How do Far-Right Parties Influence Change in Mainstream Political Parties' Positions on the Question of Europe?

An Analysis of *United Kingdom Independence Party, Alternative für Deutschland* and *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*

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Abstract

The thesis seeks to provide a greater understanding as to how far-right parties influence the change of mainstream party positions and/or framing of the question of Europe. The analysis is restricted to the last thirty years, covering the period between 1990 and January 2020 and provides a bridge between the literatures on party competition, far-right parties and Euroscepticism. Challenging the notion that mainstream parties display similar positions on the question of Europe, it argues that mainstream parties vary in their pro-EU positions. By putting forward a typology of mainstream party Europhilism, the thesis establishes that mainstream parties have changed their positions on the question of Europe.

To explain the far-right party influence on the change of mainstream party positions and/or framing of the question of Europe, the thesis applies a novel theory-testing process-tracing mechanism to three individual cases: United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ). These parties share significant ideological similarities, yet the country contexts are different. While a pro-EU consensus is said to exist within Germany, Austria and particularly the UK show less support for the EU. Therefore, while the country contexts are different, the process-tracing mechanism applied to all three cases is similar.

The thesis finds that far-right parties influence the change of mainstream party positions and/or framing of the question of Europe. While electoral success is important, it is not enough on its own to explain the influence of far-right parties on mainstream party positions and/or framing. As such, this research has identified the media, public opinion and electoral success as important variables which help to conceptualise an explicit mechanism through which far-right parties can influence mainstream parties.

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Influence of Far-Right Parties on the Question of Europe

Introduction

As the former President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, argued:

> 'The challenges facing the European Union (EU) are more dangerous than ever before in the time since the signature of the Treaty of Rome'. The first threat 'is connected with the rise in anti-EU, nationalist, increasingly xenophobic sentiment in the EU itself. The second threat 'is the state of mind of the pro-European elites. A decline of faith in political integration, submission to populist arguments as well as doubts in the fundamental values of liberal democracy are all increasingly visible. It must be made crystal clear that the disintegration of the European Union will not lead to the restoration of some mythical, full sovereignty of its member states' (European Council, 2017).

Addressed to the 27 EU heads of state/government before the Malta Summit in 2017, Tusk's letter demonstrates the challenges ahead for the EU. The EU is undergoing 'profound transformations' which can be seen in the 'growing discord among the members of the enlarged Union, a decreasing capacity to act in the face of multiple crises, increasing politicisation of EU issues in public debates, and widespread Euroscepticism among citizens' (Tömmel, 2020: 1141). The 2000s witnessed the rejection of the EU's Constitutional Treaty by France and The Netherlands, and in the 2010s the Euro Crisis in 2010 and the refugee crisis in 2015. While the EU has faced numerous challenges over the course of its history, the current crisis, namely Britain's exit (Brexit) from the EU is more profound that what has gone before.

The United Kingdom's (UK) decision to withdraw from the EU in 2016 pushed 'the EU into one of the deepest crises in its more than 60 years of history' (Leruth et al, 2019: 1014). While the EU's predecessor – the European Community – had experienced a member state voting to leave the Union in 1983, Greenland's decision had 'limited consequences for the EU as a whole' (Hobolt, 2016: 1274). After the Brexit vote, the European Commission (EC) President Jean-Claude Juncker on the 1 March 2017 published a White Paper on the Future of Europe. The intention of this White Paper

was to 'throw the ball back to member states to decide the path of integration' (Morillas, 2017).

The White Paper detailed five broad scenarios for the EU by 2025, ranging from disintegration to more collective EU action, representing to some extent the range of different opinions that political parties have on the future of the EU. While far-right parties have remained Eurosceptic, they have mostly moved away from advocating their country's withdrawal from the EU, instead promoting reform of the EU. In contrast, mainstream parties - defined as a party whose electoral appeal is based on a 'moderate ideological platform' and is the major party in government if in a coalition with a non-mainstream party – have continued to emphasise their pro-EU credentials alongside a greater reluctance for further integration.

However, mainstream parties have tried to avoid politicising the question of Europe. Mainstream parties have well-established reputations as pro-EU parties, and therefore If mainstream parties start talking negatively about Europe, they face a reputational cost (Van de Wardt et al, 2014; Rohrschneider and Whitefield, 2016; Meijers, 2017; Hooghe and Marks, 2018). Therefore, they will only do so if they face strong pressures from other political parties such as the far right who have experienced increasing electoral success in recent years or from voters. Mainstream parties have dealt with the influence of far-right parties on the question of Europe in different ways, including cooperating with them in government, co-opting their policy stances or ignoring and marginalising them. While mainstream parties can respond differently from far-right parties, it is largely understood that there is a pro-EU consensus among mainstream parties.

The thesis therefore attempts to provide a greater understanding as to how far-right parties influence the change of mainstream party positions and/or framing of the question of Europe. The main focus of the thesis is on the positions and framing of mainstream parties, rather than the salience of the EU issue. The thesis analyses far-right party influence on the question of Europe by using an original process-tracing mechanism, identifying key variables including electoral success, the media and public opinion. This novel mechanism appears to work similarly across different country contexts. While existing research has indicated that far-right parties can influence

mainstream parties to change position (e.g. Zaslove, 2004; Klingeren et al, 2017; Bale, 2018; Mudde, 2019; Albertazzi et al, 2021), the influence of far-right parties on immigration policy has been the key focus of scholarly research.

Meijers (2017) and Filip (2021) are notable exceptions. Meijers (2017) found that Eurosceptic challenger parties can influence the change of mainstream party positions as long as EU issues are regarded as important by the Eurosceptic challenger. Filip (2021), using the 'extremist or radical party hypothesis' developed by De Vries (2007), is the only example which has attempted to identify a process that links Eurosceptic parties to other parties' changing position on the EU issue. Using a process-tracing mechanism, Filip (2021) argues that the Electorate/Public Attitudes (A) causes Eurosceptic parties to do well (B), which in turn causes political parties to change position to respond to vote loss/prevent further loss (C) (p.36). However, the evidence used to support Meijers (2017) and Filip's (2021) research is quantitative and quite broad brush, relying on data from expert surveys and the Manifesto Project. Therefore, it is unable to capture the nuances of mainstream party position change or how they justify their EU position.

Furthermore, in understanding success purely in 'electoral terms', Filip (2021) is not able to explain how far-right parties can still exert influence without being electorally successful at national elections. There is no research to date that has defined success in both electoral terms and policy influence. Additionally, current research has not identified a process which recognises the importance of the role of public opinion and the media. Given the varying electoral successes of far-right parties, the question of how far-right parties can influence mainstream party position change is central to the discipline of political science and the field of party competition studies.

This thesis aims to provide a bridge between the literature on party competition and the study of Euroscepticism. The former identifies the conditions in which party competition takes place, which can help to explain how far-right parties influence mainstream parties. The latter explains the positions which mainstream parties and far-right parties hold on the question of Europe. By bridging these two literatures, the thesis helps to understand the research puzzle and fills significant gaps in our knowledge.

The findings of this thesis show that by using a novel process tracing mechanism, far-right parties have influenced the change of mainstream party positions and/or framing of the question of Europe. While electoral success is important, it is not enough on its own to explain the far right's influence. As such, how the media portrays the far right and how this may (or may not) resonate with public opinion, are important variables alongside electoral success that help to explain far-right party influence. Moreover, this research has also found that mainstream parties are no longer unconditionally Europhile.

Therefore, the following chapter is divided into five sections. The first section outlines the research agenda and puzzle, briefly outlining how the success of far-right parties has coincided with a deepening and widening of the European integration process. It argues that there is a substantial gap in our understanding of far-right party influence on mainstream party positions on the question of Europe. The second section outlines the theoretical framework and argument used to answer the research questions. The third section outlines the research design, explaining the methodologies used and justifying the case section and time frame of the investigation. The originality and contribution is discussed in the fourth section, while the fifth section provides an overview of the remainder of the thesis and outlines the following chapters.

1.1 Research Puzzle

On 7 of February 1992 European leaders signed the Treaty on European Union (TEU), better known as the Maastricht Treaty. This treaty has widely been identified as a 'turning point' in European integration. It not only represented a 'significant deepening of the integration process' (Barth and Bijsmans, 2018: 217), but also it signalled the end of the 'permissive consensus', the idea that there was an agreement between the public and national governments to proceed with integration (Hooghe and Marks, 2009; Christiansen et al, 2012). In recent years, scepticism towards the EU has grown coinciding with a number of crises including the economic crisis, the refugee crisis and Brexit (Mckeever, 2020). The process of European integration has thus faced numerous obstacles, as well as an increase in overt Euroscepticism, which has coincided with the rise of far-right parties.

Since the mid-1990s, far-right parties have been on the rise and have become powerful actors within most European electoral systems (Mudde, 2007; Hainsworth, 2008; Bale et al, 2010). While the electoral support of far-right parties has increased, all significant parties classified in this party family (examples include the Partij voor de Vrijheid -PVV and Rassemblement National - RN), have experienced some fluctuation in their electoral support in what scholars term different waves of support (De Lange, 2007). Furthermore, the electoral support is varied across time and space. While some countries have never had relevant far-right parties (e.g. Malta or until recently Portugal), or their electoral support has been more volatile (e.g. Germany and Sweden), in other countries far-right parties have been 'more or less consistently successful' (e.g. Denmark, France, Italy) (Arzheimer, 2018).

Consequently, the study of far-right party influence has received growing attention in scholarly research. The academic debate has focused on analysing the influence of far-right parties on 'one small aspect of the asserted effect – that is, immigration policies' (Mudde, 2013: 5). In explaining the influence on far-right parties, most of the literature has concluded that mainstream parties have converged with far-right parties by adopting more restrictive policies on immigration (Zaslove, 2004; Alonso and da Fonseca, 2011; Perlmutter, 2015; Klingeren et al, 2017; Mudde, 2019).

The focus on immigration policy is not surprising given the far right's nationalistic ideology (Minkenberg, 2001; Meguid, 2008; Mudde, 2013). Far-right parties believe that immigration represents a threat to their national identity and in their ability to achieve a 'monocultural state' (Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2018a). Furthermore, previous research has suggested that far-right parties primarily compete on this issue with an extreme anti-immigration position (Van Spanje, 2010; Abou-Chadi, 2016). The issue of immigration has also been embedded in EU policies such as the Schengen agreement which allows freedom of movement. The Schengen policy has been heavily criticised due to the refugee crisis but also as contributing to major terrorist attacks within member states, which has reinforced the far right's anti-immigration stance (Willsher, 2016). As a result, immigration has dominated the agenda of far-right parties and has been one of the biggest concerns of European voters (Mckeever,

2020; European Commission, 2021). Therefore, it is understandable why immigration has been the key focus of the literature on far-right party influence.

As a result, the literature has largely disregarded the influence of far-right parties on other issues. This is true with the exception of Han (2015) on multiculturalism, Verbeek and Zaslove (2015) on foreign policy, one journal article on European integration by Meijers (2017) and a book on the influence of Eurosceptic parties by Filip (2021). The expansion of empirical analyses on the influence of far-right parties on issues beyond immigration displays the beginning of an academic interest.

The influence of far-right parties on the question of Europe remains particularly under-researched. Far-right parties are considered to be the main drivers of the politicisation of Europe (Hutter and Grande, 2014). As EU issue entrepreneurs, far-right parties advocate policy issues such as the EU that have been ignored by mainstream parties (De Vries and Hobolt, 2012). The issue entrepreneurial strategy can consist of adopting a polarising position, or spending more time on the issue (Vasilopoulou, 2018). Euroscepticism defined as a form of opposition to European integration, feeds into far-right party's nationalist ideology. The EU is viewed as 'an enemy to nation-state sovereignty' (Vasilopoulou, 2018a: 125). The importance of national sovereignty forms the basis for far-right parties to express Eurosceptic sentiments in their positions and framing (Helbling et al, 2010; Van Spanje, 2010; de Vries and Hobolt, 2012; Lynch and Whitaker, 2013; Van Heerden et al, 2014; Vasilopoulou, 2018). By pooling the sovereignty of member states, the EU, 'by its design, limits national sovereignty' (Buštíková, 2018: 572). Therefore, far-right parties believe that the EU represents a threat to 'the right of the nation to act as independent, free and sovereign' (Halikipoulou et al, 2012: 509). As a result, the EU goes against the premise of radical right ideology, i.e. nationalism.

Furthermore, European integration also goes against another aspect of the far right's nationalist ideology, as far-right parties want to achieve a 'monocultural state' (Mudde, 2007: 16). Each European state has unique norms, values and beliefs. The far right believe the EU is not taking these national specificities into consideration, therefore posing a threat to the cultural homogeneity of member states. This is demonstrated by the far right's opposition to the EU's enlargement policy toward Turkey. The far right

accuse the EU of changing the 'ethnic and demographic makeup of Europe' (Vasilopoulou, 2018a: 125), from a continent based on ancient Greek democracy, Roman legal tradition and Christianity to Islamisation (Vasilopoulou, 2010).

While the EU has continued to proceed with further integration, the question of Europe is considered a divisive issue for mainstream parties who therefore avoid politicising the EU (Van de Wardt et al, 2014; Meijers, 2017; Hooghe and Marks, 2018). As mainstream parties are considered to be either office seeking, vote seeking or policy seeking, Williams (2015) suggests that addressing the EU is not beneficial for them. Hooghe and Marks (2018) argue that mainstream parties avoid openly discussing the EU as a result of internal dissent. Therefore, mainstream parties are said to refrain from politicising the question of Europe, and as a result the question of Europe is typically not at the forefront of the agenda of mainstream parties (Green-Pederson, 2012; Van de Wardt et al, 2014). Consequently, far-right parties have jumped on the opportunity to politicise the question of Europe (Van Spanje, 2010; de Vries and Hobolt, 2012; Lynch and Whitaker, 2013; Van Heerden et al, 2014; Vasilopoulou, 2018). However, it is only recently that scholars have recognised that far-right parties can influence mainstream parties on the question of Europe (Meijers, 2017; Filip, 2021).

The relative absence of scholarly research is partly because mainstream parties are viewed as supporters of the EU. The underlying assumption in the literature would suggest that as a result of being a mainstream party they display similar levels of pro-EU attitudes. Hooghe et al (2002) suggests that party family location determines party positioning on European integration. Mainstream parties have been chiefly responsible for furthering the process of European integration (Hooghe and Marks, 2009). Furthermore, Rohrschneider and Whitefield's (2016) research found that there has been no major change in the pro-EU attitudes of mainstream parties. Therefore, there is said to be a pro-EU consensus that exists among mainstream parties (Rohrschneider and Whitefield, 2016; Hooghe and Marks, 2018; Szöcsik and Polyakova, 2019).

However, there is a growing body of research that has questioned this perceived uniform stance (Kopecký and Mudde, 2002; Hertner and Keith, 2017; Flood and

Soborski, 2017), a critical perspective that is also supported by the Chapel Hill Survey 1999-2019. While mainstream party families are far more supportive of the EU in 2019 than far-right parties, there is variation between party families. The Christian Democrats and Social Democrats are considered more supportive of the EU than the Conservative party family (Jolly et al, 2022). The variation is not only evident between party families but also across countries. On a scale of one to seven, where one indicates opposition to European integration, and seven a strongly favourable position, centre-left and centre-right parties in Austria, Germany and the UK (except the British Conservative Party) range in the upper half of the scale between four and seven.

An in-depth research of mainstream parties' EU positions indicates that they have changed position. Mainstream parties in Germany and Austria have moved from advocating a pro-European position that contains very little, if any, criticism of the EU, to acknowledging that the EU needs to reform (The Local Germany, 2019; Herszenhorn, 2019). Change can be observed in the way mainstream parties nuance and justify their positions on the EU, and how they view future cooperation. Capturing the change of mainstream party attitudes towards the EU is not something that is sufficiently clear-cut for it to be easily captured by scores on expert surveys.

While the above discussion indicates that Euroscepticism is an important issue for the far-right party family and that mainstream party positions on the EU are varied, the issue of far-right party influence remains under researched. Seeking to build on the literature and to contribute towards an improved understanding of the influence of far-right parties on mainstream party positions on the question of Europe, this research is informed by two interrelated questions.

1. How can we conceptualise the nature of mainstream party positions on the EU?
2. To what extent do far-right political parties influence the change of mainstream party positions on the question of Europe?

In answering the above research questions, the thesis aims to explore what the influence of far-right parties is on mainstream party positions on the question of Europe, and whether any influence they may exercise differs between centre-left and centre-right parties.

1.2. Theoretical Framework and Argument

In response to the first research question, the thesis argues that the nature of mainstream parties' supportive positions on the EU can be conceptualised based on four indicators, namely the definition of the EU, the principle, policy and future of European Integration. Based on these indicators, derived from the current literature on Euroscepticism (Vasilopoulou, 2018), the thesis suggests that mainstream parties may be broadly categorised into three patterns of support for European integration. These are the 'enthusiast', the 'equivocal' and the 'critical' patterns (for a detailed analysis, see Chapter 4).

In relation to the second research question, namely 'to what extent do far-right political parties influence the change of mainstream party positions on the question of Europe?', far-right party influence can be defined as either direct (through legislative policy change) or indirect (through party competition) (Minkenberg, 2001; Williams, 2006; Hainsworth, 2008; Verbeek and Zaslove, 2015). While the main focus of this research is on the indirect influence of far-right parties, this research argues that indirect influence should not only be defined in terms of far-right parties in the system influencing the salience of the EU issue and position of mainstream parties, but also in terms of changing how they frame the EU. In other words, how parties define and justify their positions on the question of Europe (Basile, 2013). Thus, the approach adopted here is that indirect influence should be understood in terms of the combination of position, salience and framing of the question of Europe. However, it is important to note that this thesis specifically focuses on the position and framing of the question of Europe rather than the salience of the EU issue. For a more detailed analysis of how influence is understood see Chapter 2.

The thesis also addresses the second research question by using the process-tracing methodology. Process-tracing allows this research to combine three key variables that the literature identifies including electoral success, the media and public opinion. It argues that while some type of electoral success is needed, the media provide the public with access to the far-right party's message, and the public participate in the debate through opinion polls or voting in elections. Furthermore, process-tracing allows this research to analyse 'trajectories of change' overtime, (Collier, 2011: 823)

including mainstream party positions and framing of the question of Europe. Therefore, process-tracing allows us to understand the complex mechanism that links the influence of far-right parties with the change of mainstream party positions and framing of the question of Europe. The mechanism also appears to work similarly across different country contexts.

There are only a few examples in the literature of the process-tracing methodology being used to understand the influence of far-right parties (e.g Biard, 2019; McKeever, 2020), and even fewer that use process-tracing to understand the influence of far-right parties on the specific question of Europe (e.g Filip, 2021). Filip (2021) uses De Vries (2007) 'Radical Party Hypothesis', which 'states that the success of Eurosceptic parties leads to changes of policy position/preferences by the other parties' (p.89). Using a process-tracing mechanism, Filip (2021) argues that the Electorate/Public Attitudes (A) causes Eurosceptic parties to do well (B), which in turn causes political parties to change position to respond to vote loss/prevent further loss (C) (p.36). The argument follows that while it is possible for mainstream parties to be openly pro-European, and for the 'large swathes' of the electorate to be less warm to Europe, 'the former need not adopt more Eurosceptic positions to appease the latter unless they actually stand to incur an electoral loss' (Filip, 2021: 45). According to Filip's (2021) understanding electoral performance is the main independent variable, operationalised as the change in percentage of votes gained by a country's biggest Eurosceptic party and a change in cumulated percentage of votes gained by all Eurosceptic parties.

While acknowledging that electoral success is important for far-right parties to have influence, the thesis argues that public opinion and the media are also important variables that can affect the influence of far-right parties. When examining the influence of far-right parties, the explanatory value of Filip's (2021) approach diminishes not least because far-right parties' electoral success varies. The understanding of a far-right party as a 'credible threat to other parties' (Filip, 2021: 36), in other words taking votes away from them, will differ depending on the national context. In some countries, far-right parties will be more of a threat to other parties than in others. Therefore, the national political setting and how mainstream parties perceive the far-right party is important in analysing the influence of far-right parties

on the question of Europe. In this sense, the thesis builds on previous work by scholars including Bale (2003), Ivarsflaten, (2005) and De Jonge (2021) who argue that the media can play a crucial role in the dissemination of the far-right party's message to the public, which in turn can influence the change in the public's attitudes. In this framework, public opinion refers to the attitudes of the public measured through opinion polls and motives for voting for the far-right party, while electoral success is defined in terms of vote share/seats and government participation.

The novelty of the approach used in this thesis lies in the identification of a process which links the influence of far-right parties with the change of mainstream party positions and/or framing of the question of Europe. Additionally, it introduces 'the media' and 'public opinion' to complement 'electoral success' as key independent variables in the analysis. Therefore, based on the empirical findings the thesis argues that:

1. Parties classified as 'mainstream' vary in their pro-EU positions.

2. The media and public opinion combined with far-right party electoral success explain the influence of far-right parties.

Based on the above propositions, the thesis contends that most mainstream parties are no longer unconditionally Europhile. This in turn leads them to put forward different positions on the question of Europe, whether that be in terms of specific EU policies or the future of the EU as a whole. According to the literature on Euroscepticism, partial criticism of the EU 'has become widespread even across mainstream parties' (Nicoli, 2017: 314). As a result, mainstream parties have changed their position and/or framing of the question of Europe. Therefore, the thesis argues that there are three patterns of support: enthusiast, equivocal, and critical.

An 'enthusiast Europhile' is the most supportive of European integration and implies acceptance of a common definition of the EU and the principle of cooperation. It also advocates the reform of both policy and the future building of a European polity. While an 'equivocal Europhile' expresses support for common EU values and the principle of cooperation, it oscillates between expressing support and opposition for EU policies. 'Equivocal Europhiles' never fully accept the EU in its current form and seek

to alter the EU's future trajectory. 'Critical Europhiles' also accept common EU values and the principle of cooperation but they criticise the policy aspect and future of European integration. 'Critical Europhiles' are also against an 'ever-closer union and want to limit the EU's reach (for a detailed analysis see Chapter 4).

In relation to the second proposition, electoral success on its own is not enough to explain the influence of far-right parties. While the party competition literature suggests that electoral success is needed for far-right parties to have influence (Meguid, 2008; Albertazzi et al, 2021), immigrationfar-right parties can still exert influence without having electoral success. The literature also indicates that how the media portrays the far right and how this may (or may not) resonate with public opinion are important variables that help to explain the far right's influence. Therefore, the thesis uses a process-tracing mechanism to combine the three variables. The process-tracing mechanism has three stages. The first stage involves far-right parties shaping the debate, which focuses on how the media portray the far right to the public. Following this, the second stage focuses on the participation of the public in the debate through opinion polling and voting in elections and the recognition that mainstream parties perceive the far right as an electoral threat. The last stage focuses on mainstream parties addressing the question of Europe which contributes to the outcome that mainstream parties change their position and/or framing of the question of Europe (for a detailed analysis see Chapter 2).

The following section will discuss the methodology through which these arguments will be explored.

1.3 Research Design

1.3.1. Methodology and Case Selection

The thesis adopts a qualitative approach drawing on the literature on far-right parties' influence and party competition. It applies a theory-testing process-tracing mechanism to three individual case studies. The thesis combines the study of three case studies with a comparative qualitative analysis to identify common themes across cases. Process-tracing allows this research to 'establish whether, and how, a potential cause or causes influenced a specified change or set of changes' (INTRAC, 2017: no

page number). A qualitative analysis of the literature on Euroscepticism is used to propose a new conceptualisation of mainstream party support for European integration. Based on this new conceptualisation of Europhilism, it maps the change of mainstream party positions on the question of Europe in the UK, Germany and Austria using national and European party manifestos as the main primary sources. A novel process-tracing mechanism is identified which outlines the process in which far-right parties can influence mainstream party positions and/or framing of the question of Europe. The process-tracing mechanism provides the general framework for the empirical chapters and will analyse the change of mainstream party position and/or framing of the question of Europe.

The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ) constitute the case studies of the thesis. The three case studies have been selected on the basis that these far-right parties share similar ideological characteristics including nationalism, authoritarianism and populism, and are classified as the 'radical' variant of the far-right party family (Mudde, 2007) (see Chapter 2). The three cases are all regarded as Eurosceptic and Euroscepticism as shown by data from the Chapel Hill Survey has been a significant issue since these parties were founded (Bakker et al, 2015; Polk et al, 2017; Jolly et al, 2022). Additionally, these cases have also had electoral success at the European level. The similarities of the case studies are summarised in Table 1.1.

It should be noted that in May 2019 just before the European Elections, Nigel Farage – the former UKIP leader – formed the Brexit Party. Therefore, the UK had two far-right parties at the same time expressing similar positions that focused on following through with the Brexit result. While UKIP lost support in the European elections, the Brexit Party took 31.69 percent of the votes (BBC News, 2019). It can be said that UKIP's loss of support was at least partly due to the Brexit party following the same policy stance. A similar scenario occurred in Austria when the FPÖ split in 2005 which led to the creation of the Bündnis Zukunft Österreich (BZÖ). In effect, this resulted in the FPÖ as the junior coalition partner being 'relegated to the opposition benches', as 16 of its 18 MPs left to form the BZÖ (Luther, 2008: 1005).

While the actors under investigation are similar, the contexts in which they act are different. Firstly, the country's attitudes towards EU membership are different. Euroscepticism was an 'engrained feature of the British party system from the end of the post-war period to the present' (Baker et al, 2008: 115). The Euroscepticism within the British party system was supported by the 'vigorously anti-European agenda' of the press (Daddow, 2012). The environment in Austria is somewhat similar to Britain in the sense that Austria was a 'latecomer to the EU' (Kriesi, 2007: 89) and the Austrian public was less Europhile than the populations of other EU member states' including Germany (Fallend, 2008: 207). Table 1.1 also shows that on average the British and Austrian public are more Eurosceptic than Germany, as on average only 36 percent of the British and Austrian public believed that EU membership was a good thing (European Parliament, no date).

Unlike the UK and Austria, Germany was a founding member of the EU and has enjoyed a 'stable elite consensus around the European project' (Lees, 2008: 16). Furthermore, the pro-EU consensus was bolstered by a 'relatively compliant media', a permissive consensus amongst the general public and an 'ingrained reluctance amongst the political class to engage in populist politics on the issue of Europe' (Lees, 2008:16). In comparison to the UK and Austria, 58 percent of the German public thought EU membership was a good thing (European Parliament, no date).

Secondly, the electoral success of the three cases varies across the case-studies and over time. The FPÖ has been in government, the AfD's highest achievement has been the third largest party, and UKIP has had little success nationally. As a result it is apparent that the timing, pace and success within these countries differ. To some extent the variation of success can be partly explained by the environment in which the far-right parties operate. Thus, Austria and Germany have a proportional electoral system, whereas the UK uses a plurality system. Furthermore, Austria and Germany have a multi-party system, and the UK has two (or three) main parties (Freeman, 2002; Carvalho, 2017; Lees, 2018). While it is important to recognise that the environment in which the far-right parties operate is different, the variation in electoral success helps to support the argument that electoral success on its own is not enough for far-right parties to have influence. An overview of the similarities and differences of the far-right parties characteristics is shown below in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 – Comparability of the Case Selection

Characteristics	UK (UKIP)	Germany (AfD)	Austria (FPÖ)
Similarities			
Far-Right Party Family	Radical	Radical	Radical
Ideology (Euroscepticism)*	Strongly Opposed to Opposed	Strongly Opposed to Opposed	Opposed to Somewhat opposed
Salience of the EU to the Far Right - 0 (no importance) 10 (very important)*	9-10	7-10	5-8
Far Right Electoral Success (European Elections - Percentage of votes)	2014 – 26.77% 2019 – 3.56%	2014 – 7.1% 2019 – 11%	2014 – 19.72% 2019 – 17.2%
Differences			
Far-Right Party Founded	1993 (not originally far right)	2013	1956
Electoral System	Plurality	Proportional	Proportional
Party System	Two (or three) main parties	Multi-Party	Multi-Party
Far Right Electoral Success (Highest Achievement Nationally)	Little Success (no MPs)	Third Largest Party	Junior Partner Coalition Government
Eurobarometer Data – Average Country Support for EU Membership between 1994-2019*	36%	58%	36%

*Data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey. Position over time.
**Eurobarometer question: Generally speaking, do you think that (our country's) membership of the EU is? A good thing.

As shown above, the cases under investigation share common elements in their ideology and Euroscepticism (detailed explanation provided in Chapter 2 section

2.1.1). While the actors under investigation are similar, they exist within different contexts, yet the process-tracing mechanism appears to be similar. In order to analyse these case studies, it is necessary to address the sources that will be used to examine the impact of the far right on the centre-left and centre-right.

1.3.2 Sources

The thesis makes use of a diverse range of primary and secondary sources. In the first section of the thesis, to understand the dependent variable (mainstream party response), Chapter 4 uses national and European party manifestos, as well as data from CHES. As a primary source, party manifestos are important for indicating position, as they are designed in the context of election campaigns, to publicise and clarify potentially appealing policy commitments (Mair and Mudde, 1998). They are 'among the richest sources of information' about parties' policies (Dolezal et al, 2018: 240). Moreover, Chapter 4 combines manifestos with data from experts surveys including CHES (Jolly et al, 2022), in order to combat the criticisms that expert surveys may position parties based on reputation rather than their true position (Meijers, 2017).

The empirical analysis of the three cases, uses manifestos, as well as other primary sources including parliamentary debates and speeches, interviews, autobiographies, public opinion polls and media coverage. The independent variables are based on various sources. In order to analyse media coverage, newspaper articles were sourced from the Nexis database. Newspaper sources pass through a rigorous editorial process and information is collected just after the events take place (Beach and Pedersen, 2019). Therefore, they provide an insight into the coverage that political parties are getting, as well as what messages the public have access to. Building on this, to understand the second independent variable of public opinion, opinion polls are used as they provide parties 'with a signal of the degree to which their policy proposals are gaining or losing traction among voters'. Therefore, 'public opinion data is a direct measure of success' (Pereira, 2019: 80). The final independent variable uses election result data to analyse electoral success. Vote share is useful to gauge the strength of a party, as votes are translated into seats which give the far-right party access to the policy-making arena (Sartori, 2016).

In addition to these sources, the author conducted semi-structured elite interviews with politicians for the UK case study between January 2021 and May 2021 (see Appendix I). Interviews, as a qualitative tool, provide an opportunity to gain greater insight into individual attitudes and they give the respondent freedom to expand further (Bryman, 2016). They have increased the depth of information of the UK case study particularly in regard to understanding the influence of UKIP on the Labour Party. They have also provided insights into individual attitudes towards UKIP. Following the semi-structured method, while having a set of questions prepared, allowed the interviewer to be flexible in the sequence of questions asked, as well as being able to ask questions to encourage interviewees to elaborate on their attitudes. For a more detailed discussion see Chapter 3.

1.3.3 Time Frame

The thesis has a largely contemporary focus and is restricted to the last thirty years, between 1990 and January 2020. During this period, alongside the growing success of far-right parties with Eurosceptic agendas, the EU has also experienced a significant deepening and widening of integration. At the same time, the EU has faced several crises including the Euro crisis, refugee crisis and more recently Brexit. While Chapter 4 uses the whole breadth of the period between 1990 and January 2020 to gauge mainstream party positions on the EU, the period under analysis in the empirical chapters will depend on the far-right party in question and the occurrence of a major EU event. Both aspects make up the trigger of the process-tracing mechanism.

As a result, 1993 marks the starting point for the UK case study as the Maastricht Treaty was signed in 1992 and UKIP was formed in 1993. While the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU which took place on 23 June 2016, marked the 'climax of the politicisation of European integration' (Tournier-Sol, 2021: 380), the Maastricht Treaty was the 'major turning point' in the politicisation of the EU (Hooghe and Marks, 2009). In relation to the German case study, the Euro Crisis occurred in 2010, while the AfD was formed in 2013, meaning that 2013 marks the starting point. Furthermore, while the FPÖ was founded in 1956, Austria's accession referendum to the EU only took place in 1994, and thus 1994 marks the start of the process in the Austrian case.

The trigger of the process-tracing mechanism will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 2.

1.4. The Originality and Contribution of the Thesis

The thesis aims to build on and develop the literature on far-right parties, party competition and the study of Euroscepticism and contribute to the academic understanding of the influence of the far right on the question of Europe. It provides an input to the definition and measurement of Europhilism. This is achieved through creating a novel typology of the phenomenon of Europhilism, based on an in-depth analysis of mainstream parties' national and European manifestos. It also establishes a link between the influence of far-right parties and the change of mainstream party positions and/or framing of the question of Europe. This is achieved through creating a novel process of far-right party influence which applies in different contexts, through the in-depth analysis of the literature and through the original empirical research of far-right party influence on the question of Europe which has been largely unresearched.

In particular, the contribution of the thesis is theoretical, empirical and methodological. In answering the first question, namely 'How can we conceptualise the nature of mainstream party positions on the EU?', the thesis makes a theoretical contribution by showing nuance within mainstream parties' EU stances. Chapter 4 evaluates the current definitions of Europhilism and adds to the academic understanding by developing a new framework of Europhilism. This novel typology intends to firstly, improve the academic conceptualisation of the term, and secondly, identify divergent patterns of support for the EU within mainstream political parties. It also shows that (most) mainstream parties are no longer unconditionally Europhile.

