

Rethinking party-based Euroscepticism: A refined typology

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Abstract

This article aims to make both a conceptual and an empirical contribution to the study of party-based Euroscepticism. First, while critically evaluating current definitions, it puts forward a novel typology of Euroscepticism based on three indicators, namely the principle, the practice and the future of European integration. The typology presented identifies three types of party-based Euroscepticism, including rejecting, conditional and compromising. Concrete distinctions between these three categories are identified to ensure mutual exclusiveness. Second, it conducts a medium-N comparative party manifesto research of radical right parties elected in the European Parliament for the period 2004-2009 demonstrating qualitative differences within a party family otherwise thought to be consistent in terms of its opposition to European integration.

Keywords: typological construction, extremist parties, Europe.

Introduction

Euroscepticism has been a social and political phenomenon whose manifestation has become ever increasing since the early 1990s. Used as a term, Euroscepticism has been very popular coined in various contexts. Although its use dates back to the mid 1980s first used in the British press, it has been subsequently employed in different national political, historical and cultural contexts, which have ascribed to it various meanings. Scholars have sought to define party-based Euroscepticism from different viewpoints but the literature is still relatively vague and has yet to identify concrete criteria on the basis of which to categorise political parties. Aiming to fill this gap in the literature and improve the academic understanding of the phenomenon, this article critically evaluates the current definitions of Euroscepticism and suggests an improved conceptualisation of the term.

In a nutshell, this article puts forward three types of party-based Euroscepticism. It argues that party positions on Europe must be assessed on the basis of three indicators, namely positions on first the principle, second the practice, and third the future of European integration. From this, three types of party-based Euroscepticism are identified. First, the 'rejecting' Eurosceptic parties are unequivocally against all these three indicators. Second, the 'conditional' Eurosceptic parties do not reject the principle of integration at a European level but are unwilling to support its practice and its future. Third, the 'compromising' Eurosceptic parties support both the principle and the practice of European integration but oppose further integration. Having in mind this new analytical framework and typology of Euroscepticism, the article conducts a medium-N comparative qualitative analysis of party manifestos of fifteen radical right nationalist parties from eleven European countries assessing their normative orientation towards European integration. The analysis demonstrates significant qualitative differences within the radical right party family, which has otherwise been understood as similar in terms of its Euroscepticism, adding empirical substance to the theoretical reasoning of the article.

Defining party-based Euroscepticism

This section discusses the problems of the definition of Euroscepticism. It argues that the term is highly contextualised and that the academic definitions thus far have significant theoretical shortcomings.

A short history of Euroscepticism

Euroscepticism is a political and social phenomenon rather than an abstract concept as such and as a result it assumes different connotations depending on the context within which it is used. The early uses of the term can be understood as being 'embedded within the specific British political and historical context' (Harmsen & Spiering 2004: 16). Indeed, the term was first traced in journalistic articles written for the British press during the mid-1980s when there was a tendency to use the term 'Euro-sceptic' interchangeably with that of 'anti-Marketeer' (Spiering 2004: 128). This comes as no surprise due to the political climate of the mid and late 1980s, namely the process of deliberation and agreement on the Single European Act. Establishing a single market had increasingly an economic and comparatively less a political character even though the member states would ultimately cede sovereignty to achieve their single market aim. As a result, Eurosceptic was mainly understood at the time to be an actor or a party that opposed economic integration. Yet, the term soon acquired the meaning of outright rejection of the then European Economic Community (EEC) membership. Spiering (2004: 128) argues that the Thatcherite discourse at a time of great tensions between the British government and the European Commission soon gave the term a connotation of extremism. The argument runs as follows: being Eurosceptic points to 'a complex series of political, economic, and cultural factors which may be seen as distinguishing Britain from its continental neighbours' (Harmsen et al. 2004: 16). Thus, being the first to use this term the British attached to it a series of British-related country-specific connotations and meanings.

Although the term has its historical roots in the United Kingdom, it has ‘progressively taken root elsewhere [...] with the growth of a more critical European discourse during the debates over the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty in the early 1990s’ (Harmsen et al. 2004: 17). However, ‘where the term “Euroscepticism” is adopted in the context of distinctively articulated national political debates, it assumes a meaning which must be understood relative to the different national political traditions and experiences of European integration which frame those debates’ (Harmsen et al. 2004: 17). For example, in France the term *souverainiste* can be used interchangeably with that of eurosceptic. In this case *souverainisme* describes a policy that aims to preserve the state’s national sovereignty and does not necessarily qualify whether national sovereignty refers to economic or political issues, or both. Moreover, invoking the establishment of one’s national sovereignty suggests an underlying wish for withdrawal, which is a much stronger negative position on European integration compared to advocating for example less integration in a particular policy field or being against further transfer of sovereignty to European political structures and institutions.

It results from the above that the term Euroscepticism is contextual and highly subjective often lacking specificity. Spiering accepts that ‘such a broad interpretation of [British] Euroscepticism [...] renders the concept almost meaningless’ (Spiering 2004: 128). Its connotations change depending on the political climate, the person that uses the term as well as the country that it is used in. For instance, it could allude to being against market integration if used by a British person in the 1980s, in favour of complete withdrawal if currently used by a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) of parties including the United Kingdom’s Independent Party (UKIP) or the French National Front (FN), a level of disagreement in terms of institutional reform, or indeed it could refer to quite a lot of other instances. This vagueness of the term is partly reflected in the literature on Euroscepticism, which has yet to suggest a precise definition of the phenomenon of party-based opposition to Europe, to which this article turns.

