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Opposing a different Europe

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Introduction

‘The Dutch are supposed to associate “Europe” with all kinds of noble, pink things: international cooperation, solidarity, and peace. In Romania they only think: how much more money can we take from them before those stupid Dutchmen wake up’.

Dutch *Freedom Party* (PVV), party manifesto 2012¹

‘We want a different, a better EU. The European Union should become a truly democratic, social, ecological and peaceful Union.’

German *Die Linke*, party manifesto 2011²

Euroscepticism and left-right ideology: the ‘horseshoe model’

The increased salience of European integration for electoral politics in Western Europe has seen the occurrence of unexpected alliances. In the Netherlands, the 2016 referendum on the Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement found the radical left Socialist Party in the same camp as the radical right Freedom Party – not for the first time, as these parties had already sided against the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe in the referendum of 2005. France held a similar referendum in 2005, where the Front National campaigned alongside various far left actors (trade unions, Greens, Communists and a Socialist faction) for a vote against the EU constitution (Hobolt and Brouard, 2011). As yet another example, the Maastricht Referendum in Denmark (1992) found the radical right Progress Party and the radical left Socialist People’s Party campaigning against adoption of the Treaty

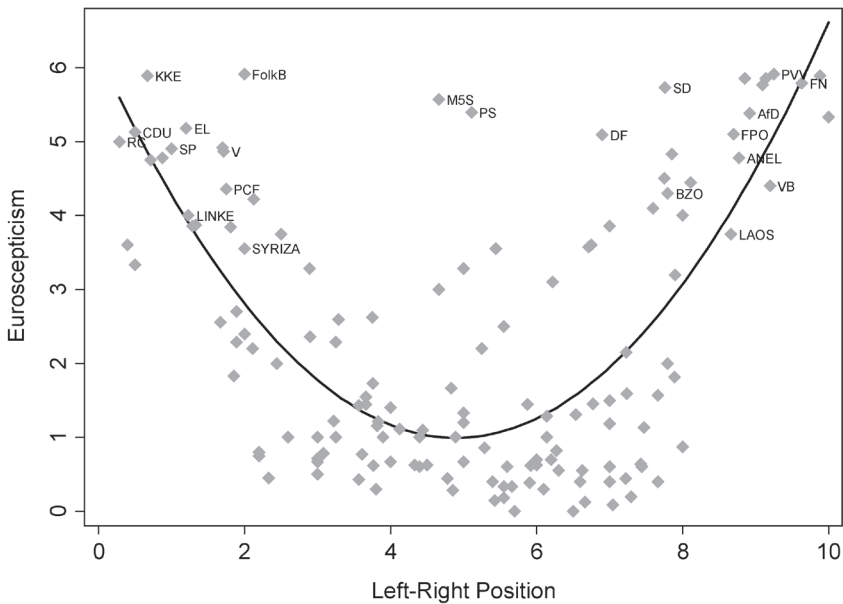
¹ Original quote in Dutch: ‘Nederlanders worden geacht bij ‘Europa’ te denken aan allerlei hoogstaande, roze dingen: internationale samenwerking, solidariteit en vrede. In Roemenië denken ze alleen maar: hoeveel geld kunnen we ze nog afpakken voordat die domme Hollanders wakker worden’. Freedom Party (PVV) Party Manifesto 2012, <http://www.pvv.nl/images/stories/verkiezingen2012/VerkiezingsProgramma-PVV-2012-final-web.pdf>, accessed on June 13, 2016.

² Original quote in German: ‘Wir wollen eine andere, eine bessere EU. Die Europäische Union muss zu einer tatsächlich demokratischen, sozialen, ökologischen und friedlichen Union werden’. Die Linke Party Manifesto 2011, <https://www.die-linke.de/partei/dokumente/programm-der-partei-die-linke/iv5-wie-wollen-wir-die-europaeische-union-grundlegend-umgestalten-demokratie-sozialstaatlichkeit-oekologie-und-frieden/>, accessed on June 13, 2016.

(Siune, 1993). That such common ground can have concrete political consequences in times of heightened politicisation of Europe is demonstrated by the recent Greek case, where Tsipras’ radical left-wing Syriza formed a coalition government with the right-wing nationalist Independent Greeks on the sole basis of their shared European discontent. These illustrations suggest that the issue of European integration cross-cuts existing ideological constellations and thereby has the potential to forge alliances between former opponents.

Similarities between parties at the extremes of the left-right spectrum appear not only in EU referenda, but have been established consistently in general analyses of party positions in Western Europe. On the basis of manifesto data (Halikiopoulou et al., 2012) and expert placements (Hooghe et al., 2002; Aspinwall, 2002), several studies have found that party-level Euroscepticism is closely related to radical positioning on the left-right dimension, to such an extent that EU opposition has become a central distinguishing feature in radical parties’ programs (Mudde, 2007) and leads ‘radical forces from the left and right [to] team up against the mainstream’ (Helbling et al., 2012: 224). The image of a horseshoe or ‘inverted U’ (in EU support) has been evoked to illustrate this (Hooghe et al., 2002). Figure 1.1 displays party positions on Euroscepticism alongside left-right ideology. Indeed, virtually all parties at the far left and far right are Eurosceptic, whereas in the political centre we find a rather undifferentiated pro-EU mainstream.

Figure 1.1 Euroscepticism by left-right positions across Western European political parties



Note: Euroscepticism is measured by country experts’ estimation of the ‘overall orientation of the party leadership towards European integration’, from 0 (strongly in favour) to 6 (strongly opposed). Left-right ideology is measured as the ‘position of the party in 2014 in terms of its overall ideological stance’.
Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014, Bakker et al. (2015).

The fact that the pro/anti-EU dimension is not subsumed into the left-right dimension has led some authors to call the EU issue a “sleeping giant” that has the potential, if awakened, to impel voters to political behaviour that [because of its degree of orthogonality with left/right orientations] undercuts the bases for contemporary party mobilisation in many, if not most, European polities’ (Van der Eijk and Franklin, 2004: 33). Others, in a similar vein, have argued that European integration stands at the core of a new political cleavage dividing ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ of globalisation that is transforming the political space (Kriesi et al., 2008; 2012). But to what extent does the ‘horseshoe’ found at the party level reflect a potential for genuine voter realignment – in the sense that there is a restructuring of citizens’ attitudes and their electoral preferences in ways unrelated to their alignment along the left-right dimension, thus creating a new line of conflict? And to what extent does this mean that former opponents may become allies on this new dimension, and vice versa? To answer these questions, this dissertation puts the relationship between Euroscepticism and left-right ideology among Western European citizens under closer scrutiny.

