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# TAKING EUROPE TO ITS EXTREMES

## Extremist Parties and Public Euroscepticism

*Catherine E. De Vries and Erica E. Edwards*

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### ABSTRACT

This article revisits the age-old debate about elite–mass linkages in the European Union (EU) by examining the way in which political contexts shape individual differentiation in Euroscepticism. We argue that the growing uncertainties about the future of European integration among national publics are increasingly politicized by Eurosceptical elites on both the extreme right and left of the political spectrum. To analyse the cueing effects of these extremist parties, we employ a two-level hierarchical linear model which combines individual-level and contextual data. We show that Eurosceptic cues are, indeed, found on both extremes, but for different reasons. Whereas right-wing extremist parties oppose European integration with the defence of ‘national sovereignty’ and successfully mobilize national identity considerations against the EU, left-wing extremist parties resist further integration in Europe on the basis of the neoliberal character of the project and effectively cue voters against the EU on the basis of economic insecurity arguments.

KEY WORDS ■ Euroscepticism ■ hierarchical linear models ■ partisan cueing

■ political parties ■ public opinion

### Introduction

Over the past decade, the process of European integration has witnessed a dual trend: a downward spiral in public support for the integration project and a concomitant increase in opportunities for the public to express these concerns. We need only look at the recent popular rejections of the Constitutional Treaty in France and The Netherlands to see the powerful role that public opinion can play in constraining the integration process. Moreover, most European Union (EU) member states – and especially the six founding members – have recently witnessed a significant drop in public support for European unification (De Vries and Van Kersbergen, 2007). Eichenberg and Dalton (2007) refer to this decline in popular support as the ‘Post-Maastricht Blues’, since the downturn occurred after the finalizing of the Maastricht Treaty in December 1991. All in all, the ‘permissive consensus’ characterizing EU politics in the 1970s and

1980s seems to have given way to what some scholars suggest is a 'constraining dissensus' (Hooghe and Marks, forthcoming 2009).

Against this backdrop of rising conflict and salience over Europe (see Marks and Steenbergen, 2004), the interaction between citizen and elite attitudes becomes ever more important for the future of European integration. We revisit the important debate on elite-mass linkages by examining the way in which political contexts shape citizens' attitudes to Europe. Specifically, we focus on the role of political elites on both the extreme right and left of the political spectrum in mobilizing Euroscepticism.

Within Western European party systems, 'Europhoria' still constitutes the norm. Party politics in the EU-15 is characterized by 'a distinct pro- integration core of social democrats, liberals and Christian democrats that are ideologically inclined to endorse further steps of integration both economically and politically' (Crum, 2007: 65). So far, Euroscepticism constitutes something of a 'touchstone of dissent' (Taggart, 1998). Strong opposition towards the integration process is often only found on the fringes of the left-right spectrum – the anti-EU position of the British Conservatives being the notable exception (Hooghe et al., 2002; Marks et al., 2002; Taggart, 1998). Although Eurosceptic parties may be extreme in terms of their left/ right positions, we demonstrate that these parties are a decisive force in swaying popular opinion against Europe by mobilizing the growing uncertainties about the future of European integration among the mass public.

Using a two-level hierarchical model to operationalize the cueing effects between extremist parties and mass publics, we show that Eurosceptic cues are, indeed, found on both extremes of the political spectrum, and that these parties effectively mobilize anti-EU sentiment, but for different reasons. While Eurosceptic parties on the right rally opposition by stressing the defence of national sovereignty and identity considerations, left-wing extremist parties resist further integration on the basis of the neoliberal character of the project and mobilize feelings of economic uncertainty.

This article is structured as follows. We begin by laying out the hypotheses guiding our empirical analysis. In a second step, we present an in-depth discussion of the concept of Euroscepticism and potential ways of measuring this phenomenon at the party level. Next, we discuss the data, methods and operationalizations. Fourth, we present the results of the multi-level analysis. Finally, we conclude by highlighting the implications of these empirical findings.

### **Extremist Parties and Public Euroscepticism: Hypotheses**

Within the extensive literature on public opinion towards the EU and the process of European integration, two perspectives dominate the discussion: the utilitarian and the national identity approaches. Utilitarian theory is reliant on self-interested or macro explanations of political attitudes, and suggests that citizens are more likely to support integration if it results in a net benefit to the national economy or to their own pockets (Anderson and Reichert, 1995; Eichenberg and Dalton, 1993; Gabel, 1998a, b; Gabel and Palmer, 1995). Gabel (1998b) demonstrates this at the micro level by showing that those who directly benefit from these economic gains, for example the highly educated, highly skilled or farmers, exhibit greater levels of support. At the macro level, Eichenberg and Dalton (1993) have found macro- economic variables, such as gross domestic product (GDP), to be positively related to support for the EU.

The second perspective highlights identity considerations as a decisive force shaping support for the EU (Bruter, 2005; Carey, 2002; Carey and Lebo, 2001; Diez Medrano, 2003; Hooghe and Marks, 2005; McLaren, 2002). Particularly following the shift in the process of European integration from a mostly economic to a more political project, the criteria for evaluating the EU include economic as well as symbolic political considerations (i.e. feelings of national identity). Carey and Lebo (2001) show that declining levels of support can be explained through increased

feelings of national identity. They argue that '[t]his increase in nationalism is negatively related to support for the European project because of the conflicts over sovereignty that developed in this era, such as the creation of a single Euro- pean currency, the European Central Bank, and the increased primacy of European law' (Carey and Lebo, 2001: 3). Similarly, McLaren shows that '[a]ntipathy toward the EU is not just about cost/benefit calculations . . . but about fear of, or hostility toward, other cultures' (2002: 553).