The literature

Taggart has been the first scholar to define Euroscepticism. He suggested that it is ‘the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration’ (1998: 366). He argued that Euroscepticism can be understood with reference to three different positions on the European Union (EU). First, ‘the anti-integration position of those who oppose the very idea of European integration and as a consequence oppose the EU’ (Taggart 1998: 365). The second position is adopted by those who are not in principle against European integration but think that the EU is too inclusive because it accumulates too diverse interests/elements. The third Eurosceptic position is embraced by those believing that the EU is too exclusive either geographically or socially. Moreover, Taggart states that ‘the term Euroscepticism encompasses those who stand outside the status quo’ (1998: 366).

Taggart and Szczerbiak (2001) have further developed this definition by suggesting the distinction between Hard and Soft Euroscepticism. On the one hand, hard Euroscepticism indicates a party’s ‘outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration and opposition to their country joining or remaining members of the EU’ (2001: 10). Thus hard Eurosceptics advocate withdrawal of their country from the EU due to disagreement with the current conception of the project. This objection ‘comes from the belief that the EU is counter to deeply held values or, more likely, is the embodiment of negative values’ (2001: 10). On the other hand, soft Euroscepticism is not a principled objection to European integration but indicates qualified opposition or disagreement on one or more policy areas. A further distinction they make within this category is policy Euroscepticism and national-interest Euroscepticism. Whereas policy Euroscepticism refers to opposition to specific policies and extension of EU competences, national-interest Euroscepticism ‘involves employing the rhetoric of defending or standing up for the national interest in the context of debates about the EU’ (2001: 10).

However, although this definition is very helpful at identifying Eurosceptic trends and tendencies within countries and party systems, its main weakness is that it cannot capture detail as it remains relatively broad and over inclusive, especially as far as soft Euroscepticism is concerned. In criticising this typology, Kopecky and Mudde rightly claim that the demarcation line between hard

and soft Euroscepticism is blurred and that 'the criteria used to connect and separate the term remain unclear' (2002: 300). Indeed, the definition of soft Euroscepticism can encompass many forms of criticism and is vague to an extent that it could be criticised for some degree of conceptual stretching (Sartori 1970). For example, it remains imprecise how many and which policies should a party oppose in order to still be characterised as soft Eurosceptic. In other words, if a party opposes three or more EU policies, is its Euroscepticism still soft or has it crossed the boundaries and has become hard? Would this depend on the number of policies or their substance? Or somehow on both? Or is it solely the wish for withdrawal, which constitutes the boundary between hard and soft Euroscepticism? How do we characterise unwillingness for institutional reform? What about attitudes to current and further integration? Additionally, standing up for one's national interest is not necessarily Euroscepticism. This depends on the context within which it occurs. For instance, in the Council of Ministers member state representatives pursue policies on a regular basis promoting their national interest; yet this is not Euroscepticism.

Kopecky and Mudde have suggested an alternative categorisation of the term differentiating between diffuse and specific support for European integration, leading to a further criticism of Taggart and Szczerbiak's definition, which mainly considers opposition to the current (at the time of writing) EU framework and practice and seems to be overlooking the dynamism of the EU project as well as issues of further integration. Drawing from Easton's (1965) seminal work on political regimes, Kopecky and Mudde define diffuse as 'support for the general ideas of European integration' while specific is defined as 'support for the general practice of European integration' (2002: 300-301). This framework leads to a two by two matrix of possible party positions on Europe structured along the Europhobe/Europhile and EU-optimist/pessimist axes. These include first, the Euroenthusiasts who support both the ideas of European integration and the general practice of integration. Second, the Eurorejects who do not accept either. Third, the Eurosceptics who support the idea of a united Europe but disagree with the general practice of integration. Fourth, the Europragmatists who are against the idea of the EU but support the practice of European integration (Kopecky and Mudde 2002). These categories being ideal types, they argue, are serviceable for the qualitative analysis of party positions.

This alternative conceptualisation has significantly moved the debate forward on the definition of Euroscepticism despite the fact that parts of it seem to be counterintuitive. Although the categories Euroenthusiasts and Eurorejects are straightforward, conceptual problems arise within both the Europragmatists and Eurosceptics. As far as the Eurosceptics are concerned, it seems theoretically possible to sustain that they support the idea of cooperation at EU level but not in the shape of the EU. For instance, according to this definition the 'Eurosceptics' could be in favour of a type of confederation at EU level. However, this typology lacks analytical precision because it fails to suggest what type of EU level cooperation these parties wish for and which parts of the current integration process they oppose. What is more, regarding the Europragmatists, principled opposition to the idea of European integration is highly unlikely to include favourable positions on the project of the current EU. As a result, Europragmatists hardly exist in real life politics. This is also manifested in the authors' analysis of Central and Eastern European political parties where they classify only two parties under this category one of which is acknowledged by the authors to be between two types (Kopecky et al. 2002: 316).