There are two major reasons why this question needs further investigation. First, both Euroscepticism and the left-right dimension have multiple meanings, and this raises the question to what extent the Euroscepticism found at the political left and right is actually a similar attitude. In fact, studies at the party level have uncovered important differences between left-wing and right-wing party families in the ideological motivations that underpin their EU positions (Hooghe et al., 2002; Marks et al., 2006). Moreover, recent studies have shown that these different motivations also lead to different types of EU opposition (Conti and Memoli, 2012; Hoeglinger, 2016; Maag, 2015). Going beyond a simple opposition between proponents and opponents of the EU, these studies operationalise ‘Europe’ as a multidimensional issue, and show that parties can oppose some aspects of European integration while at the same time supporting other dimensions of the integration process. Similar evidence for the existence of multiple EU attitude dimensions has been found at the level of citizens (Boomgaarden et al., 2011). Second, political realignment presupposes a restructuring not only of party positions but also of citizens’ attitudes. However, at the level of public opinion detailed studies are lacking. Extant research has remained at the surface, analysing correlations between general, unidimensional measures of Euroscepticism and left-right ideology, resulting in seemingly contradictory results, as some find more EU opposition at the left, others at the right, while others find no relationship at all (e.g. Defflem and Pampel, 1996; McLaren, 2007; Van der Eijk and Franklin, 2004). Little can therefore yet be concluded about the degree, nature and origins of Euroscepticism that exists among citizens at the far left and far right. The recent ‘multidimensional turn’ in the EU literature calls for a refined approach of the horseshoe model at the citizen level, which this dissertation sets out to provide. To what extent do differences exist between left-wing and right-wing citizens in the kind of Euroscepticism they hold? And to what extent is support for radical left and radical right Eurosceptic parties (or mainstream pro-EU parties) motivated by similar or different dimensions of EU opposition (or EU support)?

The theoretical starting point guiding this dissertation is that rather than Euroscepticism being unrelated to left-right, ideology is actually a crucial factor in structuring the nature and origins of citizens' Euroscepticism, as well as the type of Euroscepticism that drives electoral support for ideologically distinct party families.

The core of this dissertation consists of four complementary empirical chapters that provide a detailed analysis of the horseshoe model at the citizen level. In the remainder of this introduction, I provide a theoretical background, which builds primarily on the party-level literature. Subsequently, I turn to the citizen level, discussing how this dissertation contributes to the existing literature and introducing a two-dimensional conceptualisation of Euroscepticism. The final section presents a schematic outline as well as an overview of the case selection and the data sources used in each of the empirical chapters.

The party level

Even though this dissertation focuses on public opinion, its theoretical framework is principally derived from the party level. The simple reason for this is that much of what we know about the relationship between Euroscepticism and ideology concerns party positions, which have been studied more extensively. Additionally, party positions are subject to higher ideological constraint than public opinion (in the sense that they generally aim to present ideologically coherent positions), and thus provide a clearer starting point for formulating hypotheses. In any case, before turning to the party literature, a theoretical accounting is needed for why I expect party-level findings to be reflected at the citizen level.

The party-citizen link

There are three reasons why we can expect to find similar ideological structures at the level of parties and citizens. First, both parties and citizens form their attitudes in reaction to the fundamental conflicts in society. The current societal transformations of globalisation and European integration produce similar positional divides at the level of parties and citizens (Kriesi et al., 2008; 2012). Second, such position-taking is shaped by existing ideological views – in particular left-right ideology, which is based on a set of stable values or principles shared by parties and citizens. The meaning of left-right is in constant transformation as it absorbs various political issues as they arise (Knutsen, 1995), yet left-right is not an empty vessel of which the interpretation is fully contingent upon the whims of politics. Rather, its meaning is historically formed and continually reinterpreted in the political debate. Thus, the terms 'left' and 'right' have obtained a fundamental meaning which connects in intuitive ways to most political issues. To the extent that left-right ideology relates to EU attitudes, we would therefore expect parties and voters with similar left-right positions to share these attitudes as well. Third, there is a mutual influence between parties and voters in the positions they take on 'new' issues. Political parties are known to have a 'cueing'

effect on public opinion (Zaller, 1992). This has been demonstrated for EU attitudes specifically, as voters adapt their EU positions to those of the parties they support (Gabel and Scheve, 2007; Ray, 2003; Steenbergen et al., 2007). Conversely, parties do not invent these positions out of nowhere. They are also influenced by the attitudes of their (potential) voters, and public opinion thus also steers changes in party positioning (Carrubba, 2001).

All in all, we can thus expect similarities in how Eurosceptic attitudes are structured in relation to left-right ideology at the level of parties and voters. This dissertation studies the public opinion side, yet the party literature guides some of the theoretical expectations in each of the empirical chapters.

Party positions towards European integration

While the EU referenda cited in the introduction are good cases for witnessing the horseshoe in full effect, they also reveal important differences between left-wing and right-wing EU opposition in terms of framing and argumentation. As a case in point, the 2016 Dutch referendum on the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement was framed by its right-wing opponents (the groups involved in organising the referendum and the radical right Freedom Party (pvv)) as a fundamental vote in favour or against the EU as a whole. ‘Of course we do not care about Ukraine itself, you must understand’, one of the initiators of the referendum stated in the week before it was held. ‘Until now a Nexit referendum is not possible. That’s why we seize all opportunities to put the relationship between the Netherlands and the EU under pressure’.³ In a similar vein, pvv leader Geert Wilders celebrated the No-camp’s victory as ‘the beginning of the end of the EU’.⁴ In contrast, the radical left Socialist Party (sp) framed its ‘threefold No’ to the treaty as ‘Better for Ukraine, better for the Netherlands, better for Europe’ (note that Ukraine is mentioned first).⁵ Specifically, the sp argued that the treaty’s neoliberal character would harm the Ukrainian people while the association with the ‘corrupt Ukrainian oligarchy’ would harm the Dutch, and thus the treaty would only ‘[benefit] the multinationals while it is bad for the people here and there.’⁶ The third ‘No’, then, is for the sake of Europe itself, as in the view of the sp we should concentrate first on solving the problems that already exist ‘within and at the borders of the European

³ Original quote in Dutch: ‘Oekraïne kan ons natuurlijk niets schelen, dat moet u begrijpen. (...) Een Nexit-referendum is tot nu toe niet mogelijk. Daarom grijpen wij alle mogelijkheden aan om de relatie tussen Nederland en de EU onder spanning te zetten’. Interview with Alex van Dixhoorn and Pepijn van Houwelingen. Heck, W. (2016, March 31). ‘Oekraïne kan ons niets schelen’. NRC Handelsblad. <http://www.nrc.nl/next/2016/03/31/oekraïne-kan-ons-niets-schelen-1606419>, accessed on July 4, 2016.

