“CONTAGIOUS EUROSCEPTICISM” REVISITED

The influence of Eurosceptic parties beyond mainstream-niche and mainstream-challenger dichotomies

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Table of contents

Abstract

Do Eurosceptic parties' electoral results influence the position their competitors take on European integration? Building upon a 2015 study of Meijers and data of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey, this thesis project re-examines this question, making serious modifications to a broad variety of aspects of the original research design. Most importantly, the distinction between "mainstream" and "challenger" parties is dropped in favour of a simpler distinction between Eurosceptic and non-Eurosceptic parties. The results show that Eurosceptic parties do indeed influence their competition via their electoral results, independent of public opinion. Only where Euroscepticism is expressed on the electoral stage do parties adapt a more critical stance on the European Union. A broad variety of moderators, such as party left-right position and the salience of EU issues, as well as the recently coined theoretical concept of continuous party "nicheness", are also found to play a crucial role in determining the degree to which Eurosceptic contagion takes place. The study hence both further strengthens existing findings on Eurosceptic policy contagion between parties and introduces new perspectives on the phenomenon.

1. Introduction

In 2015, the British governing Conservative Party saw itself confronted with a major challenge: the Eurosceptic UK Independence Party was surging in national polls and started to become a real electoral threat (Clarke, et al., 2017, pp. 111-145), while the Conservative Party itself was still divided on the issue of European integration (ibid., p.148-149). The risky gamble of Prime Minister David Cameron, calling a referendum on EU membership to react to these developments (see Bale, 2016; and Clarke, et al., 2017, pp. 2-3), had dramatic consequences, leading to the likely departure of the UK from the European Union with a narrow majority of 52% of voters in favour of leaving (UK Electoral Commission, n.d.). Eurosceptic electoral pressure, however, did not subside: a sweeping victory of the newly formed "Brexit Party" in the 2019 European parliament election prompted senior Conservative politicians, among them Boris Johnson, who would shortly afterwards become Prime Minister, to pledge an unconditional exit of the UK from the EU – no matter the terms – on 31 October 2019 (Parker, et al., 2019), although this endeavour would ultimately prove unsuccessful (BBC News, 2019).

While "Brexit" is certainly the most prominent example, Eurosceptic electoral success is by no means only a salient phenomenon in the United Kingdom. Eurosceptic parties have netted significant gains all over Europe in recent years, increasing the pressure on their competition: far-right Eurosceptic Marine le Pen made it into the final round of the 2017 French presidential elections against Emmanuel Macron, promising to abolish the Euro and renegotiate French EU membership (BBC, 2017), while the AfD became the strongest opposition party in the 2017 German federal election (Bundeswahlleiter, 2017). In other states, Eurosceptics have even reached government: the Polish governing Law and Justice Party has been classified as Eurosceptic in the literature (see Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008a, p. 12; and Dúró, 2014, pp. 13-14). Fidesz, the governing party in Hungary, *"uses a confrontational rhetoric against*

Brussels" (Dúró, 2014, p. 17), and the Italian Lega Nord, until recently part of the Italian government coalition (Schumacher, 2019), *"has placed hostility towards the policies and institutions of the European Union (EU) at the heart of its rhetoric"* (Brunazzo & Gilbert, 2017, p. 624). On the supranational stage, the 2014 European Parliament election saw a major Eurosceptic surge, with Eurosceptic parties gaining 228 seats in total (Fontanella-Khan & Carnegy, 2014). In 2019, their numbers further increased to 235 – or nearly a third (32%) of available seats (Heath, 2019).

The question of whether and to which degree these successes influence the policy of competing parties has thus become very salient for both European politics in practice and contemporary scholarship. One recent and rather prominent contribution on this question was made by Maurits J. Meijers in his 2015 article *"Contagious Euroscepticism: The impact of Eurosceptic support on mainstream party positions on European integration"* (Meijers, 2015). Conducting a large-N analysis of party positions in Western Europe between 1984 and 2010 based on Chapel Hill expert survey data (see Bakker, et al., 2015; and Polk, et al., 2017), Meijers finds that Eurosceptic parties, provided they emphasize EU issues, do influence mainstream parties in their respective country into becoming more Eurosceptic themselves. The centre-left, as per Meijers, is more susceptible to Eurosceptic influence than the centre-right, as it is influenced by both the radical left and radical right, whereas the centre-right is only influenced by the radical right.

This thesis will revisit the issue of Eurosceptic contagion, building upon the study conducted by Meijers. One might call it a replication study due to the similar research question, data sources, and main hypotheses. However, it will incorporate some major modifications in key aspects of the research design, which might make the term *"follow-up study"* more appropriate, as due to the major modifications made, one might struggle to argue its findings directly support or contradict those of Meijers. Nevertheless, as the same empirical phenomenon is examined in both studies, building on similar data and hypotheses, the findings could still further support or call into question the existence of Eurosceptic contagion in European party systems. Some changes are already visible in the research question: While Meijers *"examines whether support for Eurosceptic challenger parties influences mainstream party position change on European integration in Western Europe"* (Meijers, 2015, p. 413), the research question of this thesis will be:

"Does electoral support for Eurosceptic parties influence the positioning of competing parties on European integration?"

The research design mirrors Meijers' design in both its main data source – the Chapel Hill expert survey (Bakker, et al., 2015) – and the utilized method of fixed effect panel regression analysis. The first two hypotheses resemble those from "Contagious Euroscepticism" as well, with the modification of

referring to “Eurosceptic parties” and “their competition” rather than “Eurosceptic challengers” and “mainstream parties”. It is argued that the latter distinction both unnecessarily complicates the analysis of Eurosceptic programmatic impact on other parties and prevents the analysis from capturing the phenomenon to its full extent[1]. The same applies to similar binary mainstream-based typologies like “mainstream versus niche” or “mainstream versus extreme”, which have frequently been used in the description and analysis of party-based Euroscepticism in Europe. The first two hypotheses therefore are:

H1: The higher the electoral support for Eurosceptic parties, the less supportive their competitors will be of European integration.

H2: The effect of electoral support for Eurosceptic parties on other parties’ support for European integration is stronger when the Eurosceptic parties put a stronger emphasis on EU issues.

Crucially, as already indicated by the research question, the main dependent variable and its measurement have changed in this study. Meijers aims to investigate the impact of Eurosceptic electoral success on mainstream party position *change*, a theoretical construct which, as will be argued in this paper, needs to be reconsidered. In this study, Eurosceptic results are instead hypothesized to impact *absolute* non-Eurosceptic party position. The paper will also include additional control variables to account for further possible alternative explanations of party position change, and to allow for the incorporation of theoretical advancements made after the publication of Meijers’ article. Furthermore, changes have been made with respect to the case selection: in order to include the salient high-profile cases of Eurosceptic electoral success witnessed in Eastern Europe in recent years, the study covers the entirety of the EU rather than limiting itself to Western European systems. In addition, the survey round from 2014 is included in the dataset, while pre-2000 cases are dropped for both theoretical and methodological reasons[2].

Lastly, Meijers focusses on the moderating role of the ideological left-right position of both “challenger” and “mainstream” parties for his final hypotheses, theorizing that parties will be influenced regardless of their position on the left-right-axis (H2), with the radical right having a greater influence than the radical left (H3). Since this study does not assume Eurosceptic parties are necessarily “challengers”, or “radical” in the sense of left-right-extremeness (see Whitefield & Rohrschneider, 2019), the theoretical basis of the latter hypothesis is no longer given. Therefore, only the first of these hypotheses can be controlled in this study, again replacing the mainstream-challenger with a simpler Eurosceptic – non-Eurosceptic distinction:

[1] See section 4.1.
[2] See section 4.3.

H3: Non-Eurosceptic parties will shift their positions on European integration in response to overall Eurosceptic party support, regardless of their position on the left-right axis.

Instead, the theoretical framework constructed for this thesis, moving beyond classical dichotomous mainstream-based distinctions, allows for the investigation of another potential moderator of Eurosceptic contagion: mainstream party *nicheness*[3]. Once seen as a *fixed* and *binary* characteristic observed in only certain parties or party families (Meguid, 2005; and Adams, et al., 2006), newer definitions see party *nicheness* as a *changeable* and *continuous* trait (Meyer & Miller, 2015; Bischof, 2017). As every party is seen as niche to some – greater or lesser – degree, distinguishing between the dependent and independent variable via a binary niche party status, with "niche" parties influencing "mainstream" parties, is no longer feasible. However, these recent theoretical advancements instead allow for a fine-grained analysis of how party *nicheness* can moderate and condition programmatic contagion effects.

Existing research on niche parties, although still conceived as a binary characteristic, suggests niche parties are less likely to respond to shifts in public opinion, and punished more strongly if they do so (Adams, et al., 2006), resulting in more *policy-seeking* behaviour. Similarly, more niche parties might be less influenced by electoral results of their competition. Considering their narrow electoral appeal, with their voters likely primarily concerned with their respective specific sets of *niche* issues, and other voters prioritising other topics than those at the forefront of their programme, programmatic shifts might generally be less rewarding for these parties. In fact, in line with the arguments presented by Adams et al. (2006), becoming more Eurosceptic might be *damaging* for more niche parties. Their stance on European integration might often have originated in their unique and specific issue appeals, depending on the influence of EU policy on those areas. Hence, sudden changes in their EU-related stance without changes in the EU's policy might be perceived as ideologically inconsistent by their voters. For example, a strongly environmentalist party, supportive of the EU because of its environmental protection standards, would struggle to argue in favour of a sudden turn towards Euroscepticism unless these standards were lowered or abolished. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis will be:

H4: Eurosceptic contagion effects will be weaker for non-Eurosceptic parties with a more niche policy profile.

Should this hypothesis be found to hold true, not only could the findings help to further understand the increasingly salient phenomenon of Euroscepticism and Eurosceptic contagion, but the study could

[3] The definition utilized in this paper was coined by Meyer & Miller: *"A niche party emphasizes policy areas neglected by its competitors"* (Meyer & Miller, 2015, p. 261). For further elaboration, see section 3.3.1.

also be a valuable stepping stone for redefining the role of *nicheness* more generally for future work in light of the most recent theoretical advancements.

To test the hypotheses set out in this introduction, this thesis will proceed as follows: firstly, a closer look at the study by Meijers, which forms the basis for the design of this study, is going to be presented. The following careful literature review will inform a new research design to measure Eurosceptic contagion. Finally, the results of the analysis will be presented and discussed before concluding the paper.

2. Reasons for a follow-up study: why revisit "Contagious Euroscepticism"?

Revisiting the study of Meijers (2015) seems appropriate for a variety of reasons: firstly, the ongoing "replication crisis" in contemporary science provides good reasons to conduct more replication and follow-up studies in general. As early as 2005, John Ioannidis published a high-profile essay claiming that most published research findings were false (Ioannidis, 2005). Ioannidis pointed out that conclusiveness could not be claimed by the formal statistical significance[4] of a single study, leading to a *"high rate of nonreplication"* (ibid., p. 696). In fact, in a 2015 effort to replicate 100 studies from the field of psychology, researchers only succeeded in 39 cases (Open Science Collaboration, 2015) – a finding likely to apply to other social sciences, and therefore political science, as well. Marked as a "highly cited paper" in the Web of Science (Web of Science Group, n.d.), "Contagious Euroscepticism" is in particular need of attention. After all, a popular image traced back to French medieval philosopher Bernard of Chartres claims that scholars are *"dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of giants"* (Jordan, 1995), relying on the work done by their predecessors, and their findings being correct. Although heavily modified and therefore not an exact replication study in the narrow sense, this paper does revisit the question of Eurosceptic contagion, and the results will either further strengthen or weaken the hypothesis that Eurosceptic parties influence other parties within their system via their electoral results.

Revisiting the results of "Contagious Euroscepticism" is further necessitated by its lack of clarity and transparency on operationalization. For example, Meijers states he constructed his two measures of public opinion based on Lubbers and Scheepers (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2005; and Lubbers & Scheepers, 2010) and on "Eurobarometer data" (Meijers, 2015, p. 417), but does not specify which survey rounds were used. At times, he even contradicts himself, stating that the main dependent variable was

[4] It is worth pointing out in this context that Meijers utilises the unusually lax significance levels of $p<0.10$, $p<0.05$ and $p<0.01$ in "Contagious Euroscepticism", rather than the more strict (and common) $p<0.05$, $p<0.01$ and $p<0.001$, which will be utilised in this study.

operationalized as *"the change in European integration position per year for each mainstream party"* (Meijers, 2015, p. 417), only to then claim that *"this article operationalizes the dependent variable as the change in mainstream party EU position (…). That is, the difference between a party's EU position at t = 0 and t = –1."* (ibid.) in the same paragraph. The replication data, which reveals the former as accurate, was originally unavailable due to a broken download link, and turned out to be of limited use when provided by Meijers[5], as it did not include a "year" variable required to clearly identify individual cases based on party and year, or to extend and combine the dataset with additional data. The article also contains inaccuracies in its citations, failing to clearly portray the assumed influence of Eurosceptic coalition partners in Italy as Meijers' own interpretation of case study results rather than results of the study itself[6] (Meijers, 2015, p. 415).

Most importantly, the operationalization of the independent and main dependent variable calls into serious doubt the construct validity of Meijers' study. Meijers measures the *change* in EU-related policy position per year as the dependent variable, but uses the *absolute* percentage of Eurosceptic votes as his independent variable, rather than the *change* in result of challenger parties (Meijers, 2015, p. 417). Hence, modelling a linear relationship between the two variables, his model assumes that a given electoral strength of Eurosceptic challengers will, *ceteris paribus*, on average lead to a certain amount of *change* in the policy position of competitors. Therefore, over several electoral periods with a stable, stagnant vote share of Eurosceptic parties, the model would predict a *constant and continuous change* of mainstream party position towards a more pro- or anti-integration stance, as a *linear relationship* is assumed between *absolute* challenger vote and *change* in mainstream position. The magnitude of this movement, and therefore the volatility of EU mainstream position, would be assumed higher where Eurosceptic challengers are stronger. This assumption of constant movement towards or away from Euroscepticism *ad infinitum* while facing a constant and unchanging electoral threat, and irrespective of previously held positions or the magnitude of electoral shocks, seems hardly credible.

There are two ways of solving this problem, both of which have been used in other existing scholarship: either observing variance in *absolute* electoral support and *absolute* party position, similar to the approach used by Abou-Chadi in his article on the differing impact of right-wing and Green parties on mainstream positioning (Abou-Chadi, 2014), or in *change* in both election outcomes and mainstream position, effectively analysing the effect of *electoral shocks*, as done by van Spanje in his article on

[5] Thanks to Maurits J. Meijers for supplying the replication dataset upon request via E-mail. The replication data for "Contagious Euroscepticism", after the fix of a broken download link, is now available again at http://maurits-meijers.eu/?page_id=120

[6] There are further minor errors, for example the citation of an article by van de Wardt with the wrong year of publication (p. 415)

contagious anti-immigration parties (van Spanje, 2010). This article will opt for the former approach, as the Chapel Hill data, gathered only every four years across all countries, is of limited use for the analysis of the effects of electoral shocks. After all, some countries might just have had an election only days or weeks prior to data collection, while others might not have held one in three years, and in case of particularly unstable governments, multiple elections might even have taken place between measurement points.

Other aspects of the study are also re-operationalised for theoretical considerations: firstly, and crucially, this thesis does not rely on a mainstream – challenger distinction[7], but a simpler Eurosceptic – non-Eurosceptic categorization. This modification is made because mainstream-based dichotomies are either difficult to uphold in light of recent theoretical developments, or otherwise theoretically questionable, as will be laid out in more detail after the literature review[8]. Furthermore, the salience assigned to EU integration by Eurosceptic parties is operationalized as the *unweighted* average of the salience assigned to the topic by Eurosceptic parties in a given country in the original study (Meijers, 2015, p. 417) . As bigger parties are likely to pose the bigger electoral threat and have a higher agenda setting power, the *weighted* average seems more appropriate to avoid overestimating the role of very small Eurosceptic parties where multiple parties of different size compete.

Lastly, it can be worthwhile to reinvestigate established findings in the light of both newer findings and new data. The new control variable taking into account the internal division of mainstream parties, for example, is based on findings by Adam et al. (2017), which were not yet published at the time "Contagious Euroscepticism" was written. Not distinguishing mainstream from challenger parties also allows for the inclusion of Eastern European countries, where due to often times high party system volatility, with mergers, splits and electoral alliances being commonplace (see Ibenskas & Sikk, 2017), the identification of *challenger* parties via their government experience can prove rather difficult. Furthermore, the CHES survey round of 2014 (Polk, et al., 2017) is going to be included. Being a year of major Eurosceptic electoral surge at least in the European elections (Fontanella-Khan & Carnegy, 2014), this data might be of great empirical relevance. However, contrary to Meijers, pre-2000 data will not be included. This serves to limit the imbalance in the dataset after the inclusion of Eastern European states who joined more recently, and to solve issues of data availability for some control variables[9]. It might also make the study more empirically relevant to 2019 politics by only including relatively recent cases, while limiting potential distortion of the results due to unobserved and un-

[7] "mainstream" parties being defined as parties that have governed before, while "challengers" have no experience in government (De Vries & Hobolt, 2012, pp. 250-251)
[8] see section 4.1.
[9] See section 4.3. and 4.5.3.

controlled societal and political changes, the more of which are likely to occur the longer the investigation period in question.

Considering all these factors, revisiting the question whether electoral results of Eurosceptic parties impact their competitors' stance on European integration seems warranted and worthwhile. However, before laying out the new research design in more detail, a careful survey of the existing literature relevant to the question of Eurosceptic contagion is necessary, upon which methodological choices can be based and justified.

