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Ideology, Euroscepticism and the (misleading?) U-Curve – a Comparative Study of German and French Parties

Abstract

The concept of Euroscepticism has been debated and researched for several decades. One central finding, albeit heavily contested, is that Euroscepticism is at its highest at the extremes of the political spectrum and thus forms a U-curve. According to this framework, both left- and right-wing parties tend to engage actively against the European Union and the integration process, whilst mainstream, moderate parties support it in a pragmatic manner. This study empirically challenges these findings based on the election programs of German and French parties for the European elections 2009-2019: to what extent do left- and right-wing parties *really* contest the EU similarly, or is the U-curve an oversimplifying concept? In doing so this paper first presents a new way to *think* Euroscepticism by distinguishing between a Polity and a Policy dimension and then continues to show empirically that Euroscepticism does not result in a symmetric U-curve concerning party political ideology. These findings show in the conclusion that the long-defended U-curve, for the cases of Germany and France, must be replaced by a new concept: the *J-curve*.

Keywords: EU, Euroscepticism, Germany, France, Parties

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Introduction

“If a summit was successful, Merkel, Sarkozy, Brown, and Zapatero tell their journalist compatriots: ‘I was able to enforce my demands.’ When it goes wrong, they say: ‘Brussels is too sluggish.’ In the EU, success is nationalized, and failure is Europeanized.” (Martin Schulz in: Beste & Kurbjuweit, 2009, para. 36, author’s translation).

Ever since its creation, the European Union’s role in Europe and the world has been intensely and controversially debated. Even today, many people in the public are sceptical towards the perceived inefficiency of the EU. European elections mostly function as second-order-elections, implying that voters aim to sanction the national government and its policies rather than to actively shape future European politics (Norris & Reif, 1997). And yet, support for the EU and its democratic processes is, in many states, higher than ever before (Pew Research Center, 2019; Eurobarometer, 2024).

The relationship between political parties and the European integration process has been discussed and researched in the literature for a long time (Harmsen, 2010). Countless different definitions, typologies, and taxonomies have been proposed and a lasting consensus is still not in sight. A common framework which visualises the way party-ideology relates to Euroscepticism is the U-curve, according to which the ideological extremes of the political spectrum show higher aversion towards European integration compared to more moderate parties (Hooghe et al., 2002; van Bohemen et al., 2019; Toshkov and Krouwel, 2022).

However, even though this concept has been long-established, some existing studies reject the idea that far-right and far-left parties consistently and systematically behave similarly towards European integration (e.g. van Elsas et al., 2016). Therefore, it is appropriate to ask, whether the U-curve in its symmetric character is still relevant in today’s party landscape or whether it is misleading. To what extent is the U-curve still an accurate finding and is it, at least partially, oversimplified? Does Euroscepticism behave differently for far-left and far-right parties and if so, to what extent? These questions will be addressed for the cases of Germany and France by utilising a new typology of Euroscepticism. It is to be noted that the theoretical assumptions regarding the U-curve will not be challenged in this paper but rather it seeks to re-conceptualise it by applying an empirical analysis. The long-established finding of the U-curve will be empirically examined by introducing a new way by which to distinguish Euroscepticism: in a *Polity* and a *Policy* dimension.

The paper is structured as follows: in the first part the main hypotheses will be laid down alongside a review of contemporary research on Euroscepticism and the U-curve. After that, a new typology of Euroscepticism will be deduced from existing literature in order to better capture the nature of Euroscepticism in two new dimensions. Thereafter the research design and methodology for the empirical research will be laid out, followed by

the empirical analysis. The paper is concluded by a discussion of this study and its limitations as well as a conclusion of theoretical and empirical findings.

Literature review

Euroscepticism has shown to be a very stretchable and heavily debated concept that is often used without too much precision and afterthought (Kopecký & Mudde, 2002, p. 299; Boomgaarden et al., 2011, pp. 243-244). Termini such as Eurocriticism, Europhobia, or Europragmatism are all (falsely) used interchangeably and subsumed under the umbrella-term 'Euroscepticism' (Szczerbiak & Taggart, 2018, p. 12). At the same time, *however*, there are countless variants, typologies, taxonomies, and understandings of this sole term.

A simple and groundbreaking definition was conceptualised by Taggart (1998): "*Euroscepticism expresses the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration.*" (1998, p. 366). This is also the underlying definition adopted by this paper. Ever since, and even before, this definition was established, countless scientific studies analysed Euroscepticism from an *empirical* point of view. A large body of literature analysing the intercorrelation between ideology and Euroscepticism has been compiled over time. Hooghe et al. (2002, pp. 968-973) for the first time theoretically and empirically introduced the concept of a U-curve (although they titled it the *inverted* U-curve) to describe the relationship between Euroscepticism and a party's ideology. They identified a correlation between the two concepts: far-left and far-right parties are increasingly Eurosceptic, whilst more moderate parties show a positive stance toward European integration: "*So we expect a party's support for European integration to decline with its distance from the centre of the Left/Right dimension. Both explanations [referring to Paul Taggart's (1998) concept of European integration as a "touchstone of domestic dissent" for peripheral parties.] find confirmation in our data.*" (2002, pp. 969-970).

For this, Hellström (2008) summarises three possible explanations: "*The first is based on ideological elements of party contestation, the second is mainly based on strategies of party contestation, and the third views preference formation over European integration as more or less ideologically immune.*" (2008, p. 191). The theoretical assumptions and causal mechanism of these explanations will not be challenged in this paper, instead, a re-conceptualisation of the U-curve will be proposed through empirical analysis. For that, two of the three explanations will be empirically analysed: the first explanation that a party's ideology influences its position and the third explanation after which the positioning on European integration is seen as ideologically immune. This may, at first, seem contradictory, as both explanations appear to be mutually exclusive. However, as will be shown in the theoretical framework, they ought to be linked.

Research on the U-curve has been theoretically, methodologically, and empirically diverse. Many case-studies and comparative frameworks (Marks et al., 2002; De Vries

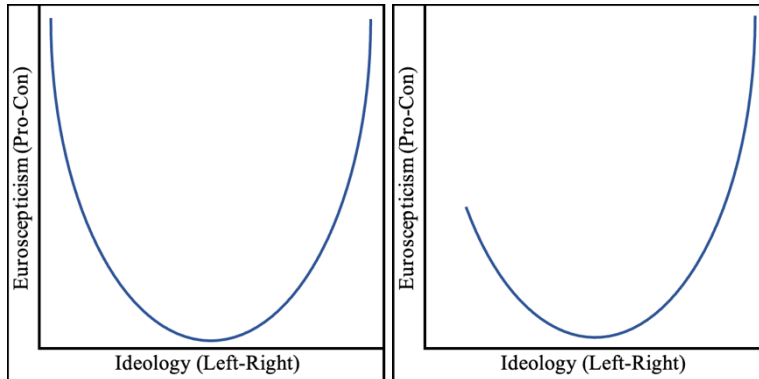
& Edwards, 2009; Lubbers and Scheepers, 2010; van Elsas & van der Brug, 2015; van Elsas et al., 2016; König et al., 2017; van Bohemen et al., 2019) have examined the relationship between ideology and the respective stance on European integration and have come to similar results. Whether when observing party manifestos, voter's positions, or other materials, the (inverted) U-curve was almost always and in some form the result. It is important to note that while the symmetry of said curve is contested, there is a consensus that the motives underlying Euroscepticism differ substantially (Habersack & Wegscheider, 2021, p. 202).

So why conduct *another* study on the relationship between ideology and Euroscepticism? The answer is as simple as it is complex: the U-curve, as established as it may be, is today prone to uncertainty and possibly inaccuracy. Whilst, as already described, many scholars still utilise the concept for further analyses and also find a U-shape in different studies, the curve does not necessarily depict a "U". Indeed, the U-curve has shown to be inconsistent when comparing different countries (Kaniok & Havlík, 2016; Toshkov & Krouwel, 2022). Some scientists ascertain that the U-curve is oversimplifying and misleading (e.g. Kaniok & Havlík, 2016). Judging by newer results regarding the correlation, it appears like the U-curve has still not yet been contested or rebranded only due to it being an established concept. This ought to change, however, as the idea of said U-shape may cause empirical misunderstandings and oversimplification, as will be shown later.

