

## Introduction

The initial idea for this book came about due to a certain personal dissatisfaction that made me see a systematic categorisation of all the parties that criticise the current EU as “Eurosceptic”, with no differences and no regard to their ideology. The term is often used as a catch-all concept not only in the media, but also in academic forums (in this case, with nuances) and this led me to investigate the issue in depth, especially bearing in mind that my main object of scientific interest is precisely political parties in their European projection. In analysing the types of criticism of the radical right and left in the EU today, apart from some objective coincidences, I quickly discovered the different proposals of each group (to reject further integration in the first case and advocate another type of integration in the second, always with some exceptions) and that is what prompted me to start this research three years ago, now presented here in completed form.

The first chapter is not intended to provide new types or unpublished empirical contributions, but to review and organise the vast material available today with regard to the issue. The objective is to provide the main descriptive and analytical elements of the eurosceptical phenomenon in its various dimensions in a systematic way, both conceptual and empirical. In this sense, this *overview* addresses the problems of a multi-purpose term that semantically includes two possible dissimilar attitudes: complete rejection or specific reservation.

This book analyses the more significant theoretical and empirical contributions made by qualified specialists in the study of Euroscepticism. The following outlines the root causes of the same, both in its social and partisan dimension: more specifically it looks at the main instrumental socio-economic theories, the focus on political legitimacy and linkage to national identity. Since this research focuses on parties, we especially look in depth at this area with regard to the appraisals and attitudes the groups of left and right have had.

At the outset of the second chapter, we analyse the recent historical background of the parties under research to highlight the main *items* of criticism of the EU, both deducible from their programme documents and their political action. It reviews the main arguments of both ideological groups of parties and their internal variations in the three principal selected critical dimensions: national sovereignty / democracy

deficit / neoliberalism (higher to lower in the case of the radical right and reverse for that of the radical left). Following on from this, there is a specific presentation of the criticisms these parties make in these areas, with occasional collateral reference to other similar formations not included in this research. I should point out that, in this section of the second chapter, the parties are usually grouped by some kind of affinity (on the radical right: classic *extreme*/postmodern populist; on the radical left: orthodox communist/postcommunist). The characteristics of the EP elections of 2009 are then set out, given that the election manifestos analysed correspond exclusively to this election and a cursory study of the national context of the campaign and the results of this type of party in the countries selected. In this case, the analysis of election results is done according to the alphabetical order of each country.

The third and final chapter deals with the comparative and transversal analysis of the election manifestos of political parties selected – which are the most representative of both ideological groups – in the three important dimensions indicated and the exposition of the different ways for right and left, given the different intensity that they both attribute to the above factors, have been organised. Therefore the ideological and programmatic centrality of the doctrine of national sovereignty in every one of the radical right parties selected is brought into focus. In this sense, it highlights the clear rejection of the possible federalisation of EU policy, and denial in assuming a multicultural society, hence the xenophobia against non-EU immigration or exclusion of Turkey as a possible member of the collective. On the other hand, the main factor of EU criticism for the radical left focuses on the objection to its neoliberal socioeconomic policies exclusively favouring big business and detrimental to workers and people in general. The last dimension considered is the EU's “democratic deficit” where the objective coincidence of criticism of both ideological groups of parties is high. This chapter does not follow the alphabetical order of countries or parties for the exposition of these parts (political/economic/cultural) of their respective manifestos, but of the electoral and parliamentary strength of each party in their respective state or territory (in the case of subnational parties), from highest to lowest. For operational reasons only the parties EFD and GUE/NGL integrated into EP eurogroups have been considered, together with some outstanding members of the radical right who are in the EP as “unregistered” entities. So well known eurosceptical parties of the conservative right (ERC) or a few of the green left (present in the EFA) are not included in this research.

Of the 27 current EU states, I have selected 17 of the 22 theoretically possible for study (in the remaining five, radical parties of the right or left of the two researched eurogroups did not achieve representation). I

had to finally renounce five of which some had indeed achieved representation to the EP because it was completely impossible to obtain their manifestos, despite repeated requests on varied occasions on a very personal basis, but otherwise, their absence is not that important since these concern (almost exclusively) very small parties that achieved a minimal presence. So in the seventeen countries finally chosen the picture is as follows: radical right parties only achieved representation in a total of eleven, radical left parties in only nine and both ideological groups in only three.

