Citizens—Party of the Citizenry

France

Europhile and Euromoderate Parties (Left side of the equation)

PS Parti Socialiste Socialist Party
 PRG Parti Radical de Gauche Left Radical Party
 VERTS Les Verts Green Party
 RPR; UMP Rassemblement pour la R publique; Rally for the Republic; Union pour un Mouvement Populaire
 Union for Popular Movement
 UDF Union pour la D mocracie Fran aise Union for French Democracy

NA Ecology Generation GECOLO
DL Démocratie Libérale Liberal Democracy

Eurosceptic Parties (Right side of the equation)

PCF Parti Communiste Français French Communist Party
FN Front National National Front
RPF/MPF; MPF Rassemblement pour la France/Mouvement Pour la France; Rally for France/Movement for France;
Mouvement Pour la France Movement for France
LO-LCR Lutte Ouvrière/Ligue communiste révolutionnaire Workers Fight/Revolutionary
Communist League
CPNT Chasse, Pêche, Nature, Traditions Hunting, Fishing, Nature, Tradition Party
MN Mouvement National Républicain National Republican Movement
PG Parti de Gauche Left Party

Parties in the dataset but not used by the analysis

MEI Mouvement Ecologiste Indépendant Independent Ecological Movement
D La Droite The Right
Unified Socialist Party PSU
NC Nouveau Centre New Center
PRV Parti radical Radical Party
AC Alliance centriste Centrist Alliance
Ens Ensemble Together

Ireland

Europhile and Euromoderate Parties (Left side of the equation)

FF Fianna Fail Soldiers of Destiny
FG Fine Gael Family of the Irish
Lab Labour Labour
PD Progressive Democrats Progressive Democrats

Eurosceptic Parties (Right side of the equation)

GP Green Party Green Party (until 06)
SP Socialist Party Socialist Party (until 92, in 96 moderate)
SF Sinn Féin We Ourselves
Workers' Party WP
PBPA People Before Profit Alliance People Before Profit Alliance
Christian Solidarity

Parties in the dataset but not used by the analysis

Democratic Left DLP
101 Socialist Party SP

Italy

Europhile and Euromoderate Parties (Left side of the equation)

PDS; DS Partito Democratico della Sinistra; Democratic Party of the Left;
Democratici di Sinistra Democrats of the Left
PSDI; SDI Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano; Italian Democratic Socialist Party;
Socialisti Democratici Italiani Italian Democratic Socialists

Verdi Federazione dei Verdi Federation of Greens
 PRI Partito Repubblicano Italiano Italian Republican Party
 RAD Radicali Italiani Italian Radicals
 CCD; UDC Centro Cristiano Democratico; Unione dei Democratici Christian Democratic Center;
 Cristiani e die Democratici di Centro Union of Christian and Center Democrats
 FI Forza Italia Forward Italy
 CU/UD Unione Democratica Democratic Union
 CDU Cristiani Democratici Uniti United Christian Democrats
 DEM; DL I Democratici; Democrazia è Libertà-La Margherita The Democrats; Democracy is Freedom—
 The Daisy
 PPI Partito Popolare Italiano Italian Popular Party
 RI Rinnovamento Italiano Italian Renewal-Dini List
 SVP Südtiroler Volkspartei South Tyrolean People's Party
 IdV Di Pietro-Italia dei Valori Italy of Values
 UDEUR Popolari-UDEUR Popular-UDEUR
 PD Partito Democratico Democratic Party
 Christian Democrats/ Popular Party DC/PP
 Italian Socialist Party PSI
 Italian Liberal Party PLI
 Network/Movement for Democracy RETE

Euroceptic Parties (Right side of the equation)

LN Lega Nord Northern League (from 1999) moderate until 96
 RC Rifondazione Comunista Communist Refoundation Party
 AN Alleanza Nazionale National Alliance MSI-DN/AN (until 06) Moderate in 10
 MS Movimento Sociale Fiamma Tricolore Tricolor Flame Social Movement
 PdCI Partito dei Comunisti Italiani Party of Italian Communists
 FDL Fratelli d'Italia Brothers of Italy
 M5S Movimento Cinque Stelle Five Star Movement
 Proletarian Democracy DP (until 88) DP

Parties in the dataset but not used by the analysis

LB Lista Bonino Bonino List
 PdUP Partito di Unità Proletaria Party of Proletarian Unity for Communism
 PsDA Partito Sardo d'Azione Sardinian Action Party
 SEG Patto Segni Segni Pact
 PP Partito dei Pensionati Pensioners' Party
 MRE Movimento Repubblicani Europei European Republican Movement
 NPSI Nuovo Partito Socialista Italiano New Italian Socialist Party
 SL Sinistra e Libertà Left and Freedom
 PSI Partito Socialista Italiano Italian Socialist Party
 MpA Movimento per le Autonomie Movement for Autonomies
 PCI Partito dei Comunisti Italiani Italian Communist Party
 SD Sinistra Democratica Democratic Left
 CD Centro Democratico—Diritti e Libertà Democratic Centre
 SC Scelta Civica Civic Choice
 VdA Vallée d'Aoste Aosta Valley
 NCD Nuovo Centrodestra New Centre-Right

Netherlands

Europhile and Euromoderate Parties (Left side of the equation)

CDA Christen-Democratisch Appel Christian Democratic Appeal
 PvdA Partij van de Arbeid Labour Party

VVD Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie People's Party for Freedom and Democracy
 D66 Democraten 66 Democrats 66
 GL Groen Links Green Left
 CU Christen Unie Christian Union
 PvdD Partij voor de Dieren Party for the Animals
 Radical Political Party PPR
 Evangelist People's Party EVP

Eurosceptic Parties (Right side of the equation)

SGP Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij Political Reformed Party (until 99 and again in 14)
 GPV Gereformeerd Politiek Verbond Reformed Political League
 RPF Reformatorische Politieke Federatie Reformational Political Federation
 CD Centrum Democraten Center Democrats
 SP Socialistische Partij Socialist Party
 LPF Lijst Pim Fortuyn Lijst Pim Fortuyn
 PVV Partij voor de Vrijheid Party for Freedom
 SGP Statkundig Gereformeerde Partij Reformed Political Party
 Pacifist Socialist Party PSP
 Dutch Communist Party CPN