The shape of a "U" insinuates a *symmetric* relationship between Euroscepticism and ideology, whereas existing studies have found that left-wing parties are not only often Eurosceptic to a lesser degree but also in a fully different sense: against the capitalist or neo-liberal *realisation* of the EU and not against the concept of an intergovernmental or even supranational organisation itself (Hooghe et al., 2002; van Elsas and van der Brug, 2015; Braun et al. 2019).

The main scientific innovation this paper presents is empirical evidence for the existence of a J-curve instead of a U-curve when regarding Euroscepticism. It is to be noted that the term J-curve has not been systematically proposed as an alternative to the U-curve in existing studies. However, the underlying assumptions (that left-wing and right-wing Euroscepticism are asymmetric) have been explored before (see e.g. Habersack & Wegscheider, 2021, pp. 203-205; Toshkov & Krouwel, 2022). Figure 1 depicts two different schemes that show possible relationships between Euroscepticism and ideology. The goal of this paper is to identify whether the second, asymmetric curve can be confirmed with new data. If this is confirmed, the long-standing U-curve must be regarded as (at least partially) oversimplifying and in need of a re-conceptualisation: towards a J-curve (Figure 1, right).

Figure 1: U- and J-curve relationship between Euroscepticism and political ideology



Source: author's work, based on Hooghe et al. (2002)

Theoretical framework

Polity and policy Euroscepticism

Following Paul Taggart's (1998) first definition on Euroscepticism, a scientific debate ensued in which different typologies were discussed, criticised, and reconceptualised by several scholars.¹ Following his original work, Taggart, together with his colleague Szczerbiak, refined the definition (2001): for the first time, they distinguished between *hard* and *soft* Euroscepticism. A further partition was then applied to *soft* Euroscepticism, which was subdivided into *Policy-* and *National-interest-*Euroscepticism (2001, pp. 10-11). According to the authors, hard Euroscepticism implies the outright rejection of the European integration, whilst soft policy Euroscepticism means the opposition to new policies that would deepen the European integration. Soft-national-interest Euroscepticism employs a "rhetoric of defending or standing up for 'the national interest' in the context of debates about the EU" (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2001, p. 10).

An intensive counterdraft was then published by Kopecký and Mudde (2002). They introduced two new dimensions, *diffuse* and *specific* Euroscepticism. Both are defined the following: "By *diffuse support* we mean support for the general ideas of European integration that underlie the EU. By *specific support* we denote support for the general practice of European integration; that is, the EU as it is and as it is developing." (Kopecký & Mudde, 2002, p. 300).

Derived from that, the presence and absence of diffuse and specific Euroscepticism leads to a fourfold table with four ideal types of attitudes towards European Integration: *Euroenthusiasts*, *Europragmatists*, *Eurosceptics*, and *Eurorejects* (2002, pp. 300-

¹ A detailed summary of the state of the art for the concept of Euroscepticism is presented by Szczerbiak and Taggart (2018).

304). Their counterdraft led Taggart and Szczerbiak to integrate new elements into a revised typology which still only differentiated between *hard* and *soft* Euroscepticism. However, this revision was more sophisticated, especially in clarifying what soft Euroscepticism is, which was one of the main points of critique by Kopecký and Mudde (2002, p. 300) (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008, pp. 6-10).

Their work will be the first of two bases for the new conceptualisation of Euroscepticism this paper offers. The second base is by Kröhnert (2018). In an original typology that builds on Kopecký and Mudde (2002) he distinguishes not only between *hard* and *soft* (*reformist*) Euroscepticism but also between a *political* and an *economic* dimension (2018, p. 19). Especially his economic dimension showed to be most innovative compared to prior understandings of Euroscepticism: Kröhnert deliberately distinguished political factors (which may also be called polity factors) from economic ones, which represent a type of policy field. One can, however, abstract even further by combining all policy fields into one single policy dimension. Therefore, soft Euroscepticism (Szczerbiak & Taggart, 2008) and an abstracted form of Kröhnert's economic dimension combined form the first part of the typology: *Policy Euroscepticism*.

For the second part of the typology, the *hard* Euroscepticism proposed by Taggart and Szczerbiak and Kröhnert's *political* dimension may be seen as essentially congruent. Thus, said two ideas can be combined into a renamed dimension of Euroscepticism: *Polity Euroscepticism*. The main difference between both dimensions is the modus of eurosceptic criticism. Polity-Euroscepticism includes attacks on the EU's most fundamental principles, institutions, and conventions. It explicitly refers to the type of criticism that seeks to either abolish or completely rework the concept or current realisation of the EU, e.g. a party demanding their country to leave the EU. Furthermore, a polity Europhily can be described as stronger than the simple contentment with EU institutions: the active advocacy for and defending of EU institutions (or even the demand for increased EU competence, such as advocating for the EP's right to introduce legislation) is far more the centre of polity Europhily and thus the contrary to polity Euroscepticism. Polity-Euroscepticism can be seen as very similar to Taggart and Szczerbiak's hard Euroscepticism. A key difference between this study's and other studies' typologies only arises when observing the second dimension.

The meaning of policy Euroscepticism is best explained by an example borrowed from Kopecký and Mudde: "*For example, despite some criticism of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, the Polish Peasant Party (PSL) is EU-optimist, not only because it sees the EU as a vital instrument for the support of farmers' communities [...], but also because it supports the general shape and development of the EU's political, institutional, and social elements.*" (2002, p. 302). The basic premise of policy Euroscepticism is that an actor need not necessarily reject the basic idea of the EU when being opposed to one or more policies imposed by it. The grouping of all policy fields in one dimension may, at first, seem counterintuitive. After all, there is an immense range of policy fields, most of which never or only sparsely interact with one another. In this case, however, this approach is justified because the actual *content* of a policy is without

any relevance for the policy dimension. Merely the question “Is the opposition to/approval of a specific policy in favour of or opposed to European Integration” marks the key question relevant for this category, regardless of deeper substance. This marks a clear distinction between policy Euroscepticism and soft Euroscepticism.

Similar to the concept introduced by Kopecký and Mudde (2002) the new typology creates four distinct subtypes of stances towards European Integration: *Europragmatics*, *Eurorejects*, *Europhiles*, and *Eurosceptics*. The typology is schematically depicted in Figure 2. For the denotation of said categories, the terms proposed by Kopecký and Mudde (2002) in their own typology are partially reused. The main advantage of the newly formed typology is its conciseness compared to the former ones. When considering any demand of a political party, one can simply sort it into one of the two dimensions by qualitatively analysing whether the criticism is addressed *towards the practical configuration and arrangements of the policy*, or towards the basic *institutions and configurations of the polity*. An example of this would be criticism towards illegal migration between European countries, which is incongruent with the outright rejection of the Schengen treaty, and therefore would be classified as policy Euroscepticism.² This typology also allows to simply but systematically, in one word, distinguish between different types of party-stances towards European integration. Many of the advantages of said typology are similar to the ones stemming from Kopecký and Mudde (2002) as the terms for the types have also been partially adopted from them.

Figure 2. Typology of Euroscepticism

		Policy-Dimension	
		<i>Eurosceptic</i>	<i>Europhile</i>
Polity-Dimension	<i>Eurosceptic</i>	Euroreject Against the EU and against its policymaking	Europragmatic Against the EU but in favour of its policymaking
	<i>Europhile</i>	Eurosceptic In favour of the EU but against its policymaking	Europhile In favour of the EU and its policymaking

An additional advantage is the possibility to analyse different policy areas systematically. The newfound typology allows for comparisons, such as comparing polity-contestation regarding the existence of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) versus contestation of specific policies undertaken or proposed by the European Commission. Due to the existing similarities of the new typology to the other ones

² It is noteworthy that, due to the complex nature of the EU, in some cases the concise distinguishing between polity and policy may still be very difficult.

discussed, it must not be seen as a competing concept but rather as a modification of existing typologies to better fit specific research questions.