⁴ Twitter account Geert Wilders (@geertwilderspvv), April 6, 2016.

⁵ Socialist Party (2016, March 12). ‘Campagneaftrap referendum: Nee is 3x beter’. <https://www.sp.nl/nieuws/2016/03/campagneaftrap-referendum-nee-is-3x-beter>, accessed on July 4, 2016.

⁶ Original quote in Dutch: ‘Het akkoord is goed voor de multinationals maar slecht voor de mensen hier en daar.’ Socialist Party (2016, February 10). ‘Verdrag is slecht voor Oekraïne, Europa en voor ons’. Interview with SP-prominent Harry van Bommel on website Socialist Party, <https://www.sp.nl/nieuws/2016/02/van-bommel-verdrag-is-slecht-voor-oekraïne-europa-en-voor-ons>, accessed on July 4, 2016.

Union'.⁷ These statements reveal fundamental differences between the motives for opposing the treaty. Where the position of the right-wing camp was fundamentally anti-EU and lacked any engagement with Ukraine, the radical left's criticism focused on the neoliberal character of the treaty itself while at the same time expressing solidarity with the Ukrainian people. Furthermore, they linked this to a more general EU critique focusing on improving the EU rather than trying to undermine the whole project.

To explain why radical parties take Eurosceptic positions, a 'strategic model' has been proposed, which argues that these parties use Euroscepticism as a marker of their anti-establishment protest solely for the purpose of electoral gains (Taggart, 1998; Sitter, 2001). The above example however suggests that a strategic explanation does not suffice to understand Euroscepticism at the extremes. In fact, the radical left and radical right express fundamentally different forms of Euroscepticism which can only be understood by taking into account their ideological roots. The power of an 'ideological model' of party-level Euroscepticism has been persuasively demonstrated by Hooghe et al. (2002). Their study reveals that both an economic (state-market) and a cultural (libertarian-nationalist) dimension are important to understand the Euroscepticism of radical parties (see also Marks et al., 2006; Bakker et al., 2012). On the basis of expert surveys on party positions, the authors show that the state-market divide explains radical left parties' opposition. Their economically left-wing positions lead them to criticise the EU primarily for its neoliberal character and the perceived threat it forms to the welfare state. This same divide however is not adequate to explain why radical right (and to a lesser extent conservative) parties oppose the EU. Their Euroscepticism arises from the perceived threat the EU poses to national sovereignty, identity, and the traditional community (Hooghe et al., 2002). Thus, particularly in the case of radical right parties, the term 'right' has more to do with their distinctly nationalist or monoculturalist positions on the cultural conflict dimension than with their socio-economic positions, which are in many cases ambivalent (Lefkofridi and Michel, 2014). Kriesi and colleagues similarly argue that Euroscepticism at the ideological extremes has distinct roots. In their analyses of media content data, they find evidence that while radical left and radical right actors both oppose European integration, they do so employing different – economic and cultural – frames (Hoeglinger et al., 2012).

It is important to emphasise here that the classifications radical left and radical right refer to different meanings of 'left' and 'right'. Left-right terminology is generally used to describe the dominant dimension structuring political competition. Given the longstanding predominance of the state-market divide, left-right is still often equated to its socio-economic meaning. However, as a 'super dimension' it has actually absorbed a broad variety of issues; not only socio-economic attitudes, but also positions towards the

⁷ Original quote in Dutch: 'We hebben onze handen vol aan problemen in en aan de rand van de Europese Unie. Laten we ons daar eerst eens op concentreren.' Van Bommel, H. (2016, March 23). 'Oekraïne is beter af als bufferstaat'. Publication on Socialist Party website, <https://www.sp.nl/ opinie/harry-van-bommel/2016/oekraïne-is-beter-af-als-bufferstaat>, accessed on July 4, 2016.

environment, law and order, and immigration are to a large extent interpretable in left-right terms (Van der Brug and Van Spanje, 2009; Inglehart and Klingemann, 1976: 244). Such 'new' issues have pluralised the meaning of left-right, with currently the economic and cultural interpretations being most salient (Kitschelt, 2004). Attitudes towards Europe have links to both interpretations (Bornschieer, 2011), which explains how Euroscepticism can be associated with the left and right ends of the spectrum at the same time, rather than being absorbed into left-right language one-dimensionally.

However, not only the left-right dimension has multiple meanings. The 'EU issue' itself is also far more complex than the simple horseshoe would suggest. Recently, there is an increasing awareness in the literature that there are not only different reasons to oppose Europe, but that this EU opposition itself can also manifest itself in different ways. Several studies now argue that Europe constitutes an 'unusually complex issue' (Hoeglinger, 2016: 9), which should be conceptualised as entailing multiple dimensions. Studies of party positions in Western Europe have shown that the degree of Euroscepticism depends strongly on what aspect of European integration is at stake, and that differences in the main object of Euroscepticism (e.g. the internal market, EU enlargement, deepening of integration) are organised along ideological lines (Dolezal, 2012; Hoeglinger, 2016; Maag, 2015). In a study of party manifesto data in fifteen Western European countries, Conti and Memoli (2012: 99) demonstrate that although all radical parties (left and right) share a criticism of the current trajectory of the EU, they differ in that 'the extreme right developed a more patent nationalist discourse that was oriented to preserve national sovereignty, while the extreme left was more open about the role and future developments of the EU'. These findings are directly reflected in the above given example of the PVV's and SP's stances in the Dutch 2016 referendum on the EU-Ukraine Treaty, with the first fundamentally rejecting the EU while the latter seeing potential for improvement at the European level. This is also exemplified by the distinct reactions of radical left and radical right parties across Europe to the recent refugee crisis and the EU's role in handling it. Both party families have voiced strong criticism of the EU's reaction to this crisis. However, while a prominent politician of the radical right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) stated that 'the only way for Germany to fight the refugee and migrant crisis is to close our borders'⁸, the radical left European party group GUE/NGL (European United Left/Nordic Green Left) stated in contrast that 'it is inhumane for Europe (...) to build walls' and that 'we need an EU-wide humanitarian response'.⁹ More generally, the GUE/NGL's adage 'Another Europe is possible' contrasts strongly with the calls of parties such as the French Front National and the German

⁸ Interview Beatrix von Storch (Member of European Parliament for AfD). Giannangeli, M. (2016, March 21). 'Germans want a vote on the EU too'. Express. <http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/653976/Germany-EU-referendum-AfD-Angela-Merkel-migrant-crisis>, accessed on July 4, 2016.

