Euroscepticism: The State of the Issue

1. Definitional problems

The term *Eurosceptic* appeared in the British press in the mid-1980s to qualify the reservations and criticisms that the Premier Margaret Thatcher had of the European Community. Since then its usage has been synonymic for anti-common market and, more precisely, equivalent to all the intense, direct criticism of the process of European integration. This was reinforced after Thatcher's famous speech at the College of Europe in Bruges (22 September 1988), in full opposition of an alleged "centralisation" of Brussels, the "all embracing nature" of EU bureaucracy and the risk of moving towards a European super-state[1]. Although Euroscept iscism appeared as a distinctively British phenomenon, it became generalised – in varying degrees – in other community members and this has helped to reinforce the fortunes of the term, especially since it has become a permanent structural datum of the European political landscape. It has therefore overcome *de facto* the classic thesis of British exceptionalism with regard to the EU from the moment that the attitudes of reservation and/or rejection were significantly manifested in the vast majority of states.

Although the term Eurosceptic has a journalistic origin, not an academic one, European policy specialists have eagerly taken to providing it with a theoretical and empirical operating status. This expression, as well as other diverse terms such as Europhobia, Eurocyinism or Europessimism are – at the outset – media *labels* that only very imperfectly identify ideological values and/or strategies of political elites and where appropriate, of public opinion. All were journalistic indicators rather than genuine, formal concepts of political

---

[1] The Oxford English Dictionary defines a Eurosceptic as "a person who is not enthusiastic about increasing the powers of the European Union". The dictionary cites an article in *The Times*, June 1986 as the first to use the term, although Spiering detected an earlier reference, in November 1985, in the same newspaper in referring to an "anti-common market" position. Vid. Harmsen, Spiering, 2004, p. 15-16; Harmsen, 2005, p. 280; Hooghe, Marks, 2007, p. 120; Sczerbiak, Taggart, 2008, II b, p. 261; Leconte, 2010, p. 3 and 12.

theory, among other factors because we are not dealing with perfectly defined and closed categories. However, the progressive accumulation of a broad background of academic research has continued to refine the concept. Euroscepticism is often used synonymously to define some kind of opposition, as a practical response to the development of the EU: "expressing the idea of a contingent or qualified opposition (...) the process of European integration"[2]. One of the greater conceptual and operational difficulties is to draw the boundary which permits certain types of criticism of the EU by Euroesceptics, but not by others. This means that Euroscepticism implies a *continuum* that ranges from serious doubts to clear rejections.

Besides the question of gradations, the motivations are not always the same given that – sometimes – economic ones predominate (if the expected material benefits do not materialise or are not enough), political ones at other times (fear of loss of national sovereignty, mistrust in the EU institutions for their opacity). In short, at the outset it seems quite clear that anyone who is against the EMU could be described as eurosceptical, but not the one which – for example – only objects to the PPC. Now we are becoming more precise, it should be noted that the term has more congruence applied to those with a strict view of European intergovernmental cooperation and a rejection of the supranational delegation of *sovereign* State responsibilities[3].

In the *mass media* and even in some academic literature, the term Euroscepticism is used as a *catch-all*, multi-purpose, hybrid, ambiguous and generic term as it includes *different* attitudes to the EU. Indeed, sometimes it is used as a synonym for any kind of opposition to the EU, at other times as a reserve against certain relevant EU policies. In fact, separate variants need to be clarified as the principled opposition to the current EU can not be grouped together (without forgetting that the ideological perspectives can be very different in this respect) or the criticism of certain EU decisions, important as they are. Consequently, the use of the term Euroscepticism can mean both outright rejection and permanent doubts about the direction the current EU is taking and this is what makes the concept something rather vague and all-encompassing, requiring an effort of conceptual clarification and analytical, empirical operability[4].

---

[2]   Taggart, 1998, p. 366; Tierski, 2001, p. 3 and 305; Rovny, 2004, p. 31; Krouwel, Abts, 2007, p. 254-255 and 268.

[3]   Hooghe, Marks, 2007, p. 120; Leconte, 2010, p. 6 and 8.

[4]   Both the *Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy of Language* and that of Maria Moliner include two different semantic meanings in the term "Scepticism": first, doubts and reservations, and other negation and opposition. On its application to the

In view of this, it seems clear that to pigeonhole any opposition to the current EU with the convenient term of Euroscepticism is not very illuminating because of its lack of nuance. Ultranationalist Europhobia and criticism of the current EU for being insufficiently supranational are not comparable, for example. We can neither assimilate the advocation of the abandonment and/or dismantling of the EU nor demand a lot more integration than already exists. Naturally the "central block" parties that support the ongoing process practically without reservation (the three main ideological groups of the EP: conservative, socialist and liberal) are primarily interested in denouncing *all* opposition as eurosceptical, whether this is ideological or for whatever goals they have, which creates a confusing amalgamation of the different types of criticism of European integration. In fact, it is not very clarifying to mix negative opposition (mostly on the radical right) with positive (the majority of which is on the radical left), but if any background criticism to EU policies involves these being typecast as eurosceptical, then the term loses conceptual value for academic analysis. On the one hand, not all Euroscepticism always implies a negative attitude, and other, more differentiation is needed to develop more sophisticated analytical typologies[5].

2. A new *cleavage*?

Euroscepticism is not just a phenomenon of certain elites, some mass media or voters who protest: it is a more complex phenomenon that interacts with all these elements in certain contexts. From being initially a marginal phenomenon, it has grown steadily since the 1990s and has become an element of undoubted impact on the process of European integration. The political and social boom of Euroscepticism is related to many factors: among others, a weak feeling of European community, popular distrust of the political representatives of the *establishment* and the economic crisis reinforcing the tendency towards protectionist measures. The disaffection of significant social sectors, the demago-guery of some clever populist politicians and the increasing difficulty of the pro-EU elite in convincing public opinion of their conduct explain – for example – the defeats of various national governments on referenda held on European issues[6].

EU: Harmsen, Spiering, 2004, p. 33; Lubbers, Scheepers, 2005, p. 229; Neumayer, 2008, p. 136; Sczerbiak, Taggart, 2008, Ia, p. 7 and II b, p. 240 and 253; De Vries, Edwards, 2009, p. 10.

[5]   Taggart, 1998, p. 366. Krouwel, Abts, 2007, p. 268; Neumayer, 2008, p. 155.

[6]   Eichenberg, Dalton, 2007, p. 140; Hooghe, Marks, 2007, p. 119; Krouwel, Abts, 2007, p. 252-253; Wessels, 2007, p. 288 y 290-291. Leconte, 2010, p. 2-3, 9 and 10.

It is a somewhat debatable question as to whether European integration is a new *cleavage* that – in principle – sets the losers of globalisation against the winners, though this dichotomy presents some relevant exceptions (the United Kingdom as a country is not a "loser" in the EU, however, it is largely euroseptical). If European integration were an integral *cleavage*, it should have a strong internal projection in domestic politics, but this is rarely the case because the competition between national parties in each state ignores, to a greater extent, the euroseptical issue. In a restricted sense it has been indicated that criticism of European integration has a strategic reach and so would not become a true *cleavage*, but in an extensive sense it could considered as such as it affects both the confrontation of national sovereignty *versus* supranationality and the division right/left. Therefore, European integration itself can be considered broadly as a *cleavage* because it focuses on a redefinition of all those being found in the foreign policy of some states and reflects the emergence of a new dimension in political competition. However, it is true that the European *issue* is always instrumental and dependent on the domestic agenda, given that community affairs – in general – have little direct relevance to national political life[7].