Hypotheses

Several studies found a correlation between a party's ideology and its stance toward the EU and the integration process (Toshkov & Krouwel, 2022). This correlation is often depicted as a U-curve, as the very edges (or extremes) of the ideological-political spectrum show higher Euroscepticism than mainstream-parties (van Bohemen et al., 2019). Therefore, hypothesis H1 can be stated as follows:

H1: The level of polity and policy Euroscepticism is higher for far-left and far-right parties than for moderate parties:

$$EI_{Polity\ and\ Policy}(far\ right) > EI_{Polity\ and\ Policy}(moderate)^3$$

$$EI_{Polity\ and\ Policy}(far\ left) > EI_{Polity\ and\ Policy}(moderate)$$

This tendency, however, is not unanimously agreed upon. Some researchers find that the relationship between ideology and Euroscepticism is asymmetric and differs between right- and left-wing parties in a sense that far-right parties are more eurosceptic than far-left parties (e.g. Meijers, 2017). Furthermore, the modus of criticism differs heavily between both extremes. Far-right parties often advocate against the entire concept of the EU and approve of re-nationalisation of competences as well as their country's exit from the EU. Far-left parties on the other hand are often more critical of the substantive configuration of the current EU. For example, they are more hostile towards policies, however, not towards the EU as an institution itself (Hooghe et al., 2002; van Elsas and van der Brug, 2015; Braun et al., 2019). From these findings, H2 and H3 can be derived:

H2: The level of polity-Euroscepticism is higher for ideologically far-right parties than for far-left parties whose level, in turn, is similar to moderate parties.

$$EI_{Polity}(far\ right) > EI_{Polity}(far\ left) \approx EI_{Polity}(moderate)$$

H3: The level of policy Euroscepticism for far-left parties is higher than for moderate ones but lower than for far-right ones.

$$EI_{Policy}(far\ right) > EI_{Policy}(far\ left) > EI_{Policy}(moderate)$$

³ *EI* = Euroscepticism Index

All three hypotheses are theoretically explained by the argument that party positioning on European integration is based on ideological elements of party contestation (Hellström, 2008, p. 191).

The fourth hypothesis is founded on the research-based assumption that French and German parties (which will be the point of observance in the empirical section) behave different in different policy fields, including their stance on European Integration (Bornschier, 2012; Evrard, 2012). This is particularly important when considering that, empirically, support for European Integration varies from country to country (both when observing public opinion and party positioning, see Kopecký & Mudde, 2002; De Vries & Edwards, 2009). As mentioned above, Hellström (2008) refers to this argument as the preference formation being “ideologically immune” (p. 191). In other words, distinct national features such as individual culture, history, and identity also form the stance on European Integration *aside from* an ideological influence (Hellström, 2008, p. 195).

Different studies have found varying patterns of Euroscepticism between countries (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2010; van Bohemen et al., 2019) which further raises the question of whether the U-curve is even a phenomenon to be observed in *all* European countries and, if so, to what extent they are similar. As this study only compares two cases, Germany and France, this problem cannot be resolved fully. Nevertheless, systematic differences between party-Euroscepticism of German and French parties may be a snapshot of a wider picture that sees different U-curves all over the Union. For instance, Lubbers and Scheepers also discovered that Dutch parties, over time, grew more Eurosceptic whilst Spanish and Greek parties developed more Europhile positions (2010, p. 800). Therefore, it is appropriate to assume the following hypothesis:

H4: The level of polity and policy Euroscepticism differs between German and French parties.

$$EI_{Polity\ and\ Policy}(France) \neq EI_{Polity\ and\ Policy}(Germany)$$

Research design and methodology

Case-selection

The two introduced dimensions of Euroscepticism provide the room for a detailed analysis of positions towards European Integration. In their cross-country comparative analysis, Habersack and Wegscheider (2021) find that the role of ideology towards a party’s position on European Integration is evident. Nevertheless, right-wing parties show higher levels of Euroscepticism than left-wing parties (Habersack & Wegscheider, 2021, pp. 203-205). Further comparative (Pirro et al., 2018; Kneuer, 2019) and case studies (Franzosi et al., 2015; Herkman, 2017; van Boehmen et al., 2019) came to similar conclusions opting for a strong correlation between Euroscepticism and ideology. The

overwhelming consensus that there is a correlation between the two concepts leads to a focus on right- and left-wing parties in much of the literature. While this paper shares this approach, moderate (or mainstream) parties will also be analysed and then compared to their radical counterparts in order to increase comparability. The inclusion of moderate parties within the same research design enables one to identify clear differences and patterns between extremist parties in stark contrast with mainstream ones.

The units of investigation in this paper are German and French parties. To be precise, a comparative, medium-n study of German and French parties will be conducted to examine their stances on the EU regarding policy and polity Euroscepticism. In the analysis, only party manifestos for elections to the European Parliament have been examined. The selection of German and French parties, whilst partially based on external limitations, is also substantially justified. Germany and France possess very different electoral and party systems. Whilst Germany utilises a form of Mixed-Member-Proportional system, France uses a Two-Round-Runoff system with a dominant majoritarian component (Lijphart, 2012, p. 133). The party systems of Germany and France also differ quite heavily. On one hand, Germany has evolved into a solid multiparty system with about six different parties all depicting different interests and political ideologies (Ismayr, 2009, p. 539). On the other hand, France is, to some extent, still divided into a two-block-system, often referred to as Bipolarisation (Kempf, 2009, pp. 374-475). The variation of both variables is appropriate when trying to cautiously generalise these findings to other countries. This is, of course, only appropriate in a very constrained manner, however, said variation at least accounts for some EU-wide variation.

Furthermore, Germany and France were and are seen as *tandem for European Integration* (Krotz & Schild, 2012) as well as central players in the EU. This makes the fact that Eurosceptic parties fare well in both countries all the more critical and worthy of examination. Especially over the last decade, the electoral success of the French Rassemblement National (RN, formerly Front National, FN) and the German Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) has grown substantially while left parties have maintained relatively stable electoral outcomes. Simultaneously, eurosceptic sentiment has increased both among parties and the public (van Elsas & van der Brug, 2015). Accordingly, six French and six German parties⁴ were selected based on their relevance in prior elections to the European Parliament. The only material that was examined was the electoral manifestos of all parties.⁵ Electoral manifestos pose, formally, the base for everything that a party stands for: its policies, its ideas, and its key ideology. Therefore, as this paper seeks to identify patterns for a party *as a whole* (in contrast to factions, prominent political figures, and others), the examination of party manifestos is an

⁴ *Front de Gauche* (FDG), an electoral coalition consisting of multiple parties, is, in this paper, handled as one party. The name *CDU* also includes the *CSU*. *Parti Socialist* (PS) contested both elections in an electoral coalition, nevertheless, it is still referred to as PS.

⁵ The author was not able to obtain a genuine manifesto of the *Front National* for the European election 2014. Therefore, it was not analysed then.

appropriate and suitable method.⁶ Figure 3 depicts the distribution of all analysed party manifestos by country and by the share of right and left-wing extremist parties.

The classification of the selected parties for the empirical part of this paper has been adopted from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Jolly et al., 2019). The Chapel Hill Expert Survey codes overall ideology with the variable “LRGEN”, and its variation goes from 0 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right). Accordingly, all parties can be distinguished into three groups: the left-wing-group (values 0-2), the moderate-party-group (3-7), and the right-wing-group (8-10). Both countries possess at least one party that can be grouped into either category. For Germany, Die Linke fits into the first group, CDU/CSU, SPD, Greens and FDP into the second, and AfD into the third one. For France, LFI and FDG represent the left-wing-group, PS, Renaissance and UMP the moderate, and FN/RN the right-wing-group.