Parties in the dataset but not used by the analysis

50PLUS 50PLUS

UK

Europhile and Euromoderate Parties (Left side of the equation)

Cons Conservative Party Conservative Party
 Lab Labour Party Labour Party
 LibDems Liberal Democratic Party Liberal Democratic Party
 SNP Scottish National Party Scottish National Party
 Plaid Plaid Cymru Party of Wales
 Soc.-Democratic Labour Party (N.IRL) SDLP

Eurosceptic Parties (Right side of the equation)

Greens Green Party Green Party (Until 1996)
 UKIP United Kingdom Independence Party United Kingdom Independence Party
 BNP British National Party British National Party
 Referendum Party
 Socialist Labor Party
 Scottish Socialist Party
 Socialist Alliance
 Democratic Unionist Party

Portugal

Europhile and Euromoderate Parties (Left side of the equation)

CDS/PP Centro Democrático e Social/ Partido Popular Democratic and Social Center/People's Party
 PS Partido Socialista Socialist Party
 PPD/PSD Partido Popular Democrático/ Democratic People's Party/ Partido Social Democrata Social Democratic Party

Popular Monarchist Party PPM
 Democratic Renewal Party PRD
 National Solidarity Party PSN

Eurosceptic Parties (Right side of the equation)

CDU Coligação Democrática Unitária Unitarian Democratic Coalition
 BE Bloco de Esquerda Left Bloc (Not in 06 and 10)
 Portuguese Communist Party PCP
 Popular Democratic Union UDP
 Democratic Movement of Portugal MDP
 Ecologists 'os Verdes' PEV (until 92) after that moderate
 National Renovator Party
 New Democracy Party

Parties in the dataset but not used by the analysis

Party of Christian-Democracy PDC
 MPT Partido da Terra Earth Party

Austria

Europhile and Euromoderate Parties (Left side of the equation)

SPÖ Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs Social Democratic Party of Austria
 ÖVP Österreichische Volkspartei Austrian People's Party
 LIF Liberales Forum Liberal Forum

Eurosceptic Parties (Right side of the equation)

FPÖ Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs Freedom Party of Austria (Starting 96)
 Grüne Die Grünen The Austrian Green Party (until 1996)
 BZÖ Bündnis Zukunft Österreich Alliance for the Future of Austria
 MARTIN Liste Dr. Hans-Peter Martin Hans-Peter Martin's List
 Austrian Communist Party KPO
 TeamStronach Team Stronach für Österreich Team Stronach for Austria

Parties in the dataset but not used by the analysis

NEOS NEOS—Das Neue Österreich NEOS—The New Austria

Finland

Europhile and Euromoderate Parties (Left side of the equation)

SDP Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Social Democratic Party of Finland
 KOK Kansallinen Kokoomus National Coalition Party
 KESK Suomen Keskusta Finnish Center Party
 RKP/SFP Ruotsalainen kansanpuolue/ Svenska folkpartiet Swedish People's Party
 VIHR Vihreät De Gröna Green League
 Liberal People's Party LKP

Eurosceptic Parties (Right side of the equation)

SKL; KD Suomen Kristillinen Liitto; Kristillisdemokraatit Finish Christian League; Christian Democrats (until 99)
 after 1999 moderate
 VAS Vasemmistoliitto Left Alliance (until 1992)

PS Persussuomalaiset True Finns (SMP)
 EKA Eläkeläiset Kansan Asialla Pensioners for the People
 KIPU Kirjava “puolue” - Elonkehän puolesta Ecological Party
 Democratic Alternative DA
 Alliance for free Finland

Parties in the dataset but not used by the analysis
 REM Remonttiryhmä Reform Group

Sweden

Europhile and Euromoderate Parties (Left side of the equation)

SAP Arbetarpartiet- Socialdemokraterna Worker’s Party-Social Democrats
 C Centerpartiet Center Party
 FP Folkpartiet liberalerna Liberal People’s Party
 M Moderaterna Moderate Party
 KD Kristdemokraterna Christian-Democrats
 NyD Ny Demokrati New Democracy
 PIRAT Piratpartiet Pirate Party

Eurosceptic Parties (Right side of the equation)

V Vänsterpartiet Left Party
 MP Miljöpartiet de Groena Environmental Party the Greens (until 2006) after 06 moderate
 JL Junilistan June List
 SD Sverigedemokraterna Sweden Democrats

Parties in the dataset but not used by the analysis
 FI Feministiskt initiativ Feminist Initiative

Appendix 3 – Extended Regression Tables

Table 1 – the Radical Party Hypothesis, first Analysis

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model	(3) Model	(4) Model
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.02** (0.007)			
Totalvotes_Biggest_EuroscepticP		-0.01 (0.009)		
Votechange_All_ES_Parties			-0.02** (0.006)	
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties			0.03 (0.042)	0.05 (0.045)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties			-0.04 (0.088)	-0.02 (0.087)
Totalvotes_All_ES_Parties				-0.00 (0.008)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.05 (0.043)	0.06 (0.042)		
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.03 (0.086)	-0.01 (0.088)		
Time	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.01 (0.025)	-0.02 (0.023)	-0.02 (0.024)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)
unemployment	0.03 (0.015)	0.03 (0.014)	0.02 (0.016)	0.03 (0.015)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.06*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.06*** (0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.15** (0.054)	0.13* (0.056)	0.15** (0.055)	0.13* (0.056)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01* (0.004)	0.01** (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)	0.01** (0.004)
2.country	0.09 (0.166)	0.14 (0.172)	0.13 (0.163)	0.20 (0.180)
3.country	-0.09 (0.117)	-0.10 (0.130)	-0.03 (0.115)	-0.05 (0.134)
4.country	-0.24 (0.278)	-0.19 (0.300)	-0.22 (0.282)	-0.19 (0.300)
5.country	-0.17 (0.207)	-0.23 (0.211)	-0.14 (0.193)	-0.20 (0.194)
6.country	0.02 (0.177)	0.09 (0.188)	0.01 (0.182)	0.07 (0.202)
7.country	0.27 (0.173)	0.24 (0.181)	0.28 (0.185)	0.27 (0.188)
8.country	0.00 (0.115)	-0.00 (0.118)	0.00 (0.109)	-0.01 (0.117)
10.country	0.32* (0.136)	0.35* (0.153)	0.32* (0.131)	0.35* (0.170)
11.country	-0.15 (0.222)	-0.21 (0.244)	-0.14 (0.213)	-0.17 (0.248)