To address the second research question, namely 'To what extent do far-right political parties influence the change of mainstream party positions on the question of Europe?', the thesis makes a significant empirical and methodological contribution. The thesis makes an empirical contribution by showing that electoral success is not a pre-condition for a far-right party to have influence. The empirical evidence in this

thesis suggests that even in the absence of electoral success, far-right parties can still influence mainstream parties. The thesis challenges the assumptions made in the literature that electoral success is the core explanation for far-right party influence and argues that far-right party influence is also dependent on how the media portrays the far right, as well as how this may (or may not) resonate with public opinion.

The thesis also makes a methodological contribution. It takes a novel approach to the under-researched area of the far right's influence on the question of Europe. It does so through an original process-tracing mechanism which demonstrates that electoral success (vote share/seats and government participation) alone is not sufficient to explain the influence of far-right parties on the question of Europe. Process-tracing enables this research to combine the independent variables of the media, public opinion and electoral success to understand the influence of far-right parties. It therefore constitutes the first study of far-right party influence to combine the independent variables of the media, public opinion and electoral success to understand the influence of far-right parties. The mechanism also appears to work similarly across different country contexts. Therefore, it will contribute to a greater understanding of far-right party influence by establishing a link between the influence of far-right parties and the change of mainstream party positions.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

The thesis is divided into two sections. The first discusses issues of theory, conceptualisation and measurement of far-right party influence and Europhilism. It provides a new conceptualisation of indirect influence and a new framework to understand mainstream party positions on the question of Europe. The second section applies the novel process-tracing mechanism to each of the case studies including UKIP, AfD and FPÖ.

In particular, Chapter 2 examines the influence of far-right parties, demonstrating that electoral success alone is not sufficient to explain their influence on mainstream parties. It argues that to complement electoral success, the media needs to portray the far right as different from the mainstream parties and public opinion needs to resonate with the far right's EU policy in order for far-right parties to have influence on

mainstream parties. As a result, it sets out the theoretical and methodological framework within which this thesis operates. The theoretical proposition of this chapter maintains that there is a process which links the influence of far-right parties with the change of position and/or framing of mainstream parties on the question of Europe. The process has three stages, (1) shaping the debate, (2) public opinion and the awareness of mainstream parties and (3) mainstream response. Chapter 3 examines the sources that will be used at each stage of the mechanism.

Chapter 4 puts forward a novel conceptualisation of Europhilism which suggests that the variation of mainstream party positions may be categorised into three patterns of support for the EU. These comprise the 'enthusiast', 'equivocal' and 'critical' patterns of Europhilism and are identified through the examination of party attitudes on four different aspects related to the European integration. These party attitudes are the definition of the EU, the principle of cooperation, the policy and the desire for building a future European polity. It proceeds by conducting a qualitative analysis of party literature of seven mainstream parties from the three case studies supporting empirical substance to the theoretical arguments of the chapter.

After the theories and methods have been laid out, the thesis proceeds with the empirical analysis of three case studies: UKIP, AfD and FPÖ. Chapter 5 tests the process-tracing mechanism by applying it to the first case study of UKIP. It confirms that the process-tracing mechanism works as expected and argues that UKIP facilitated the Conservative Party's co-optation of its EU position. It also argues that Labour pursued a dismissive strategy to UKIP as an actor but adversarial (clashing) strategy in regard to UKIP's EU policy prior to the Brexit referendum result.

Chapter 6 examines the influence of the AfD on the SPD, CDU and CSU. By applying the process-tracing mechanism it argues that the SPD, CDU and CSU embark on an adversarial (clashing) strategy, attacking both the AfD as an actor and its EU position. However, in terms of framing, the CDU and CSU co-opted the AfD's language by showing reluctance to immediate further integration.

Chapter 7 constitutes the final substantive chapter of the thesis. It applies the process-tracing mechanism to the final case study, namely the FPÖ. It argues that while the

ÖVP and SPÖ used an adversarial (clashing) strategy attacking the FPÖ as an actor and its Eurosceptic position, the ÖVP co-opted both the FPÖ's position and framing of the question of Europe.

The concluding chapter 8 provides a comparative analysis of the analytical findings from the three empirical chapters. It argues that while some type of electoral success is needed for far-right parties to have influence, a more nuanced approach is required. It explores the generalisability of the argument in applying the process-tracing mechanism to other case studies such as the RN in France and in examining different levels of Europhilism within other party families that are classified as mainstream. It discusses the broader contribution of this research and points to directions for future research.

Chapter 2

Theorising Far Right Influence on the Centre-Left and Centre-Right

Introduction

The main research question posed in this thesis, namely 'to what extent do far-right political parties influence the change of mainstream party positions on the question of Europe?', feeds into the wider literature on party competition and party behaviour. The literature has primarily focused on the influence of far-right parties on the immigration policy of mainstream parties. Despite this, it provides a framework to understand influence as direct (through legislative policy change) or indirect (through party competition), which helps guide the researcher as to how to approach this research question.

However, before answering the question, we need to define the main actors under discussion including mainstream and far-right parties. This is important not only to help to identify the cases which this research will analyse, but also the standard classification of parties as 'mainstream' and 'far right' do not provide clear characteristics that distinguish them from one another. Furthermore, we also need to define where we can observe influence as this will provide a framework to guide the analysis of far-right party influence in the empirical chapters.

Therefore, this chapter is divided into four sections. The first section focuses on the characteristics of 'mainstream' and 'far-right' parties. It demonstrates that mainstream parties are distinguished from far-right parties by their role as the main partner in a coalition government with a non-mainstream party and their 'moderate ideological platform'. In contrast, far-right parties are defined by their exclusion from office or their role as a junior partner in a coalition government and the core ideological features of nationalism, authoritarianism and populism. The following section turns to addressing what influence far-right parties can have, analysing both direct and indirect influence. A key finding is that there are no examples of research that conceptualise indirect influence by using framing; in other words, how political parties define the question of Europe and what justifications they use to support their positions. The section then focuses on previous studies that analyse the influence of far-right parties and the type

of policy they have focused on. An important finding is that there is very little discussion of far-right party influence on mainstream party positions and the salience and framing of the question of Europe.

The chapter then turns to explaining the influence of far-right parties through analysing key variables including electoral success, media and public opinion. It argues that while the core explanation for the influence of far-right parties in the literature is electoral success, it is not enough for the far right to exert influence on mainstream parties. As a result, while some type of electoral success is needed, the media acts as an important instrument for far-right parties to disseminate their message to the public which in turn can influence public attitudes and the increase the salience of its issues. By identifying electoral success, media and public opinion as key variables that can facilitate the far-right's influence, the following section outlines how the methodology of process-tracing addresses the limitations of previous research on far-right party influence.

It posits that previous research has not identified a process which incorporates the variables of electoral success, the media and public opinion through which far-right parties influence mainstream parties on the question of Europe. This is an important omission because there is a clear process which links the influence of far-right parties to the change in mainstream party positions and/or framing of the question of Europe. This novel process-tracing mechanism has three main stages. The first stage involves far-right parties shaping the debate, which focuses on the media as an instrument to disseminate the far right's Eurosceptic message to the public. As a result of the information that the public receive through the media, stage 2 focuses on the participation of the public in the debate through opinion polling and voting in elections. Therefore, if the public become more Eurosceptic and the support for the far-right party increases, mainstream parties will consider them an electoral threat. This leads to stage 3 whereby mainstream parties respond by addressing the question of Europe which contributes to the outcome that mainstream parties change their position and/or framing of the question of Europe.

Overall, the chapter argues that we lack a comprehensive understanding of the influence of far-right parties on the question of Europe. While some type of electoral

success is needed, whether that be measured by the percentage of votes or number of seats, a more nuanced approach is required to explain the influence of far-right parties. Therefore, to complement electoral success, the media and public opinion are important variables that also can help to explain the influence of far-right parties on the question of Europe.

2.1 Defining Far Right and Mainstream Parties

To understand the main objects of this study, the section outlines the definition of 'far-right' parties and the second discusses the definition of 'mainstream' parties. This discussion is relevant given that the characteristics of 'far-right' parties and 'mainstream' parties will help to define who may influence whom. Based on this analysis, far-right parties can be distinguished from mainstream parties by their policy and ideology including key ideological features of nationalism, authoritarianism and populism. Additionally, far-right parties can also be distinguished by their government participation, in the sense that they are still less likely to participate in government than mainstream parties. The identified characteristics define the differences between far right and mainstream parties and thus this analysis will contribute to identifying the types of influence, the factors that can affect the extent of the far-right party's influence and how this influence can be measured.

2.1.1 Defining the Far-Right Party Family

There is a plethora of terms used to describe these parties including 'far right', 'extreme right', 'radical right' or 'populist radical right' (Heinisch, 2003; Schain, 2006; Hainsworth, 2008; Mudde, 2013; Carvalho, 2013; Williams, 2015; Han, 2015; Bolin, 2015; Akkerman and Rooduijn, 2015; Abou-Chadi, 2016; Minkenberg, 2017; Vasilopoulou, 2018; Heinze, 2018). These labels imply some variation in the political parties on the right that are deemed to be 'hostile to liberal democracy' and in turn question whether a far-right party family actually exists (Golder, 2016; Mudde, 2019). This thesis favours the term 'far right' as scholars such as Hainsworth (2008), Halikiopoulou and Vasilopoulou (2018) and Mudde, (2019) use it as an umbrella term which encompasses 'both radical and extreme variants'. The main focus of this research is on the radical variant of the far-right party family, and therefore it is important to understand what distinguishes the 'radical' from the 'extreme' variant.

'Radical' and 'extreme' variants of far-right parties are distinguished by their attitudes towards democracy. Rydgren (2018a) argues that it is important to separate two subtypes of right-wing extremism: one that is 'opposed to democracy and one that is not explicitly opposed to democracy' but is hostile to the way representative democracy functions (p.2). The former subtype is referred to as 'right-wing extremism', and the latter as 'radical right'. Right-wing extremist parties are often associated with parties of the 1950s and 1960s, those that promote the ideas of fascism and an outright rejection of democracy (Minkenberg, 2003), such as the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), the British National Party (BNP) and the Deutsche Volksunion (DVU) (Ignazi, 1997). The 'radical' variant emerged in Europe from the 1980s, claiming a distance from fascism, and abandoning outright references to race (Ignazi, 1995; Halikiopoulou et al, 2013), including the French Front National (FN) and the Belgian Vlaams Blok (VB) (Ignazi, 1997). The difference between the extreme and radical variants is that the parties in the radical variant category keep their distance from fascism but express anti-democratic values (Ignazi, 1997).

With the previous discussion in mind, it is relatively easy to distinguish between the 'radical' variant, which is the main focus of this research, and the 'extreme' variant of far-right parties. However, it is harder to distinguish between the radical variant of the far-right party family and mainstream parties. Thus, we need further criteria to define far-right parties including policy and ideology (1) and government participation (2).

Policy and Ideology

Policy and ideology are important indicators of parties belonging to the far-right party family. Mudde (2007) identifies a minimum and maximum definition of the party family he refers to as the 'radical right'. The minimum definition suggests that nationalism is a core feature of far-right parties' ideologies (Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2007; Halikiopoulou et al, 2012) and is used to justify all the far right's policy positions (Halikiopoulou and Vlandas, 2019). The far-right prioritise sociocultural issues, particularly those related to national identity (Rydgren, 2018a). The core goal of the nationalist is to achieve a 'monocultural state' (Mudde, 2007: 16). Nationalism includes elements of civic and ethnic nationalism. While the civic nationalism emphasises both

'assimilation and repatriation as methods for achieving a monocultural state', ethnic nationalism suggests that 'membership in the nation is hereditary and often includes a shared language or religion' (Golder, 2016: 480).

The contemporary far right builds on the idea of ethnopluralism which states that in order to 'preserve unique national characters of different peoples, they have to be kept separated' (Rydgren, 2018a:5). These parties often use 'ethnocentric messages' to highlight the need for resistance against external threats to the nation (Hainsworth, 2008). The far right believe that there are several threats to their national identity, with immigration being the most important (Rydgren, 2018a). Far-right parties also perceive the EU to be a threat to the nation's homogeneity and oppose it predominately on ethnic grounds (Halikiopoulou et al, 2012).

According to Mudde's maximum definition, far-right parties can also be defined by their authoritarianism and populism. Authoritarianism is the belief in a 'strictly ordered society in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely' (Mudde, 2007: 23). The inclusion of law and order in this definition does not necessarily mean an anti-democratic attitude, which links to the focus of this research on the 'radical' rather than the 'extreme' variant. The hostility expressed towards liberal democracy is also connected to the concept of populism, defined as 'the rejection of "appropriate" political behaviour (i.e. they break taboos) and, above all, in their appeal to the pure "people" in opposition to the corrupt and evil "elite" (De Jonge, 2021: 3). A party that uses this strategy tries 'to construct an image of itself as an opposition to the political class while trying actively not to appear anti-democratic' (Rydgren, 2018a: 6). However, populism is not exclusive to far-right parties and comes without any fixed programmatic orientation (Stavarakakis et al, 2017). Therefore, non-populists can occasionally borrow from populist rhetoric during campaigns including that they represent the 'general will of the people'. While the individual characteristics of nationalism and populism can also be found among mainstream parties, the combination of nationalism, authoritarianism and populism are key to identifying far-right parties (Golder, 2016).

Government Participation

The far-right party family can also be characterised by their participation in government. In many countries the existence of a cordon sanitaire, designed to exclude far-right parties, has held back their entry into government. While the cordon sanitaire remains in place in some countries like Germany and the UK, in others it has been perforated by coalition agreements such as in Austria between the mainstream ÖVP and the far right FPÖ (Kallis, 2013). In more and more countries, far-right parties are 'considered *"koalitionsfähig"* (acceptable for coalitions)' by mainstream parties (Mudde, 2019:21). While in Western Europe between 1980 and 2012 out of the formation of more than 200 national governments, a mere eight included a populist radical right party (PRRP). In all cases it was a junior partner (Mudde, 2013).

Since 2013, there has been numerous occasions where far-right parties have participated in government. This includes those that have participated in a coalition including the Fremskrittspartiet (Progress Party - FrP) in Norway in 2013, Perussuomalasiset (Finns Party) in Finland in 2015, the FPÖ in Austria in 2017 and Lega (League) in Italy in 2018. Other forms of participation include the Schweizerische Volkspartei (Swiss People's Party - SVP) who as of 2019 was the largest party in the Swiss government and the Dansk Folkeparti (Danish People's Party- DF) who from 2016-2019 supported a right-wing minority government in Denmark. More recently in 2022, the far right Fratelli d'Italia (Brothers of Italy) under Giorgia Meloni leads a right-wing coalition government (Macchiarelli and Monti, 2022). Therefore, far-right parties at least of the 'radical' variant kind have increased their presence in government. That being said, far-right parties are still 'less likely to participate in government coalitions than mainstream parties' (Akkerman and de Lange, 2012: 574).

 Therefore, in Western Europe far-right parties can be characterised by either not holding office or holding office typically as a junior partner but on occasion also as the main party. As this statement can also apply to green and radical left parties, to identify far-right parties it also needs to be combined with the ideological features of nationalism, authoritarianism and populism.

2.1.2 The Three Case Studies: UKIP, AfD and FPÖ

Based on the previous discussion, the 'radical' variant of the far-right party family draws upon similar themes and ideas. While the 'radical' variant cannot be considered identical in all aspects, anti-democratic values and nationalism are important attributes to identify the parties included in the far-right party family. In terms of government participation, while it is still the case that most far-right parties do not hold office, there are some exceptions in Western Europe whereby far-right parties have become a junior coalition partner. Therefore, while it may help to identify far-right parties by looking at their government participation or lack thereof, it is no longer a determining feature of the far-right party family. In this research, the parties that form the main focus include two parties that have not been in government, UKIP and the AfD, and one party that has been in government, the FPÖ. While their opportunities to participate in government may vary, UKIP, the AfD and the FPÖ are classified within the 'radical' variant of the far-right party family, with their core ideological features being nationalism, authoritarianism and populism, as well as expressing anti-democratic values.

UKIP rejects multiculturalism because it has 'fragmented British society' (UKIP, 2017: 35), which suggests that British cultural identity is characterised by homogeneity (Dâmaso, 2018) and that it needs protection (Guia, 2016). UKIP's support for a 'monoculture' opposes key elements of liberal democracy including the protection of minorities and the centrality of individual rights (Bale, 2018). A similar position is echoed by the AfD, multiculturalism is a 'serious threat to social peace and to the survival of the nation as a cultural unit' (AfD, 2017: 46). The 'preservation of Austrian culture and lifestyle' is paramount to the FPÖ (Heinisch and Werner, 2019). In relation to authoritarianism, the AfD included a strong authoritarian element within its 2016 programme and 2017 election manifesto. As Dilling (2018) highlights, the AfD wanted to deport any foreign nationals found guilty of a criminal offence. Additionally, UKIP also wanted a stricter policy on law and order (Tournier-Sol, 2015) and the FPÖ advocated stricter border controls against illegal immigrants and crime tourism (Hafez and Heinisch, 2019).

Both the AfD and the FPÖ did not start out as populist parties: the FPÖ became populist in the 1990s, and the AfD after 2015 (Golder, 2016; Franzmann, 2017; Breeze, 2019; Heinisch and Werner, 2019). There is some debate about whether UKIP started off as a 'populist' party. Tournier-Sol (2015) argues that in 1993 'UKIP was explicitly founded as a populist party' (p.149), while Bale (2018) suggests it was a 'Eurosceptic party that became populist' after Nigel Farage became leader in 2006 (p.263). However, both Tournier-Sol (2015) and Bale (2018) agree that under the agency of Farage, populism was used as a strategy to widen its electoral appeal. The discourse of all three parties was characterised by an anti-establishment rhetoric directed mainly at the mainstream parties within their respective countries (Krzyżanowski, 2013; Breeze, 2019). As Pelinka (2005) notes, the FPÖ is a populist party because it claims to represent and to mobilise "the people" against the elite. However, the anti-establishment rhetoric of the FPÖ gradually faded once the FPÖ became part of the 'establishment' by entering a coalition government in 1999 (Krzyżanowski, 2013). On the EU, while for UKIP the EU is an external enemy, for the AfD and FPÖ the EU must be accepted but restricted where possible (Breeze, 2019; Heinisch et al, 2021). Therefore, all three of the case study parties include nationalism, authoritarianism and populism as core parts of their ideology which opposes key elements of liberal democracy.

This section has pointed to the difficulties in identifying the attributes of the far-right party family. Therefore, rather than focusing on adopting a 'one size fits all' approach of the far right, it is best to recognise the 'discourse, themes and issues' that help us to identify far-right parties (Hainsworth, 2008: 68). Ivaldi (2004) identifies the anti-immigration stance, combined with a strong, authoritarian and security-minded discourse, hostility to globalisation and to European integration and anti-establishment populism as central themes of far-right parties. As Mudde (2007) recognises, far-right parties draw upon similar themes and ideas in their ideology including nationalism, authoritarianism and populism. Therefore, UKIP, the AfD and the FPÖ can be distinguished from mainstream parties by their core ideological features of nationalism, authoritarianism and populism combined with either their exclusion from holding office or government participation, typically but not always as a junior partner.

2.1.3 Defining Mainstream Parties

The previous section focused on defining the far-right party family using two key criteria: their policy and ideology (1) and position in the party system (2). These two key criteria also help us to define mainstream parties. The term 'mainstream' is invoked in the media, in the party politics literature and by political actors themselves but the absence of a clear definition has meant that 'we are assumed to know intuitively what a mainstream party is' (Moffitt, 2021: 1). While the term 'mainstream party' is not clearly defined within the party politics literature, scholars who have attempted to define 'mainstream' tend to hinge their definitions on either a party's ideological position (1) or its perceived potential to govern (2).

Ideology

Meguid (2005) proposes an ideological definition by including the electoral dominance of actors in the centre-left, centre and centre-right blocs on the left-right political spectrum. Most mainstream parties 'belong to the four traditional party families – Social Democrats/Socialists, Christian Democrats, Conservatives and Liberals' (Carrieri, 2021: 62). Pop-Eleches (2010) states that 'a political party is classified as mainstream if its electoral appeal is based on a recognizable and moderate ideological platform, rather than on the personality of its leader and/or extremist rhetoric' (p. 225-226). Furthermore, 'a mainstream party represents an ideological orientation that can be mapped with reasonable accuracy onto the mainstream ideological spectrum of established Western democracies' (Pop-Eleches, 2010: 225). In other words, 'it denotes parties that have a centrist position on the classic left-right scale' (Akkerman et al, 2016: 7). While 'mainstream-opportunist' parties may 'occasionally resort to nationalist rhetoric or allies' they 'primarily pursue moderate ideological platforms' (Pop-Eleches, 2010: 231). Thus, 'mainstream' is used to distinguish parties from those that 'exploit programmatic niches' including far-right parties (Akkerman et al, 2016: 7). However, a political party's ideological platform and focus of their policy programme may change as a result of electoral losses (Meyer and Wagner, 2013). Therefore, a party's ideological position on its own is not an effective gauge of whether or not a party is mainstream.

Potential to govern

Other authors, such as De Vries and Hobolt (2012), define mainstream parties as those that regularly alternate between government and opposition. The mainstream parties in question are the centrist 'natural' parties of government: the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats who 'dominated politics in twentieth-century Europe' (Grzymala-Busse, 2019: 40). However, as Muller-Rommel and Poguntke (2013) and Carrieri (2021) point out, some Green parties have entered the mainstream by moderating their ideological stances and joining governments as minor partners. Therefore, De Vries and Hobolt's (2012) argument that mainstream parties are those that 'regularly' alternate between government and opposition does not apply to Green parties. Sartori's (1976) criteria also includes how a party is considered able to govern or form coalitions with other 'mainstream' parties'. Abedi (2004), using the concept of 'establishment parties', expanded this understanding by including those parties that the governing parties 'regard as suitable partners for government formation' or 'parties that are willing to cooperate with the main governing parties by joining them in a coalition government' (p.11).[1]

This highlights two aspects of the mainstream party definition, on one hand being able to govern and on the other being perceived as a suitable coalition partner. In regard to the former, the 'traditional' party families (Social Democrats/Socialists, Christian Democrats, Conservatives and Liberals) have been in government either as the lead (when in a government with a non-mainstream party) or sole party. However, as discussed previously, some Green Parties can also be classified as mainstream but they have tended to be either the junior partner in a coalition or have not entered government at the national level. Furthermore, in relation to the latter point the cordon sanitaire that exists in some countries to exclude far-right parties from office indicates that they are not perceived as suitable partners and therefore are not 'mainstream'. However, as mentioned earlier (see Section 2.1.1), albeit still a rare occurrence, some

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[1] Note here that this definition of mainstream parties is only applicable to Western Europe. In Eastern Europe, nationalism is not confined to the far right of the political spectrum but constitutes part of the mainstream. For example in Hungary, Fidesz was originally classified as a mainstream right party who has regularly been in government. However, Fidesz has moved to the right, combining racism and anti-Semitism. It is now considered the 'most prominent right-wing populist party in Central and Eastern Europe' and exhibits a number of similarities with the far-right party Jobbik in their ethic nationalism (Minkenberg, 2013: 20).

far-right parties are (increasingly) able to hold office, which highlights that the 'governing' criteria is not a good enough criterion for distinguishing the far right from mainstream parties.

These issues reflect the reality that the labels that are used for political parties are temporary and operate as ideal types, as the circumstances, party systems and parties themselves change over time (Moffitt, 2021). Therefore, additional criteria are needed to flesh out the differences between a mainstream party and a far-right party, including whether they are the main party or the junior party in a coalition. This distinction is important given that (traditional) mainstream parties are usually the main party when in a coalition with a non-mainstream party, while far-right parties in Western Europe tend to be the junior partner (Mudde, 2013).

This section has highlighted the problems of defining parties as 'mainstream' based on a party's ideological position or its perceived potential to govern. However, by combining the two criteria, it provides a more robust understanding of what it means to be a mainstream party. Thus, to be classified as mainstream, a party's electoral appeal should be based on a 'moderate ideological platform' and they should be the major party when they are in a coalition with a non-mainstream party. With this in mind, the following section turns to an analysis of how the far right's influence is defined and observed.

2.2 Defining Where We Observe Far Right Influence

2.2.1 What is Influence?

Far right influence has been conceptualised as being exercised both directly (through legislative policy change), and indirectly (through party competition) (Minkenberg, 2001; Bale, 2003; Heinisch, 2003; Williams, 2006; Schain, 2006; Mudde, 2007; Hainsworth, 2008; Akkerman, 2012; Van Heerden et al, 2014; Verbeek and Zaslove, 2015; Meijers, 2017). Direct influence refers to the far right holding office which provides direct access to policymaking and thus to changing the government's policy (Minkenberg, 2001; Williams, 2006; Hainsworth, 2008, Verbeek and Zaslove, 2015). Indirect influence includes mainstream parties changing position and increasing the salience of an issue (Mudde, 2007).

However, previous research has not identified framing as an important aspect of indirect influence. As Helbling et al (2010) recognise 'in addition to simply analysing the positions of political actors, we must consider how they problematise European integration and why they are against or in favour of it' (p.496). Political parties not only change their position and increase the salience of an issue, but also they can frame an issue in a particular way. While the main focus of this research will be on the indirect influence of far-right parties, specifically in relation to mainstream party positions and framing, the following section will firstly discuss direct influence and then will be followed with an analysis and development of indirect influence to include the way a party frames an issue.

Direct Influence: Legislative Policy Change

The literature believes that changing legislation is dependent on the far-right party being in government. As Schain (2016) suggests 'participation in and influence over policy-making is most direct when the party controls or is a coalition partner in national government' (p.460). Government participation is not the only way that the far right can be close to the policy-making arena. Bolin et al (2014) suggests that holding seats in decision-making assemblies must also be regarded as a position where impact could occur, but only when the far-right party holds the *'balance of power'.* In other words, where the far right has supported minority governments, such as in Denmark. Therefore, direct influence refers to the closeness of the far-right party to the policy-making arena through participation in government and/or seats within parliament. Both the AfD and the FPÖ have seats in their respective parliaments, but the FPÖ is the only case study party examined in this thesis that has been in government. While there is potential for far-right parties to have a direct impact, the literature has suggested that the influence of far-right parties is 'mostly indirect' (Mudde, 2013: 11).

Indirect Influence: Party Competition

Far-right parties[2] do not need to be in government to make an impact and 'often play an important role in shaping the agenda by influencing non-populist parties' (Albertazzi et al, 2021: 12). Therefore, indirect influence is defined in terms of party competition,

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[2] Most of what Albertazzi et al (2021) define as 'populist parties' are 'populist radical right parties' (P.9).

in other words the influence on both the 'structure and support of other political parties, as well as the priorities of the political agenda of both parties and government' (Schain, 2016: 460). Far-right parties 'influence mainstream parties to adjust their political programmes in the direction of the far right's exclusionist nationalist program' (Rydgren, 2018a: 10).

Indirect influence is not only limited to position but also far-right parties have 'contaminated various aspects of the established parties in their party systems' including the charismatic style of leadership, the populist discourse, and the relationship between the leaders and followers (Mudde, 2007: 28). When mainstream parties adopt the language and arguments of the far right, a de-facto legitimisation of the far-right party takes place as their issue ends up in the mainstream (Hainsworth 2008; Van Spanje, 2010). By adopting the language or arguments of the far right, mainstream parties are increasing the saliency of the issue (Van Heerden et al, 2014; Akkerman, 2015; Bolin, 2015; Halikiopoulou et al, 2016). Therefore, the literature defines indirect influence in terms of party competition, which encompasses the change of the salience of an issue, as well as a mainstream party's position.

However, indirect influence should be defined not only in terms of far-right parties in the system influencing the salience and position of mainstream parties, but also in terms of changing how they frame the EU. To the author's knowledge indirect influence has not been conceptualised in terms of how political parties frame European integration. Political parties choose not only which issues to compete on (positioning) and how much emphasis they place on each issue (salience), but also how they define these issues (framing) (Basile, 2013). By 'knowing how parties conceive and represent European integration' it will allow us 'to understand better their positions towards it' (Helbling et al, 2010: 497). As the third form of indirect influence, framing is different from position or salience because it focuses on how parties discuss an issue. Therefore, it recognises that parties can have different reasons for supporting or opposing an issue (Basile, 2016). As a result, this research defines party competition in terms of other parties in the system changing the position and salience, as well as how an issue is framed.

By acknowledging that influence can be direct or indirect, the literature provides parameters to gauge the influence that far-right parties can have. The main focus of this research will be on indirect influence as it seeks to analyse the influence of far-right parties on the position of mainstream parties and framing of the question of Europe. With this in mind, it is important to address what type of policy the literature on party impact has focused on.

2.2.2 Type of Policy

The influence of far-right parties on immigration policy has been the key focus of scholarly research, with a few exceptions including Han (2015) on multiculturalism and Verbeek and Zaslove (2015) on foreign policy. As Mudde (2013) recognises, many studies that analyse the influence of far-right parties focus only on 'one small aspect of the asserted effect – that is, immigration policies' (p.5). The focus on immigration policy is not surprising given the far right's nationalistic ideology (Minkenberg, 2001; Meguid, 2008; Mudde, 2013). As discussed previously (Section 2.1.1) nationalists want to achieve a monocultural state (Mudde, 2007). An anti-immigration position thus fits with the ideology of the far-right party family.

Most scholars agree that [Issue] ownership is the 'link between specific parties and issues in the minds of voters' (Walgrave et al, 2015: 778). Political parties have issue reputations, which are images that voters have based on the issues that the parties highlight. Thus, political parties seek to 'raise the importance that voters attach to the issues they own' (De Vries and Hobolt, 2020: 186). Mudde (2010) describes immigration as one of the far-right parties' 'golden issues'. Dennison and Goodwin (2015) indicate that immigration policy is an issue owned by political parties on the right. Therefore, given the association of far-right parties with immigration, it is understandable why the literature has focused on the far-right party's influence on immigration policy.

However, Euroscepticism 'defines the far right's politics just as much as anti-immigrant sentiments' (Szöcsik and Polyakova, 2019: 401). As opposition to European integration has become an increasingly visible and shared feature of the far right (Gómez-Reino Cachafeiro, 2018), studies have emerged analysing how far-right

parties articulate their positions on Europe (e.g. Ganesh and Froio, 2020; Lorimer, 2021), the root causes of their Euroscepticism (e.g. De Vries and Edwards, 2009; Vasilopoulou, 2018), as well as the reasons and effects of varying patterns of opposition across parties (e.g. Vasilopoulou, 2011; Heinisch et al, 2020; Lorimer, 2022). However, with the exception of Meijers (2017) and Filip (2021), and to some extent Baloge's (2021) work, there has not been much, if any, discussion of the far right's influence on the positions of mainstream parties on the question of Europe.

For much of the post-war period, European integration benefitted from a 'permissive consensus' in which both the public and party elites supported the integration of Europe (Franklin et al, 1994; Hix, 1999; Hooghe et al, 2002; Van der Eijk and Franklin, 2004; Kriesi et al, 2006; Hobolt and Tilley, 2014). In the post-Maastricht period and as a consequence of a substantial transfer of powers from member states to the EU, 'European integration has become the object of intensified conflicts over national sovereignty, political identity and financial redistribution' (Hutter and Grande, 2014: 1002). Therefore, the future of Europe has been the focus of many debates, with reforming the EU now focused on 'defending the achievements of earlier decades and keeping the populist demons at bay', rather than 'tearing down obstacles and opening up opportunities' (Lehne, 2018).

Eurosceptic discourse is 'propagated first and foremost by the far right' (Szöcsik and Polyakova, 2019: 401). Far-right parties are the main or most vocal critics of the EU and their nationalist ideology feeds 'into their broader skepticism and antipathy toward international cooperation' (Szöcsik and Polyakova, 2019: 401). As national governments started to pool their sovereignty, it 'ignited a fear that national identities were eroding' (De Jonge, 2021: 36). It is far-right parties which '(a) emphasise European integration issues, (b) take a Eurosceptic or euro-critical position, and (c) justify their criticism by referring to cultural motives' (Hooghe and Marks, 2009: 14). Far-right parties are therefore considered to be the main drivers of the politicisation of Europe (Hutter and Grande, 2014).

Current research has found that Eurosceptic challenger parties are capable of influencing mainstream positional shifts as long as EU issues are regarded as important by the Eurosceptic challenger (Meijers, 2017). Furthermore, Filip (2021)

found that political parties use changes in 'electoral outcomes from one election to another to "update" their map of the electoral landscape, the attractiveness of various policy positions, and the distribution of voter prefers' (p.92). As a result, the success of other Eurosceptic parties has led to the change of policy position/preferences by the other parties (Filip, 2021).

Other research has concentrated on country case studies and addressed wide ranging issues including the EU and immigration but has not focused on a particular issue (Albertazzi and Vampa, 2021; Heinisch et al, 2021; Pautz, 2021). Therefore, given the perceived consensus among mainstream parties on their pro-EU position, and the Eurosceptic nature of far-right parties, there is further scope to examine the extent of the far right's influence on mainstream party positions and framing of the question of Europe. We therefore need to understand what explains the influence of far-right parties on mainstream party positions and framing of the question of Europe.

2.3 Explaining the Far Right's Influence on Party Competition

To explain the influence of far-right parties in Western Europe, scholars commonly highlight electoral success as an important variable. Electoral success, or its synonym electoral performance, is a key variable in explaining how far-right parties have influence. However, generating a formal definition of success is difficult, as de Jonge (2021) notes 'success is inevitably contextual and hence best defined within the national context' (p.32). There is 'no absolute yardstick' to assess the strength or importance of a political party (Sartori, 2016: 107). That being said, the understanding is that whatever way electoral success is defined, the more 'electoral success' that far-right parties have, the more influence they will have.