3. Literature review

Two strands of literature are particularly relevant for the analysis of the effect of Eurosceptic challenger parties' electoral success on their competition. Firstly, contributions on party-based Euroscepticism matter for the selection of relevant cases for both the dependent and independent variable. Secondly, publications on party competition are crucial for developing a theoretical framework on how parties might influence each other. This section is going to summarize the state of the art in both these strands of literature in turn: it will first introduce the two main schools of party-based Euroscepticism, before turning to the key literature on competition between parties, starting from general approaches before focussing in on literature related to *asymmetric* party competition and mainstream-nonmainstream dichotomies. Lastly, some existing key contributions on Eurosceptic influence on other parties will be introduced.

3.1. The two main schools of party-based Euroscepticism

Euroscepticism is a contentious phenomenon in contemporary political science, with different competing definitions and classifications being subject to intense debate within the scientific community. Broadly, the term can be defined as *"idea of contingent, or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration."* (Taggart, 1998, p. 366). Contributions to the literature can be roughly divided into two strands (see Vasilopoulou, 2018): those that address *popular*, or *public*, Euroscepticism – Eurosceptic attitudes on the level of individual voters or broader electorates – and those that address party-based Euroscepticism, which encompasses political parties' opposition to the European integration process. Since this thesis focuses mostly on party competition, the main strand of literature of interest is that on party-based Euroscepticism.

Mudde (2012) distinguishes two "schools" in the study of party-based Euroscepticism: the Sussex and the North Carolina School. The approach of the "Sussex School", led by Taggart and Szcerbiak, is most comprehensively laid out in the two volumes of *"Opposing Europe?"*, published in 2008 (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008a; and Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008b). Central to their framework is a distinction

between "hard" Eurosceptic parties, with hard Euroscepticism being defined as *"principled opposition to the project of European integration as embodied in the EU"* (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008b, p. 247), and "soft" Euroscepticism as *"when there is not a principled objection to the European integration project of transferring powers to a supranational body such as the EU, but there is opposition to the EU's current or future planned trajectory based on the further extension of competencies that the EU is planning to make."* (ibid, p.248).

One clear strength of the "Sussex school" is "*validity, i.e. depth, detail, and expertise"* (Mudde, 2012, p. 200), with the research network of central authors being *"made up of scholars who specialise in Euroscepticism in a specific country, which they know through and through"* (ibid.). Nevertheless, the definitions of "hard" and soft" Euroscepticism have been contested by various scholars. Kopecký and Mudde, for example, propose an alternative two-dimensional typology distinguishing between *diffuse* support for the general idea of European integration and *specific* support for the form this idea has taken in the European Union and its institutions, practices and policies (Kopecký & Mudde, 2002, pp. 299-304). Based on these dimensions, they distinguish four ideal types of attitudes towards the EU: Euroenthusiasts (pro-Integration, pro-EU), Europragmatists (anti-integration, pro-EU), Eurosceptics (Pro-Integration, anti-EU) and Eurorejects (Anti-Integration, anti-EU) (ibid.). Similarly, Rovny develops another two-dimensional categorization of Euroscepticism, analysing both the *magnitude* of Eurosceptic party attitudes – from hard to soft Euroscepticism – and their *motivation*, from purely ideologic to purely strategically driven in the hopes of improving their electoral position (Rovny, 2004, pp. 32-37). Flood and Usherwood, on the other hand, entirely reject binary and "double-binary" categorizations of Euroscepticism, instead proposing a "thin typology" of six possible EU alignments ranging from "maximalists" who push integration "as far and fast as possible", to "rejectionists" who outright refuse to partake in European integration in any way (Flood & Usherwood, 2005).

Despite these alternative typologies, the differentiation between "hard" and "soft" Euroscepticism has emerged as the "clear winner" (Kaniok, 2012, p. 34) of the theoretical debate over Euroscepticism despite, or maybe precisely because of, the simplicity of the framework. In fact, Taggart and Sczerbiak explicitly acknowledge the need for a more nuanced typology (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008b, p. 248). They do, however, worry that *"the more complex and fine-grained the typology, the more difficult it is to operationalize and categorize the parties"* (ibid, p. 246), especially as empirical data on party positions is often limited. These concerns seem justified as even with the existing twofold typology, the status of individual parties is often contested, especially when it comes to "soft Eurosceptic" parties. Their categorization depends on the precise assumed definition of the European integration process and its end goal (Kaniok, 2012, p. 40) – in extreme cases, any party not in favour of fully fledged federalism could be classed as "soft Eurosceptic" – and on the precise standard of measurement

applied. The Hungarian Fidesz party, for example, was initially classified by Taggart and Sczerbiak as "soft Eurosceptic" (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2002, p. 14). Dúró, however, contests this classification due to the "*clear pro-European policy in practice*" (Dúró, 2016, p. 44) despite the at time anti-Brussels rhetoric of Fidesz, and it is even classed as "Euroenthusiast" by Kopecký and Mudde (Kopecký & Mudde, 2002, p. 316).

An additional clear drawback of the "Sussex school", making agreement on party categorization even more difficult to achieve, is that its main representatives do not address the issue of which data to use for the analysis of party stances beyond "*focusing on a party's public statements, the parliamentary voting on key European issues (treaties), and published party programmes/manifestos*" (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008a, p. 9). Mudde notes that *"consequently, different authors use different sources and consign different importance to similar sources"* (Mudde, 2012, p. 197), making studies less comparable and interoperable. Furthermore, for any quantitative study, data collection will be complicated and time-consuming as it requires the analysis of party manifestos and statements from scratch, rather than providing researchers with a ready-made dataset to use. Lastly, the main literature contribution of the Sussex school – "Opposing Europe" – and the case studies contained within its first volume are rather dated, stemming from more than a decade ago. This is a problem especially in the analysis of Eastern European member states, who had only just joined the European Union at the time of publication and therefore only really allowed for a detailed analysis of the pre-accession state of affairs (Mudde, 2012, p. 194).

The "North Carolina School", on the other hand, is in many ways the counterpart to the "Sussex school" in terms of its approach, strengths and weaknesses. Based on the early work of Ray (Ray, 1999), its approach is quantitative in nature, and centered around what has now become the Chapel Hill expert survey (CHES, see Bakker, et al., 2015; and Polk, et al., 2017). The dataset covers party positions on European integration in the EU and candidate countries in multiple survey rounds held every four years[10], currently spanning from 1999 to 2014. These newer and more comprehensive survey rounds can be combined with an earlier survey conducted by Ray to additionally cover the period between 1984 and 1996. *This "longitudinal, quantitative and easily accessible"* (Mudde, 2012, p. 197) data source is the big strength of the North Carolina school compared to the Sussex school.

However, this strength comes with some considerable trade-offs: firstly, expert surveys as a data source are often seen as inferior to the direct measurement of the phenomenon of interest, as *expert perceptio*n rather than empirical reality is measured, and key parameters of the measurement, such as the definition of a party and the precise time scale of evaluation are often unclear (see Budge, 2000,

[10] with the exception of a three-year gap between the first two survey rounds in 1999 and 2002

pp. 103-104; and Volkens, 2007, p. 117). This can potentially skew results, especially since the scholars questioned for the CHES survey tend not to be specialized in the study of party positions or Euroscepticism (Mudde, 2012, pp. 197-198), but are merely *"specialized in either the domestic political system of their nation, or European politics"* (Ray, 1999, p. 286). Most fundamentally for the measurement of Euroscepticism using CHES data, the precise definition of Euroscepticism and European integration upon which the questioned experts evaluate parties in the CHES surveys is unclear, as the survey item merely asks experts to evaluate *"the overall orientation of the party leadership towards European integration"* (Bakker, et al., 2015) without further elaborating on how these terms are to be understood. Ray, however, argues that the consistency of expert evaluations implies they were "*evaluating the parties on the same underlying dimension*" (Ray, 1999, p. 287), and Whitefield et al. find that there is remarkable overlap in expert evaluations of different surveys even in the particularly difficult country cases of Eastern Europe (Whitefield, et al., 2007).

While this vagueness in definitions avoids the conceptual arguments of the Sussex school, and while the CHES approach of measuring Euroscepticism on a continuous scale[11] rather than introducing binary typologies inherently open to contested borderline cases might be worthwhile, Ray's argument is still purely reliant on *reliability.* It therefore poses problems for the theoretically *valid* measurement of Euroscepticism, both in terms of the underlying evaluation standards and the appropriate cut-off point between Euroscepticism and non-Euroscepticism. Ray has argued that scores under two tend to coincide with a classification of a party as "hard" Eurosceptic, and the same applies to a value up to four and "soft" Euroscepticism (Ray, 2007, pp. 158-159). However, this measurement has been criticized as unreasonably broad, labelling parties with neutral stances on integration as Eurosceptic (Mudde, 2012, p. 194)[12]. Therefore, any study based on CHES data needs to carefully consider its measurement of party-based Euroscepticism.

The theory developed by both Eurosceptic "schools", as well as the reflection on their strengths and weaknesses, will prove crucial for choosing the appropriate data selection and measurement of Euroscepticism, as well as for distinguishing parties on the independent variable – Eurosceptic parties exerting influence – from parties on the dependent variable, i.e. non-Eurosceptic parties being subject to Eurosceptic contagion. However, merely surveying the literature on party-based Euroscepticism is hardly enough of a foundation for this paper, as its main interest are *interaction effects* between Eurosceptic parties *and their competition*. Therefore, a look at the relevant literature on party

[11] Experts rate the *"the overall orientation of the party leadership towards European integration"* on a seven-point scale, with a value of one meaning complete opposition and a value of seven signifying complete support (Bakker, et al., 2015)

[12] See section 4.4.

competition is necessary to formulate a valid theoretical framework for the analysis of Eurosceptic influence in European party systems.

3.2. Early/general theories of party competition: spatial models versus salience and issue ownership

Two important basic strands of theory on party competition can be distinguished, although in recent practice, they have often been combined within more comprehensive frameworks: *spatial* theories of party competition, and theories of *salience* and *issue ownership*.

Spatial conceptions of party competition were first introduced in the seminal work of Anthony Downs. In his dissertation "An Economic Theory of Democracy" (Downs, 1957), Downs ingeniously applied the assumptions of economic theory to the functioning of democratic systems, assuming rationality and utility-maximising behaviour to guide the actions of both citizens and parties. Downs assumed the latter to be monolithic, exhibit a stable preference order and be primarily "office-seeking" – i.e., *"parties formulate policies to win elections, rather than win elections to formulate policies"* (p. 28). Consequently, party ideologies are not motivating the policy choices of parties, but are mere tools for attaining maximum power and resources. Downs models this assumption using a spatial model of party positioning: given a specific voter preference distribution, parties will position themselves on a one-dimensional left-right-scale wherever they can achieve the maximum amount of votes.

However, a number of factors might constrain party position shifts in the face of changing environments. Uncertainty over the distribution of voter preferences and which combination of conflicting social groups to target (Downs, 1957, pp. 100-101), institutional immobility, but also the fact that parties need to appear consistent to their voters (pp. 103-109), might induce a measure of ideological stability into parties and party systems. If and how much parties shift position within a party system is therefore dependent not only on voter preferences, but also, for example, the degree of information they possess and their institutional environment. One crucial factor in this environment can be other parties, the existence and success of which can shift the ideal position on the policy spectrum for other parties aiming to maximise their own number of votes. In fact, parties, according to Downs, might in some cases even be founded for the precise aim of shifting the position of an existing party, rather than gaining office themselves (Downs, 1957, p. 128).

Just like Downs' framework, the concepts of *issue ownership* and *saliency theory* form the basis of influential contemporary theory, such as Meguid's seminal article on mainstream-niche competition (Meguid, 2005) and the Comparative Manifesto Project (see Budge, et al., 2001, p. 76; and Dolezal, et al., 2014, p. 57). First implicitly described by Budge and Farlie as the perception that a party is *"much more dependable in carrying out the desired objective than others"* (Budge & Farlie, 1983, p. 287), the

concept of issue ownership was first explicitly defined by Petrocik (Petrocik, 1996). Issue ownership is, according to his influential definition, created when a candidate or party *"successfully frames the vote choice as a decision to be made in terms of problems facing the country"* (Petrocik, 1996, p. 826) which they are *better suited* to resolve than their opposition. Stubager notes that this definition entails *"both a performance element, i.e., the parties' ability to solve problems, the attention devoted a given issue by the parties, and (…) parties' ties with conflicting social groups (…)"* (Stubager, 2014, p. 5).

Walgrave et al. make this conceptual ambiguity explicit by differentiating *competence* and *associative* issue ownership, with the former being defined as the ability of a party to best *solve* an issue, and the latter as a party being spontaneously *associated* with an issue (Walgrave, et al., 2012, pp. 772-773). The latter, being *"the consequence of long-term party attention"* (ibid., p. 772) to a given issue, closely ties into saliency theory. A more supply-side/party-focussed concept than the issue ownership concept which stresses voter perceptions, saliency theory assumes parties do not primarily directly confront each other over policy disagreements, but compete primarily via placing a *selective emphasis* on topics which benefit them, rather than their competition (Dolezal, et al., 2014, pp. 58-59). Theories of issue ownership and issue salience hence include a crucial aspect of party competition not covered by Downs' approach: rather than just in terms of their position, parties also compete over *issue ownership* by *emphasizing* those issues that are central to their identity and brand.

Both spatial and saliency theory have contributed a lot to understanding how parties compete on the programmatic and the electoral stage. The two theories are mirrored in the theoretical model underlying this thesis and particularly hypotheses H1 and H2, which include both substantial positioning and issue emphasis as crucial dimensions of party competition. But they have also formed the basis of further theoretical frameworks commonly applied in the analysis of Eurosceptic parties. These frameworks, which focus on *asymmetric* party competition, are going to be addressed next.

3.3. Theories of asymmetric party competition: the mainstream versus the rest?

Eurosceptic party influence has often been analysed utilising specific frameworks of *asymmetric* party competition: Eurosceptic parties are frequently conceptualized as, for example, *"niche"* (see for example van de Wardt, 2015) or *"challenger*" (see for example Meijers, 2015) parties, competing with *"mainstream"* parties within their respective country. This section is going to give an overview over the existing literature on asymmetric party competition, with a particular focus on "nicheness" and the evolution of the concept, as it is directly relevant to hypothesis H4 of this paper.

3.3.1. Niche versus mainstream parties and the evolving "nicheness" concept

A seminal early contribution on asymmetric party competition was made by Bonnie Meguid in her article on "Competition among Unequals", in which she developed a theoretical framework aiming to

explain the success of emergent "niche" parties with the strategy picked by established "mainstream" parties (Meguid, 2005). "Niche" parties, as per Meguid, differ from "mainstream" parties in three important ways: Firstly, they focus on novel, non-class-based issues such as the environment or immigration which, secondly, cross-cut existing party alignments and political divisions. Thirdly, niche parties *"differentiate themselves by limiting their issue appeals"*, relying on narrow sets of policies to gain electoral support (Meguid, 2005, pp. 347-348). According to Meguid, mainstream parties have three options in addressing emergent niche parties: they can accommodate their policy demands (accommodative strategy), reject them (adversarial strategy) or decide to not address them at all (silencing strategy) (ibid., p.349).

However, only one year later, a first competing definition emerged. In a 2006 article, in which they established that niche parties were less responsive to shifts in public opinion than mainstream parties, Adam et al. defined niche parties as parties with an *"extreme or noncentrist"* ideology (Adams, et al., 2006, p. 513). This definition is clearly rooted in a Downsian conception of party competition, in which mainstream parties occupy the centre of the policy spectrum, while niche parties are to be found at the extremes – contrary to the definition by Meguid, which strongly builds on party competition over *issue ownership* (Meguid, 2005, p. 349). Crucially, Adam et al.'s definition does not require niche parties to campaign mainly on novel, non-economic issues and therefore, contrary to the definition brought forward by Meguid, includes communist parties, but not regionalist ones.

Theory has since developed beyond these initial conceptions, mainly based on the salience-based conception proposed by Meguid, with an article by Markus Wagner being an important first step (Wagner, 2011). Wagner proposed a simplified definition of niche parties as *"(…) best defined as parties that de-emphasize economic concerns and stress a small range of non-economic issues"* (ibid, p.846). He also criticized that in existing definitions and measurements, parties had been grouped by party family regardless of their actual policies, making niche status a *"fixed and purely binary"* attribute (Wagner, 2011, p. 846). Instead, Wagner maintained that niche parties were a *"fluid, continuous"* (ibid., p.847) characteristic: parties could evolve from niche to mainstream and vice versa, and the degree to which they were "niche" could vary over time depending on their policy programme. However, Wagner's operationalization and empirical measurement of niche parties, while no longer based on party families, did not match this theoretical insight: it still sorted parties into either the niche or non-niche category in a binary fashion. In fact, Wagner himself admitted that he had to rely on arbitrary cut-off points for his categorization, and that the number of niche parties would differ if one were to set a higher or lower cut-off (Wagner, 2011, p. 854).

This weakness is addressed in an approach proposed by Meyer & Miller in 2015 (Meyer & Miller, 2015). The authors propose an even simpler minimal definition of the term "niche party": *"A niche party*

emphasizes policy areas neglected by its competitors" (Meyer & Miller, 2015, p. 261). Niche party issues often being novel or non-economic, from this perspective, are empirical correlates rather than necessary conditions for a party being *niche* (ibid.). Rather, nicheness can stem from any policy dimension, depends on the platform of a party relative to its competitors, and varies over time (Meyer & Miller, 2015, p. 262). Similar to Wagner, the authors further argue that the precise *degree* of programmatic difference matters (ibid.).