12.country	0.00 (0.198)	0.03 (0.203)	0.01 (0.195)	0.04 (0.205)
13.country	-0.07 (0.235)	0.17 (0.256)	-0.05 (0.222)	0.11 (0.254)
14.country	0.16 (0.214)	0.15 (0.242)	0.13 (0.224)	0.16 (0.264)
16.country	0.36 (0.193)	0.41* (0.197)	0.36* (0.180)	0.42* (0.201)
Constant	0.73 (0.672)	0.64 (0.669)	0.78 (0.611)	0.69 (0.603)
Observations	527	533	527	533
R-squared	0.16	0.15	0.17	0.14
Adj. R-squared	0.13	0.11	0.13	0.10

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 2: Radical Party Hypothesis, 2nd analysis

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.02* (0.009)	
Totalvotes_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.00 (0.011)	
Votechange_All_ES_Parties		-0.02* (0.008)
Totalvotes_All_ES_Parties		0.00 (0.009)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties		0.04 (0.046)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties		-0.04 (0.085)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.04 (0.043)	
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.03 (0.088)	
Time	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.02 (0.023)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01* (0.006)	-0.01 (0.005)
unemployment	0.03 (0.014)	0.03 (0.015)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.15** (0.054)	0.15** (0.056)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)
2.country	0.10 (0.169)	0.09 (0.177)
3.country	-0.09 (0.115)	-0.02 (0.112)
4.country	-0.25 (0.287)	-0.23 (0.274)
5.country	-0.17	-0.15

	(0.204)	(0.191)
6.country	0.03	-0.04
	(0.179)	(0.187)
7.country	0.27	0.27
	(0.176)	(0.183)
8.country	0.01	-0.02
	(0.112)	(0.108)
10.country	0.33*	0.28
	(0.138)	(0.152)
11.country	-0.18	-0.10
	(0.228)	(0.222)
12.country	0.00	0.01
	(0.198)	(0.195)
13.country	-0.05	-0.09
	(0.261)	(0.242)
14.country	0.15	0.14
	(0.232)	(0.235)
16.country	0.36	0.36
	(0.184)	(0.183)
Constant	0.76	0.69
	(0.641)	(0.564)
Observations	527	527
R-squared	0.16	0.17
Adj. R-squared	0.12	0.13

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 3 – The Alternative Model

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model	(3) Model	(4) Model
Change_Position_on_EU	0.24 (0.407)	-0.27 (0.514)	0.07 (0.773)	-0.31 (1.018)
leadextremeness_biggestES	-0.83** (0.276)		-1.27 (1.232)	
leadsalience_biggestES	-0.20 (0.391)		-0.62 (1.326)	
leadextremeness_allES		-1.20** (0.368)		-1.36 (1.141)
leadsalience_allES		0.06 (0.508)		0.26 (1.328)
Time	0.25 (0.127)	0.30* (0.153)	0.26 (0.307)	0.24 (0.354)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	0.03 (0.020)	0.07** (0.024)	0.10 (0.085)	0.15 (0.107)
unemployment	0.17** (0.063)	0.18* (0.079)	0.17 (0.222)	0.26 (0.290)
2.country			1.42 (2.706)	-0.64 (2.927)
3.country			3.08	3.45

			(2.472)	(2.553)
4.country			-1.26	0.44
			(2.861)	(3.603)
5.country			2.57	1.12
			(3.916)	(3.443)
6.country			1.39	1.59
			(3.086)	(3.635)
7.country			-0.29	-0.91
			(2.678)	(3.037)
8.country			1.22	1.27
			(3.660)	(4.120)
10.country			0.07	1.44
			(3.641)	(3.795)
11.country			3.23	3.72
			(3.006)	(3.881)
12.country			0.32	-0.18
			(2.197)	(2.333)
13.country			2.61	5.20
			(4.888)	(5.814)
14.country			4.89	3.70
			(4.958)	(5.290)
16.country			3.46	4.09
			(3.136)	(3.755)
Constant	-0.79	-3.17	-3.90	-9.88
	(2.326)	(2.818)	(10.290)	(11.085)
Observations	421	421	421	421
R-squared	0.04	0.05	0.09	0.11
Adj. R-squared	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.06

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 4 – Eurosceptic Contagion and Electoral Threshold

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model
Votes_Over_Electoral_Threshold	0.11 (0.575)	0.30 (0.527)
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP		-0.02* (0.009)
Totalvotes_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.12 (0.578)	-0.30 (0.529)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.06 (0.042)	0.04 (0.043)
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.01 (0.090)	-0.03 (0.090)
Time	-0.01 (0.028)	-0.01 (0.027)
Public_Opinion_of_EU		-0.01*

	(0.006)	(0.006)
unemployment	0.03	0.03
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Left_Right	-0.06***	-0.05***
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.13*	0.15**
	(0.056)	(0.054)
Party_vote	-0.00	-0.00
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01**	0.01
	(0.004)	(0.004)
2.country	-0.19	-0.81
	(1.739)	(1.583)
3.country	-0.11	-0.10
	(0.138)	(0.121)
4.country	-0.41	-0.85
	(1.237)	(1.118)
5.country	-0.44	-0.77
	(1.226)	(1.118)
6.country	-0.45	-1.47
	(2.878)	(2.630)
7.country	-0.31	-1.24
	(2.981)	(2.721)
8.country	-0.11	-0.30
	(0.648)	(0.585)
10.country	-0.13	-1.00
	(2.625)	(2.399)
11.country	-0.76	-1.68
	(2.867)	(2.615)
12.country	-0.52	-1.50
	(2.938)	(2.691)
13.country	0.06	-0.36
	(0.593)	(0.559)
14.country	-0.40	-1.35
	(2.938)	(2.676)
16.country	0.30	0.05
	(0.729)	(0.668)
Constant	1.19	2.29
	(2.792)	(2.574)
Observations	533	527
R-squared	0.15	0.16
Adj. R-squared	0.11	0.12