Figure 3. Distribution of analysed party manifestos

Party	Elections examined	N	N by country	N by 'extremism'	
AfD	2014, 2019	2	13	11	11
DIE LINKE	2009, 2014, 2019	3			
CDU	2014, 2019	2			
SPD	2014, 2019	2			
Bündnis90/DieGrünen	2014, 2019	2			
FDP	2014, 2019	2			
FDG	2009, 2014	2	9	11	11
LFI	2019	1			
RN / FN	2009, 2019	2			
PS	2014, 2019	2			
Renaissance	2019	1			
UMP	2014	1			
			22		

Notes: 'N by extremism' depicts the number of cases classified as either far-right or far-left (*green*) or as moderate parties (*blue*); **Source:** author's work; all the examined manifestos stem from the European Parliamentary Election Study 1979-2019 (Euromanifesto Study)

Based on the case selection a key implication needs to be addressed. Whilst the case selection includes different national political systems and thus shows variation for the institutional foundation on which the parties operate and originated from, the fact remains that only *two* countries are being analysed. Therefore, generalisations derived from this study's results are far-fetched and may distort actual tendencies. Only further

⁶ The *Manifesto Project* is the most prominent research project examining party manifestos and coding them content-wise. The data provided by the Manifesto Project was, in this paper, not used for two reasons. First, the Manifesto Project does not systematically examine manifestos for *European Parliament elections*, which is the main point of focus in this paper. Second, the Manifesto Project does not consider the newly conceptualised policy and polity dimensions of Euroscepticism and thus does not provide suitable data to examine these two dimensions. This is, of course, not the fault of the Manifesto Project database: it is merely not conceptualised to suit the research methodology used in this study.

research can clarify whether the Franco-German results of this study are applicable to a wider range of countries and parties.

The timespan of electoral manifestos examined differs between established and extreme (left- or right-wing) parties: the manifestos of German and French left- and right-wing parties will be analysed for the European Elections from 2009 to 2019 while for the mainstream parties, only a selection of manifestos will be examined. This includes the manifestos of the German mainstream parties (CDU/CSU, SPD, B90/The Greens, and FDP) as well as those of the French PS for the elections 2014 and 2019, the UMP only for the 2014, and Renaissance only for the 2019 European Election. This selection is justified by two core reasons. First, as the research question is only concerned explicitly with left- and right-wing (eurosceptic) parties, a large coverage of their variation is more important to this study than of the mainstream parties. Secondly, no large and substantial variation between the mainstream parties' stance towards European Integration is expected (Hooghe et al., 2002; Halikiopoulou et al., 2012) which makes an even larger analysis unnecessary. Covering all important Eurosceptic parties is far more important for the proposed research question.

Operationalisation and coding

For the analysis, all electoral manifestos were qualitatively examined. For the operationalisation of the dimensions of Euroscepticism, both dimensions were dissected into a total of 45 issues. By conducting a detailed qualitative content analysis most of the formulated issues were manually assessed by the author. The content of eight issues, however, is provided by the data offered by the European Parliamentary Election Study 1979 – 2019 (Euromanifesto Study) and was therefore not ascertained again. The formulated items were deliberately phrased in a dichotomous way and generally have one answer that was coded as eurosceptic ($X_N=1$) and one answer that was coded as Europhile ($X_N=0$).

In total, 15 individual issues were formulated and examined for the polity dimension and 30 individual issues for the policy dimension. To ensure sufficient variation in the policy dimension, a total of 30 individual policies from five broad policy fields were examined. Appendix A.1 lists all of them as well as their corresponding Euroscepticism dimensions and their corresponding policy field. Appendix A.2 displays each examined party manifesto, its number of pages, and the proportion of the formulated issues that could be answered in each program.

The identification process of all items was fully inductive. In order to find issues suitable for the analysis, combined with an intensive literature review, four electoral programs were analysed and all 45 hypotheses induced from them with the help of the software MAXQDA. The manifestos in question were from AfD, B90/The Greens, CDU, and LFI (all for the 2019 election). By including items from different policy fields and stemming from parties with different ideologies, the confirmation bias of the study minimised as

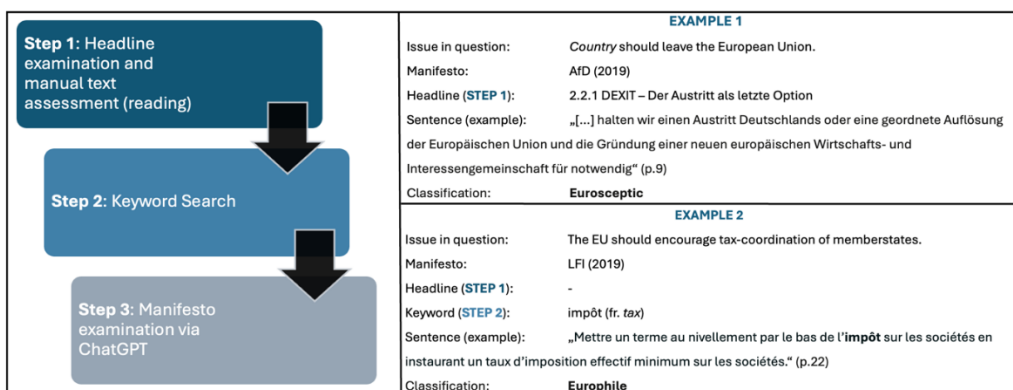
much as possible. Thus, the identification process tried to keep four different and important aspects in balance for the formulation of the items:

1. Avoiding a biased formulation (toward one ideological direction) in all issues
2. Incorporating multiple (five) different policy fields
3. Ensuring that French and German parties would both have an interest in all issues (in either direction) as to not indirectly exclude certain parties
4. Refraining from formulating too specific statements as not all electoral manifestos may be specific and detailed enough to answer very specific issues or questions

The issues were kept as generalised as possible without losing any relevant substance to ensure that most party manifestos could provide answers to them. The coding process was conducted qualitatively. The process itself was multi-levelled and split into three sequential parts.

First, after all issues were formulated, the manifesto's structure was examined and all headlines in the list of contents relating to a specific item were examined. If at this point a clear answer to an item could be found, the coding process for said item ended. If not, a keyword-search through the entire manifesto was conducted. For each item, keywords that were intuitively near to its content were searched for in the manifesto. This was done with German keywords for German party manifestos and with French keywords for French party manifestos. If at this point a clear answer to the item examined could be found, the coding process ended.

Figure 4: Schematic coding process and examples



If not, then the issue was temporarily disregarded and at the end, after all remaining issues were coded, the manifesto was, in its entirety, fed into the AI software ChatGPT. ChatGPT was then tasked to evaluate whether said item could be answered for the party with the help of *only* the manifesto (under the assumption that the author simply overlooked the information). The reasoning behind the utilisation of ChatGPT was to,

possibly, find information corresponding to certain issues that have either been subsumed under a headline with misleading phrasing, which would have led for the author to miss the information the first step of analysis, or formulated in an unorthodox way without keywords that normally would be associated with a topic.⁷ Figure 4 schematically depicts the coding process as well as exemplary coding for steps 1 and 2. Missing values were coded with -999 and disregarded for further analysis in the empirical part. The answers to all issues were coded as either 1 (Eurosceptic) or 0 (Europhile) and then used to calculate Euroscepticism Indices, first for the respective dimension and subsequently for the total Euroscepticism Index, according to the following simple formulas:

$$EI_{Policy} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n_{Policy}} X_i}{n_{Policy}};$$

$$EI_{Polity} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n_{Polity}} X_i}{n_{Polity}};$$

$$EI = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n_{Policy}} X_i + \sum_{i=1}^{n_{Polity}} X_i}{n_{Policy} + n_{Polity}};$$

Note: EI = Euroscepticism Index; $\sum_{i=1}^{n_{Policy}} X_i$ = Sum of feature values of n; n = Number of answered items excluding n/a