⁹ Quote by Dimitris Papadimoulis (Member of European Parliament for GUE/NGL), European United Left/Nordic Green Left (2015, September 16). 'EU leaders must take more responsibility in migration crisis'. Publication on website. <http://www.guengl.eu/news/article/eu-leaders-must-take-more-responsibility-in-migration-crisis>, accessed on July 4, 2016.

Alternative für Deutschland for more national sovereignty. These differences underline that opposition to 'Europe' is a multidimensional attitude, not only in its motivations but also in its manifestations.

The EU as a 'moving target'

Not only can opposition to 'Europe' refer to different facets, but the character of European integration itself is also subject to continuous change over time – and is therefore often referred to as a 'moving target' (Marks, 2004). European integration was set in motion in the early 1950s by forming the European Coal and Steel Community, an economic cooperative created with the aim to promote political stability in Europe and to prevent future Franco-German animosity. Though Monnet and Schumann initially had wider ambitions of political union, these ambitions met with national sovereignty concerns early on. In the decades to follow, common policies principally focused on issues of trade, and national political elites were the main drivers of integration. The European Parliament elections that were organised from 1979 onwards were mainly used by voters to hold national governments accountable for domestic issues (Reif and Schmitt, 1980). Inversely, European issues had little effect on domestic politics, as European integration largely remained an elite-driven process (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970).

Public attention for European integration however greatly intensified with the establishment of the Single European Act (1986) and, more importantly, the Maastricht Treaty (1992), which changed the character of European integration as well as how it was perceived by European citizens. These integration steps turned the EU into a multi-level polity with increased political power in both economic and non-economic policy domains (Hooghe and Marks, 2009). Important developments include the creation of a level playing field for business and trade through EU-wide harmonisation of national laws and regulations; the establishment of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the path to a common currency; the extension of EU competencies to encompass environmental, employment, foreign and defense policy; the transmission of political authority by empowering the European Commission and European Parliament, and by extending qualified majority voting in the European Council; and finally, the renaming of the European Community to the European Union, and the attribution of EU citizenship to all member states' citizens. Each of these transformations – next to their factual consequences – carried symbolic value and made citizens aware of the impact of European integration on their member states' internal affairs as well as on daily life. As such, with the Maastricht Treaty 'decision making on European integration entered the contentious world of party competition, elections and referendums' (Hooghe and Marks, 2009: 7). In the 2000s, the introduction of the Euro (in 2002), the attempted introduction of the EU Constitution (voted down in France and the Netherlands in 2005), and the Eastern Enlargements in 2004 and 2007 – and subsequent westward labour migration – augmented the contentiousness of European integration, particularly by increasing the tension between European integration and

national sovereignty. This tension is only reinforced by the recent financial and migration crises that have come to dominate European politics in the 2010s.

As its character changed, European integration not only became more contentious, but the roles of its main contenders in party politics also changed. In the early decades, Christian democratic and liberal parties were the driving force behind European integration, while social democrats were among its main sceptics (Hooghe and Marks, 2009). From the mid-1980s onwards, however, the social democrats became convinced that the neo-liberal character of integration was best challenged at the supranational level (Dunphy, 2004: 163). In contrast, the EU's increasingly supranational character was more negatively received by right-wing parties. Expert survey data confirm that social democratic parties have become more supportive of European integration since the mid-1980s (Hooghe et al., 2002). A study of Euromanifesto data from 1979 to 1999 shows that this has led socialists to switch positions with the Christian democrats and conservatives, who moved in the opposite direction (Gabel and Hix, 2002). Similar changes occurred at the political flanks. Where radical left parties were the main opponents of European integration in the early decades (Almeida, 2012: 69), many radical right parties only came to oppose the EU in reaction to the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 (Mudde, 2007: 159).

In sum, from the party-level literature we can take away that left-right ideology is in fact a crucial factor in structuring party positions towards Europe. However, as both 'Europe' and left-right have multiple meanings, which are subject to change over time, the relationship is both complex and dynamic.

The citizen level

As of yet there is little conclusive evidence on the relationship between left-right ideology and Euroscepticism at the level of citizens in Western Europe. The relationship has been studied in several accounts – either as the central focus of study or with left-right orientation in the function of control variable – but the findings are inconsistent. Some studies find low or zero correlations between left-right ideology and Euroscepticism (Gabel, 2000; Gabel and Anderson, 2002; Van der Eijk and Franklin, 2004), which has led to the conclusion that 'support for EU membership fulfils the first condition for providing a new electoral cleavage in national elections' (Gabel, 2000: 60). Other studies, however, have found that citizens with a left-wing orientation are more opposed to Europe (Alvarez, 2002; Deffem and Pampel, 1996; Llamazares and Gramacho, 2007), and suggest that Euroscepticism is strongly associated with socio-economic ideological preferences. Yet, this does not explain why other studies have found public Euroscepticism to be higher among right-wing citizens (McLaren, 2007; Ray, 2004).