Electoral success has been measured by the percentage of national electoral support (Golder 2003), presence in government (Mattila and Raunio, 2004; Zaslove, 2012), change in vote-share (Maeda, 2010; Filip, 2021) and percentage of votes gained combined with overall percentage of the party family e.g. Radical Left Parties (RLPs) (March and Rommerskirchen, 2015). However, to understand far-right party influence, while some type of electoral success is needed, this thesis argues that additional variables including media and public opinion are also important. Therefore, the

following section will discuss how far-right parties have influence by analysing electoral success by vote-share, government participation, as well as the media and public opinion.

2.3.1 Electoral Success

Vote and Seat Share

Quantitative studies have suggested that the more the far-right party is electorally successful (gains more votes and seats) the more likely it is to have influence. As Filip (2021) concludes, mainstream parties react to vote gains or losses by far-right parties 'relative to the last election at each point in time' (p.92). Therefore, far-right parties will have influence if they gain votes in the next election compared to the previous one. Sartori (2016) also suggests that vote share can be used as a base to measure the strength of a party. Votes are translated into seats which give the far-right party access to the policy-making arena and therefore can influence legislative policy change. By understanding that parties are office seeking or vote seeking, the far right's electoral success threatens the centre-left and centre-right's vote share as well as their ability to hold office (Van Spanje, 2010; Williams, 2015). Additionally, 'while a PRRP can be excluded from debates or completely ignored before entering parliament, this is often no longer possible in the parliamentary arena, as each represented party enjoys certain privileges' (Heinze, 2022: 3). Therefore, the literature indicates that influence hinges upon electoral success measured by vote share and seats within parliament.

However, far-right parties can still have impact without being electorally successful. If party 'success' is measured only by the number of parliamentary seats won, UKIP could hardly be described as a 'successful' political party (de Jonge, 2021). While Heinze (2022) was referring to national parliaments, the European Parliament (EP) can also provide a valuable platform to parties like UKIP that have had success at the European rather than national level measured by seats in parliament. That being said, Ford and Goodwin (2014) emphasised that seats in the EP 'cannot help UKIP achieve their ambitions in domestic British politics' (p.228). Yet Bale (2018) suggests 'UKIP had at the very least, helped to push the Conservative Party into holding an in/out referendum' (p.274). As a result, while vote share and number of seats in parliament

is an important indicator of success, far-right parties are still able to exert influence without performing well on these criteria.

March and Rommerskirchen (2015) on RLPs tries to overcome the issues of previous work on electoral success by understanding success not only related to the strongest party but the overall performance of RLP's. Therefore, March and Rommerskirchen (2015) analyse 'the aggregate of the total percentage of votes gained by all RLPs in the legislature and the total percentages of votes gained by the electorally strongest RLP represented therein' (p.45). However, if this understanding of electoral success was applied, UKIP would still not be included as it has not had seats in parliament with the exception of two former Conservative Members of Parliament (MPs). As a result, while the number of parliamentary seats is an important indicator of success, success should not be defined by the number of parliamentary seats *alone*.

Government Participation

Electoral success can also be measured by the far-right party's participation in government. The electoral success of far-right parties can influence mainstream parties to welcome the opponent as a partner, whether through joint action in the legislative, governmental or electoral arenas (*Cooperation)* (Albertazzi et al, 2021). The FPÖ is a notable and only example of a far-right party in government within the thesis. However, within Western Europe the far right have been in a coalition government such as in Norway, Finland, and Italy, the largest party in government such as in Switzerland or supporting a right-wing minority government in the case of DF in Denmark (as discussed in Section 2.1.1).

Mudde (2019) suggests that far-right parties can 'have a least as much influence as a support party than as an official coalition party' (p.118). DF supported a series of right-wing minority governments in Denmark which tightened immigration law and strengthened integration requirements (Mudde, 2019). Zaslove (2004) found a similar level of influence in the Austrian FPÖ's instrumental role in introducing more restrictive immigration policies in Austria. However, measuring electoral success on the basis of government participation is problematic given that firstly, mainstream parties are still

more likely than far-right parties to enter government as discussed in section 2.1.1, and secondly, even in government far-right parties may not be able to exert influence.

Firstly, while there has been an increasing number of far-right parties participating in government, some remain excluded from government participation which would mean that far-right parties have no or limited influence on mainstream parties (Norris, 2005), such as the Sweden Democrats (SD) who found themselves excluded from government despite securing success in the polls (Blanc-Noël, 2019). However, being excluded from participating in a government does not stop far-right parties exercising influence. UKIP, despite not participating in government, influenced the British Conservative Party to co-opt their policy of a referendum on EU membership to fight off the electoral threat that UKIP posed (Bale, 2018; Albertazzi et al, 2021). In France, Jean-Luc Mélechon, leader of *La France Insoumise,* a left-wing party, co-opted aspects of Marine Le Pen's communication strategy, by increasingly adopting a patriotic tone in his speeches and replacing the red flag with the Tricolour (Ivaldi, 2018:9). Therefore, electoral success and thus influence is not determined by the participation of the far right in government.

Secondly, government participation does not guarantee that far-right parties will be able to exert influence. If the far-right party in its role as a junior coalition partner cannot put into place core features of their ideology, then holding office may not be beneficial (Heinisch, 2003; Mudde, 2007). From 2001, DF in Denmark have refused to take part in governing coalitions, as have Perussuomalasiset in Finland in 2011 because of the EU question (Blanc-Noël, 2019). While the FPÖ's participation in government required it to agree that Austria was committed to staying in the EU, a position which constrained its ability to promote its Eurosceptic position (Mudde, 2007; Zalan, 2017).

Furthermore, as junior coalition partners, far-right parties tend to get less important ministerial portfolios which also limits their influence in government. Senior coalition partners can 'implement much more of their election promises than junior coalition partners' (Klüver and Spoon, 2020: 1233) because ministerial portfolios tend to be distributed in close proportion to the number of seats they hold (e.g., Gamson, 1961; Browne and Franklin, 1973; Warwick and Druckman, 2006). While the European integration portfolio was part of the FPÖ-run Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1999, in

2017 European policy was moved to the Chancellor's office (Moreau, 2011; Rettman, 2017), which limited the FPÖ's ability to influence Austria's EU policy. Therefore, far-right parties may be constrained by government participation as they have to prioritise and tone down their agenda (Minkenberg, 2001; Heinisch, 2003; Mudde, 2007; Akkerman et al, 2016).

Zaslove's (2012) research combines both vote share and government participation. Success in electoral terms 'is determined by the extent to which a PRR party can maintain its electoral support even after entering government, or in some cases supporting a minority government' (p.424). In Zaslove's research, Lega Nord, DF and the SVP have all experienced a small but steady electoral increase, while the FPÖ suffered an electoral decline after it had been in government. Therefore, this would indicate that the FPÖ had not been successful as its electoral success declined after being in government. That being said, in Zaslove's (2004) earlier research he found that the FPÖ played an instrumental role in introducing restrictive immigration policies while in government. Consequently, success should not merely be defined in electoral terms. Importantly Zaslove (2012) does recognise that it is not necessary for far-right parties to be in government in order to be considered successful.

Therefore, while some type of electoral success is needed for far-right parties to have influence, the far right's influence is not dependent on electoral success alone, but also can be explained by how the media portrays the far right and how this may or may not resonate with public opinion. Therefore, the following section will discuss the media as an important variable which can influence the far right's influence.

2.3.2 The Media

The media[3] can play a crucial role in disseminating the message of a far-right party to the public, which in turn can influence the change of public's attitudes and increase the salience of its issues (Bale, 2003; Ivarsflaten, 2005): 'If there are no actors (i.e. parties) or channels (i.e. the media) to diffuse right-wing populist agenda items, right-

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[3] Note media refers to the traditional media i.e. newspapers. While social media is an important instrument that far-right parties use to disseminate their message, traditional media was chosen because of the longitudinal perspective that this research has.

wing populist parties are less likely to break through electorally' (de Jonge, 2021: 182). Coverage of far-right parties 'increases their legitimacy in the eyes of supporters' (Doroshenko, 2018: 3187), as well as increasing the salience of its issues. However, the media can also choose not to provide the far-right party with media coverage, limiting the dissemination of its message, as well as not increasing the salience of its issues. As de Jonge (2021) highlights, the media can choose between disengagement and engagement strategies, which will affect the public's access to the far-right party's message and therefore the influence of far-right parties.

Disengagement

The media can opt to isolate far-right parties, by 'silencing them to death' (de Jonge, 2021: 50). As far-right parties 'rely heavily on media', a disengagement strategy would ignore both the party themselves and the issues they address. However, as Mudde (2007) emphasises 'there is virtually no country where populist radical right parties are truly ignored' (p.252). The media can also try to 'ostracise or demarcate' them by denying politicians access to media coverage (Minkenberg, 2001; de Jonge, 2021). By ignoring the far-right party, the public have limited or no access to the far-right party's message, and therefore, influence on public opinion will be severely hampered. While this strategy may be possible when far-right parties 'are electorally and politically insignificant', once the far-right party has become electorally successful, the media will struggle to ignore or isolate them (Mudde, 2007: 252). Therefore, far-right parties need some type of electoral success in order to attract the attention of the media.

Engagement

The far right are able to have the most influence when the media chooses to engage with the party because it allows them to disseminate their message, as well as increase the salience of their issues. The media can adopt an 'accommodative' strategy by offering the far right a platform to spread their views. This may mean 'granting direct, unmediated access' to far-right parties, but in practice it is often subtler by incorporating 'some of their rhetoric in their news coverage' (de Jonge, 2021: 50). While positive media coverage 'can benefit far-right parties by signalling their political viability and legitimising their policy agenda', the most 'beneficial aspect of media coverage' comes from how it increases the salience of far right issues (Golder, 2016:

488). Walgrave and de Swert (2004) found that the Belgian media had helped VB not by giving it increased visibility, but by simply covering the immigration and crime issues associated with VB. Another study by Karapin (2002) suggested that high publicity and public attention to immigration issues contributed to the success of radical right parties in Germany in the 1990s.

The media can also engage with far-right parties by being overly critical towards them (adversarial strategy), but there is some debate as to whether negative coverage can be harmful to the influence of the far right (de Jonge, 2021). Mudde (2007) suggests that even if the news coverage of far-right parties is highly negative, the media may increase the salience of key issues of the far right. Negative coverage can also increase the party's visibility in the media. Muis (2015) finds that while negative publicity was electorally harmful for the Dutch Centre Democrats (Centrum Democraten - CD), at the same time it increased media visibility. Therefore, media coverage, whether positive or negative, appears to draw attention to the far-right party and its issues giving the public access to its message. As a result, the following section will analyse public opinion as an important variable that can impact the extent of the far right's influence.

2.3.3 Public Opinion

In order for political parties to face the dilemma between changing policy positions in pursuit of votes and adhering to their previous position, parties sought information on public opinion (Somer-Topcu, 2009). Political parties have incentives to move where voters position themselves (Downs, 1957; Meguid, 2008; Rohrschneider and Whitefield, 2017). Public resonance consists of participation of the public in the debate which might be direct (voting in elections or referenda) or indirect (opinion polls) (Trenz and Eder, 2004; de Wilde, 2011). Far right messages appear to resonate with many European publics 'at least insofar as public opinion polls can provide an indication of this'. For example, in the 2017 French Elections, analysis attributed the pre-election surge of French far right support to the resonating messages of the FN (Williams, 2018: 316). Therefore, far-right parties will have more impact if the public also share similar attitudes.

However, Brown et al (2021) highlight that it is 'misguided to assume [..] that the elite simply respond and follow the wish of 'the people' (p.14), which suggests that far-right parties can have the ability to influence public discourse. As Williams (2018: 309) suggested, far-right party success may be defined by swaying public mood, as that in turn can put pressure on other parties to co-opt radical-right parties (RRPs) issues, adjusting their positions in order to retain or recapture voters inclined toward RRPs (Williams, 2006; Schain, 2006: 272; de Lange, 2008; Minkenberg, 2013). Therefore political parties and public opinion can influence each other (Han, 2015). To summarise, in order to have influence, the far right's message needs to resonate with the public, which is dependent on the public having access to the far right's message through the media.

2.4 Analysing the Far Right's Influence

The previous section has outlined the three key variables identified in the literature that can affect the influence of far-right parties: electoral success, the media and public opinion. While the previous discussion recognised that some type of electoral success is needed for far-right parties to have influence, they do not need to have seats in parliament or participate in government in order to do so. Therefore, the understanding in the literature of electoral success as the core explanation for the influence of far-right parties is problematic because firstly, participation in government remains a rarity for far-right parties and, secondly, some far-right parties are not 'electorally successful' but still exert influence. In addition, both the media and public opinion complement electoral success, as the media provide the public with access to the far right's message, and the public participate in the debate either through voting in elections or through public opinion. Therefore, some type of electoral success is needed but the media and the participation of the public also play a role in explaining far-right party's influence.

As a result, this research uses a process-tracing mechanism to understand the influence of far-right parties because it nuances their success. Success is therefore defined in both electoral terms (i.e. vote share/seats and government participation), and on the basis of 'policy influence, discourse, party systems and the actions of other parties outside of government' (Zaslove, 2012: 424). There are examples in the literature of attempts to link the variables of electoral success and public opinion

together to explain the far right's influence. For example Mudde (2013) suggests that far-right parties 'politicised mostly existing anti-immigrant sentiments in the population, which encouraged mainstream parties (if encouragement was needed) to adopt their issues and issue position, albeit in a more moderate form, and change policies accordingly' (p. 11). However, the role of the media is notably missing and this literature has not explained in detail the process in which far-right party influence occurs. Furthermore, as discussed in section 2.2.2, the literature has not focused on the question of Europe.

Related specifically to the question of Europe, Filip (2021) uses a process-tracing mechanism to argue that the Electorate/Public Attitudes (A) causes Eurosceptic parties to do well (B) which in turn causes political parties to change position to respond to vote loss/prevent further loss (C) (p.36). Therefore, Filip (2021) identifies a process that links the influence of far-right parties[4] with a change in mainstream party positions. However, the evidence used to support this mechanism is quantitative, relying on data from the Manifesto Project and CHES. Secondly, electoral success is considered the main independent variable which means that the role of the media and public opinion is notably missing. Thirdly, the dependent variable (position change) is measured using the change on the 1-7 CHES scale from one measurement to the next.

As a result, the literature does not identify a clear mechanism which links the influence of far-right parties and the change of mainstream party positions and/or framing of the question of Europe. The use of process-tracing enables this research to identify the process that links the influence of far-right parties to the change of position and/or framing of mainstream parties. The following section will discuss process-tracing as a method and then outline the process-tracing mechanism that this research will use.

2.4.1 What is Process-Tracing and Why is it Useful

Process-tracing is a research method for tracing mechanisms using 'detailed within-case empirical analysis' (Beach and Pedersen, 2019; 1). It is a fundamental tool of

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[4] Filip calls them Eurosceptic parties

qualitative analysis, which in this case can help to describe and evaluate the influence of far-right parties (Collier, 2011). However, it has not been widely used to analyse far-right parties' influence with the exception of Bale et al (2010), Hampshire and Bale (2015), Biard (2019), Mckeever (2020) and Filip (2021). This research aims to document and explain the mechanisms through which far-right parties influence the centre-left and centre-right in the UK, Germany and Austria to change (or not) their positions and framing of the question of Europe.

The value of process-tracing is threefold. Firstly, process-tracing allows us to create thick descriptions of concepts which include 'more attributes and/or defines them more narrowly, resulting in fewer cases having membership in the concept' (Beach and Pedersen, 2016; 103). Therefore, thick definitions help us to avoid 'conceptual stretching', where concepts are defined so broadly that 'they result in populations that lump together cases with different causal properties' (Beach and Pedersen, 2019: 58). It therefore offers a thorough understanding of the factors and the context leading to a certain outcome (Gerring, 2007; Voltolini, 2017). Thick description is an important aspect of process-tracing because the failure to describe each step of the mechanism leads to the failure in the overall analysis (Collier, 2011). Process-tracing explicitly describes and theorises what is going on in each part of the mechanism (Beach, 2016).

Secondly, process-tracing 'analyses trajectories of change' (Collier, 2011: 823). The main purpose of process-tracing is to 'establish whether, and how, a potential cause or causes influenced a specified change or set of changes' (INTRAC, 2017: no page number). 'Process-tracing focuses on the unfolding events or situations over time', which allows this study to cover a significant period: between 1990 and 2020 (Collier, 2011: 822). The previous literature has not identified a clear mechanism which links the influence of far-right parties with the change of position or framing of mainstream parties on the question of Europe. Furthermore, it has not linked electoral success, public opinion or the media as key variables in explaining the influence of far-right parties.

Thirdly, process-tracing gives 'close attention to sequences of independent, dependent and intervening variables' (Collier, 2011: 823). Previous research focuses

on particular independent variables such as public opinion and electoral success rather than looking at the relationship between them. A process-tracing mechanism is a statement of how intervening variables and processes linked to them cause a specific outcome (Hall, 2013). Process-tracing intends to specify the 'process where relevant variables have an effect' within individual cases (Hall, 2008: 306). While there are only a few examples of the process-tracing methodology being used, either to analyse the influence of far-right parties on policy (Biard, 2019; McKeever, 2020; Filip, 2021), or the responses of social democratic parties (Bale et al, 2010), they identify public opinion and electoral success as important variables that explain the far right's influence. All four examples analyse the influence of far-right parties after they have achieved electoral success, but prior to this the far-right parties have to establish themselves as perceived owners of the issues they advocate.

This research argues that there is a discernible process that can be identified which is conceptualised on the basis of existing theorisation and empirical research on the variables that affect the influence of far-right parties on mainstream parties. As a result, this research offers a novel way to trace the process from the existence of far-right parties within the party system to the influence they have on mainstream parties. It also offers a nuanced way to understand the success of far-right parties.

2.4.2 The Process-Tracing Mechanism

Building on the variables that can affect the influence of far-right parties identified in the previous sections including electoral success (section 2.3.1), the media (section 2.3.2) and public opinion (section 2.3.3), this section seeks to conceptualise an explicit mechanism through which far-right parties can influence mainstream parties. The variables can be summed up in two arguments that the literature makes. Firstly, if far-right parties can disseminate their message through the media to the public, it can influence the change of public's attitudes and increase the salience of its issues. Secondly, if far-right parties are electorally successful it puts pressure on mainstream parties to respond. These arguments can be used to conceptualise a mechanism.

The Scope Condition

'Context plays a radically different role than played by cause (trigger) and effect; context does not cause X or Y but affects how they interact' (Goertz, 1994: 28). The scope (or contextual) conditions are defined as the 'relevant aspects of a setting (analytical, temporal, spatial or institutional) in which a set of initial conditions leads […] to an outcome of a defined scope and meaning via a specified […] mechanism (Falleti and Lynch, 2009: 1152). The scope condition is 'merely the enabler or inhibitor, it does not do anything active' (Beach and Pedersen, 2019: 78). In other words, the scope condition is the environment that is needed for a mechanism to act.

In this mechanism, the scope condition is the absence of party competition on the question of Europe, as a result of the existence of a pro-EU consensus among mainstream parties. Party competition refers to the notion that political parties compete with each other for electoral support (Green-Pedersen, 2007). Mainstream parties have been in government during the development of the EU and therefore, European integration is characterised by a 'pro-EU consensus at the elite level, including most political parties that form governments' (Green-Pedersen, 2012: 116). Given their well-established reputations as pro-EU parties, the question of Europe is considered a divisive issue and therefore mainstream parties struggle to politicise the EU (Van de Wardt et al, 2014; Meijers, 2017; Hooghe and Marks, 2018). If mainstream parties start talking negatively about Europe, they face a reputational cost. Therefore, they will only do so if they face pressures from other political parties such as the far right or the voters. As a result, mainstream parties have little incentive to talk extensively about Europe.

Furthermore, in some cases, centre-left and centre-right parties are forced to cohabitate in 'grand coalitions' (Downs, 2002). As a result, positions on integration 'become harder and harder to distinguish, as they collectively morph into one large pro-EU collective/pole' (Filip, 2021: 168). As a result, the pro-EU consensus among mainstream parties has left a vacuum for a political party to rise and challenge the mainstream parties' positive attitudes towards EU integration (Miklin, 2014; Vasilopoulou, 2018a).

Trigger

A cause is defined as 'something that triggers a mechanism, meaning it is in a productive relationship with the outcome' (Beach and Pedersen, 2019: 78). The trigger within this mechanism is the existence of the far-right party within the party system on a Eurosceptic platform and the occurrence of a major EU event (e.g., treaty, accession referendum, crises).

Far-right parties politicise the EU and as issue entrepreneurs introduce a new anti-EU position, which is different from the pro-EU positions of most centre-left and centre-right parties. As Szöcsik and Polyakova (2019) highlight, Eurosceptic discourse is 'propagated first and foremost by the far right' (p.401). Thus, far-right parties introduce competition and contestation around the question of Europe. Major EU events have 'accelerated the emergence of a new political conflict related to European integration' (Carrieri, 2021: 6). A major EU event is defined as one that raises questions about the future of European integration, such as a treaty signing, a referendum on membership or an economic or political crisis that confronts the EU. These major EU events strengthened incentives to politicise European integration.

The initial cause of the far right's influence will be slightly different depending on the country context i.e., when the far-right party came into existence in relation to a major EU event. The context involving the entrance of a new far-right party, applies to UKIP and the AfD, while the FPÖ had been present for a long time within the Austrian party system before it changed position on the question of Europe. As a result, the trigger will not only be different, but the temporal dimension of the mechanisms will be different. While all three cases will cover the developments up until January 2020, the starting points will vary because the far-right parties under analysis come into existence at different times, which means that the major EU events in each case are different. As a result, in the UK the mechanism starts in 1993, in Austria 1994 and in Germany 2013. While the Treaty of the European Union was signed in 1992, UKIP was formed in 1993, and therefore the starting point for the UK case is 1993 because both aspects of the trigger need to be present. In Austria, despite the FPÖ being formed in 1956, Austria's referendum on EU membership only took place in 1994 and hence the starting point is 1994. In Germany, the Euro Crisis occurred in 2010 but the

AfD was not formed until 2013 and thus 2013 is the main starting point for this case. Despite, the different contexts, the mechanism appears to work in a similar way across the three cases. The following section will discuss the mechanism which consists of three stages and is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Stage 1: Shaping the Debate

The first step in the mechanism is that the far-right party shapes the debate on the question of Europe by holding a distinct position in contrast to mainstream parties. As discussed previously in Section 2.1.1 the nationalist ideology of far-right parties means that they perceive the EU to be a threat to the nation's homogeneity and oppose it predominately on ethnic grounds (Halikiopoulou et al, 2012). In contrast, parties that are identified as mainstream hold moderate positions and have a centrist position on the left-right scale (Marks et al, 2002; Meguid, 2005; Adams et al, 2006; Akkerman et al, 2016). Therefore, European integration is characterised by a 'pro-EU consensus at the elite level, including most political parties that form governments' (Green-Pedersen, 2012: 116). As a result of the pro-EU consensus that is said to exist among most mainstream parties, the far-right party's anti-EU position will be more distinct. As issue entrepreneurs, far-right parties introduce competition on the question of Europe by adopting an anti-EU (or an aspect of it) stance, which needs to be picked up by the media and transmitted to the public.

'As intermediaries transmitting party messages to voters, the media are thought to shape voter preferences in ways that favour the radical right' (Ellinas, 2018: 270). In addition, media behaviour 'does not simply reflect but also shapes the electoral advances' of far-right parties (de Jonge, 2019: 204). Therefore media coverage is an important variable in helping far-right parties shape the debate. The media offers a platform to spread the views of the far-right party, and even if the coverage is highly negative (de Jonge, 2021: 50) the media may simultaneously push 'the (salience of) key issues of the populist radical right' (Mudde, 2007: 253). The media can thus play an instrumental role in disseminating the far-right's message which can contribute to 'legitimising their cause or remove the stigma of extremism' (Ellinas, 2018:273). While Eatwell (2018) notes that the media also tends to reflect public opinion, as well as set

the agenda, de Jonge (2019) found that the willingness of the media to engage with far-right parties was linked to the electoral trajectories of these parties.

Furthermore, far-right parties can also shape the debate by the way in which they frame the question of Europe. By framing policies in a particular way, political parties define problems, and prescribe solutions which allow them to claim competence (Wonka, 2016). The justifications that far-right parties use can thus distinguish themselves from mainstream parties and can help the far-right party to establish ownership of an anti-EU position.

Stage 2: Public Opinion and the Awareness of Mainstream Parties

Once the media has spread the views of the far-right party and the public have access to those views, mainstream parties must firstly perceive the far-right party's EU policy to resonate with public opinion and secondly perceive the far-right party as an electoral threat. Far-right party success may be defined by swaying public mood (Williams, 2006; Schain, 2006; de Lange, 2008; Minkenberg, 2013). The question of Europe needs to be considered salient and the far-right party's Eurosceptic position regarded as attractive (Meguid, 2008). Therefore, public opinion needs to shift to a more Eurosceptic position, which moves them away from the pro-EU position of mainstream parties. Before addressing the dilemma between changing policy positions in pursuit of votes and adhering to their previous position, political parties sought information on public opinion (Somer-Topcu, 2009). Therefore, mainstream parties need to recognise that the public has changed position on the question of Europe.

'Facing uncertainty about voters' preferences, vote seeking parties have to rely on signals about these preferences. Elections constitute the most important of these signals' (Abou-Chadi and Krause, 2020: 831). Once the far-right party has entered the electoral arena and gained some 'relevance' or 'success', 'it effectively alters the parameters of party competition' (de Jonge, 2021: 33). While this research defines success in both electoral terms (i.e. vote share/seats and government participation), and on the basis of 'policy influence, discourse, party systems and the actions of other parties outside of government' (Zaslove, 2012: 424), this stage focuses on success in electoral terms.

A far-right party is defined as an electoral threat if it 'takes (a significant number of) votes from it' (Van Spanje, 2010; Williams, 2015) and threatens mainstream parties legislative majorities or prevents them from forming coalitions (Meguid, 2008; Sartori, 2016; Zobel and Minkenberg, 2019). Therefore, the more the far-right party is electorally successful (gains more votes and seats), and takes votes away from mainstream parties, the more likely they are to have influence. The electoral support of far-right parties across Europe is made up of supporters of the centre-right and social democratic parties, as well as protest voters (Lochocki, 2015). In other words, the far-right party's electoral success is often achieved at the expense of the parties on the centre-left and centre-right (Bale et al, 2010). However, it is important to mention here that electoral threat does not have to be defined in quantitative terms (i.e. more votes or seats), the far-right party just have to be perceived by mainstream parties as an electoral threat.

While it seems that far-right parties take votes off mainstream parties, in order for the far-right party to be a threat specifically related to the question of Europe, Euroscepticism must be [one of] the main motives for driving the electoral successes of the far-right party. Opposition to European integration feeds into the far right's nationalist ideology and has become an increasingly visible and shared feature of the far right (Gómez-Reino Cachafeiro 2018; Szöcsik and Polyakova, 2019). Therefore, combined with the understanding that European voters in some EU countries have become less enthusiastic about the EU, this 'match in political ideology and voters' attitudes' has meant that 'Euroscepticism continues to be a core aspect of the far right's mobilisation strategies and electoral campaigns' (Szöcsik and Polyakova, 2019: 412).

Stage 3: Mainstream Response

As a result of the electoral threat that the far-right party poses, mainstream parties feel pressured to address the EU issue (Stage 3). This pressure can be as a result of groups or factions within mainstream parties adopting a more Eurosceptic position as a result of the far-right party posing an electoral threat. Factions or groups can influence party position change. A significant faction that disagrees with the

mainstream of the party would be likely to encourage extensive debate within the party on that issue (Steenbergern and Scott, 2004). The factions that are considered 'significant' or 'dominant' are those groups that have attained a certain level of concentration and cohesion (Bale, 2012) and present a challenge to the party's leadership (Harmel et al, 1995; Noel, 2016). This raises the possibility that parties could include factions without them being in control of party structures. That being said, the existence of Eurosceptic groups or factions within political parties indicates that there are some internal divisions within the party on its EU position, which can encourage a party to change position on the EU, alongside the far right's electoral pressure.

The pressure that mainstream parties feel can also come to fruition in terms of the increase of parliamentary debates on the question of Europe and/or the position and framing of a particular aspect of the EU. National parliaments are well-suited to study the politicisation of EU politics as they play an important role when it comes to debating EU politics (Auel and Raunio, 2014; De Wilde 2014; Wonka, 2016). The presence of far-right parties within parliament can also change the dynamic of political communication on Europe increasing the intensity of 'ad hominem attacks, verbal aggressions and screaming' (Rensmann, 2018: 59). European far-right parties that hold public office utilise 'parliament to communicate their ideology and protest' (Rensmann, 2018: 65). As Heinze (2022) stated far-right parties can no longer be excluded from debates or completely ignored when they enter the parliamentary arena, as 'each represented party enjoys certain privileges' (p.3). Therefore, the presence of far-right parties within parliament means that mainstream parties are forced to defend their EU policies, while also distinguishing the far-right party's position from other parties.

However, far-right parties do not need to be present in parliament in order for mainstream parties to feel pressured. Lack of representation in parliament does not mean that far-right parties cannot take votes away from mainstream parties and possibly hand electoral victory to another party (Gruber and Bale, 2014; Ford and Goodwin, 2014). Therefore, if Euroscepticism is [one of] the main motives for voting for a far-right party then mainstream parties will feel pressured into addressing the EU issue. Furthermore, mainstream parties may not change position but instead change the way they frame the question of Europe. As a result of mainstream parties being

pressurised into addressing the EU issue, mainstream parties change their position and/or framing of the question of Europe. Figure 2.1 outlines the process-tracing mechanism on the theoretical level.

Scope Condition: Absence of Party Competition on the Question of Europe

| Stage 1: Shaping the debate | Stage 2: Public Opinion and the Awareness of Mainstream Parties | Stage 3: Mainstream Response |

Trigger:

Far-Right Party enters the party system on a Eurosceptic Platform and occurrence of a major EU event

Stage 1: Shaping the debate

Entity: Far Right

Activity: Shaped the debate on the Question of Europe

Stage 2: Public Opinion and the Awareness of Mainstream Parties

Part 1: Voters

Entity: Centre-Left and Centre-Right Parties

Activity: Perceived the Far Right's EU Policy to resonate with Public Opinion

Part 2: Parties

Entity: Centre-Left and Centre-Right Parties

Activity: Perceived the Far-Right Party as an Electoral Threat

Stage 3: Mainstream Response

Entity: Centre-Left and Centre-Right Parties

Activity: Feeling Pressured into Addressing the EU Issue

Outcome:

Mainstream Parties Change their Position and/or Framing of the Question of Europe

Figure 2.1 The Process-Tracing Mechanism

Conclusion

This chapter has laid out the distinguishing features of far-right parties compared to mainstream parties. It has argued that nationalism, authoritarianism and populism are the core ideological features of the radical variant of the far-right party, which distinguishes them from mainstream parties. Far-right parties are also characterised by their role as junior coalition partner or as an opposition party, and they politicise issues that the mainstream want to avoid. The levels of nationalism, authoritarianism and populism may vary from one far-right party to another and thus a one-size fits all interpretation is not useful to understanding the fluidity of the far-right party family, but they do provide broad parameters which can be applied to far-right parties individually.

By reviewing the literature on party competition, the chapter has argued that the influence of far-right parties can be explained by several variables including electoral

success, how the media portrays the far right and how this may or may not resonate with public opinion. While electoral success is the core explanation that the literature provides to understand the far right's influence, influence is not dependent on electoral success alone. By using a novel process-tracing mechanism, this research not only understands success in electoral terms but also in terms of policy influence. It also recognises that the media also play an important role in disseminating the far-right party's message to the public, which in turn can influence changes in public attitudes and increase the salience of its issues. Therefore, this research contributes to the literature by addressing the limitations of the current approaches to analysing far-right party influence by outlining a process that links the influence of the far right to the change of mainstream party positions and framing of the question of Europe.

Before embarking on how the EU is debated by mainstream parties, the following chapter discusses the data that will be used to support the novel process-tracing mechanism that will form the methodology across each case study.

Chapter 3

Analysing the Far Right's Influence: Data and the Comparability of the Cases

Introduction

By reviewing the literature on party competition, the second chapter of the thesis has identified a clear mechanism that links the influence of far-right parties to the change of mainstream party positions and/or framing of the question of Europe. As a result, the influence of far-right parties can be explained by three key variables discussed in Chapter 2 including electoral success (section 2.3.1), the media (section 2.3.2) and public opinion (section 2.3.3). Therefore the mechanism was outlined as follows: firstly shaping the debate (media), followed by public opinion and the awareness of mainstream parties (public opinion and electoral success) and lastly mainstream parties responding which contributes to mainstream parties changing their position and/or framing of the question of Europe (See Chapter 2 for a more detailed analysis).