From the mid-1950s to the late 1980s Euroscepticism was clearly marginal, initiating the change of social and political perception from the SEA and, above all, the TEU, which ended the era of "permissive consensus" in the construction of Europe. However, it remains somewhat schematic to say that before the 1990s there was an almost total acceptance of any integrational advance and today a systematic opposition as the picture is more nuanced. For example, in the 1950s is true that 70% of Western European public opinion was in favour of European unification and only 10-15% against, but that half a century later, the percentages have changed relatively little so that 60-65% continues to support integration while the 15-20% opposes it, this without overlooking the different responses to economic integration (widely shared) and political integration (significantly lower)[8]. In any case, it is true that the intense debate on the EU Treaty showed a clear symptom of a gap between pro-integrationist elites and public opinion for the first time, both for economic reasons (negative evaluations of the cost-benefit calculation) and identity (very weak feelings for the European community and strong national roots) as well as political

---

[7] Setter, 2002, p. 7-9; Sczerbiak, Taggart, 2008, Ia, p. 2; Steenberger, Scott, 2008, p. 165-195; Fuchs, Magni-Berton, Roger, 2009, p. 12-13, 15 y 20; Leconte, 2010, p. 37.

[8] Gabel, 1998a, p. 112. The figures in Leconte, 2010, p. 44-45 and 162-165.

criticism (the "democratic deficit" of the EU). This was because the EU Treaty implied a reconceptualisation of European integration and increased the powers of EU institutions, two elements not easily accepted by large sectors of national public opinion. With this, it was found that the greater European integrative process, the greater the rejection and the sources of friction – the advance of the process generated an increasing amount of discontent, sometimes channelled by some parties[9].

The complex and contradictory process of European integration shows that the main contrast in this respect is in the *continuum* that ranges from sovereign nationalists to supranationalist Federalists and the analytical key lies in discriminating the different types of opposition that reflect reservations or hostility, both by sectors of the political elite and public opinion. From here, it is noted that Euroscepticism – in all its forms – is a transversal ideological phenomenon that crosses the left/right axis and is clearly present even within parties themselves. This means that although in most cases Euroscepticism is often associated with groups that cling to the myth of *national sovereignty* and are unwilling to cede more power (or even recover some or even all already ceded) to the EU, at other times formations that – in fact – are not anti-integracionist in principle, but understand an alternative construction of Europe, are tagged with this label, criticising the current process underway in considering it insufficient[10].

The uncertainty of the European project is reflected in differing models used for understanding integration, one more supranational (linked historically to the Franco-German alliance), one more statist and economic (led by the British, followed by Scandinavian countries and several CEEC) and the mismatch of objectives, causing contradictions, setbacks and eventual paralysis. Economic crises and difficulties the EU has in addressing them, political conflicts and the nationalist tendency to withdrawal contributed to the rise of Euroscepticism as a general phenomenon of protest that affects several dimensions, some magnified by the radical right (national identity) and others by the radical left (the unequal elements of the market economy). This means that opposition to the EU takes different forms and also affects distinct elements, in such a way that variations are produced: 1) direct opposition to *any kind* of integration, 2) opposition to the *current* level achieved, considering it

---

[9] Taggart, 1998, p. 364; Sitter, 2002, p. 5; Harmsen, Spiering, 2004, p. 17 and 25; Mc Laren, 2004, p. 895; Eichenberg, Dalton, 2007, p. 129 and 131; Hooghe, 2007, p. 5. Fuchs *et al.*, 2008; De Vries, Edwards, 2009, p. 5-6; Trenz, Wilde, 2009, p. 1-2; Leconte, 2010, p. 167.

[10] Taggart, 1998, p. 363; Sitter, 2002, p. 10; Sczerbiak, Taggart, 2008, I a, p. 9.

excessive and 3) opposition to the current level, considering insufficient. To refine further: "All who oppose the EU are, in short, sceptics, but not all sceptics are opponents" – some groups raise objections to everything, while others raise objections to only some aspects of European integration[11].

3. The academic contributions

To measure attitudes (pro-integration / reservations / anti-integration) scholars have used various sources: party manifestos, statements from party leaders, votes of their representatives in the EP and opinion polls (the series of existing Euro-barometers are very abundant), among others. These are all being used in an attempt to combine both ideological and strategic variables, without overlooking some specific difficulties: at the theoretical level, the more internal complexity and variety of the types, the greater the difficulty verifying them operationally and at the empirical level, what has been relevant is the overcoming of the initial approach focused almost monothematically on questions formulated in terms of the parameter cost/benefit (the *instrumental approach*), to address other very relevant dimensions (the identity and the quality of democracy). So there are many factors under discussion: the impact of economic integration and the scope of community public policy, in politics, the strategic direction of the process and the performance of institutions and actors, in identity factors – the idea itself of the European community and the stage achieved. This all has obvious projection on the specific study of Euroscepticism that should evaluate not only its "magnitude" (quantitative criterion) but also its "motivation" (qualitative criterion)[12].

The academic literature on Euroscepticism is already rich and of quality, although no "school" that imposes its views has emerged. Some contributions have focused on public opinion (Lubbers/Scheepers), others on the party elites (Kopeck, Mudde, Sczerbiak, Taggart) and some on the conceptual dimension (Flood, Tierski). The proliferation of non-coinciding concepts and classifications has generated significant scientific debate that has refined the theoretical level whilst perfecting empirical methods of evaluation and treatment of the data. All of this with the understanding that there are still problems in operationalising

---

[11] Quoted from Taggart, 1998, p. 366; Eichenberg, Dalton, 2007, p. 139; Hooghe, Marks, 2007, p. 125; Fuchs, Magni-Berton, Roger, 2009, p. 21; Leconte, 2010, p. 7. 169 and 172.

[12] Rovny, 2004, p. 38; Lubbers, Scheepers, 2005, p. 224; Krouwel, Abts, 2007, p. 255-256 and 270; Wessels, 2007, p. 287-306; Neumayer, 2008, p. 137; Sczerbiak, Taggart, II a, p. 5 and II b, p. 239; Fuchs, Magni-Berton, Roger, 2009, p. 16; Kufer, 2009, p. 40.

some types whose explanatory power can be relative and this explains why the academic results have not produced a unanimous interpretation of the eurosceptical phenomenon.

It was Flood who provided the most comprehensive theoretical framework that includes six major categories with internal subcategories to cover the full potential range of positions relative to European integration. Although his contribution presents not insignificant difficulties in empirical application, it is relevant for its exhaustive conceptual character:

1) *rejectionist*:

    1.1) as opposed to EU membership

    1.2) opposition to participate in some of its basic policies

2) *revisionist*:

    2.1) return to the state basic policies transferred

    2.2) do so only with some very specific policies

3) *minimalist*:

    3.1) accepted as the maximum current status quo for the entire community structure

    3.2) only for some areas

4) *gradualist*:

    4.1) supporting a greater integration for the whole

    4.2) only for some areas

5) *reformist*: in favour of greater European commitment and a gradual increase in integration;

6) *maximalist*:

    6.1) for maximum integration of the entire structure of the EU,

    6.2) for certain areas[13].

In this sense the Kopecky and Mudde scheme is more practical, which groups the four main variants from two dimensions, the attitude towards the *principle* of integration and to specific Community *policies*.