The fact that the findings are so contradictory is mainly a result of theoretical confusion at three levels. *First*, left-right ideology is a 'super dimension' with both socio-economic

and cultural connotations. Consequently, there are reasons to expect Euroscepticism to exist among left-wing and right-wing citizens, and to model the relationship between *general* left-right placement and Euroscepticism as a curvilinear function. Yet, many extant studies have conceptualised left-right as a socio-economic dimension, either using specific socio-economic attitudes as indicators (Evans, 1998; Garry and Tilley, 2014), or using a general left-right placement measure to capture socio-economic positions (Brinegar and Jolly, 2005; Deflem and Pampel, 1996; McLaren, 2007). These studies thus overlook the cultural component of left-right ideology. In addition, even studies that conceptualise left-right as a general orientation without pre-defined meaning still often model it as a linear function (Gabel, 2000; Hooghe and Marks, 2005); only a handful of studies has modelled the relationship curvilinearly (Lubbers and Scheepers, 2010; Steenbergen et al., 2007; Van der Eijk and Franklin, 2004). These inconsistent measurements and modeling strategies are an important reason for the inconclusiveness of findings to date. *Second*, although most of these studies aim to draw conclusions about general Euroscepticism (or EU support, depending on the direction of coding), they use diverse indicators to measure it. At the party level we have seen that Eurosceptic parties of the radical left and radical right voice different kinds of EU critiques. Moreover, at the citizen level there is evidence as well that ‘Euroscepticism’ as a generic term actually refers to multiple and rather independent dimensions of EU attitudes (Boomgaarden et al., 2011). The contradictory findings of the mentioned studies are likely to be in part a consequence of using different indicators of Euroscepticism – as will be discussed in more detail below. *Third* and finally, almost all studies to date are carried out on cross-sectional data. From party-level research we know that the character of Euroscepticism and its relation to left-right change over time. The public opinion studies that do include a time dimension suggest changes among citizens as well (Lubbers and Scheepers, 2010; Evans, 1998). In sum, party-level findings and the contradictory results in public opinion studies call for theoretical and empirical refinement. The relationship between Euroscepticism and left-right ideology is more complex and dynamic than we can grasp with coarse, one-dimensional measures at single time points.

The same need for refinement also applies to understanding voting for pro- and anti-EU parties. Like left-right ideology, the relationship of Euroscepticism to electoral support is also thought to follow the horseshoe model, as voting for both radical left and radical right anti-EU parties is assumed to be driven by EU opposition (Lubbers and Scheepers, 2007), while pro-EU attitudes benefit centrist parties. The multiple meanings of ‘left’ and ‘right’ and of Euroscepticism itself raise the question to what extent ideologically different kinds of parties draw support on the basis of the same or a different kind of EU attitudes. In the EU issue voting literature, both the independent and the dependent variable are conceptualised as single dimensions: Most studies are concerned with the overall effect of general EU support on party choice in general (De Vries, 2007a; 2010; Gabel, 2000; Tillman, 2004): No reference is made to what kind of EU support or opposition this entails, and for which party families it matters most. Again, the relationship between

Euroscepticism and supporting Eurosceptic parties is likely to be more complex than the literature until now has shown.

This dissertation: refining the horseshoe

The aim of this dissertation is to give a refined account of the relationship between Euroscepticism and the political space at the citizen level, by studying the structure of public opinion as well as of electoral preferences. The theoretical starting point of this endeavour is that the relationship between Euroscepticism and left-right ideology is much more nuanced and multifaceted than the horseshoe model suggests. Underneath superficial similarities in Euroscepticism at the flanks, I expect important differences in the nature and motivations of Euroscepticism on the left and right. The EU dimension, then, is not an unrelated, cross-cutting issue dimension. Rather, I expect left-right ideology to play a crucial role in structuring EU attitudes and EU issue voting among left-wing and right-wing citizens.

Three key insights guide this dissertation, which speak to the above identified lacunae in the literature. First, I conceptualise 'Europe' as a multidimensional issue, by distinguishing two EU attitude dimensions which are hypothesised to relate differently to left-right ideology. Second, left-right ideology is conceptualised as a 'super dimension' that has the capacity to absorb diverse political issues, and that connects to EU attitudes in multiple ways through its economic and cultural meanings. Third, both the meaning of left-right and Euroscepticism are subject to transformations over time, which makes it likely that their relation changes over time as well. Therefore, each of the empirical chapters takes a longitudinal perspective. The first insight, the distinction between the two dimensions of Euroscepticism, stands at the heart of this dissertation. I therefore start by explaining my conceptualisation of Euroscepticism before continuing to an outline of the four empirical chapters.

Two dimensions of Euroscepticism

In the public opinion literature, negative attitudes towards European integration are often referred to by the generic term 'Euroscepticism'. Even though 'scepticism' arguably does not cover the broad spectrum of possible negative attitudes one can have – and in its literal meaning refers more to a cautious than a decidedly negative attitude – it has become the key term in both the academic and political debate, and is generally used as the antonym of EU support. A large and growing body of literature addresses the roots and consequences of public Euroscepticism or EU support, yet using a high variety of indicators to (presumably) measure the same concept. A widely used indicator is the 'EU membership support' question, which asks respondents to evaluate their country's membership of the EU as 'good', 'bad', or 'neither good nor bad' (Anderson, 1998; Eichenberg and Dalton, 2007; Gabel, 1998; Hakhverdian et al., 2013; Steenbergen et al., 2007). Its popularity is mainly due to its consistent availability across countries and over time. Alternative measures of

EU support include support for further European integration (Evans, 1999; Kriesi et al., 2008), the desired speed of integration (De Vries and Edwards, 2009), and measures of trust in EU institutions (Armingeon and Ceka, 2014; Werts et al., 2012). In some cases, several of these items are combined into a single index (Hooghe and Marks, 2004; Garry and Tilley, 2014; Gabel, 1998).

The use of such different indicators creates conceptual nebulosity. Recent scholarship suggests that Euroscepticism is a multidimensional attitude among citizens, as different EU attitude items cluster in relatively independent dimensions (Boomgaarden et al., 2011; Lubbers and Scheepers, 2010). Different indicators thus represent different EU attitude dimensions, and combining scales out of these different indicators might introduce noise rather than increase reliability – if they are not chosen carefully to reflect the same sub dimension. Since EU attitudes can also differ in their roots and consequences, studies into the correlates of Euroscepticism need to explicitly define which dimension of this concept is studied. Given the distinct kind of Euroscepticism voiced by parties at the left and the right, it seems particularly pertinent to do so in a study on its ideological correlates in public opinion.