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 5 – The Circumstances of Electoral Contagion

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model	(3) Model
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	0.01 (0.025)	-0.04 (0.021)	0.03 (0.036)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.05 (0.045)	0.05 (0.043)	0.05 (0.043)
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.03 (0.087)	-0.02 (0.087)	-0.03 (0.086)

Time	-0.01 (0.026)	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.01 (0.025)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)
unemployment	0.03 (0.014)	0.02 (0.013)	0.02 (0.014)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.15** (0.054)	0.15** (0.054)	0.16** (0.055)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01 (0.004)	0.01* (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)
Time*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.00 (0.003)		
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP		0.01 (0.008)	
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP			-0.01 (0.010)
2.country	0.12 (0.174)	0.10 (0.166)	0.10 (0.171)
3.country	-0.07 (0.114)	-0.10 (0.118)	-0.10 (0.123)
4.country	-0.23 (0.279)	-0.20 (0.269)	-0.21 (0.283)
5.country	-0.18 (0.203)	-0.17 (0.208)	-0.15 (0.211)
6.country	0.07 (0.196)	0.04 (0.180)	0.04 (0.189)
7.country	0.29 (0.171)	0.27 (0.171)	0.28 (0.179)
8.country	0.02 (0.116)	0.03 (0.111)	0.02 (0.117)
10.country	0.33* (0.134)	0.29* (0.135)	0.32* (0.137)
11.country	-0.11 (0.227)	-0.14 (0.219)	-0.14 (0.225)
12.country	0.03 (0.196)	0.00 (0.195)	0.02 (0.201)
13.country	-0.04 (0.235)	-0.05 (0.234)	-0.10 (0.243)
14.country	0.24 (0.247)	0.18 (0.214)	0.20 (0.226)
16.country	0.41* (0.186)	0.38* (0.192)	0.37 (0.195)
Constant	0.60 (0.683)	0.66 (0.681)	0.70 (0.669)
Observations	527	527	527
R-squared	0.17	0.17	0.17

Adj. R-squared	0.13	0.13	0.13
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Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 6 – The Circumstances of Electoral Contagion (B)

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model	(3) Model
Votechange_All_ES_Parties	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.03 (0.022)	0.03 (0.039)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties	0.04 (0.043)	0.03 (0.043)	0.03 (0.043)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties	-0.04 (0.089)	-0.04 (0.088)	-0.03 (0.089)
Time	-0.02 (0.025)	-0.02 (0.022)	-0.02 (0.023)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01* (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)
unemployment	0.03 (0.016)	0.02 (0.015)	0.02 (0.016)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.15** (0.055)	0.15** (0.055)	0.16** (0.056)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)
Time*Votechange_All_ES_Parties	-0.00 (0.003)		
2.country	0.14 (0.172)	0.12 (0.162)	0.11 (0.166)
3.country	-0.02 (0.117)	-0.03 (0.116)	-0.06 (0.123)
4.country	-0.21 (0.283)	-0.20 (0.277)	-0.21 (0.280)
5.country	-0.14 (0.192)	-0.13 (0.195)	-0.15 (0.196)
6.country	0.02 (0.183)	0.02 (0.184)	-0.02 (0.184)
7.country	0.29 (0.183)	0.28 (0.183)	0.28 (0.185)
8.country	0.01 (0.107)	0.03 (0.108)	-0.03 (0.114)
10.country	0.33* (0.128)	0.30* (0.128)	0.30* (0.134)
11.country	-0.13 (0.221)	-0.14 (0.212)	-0.15 (0.219)

12.country	0.02 (0.196)	0.01 (0.194)	0.00 (0.197)
13.country	-0.04 (0.226)	-0.05 (0.220)	-0.05 (0.227)
14.country	0.16 (0.244)	0.13 (0.225)	0.14 (0.231)
16.country	0.37* (0.175)	0.36* (0.178)	0.33 (0.195)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties*Votechange_All_ES_Parties		0.01 (0.008)	
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties*Votechange_All_ES_Parties			-0.01 (0.011)
Constant	0.75 (0.632)	0.77 (0.607)	0.75 (0.617)
Observations	527	527	527
R-squared	0.17	0.17	0.17
Adj. R-squared	0.13	0.13	0.13

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table7 –Nonlinear and Threshold Contagion

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model
Votechange_Biggest_EurosepticP	-0.02 (0.015)	-0.02** (0.007)
Votes_Over_Electoral_Threshold	-0.00 (0.013)	
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.04 (0.048)	0.05 (0.044)
EU_Salience_Biggest_EurosepticP	-0.03 (0.085)	-0.02 (0.085)
Time	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.01 (0.024)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01* (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)
unemployment	0.03 (0.014)	0.03 (0.014)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.15** (0.054)	0.15** (0.054)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01* (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)
Votes_Over_Electoral_Threshold*Votechange_Biggest_EurosepticP	0.00 (0.001)	

Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP		-0.00	
		(0.001)	
2.country	0.11	0.08	
	(0.181)	(0.166)	
3.country	-0.09	-0.10	
	(0.118)	(0.119)	
4.country	-0.24	-0.25	
	(0.280)	(0.278)	
5.country	-0.16	-0.19	
	(0.199)	(0.206)	
6.country	0.05	0.03	
	(0.195)	(0.179)	
7.country	0.28	0.26	
	(0.174)	(0.172)	
8.country	0.01	0.02	
	(0.117)	(0.115)	
10.country	0.34*	0.33*	
	(0.151)	(0.138)	
11.country	-0.16	-0.17	
	(0.220)	(0.224)	
12.country	0.02	-0.01	
	(0.211)	(0.198)	
13.country	-0.05	-0.02	
	(0.264)	(0.224)	
14.country	0.16	0.18	
	(0.224)	(0.220)	
16.country	0.36	0.36	
	(0.188)	(0.193)	
Constant	0.76	0.67	
	(0.655)	(0.654)	
Observations	527	527	
R-squared	0.16	0.17	
Adj. R-squared	0.12	0.13	