Meyer and Miller therefore propose a continuous measurement of *nicheness,* rather than of binary *niche party status*, according to the following formula: First, the issue emphasis per party and issue is measured for all relevant policy areas within a system. The average issue emphasis of all remaining parties is then subtracted from this score per issue dimension, weighted by vote share to account for the stronger agenda setting capabilities of bigger parties. Lastly, the scores for all individual issue dimensions are added up and divided by the total number of relevant issue dimensions (Meyer & Miller, 2015, p. 262). As the overall variance of policy platforms within a system can lead to high or low nicheness scores across the board in a given country, Miller and Meier propose *standardizing* the score by subtracting the average nicheness of all competitors from a party's nicheness score to measure whether a party is more or less *niche* than the other parties *within its system* (ibid, p.263).

An alternative measurement is proposed by Daniel Bischof (Bischof, 2017). Criticising Meyer and Miller for their measure being too broad and interpreting parties competing on traditional issues of party competition as niche (Bischof, 2017, p. 222), he re-defines nicheness as *"a strategy which results in parties: (a) predominantly competing on niche market segments neglected by their competitors; (b) not discussing a broad range of these segments"* (Bischof, 2017, p. 223). These "niche market segments" are pre-defined by the author: included in his new nicheness measure, continuous in nature just like that proposed by Meyer and Miller, are exclusively *ecological, agrarian, regional, extreme* right and *Eurosceptic* issue emphasis (Bischof, 2017, p. 224). Furthermore, contrary to Meyer & Miller, he does not weigh competing parties by their vote shares, as he maintains party size does not necessarily correspond to agenda setting power.

However, the framework of Bischof, while based on Meyer & Miller, does not necessarily constitute theoretical progress. Firstly, the argument by Meyer and Miller that a measure of nicheness *"should not restrict policy niches to specific policy areas (such as immigration or environmental protection)"* (Meyer & Miller, 2015, p. 262), but depend on the specific issues salient in domestic political discourse, is highly convincing. Sure, even parties competing on traditional economic issues might, in some cases, be considered niche using their measure, but this is not necessarily problematic depending on their overall policy profile compared to their competition – especially given the fact that these issues might lose significance in wealthier societies due to increasingly post-materialist value orientations (see

Inglehart, 1977). Bischof's measure, in comparison, with its clearly pre-defined "niche" policy dimensions, seems like a step back to less broadly applicable, static categorizations by party family.

These pre-defined niche issues also do not allow for the inclusion of potential upcoming *new* niche issues. After all, environmentalist and Eurosceptic parties are relatively recent phenomena, only having become relevant to party competition in the 1970s (Müller-Rommel, 2011) and 1990s (Hooghe & Marks, 2008, p. 7) respectively, and there is no reason to assume they will be the *last* niche issues to emerge. Lastly, while Bischof is right that party size does not necessarily translate *proportionally* into agenda setting power (Bischof, 2017, p. 227), not weighting parties by size at all implies the even more questionable assumption that agenda setting power is even across all parties in a system, no matter their size. This study is hence going to rely on the measure of Miller&Meyer (2015), which also avoids methodological issues of endogeneity[13].

In conclusion, while the continuous nature of "nicheness" has been recognised in more recent literature, existing research on niche parties still nearly exclusively builds on binary classifications. "Niche parties" have been found to, for example, differ in their behaviour in the European parliament (Jensen & Spoon, 2010), in their response to shifts in public opinion (Adams, et al., 2006), and in the electoral consequences of changing their policy stance (ibid., also see Han, 2017). This study will be among the first to incorporate nicheness in a way that reflects the current state of theoretical development. This only requires minor changes to the way hypotheses are framed: rather than, for example, hypothesizing that *"(…) niche parties' policy programs are less responsive to shifts in public opinion"* (Adams, et al., 2006, p. 514), it is assumed here that the *more* niche a party is, the less it is affected by electoral results of its competition.

3.3.2. Other mainstream vs. non-mainstream typologies

Besides "mainstream-niche" distinctions, whether based on *issue salience* (Meguid, 2005; Wagner, 2011; Meyer & Miller, 2015; and Bischof, 2017) or on left-right *extremeness* (Adams, et al., 2006), further mainstream-based dichotomies exist and could be applied to the analysis of Eurosceptic parties (see Chiocchetti, 2017). Most importantly, Meijers (2015), in "Contagious Euroscepticism", utilises a distinction between "mainstream" and "challenger" parties, with "mainstream" parties being parties that have governed before and "challengers" having no government experience (De Vries & Hobolt, 2012, pp. 250-251). But "mainstream-ness" measurements can also include the *novelty* of parties outside the mainstream (see Emanuele & Chiaramonte, 2018), mirroring the notion of niche parties raising "novel" issues (Meguid, 2005, p. 348). One further possible indicator would be *identity and anti-establishment-appeal*, distinguishing *established* from *anti-establishment* parties (see for example

[13] See section 4.5.2.

Abedi, 2002), which might be an appropriate category for the analysis of Eurosceptic parties as well – after all, Taggart finds that Euroscepticism tends to be associated with protest politics (Taggart, 1998).

Hernandez and Kriesi even attempt to construct a mixed mainstreamness typology, classifying all parties competing for the first time in an election as "new", then identifying "radical left" and "radical" right parties among the non-new parties, and lastly classifying the remaining parties as mainstream or non-mainstream depending on whether they have *"played a key role in a country's party system in the postwar period"* (Hernández & Kriesi, 2016, p. 210). However, neither is this "key role" clearly defined, nor are the categories as mutually exclusive as conceptualized by the authors[14], making the typology highly problematic.

While it can therefore be said that there seems to be agreement that Eurosceptic parties are somehow situated outside the political "mainstream", both the term "mainstream" and what lies *outside* of it are not particularly clearly defined. Their application can therefore lead to major theoretical and methodological issues. This will be further addressed when laying out the research design of this study. First, however, notable studies on Eurosceptic party influence and possible moderators of it are going to be summarized to complete this literature review.

3.4. Literature on Eurosceptic party influence

Before introducing a novel research design for the analysis of Eurosceptic influence, a brief summary of existing literature on the influence of Eurosceptic parties might be helpful to both make sure this thesis is not redundant, merely answering questions that have already been addressed, and to identify possible variables of interest that should be incorporated in the analysis.

Firstly, many case studies suggest Eurosceptic parties can exert major influence over other parties in their system when it comes to the issue of European integration. The British case is certainly a prominent one: Baker et al. suggest that the presence of two newly formed Eurosceptic parties kept both major parties from ignoring the issue of European integration (Baker, et al., 2008). It has furthermore been widely suggested that the UK Independence party motivated the decision of Conservative Prime minister David Cameron to call a referendum on EU membership developments (see Bale, 2016; and Clarke, et al., 2017, pp. 2-3), with parts of his party and UKIP even forming a *"common albeit awkward alliance to take Britain out of the EU"* (Clarke, et al., 2017, p. 144). Van de Wardt finds that, in the Danish case, "mainstream" parties, particularly those in opposition, tend to emphasize EU issues more if their Eurosceptic competition does so (van de Wardt, 2015). Ivaldi sees the impact the Brexit and "refugee crisis" had on the policy of French parties as a strategic response

[14] After all, there is no reason why a new party should not be radically right-wing, or a radical left party should not have played a key role in a country's party system in the postwar period.

to the electorally threatening presence of the Eurosceptic Front National (Ivaldi, 2018), and Meijers interprets the occasional adoption of critical stances towards the EU by representatives of Forza Italia (see Quaglia, 2008, p. 415) as a consequence of its Eurosceptic coalition partners (Meijers, 2015).

More systematic studies are slightly scarcer, with "Contagious Euroscepticism" being the most prominent contribution (Meijers, 2015). The main findings, as already summarised in the introduction, are that, in Western Europe, the electoral success of Eurosceptic "challenger" parties impacts position *change* of "mainstream" parties in Western Europe, with the centre-left being affected more strongly than the centre right, as the former is affected by both radical left and radical right challengers, and the latter only reacts to radical right results. A comparative follow-up study also finds these contagion effects to be relevant, but to have declined between the 2009 and 2014 European parliament elections in the Dutch and French case (Meijers & Rauh, 2016). One further study worth mentioning here, introducing a further potential moderator of Eurosceptic contagion, is a 2017 article of Adam et al., in which the authors investigate possible strategies of pro-European parties facing a Eurosceptic challenge in a comparative design covering seven European countries. Analysing press releases in the run-up to the 2014 European Parliament elections, they find that parties with strong internal division on Europe are more likely to either adopt EU-critical stances or *"blur their position towards the EU"* (Adam, et al., 2017, p. 263), suggesting that Eurosceptic contagion is more likely where pro-European parties are split on EU integration.

4. Starting from scratch: a new research design to investigate the impact of Eurosceptic parties on their competition

Based on the analysis of Meijers' article, as well as the comprehensive literature review, this section will lay out an updated design for analysing Eurosceptic contagion between parties. Firstly, the main innovation of the framework compared to Meijers (2015) – the non-reliance on mainstream dichotomies – will be introduced and justified, followed by a brief description of the data sources used. The insights from the literature on party-based Euroscepticism will then be applied to distinguish between parties relevant to the independent (i.e. Eurosceptic parties) and dependent (i.e. non-Eurosceptic parties) variable respectively. Lastly, the precise operationalization of all included variables will be described, and the most suitable method of analysis will be identified.

4.1. Moving beyond mainstream dichotomies: the analysis of Eurosceptic influence irrespective of niche, fringe or challenger status

In existing literature, Eurosceptic parties have often been treated as parties situated exclusively *outside of the political mainstream*. Researchers have conceptualised Euroscepticism as an issue owned by

"niche" parties (van de Wardt, 2015), or focussed on the analysis of Eurosceptic "fringe" (Meijers & Rauh, 2016) or "challenger" (Meijers, 2015) parties. However, these distinctions are unhelpful in a study aiming at the comprehensive analysis of party-based Euroscepticism and possible contagion effects in their full breadth, as they restrict the analysis to only a *subset* of the empirical phenomenon of party-based Euroscepticism.

As various studies have shown, Euroscepticism is, nowadays, often observed *within* the political mainstream: Ray finds that, while Euroscepticism is mainly observed in smaller, more ideologically extreme parties and those in opposition, Eurosceptic ideology can also be found in "mainstream" parties in some prominent cases such as the UK and France (Ray, 2007). The growing Euroscepticism of the British Conservatives over recent decades as a clear party of the traditional British "mainstream" is a strong case in point (Dorey, 2017). Adam et al. even explicitly compare "mainstream" and fringe Eurosceptic parties, uncovering differences in their rhetoric and issue focus during electoral campaigns (Adam, et al., 2013). Dúró analyses the prominent country cases of the Visegrád four, in which "mainstream" parties have increasingly taken Eurosceptic positions and even reached government in Poland and Hungary (Dúró, 2016). Lastly, Whitefield & Rohrschneider find that European integration is an issue embedded in the policy profile of "mainstream" parties, rather than being the domain of ideologically extremist and challenger parties (Whitefield & Rohrschneider, 2019).

Not only do mainstream-based distinctions prevent the analysis of party-based Euroscepticism to its full extent, excluding "mainstream" Eurosceptic parties from the analysis, they also create major methodological issues. Sure, following Meguid's definition (Meguid, 2005), Euroscepticism might qualify as a "niche" issue: it is relatively novel, only having become prominent post-Maastricht in the 1990s (Hooghe & Marks, 2008), and cross-cuts existing party alignments, splitting established parties (Whitefield & Rohrschneider, 2019) and being found in both radical left and right parties (see for example Meijers, 2015). However, with nicheness being seen as a continuum in recent publications (Meyer & Miller, 2015; and Bischof, 2017), which Eurosceptic parties qualify as "niche" becomes a question of arbitrary cut-off points (see Wagner, 2011, p. 854). The same applies for ideological "extremeness": which point on a given left-right-scale qualifies as "extreme" is by no means obvious, and borderline cases will inevitably lead to contested classifications. Rendered questionable as criteria in case selection, *nicheness* and left-right position can, however, still be of value to the analysis of Eurosceptic contagion, as their inclusion as moderating variables in this study demonstrates.

While the issue of cut-off points is irrelevant to the distinction between mainstream and challenger parties utilised by Meijers in "Contagious Euroscepticism", this distinction brings about its own issues. Following de Vries and Hobolt (2012), mainstream parties are defined as parties who have governed before, with challengers having no previous government experience. However, the question of why

Eurosceptic contagion should be limited to only Eurosceptic *challenger* parties, i.e. the subset of Eurosceptic parties which have always been in opposition, with those with government experience no longer influencing the stance of other parties, remains unanswered. Meijers merely argues that *"the distinction between mainstream and challenger parties (…) ensures that the dependent variable and the independent variables cannot overlap. If one were to rely on a definition that builds on party families, endogeneity problems could arise – especially when 'the radicals' come into government as was the case for the FPÖ"* (Meijers, 2015, pp. 416-417).

While *overlap* between the independent and dependent variable might indeed be avoided, the division into "mainstream" and "challenger" parties comes with its own problems: as Eurosceptic parties reach government, sudden *switches* from challenger to mainstream status, and therefore from independent to dependent variable, can occur. Hence, the main independent variable – the vote share of Eurosceptic challengers – experiences a sudden drop from one election to another, with a major *challenger* suddenly being part of the *mainstream*. One would therefore expect decreased Eurosceptic contagion and perhaps even a development of pro-European parties towards more pro-EU positions. However, there is no obvious theoretical justification for such an assumption. One could circumvent this by excluding all parties reaching government at any point during the investigation period from the analysis altogether, but this would mean systematically underestimating Eurosceptic electoral support in a given country. Furthermore, due to high party system volatility in Eastern Europe, with mergers and splits being commonplace (Ibenskas & Sikk, 2017), "challenger" and "mainstream" parties can be hard to distinguish. Dropping the mainstream-challenger distinction therefore allows this study to extend the case selection compared to the study of Meijers[15], while not excluding prominent cases from the analysis altogether or assuming their influence to cede after reaching government.

In conclusion, the assumption that Eurosceptic influence is only exerted by ideologically extreme, niche or opposition challengers does not hold up to scrutiny. Relying on mainstream-based dichotomies in selecting cases for this study would not only keep it from capturing the phenomenon of party-based Euroscepticism comprehensively, but also cause major methodological issues. It therefore makes more sense to simply distinguish Eurosceptic from non-Eurosceptic parties. The literature provides good examples for such an approach: van Spanje, for example, investigating anti-immigration parties and their contagious effects, relies solely on immigration-related *position* and *issue salience* rather than on niche or challenger status in identifying parties of interest to his study (van Spanje, 2010) - although the issue of migration is traditionally seen as a "niche" issue owned by radical right challenger parties (see Meguid, 2005; Abou-Chadi, 2014). To be sure, there is certainly a correlation between Euroscepticism and non-mainstreamness: Eurosceptic parties are likely to often be disproportionately

[15] See section 4.3.

programmatically niche-y, ideologically extreme, have no government experience, and/or invoke anti-establishment narratives (see Taggart, 1998; Ray, 2007). But those empirical correlates should not be used in the selection of cases in a paper aiming to comprehensively analyse Eurosceptic contagion, as long as there is no indication that mainstream Eurosceptic parties are not contagious as well.

4.2. Data I: main data source: The Chapel Hill Expert Survey dataset

Just like the article of Meijers (2015), this study relies mostly on the data of the Chapel Hill expert survey, particularly its 1999-2014 trend file (Polk, et al., 2017); Bakker, et al., 2015). Forming the basis of what Mudde calls the "North Carolina School" (Mudde, 2012) of research into party-based Euroscepticism, the Chapel Hill expert surveys (CHES) *"estimate party positioning on European integration, ideology and policy issues for national parties in a variety of European countries"* (chesdata.eu, n.d.). As of now, five waves have been conducted in 1999, 2002, 2006, 2010 and, most recently, 2014. The coverage is rather comprehensive, with the latest survey round covering 268 parties in 24 current or potential EU member states (ibid.). The dataset covers many of the core variables included in this study, from positions on and salience of European integration for each party, to their vote shares received in the last parliamentary elections. It is further easily interoperable with other datasets thanks to the inclusion of, for example, party IDs of the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP/MARPOR, see Budge, et al., 2001; and manifesto-project.wzb.eu, n.d.). This allows this study to include variables from data sources not originally included in the CHES trend file, such as MARPOR or Eurobarometer survey data.

The CHES trend file is chosen not only for providing a *"longitudinal, quantitative and easily accessible"* (Mudde, 2012, p. 197) source of data on party-based Euroscepticism, but, as Meijers notes, also contains significantly more data on fringe parties than other possible data sources such as the CMP (Meijers, 2015, p. 416). Contrary to the analysis of press releases and party manifestos recommended by scholars of the "Sussex school" (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008a, p. 9), it also allows for the inclusion of a broad variety of parties where language barriers and the sheer scale of a project analysing primary sources from scratch would usually be prohibitive. After all, existing articles working with content analysis have usually only been possible by combining the capabilities of big groups of researchers (see for example Adam, et al., 2013; Adam, et al., 2017). This is a crucial asset when trying to find results that are generalizable beyond individual country cases.

However, expert surveys as a data source have been criticised for measuring party reputations among experts, rather than directly analysing party positions based on press releases or manifestos (Budge, 2000). The Chapel Hill Survey in particular has further received criticism for the fact that the scholars questioned for it tend not to be specialised in the study of party positions or Euroscepticism, making it more of a "peer" than an "expert" survey in the eyes of its critics (Mudde, 2012, pp. 197-198). To

counter these criticisms, defendants of the survey cite both the consistency between individual expert evaluations (see Ray, 1999, pp. 286-287; and Steenbergen & Marks, 2007, pp. 351-354) and between CHES data and alternative measurements of party-based Euroscepticism (see Steenbergen & Marks, 2007, p. 360; and Ray, 2007b, p. 19) in its defence.