Figure 5: Example Index Calculation

<p>Party / Election. DIE LINKE / 2012</p> $EI_{Policy} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n_{Policy}} X_i}{n_{Policy}} = \frac{10}{21} = 0,476$ $EI_{Polity} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n_{Polity}} X_i}{n_{Polity}} = \frac{2}{12} = 0,167$ $EI = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n_{Policy}} X_i + \sum_{i=1}^{n_{Polity}} X_i}{n_{Policy} + n_{Polity}} = \frac{10+2}{21+12} = \mathbf{0,364}$

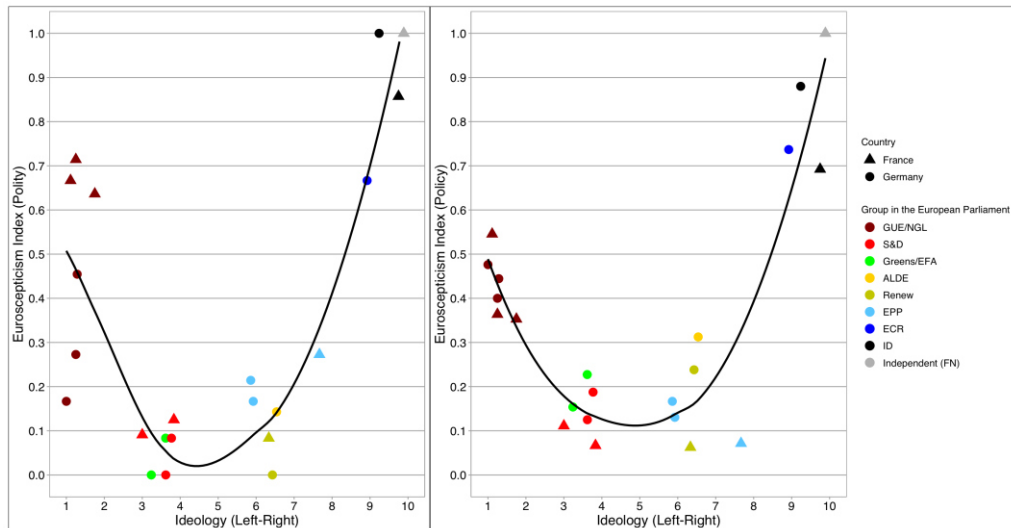
Analysis

In the empirical analysis of ideology and Euroscepticism, numerous studies have found a correlation between both concepts. This correlation is often described as a U-curve, according to which right-wing and left-wing parties are perceived as more Eurosceptic than moderate parties (van Elsas et al., 2016, p. 1992; van Bohemen et al., 2019; initially, the U-curve was identified as an "inverted-U-curve" by Hooghe et al., 2002; for a critique of this concept, see van Elsas & van der Brug, 2015).

⁷ Nevertheless, all issues were either already coded after the first or second step or were not able to be coded entirely due to a lack of information in the manifesto.

For the empirical findings, figure 6 depicts two graphs: shown on the left side is the *EI* for the polity and on the right side for the policy dimension. Figure 7 depicts the correlation between ideology and the general *EI*-Index. Figure 8 shows the same relationship grouped by country.⁸

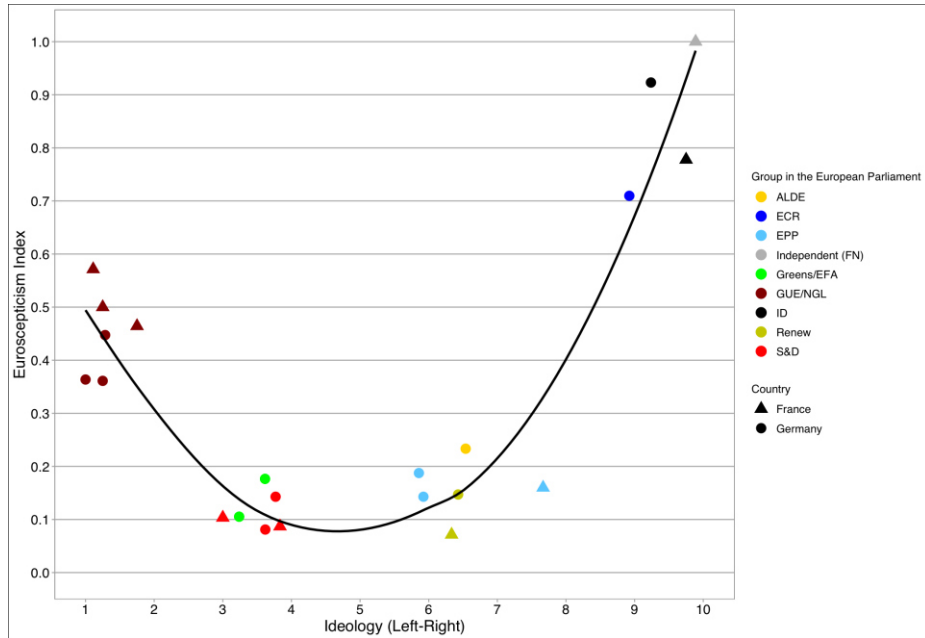
Figure 6: Correlation between polity and policy Euroscepticism Index and ideology



Note: The “Left-Right-ideology” variable was borrowed from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Jolly et al., 2019).

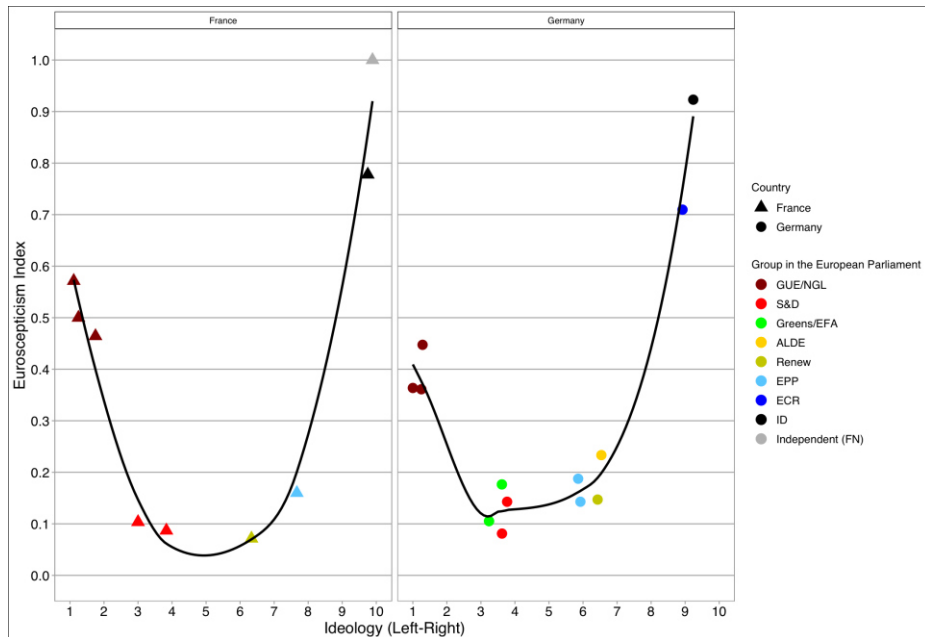
⁸ All party manifestos have been treated as singular and independent observations for the analysis. The study does not provide for a systematic longitudinal analysis of party Euroscepticism. For an example of such a longitudinal analysis, see e.g. van Elsas and van der Brug, 2015.

Figure 7: Correlation between Euroscepticism Index and ideology



Note: The “Left-Right-ideology” variable was borrowed from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Jolly et al., 2019).