This section touched upon the main definition of opposition to European integration in the literature. It argues that Euroscepticism can have different connotations in diverse national political, historical and cultural contexts, which has resulted in the contextual and journalistic use of the term devoid of objective meaning. This vagueness is mirrored in the current literature on Euroscepticism, which has yet to come up with a precise conceptualisation and typology of the phenomenon. The scholars analysing Euroscepticism have significantly moved the debate forward. However, there are theoretical shortcomings with the current typologies. To review the most prominent typologies in the literature, Taggart and Szczerbiak's hard and soft Euroscepticism lacks specific criteria of categorisation and overlooks issues of further integration. Kopecky and Mudde's typology has similar shortcomings as well as making counter-intuitive suggestions. What is needed therefore is a de-contextualisation of the term from country-specific use, a more detailed explanation of all its potential facets, and clear indications on how it can be measured, to which this article turns.

Varieties of Euroscepticism: A refined typology

This section advances a three-fold conceptualisation of European integration on the basis of which three types of party-based Euroscepticism are constructed. These are the 'rejecting' Euroscepticism, the 'conditional' Euroscepticism, and the 'compromising' Euroscepticism.

The criteria

Given the abovementioned shortcomings of the definitions of party-based Euroscepticism presented in the literature, this article seeks to fill this gap by putting forward a novel typology based on a three-fold conceptualisation of European integration. It advances three facets of European integration, which provide the criteria on the basis of which the typology of Euroscepticism is constructed. Arguably, the reason why the current definitions of Euroscepticism are relatively broad and sometimes seem to be counter-intuitive is because the authors have failed to provide concrete indicators of what European integration is according to which to estimate party-based opposition. Aiming at addressing this issue, this section suggests breaking down European integration into its three fundamental aspects, which derive first and foremost from an attentive reading of the Treaties establishing the EU (TEU). These are first the principle, second the practice, and third the future of European integration.

Based on the preamble of the TEU stating 'RESOLVED to mark a new stage in the process of European integration undertaken with the establishment of the European Communities' (European Union 2002: 9), the principle of European integration refers to a party's wish and willingness for cooperation at a higher multilateral level. This type of cooperation includes various aspects of integration. It does not signify solely bilateral or trilateral cooperation between less than a handful of European states on particular ad hoc policies, including for instance some aspects of trade. In this respect, cooperation under the European Free Trade Area does not qualify as supporting the principle of European integration given that this is an agreement providing only for the liberalisation of trade not having any political character or commitment. Here, the principle of European integration refers to a multi-faceted political multilateral agreement, not necessarily the one embodied by the EU. In other words, it is the principle of state cooperation at a higher multilateral level (not only bilateral such as in trade terms for instance) irrespective of the framework within which this occurs.

The practice of European integration is also based on the TEU, which mentions that 'The Union shall be served by a single institutional framework which shall ensure the consistency and the continuity of the activities carried out in order to attain its objectives while respecting and building upon the *acquis communautaire*' (European Union 2002: 11). It includes the European institutional structure governing the EU as well as the overall body of EU law thus far accumulated. In particular, the practice of European integration is conceptualised as the political compromise between the supranational and the intergovernmental bodies within the EU. Moreover, it comprises the EU legislation pertaining to the three European pillars, namely the policies that have been decided to be administered at the European level. In short, the practice of European integration refers to the institutional and policy status quo of how the EU functions.

The facet of European integration that connects to its future is also largely confirmed by the TEU, which stipulates that 'This Treaty marks a new stage in the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe' (European Union 2002: 10). The future of integration derives from the member states' strong desire to further European cooperation within the EU political framework by transferring national policies to the EU with the general aim of creating an ever closer union. Table 1 below summarises these three facets of European integration.

Three facets of European integration	
Principle	The wish and willingness for cooperation at a European multilateral level
Practice	The EU institutional and policy status quo
Future	Further integration at EU level

Table 1: Conceptualising European integration

The typology

In defining European integration in terms of its principle, practice and future, our understanding of the range of Eurosceptic positions available for parties to adopt increases and the analysis becomes rather more specified. These three aspects of integration present the principal point of reference of this study and provide the researcher with the analytical toolkit on the basis of which to construct a theory of party-based Euroscepticism. As a result, it is argued that theoretically there are three different types of Euroscepticism a given party can embrace, namely the rejecting, the conditional and the compromising types.

The first type of Euroscepticism a party can adopt is the ‘rejecting’ Euroscepticism. This is a position whereby a party rejects all three facets of European integration. In this case, the party rejects the principle of cooperation at a political European multilateral level, it is against the European policy and institutional status quo, and is adamantly against future cooperation at the European level. According to the rejecting Eurosceptic position, all policies must be managed solely at the national level and member states must withdraw from the EU at any cost. This position is generally associated with party ardent anti-supranationalism and national self-determination discourse. The general aim is to shift power back to the nation state and restore sovereignty of the nation state’s institutions usually to the detriment of European integration.

The second possible type of Euroscepticism available to parties is the ‘conditional’ Euroscepticism. This is a position whereby the party is not against the principle of cooperation but against its practice and its future. By adopting this type of Euroscepticism, the party largely differentiates itself from the rejecting Eurosceptics. In this case, the party accepts the principle of integration and recognises the significance of European cooperation to the nation state. However, the current institutional balance as well as the policy status quo is not acceptable given that it compromises the country’s sovereignty. Consequently, closer European unification is not an appealing option. This type of Euroscepticism is usually connected to a party’s conditional wish for European cooperation while ensuring that state sovereignty is not compromised by decisions taken at the European level. Whereas both the practice of integration and the institutional balance of powers are dismissed, intergovernmental cooperation in particular policies deemed beneficial to the state is largely supported. According to the typology presented here, conditional Eurosceptic parties are predicted to give their consent to the creation of a Europe administered by an institutional framework resembling a confederation. Moreover, conditional Eurosceptics reject decisions taken by supranational institutions campaigning for the reform of the current EU structures so that state interests are assured. They deem that cooperation has already gone too far and are against an ever closer union.

