"Welcome" to Europe: How media and immigration affect increasing Euroscepticism

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Citation for published version (APA):
van Klingereren, M. (2014). "Welcome" to Europe: How media and immigration affect increasing Euroscepticism.

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“All good people agree,
And all good people say,
All nice people, like Us, are We
And every one else is They:
But if you cross over the sea,
Instead of over the way,
You may end by (think of it!) looking on We
As only a sort of They!”
Rudyard Kipling
CHAPTER 2: GOING SOFT OR STAYING SOFT

Going Soft or Staying Soft: Have Identity Factors Become More Important Than Economic Rationale When Explaining Euroscepticism?

Abstract
The scholarly debate on explanatory factors of public opinion towards the EU has shifted from economic and utilitarian (‘hard’) factors to also encompass identity/ affective (‘soft’) factors. This chapter investigates the explanatory strength of these so-called hard and soft factors. It does so in the context of twelve long-standing EU member states at two points in time (1994 and 2005) and draws on Eurobarometer data. Results from two multi-level analyses show that identity-based as well as utilitarian factors play a significant role in explaining Euroscepticism in both years. Furthermore, the explanatory power of hard factors is very stable over time. I conclude that, against expectations, soft factors did not explain more variance in 2005 than in 1994, but already played an important albeit neglected role in explaining Euroscepticism.

A version of this chapter, co-authored by Hajo G. Boomgaarden & Claes H. de Freese, has been published in the Journal of European Integration.
CHAPTER 2

Public opinion about the European Union is a widely discussed topic among scholars (e.g., Anderson, 1995; Gabel, 1995, 1996; McLaren, 2002; Boomgaarden et al., 2011). The academic debate on EU attitudes (in recent years often labeled Euroscepticism; i.e., a negative standpoint among the public towards the EU) has experienced a shift. Over time it moved beyond a mere utilitarian endeavor to encompass other facets of political and social life. The empirical focal point on the factors that explain public Euroscepticism shifted from so-called “hard factors”, which are the more utilitarian and economic predictors, to also encompass more affective, identity and culturally driven predictors, the so-called “soft factors” (McLaren, 2002; De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005; De Vreese et al., 2008; Hooghe & Marks, 2005).

During the 1990s the so-called hard-factor approach was most common in the field (Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993; Gabel & Palmer, 1995; Gabel & Whitten, 1997). It emphasized the importance of for instance, individuals’ work status, income and economic evaluations. Since the initial purpose of European integration was predominantly economic, this approach was hardly questioned at the time. (Anderson & Reichert, 1995; Gabel & Whitten, 1997). With the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, however, intergovernmental policies were created concerning foreigners and security (CFSP), justice and home affairs (JHA), which caused the focus to shift toward softer aspects (Dinan, 1999). These new policy areas arguably began to show their impact around the late 1990s, early 2000s (De Vreese et al., 2008).

Extant research suggests that today soft factors have a bigger impact on the public’s Euroscepticism than hard factors do (Hooghe & Marks, 2005; De Vreese et al., 2008). It implies a shift in the explanatory powers of utilitarian- towards identity-based factors in explaining Euroscepticism. To my knowledge, however, no empirical evidence has shown that determinants of public EU attitudes in the 2000s in fact differ (in strength) from the ones investigated in the 1990s1. Therefore, in this chapter I aim to answer the following question: Has the strength of soft and hard factors in explaining Euroscepticism changed over time?

The terms hard and soft in this chapter relate to the predictors of public opinion regarding the EU. This chapter takes the approach of grouping independent variables into hard and soft. It thereby builds upon research by Marks and Hooghe (2005) and in particular De Vreese et al. (2008), who used the same terminology to group predictors of attitudes on Turkish membership to the EU. The terms relate to how processes of European integration enhance ethnic threat among citizens within member state countries; and the consequential realization among citizens of how European integration might affect their financial status (hard factors) as well as culture and national identity (soft factors). Since I build my

1 My results are based on data from the 1994 and 2005 Eurobarometer. More information on the data selection can be found in footnote 3 and in the method section.
GOING SOFT OR STAYING SOFT

hypothesis on the basis of developments in EU policies and European integration, this is a
useful distinction to make here (for more details regarding the use of these terms in the
context of Euroscepticism research, see De Vreese et al., 2008).