Figure 8: Correlation between Euroscepticism Index and ideology by country



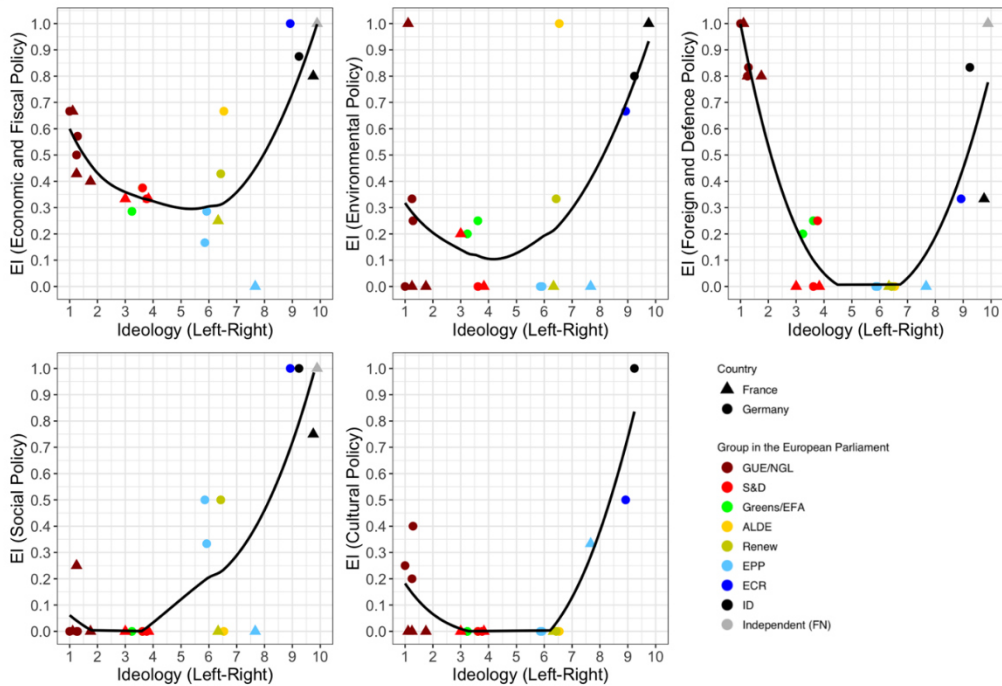
Note: The “Left-Right-ideology” variable was borrowed from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Jolly et al., 2019).

With the exemption of two cases, Social Democratic, Liberal, Green, and Christian democratic parties show values of < 0.25 in all cases, indicating lower levels of Euroscepticism. Right-wing parties are more consistently Eurosceptic, while the positions of left-wing parties vary significantly among themselves. In the policy dimension, there is a certain homogeneity among left-wing parties and their scepticism, particularly regarding the idea of European solutions in social policy, while, for example, a common defence policy is rejected. In the polity dimension, on the other hand, there is a strong variance: particularly the French left tends to reject the EU as an institution, while the German Die LINKE takes a more moderate stance towards it.

Thus, in all three figures, a shape like the U-curve can be drawn, indicating that left-wing and right-wing parties indeed tend towards higher Euroscepticism. And yet, the assumed symmetry does not feature everywhere. Right-wing parties show greater and consistent levels of Euroscepticism than left-wing parties.

This finding can be mostly amplified by looking at figure 9, which depicts the policy *EI* values for the different policy fields examined. For economic and fiscal policy, environmental policy, social policy, as well as cultural policy, a clear J-curve can be drawn. Only foreign policy depicts an almost perfect and, most notably, symmetric U-curve. These findings should, however, be treated with caution. Whilst they undoubtedly amplify the argument proposed, most policy fields were only ascertained by very few issues (e.g. only five issues for environmental policy) and therefore are prone to deviation. Nevertheless, relying on the empirical findings, from this point on it is more appropriate to speak of a J-curve, rather than a U-curve, as the letter J depicts the results more accurately.

Figure 9. Euroscepticism Indices for different policy fields

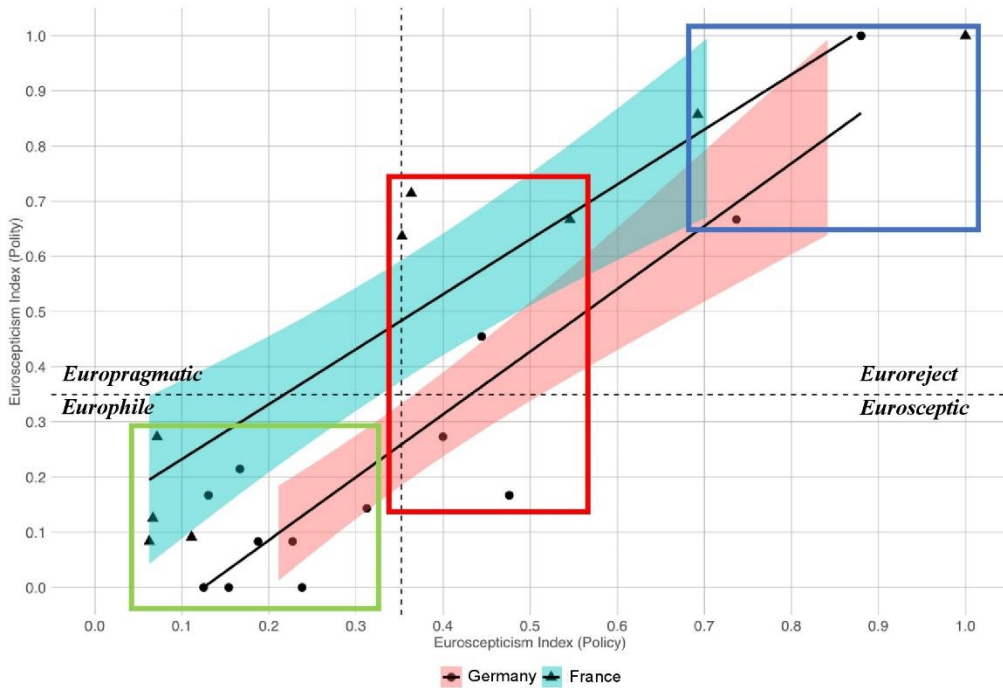


Note: some manifestos did not include any information on a specific policy field (e.g. FN 2009 on environmental policy) which is why these manifestos do sometimes not appear in the figures. The “Left-Right-ideology” variable was borrowed from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Jolly et al., 2019).

Hypothesis **H1**, after which the level of *EI* in both dimensions would be highest for extreme and lowest for moderate parties can be confirmed. **H3** can also be seen as confirmed, as the level of policy *EI* is indeed highest for far-right, lowest for moderate and in-between for far-left parties (J-shape). The hypotheses **H2** and **H4**, on the other hand, are not confirmed at this stage. It appears that far-left parties show higher levels of polity Euroscepticism than moderate parties (H2). Furthermore, German and French parties do not show any apparent systematic differences, the variation is mostly limited to ideology, aside from the exception of the far-left.

To clarify both unconfirmed hypotheses, figure 10 illustrates the relationship between both *EIs*. The x-axis represents the *EI*-Index for the policy dimension, and the y-axis represents the polity dimension. Firstly, a positive correlation is evident for both French and German parties: higher polity Euroscepticism correlates with higher policy Euroscepticism. Secondly, in this depiction a systematic variance in the country context is noticeable: French parties generally exhibit higher polity Euroscepticism, while German parties generally show higher policy Euroscepticism. Thus, hypothesis **H4** can also be confirmed. The insights from the graph can generally be divided into three clusters, which are marked by coloured boxes.

Figure 10: Two dimensions of Euroscepticism in comparison



Firstly, the bottom-left, green box, which includes all moderate or mainstream parties, demonstrates that Euroscepticism is indeed a phenomenon of the extremes. Moderate parties have Euroscepticism values < 0.32 in both dimensions, with only one exception: the FDP's policy dimension in 2014, where the value exceeds 0.3. The classification of both dimensions into the four types as outlined by the typology is somewhat difficult with this research design, as only Euroscepticism (or rather: the degree of Euroscepticism) is measured and not Europhilia. Depending on the division and thereby the level of Euroscepticism one deems sufficient for a party to be deemed any typus, different pictures were to arise from the figure. For figure 10, the averages of the two *EIs* (polity and policy) were calculated ($\bar{x}_{EI,Policy}=0.352$; $\bar{x}_{EI,Polity}=0.349$).