This article takes up both perspectives, but examines the way in which political contexts influence these explanations. We know from previous work that the impact of both utilitarian and identity considerations on support for or opposition towards Europe is not uniformly distributed across countries. For instance, recent research shows that cultural traditions or national sym- bols are of great value if one seeks to understand the influence of identity considerations on opinions about Europe (Bruter, 2005; Diez Medrano, 2003; Hooghe and Marks, 2005). Although national identities are shaped through socialization, they are also contested within national contexts and are subject to *reinvention* or *reintepretation* over time (Smith, 1991). This idea implies that feelings of national identity are not necessarily stable, but subject to processes of societal conflict and political contestation. Authors within the utilitarian perspective have turned to institutional variables, such as types of welfare state or varieties of capitalism, in explaining individual and cross-national variation (Brinegar and Jolly, 2005; Kitschelt et al., 2004). Specifically, Brinegar and Jolly (2005) point to the mediating effect of contextual factors on utilitarian explanations of EU support, in particular national factor endowments and varieties of capitalism.

Our article adds to this body of work by exploring an important aspect of this cross-national variation, namely the role of political parties. We believe that partisan cueing is essential in our understanding the conditions under which utilitarian and national identity considerations are mobilized against European integration within national contexts. Research has shown that the human capacity for calculation is more limited than utilitarian (and to a lesser extent national identity) models presume (Chong, 2000; Kinder, 1998). Consequently, we argue that cues presented by political elites provide citizens with cognitive short-cuts that help them decide what is in their interests.

An extensive literature within the field of EU studies has evolved demonstrating the importance of elites in shaping public opinion towards Euro- pean integration (De Vries and Edwards, 2005; Franklin et al., 1994; Gabel and Scheve, 2007; Janssen, 1991; Ray, 2003; Steenbergen and Jones, 2002; Steenbergen et al., 2007; Weßels, 1995). These studies have mainly focused on the debate regarding the nature of cueing effects, i.e. top-down or bottom-up (the exception being De Vries and Edwards, 2005). In other words, the research focuses on the question: who is cueing whom? Although we acknowledge the centrality of this question, we feel that it is also import- ant to understand the content of partisan cueing. Our article attempts to provide insight on this issue.

Previous research on public opinion informs us that popular Euroscepticism is most likely rooted in feelings among citizens that their core economic interests and/or their national identity are being threatened.<sup>1</sup> But what is the structure of Euroscepticism among political parties? We contend that party-based Euroscepticism is structured similarly to that of the public.

Within Western Europe, national party systems have evolved around a dominant left–right axis, with socialist (and/or social-democratic) parties on the left favouring state intervention in the economy and conservative parties on the right supporting free market ideas (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). While conflict over Europe was often seen as largely independent of the dominant dimension of political conflict (Gabel and Anderson, 2002; Hix and Lord, 1997), authors are increasingly arguing that issues regarding European inte- gration are linked to the left–right dimension (Hooghe et al., 2002; Marks and Wilson, 2000).<sup>2</sup> Within this literature, the relationship between left/ right placement and support for European integration is described as the 'inverted U-curve' (Hooghe et al., 2002: 968). The inverted U-curve indi- cates that parties in the ideological mainstream, i.e. conservative, social and Christian democratic, are generally supportive of the integration process, as they have frequently been part of governing coalitions

throughout Western Europe and were therefore largely responsible for the course of integration. Left-wing and right-wing extremist parties, however, most strongly oppose European integration. Hence, Euroscepticism is found mostly outside the political mainstream (Crum, 2007; Hooghe et al., 2002).

Interestingly, the Euroscepticism of these political parties is structured similarly to that of the mass public. Party Euroscepticism evolves around two dimensions: economic and cultural opposition to integration. Parties may oppose European integration with the defence of national sovereignty and national community and/or reject the European project on the basis of its neoliberal character, which undermines the national welfare state (Hooghe et al., 2002; Marks and Wilson, 2000). Against this backdrop, it is reasonable to assume that Eurosceptic extremist parties play an important part in the mobilization of public sentiment against the EU. We assume that these Eurosceptic parties rally opposition to the European project, but the *raison d'être* to do so varies between left-wing and right-wing parties. We hypothesize that extremist parties on the right tap into feelings of cultural insecurity to reject further integration and to defend national sovereignty from control from Brussels. These parties mobilize national identity considerations against the EU. A prime illustration of this phenomenon is the *Dansk Folkeparti*, which views the EU mainly as a threat to Danish identity, values and sovereignty. For example, they voiced their opposition to the Amsterdam Treaty in the 1998 campaign with the slogan 'vote Danish, vote no'.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, their party programme for the 2001 general election was entitled 'Denmark for the Danes' and portrayed a clear anti-immigration and anti-EU sentiment.<sup>4</sup>

In contrast, left-wing extremist parties resist further integration in Europe on the basis of the neoliberal character of the project and its negative influence on the welfare state. These parties effectively cue voters against the EU on the basis of economic insecurity arguments. The extremist left-wing *Socialistische Partij* in The Netherlands, for instance, opposes further integration in Europe because it would threaten the Dutch welfare state and restrict the influence of the Dutch parliament on the formulation of social policy. In the 2005 referendum campaign regarding the Constitutional Treaty, the neoliberal character of the European integration project and the hollowing-out of Dutch welfare provisions by Brussels constituted the key points of opposition to the Treaty brought to bear by the *Socialistische Partij* (Koole and Raap, 2005).

Two hypotheses can be deduced from the above reasoning:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Right-wing extremist parties mobilize feelings of national identity in their opposition to European integration.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Left-wing extremist parties mobilize feelings of economic anxiety in their opposition to European integration.

Hence, we assume an interaction effect between feelings of national identity and the Eurosceptic cue of extremist right-wing parties as well as between feelings of economic anxiety and the Eurosceptic cue of extremist left-wing parties, which are both in turn positively related to feelings of Euroscepticism. Two assumptions ground these hypotheses. First, we assume that the relationship between public opinion and the positions of political parties is top-down. On studying the research on public opinion and mass behaviour in the context of the EU, this assumption seems reasonable, as strong support can be found for elite cueing on integration issues (Ray, 2003; Steenbergen et al., 2007). Moreover, the goal of this article is to examine the content of the cueing effects rather than the direction. Second, unlike most studies on elite cueing effects on EU public opinion thus far, we do not assume the correspondence between parties' opinions regarding the EU and the opinions of their respective party supporters. We argue that left-wing and right-wing extremist parties frame the European integration process in terms of a neoliberal threat, or the defence of national sovereignty, and mobilize feelings of economic anxiety and national identity in relation to the EU regardless of whether citizens would support these parties in a specific election. Thus, we do not restrict the cueing effect of political parties to party supporters, as most of the elite cueing models propose.