In light of the aforementioned significant advantages of providing *quantitative*, *comprehensive* and *longitudinal* data suitable for answering the research question of this study, CHES data, despite its potential weaknesses, is therefore clearly most suitable for the analysis to be conducted. While this study therefore uses the same main data source as the article of Meijers (2015), the cases selected from this dataset for analysis differ both regarding the countries and survey rounds of interest and the categorization of parties within them. These differences will be addressed in the next two sub-chapters of this paper.

4.3. Data II/Case selection I: investigation period and selection of country cases – going beyond Western Europe

"Contagious Euroscepticism" utilises a combined dataset of the Chapel Hill expert survey rounds of 1999-2010 and their predecessor survey by Ray, covering the additional years of 1984, 1988, 1992 and 1996 (Meijers, 2015, p. 416). Meijers' study does not, however, contain the survey round of 2014, as it had not yet been published at the time of writing his article. He further limits his analysis to Western European countries, potentially for the reason that the data on party status compiled by van de Wardt et al. (2014) that he uses only covers Western Europe. This study deviates in its case selection, both in respect of the countries and years included.

Firstly, instead of covering only Western European countries, the dataset includes all EU member states including those in Central and Eastern Europe, as long as they were EU member at the time of the survey round. After all, some prominent cases of Eurosceptic party success in recent years have taken place in those countries (Duro, 2016). One might argue that Eastern Europe differs massively from the West regarding, for example, its political traditions and economic situation, and that mapping Euroscepticism in Eastern Europe can prove difficult (Henderson, 2008). However, even between Western European countries, there are major differences regarding their political system, their economy and their culture. Furthermore, a trend towards convergence between the party politics of West and East following EU accession has been observed (Henderson, 2008, pp. 123-124). Lastly, the chosen method of fixed effects regression analysis controls for differences between east and west, at least those that are time-invariant, limiting the observed variation to within-case-variance[16].

[16] See section 4.6.

Secondly, the design also deviates from Meijers' regarding the investigation period. It includes the year 2014, a salient year of major electoral success of Eurosceptic parties, particularly in the European parliament elections (Fontanella-Khan & Carnegy, 2014). By contrast, the data from the Ray-Marks-Steenbergen-Survey (Ray, 1999; and Steenbergen & Marks, 2007), as well as the year 1999, and therefore cases from the past century, are not included. There are multiple reasons for this modification: firstly, data for some control variables was not available for years prior to 2000, notably data on national net payments to the EU as a percentage of GDP, and a Eurobarometer measure of the EU's image in the general population[17]. Secondly, only including post-2000 cases might serve to enhance the empirical relevance of the results of this study to current politics, as dynamics of Eurosceptic contagion, and unobserved time-variant confounding influences on it, might have changed over the years. This problem is still relevant for the period between 2002 and 2014, but the magnitude of unobserved changes in confounding variables can be expected to be smaller the shorter the investigated time period. Moreover, the format of some survey items and measurement scales varies between the 1999-2014 trend file and its predecessor survey, with the use of only the former ensuring consistency of measurement over the entire investigation period[18]. Lastly, many Eastern European countries only joined the EU rather recently. A longer investigation period would thus lead to increased imbalance in the dataset.

Having defined countries and years included in the study, all that remains to be specified in terms of case selection is the parties of interest, or more precisely, which parties within the dataset are defined as Eurosceptic and which are not.

4.4. Case selection II/Operationalization I: distinguishing between independent and dependent variable cases: operationalizing Eurosceptic parties

As outlined in section 3.1., there are differing definitions of party-based Euroscepticism, and various contested borderline cases of parties that have been classified by parts of the literature as Eurosceptic, but not by others (also see Mudde, 2012). So how to best differentiate between Eurosceptic and non-Eurosceptic parties? After all, similar to the increasingly contested distinction between niche and mainstream parties, it has been argued that Euroscepticism is best understood as a continuous (see Rovny, 2004, p. 33) and changeable rather than a binary and fixed phenomenon, with the seven-point-

[17] See section 4.5.3.

[18] For example, the dissent on European integration was measured on a five-point scale in the original survey, with a one signifying a party being completely united on the issue, a four meaning a party was evenly split, and a five meaning that a majority of acitivists opposed the party leadership (Ray, 1999; and Steenbergen & Marks, 2007). In the more recent trend file, dissent was measured on an eleven-point scale ranging from zero to ten, with a zero signalling complete unity and a ten complete division (Bakker, et al., 2015). Note how due to the different definition of the highest value on the two scales, simply rescaling the data would not have solved the problem of changed measurement.

scale of the Chapel Hill expert survey (Bakker, et al., 2015) reflecting this non-binary nature as well. Changes in policy stance on the EU often take place gradually, and the classification of borderline cases depends on the specific cut-off point chosen. For example, Adam et al. classify all parties that score under three on the CHES scale as Eurosceptic (Adam, et al., 2017, p. 267), while Meijers uses a cut-off point of four (Meijers, 2015, p. 417).

However, while every cut-off point is bound to be somewhat arbitrary, Adam et al. do not provide any theoretical justification for theirs, whereas Meijers relies on Ray (2007), who argues that, with the exception of some outliers, parties classified by Taggart and Szcerbiak as "soft Eurosceptic" tend to fall in the range between two and four on the CHES scale, while parties identified as "hard Eurosceptic" tend to correspond with parties scoring below two (Ray, 2007, pp. 158-159). Still, this measurement comes with two major problems. Firstly, since Euroscepticism, as argued above, is a changeable characteristic, parties could switch back and forth between independent and dependent variable frequently in a study based on panel data, as they might score just below four in some years and just above in others, leading to potentially massive changes in Eurosceptic vote share due to only very minor differences in the expert evaluation of the party in question. Secondly, as Mudde argues, the cut-off point of four results in an unreasonably broad definition of party-based Euroscepticism: *"the suggestion that a neutral stance and a no opinion on European integration (a 4 on this scale) equals Euroscepticism, Soft or not, lacks any basis"* (Mudde, 2012, p. 194).

Mudde is right about the fact that a simple classification as Eurosceptic for a score below four at any given point, especially for parties usually scoring above four and therefore in tendency pro-European in their outlook, would constitute an unreasonably broad measurement of Euroscepticism. Still, a cut-off of four is the only cut-off with at least some form of theoretical justification in the literature, largely corresponding to the classifications of the "Sussex school", the strength of which, after all, is extensive expertise on party-based Euroscepticism (see Mudde, 2012, p. 200). One way out of this dilemma would be to only count parties as Eurosceptic who *consistently* score below four in *all* years under investigation. This would ensure clear-cut boundaries between Eurosceptic parties and their competitors and therefore avoid switches between the independent and dependent variable, contrary to a separate evaluation at every single point of measurement or reliance on the mainstream – challenger distinction to separate independent from dependent variable parties.

However, the approach based on a maximum of four over all years under investigation seems overly restrictive due to individual party-year outliers and changing party stances over time, as exemplified by two party cases in Germany and the Republic of Ireland. The German left party, identified as Eurosceptic in the literature (see Baluch, 2017, pp. 121-122; and Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2018, p. 1200), scores below a four in every year except for 2002, but would not be included in measuring the

Eurosceptic vote share by means of maximum score. The Green party in Ireland, on the other hand, traditionally adopted Eurosceptic stances, but changed its position over time (see Bolleyer & Panke, 2009; and Laffan & O'Mahony, 2008, pp. 87-88). Being firmly placed below the cut-off point of four in 2002 and 2006, and above it in 2010 and 2014, it seems wrong to exclude the party from the analysis as a Eurosceptic party entirely for the time during which it was Eurosceptic.

Therefore, a different approach seems more sensible: utilizing the *average* of all years under investigation for the categorization of parties. All parties who scored below four *on average* over the investigation period are hence categorized as (consistently) *Eurosceptic parties*. After all, these parties, over multiple years, took a *less-than-neutral* stance on European integration on average. This operationalization ensures that no party can ever switch back and forth between the independent and the dependent variable. Eurosceptic parties who score above a four in individual years, taking a stance more favourable than neutral of European integration, are not included in the measurement of Eurosceptic vote shares in that particular year as a more-favourable-than-neutral stance on European integration precludes a categorization as Eurosceptic for that point in time. The Irish Green party, for example, is included in the vote share of Eurosceptic parties up to 2006, but not post-2010. This exclusion from the independent variable, however does not mean inclusion as part of the dependent variable – the parties in question are categorized as Eurosceptic for the entirety of the study, but only included in the measurement of the independent variable for years in which they did not position themselves in a more-favourable-than-neutral manner, ensuring there is no overlap whatsoever between independent and dependent variable.

This measurement seems to be a good compromise between not being overly strict, but not too all-encompassing either, efficiently avoiding both type I and type II errors. Among the 174[19] parties who are classed as non-Eurosceptic (Appendix A), only nine ever score below a four in individual years. Furthermore, none of these nine parties have more than one "Eurosceptic year", indicating that they were quite consistently pro-integration, and Hungarian Fidesz is the only one to ever score below a three, with a value of 2.71 in 2014 (Appendix C). Fidesz' classification as a non-Eurosceptic party, scoring above four on average over the investigation period, might be surprising given the recent conflict between Brussels and the government of Victor Orbán. However, it is supported by various contributions on Euroscepticism in Eastern Europe: Dúró argued in 2014, the end of the period covered by this study, that *"by and large, Fidesz cannot be considered as Eurosceptic but rather pragmatist due*

[19] Those non-Eurosceptic parties which were not represented in their national parliament at any point during the investigation period were dropped from the dataset to ensure results are not skewed by position changes of minor parties largely irrelevant to their respective party system, resulting in the number of 174 parties in the dataset. After all, for Eurosceptics to pose an *electoral threat* to them, a party first has to have a realistic chance of getting *elected*.

to its clear pro-European policy in practice, i.e. it has always supported the deepening of the European integration. The reason of its more confrontational rhetoric is a strong and relatively large (…) group of Eurosceptic voters" (Dúró, 2014, p. 44). In fact, its MPs voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Lisbon treaty in 2007 (ibid, p.43). Kopecky and Mudde also class Fidesz as an example of a "Euroenthusiast" party (Kopecký & Mudde, 2002, p. 316). Fidesz can therefore safely be classed as not *systematically Eurosceptic* for the investigation period in question.

On the other hand, of the 81 parties classed as Eurosceptic (Appendix B), only nine were not consistently Eurosceptic across all years in which they were included. Furthermore, all of these parties except for the Finish KD were only acutely Eurosceptic up to a certain point in time or from a certain point onwards. These changes in position can therefore likely be interpreted as consistent changes in a party stance on Europe, and the parties therefore safely be included as Eurosceptic up to or from the point of becoming Eurosceptic or non-Eurosceptic, without skewing the results by "switching in and out" of the Eurosceptic vote share in a country (Appendix D).

Lastly, as no parties from Spain and Cyprus in the dataset fulfil the requirements to be classified as Eurosceptic in the observation period, both countries are dropped from the dataset as the phenomenon of interest – party-based Euroscepticism – is not observed in these two country cases[20]. With the dataset now complete, it is time to turn to the operationalization of all relevant variables to test the hypotheses laid out in the introduction of this thesis.

4.5. Operationalization II: variables and their operationalization

To recall, the main dependent variable of this thesis is the position of non-Eurosceptic parties on the EU, with the main hypothesized influence on its variation being the electoral success of Eurosceptic parties. This relationship is expected to be moderated by the emphasis Eurosceptic parties put on the issue of European integration. These assumptions hence combine the Downsian positional element of party competition (see Downs, 1957) with insights from saliency theory and the literature on issue ownership (see Budge & Farlie, 1983; Petrocik, 1996; and Dolezal, et al., 2014). Similar to the contributions of Meguid (2005) and Adam et al. (2017) on niche parties and their influence, both substantive policy position and issue emphasis are thought to be an integral part of party competition. It is only when parties who are critical towards Europe emphasize these concerns, that other parties are forced to reconsider their position.

[20] This does not necessarily mean that party-based Euroscepticism does not exist in Spain and Cyprus. It was merely not observed in these countries within the given dataset. Small Eurosceptic parties might not have been included in the dataset for a variety of reasons. For example, in Spain, they have traditionally failed to attract popular support (see Margalef, 2018), and might hence have not been relevant enough for their inclusion. Another reason might be measurement error, with Spanish and Cypriot country experts consistently placing parties more pro-European than those in other countries.

The relationship between Eurosceptic electoral success and non-Eurosceptic positioning on European integration is further hypothesized to potentially be moderated by the left-right position and nicheness of the non-Eurosceptic party in question. An extended set of control variables is also included to ensure alternative explanations of non-Eurosceptic position change are accounted for and valid causal inferences can be made. These variables are going to be addressed in turn, starting with the main dependent variable.

4.5.1. Dependent variable: Party-based Euroscepticism of non-Eurosceptic parties

The dependent variable for this study is the EU-related position of those parties not identified as Eurosceptic. This is operationalized using the "position" Chapel Hill variable, for which experts are asked to evaluate the *"overall orientation of the party leadership towards European integration"* in a given year on a scale from one to seven, with a value of one signifying strong opposition, a value of four signifying a neutral stance, and a value of seven signifying strong support for European integration (Bakker, et al., 2015).

4.5.2. Independent variables: Eurosceptic electoral success and EU salience, and non-Eurosceptic nicheness

The main independent variable is the electoral success of Eurosceptic parties, the effect of which is hypothesized to be moderated by the salience assigned to EU issues by Eurosceptic parties and non-Eurosceptic party *nicheness*. The moderating influence of pro-European parties' left-right-positioning will also be examined to account for the findings of Meijers (2015).

The electoral strength of Eurosceptic challengers is operationalized using the "vote" variable included in the CHES dataset, which measures the vote share in the most recent national election for a given party (Bakker, et al., 2015). The values of this variable for all parties classed as Eurosceptic in a given year/country case are added up to obtain the overall electoral strength of Eurosceptic parties in that year and country.

The salience of EU issues is captured in the "eu_salience" variable within the CHES dataset, for which experts are asked to evaluate the "relative salience of European integration in the party's public stance" in a given year (Bakker, et al., 2015). A value of zero means that "European integration is of no importance, never mentioned", while a value of ten means the issue is the "most important issue" (ibid.). This is the same variable utilized in the article of Meijers (2015), but there is one crucial difference between the two studies: Meijers operationalizes the overall salience of European issues in a given country and year calculating the *"mean salience of all Eurosceptic challenger parties per country, by year"* (p.417), which is problematic where multiple Eurosceptic parties of significantly different size compete. In these cases, instead of just calculating the unweighted mean salience of

European integration between parties, the calculation of the mean should be *weighted* by party size. This is because bigger Eurosceptic parties can not only be assumed to have a higher agenda setting power, receiving more media coverage and parliamentary speaking time, but also because they are likely to pose the bigger electoral threat. For this study, the salience assigned to EU issues by Eurosceptic parties in a given country and year is hence weighted by their vote share.

Just like the salience of European integration, a party's left-right position is also measured on an 11-point scale in the CHES dataset, with a value of zero marking extreme left parties, a value of ten signifying a party position on the extreme right, and a score of five signifying an exactly centrist position (Bakker, et al., 2015).

Measures of party nicheness, contrary to the variables introduced thus far, are not included within the CHES data. However, one strength of the CHES dataset is its interoperability, allowing the inclusion of data from other sources. Notably, the dataset includes not only the Chapel Hill party IDs, but also those of "Manifesto Research on Political Representation" (MARPOR), better known under its old name "Comparative Manifestos Project" (CMP). Heavily based on the assumption of saliency theory that parties mainly compete via selective issue emphasis (Dolezal, et al., 2014, pp. 58-59), the CMP analyses party manifestos, dividing them into "quasi-sentences" as units of analysis, before trained coders sort these into the categories of a comprehensive coding scheme. This allows the project to determine the "relative issue emphasis" parties put on individual issues in their manifestos, as well as to estimate party positions on a left-right scale (see Gemenis, 2013; and Budge, et al., 2001). Conveniently, the ManifestoR package, a dataset containing MARPOR data for the statistical software R (manifesto-project.wzb.eu, n.d.), includes a function allowing for the calculation of party nicheness, both according to Bischof (2017) and Meyer and Miller (2015).

This study utilizes the measure of standardized nicheness following the formula of Meyer and Miller (Meyer & Miller, 2015). The reasons for this have been partially elaborated on in the literature review, but go beyond theoretical considerations, such as those on the broader applicability, adaptability and consideration of agenda setting power of the measure of Meyer and Miller[21]. This is because the utilization of Bischof's nicheness measure could also lead to major endogeneity problems, with the phenomenon of interest to this study – Euroscepticism – being one of just five issue dimensions included in the measure (Bischof, 2017, p. 225), and therefore accounting for a major share of it. In the measure of Meyer and Miller, Euroscepticism only constitutes one out of ten sub-measures included in the foreign policy dimension, which, in turn, is only one of the up to twelve relevant dimensions included (see Meyer & Miller, 2015, p. 268). Therefore, for this study, the measure of standardized

[21] See section 3.3.1.

nicheness according to Meyer and Miller was calculated for all elections in the investigation period using the ManifestoR package. The resulting data was then then converted into Stata format and matched with the main dataset based on Comparative Manifesto party ID and election year. *Standardized* nicheness was chosen over the raw measure of nicheness as it is likely to matter most how niche a party is *compared to other parties within its party system* rather than across party systems (see Meyer & Miller, 2015, pp. 262-263).

With all core variables now included in the dataset, the next important step is to control for any potential confounders, the non-inclusion of which could skew results. Compared to Meijers, this study utilizes an extended set of control variables, which are going to be the subject of the following section.

