Opposing a different Europe
The nature and origins of Euroscepticism among left-wing and right-wing citizens in Western Europe
van Elsas, E.J.

Publication date
2017

Document Version
Other version

License
Other

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.
Opposition to European integration does not fit left-right politics in an unequivocal way. Across Western Europe, Euroscepticism is found among both radical left and radical right parties and voters - a pattern commonly illustrated by the image of a horseshoe, emphasising the similarities between the extremes. But to what extent do attitudes towards “Europe” actually provide common ground for the political left and right?

This dissertation studies the applicability of the ‘horseshoe model’ to public opinion in Western Europe. Its theoretical starting point is that Euroscepticism is a multidimensional attitude, the nature and origins of which are actually dependent on - rather than unrelated to - left-right ideology. In four empirical studies, based on survey data covering fifteen Western EU member states and four decades, it shows that the horseshoe only applies to Euroscepticism in its most general sense. However, systematic differences between the left and right are found when studying more specific EU attitudes. Left-wing and right-wing citizens are found to differ not only in their reasons for being Eurosceptic, but also in the type of EU opposition they hold. Thus, this dissertation concludes that rather than being unrelated, ideology is actually a crucial factor in structuring citizens’ Euroscepticism. This refines the common horseshoe understanding of Euroscepticism and the political space.

Erika van Elsas is a postdoctoral researcher at the Amsterdam School for Communication Research (ASCoR) at the University of Amsterdam. She carried out this research as a PhD candidate at the Department of Political Science of the same university.
Opposing a different Europe
The nature and origins of Euroscepticism among left-wing and right-wing citizens in Western Europe

Erika J. van Elsas
Opposing a different Europe
The nature and origins of Euroscepticism among left-wing and right-wing citizens in Western Europe

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam op gezag van de Rector Magnificus prof. dr. ir. K.I.J. Maex
ten overstaan van een door het College voor Promoties ingestelde commissie, in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Agnietenkapel op donderdag 9 maart 2017, te 12:00 uur

door Erika Johanna van Elsas geboren te Wageningen
Promotiecommissie:

Promotores: Prof. dr. W. van der Brug Universiteit van Amsterdam
Prof. dr. A.J.J. Nijhuis Universiteit van Amsterdam

Copromotor: Dr. A. Hakhverdian Universiteit van Amsterdam

Overige leden: Prof. dr. B. Burgoon Universiteit van Amsterdam
Prof. dr. C. van der Eijk University of Nottingham
Prof. dr. S.B. Hobolt London School of Economics
Dr. T. Kuhn Universiteit van Amsterdam
Prof. dr. C.H. de Vreese Universiteit van Amsterdam

Faculteit: Maatschappij- en Gedragwetenschappen
Table of contents

List of tables  8  
List of figures  9  
Acknowledgements  10  

CHAPTER 1  Introduction  13  
  Euroscepticism and left-right ideology: the ‘horseshoe model’  13  
The party level  16  
    The party-citizen link  16  
    Party positions towards European integration  17  
    The EU as a ‘moving target’  20  
The citizen level  21  
    This dissertation: refining the horseshoe  23  
    Two dimensions of Euroscepticism  23  
Outline of the chapters  26  
    Case selection and data  29  

PART I: THE STRUCTURE OF PUBLIC OPINION  33  

CHAPTER 2  The changing relationship between left-right ideology and Euroscepticism, 1973-2010  35  
  Introduction  35  
The changing nature of European integration  37  
The changing meaning of left-right  39  
Left-right ideology and Euroscepticism  39  
Hypotheses  41  
Data and Methods  44  
Results  47  
Conclusion  52
CHAPTER 3 United against a common foe? The nature and origins of Euroscepticism among left-wing and right-wing citizens