## **Party Euroscepticism: Concept and Measurement**

Before we turn to the empirical examination of the hypotheses, let us first discuss our understanding and classification of Eurosceptic parties. The word 'Euroscepticism' is widely used in the field of EU studies. Notwithstanding, the term itself suffers from great conceptual ambiguity. Sometimes it is used to describe any form of opposition to or critique of the process of European integration, whereas on other occasions it implies an ideological position that structures parties' stances on other issues. Related to this, some authors conceive of Euroscepticism as a strategy often employed by political parties on the fringes of the party system (Taggart, 1998), while others maintain that Eurosceptic party positioning is rooted in ideology – left/right or 'new politics' (Hooghe et al., 2002; Marks and Wilson, 2000).

Furthermore, the literature on Euroscepticism among political parties has produced a wide variety of typologies and classifications. For instance, Taggart and Szczerbiak (2002) distinguish two types of Euroscepticism – hard and soft. Hard Euroscepticism points at a 'principled opposition to the EU and European integration', whereas the soft version implies an 'expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or a sense that "national interest" is currently at odds with the EU's trajectory' (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2002: 7). Kopecky and Mudde (2002), on the contrary, view Euroscepticism as one of four ideal types of support or opposition to the EU. These authors distinguish between two dimensions of EU support or opposition: European integration as an ideal and the EU as a set of institutions. Eurosceptics are those that support the ideal of integration but oppose the ways in which this ideal is currently transformed into treaties, policies or institutions.

For the purposes of this article, we define Euroscepticism as a continuum of party stances on European integration ranging from extreme opposition to tremendous support for integration (for a similar conceptualization, see Ray, 1999, 2007). Furthermore, we assume that Euroscepticism may constitute a conscious strategy by political entrepreneurs and that it may also be rooted in partisan ideology; indeed, these processes are most likely mutually enforcing rather than mutually exclusive (see Kopecky and Mudde [2002] for similar argumentation). We measure Euroscepticism at the party level by drawing on an indicator from the 2002 Chapel Hill Expert Survey on party positioning towards European integration (Hooghe et al., 2003). In the survey, country experts were asked to place parties in their own country on a seven-point scale ranging from complete opposition to European integration to complete support. Parties included in this survey received at least 2 percent of the vote and/or one seat in the lower house of their national parliament. These expert party placements on the EU scale resemble placements on the basis of voter judgments using the European Election Survey, or party positioning using party manifestos (Marks et al., 2007).

When should a party's EU position be considered Eurosceptic? In order to classify a political party as Eurosceptic, we relate party stances to the mean position within a national party system rather than choose an arbitrary cut-off point on the seven-point scale. A party is characterized as Eurosceptic when its EU position is at least one standard deviation below the mean EU stance of all parties in that system. This procedure is more reasonable for our purposes, as we attempt to grasp the way in which utilitarian and national identity considerations are mobilized in national contexts. Previous research indicates that parties and citizens in some countries are more Eurosceptic than those in others – the United Kingdom and the Scandinavian countries, for example. Hence, by relating individual party stances to the average EU position in a country, we can determine whether a party can be considered Eurosceptic within the specific national context.

Note that the hypotheses presented above relate to the special role of extremist parties (in terms of left/right ideology) in mobilizing Euroscepticism. For this reason, we include only the Eurosceptic cues of parties on either the right or left extremes of the political spectrum. Here, extreme parties are those that are one standard deviation below or above the mean left/right

ideological position of all parties in a country. Tables 1 and 2 provide an overview of the right-wing and left-wing parties that can be considered as Eurosceptic.

The parties included in Tables 1 and 2 are the ‘usual suspects’. For instance, it is common knowledge that the *Dansk Folkeparti*, the *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* and the *Front National* are extremist right-wing parties that strongly oppose European integration. On the left, it is not surprising that we included the Dutch *Socialistische Partij* and the communist parties in France, Italy, Greece and Germany. The inclusion of the British Conservative Party as a right-wing extremist Eurosceptic party may be surprising,

**Table 1.** Eurosceptic right-wing parties

Austria	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs	Freedom Party of Austria
Belgium	Vlaams Blok (Vlaams Belang)	Flemish Bloc (Flemish Interest)
Denmark	Dansk Folkeparti	Danish People’s Party
Finland	Perussuomalaiset	True Finns
France	Front National	National Front
Italy	Lega Nord	Northern League
The Netherlands	Lijst Pim Fortuyn	List Pim Fortuyn
United Kingdom	Conservative Party	

All parties included here: (1) received at least one parliamentary seat or 2 percent of the vote in the last parliamentary election prior to 2003 (*Source: [www.electionworld.org](http://www.electionworld.org)*) and (2) can be classified as Eurosceptical and right-wing on the basis of country expert judgments. *Source: 2002 Chapel Hill Expert Survey on European Integration (Hooghe et al., 2003).*

however, not so much in terms of the explicit Eurosceptic position of the party, as opposition to the EU has become more ingrained among British Conservatives since the creation of the European Monetary Union (EMU), but more in terms of classification of the right-wing position of the party as extremist. Though this party may appear to be the ‘odd-one-out’ on the list, it meets our criterion for extreme, as its position is one standard deviation to the right of the mean party position on the left/right. To guarantee that our empirical results are not driven by the classification of the Conservative Party, we also ran an analysis in which the British Conservatives were excluded and we found similar results.