Different multidimensional conceptualisations of Euroscepticism circulate in the literature. Probably best-known is Taggart and Szcerbiak's (2004) distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' Euroscepticism. Hard Euroscepticism 'implies outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration and opposition to [one's] country joining or remaining members of the EU', whereas soft Euroscepticism involves 'contingent or qualified opposition to European integration' (2004: 3-4). The main critique on this definition is that almost anything can classify as qualified opposition, whereas hard Euroscepticism in reality applies to only few cases. Also, in practice it is difficult to tell where qualified opposition ends and outright rejection begins. Kopecky and Mudde (2002: 300) therefore instead propose to distinguish between diffuse and specific EU support, based on Easton's (1965) conceptualisation of political support. They note the crucial difference between supporting the process of European integration in principle (diffuse), and supporting the European Union as the current outcome of this process (specific). Pippa Norris (1999: 58) has refined the distinction between diffuse and specific political support (in the context of national politics) by arguing that expressions of political support can be classified gradually in five levels that run from more diffuse to more specific. Diffuse support entails a basic attachment to the political community (1) and – slightly more specifically – the principles according to which the political regime functions (2). Political support turns incrementally more specific once it relates to the performance of the regime (3), of its key institutions (4), and finally, political actors (5).

Inspired by Kopecky and Mudde's application of the distinction between diffuse and specific support to Euroscepticism, and using Norris' more substantive definition of what these two types of support entail, I distinguish between two dimensions of Euroscepticism (while reserving this latter term to refer to EU opposition in general, in line with its common

use). First, in relation to the European polity, Norris' two most diffuse levels of opposition take the form of not feeling attached to the European political community as well as not subscribing to the principle of supranational political integration of European countries. These forms of opposition have a principled character – that is, they are the result of values rather than evaluations of actual performance, and these values are rooted in the fundamental conflict between preservation of (or returning to) the nation-state versus the integration into a united Europe. This conflict involves not only the deepening but also the widening of the EU. Though strictly speaking these are independent processes which can also function as a trade-off, EU enlargement, like further integration, is perceived as antonymous to the wish to protect the boundaries and sovereignty of the national community – if only because enlargement of the EU means that current levels of integration (e.g. free movement) will be shared with an increasing number of countries. Indeed, enlargement attitudes are closely related to support for deeper European integration in public opinion (Boomgaarden et al., 2011; Ruiz-Jimenez and Torreblanca, 2008).¹⁰ Also, both deepening and widening attitudes are strongly related to attachment to or identification with Europe (Dixon, 2010; Hobolt, 2014), indicating that these attitudes are rooted in fundamental values. To capture this conflict, which essentially posits the nation-state against 'more Europe', I define this dimension as *opposition to EU strengthening*. The second EU dimension involves Norris' three more specific levels of political support. Although Norris posits regime performance as the 'middle level' between diffuse and specific (Norris, 1999: 58), in my conceptualisation it fits best under the second dimension of Euroscepticism, which I call *dissatisfaction with the current EU*. This dimension contrasts with the first dimension in that it refers to evaluations of the actual functioning of the EU regime, its key institutions and its current political authorities. It thus reflects specific evaluations of what the EU currently is or does – not its potential transformations in the future.

Although there may not be a single optimal categorisation of EU attitudes, the distinction between opposition to EU strengthening and dissatisfaction with the current EU is essential for understanding how the nature of Euroscepticism may differ between the left and the right. As the discussion of party-level findings suggested, the economic critique of left-wing Eurosceptics is mostly concerned with the current set-up of the EU – which is considered to disadvantage the socially vulnerable – whereas these concerns do not necessarily imply opposition to further European integration. The cultural, nationalist objections of the Eurosceptic right are more fundamental, and by definition antithetical to further integration at the supranational level. Such Euroscepticism takes issue with the principle of European integration per se – and calls for reversing rather than intensifying

¹⁰ Studies by Karp and Bowler (2006) and Hobolt (2014) have shown the merits of distinguishing between enlargement and deepening, as both within and across countries there are theoretically understandable differences in the extent to which these attitudes are correlated. Although their approach generates important insights, for this dissertation's purpose – and viewed among a broader array of EU attitudes – these attitudes are sufficiently closely related to represent the diffuse dimension of Euroscepticism.

integration. However, whether this leads to an rejection of EU membership per se (and thus to ‘hard Euroscepticism’) is an empirical question. In Taggart and Szczepiński’s (2004) definition, both criticising the EU in its current form and fundamentally opposing any step further down the integration path would be defined as ‘qualified support’, thus overlooking an ideologically important distinction. The crucial difference between left-wing and right-wing Euroscepticism, I argue, can be captured best by distinguishing between the furthering of the European integration process and its current embodiment in the EU.

Outline of the chapters

This dissertation studies the relationship between EU attitudes and the political space from two complementary angles. Part I (Chapters 2 and 3) focuses on the structure of public opinion by studying the relationship between citizens’ ideological positions and their attitudes towards the EU. Part II (Chapters 4 and 5) turns to the structure of electoral support by studying the way in which different kinds of EU attitudes motivate support for different kinds of (pro- and anti-EU) parties. Figure 1.2 maps the principal relationships studied in this dissertation (without aiming to provide a causal model).

The first step in this dissertation is to establish whether the horseshoe model found for left-right and Euroscepticism at the party level applies to public opinion as well. *Chapter 2* argues that a major reason for the inconsistent findings in studies on this topic to date is that the relationship between left-right ideology and Euroscepticism has changed over time – as the meaning of both left-right and the character of the EU itself have changed. While integration efforts were initially focused on market liberalisation and thereby sparked mainly left-wing opposition, the intensification of political integration after the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) additionally produced a nationalist Euroscepticism based on cultural attitudes. Hence, it is expected that the relationship between left-right ideology and Euroscepticism over time has involved from linear (with left-wing citizens being most Eurosceptic) to U-shaped (with Euroscepticism found at both extremes). This expectation is tested by studying the relationship between left-right placement and a general measure of Euroscepticism (attitudes towards EU membership) over a far longer time span than has been done before, using Eurobarometer data over 74 waves (from 1973 to 2010) in twelve Western EU member states.¹¹ The results provide evidence for the development towards a horseshoe-shaped relationship in public opinion in many of these countries.

While the strength of Chapter 2 is the consistency of its measures over an unprecedented number of time points and countries, the major limitation is that these measures are only

¹¹ This measure is chosen for its unequalled availability across countries and time points, enhancing cross-national and cross-temporal comparability. Additional analyses underline the general nature of the EU membership support measure, as it correlates to an equal extent with items measuring opposition to EU strengthening and dissatisfaction with the current EU (see Appendix A).