This approach complements the prominent strand of literature on party positions vis-à-vis
European integration. Here, the terms hard and soft are used to distinguish different types
of Euroscepticism among political parties (see for example Kopecký & Mudde, 2002;
Szczerbiak & Taggart, 2003). Szczerbiak and Taggart (2003) focus on the dependent
variable (2008). They distinguish between principal opposition towards the EU (hard
Euroscepticism) and political parties' criticism of certain aspects of European integration
(soft Euroscepticism). However, this should not be confused with the way the terms hard
and soft are applied here. In this chapter the focus is on the nature of the factors explaining
Euroscepticism in public opinion, rather than different types of Euroscepticism2.

Throughout the 1990s a growing number of European citizens expressed reluctance
towards further European integration, which marked the end of an era of “permissive
consensus” (Hooghe & Marks, 2008) and the undisputed authority of EU elites (Eichenberg
& Dalton, 1993; Gabel, 1998b). Citizens increasingly expressed reluctance towards further
European integration. In response, the EU took measures for a more open and accountable
progress of decision-making, creating a greater role for the EU parliament (the only elected
body of the EU) (Luedtke, 2005), but Euroscepticism still rose. As positive attitudes are
crucial to the success of the EU (Cichowski, 2000), negativism can induce stagnation,
standstill or, ultimately, implosion of European integration. Hence, it is vital to understand
the factors that cause changes in public attitudes towards the EU, and to see if those factors
have changed after a period wherein much has changed for the European Union.

Euroscepticism, A Change in Emphasis

Extant literature (e.g., Hooghe & Marks 2005; De Vreese et al., 2008) suggests that with
regard to Euroscepticism, soft factors increased in explanatory strength vis-a-vis hard
factors between the 1990s and the 2000s. There are two main underlying assumptions:
First, the focus of the EU has shifted. By implementing new (social) policies during the
Maastricht treaty (in 1992), the EU took a more social (soft) turn in its approach towards
European integration without leaving its utilitarian (hard) qualities behind (Hooghe &
Marks, 2005; De Vreese et al., 2008). The newly implemented policies gradually altered the
European context. European citizenry competed with national citizenship (Kriesi, Grande, &
Lachat, 2008), and the fear of losing one’s national identity as a consequence of progressing

2 Note, however, that public Euroscepticism is also multidimensional (Boomgaarden et al., 2011; and see
chapter 1 and 6). In the current chapter I focus on a standard measure of EU support, namely perceived benefits
of a country’s membership to the EU.
European integration was found to directly affect ethnic threat and Euroscepticism (Hooghe & Marks, 2005; 2006; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2007). Consequently, in the Netherlands as a case in point, ethnic threat became a main predictor of Euroscepticism in 2008, while it was not in 1990 (Lubbers and Jaspers 2010). Second, a number of international key-events took place in the last decade between the two periods; the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York (in 2001) and the terrorist attacks in Madrid (in 2004) and London (in 2005) being specific examples. These events altered the discourse within politics (Perrin, 2005; Korteweg, 2005), the media (Nacos & Torres-Reyna, 2003; Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007), and the public sphere (Davis, 2007). As a consequence of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, national identities were re-established and feelings of (cultural and/or national) threat were heightened (Huddy, Khatib, & Capelos, 2002).

Huntington (1993) stated that world politics entered a new phase in the 1990s, when economy and ideology made way for culture as the most fundamental political source of conflict. Taking literature, recent key-events and the new European social policy impact into consideration, I assume that people in the 2000s were more inclined to take soft issues into consideration over hard issues when judging an overarching political power such as the EU (De Vreese et al., 2008). Hence, the soft factors have become more influential over time.

H1: The explanatory strength of soft (identity) factors vis-à-vis hard (economic) factors has increased between 1990s (specifically 1994) and the 2000s (specifically 2005).

This first and main hypothesis stems from extensive research on Euroscepticism. Therefore the aim is to place this hypothesis in its proper context. In the next section I elaborate on the most common assumptions, hypotheses, and measurements within EU-opinion research, in order to embed the hypothesis within the field.