**Table 2.** Eurosceptic left-wing parties

Denmark	Socialistisk Folkeparti	Socialist People’s Party
Finland	Vasemmistoliitto	Left Alliance
France	Parti Communiste Français	French Communist Party

Germany	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus (Die Linkspartei)	Party of Democratic Socialism (The Left Party)
Greece	Kommunistiko Komma Ellado	Communist Party of Greece
Ireland	Green Party	
	Sinn Féin	We Ourselves
Italy	Rifondazione Comunista	Party of Communist Refoundation
The Netherlands	Socialistische Partij	Socialist Party
Portugal	Coligação Democrática Unitária	Unitary Democratic Coalition
Spain	Izquierda Unida	United Left
Sweden	Vänsterpartiet	Left Party
	Miljöpartiet de Gröna	Green Party

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All parties included here: (1) received at least one parliamentary seat or 2 percent of the vote in the last parliamentary election prior to 2003 and (2) can be classified as Eurosceptical and left-wing on the basis of country expert judgments *Sources: [www.electionworld.org](http://www.electionworld.org); 2002 Chapel Hill Expert Survey on European Integration (Hooghe et al., 2003).*

## Data, Operationalization and Method

In order to examine the role of left- and right-wing extremist parties in framing economic anxiety and national identity to the EU, we analyse public support for European integration within 14 Western European EU member states using a two-level hierarchical linear model that allows us to combine individual-level and contextual data.<sup>5</sup> For the individual-level data, we make use of the Eurobarometer survey 60.1 from November 2003. The contextual data are based on the 2002 Chapel Hill Expert Survey on party positioning towards European integration (Hooghe et al., 2003) and on OECD Economic Outlook data for 2003. In this section, we define the key theoretical factors of Euroscepticism.

Support for or opposition to European integration can be operationalized using a variety of different measures.<sup>6</sup> We rely on the Eurobarometer's 'desired speed of integration' question, which asks respondents to consider the speed at which they would like European unification to proceed. Individuals are able to choose their position on a seven-point scale ranging from integration should be brought to a 'standstill' (1) to integration should proceed 'as quickly as possible' (7). Since our dependent variable is Euroscepticism, we have recoded this variable so that lower scores reflect more support for the EU, while higher scores indicate greater opposition.<sup>7</sup>

We hypothesize national identity to be positively related to Euroscepticism. Following Hooghe and Marks (2005), we use the following Eurobarometer question to distinguish exclusive from inclusive national identity: 'In the near future, do you see yourself as (1) [nationality] only, (2) [nationality] and European, (3) European and [nationality], or (4) European only?' Individuals with an inclusive national identity have multiple identities, which may include regional, national and European. These respondents are expected to reply using answer categories 2, 3 or 4. Individuals who conceive of their national identity as exclusive (i.e. those responding with answer category 1), however, identify only with the national level of governance and may therefore consider multi-level governance as a threat. Thus, exclusive national identity can be

expected to form an obstacle to support for European integration, as individuals adhering to exclusive national identity view the nation-state as the level of political organization to which they owe allegiance. To operationalize exclusive national identity, we collapse answer categories 2, 3 and 4 to create a dummy variable in which 1 stands for exclusive national identity and 0 for inclusive. We expect extremist right-wing parties to cue those respondents who view their national identity as exclusive.<sup>8</sup>

Economic anxiety is operationalized by a combined index measuring the prospective economic conditions of the respondent. It includes two questions:

- 1 'What are your expectations for the year to come: Will 2004 be better (1), worse (3) or the same (2) when it comes to the financial situation of your household?'
- 2 'What are your expectations for the year to come: Will 2004 be better (1), worse (3) or the same (2) when it comes to your personal job situation?'

On the basis of these questions, we construct an economic anxiety measure ranging from 1 (high anxiety) to 0 (low anxiety).

Recall that we conceptualize Euroscepticism at the party level as a spectrum ranging from complete support for to complete opposition to the EU. To determine the left- and right-wing Eurosceptic cues, we utilize data on EU and left/right ideological positions deduced from the 2002 Chapel Hill Expert Survey described above. Several steps are involved. We first identify extremist parties as parties that are at least one standard deviation above or below the mean left/right ideological position in a country. Next, we determine which of these extremist parties should also be classified as Eurosceptic; parties whose EU positions are at least one standard deviation below the mean EU stance of all parties in a system fall within this category. Lastly, we measure the strength of a country's left- or right-wing Eurosceptic cue by taking the identified party's EU position obtained from the 2002 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (recoded to reflect party Euroscepticism: 1 = complete support; 7 = complete opposition). In the cases of Ireland and Sweden, both of which have two left-wing extreme parties, we weight the parties' EU positions by vote share to determine an overall left-wing Euro-sceptic cue for each country.<sup>9</sup> If a country does not have an extreme Eurosceptic party on either the right or the left, it receives a score of 0 for the cue. For example, since Portugal does not have an extreme right-wing Euro-sceptic party, the strength of its right-wing Eurosceptic cue is coded as 0. Thus, the values of the left- and right-wing Eurosceptic cues range from no left-wing/right-wing Eurosceptic cue (0) to strong left-wing/right-wing Eurosceptic cue (7).

We are primarily interested in how left- and right-wing parties frame economic anxiety and national identity to European integration (see H1 and H2). To examine this, we incorporate two interaction terms within the model. We interact the right- and left-wing Eurosceptic cues described in the paragraph above with national identity and degree of economic anxiety, respectively.

Finally, we include a number of individual-level and country-level control variables. At the micro level, we add in satisfaction with national democracy, trust in government and employment status. These factors have been identified as determinants of support for or opposition to European integration (Anderson, 1998; Gabel, 1998a, b). Respondents with higher levels of democratic satisfaction and political trust are more likely to support the EU. The argument here is that 'citizens who are more supportive of the way political institutions work at home are more likely to support European institutions and their country's participation in them' (Anderson, 1998: 14). Individuals with a manual work status are expected to be less supportive of the EU, as they are unable to reap the benefits of further economic integration directly (see Gabel, 1998a).

At the macro level, we incorporate a control for the impact of national economic performance on public opinion regarding the EU. A number of scholars have shown that support for or opposition to European integration varies in accordance with patterns of macro-economic performance (Anderson and Kaltenthaler, 1996; Eichenberg and Dalton, 1993). We measure this effect by constructing a misery index combining national inflation (i.e. Consumer Price Indexes) and unemployment rates.