Following on from the above, the aim of this chapter is to outline the data that the novel process-tracing mechanism will use and in doing so it will highlight that the cases are comparable. The data used in this research is similar across all three case studies, with the exception of elite interviews used in the UK case study. There are four types of evidence: pattern, sequence, trace and account (Beach, 2016). *Pattern evidence* relates to statistical evidence such as public opinion polls. *Sequence evidence* deals with the 'temporal and spatial chronology of events', for instance a document that is published before or after an event. *Trace evidence* is 'evidence whose mere existence provides proof, for example a record of a meeting. Lastly, *account evidence* refers to the eye-witness account – written or spoken – which includes interviews and debates (Beach, 2016: 469). The mechanism uses *trace, pattern* and *account* evidence to corroborate the stages of the mechanism through both primary documents (manifestos, minutes of debates, autobiographies and interviews) and secondary sources (newspaper articles, journal articles and books).The following section will discuss the data used in each of the stages of the mechanism across the case studies.

3.1 Stage 1: Shaping the Debate

The process-tracing mechanism is derived from the literature's identification of the importance of the media, public opinion and electoral success to facilitate the influence of far-right parties. Stage 1 focuses on the far-right party shaping the debate on the question of Europe, which requires the far-right party to embark on issue entrepreneurial strategies, promoting and competing on new issues, as well as adopting a polarising position (Meguid, 2008:22). As a result, it would be expected that far-right parties adopt a Eurosceptic position which contrasts to their mainstream rivals, Europe would be a central part of the far right's agenda, and the party would receive increasing attention from the print media.

To establish strong evidence that supports the first stage of this mechanism, a variety of data is used across all three case studies including a qualitative analysis of media coverage, CHES data, national and European manifestos and minutes from debates in the national and state (Germany) parliaments. The aim of this stage is to analyse both the position and framing of the question of Europe by the far-right parties and mainstream parties, as well as how their EU policy is portrayed within the media.

3.1.1 Print Media Coverage

Newspaper sources can have a high degree of accuracy as information is collected just after the events took place and passed through a 'rigorous editorial review process' (Beach and Pedersen, 2019: 222). Media coverage provides far-right parties with an avenue to disseminate their message to a wider audience. Walgrave and de Swert (2004) demonstrated that there was a strong association between the success of the Belgian VB and media coverage of the party's themes. Another study by Karapin (2002) suggested that high publicity and public attention to immigration issues contributed to the success of radical right parties in Germany in the 1990s.

Therefore, to ensure the comparability of cases and to analyse the coverage of the far-right parties within Austria, Germany and the UK, two quality newspapers were chosen from each case study, with one representing the centre-left and the other

centre-right positions. It is important to note that the time period under analysis and the availability of evidence varied across the cases. Further criteria included selecting newspapers that were broadsheets, are published daily, have national coverage and a relatively large circulation. Table 3.1 lists the newspapers that were chosen for each case study.

Table 3.1: Newspaper selection

	Centre-Left	**Centre-Right**
Austria	*Der Standard*	*Die Presse*
Germany	*Süddeutsche Zeitung*	*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*
United Kingdom	*The Guardian*	*The Daily Telegraph*

Searches were conducted using these newspapers on the Nexis database which included one political party and the European Union or Europe, and within each search both the party's full name and abbreviation was used. For example, *'Alternative für Deutschland or AfD and Europäische Union or Europa'.* Europe was also included because political parties tend to interchange between the EU or Europe when discussing the question of Europe. In order to establish the number of articles on the EU, a search was conducted for each newspaper which included the 'EU or European Union'. For all searches, articles that mentioned all parties within one of the case studies and the EU or Europe were excluded from the results.[5] Further exclusions that were specific to the cases are detailed in tables 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4.[6]

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[5] Duplicates - Austria: Der Standard (187 articles), Die Presse (186 articles)
Germany: SZ (29 articles), FAZ (32 articles)
UK: Guardian (8 articles), Telegraph (14 articles).
[6] As shown in Tables 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, the exclusions were made because they were not relevant to the discussion of the parties and the EU, which involved interviews, debates, forums and letters to the editor.

Table 3.2: Nexis Search of Newspaper Coverage: UK

Nexis Search	Exclusions: Guardian	Exclusions: Telegraph
'UKIP or UK Independence Party and European Union or Europe'	- Comment and Debate: Diary - Reply Letters and Emails - Reply Letter - Corrections and Clarifications - Potted Profile - Commentary - Books - Review - Profile - Obituary - World Factfiles - Worth a look	- Country Diary - Thrillers - Letters - Obituary - What to watch - Ryanair
'Conservative Party and European Union or Europe'		
'Labour Party and European Union or Europe'		

Table 3.3 Nexis Search of Newspaper Coverage: Germany

Nexis Search	Exclusions: Süddeutsche Zeitung	Exclusions: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung
'Alternative für Deutschland or AfD and Europäische Union or Europa'	- Schön Doof - Interview - Debatte@SZ - Personalien - Wochenchronik - Kala - Forum & Leserbriefe - Portrait - Gaudi - Schwarzsehen - Aus dem Stand in die Wolken - Filme - Zitate des Tages - Pestizide - Edward Snowden - Automesse - Wettbewerbsvergleich - Hans Joachim Klein - Wenn die Party vorbei ist - Sony - Huehner	- Grammatik - China-Politik - Opel-Bieter - Chattanooga - Puzzle - Handyfabrik - Papst
'Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands or CDU and Europäische Union or Europa'		
'Christlich Soziale Union or CSU and Europäische Union or Europa'		
'Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands or SPD and Europäische Union or Europa'		

Table 3.4: Nexis Search of Newspaper Coverage: Austria

Nexis Search	Exclusions: Der Standard	Exclusions: Die Presse
'Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs or FPÖ and Europäische Union or Europa'	- Radosavlijevic - Album - SWITCH LIST - Sport - Relevanter Player - Tumper-Gugerell - Neoliberalismus	- Debatte - Zur Person - Sport - Zur Rübe - Behinderte - Zum FLUGZEUG - Leserbriefe - Genossen - Busek - Interview - Occupy Wall Street - Kärntnern - Wissenschaftsrat - OBAMA - VW - WHO - Stinkt - FBI - TUI - Top 3 - Zweitbestes - Zum Thema - Donauinselfest - Zum Autor - Pressburg
'Österreichische Volkspartei or ÖVP and Europäische Union or Europa'		
'Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs or SPÖ and Europäische Union or Europa'		

3.1.2 Framing

Alongside this analysis of newspaper coverage, by framing policies in a particular way, political parties define problems, and prescribe solutions which allow them to claim competence and increase a party's influence on political debates and decisions (Wonka, 2016). The justifications that political actors use can thus distinguish themselves from one another and can increase the salience of the question of Europe, but also can help the party to establish ownership of that aspect of EU policy. Following Wonka (2016) and Helbling et al's (2010) categorisation of frames of European integration policy, the framing of the EU was split into cultural, economic and institutional arguments as shown by table 3.5.

In line with Wonka's (2016) research, an argument can be made in one or more grammatical sentences. Therefore, contrary to the 'core sentence' approach, the

frames were identified and hand-coded on the basis of the idea, regardless of length because positions of parties are not usually just based on a sentence. The positions can vary between -1 (Strongly opposed) and +1 (Strongly support). A position of -0.5 and +0.5 signified an understated opposition or support, and 0 means that an actor is ambivalent regarding the issue, and thus are not included in the overall analysis (Helbling et al, 2010). Ideas were framed on the basis that they were part of a policy position.

Table 3.5: Frame Categorisation

Frames	*Issue Subcategories*
Cultural	Migration
	Enlargement
	Austrian/British/German identity
	European Identity
Economic	Growth
	Single Market
	Employment
	Single Currency
	Cost of EU membership
	EU budget
Institutional	Sovereignty
	Enlargement
	EU centralisation/Integration
	EU Institutions

The cultural dimension included statements that relate to a national or European community and identity, and/or express (fears of) migration and multiculturalism. An example of a cultural frame would be opposition to Turkey's EU membership because '*Europe has geographical, cultural and historical borders*'. The economic dimension included arguments that a country benefitted/did not benefit economically from EU membership. An example of an economic frame would be '*Expand the Single Market'*. It is also important to mention that opposition to Turkey's EU membership could also be expressed through economic frames, for example '*the size of the country and economic structure would overwhelm the EU'*. The key difference to the cultural frame is that Turkey is not being ruled out because of its identity as 'non-European'. Institutional frames deal with support for or opposition to the (de-) centralisation of competencies and resources (Helbling, 2010; Wonka, 2016). For example, '*ensure defence policy remains firmly under British national control'.* Sovereignty is thus an

important aspect of the institutional frame. Opposition to enlargement more generally can be expressed through institutional frames, for example *'there cannot be unlimited growth for the EU'.* The key difference to the cultural and economic frame is that enlargement as a whole is being opposed due to integrating more states.

Party Families and the use of Framing

Helbling et al (2010) highlight that the use of frames is influenced by the party family to which a party belongs. Opposition to the EU via institutional but particularly cultural frames would be expected, as radical right populist parties emphasise nationalism (Mudde, 2007, 2016). In contrast, mainstream Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, and Conservative parties are expected to support European integration.

Christian Democrats including the ÖVP (Austria) and CDU (Germany) are in favour of economic and political integration but regarding the cultural dimension, it may prove increasingly difficult for Christian Democrats to argue for the 'ever closer union' in Europe, a key part of the Christian Democratic package (Bale and Krouwel, 2013)**.** Similarly Social Democrats like Labour, SPD and SPÖ are in favour of both economic and political integration, the latter because it enhances the capacity for European-wide regulation. Pelinka (2013) suggested that Social Democratic parties would use economic frames to support the question of Europe. Furthermore, more generally social democracy was accepting of European integration (Waele et al, 2013).

The German CSU also comes under the Christian Democrat party family, but it is considered to express more opposition, similar to the Conservative party family. The CSU would be expected to support the economic aspect of the EU but be opposed to further powers going to the EU, and want some powers transferred back national governments (institutional frames) (Hooghe and Marks, 1999). Thus, it would be expected that economic, cultural and institutional frames would be used to express support for the EU, but that Christian Democrats would express more opposition than the Social Democrats.

The only Conservative Party in this research - the British Conservative Party - differs from the Christian Democrat CDU, CSU and ÖVP. The Conservative Party defends

national culture, national community and national sovereignty against the influx of immigration, competing sources of identity within the state, and against external pressures from other countries and international organisations (Hooghe et al, 2002). As demonstrated by Hooghe et al (2002), Conservative parties are in favour of economic integration, but are strongly opposed to political integration, in the sense that it shifts authority away from national control. Therefore, it would be expected that Conservatives would use economic frames to express support, and institutional frames to oppose the EU. Table 3.6 provides a summary of the party families.

Table 3.6 Party Families

	Social Democrat	**Christian Democrat/Conservative**	**Far Right (Populist)**
Austria	SPÖ	ÖVP	FPÖ
Germany	SPD	CDU/CSU	AfD
United Kingdom	Labour Party	Conservative Party	UKIP

Framing: Manifestos and Parliamentary Debates

While the previous discussion in 3.1.1 has focused on media coverage, looking at how the question of Europe was framed in the media would not reveal much about how the political parties framed this topic. As a result, party manifestos (national and European) combined with speeches/debates (state and federal in the case of Germany) were used to help to provide a snapshot of current themes and debates (Hertner and Keith, 2017). The British term 'manifestos' refers to what Germany and Austria call 'election programmes', and they are authoritative policy statements indicating policy preferences at a given point in time (Werner et al, 2011). Both European and national election manifestos were used and were available across the time period of analysis: Austria (1994-2020), Germany (2013-2020), and the UK (1993-2020).[7] Furthermore, parliamentary debates on the EU provide a snapshot of current themes and the aspects which are politicised, and thus acknowledged the debate in between election years.

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[7] While the start dates of each case study are different, the end date of the analysis is January 2020 for all.

Manifestos as a primary source provide accurate information as to where a political party positions' itself on the EU, as they are produced around an election cycle and distributed to the public. Furthermore, if a party is not in parliament, for example UKIP, manifestos are a key source that can be used to understand a party's position. Thus, manifestos represent the 'official' position of the party, which might not represent each individual within the party. As a result, minutes from parliamentary debates are also used. The contributions of politicians to parliamentary debates can provide important information regarding the differences between their position and the position of their party, as well as responding to events as they happen. It could be said that contributions from politicians that hold a position within their party or government may provide more accurate information, as they are directly representing their party's position. However, it must be considered that the information provided by these contributions may align with the interests/motivations of the source. As a result, combining manifestos and parliamentary debates will help to overcome the limitations of both sources.

Across case studies, similar keywords were searched. In the UK, the debates were found on the UK Parliament's (2022) website in which Hansard was selected, followed by clicking on the section labelled 'find debates' which allows for a key word(s) to be searched. From this page, in the keyword box 'EU or Europe' was searched, in relation to debates in the House of Commons and the date between 1993-2008. In total there were 66 debates in the House of Commons that included a discussion of the EU but also outlined at least one of the parties' EU policies.

For the German case study, the debates were found on the Deutscher Bundestag's (no date) website, on the Document and Information Systems, under Dokumente, information about the debates within the Bundestag can be found. From this page, Bundestag and Plenarprotokoll (Plenary minutes) was selected. This was followed by searching for 'Europapolitik und Europäische Union' because this was a theme already outlined as a subject area, and thus should include all plenary debates that had a discussion on the question of Europe. The Landtag websites are set up slightly different, and thus required looking for documents and then selecting Plenarprotokoll. From here, 'Europapolitik und Europäische Union' was searched if it was possible to do so. In some cases, only Europäische Union was used, as using both terms did not

bring up any results. In total there were 21 debates between 2013-2015 in the German States' Parliaments that included a discussion of the EU and outlined at least one of the parties' EU policies.

In Austria, debates in the National Council (Nationalrat) were used between the period 1994 to 2008 because they showed political parties' EU position in-between election cycles, as well as whether parties appeared united on the question of Europe. The debates were found on the Austrian Republic's website, in which Nationalrat, plenarsitzungen, and sitzungen were selected (Republik Österreich, no date). This allowed for an analysis of all the plenarprotokoll (plenary minutes) during the period under analysis by looking for 'Europa' or 'Europäische Union'. In total there were 22 debates in the Austrian Parliament's National Council between 1994-2008 that included a discussion of the EU but also outlined at least one of the parties' EU policies.

3.2 Stage 2: Public Opinion and the Awareness of Mainstream Parties

Stage 2 focuses on whether the centre-left and centre-right perceived the far-right party's EU policy to resonate with public opinion, as well as whether the far-right party was perceived as an electoral threat. The agenda-setting literature recognised that political parties and public opinion could influence each other (Han, 2015). Therefore, if the centre-left and centre-right perceived the far-right party's message to resonate with public opinion, for example through increasing the salience of the question of Europe in the public consciousness, it would suggest that public opinion is changing. This relates to the notion that political parties have incentives to move where voters position themselves (Downs, 1957; Meguid, 2008; Rohrschneider and Whitefield, 2017). Thus, if voters positioned themselves as opposed to elements of the EU or membership as a whole, parties have incentives to move towards their voters.

In order for the far-right party's message to resonate with public opinion, the question of Europe needed to be considered salient and the far-right party's Eurosceptic position regarded as attractive (Meguid, 2008). Public resonance consists of participation of the public in the debate which might be direct (voting in elections or

referenda) or indirect (opinion polls) (Trenz and Eder, 2004; de Wilde, 2011). The first section looks at the public's indirect participation in the debate on the EU, namely opinion polls on public attitudes towards the EU, and most important issues facing each country. Opinion polls such as the Eurobarometer can shed light on the public's attitudes towards the EU. It would be expected that the centre-left and centre-right would perceive that the far-right party's EU policy resonates with public opinion if public opinion becomes less supportive of the EU.

The second piece of evidence related to public opinion includes surveys on the most important issues that are able to indicate the current social, economic and political problems (GfK Verein, 2014). Therefore, if Europe was considered an issue of concern, whether explicitly or through the links with other issues, it would suggest that the EU was a feature of public evaluations. It is important to note here that while Europe might not feature in the three top most important issues, the EU is a still a feature of public concern and far-right parties link the EU to other issues. By combining the two pieces of evidence, it would be expected that the centre-left and centre-right would perceive that the far-right's EU policy resonates with public opinion if they became less supportive of the EU and that the EU would be perceived as an issue of concern, either as a stand-alone issue, or linked to others. The accuracy of opinion polls can be questioned, but they provide information immediately before and after a political event, and political parties use opinion polls to gauge public opinion. Therefore, opinion polls are being used in the same way that political parties would use them, to understand public opinion.

To support the data collected by opinion polling, parliamentary debates and autobiographies by politicians will provide the two main sources to analyse the parties' acknowledgement of public opinion. This is because representatives of political parties depend on continued electoral success and thus must be attentive to the electorate (Katz and Mair, 1993). This attentiveness would indicate the centre-left and centre-right parties would be likely to react to changing public opinion on the EU. Therefore, it would be expected that the far right, centre-left and centre-right parties would acknowledge the Eurosceptic attitudes of the public and use them as justifications to reflect or change their policy on the EU.

Debates are useful to understand how political parties acknowledged public opinion because they are able to provide immediate responses to events that are happening. Autobiographies of (former) Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) or MPs who played an important role in their party relating to the question of Europe provide the 'definitions of situations made by those who made significant historical decisions and symbolized the social and cultural arrangements they sought to shape' (Sjoberg and Kuhn, 1989: 317). Despite the limitations of autobiographies including that they may only provide insights into selective aspects, combining them with debates helps to provide an account of the past as well as the present.

The second section looks at the public's direct participation in the EU debate by analysing the electoral threat of the far right to the centre-left and centre-right. In spatial analysis, Meguid (2008: 96) stated that a 'niche party is a danger to a mainstream party if it takes (a significant number of) votes from it'. Furthermore, the extent of votes that are lost, as well as the ratio of votes that are lost to the niche party from other mainstream competitors, could also determine the response of mainstream parties. Therefore, electoral threat can refer to the threat of losing further voters, but also the threat of losing legislative majorities or being unable to form coalitions (Zobel and Minkenberg, 2019). Thus, it is necessary to establish not only the extent of the far-right party's electoral success in national, state (Germany) and European elections, but also the potential for the centre-left and centre-right to lose more votes to the far-right party. Therefore, the evidence that will be used includes the far-right party's electoral success, the main motives for voting for far-right parties, the voting intentions of the public, and which parties the far-right party took votes from. It would be expected that far-right parties have increased their electoral success, and (one of) the main motives for voting for the far right would be related to the question of Europe. It would also be expected that for the far right to be an electoral threat, the mainstream parties would have lost votes to the far right and would potentially face losing further voters.

As a result, it is important that the centre-left and centre-right actually acknowledge the electoral threat that the far-right party poses through newspaper interviews, party conventions or parliamentary debates. These sources provide immediate reactions to election losses, as well as outline how parties intend to react to the far-right party's

electoral gains. It would be expected that the centre-left and centre-right would seek to address the electoral threat the far-right party poses by expressing that they would try to win votes back as well as discussing how they would respond to the far right's electoral success. This leads on to stage 3 of the mechanism.

3.3 Stage 3: Mainstream Response

The most commonly cited drivers of party change are: external shock (electoral defeat or loss of office), a change of leader; and change in the dominant faction that, to a greater or lesser extent, runs the party (Harmel and Janda, 1994; Bale, 2012). While the previous section discussed the role of electoral success, this section will discuss the role of leadership change or change in the dominant faction. Therefore, the evidence that will be used in this stage is related to factional groups that exist within parties, as well as their leaders. The evidence includes primary sources such as founding group documents and autobiographies, as well as secondary sources such as the academic literature. This evidence is vital to establish both the positions but also to identify the importance of internal pressures within political parties.

Party change encompasses decisions to change a party's organisation, issue positions or strategy. There must be both a clear reason for change and a power configuration that facilitates change. As a result, Harmel and Tan (2003) conclude that the ability of the newly dominant faction to control its coalition – and hence the party – had the most impact on the degree of party change. As Steenberger and Scott (2004) recognised, party cohesion is an important goal for political parties, and therefore to be considered a dominant faction, it must have attained a certain level of concentration and cohesion (Bale, 2012). Consequently, this raises the possibility that parties could include factions without them being in control of the party structures, and which is unlikely to result in party change. While the term party 'faction' is being used, Göpffarth (2020) uses the term 'group' to describe the *Werte Union* within the CDU and CSU*,* despite the difference in terminology it is important to recognise that parties face challenges from insiders as well as outsiders.

Bale (2012) suggested that a dominant faction will not exist without a particularly assertive leader. Furthermore, Noel (2016) agreed with Bale's assessment that the

factions that matter are those that present a challenge to the party leadership. Interestingly, Harmel et al (1995) posited that the combination of leadership and factional change creates opportunities for change that are greater than what either event would accomplish alone. Thus, the factions that can initiate party change are those that have the power to control and lead the party. A significant faction that disagrees with the mainstream of the party, would likely encourage extensive debate within the party on that issue (Steenberger and Scott, 2004). Therefore, it would be expected that parties would show some internal divides on their position on the EU, and possibly have a leader who changes the party's overall EU position. Party factions on the EU can encourage a party to change position on the EU, alongside the far right's electoral pressure.

National parliaments are well-suited to study the politicisation of EU politics as they play an important role when it comes to debating EU politics (Wonka, 2016; Auel and Raunio, 2014; De Wilde; 2014). Therefore, the number of debates on the EU over the periods of coverage will be analysed, as well as the acknowledgement of the pressure the centre-left and centre-right felt through examining autobiographies and parliamentary debates. While autobiographies and debates have been used in Stage 2, in Stage 3 they are used to analyse the politicisation of the EU through the responses that mainstream parties provide to the far right's EU policy. The data is also applied to a later timeframe which differs depending on the case. Alongside this, the framing of the question of Europe was also analysed. Section 3.1.2 provides a more detailed outline of how the frames were operationalised. While the framing of the question of Europe was analysed in Stage 1, Stage 3 analyses the framing at a later timeframe. In total, there were 247 debates in the House of Commons between 2013 and 2019, 138 in the German Parliament between 2017 and 2019, and 142 in the Austrian Parliament between 2017 and 2019. However, while these debates discussed the EU, they did not always include a clear outline of a party's EU policy, and therefore not all of these debates were framed.

Therefore, the aim of this stage is to discover how mainstream parties responded to being pressured to address the question of Europe. The following section will discuss the role of semi-structured interviews in the UK case study.

3.3.1 Interviews

A semi-structured interview is a flexible interview process which provides an opportunity to gain greater insight and it gives the respondent freedom to expand further (Bryman, 2012, 2016). Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with senior (former) MPs or MEPs from the Labour Party or the Conservative Party in the UK who are related to the question of Europe. Seven interviews were conducted, six from the Labour Party, and one from the Conservative Party. As a result, more data has been gathered for the Labour Party than for the Conservative Party. To balance this and gain greater knowledge of individual attitudes within the Labour and Conservative parties, the 'UK in a changing Europe' website (https://ukandeu.ac.uk/brexit-witness-archive/) have conducted in-depth interviews regarding the key decisions and moments that determined how Brexit happened. They have asked and discussed similar questions which I raised when conducting the semi-structured interviews. The thesis only uses interviews for the UK because unlike with Austria and Germany, the influence of UKIP and more broadly Euroscepticism within the UK has been studied at length (See Lynch and Whitaker, 2013a; Gruber and Bale, 2014; Evans and Mellon, 2016; Vasilopoulou, 2016; Copeland and Copsey, 2017; Bale, 2018: Vampa, 2021). Therefore, interviews increased the depth of information on the UK case study and provided valuable insights from politicians that have had a 'key' role on the question of Europe. The data collected from interviews will be used across all three stages in the UK case study because the questions that the participants answered related to each individual stage of the mechanism.

3.4 Outcome: Mainstream Parties Change their Position and/or Framing of the Question of Europe

The outcome of this mechanism is that mainstream parties will respond to far-right parties by either changing their position and/or framing of the question of Europe. This section uses Albertazzi et al's (2021) typology which was based on Meguid's (2008) theory of party competition. Meguid identifies three mainstream party responses to the rise of niche parties: dismissive, adversarial and accommodative (Meguid, 2008). Albertazzi et al's (2021) typology of party competition was used because it can analyse 'interactions between all and any actors within the system', not just between

mainstream and 'niche' parties as Meguid had originally set out (Albertazzi et al, 2021: 53).

Furthermore, Albertazzi et al's (2021) typology also adds another aspect, 'how parties relate to each other and compete, not just on policies, but also as actors' (p.53). This broadens out the understanding of party competition to include the relationship between parties, as well as convergence and divergence on policies. Therefore, Albertazzi et al's (2021) typology provides the basis for outlining what type of response mainstream parties have adopted, whether that be a dismissive, adversarial, or accommodative stance.

Dismissive

When mainstream parties adopt a 'dismissive' strategy it is designed to not only decrease the salience of the far right's issues, but substitute in the mainstream's political agenda (Akkerman, 2015; Carvalho, 2017). A dismissive strategy implies an attempt by Party A to suggest that policies put forward by Party B, or even Party B itself, should be regarded as insignificant by the electorate. Hence, by ignoring the issue, Party A does not need to justify its arguments. This strategy may be chosen because Party A does not own certain issues. Furthermore, Party A may fear Party B as an actor and thus tries to deflect attention from it. By not placing importance on Party B's policies or deflecting attention away from Party B, this decreases the salience of the policy, and of the party itself. In adopting this strategy Party A remains committed to its core ideas and seeks to reduce the salience of Party B's issue and limit its electoral success (Meguid, 2008; Albertazzi et al, 2021). A dismissive strategy would therefore not increase the party competition on the issue.

Adversarial

Alternatively, parties may adopt the 'adversarial' strategy which consists of taking 'a position on the new issue dimension opposite to the niche party's' (Meguid, 2008: 29). The framing of this issue will also be distinct from the far-right party. Albertazzi et al (2021) expands the understanding of an 'adversarial' strategy by suggesting this 'hostility' to the far-right party's policy stances, to the party itself, or both, can be

expressed in three distinct ways: *clashing, marginalisation and co-optation. Clashing* is associated with attacking the far right's policy and/or its credibility. *Marginalisation* involves mainstream parties ostracising or silencing the far right in the form of cordon sanitaires or cutting off funding. This contrasts to the dismissive strategy which focuses on deriding the policies or actors more broadly. Both these subcategories increase the salience of Party B's issue and its electoral success, while reinforcing Party B's ownership (Meguid, 2008). Issue entrepreneurial strategies including spending more time discussing a new issue or adopting a polarising stance can allow parties to claim ownership of that specific issue (Vasilopoulou, 2018). Thus, polarising positions on the question of Europe distinguishes the mainstream party from the far-right party and increases the salience of the EU issue at the electoral level (de Wilde, 2011; Green-Pederson, 2012).

By contrast, the subcategory of *co-optation* is more closely related to what Hainsworth (2008), and Meguid (2008) have referred to as the 'accommodative strategy' in other words 'clothes stealing' in order to dilute the far right's policy appeal (Hainsworth, 2008). *Co-optation* involves the mainstream party occupying the space of the far-right party by co-opting one or more of its policies or style (Albertazzi et al, 2021). It also includes the co-option of the frames that far-right parties use to justify their position. In this sense, *co-optation* would increase the salience of Party B's issue but as Party A converges towards Party B, Party B's electoral success decreases and the ownership of that issue transfers to Party A (Meguid, 2008). However, if the far-right party gains a reputation as the proponent of the anti-EU position, the advocacy of a similar policy position by other parties will be judged less credible (Meguid, 2008). Therefore, convergence may not lead to the decrease of the far right's electoral success.

Accommodative

In Albertazzi et al's (2021) understanding the accommodative strategy is a way of welcoming the opponent as a partner, whether through joint action in the legislative, governmental or electoral arenas (*Cooperation)* or parties joining forces on a permanent basis, creating a brand-new entity (*Fusion).* When regarding policy

stances, *cooperation* between Party A and Party B entails joint action in more than one arena (legislative, governmental or electoral). Even parties that may diverge in most respects may be able to establish some form of cooperation that concerns the actors rather than the policies (Albertazzi et al, 2021). Party A and Party B would also converge on the framing used for some of the policies advocated.

The evidence that will show position and/or framing change of mainstream parties will involve the use of manifestos, legislation, parliamentary debates and coalition agreements. These pieces alone would only show that the centre-left and centre-right's position and/or framing has changed, the previous stages of the mechanism will establish a link between the far right's influence and the position and/or framing change of mainstream parties. Table 3.7 summarises what empirical fingerprints the activities associated with each of the parts of the mechanism should have left if they operate as theorised and the sources that will be used to inform each step.

Table 3.7 The Process-Tracing Mechanism and Evidence

	Trigger	Stage 1	Stage 2		Stage 3	Outcome
Theoretical level	Far-Right party *entrance* into the party system and the occurrence of a major EU event	Far-Right Party *shapes* the debate on the Question of Europe	**Part 1: Voters** Centre-Left and Centre-Right Parties *perceived* the far-right parties' EU policy to resonate with public opinion	**Part 2: Parties** Centre-Left and Centre-Right Parties *perceived* the far-right party as an electoral threat	Centre-left and Centre-Right Parties *feeling pressured* into addressing the EU Issue	Mainstream Parties *change* their position and/or framing of the Question of Europe
Empirical Case Specific Level	Entrance of a new far-right party or the change of position on the EU by an existing party. Record of EU event	Far-Right's position on the EU is distinct from mainstream parties.	Public become more Eurosceptic which centre-left and centre-right parties acknowledge	Far-Right are electorally successful, take votes away from centre-left and centre-right parties.	Increased politicisation of EU	Change of position and/or framing of mainstream parties
	Trace Evidence	**Trace and Account Evidence**	**Pattern and Account Evidence**	**Pattern and Account Evidence**	**Account Evidence**	**Account and Trace Evidence**
Actual Sources	-Treaty Document - Referendum Vote - Documents related to response to crisis	-Newspaper and media coverage -Manifestos -Interviews (UK)	- Public opinion polls -Autobiographies Interviews (UK)	Election results Voter defection Autobiographies/ speeches Interviews (UK)	Internal factions Debates Interviews (UK)	Manifestos Debates Interviews (UK)

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an outline of the process-tracing mechanism that will be used to analyse the influence of the far right in the UK, Germany and Austria. It has discussed the data that will be used to support the process-tracing mechanism outlined in Chapter 2. The process-tracing mechanism will be applied in a similar way to each case study, with the trigger, outcome and time period covered being slightly different in each country. Using a range of data including manifestos, media coverage, interviews, autobiographies, parliamentary debates and opinion polls, this will provide evidence for the different stages of the mechanism. The following chapter will outline how the EU is debated, setting out a typology of pro-EU attitudes before moving on to applying the mechanism to the case studies.

Chapter 4

How is the Question of Europe debated in Domestic Politics?

Introduction

Throughout the EU's development, the centre-left and centre-right parties have often been labelled as pro-EU or pro-European, typically by the parties themselves, the media, and perceived by the public as such. Both the pro-EU and pro-European labels are used interchangeably and as a blanket term for any kind of support, including the reforming of or hesitancy about European integration.

Previous research on European integration as a domestic policy issue has attempted to describe and define political parties attitudes towards the EU, particularly those related to Euroscepticism. However, scholars have not directly touched upon the conceptualisation of pro-EU attitudes. Aiming to fill this gap in the literature and improve the understanding of mainstream positions on the question of Europe, this chapter critically evaluates the view that a pro-EU position involves support of the general idea of European integration, and either support for the EU as it is or is developing or the call for different or reformed EU institutions or policies (Kopecký and Mudde, 2002; Hertner and Keith, 2017). The analysis demonstrates that mainstream parties are assumed to be pro-EU; yet they actually fluctuate over time and change their positions. Therefore, to understand this change/variation, we need to create a new typology.

To improve the understanding of mainstream positions on the question of Europe, this chapter proposes a new typology to characterise mainstream parties' pro-EU attitudes. Despite the focus on Euroscepticism, the previous research can contribute to a clearer understanding of mainstream parties' pro-EU positions. Based on an adaptation of the four aspects of European integration that Vasilopoulou (2011) identifies, this chapter argues that centre-left and centre-right parties may be categorised into three patterns of support towards European integration. These consist of enthusiast, equivocal and critical Europhile, identified through the examination of party attitudes on four different aspects related to European

integration: the understanding of the EU as a 'peace project', the principle of cooperation, the policy aspect of the EU including support or opposition to EU competences and the future deepening of European integration.

Therefore, this research seeks to address the first research question 'how can we conceptualise the nature of mainstream party positions on the EU'. It provides evidence to show that while mainstream parties support the basic premise of cooperation in the EU, a pro-EU position means different things to different parties. Secondly, mainstream parties justify their positioning on the basis that they are pro-EU, regardless of whether they seek further cooperation or want to limit it. Thirdly, a pro-EU position includes ambivalence and/or criticism of European integration, thus mainstream parties can hide behind a declaration that they are pro-EU.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides a review of the emerging literature on Euroscepticism, assessing the extent to which they can describe mainstream party attitudes towards the EU. Following on, it proposes a new conceptualisation of mainstream party attitudes to the EU based on three patterns of support. Third, it conducts a qualitative analysis of party literature of seven mainstream parties from Austria, Germany and the UK showing that mainstream party positions on the EU have changed over time between 1990 and 2020. The analysis demonstrates mainstream parties held significantly different positions on the EU, despite all being categorised under the banner of pro-EU. This discussion is followed by the concluding remarks.