Table 1<sup>1</sup>

<b>Country</b>	<b>Radical Right</b>	<b>Radical Left</b>
Germany	-	DL
Austria	FPÖ	-
Belgium	VB	-
Bulgaria	NSA	-
Czech Republic	-	KSČM
Cyprus	-	AKEL
Denmark	DF	-
Spain	-	IU
France	FN	FG
Greece	LAOS	KKE / SYRIZA
Holland	PVV	-
Hungary	JMM	-
Italy	LN	-
Portugal	-	BE / CDU-PCP
United Kingdom	UKIP	SF
Romania	PRM	-
Sweden	-	VP

I would like to point out that it is not in any way the objective of this research to concern myself with defining what a “radical” party is: I assume the elaborate and consolidated conceptualisations of specialists such as Mudde, Ignazi and Perrineau for the radical right and Backes and Moreau, Dunphy, De Waele and Seiler with regards to the radical left. Although, in general, I analysed only the specific programmes that the 22 selected parties presented for the EP elections of 2009, in some cases I had to resort to a complimentary documentation: this is the case of LAOS that produced two separate texts on its proposed policy on this issue and of the VB, given that the European and regional elections

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<sup>1</sup> See the list of acronyms at the end of the book.

coincided in Flanders and their European positions were reflected in two different texts.

Academic literature justifying recourse to the study of parties' electoral manifestos is already abundant and I personally had the opportunity to study this matter thoroughly in my book *Political Parties and European Integration*, ICPS, Barcelona, 2008 (English version by PIE Peter Lang, Brussels, 2009), it is however worth reiterating that these are official documents, representative of the whole party and also public. In the chosen manifestos of 2009 several common elements were found: 1) overwhelming dominance of national *issues*, 2) absence of real transnational coordination with homologues from other countries and 3) few concrete commitments and numerous general statements (see Braun, 2010; Sigalas, 2010).

The use of computer programmes in the analysis of these texts (such as "Atlas-ti" or the PIREDU of the *Manifesto Group Research* of the *Mannheimer Zentrum für Europäische Sozialforschung* / MZES) were rejected for various reasons: 1) for the non-coincidence of *items* of the same with the ones I have used, 2) because the coding these systems use do not always coincide, 3) for the complexity derived from so many different languages (not all can be processed and to translate all the programmes into English would imply an extraordinary increase in costing for the project) and 4) mainly because these techniques, in my view, do not contribute anything especially relevant to the interpretation, beyond providing some quantitative indicators that are often insignificant. In sum, these forms of text analysis, though having produced some interesting results (in particular those of the *Comparative Manifesto Research Group* led by Budge) have received numerous profound criticisms for having a rather low reliability (in this regard, it is of interest to compare the positions of specialists such as Benoit, Garry, Laver, Martin and Vanberg). Finally, I would like to mention that I do not cite specific pages of manifestos because the translations have changed their format (sometimes considerably, the case of illustrated texts) and therefore the number of pages is not the same and do not match the original.

The collection all 22 electoral manifestos has been an extraordinarily difficult and lengthy task, the whole process requiring frequent and repeated contacts of various kinds and nearly six months' work because none were present on the party websites (September 2010 to February 2011). To begin with, I sent emails to all the party headquarters, but the result could not have been more disappointing: of the 22 parties, only six answered and four of these could not provide any manifesto at all (only the LN and IU sent theirs back to me). The DF, the FPÖ and the

FN limited themselves to sending me a prerecorded bureaucratic response that referred to their respective web pages which, as I have explained, no longer contained the election manifestos of 2009. For its part, the Danish *Folkebevægelsen mod EU* party clarified that no manifesto had been presented as they had lent their support to an independent candidate.

With this option exhausted, I chose to speak directly to each and every one of the MEPs of the 22 parties being researched. The initial result was even more disappointing because, in the first instance, none deigned to answer me. It took a new batch of emails, spaced over time to start having some results: in the second instance, a representative of the Bulgarian NSA party announced that he would send me their programme “soon”, something that never happened despite me sending him two reminders of his promise. Only after the third round of emails I received the manifestos of the BE, the CDU-PCP, the VP and the DF.