Hard Factors and Euroscepticism

Rational choice theory explains human action by calculative rationale. According to this theory, people tend to think in terms of costs and benefits when making decisions (Scott, 2000). They are inclined to do things that yield rewards and avoid them when a penalty follows (Coleman, 1973; Heath, 1976). With its roots in economics, this theory applies especially when attitudes and behavior relate to financial incentives. Rational choice theory has found its way in Euroscepticism research through the use of economic variables. The

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3 Media influences will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.
4 Data limitation let me to a somewhat more diachronic approach than initially anticipated. Unfortunately, leaving out some of the EU countries or excluding some of the less important variables would not solve this problem. Hence, these conclusions are based on two time points (1994 and 2003). Allegedly, these time points represent a larger period surrounding the period in which they were observed (more on this can be found in the theory and method sections), but I cannot and will not claim anything about longitudinal developments or any fluctuations that might have occurred on the basis of these data.
operationalization of these variables has developed throughout time. In the early 1990s, for instance, national economic conditions were used (i.e., GDP, inflation and unemployment rates) (e.g., Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993), followed by the use of individual level indicators (i.e., occupation, education and wealth) (e.g., Gabel & Palmer, 1995). In 1997 a subjective financial measure was added to the objective indicators used thus far. (e.g., Gabel & Palmer, 1997). People’s perception of their financial situation were found to play a bigger role than objective financial indicators (Gabel & Palmer, 1997).

To get a thorough overview of the influences of the several economic indicators, most of the above-mentioned economic predictors are included in the analysis. I expect to find the following outcome: First, economic threat from the EU is felt least by those who foresee a positive financial future, as economic prosperity is likely to catalyze a sense of financial security as open borders may lead to economic benefit (Anderson & Reichert, 1995). Subsequently, people who feel financially insecure feel more vulnerable. The latter are therefore most likely to see European integration as a threat: open borders and trade may shake up their (already instable) financial situation (Marx & Engels, 1961; Wood, 1994; Rodrik, 1997). As I assume that for those who foresee a positive financial future it is rational to support the EU, the first ‘economic’ hypothesis reads:

H2: The more positive someone is about their own financial- or their country’s economic situation the less Eurosceptic they are.

In a similar line of reasoning Gabel (1998a) stated that people’s EU support is consistent to their objective economic situation. Open trade of goods between EU countries creates significant gains or losses for workers, depending on their occupational status. Elimination of country barriers increases labor competition throughout the EU. Those on the lower steps of the occupational ladder experience more competition, which makes them more likely to be Eurosceptic. Rodrik (1997, p. 26-27) stated that the “weakest” in society (i.e., lower occupational workers) are easiest to replace by cheaper immigrants and competition increases with the addition of new EU countries. By showing discontent towards further integration, lower skilled employees try to stagnate the process of European integration and thereby limit the risk of being replaced. Therefore, I expect:

H3: The lower one’s occupational status the more Eurosceptic one is.

Eichenberg and Dalton stated “…the EC has a major impact on economic welfare and this fact should be recognized by the European public” (1993; p. 512). And early scholars mostly stressed Europe’s economic performance on public evaluations (Shepherd, 1975). Hence, if economic performances rise, people will become less skeptical towards the EU.

H4: The greater the rise of a country’s GDP, the less Eurosceptic its citizens are.
McLaren (2002, p. 551) was one of the first in the field to notice the biased focus in EU opinion research. She argued that previous research forgot to include fear and hostility towards foreign cultures and the power of nationalism. According to Hooghe and Marks (2005) especially national attachment generates feelings of mistrust and threat towards the EU. They compared the explanatory strength of economic- and the newly introduced identity-based factors on public opinion with concern to the EU (Hooghe & Marks, 2004, 2005). These studies concluded that identity factors had a stronger influence than economic factors.

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) states that attitudes and behavior stem from the desire to belong to one or more social groups or institutions; from this, people subtract their individual identity. Group connections have a strong impact on one's perceptions and attitudes (Ellemers et al., 2002). At times, people go through great lengths for their group and group identity (Gaertner, Sedikides, & Gratz, 1999), thereby placing the collective "self" above the individual "self". Everyone wants to create and/or maintain a positive and significant sense of the social "self". This can be obtained by applying positive characteristics to one's in-group via a mental labeling process, while applying negative characteristics to the out-group in the same way (Scheepers et al., 2002). These seemingly harmless labeling strategies can lead to real between-group conflicts.