The indicators used to operationalize the dependent and independent variables employed in the empirical analysis are summarized in Table 3.

We examine how the political and economic contexts discussed above shape individual differentiation in Euroscepticism by employing a two-level hierarchical linear model (HLM). This method is appropriate since we are concerned with variation at both the individual and country levels. Particular country characteristics, namely the presence or absence of Eurosceptic left- or right-wing parties, provide important political contexts that interact with individual attributes, namely economic anxiety and national identity, to produce certain political effects. To explain variation among citizens, we must account for these variations across national contexts.

The data used in our analysis are hierarchical in nature, consisting of multiple units of data that are nested. Steenbergen and Jones (2002) suggest that using a technique for modelling multi-level data of this type allows for a single model that incorporates the different levels of data without assuming a single level of analysis. This facilitates the exploration of causal heterogeneity and provides a test for the generalizability of findings across different contexts. Additionally, our data are collected at the individual level, but the individuals reside within a country and are more likely to share common characteristics with citizens in the same country than with citizens of another country. Because clustering of the data is a particular statistical problem, we must use a modelling technique that takes into account the associated problems with standard errors.<sup>10</sup> The appendix provides a detailed description of the model specification including equations.

### Empirical Analysis

Is there significant variation in Euroscepticism at the individual and country levels? We begin our empirical analysis by considering this question, and in doing so conduct an analysis of variance (ANOVA) on our indicator for Euroscepticism. The maximum likelihood estimates of the overall mean and variance components are given in Table 4.<sup>11</sup> Both of the variance components are significant in providing evidence of considerable variance in Euroscepticism at both the individual and country level. Next, we consider the ratio of each variance component to the total variance in Euroscepticism to obtain a better understanding of the relative importance of the two levels of analysis (see Snijders and Bosker, 1999). We find that 85.5 percent of the variance is explained at the individual level  $[(2.487/(2.487 + 0.423))*100]$  and 14.5 percent at the country level  $[(0.423/(2.487 + 0.423))*100]$ . Given that the data are measured at the individual level, this is not surprising (Snijders and Bosker, 1999).

**Table 3.** Variable description

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Description</i>
Dependent variable	
Euroscepticism index	Respondent's support for European integration measured as the desired speed of European integration, whereby 7 = integration should be brought to a 'standstill' and 1 = integration should run 'as fast as possible'. <i>Source:</i> Eurobarometer Survey 60.1.
Independent variables (individual level)	
Exclusive national	Respondent's feeling of national identity as measured by the following item: 'In the near future, do you see identity yourself as (1) [nationality] only, (2) [nationality] and European, (3) European and [nationality], or (4) European only?' Exclusive national identity is coded as (1 = 1) (2, 3, 4 = 0). <i>Source:</i> Eurobarometer Survey 60.1.

Economic anxiety	<p>Combined index measuring prospective economic conditions of respondent, including two items: 'What are your expectations for the year to come: will 2004 be better, worse or the same when it comes to the financial situation of your household?'; and 'What are your expectations for the year to come: will 2004 be better, worse or the same when it comes to your personal job situation?'</p> <p>Respondents that expect their financial and job situation to worsen in 2004 are coded 1 (highly anxious); those that expect one of the situations to worsen and one to stay stable are coded 0.75; those that expect their situation to be stable are coded 0.5; those that expect one of the situations to improve and one to stay stable are coded 0.25; those that expect their situation to improve are coded 0 (low anxiety). <i>Source:</i> Eurobarometer Survey 60.1.</p>
Satisfaction with	<p>Respondent's satisfaction with national democracy as measured by the following item: 'On the whole, are national democracy you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [your country]?' 0 = not satisfied at all; 1 = very satisfied. <i>Source:</i> Eurobarometer Survey 60.1.</p>
Trust in national. it	<p>A dummy variable indicating a respondent's trust in national government as measured by the following item: government 'I would like to ask you how much trust you have in [your national government]. Please tell me if you tend to trust or tend not to trust it' (0 = tend to trust; 1 = tend not to trust). <i>Source:</i> Eurobarometer Survey 60.1.</p>
Manual worker	<p>A dummy variable indicating a respondent's employment status measured by the following item: 'What is your current occupation?' coded as 1 = manual, unskilled worker; 0 = other type of worker. <i>Source:</i> Eurobarometer Survey 60.1.</p>
Independent variables (country level)	
Misery index	<p>An additive index combining national unemployment rates and inflation (i.e. Consumer Price Index). <i>Source:</i> OECD Employment Outlook.</p>
Left-wing Eurosceptic	<p>Variable indicating the strength of a country's left-wing Eurosceptic cue. Measured as the EU positions of cue the extreme left-wing Eurosceptic parties in a country. EU party position obtained using the following item:</p> <p>'[What is] the overall orientation of the party leadership toward European integration?' (recoded 1 = complete support; 7 = complete opposition). Extreme left-wing parties are those that are one standard deviation below the mean left/right ideological position of all parties in a country. Eurosceptic parties are those that are one standard deviation above the mean EU position of all parties in a country. In countries with multiple left-wing Eurosceptic parties, EU positions are weighted by parties' vote shares. Countries with no left-wing Eurosceptic parties are coded as 0. (0 = no left-wing Eurosceptic cue; 7 = strong left-wing Eurosceptic cue). All data are based on expert judgments taken from the 2002 Chapel Hill Expert Survey. <i>Source:</i> Hooghe et al. (2003).</p>
Right-wing Eurosceptic	<p>Variable indicating the strength of a country's right-wing Eurosceptic cue. Measured as the EU positions of cue the extreme right-wing Eurosceptic parties in a country. EU party position obtained using the following item:</p> <p>'[What is] the overall orientation of the party leadership toward European integration?' (recoded 1 = complete support; 7 = complete opposition). Extreme right-wing parties are those that are one standard deviation above the mean left/right ideological position of all parties in a country. Eurosceptic parties are those that are one standard deviation above the mean EU position of all parties in a country. In countries with multiple right-wing Eurosceptic parties, EU positions</p>

are weighted by parties' vote shares. Countries with no right-wing Eurosceptic parties are coded as 0. (0 = no right-wing Eurosceptic cue; 7 = strong right-wing Eurosceptic cue). All data are based on expert judgments taken from the 2002 Chapel Hill Expert Survey. *Source*: Hooghe et al. (2003).