The last type of Euroscepticism a political party can adopt is the ‘compromising’ Euroscepticism. This is a position whereby a party accepts both the principle and the practice of integration but rejects future cooperation. In this scenario, the party has largely compromised its position admitting that European integration is not necessarily a good thing but some aspects of it are beneficial to the nation state. Transferring national decision-making power to European institutions is particularly unattractive. However, a degree of integration is necessary for the general prosperity of the nation state. Moreover, partaking in the EU structures and institutions provides the additional advantage of having the possibility to strengthen the position of member states from within. Therefore, a party adopting this type of Euroscepticism is predicted to be willing to ‘play by

the rules of the game’ with a view to reinforcing the intergovernmental aspect of the EU and the member states decision-making power typically (but not necessarily) to the detriment of supranational institutions. It seeks to negotiate change and reform from within the EU institutional structures. An ever closer union is not acceptable however because that would incur reinforcing federalism, which the party adamantly opposes.

As seen in table 3 below, the logical development of the above theory is to argue that opposing the future of Europe is the lowest common denominator of Euroscepticism. To be considered Eurosceptic, parties need at the very minimum to reject further cooperation at the European level as this is defined here. If parties are in favour of further transferring national policies to the European level, they simply cannot be thought as being Eurosceptic and their positions are outside the scope of this article.

Facets of European integration			
Predicted types of Euroscepticism	Principle	Practice	Future
Rejecting	Against	Against	Against
Conditional	In favour	Against	Against
Compromising	In favour	In favour	Against

Table 2: Predicted types of Euroscepticism based on the three facets of European integration

In order to ensure that the three types of Euroscepticism are mutually exclusive, the issue of sovereignty needs to be discussed. The transfer of decision-making power to European institutions is prominent within all three categories of Euroscepticism but is viewed in a different manner. The parties that choose to adopt either the ‘rejecting’ or the ‘conditional’ type of Euroscepticism are fervent opponents of supranationalism and ceding one’s national sovereignty to the benefit of European institutions. For them any type of transfer of sovereignty to European institutions on any type of issue is unacceptable. However, the parties choosing to adopt a conditional approach on Europe differ to the ones that utterly reject Europe because they are willing to accept that European countries must cooperate at a multilateral level on particular issues, which they believe cannot be resolved exclusively at the domestic level. This sometimes is articulated in a ‘Europe of Nations’ discourse or putting forward the idea of a confederation on particular policies or on a project basis.

The parties deciding to adopt a ‘compromising’ position on Europe do not support the transfer of sovereignty either. They criticise the degree of the sovereignty transfer that has occurred thus far. Nevertheless, they accept –albeit not without criticisms– the current structures of European integration. According to them, a degree of European integration is desirable because it brings important economic advantages and prosperity to the member states. The main difference between the ‘conditional’ and the ‘compromising’ Eurosceptic positions lies in how the current EU framework for European integration is treated. Whereas the first do not accept that the EU is the desirable platform for cooperation suggesting alternative frameworks, the later are willing to act within the existing structures of the EU, in other words they ‘play by the rules of the game’.

In sum, the demarcation line between ‘rejecting’ and ‘conditional’ Eurosceptics lies in the issue of EU withdrawal. The ‘conditional’ Eurosceptics significantly differ from the ‘compromising’ Eurosceptics because they do not accept that the EU is the desirable framework for European integration. The ‘compromising’ Eurosceptics differ from the other two types in that they accept to work within the existing EU structures. All three types of Euroscepticism reject transferring further decision-making power to Europe and they are fervent opponents of a federal Europe. Table 3 succinctly summarises the above distinctions among the three types of Euroscepticism.

	Rejecting	Conditional	Compromising
Location of policy decision - power	Nation state only	Nation state and sometimes Intergovernmental	Nation state, Intergovernmental and reluctantly supranational
Revert power back to the nation state	Yes	Yes (partial – case by case)	No
Country EU withdrawal	Yes	No	No
Desirable framework for cooperation	Case by case basis No transfer of sovereignty No political cooperation	Case by case basis Partial transfer of sovereignty – confederation	EU as it stands but against further integration
Wish for reform	Do not care or do not mention	Yes (different framework of cooperation)	Yes (within the current EU framework)
Seeking an ever closer union	No	No	No

Table 3: Distinctions among the categories of Euroscepticism

The contribution of this typology to the literature is two-fold. First, it breaks down European integration into a three-fold phenomenon based on the EU's own legal documents. The principle, practice and future serve as indicators for assessing the degree to which a party opposes European integration. These can prove particularly helpful in unpacking the concept of Euroscepticism adding analytical precision and clarity when assessing a party's position on Europe. Moreover, evaluating a party's Euroscepticism on the basis of concrete indicators minimises overlapping, over-inclusive or over-exclusive concepts with a view to increasing parsimony and precision. Very importantly, the conceptualisation of party positions on the EU as a function of three facets of integration has the potential to reveal significant qualitative differences between parties that have otherwise been understood as similar in terms of their positions on Europe. What is more, unlike the current typologies in the literature the suggested typology acknowledges and incorporates the member states' agreement to build an ever closer union thus referring to the future of integration. By adding the criterion of future integration, it offers a more comprehensive view of European integration and thereby suggests that there are multiple levels of integration that a party can oppose to without necessarily opposing the principle of European cooperation or the practice of the EU status quo.