Realistic group conflict theory (Austin & Worchel, 1979; LeVine & Campbell, 1972) emphasizes the possible consequences of in- and out-group attitudes, especially when they compete for the same (scarce) resources. These can be tangible- (e.g., possessions, housing, land, jobs and food) or symbolic (e.g., cultural values, identity or political power). Every group wants to get hold of these resources, for which they may have to compete with other groups. Group competition can exist in various ways. For example, European citizenry can be seen as a competing level of citizenship (the out-group) that challenges nationalism (the in-group), as it creates new social layers that crosscut existing class divisions on the national level (Kriesi et al., 2008). Therefore, people who feel a strong attachment to their own nation can feel threatened by the European identity. Hence, the next hypothesis reads:

H5a: The stronger one's national pride, the more Eurosceptic one is.

And in line with this hypothesis:

H5b: If one identifies exclusively with one's country, one is more likely to be Eurosceptic (H5b).

The two hypotheses seem similar, but there is a subtle difference. Hooghe and Marks (2005) argued that exclusive national identity is of greater importance than national pride when explaining EU opinion, because nationality can be multi-dimensional: "Individuals who
GOING SOFT OR STAYING SOFT

identify themselves exclusively as Belgian or exclusively as Flemish are more likely to oppose multi-level governance than are those who identify themselves as both Belgian and Flemish" (Hooghe & Marks, 2005, p. 424). The level of national pride (in hypothesis 5a) does not eliminate feelings of pride associated with other social groups that one may identify with.

By opening up the borders between EU countries and enabling easier migration within the EU, the absolute influx of migrants to European countries grows each year (OECD 2010). With the accession of more member states a greater number and variety of immigrants travel freely throughout Europe (Queisser & Whitehouse, 2007). This can create competing groups within the natural environment of societies, which provokes feelings of threat among the natives, and augments the possibility of intergroup competition for scarce socio-cultural and identity resources. Due to the EU’s responsibility with regard to this migration, it is likely that some of the aggravation about immigrant groups reflects upon them. I hypothesize the following:

H6: With increasing migration levels within EU member states, people will become more Eurosceptic.

Data and Methods

Data

The analyses were carried out with the use of survey data from the Eurobarometer eb42 (1994; n = 7,816) and eb64.2 (2005; n = 8,793). The first wave (1994) lies in the midst of the 1990s and represents the period right after the implementation of new EU policies. Only two years had passed since the Maastricht treaty. Consequently, the social policies were not fully employed yet and therefore did not have a notable effect in the public sphere. Additionally, most of the important external events (e.g., 9/11, Madrid bombing) had not yet taken place. The second wave (2005) took place in the middle of the 2000s and thereby represents the zeros. By this time the European policies had the opportunity to develop much more, hence their effects were much more notable. Also, some of the external events had taken place by this time, allowing them to influence public opinion. The two points in time enable me to compare and investigate any systematic differences or similarities between them. Note that I do not draw any conclusions about fluctuations or developments about the time in between the two points of observation.

On a pragmatic level, the decision to employ these survey waves was made because of the level of compatibility of the questions; a necessity to estimate the exact same models over time. Because these are the only two surveys within the time frames of interest (early 1990s
and 2000s) that comply with this compatibility demand of the key variables, these are the ones I use to test the hypotheses.

The sample includes twelve countries, namely Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the UK. All have been EU members since 1993 or before. Membership duration will therefore not be a factor of influence (Cichowski, 2000). All countries had to be member states, as the dependent variable concerns EU membership attitudes.