**Table 4.** ANOVA Estimates

Fixed Effects	Constant	4.682* (0.175)
Variance components	Country level	0.423* (0.161)
	Individual level	2.487* (0.034)
	-2 × log likelihood	40183.970

Table entries are maximum likelihood (IGLS) estimates with estimated standard errors in parentheses (\* $p < 0.05$ ).

The analysis of variance indicates that there is significant variation in Euroscepticism at both the individual and country level, but how well does the model specified in the previous section account for this variance? The maximum likelihood estimates of the fixed effects and the variance components of the multi-level model are provided in Table 5. When these results are compared with those in Table 4, we find that our model is a significant improvement over the

base model:  $\chi^2 = 1422.92$ , d.f. = 10,  $p < 0.01$ . This indicates that at least some of the predictors included in our model have effects that are significantly different from zero. Moreover, when we calculate the relative change in the variance components from our base model to our fully specified model (Raudenbush and Bryk, 2002; Snijders and Bosker, 1999), there is evidence that the individual-level and country-level predictors are powerful in explaining Euroscepticism. Taken as a whole, the individual-level variance components explain 12.5 percent of the individual variance in Euroscepticism  $[((2.487 - 2.177)/2.487)*100]$ . With regard to the country level, we find that our predictors perform even better, accounting for 46.3 percent of the cross-national variance in Euroscepticism  $[((0.423 - 0.227)/0.423)*100]$ .

Returning to our two main hypotheses, the individual parameter estimates support our expectations. Recall that our first hypothesis argued that right-wing extremist parties mobilize feelings of national identity against European integration. Our results indicate that this is indeed the case. The interaction between national identity and the presence of a Eurosceptic right-wing cue is significant and is in the anticipated positive direction (0.058). We also find strong backing for our second hypothesis, suggesting that left-wing extremist parties mobilize feelings of economic anxiety against European integration. The interaction between economic anxiety and the presence of a Eurosceptic left-wing cue is positive and significant (0.058).

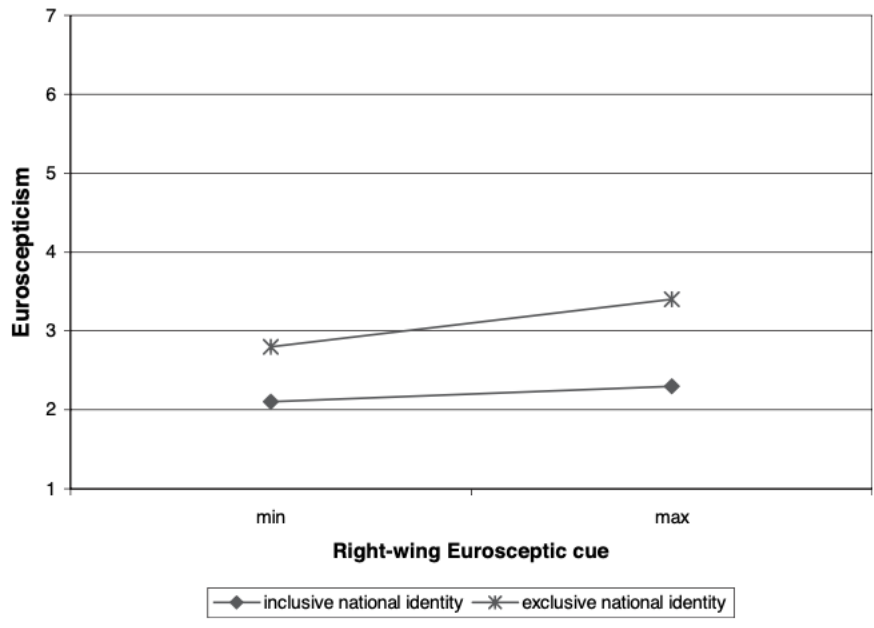
**Table 5.** Determinants of Euroscepticism (multi-level analysis)

	<i>Predictors</i>	<i>Estimates</i>
Fixed effects	Constant	2.627* (0.230)
	Exclusive national identity	0.677*

		(0.134)
	Economic anxiety	0.513*
		(0.134)
	Trust in national institutions	-0.002
		(0.013)
	Satisfaction with national democracy	-0.624* (0.021)
Manual worker	0.040	
		(0.034)
	Misery index	0.019*
		(0.008)
Right-wing Eurosceptic cue	0.028	
	(0.024)	
Left-wing Eurosceptic cue	0.022	
		(0.032)
	National exclusive identity* right-wing Eurosceptic cue	0.058*
		(0.024)
	Economic anxiety* left-wing Eurosceptic cue	0.058* (0.031)
Variance Components		
	Country level	0.227*
		(0.108)
	Individual level	2.177*
		(0.030)
	-2 × Log Likelihood	38761.050

Table entries are maximum likelihood (IGLS) estimates with estimated standard errors in parentheses. \* $p < 0.05$  level, one-tailed.