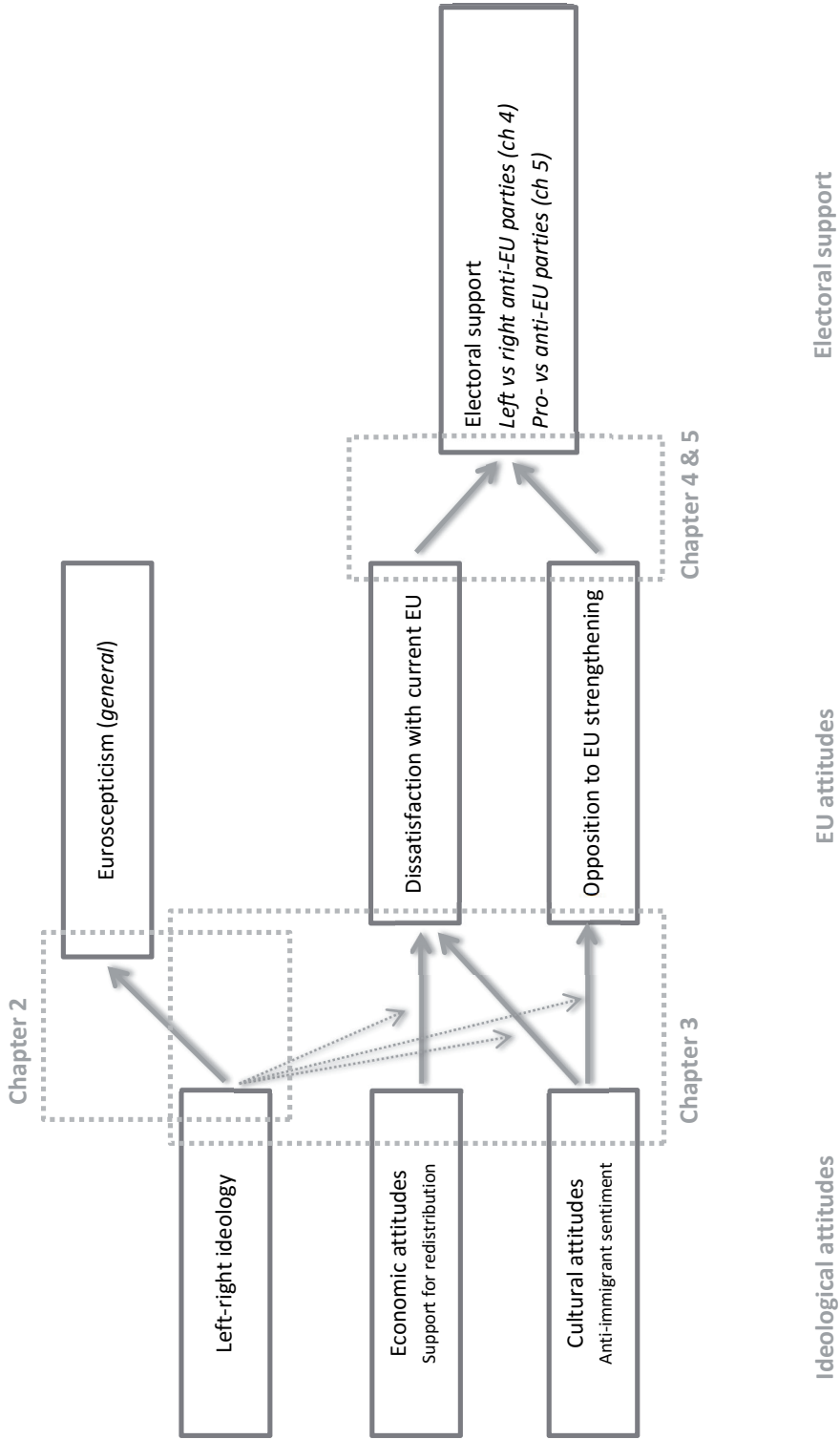


Figure 1.2 Schematic outline of dissertation

coarse and general – and therefore unsuited to test whether the Euroscepticism found among left-wing and right-wing citizens is directed at different aspects and grounded in different motivations. *Chapter 3* therefore provides an exploration of the different nature and origins of Euroscepticism among left-wing and right-wing citizens. I use European Election Study data (2004-2014) to demonstrate that left-wing Eurosceptics are dissatisfied with the current functioning of the EU, but do not oppose further European integration per se, while right-wing Euroscepticism is more fundamental and directed primarily at the strengthening of the EU. Additionally, on the basis of European Social Survey data (2004-2012) I show that these differences can be understood from the different motivations anchoring their EU attitudes: Euroscepticism among left-wing citizens is motivated by economic (i.e. support for redistribution) as well as cultural (i.e. anti-immigrant sentiments) concerns, whereas for right-wing citizens Euroscepticism is solely anchored in cultural attitudes. Thus, this chapter nuances the horseshoe model by showing that the meaning and motivations of Euroscepticism are different depending on citizens' left-right ideology.

These findings raise the question to what extent similar nuances should be made when it comes to Eurosceptic voting behaviour. Where Part I of this dissertation focuses on the relation between attitude dimensions, building on earlier work on Euroscepticism and the structure of the political space (Hooghe et al., 2002; Marks and Steenbergen, 2004), Part II turns to electoral preferences for anti- and pro-EU parties, and how they are structured by EU attitudes and socio-structural characteristics. This second part of the dissertation principally builds on the work by Kriesi and colleagues, who see Euroscepticism as part of a broader globalisation cleavage (2008; 2012). According to this line of research, a new societal divide is emerging due to globalisation and related processes such as European integration, immigration and economic liberalisation, which creates a structural potential of lower educated citizens vulnerable to globalisation processes to be mobilised by political parties at the radical left and right.

Bearing in mind the nuances to the horseshoe model made in Part I of the dissertation, *Chapter 4* questions to what extent Eurosceptic parties of a left-wing and right-wing profile actually draw similar or different electorates. I theorise that while both party families are likely to appeal to similar *interests* – those of the lower educated groups most vulnerable to globalisation – they crucially differ in the terms of the *values* they represent on a nationalism-cosmopolitanism dimension. Comparing their supporters on both their attitudinal and socio-structural profiles, the analyses on the basis of European Election Study data from 1989 to 2014 show that right-wing Eurosceptic parties draw lower educated voters who fundamentally oppose the EU in both its current and potential future forms, whereas left-wing Eurosceptic parties draw voters with a mixed – and in some countries even higher – educational profile who are mainly dissatisfied with the current EU, but not opposed to further European integration per se. I suggest that the different (nationalist versus cosmopolitan) values held by parties and voters at far left and far right lie at the basis of these differences. To the extent that such cultural values are becoming more politically

salient, as the literature suggests (Kriesi et al., 2008; 2012), this means we cannot expect the far left and far right to find increasingly common ground in a shared Euroscepticism.