Introduction 55
Left-wing and right-wing Euroscepticism 58
Data 62
Variables 63
  Measuring Euroscepticism 63
  European Election Study 2009 64
  European Election Study 2014 64
  European Social Survey 2008/2012 65
  Control variables 65
Method 66
Results 67
  Left-right and the two dimensions of Euroscepticism 67
  What motivates left-wing and right-wing Euroscepticism? 69
Conclusion 74

PART II: THE DETERMINANTS OF ELECTORAL SUPPORT 79

CHAPTER 4 Same interests, different values? The electorates of left-wing and right-wing Eurosceptic parties compared

Introduction 81
Theory 84
  The new conflict: interests or values? 84
  Two dimensions of Euroscepticism 86
  The conflict over time 88
Data 89
  Selection of parties 90
Variables 90
  Method 92
Results 93
  Cross-sectional analyses 93
  Longitudinal analyses (1989-2014) 98
Robustness checks 100
Conclusion 101
List of tables

**Table 1.1**  Key variables, data sources and time coverage per chapter  
**Table 2.1**  Overview of sample size and time frame per country  
**Table 2.2**  Effect of left-right placement on relative fears related to eu  
**Table 2.3**  Left-right and Euroscepticism in 12 EU member states (1973-2010)  
**Table 3.1**  Items used in scales for support for redistribution and anti-immigrant sentiments  
**Table 3.2**  Relation of two dimensions of Euroscepticism to left-right self-placement  
**Table 3.3**  Interactions between left-right and support for redistribution and anti-immigrant sentiments  
**Table 4.1**  Overview of sample size, number of countries and number of parties per EES wave  
**Table 4.2**  Overview of attitudinal items used in analyses of 2009 and 2014 EES waves  
**Table 4.3a**  Regression models explaining the probability to vote for Eurosceptic right-wing party  
**Table 4.3b**  Regression models explaining the probability to vote for Eurosceptic left-wing party  
**Table 5.1**  Summary of party positions on European integration
List of figures

Figure 1.1  Euroscepticism by left-right positions across Western European political parties 14
Figure 1.2  Schematic outline of dissertation 27
Figure 2.1  Relative fears with regard to EU by left-right self-placement 48
Figure 2.2  Predicted probability of Euroscepticism by left-right position in 12 EU member states (1973-2010) 50
Figure 3.1  Predicted values of two dimensions of Euroscepticism across left-right scale in 2009 68
Figure 3.2  Predicted values of two dimensions of Euroscepticism across left-right scale in 2014 68
Figure 3.3  Marginal effect of support for redistribution on two EU dimensions by left-right in 2008 72
Figure 3.4  Marginal effect of support for redistribution on two EU dimensions by left-right in 2012 72
Figure 3.5  Marginal effect of anti-immigrant sentiment on two EU dimensions by left-right in 2008 73
Figure 3.6  Marginal effect of anti-immigrant sentiment on two EU dimensions by left-right in 2012 73
Figure 4.1  Marginal effect of education on support for right-wing and left-wing Eurosceptic party, 1989-2014 97
Figure 4.2  Marginal effect of dissatisfaction with current EU on support for right-wing and left-wing Eurosceptic party, 1994-2009 98
Figure 4.3  Marginal effect of opposition to EU strengthening on support for right-wing and left-wing Eurosceptic party, 1989-2014 99
Figure 5.1  Average position on two EU dimensions by party voted for in last general election, 2009 115
Figure 5.2  Average position on two EU dimensions by party voted for in last general election, 2014 116
Figure 5.3  Average position on two EU dimensions by party voted for in last general election, 1994 117
Figure 5.4  Marginal effect of two EU dimensions on electoral support, 2009 118
Figure 5.5  Marginal effect of two EU dimensions on electoral support, 2014 119
Figure 5.6  Marginal effect of two EU dimensions on electoral support, 1994 120
Acknowledgements

First of all I would like to express my gratitude to the Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam (DIA) and the program group Challenges to Democratic Representation of the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR) at the University of Amsterdam for co-sponsoring this PhD project. Both institutes have provided a rich and inspiring work environment.