In summary, neither the parties nor MEPs in general worked (which is still somewhat incomprehensible from the standpoint of public relations) for the compilation phase of the texts, so it was more practical in the end to go to academic colleagues. Although those I now mention did not manage to obtain the documents I requested, I know they made great efforts in this and so would now like to offer my gratitude: William Genieys (University of Montpellier), Pierre Bon (University of Pau et Pays de l'Adour) Nonna Maier (CEVIPOF), Pascal Perrineau (CEVIPOF), David Mc Crone (University of Edinburgh), Lieven De Winter (University of Leuven), Blanca Vilà (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) and Suzana Tavares (University of Coimbra). However, Montserrat Baras (UAB), Pere Joan Plaza Universidad Carlos III), Josep Ma Reniu (Universitat de Barcelona) and, especially, Ignasi Pérez (IES Abroad Barcelona/University of Chicago) were absolutely decisive with their contacts and help. Montserrat Baras gave me the contacts of Eva Poptcheva (she obtained the NSA and JMM manifestos), Patricia Correa (who, in turn, contacted Eva Finkova who, thanks to her colleague Ladislav Mrklas at the University of Prague, was able to get the KSCM programme, and finally, that of the FN, surprisingly the most difficult to obtain). Joan Pere Plaza obtained the LAOS and the PRM manifestos and Josep Ma Reniu obtained the programme of the SF and VB. At the same time, Ignasi Pérez, through Kalispera Thanos, obtained the manifestos of the KKE, SYRIZA and AKEL and directly that of the FG, the PVV and UKIP. In contrast, I received no response from the MZES (where I had occasion to conduct research in May 2008), a centre specialised specifically in the study of European election manifestos because, despite my repeated emails, this time I received no institutional help whatsoever from this centre. However, a colleague of the same –

currently on secondment at the University of Vienna – was very helpful and I obtained the programmes for the DL and FPÖ: I am therefore very grateful to Wolfgang Müller.

Let me also express my heartfelt appreciation to Juan Crespo and Lorenzo Mannelli, both in the service of the EP in Brussels, for having provided me all the addresses for the euro-deputies and direct support given to me in the seat of that institution in June 2011 where I was able to collect more materials useful to conclude this research. In this regard, I extend special thanks to the library that the MEP Raul Romeva gave me access, as well as the efficient efforts of Pilar d'Orey. In any case, it is still somewhat surprising that the Library of the European Parliament does not have the electoral manifestos of the parties present in the institution: it is true that these are not official documents of the same, but it would be very easy to request that MEPs to deposit a copy of their programs in the centre, which would be an extraordinary help for the task of researchers. Finally, I must point out that, in order to improve agility, I always asked for the manifestos in their respective original languages as I already knew that it would be difficult to have available versions translated into English. This means that I had to order several translations, in many cases minority languages, which increased expense and delayed the whole process. As a speaker of Castilian, English, French, Italian and Portuguese, I had no problems with the manifestos written in these languages, in fact, I found to my surprise that two parties with other languages had sent me their texts in English (AKEL and KKE). I want to thank the German translations from German (DL FPÖ) by Raul Hernandez, from Bulgarian (NSA) by Tsarimir Alexandrov, from Czech (KSCM) by Lenka Skalossova, from Danish (DF) by Boersting Mette, from Greek (LAOS, SYRIZA) by Stavrinidou Eleni, from Dutch (PVV, VB) by Caspar Visser, from Hungarian (JMM) by Kristine Farkas, from Romanian (MRP) by Teica Tatiana and from Swedish (VP) by Agnes Von Anoint.

Finally, I would also like to mention other people who, in one way or another, also provided assistance in this long and complicated process: Óscar Barbera (University of Valencia), Astrid Barrio (University of Valencia), Juan Rodriguez (University of Valencia), Esther Martin (University of Barcelona), Ana Sanchez (University of Barcelona), Montserrat Morante (University of Barcelona) and Ruth Ferrero (Complutense University). I want to pay special tribute to Mariano Torcal (Pompeu Fabra University) since he very kindly allowed me to consult the manuscript of the book co-edited with Joan Font on elections to the European Parliament in 2009 – prior to publication. I can not conclude without mentioning that this study is linked to the *Grup de Recerca sobre Elits i Partits (Research Group on Parties and Elites)*

(GREP.SGR 2009-1290) and to the project coordinated by Montserrat Baras “The effects of decentralisation on political parties: human base, organisation and alliances. Spain in Comparative Perspective” through which I would not have received financial support for the translations of some election manifestos.

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