---

[13]   Flood, 2002. Based on this and other contributions, Perez provides a more simplified (and operative) table: 1) Europromotors (the "central block" of the political formations in favour of the current EU), 2) Euroesceptics (in this case, distinguishing between minimalist and revisionist) that propose a halt to the integration process and in some cases, a return of powers to the states, but not to dismantle the EU and intergovernmental economic cooperation, 3) Eurorepublicanists (they are – in his opinion – the *critics* of the current EU advocating a much more ambitious *alternative*), 4) or anti-Europeans who defend the Europhobes' abandonment and/or dismantling of the current EU. Perez, 2008, p. 92-94 and 115-117.

With the integrationist principle, firstly, the divide between Europhiles (Euroenthusiasts) and Europhobes is clear, with an initial lack of nuance, that of the "agnostics" (Europragmatics). In practice in the Community the division includes Euro-optimists and Europessimists: the former believe that the *current* process of integration is right because there is really no other possibility (this does not stop them disagreeing with *one or another* specific EU policy) and the latter, who believe, in contrast, that the EU is not moving in the right direction in accordance with its historical premises. Both authors distinguish, therefore, parties that to a greater or lesser extent diffusely oppose the *principle* of integration (i.e. to cede sovereignty to supranational authorities) and those who specifically oppose either the *extension* of the ceded part or specific Community policies. From this point, the variants are grouped in four positions: 1) Euroenthusiasts (Europhiles and Euro-optimists), 2) Eurosceptics (Europhiles and Europessimists), 3) Eurorejectionists (Europhobes and Europessimists) and 4) Europragmatics (Europhobes and Euro-optimists). The first group supports the principle of integration and the way this is being done (the procedure), the second group are not against the principle, but are contrary to the procedure, considering it "excessive", the third opposes both the principle and the procedure and the fourth does not share the principle but accepts the acceptance of the procedure as inevitable.

Table 1

		SUPPORT FOR THE PRINCIPLE	
		Europhiles	*Europhobes*
SUPPORT FOR THE PROCEDURE	*Euro-optimists*	Euro-enthusiasts	Europragmatics
	Europessimists	Eurosceptics	Eurorejectors

Source: Kopecky, Mudde, 2002, p. 303.

The category of "Euroenthusiasts" may be too inclusive and generic as it does not quite capture the different types of acceptance of the EU, an area in which there is a high level of transversalism even within a group of parties, given – occasional – conflicting national interests. It is true that the parties of the center-right and center-left often coincide in both the principle and the current integrative procedure of the Community, but – for example – the differences between the French Gaullists and the Belgian Christian Democrats or between the British Labour Party and German Social Democracy on both dimensions are known. Kopecky and Mudde are aware of the fact and, consequently, distinguish within the Europhile field between integrationist and strictly economic policies. A nuance clear in theory, but in a particular concrete case this may cause some perplexity: in the second sense, Thatcher was

not eurosceptical and at the outset went far beyond being europhobic and it must be remembered that this British leader has always been uniquely regarded as the quintessential example of Euroscepticism. Meanwhile, in the europhobic field, nuances between the most radical sectors, totally hostile to any European supranational decision making entity and the less radical sectors that can accept some form of intergovernmental economic cooperation, can be found[14].

Sczerbiack and Taggart have directed the first major systematic study comparing eurosceptical phenomenon in various EU countries with notable empirical results and theoretical contributions of interest open to further discussion. These authors have chosen a dichotomous classification ("hard" and "soft" Euroscepticism) which – despite its inevitable reductionist schematic – has the advantage of being applicable for operational purposes. This is a manageable dual definition that though having received some criticism and is open to modification, has borne empirical fruit. What these authors call hard Euroscepticism implies *opposition* to the EU, with key principles and/or policy: parties and sectors that fall into this category or demand their countries *leave* the EU or their policy proposals are so contradictory and antagonistic with the Community that there is no chance of their fitting in. From this perspective (in fact, Europhobia), the EU must be rejected, either because it violates national sovereignty and would serve to obscure "globalisationist" interests (radical right) or it is used as a tool of "big capital" to impose neoliberalism (radical left). Consequently, the EU is perceived as an anti-national matrix, techno-bureaucratic, elitist, undemocratic and unpopular: empirical research has shown that this type of scepticism is much less common than the other. Meanwhile, soft Euroscepticism implies that it does not object to the principle of integration itself, but only *certain* Community policies, that, in the opinion of the groups that occupy this space, are harmful to the "national interest". The soft Eurosceptics can accept the benefits of mutually beneficial cooperation between States, but reject the transformation of this into a European supranational *political* authority. Therefore, soft Euroscepticism implies an instrumental view of the EU and a limited view on the extent of integration, hence the opposition to the EU is not direct or of principle, but partial and sectorial[15].

---

[14] Kopecky, Mudde, 2002, p. 300-302. Sczerbiak and Taggart, whose simplified scheme has been academically successful. It does, however, have the rare intellectual honesty to recognise that Kopecky and Mudde's looks a lot better than theirs, *op. cit.*, 2008, II b, p. 247.

[15] Sczerbiak, Taggart, 2008, I a, p. 8 and 11-12 (in these two pages the table of countries and parties with their eurosceptical variants are included); Tiersky, 2001, p. 3-4; Lubbers, Scheepers, 2005, p. 227 and 232.

This dual classification has some problems especially in the case of those parties who have substantial ambiguities of both the principle and of the community policies. In this sense, the generic category of Euroscepticism is excessively wide in ranging from parties and groups who reject the membership of their countries to the EU to others who strongly oppose only some of its policies. This *soft* classification runs the risk of being so vague that almost any disagreement with EU policies could fit in it – the concept then needs to be fully refined. There are also complicated cases such as those parties who are against the principle of integration, but do not advocate leaving the EU. This, in principle, seems illogical, however, it is relatively common in certain CEE countries where there are anti-EU parties that do not advertise the fact because their countries need EU funds and they are not aware that no alternative exists. Another example of a difficult fit are those parties who distrust the current process of integration, not for going too far, but for precisely the opposite (the "Eurocritics" of the radical left who refuse to be labelled as eurosceptical)[16].

Sczerbiak and Taggart recognise that it is not easy to unequivocally define the concept of Euroscepticism given the notable differences in context of each case and so admit the inherent difficulties when it comes to coining a general pattern applicable in all countries. At the same time, they assume that from an empirical stance the distinction hard/soft is not always easy and so, for example, both authors admit they have included in the *soft* category parties that are essentially pro-integrationist, which forces us to clarify the scope of the term. Indeed, although a party may have some serious reservations about *some* EU policies, it should not be classified as eurosceptical for this reason alone, as the key is to verify if it is in favour of the principle of integration. If a party is in favour of this and *in general*, of the direction the community is taking, although it may disagree with a specific policy – even one of importance – (these specialists mentioned none other than the CFSP) it can not be defined as eurosceptical. The pertinent question that arises is: where can the line be drawn on what sovereignty a party is willing to cede to determine whether or not it is eurosceptical? The answer is not easy as the question is not so much *quantitative* (a party may object *only* to *many* "secondary" EU policies), but *qualitative* (a party may object *only* to *few* "fundamental" EU policies). Of course, this raises a new question: regarding community policy – what is a secondary and what is fundamental? To determine which EU policies are "peripheral" and what others are "core" is something arbitrary and subjective. It is true there may be some very clear, specific examples: if a party opposes the EMU

---

[16]   Sczerbiak, Taggart, 2008, I a, p. 8; Kopecky, Mudde, 2002, p. 300.

as a block it is eurosceptical (or, where appropriate, eurocritical), but not if it only opposes the CSF, for example. Taggart and Sczerbiak admit that it is debatable to determine which policies are or are not central and in this sense they have sustained the CFSP policy is not central: for current practical purposes it is true (because of its low real density and in part for its strict intergovernmental character), but to oppose its limited deployment is a deeply anti-integrationist policy and therefore it seems clear that objectively it is not a secondary question[17].