4.5.3. Control variables

The model controls, like in the design proposed by Meijers (2015, p. 417), for party size, government or opposition status of non-Eurosceptic parties, and public opinion on European integration, as well as vote loss since the previous election. It further includes new control variables, which capture the influence of national cost-benefit calculations in the form of net payer or receiver status within the EU, of the internal division on Europe within parties, and of European election results of Eurosceptic parties.

Party size is included in Meijers' model without a theoretical justification as to what effect is expected and why. In this thesis, no effect or a moderate positive correlation between variation in party size and EU position is expected. Smaller parties, due to their tendency to gain in European elections (Reif & Schmitt, 1980, p. 6), might be more pro-EU, as it provides them with an electoral stage on which they are likely to be disproportionately successful. But with growing size, parties might grow more content with the "status quo" they electorally benefit from, including the state of European integration. Also, bigger party size tends to be associated with more vote-seeking behaviour (Pedersen, 2012, p. 907), and the general public tends to be broadly pro-European in most countries - in the entire sample used in this study, only in the case of Great Britain in 2010 did more respondents find EU membership a "bad thing" than a "good thing". Party size will still be included as a control to make sure it does not have an unexpected significant influence, measured by a party's vote share in the last national election, contained in the "vote" variable within the CHES dataset (Bakker, et al., 2015).

Public opinion on the European Union in times of a "Constraining dissensus" over Europe, with growing politicization of European integration in referendums and elections limiting the scope for further integration steps (Hooghe & Marks, 2008), is a third crucial control variable when trying to isolate the effect of Eurosceptic election results on their competition. Taggart and Szczerbiak find "*that high levels of public Euroscepticism do not necessarily translate into high levels of support for parties expressing*

Euroscepticism and that high levels of support for such parties are not necessarily indicative of high levels of popular Euroscepticism" (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2002, p. 22). But still, a rise in public Euroscepticism could, on average, both enhance Eurosceptic electoral results and entice non-Eurosceptic parties to become more critical of the EU, leading to an association between the two variables without direct underlying causality.

Meijers uses two measures of public Euroscepticism based on the work of Lubbers & Scheepers (2005; 2010), who distinguish between "instrumental" and "political" Euroscepticism. Instrumental Euroscepticism is defined as *"considering membership of the European Union to bring few benefits or to be a 'bad thing'"* (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2010, p. 787), while the term "political Euroscepticism" denotes resistance to the reduction of national sovereignty (ibid.). However, with the inclusion of the year 2014 in this study, problems in the measurement of *political* Euroscepticism emerge: The measurement proposed by Lubbers and Scheepers (2005, p. 228; 2010, p. 794) relies on a series of questions formerly contained within Eurobarometer surveys which have not been included in recent years[22]. The last point in time in which answers are recorded for these items is late 2011[23] (see European Commission, n.d.). This renders the calculation of a consistent measure of political Euroscepticism covering the entire investigation period and following the methodology of Lubbers and Scheepers impossible.

It is therefore necessary to find a different measurement of public Euroscepticism. Vasilopoulou lists four survey questions commonly used for this purpose, one of them taken from the European Election Study and three from the Eurobarometer survey (Vasilopoulou, 2018, p. 25). The European Election Study, however, is not a suitable data source for this research project, as the election years in which respondents were surveyed (see europeanelectionstudies.net, n.d.) do not coincide with the measurement years of the Chapel Hill dataset (see Bakker, et al., 2015). Due to its extensive coverage in terms of both countries and years and comparability between them, Eurobarometer data therefore seems to be the only suitable data source for the analysis to be conducted in this paper, despite

[22] In these survey items, respondents were first confronted with the statement that *"Some people believe that certain areas of policy should be decided by the (national) government, while other areas of policy should be decided jointly within the European Union"* (see for example Eurobarometer 53, available at (GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, n.d.) They were subsequently asked to judge whether various policies should be decided by their respective national government or jointly with the EU (ibid.). Based on respondents' answers, Lubbers and Scheepers then construct measures of resistance to European integration in three distinct dimensions, which they then aggregate into a measure of "political Euroscepticism" (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2005, pp. 228-230; and Lubbers & Scheepers, 2010, p. 794).

[23] In more recent years, some surveys have included the question of whether, for specific policy areas, *more*, *less* or the *current* amount of European decision making on a certain issue was needed (see for example Eurobarometer 86.1, available in the Zacat database: (GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, n.d.). However, fewer policy areas are covered and the question, despite its similar impetus, is, in the end, fundamentally different from the one utilized by Lubbers and Scheepers, focusing on *change* in decision making level rather than which decision making level is appropriate in *absolute* terms.

criticisms that it systematically produces biased, *"integrationalist"* outcomes, serves primarily as a public relations instrument for the European Commission and violates several standards of good scientific practice[24] (Höpner & Jurczyk, 2015).

However, one of the three Eurobarometer questions listed by Vasilopoulou (2018), dealing with whether citizens identify primarily with their respective nationality or as European[25] and included in the later work of Lubbers and Scheepers as *"non-identification"* (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2010, p. 794), does not seem to measure Euroscepticism in a narrow sense. Citizens, after all, could well support the project of European integration without identifying as European, except for if one assumes a narrow definition of the integration process only allowing for full federalization as an end goal – an assumption which has been criticized in the literature on party-based Euroscepticism (Kaniok, 2012, p. 40) and is equally as problematic for the popular variety. The item will therefore not be included as a measurement of public Euroscepticism in this study.

The remaining two items listed by Vasilopoulou (2018, p. 25), however, seem more suitable for the measurement of Public Euroscepticism: firstly, the same question that measures "instrumental" Euroscepticism in the framework of Lubbers and Scheepers (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2010, p. 794): *"Generally speaking, do you think that (our country's) membership of the European Union is a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad?"*[26]. Secondly, one more recently included Eurobarometer question on the EU's image: *"In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative, or very negative image?"*[27]. Both questions will be included in the study, albeit in separate models to avoid collinearity issues. After all, they seem to mirror slightly different dimensions of Eurosceptic attitudes, one geared towards general feelings towards European integration irrespective of the benefits for their country, and one more specific, focused on national cost-benefits calculations. As the results of Meijers show, different measures of public Euroscepticism can yield very different results (Meijers, 2015, p. 418).

The Eurobarometer data was taken from the data portal ZACAT, maintained by the GESIS Data Archive for the Social Sciences (GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, n.d.). Survey rounds were selected following two rules: the data should be from the year of the respective CHES survey round, and if there were multiple instances of a question being asked in a given year, the earlier survey round

[24] These violations range from leading questions to biased response options and the removal of questions from the survey that fail to produce "integrationalist" outcomes – potentially a reason why the question on which the measure of "political Euroscepticism" was based is no longer included for 2014.

[25] "In the near future, do you see yourself as (1) (nationality) only; (2) (nationality) and European; (3) European and (nationality); (4) European only?" – see for example Eurobarometer 53, available at (GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, n.d.)

[26] See for example Eurobarometer 57.1, available at (GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, n.d.)

[27] See for example Eurobarometer 57.1, available at (GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, n.d.)

was chosen so that the chance of causes preceding effects was maximized. For the question on the EUs image, the survey rounds 57.1, 66.1[28], 73.4 and 81.2 were selected as a result. For the question whether EU membership was a "good thing", survey rounds 57.1, 65.2, 73.4 and 82.4 were chosen[29]. Euroscepticism is measured as the combined share of those who have a "negative" or "very negative" image of the EU in a given year, or alternatively, as the share of respondents finding EU membership of their country a "bad thing"[30].

One last control variable included by Meijers is the question whether Eurosceptic contagion is influenced by a party's government participation. Based on van de Wardt (2015) and van Spanje (2010), Meijers expects government parties to be less responsive to Eurosceptic results, and opposition parties to shift their policies more strongly in a Eurosceptic direction (Meijers, 2015, p. 417). Furthermore, opposition parties, not having to work together with and maintain the goodwill of European partners, can also afford more easily to criticize the European Union than government parties. Government participation is captured within the CHES trend file in the form of the variable "GOVT" (Bakker, et al., 2015).

National net payment balances could be an important factor in determining variation in both Eurosceptic vote and mainstream party position. National cost-benefit calculations – or their simplified portrayal in the media – might determine the level of Euroscepticism in a country. The infamous "Brexit Bus" claiming leaving the European Union would free up £350m a week for the British National Health Service (Payne, 2018) is a prime example. Empirical studies further support this assumption: Lubbers and Scheepers find that, after the introduction of the Euro, Euroscepticism increased in richer and decreased in poorer member states (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2010, p. 810). Furthermore, Segesten and Bossetta show that media in net contributing states tend to portray Euroscepticism as a domestic phenomenon, while in net receiver states, the phenomenon is often externalized by reporting about manifestations of Euroscepticism in other member states (Segesten & Bossetta, 2019). Therefore, the contribution to or received funds from the EU budget as a percentage of GDP is included as a control

[28] There was an earlier survey round including the question in 2006: 65.2. However, the data was in a different format from other surveys, with non-responses/"don't know" being assigned their own percentage value, while for all other survey rounds, these cases were dropped from the calculated percentages in ZACAT. To ensure consistent measurement, Eurobarometer 65.2 was foregone in favour of Eurobarometer 66.1

[29] This question was first asked in the Eurobarometer 53 in 2000. The unavailability of both this variable and national net payment balances for 1999 was one of the reasons for the exclusion of this year, as mentioned in section 4.3

[30] An alternative measure following Arnold and Hosli (2006, pp. 9-10) was also utilized, the results can be found in Appendix F. Here, the two measurements of public Euroscepticism were produced by deducting the percentage of respondents who found EU membership a "good" thing from those that considered it a "bad thing", and those for who the EU conjured up a "positive" or "very positive" image from the share of those for whom it came with "negative" or "very negative" connotations. The resulting net values range from -100 (no public Euroscepticism) to 100 (maximum public Euroscepticism).

variable, with non-Eurosceptic parties being expected to shift to a more Eurosceptic stance where national contributions increase as a percentage of GDP, and to a less Eurosceptic stance where they decrease. The data is provided by the European Commission on its website, from the year 2000 onwards (European Commission, n.d.).

Two potential moderators, besides those contained in the hypotheses of this paper, might be of relevance to the influence of Eurosceptic parties: firstly, Meijers, based on Abou-Chadi's finding that *"parties that have lost votes in a previous election react more strongly to radical right party success than those that performed better*" (Abou-Chadi, 2014, p. 432; also see Somer-Topcu, 2009), includes vote loss as a control variable as well. As in his study, the potential moderating influence of vote loss will here be operationalized as *"the difference in a mainstream party's percentage of the vote between the current and the former round"* (Meijers, 2015, p. 417). Secondly, the dissent within parties over European integration as an established potential moderator of Eurosceptic Contagion (Adam, et al., 2017) is contained within the CHES dataset and measured on an eleven-point scale ranging from zero to ten. A value of zero of this "eu_dissent" variable means that a party was "completely united" in the year in question, while a value of ten means it was "extremely divided".

Lastly, besides national election results, party positions could also be influenced by the results of past European elections. Being "second-order" elections in which less is at stake compared to national elections (Reif & Schmitt, 1980, pp. 9-10), these are often utilised by voters to express frustration with their national government by means of increased protest votes for newer, smaller, more populist or radical parties (Reif, 1997, p. 118). Hence, European elections often produce significantly better results for Eurosceptic parties than national elections (see Hobolt, et al., 2009). While due to less being "at stake", these results can be expected to exert less direct pressure to act on parties, they might still provide them with strong hints about Eurosceptic attitudes within the national populace, and electoral threats in upcoming national elections to be counteracted. Due to strong collinearity with national election results, European election results cannot be included as a control variable in the main model, but the full model will be estimated using the alternative measurement of European, rather than national, election results of Eurosceptic parties as the independent variable. European Parliament Vote shares are captured within the "epvote" variable in the CHES trend file (Bakker, et al., 2015).

With all relevant variables now operationalized, the only remaining piece of the research design to be briefly elaborated on is the appropriate method for analysing the collected data.

4.6. Method

This paper, just like "Contagious Euroscepticism", relies on fixed effects panel regression analysis using mainstream parties as the unit of analysis, with robust variance estimates clustered by mainstream

party (Meijers, 2015, p. 418). While random effects models could reduce variance potentially caused by random error in a dataset, fixed effects models offer the advantage of excluding all time-invariant possible confounders from the analysis and are hence useful to reduce systematic bias caused by unit-specific effects (Clark & Linzer, 2015). Therefore, the use of fixed effects models is, as Abou-Chadi argues, *"essential for making causal claims about the effect of niche party success on mainstream party behaviour"* (Abou-Chadi, 2014, p. 427). His argument applies beyond the mainstream-niche-dichotomy, to large-n studies analysing party competition in general: within the EU, with its massively differing political and party systems, it is unrealistic to control for all potentially relevant institutional, cultural, economic and other differences between cases. Using a fixed effects model, the analysed variation is reduced to "within-party variation over time" (Abou-Chadi, 2014, p. 426), thus allowing stronger causal claims – albeit at the cost of not being able to estimate the exact strength of any influence of between-effects and of time-invariant variables (see Bell, et al., 2019), such as initial vote shares, positions on Europe before the investigation period or east/west European differences.

Three different basic models are estimated: The first model includes all non-moderator controls and operationalizes Euroscepticism using the Eurobarometer question on the EUs image. The second model deviates in that it utilizes the question on EU *benefits*. Including these measurements in different models avoids potential problems of collinearity between them. Model three is a modification of model one, but the main explanatory variable, Eurosceptic electoral strength, is measured using Eurosceptic results in European elections rather than national elections, to see whether second-order elections differ in their impact from those of first order. However, these models can only generate results regarding hypothesis H1. As hypotheses H2-H4 and some of the controls are of a conditional nature, different statistical models are required. Therefore, further models with interaction terms for non-Eurosceptic left-right position, non-Eurosceptic nicheness, Eurosceptic salience assigned to EU integration, non-Eurosceptic vote loss, and the internal division of non-Eurosceptic parties are included, serving as a basis to calculate the marginal effects of those variables. Marginal effects graphs are then generated to visualize these effects. Contrary to the basic regression tables with interactive terms, these graphs allow for the assessment of conditioning and moderating effects, and for which range of observations these results are significant (see Brambor, et al., 2006, p. 75).

5. Results

The following table (Table 1) portrays the outcomes of the three regression analyses outlined above, allowing for the evaluation of Hypothesis H1 and the impact of the included non-moderator control variables[31]:

Table 1: Results of fixed-effects regression, model 1-3

	(1) Party Position on European Integration	(2) Party Position on European Integration	(3) Party Position on European Integration
Eurosceptic Vote Share (National)	-0.0151*** (0.00416)	-0.0137** (0.00418)	
Eurosceptic Vote Share (EP Election)			-0.000123 (0.00371)
Party Size	0.0120 (0.00664)	0.0111 (0.0067)	0.0190** (0.00622)
National Net EU Contributions	-0.0798 (0.0576)	-0.0794 (0.0568)	-0.0742 (0.0607)
Government Participation	0.000646 (0.0628)	0.0125 (0.0601)	-0.0395 (0.0642)
Public Euroscepticism (Image)	0.00611* (0.00276)		0.00438 (0.00274)
Public Euroscepticism (Benefit)		0.00869 (0.00554)	
Constant	5.912*** (0.166)	5.864*** (0.185)	5.637*** (0.162)
Number of observations (party/year)	443	443	443
Number of observed parties in sample	174	174	174
Number of relevant parties (_N > 1)	124	124	124

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001 Standard errors in parentheses

[31] This regression table, like other regression tables within this thesis, does not include R^2 to measure how much of the observed variance a given model can explain. This is because it is contested whether the xtreg function returns the correct R^2 values (see Al-Gamrh, 2018), and the high deviation between areg and xtreg results: the adjusted R^2 using areg was 0.66 (unadjusted: 0.7969), while the "within" R^2 of xtreg was 0.0947 and the "overall" R^2 0.0127. Because of the relatively low importance of R^2 in a paper primarily aiming to test hypotheses, the value was hence omitted to avoid reporting incorrect values.

As the results for both model 1 and 2 indicate (Table 1), Eurosceptic electoral results do seem to have an impact on the positioning of their competitors on the issue of European integration. The correlation is highly significant, reaching a p-value of $p = 0$ in model 1 and of $p = 0.001$ in model 2. However, the effect is comparatively small: for any percentage point of the vote gained by Eurosceptic parties, their competition is expected to shift their stance in a more Eurosceptic direction by 0.0151 and 0.0137 points respectively on a seven-point-scale. Still, hypothesis H1 can be accepted based on these results: the stronger the electoral result of Eurosceptic parties, the more Eurosceptic stances their competition will take. Interestingly, the same does not apply to European elections. Being "second-order" elections (Reif & Schmitt, 1980), their results do not seem to exert the same amount of pressure on parties, as demonstrated by the very small marginal effect size and lack of statistical significance of the main explanatory variable.

Turning to the control variables, party size does seem to impact party positioning on Europe, with positive effects across all models and statistical significance in model 3. National net contributions, despite a consistent negative effect as predicted, do not seem to be a statistically significant influence on party positions on the EU. The same applies to government participation, a variable found to be significant by Meijers – however, only using the unusually lax significance level of $p<0.10$ (Meijers, 2015, p. 418), with this thesis relying on the more common threshold of $p<0.05$ to identify significant findings. The perhaps most unexpected result is found on Public Euroscepticism: while, as in "Contagious Euroscepticism", the question of whether EU membership is seen as beneficial (or "Instrumental Euroscepticism") does not seem to have a significant influence on the variation of party positions (ibid., p. 418), the survey item on the EU's general image is indeed found to be significant ($p<0.05$). The effect, however, is positive rather than negative. This suggests the – on first glance perplexing – effect that the higher the percentage of citizens with a "negative" or "very negative" perception of the EU, the more supportive non-Eurosceptic parties become of European integration.