Second, and as a result of the first, this typology offers a dynamic framework (as opposed to static) on the basis of which the author can measure party positions on Europe. The typology put forward in this article can incorporate change in party positions on the EU over time. For instance, at a given point in time, t_1 , a party can theoretically oppose European integration as a whole and advocate the country's withdrawal from the EU. This party's Euroscepticism would be characterised as 'rejecting'. At another point in time, t_2 , the same party might be willing to accept that some degree of cooperation is desirable at a multilateral European level. Therefore, at t_2 this party would be characterised as 'conditional' Eurosceptic. Otherwise put, parties can 'jump' from one type of Euroscepticism to another at any given point if they change their rhetoric on Europe.

Furthermore, behind these three types of Euroscepticism, different kinds of arguments and criticisms can be articulated from parties that belong to party families across the political spectrum. Political parties articulate indeed three different kinds of critique against European integration, which are interrelated with different ideal visions of Europe. The nationalist critique of European integration encompasses parties that are mostly right wing authoritarian and as a result are averse to giving up national sovereignty in favour of supranational institutions. The liberal critique of European integration originates from parties that argue that European integration is not liberal enough in terms of the policies that impact on the economy of the member states whereas the social

critique of integration has its roots in socialist and communist parties, which are trying to push for a more social Europe. These three different kinds of critique against the EU do not necessarily contradict or decrease the value of this typology because the typology is not based on types of criticisms and motivations of the parties. Rather it takes European integration as its point of reference and seeks to position parties on each of its aspects, namely the principle, the practice and the future of integration. In other words, this typology has the advantage of being able to incorporate all three ideal visions of Europe, which is one of the reasons why it can be generalisable to party families across the political spectrum.

Euroscepticism within the European radical right

In order to add empirical substance supporting the usefulness of the above typology, this section conducts a medium-N manifesto analysis of right-wing nationalist party elected in the European Parliament (EP) during the legislative period 2004-2009. Parties having obtained seats in the EP are selected for two reasons. The first reason lies in parties' own information on Europe. Since these parties operate within a European institution, they have increased information on the EU and its institutions. As a result, it is assumed that being insiders they have formulated informed positions on European issues and policies. Second, the radical right parties elected in the EP have a reasonable electoral success both in national and European elections. In this manner, parties of very limited political strength are excluded from the analysis. The sample consists of parties that have not allied with the mainstream right-wing European People's party. These parties are members of either the Union for Europe of the Nations, the Independence/Democracy political groups, or are independent parties that have previously allied with the dissolved Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty EP political group. Anti-EU issue parties including the Swedish June List and the Danish June Movement are excluded from the sample. As a result of the above restrictions, the parties considered add up to a total of fifteen parties from eleven EU member states and display all three types of Euroscepticism (also see Table 4).

Rejecting Euroscepticism

Five radical right parties have chosen to utterly 'reject' Europe. These are the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), the French National Front (FN), the Italian Tricolour Flame (MSFT), the Belgian Flemish Interest (VB), and the League of Polish Families (LPR). These parties display among others similar positions on the issues of sovereignty transfer, European legislation, immigration, enlargement, and foreign policy. Most importantly, they are all against the principle of ceding national sovereignty to non-national institutions, and they are utterly against any European legislation or Treaty. They also blame the EU suggesting that it has been one of the sources of their domestic immigration and economic problems. In particular, these parties do not accept the principle that nations should cooperate at a higher European level. They advocate that policies must remain strictly national and they wish for their country's withdrawal from the EU. It goes without saying that they also reject the practice and the future of integration.

A leading party within this category is UKIP¹. The party slogan is 'We want our country back' openly advocating withdrawal, and its political purpose lies in restoring the authority for governing Britain in Westminster. UKIP suggests that 'the best people to run Britain are the British', that the EU is 'a political project designed to take control of all the main functions of national governments', and that 'only outside the EU will it be possible to begin rebuilding a Britain which is run for British people, not for career politicians and bureaucrats' (UK Independence Party 2005: 1). FN's stance on France's EU withdrawal is slightly more indirect compared to UKIP's. In its manifesto, the party expresses its wish for the overhauling of the European Treaties. It suggests a tour of all the European capitals where it would try to renegotiate the Treaties. In case of failure of agreement with the EU member states, FN will organise a popular referendum on the question

¹ UKIP has been included in the medium-N analysis although it started as an anti-EU issue party because during the past few years it has largely increased the scope of its policies and does not run on a solely anti-EU platform.

‘Should France regain its independence vis-à-vis the Europe of Brussels?’ (Front National 2007a: 61; National Front 2007a: 61)². This rhetoric indicates that the party wishes French EU withdrawal, which should take place in a hassle-free manner, just like a velvet divorce. Indeed, the literature suggests that ‘the FN calls for a restoration of French sovereignty and independence and for the exit of France from the EU’ quoting Le Pen as saying ‘Let’s liberate France’ (Hainsworth, O’Brien, & Mitchell 2004: 47). Very importantly, the party supports the restoration of the French currency as well as the closing of French borders.