Secondly, in the middle the red cluster is of significance. This cluster includes all far-left parties observed. Again, a clear distinction between German and French parties is apparent: Whilst all left-wing parties exhibit similar levels of Euroscepticism on the policy level, the French parties are all significantly more polity Eurosceptic than the German DIE LINKE. This difference is more pronounced here than in the average of other parties. When observing only the German DIE LINKE, its polity *EI* level is mostly approximately at the level of the moderate parties. However, when observing the French left, a clearly higher level of polity Euroscepticism can be measured. This comes back to Hellström's (2008) third explanation for position formation on European integration, after which a position is also formed in country-specific contexts and is somewhat ideologically immune. Due to these findings, **H2** can neither be confirmed nor rejected.

Still, the level of polity Euroscepticism is highest for far-right parties. DIE LINKE was classified as Eurosceptic for its manifestos from 2009 and 2014, whilst its 2019 manifesto as well as LFI and FDG are classified as Euroreject according to the typology, although LFI 2019 and FDG 2014 are at the brink of classifying as Europragmatic.

Another important point is that left-wing parties tend to exhibit strong Europhilia in social policy matters. Contestation in the policy dimension is strongly rooted in the ideology of the parties. They advocate common EU-wide policies in social policy, while often rigidly rejecting current common foreign, security, and defence policies. However, a clear distance to the last, blue cluster, is recognisable. Left-wing parties are thus decidedly more Eurosceptic than moderate parties in both dimensions, but far less so than right-wing ones. This also aligns with the findings of van Elsas et al. (2016).

The third and final cluster is the upper, blue box, which includes all far-right nationalist parties. As is apparent, these are the most Eurosceptic in both the polity and policy dimensions. This aligns with the findings of recent research on Euroscepticism, according to which since the emergence of the so-called Radical Right Parties in the 1990s, Euroscepticism has been one of their central characteristic(s), which previously was assumed to be a characteristic of Radical Left Parties (see Halikiopoulou et al. 2012).

The findings in Figure 10 underline and elucidate the points already made and discussed substantively. The U-curve, often observed in the context of Euroscepticism, may be too simplistic, at least for the cases of Germany and France. While both right and left-wing parties are Eurosceptic, this Euroscepticism is by no means symmetric and equal in both dimensions, as in a U. Instead, it is an asymmetric relationship, which gains further complexity when systematically disaggregating the dimensions of Euroscepticism. Therefore, the formulation of a J-curve is far more appropriate for any finding that was presented in this section and should, as many other researchers have found similar results, be discussed as a possible successor-model to the U-curve.

Reflection of methods and results

This study has several, partially self-imposed, limitations that ought to be addressed in this section. Firstly, not all party-manifestos are of equal size and substantial value. Empirically, the study has shown that particularly French parties often had less detailed information written down in their manifestos, resulting in missing information on some hypotheses. The other way around, this limitation leads to the problem that there are only so many aspects to be examined and answered by manifestos. Secondly, the study conducted is hardly exhaustive, as only 30 policy issues covering five different policy fields were formulated. Yet, there are countless additional topics that could and ought to be examined in Euroscepticism analyses.

A third problem is the possible selection bias. Since not all policy fields were systematically, comprehensively, and exhaustively analysed, it is likely that there will be

a substantive shift in favour of certain positions. This is partly because some parties, due to ideology, are more Europhile or Eurosceptic in certain policy fields. For instance, Brack (2020) observes that left-wing parties actively support European solutions in the field of social policy, unlike right-wing parties (Brack, 2020, pp. 3–5). By including multiple policy fields, this study attempted to minimise this bias to the best of the author’s ability within this limited scope. However, it is likely that complete elimination could only be achieved in a study with a much larger sample size. Paradoxically, this would, again, conflict with the second problem that even with “only” 45 items, the average proportion of party programs containing suitable information was 78.2% for the polity dimension and only 62.9% for the policy dimension (see Appendix A.2). This share would only decline as the number of aspects and items covered increases.

A final, fourth shortcoming is inherent to the dichotomised nature of the items. This might lead to an over-simplified view whereas many of the issues could be understood in a more nuanced way. However, this paper primarily seeks to unveil general tendencies and patterns with the help of the new typology and could serve as a starting point for further analyses. Regardless of the shortcomings described, the findings that this paper presents still hold value for research on Euroscepticism.

To analyse the U/J-curve and its hypothesised simplification more precisely, four hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study. Each hypothesis provided unique insights into the complex interplay of ideological positioning and Eurosceptic sentiments. The hypotheses **H1**, after which the level of both *Eis* was higher for extreme than for moderate parties was confirmed. Additionally, **H3** showed that policy Euroscepticism is indeed highest for far-right parties and lowest for moderate parties, with far-left parties in between. These findings are explained by the theory that positioning on European integration is “*based on ideological elements of party contestation.*” (Hellström, 2008, p. 191). However, **H2** could not be proven nor denied. It is evident that far-right parties show the highest polity Euroscepticism. However, the hypothesis that far-left parties would show approximately similar levels of polity Euroscepticism to moderate parties could not be confirmed. This is due to French parties showing comparably high levels of polity Euroscepticism, while the German DIE LINKE is closer to the level of moderate parties.

Table 11: Hypothesis results of this study

#	Hypothesis	Status
1	The level of polity and policy Euroscepticism is higher for far-left and far-right parties than for moderate parties.	✓
2	The level of polity Euroscepticism is higher for ideologically far-right parties than for far-left parties whose level, in turn, is similar to moderate parties	○
3	The level of policy Euroscepticism for far-left parties is higher than for moderate ones but lower than for far-right ones	✓

4	The level of polity and policy Euroscepticism differs between German and French parties	✓
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Notes: ✓ = confirmed, X = rejected, ○ = neither confirmed nor rejected

Hypothesis **H4** examined the systematic difference in the stance towards European integration between German and French parties. The analysis indicates that French parties tend to be more polity sceptical towards the EU, questioning the EU's structure and governance, whereas German parties exhibit more scepticism on the policy level, criticising specific EU policies rather than its overall structure. This national difference is particularly pronounced among left-wing parties, with French left-wing parties showing higher levels of polity scepticism compared to their German counterparts, who "focus" more on policy scepticism. The findings of **H2** (regarding far-left parties) and **H4** highlight the importance of national contexts in shaping party positions towards the EU, reflecting historical, cultural, and political differences between countries. It is also theoretically explained by the view that "*preference formation over European integration [is] more or less ideologically immune.*" (Hellström, 2008, p. 191). Due to this study not producing generalisable insights into all political parties from all different countries of the European Union, this tendency must for the moment be seen as specific for the German and French cases. However, further studies could include a wider range of countries and thus confirm or reject the findings proposed by this paper.

The study was successful in introducing a new way to understand Euroscepticism, in the polity and policy dimensions. It also incorporated these dimensions by showing general tendencies of party Euroscepticism and suggesting that the U-curve might be outdated and should be replaced by a new concept, the J-curve. The newly proposed typology unveils a new framework by which to think, observe, and examine Euroscepticism in a more detailed and constructive way.

The study also highlights several broader implications for political science research. Firstly, it underscores the necessity of moving beyond one-dimensional analyses of Euroscepticism. The multidimensional nature of the European Union necessitates more sophisticated models that can capture the nuances of Euroscepticism. The results show gaps between a party's stance towards the EU as an institution or a concept and its current policies. These differences ought to be included in any study of Euroscepticism, it cannot merely be seen as one dimension, ranging from anti- to pro-EU-sentiment. Secondly, the findings emphasise the role of both ideology and national contexts in shaping party positions towards the EU. Future research should continue to explore both dimensions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Euroscepticism across Europe.