4.1 Defining Pro-EU Attitudes Towards European integration

The EU is a product of party-political actors on the centre-right, centre and to a lesser extent the centre-left (Haas,1958), and thus there is a perceived consensus among mainstream parties in their pro-EU stances (Bale and Krouwel, 2013, Waele et al, 2013; Hobolt and Tiley, 2016; Whitefield and Rohrschneider, 2019). Despite this perceived consensus, conceptualising and defining what Europhile/pro-EU means is difficult given that it includes an array of party positions which incorporate criticism of the EU while retaining a broad underlying position that is supportive of European integration in principle (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008).

The term Europhile is used by the literature to describe any type of support for the EU. While Garry (1995) defined Europhiles in the UK context as those who would argue that 'further European integration […] was essential to renewed British influence on the world stage' (p.172), Turnbull-Dugarte (2020) used Europhile and pro-European interchangeably to mean mainstream parties that come out in 'defence of Europe' (p.830). The vagueness of the term is also reflected in the literature on political parties attitudes towards European integration, which has yet to suggest a clear definition of Europhile.

Europhilia as a concept has arisen out of the development of the literatures' definition of Euroscepticism. Previous research has concentrated on understanding party-based Euroscepticism, partly as a result of the perceived decline of the 'permissive consensus' and the development of European integration (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008). While the focus of this chapter is on Europhilia, the literature on Euroscepticism is a useful starting point to understand pro-EU positions. It identifies a distinction between diffuse support (support for the general ideas of European integration) and specific support (support for the general practice of European integration) (Kopecký and Mudde, 2002). Therefore, it recognises that mainstream parties may support 'cooperation on the basis of pooled sovereignty (political element) and an integrated liberal market economy (the economic element)', but 'consider the current EU to be a serious deviation from their interpretation of the founding ideas of European integration' (Kopecký and Mudde, 2002: 301-302). Therefore, the following section will start with a discussion of the literature on party-based Euroscepticism.

4.1.1 Definitions in the Literature

Euroscepticism was characterised by Taggart (1998) as the 'contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration' (p.366). Subsequently, Taggart and Szczerbiak (2001) further developed this definition, distinguishing between *hard* and *soft* Euroscepticism. Hard Euroscepticism involves 'outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration, and opposition to their country joining or remaining members of the EU' (p.10). In practice, Taggart and Szczerbiak suggested that hard Euroscepticism can be identified by 'principled objection to the current form of

European integration' which comes from the belief that the existence of the EU conflicts with deeply held values or represents the embodiment of negative values.

Soft Euroscepticism involves 'contingent or qualified opposition to European Integration' and can be further sub-divided into 'policy' Euroscepticism and 'national-interest Euroscepticism' (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2001: 10). Policy Euroscepticism includes opposition to measures designed to deepen European political and economic integration such as the Economic Monetary Union (EMU) or opposition to an existing policy, while national-interest Euroscepticism involves the use of rhetoric of defending or standing up for the national interest in debates about the EU.

In response to numerous critiques, Taggart and Szczerbiak reformulated their original hard/soft dichotomy. Hard Euroscepticism was re-defined as 'a principled opposition to the project of European integration as embodied in the EU', in other words, based on the ceding or transfer of powers to the EU. While soft Euroscepticism was re-defined as 'when there was not principled objection […], but there was opposition to the EU's current or future planned trajectory based on the further extension of competences that the EU was planning to make' (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008a: 247-248).

Taggart and Szczerbiak's definition of Euroscepticism offers a useful tool to identify the different levels of Euroscepticism that political parties can display. However, by applying this typology to 'mainstream parties', both categories present an unclear picture of their attitudes and policy justifications. 'There is still a relative absence of parties from government that are hard or soft Eurosceptic' with the exception of the Austrian FPÖ and the British Conservative Party (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008: 10). Mainstream parties, with the exception of the British Conservative Party, are 'only likely to express Euroscepticism through factions' (Taggart, 1998: 363). Therefore, the hard Eurosceptic category appears somewhat less applicable to mainstream parties because they tend not to express 'principled opposition', in other words exit from the EU is not their preferred course of action. While the soft Eurosceptic category could apply to mainstream parties, for example in the case of the British Conservative Party, it is normally restricted to factions within a mainstream party. This highlights that the

hard-soft dimension is not very useful for outlining the positions of mainstream parties on the question of Europe.

The soft Eurosceptic category is also difficult to apply to mainstream parties because opposition to specific extensions of EU competences 'is not incompatible with expressing broad support for the project of European integration' (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2004: 4). Partial criticism of the EU 'has become widespread even across mainstream parties' (Nicoli, 2017: 314), but a mainstream party can be opposed to a common European defence policy and still broadly support deepening European integration in principle (Raunio, 2002; Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008a). Addressing the categories outlined by Taggart and Szcerbiak, Kopecký and Mudde (2002) argue that Euroscepticism has been 'wrongly ascribed to parties that are in essence pro-European as well as to those who are outright anti-European' (p.300). As Priestley notes (2011) 'it is perfectly possible for parties to be passionately European but to disagree fundamentally about what the European institutions have done in the past and should do in the future' (p.39). Therefore, soft Euroscepticism 'encompasses a wide spectrum of difference in terms of stances towards integration' (Verney et al, 2013: 4).

The all-encompassing nature of the term 'soft Euroscepticism' is problematic given that parties located across the political spectrum may express opposition to the EU having more competences, but the language they use is different. While the focus of this chapter is on mainstream parties, it is important to understand the differences in language that mainstream and far-right parties use. The British Conservative Party is one of the few mainstream parties which has been classified by scholars as 'soft Eurosceptic' (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008; Lynch and Whitaker, 2013a; Bale, 2018). The Conservative Party (2005), stated that 'we will co-operate with all those who wish to see the EU evolve in a more flexible, liberal and decentralised direction' (p.26). 'The answer to the challenges Europe faces is not greater centralisation of power in Brussels' (Conservative Party, 2009: 1). 'The steady and unaccountable intrusion of the European Union into almost every aspect of our lives has gone too far' (Conservative Party, 2010: 114).

In contrast, parties on the far right of the political spectrum use notably different language compared to those on the centre right. The Greek Orthodox Popular Rally (LAOS) classified as a 'soft-Eurosceptic' party does not accept that 'we have to surrender to the EU powers that erode our national sovereignty' (LAOS, 2004:2 as cited in Vasilopoulou, 2011: 173). While the Deutsche Volksunion (2001) stated that 'all efforts to protect the character of our German mother country […] would be useless if the politicians and the media were to succeed in transforming Germany in a multinational state or European Union' (as cited in Spiering, 2002: 70). In a similar manner the Lega in Italy argued that 'European integration had created a 'continental super-state, whose level of democracy is, in practice, non-existent', and threatened 'its peoples and European traditions' (LN: 2009: 60-61 as cited in Pirro and van Kessel, 2018: 332).

Pirro and van Kessel (2018) refer to this as 'populist Eurosceptic' discourse. From a populist perspective, the EU can be interpreted as the 'ultimate elitist project, operating against the general will of the people and according to non-democratic practices' (Pirro and van Kessel, 2018: 328). Tournier-Sol (2015) indicates that UKIP reworked its Euroscepticism into a populist narrative. The defence of democracy is a central element of populism, as well as a key element of UKIP's Euroscepticism. This relates to the identification of the radical variant of far-right parties (as discussed in chapter 2) as those that are not opposed to democracy but are hostile to the way representative democracy functions (Rydgren, 2018).

While the sentiment may be similar to far-right parties, the British Conservative Party used much more subtle language but the original conceptualisation of soft Euroscepticism would include all these parties despite the language used being different. Therefore, it does not capture the nuanced positions of mainstream parties that incorporate criticism of the EU.

Kopecký and Mudde (2002) understood party-based Euroscepticism by using their 'support for the European Union' typology. Building upon David Easton's (1965) work on political regimes, Kopecký and Mudde (2002) distinguished between 'diffuse' and 'specific' support for European integration. This led to further refinement of possible party positions structured along the Europhobe/Europhile and EU-optimist/pessimist

axes. The first is labelled Euroenthusiasts who support both the general idea of European integration and the general practice of integration. Eurosceptics support the general ideas of European integration but are pessimistic about the EU's current and/or future reflection of these ideas. Third, the Eurorejects do not accept either the general idea or practice of integration. Lastly, Europragmatists do not support the general ideas of European integration, nor do they necessarily oppose them, yet they do support the EU. Both Kopecký and Mudde stress that these four categories are ideal types.

The usefulness of Kopecký and Mudde's typology is not only that it acknowledges that Euroscepticism can take different forms and shapes, but it also approaches understanding Euroscepticism through identifying levels of support for the EU. It recognises that parties can support cooperation in terms of pooling sovereignty and a liberal market economy (diffuse), but they do not have to support the way the EU is developing (specific). However, the four types deduced from two dimensions are not entirely relevant to mainstream parties. Both the Euroenthusiast and Eurosceptic category can be both theoretically and empirically applied to mainstream parties. However, the Euroreject and Europragmatist categories are not empirically observable, at least until the UK referendum, given that mainstream parties accept the general idea of integration. Thus, Kopecký and Mudde's typology does not sufficiently capture the pro-EU positions of mainstream parties.

Drawing upon Taggart and Szczerbiak's hard and soft Euroscepticism, Hertner and Keith (2017) extended the concept by suggesting that hard and soft Euroscepticism can be mirrored by hard and soft Europhilia. Hard Europhilia 'can be understood as very strong unconditional support for the EU integration project in general, for the EU's core policies and institutions, and for further transfer of powers to the EU'. In contrast, soft Europhilia while showing 'strong support for the EU integration project in general, they call for different, or reformed, EU institutions or policies' (Hertner and Keith, 2017: 66). The distinction between hard and soft Europhilla is a useful starting point to recognising that mainstream parties support for the EU varies, and that parties can support European integration, while also calling for a different EU.

That being said, the rigidity of these categories is an issue, while a mainstream party may support the further transfer of powers, it may also call for change or reform. By distinguishing the hard-soft dimension at least partly on the basis of calling for 'different, or reformed, EU institutions and policies', it suggests that these parties are less-committed to the EU. However, advocating change or reform does not have to mean that mainstream parties are any-less committed to the EU.

Flood and Soborski (2017) suggested seven categories of EU alignments on integration namely from support to opposition: maximalist, reformist, gradualist, neutral, minimalist, revisionist, and rejectionist. However, Flood and Soborski (2017) emphasised that these categories are 'not intended to convey any suggestion of a specific content to the positions described, beyond basic stances towards EU integration' (p. 41). The benefit of Flood and Soborski's thin typology is that the categories can be used singly or in combination which allows for some recognition that a party's overall position may be different from its position on a specific policy. For instance, a party might be revisionist with regard to the EMU in its current form but reformist in its overall posture. Furthermore, the inclusion of a 'neutral category' did not feature in Flood's original work (2002) but it provides a useful category to explain positions that are 'indifferent' or 'evenly balanced between positive and negative' (Flood and Soborski, 2017: 41). That being said, the broad categories and the lack of specific criteria, further highlight the difficulties in categorising parties that claim to be pro-EU.

In summary, the research on Euroscepticism is useful to the study of pro-EU attitudes because it emphasises a distinction between opposition to the EU as a whole and opposition to certain aspects of the EU, which has been used to develop a typology as will be discussed in section 4.2. However, it is firstly important to address the understanding that mainstream parties are 'pro-EU'. By using data from CHES, the following discussion will allow this research to show that centre-left and centre-right parties in Austria, Germany and the UK represent different 'pro-EU' positions and that they have varied over time between 1990-2020.

4.2 Conceptualising Mainstream Party Attitudes on European Integration: Three Patterns of Support

In order to develop a typology of mainstream parties' pro-EU attitudes, the aims of the following section are two-fold. First, it requires establishing that mainstream party positions on the question of Europe vary. While the literature recognises that there is some variation in pro-EU positions that parties advocate, the literature does not grasp the full extent of this variation. Despite the centre-left and centre-right parties often being viewed as pro-EU, the question of Europe does not produce a uniform stance, which can be shown by the data collected by CHES 1999-2019 (Jolly et al, 2022) and the 2017 Chapel Hill Expert Flash Survey on party positions (Polk et al, 2017).

Second, it also requires establishing that mainstream parties regard the question of Europe as salient because parties only address issues that they themselves regard as important. While the focus of this research is on the position of mainstream parties and how they frame the question of Europe, the salience of European integration is also important to discuss because research has suggested that mainstream parties downplay the importance of European integration (Whitefield and Rohrschneider, 2015). However, results from the CHES (Polk et al, 2017; Jolly et al, 2022) would indicate that mainstream parties regard European integration as important but this varies between mainstream parties. The following section will therefore analyse the CHES data on position and salience of European Integration.

4.2.1 The Position and Salience of European Integration

On the question 'Overall position of the party leadership towards European integration', Figure 4.1 shows that the German SPD and CDU and the Austrian SPÖ and ÖVP scored the highest. The opposite was the case for the UK's centre-left Labour Party and centre-right Conservative Party which scored the lowest. Between 2014-2019 there was a decline in support in the case of the centre-right ÖVP and Conservative Party, as well as the centre-left Labour Party which coincided with the refugee crisis and - particularly resonant within the UK - the Brexit referendum. Despite this variation and change of position, all of these parties claim to be 'Pro-EU' (Polk et al, 2017; Jolly et al, 2022).

Chapel Hill Survey: Centre-Left Parties

Chapel Hill Survey: Centre-Right Parties
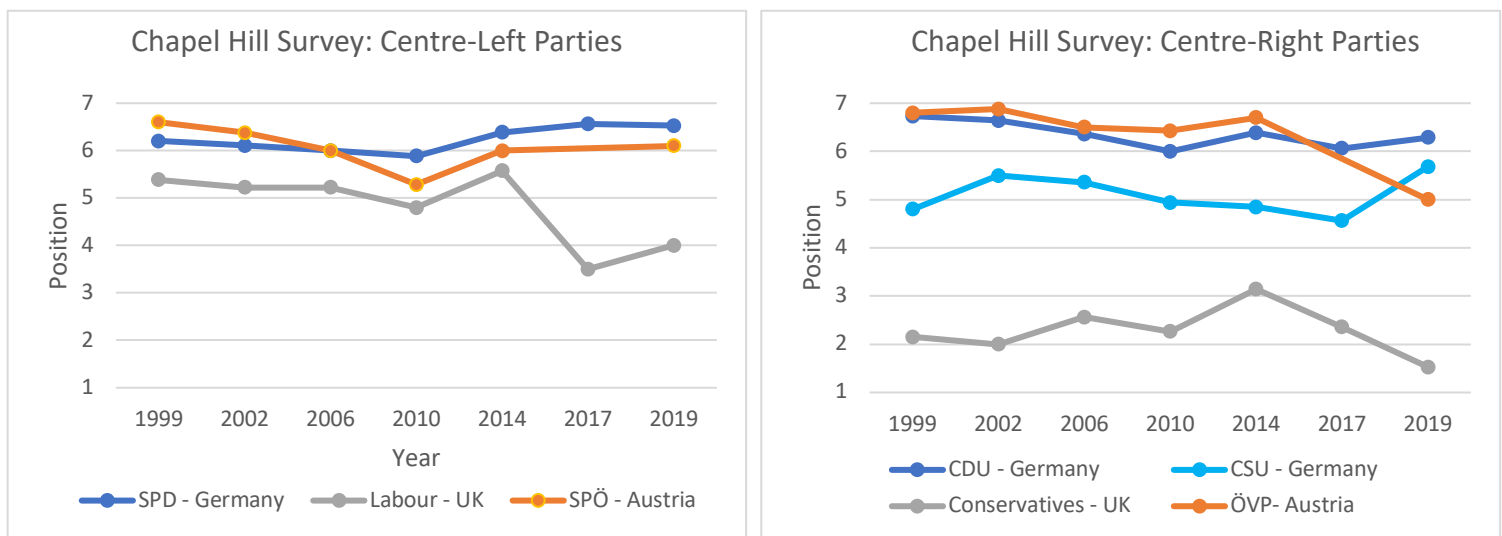
1 = Strongly Opposed to European Integration. 7 = Strongly in Favour of European Integration

**Figure 4.1: Position of Centre-Left and Centre-Right Parties
Towards European Integration**

Figure 4.2 below shows that Europe has become a salient issue based on the data collected by CHES, but the levels of salience on the question of Europe vary depending on the political party and over time (Polk et al, 2017; Jolly et al, 2022). Mainstream parties found European integration to be an important issue, as they were placed in the upper half of the scale (with the exception of the Labour Party). European integration was generally considered more important by parties in Germany and Austria. In comparison, the salience of European integration was generally lower in the UK. In terms of the British Labour Party, it regarded European integration to be less important than its centre-left counterparts between 1999-2014, after which it increased coinciding with Brexit. The salience of European integration also increased after 2014 for the Conservative Party (Bakker et al, 2015; Polk et al, 2017). Generally speaking, the centre-right considered the question of Europe to be more salient than the centre-left. The CHES data indicates that there was variation in the salience that mainstream parties attribute to the question of Europe. This is particularly important given that previous research has suggested that mainstream parties do not talk about Europe (Whitefield and Rohrschneider, 2015).

Chapel Hill Survey: Centre-Left Parties

Chapel Hill Survey: Centre-Right Parties
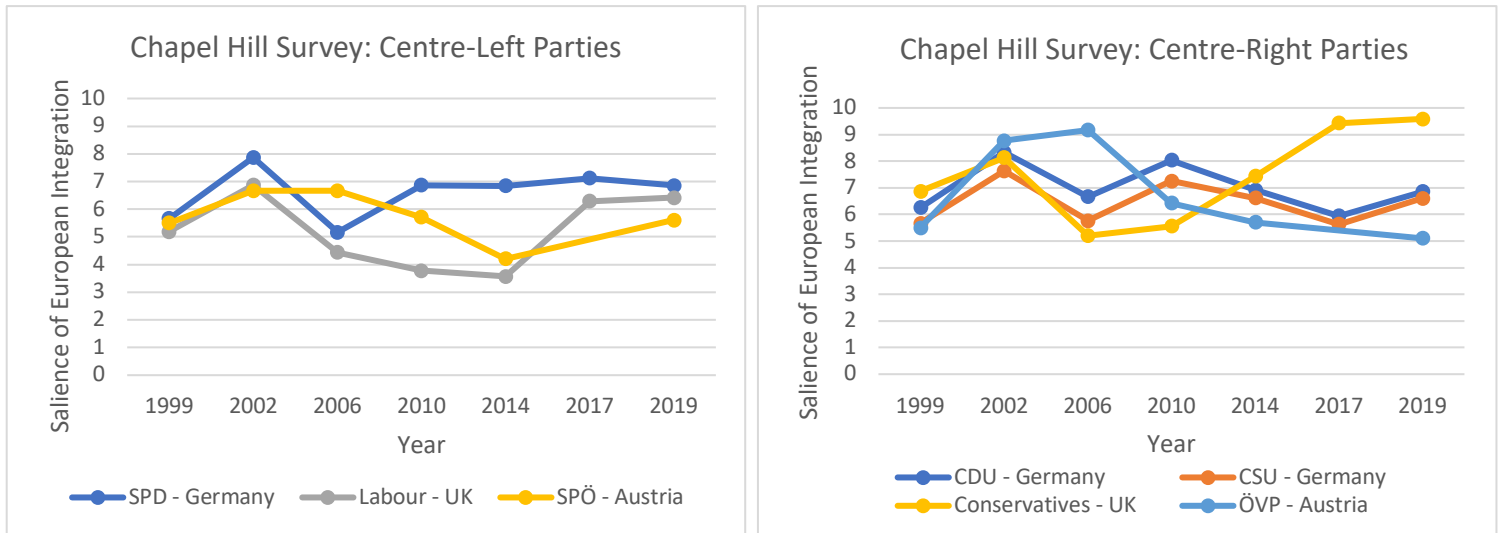
0 = European Integration is of no importance, never mentioned. 7 = European Integration is the most important issue.

Figure 4.2: Salience of European Integration to Centre-Left and Centre-Right Parties

The lack of a uniform stance across mainstream parties was also evident in the Manifestos Project data which analyses policy preferences within parties' national election manifestos and codes the positive and negative messages on European integration (Volkens et al, 2021). Figure 4.3 shows that positive positions on European integration were more salient for the centre-left and centre-right parties in their manifestos, but there was a considerable amount of fluctuation. Generally, the EU issue was salient for the centre-left in terms of their emphasis on positive messages, in contrast to the centre-right. That being said, the ÖVP was the notable exception, whereby between the years 2002-2008, it emphasised more positive statements. There was a downward trend in positive statements across both centre-left and centre-right parties, which occurred from 2009 for the centre-right and SPÖ, from 2015 for the Labour Party, and from 2017 for the SPD. Thus, while there was no notable increase of negative messages by the centre-left parties, there was a notable decrease in positive messages.

In terms of the salience of the EU issue for the centre-right, their manifestos contain a greater emphasis on negative messages than the centre-left. That being said, the centre-right ÖVP was the notable exception, whereby between the years 2002-2008, it emphasised more positive statements. The British Conservative Party emphasised the negative side of the EU issue more than other centre-right parties, which was

expected given that the party was understood as Eurosceptic (Taggart and Szczerbiak; 2008). In comparison, the CDU/CSU and ÖVP placed a significantly lower emphasis on negative statements. Since 2005 the salience of negative statements used by the CDU/CSU has declined, while the ÖVP's manifestos from 2013 has become more negative on European integration. The variation in terms of a parties' position, and the salience of European integration that has been identified by CHES and the Manifesto Project indicates a greater understanding is needed to categorise mainstream parties pro-EU stances.
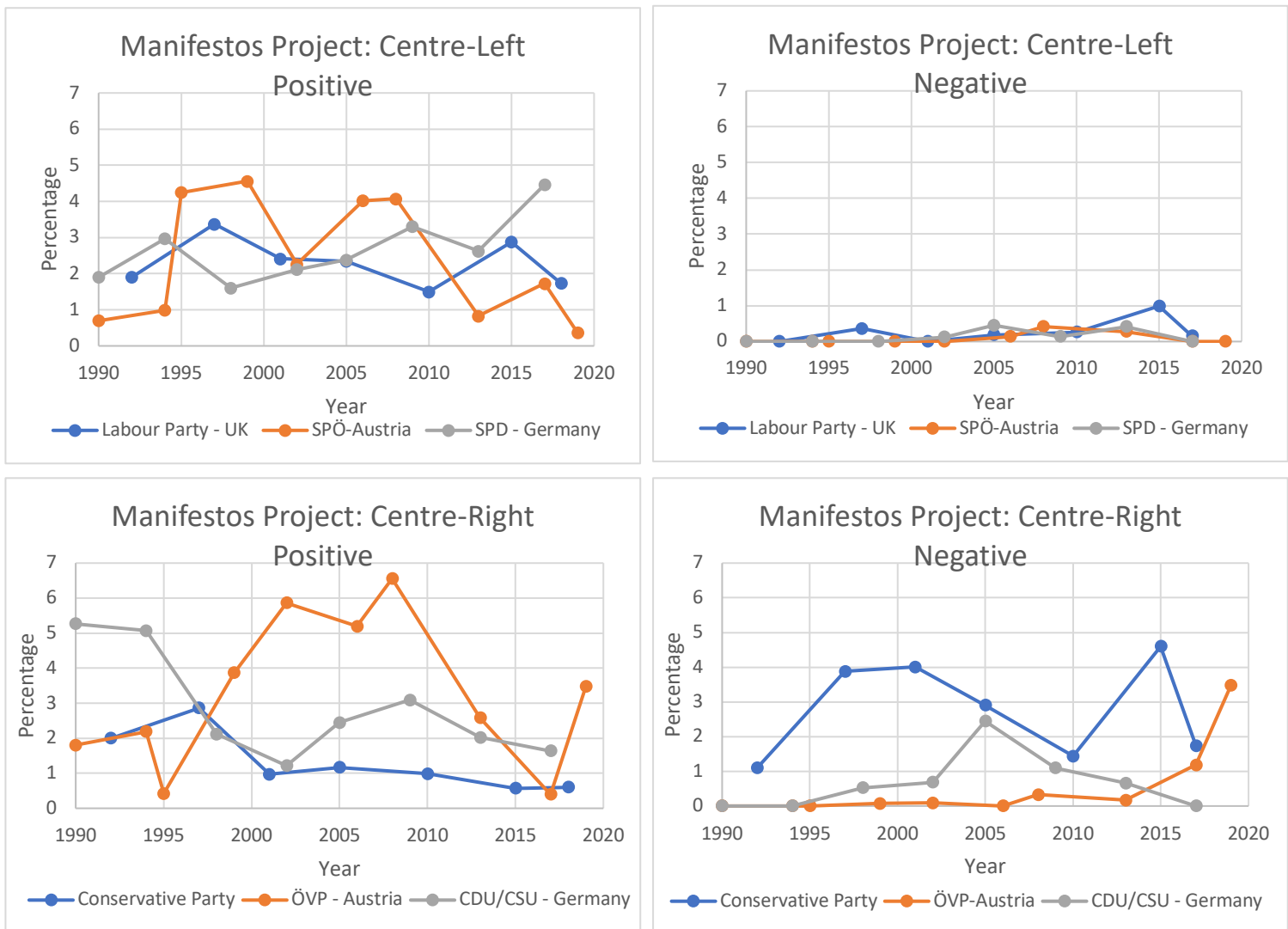
Figure 4.3: Positive and Negative Statements on European Integration by Centre-Left (Top) and Centre-Right (Bottom)

4.3 Four Aspects of European Integration

The findings of the previous section suggest that mainstream party positions on the question of Europe vary and European integration was a salient issue for mainstream parties with varying levels of emphasis on positive or negative messages on the EU. Therefore, a more nuanced understanding of mainstream parties' pro-EU positions is needed.

This section develops the conceptualisation of mainstream party attitudes towards the EU by presenting a framework that categorises their positions on the question of Europe into enthusiast, equivocal and critical patterns. The three categories of mainstream party attitudes suggested here are drawn from the current literature on Euroscepticism. Vasilopoulou (2011) identifies four aspects of European integration which helps to advance the understanding of mainstream party positions: a definition of the EU, the principle for cooperation, the current EU policy and the future of the EU polity. These four aspects of European integration are utilised and adapted to mainstream parties to provide the basis upon which the three patterns of mainstream Europhilism are identified.

The first aspect of European integration is adapted from the cultural definition of the EU provided by Vasilopoulou's (2011) typology. In relation to mainstream parties, the definition of the EU is a valued-based union that promotes peace, prosperity and security among its members. The EU as a peace project is 'probably the most repeated reason for why integration in Europe should stay the course' (Hansen, 2002: 484). The initial steps towards European cooperation was based on the need to avoid another war in Europe. As French foreign minister Robert Schuman (1950) stated through the creation of a European Coal and Steel Community 'the solidarity in production thus established will make it plain that any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible'. Promoting peace was closely tied with economic integration in that the founders of the EU hoped that 'by pooling sovereignty in certain sectors (primarily economic ones at first), integration would foster interdependence and make another war in Europe unthinkable' (Archick, 2017:1). The goal of promoting peace has been evident throughout the development of European integration and clearly stated in the Treaty on European Union (European Union, 2012). This definition of the EU also moves

away from Vasilopoulou's (2011) cultural definition related to radical right parties, that Europe is defined as 'the feeling of cultural, religious and historical bonds among the European nations' (p.68).

The second aspect is the 'principle' of European integration which indicates 'a party's wish and willingness for cooperation at a higher multilateral level' that entails a political character within EU structures even if reform of the latter is pursued (Vasilopoulou, 2011: 69). Parties can advocate the reform of the EU from within, including advocating a change in the future trajectory of the EU. The third and fourth aspect of European integration include the 'policy' and 'future' of European integration.[8] The policy aspect refers to support for or opposition to EU competences and the 'future' aspect refers to the member states' desire to promote European cooperation with the aim of creating an ever-closer union (Vasilopoulou, 2011: 69). Table 4.1 summarises these four aspects.

Table 4.1 Conceptualising European Integration

The Four Aspects of European Integration	
Definition of the EU	European integration as a project promoting peace.
Principle	The wish and willingness for cooperation at a European multilateral level
Policy	The EU institutional and policy status quo
Future	The making of a European polity

4.3.1. The Three Patterns of Mainstream Support

By using the adapted version of Vasilopoulou's (2011) aspects of European integration, it enables a more focused analysis of the range of attitudes that mainstream parties can display. The definition, principle, policy and future of integration provide a framework to classify potential mainstream party EU positions.

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[8] In Vasilopoulou's initial framework it was referred to as 'Practice' but given that this aspect of European integration refers directly to EU competences, policy appears more useful.

This section argues that mainstream party Europhilism can be categorised into the enthusiast, equivocal and critical patterns.

'Enthusiast Europhile' is a position that implies acceptance of a common definition of the EU and the principle of cooperation. While supporting the remaining two aspects of European integration, this position advocates the reform of both policy and the future building of a European polity. Reforming the EU is framed as a way to continue European integration by revaluating what competences the EU holds in a bid to strengthen the EU. However, importantly, an 'Enthusiast Europhile' does not always pursue reform of all policies. This pattern largely is a development of the 'reformist' category in Flood and Soborski's (2017) 'endorsing advance of integration, subject to remedying the deficiencies of what has already been achieved' (p.41). Hertner and Keith's (2017) soft Europhilia category also overlaps with the 'Enthusiast Europhile' in the sense that EU integration is supported in general but they call for different, or reformed EU institutions and policies. It is worth noting that in Hertner and Keith's categorisation, soft Europhiles are the least supportive of the EU. In this framework, 'Enthusiast Europhile' is the most supportive of European integration because reform is framed in a way to make the EU better.

'Equivocal Europhile' entails acceptance of the common EU values, and the principle of cooperation. 'Equivocal Europhiles' avoid a clear enthusiast position, but at the same time express support for European integration that echo the arguments of parties that are 'enthusiast Europhiles'. These supportive arguments on the principle of European integration are likely to be based on wanting to reform the system from within, for example by strengthening cooperation in certain areas. However, as ambivalent actors, equivocal Europhiles would also take positions which could potentially weaken multi-lateral cooperation, including opposing cooperation in certain areas of policy such as joining the single currency. While equivocal Europhiles criticise some policies, they praise others and even call for reforms to strengthen the European project. Regarding the future of the EU, equivocal Europhiles never fully accept the EU in its current form and seek to alter the future trajectory of the EU. Furthermore, equivocal Europhiles would not only present a mix of ambivalent positions, but also the criticisms they express would be phrased using softer language such as emphasising the need to 'reform'. 'Equivocal Europhiles' differ from 'critical Europhiles'

in the sense that they are not necessarily opposed to the political character of the EU, but they can express opposition to aspects of it.

This pattern mirrors the 'equivocal' or 'ambivalent' Eurosceptic categories used to conceptualise Euroscepticism as identified by Heinisch et al (2021) and Lorimer (2021). While 'equivocal Europhiles' is designed to understand parties that display pro-EU attitudes but nonetheless take an ambivalent stance capturing elements of the 'Enthusiast' and 'Critical Europhile' categories, 'equivocal Eurosceptics espouse an inherently ambivalent stance that, in terms of rhetoric and behaviour, includes aspects of both hard and soft eurosceptical' (Heinisch et al, 2021; 191). A similar category was identified by Lorimer (2021) to provide greater understanding of Euroscepticism. 'Ambivalence' or 'ambiguity' Eurosceptic category refers to parties that oscillate between opposition and support for Europe, depending on how they understood Europe, and how they conceived of the EU' (Lorimer, 2021: 2027). Therefore, while the 'equivocal Europhile' pattern is a development of the 'equivocal' or 'ambivalent' categories of Euroscepticism, they can also be adapted to understand pro-EU attitudes, focusing on the support for the EU that parties display rather than Euroscepticism.

'Critical Europhile' includes acceptance of the common EU values and principle of cooperation but criticism of the policy aspect and future of European integration. 'Critical Europhiles' want the EU to be limited to a small amount of policy areas, such as the economy which were agreed upon in the TEU. In areas such as the economy, critical Europhiles support the policy aspect of the EU. Critical Europhiles reluctantly support the principle of multi-lateral cooperation, but the political character of the EU is sometimes used as an argument to oppose further integration. While they do not want more powers transferred to the EU, equally they want their interests to be guaranteed in the EU even if they choose to opt-out of polices such as the Euro. They believe that membership provides opportunities for them to participate in shaping the EU, in other words to advocate change. However, critical Europhiles are against an ever-closer union and want to limit the reach of the EU.

While critical Europhiles can be incorporated into Szczerbiak and Taggart's (2008) much broader 'soft-Eurosceptic' category, the critical Europhile pattern recognises that

while mainstream parties may echo similar sentiments to those expressed by far-right parties, from opposition to the Euro to arguing against a federal Europe, the language that these parties use is different. Critical Europhiles use language that is critical of the EU but not hostile to it. Harmsen (2010) distinguishes between 'populist opposition' and 'mainstream critique' of Europe. This develops into a discussion about mainstream parties and the notion of 'legitimate criticism of the EU' with Neumayer (2008) stating that by the late 1990s, saying 'yes but' became a pragmatic rule of the game.[9] A member of the Občanská demokratická strana (Conservative Civic Democratic Party - ODS) in the Czech Republic stated 'we were labelled Eurosceptic, but ODS's Euroscepticism has never been as strong as to try to slow down EU accession. […] We just talk about the EU's problems and we criticize some of its aspects' (as cited in Neumayer, 2008: 143). Thus, while critical Europhiles can be categorised within the broader 'soft-Eurosceptic' typology, the critical Europhile category only includes mainstream parties, those that have a 'moderate ideological platform' and are the major party when they are in a coalition with a non-mainstream party (as discussed in Chapter 2 Section 2.1.3).