The Polish LPR argues along similar lines in favour of Polish withdrawal. Indicatively, their manifesto reads ‘We oppose the incorporation of Poland into the European Union and we will strive so that Polish people reject integration within the European Union in the national referendum’ (League of Polish Families 2008)³. Similarly, in the manifesto of the Belgian Vlaams Belang (VB) we read ‘we adopt a restrained and critical attitude towards the European Union with its bureaucracy and tendency to meddle where the sovereignty of the people should prevail’ (Flemish Interest 2007)⁴. According to VB, the EU intrudes the sovereignty of the nation state and its people, which takes precedence to anything else. The Italian MSFT is also in favour of withdrawal: ‘Italy and the European states should restore political sovereignty’⁵ (Tricolour Flame 2007: 2). We read in their manifesto ‘We reject the European Union which was born in Maastricht and was artificially created from above and without the will of the people’⁶ (Tricolour Flame 2007: 2).

Immigration is a significant theme that arises in these parties’ European discourse. Indicatively, UKIP argues that ‘the numbers of those permitted to enter legally has been rising sharply as a result of [...] the eastern expansion of the European Union’, and it seeks to ‘approach zero net immigration [...] by imposing far stricter limits on legal immigrants’ (UK Independence Party 2005: 7) suggesting thus that it opposes intra-European immigration. The party argues that it is irresponsible to have the free movement of peoples from countries with vastly differing GDP’s. The French FN takes a very similar approach to immigration. It is against the Schengen agreement, and is in favour of the reestablishment of the French internal border controls as well as the reinforcement of the external EU border controls (National Front 2007a: 61)⁷. Similarly, the MSFT suggests the complete block of immigration arguing that ‘Italy does not need to use any more workers’ (Tricolour Flame 2007: 4).

The above parties clearly reject the principle that European member states should cooperate at a multilateral level. They solely support national self-determination seeking that any type of power shifts back to the nation state.

Conditional Euroscepticism

The radical right parties that choose to be ‘conditional’ Eurosceptics strongly differentiate themselves from the ‘rejecting’ Eurosceptics in that they do not maintain that their countries should exit the EU. These are the Greek Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS), the Italian Northern League (LN), the French Movement for France (MPF), the Danish People’s Party (DF), the Bulgarian Attack, and the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ). For these parties, the EU framework is clearly not the right platform for European multilateral cooperation but in contrast to the previous category they crucially accept the principle that the European peoples need and should cooperate. They refrain from supporting the practice and the future of integration.

² Original text: “La France doit-elle reprendre son indépendance vis-à-vis de l’Europe de Bruxelles?”

³ Original text in English.

⁴ Original text in English.

⁵ Original text: “l’Italia e l’Europa devono recuperare la sovranità politica”.

⁶ Original text: “Rifiutiamo l’Unione Europea nata a Maastricht, creata artificialmente al di sopra e al di fuori della volontà popolare”.

⁷ Original text: “Rétablir les contrôles aux frontières intérieures de l’Europe ainsi que dénoncer les accords de Schengen [...] exiger des contrôles renforcés aux frontières extérieures de l’Union”.

As far as the FPÖ is concerned, we learn from the literature that in 1998 ‘it organised a popular initiative against Austria’s participation in the Economic and Monetary Union’, and that in 1999 it ‘used the campaign before the general elections to underline its scepticism regarding EU enlargement’ (Pelinka 2004: 216). The party has been sceptical with respect to the lifting of any kind of borders within the Union and has sought for a more general rethinking of Austria’s EU membership’ (Pelinka 2004: 222). Currently the FPÖ calls the European Constitution a ‘madness’ (2007b)⁸. Adreas Mölzer, the party’s only Member of the European Parliament, argues that ‘Europe of the ‘Brussels syndicate’ has nothing in common with the conception of a Europe of free and sovereign states’ (Mölzer 2007)⁹. However, the party’s official programme states that ‘The future of Europe lies in the close cooperation of its peoples [...] The European Union is only one part of the European reality. It should not develop to a European federal state but to a confederation of states’ (Austrian Freedom Party 2007c)¹⁰. FPÖ thus implicitly accepts the principle of cooperation putting forward an alternative framework for European cooperation nevertheless rejecting both the practice of the EU and any type of future integration.

Similarly, the French MPF openly supports a de Guallist type of Europe whereby the party would ‘guarantee, preserve and reinstate the national independence in a Europe of the cooperation of the States and the peoples [...] the Movement for France proposes a new Europe, a Europe of the nations and the peoples’ (Movement for France 2007a)¹¹. Hainsworth, O’Brien et al find that according to De Villiers, the leader of the party, ‘the European Union should be transformed into a Confederation of Sovereign States. The Council of Ministers [...] would be the sole executive body. The Commission would play a purely administrative role. There would be a common, but not a single currency.’ (2004: 50). Indeed, according to the views set out in the recent party manifestos, the MPF suggests that integration should be replaced with a free cooperation between states on a project basis. The party supports ‘cooperation of variable geometry and geography among the willing countries’ (Movement for France 2007c: 6)¹² arguing that there are many areas that states should cooperate but not within supranational institutions. Thus although the party accepts cooperation it opposes the practice of supranational institutions.