Still, to assess hypotheses H2 to H4 as well as the influence of non-Eurosceptic vote loss and party division on Europe, simple regression models are insufficient, as these hypotheses are all based on the interaction of multiple variables, hypothesizing different factors to moderate the relationship between Eurosceptic electoral strength and non-Eurosceptic position on Europe. Therefore, the following regression table (Table 2) shows models accounting for the influence of the weighted mean salience Eurosceptic parties assign to EU issues (H2), the position of non-Eurosceptic parties on the left-right axis (H3) and the nicheness of non-Eurosceptic parties (H4). All models are based on Model 1 from the previous regression table, but include interaction terms between the variable in question and Eurosceptic vote share, rather than just the simple vote share of Eurosceptic parties on its own.

Table 2: Result of fixed-effects regression including interactive terms, models 4-6

	(4) Party Position on European Integration	(5) Party Position on European Integration	(6) Party Position on European Integration
Eurosceptic Vote Share (National)	0.00219 (0.0176)	-0.0257 (0.0145)	-0.00922* (0.00401)
Eurosceptic EU Salience (Weighted Mean)	0.0559 (0.0411)		
Eurosceptic Vote Share # Mean Salience	-0.00207 (0.00251)		
Left-Right Position		-0.114 (0.0838)	
Eurosceptic Vote Share # Left-Right		0.00216 (0.00280)	
Standardized Nicheness			-0.0255 (0.0305)
Eurosceptic Vote Share # Nicheness			0.00208 (0.00119)
Party Size	0.0128* (0.00549)	0.0121 (0.00682)	0.0160* (0.00663)
National Net EU Contributions	-0.0626 (0.0883)	-0.0831 (0.0555)	-0.00742 (0.0618)
Government Participation	0.0507 (0.0596)	0.00981 (0.0591)	0.0510 (0.0605)
Public Euroscepticism (Image)	0.00434 (0.00269)	0.00622* (0.00279)	0.00219 (0.00293)
Constant	5.512*** (0.298)	6.502*** (0.456)	5.729*** (0.162)
Number of observations (party/year)	393	443	328
Number of observed parties in sample	164	174	133
Number of relevant parties (_N > 1)	123	124	108

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001 Standard errors in parentheses

The regression results in Table 2 show that the same control variables found to be significant in model 1 and 3 – Public Euroscepticism based on the *"image"* Eurobarometer item, and Party Size – are found to be significant in model 5 and 6 respectively as well, further supporting the notion that an increase in these two factors leads to more pro-European party stances on European integration. Model six also finds the Eurosceptic vote share significant. The coefficient here, however, is not to be interpreted as the unconditional marginal effect of Eurosceptic vote share on non-Eurosceptic positioning, but merely as the effect of Eurosceptic vote share if non-Eurosceptic standardized nicheness – i.e. the relative nicheness of a party compared to its competitors – is zero (Brambor, et al., 2006, pp. 71-73). The same applies to the non-significance and coefficient of the main explanatory variable in model 4 and 5 – in fact, simply rescaling the "position" variable for 0 to signify a central position and -5 and 5 as the extremes would render the "Eurosceptic Vote Share" variable significant (see Fig. 2).

Turning to the interaction terms, none are found to be significant in themselves. However, neither does this result allow the conclusion that they are insignificant for *any given value* of the moderating variable, nor does it allow for the analysis of conditioning and moderating effects (Brambor, et al., 2006, p. 74). Both these shortcomings can be remedied by using conditioning plots. Fig 1-3 show interaction effects of Eurosceptic Weighted Mean Salience (Figure 1), non-Eurosceptic Left-Right Position (Figure 2) and non-Eurosceptic Nicheness (Figure 3):

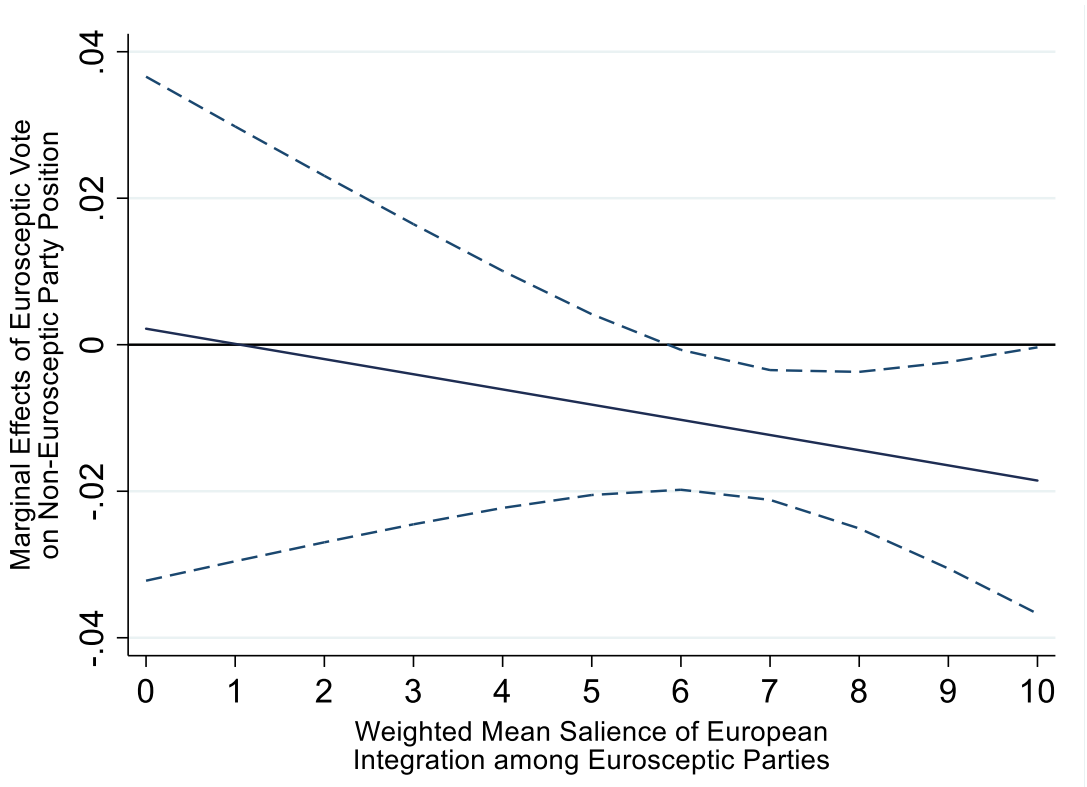

Figure 1: Marginal effects of Eurosceptic vote share for different Eurosceptic EU salience means

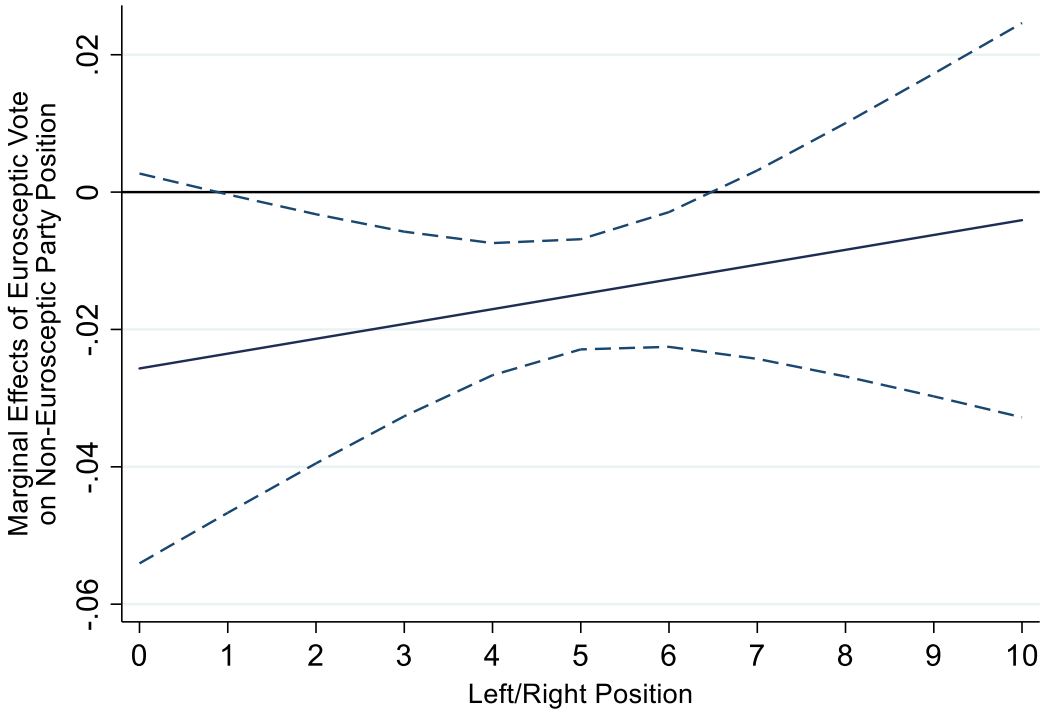

Figure 2: Marginal effects of Eurosceptic vote share for different non-Eurosceptic ideological positions on the left-right-axis

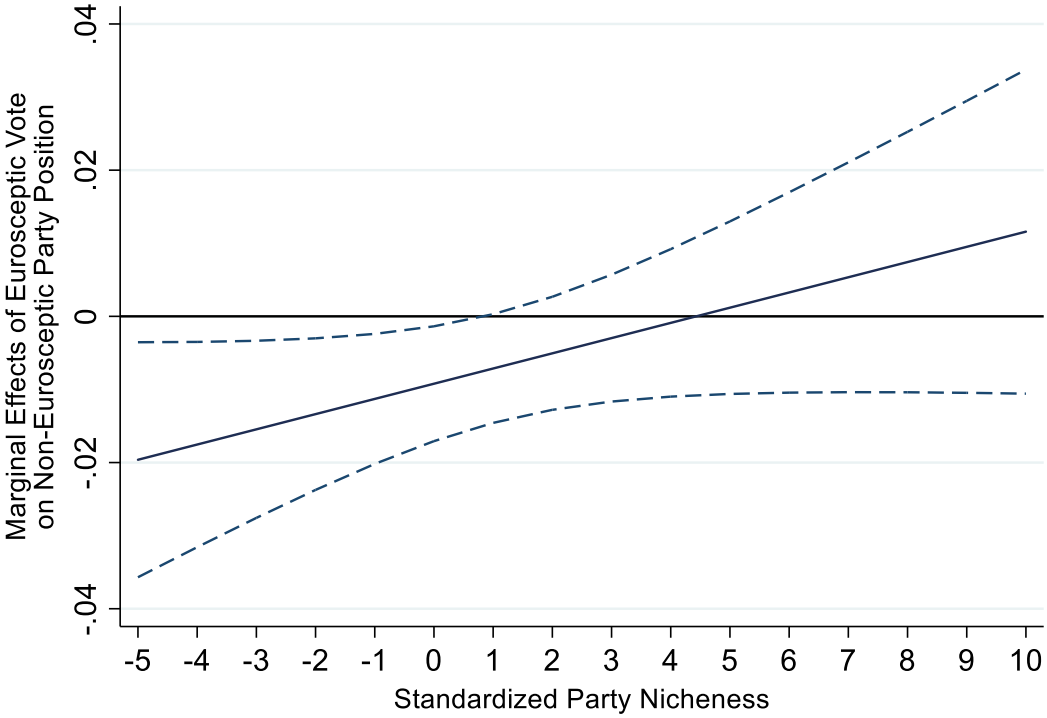

Figure 3: Marginal effects of Eurosceptic vote share for different non-Eurosceptic nicheness means

As figures 1-3 show, the calculation of marginal effects yields significant results for all hypotheses. All three graphs exhibit both a clear slope and a meaningful range of significant effects[32].

Regarding hypothesis H2, it can be said that the salience Eurosceptic parties assign to European integration does indeed condition their influence on their competition (Figure 1). Their impact steadily increases with rising salience, up to -.02 per vote percentage point gained if they treat European integration as the most important issue. These findings are significant from a value of six on the CHES scale upwards, meaning that Eurosceptic parties are found to have a certain, unequivocal effect on their competition where they treat European integration as an issue of above-average importance.

In respect of a party's left-right position, the results further support those of Meijers (2015): The predicted effect of eurosceptic vote share on party position is negative across the entire range of the political spectrum, with left parties being more affected than right parties, and statistical significance found mainly on the political left as well (Figure 2). The slope is very similar to the original results, with the significant range of approximately one to six resembling that of Meijers too, and, in fact, including slightly more parties of the more extreme left (see (Meijers, 2015, p. 419). Whether this is due to differing impact between "radical left" and "radical right" Eurosceptic parties, as found by Meijers, cannot be tested within the theoretical frame of this study, as Eurosceptic parties are not categorized into a framework of extreme left and extreme right "challenger parties".

Non-Eurosceptic party nicheness, as expected, seems to have an impact on how strongly parties are affected by the electoral results of their Eurosceptic competition as well (Figure 3). A significant negative effect of Eurosceptic results on party positions can be detected for those parties whose standardized nicheness lies below a value of approximately one, meaning that there is a significant influence of Eurosceptic results on those parties who are *just as or less niche* than the average party competing in their system. For those parties whose issue emphasis deviates above-average strongly from the political mainstream of their system, no significant impact of Eurosceptic votes can be found. H4 can hence be accepted: non-Eurosceptic parties with a more *niche* policy profile are indeed less succeptible to Eurosceptic electoral results, catering to their own policy niches and voter segments and being more policy-seeking on average (Adams, et al., 2006, p. 515), and hence less likely to change their position.

Two further potential moderators, although not contained in explicit hypotheses in this thesis, remain to be controlled for: firstly, the change in vote share a party experienced in a previous election, based on the assumption that parties might be more inclined to change their policy after electoral losses

[32] Results are significant where the dashed lines, signifying the upper and lower bound of the 95% confidence intervals for a given value of the moderating variable, are both above or below zero and therefore an unequivocal correlation in either a positive or negative direction exists (see Brambor, et al., 2006, p. 76)

(Somer-Topcu, 2009), and secondly, intra-party dissent on European integration, based on the finding of Adam et al. (2017) that pro-European parties with strong internal dissent on Europe are more likely to resort to accomodative strategies towards Eurosceptic parties and hence be more succeptible to Eurosceptic contagion. The following marginal effects plots (Figures 4 and 5) show the results for these two controls (for the corresponding regression results, see Appendix E).

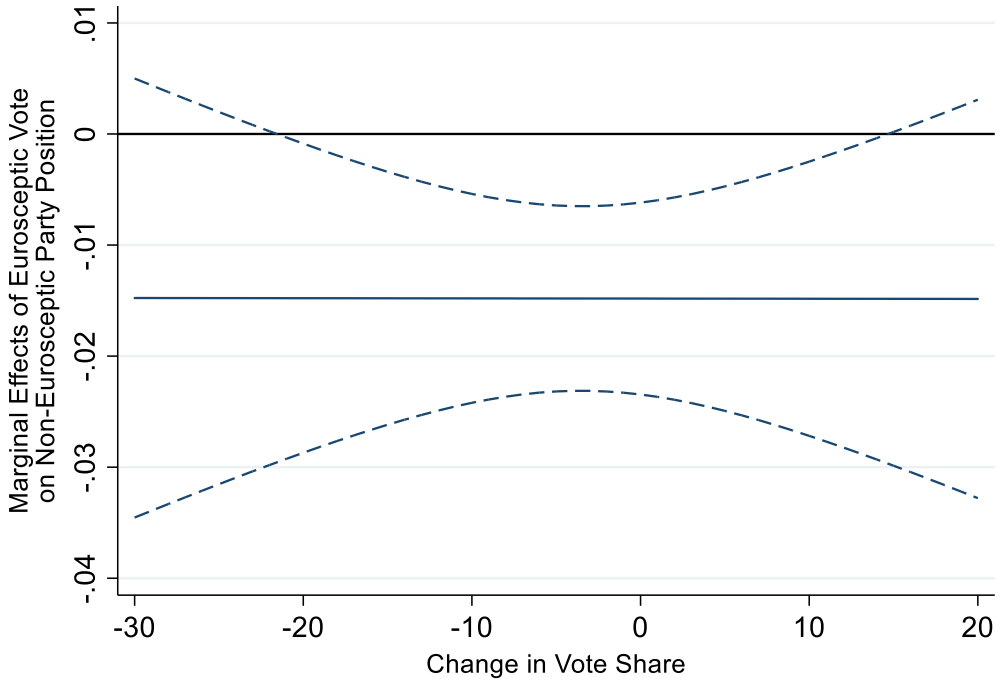

Figure 4: Marginal effects of Eurosceptic vote for different levels of pro-European change in vote share

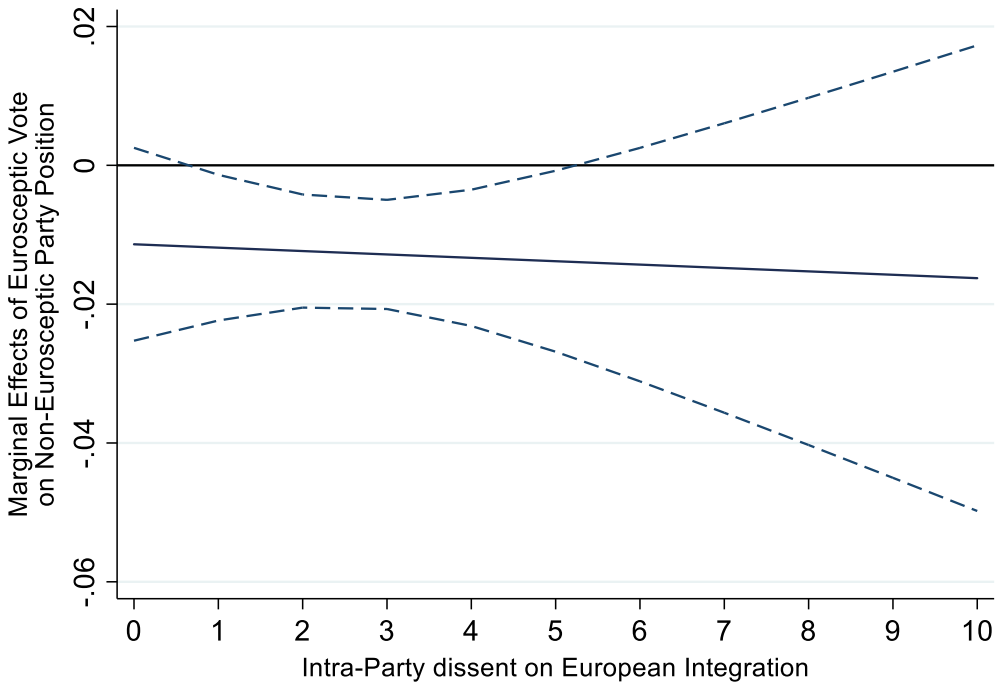

Figure 5: Marginal effects of Eurosceptic vote for different levels of pro-European intra-party dissent

The marginal effects graphs show no meaningful effect of either changing vote share (Figure 4) or intra-party dissent (Figure 5) on party positions regarding European integration. While certain ranges of these moderating variables might be *statistically* significant, the slope of both graphs is negligible. Especially for the change in vote share, the graph runs essentially parallel to the x-axis[33], suggesting that the impact of Eurosceptic electoral success remains the same for all levels of change in their competition's vote share. The results for intra-party dissent do not look much more encouraging: the uncovered effect is miniscule and only significant for the lower ranges of intra-party dissent on Europe, up to a value of approximately five. The results do hence not suggest that parties with high internal division are more vulnerable to Eurosceptic contagion than more united parties.