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 8 – The Motivations behind party responses

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model	(3) Model	(4) Model
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.02*	-0.02**	-0.02**	-0.02**
	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.05
	(0.044)	(0.043)	(0.045)	(0.046)
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02
	(0.086)	(0.086)	(0.090)	(0.091)
Time	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02	-0.02

	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01	-0.01*	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
unemployment	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.03
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Left_Right	-0.05***	-0.05***	-0.06***	-0.06***
	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.016)
Gov_Opposition	0.15**	0.15**	0.15*	0.15**
	(0.056)	(0.055)	(0.057)	(0.057)
Party_vote	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01*	0.01		
	(0.004)	(0.004)		
Gov_Opposition*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	0.01			
	(0.012)			
2.country	0.09	0.08	0.06	0.08
	(0.167)	(0.166)	(0.167)	(0.168)
3.country	-0.09	-0.10	-0.09	-0.07
	(0.117)	(0.117)	(0.117)	(0.119)
4.country	-0.24	-0.26	-0.12	-0.11
	(0.279)	(0.280)	(0.296)	(0.308)
5.country	-0.17	-0.19	-0.18	-0.18
	(0.207)	(0.208)	(0.212)	(0.218)
6.country	0.02	0.02	-0.03	0.00
	(0.177)	(0.178)	(0.198)	(0.208)
7.country	0.27	0.26	0.32	0.34
	(0.174)	(0.173)	(0.202)	(0.197)
8.country	0.00	0.01	-0.01	0.02
	(0.115)	(0.113)	(0.129)	(0.127)
10.country	0.32*	0.32*	0.30*	0.33*
	(0.137)	(0.136)	(0.138)	(0.139)
11.country	-0.15	-0.17	-0.19	-0.16
	(0.222)	(0.223)	(0.229)	(0.230)
12.country	0.00	-0.01	-0.02	0.01
	(0.199)	(0.198)	(0.200)	(0.203)
13.country	-0.08	-0.06	-0.10	-0.04
	(0.235)	(0.231)	(0.242)	(0.237)
14.country	0.16	0.15	0.15	0.16
	(0.214)	(0.214)	(0.221)	(0.225)
16.country	0.37	0.35	0.36	0.39
	(0.193)	(0.191)	(0.194)	(0.196)
Party_votechange*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP		0.00		
		(0.001)		
Relative_Votechange			0.00	
			(0.003)	
Relative_Votechange*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP			0.00	
			(0.000)	
Relative_Percent_Votechange				0.00*
				(0.000)
Relative_Percent_Votechange*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP				-0.00
				(0.000)
Constant	0.74	0.70	0.76	0.72
	(0.673)	(0.670)	(0.688)	(0.704)
Observations	527	527	508	497
R-squared	0.16	0.17	0.17	0.17

Adj. R-squared	0.12	0.13	0.13	0.12
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Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 9 – The Motivations behind party responses (B)

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model	(3) Model	(4) Model
Votechange_All_ES_Parties	-0.02** (0.008)	-0.02** (0.006)	-0.02** (0.007)	-0.02** (0.007)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties	0.03 (0.043)	0.03 (0.043)	0.04 (0.042)	0.04 (0.044)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties	-0.04 (0.088)	-0.04 (0.088)	-0.03 (0.092)	-0.03 (0.092)
Time	-0.02 (0.023)	-0.02 (0.023)	-0.02 (0.023)	-0.02 (0.023)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01* (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)
unemployment	0.03 (0.016)	0.02 (0.016)	0.02 (0.016)	0.03 (0.016)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.015)	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.06*** (0.015)	-0.06*** (0.015)
Gov_Opposition	0.14* (0.057)	0.15** (0.055)	0.15* (0.058)	0.15** (0.057)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)		
Gov_Opposition*Votechange_All_ES_Parties	0.01 (0.010)			
2.country	0.12 (0.163)	0.12 (0.163)	0.11 (0.164)	0.13 (0.163)
3.country	-0.03 (0.115)	-0.04 (0.115)	-0.03 (0.117)	-0.01 (0.116)
4.country	-0.23 (0.282)	-0.22 (0.284)	-0.07 (0.301)	-0.08 (0.316)
5.country	-0.15 (0.193)	-0.15 (0.194)	-0.15 (0.195)	-0.15 (0.204)
6.country	0.01 (0.180)	0.01 (0.182)	-0.04 (0.203)	-0.01 (0.213)
7.country	0.28 (0.187)	0.28 (0.186)	0.34 (0.215)	0.36 (0.209)

8.country	0.00 (0.110)	0.01 (0.108)	-0.01 (0.120)	0.04 (0.118)
10.country	0.31* (0.132)	0.32* (0.132)	0.30* (0.132)	0.33* (0.133)
11.country	-0.14 (0.214)	-0.15 (0.214)	-0.17 (0.219)	-0.15 (0.219)
12.country	0.01 (0.197)	0.00 (0.196)	-0.01 (0.196)	0.02 (0.200)
13.country	-0.07 (0.221)	-0.05 (0.220)	-0.08 (0.227)	-0.01 (0.219)
14.country	0.13 (0.224)	0.12 (0.224)	0.12 (0.227)	0.12 (0.231)
16.country	0.37* (0.181)	0.35 (0.178)	0.36 (0.181)	0.38* (0.183)
Party_votechange*Votechange_All_ES_Parties		0.00 (0.000)		
Relative_Votechange			0.00 (0.003)	
Relative_Votechange*Votechange_All_ES_Parties			0.00 (0.000)	
Relative_Percent_Votechange				0.00* (0.000)
Relative_Percent_Votechange*Votechange_All_ES_Parties				-0.00* (0.000)
Constant	0.77 (0.615)	0.78 (0.611)	0.81 (0.622)	0.78 (0.632)
Observations	527	527	508	497
R-squared	0.17	0.17	0.18	0.18
Adj. R-squared	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 10 – Eurosceptic Contagion and Ideological Considerations