Both authors admit that their binary categories are not necessarily exclusive and that some parties may have elements of both, since their programme policies on European integration are not always made abundantly clear, making their classification difficult. More particularly, Sczerbiak and Taggart recognise the problem of conceptualising parties that not only *do not* oppose integration, but also criticise existing processes as *inadequate* (radical left) as eurosceptical. This ideological group of parties – in the main pro-integrationist in principle – is often severe in judging the existing process, which – in practice – tends to produce retardant *objective* effects on the construction of Europe which so far has advanced with the slow and contradictory functionalist method. In this case, it poses a problem of form and substance: in theory they are very integrationist parties but, in fact, they are not, since they do not facilitate the small concrete steps of the "central block" at all, always disqualifying the same as "insufficient". In any case, from a conceptual point of view, it seems right to distinguish this type of opposition of the majority on the radical right because in criticising the *current* state of integration as being insufficient and, above all, the *direction* that governments are taking, it should not be automatically categorised with the block of *Eurorejectors* (what is relevant in this regard is to consider most radical left-wing parties as eurocritical). Still, Sczerbiak and Taggart were right to point out that the more types there are, the more difficult it is to operationalise and to categorise them in parties. With this, the scale *hard/soft* should be interpreted as a *continuum*, not as two stagnant compartments[18].

4. Causes of Euroscepticism

There are many different factors driving the rise of the phenomenon (economic, political, cultural) and these manifest themselves with variable intensity depending on countries and formations. The expansion of European integration in primarily political and not only in economic

---

[17]   Sczerbiak, Taggart, 2008, I b, p. 361 and II b, p. 249-250.
[18]   Sczerbiak, Taggart, 2008, II b, p. 246 and 252; Rovny, 2004, p. 45.

areas has generated more and more resistance in significant sectors of national public opinion. In as much as the latter has been broadly accepted, the former much less so, which, incidentally, has contradicted the strategic expectations of neofunctionnalists. So, Euroscepticism – as a reactive phenomenon – indicates a negative perception of the increase in community integration, the EU institutions and the assessment of its performance. In the approaches to the study of the causes of Euroscepticism, the utilitarian perspective has focused on calculating cost/profit (increasingly unbalanced in favour of the former, which would generate many *losers*), the political theories of "democratic deficit" of the EU (suspicion of supposedly incomprehensible and distant Community institutions) and the cultural issue in the area of identity (weak feelings towards Europe *versus* strong of national roots). In short, what is rejected or on what issues are there reservations?: 1) the loss of national sovereignty, 2) the indefinite expansion of the EU, 3) the expansion of responsibilities, 4) the imbalance of power between the EU and States in favour of the latter in certain areas, 5) the imbalance between the Community institutions themselves generating opacity and 6) specific community policies. In addition, the open and unfinished character of the EU (a possible *final* format has never been outlined) and its permanent process of readaptation contributes to favour the rise of Euroscepticism[19].

This phenomenon is a consequence of the perceptions of some elites and citizen groups on their primary preferences: if public opinion is not satisfied with domestic policies and believe that further European integration may change this, they will be pro-European and, inversely, consider that when Community policies are less desirable than or are more harmful than national policies, they will be eurosceptical. Thus, opposition to European integration is more an explicit rejection of and/or concerns about the EU's ability to effectively ensure tangible *benefits*, on the feasibility of a genuine European democratic *governance* and the risks to national identity. There are then fears for the future of the welfare state (increasingly challenged at all levels), the loss of popular control and democratic quality (the Eurosceptics believe that from the point of view of regulatory legitimacy the EU is much poorer than nation states) and for a supposed project forcing homogenising integration, impossible by definition in a Europe as heterogeneous as the mosaic of peoples that it is. Euroscepticism reflects hostility toward global governance in all its dimensions, something viewed negatively in

---

[19]   Eichenberg, Dalton, 2007, p. 132-133; Hooghe, Marks, 2007, p. 119; Dubé, Magni-Berton, 2009, 2009, p. 77; Siegers, 2009, p. 116.

the civic perception of the lack of accountability of EU institutions and the delegative nature of these[20].

The removal of economic barriers in the EU has altered the balance between capital and labour in domestic markets and increased competetion for jobs. In particular, less skilled workers tend to feel prejudiced and consequently, their support for the EU is low. In addition, in some cases, institutional and decisional complexities of the EU contribute to increased distrust and suspicion regarding the limited effectiveness of Community authorities. Add to this the uncertainties caused by the Euro and rising renationalistic trends in various European governments, both of which have contributed to the development of Euroscepticism[21].

In studies of European integration there was initially an overwhelming predominance of views focusing on elites and only since the 1990s has in-depth research on public opinion been developed. This means that, on one hand, we must distinguish between Euroscepticism in parties and citizens, and on the other, the wide range of possible attitudes (by area), both of which reflect the multidimensional nature of support or not for European integration[22]. Hix has thoroughly systematized the complex relationships between parties, interest groups and voters formulating the following theses: 1) voters and parties of the radical left and right tend to be *more* eurosceptical than voters and parties of the "central block", 2) individuals and groups who support the government parties tend to be *less* eurosceptical, 3) when the "domestic" policy is to the left or right of the European average, voters of left or right wing parties tend to be eurosceptical, 4) voters and parties in majority democratic systems tend to be *more* eurosceptical than in systems of consensual democracy, with some exceptions, 5) left wing electors and parties were more eurosceptical in the 1970s, 1980s and 2000-2010 and right wing electors and parties in the 1990s, 6) voters, parties and interest groups of the large States tend to be more eurosceptical than those of small states, however, there are exceptions[23].

---

[20]   Carey, 2002, p. 388; Hooghe, Marks, 2007, p. 122; Siegers, 2009, p. 115-118; Leconte, 2010, p. 247 and 256.

[21]   Gabel, 1998b, p. 940; Wessels, 2007, p. 295 and 296 and following on; Leconte, 2010, p. 24, 30, 35 and 39; Lubbers, Scheepers, 2010, p. 791.

[22]   Eichenberg, Dalton, 2007, p. 142; Krouwel, Abts, 2007, p. 256 and 261 (includes a scale to operationlise degrees); Wessels, 2007, p. 304; Hooghe, Marks, 2008, p. 6.

[23]   Hix, 2007, p. 136-140

5. Social Euroscepticism

It is a debated question to clarify whether the EU strengthens or weakens civil society and in this sense, civic images and perceptions of the meaning attributed to "Europe" are relevant to the study of social Euroscepticism. With regard to interest groups, the distancing of the churches, union unrest, criticism of the majority of the "new social movements" and even fundamentalist sectors (in a neoliberal sense) of the business confederations against "excessive" EU regulatory zeal is perceptible (for different reasons in each case). The *mass media* deserve a special mention as they have had much to do with the phenomenon of Euroscepticism, since in some cases (the UK especially) they have set the European agenda of the national "political class" and have contributed massively to exacerbate hostility towards the EU. Naturally, the media landscape is plural, but the eurosceptical media is powerful and influential in several countries. However, neither the opposite case can not be ignored: in some countries the majority of the media has ended up backing the EU and this, paradoxically, has resulted in emphasising Euroscepticism in some cases (Scandinavian countries). There is one type of media (fundamentally British) that seems to have "specialised" in Euroscepticism (the sensationalist *tabloids*), although not necessarily has all of this always been eurosceptical. In this area, the absence of a true European "public sphere" and the absolute predominance of national frameworks is noted[24].