Regarding the Italian LN, Conti finds that its position has changed from a supportive to a much more radical stance (2003: 27). This is substantiated by Quaglia who points out the shift in its position on Europe arguing that it has moved towards hard Euroscepticism in the most recent period and that it seems to be consolidating its Euroscepticism (2003: 18). Indeed the LN argues that the European institutions are not close to the European citizens and that integration should mean the respect of the traditions and cultures of the European peoples, which is not currently the case. However, it argues that ‘we must construct a Europe that is founded on the respect of national and territorial realities, giving the European Union only a limited degree of sovereignty, delimiting its competences and the fields of its intervention avoiding ambiguities’ (Northern League 2006: 26)¹³. This demonstrates that whereas the LN accepts the principle of EU cooperation, it discards the current institutional arrangements, and rejects future EU cooperation.

Whereas the DF argues against European unification suggesting that the EU must not gain power over the member states, it promotes particular policies of its interest that should be dealt at a European multilateral level. For instance, the party’s official programme reads ‘We oppose the development of the EU which is going towards the United States of Europe. The DF wants a close and friendly cooperation in Europe but cooperation should be limited to areas such a trade policy,

⁸ Original text: “Die FPÖ ist die einzige Partei, die diesen Wahnsinn ablehnt”.

⁹ Original text in English.

¹⁰ Original text: “Die künftige Bestimmung Europas ist in enger Zusammenarbeit seiner Völker zu gestalten. [...]Die Europäische Union ist nur ein Teil der europäischen Wirklichkeit. Sie soll sich nicht zu einem europäischen Bundesstaat, sondern zu einem Staatenbund entwickeln”.

¹¹ Original text: “Le Mouvement Pour la France entend garantir, préserver, recouvrer l’indépendance nationale dans une Europe de la coopération des États et des peuples. [...]le Mouvement Pour la France propose une nouvelle Europe, une Europe des patries et des peuples”.

¹² Original text: ‘coopérations à géométrie et géographie variables avec les pays qui le voudront’.

¹³ Original text: ‘si deve cercare di costruire un’Europa fondata sul rispetto delle realtà nazionali e territoriali, cedendo all’Unione Europea solo una limitata parte di sovranità, delimitando chiaramente le proprie competenze; vanno delimitati con precisione gli ambiti di intervento dell’Unione Europea, evitando norme ambigue ed indefinite”.

environmental policy and technical cooperation.’ (Danish People's Party 2008)¹⁴. Although the party supports cooperation in general, it opposes the introduction of a European political union and argues that Denmark shall remain a sovereign state. Along similar lines, the Greek LAOS sustains that the future of Greece is linked to a great extent to the European Union. The party supports the incorporation of all the European states into a viable Union, that is it is in favour enlarging the EU. However, it argues that ‘this can only occur within the context of a Confederation where there would be recognition and protection of the historic, cultural and ethnic roots as well as the ethnic characteristics of the European peoples.’ (Popular Orthodox Rally 2007: 23).¹⁵ Lastly, the Bulgarian Attack party does not dedicate much space in its electoral programme on Europe, indicating that the issue has low salience. The EU is discussed in the foreign policy section arguing that Bulgaria’s foreign relations must be expanded to include not only the EU but also other states (Attack 2009). This indicates that although the party is a fervent supporter of national sovereignty, it indirectly accepts the existence of the EU and although it seeks to reinforce foreign relations with other states, it does not wish Bulgaria’s EU withdrawal.

The above parties display a rhetoric similar to the first category’s arguing that the practice of the EU is destroying national sovereignty. However, the main important difference is that they all accept the principle that nation states should cooperate at a European multilateral level, and that there are particular policies that cannot be dealt with solely at the national level.

Compromising Euroscepticism

The parties that have chosen to adopt the ‘compromising’ type of Euroscepticism clearly accept both the principle and the practice of European integration. They also acknowledge that their country’s economic prosperity is largely a result of cooperation at the European level within the EU framework. These parties are the Dutch Political Reformed Party (SGP), the Polish Law and Justice (PiS), and the Italian National Alliance (AN). Moreover, these parties suggest that the EU should be reformed within its existing structures and refrain from proposing an alternative framework for cooperation, such as the confederation argued by some of the conditional Eurosceptics. Nevertheless, they are not active proponents of further integration nor do they promote further national policies to be uploaded to the European level.

In his analysis of party positions on integration in Italy, Conti argues that the Italian AN gives particular importance to the idea of the nation, and that ‘the party rejects the idea of a federal Europe and supports one of a looser union where the power of nation states are preserved and the outcomes of European integration are systematically checked’ (2003: 26). Quaglia points out that AN has called for ‘the development of the EU beyond purely economic and monetary dimension as well as the strengthening of the European pillar vis-à-vis the US’ (2003: 14). The Italian AN is in favour of an EU that is a champion in the field of technology, energy, and the Lisbon Agenda. The party is also in favour of the reduction of the transatlantic technology gap with particular focus on the energy security, the liberalisation of the market, the completion of the Trans-European Energy networks, the support for renewable energy. It also states that ‘Today Italy cannot any more entrust itself to Europe, it should also contribute to remake Europe’ (National Alliance 2006: 13)¹⁶ taking into account the Italian specificity. The party views integration through a cost-benefit analysis approach and tries to reinforce the Italian national interest through participating in the various institutions. This clearly indicates that the party has accepted that it should promote Italy within the existing structures and that the party find an additional advantage in playing by the rules of the game.