As seen in Table 4.2, a definition of the EU and the principle of cooperation are points of agreement among the three patterns of mainstream party Europhilism. The EU is seen as a vessel to promote peace, as well as freedom, equality, human rights and the rule of law. The EU as a values-based institution provides the basis for a definition of the EU and the main reason for cooperation between member states, and the accession of candidate countries.

Table 4.2 Patterns of Mainstream Party Support for European Integration

Aspects of European Integration				
Patterns of Support	**Definition**	**Principle of Cooperation**	**Policy**	**Future**
Enthusiast	Support	Support	Support but with reform	Different or reformed
Equivocal	Support	Support	Support and Oppose	Support and Oppose
Critical	Support	Support	Mostly Oppose	Against

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[9] While Neumayer talks about accession, the 'yes but' strategy has come to mean supporting the EU but criticising the path of the EU.

4.4. Mainstream Parties Changing Attitudes on the Question of Europe: Empirical Overview

By utilising the patterns of support that were discussed in the previous section, this section further investigates the patterns through a qualitative analysis of seven mainstream parties from Austria, Germany and the UK. To be classified as a mainstream party, a party's electoral appeal should be based on a 'moderate ideological platform' and they should be the major party when they are in a coalition with a non-mainstream party (as discussed in Chapter 2 Section 2.1.3). The parties featured in this research are classified under the party families of Social Democrats, Christian Democrats or Conservatives (as discussed in Chapter 3 Section 3.1.2).

The analysis encompasses national party manifestos from 1990 to the formation of a new Austrian coalition government in January 2020, for the centre-left and centre-right in Austria, Germany and the United Kingdom (UK). All these national party manifestos contain a section devoted to Europe which was identified and translated into English. As European parliamentary election manifestos are specifically devoted to the EU issue, to narrow the focus, policy areas were chosen that were common to the centre-left and centre-right parties, which included economic policy, foreign and security policy, enlargement and the principle of subsidiarity. Therefore, within each manifesto these topic areas were analysed to identify a party's position. However, political parties emphasised different policy areas to varying extents, and thus they might not be the same in each country. These particular aspects of European policy were also selected because they are defined within the founding TEU (European Union, 2012). Therefore, national party manifestos and European manifestos can be combined with the CHES and Manifestos Project data to analyse party position change on these areas of European integration.

The following section will discuss the three patterns to analyse the change of mainstream party pro-EU positions between 1990-2020. As the research is focused on the change of mainstream party positions, the discussion is structured by party to show how each position has changed over time using the three patterns discussed previously. It is important to note that the time periods in which position change of mainstream parties occurs might not be the same in each country.

4.4.1 The United Kingdom

In the UK, the Labour Party changed from an 'Equivocal Europhile' to a 'Hard Eurosceptic' position, while the Conservative Party moved from a 'Critical Europhile' to a 'Hard Eurosceptic' position. Prior to 2016, both parties justified their support for the EU on the basis that the EU was a peace project and accepted that nations should cooperate on a European level, but they differed with respect to the policy aspect and future of European integration. The Labour Party fluctuated between support and opposition to the policy aspect of the EU. On the future of European integration, its position on an 'ever closer union' was unclear. On the other hand, the Conservative Party acknowledged that EU cooperation had economic benefits but was reluctant to support, and in most cases opposed, more cooperation. It was also opposed to an 'ever closer union'. After 2016, both parties agreed to follow through with the referendum result to leave the EU.

The Labour Party: Equivocal Europhile to Hard Eurosceptic

The Labour Party was an 'Equivocal Europhile' in the 1990s until after the Brexit referendum in 2016 when it became a 'Hard Eurosceptic' by following through with the result of the referendum. The Labour Party's support for European integration was justified on the basis that it promoted peace, for instance through the development of a common foreign and security policy (Labour Party, 1994). In addition, Labour advocated 'an EU which looks outward to promote stability, peace and prosperity on its borders' (Labour Party, 2015: 75). Additionally, Labour stated that while Turkey's membership was a key test of Europe's 'potential to bridge between religions and regions; there must be continued progress on its application to join the EU' (Labour Party, 2010: 104). Peace was therefore an important part of not only Labour's support for the EU but also the EU's development.

The Labour Party throughout the period consistently wanted to reform the EU, expressing support for certain aspects of the EU, opposing others or leaving it up to the public to decide. The latter was the case with the Euro, 'people would have to say "Yes" in a referendum' (Labour Party, 1997: NPN). There would be 'no membership of the single currency without the consent of the British people in a referendum' (Labour

Party, 2001: 36). Labour's referendum policy on the Euro continued in its national manifestos in 2005 and 2010 but by 2015 Labour's position changed stating that Britain 'will not join the Euro' (Labour Party, 2015:77). Therefore, Labour's position incorporated referendums on the Euro, which changed to outrightly rejecting Britain's membership.

The Labour Party (1997) envisioned Europe as an 'alliance of independent nations choosing to co-operate to achieve the goals they cannot achieve alone' (NPN). In 2001, the Labour Party (2001) stated 'inter-governmental cooperation where possible, and integration where necessary (p.38). Therefore, while the Labour Party supported co-operation it was only on a limited basis. For instance, the Labour Party supported the Constitutional Treaty because 'Britain keeps control of key national interests' (Labour Party, 2005: 84). Labour reasserted that 'the EU is a union of sovereign nation states not a federal superstate' (Labour Party, 2004: 19).

A 'critical Europhile' position was also evident in 2015 when Labour continued to support Britain's EU membership for economic and security reasons, but it guaranteed that 'no transfer of powers from Britain to the European Union without the consent of the British public through an in/out referendum' (Labour Party, 2015: 77, 2014). Following the result of the 2016 Brexit referendum, Labour's positioned changed to wanting a 'close and cooperative relationship with the European Union' which would deliver Brexit (Labour Party, 2019: 4). While Labour remained committed to the EU and EU integration in principle, its position on EU membership changed because it chose to respect the democratic decision of the electorate. 'Labour accepts the referendum result' (Labour Party, 2017: 24). In 2019, Labour even proposed the idea of a second referendum, which would ask the public whether they wanted 'Labour's new deal' or to remain in the EU (Labour Party, 2019: 89-90). Therefore, a more nuanced view of Labour's position is needed because while it did adopt a 'hard Eurosceptic' position in the sense that it was following through with the UK's withdrawal from the EU, it was only doing so to follow through with what the people wanted.

The Conservative Party: Critical Europhile to Hard Eurosceptic

The Conservative Party was a critical Europhile up until after the 2016 Brexit referendum when it became a hard Eurosceptic party. Despite the Conservative Party holding a critical Europhile position, peace was a key justification for British membership of the European Union. 'We have much to gain from our membership of the European Union […] in preserving European peace' (Conservative Party, 1997: NPN). Peace was also an important reason for the Conservative Party's (1994) support of the enlargement of the EU. Enlargement offered an 'opportunity to advance the principles for which Europe should stand: free trade, free markets, deregulation and co-operation' (Conservative Party, 1999: NPN). It wanted to make Europe 'more diverse by working to bring in more nations, including Turkey' (Conservative Party, 2005: 26, 2009).

However, the Conservative Party expressed opposition to most aspects of the EU. Initially the Conservative Party would only adopt the Euro if the British people gave their approval in a referendum (Conservative Party, 1997: NPN). After 1997, the Conservative Party opposed joining the Euro, stating that it would 'keep the pound' (Conservative Party, 2001, 2005, 2010: 21). Furthermore, it also opposed 'participation in Eurozone bailouts or notions like the European army' (Conservative Party, 2014: 15; 2015: 72). The Conservative Party was long opposed to the European army claiming that either the EU does not need its own army (Conservative Party, 1999) or that there should be 'no European army outside of NATO' (Conservative Party, 2001: 28).

The opposition to different EU polices relates to the Conservative Party's general attitude towards the EU, which consistently wanted to 'be in Europe but not run by Europe' (Conservative Party, 1997: NPN, 1999: NPN, 2001: 29). In the early stages of the EU's development, the Conservative Party (1999) believed that European integration was close to its limits. The 'Conservative vision is for a Europe which does less, but does it better' (Conservative Party, 1999: NPN). The Conservative Party was clear that 'there should be no further extension of the EU's power over the UK without the British people's consent (Conservative Party, 2010: 113). It opposed an 'ever closer union' and emphasised that it would say 'no to a constant flow of power to

Brussels' (Conservative Party, 2014: 15, 2015: 72). Therefore, prior to 2016, the Conservative Party adopted a critical Europhile position supporting the EU in general and a few limited policies but remained opposed to the EU's current or future trajectory.

Official party policy did not oppose membership of the EU in its manifestos prior to the 2016 referendum. Even in the run up to the 2014 and 2015 elections, the official party line was 'yes to a family of nations, all part of the European Union' (Conservative Party, 2014: 15; 2015: 72). After the referendum result, the Conservative Party (2017) adopted a hard Eurosceptic position, by wanting to deliver 'a smooth and orderly departure from the EU' (p.6).

In summary, the Labour Party started out as more supportive of the EU than the Conservative Party, but by 2016 coinciding with the aftermath of the vote to leave, Labour changed its position on EU membership to respect the democratic result of the referendum.

4.4.2 Germany

In comparison, the centre-left SPD and the centre-right CDU/CSU were more supportive of the EU than their British counterparts. In Germany, the SPD belonged to the 'Enthusiast Europhile' pattern, while the CDU moved from 'Enthusiast Europhiles' to 'Equivocal Europhile' and the CSU belonged to the 'Equivocal Europhile' pattern. While all three parties justified their EU support on the grounds that the EU promotes peace and accepted the principle that nations should cooperate at a higher European level, they differed on the policy aspect and the future of European integration. The SPD continued to advocate greater cooperation between member states and that the EU should reform to make it better. The CDU and CSU on the other hand remained supportive but concentrated on transferring powers back to member states.

SPD: An Enthusiast Europhile

Throughout the period from the 1990s to 2020 the SPD has remained an 'Enthusiast Europhile' by showing continued support for the EU, as well as promoting more cooperation between member states. Peace was an important justification for the

SPD's support for the EU regarding it as the 'best guarantee for peace, security and social stability' (SPD, 1998:72; 2002).[10] The European idea 'ensures peace in Europe' (SPD, 2017: 77).[11]

Peace was also an important justification for supporting EU enlargement because 'the essence of the EU enlargement policy was always the policy of peace' (SPD, 2005:40).[12] Throughout, the SPD supported Turkey's accession prospects although its support became less enthusiastic and more qualified by 2019. In 2009, the SPD (2009) supported 'the EU-accession of Turkey, when they successfully meet the criteria in full' (p.88).[13] By 2014, the SPD (2014) addressed the importance of the EU's ability to absorb new members but continued to support the 'ongoing negotiations with Turkey with the aim of accession' (p.12).[14] However, the SPD became increasingly reluctant to support Turkish accession so that by 2017 the SPD's position was that the actions of the Turkish government were against the EU's shared values (SPD, 2017). Thus, the definition of the EU as a value-based union was used as a justification to oppose Turkey. In 2019, the SPD did not oppose Turkish membership but instead stated that 'neither Turkey nor the European Union is ready for accession in the foreseeable future' (SPD, 2019:61).[15]

The SPD has continually supported the strengthening or reform of the EU and has advocated greater cooperation between member states. The SPD (1994) wanted to take 'further steps to deepen and democratise' the EU (p.33)[16] and was 'committed to further reform of the EU institutions' (SPD, 1998: 74).[17] Similar sentiments were echoed later on in the period. The SPD (2009) wanted 'to improve coordination of economic and financial policy at the EU level' (p.88)[18] and to make the EU better by

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[10] Die Europäische Union ist der beste Garant für Frieden, Sicherheit und soziale Stabilität

[11] Die europäische Idee vom Leben in Freiheit und Verantwortung sichert den Frieden in Europa

[12] Die EU- Erweiterungspolitik war im Kern immer Friedenspolitik.

[13] Wir unterstützen einen EU-Beitritt der Türkei, wenn diese die erforderlichen Kriterien voll erfüllt.

[14] Auch muss die EU ihre eigene Aufnahmefähigkeit sicherstellen. Die laufenden Verhandlungen mit der Türkei führen wir mit dem erklärten Ziel eines Beitritts weiter.

[15] Weder die Türkei noch die Europäische Union sind in absehbarer Zeit für einen Beitritt bereit.

[16] Bei der für 1996 vorgesehener reform der europäischen union werden wir uns für weitere vertiefungs- und demokratisierungsschritte engagieren.

[17] Die SPD setzt sich für eine weitere Reform der Institutionen der EU ein.

[18] Wir wollen die wirtschafts- und finanzpolitische Koordinierung auf Ebene der EU, vor allem in der Eurogruppe, verbessern und verbindlicher regeln.

contributing to 'strengthening European democracy' (SPD, 2013: 106).[19] The SPD (2014) also advocated for the reform of the EU Commission and further cooperation to 'increase the EU's ability to act' (p.6).[20] Therefore, the SPD's support for the EU was characterised by reform of the EU institutions and greater cooperation.

The SPD (2013,2017) continued to support the Euro and wanted greater cooperation through the formation of an economic government. In other areas such as foreign and security policy, the SPD also advocated more cooperation including the creation of a European army and defence union (SPD, 2014, 2017). The position of the SPD on the question of Europe was nicely summed up in its 2019 EP manifesto, 'the goal remains the further development of the Euro zone into a social, economic and political union' (SPD, 2019:42).[21] While the SPD opposed the centralisation and over bureaucratisation of Europe (1994, 2013, 2014), the main focus was on developing greater cooperation between member states. Despite support for EU enlargement becoming more subdued, the SPD continued to advocate greater cooperation and reform of EU institutions throughout the period.

CDU: From Enthusiast to Equivocal Europhiles and CSU: Equivocal Europhiles

As a result of campaigning on a joint election platform in the federal elections, the CDU and CSU's position on the question of Europe overlapped. Therefore, it was difficult to separate their positions with the exception of EP elections whereby the CDU and CSU ran on separate campaigns in the EP elections. The EP manifestos highlighted that the CSU was less supportive of the EU, but the CSU's position was toned down when it ran on a joint manifesto with the CDU in federal elections. The CSU's position from the 1990s-2020 can be characterised by the Equivocal Europhile pattern oscillating between support and opposition to the EU. The CDU was more supportive of the EU, with its position appearing more often within its joint manifesto with the CSU, and thus toning down the CSU's position. Thus, reflecting the CDU's dominant role in the

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[19] Eine solche Reform hilft, Entscheidungen transparenter und nachvollziehbarer zu machen, und sie ist damit ein Beitrag zur Stärkung der europäischen Demokratie.

[20] Für verstärkte Zusammenarbeit: Um die Handlungsfähigkeit der EU auch in Bereichen zu steigern, in denen nicht von vorneherein alle EU-Staaten zu Fortschritten bereit sind, sollte das Instrument der verstärkten Zusammenarbeit stärker genutzt werden.

[21] Ziel bleibt die Weiterentwicklung der Eurozone zu einer sozialen, wirtschaftlichen und politischen Union.

partnership. Therefore, the CDU's position from the 1990s until 2018 can be classified as a 'Enthusiast Europhile'. From 2019, the CDU/CSU's joint manifesto appeared to include more similarities with the CSU's position and therefore, the CDU's position seems to have changed to an Equivocal Europhile.

The CDU and CSU agreed that the aim of the EU was to promote peace. The CDU/CSU (1998) wanted to further advance European unification because 'European integration determines the future of our continent' (NPN).[22] Support for the enlargement of the EU was also justified on the basis that it offered an 'opportunity to guarantee peace and freedom' (CDU, 1999: 9)[23] and that it was the 'only way to guarantee long-term peace, freedom, security and prosperity throughout Europe' (CSU, 2004: 6).[24] Furthermore, European unification was seen as a way to secure peace and freedom in the long term (CDU/CSU, 2002). Therefore, despite being on separate platforms in the EP elections, peace was a key justification for supporting the EU.

The CDU and CSU's EU enlargement policy became increasingly hesitant after the enlargement of the EU by twelve member states and Croatia. The CDU (2004) stated that 'Europe must not grow indefinitely' (p.8)[25] and the CSU wanted 'a phase of consolidation through deepening of the community' (CSU, 2004: 9). While a consolidation phase was not mentioned by the CDU within their own EP manifesto, it later appeared within their joint national manifesto with the CSU (CDU/CSU, 2009). The CDU/CSU also emphasised that it was important to take into the account the 'EU's ability to absorb new members' (CDU/CSU, 2009: NPN).[26]

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[22] CDU und CSU wollen die europäische Einigung weiter voranbringen'. Die europäische Integration entscheidet über die Zukunft unseres Kontinents

[23] Durch die Aufnahme der Staaten Mittel- und Osteuropas eröffnet sich die historische Chance, daß Frieden und Freiheit, Demokratie und Soziale Marktwirtschaft, Menschen- und Minderheitenrechte auf dem gesamten Kontinent garantiert werden.

[24] Nur sie bietet die Chance zur langfristigen Garantie von Frieden, Freiheit, Sicherheit und Wohlstand in ganz Europa.

[25] Europa darf nicht unbegrenzt wachsen

[26] Für Staaten mit einer europäischen Beitrittsperspektive gilt, dass für die Aufnahme neuer Mitglieder in die Europäische Union das Kriterium der Aufnahmefähigkeit der EU ebenso wichtig ist, wie die vollständige Erfüllung aller politischen und wirtschaftlichen Kriterien durch die Bewerberländer, zu denen insbesondere die Meinungsfreiheit, die Gleichheit von Frau und Mann, der Minderheitenschutz oder die Religionsfreiheit zählen.

Furthermore, the CSU's opposition to Turkish membership was based more on the cultural and geographic boundaries of Europe. The CSU opposed Turkey's accession because 'the EU member states have common cultural and historical roots, which Turkey does not share' (CSU, 2009: 15).[27] While, the CDU (2014) rejected full membership for Turkey because it did not meet the requirements for EU membership, the CSU (2014) was 'against Turkey's full membership' because it would overburden the EU. (p.5). [28]   The joint platform the CDU/CSU ran on in the EP elections in 2019 represented a change in the justifications used to oppose Turkey's membership. The CDU/CSU's 2013 national manifesto stated that Turkish accession would overwhelm the EU because of the size and economic structure of Turkey (CDU/CSU, 2013). The 2019 joint platform developed this position into 'Our Europe also knows its borders. There will be no full membership of Turkey in the EU with us' (CDU/CSU, 2019: 22).[29] The CDU's justification for opposition to Turkish membership had changed to incorporate the argument that the CSU had made in 2009 that it stood for a 'Europe that knows its borders' (CSU, 2009: 1).[30]

Additionally, both the CDU and CSU wanted to advance European integration by reforming the EU, but the CSU's advocacy of EU reform focused on having 'less Europe'. Initially, both parties wanted to 'strengthen the democratic legitimation of European institutions' (CDU/CSU, 2002:66)[31] and reform the Euro, by establishing a monetary fund for the Eurozone (CDU/CSU, 2013). The CDU/CSU also was 'striving for a European army' (CDU/CSU, 2013: 118).[32] Importantly, reforming the EU was framed to make the EU better, but it was combined with greater reluctance towards further European integration on the part of the CSU in certain policy areas.

When sharing a joint election platform, the CDU and CSU (2005) emphasised that 'not every problem in Europe is a task for Europe' (p.36)[33], the CSU (2009) stood for 'a

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[27] Die EU-Mitgliedstaaten verfügen über gemeinsame kulturelle und historische Wurzeln, die die Türkei nicht teilt.
[28] Wir sind gegen die Vollmitgliedschaft der Türkei
[29] 'Unser Europa kennt zudem seine Grenzen. Eine Vollmitgliedschaft der Türkei in der EU wird es mit uns nicht geben'
[30] Die CSU steht aber auch für ein Europa, das seine Grenzen
kennt – in seinen Zuständigkeiten, in finanzieller Hinsicht und in seiner räumlichen Ausdehnung.
[31] 'Wir wollen die demokratische Legitimation der europäischen Institutionen stärken'.
[32] Langfristig streben wir eine europäische Armee an.
[33] Nicht jedes Problem in Europa ist auch eine Aufgabe für Europa.

Europe that knows its limits - in terms of its competences, financially and geographically' (p.1).[34] 'We do not want a European superstate' (CSU: 2009:3).[35] The CSU (2014) wanted 'a better Europe, instead of always more Europe' (p.6)[36] and 'a Europe that is less-centralised and less bureaucratic' (CSU, 2014:2).[37] In contrast, the CDU (2014) maintained that not every task was a task for Europe. The CSU's tone was somewhat mellowed by the decision to join forces with the CDU for the first time in an EP election. Thus, the CDU/CSU's (2019) position emphasised 'Our Europe is guided by the principle of subsidiarity' (p.20).[38] The balance of support and reluctance that embodied the CDU and CSU's enlargement policy, also characterised their EU support more widely.

To summarise, the adoption of the 'enthusiast' Europhile position by the SPD and CDU distinguished them from the CSU in the sense that the CSU fluctuated between supporting and opposing elements of the EU. However, the relationship between the CDU and CSU resulted in the CDU becoming more reluctant to accept more integration and thus, the CDU's position changed to become an equivocal Europhile.

4.4.3. Austria

Similar to Germany, both the centre-left and centre-right parties initially held a similar position. While the ÖVP moved from a 'equivocal Europhile' to a 'Critical Europhile' pattern, the SPÖ belonged to the 'equivocal Europhile ' pattern. Both parties justified their EU support on the grounds that the EU promotes peace and that nations should cooperate at a higher European level, but they differ in terms of the policy aspect and the future of European integration. The SPÖ oscillated between support and opposition to certain EU policies, and while it did not support the direction which the EU was travelling, it sought to improve it because that was the only EU it had. In

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[34] Die CSU steht für ein Europa, dem die Menschen vertrauen können und das seiner Verantwortung in der Welt gerecht wird. Die CSU steht aber auch für ein Europa, das seine Grenzen kennt – in seinen Zuständigkeiten, in finanzieller Hinsicht und in seiner räumlichen Ausdehnung.
[35] Wir wollen keinen europäischen Superstaat. –
[36] Wir brauchen ein besseres Europa statt immer mehr Europa
[37] Ein Europa, das weniger zentralistisch und weniger bürokratisch ist.
[38] Unser Europa ist vom Subsidiaritätsprinzip'

contrast, the ÖVP increased its opposition to the policy aspect and future of European integration.

SPÖ: Equivocal Europhile

Throughout the period, from the 1990s to 2020, the SPÖ was an equivocal Europhile. Despite holding a position that was characterised by both elements of support and opposition to the EU, the SPÖ (1996) saw 'Europe above all as a peace project' (p.15)[39] and it believed that this peace project was 'worth fighting for' (SPÖ, 2014: 4).[40]

Peace was also the justification for the SPÖ's support for enlargement of the EU because 'it will finally overcome the division of Europe and ensures the peace and stability of our continent' (SPÖ, 2002:20).[41] The SPÖ increasingly became more reluctant to support the enlargement of the EU, prioritising consolidation 'over any future enlargement' (SPÖ, 2004: 7).[42] Despite the SPÖ recognising that the EU's enlargement process is an 'essential part of the comprehensive peace project that underlies integration', it also pointed out that the EU's future capacity for enlargement is 'highly uncertain' (SPÖ, 2006:21).[43] The SPÖ's justification for its hesitancy over future enlargements was because it wanted a strong Europe that is able to act (SPÖ, 2006). In spite of this, the SPÖ (2008, 2014) advocated the enlargement of the EU to the Western Balkans. In contrast, the SPÖ believed that 'Turkey's accession would overwhelm the current economic, social and political capacities of the EU and its structures' (SPÖ, 2008:37, 2009).[44] Even with the SPÖ's opposition to Turkey's accession, it stated that it would be subject to a referendum.

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[39] Wir Sozialdemokratinnen und Sozialdemokraten sehen in Europa vor allem ein Friedensprojekt.

[40] Die EU ist in ihrem Kern ein friedensstiftendes Projekt. Durch die gemeinschaftliche Verpflichtung der Mitgliedsstaaten zur friedlichen Konfliktbeilegung im Inneren und der schrittweisen Integration der Staaten zur Europäischen Union konnte sich Europa zu einem Kontinent des Friedens entwickeln. Für dieses „Friedensprojekt Europa" lohnt es sich zu kämpfen.

[41] Wir treten für eine gut vorbereitete Erweiterung der EU ein, weil sie endgültig die Teilung Europas überwindet und Frieden und Stabilität auf unserem Kontinent sichert.

[42] Eine umfassende wirtschaftliche, soziale und politische Konsolidierung der EU, damit die jetzige Erweiterung bewältigt werden kann. Diese Konsolidierung hat klaren Vorrang gegenüber jeder künftigen Erweiterung.

[43] Der Erweiterungsprozess der EU ist ein wesentlicher Teil des umfassenden Friedens projekts, das der Integration zugrunde liegt. Freilich: Der letzte große Erweiterungsschritt ist noch nicht wirklich verarbeitet und die zukünftige Erweiterungsfähigkeit der EU höchst unsicher

[44] Die SPÖ unterstützt und bekräftigt die im Regierungsübereinkommen vereinbarte Vor- gangsweise, den eventuellen Beitritt der Türkei einer Volksabstimmung zu unterziehen. Aus unserer Sicht würde ein Beitritt der

The SPÖ (2002, 2006, 2008) supported the further development of the EU including an expansion of the EU's common foreign and security policy, as well as 'to further develop and strengthen the European social model' (SPÖ, 2002:19, 2006).[45] More broadly, the SPÖ was 'convinced of the economic reason for Austria's membership in the European Union' as it formed the basis of its economic success and prosperity (SPÖ, 2013:13).[46] From 2009, the SPÖ stated its support for the principle of subsidiarity in that the EU should only govern those areas where it could be useful. 'Where we need common European answers, we stand for a strong Europe capable of action' (SPÖ, 2014: 4).[47] 'Everything that can be regulated more sensibly at national or regional level should also be regulated there' (SPÖ, 2014: 6).[48] In 2019, the SPÖ advocated improving the EU and its institutions by recognising that 'the European Union is certainly not perfect. If it were up to me, the EU would look very different' (SPÖ, 2019: 97).[49] While, the SPÖ continued to support the EU, it oscillated between support and opposition to certain EU polices.

ÖVP: Equivocal Europhile to Critical Europhile

The ÖVP was initially an equivocal Europhile but from around 2006 it gradually began to shift so that by 2017 it became a critical Europhile. Despite the movement towards a move critical position on the question of Europe, peace remained an important constant justification for the ÖVP's support for Austria's EU membership. 'We are committed to European unification as a historic peace project' (ÖVP, 2002:44).[50] The EU 'guarantees us peace and stability' (ÖVP, 2013:65),[51] and has brought lasting

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Türkei die derzeitigen wirtschaftlichen, sozialen und politischen Kapazitäten der EU sowie ihre Strukturen überfordern.

[45] Unser Ziel in der Europapolitik ist es, das europäische Sozialmodell zu stärken und weiterzuentwickeln.

[46] Die SPÖ ist aus Überzeugung und aus volkswirtschaftlicher Vernunft für die Mitgliedschaft Österreichs in der Europäischen Union. Diese stellt eine Basis für unseren wirtschaftlichen Erfolg und Wohlstand dar.

[47] Wir wollen ein Europa, das jene Dinge regelt, die nicht besser lokal, regional oder national geregelt werden können. Dort, wo wir gemeinsame europäische Antworten brauchen, stehen wir für ein starkes und handlungsfähiges Europa.

[48] Außerdem muss die Subsidiarität gewahrt werden, sprich: Alles, was auf nationaler oder regionaler Ebene sinnvoller geregelt werden kann, soll auch dort geregelt werden.

[49] Die Europäische Union ist bestimmt nicht perfekt. Wenn es nach mir ginge, würde die EU ganz anders aussehen. Aber wir haben nur die EU.

[50] Wir bekennen uns zur europäischen Einigung als historischem Friedensprojekt.

[51] Die Europäische Union garantiert uns Frieden und Stabilität, fördert Wachstum und bringt uns Wohlstand.

peace to the continent (ÖVP, 2017). Therefore, 'a united Europe is the best future insurance for peace, freedom, stability and prosperity' (ÖVP, 2019:5).[52]

EU enlargement, as a peace project, was supported by the ÖVP (1999). However, the more countries that the EU incorporated, the more hesitant the ÖVP became. After the enlargement in 2004, the ÖVP stated that the EU needs a 'phase of consolidation' (ÖVP, 2004: 12).[53] Turkey's accession was also a point of contention for the ÖVP. It emphasised that Turkey's accession was not 'a done deal' and wanted 'clarification as to whether the European Union can cope with such an enlargement step' (ÖVP, 2004: 12).[54] While not openly opposing Turkey's accession, the ÖVP (2006) stated that EU negotiations with Turkey would have an 'open outcome', and as a last instance, Austrian citizens will vote in a referendum on whether Turkey will join the EU. The ÖVP (2008) emphasised that the accession of Turkey will not happen in the 'foreseeable future' and that if the question was to arise it would be subject to a referendum. However, the ÖVP advocated the 'continuation of the enlargement process and the accession of the Western Balkans to the EU' (ÖVP, 2013: 68, 2017).[55] By 2017, the ÖVP stated that 'Turkey's accession should be prevented' (ÖVP, 2017: 45, 2019).[56] Therefore, while the ÖVP has continued to support enlargement of the EU, it has gradually changed to openly opposing Turkey's accession to the EU.

The ÖVP wanted to reform the EU through the clear establishment of the competences the EU performs. Throughout the period, the ÖVP wanted 'those competences to be located at the European level, that cannot be adequately dealt with by member states' (ÖVP, 2002:46, 2004, 2006, 2013, 2014, 2019).[57] The ÖVP advocated that the EU should be strengthened in the area of foreign, security and defence policy (ÖVP, 2017) and that the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) should be further developed into a

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[52] Für uns ist deshalb klar: Ein geeintes Europa ist die beste Zukunftsversicherung für Frieden, Freiheit, Stabilität und Wohlstand.
[53] Die EU braucht eine Phase der Konsolidierung.
[54] Die Aufnahme der Türkei in die Europäische Union ist keine entschiedene Sache. Vor der Entscheidung über die Aufnahme der Beitrittsverhandlungen mit der Türkei sind noch viele Voraussetzungen zu klären.
[54] Außerdem wollen wir eine Klärung, ob die Europäische Union einen solchen Erweiterungsschritt verkraftet.
[55] Darum tritt die ÖVP für eine Fortsetzung des Erweiterungsprozesses und die Heranführung der Westbalkan-Länder an die EU ein.
[56] Der EU-Beitritt der Westbalkanländer soll forciert, der Beitritt der Türkei verhindert werden.
[57] Die ÖVP will, dass nur jene Kompetenzen auf europäischer Ebene angesiedelt werden, die von den Mitgliedstaaten nicht ausreichend erledigt werden können.

European Monetary Fund (EMF) (ÖVP, 2014). The ÖVP (2014) also strongly opposed leaving the Euro or the EU because 'it would undermine our competitiveness, our economic strength, the stability of our currency…' (p.5).[58] However, the ÖVP made sure to emphasise that as a European party it did not endorse all the developments in Europe (ÖVP, 2006). 'We want to be part of the EU so that we can say no to developments in Europe that we do not want' (ÖVP, 2008: 21).[59] The ÖVP (2014) later clarified that 'we do not have to rebuild Europe but make it better' (p.6).[60]

To summarise, both the SPÖ and ÖVP were equivocal Europhiles fluctuating between supporting and opposing certain elements of the EU. While the SPÖ continued to express these views, the ÖVP became a critical Europhile supporting the EU in general and a few limited policies but opposed to the EU's current or future trajectory. The mainstream party positions are illustrated in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Mainstream Party Position Change on European Integration

Patterns of Support for European Integration		
Austria	SPÖ	**Equivocal Europhile**
	ÖVP	**Equivocal to Critical Europhile**
Germany	CDU	**Enthusiast to Equivocal Europhile**
	CSU	**Equivocal Europhile**
	SPD	**Enthusiast Europhile**
United Kingdom	Labour Party	**Equivocal Europhile to Hard Eurosceptic**
	Conservative Party	**Critical Europhile to Hard Eurosceptic**

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[58] Nein zum Austritt aus Euro und EU
Der von radikalen Kräften geforderte Austritt aus dem Euro und aus der EU wäre verantwortungslos gegenüber unserem Land und Europa: Er würde unsere Wettbewerbsfähigkeit, unsere wirtschaftliche Stärke, die Stabilität unserer Währung, unzählige Arbeitsplätze und die soziale Sicherheit in Österreich erheblich gefährden.
[59] Und: Wir wollen in der EU dabei sein, um auch Nein sagen zu können bei Entwicklungen in Europa, die wir nicht wollen.
[60] Wir müssen Europa nicht neu bauen, aber besser machen.

Conclusion

In order to establish a link between the literature on mainstream parties and the study of their pro-EU attitudes, this chapter has proposed the conceptualisation of mainstream party support for European integration into the enthusiast, equivocal and critical patterns. It has utilised the four aspects of European integration as identified by Vasilopoulou (2011) encompassing an adaptation of the definition of Europe, the principle, policy and future of Europe. From this, the three patterns have been identified. This chapter has provided a qualitative analysis of the party literature aiming to improve our understanding of the nuanced mainstream pro-EU position, while also demonstrating that the mainstream parties have changed their position on aspects of the EU.