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model	(3) Model
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.02* (0.008)	-0.02 (0.019)	-0.01 (0.011)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.05 (0.043)	0.05 (0.044)	0.10 (0.075)
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.03 (0.086)	-0.03 (0.086)	-0.12 (0.110)
Time	-0.01	-0.01	0.01

	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.027)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01	-0.01	-0.00
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)
unemployment	0.03	0.03	0.02
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.016)
Left_Right	-0.05***	-0.05***	
	(0.014)	(0.014)	
Gov_Opposition	0.15**	0.15**	0.09
	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.068)
Party_vote	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01	0.01	0.02***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Party_vote*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	0.00		
	(0.000)		
2.country	0.09	0.09	0.21
	(0.166)	(0.165)	(0.216)
3.country	-0.09	-0.09	-0.10
	(0.117)	(0.116)	(0.158)
4.country	-0.24	-0.24	-0.05
	(0.278)	(0.278)	(0.291)
5.country	-0.17	-0.17	-0.31
	(0.207)	(0.207)	(0.264)
6.country	0.02	0.02	0.25
	(0.177)	(0.177)	(0.265)
7.country	0.27	0.27	0.22
	(0.174)	(0.174)	(0.225)
8.country	0.00	-0.00	-0.03
	(0.115)	(0.115)	(0.175)
10.country	0.32*	0.32*	0.34
	(0.137)	(0.136)	(0.183)
11.country	-0.15	-0.15	0.17
	(0.222)	(0.221)	(0.258)
12.country	0.00	0.00	0.23
	(0.199)	(0.197)	(0.192)
13.country	-0.07	-0.08	0.09
	(0.235)	(0.235)	(0.227)
14.country	0.16	0.16	0.19
	(0.214)	(0.214)	(0.201)
16.country	0.36	0.36	0.22
	(0.193)	(0.193)	(0.146)
Left_Right*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP		-0.00	
		(0.003)	
galtan			-0.03**
			(0.010)
galtan*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP			-0.00
			(0.002)
Constant	0.73	0.73	0.23
	(0.672)	(0.672)	(0.562)
Observations	527	527	340
R-squared	0.16	0.16	0.17
Adj. R-squared	0.12	0.12	0.11

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 11- Eurosceptic Contagion and Ideological Considerations

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model	(3) Model
Votechange_All_ES_Parties	-0.02* (0.007)	-0.01 (0.016)	-0.01 (0.011)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties	0.03 (0.042)	0.03 (0.043)	0.06 (0.084)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties	-0.04 (0.088)	-0.04 (0.088)	-0.06 (0.091)
Time	-0.02 (0.023)	-0.02 (0.023)	0.00 (0.025)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.00 (0.006)
unemployment	0.02 (0.016)	0.02 (0.016)	0.03 (0.017)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)	
Gov_Opposition	0.15** (0.056)	0.15** (0.056)	0.11 (0.070)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)	0.01** (0.004)
Party_vote*Votechange_All_ES_Parties	0.00 (0.000)		
2.country	0.13 (0.163)	0.12 (0.162)	0.18 (0.198)
3.country	-0.03 (0.115)	-0.03 (0.114)	-0.03 (0.159)
4.country	-0.22 (0.282)	-0.21 (0.282)	-0.22 (0.295)
5.country	-0.14 (0.193)	-0.14 (0.193)	-0.31 (0.247)
6.country	0.01 (0.183)	0.01 (0.182)	0.04 (0.253)
7.country	0.28 (0.185)	0.28 (0.186)	0.22 (0.239)
8.country	0.00 (0.109)	0.00 (0.109)	-0.07 (0.150)
10.country	0.32* (0.131)	0.32* (0.131)	0.23 (0.148)
11.country	-0.14 (0.214)	-0.14 (0.213)	0.04 (0.247)
12.country	0.01 (0.196)	0.01 (0.194)	0.20 (0.190)
13.country	-0.05 (0.221)	-0.06 (0.221)	0.05 (0.231)
14.country	0.13 (0.225)	0.13 (0.223)	0.08 (0.189)
16.country	0.36* (0.179)	0.36* (0.180)	0.15 (0.147)
Left_Right*Votechange_All_ES_Parties		-0.00 (0.003)	
galtan			-0.03** (0.010)
galtan*Votechange_All_ES_Parties			-0.00 (0.002)
Constant	0.78 (0.612)	0.78 (0.612)	0.11 (0.515)

Observations	527	527	340
R-squared	0.17	0.17	0.16
Adj. R-squared	0.13	0.13	0.10

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 12 – who is stealing votes from whom?

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model	(3) Model	(4) Model
Votechange_Biggest_Left_ES	-0.01 (0.021)	-0.03** (0.010)		
Votechange_Biggest_Right_ES	-0.01 (0.007)	-0.01 (0.019)		
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.05 (0.045)	0.05 (0.045)		
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.01 (0.089)	-0.01 (0.090)		
Time	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.02 (0.022)	-0.02 (0.022)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01* (0.006)	-0.01* (0.006)
unemployment	0.03* (0.015)	0.03* (0.015)	0.02 (0.017)	0.02 (0.017)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.015)	-0.05*** (0.014)	-0.05*** (0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.13* (0.054)	0.14* (0.055)	0.14* (0.053)	0.14* (0.054)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01* (0.004)	0.01* (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)
Votechange_Biggest_Left_ES*Left_Right	-0.00 (0.004)			
2.country	0.09 (0.161)	0.09 (0.162)	0.11 (0.166)	0.11 (0.166)
3.country	-0.06 (0.122)	-0.06 (0.122)	-0.03 (0.114)	-0.03 (0.114)
4.country	-0.32 (0.287)	-0.32 (0.288)	-0.21 (0.286)	-0.21 (0.286)
5.country	-0.23 (0.216)	-0.23 (0.216)	-0.14 (0.201)	-0.14 (0.201)
6.country	-0.01 (0.196)	-0.01 (0.196)	-0.01 (0.188)	-0.01 (0.189)
7.country	0.14 (0.159)	0.13 (0.158)	0.25 (0.184)	0.25 (0.183)
8.country	0.01 (0.119)	0.02 (0.119)	0.03 (0.112)	0.04 (0.112)
10.country	0.37* (0.143)	0.37* (0.144)	0.33* (0.138)	0.34* (0.139)
11.country	-0.17 (0.224)	-0.17 (0.225)	-0.18 (0.220)	-0.18 (0.221)
12.country	-0.02 (0.207)	-0.02 (0.207)	-0.01 (0.218)	-0.01 (0.217)