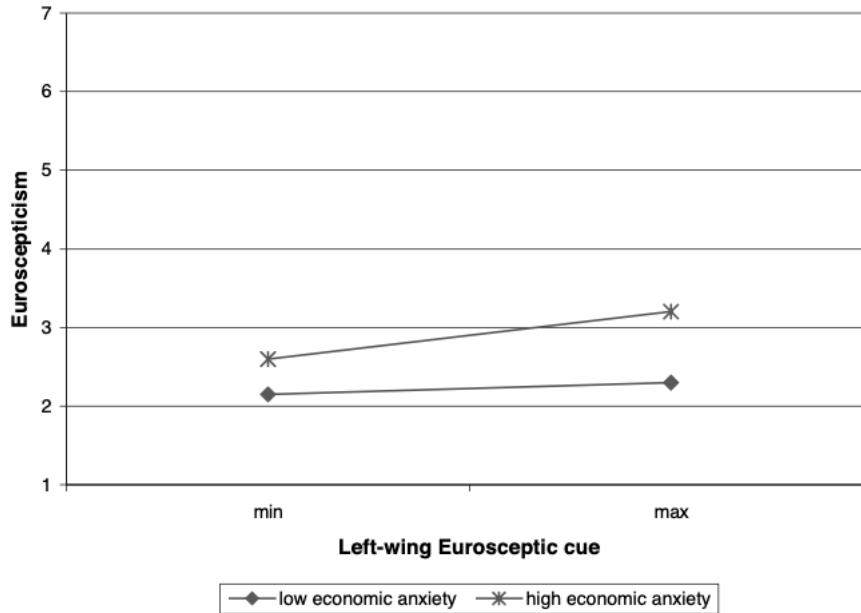
Graphical representation of these interaction effects eases interpretation. Figure 1 illustrates the cueing effects of Eurosceptic right-wing parties on national identity while controlling for other variables (by holding them constant at their respective means). We chart inclusive versus exclusive identity across the minimum and maximum strength of the Eurosceptic right-wing cue. The lines represent the respondents with an inclusive or exclusive feeling of national identity. The intercepts are interesting substantively, as they show that individuals with an exclusive national identity are more inclined to be Eurosceptic than their inclusive counterparts. The slopes of the lines represent the impact of the right-wing cueing effect. They demonstrate clearly that the cueing effect of Eurosceptic right-wing parties in mobilizing national identity against the EU is large in the case of feelings of exclusive national identity. Euroscepticism increases by 0.6 when the strength of the Eurosceptic right-wing cue moves from its minimum of zero to its maximum level of seven. In contrast, with a change of only 0.3, the cueing effect is only half as strong for respondents, indicating that their national identity can coincide with their supranational identification.



**Figure 1.** Cueing effect of right-wing Euroceptic parties on national identity

We follow a similar procedure in Figure 2 to show the cueing effects of Euroceptic left-wing parties on economic anxiety. We graph economic anxiety across the minimum (0) and maximum (6.6) strength of the Euro- sceptic left-wing cue. In this case, the lines represent the respondents with higher and lower levels of economic anxiety. The intercepts indicate that individuals with higher economic anxiety are more prone to Eurocepticism than those with lower economic anxiety. Moreover, the slopes of the lines demonstrate that the cueing effect of Euroceptic left-wing parties in mobilizing public opinion against the EU is greater in the case of high economic anxiety (Eurocepticism increases by 0.5) and much lower when respondents indicate that they are less anxious about their economic situation (Eurocep- ticism increases by only 0.1).

Finally, we consider our control variables. Beginning with the domestic politics variables, the results are mixed. Although the coefficients for satis- faction with national democracy and trust in national institutions are both negative (-0.624 and -0.002, respectively), the latter fails to reach statistical significance. Thus, the notion that individuals who are satisfied with the democratic performance of their national institutions are more inclined to display trust in political institutions in general and are consequently less likely to be Euroceptic finds only limited support (Anderson, 1998). Of the variables included to control for the utilitarian self-interest and macro- economic explanations of EU support, only the country-level measure yields an affirmative result. The misery index is positive and significant (0.019), indicating that increases in unemployment and inflation lead to higher levels of Eurocepticism.



**Figure 2.** Cueing effect of left-wing Eurosceptic parties on economic anxiety

### Concluding Remarks

While ‘Europhoria’ still tends to be the name of the game among most Western European political parties, European integration is increasingly coming under fire from both the right and the left. Many are quick to dismiss the gravity of this party-based Euroscepticism since, to date, it is a phenomenon largely relegated to the extremes of the political spectrum. We suggest that this is unwise. Although Eurosceptic parties may be outliers in terms of their left/right position, we have argued and demonstrated that these parties are a decisive force in swaying popular opinion against Europe by mobilizing the growing uncertainties about the future of European integration among the mass public.

Employing a two-level hierarchical linear model that combines individual-level Eurobarometer data and contextual data, we have analysed the cueing effects of these extremist parties. We have uncovered evidence that Euro-sceptic cues are found on both extremes of the political spectrum but for different reasons. On the extreme right, the battle cry is defence of national sovereignty, as parties successfully mobilize national identity considerations against the EU. Crying foul against the neoliberal character of the EU project, parties on the extreme left appeal to citizens’ wallets, effectively cueing voters against the EU on the basis of economic insecurity arguments.

In stressing the role of national political contexts in influencing public opinion towards European integration, our article offers an important contribution to the literature. Thus far, the EU support discussion has been dominated by two perspectives: the utilitarian approach emphasizes that citizens are more likely to support the EU if it results in a net benefit to their bank accounts, while the national identity approach argues that national identity is decisive in shaping citizens’ opinions towards European integration. We have incorporated both of these viewpoints, but have highlighted the way in which political contexts influence these

explanations, focusing particularly on the role of national political parties. Our analysis has demonstrated that partisan cueing is essential in our understanding of the conditions under which utilitarian and national identity considerations are mobilized against European integration. Moreover, this article takes an important step towards understanding the nature of this partisan cueing.

## Appendix: Model Specification

We began by specifying the level 1 (individual-level) model. The dependent variable *Euroscepticism<sub>ij</sub>* denotes the level of Euroscepticism for each respondent (i) in each country-year (j). In addition to the five individual-level predictors, the model includes an individual-level constant  $\beta_{0j}$ , which enables us to bring in the level 2 (country-level) predictors:

$$(1) \text{ Euroscepticism}_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}\text{ExclusiveNationalIdentity}_{ij} + \beta_{2j}\text{EconomicAnxiety}_{ij} + \beta_{3j}\text{TrustNationalGovernment}_{ij} + \beta_{4j}\text{SatisfactionNationalDemocracy}_{ij} + \beta_{5j}\text{ManualWorker}_{ij} + r_{ij}$$