When analysing the dimensions of Euroscepticism it is essential to set out from the classic distinction of eastonian origin between diffuse generic support and what is specific to the system, in this case, the European. In general, research has found a notable lack of diffuse support (typical of states) for the EU and a higher incidence of specific support according to areas, sectors and circumstances. With this, the distinction between the two separate types of support has been, in turn, criticised for being "fuzzy" – given that civic assessments of the EU and European integration are more complex and dynamic than those of this binary model[25]. Additionally, it is useful to clarify what is supported or rejected and – in this sense – it is useful to consider the triple meaning of the policy that the English language captures more subtlety: *polity* (structures), *politics* (processes) and *policy* (results); that is, the EU institutions, European politicians and public policy in the EU. This set includes assessments of politician's responsibility, institutional

---

[24] Leconte, 2010, p. 191, 203-204 and 211-212; Kufer, 2009, p. 37.
[25] Gabel, 1998a, p. 27; Sánchez-Cuenca, 2000, p. 147-171; Krouwel, Abts, 2007, p. 255; Leconte, 2010, p. 250.

accountability and the legitimacy resulting from the system, dimensions on which various gradations are given.

Eurosceptical sectors of public opinion believe that the EU is normatively invasive, does not function democratically and distorts the principle of subsidiarity through the continuous expansion of Community competence. In addition, many citizens do not agree with the fact that the EU ceaselessly accumulates powers and this is what provides a potential basis for eurosceptical parties. While generally acknowledging that some policies do require supranational cooperation (environment, the fight against organised crime), in others it categorically rejects any community "intrusion" (education, culture, including health policies). Nearly half of Europeans are eurosceptical regarding cultural policies, more than half on the issue of immigration and asylum and third on foreign policy[26].

The membership of a State to the EU has different consequences for its citizens (winners/losers) and this makes their interests align or conflict with this. Statistical analyses provide significant evidence of the variation of support/rejection to integration in terms of different dimensions[27].

Table 2: Types and Dimensions of Support/Rejection of the EU

Types	Dimensions
Support / reject on principle	Economy: high regulation v low regulation policy: supranational integration v intergovernmentalism
Support / general rejection	Support/opposition to the EU as a whole support/rejection of the EU as a "regime"
Support / reasoned rejection	Effectiveness Legitimacy instrumental rules expressive Identity

Source: Fuchs, Magni-Berton, Roger, 2009, p. 23. Personal adaptation.

Indeed, there are three major analytical criteria to gauge the overall phenomenon of Euroscepticism: 1) effective evaluation (in instrumental/utilitarian terms), 2) cognitive assessment (from the rational/normative standpoint) and 3) emotional evaluation (in terms of identity). The first has a clear economic dimension and focuses on the cost/profit correlation, the second proceeds from a judgement of political legitimacy on the problems of European governance in relation to the national government, the third is linked to the intensity of the feelings of national/

---

[26] Lubbers, Scheepers, 2005, p. 226 and 238; Krouwel, Abts, 2007, p. 258; Wessels, 2007, p. 292.

[27] Gabel, 1998a, p. 71; Gabel, 1998b, p. 937; Wessels, 2007, p. 300-301 (cf. table with percentages).

european belonging and loyalty[28]. From the outset, utilitarian approaches focused on the market predominate, following this there was a focus on directly political implications and finally, studies in identity developed remarkably. In fact, there is no single explanatory factor, although the intensity of one or other according to country, social sectors and the moment may vary and this is because the popular support/rejection of European integration is not fixed but variable and multifaceted[29]. The empirical analyses confirms the differences in support for European integration according to levels of vocational training (less educated, less support), something only relativised by the factor of identity that is interclassist. Beyond the material *interest* of the participatory *effectiveness*, in the long-term, *identification* with Europe would be the key driver for strengthening the process of European integration[30].

Since diffuse support for the EU is weak and the enthusiasm for the same is low, what is essential continues to be the utilitarian criterion. In this sense, the key indicator for assessing the cost/benefit is the net fiscal transfers to the EU budget: whenever a country contributes more than it receives, it is paving the way – in principle – for Euroscepticism. Developed European states with a good system of social protection are those in which the phenomenon manifests itself more clearly. This has started to become increasingly visible since the Euro was launched as the economic convergence policy has provoked increasing social costs that negatively affect a large sector of public opinion in those countries, increasing demands for policies of renationalisation. These social concerns for the costs of progress in European integration would seem to indicate that most Eurosceptics would be the *losers* of the same. As a consequence, if the acceptance of the EU rests mainly on the material benefits expected and on proper and effective management, but the two separate elements fail, then rejection and reservations toward the same grow so exponentially that the heterogeneous group of malcontents can then lean toward clearly eurosceptical parties to "punish" pro-EU politicians. Moreover, neoliberal policies in expansion since the 1990s make the EU less attractive to broad sectors of society, who witness the cutting of welfare state benefits[31]. In summary, the economic interests of citizens

---

[28] 28 Gabel, 1998a, p. 9-10, 11-12 and 20; Van der Eijk, Franklin, 2004, p. 32-50; Hix, 2007, p. 133; Hooghe, Marks, 2007, p. 124; Krouwel, Abts, 2007, p. 253; De Vries, Edwards, 2009, p. 7; Leconte, 2010, p. 251; Lubbers, Scheepers, 2010, p. 810 (p. 793 includes references to several Eurobarometers).

[29] Gabel, 1998a, p. 110-111; Carey, 2002, p. 389; Hooghe, Marks, 2008, p. 10-13.

[30] Gabel, 1998a, p. 114; Gabel, 1998b, p. 949 and 951; Wessels, 2007, p. 298-299.

[31] Lewis, 2002, pp 166-168; Sitter, 2002, p. 12; Lubbers, Scheepers, 2005, p. 224; Manners, 2006, p. 77; Sczerbiak, Taggart, 2008, II a, p. 22 and 24; Siegers, 2009, p. 117 and 120-121; Leconte, 2010, p. 47-48, 173, 175 and 177.

and their impact on their attitude towards the EU has been analysed under both microeconomic and macroeconomic criteria, i.e., both from the constant liberalisation of markets and from the personal evaluation of performance of the national economy in the context of the EU.

The cognitive evaluation links not only determined values of political legitimacy (participation, *accountability*) but also the judgement of the pros and cons of the relationship between national governments and EU authorities, as well as their respective performance. Empirical studies have shown that the direct effects of cognitive appraisal are not as high as expected and that, therefore, this dimension only relatively determines positive or negative attitudes towards the EU. From this latter point of view, Eurosceptics who focus on values reject the "interventions" (real or perceived) of the EU that have to do with their system of beliefs regarding social order (on matters such as divorce, abortion, minority rights, the balance between freedom and security and others). Many citizens believe the EU is being "invasive" in these areas and thus, for example, the expansion of Community competence in areas such as immigration or criminal law is not always accepted[32].