Dependent variable

The Euroscepticism indicator was created out of two questions. The first reads: Generally speaking, do you think that (your country’s) membership in the European community (Common market) is a good thing (0), neither good nor bad (1), or a bad thing (2)? The second question reads: taking everything into consideration, would you say that (our country) has on balance benefited (0) or not (2) from being a member of the European Union? The dependent variable was created out of the mean of the two answers, only in the case that respondent answered both adequately. This means they did not answer “don’t know” on one or both of the questions. “Don’t know”-answers were recoded as missing. This decision meant that 18.2 % of the respondents were dropped in 1994 and 10.9 % in 2005. The scale of the dependent variable runs from 0 to 2 in five steps (see Appendix 2, Table A2.1 for descriptive statistics): (0) not at all Eurosceptic, and (2) very Eurosceptic. Factor analysis showed one clear single dimension for both variables, with a Cronbach’s alpha of .77 in 1994 and .76 in 2005.

Independent variables

Hard factors. The first individual hard variable is occupational class. The original survey categories were too detailed; therefore they were combined in concordance to the EGP class schema (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1992; see appendix 2, Table A2.2). This categorization was tested and found valid in various occasions (Evans, 1992; Evans & Mills, 1998; 2000). It also creates a distinction between higher-level occupations and lower level occupations, which is important for testing the third hypothesis.

There are three subjective financial variables of the perceived personal and country’s financial situation: (1) “And over the next 12 months”, 1) “…how do you expect the financial

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5 This decision means a substantial decrease of the sample size; however, the created variable gives a more exhaustive idea of real EU-attitudes. Imputing data on the dependent variable can create more severe problems.

6 Scalar invariance tests were performed, and over time the measurement appeared equivalent. Over countries there were two outliers: Greece and Ireland that were kept in the analyses. One needs to be aware that this may alter the results somewhat. However, since I am interested in over time comparisons, it should not jeopardize the interpretation of these results.
situation of your household will be?; 2) “…how do you think the general economic situation in (our country) will be?; and, 3) “…how do you think the employment situation in (our country) will be? Respondents could choose one of the following answers: worsened (0), stable (1) or improved (2). I decided to include these questions as separate variables because the questions concern financial situations on different conceptual levels (country or household) or on different subjects (economics and unemployment). The questions do correlate but not very strongly (r < .64), and they show no collinearity; hence, the coefficients of each question can yield different results. I use the percentage of increase or decrease of the country’s GDP compared to the same period, one year prior to the year of interest as the objective country level hard factor.

**Soft factors.** The first variable measures level of national pride: “Would you say you are very proud (3), quite proud (2), not very proud (1), not at all proud (0) to be (nationality)”. This scale is included in the analyses as such. The second measures exclusive nationality: “In the near future do you see yourself as: country nationality only, country nationality and European, European and country nationality, or European only?” This was recoded into a dichotomous variable: (1) exclusive national identity, (0) no exclusive national identity. The country level variable is the percentile of immigration increase relative to the previous year.

**Control variables.** Left-right placement is controlled for, however, an effect of extremism is expected rather than ideological position (Van der Eijk & Franklin, 2004). Hence, the ten-point scale is recoded into a variable representing the distance from the country’s average value. This ranges from 0 (not extremist) to around 7 (very extremist) (see Appendix 2, Table A2.1). Post-materialists are expected to be more likely to approve of a supranational entity (e.g., the EU) (Inglehart, 1970; 1990). In the analysis ‘post-materialist’ (1) are compared with ‘mixed’ and ‘materialists’ (0).

Lastly, age, gender and level of education are controlled for. I chose to do so because elderly often have significantly different political views than youngsters (Goerres, 2008; Rhodebeck, 1993; Wilkoszewski, 2009), men and women tend to think differently about European integration (Nelsen & Guth, 2000), and higher levels of education create more EU support (Gabel, 1998a).

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8 For more information on immigration figures, consult the OECD website: [http://www.oecd.org/home/](http://www.oecd.org/home/)

9 Due to many missing values on this variable (14 percent in 1994, 16 percent in 2005) I used multiple regression imputation (with education level, age and gender as predictors). Most missing values were imputed, reducing the total amount of missings to two percent in both years, while maintaining the same effects in the analyses as before the imputation.