For each level 2 case (in the analysis a country-year), we estimate a unique level 1 model. This produces intercept and slope estimates specific to each country-year. At the second level, each of the level 1 coefficients (and their intercepts) could become a potential dependent variable (see Byrk and Raudenbush, 1992). The level 2 model is represented by equation 2 and includes the three country-level predictors:

$$(2) \beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}\text{MiseryIndex}_j + \gamma_{02}\text{RWEuroscepticCue}_j + \gamma_{03}\text{LWEuroscepticCue}_j + \delta_{0j}$$

By substituting equation 2 into equation 1, we summarize the multi-level model in a single equation that brings together the predictors from the two levels (see equation 3). Since we do not assume that the predictors account for all of the variation in Euroscepticism at the two levels, the model includes variance components for  $\delta_{0j}$  and  $r_{ij}$ . This allows us to consider how to account for Euroscepticism at different levels of analysis:

$$(3) \text{ Euroscepticism}_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}\text{MiseryIndex}_j + \gamma_{02}\text{RWEuroscepticCue}_j + \gamma_{03}\text{LWEuroscepticCue}_j + \gamma_{10}\text{ExclusiveNationalIdentity}_{ij} + \gamma_{20}\text{EconomicAnxiety}_{ij} + \gamma_{30}\text{TrustNatGovernment}_{ij} + \gamma_{40}\text{SatisfactionNatDemocracy}_{ij} + \gamma_{50}\text{ManualWorker}_{ij} + \delta_{0j} + r_{ij}$$

The model thus far assumes that the level 1 predictors have fixed effects. However, the two central hypotheses (H1 and H2) suggest heterogeneity in the effects of two of the level 1 predictors, namely exclusive national identity and economic anxiety. To model this interaction effect, we relax the assumption that exclusive national identity and economic anxiety, given by  $\beta_{1j}$  and  $\beta_{2j}$  in equation 1, are fixed and instead stipulate that the effects vary as a function of right-wing and left-wing Eurosceptic cues, respectively. This produces the following:

$$(4) \beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{12}\text{RWEuroscepticCue}_j + \gamma_{13}\text{LWEuroscepticCue}_j + \delta_{0j}$$

Equation 5 represents the fully specified model and includes the two cross-level interactions:

$$(5) \text{ Euroscepticism}_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}\text{MiseryIndex}_j + \gamma_{02}\text{RWEuroscepticCue}_j + \gamma_{03}\text{LWEuroscepticCue}_j + \gamma_{10}\text{ExclusiveNationalIdentity}_{ij} + \gamma_{20}\text{EconomicAnxiety}_{ij} + \gamma_{30}\text{TrustNatGovernment}_{ij} + \gamma_{40}\text{SatisfactionNatDemocracy}_{ij} + \gamma_{50}\text{ManualWorker}_{ij} + \gamma_{12}\text{RWEuroscepticCue}_j * \text{ExclusiveNationalIdentity}_{ij} + \gamma_{13}\text{LWEuroscepticCue}_j * \text{EconomicAnxiety}_{ij} + \delta_{0j} + \delta_{1j}\text{ExclusiveNationalIdentity}_{ij}$$

$$+ \delta_{2j} \text{EconomicAnxiety}_{ij} + r_{ij}$$

## Notes

- 1 Note that recent research points to the fact that these perspectives should be combined into one single explanatory framework rather than framed as alternatives (De Vries and Van Kersbergen, 2007). Drawing on the concept of double allegiance, these authors argue that interest- and identity-based explanations capture different sides of the same coin, as the more citizens perceive integration to threaten their (economic and social-psychological) security and well-being, the less likely they are to support the EU.
- 2 Some authors argue that the issue of European integration is even subsumed into the left-right dimension (Hix et al., 2006; Kreppel and Tsebelis, 1999; Noury and Roland, 2002). Whereas the left favours further political integration as a means by which to establish common economic regulation across Europe, on the right favoured economic integration and the creation of the common market, but after the establishment of the European Monetary Union (EMU), object to further political integration.
- 3 See article 'Past 'No' haunts EU referendum' in the *Copenhagen Post* under [www.cphpost.dk/get/55301.htm](http://www.cphpost.dk/get/55301.htm).
- 4 <http://www.danskfolkeparti.dk/>
- 5 Due to the fact that the 2002 Chapel Hill Expert Survey does not include Luxembourg, this country is excluded from the analysis.
- 6 See Brinegar and Jolly (2004) for a complete discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the various Eurobarometer measures of support for European integration.
- 7 Note that our findings are also robust when we run the analysis using other Eurobarometer questions measuring public opinion towards the EU, such as the 'good/bad' membership question.
- 8 Though this operationalization of exclusive national identity may suffer from shortcomings in terms of question wording, this item has been cross-validated with other measures. Hooghe and Marks (2005) found similar results using either exclusive national identity or national attachment measures.
- 9 The following hypothetical example helps to illustrate this procedure. A country has two extreme right-wing Eurosceptic parties, A and B, parties that together receive 20 percent of the popular vote. Party A, with 15 percent, has a much larger portion of the vote share than party B, which has only 5 percent. In this case, we would weight party A's position by a factor of 0.75 and party B's by a factor of 0.25. We would then add the two parties' scores together to determine the overall right-wing Eurosceptic cue for the country.
- 10 More specifically, as contextual measures are constant for individual cases residing within a given country, using standard modelling techniques such as logistic regression violates the assumption of independent observations. The result is that estimates of standard errors are reduced, which increases the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when accepting the null is more appropriate. HLM avoids this by estimating distinct models at each level and by estimating unique level 1 models for each level 2 unit (Raudenbush and Bryk, 2002). For our purposes, we estimate distinct individual-level models that test the influences of national identity and other variables on Euroscepticism for each country. Next, we estimate a second-level model that uses the country-level contextual measures to account for variation in the effects of the individual variables. In effect, this allows each country to have unique intercepts (average Euroscepticism), slopes (effects of individual characteristics, such as economic anxiety and national identity, on Euroscepticism) and error terms. At the second level, contextual effects are estimated by modelling the slopes for the influence of economic anxiety and national identity on Euroscepticism (i.e. the level 1 slope estimates are treated as dependent variables).
- 11 All estimates included in this article were obtained using MLwiN V2.1.

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