The factor of identity initially received little attention in studies of Euroscepticism, but when it became evident that the ethnoterritorial dimension was very relevant to significant sectors of the public, it gained considerable attention in research on the matter. There are now numerous studies that apply the *Moreno question* to the (self) identification of citizens: the compatibility European/national is sometimes accepted, but not always and invariably to a greater or lesser extent. In principle, exacerbated nationalism is a clear obstacle to the process of European integration and in this sense, many citizens reject the notion of "European citizenship" or European symbols, so that this feeling has ended up having a strongly negative impact on the evaluation of the EU. Although the compatibility among identities is manifest (albeit unbalanced, given the generally *derived* and complementary character attributed to European identity), many citizens reject this. All things considered, a strong national identity is not necessarily incompatible with support for European integration, even for instrumental reasons[33]. In any case, polls show a weak sense of European identity, or even of European citizenship, given that Europeans are heavily linked to their national identities, a really significant factor in explaining the reservations towards the EU. For some citizens "Europe" is a pipe dream and its people have nothing in common, although others do recognise the

---

[32] Mößner, 2009, p. 172; Leconte, 2010, p. 57 and 59.

[33] Carey, 2002, p. 407; Fuchs, Guinaudeau, Schubert, 2009, p. 91 and 96; Leconte, 2010, p. 50-52, 54, 90, 97 and 110-111; Lubbers, Scheepers, 2010, p. 787.

existence of common cultural ties and shared values; without which a single political identity could not be mechanically deduced. Given the strong predominance of national identity and non-existent practice of an *effective* European identity, it is understandable that the EU is perceived by some as a threat to their own community. In addition, there are citizens of European states that are deeply suspicious of citizens from other member States and in this sense, Euroscepticism is presented as a manifestation of nationalist withdrawal[34]. On the one hand, the nation-state (or, where appropriate, sub-national community) is the primary framework of belonging and loyalty for the great majority of citizens and on the other, EU enlargement to the CEEC in 2004 or the candidacy of Turkey have increased civil unrest regarding national identity and a clear retreat from the multicultural society, a trend that could only be reversed if emotional Europeanism is developed[35].

6. Political parties and Euroscepticism

Ordinarily, attitudes pro or anti-EU are often highly connected with the political system itself: as citizens are poorly informed about European politics, it is common for their views on the EU to be strongly influenced by national politics. In principle, the countries benefitting from EU funds tend to be less eurosceptical than net contributors. When a country is admitted also has some influence: in Spain the unanimity of the "political class" and the receipt of funds were important keys for the consolidation of democracy (which explains the high civic Europeanism), while in the CEECs tough internal economic reconversion and neoliberal direction which the community took did not help to make the EU popular. In any case, the traditional argument that the founding members would be so associated with the EC that they would not be largely eurosceptical almost by definition, has been greatly downplayed after the referendums in France and Holland in 2005. This means that the phenomenon of opposition to the EU is not reserved for traditionally reticent States, but is also found in countries that have always been supporters of the integration process. From all this, real different national realities exist: 1) States with limited response in which the *principle* of integration is not rejected and criticisms focus on the *peripheries* of the party system, 2) States with an open response in which criticism does not affect only small extreme radical parties, but

---

[34] Carey, 2002, p. 388, 390 and 392; Leconte, 2010, p. 61-62. 65, 180,181, 184 and 186.

[35] Gabel, 1998a, p. 122; Carey, 2002, p. 397 and 403; Mc Laren, 2004, p. 899-901; Hooghe, 2007, p. 7; Hooghe, Marks, 2007, p. 123; Wessels, 2007, p. 304; Hanley, 2008, p. 197; Leconte, 2010, p. 182-183.

also important ruling parties in government and 3) States with constrained response where there are serious reservations about the process, but accepting its inevitability (the case of the CEEC)[36].

The eurosceptical phenomenon manifests itself with more force and clarity in the developed nations: in the strongly redistributive States (e.g., Sweden), less wealthy citizens are likely to quickly adopt Euroscepticism and in States with a lower redistributive level (e.g. the UK) the richest citizens may also lean toward this position. The former group fear the cutting of social benefits and the latter do not want to be permanent net contributors to EU. A different analysis must be undertaken with the CEECs: with these countries after 1989, the idea of the "return to Europe" was strongly imposed and for that reason virtually no significant political movement to oppose integration into the EU emerged, as both elites and society knew there was no alternative. However, the serious difficulties during their transitions (especially economic) and disappointment at a social level after admission to the EU (obviously quick, positive, large scale effects are not possible) have favoured the emergence and development of eurosceptical political movements. In the CEE there is a predominance of widespread acceptance of the principle of integration, hence the dominant Euroscepticism there is clearly *soft* as reservations and criticisms are constrained by the objective need to be "eurorrealist". In other words, perhaps the EU has not given everything expected of it, but almost everyone knows that the CEECs have no choice and that explains their pragmatic acceptance of it. It is not always easy to distinguish in the CEE who really opposes the principle (formally very few parties) and who opposes the trajectories (in this case there are several examples), while it seems an increasing degree of Euroscepticism is evident in some of the newly independent States (the Baltic countries) than in those States with a long history, with the occasional hybrid case. The truth is that the continuing process of *Europeanisation* of political parties in the CEE and their integration into transnational federations will increasingly assimilate those of Western Europe: given this, there are highly integrationist parties and others much less so[37].

Institutional structures also have their influence on the acceptance/ rejection of the EU (decentralisation, proportional representation, multi-party formations): the States that meet the above characteristics seem to

---

[36] Krouwel, Abts, 2007, p. 264; Sczerbiak, Taggart, 2008, Ib, p. 349; Leconte, 2010, p. 69-70. 73 and 76; Lubbers, Scheepers, 2010, p. 790-791.

[37] Kopecky, Mudde, 2002, p. 298; Taggart, Sczerbiak, 2004, p. 3 and 8; Neumayer, 2008, p. 136; Sczerbiak, Taggart, 2008, II a, p. 15-16 and 18, II b, p. 246; Ladrech, 2010, p. 140-143.

have adapted better to the EU, although the empirical evidence is less. The type of welfare state can also tilt public opinion in favour or against the EU as well as the functioning and performance of political institutions themselves (the quality of national democracy) and that – in theory – the worse the quality of national democracy, the greater the support for European integration, something not always verified. The newly independent States are more reluctant to formally cede national sovereignty (the Baltics, for example), but states with a very long historical tradition can be quite contrary to the supranational community (the United Kingdom, Scandinavia). In turn, institutional, regulatory and decisional constraints of the EU can cause contrary reactions in some countries and tensions with certain governments[38].

National and European election processes show elements of confrontation variables in European issues and in this sense, the role of political parties can be very decisive. Firstly, there is less Euroscepticism in each national arena if the parties overwhelmingly favour integration (not without exceptions), although these do not always adequately assess the balance between the pros and cons of moving forward with this. In this context, the issue of extending the EU or not is of little use in determining whether a party is eurosceptical or not because, although the British conservatives are very supportive of indefinite extensions to block any federalist scenario, the French postgaullistas – always very nationalistic – prefer to deepen integration sooner rather than later[39]. Fort he rest, the absence of a genuine European party system favours the rise of eurosceptical tendencies.