The four fundamental aspects as identified by Vasilopoulou (2011) were used to provide a framework to understand the different levels of the support for the EU, but the definition of the EU was redefined in order for it to apply to mainstream parties. By recognising the varying levels of support for the EU, it can provide greater understanding as to what a pro-EU position actually means to different parties. The three-fold conceptualisation of mainstream party support for the EU lies in identifying the nuances of a pro-EU position.

The qualitative analysis of party manifestos shows that the ideological positioning of a party does not necessary mean that they will display the same levels of support for the EU. In fact, the parties under analysis actually show three different patterns of support, which are influenced by the domestic context in which these parties are situated. These are important findings for a number of reasons. Firstly, it provides evidence showing that while mainstream parties support the basic premise of cooperation in the EU, a pro-EU position means different things to different parties. Secondly, mainstream parties justify their positioning on the basis that they are pro-EU, regardless of whether they seek further cooperation or want to limit it. Thirdly, a pro-EU position includes ambivalence and/or criticism of European integration, thus mainstream parties can hide behind a declaration that they are pro-EU.

These findings have important implications in terms of the study of mainstream parties' pro-EU attitudes. Thus, Chapters 5,6 and 7 intend to analyse the influence of far-right parties on the positions of mainstream parties on the question of Europe in the UK, Germany and Austria.

Chapter 5

The Influence of UKIP on the Positions and Framing of the Labour Party and the Conservative Party on the Question of Europe.

Introduction

This chapter shifts the focus onto the first of three case studies, examining the influence of UKIP on mainstream party positions and/or framing of the question of Europe. The previous chapter proposed a conceptualisation of mainstream party support for European integration and in doing so argued that mainstream party pro-EU positions fluctuate and change over time. It argued that the Conservative Party changed from a 'Critical Europhile' to a 'Hard Eurosceptic' and the Labour Party moved from an 'Equivocal Europhile' to a 'Hard Eurosceptic' party. In seeking to answer the research puzzle of the thesis, i.e. to what extent do far-right political parties influence the change of mainstream party positions on the question of Europe, the aim of this chapter is to analyse the change of position identified in Chapter 4.

This chapter proceeds by applying the process-tracing mechanism as outlined in Chapter 2 (Section 2.4.2). According to this mechanism, far-right parties can influence the change of position and/or framing of the question of Europe. The mechanism will be used to analyse UKIP's influence on Labour and the Conservative parties. While the focus of the previous literature is primarily on the influence of UKIP on the Conservative Party (Lynch and Whitaker, 2013a, 2016; Bale, 2018, Hayton, 2021), this chapter extends Vampa's (2021) argument that UKIP put both Labour and the Conservative parties under pressure. The contribution of this chapter is two-fold. Firstly, it uses a unique process-tracing mechanism to link the influence of UKIP to the change of position of Labour and the Conservative parties, and secondly, to provide a greater understanding of the influence UKIP had on the Labour Party's position on the question of Europe.

This chapter examines the influence of UKIP between 1993 to January 2020 through a process-tracing mechanism that was triggered by the signing of the TEU and the entrance of UKIP in the party system on a Eurosceptic platform. It is then followed by three stages: shaping the debate (1993-2008), public opinion and the awareness of

mainstream parties (2009-2012) and the response of mainstream parties (2013 onwards). To support this mechanism, this chapter engages with numerous sources including semi-structured interviews, manifestos, media coverage, public opinion and parliamentary debates.

By applying the novel process-tracing mechanism outlined in Chapter 2 to the UK case study, it reveals that electoral success on its own was not enough for UKIP to have influence on the Labour and the Conservative parties. The media and public opinion are also important variables that need to be considered when analysing the influence of UKIP. The chapter argues that the Conservative Party embarked on an adversarial strategy, clashing with UKIP as an actor, while co-opting UKIP's EU position - firstly, on holding a referendum on EU membership and secondly, on withdrawing from the EU. The Conservative Party also co-opted UKIP's justification for EU withdrawal by using institutional frames to argue that EU withdrawal would allow Britain to 'take back control'.

In contrast the Labour Party dismissed UKIP as an actor but adopted an adversarial (clashing) strategy in regard to UKIP's EU policy up until after the EU referendum. While Labour was identified as 'pro-EU', by the previous literature, the media and by the party itself, Labour struggled to address the question of Europe and UKIP. This was particularly evident after the referendum result. Labour co-opted UKIP's EU withdrawal policy to 'honour the referendum result', but it remained conflicted on the issue. After the leave result, Labour continued to use economic frames to support the EU but changed from wanting to 'retain the benefits of the Single Market' to arguing for 'close alignment to the Single Market'. It also briefly flirted with holding a second referendum. Therefore, both parties aimed to weaken UKIP as an actor either by discrediting it or deflecting attention away from it. Additionally, the Conservative Party's willingness to occupy the political space that UKIP held on the question of Europe, also aimed to prevent it from losing votes to UKIP. The following section continues by outlining what environment is needed for the mechanism to act.

5.1 Scope Condition

In this mechanism, the scope condition is the absence of party competition on the question of Europe, as a result of the existence of a pro-EU consensus among mainstream parties. In Britain, Startin (2015) noted that the 'permissive consensus evident in most EU nation states was never clear-cut in the British context' (p.314). Euroscepticism was an 'engrained feature of the British party system from the end of the post-war period to the present' (Baker et al, 2008: 115). Labour was 'somewhat hostile' to joining the European Economic Community (EEC) before and after the 1975 referendum. However, Labour's policy shifted in 1989, and 'started to become the more pro-European of the two main parties' (Evans and Mellon, 2019: 77-78). As for the Conservative Party, it had long been divided on Europe (Garry, 1995; Vasilopoulou, 2016), and under William Hague (1997-2001), it 'first fused populism and Euroscepticism' (Bale, 2018: 263). Therefore, while the Conservatives not UKIP were 'the United Kingdom's first populist Eurosceptic party', when David Cameron (2005-2016) turned away from this strategy, it provided UKIP with an opportunity to fill the gap left by the Conservative Party (Bale, 2018: 274).

While the membership question 'was never fully dropped' after the 1975 referendum, there was a cross-party consensus. The 'enduring fragile' consensus was based on a form of 'economic integration that incurred neither large budgetary cost, nor led to an erosion of Britain's sovereignty' (Copeland and Copsey, 2017: 709). Furthermore, Goodlad (2015) suggested that there was considerable cross-party consensus on the implications of continued EU membership including the completion of the single market and reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Therefore, the cross-party consensus in Britain between the two main parties – the Labour and Conservative parties - left a gap for a Eurosceptic political party to rise and challenge the mainstream parties' attitudes towards EU integration (Miklin, 2014).

5.2 Trigger: Treaty on European Union and the Entrance of UKIP in the Party System

As discussed in the previous section, prior to the signing of the TEU, both Labour and the Conservative parties had experienced phases of Euroscepticism. The TEU was

labelled a key turning point in Euroscepticism across the EU, as it resulted in a more critical debate (Hooghe and Marks, 2009). As Startin (2015) also suggests the TEU was one of the key drivers of change in the Eurosceptic debate as it 'signalled a new politicisation of European integration', challenging the previous assumption that the EU was 'solely a trading block of like-minded nations', and it thrust 'the issue of parliamentary sovereignty to the forefront of discussion' (p.314). From the TEU onwards, the acceleration of the integration process resulted in EU-decision making becoming a part of electoral and party competition (Vasilopoulou, 2018).

The presence of parties critical of Europe also goes beyond Labour and the Conservative parties. For example, the British National Party (BNP) had been committed to a 'hard Eurosceptic position of withdrawal since its foundation in 1982' (Baker et al, 2008: 102). Similarly, UKIP from its foundation in 1993 had adopted a hard Eurosceptic position, advocating Britain's withdrawal from the EU and expressing strong opposition to the Single Currency (Baker et al, 2008). Additionally, the Referendum Party was formed by Sir James Goldsmith in 1995 with the sole purpose to force a referendum on Britain's relationship with the EU (Carter et al, 1998). However, UKIP was different from the BNP and the Referendum Party. Firstly, UKIP's position was 'rooted in a politically legitimate form of British Euroscepticism, in comparison to the BNP's position which originates in a neo-Nazi and anti-democratic tradition' (Ford and Goodwin 2014: 7). Furthermore, unlike the Referendum Party, UKIP has endured 'longer than the other expressly Eurosceptic party to emerge in the 1990s' (Baker et al, 2008: 103).

In the early years after UKIP's foundation, it was a 'classic single-issue party' which was 'distinct enough to spark occasional interest' (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 3). Therefore, UKIP stood on a clear Eurosceptic platform of withdrawal from the EU, which was more Eurosceptic than the two main parties. Consequently, the TEU and the entrance of UKIP into the party system on a Eurosceptic platform can be seen as the starting point of this mechanism, which triggered the influence of UKIP on Labour and the Conservative positions and framing of the question of Europe. An overview of the mechanism is provided in Figure 5.1.
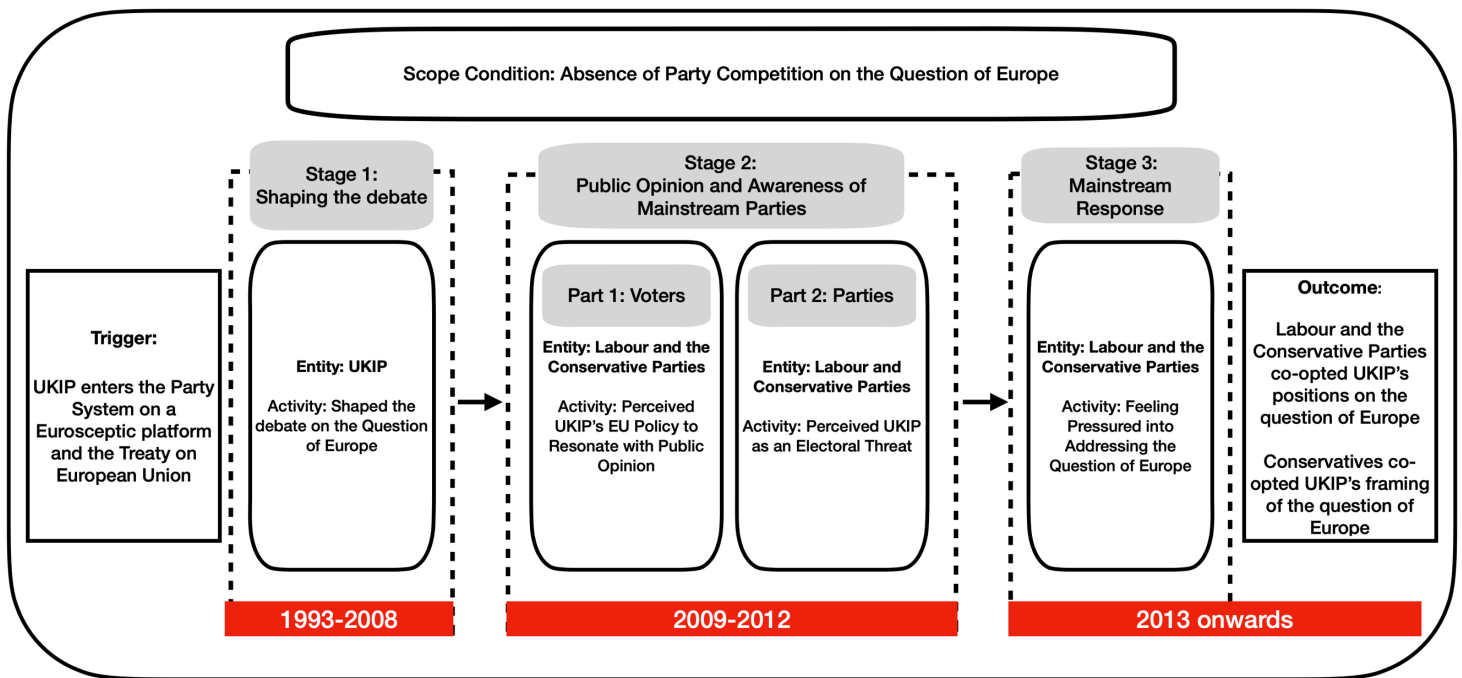
Figure 5.1: Process-Tracing Mechanism

5.3 Stage 1: Shaping the Debate: 1993-2008

This stage discusses how UKIP shaped the debate on the question of Europe by analysing the time period between 1993 and 2008. This timeframe was used for stage one because UKIP was gradually increasing its electoral success during this period. While nationally, UKIP's vote share had only risen marginally since 1993, at the European level UKIP's vote share had increased to 15 percent. Furthermore, during this period the EU was integrating further, not only through enlargement in 2004 and 2007 but also treaty change (Bale, 2018). Enlargement served to push the debate about the Freedom of Movement to the heart of the Eurosceptic narrative in the UK (Startin, 2015). Therefore, it gave UKIP new vigour to push its Eurosceptic message. The first section discusses the coverage of UKIP in the print media, and the second section discusses how UKIP, Labour and Conservative parties frame the question of Europe.

5.3.1 Coverage of UKIP in Print Media

The mass media is the primary channel through which the electorate receive information about politicians and parties (Beck et al, 2002; Schafraad, 2009; Murphy and Devine, 2020). Therefore, coverage draws attention to UKIP as an actor, but also its core issues. Coverage of the EU and political parties was found to be higher during EP election campaigns when political parties focus on Europe, and when there was elite dissent between political parties (Turner, 2000; Opperman, 2008). Media coverage can therefore determine the extent to which UKIP's message was transmitted to a wider audience.

Previous research argues that firstly, UK newspaper coverage of the EU was less than other EU countries and secondly that the press was mostly Eurosceptic. Alarcón (2010) found that in comparison to France and Spain, UK newspapers (Times and Guardian) dedicated the least space to covering EU issues. That being said, de Vreese et al's (2006) analysis included both the Daily Telegraph and the Guardian and found that the UK had the highest increase of front-page stories devoted to EU news from 2.9 percent in 1999 to 5.4 percent in 2004. In debates over free movement, Balch and Balabanova (2017) found that the output of the Daily Telegraph was greater than in the Guardian. Therefore, both the Guardian and the Daily Telegraph appeared to cover EU events.

Another aspect of British press coverage, discussed by Daddow (2012), was the 'vigorously anti-European agenda' of the press including the Daily Telegraph. Daddow also suggested that the Guardian was 'something of an antidote to the Eurosceptic press' (p.1225-1226). Furthermore, Alarcon (2010) found that the Guardian tended to have the most neutral coverage of the EU, similar to *Le Monde* in France. Therefore, while UK newspapers covered EU events, it appeared to be predominately from a Eurosceptic viewpoint and as a result the public would be familiar with Eurosceptic attitudes towards the EU.

The coverage by the Guardian and the Telegraph showed that the EU was salient in the press between 1994 and 2008 (Guardian) and 2000 and 2008 (Telegraph) which is summarised in Table 5.1. While the EU was less salient in the coverage that also

referred to UKIP over the whole period 1994-2008 in comparison to Labour and the Conservative parties, this does not provide the whole picture. Murphy (2015) indicated that between 2004 and 2009 media coverage of UKIP was 'a series of small increases' and that UKIP experienced a record amount of coverage in 2004 with the European Election (Murphy and Devine, 2020).Therefore, this would suggest that coverage of the EU in relation to UKIP would be greater during EU elections. As a result, it is important to break down the number of articles into yearly figures to acknowledge the variation in the coverage of UKIP and the EU.

Table 5.1: Newspaper Coverage on the Question of Europe 1994-2008

Newspaper (Total Number of Articles mentioning the EU)	Articles on the EU and at least one party	Percentage of articles on EU and Parties
The Guardian [From 1994] (17,030)		
Labour Party	1472	**8.6%**
Conservative Party	1299	**7.6%**
UKIP	253	**1.5%**
The Daily Telegraph [From 2000] (12,312)		
Labour Party	593	**4.8%**
Conservative Party	622	**5.05%**
UKIP	279	**2.3%**

Note: Total number of articles on EU and at least one party: The Guardian 3,024. The Telegraph 1,494. Percentage calculated by dividing number of articles on party and EU in one newspaper, by the total number of articles in that newspaper.

Figure 5.2 shows that media coverage of the EU in relation to Labour and the Conservative parties, gradually decreased, whereas coverage of the EU that referred to UKIP increased. In the 1990s and early part of the 2000s, coverage of the EU in relation to UKIP was considerably smaller than Labour and the Conservative parties. However, in 2004 coverage of the EU that referred to UKIP increased to a similar level to Labour and was higher than the Conservatives in the Guardian (87 articles).

Coverage of the EU in relation to UKIP was higher than both mainstream parties in the Telegraph (120 articles). From 2005 onwards, coverage of the EU in relation to UKIP decreased but so did the salience of the two main political parties in relation to the EU with the exception of Labour in the Guardian.

Figure 5.2 also shows that the frequency of mentions of the EU and Labour and the Conservative parties had declined over the years, from a high point in 1994 for the Guardian and 2001 for the Telegraph, to 2008 when their coverage was lower. Therefore, while the frequency of mentions of the EU and UKIP was generally lower than both mainstream parties, there had been some convergence in the levels of coverage by 2008. To further analyse the coverage of the EU in relation to the political parties it is important to analyse coverage before and after specific events.
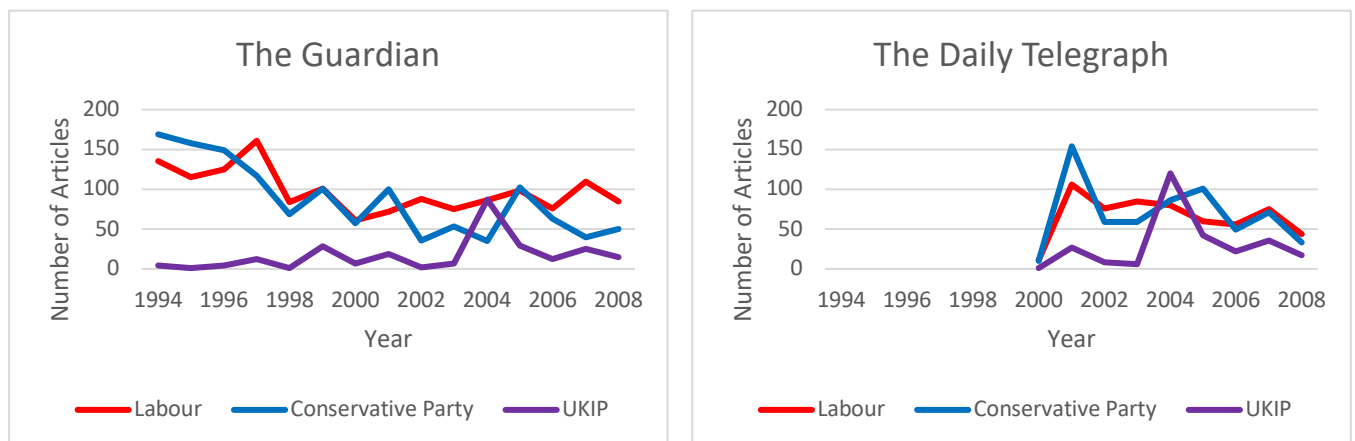
Figure 5.2: Newspaper Coverage of Political Parties and the EU or Europe in the UK

5.3.2 UK Political Parties' EU Policy: Coverage Before and After Key Events

Previous research has investigated news coverage around specific EU events such as the introduction of the Euro or European elections (Norris, 2000; De Vreese, 2001). Boomgaarden et al (2010) concluded that EU news were particularly visible during 'policy-related, institutional events' such as elections or referenda. Therefore, this section will analyse the visibility of UKIP and the EU by covering key events including the European elections (10th June 2004) and the UK general election (5th May 2005). These dates were selected because the question of Europe, specifically Eurosceptic

attitudes, was apparent as a result of debates around the Constitutional Treaty, as well as the enlargement of the EU.

The number of articles on the EU and one of the political parties per newspaper and key event are shown below in Table 5.2. It shows that in both newspapers the coverage of the EU in relation to UKIP was more salient during the European elections in 2004 than coverage that referred to either Labour or the Conservative parties. In contrast, during the 2005 general election, the coverage suggested that EU was not as salient in relation to UKIP, but all parties received less coverage in relation to the EU than during the European elections in 2004. The following discussion will analyse two key themes from the coverage: UKIP as an electoral threat and the levels of Euroscepticism that existed within Labour, Conservatives and UKIP.

Table 5.2: Number of Articles on the EU and Key Event

Key Event		Number of Articles			
		Week Before	Week After	Week Before	Week After
	The EU and..	Guardian		Telegraph	
10th June 2004 – European Elections	Labour	2	8	2	7
	Conservative	1	3	7	11
	UKIP	9	24	15	29
5th May 2005 – UK General Election	Labour	3	11	3	4
	Conservative	2	5	1	2
	UKIP	3	3	3	3

Note: The shaded fields indicate whether there are more articles in the 7 Days before or after the event

UKIP as a Threat

An analysis of the newspaper coverage of the key events in the Guardian and Telegraph indicated that UKIP was an electoral threat in the EP elections to both the Conservative Party and the Labour Party. Before the 2004 European elections the Guardian wrote 'Euro fear for Tories as UKIP eyes top slot' (Watt, 2004: 6), while the Telegraph wrote 'UKIP threatens new schism in Tory ranks' (Brogan, 2004: no page

number). The Conservative Party leader, Michael Howard, was being 'pulled in opposite directions as MPs argued over how to head off a late surge by the UK Independence Party' (Brogan, 2004: no page number). Additionally, the Guardian stated that Michael Howard 'has now got the UKIP burglar inside the Tory gates stealing his votes and thunder' (White, 2004: 11). The Telegraph also made a similar point that Howard was 'under pressure from Eurosceptics in his party to promise a fundamental review of Britain's relationship with the EU to prevent a further haemorrhaging of support to UKIP' (Jones, 2004: no page number). Therefore, the coverage suggested that UKIP was an electoral threat to the Conservative Party in the EP elections and that it highlighted the divisions within the Conservative Party on Europe.

UKIP was also depicted as a threat to the Labour Party. Prior to the European election, the Telegraph reported that UKIP was 'snapping at the heels of the Tories and Labour' (King, 2004). After the European election, the coverage within the Guardian indicated that UKIP had taken votes away from both the Labour and Conservative parties (White and Watt, 2004). Additionally, the Telegraph reported that Labour and Conservatives were 'rattled by UKIP surge' (Jones, 2004: no page number). A similar point was made by the Guardian, which suggested that 'the main political parties were left wondering how UKIP […] had marched to centre-stage' (Hall and Watt, 2004: 9). Therefore, the coverage of the European elections focused on UKIP as an electoral threat to both the Labour Party and the Conservative Party.

Party-based Euroscepticism

The coverage in the Guardian and Telegraph of the key events outlined in Table 5.2 made three key points. Firstly, UKIP was described as anti-EU, secondly, the Conservative Party was divided on Europe and thirdly, that Labour was 'pro-EU'. On the first point, before and after both key events, UKIP was described as being firmly anti-EU, which distinguished it from Labour and the Conservative parties (Brogan, 2004; Jones, 2004; Brown, 2005; Burkeman, 2005). The Guardian also suggested that UKIP exploited opposition to Europe (Hall and Watt, 2004). Thus, the coverage identified UKIP's position on Europe as being distinct from Labour and the Conservative parties.

The distinctiveness of UKIP's position was also evident in regard to the second key point that the Conservative Party was divided on Europe. In the week leading up to the European elections, the Guardian indicated that 'the bulk of the political attention again fell on Tory internal divisions, as battle resumed for the first time in years between the party's warring camps over Europe' (Wintour and Watt, 2004: 2). The Telegraph reported that Howard had sought to position himself between 'UKIP, which wants to withdraw from the EU, and Labour and the Liberal Democrats, which want to see Britain integrate further into the EU's structures, including the single currency' (Brogan, 2004: no page number). After the European elections, both the Guardian and the Telegraph continued to emphasise the divisions within the Conservative Party on Europe (Watt and Hetherington, 2004; Jones, 2004). Therefore, the coverage focused on the internal divisions within the Conservative Party on Europe, which also emphasised that UKIP's position on Europe was different.

The third key point drawn from the articles was the understanding that Labour was pro-EU. The Guardian (2004: 25) described the Labour Party as 'the only UK-wide party which […] is pro-Europe'. After the election, the Telegraph reported that the elections represent a 'disaster' for the 'Blairite, pro-European brand' (Helm and Jones, 2004: no page number). While prior to the 2005 general election, the Guardian's (2005) coverage indicated that Labour appeared united behind the need for EU economic reform, post-election the focus was on the issues brought about by referendums on the Constitutional Treaty (Ashley, 2005). The Telegraph's (2005) coverage suggested that Tony Blair 'would surely not have offered a referendum on the EU institution' without the influence of Conservative Party leader Michael Howard (no page number). The coverage suggested that the Labour Party was 'pro-EU', while also advocating EU reform and a referendum on the Constitutional Treaty.

The coverage of Labour, the Conservatives and UKIP on the two key events identified in Table 5.2 highlighted that UKIP was described as anti-EU, the Conservative Party divided on Europe and the Labour Party as pro-EU. However, there was some suggestion that Labour's position had changed. Data collected from CHES, shown in Figure 5.3 also suggested that UKIP was relatively united on European integration, whereas the Conservative Party was significantly more divided than the Labour Party on European integration (Bakker et al, 2015; Polk et al, 2017). The conclusions from

the coverage and Chapel Hill Survey were expected given UKIP's continued commitment to Britain's withdrawal from the EU. Regarding the Conservative Party, as noted by previous literature, the Conservatives had long been divided on the question of Europe (Vasilopoulou, 2016).

Chapel Hill Expert Survey
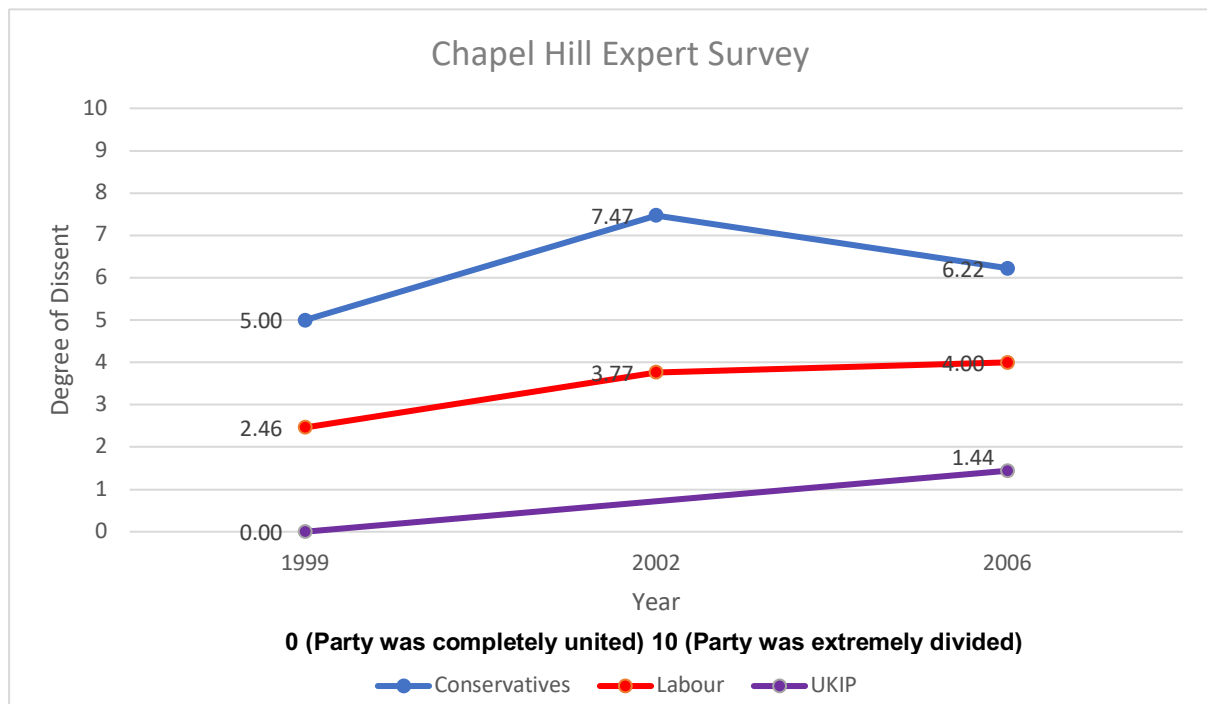
Figure 5.3: Degree of Dissent on European Integration

5.3.3 Framing of EU Policy

To further develop our understanding of how UKIP shaped the debate on the question of Europe, it was necessary to analyse the justifications or frames that Labour, Conservative Party and UKIP used to discuss their EU policy. Chapter 3 (section 3.1.2) provides a more detailed outline of how the frames were operationalised. To analyse the frames used by UKIP, Labour, and the Conservative parties, this chapter focuses on parliamentary debates in which MPs 'express, defend and attack opinions and political positions' (Van Dijk, 2000: 97). While debates in the House of Commons were used between 1993 and 2008, it is important to highlight that UKIP during this period

was never represented at the national level,[61] therefore UKIP's data was related only to the publication of its national and European manifestos.

To analyse the framing of EU policy, this research distinguishes between cultural, economic and institutional dimensions, as identified by Wonka (2016). Table 5.3 summarises the frames that the parties used to discuss their EU policy. The analysis revealed that while the Labour Party used cultural, economic and institutional frames to express support for the EU, the Conservative Party predominately used all three frames to express opposition, similar to UKIP. These findings reflected the newspaper coverage of the parties' positions in the sense that Labour was described as 'pro-EU' in contrast to the Eurosceptic Conservative Party and UKIP. Table 5.3 also shows that despite the pro-EU position of the Labour Party and Eurosceptic Conservative Party, Labour used frames to express opposition and the Conservative Party used frames to express support. On European integration, the supporting statements focused on advocating greater integration and cooperation, including advocating the 'completion of the single market'. In contrast, opposing statements included an emphasis on opposition to a further transfer of powers to the EU, or joining the single currency.

Cultural frames were used to express either support for a particular policy that promoted EU values including the widening of the EU or oppose polices such as migration on the basis that it presents a threat to British identity. Labour and the Conservative parties supported enlargement of the EU because it would spread democracy. Labour MP Tom Cox supported Cyprus' membership of the EU because Cyprus is part of Europe as a result of 'its traditions and democracy' (HC Deb 20 June 1996). Furthermore, Labour's Foreign Secretary Jack Straw supported Turkey's membership of the EU because it accepts 'our conception of liberal democratic values' (HC Deb 21 May 2003: 1033). Furthermore, Conservative MP Peter Luff supported enlargement because he believed that 'enlargement was about fulfilling the great goal of spreading democracy around Europe' (HC Deb 21 May 2003: 1095). While UKIP (2005) did not refer to enlargement directly during this period, it blamed immigration

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[61] With the exception of Bob Spink. He was the first UKIP MP after defecting from the Conservative Party in April 2008, but by November 2008 he became an independent MP.

on the eastern enlargement of the EU and thus wanted to bring an end to mass immigration.

Economic frames were typically used by the mainstream parties to express support for closer cooperation including the completion of the single market, but also opposition to joining the Single Currency. The Conservative Party (2004) opposed the UK joining the Single Currency. The opposition to the Single Currency was also adopted by UKIP (1999) who stated that it would 'retain the pound sterling as Britain's currency and will never adopt the European single currency' (no page number -NPN). On the Single Currency, while some Labour MP's opposed Britain's membership including John Cryer, the official position of the Labour Party (2001) was that five economic tests had to be met before Labour would recommend Britain joining the Single Currency. More generally, the Labour Party (2004) believed that Britain's membership of the EU was 'vital to our prosperity and economic future' (p.4), while Conservative MP Sir David Mabel supported Britain's EU membership because there was many 'economic and industrial benefits' (HC Deb 1 December 1999: 377).

The use of institutional frames focused on whether the EU should be centralised further or not. The Conservative Party and UKIP were generally opposed to further integration. While UKIP (2004) advocated Britain's withdrawal from the EU, the Conservative Party (2004) stated that it wanted the 'EU to do less but do it better' (p.3). In contrast, the Labour Party (1997) supported EU membership on the grounds that it can 'choose to cooperate to achieve the goals they cannot achieve alone' (NPN). Labour (1997) also stipulated that it opposed a 'European federal superstate' (NPN). Therefore, there was some support for further integration, but both UKIP and the Conservative Party opposed further centralisation. Table 5.3 summarises the frames that were used.

Table 5.3 Framing of Supporting or Opposing Statements by Parties (Percentages)

	Years	Cultural		Economic		Institutional	
		-	**+**	**-**	**+**	**-**	**+**
UKIP	1993-1997	3.8		38.5		57.7	
	1998-2002	50.0				50.0	
	2003-2008	3.8		30.8		65.3	
Labour Party	1993-1997		8.6	8.6	17.1	20.0	45.7
	1998-2002			13.8	24.1	10.3	51.7
	2003-2008		5.0		31.7	16.7	46.7
Conservative Party	1993-1997		2.8	14.0	8.5	56.3	18.3
	1998-2002		9.0	22.7	4.5	54.5	9.0
	2003-2008		2.8	12.3	5.7	56.6	22.6

Notes: *The percentages represent the statements for one frame divided by the total number of statements each year.* **The shaded fields indicate whether a party family uses cultural, economic, and institutional frames more in a given year.** *Frames without direction (-0.5,0 and +0.5) have been excluded from this analysis.*

The next section further analyses the framing of UKIP, Labour and the Conservative parties by focusing on economic and enlargement policy, which have been chosen because all parties discussed these in their manifestos and parliamentary debates and are fundamental to the EU. Furthermore, during this period debates around the Euro and enlargement were increasing. Howarth (2007) emphasised the potential adoption of the Euro to replace the Pound 'has been one of the most divisive issues in British politics since the debates on the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty' (p.47). Additionally, there were three enlargements over this timeframe: 1995, 2004 and 2007. In contrast to the Euro, Britain was a fervent supporter of the widening of the EU for the purpose of undermining the deepening of European integration. The 2004 'big bang' enlargement was a key turning point in the development of 'Europe' as an issue because it pushed the debate about the Freedom of Movement to the heart of the Eurosceptic narrative in the UK and other states (Startin, 2015). Therefore, to further analyse the frames used by all three political parties, the following section will discuss economic and enlargement policy.