Similar to support for left-wing and right-wing *anti*-EU parties, support for *pro*-EU parties is also likely to be driven by different kinds of EU attitudes, depending on these parties' ideological positions. *Chapter 5* assesses this question by comparing the explanations of support for seven principal (mainstream and radical) party families (radical left, green, social democratic, Christian democratic, liberal, conservative and radical right). The horseshoe model portrays the political mainstream as an undifferentiated pro-EU block. This chapter, taking a more explorative approach than the previous chapters, investigates whether we find more differentiation between the supporters of different party families if we distinguish the two EU attitude dimensions that the previous chapters have shown to relate differently to left-right ideology. On the basis of European Election Study data from 1994, 2009 and 2014 I find that all mainstream party families similarly draw support on the basis of current EU satisfaction, while for opposition to EU strengthening the pattern is more diverse. In 2009 and 2014, only social democratic, green and liberal parties are on average more popular among supporters of EU strengthening, while the effect is largely insignificant for conservative and Christian democratic parties. This indicates that electoral support does not follow the familiar horseshoe pattern when it comes to this more principled form of EU opposition. Rather, the EU strengthening dimension might reinforce competition along a left-liberal versus right-conservative axis.

Case selection and data

The focus of this dissertation is limited to Western Europe, as the horseshoe model of left-right and Euroscepticism is developed in the Western European context. In Eastern Europe, the political space follows a different structure (with nationalism being associated to the economic left), and therefore the horseshoe model is not applicable (Marks et al., 2006). Since the aim of this dissertation is to apply and refine the horseshoe model at the level of public opinion, it focuses only on Western European EU member states (the EU-15).¹² Western European non-EU members are also excluded, since EU attitudes in these countries might be structured by essentially different considerations.

The theoretical framework of this dissertation is designed to discover common structures and trends across these fifteen countries. Evidently, however, the relationship between Euroscepticism and ideology also depends upon country context. Country differences have been explained from different angles, by looking at party supply (De Vries and Edwards, 2009), macro-economic indicators (Brinegar et al., 2004; Garry and Tilley, 2014; Hooghe and Marks, 2005), and a country's role as net EU contributor or receiver (Lubbers and Scheepers, 2010). Many of these explanations are based on the idea that citizens assess how

¹² The EU-15 are those countries that were EU member states on 1 January 1995: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

EU policy will affect their country's welfare system, degree of government interventionism, and economic situation. Whether support for the EU is higher among left-wing or right-wing citizens then depends on whether more integration is expected to move economic public policy towards the left or the right (i.e. more or less interventionism and welfare redistribution) and whether it will increase or decrease economic inequality. In addition, supply side explanations have shown that the presence of a radical left party increases Euroscepticism among economically anxious citizens, whereas radical right cues increase Euroscepticism among those with monoculturalist attitudes (De Vries and Edwards, 2009) – thus suggesting that the relationship of Euroscepticism to left-right ideology is sensitive to party cueing.

We thus know quite a bit about the influence of context – yet these studies all apply to *general* Euroscepticism, often in relation to *general* left-right ideology. The aim of this dissertation is to take a step back and to refine our knowledge of this relationship once we look at sub dimensions of Euroscepticism. From there, follow-up studies could test how different context explanations identified in the literature impact upon different forms of Euroscepticism. The focus on general structures does not mean that country-specific variations are overlooked, yet it is not the aim of this dissertation to systematically explain these differences. Alongside the pooled models, the results are presented per country, and important country differences are discussed in the results sections. These variations are often understandable on the basis of the macro explanations that appear in the literature.

Table 1.1 Key variables, data sources and time frame per chapter

Chapter	Ideological attitudes	EU attitudes	Electoral support	Time frame	Data	No. countries
2	Left-right ideology	General Euroscepticism		1973-2010	EB, EVS	12
3	Cultural/ economic attitudes	Opposition to EU strengthening / Current EU dissatisfaction		2004-2014	ESS, EES	15
4		Opposition to EU strengthening / Current EU dissatisfaction	Radical left vs radical right anti-EU parties	1989-2014	EES	14
5		Opposition to EU strengthening / Current EU dissatisfaction	Pro- vs anti-EU parties	1994-2014	EES	15

Note: Abbreviations stand for Eurobarometer (EB), European Values Study (EVS), European Social Survey (ESS), and European Election Study (EES).

Table 1.1 displays an overview of the data sources used in each of the chapters. The criteria for selecting the datasets depend on the different aims of the chapters. As Chapter 2 aims to provide a bird's eye view of the relationship between left-right and Euroscepticism, Eurobarometer data from 1973 to 2010 are used with cross-temporal and cross-national consistency as the main advantage. Chapter 3, in contrast, aims to disentangle these general attitude dimensions, and therefore relies on surveys that allow for constructing reliable scales of different EU dimensions (EES) and different ideological motivations (ESS). Finally, for Chapters 4 and 5 it is crucial to include electoral support for a broad range of political parties, among which many smaller parties. The vote recall questions included in many surveys often contain only few supporters for small parties – which are often precisely the Eurosceptic parties that I am interested in. The *propensity to vote* (PTV) items included in all waves of the European Election Study provide a solution by probing respondents for their electoral support for all (including smaller) parties (Van der Eijk et al., 2006). Therefore I base the final two empirical chapters on these datasets.

The four empirical chapters of this dissertation constitute independent studies and can also be read as such. Some degree of repetition in the theory and data sections could therefore not be avoided. Yet, the theoretical framework of each chapter is tailored to the specific research question under study, as are the chapter-specific concluding sections. A general conclusion and discussion are presented in *Chapter 6*, which returns to the broader research questions raised in this introduction. After summarising the implications of this dissertation's findings for the applicability of the horseshoe model to public opinion, this final chapter addresses the main contributions of this dissertation to the academic literature, as well as the question it raises for future research to address. Finally, I reflect on the broader societal and political implications of my findings.