In the construction of Europe it is evident that genuinely federalist parties are very few and very weak and that the key lies in the majority "central block" parties. In this area there has been a change in perception as the center-right, which had been the main driver of the European Community, has considerably weakened its historical supranational projects, while the center-left, which had serious initial reservations, has now become the main champion of the current process. Bearing this in mind, it can not be ignored that the issue of integration has been very divisive *internally* in some parties and that in some ideological groups conflictive *issues* have emerged: for conservatives the degree of acceptable supranationality, for the Christian Democrats the question of formalising "Christian roots" (this is something that, in general, divides Catholics and Protestants, the former being more confessional, the latter more secular), for liberals the tolerable level of regulation or for

---

[38]   Leconte, 2010, p. 79-80, 82-83, 86, 137 and 143.
[39]   Gable, 1998a, p. 115; Fuchs, Magni-Berton, Roger, 2009, p. 18; Lubbers, Scheepers, 2010, p. 811-812.

socialdemocrats the minimum non-negotiable reach of social protection. This means with all of them there are perceived swings of opinion: the Christian Democrats – who had been "Euroenthusiasts" – have slowed their earlier impulses for political integration, the Liberals, who had zealously defended the common market now oppose the increase of its regulations, the Social Democrats – who criticised the original EEC for its social insensitivity – now see that the only hope of preserving the welfare state lies with the EU, regional nationalists – initially opposed to a union of states – believe that the EU offers them a chance to try to realise the autodeterminist principle[40].

The success of European integration during the 1960s and 1970s strengthened the pro-integrationist vision of the political elites of the "central block", the reservations of the more radical right and left wing formations being marginal at that time. However, since the 1990s, tensions and the strength of parties critical of the EU have increased. In this regard, the eurosceptical phenomenon is far more typical of the parties of structural opposition (in terms of Panebianco): since European integration is managed by governments, it is almost "natural" that critics are parties in permanent opposition, something which – in some cases – has emerged as an useful electoral strategy once the time of lenient social consensus towards EU institutions finished.

In principle, the more distant the likelihood of being the ruling party, the easier it is to appeal to Euroscepticism as a distinctive element of protest against governing political elites[41]. This does not preclude eurosceptical parties from the possibility of accessing government, however, in this case, they moderate their criticism from this position and postpone some of their less compatible objectives with the UE[42]. In practice there are indeed elements that mitigate many eurosceptical options as parties are, in fact, *office-seeking* rather than *goal-seeking*, hence the search for positions of responsibility prevail in these cases. In fact, some traditionally eurosceptical parties thoroughly deradicalise their previous anti-EU bias when acceding to government (the greens, for example) and neither is the impact of their integration into transnational party federations negligible, the same that tend to reproduce reservations and/or opposition to European integration.

---

[40] Hooghe, Marks, 2008, p. 19; Fuchs, Magni-Berton, Roger, 2009, p. 19; Leconte, 2010, p. 101-102, 114-115, 121, 124 and 125-126.

[41] Taggart, 1998, p. 382; Sitter, 2002, p. 5, 11, 14 and 24; Harmsen, Spiering, 2004, p. 32.

[42] Taggart, 1998, p. 383; Tierski, 2001, p. 5; Sitter, 2002, p. 12 and 20; Taggart, Sczerbiak, 2004, p. 21; Leconte, 2010, p. 15-16.

7. Ideology and strategy of the radical parties

Generically the radical parties of the right and left wing are the most likely to take a eurosceptical stance, but grouping them all together in an undifferentiated way can lead to misinterpretation, so it is therefore useful to distinguish three positions: parties that advocate leaving the EU, parties that advocate cutting its powers and parties that plan to expand the same. The first group are explicitly anti-integrationist, the second group do not reject the *principle* of integration, but consider that the current EU is forcing the integration of some incompatible elements (for these groups the EU is too inclusive), the third group does not reject the principle (the opposite is the case), but believe that the EU is moving too slowly (for them it is too *exclusive*). To be more precise: the opposition to *any kind* of integration (negative rejection) are actually Europhobes, whilst being against the current EU does not necessarily imply being anti-integrationist as there are parties that aspire to a different type of integration (positive rejection). The latter should be classified as *eurocritical* as they repudiate the current process as insufficient: they are anti-integrationist, but do not believe the EU will move more clearly and decisively in a supranational direction.

When analysing the positions of the renowned eurosceptical parties, we must distinguish between those who support a minimum of inter-governmental economic cooperation (the most) and those who even reject such a possibility (the least). In any case, various eurosceptical parties believe that the EU has gone too far, advocating in turn the renationalisation of some ceded policies and others (few) proposing an exit. Opposition to the current process of European integration focuses mainly on two dimensions: cultural-identity and socio-economic, without forgetting a third related to the "democratic deficit" of the EU. The radical right especially criticises the European Union for threatening national sovereignty and ethnic identity and the radical left for neoliberal policies only benefitting big business. Additionally, community institutional opacity and the non-participatory and delegative character is establishing uncontrollable supranational political power[43].

In any case, the electoral support for radical parties is limited, as is their parliamentary representation. If support for these parties increases, it would suggest that popular support for integration is decreasing, and yet the results of the analyses show that the growth of opposition to the

---

[43]   Tierski, 2001, p. 1-2; Lewis, 2002, p. 151-153 and 157; Taggart, Sczerbiak, 2004, p. 5; Hanley, 2008, p. 192; Hooghe, Marks, 2008, p. 21; Sczerbiak, Taggart, 2008, IIa, p. 2-3 and II b, p. 255; De Vries, Edwards, 2009, p. 8-9; Lubbers, Scheepers, 2010, p. 791.

establishment has more complex effects. For example, the rise of the radical parties can cause the growth of support for integration from citizens who do not support them. Therefore, it should be clear that radical opposition parties represent electoral minorities and can paradoxically contribute to building support for integration among those who do not vote for them[44]. Better put: it is known that the radical right is generally more eurosceptical than the radical left as ethnic ultra-nationalism is more difficult to integrate than socio-economic demands. Just as the radical right is not only opposed to the current direction of the EU, but has serious reservations about the principle of integration, the radical left does not usually pose the latter question but focuses on the methods the community uses[45].

EP elections tend to favour eurosceptical parties because they are perceived as "second class" in which there *appears* to be nothing really important at stake. These are election-consultations operating in a mode of "second round" or "primaries" in many countries, usually offering a classic opportunity to "punish" the government of the day and are non operative as a strategic vote (which favours small, new and radical parties). Even if you add together the Eurosceptics of the central parties and the percentage increases to about one third, the strength of radical groups is much lower and also their degree of cohesion in the EP is weak. The members of the EP tagged with the label of Euroscepticism fall under four ideal types: 1) anti-EU (rejecting both the project and EU policies), 2) minimalist (can accept the project, but disagree with the majority of its policies), 3) reformist (offering moderate criticism both of the project and its policies) and 4) resigned (rejecting the project in theory, but accepting policies in the main)[46].

---

[44] Gabel, 1998a, p. 87; Leconte, 2010, p. 15.

[45] Manners, 2006, p. 79-81; Benedetto, Quaglia, 2007, p. 482-487; Lubbers, Scheepers, 2007, p. 71-92; Hanley, 2008, p. 148, 179 and 186; Lubbers, Scheepers, 2010, p. 790.

[46] Overall Eurosceptics in the EU average 32%, with internal scales (14% inflexible, 9% critics, 9% indifferent), with significant contrasts by country: 46% in the United Kingdom (29% irreducible), but only 10% in Luxembourg (only 2% unyielding): Wessels, 2007, p. 300. Holmes, 2002, p. 1; Sczerbiak, Taggart, 2008, II, p. 19; Leconte, 2010, p. 128-131.

Figure 1

Source: Costa, Brack, 2009, p. 257.