6. Discussion

With the empirical analyses now concluded, it is time to bind the results back to existing theory on Euroscepticism, European integration and party competition. Furthermore, a brief critical reflection about potential shortcomings, weaknesses and blind spots of the study seems in order to qualify the degree to which the results found meanigful, as well as the certainty of them being correct.

6.1. Theoretical Implications

The results found in this study come with a variety of theoretical implications and connections to existing literature. First and foremost, many of the findings of Meijers from "Contagious Euroscepticism" (Meijers, 2015) are confirmed utilising the different operationalization of Eurosceptic parties proposed in this thesis. Most crucially, the main result that Eurosceptic parties and their electoral successes influence the positioning of their competition holds when not relying on "mainstream" dichotomies to categorize parties beyond their Eurosceptic attitudes. In both studies, this impact of Eurosceptic party strength is found to be moderated by the salience Eurosceptic parties assign to EU issues. Only if European integration features prominently in the public stance of Eurosceptic parties do other parties shift their position in a more Eurosceptic direction in response. In the absence of *vocal* Eurosceptic competition, parties do not seem to have an incentive to change their own position on the EU. Party competition over Europe is hence defined by both an element of positional competition, as emphasised in Downs' "Economic Theory of Democracy" (Downs, 1957), and an element of issue ownership, as emphasised by saliency theory (e.g. Dolezal, et al., 2014).

This effect, however, is only found for the results of national elections. This provides further support for the well-established notion that European elections, being "second order"-elections, are of lower

[33] The regression coefficient of the interaction term, and therefore the slope of the graph, lies at a negligible -0.00000165, see Appendix E

importance than those on the national level (Reif & Schmitt, 1980). Their results do, consequently, not seem to produce significant Eurosceptic contagion effects.

Interestingly, contrary to Meijers' finding *that "public opinion remains a powerful driver of mainstream policy shifts"* (Meijers, 2015, p. 419), this study finds no support for the notion that positional shifts of non-Eurosceptic parties towards a more Eurosceptic stance are partially caused by underlying shifts in public opinion, rather than electoral contagion. On the contrary, while the Eurobarometer question on country benefits, like in the original study, yields no significant results (ibid, p.418), the newly included operationalization of Euroscepticism utilizing the Eurobarometer item on the EU's image is significantly and, surprisingly, slightly positively correlated with party position changes on Europe on the 7-point CHES scale. This result indicates that, rather than adapting to public Euroscepticism, non-Eurosceptic parties, if they change their position, become slightly more pro-European in the face of declining public opinion of the EU. They seem to, if anything, "double down" on their previously held position and make an even stronger case for European integration, possibly in an attempt to sway public opinion back towards a more pro-European attitude.

The results therefore suggest that parties are not programmatically sensitive to popular Euroscepticism, but only adapt their stance once the public's changing position is reflected in the presence of competing Eurosceptic parties who emphasize European integration and whose results in national first-order elections make them an electoral threat. These electoral threats are likely to be present in most European states to some degree: being an issue outside the dominant left-right dimension of party conflict, European integration is a prime target for "policy entrepreneurship" of parties trying to shift the basis of party competition for their political gain (see (Hobolt & de Vries, 2015, pp. 1161-1162). However, "*high levels of public Euroscepticism do not necessarily translate into high levels of support for parties expressing Euroscepticism and that high levels of support for such parties are not necessarily indicative of high levels of popular Euroscepticism"* (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2002, p. 22). It is therefore only where parties successfully bring Euroscepticism to the electoral stage, hence directly impacting the electoral chances of their competitors, that these competitors adapt their own position. It seems like *"political entrepreneurs must mobilize the tension"* (Hooghe & Marks, 2008, p. 13) over European integration and bring it into the electoral arena for it to have an impact on domestic party conflict. In fact, similar dynamics can often be observed in political practice for a variety of policy areas. To name just one recent salient example, the strong showing of the German Green party in the 2019 European Parliament election prompted competing parties to pledge increased efforts on climate protection (Tagesschau, 2019), with chancellor Merkel personally calling for more decisive action on the issue (Schäfers & von Blazekovic, 2019).

Furthermore, in line with Meijers' findings, it seems that parties on the left are more susceptible to Eurosceptic contagion than those further on the right of the policy spectrum. This might be because of the explanation suggested by Meijers that, when restricting the analysis to radical Eurosceptic "challengers", radical right Eurosceptic parties influence both left and right parties, while radical left Eurosceptics influence only the political left (Meijers, 2015, p. 420). This explanation could not be tested in this thesis: aiming to capture the full width of party-based Euroscepticism in Europe, it has not assumed Eurosceptic parties to be ideologically positioned at either the extreme left or right. In fact, the dataset, utilising a pure Eurosceptic – non-Eurosceptic distinction, contains such prominent centrist Eurosceptic parties as the British Conservatives.

Instead, however, this thesis has been able to introduce and control for a further moderator of Eurosceptic contagion based on recent theoretical advancements: party *nicheness,* or the degree to which a party *"emphasizes policy areas neglected by its competitors"* (Meyer & Miller, 2015, p. 261), seems to play a decisive factor on how easily parties are influenced by electoral gains of their Eurosceptic competition. It is those parties that are closer to the political "mainstream", or, in other words, deviate less than average from the mean issue emphasis of parties in their respective party system, for which significant contagion effects are found. This is in line with the theoretical expectations set out in the introduction of this paper: the more niche a non-Eurosceptic party, the more policy-seeking it can be expected to be (Adams, et al., 2006, p. 515) and the narrower and more specific the set of voters it will likely rely on. Hence, emergent Eurosceptic competition poses less of a threat to parties who occupy a separate "niche" of the policy spectrum. This finding is, beyond its empirical relevance, also relevant for further theory development in that it shows ways of incorporating the most current state of research on "niche" parties into research on party competition. Rather than relying on a binary "mainstream-niche" distinction, and hence on arbitrary cut-off points, to distinguish "niche" from "mainstream" parties, *continuous* nicheness can be a valuable asset to future analyses as a potential moderator of a broad variety of party characteristics.

The thesis has also controlled for party division on Europe and their change in vote share in the most recent election to account for findings that non-Eurosceptic parties are more likely to adapt more Eurosceptic stances in response to Eurosceptic competition when they are internally split on Europe (Adam, et al., 2017), and that vote loss in previous election makes parties more likely to shift their position (Somer-Topcu, 2009). However, neither the newly included former nor the latter, in line with the findings of Meijers (2015), seem to make a substantial difference in Eurosceptic programmatic contagion.

One last finding worth briefly discussing is that party size does, in contrast to Meijers' results (Meijers, 2015, p. 418), turn out to be a significant predictor of party positions on European integration. This

might be a result of the differing operationalization of the dependent variable, focussing on variation in position rather than in position *change*. The correlation itself, if not a statistical artefact, can likely be explained by parties being socialized into the political "mainstream" as they grow, adopting positions that both allow them to appeal to a broader voter base and maintain the *status quo* in which they achieved their electoral success. There might, however, be some danger of reverse causality here: as parties become less Eurosceptic, they might appeal to a broader part of a broadly pro-European public and hence increase their vote share. In fact, the same might apply to the main explanatory variable: non-Eurosceptic parties taking more Eurosceptic positions might normalize Euroscepticism in national political discourse, and thus enable Eurosceptic parties to be electorally successful. This threat to inference, along with other potential weaknesses and blind spots of the study, will be briefly addressed in the following section before concluding the thesis.

6.2. Critical reflection

While this paper has produced significant results regarding its main hypotheses, some of its findings should be taken with some caution. Two caveats come to mind in particular: firstly, besides statistical significance, effect sizes should be kept in mind when interpreting the results. Secondly, the results might suffer from two major threats to valid inference: reverse causality in regard to both the main explanatory variable and the control variable of party size, and measurement error regarding public Euroscepticism.

Regarding the role of effect sizes, while the relationship between main explanatory and dependent variable is highly significant, the effect size is relatively small. For one percent of the vote won by Eurosceptic parties, competing parties will only change their position by 0.0151 on a scale ranging from one to seven (see Table 1, Model 1). Eurosceptic parties hence seem to, on average, have a detectable, but limited influence on their competition, prompting them to make slight adjustments to their policy rather than major changes. The same applies to the remaining significant results on party size and, particularly, public opinion. While a significant ($p<0.05$) and, surprisingly, positive effect is found for the impact of the EU's public image in model 1 (see Tab. 1), this effect is small and should hence not be overstated. Pro-European parties only grow more supportive by a margin of 0.00611 on the CHES scale per percentage of the population critical of the EU. However, the finding is enough to strongly suggest that, as theorized above, parties do not react in an *accommodative* way to growing public Euroscepticism, but only shift position when this Euroscepticism manifests itself in concrete electoral threats.

However, this finding is subject to some qualifications as well, mainly due to questions over the measurement of public Euroscepticism. The possibility of measurement error cannot be entirely excluded, although the data is based on a rather large sample of European citizens, the utilized survey

item clearly reflects on popular perception of the EU, and the results are robust utilising an alternative operationalization based on net values of the same the same survey item[34] (see Appendix F). The problem lies in two issues this thesis cannot resolve, but that might need attention from the broader scientific community: a lack of conceptual clarity on public Euroscepticism and its consistent measurement, and the Eurobarometer as a questionable data source for such measurement.

Measures of party-based Euroscepticism have been shown to be largely consistent with each other (Whitefield, et al., 2007), suggesting that different existing measurements reliably capture the phenomenon of Euroscepticism in parties. The same cannot be said about public Euroscepticism: the phenomenon is either to multifaceted in nature to capture in a single measurement, or, at the very least, no such appropriate measurement exists yet. Meijers, for example, differentiating between "political" and "instrumental" Euroscepticism based on the theoretical framework of Lubbers and Scheepers (2005; 2010), finds a significant negative impact of the former, while the latter yields no significant effects (Meijers, 2015, p. 418). The non-significance of "instrumental" Euroscepticism is replicated in this thesis, while the newly included measure utilising the Eurobarometer item on the EU's image yields a significant and, surprisingly, slightly positive effect. As these results show, depending on the underlying precise data source and measurement, controlling for public Euroscepticism with different established measures can yield vastly differing results.

This problem is further exacerbated by the questionable methods and ever-changing nature of the only data source available for a longer time scale and frequent measurement points, the Eurobarometer. "Political Euroscepticism" (see Lubbers & Scheepers, 2005), for example, although found to have a significant influence on party position change by Meijers (2015), cannot be controlled for in this study, or any study going beyond the year 2010. The reason is that the survey item the measure was based on has been dropped from recent iterations of the Eurobarometer (see European Commission, n.d.).

Besides the problem of discontinued survey items – particularly those that fail to produce pro-integration results (also see Signorelli, 2012, pp. 64-70) – the Eurobarometer, as survey commissioned by the European Commission, an entity clearly interested in pro-integration results, has been criticized for a wide variety of further methodological flaws. These range from leading or incomprehensible questions and biased response options (Höpner & Jurczyk, 2015), to translation problems and changed question wording impacting the comparability between countries and measurement points (Nissen,

[34] following Arnold and Hosli (2006, pp. 9-10), the share of positive perceptions was subtracted from the share of negative views in a country to obtain a net measure of public Euroscepticism and account for a potential share of staunch pro-Europeans potentially outweighing the influence of Eurosceptic parts of the population in some cases

2014, pp. 718-721), to changing samples between survey rounds (ibid., pp. 716-718). Unfortunately, the Eurobarometer is the only suitable data source available in regular intervals over a long time span (also see Meijers, 2015, pp. 417-418). In conclusion, while based on the available data, efforts have been made to ensure the results are robust and valid, both the definition and the measurement of public Euroscepticism could benefit from further refinement, and it might be worthwhile revisiting the results of this study once clarification and methodological progress have been achieved.

Another potential point of criticism, remaining unaddressed in "Contagious Euroscepticism" as well, is possible reverse causality. This applies to the main explanatory variable as well as to the significant control variables: Changes in the position of mainstream parties towards a more Eurosceptic position might change societal climate, enabling Eurosceptic parties to net better electoral results. Changes towards a more-pro-European position might also make parties more acceptable as an electoral choice to the – on average – mainly pro-European publics[35] in most European states, increasing their vote share in subsequent elections, rather than increasing party size rendering parties more pro-European.

This issue could be addressed, firstly, with theoretical arguments about the suspected direction of causality. One might, for example, expect changes in party position to have a limited impact on voters if these voters are assumed to be, on average, neither particularly informed about the EU nor consider European integration an important issue (see for example Carrubba, 2001). However, this approach is best supported by further statistical evidence, as good arguments for either causal direction exist. It is hence preferable to also test for reverse causality using the data at hand. Methodologically, reverse causality is often tested by lagging the independent variable (Reed, 2015, p. 897). If the independent variable at t-1 has a significant effect on the dependent variable at t, the temporal order of causes preceding effects suggest a causal relationship between the variables. This, however, with CHES data being collected only every four years and national elections potentially having happened years before the lagged measurement point, would create gaps of more than half a decade between the Eurosceptic vote share measurement point at t-1 and the position measurement point at t. In this timespan, another election will usually already have happened, and parties might be adapting to its result already – the lag between two periods, with the added lag of election periods, is simply too big for meaningful results. Hence, simply lagging the independent variable is not viable for this study given the data at hand.

There is, however, a further simple methodological approach that allows for direct testing of reverse causality by *"running regression models using the dependent variable at t − 1 to predict the independent variable at time t"*, as suggested by Abou-Chadi (Abou-Chadi, 2014, p. 429). This approach

[35] As pointed out earlier, in the entire sample used in this study, only in the case of Great Britain in 2010 did more respondents find EU membership a "good thing" than a "bad thing"

reduces the temporal gap to a maximum of four years, with an election usually having been held at some point between t-1 and t. Applying this method, the position on Europe held by a party at t-1 does not seem to affect its size/vote share at t in a statistically significant manner (see Appendix G). Since the position of *individual* parties at t-1 is unlikely to predict aggregate Eurosceptic vote shares at t, the mean position on Europe of non-Eurosceptic parties per country and measurement point, weighted by their size, was calculated to then regress the lagged value of this variable on the vote share of Eurosceptic parties. Again, the outcome is not statistically significant and hence does not indicate reverse causality, or (average) non-Eurosceptic party positions in a country determining subsequent Eurosceptic vote shares (see Appendix H).

7. Conclusion

This thesis has addressed the question whether the electoral results of Eurosceptic parties cause competing parties within their system to adapt their own stance on European integration in a more Eurosceptic direction, building upon the 2015 article by Maurits J. Meijers on "Contagious Euroscepticism". The research design has been subject to various modifications compared to Meijers' article. Most importantly, the distinction between "Eurosceptic challengers" on the one hand and "mainstream" parties on the other has been dropped in favour of a simpler Eurosceptic – non-Eurosceptic categorization, and the dependent variable has been re-operationalized to reflect the variation in absolute party position rather than change in party position. The analysis, based mainly on Chapel Hill Expert Survey data (Bakker, et al., 2015), indeed indicates a slight, but statistically significant effect of Eurosceptic electoral success in national first-order elections on non-Eurosceptic party position.

This effect does not seem to be a result of underlying changes in public opinion based on the available Eurobarometer data. In fact, non-Eurosceptic parties seem to be unresponsive to public opinion alone, and to only shift their stance on Europe in the face of emergent electoral threats by Eurosceptic parties. This suggests Eurosceptic parties play a key role as "policy entrepreneurs", carrying the conflict over European integration into the electoral arena and hence forcing their competition to adapt their stances. The impact of Eurosceptic parties is found to be moderated by the salience Eurosceptic parties assign to European integration, indicating that party competition over Europe is structured along the lines of both an element of substantive positional conflict and salience/issue ownership. The left/right position of non-Eurosceptic parties is also found to be impactful: in line with the findings of Meijers (2015), more leftist parties seem slightly more susceptible to Eurosceptic contagion than those further to the political right. Changes in their own vote share or the degree to which a pro-European party is split internally, on the other hand, do not seem to have a significant influence on their position on Europe.