While writing this dissertation I have been surrounded by many kind and smart people, and I would like to use this opportunity to acknowledge their support. First and foremost I thank my supervisors, Wouter van der Brug, Ton Nijhuis and Armen Hakhverdian. Wouter, you have been a great supervisor in both academic and personal sense. You helped me in refining my arguments and crystalising the research puzzles. Next to that, your encouragement and understanding has kept me going throughout the project, not to forget your sense of humour, which you share with Armen, my daily supervisor. Armen, thank you for your cheerful guidance throughout the project, and for being there whenever I needed advice. You helped me to see the bigger picture and put things into perspective – not only when it came to research findings, but also the writing of a dissertation in itself.

Ton, I am thankful for having had the opportunity to be associated to the Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam. Your critical eye has been particularly important in both the start-up and the final phase of the project, as it has helped to sharpen both the research question and the conclusions of my dissertation. Our discussions and my participation in the Graduiertenkolleg have broadened my scope methodologically, epistemologically, as well as linguistically. Furthermore, I want to thank the nice colleagues from the DIA. Charlotte Broersma deserves special thanks for her help with several administrative intricacies.

I want to thank Ruud Koopmans and the colleagues from the Migration and Diversity department of the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (wzb) for my pleasant stay there. Among the many nice people there, I especially thank Simon Maag, Malisa Zobel and Constanza Sanhueza for the good company.

At the University of Amsterdam I have shared an office with many people over the years. And if anything, the move of the Political Science department from the authentic, mice-crowded Binnengasthuis to the orderly, glass-walled Roeterseiland complex has proven that it is the people who make the atmosphere, and not the material surroundings. The feestkamer and the people around it have made office a place where I felt very much at home – a kind atmosphere where PhDs help each other and where there was always someone to share PhD and life events with over a coffee. Thank you Loes, Joep, Sjoerdje, Daphne, Marc, Mariken, Lars, Remko, Harmen, Hannah, Wouter, Lisanne and Lea! I also want to thank my other colleagues from the Challenges program group and the Political Science department. In particular, I thank Floris Vermeulen, Joris de Vries, Theresa Kuhn, Matthijs Rooduijn and Tom van der Meer for the pleasant collaboration.

Of the people I met and grew close to during these years, a few I would like to single
out. Emmy Bergsma, for the first year in our mysterious yet cosy mezzanine office and your good company ever since. Emily Miltenburg, for our mutual pep talks ever since the Research Master – I hope we will continue sharing our successes and setbacks in the corridors between our departments. Eefje Steenvoorden, for sharing laughs and stories while we were going through similar life-changing transitions. Maria Kranendonk, for the instant familiarity and for upholding the good office atmosphere. Eelco Harteveld, for all the fun in and outside of the office – I have great reminiscences of our many trips. I am happy to have Maria and Eelco by my side while defending this thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank those who were important to me in life outside the PhD. I thank my friends for being there, for the much-needed distraction they offered, and, it must be said, for their understanding when I had no time for such distraction because of deadlines.

I thank my mother, father and my two brothers – you are a fantastic family and my solid basis. Though dispersed over the country and the globe, with you I always feel at home no matter where we meet. I am lucky to have you by my side. I also want to thank my great and supportive family-in-law.

Rijk, I want to thank you most of all. Ever since I started this PhD we have jokingly alluded to me thanking you in these acknowledgements, and I have always found it slightly awkward to thank someone who means everything to me in a few, public, sentences, with the added risk of resorting to clichés. But I will do so anyway, because you more than deserve the homage. Thank you for being by my side, for laughing with (and at) me, for analysing the world with me. Even if this dissertation was one of the few endeavours we did not take on together, it never really felt like that, because you were always there to make life easier, lighter, more beautiful and more fun. At the time of finalising this PhD project, our daughter has marked the beginning of a new era. I am happier than ever to live our life together, now with the three of us.