¹⁴ Original text: "Vi er modstandere af udviklingen i EU, som går i retning af Europas Forenede Stater. Dansk Folkeparti ønsker et tæt og venskabeligt samarbejde i Europa, men samarbejdet skal begrænses til områder som handelspolitik, miljøpolitik og teknisk samarbejde. Vi er modstandere af indførelsen af en europæisk politisk union".

¹⁵ Original text: 'Θεωρούμε όμως ότι κάτι τέτοιο είναι δυνατόν να επιτευχθεί μόνο στα πλαίσια μιας Συνομοσπονδίας όπου θα αναγνωρίζονται και θα προστατεύονται οι ιστορικές τόσο οι πολιτισμικές και οι εθνικές ρίζες όσο και τα ιδιαίτερα εθνικά χαρακτηριστικά των Ευρωπαϊκών λαών.'

¹⁶ Original text: "Oggi l'Italia non può più affidarsi solo all'Europa, deve contribuire a rifare l'Europa".

Similarly, the Polish PiS accepts the existing framework of the EU for European cooperation. However, it actively seeks to strengthen Poland's position within the EU 'At the European Council meeting in June, we minimized regulations that were harmful to Poland from the rejected Constitutional Treaty' (Law and Justice 2007: 52)¹⁷. This is because the party fears that the EU is dominated by the strongest and most economically developed states, and that the Polish interests are likely to be overshadowed. For instance, during the negotiations of the Lisbon Treaty the party argued 'We will work to strengthen Poland's position in the legal treaty order of the European Union; we will not agree to a new treaty unless it includes all the matters raised by Poland at the international conferences.' (Law and Justice 2007: 57)¹⁸. Lastly, the Dutch SGP¹⁹ 'recognises the benefits and opportunities of European integration. But at the same time it cautions against the dark side of it'²⁰ (Christian Union and Political Reformed Party 2004). It is favourable of European cooperation and integration on the policies where the member states themselves cannot solve the problems, including the environment and agriculture. SGP does not wish for a European super-state, but an effective Union with realistic goals.

The above clearly demonstrate that these parties have accepted that they should promote and strengthen their country's position within the existing structures of the EU. In other words, they have accepted to play by the 'rules of the game'.

Party positions on European integration			
	Uncompromising	Conditional	Compromising
Austria		Austrian Freedom Party	
Belgium	Flemish Interest		
Bulgaria		Attack	
Denmark		Danish People's Party	
France	National Front	Mouvement for France	
Greece		Popular Orthodox Rally	
Italy	Tricolour Flame	Northern League	National Alliance
Latvia			For Fatherland and Freedom
Netherlands			Political Reformed Party
Poland	League of Polish Families		Law and Justice
United Kingdom	United Kingdom Independence Party		

Table 4: Radical right party positions on European integration

Conclusion

In an attempt to improve the conceptualisation of party-based opposition to the EU, this article has put forward a novel typology of Euroscepticism. Using as point of reference the process of European integration, it has presented three facets of European integration, namely the principle, the practice, and the future of European integration on the basis of which the typology has been constructed. In brief, the principle of European integration refers to a party's wish and willingness for political cooperation at a higher multilateral level not necessarily the one embodied by the EU. The practice of European integration indicates the European institutional structure governing the EU as well as the overall body of EU law thus far accumulated. The future of integration suggests

¹⁷ Original text: "Podczas Szczytu Rady Europejskiej w czerwcu br. zniwelowaliśmy niekorzystne dla Polski zapisy odrzuconego projektu Traktatu Konstytucyjnego".

¹⁸ Original text: 'Będziemy kontynuować twarde działania na rzecz wzmocnienia statusu Polski w prawno-traktatowym porządku UE; nie podpiszemy nowego traktatu, jeżeli nie znajdą się w nim wszystkie postulaty zgłaszane przez Polskę podczas konferencji międzyrządowej'

¹⁹ SGP has a joint European manifesto for 2004-2209 with ChristenUnie. However, ChristenUnie is not included in the analysis as it is considered to have a mainstream conservative rather than extremist/ultraconservative character.

²⁰ Original text: "ChristenUnie en SGP erkennen de voordelen en kansen van Europese integratie. Maar benoemen tegelijk eerlijk de schaduwzijden ervan".

support for an 'ever closer union' by further transferring national policies to the EU level. On the basis of these three criteria, three types of party-based Euroscepticism have been identified. First, the 'rejecting' Eurosceptic parties are against the principle of European political multilateral cooperation. Second, the 'conditional' Eurosceptic parties support the idea of European cooperation but reject its current practice and its future. Lastly, the 'compromising' Eurosceptic parties defend both the principle of integration and its current institutional and policy practice without however supporting an ever closer union. This typology identifies the rejection of the 'future' of Europe as the necessary condition for a party to be Eurosceptic.

A medium-N research has been conducted on fifteen radical right nationalist parties from eleven EU member states supporting the relevance of the proposed typology. The qualitative analysis of party manifestos demonstrates that although these parties belong to the same party family choose to adopt three utterly different positions on European integration. This is a striking finding for two reasons. First, as far as the significance of the typology is concerned this finding demonstrates that the typology is an empirical reality. Second and most importantly, this typology demonstrates significant deviance in terms of Euroscepticism in a party family otherwise considered to oppose European integration in a uniform manner. Therefore, these findings are a preliminary attempt at understanding the general phenomenon of Euroscepticism. More research is needed, especially in disentangling the reasons behind different levels of Euroscepticism within party families.

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