13.country	-0.08 (0.223)	-0.08 (0.224)	-0.10 (0.217)	-0.09 (0.217)
14.country	0.09 (0.241)	0.10 (0.242)	0.09 (0.231)	0.09 (0.232)
16.country	0.37 (0.197)	0.37 (0.199)	0.32 (0.185)	0.33 (0.186)
Votechange_Biggest_Right_ES*Left_Right		0.00 (0.004)		
Votechange_All_Left_ES			-0.02 (0.022)	-0.03** (0.010)
Votechange_All_Right_ES			-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.018)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties			0.04 (0.044)	0.04 (0.044)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties			-0.04 (0.086)	-0.04 (0.087)
Votechange_All_Left_ES*Left_Right			-0.00 (0.004)	
Votechange_All_Right_ES*Left_Right				0.00 (0.003)
Constant	0.57 (0.700)	0.57 (0.698)	0.82 (0.619)	0.82 (0.617)
Observations	517	517	525	525
R-squared	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18
Adj. R-squared	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 13 – the Geographical take on Eurosceptic Contagion

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model	(3) Model
Votechange_Biggest_Left_ES		-0.03 (0.015)	-0.02** (0.008)
Votechange_Biggest_Right_ES		-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.007)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	-0.00 (0.035)	-0.00 (0.037)	-0.00 (0.035)
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.01 (0.053)	-0.01 (0.051)	-0.01 (0.051)
Time	-0.02 (0.022)	-0.02 (0.023)	-0.02 (0.023)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01 (0.004)	-0.01 (0.004)	-0.01 (0.004)
unemployment	0.02 (0.011)	0.02 (0.011)	0.02 (0.011)
Left_Right	-0.04** (0.014)	-0.04** (0.014)	-0.04** (0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.17** (0.056)	0.16** (0.057)	0.16** (0.058)

Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)	0.01 (0.004)
Votechange_Biggest_Left_ES*South_EU		0.01 (0.017)	
South_EU	-0.14 (0.092)	-0.12 (0.093)	-0.12 (0.091)
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.02* (0.007)		
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP*South_EU	0.01 (0.012)		
Votechange_Biggest_Right_ES*South_EU			0.01 (0.008)
Constant	0.62 (0.433)	0.60 (0.455)	0.60 (0.441)
Observations	527	517	517
R-squared	0.11	0.12	0.12
Adj. R-squared	0.09	0.09	0.09

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 14 – the Geographical take on Eurosceptic Contagion (B)

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model	(3) Model
Votechange_All_Left_ES		-0.04** (0.013)	-0.03** (0.009)
Votechange_All_Right_ES		-0.01 (0.006)	-0.01 (0.007)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties	-0.01 (0.033)	0.00 (0.033)	-0.00 (0.034)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties	-0.02 (0.055)	-0.03 (0.051)	-0.02 (0.051)
Time	-0.02 (0.020)	-0.02 (0.020)	-0.02 (0.020)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01 (0.004)	-0.01 (0.003)	-0.01 (0.003)
unemployment	0.02 (0.011)	0.01 (0.011)	0.02 (0.011)
Left_Right	-0.04**	-0.04**	-0.04**

	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.17**	0.15**	0.16**
	(0.058)	(0.055)	(0.057)
Party_vote	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01	0.01	0.01
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Votechange_All_Left_ES*South_EU		0.03	
		(0.015)	
South_EU	-0.13	-0.11	-0.11
	(0.090)	(0.090)	(0.090)
Votechange_All_ES_Parties	-0.02*		
	(0.008)		
Votechange_All_ES_Parties*South_EU	0.00		
	(0.009)		
Votechange_All_Right_ES*South_EU			0.01
			(0.010)
Constant	0.62	0.61	0.63
	(0.403)	(0.387)	(0.394)
Observations	527	525	525
R-squared	0.12	0.13	0.12
Adj. R-squared	0.10	0.11	0.10

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 16 – Proportionality and National Elections

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model
Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	-0.02* (0.009)	
System_proportionality	-0.03* (0.013)	-0.04** (0.012)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.02 (0.045)	
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	0.00 (0.087)	
Time	-0.02	-0.02

	(0.025)	(0.023)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.01*	-0.01*
	(0.006)	(0.006)
unemployment	0.02	0.02
	(0.015)	(0.016)
Left_Right	-0.05***	-0.05***
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Gov_Opposition	0.16**	0.17**
	(0.051)	(0.051)
Party_vote	-0.00	-0.00
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Party_votechange	0.01	0.01
	(0.004)	(0.004)
System_proportionality*Votechange_Biggest_EuroscepticP	0.00	
	(0.002)	
2.country	-0.06	-0.07
	(0.192)	(0.196)
3.country	-0.11	-0.09
	(0.123)	(0.122)
4.country	-0.20	-0.15
	(0.279)	(0.280)
5.country	-0.07	-0.03
	(0.218)	(0.204)
6.country	0.35*	0.41**
	(0.152)	(0.155)
7.country	0.32	0.33
	(0.179)	(0.188)
8.country	-0.04	-0.02
	(0.115)	(0.110)
10.country	0.20	0.21
	(0.141)	(0.131)
11.country	0.03	0.05
	(0.188)	(0.178)
12.country	0.03	0.04
	(0.200)	(0.197)
13.country	-0.22	-0.22
	(0.263)	(0.254)
14.country	0.04	-0.02
	(0.223)	(0.236)
16.country	0.19	0.17
	(0.192)	(0.172)
Votechange_All_ES_Parties		-0.02**
		(0.008)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties		0.01
		(0.044)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties		0.00
		(0.090)
System_proportionality*Votechange_All_ES_Parties		0.00
		(0.001)
Constant	0.99	1.05
	(0.706)	(0.640)
Observations	527	527
R-squared	0.17	0.19
Adj. R-squared	0.13	0.15