10 Age is calculated as age in years minus 16 (the youngest possible age in the survey).

11 Education is measured in number of years of schooling. This is a rather crude measure, but also the most commonly used education level variable in country comparative research (Schneider, 2008b).
CHAPTER 2

Analysis. The data are structured on two levels: country and individual level. In order to control for this structure an OLS multi-level analysis is performed. The intra-class correlation of the empty model is .10 in 1994 and .09 in 2005, which indicates that 10 percent of the total variance is on the country level. Hence, it is necessary to use a method that controls for the variance on the different levels\(^\text{12}\). In order to observe the isolated impact of soft and hard factors, the two different types of variables are added in separate models (see Table 2.1a and 2.1b) first\(^\text{13}\).

Results

In the result section my aim is to answer the hypotheses step-by-step in the logic of the models, although not always in sequential order. Eventually, this leads me to the model’s explained variances; whereby the first and main hypothesis is discussed.

Both Tables (2.2a and 2.2b, respectively 1994 and 2005) present a baseline model with control variables only (model 1). This was done so that later on the variances of these models can be compared with that of the models that hold either soft or hard variables or both. The discussion starts with model 2 of Table 2.1a. The first conclusion that I can draw from this model is that hard factors have little significant impact on Euroscepticism. The coefficients are often small and insignificant. Occupational class has hardly any significant impact, which goes in against hypothesis 3 (people with a lower occupational status are more likely to be against the EU). However, financial expectations affect Euroscepticism significantly, which supports the second hypothesis. People with more positive views of their financial situation are less Eurosceptic. The strongest effect of the three economic expectation effects is that of perceived economic position of the country (\(b = -0.1\)). Higher GDP-rates lead to less Euroscepticism, which supports the fourth hypothesis.

Continuing to the soft factor in model 3 of Table 2.1a, greater levels of national pride lead to less Euroscepticism. The results are fairly small, but significant. Having an exclusive national identity has a positive effect on Euroscepticism (\(b = 0.45\)). In summary, in 1994 hypothesis 5a (greater levels of national pride yield more negative opinions of the EU) is not supported, but hypothesis 5b (exclusive national identity creates more Euroscepticism) is supported. Increasing levels of immigration have a significant negative effect on Euroscepticism, which is the opposite of what I expected and therefore refutes hypothesis 6.

\(^{12}\) The method used here does not control for the categorical nature of the dependent variable (five categories, not normally distributed). The method was chosen because it produces variances on both levels, which is important to answer the main hypothesis. For reasons of construct validity, I performed a two-level multinomial logistic regression analysis. The direction and interpretations of both methods yield the same conclusions (consult authors for exact results).

\(^{13}\) There were no problematic cases of heteroskedasticity in the model.
Both soft and hard factors are included in the last model. This barely alters the coefficients, as only minor decreases occur.

Table 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
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<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b</td>
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<tr>
<td>National pride</td>
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<td>0.43***</td>
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<td>-4.57**</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These models show unstandardized coefficients; \( n_{2nd \text{ level}} = 12; n_{1st \text{ level}} = 7816; * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001; \) Source: Eurobarometer (eb42)
CHAPTER 2

As the results in Table 2.1b (2005) are similar to those in 1994, I will mainly emphasize the differences. In the second model, occupation class shows more significant results in 2005 than in 1994. Manual workers are the most Eurosceptic, quickly followed by non-worker/non-paid workers. Members of the upper-service class are the least Eurosceptic. Most effects disappear with the inclusion of soft factors, which means that hypothesis 3 is again not confirmed.

Model 3 shows an unexpected result: GDP is significantly stronger in 2005 than in 1994. Another significant difference turns up in the impact of the expected financial situation of the household, which is larger in 2005 than in 1994. Similar between-time significance tests were performed on other soft and hard variables, but did not show any significant differences over time. The results of GDP and financial expectations are in line with hypothesis 2 and 4, as they were in 1994.

The results of the soft indicators (in model 3) are roughly the same as in 1994. National pride has a significant negative effect, while exclusive national identity has a positive effect on Euroscepticism. Hypothesis 5a is thereby not supported while hypothesis 5b is. The effect of immigration increase is insignificant; hence hypothesis 6 is not confirmed. The coefficients of the soft factors do not change much in the final model with the inclusion of hard factors; neither do the hard effects in this model. This means hard and soft factors do not have a mediating effect on one another.