Conclusion

The primary aim of this study was to develop a new, two-dimensional framework for understanding Euroscepticism and to critically evaluate the suitability of the U-curve as a scientific concept for describing the relationship between Euroscepticism and ideology. This objective was pursued through a detailed qualitative content analysis of 22 party manifestos from German and French parties for European Parliamentary elections.

This paper was able to theoretically conceptualise a new typology of Euroscepticism based on existing scientific literature by distinguishing Euroscepticism in two distinct dimensions: policy and polity. With this new framework, party Euroscepticism in selected German and French parties was thoroughly examined and new conclusions were drawn. This study's findings reaffirm the longstanding consensus in political science regarding the relationship between ideology and Euroscepticism. Traditionally, this relationship is depicted as a U-curve, with parties at the extremes of the political spectrum exhibiting the highest levels of Euroscepticism. This study both confirms and challenges this depiction, proposing a new way to see the relationship between Euroscepticism and ideology: the J-curve.

As the results have shown, there are two separate results to be observed. Both ideology and cultural/historical background influence party positioning on European integration as defined in the two possible explanations. In light of these findings, the continued use of the U-curve remains (to say the least) problematic. The U-curve, while historically significant, oversimplifies the complex and evolving dynamics of party positions on European integration. The J-curve better captures the empirical realities of contemporary political landscapes, where the intensity and consistency of Euroscepticism vary significantly between right- and left-wing parties. Adopting the J-curve in political science discourse will allow for a more precise analysis of the diverse and complex positions parties hold towards the European Union. This approach not only refines theoretical models but also has practical implications for policymakers and political strategists aiming to navigate the complexities of European integration in an era of growing ideological polarisation and populist influence. Further research on Euroscepticism ought to examine whether the results produced by this study may be generalisable for other countries and parties in the European Union and thereby – additionally – test the empirical validity and reliability of the conceptual frameworks proposed and imposed by this study, or possibly whether the J-curve exists in certain countries and the U-curve in others, and why.

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Appendix

A.1 All issues and descriptive information

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Policy-field</i>	<i>Manifesto %</i>
Polity	"COUNTRY should exit the EU."	-	100,00%
Polity	"The EU as an institution brings more advantages than disadvantages"	-	100.00%
Polity	"COUNTRY should a.) leave the Schengen-treaty entirely or b.) reintroduce border controls again."	-	95.45%
Polity	"The common market brings more advantages than disadvantages."	-	81.82%
Polity	"COUNTRY should leave the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and return to a national currency."	-	90.91%
Polity	"The EU should retransfer competences to the nation-states."	-	95.45%
Polity	"The European Commission should loose (some of) its competences."	-	81.82%
Polity	"The European Parliament should loose (some of) its competences."	-	95.45%
Polity	"The principle of unanimity in the European Council should be kept or expanded."	-	63.64%
Polity	"The European Court of Justice should loose (some of) its competences."	-	45.45%
Polity	"National law should always apply first; European law should come after that."	-	45.45%
Polity	"There should be more referenda on the European level to increase the veto-possibilities of the people (against the European Commission and Parliament)."	-	63.64%
Polity	"The European Parliament should not be granted the right of initiative."	-	81.82%
Polity	"The long-term goal of a European federal state is to be prevented."	-	68.18%
Polity	"The EU should not encourage more states to join it."	-	63.64%
Polity	Average		78.18%

Policy	"The EU should encourage tax-coordination on the EU-level."	Economy and Finance	95.45%
Policy	"The EU should propose a minimum tax."	Economy and Finance	81.82%
Policy	"The EU (European Commission) should nominate a <i>European Finance Minister</i> ."	Economy and Finance	13.64%
Policy	"Companies should be supported by the EU through subsidies."	Economy and Finance	45.45%
Policy	"The ESM should be kept and applied in the entire EU."	Economy and Finance	54.55%
Policy	"The European Central Bank is an essential institution for the successful functioning of the EU and the EMU."	Economy and Finance	72.73%
Policy	"The current system of lobbying at EU-level is good and should be kept that way."	Economy and Finance	63.64%
Policy	"The EU should continue to be able to negotiate free-trade agreements with other countries."	Economy and Finance	86.36%
Policy	"The EU should introduce and enforce a CO2-emission trading system."	Economy and Finance	59.09%
Policy	"The CAP should continue to be financed and supported."	Environment, Climate and Agriculture	86.36%
Policy	"Ecological agriculture should be encouraged at EU-level (e.g. by utilizing subsidies)."	Environment, Climate and Agriculture	45.45%
Policy	"The subsidies of the CAP should be kept the way they are (for now)."	Environment, Climate and Agriculture	59.09%
Policy	"The EU should introduce binding limits for the pollutant emission."	Environment, Climate and Agriculture	59.09%
Policy	"The EU should introduce EU-wide standards for food and nourishments."	Environment, Climate and Agriculture	27.27%
Policy	"The EU should introduce an EU-wide minimum wage or encourage nation-states to introduce own minimum wages."	Social	72.73%
Policy	"The EU should introduce EU-wide standards for working conditions."	Social	86.36%

Policy	"Unemployment should be combated at the EU-level."	Social	86.36%
Policy	"The EU should be able to propose measures for better integration of immigrants."	Social	40.91%
Policy	"The pension-systems of the EU-countries should be harmonized."	Social	45.45%
Policy	"The disadvantages women encounter in society should be combated at EU level, e.g. by initiatives to improve the number of women in leadership positions."	Education, Culture, Science and Technology	77.27%
Policy	"The Bologna-reforms were good and should be kept in place or expanded."	Education, Culture, Science and Technology	50.00%
Policy	"The EU should encourage life-long-learning."	Education, Culture, Science and Technology	40.91%
Policy	"The EU should implement own infrastructure projects at the EU-level."	Education, Culture, Science and Technology	63.63%
Policy	"The EU should introduce binding rules for data protection (GDPR)."	Education, Culture, Science and Technology	59.09%
Policy	"The EU-peace-missions and military missions in areas of crisis should be kept in place and continued."	Foreign, Security and Migration	50.00%
Policy	"The EU should introduce an own EU-army."	Foreign, Security and Migration	59.09%
Policy	"The CFSP is good and should be kept or expanded."	Foreign, Security and Migration	90.90%
Policy	"FRONTEX is a necessary institution to secure the EU's borders and needs to be kept."	Foreign, Security and Migration	81.82%
Policy	"The sanctions imposed on Russia are good and should be kept or expanded at EU-level."	Foreign, Security and Migration	36.36%
Policy	"An EU-wide common migration policy is good and necessary."	Foreign, Security and Migration	95.45%
Policy	Average		62.88%

Notes: all purple marked issues were not examined by the author but borrowed from the European Parliament Election Study 1979-2019 (Euromanifesto Study). If there is no value in a cell there may be two possible explanations: 1.) the electoral Manifesto did not have any information on said item or 2.) there were

equally many positive and negative text passages (*Null effect*). **Source:** author's work and European Parliament Election Study 1979-2019

A.2 Share of answered issues and Length of Manifestos

<i>Party</i>	<i>Election examined</i>	<i>Length in pages</i>	<i>Share of answered issues</i>
AfD	2014	25	68.89%
AfD	2019	88	86.67%
Bündnis90/DieGrünen	2014	145	75.56%
Bündnis90/DieGrünen	2019	197	84.44%
CDU	2014	103	77.78%
CDU	2019	26	71.11%
DIE LINKE	2009	24	73.33%
DIE LINKE	2014	76	80.00%
DIE LINKE	2019	64	84.44%
FDG	2009	3	31.11%
FDG	2014	36	62.22%
FDP	2014	28	66.67%
FDP	2019	150	75.56%
LFI	2019	36	80.00%
PS	2014	17	51.11%
PS	2019	36	64.44%
Renaissance	2019	32	62.22%
SPD	2014	14	62.22%
SPD	2019	76	82.22%
RN (FN)	2009	4	40.00%
RN	2019	20	60.00%
UMP	2014	12	55.56%