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 15 – Eurosceptic Contagion and EP elections

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model
EP_Votechange_Biggest_Euroscepti	-0.01 (0.005)	
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.11** (0.042)	
EU_Salience_Biggest_EuroscepticP	0.02 (0.076)	
Time	0.03 (0.015)	0.02 (0.016)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	0.00 (0.004)	-0.00 (0.004)
unemployment	0.03** (0.011)	0.03** (0.012)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.013)	-0.04*** (0.013)
Gov_Opposition	0.10* (0.052)	0.08 (0.053)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votechange	0.02*** (0.004)	0.02*** (0.004)
2.country	0.24* (0.120)	0.30* (0.128)
3.country	-0.01 (0.111)	0.06 (0.118)
4.country	-0.13 (0.229)	-0.18 (0.243)
5.country	-0.35 (0.176)	-0.29 (0.156)
6.country	0.23 (0.126)	0.17 (0.129)
7.country	0.22 (0.134)	0.22 (0.142)
8.country	-0.03 (0.095)	-0.03 (0.093)
10.country	0.26* (0.115)	0.24* (0.114)
11.country	0.18 (0.142)	0.15 (0.140)
12.country	0.10 (0.162)	0.11 (0.166)
13.country	0.31 (0.171)	0.28 (0.170)
14.country	0.14 (0.119)	0.16 (0.124)
16.country	0.34* (0.132)	0.30* (0.137)
EP_Votechange_All_Eurosceptics		-0.00 (0.004)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties		0.09* (0.037)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties		-0.00 (0.076)
Constant	-0.67 (0.525)	-0.46 (0.439)
Observations	519	526
R-squared	0.13	0.12

Adj. R-squared	0.09	0.08
Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses		
*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05		

Table 17 – Proportionality and European Elections

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model
EP_Votchange_Biggest_Euroscepti	-0.00 (0.007)	
System_proportionality	-0.01 (0.011)	-0.01 (0.012)
Extremeness_of_Biggest_ES_Party	0.10* (0.041)	
EU_Salience_Biggest_EurosceptiP	0.04 (0.080)	
Time	0.02 (0.016)	0.01 (0.016)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.00 (0.004)	-0.00 (0.004)
unemployment	0.04** (0.011)	0.03** (0.012)
Left_Right	-0.05*** (0.013)	-0.04*** (0.013)
Gov_Opposition	0.11* (0.051)	0.09 (0.052)
Party_vote	-0.00 (0.002)	-0.00 (0.002)
Party_votchange	0.02*** (0.004)	0.02*** (0.004)
System_proportionality*EP_Votchange_Biggest_Euroscepti	-0.00 (0.001)	
2.country	0.18 (0.149)	0.22 (0.162)
3.country	-0.03 (0.115)	0.03 (0.122)
4.country	-0.14 (0.232)	-0.18 (0.241)
5.country	-0.33 (0.177)	-0.25 (0.155)
6.country	0.32* (0.154)	0.30 (0.156)
7.country	0.23 (0.136)	0.23 (0.144)
8.country	-0.05 (0.098)	-0.05 (0.096)
10.country	0.22 (0.124)	0.20 (0.118)
11.country	0.21 (0.144)	0.20 (0.144)
12.country	0.10 (0.164)	0.11 (0.167)
13.country	0.26 (0.196)	0.22 (0.191)
14.country	0.08 (0.147)	0.09 (0.152)
16.country	0.28 (0.147)	0.23 (0.149)

EP_Votchange_All_Eurosceptics		-0.00	(0.005)
Avg_Extremeness_all_ES_Parties		0.07	(0.039)
Avg_EU_Salience_all_ES_Parties		0.02	(0.082)
System_proportionality*EP_Votchange_All_Eurosceptics		-0.00	(0.001)
Constant	-0.63	-0.39	(0.531) (0.448)
Observations	519	526	
R-squared	0.14	0.12	
Adj. R-squared	0.09	0.08	

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01

Table 18 – Eurosceptic Contagion and Dissonance

VARIABLES	(1) Model	(2) Model
Dissonance	-0.10 (0.369)	-0.25 (0.502)
Public_Opinion_of_EU	-0.13** (0.039)	-0.13* (0.054)
unemployment	0.11 (0.069)	0.34*** (0.094)
eu_salience	-1.05** (0.323)	0.02 (0.441)
2.country	-0.06 (0.705)	0.82 (0.966)
3.country	-0.48 (0.787)	-0.21 (1.077)
4.country	-0.26 (1.266)	-0.74 (1.731)
5.country	0.02 (0.756)	-1.60 (1.035)
6.country	-1.01 (0.709)	-0.69 (0.971)
7.country	3.28*** (0.824)	2.54* (1.127)
8.country	1.60* (0.710)	1.85 (0.970)
10.country	3.09*** (0.791)	5.41*** (1.082)
11.country	0.53 (1.042)	2.31 (1.425)
12.country	-0.22 (0.810)	0.06 (1.109)
13.country	-4.02*** (1.143)	-2.56 (1.564)
14.country	-0.66 (0.809)	-1.58 (1.108)
16.country	-2.74** (0.873)	-3.82** (1.195)
Constant	10.35*** (3.019)	5.31 (4.119)

Observations	568	568
R-squared	0.18	0.17
Adj. R-squared	0.15	0.15

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Declaration

I hereby declare that the dissertation was completed without any unauthorized aid. Only those sources and aids where used as are referenced. All exerts, citations and ideas are indicated.