I now continue to the first and main hypothesis. Both tables show the unexplained variances at the bottom of each model. The 1994 baseline model reveals a small estimated unexplained variance on the country level (.049), and a relatively large variance on the individual level (.418). The first change in estimated variances appears in the second model, when hard indicators are added. GDP explains 22 percent (.038) of the country level variance and all other hard factors explain 4.7 percent (.40) on the individual level. They explain substantially less than the soft factors do in the third model. This is 43.7 percent of the variance on the country level and 8.83 percent on the individual level. Most variance is explained when both factors are combined. Compared to the first model, the fourth 1994 model shows a decrease of 53.2 percent (to .023) on the country level and a 13.3 percent (to .36) decrease on the individual level.

In 2005 (Table 2.1b) the variances show a pattern similar to that of 1994, with one important difference: the 2005 explanatory strength of the country level variables. The variance of GDP in comparison to that of immigration is much bigger; the opposite of what the 1994 models show. With the main hypothesis I expressed the expectation that the explanatory strength of soft factors vis-à-vis hard factors had increased from 1994 to 2005. The results do not support this hypothesis, since both hard and soft factors on the individual level show a similar influence in relation to one another in both years with rather similar
explained variances. Overall, soft factors already played a substantial explanatory role in 1994; even more so than hard factors. In chapter 4 and 5, these soft factors will be explored even further.

Table 2.1b  Multilevel Analysis, explaining Euroscepticism in 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2005</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.99***</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>7.83***</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (male = ref)</td>
<td>0.07***</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.06***</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level</td>
<td>-0.03***</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.02***</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremism</td>
<td>0.02***</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.02***</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-mat.</td>
<td>-0.07***</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.07***</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National pride</td>
<td>-0.04***</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.03***</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive national ID</td>
<td>0.49***</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.46***</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd level:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation (upper-service = ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower service class</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routine non-manual worker</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual worker</td>
<td>0.14***</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.07**</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non(paid) working</td>
<td>0.08***</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petty bourgeoisie</td>
<td>0.08*</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household, financial situation</td>
<td>-0.08***</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.07***</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country, economic position</td>
<td>-0.05***</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.08***</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country, unemployment</td>
<td>-0.05***</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.08***</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd level:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>-6.42***</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>-6.35***</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These models show unstandardized coefficients; n 2nd level = 12; n 1st level = 8793; * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001; Source: Eurobarometer (eb64.2)
Last, I briefly discuss the control variables in both years. Age showed insignificant in 1994, but significant in 2005 ($b = .001$). Women appear to be significantly more Eurosceptic than men. Education has a strong significant negative impact in 1994 and 2005 (-.02, respectively -.03). A more extreme ideological position creates more skepticism and post-materialists are less Eurosceptic than materialists. The gender and post-materialist effects disappear in either the second or the third model in both survey waves, which means that they are mediated by the soft or hard factors.

**Discussion**

The aim of this study was to investigate whether the claims within the scholarly debate about the shift in explanatory strengths of soft and hard factors for public skepticism towards European integration could be empirically supported. I observed the effects and explanatory strength of soft and hard factors at one point in time before and one after relevant developments in EU policies and important events had taken place. First the results showed remarkable similarities in the effects of both types of variables at the two time points. The findings showed that in both years hard factors had a somewhat limited influence on Euroscepticism in comparison to soft factors (though this was mainly the case on the individual level).

In line with Hooghe and Marks (2004; 2005), I found that soft factors generally had a greater effect on EU attitudes in both 1994 and 2005. Even though this result showed in both years, soft factors have only recently gained prominence in this field of academic research (see for example Hooghe & Marks, 2004; 2005; McLaren, 2002). As there is no difference in explanatory strength between the two time points, the results are not in line with what I expected from extant literature (e.g., Hooghe & Marks, 2005; De Vreese et al., 2008). The EU developments with regard to more social policies did not seem to affect the leverage of socially and culturally driven factors on which people base their EU attitudes. These soft factors may have existed alongside hard factors all along, or gotten leverage from earlier EU developments.