A last moderator found to be of importance in this study has been the nicheness of non-Eurosceptic parties. Traditionally seen as a binary and fixed characteristic (e.g. Meguid, 2005), and often used for distinguishing between parties to be placed on the independent and dependent variable respectively, the niche party concept has evolved in recent years to reflect the insight that party nicheness is changeable, context-dependent and continuous in nature (Meyer & Miller, 2015). Existing research employing the niche party concept, however, has not incorporated these insights into scientific practice so far. As this study has shown, measures of continuous party nicheness can yield significant results and allow for a more nuanced assessment of which degree of party nicheness has which precise effect on party behaviour. More precisely, parties who are less niche than the average party in their system have been found to be influenced in a statistically significant way by Eurosceptic competition.

The findings of this study have some significant practical implications for research and political practice: not only should, as previous studies have indicated (see Abou-Chadi, 2014; Meijers, 2015), the influence of more "niche" been taken into account when analysing the policy position shifts of other parties. The mechanism via which Eurosceptic attitudes translate from the general population to the political party system has also become clearer. Rather than reacting to mere societal opinion shifts, it is only in the face of electoral pressure that parties reconsider their policy stances. Similar dynamics are likely to exist for further "niche" issues, such as anti-immigration or environmental concerns, with the reaction of German parties to Green electoral pressure in the European elections earlier this year being just one case in point (Tagesschau, 2019). This has implications for both how democratic systems can be interpreted - as arenas of strategic interaction and electoral competition rather than of content-based deliberation - as well as for which institutional safeguards (such as electoral threshold clauses) might be appropriate if one wishes to limit "niche" party influence.

Future research could take various directions: firstly, the findings on Eurosceptic contagion could be further solidified and extended by controlling for additional moderators of the phenomenon. Investigating the impact of electoral shocks, i.e. the effect of the variation in *changes* in Eurosceptic vote shares on *changes* in positioning on European integration, might also be a worthwhile endeavour. Found to be significant for Eurosceptic contagion, continuously measured party nicheness should be taken into consideration as an explanatory for a broader range of issue areas and dimensions of party competition, as current research often still relies on outdated binary distinctions. Furthermore, as parties, in this study, have been found to react to party-based Euroscepticism, but not popular Euroscepticism, the question under which circumstances popular Euroscepticism is expressed in electoral results merits closer examination as well. For this, however, further clarification of the concept of public/popular Euroscepticism is needed in terms of both appropriate definition and measurement. Eurobarometer data, as the only suitable data source for many longitudinal quantitative

designs, has serious methodological weaknesses and tends to produce widely differing outcomes depending on which survey items are used, as shown by the comparison of the results found in this study and its 2015 predecessor “Contagious Euroscepticism” (Meijers, 2015).

One thing seems certain either way: as Eurosceptic parties continue to stay a relevant force in European politics, having solidified their significant 2014 gains (Fontanella-Khan & Carnegy, 2014) in the 2019 European Parliament election (Heath, 2019) and increasingly often participating in national governments, the impact of their success on their political environment will certainly remain a salient topic of research in years to come.

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Appendices

App. A: Non-Eurosceptic party/year cases

Table A1: List of non-Eurosceptic party/year observations

country	party_id	party	year
be	102	PS	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
be	103	SPA	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
be	104	ECOLO	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
be	105	Groen	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
be	106	MR	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
be	107	VLD	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
be	108	CDH	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
be	109	CD&V	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
be	110	NVA	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
be	111	FDF	2014
dk	201	SD	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
dk	202	RV	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
dk	203	KF	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
dk	211	V	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
dk	218	LA	2010, 2014
ge	301	CDU	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
ge	302	SPD	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
ge	303	FDP	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
ge	304	Grunen	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
ge	308	CSU	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
gr	401	PASOK	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
gr	402	ND	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
gr	414	DIMAR	2014
fr	602	PS	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
fr	603	PRG	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
fr	605	EELV	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
fr	609	UMP	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
fr	613	MODEM	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
fr	621	NC	2010, 2014
fr	622	PRV	2014
fr	623	AC	2014
irl	701	FF	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
irl	702	FG	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
irl	703	Lab	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
irl	706	PD	2002, 2006
it	802	DS	2002, 2006
it	805	AN	2002, 2006, 2010
it	807	SDI	2006
it	808	VERDI	2006, 2010
it	813	RAD	2006
it	814	UDC	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014

Table A1: List of non-Eurosceptic party/year observations

country	party_id	party	year
it	815	FI	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
it	818	CDU	2002
it	819	DEM	2002, 2006
it	823	PPI	2002
it	825	RI	2002
it	827	SVP	2006, 2010, 2014
it	828	IdV	2002, 2006, 2010
it	829	UDEUR	2002, 2006
it	835	NPSI	2006
it	837	PD	2010, 2014
it	840	MpA	2010
it	843	CD	2014
it	846	SC	2014
it	847	VdA	2014
nl	1001	CDA	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
nl	1002	PvdA	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
nl	1003	VVD	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
nl	1004	D66	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
nl	1005	GL	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
nl	1020	50PLUS	2014
uk	1102	LAB	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
uk	1104	LibDem	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
uk	1105	SNP	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
uk	1106	PLAID	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
uk	1107	GREEN	2006, 2010, 2014
por	1202	PP	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
por	1205	PS	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
por	1206	PSD	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
aus	1301	SPO	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
aus	1302	OVP	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
aus	1304	GRUNE	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
aus	1306	NEOS	2002, 2006, 2014
fin	1401	SDP	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
fin	1402	KOK	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
fin	1403	KESK	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
fin	1404	VAS	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
fin	1406	RKP/SFP	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
fin	1408	VIHR	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
sv	1602	SAP	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
sv	1603	C	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
sv	1604	FP	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
sv	1605	M	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
sv	1606	KD	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
bul	2002	ODS	2010, 2014
bul	2003	BSP	2010, 2014
bul	2004	DPS	2010, 2014

Table A1: List of non-Eurosceptic party/year observations

country	party_id	party	year
bul	2008	DSB	2010, 2014
bul	2010	GERB	2010, 2014
bul	2012	RZS	2010
bul	2013	DBG	2014
bul	2015	BBT	2014
bul	2016	ABV	2014
cz	2101	CSSD	2006, 2010, 2014
cz	2104	KDU-CSL	2006, 2010, 2014
cz	2107	SZ	2006, 2010, 2014
cz	2109	TOP09	2010, 2014
cz	2110	VV	2010
cz	2111	ANO2011	2014
est	2201	IRL	2006, 2010, 2014
est	2202	EK	2006, 2010, 2014
est	2203	ER	2006, 2010, 2014
est	2204	SDE	2006, 2010, 2014
est	2206	ERL	2006, 2010
est	2207	EER	2010, 2014
hun	2301	MSzP	2006, 2010, 2014
hun	2302	Fidesz	2006, 2010, 2014
hun	2303	MDF	2006, 2010
hun	2304	SZDSZ	2006, 2010
hun	2307	KDNP	2006, 2010
hun	2309	LMP	2010, 2014
hun	2310	E14	2014
hun	2311	DK	2014
lat	2401	JL	2006
lat	2403	TP	2006
lat	2404	LPP	2006
lat	2405	ZZS	2006, 2010, 2014
lat	2406	NA	2006, 2010, 2014
lat	2407	LC	2006
lat	2410	SDPS	2006, 2010, 2014
lat	2411	ZRP	2010
lat	2412	V	2010, 2014
lat	2413	NSL	2014
lat	2414	LRA	2014
lith	2501	LSDP	2006, 2010, 2014
lith	2504	NS	2006, 2010
lith	2505	LiCS	2006, 2010
lith	2506	TS-LKD	2006, 2010, 2014
lith	2507	LVLS	2006, 2010, 2014
lith	2511	LLRA	2006, 2010, 2014
lith	2515	TT	2006, 2010, 2014
lith	2516	DP	2006, 2010, 2014
lith	2517	TPP	2010

Table A1: List of non-Eurosceptic party/year observations

country	party_id	party	year
lith	2518	LRLS	2010, 2014
pol	2601	SLD	2006, 2010, 2014
pol	2603	PO	2006, 2010, 2014
pol	2606	PSL	2006, 2010, 2014
pol	2611	SDPL	2006, 2010
pol	2613	RP	2014
rom	2701	PSD	2010, 2014
rom	2702	PC	2010, 2014
rom	2704	PDL	2010, 2014
rom	2705	PNL	2010, 2014
rom	2706	UDMR	2010, 2014
rom	2709	UNPR	2014
rom	2710	PP-DD	2014
slo	2801	LS-HZDS	2006, 2010
slo	2802	SDKU-DS	2006, 2010, 2014
slo	2803	Smer-SD	2006, 2010, 2014
slo	2804	SMK-MKP	2006, 2010, 2014
slo	2805	KDH	2006, 2010, 2014
slo	2813	MH	2010, 2014
sle	2901	LDS	2006, 2010
sle	2902	SDS	2006, 2010, 2014
sle	2903	SD	2006, 2010, 2014
sle	2904	SLS	2006, 2010, 2014
sle	2905	NSI	2006, 2010, 2014
sle	2906	DeSUS	2006, 2010, 2014
sle	2910	Zares	2010
sle	2911	SMC	2014
sle	2913	ZaAB	2014
cro	3101	HDZ	2014
cro	3102	SDP	2014
cro	3103	HSS	2014
cro	3105	HNS	2014
cro	3106	IDS	2014
cro	3107	HDSSB	2014
cro	3112	HL-SR	2014
mal	3701	PL	2014
mal	3702	PN	2014
lux	3801	CSV	2014
lux	3802	GRENG	2014
lux	3803	DP	2014
lux	3804	LSAP	2014

Parties listed by their most current party name in case of name changes

App. B: Eurosceptic party/year cases

Table A2: List of Eurosceptic party/year cases

country	party_id	party	years
be	112	VB	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
be	115	FN	2010
be	117	LDD	2010
be	119	PVDA	2010, 2014
be	120	PP	2014
dk	206	SF	2002, 2006
dk	213	EL	2006, 2010, 2014
dk	215	DF	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
dk	216	JuniB	2006
dk	217	FolkB	2006, 2010, 2014
ge	306	LINKE	2006, 2010, 2014
ge	309	NPD	2014
ge	310	AfD	2014
gr	403	SYRIZA	2006, 2010, 2014
gr	404	KKE	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
gr	409	DIKKI	2006, 2010
gr	410	LAOS	2006, 2010, 2014
gr	412	ANEL	2014
gr	415	XA	2014
fr	601	PCF	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
fr	610	FN	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
fr	612	MPF	2006, 2010, 2014
fr	624	PG	2014
fr	625	Ensemble	2014
irl	705	GP	2002, 2006
irl	707	SF	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
irl	708	SP	2010, 2014
irl	709	PBPA	2014
it	803	RC	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
it	811	LN	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
it	836	PdCI	2006, 2010
it	838	SEL	2014
it	844	Fdl	2014
it	845	M5S	2014
nl	1006	SGP	2010, 2014
nl	1014	SP	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
nl	1015	LPF	2002
nl	1016	CU	2006, 2010, 2014
nl	1017	PVV	2006, 2010, 2014
nl	1018	PvdD	2010, 2014
uk	1101	CONS	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
uk	1108	UKIP	2006, 2010, 2014
uk	1109	BNP	2010

Table A2: List of Eurosceptic party/year cases

country	party_id	party	years
por	1201	CDU	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
por	1208	BE	2010, 2014
por	1209	MPT	2014
aus	1303	FPO	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
aus	1307	BZO	2006, 2010, 2014
aus	1308	MARTIN	2006, 2010
aus	1310	TeamStronach	2014
fin	1405	PS	2006, 2010, 2014
fin	1409	SKL	2002
fin	1409	KD	2010, 2014
sv	1601	V	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
sv	1607	MP	2002, 2006, 2010
sv	1609	JL	2006, 2010
sv	1610	SD	2010, 2014
sv	1611	PIRAT	2010, 2014
sv	1612	FI	2014
bul	2005	VMRO-BND	2014
bul	2007	NOA	2010, 2014
bul	2014	NFSB	2014
cz	2102	ODS	2006, 2010, 2014
cz	2103	KSCM	2006, 2010, 2014
cz	2112	USVIT	2014
cz	2113	SVOBODNI	2014
est	2205	KP	2006
hun	2308	JOBBIK	2010, 2014
lat	2402	LKS	2014
lith	2519	FRONT	2010
lith	2520	DK	2014
pol	2604	S	2006, 2010
pol	2605	PiS	2006, 2010, 2014
pol	2607	LPR	2006, 2010
pol	2614	KNP	2014
pol	2616	SP	2014
rom	2703	PRM	2010
slo	2807	KSS	2006, 2010
slo	2809	SNS	2006, 2010, 2014
slo	2812	SaS	2014
slo	2814	OLaNO	2014
sle	2907	SNS	2006, 2010
sle	2912	ZL	2014
cro	3109	HSP	2014
cro	3113	HSP-AS	2014
lux	3805	ADR	2014
lux	3806	DL	2014

Parties listed by their most current party name in case of name changes

App. C: Eurosceptic years of non-Eurosceptic parties

Table A3: List of non-Eurosceptic parties' Eurosceptic years

country	year	party_id	party	avgpos	position
por	2002	1202	CDS-PP	5.15875	3.71
uk	2006	1107	GREEN	4.546325	3.78
slo	2006	2805	KDH	4.464445	3.86
nl	2010	1003	VVD	4.512598	3.9285715
lat	2010	2410	SC	4.27037	3.1111112
dk	2014	218	LA	4.9625	3.8
it	2014	815	FI	4.211309	3.4285715
hun	2014	2302	Fidesz	4.522409	2.7142856
lith	2014	2515	TT	4.508461	3.2

App. D: Non-Eurosceptic years of Eurosceptic parties

Table A4: List of Eurosceptic parties' non-Eurosceptic years

country	year	party_id	party	avgpos	position
dk	2010	206	SF	3.970454	4.5454545
dk	2014	206	SF	3.970454	4.6363635
ge	2002	306	PDS	3.40853	4.07
gr	2002	403	SYN	3.681566	6
irl	2010	705	GP	3.80625	5
irl	2014	705	GP	3.80625	4.375
it	2010	838	SL	3.821429	4.5
nl	2002	1006	SGP	3.185185	4
nl	2002	1016	CU	3.72504	4.22
por	2006	1208	BE	3.597222	4
fin	2006	1409	KD	3.891944	4
sv	2014	1607	MP	2.909773	4.409091
lat	2006	2402	PCTVL	3.694444	4.5
slo	2010	2812	SaS	3.695238	4.5333333

App. E: Regression models with interaction effects of vote share change and intra-party dissent

Table A5: Results of fixed-effects regression, model 7 & 8

	(7) Party Position on European Integration	(8) Party Position on European Integration
Eurosceptic Vote Share (National)	-0.0148** (0.00441)	-0.0114 (0.00709)
Electoral Gains/Losses	0.00480 (0.00861)	
Eurosceptic Vote Share # Gains/Losses	-0.00000165 (0.000345)	
Internal Division on EU		-0.216*** (0.0518)
Eurosceptic Vote Share # Division		-0.000488 (0.00226)
Party Size	0.00667 (0.00870)	0.0102 (0.00541)
National EU Net Contributions	-0.111 (0.0581)	-0.0263 (0.0572)
Government Participation	0.0237 (0.0583)	0.0107 (0.0547)
Public Euroscepticism (Image)	0.00703** (0.00265)	0.00612* (0.00243)
Constant	5.990*** (0.208)	6.425*** (0.183)
Number of observations (party/year)	376	442
Number of observed parties in sample	132	174
Number of relevant parties (_N>1)	124	124
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001	Standard errors in parentheses	

App. F: Results using net values of Euroscepticism following Arnold & Hosli (2006) instead of absolute shares of Eurosceptic attitudes in the general public

Table A6: Result of fixed-effects regression, model 9-11 using net values of Euroscepticism

	(9) Party Position on European Integration	(10) Party Position on European Integration	(11) Party Position on European Integration
Eurosceptic Vote Share (National)	-0.0149*** (0.00418)	-0.0135** (0.00422)	
Eurosceptic Vote Share (EU)			0.0000136 (0.00373)
Party Size	0.0118 (0.00668)	0.0109 (0.00670)	0.0188** (0.00619)
National EU Net Contributions	-0.0779 (0.0581)	-0.0811 (0.0574)	-0.0730 (0.0611)
Government Participation	-0.00124 (0.0629)	0.0126 (0.0597)	-0.0404 (0.0641)
Public Euroscepticism (Image, Net Val.)	0.00217* (0.00106)		0.00152 (0.00108)
Publ. Euroscepticism (Benefit, Net Val.)		0.00289 (0.00269)	
Constant	6.080*** (0.158)	6.105*** (0.182)	5.757*** (0.149)
Number of observations (party/year)	443	443	443
Number of observed parties in sample	174	174	174
Number of relevant parties (_N>1)	124	124	124
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001	Standard errors in parentheses		

App. G: Test for reverse causality I

Table A7: Reverse causality test for party size/position

	(12) Party Size
Party position on Europe at t-1 (lagged)	1.097 (0.652)
Constant	8.570* (3.855)
Number of party/year observations	379
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001	Standard errors in parentheses

App. H: Test for reverse causality II

Table A8: Reverse causality test for Eurosceptic vote share/position

	(13) Eurosceptic vote share
Weighted mean position of non-Eurosceptic parties at t-1 (lagged by one period)	-6.083 (3.856)
Constant	54.12* (23.13)
Number of country/year observations	71
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001	Standard errors in parentheses