In general, the success of eurosceptical parties has much to do with national conditions of political competition and although European integration *per se* does not restructure the party system, its influence is perceptible ("Europeanisation") in the same. In this way, Euroscepticism contributes to increased electoral volatility and in its case, to further fragmentation of the party system[47]. In the competition between left and right the use of Euroscepticism may sometimes work electorally when European issues are divisive (at the heart of elites and public opinion) being then of political benefit. Euroscepticism, then, is a reactive symptom of certain types of parties and a usable element according to their ideology and actions. However, there are very few monothematical-ly eurosceptical parties, that is, who turn this orientation into the exclusive and defining base of their policy. There is another factor that helps explain why some parties turn to Euroscepticism: the growing weakness of the classical forms of political representation. As traditional parties are unable to offer new forms of really refreshing organisation and proposals, opposition to the EU can function as an opportunity for some to criticise the conventional mechanisms of participation[48].

The different degrees of *hard* and *soft* in ideology and strategy allow the classification of various party groups into four generic Eurosceptic categories, parties motivated: 1) by *hard* ideologies (ultra-nationalists, orthodox communists), 2) by *hard* strategies (populist), 3) by *soft* ideologies (agricultural, postcommunist) and 4) by *soft* strategies (conservative). Combining the two dimensions can create another typology: 1) *single-issue* parties whose raison d'être is direct opposition

---

[47] Harmsen, 2005, p. 285; Fuchs, Magni-Berton, Roger, 2009, p. 13; Leconte, 2010, p. 117 and 120.

[48] Taggart, 1998, p. 384-385; Sitter, 2002, p. 15 and 24; Rovny, 2004, p. 36; Roger, 2009, p. 275, 278 and 280.

to the EU (UKIP, the list of Philippe de Villiers in France), 2) populist protest parties *using* Euroscepticism as one more element of their ideology and strategy against the *establishment* (DF, LN, the old list of Pim Fortuyn in Holland), a movement radicalising the most extreme parties (FNVB) in their closed defence of national sovereignty and even some classic Communist Parties (KKE, PCP, KSČM), 3) central government parties that are somewhat critical of some community policies (the left wing of the French Socialist Party or Swedish Social Democracy) or – more broadly – most of them (the British *Tories* are archetypal in this respect and some CEE right wing parties such as the Czech ODS and the Polish PiS have joined them)[49].

Beyond the classic right/left division (basically socio-economic) other conceptualisations of identity and attitudinal elements have developed. In this way, Hooghe and Marks classify parties in relation to the euroscepttical phenomenon into two broad categories: 1) *green / alternative / libertarian (gal)* and 2*) traditionalism / authority / nationalism (tan)*. "*Gal*" type parties are more integrationist than type "*tan*", but this dichotomy is very sketchy because sometimes "*gal*" / "*tan*" trends coexist in one party. There are "*tan*" parties that, for economic reasons, could be considered more integrationist (the French Gaullists) and others, type "*tan*" that are much more reticent (the Nordic Green Left) due to their opposition to neo-liberalism. In the CEEC a link is often given between left and "*tan*" *and* right and "*gal*", the contrary to what happens in Western Europe[50].

A singular specific mention must be made on the subject of nationalist parties at a sub-state level (ethnoregionalists in international academic terminology) given that the European integration process provokes contradictory reactions in them. To begin with, most of them are favourable – in principle – to European integration with two sets of considerations: 1) against more Europe, less state, in which they are included and 2) only in the EU does it seem feasible to try to articulate more or less sovereigntist joint projects given that within these small States are viable. In territories where the issue of identity is politically mobilising, this type of party often opts for an *instrumental* Europeanism of a classical nature as it aims to reproduce the intergovernmental model of the nation state on a smaller scale. In some developed areas, regional political movements expressing reservations and even rejection of redistributive EU policies have emerged. A kind of increasingly

---

[49] Taggart, 1998, p. 368-369 (includes a complete list of parties on pages 370-371, but this is now outdated); Sitter, 2002, p. 10; Rovny, 2004, p. 46; Harmsen, 2005, p. 281-284 (provides a typology of five variants).

[50] Hooghe, Marks, 2008 p. 16-19.

unsupportive *welfare chauvinism* is being expressed within them, ranging from the radical right of the VB or the LN to more moderate conservative formations such as the Bavarian CSU. Therefore, in some rich regions there is the emergence of populist movements that reflect the "solidarity fatigue" of territories that, as such, do not receive EU structural funds because they are above the EU average and this may incline them towards a growing Euroscepticism[51].

Party Euroscepticism has two facets, one ideological, the other strategic and that while in some the first is more influential and others the second, both elements are interrelated. In the first instance, parties of the "central block" are more pro-EU than radical parties, and in the second, the parties of government are much less eurosceptical (if they are, they have to moderate this when in power) than the permanent opposition. Over time, the centre right has become less integrationist, while the opposite has occurred with the center left, for their part, the opposition of the radical right and left tend to diverge in both the dimensions that they reject (supranationality and neoliberalism respectively) and the finalist perspective (less/more EU). In general, Euroscepticism is a conscious strategy of some parties that is also often linked to certain ideological conceptions and so the two dimensions do not exclude each other but have to be complementary[52].

Although Euroscepticism is a cross-ideological phenomenon (neo-fascist, neo-populist, conservative, ethnoregionalist, confessional religious, agrarian, radical left) there is empirical evidence that there are doctrines that predispose to the same (the exclusive type of nationalist ideology) but others, however, much less (internationalist solidarity ideologies). For some analysts of the phenomenon, the ideological dimension is the most important factor to explain, above the strategic dynamics (Taggart, Kopecky and Mudde, Hooghe), while for others, although it provides a clue, it is not always is the most relevant (Rovny, Neumayer, Fuchs). From the latter the point of view is held that for practical purposes Euroscepticism is not an ideology in itself (except in very exceptional anti-EU single issue parties, such as the British UKIP), while contrastingly the strategic use of it is much more common. Ideologies are undoubtedly important, but are not sufficient for explaining the adoption of eurosceptical strategies in themselves: the right/left wing scale is insufficient to determine whether a party is

---

[51] Haesly, 2001, p. 81; Karolewski, 2007, p. 23 and 31; Karolewski, Suszyki, 2007, p. 187 and 191; Hooghe, 2007, p. 9; Hoppe, 2007, p. 67.

[52] Kopecky, Mudde, 2002, p. 319; Rovny, 2004, p. 34; Neumayer, 2008, p. 136 and 141; De Vries, Edwards, 2009, p. 11; Trenz, Wilde, 2009, p. 7; Leconte, 2010, p. 107-109.

eurosceptical or not as they exist in both spectra and this is what is required to combine the ideological and strategic explanation. In fact, the parties that *use* Euroscepticism as an element of political contestation and electoral competition are the result of a strategic choice determined by national conditions that encourage such mobilisation. From the start, it is more likely that *hard* eurosceptical parties will be so because of ideology and the *soft* parties because of strategy, although – in the end – the most important factor is the distance or proximity to government: the farther from it, the more likely the use of this *issue* and therefore the phenomenon is recurrent in protest parties. In other words, the position in the national party system gives key clues and as a consequence, it seems that the practically permanent opposition parties may be more prone to Euroscepticism[53].

---

[53]   Taggart, 1998, p. 376-378; Sitter, 2002, p. 23 and 24; Rovny, 2004, p. 34 and 36-37; Krouwel, Abts, 2007, p. 263; Sczerbiak, Taggart, 2008, I a, p. 9-11, II b, p. 255 and 257; Fuchs, Magni-Berton, Roger, 2009, p. 9 and 14; Roger, 2009, p. 276.