Furthermore, the findings regarding hard factors showed a more significant influence of people’s perceived than of objective financial measures. People, who were more positive about their personal and country’s financial situation, were significantly less Eurosceptic. Meanwhile, the influence of occupational status was small. The results indicated that soft factors might even mediate these hard factors. Furthermore, the relative increase of the country’s economic situation (GDP) led to less skepticism. These results offer no indisputable confirmation, neither definite rejection of the rational choice theory (Coleman, 1973; Heath, 1976; Scott, 2000): People do not act rational in relation to their objective
GOING SOFT OR STAYING SOFT

financial situation, but do so in relation to their perceived personal- and country’s financial situation.

Exclusive national identity positively influences Euroscepticism, while national pride shows the opposite effect. In line with Hooghe and Marks (2005), it is the exclusive element that creates the opposing attitudes towards “others” (the EU).

The results of the soft factors showed no full support for the two theories (social identity- and realistic group theory). National pride and a possible increase of cultural threat (by immigrants) do not always lead to more Euroscepticism. The effect of immigration increase was rather ambiguous between both years. This unexpected (negative or none) effect might be explained by the intergroup contact theory. This theory states that contact with immigrants, under certain conditions, can create mutual understanding and acceptance (Allport, 1954). It is, however, difficult to draw this conclusion from the analyses, as I have no information about contact of natives with immigrants. Another explanation could be that there is a longer time lag between the appearance of a change and the effect on EU citizens than I accounted for. It is difficult to make a correct judgment of how long it will take for people to detect a contextual change, if they do so at all. To control for this, in subsequent research one could take the perceived number of immigrants into account.

The dissolving immigration effect mirrored in the limited explanatory strength of the variable. Though scarce resources may relate to identity and cultural factors, they may also relate to economic factors (jobs as a scarce resource). Hence, I expected that the absent effect could be due to the fact that economic predictors already explained this variance. This was, however, not the case, since the effect was already absent in the third model without GDP. I tentatively interpret this finding as a function of the fact that actual immigrant numbers are included and not, for reasons of data limitation, attitudes towards immigrants (e.g., De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005).

One of the limitations of this study was the restricted number of survey waves. I compared two points in time, hence could not observe possible fluctuations over time and between the two observations. This could have given more insight into possible period effects. In follow-up research it would be useful to include more time points. However, due to insufficient data, this is likely to create problems to include a sufficient number of countries in the analysis, or to get the right variables to answer this question. Also, in this chapter I discussed threat and identity. I was, however, unable to control for attitudes towards possible out-groups. Therefore, I plead for including this in follow-up research.

The last point of discussion is on the dimensionality of Euroscepticism. As explained in chapter 1, there are several spectra of the EU (Boomgaarden et al., 2011). In this chapter two variables are used, which are both part of the so-called utilitarian dimension.
shortcoming with this could have been that utilitarian Euroscepticism corresponds too well with the hard factors, and could lead to an overestimation of their explanatory power. Even so, the soft factors proved more important. Since the interest in this chapter was to observe differences between the two time points, and because the same variables were applied in both years, the dimensionality of the dependent variable had no implications for the interpretation of the results.

The findings speak to Easton’s (1965) commonly used distinction between specific and diffuse support. Specific support refers to concrete political outcomes and satisfying demands. Diffuse support is more general and does not relate to specific rewards or coercion. One might expect that these two types of support would call for different types of predictors. In this chapter I found that soft factors explain a more diffuse type of support, whereas previous research found they also explained a more specific type of support, namely the Turkish accession to the European Union (De Vreese et al., 2008). In chapter 5 a specific type of support will be explored, namely support for EU immigration and border control policies, which relates closely to the soft factors in this chapter.

The current chapter contributes to the field of Euroscepticism research by looking at the effects and the change in explanatory strength of today’s most commonly used indicators (hard and soft factors). Surprisingly I found, despite the implicit assumption in this line of research, that the explanatory strength of these two issues in relation to Euroscepticism has not changed much between 1994 and 2005. I believe that soft factors already played an important explanatory role well before they were included in many Euroscepticism models. It has become clear from this study that soft factors have rightfully earned their position in current EU public opinion research and should not be discarded in future research on the basis of their assumed temporary nature. In the next chapter, Euroscepticism will be explored further. The focus in this chapter is on the role of news media in interplay with their audience.