Economic Policy

In regard to the Single Currency, the Euro, economic and institutional frames were used by both parties. The Conservative Party equated joining the Euro with losing

sovereignty. Conservative MP Peter Tapsell (HC Deb 11 December 1996: 349) could not 'accept that it is possible to join a single European currency without giving up a large measure of our national sovereignty'. Furthermore, Conservative MP Julian Lewis (HC Deb 1 Dec 1999: 390) expressed opposition to the Euro through economic and institutional frames to 'preserve the pound and our sovereignty'. Some Labour MPs, such as Peter Shore, shared this position that joining the single currency would involve 'the transfer of democratic powers' (HC Deb 1 March 1995: 1083). However, Gordon Brown used institutional and economic frames to support the single currency because it did not remove 'our freedom to make decisions on taxation and other issues in the House of Commons' (HC Deb 11 December 1996: 308). While Labour did not take a clear position in 2001, it stated that it would give the people the final say on the proposal to join the Euro (Labour, 2001).

Similar to the Conservative Party and some members of the Labour Party, UKIP (1997) used institutional and economic frames to oppose 'the surrender of the £-Sterling in favour of the planned Single European Currency' (NPN). UKIP (1997) suggested that joining the single currency would mean the 'loss of Britain's ability to manage its own economy' (NPN). Additionally, UKIP (2004) emphasised that it would 'keep the pound, to keep control' (NPN). As a result, the Conservative Party reflected similar positions to UKIP, while some MPs within the Labour Party also echoed similar sentiments, the official party policy of the Labour Party was neither strongly supportive nor opposed to the Euro.

EU Enlargement

The Labour and the Conservative parties used all three frames to express support for the enlargement of the EU. UKIP in the early years did not refer to enlargement, as it focused on its policy of withdrawing the UK from the EU. Both parties used institutional frames to support the enlargement of the EU. As Labour Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Robin Cook stressed that 'enlargement is in Britain's own interest' (HC Deb 1 December 1999: 321). A previous foreign secretary, Conservative MP Douglas Hurd, also emphasised that 'we have always believed that the European Union's door should be open to those who wish to join the rest of Europe and are able to do so' (HC Dec 1 February 1995: 1074). Furthermore, both Labour and the

Conservative parties also used economic frames to support the enlargement of the EU. Labour's Cook stated that 'it makes no economic sense for us to oppose the increase of the single market that will come from enlargement' (HC Deb 1 December 1999: 321), while former Conservative Prime Minister John Major believed that enlargement would transform the EU into an 'economic powerhouse' (HC Deb 9 June 1997: 819).

Both parties also used cultural frames to support enlargement. In the Conservative European Manifesto (1999), it stated that 'enlargement was an historical opportunity to advance the principles for which Europe should stand' (NPN). Conservative MP Peter Luff stated that the Conservative Party supported enlargement to fulfil 'the great goal of spreading democracy around Europe' (HC Deb 21 May 2003: 1095). Labour also used cultural frames to express support for enlargement. Labour's Jack Straw, as Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Office, expressed support for Turkish membership. 'A state in which the overwhelming majority of people are Muslim, but which is secular, and accepts our conception of liberal democratic values, would strengthen Europe's ties with the Islamic World' (HC Deb 21 May 2003: 1033).

However, it is important to understand the fundamentally negative reasons underlying the Conservative Party's support for the enlargement of the EU. The Conservative Party's support was justified by using institutional frames to oppose the centralisation of the EU. As John Major stated, 'we need to press to enlarge and decentralise the Union' (HC Deb 9 June 1997: 819). A similar position was echoed by Peter Luff, the promotion of enlargement for the Conservative Party was about 'enabling a wider, but not deeper, European Union' (HC Deb 21 May 2003: 1095). Therefore, while the Conservative Party supported enlargement, it did so to stop deeper integration.

Regarding the literature on the Labour Party and Conservative Party, table 5.3 reflects the expectation that Labour would be more pro-EU than the Conservative Party (Evans and Mellon, 2019). While Labour used more frames to express support, reflecting the 'moderately pro-European line' that Labour had adopted, it also expressed opposition (Holden, 2011: 158). The divisions within the Conservative Party on the EU reflected its opposition to the EU through predominately institutional frames, as well as the use of economic and cultural frames to express support (Garry, 1995; Vasilopoulou, 2016).

The previous literature also indicated that UKIP was created as a single-issue party (Usherwood, 2008), advocating the withdrawal of the UK from the EU and thus adopting a hard Eurosceptic position as defined by Taggart and Szczerbiak (2001). After 2006, UKIP undertook a populist shift under the leadership of Nigel Farage, rebranding its original Euroscepticism 'by incorporating it into a wider populist narrative' (Tournier-Sol, 2021: 381). As a result, it was expected that institutional frames would be used to oppose the EU, specifically the UK's membership of the EU, during the period of analysis between 1993 and 2008. From 1993, UKIP used primarily institutional frames, but also cultural and economic justifications to oppose the EU. While the period 1998-2002 showed that UKIP used both cultural and institutional frames equally, it is important to highlight that this data relies on its 2001 manifesto which did not feature a significant amount of policy positions.

In summary, UKIP's commitment to the UK's withdrawal from the EU from its foundation in 1993 distinguished it from the Eurosceptic Conservative Party which did not want to leave the EU and from the 'pro-EU' Labour Party, which helped it to shape the debate on the question of Europe. This initial stage established in the eyes of the public how the Eurosceptic position of UKIP diverged from that of Labour and Conservative parties.

5.4 Stage 2: Public Opinion and the Awareness of Mainstream Parties 2009-2012

The previous section outlined how media coverage enabled UKIP to disseminate its Eurosceptic position to the public. While UKIP's Eurosceptic position might be visible to the public, public resonance consists of participation in the debate whether directly (elections and referenda) or indirectly (opinion polls) (Trenz and Eder, 2004; De Wilde, 2011). Either way there need to be clear signals that the public support UKIP's Eurosceptic message. As a result, the following section addresses the second stage of the mechanism, namely, public opinion and the awareness of mainstream parties. This stage is split into two separate parts. The first discusses how UKIP's Eurosceptic position resonated with public opinion and the second part discusses whether the parties perceived UKIP as an electoral threat. Both parts of stage 2 focus on the period 2009-2012 because these years incorporated the 2009 European elections in which UKIP's electoral success increased, pushing Labour into third place (Carey and

Geddes, 2010). Furthermore, during the 2010 general election campaign, Labour and the Conservative parties affirmed the importance of EU membership. However, the Conservatives pledged that there would be no further transfers of sovereignty to the EU without a referendum. In contrast, Labour's 'positive' view of the EU was portrayed as a route to achieve policy objectives on issues such as climate change (Carey and Geddes, 2010). Therefore, the first part argues that the public were regarded as Eurosceptic, which coincided with the increase in the electoral success of UKIP, with Euroscepticism considered as an important driver of UKIP's support.

Part 1: The Voters

5.4.1 Public Attitudes on EU Membership: Indirect

Between 1993 and 2019, the Eurobarometer asked respondents, *'Generally speaking, do you think that (your country's membership of the EU is)?* (European Commission, 2020; European Parliament, no date, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019**)**. The possible answers included: 'a good thing', 'neither good nor bad', 'a bad thing' and 'don't know'. In addition, the Pew Research Center asked *'Please tell me if you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable, or very unfavourable opinion of the European Union?* (Fetterolf and Kent, 2021). While this section is mainly focused on the period 2008-2012, it is important to recognise that public opinion has fluctuated since 1993 on the question of Europe, increasingly becoming less supportive of the EU as shown by Figure 5.4.

Relating specifically to the period 2009-2012, the Eurobarometer shows that the public's perception of Britain's membership of the EU as a good thing decreased, whereas views that saw the EU membership as a bad thing, or neither good nor bad increased (European Commission, 2020). As to more general attitudes towards the EU, the EU was viewed as somewhat favourable, although that sentiment decreased slightly from 2009 onwards. Somewhat unfavourable attitudes also increased slightly, while very favourable attitudes remained below 20 per cent (Fetterolf and Kent, 2021).

It is important to highlight that less than 50 per cent of respondents said that they held somewhat favourable attitudes to the EU, while just over 20 per cent viewed the EU

as somewhat unfavourable and just under 20 per cent viewed the EU as very unfavourable. Therefore, Figure 5.4 suggests that on EU membership and the EU more broadly, the British public's support was limited.
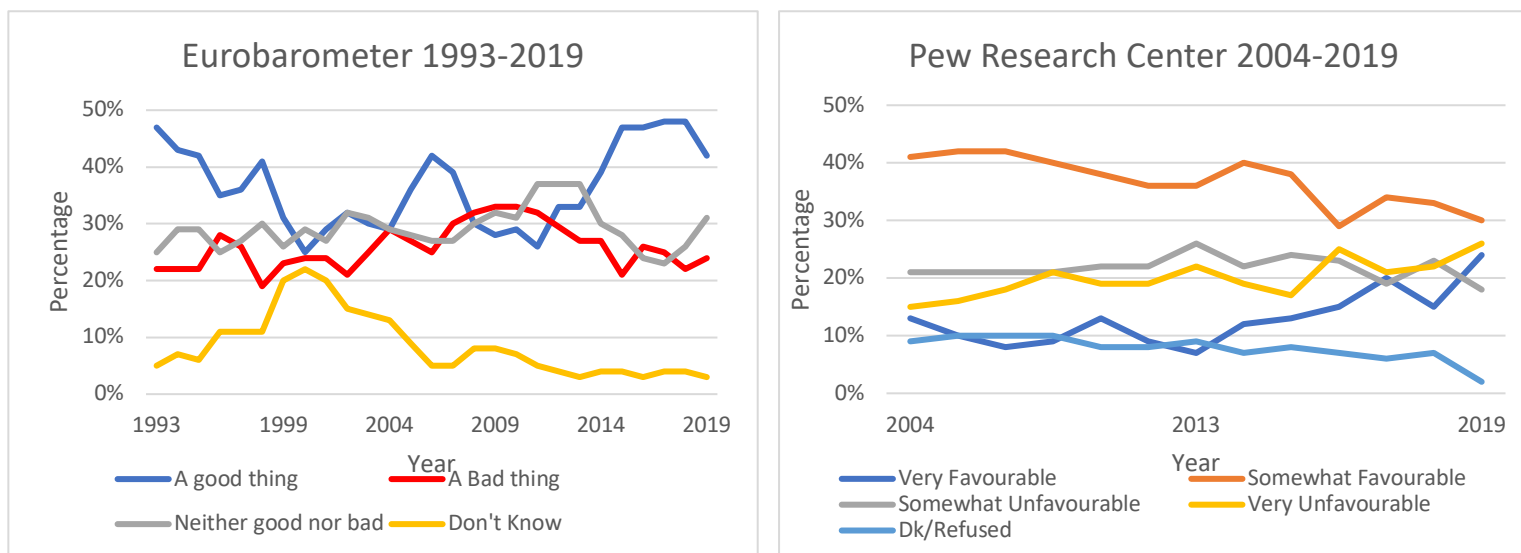
Figure 5.4: Attitudes Towards British Membership of the European Union

Another indicator of the British public's attitudes towards EU membership was provided by the IPSOS Mori data on the proportion of people regarding the EU as the most important issue facing Britain. While the EU was rarely considered the most important issue facing Britain, it was a feature of public concern (IPSOS Mori, 2021). Between 2009 and 2011, the EU was not considered to be an important issue, achieving the lowest score recorded by IPSOS Mori during 2010-2011 of 1 per cent. However, from 2011 onwards the importance of the EU increased. It is also important to mention that to combat the low salience of the EU, UKIP connected EU membership to other issues such as immigration, and therefore it was hard to separate out the EU issue from other issues (Clements et al, 2013). In summary, public opinion became increasingly more Eurosceptic, but the extent of that Euroscepticism fluctuated.

5.4.2 Public Attitudes on EU Membership: Direct

5.4.2.1 Electoral Success of UKIP

The public can also participate in the debate on the EU by voting in elections (De Wilde, 2011). While the main focus of this stage is the period 2009-2012, it is important to be aware of the wider context of UKIP electoral results over the years. An overview of UKIP's electoral success at the national and European level from 1994-2019 is provided in Table 5.4. Considering UKIP's electoral results prior to 2009, in the 2009 European election and 2010 general election, UKIP's electoral success increased (BBC, 1997, 2001, 2010, 2015, 2020; Cowan, 2005; European Parliament, no date-a**).** As a result of the plurality electoral system, UKIP's performance at national elections was limited, in comparison to the proportional system used at European elections whereby UKIP achieved not only a share of the votes but also representation (De Jonge, 2021). During 2009-2012, UKIP was increasing its electoral success at both national and European elections.

Table 5.4: Percentage of UKIP's Vote Share and Seat Distribution

Election Year	*Vote Share*	*Seats*	*Largest Party*
General Election			
1997	0.3%	0	11th
2001	1.5%	0	5th
2005	2.2%	0	12th
2010	3.1%	0	11th
2015	12.6%	1	3rd
2017	1.8%	0	5th
2019	0.1%	0	-
European Election			
1994	1%	0	10th
1999	6.5%	3	4th
2004	15.6%	11	3rd
2009	16.09%	13	2nd
2014	26.77%	24	1st
2019	3.21%	0	6th

*Note: Shaded areas represent an increase in UKIP's electoral success where UKIP has already participated in an earlier election.
Source: BBC NEWS, Electoral Reform Society, European Parliament

However, while UKIP's electoral success increased, to establish that public opinion resonated with its Eurosceptic message, Euroscepticism needs to be the main motive

for voting for UKIP. Ford and Goodwin (2014) found that Euroscepticism was so central to the party's identity, that it was 'better seen as a necessary condition for considering a UKIP vote' (p.195). In reference to the 2009 European election, Ford et al (2012) stated that Euroscepticism was the most important driver of support for UKIP. Furthermore, Lord Ashcroft's poll found that 27 per cent of 'UKIP considerers' said that resolving Britain's future relations with the EU is one of the three most important issues facing the country (Ashcroft, 2012).

While Ford and Goodwin (2014) understand Euroscepticism as a 'necessary condition' for UKIP support, they also suggest it is not a 'sufficient one'. UKIP's 'voters do not tend to be single-issue Eurosceptics but can instead be characterised as 'Brussels-plus', fusing hostility to the EU with potent domestic concerns' (p.195). Pointing to connections between EU membership and other issues such as immigration was a 'technique' used by UKIP (Clements et al, 2013). As a result, Clarke et al (2016) suggested that UKIP's anti-EU/anti-immigration message constituted its core appeal. Evans and Mellon (2019) also indicated that interconnected immigration fears and Euroscepticism resulted in a dramatic upsurge in support for UKIP, 'the only occupant of the anti-EU, anti-immigration pole' (p.84). Therefore, Euroscepticism played a significant role in driving UKIP's support, partly because it was tied to other issues such as immigration.

This discussion has shown that public opinion resonated with UKIP's Eurosceptic message through an increase of public Euroscepticism, and an increase of support for UKIP. However, in order for the process-tracing mechanism to proceed as Figure 5.1 depicted, the following section outlines that mainstream parties needed to not only acknowledge that public opinion on the question of Europe had changed, but also they had to perceive UKIP as an electoral threat.

5.4.3 Public Opinion and the Electoral Threat of UKIP

The following discussion analyses the second part of this section, namely Labour and the Conservative parties' acknowledgement that public opinion had changed on the question of Europe and that UKIP posed an electoral threat to them. Therefore, this part argues that Labour and the Conservative parties recognised that public opinion

on the EU was Eurosceptic but thought that the public did not believe the EU was a big issue. Furthermore, it also shows that while the Conservative Party recognised the electoral threat that UKIP posed to them, the Labour Party disregarded UKIP as an electoral threat.

Part 2: *Political Parties and Public Opinion*

Both Labour and the Conservative parties acknowledged that the public were Eurosceptic but believed that the EU itself was not a big issue in the minds of the public. Former Conservative Foreign Secretary Phillip Hammond suggested that the 'British have never been enthusiastic about the European Union'. 'I think British public opinion was always gently against the EU in the sense of a grumbling dislike of the institution' (UKICE, 2021c: 4). David Lidington, a former Conservative Minister for Europe, also indicated that 'there was not a recognition in the senior ranks of the Conservative Party until very late in the day, that there were a hardcore of people who were hostile to British membership of the European Union on principled grounds about sovereignty and national autonomy' (UKICE, 2020: 3). David Cameron (2019) stated that 'the vast majority of Britons were never going to love it like our European neighbours. We hadn't founded it, and we hadn't shaped it. Nor did most British people want ever closer union' (p.401).

While the Conservative Party appeared to acknowledge the British public's Euroscepticism, it also suggested that the EU was not a big issue for the public. A Conservative minister thought that 'most of the country are, were fairly Eurosceptical […] but most people didn't think it was their biggest priority' (personal interview 1, 2021). Dominic Grieve stated that 'although it's [the EU] one of those subjects that makes people irritated and angry, when it comes to the crunch I don't think it featured so high on people's list when it came to a general election' (UKICE, 2020a: 2). Therefore, the Conservative Party recognised public opinion was 'not enthusiastic' about the EU but also that they believed that the issue was not that important to the British people.

Similar to the Conservative Party a former Labour MEP (personal interview 2, 2021) reflected that although public opinion 'did not think it was a big issue', it was 'not

favourably disposed to the European Union'. Another former Labour MEP (personal interview 3, 2021) stated that 'the vast majority of people don't give two hoots about' Europe. Gordon Brown (2017), suggested that people objected to the direction of Europe. 'Most people bought the idea that the EU was moving inexorably towards becoming a federal superstate' (p. 407-408). Furthermore, a former Labour MEP (personal interview 4, 2021) suggested that initially people saw the benefits of the EU which changed, but Labour and the Conservative parties assumed 'well you know we are members of the EU it is never going to change'. The final statement raises an important point that while both parties recognised that the public lacked enthusiasm for the EU, they also appeared to be complacent about the UK's continuing membership of the EU.

In contrast to the Conservative and Labour parties, UKIP (2009) emphasised that 'the government is determined not to allow your voice to be heard' (p.1), in reference to the Labour government not holding a referendum on the EU Constitution. Furthermore, while the Conservative and Labour parties described British public opinion on the question of Europe as 'never been enthusiastic', 'gently against the EU', 'not favourably disposed', UKIP (2010) stated that a 'consistent majority want to leave the EU. Only UKIP represents the majority view' (p.2). Thus, UKIP believed that it represented the British public by advocating that the UK withdraw from the EU.

The Electoral Threat of UKIP and its Supporters

As previously discussed, Labour, Conservatives and UKIP recognised that the public's attitudes towards the EU were sceptical at best. Between 2009 and 2012, UKIP was gaining momentum as shown by Table 5.4. Prior to 2014, there was little research conducted on the sources of the UKIP vote. Before 2010 and during the Tony Blair and Gordon Brown eras, UKIP 'drew much of their strength from Britons who said they used to vote Labour' (Goodwin, 2014). While Evans and Mellon (2016) show that the Conservative and Labour parties lost votes to UKIP, in 2005 during the Blair years, Labour makes up a similar or even larger share of UKIP supporters. Therefore, both Labour and the Conservative parties were said to have lost votes to UKIP.

Voting Intentions

While Labour and Conservatives were regarded as losing out to UKIP at elections, an electoral threat can also refer to the potential to lose further votes (Zobel and Minkenberg, 2019). Figure 5.5 shows the voting intentions of the British public from 1990 to January 2020 (Ipsos Mori, 2020). The main focus of this section is on the years 2009-2012, but it is important to situate these years within the broader trend of public opinion. Therefore, from 2009, it can be seen that those who intended to vote for UKIP started to increase. During the same period, voting intentions decreased from a high of 40 percent to a low of 24 percent for the Labour Party, and the Conservative Party also experienced a decline from 40 to 30 percent. That is not to suggest that the decrease in the voting intentions for Labour and the Conservative parties went to UKIP, but that fewer people said that they would vote for the two mainstream parties than had previously, all the while those intending to vote UKIP increased. Therefore, both Labour and the Conservative parties could not rely on getting the public's support.
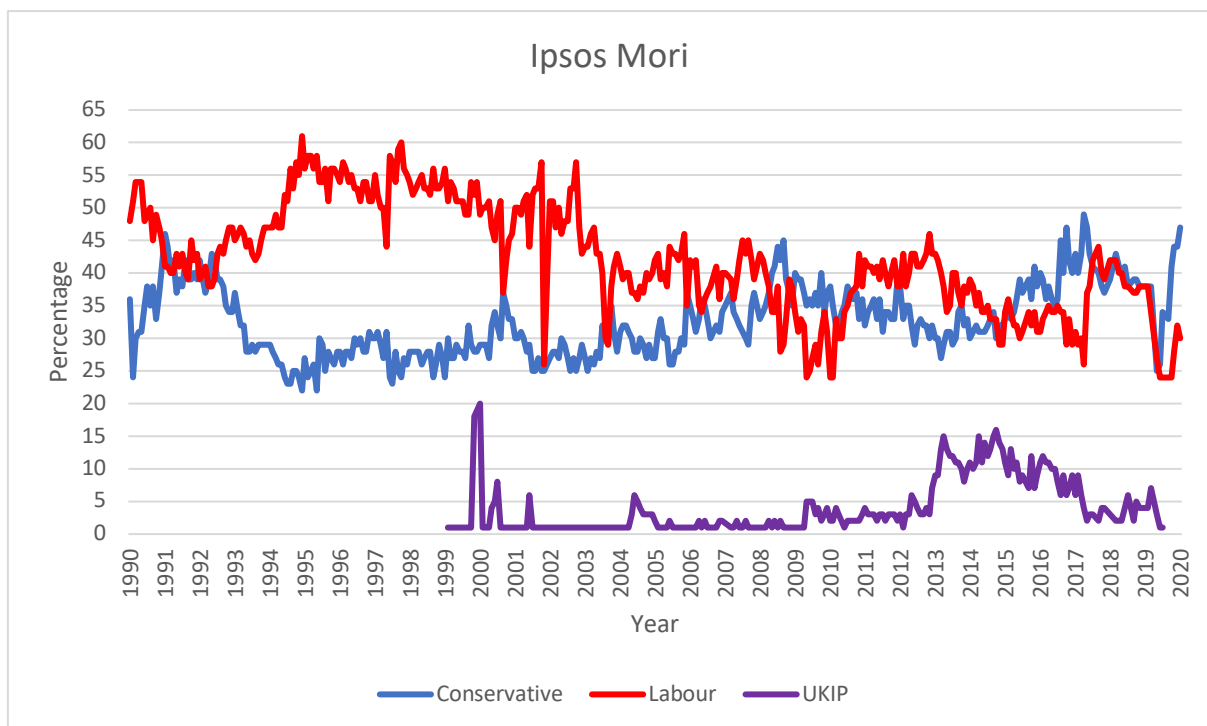
Figure 5.5: British Public Voting Intentions

The Labour and Conservative parties: An Acknowledgement of the UKIP threat

Contrary to the research by Goodwin (2014) and Evans and Mellon (2016), the Labour Party initially assumed that UKIP was not a threat to them. A Labour MP (personal interview 5, 2021) stated 'I think we thought they were more of a threat to the Tories because they were trying to put themselves up as an alternative, a more right-wing Tory Party'. This corresponds with another Labour MP (personal interview 6, 2021) who acknowledged that 'I think to begin with we thought it [UKIP] wasn't, and then we realised that it was'. The understanding that UKIP was more of a threat to the Conservative Party was evident in the emphasis by Labour MP Ian Davidson that 'there is a substantial drift of voters from the Conservatives to UKIP' on the matter of Europe (HC Deb 24 October 2011: 85). Furthermore, as a result of this initial assumption that UKIP was not a threat to Labour, another former Labour MP stated that UKIP became a threat because of 'our failure to respond to it' (personal interview 6, 2021). Therefore, the fact that Labour did not initially recognise UKIP as a threat to them, meant that they did not seek to respond to UKIP. As one former Labour MEP (personal interview 4, 2021) reflected, 'it emerged that UKIP could have been an electoral threat to Labour […], what saved Labour […] was the fact that we have first-past-the-post'.

In contrast, the Conservative Party recognised the electoral threat that UKIP posed to it. In 2010, former Prime Minister David Cameron (2019) remarked that UKIP did not seem like a blot on the horizon. However, by 2012, Michael Fabricant stated that while at present UKIP does not pose a threat in any single Westminster seat, by UKIP winning 3.1 per cent of the vote in the 2010 general election, it was a 'major contributory factor to the Conservatives failing to win an overall majority' (Fabricant, 2012: 3). Thus, Fabricant proposed an electoral pact with UKIP, which indicated an accommodative approach as outlined by Albertazzi et al (2021). A Conservative Party minister (personal interview 1, 2021) also indicated that 'my guess is that it [UKIP] probably had more of an electoral impact on the Conservative Party but by no means as much as I think the propaganda would have you believe'. By propaganda the interviewee clarified that 'I mean UKIP's propaganda trying to say that they had more of an influence on the subject'.

In the Conservative Party there was also a growing sense that it needed to respond to UKIP. As Conservative MP David Gauke observed 'there was a sense of wanting to be able to neuter a populist party on the right' (UKICE, 2020c:1). Chris Grayling, another Conservative MP, said that concern about UKIP was about 'taking votes off the Conservative Party sufficient that, in Labour/Conservative marginal, we would lose a lot of seats' (UKICE, 2020b: 2). Therefore, 'as the coalition went on, Dominic Grieve, stated that 'he [David Cameron] became increasingly anxious […] about the growth of UKIP and the way in which Farage was biting at his heels' (UKICE,2020a: 2). Therefore, the Conservative Party understood that UKIP was an electoral threat because it was taking away votes.

Both the Labour Party and Conservative parties also discussed the question of Europe as a reason for voting for UKIP. The Conservative MP Peter Bone suggested that 'the great British public were sending a message about Europe, even if in a coded manner, by voting UKIP' (HC Deb 16 June 2009: 210). A similar point was made by Conservative MP Laura Sandys who acknowledged that her constituency had 'one of the largest UKIP votes in the country' and noted that she was 'very conscious that we need to be robust on Europe and that any further transfer of powers need to be questioned' (HC Deb 7 December 2010: 246). Former Labour MP Ian Davidson also believed that 'we cannot disregard the fact that UKIP polled astonishingly well […] which surely cannot be unconnected with the hostility towards the European Union' (HC Deb 16 June 2009: 210).

However, some MPs were not convinced that Europe was such a big factor in the public voting for UKIP. Conservative MP Jake Berry opposed the referendum motion because 'the UK Independence Party fought the last general election on a policy of withdrawing from the European Union, but it did not win the election. The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats together won with a mainstream policy of repatriation' (HC Deb 24 October 2011: 91). Thus, there was some debate as to how to respond to UKIP, whether it was through co-optation of UKIP's position on the question of Europe or disregarding the link between voting for UKIP and the question of Europe.

Therefore, this section has shown that while public opinion was Eurosceptic, Labour and Conservative parties did not believe that the EU was a big issue for the public. During this period between 2009 and 2012, UKIP was increasing its electoral success with Euroscepticism considered one of the main drivers of its support. While the Conservative Party acknowledged the electoral threat that UKIP posed and recognised that it needed to respond, Labour focused on emphasising the threat that UKIP posed to the Conservative Party.

5.5 Stage 3: Mainstream Response From 2013 onwards

The previous section identified that the Labour and Conservative parties acknowledged that there was an increase in the public's Euroscepticism, along with an increase in support for UKIP where the question of Europe was understood as an important factor. While the Conservative Party recognised that UKIP was an electoral threat, Labour, at least initially thought UKIP was more of a problem for the Conservatives. The following section analyses the response of mainstream parties by looking at party factions and leadership, debates within the House of Commons and how the parties frame the question of Europe. While factions and leadership indicate whether a party is divided on an issue, analysing debates and the way parties frame the question of Europe allows for a broader analysis of how mainstream parties have changed their justifications for their EU policy.

The coverage of this stage focuses on 2013 onwards because David Cameron realised that the 'question of Europe would not go away' (Smith, 2018:1). As a result, Cameron announced that the Conservative Party would hold a referendum on Britain's EU membership if it won a majority in the 2015 general election. Therefore, this section argues that factions existed within the Conservative Party and more informally within the Labour Party on the EU, and that the leadership of both parties' had different attitudes on European integration at any given time. Despite, UKIP's lack of presence in parliament, the Conservative Party co-opted UKIP's referendum on British membership of the EU, whereas Labour focused on criticising the Conservative Party response. While both parties used institutional frames to oppose Britain's EU membership, Labour in particular did so to 'honour the referendum result'. Labour's

conflict with the Leave result meant that Labour focused on criticising the Conservative Party.

Despite a few Labour MPs who supported Britain's exit from the EU, Labour's official policy was based on honouring the result. Labour used economic frames but changed its position by moving from advocating 'retaining the benefits of the Single Market' to 'close alignment to the Single Market'. In contrast, the Conservative Party converged with UKIP's position, using institutional frames to argue that leaving the EU would allow Britain to take back control.

5.5.1 Party Factions and Leadership

Conservative Party

While the main focus in this stage is from 2013 onwards, 'European integration has long been a divisive issue within the Conservative Party for half a century' (Lynch and Whitaker, 2013a: 317). 'In the 1990s, there was an increase of apparently ideologically motivated backbench groups, including the 92 Group, No Turning Back and Fresh Start' (Bale, 2012: 264). All of which are associated with Euroscepticism. More recently, groups had emerged within the Conservative Party including the Fresh Start Group formed in 2011 which proposed a renegotiation of the UK's relationship with the EU (Fresh Start Project, 2012), and the Conservatives for Britain group created in 2015 to monitor Cameron's renegotiation and prepare for the Leave campaign (Baker, 2015). However, despite no formal membership list existing, it was clear that the Conservative Party had different positions on the EU, mostly Eurosceptic views.

The European Research Group (ERG) was another example of a group that was ideologically motivated. The ERG was created in 1993, for those concerned about the EU becoming a federal state (Spicer, 2018). In an interview with a Conservative minister (personal interview 1, 2021), they said 'if you are a member of parliament […] and you take a very Eurosceptical position you probably join the European Research Group'. There was very little research on the influence of the ERG within the Conservative Party, partly as a result of the fact it 'keeps its "research" private and refuses to publish names of its members' (Cusick et al, 2019: no page number). Data

provided by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) showed that from 2010-2011, 10 MPs paid some of their allowance to the ERG, by 2013-2014 this had increased to 25 MPs between 2013-2015 and 23 MPs for 2015-2016 (IPSA, 2020). However, this does not necessarily indicate all members of the ERG.

Documents obtained by OpenDemocracy suggested that the ERG held a Eurosceptic position. In relation to the EU leaflet (HM Government, 2016) that the government produced in the run up to the Brexit referendum in 2016, the ERG stated that it was 'propaganda' and contained 'a number of false claims' including that 'the UK will not be part of further political integration'. Additionally, despite Cameron's renegotiation, the ERG referencing the 'vote leave' campaign believed that the 'EU is fundamentally unchanged' (ERG, 2016: no page number).

However, the Conservative Party's Eurosceptic credentials appeared much wider than just membership of formal factions within the party. Table 5.5 shows the voting record of Conservative MPs on different bills relating to the question of Europe between 2008 and 2013. While the main coverage of this section is from 2013 onwards, table 5.5 shows that there was a large part of the Conservative Party that were Eurosceptic. For example, 78 MPs rebelled against the three-line Whip and voted for the Bill that proposed a national referendum on the EU in 2011 (Sparrow, 2011). In relation to the EU Economic Governance Bill, Conservative MPs were told to support the bill. However, 95 MPs went against the party line and voted either against the bill or abstained.

Table 5.5 Voting Record of Conservative Party MPs

	Aye	No	Abstained
EU (Amendment Bill) 2008	3	181	154
EU Economic Governance 2010	243	23	72
EU Bill 2010		270	68
EU 2011	269		69
National Referendum on the EU 2011	78	207	53
EU (Referendum) Bill 2013	293		45

Note: Shading refers to how the Conservative Party told MPs to vote.

By analysing parliamentary votes, the dataset developed by Lynch and Whitaker (2018) showed that during the 2010-2015 Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition, '49 votes on EU issues saw a Conservative rebellion, and a total of 103 Conservative MPs rebelled at least once' (p.34). While in 2015-2016, 57 Conservatives rebelled across 15 divisions on EU issues (Lynch and Whitaker, 2018). Therefore, there were other ways that Conservative MPs could express their Euroscepticism without being a member of a formal faction.

Eurosceptic backbenchers, including some members of the ERG, were one of the reasons why David Cameron advocated a referendum on the question of Europe. Cameron explicitly stated that the reason behind his referendum pledge was as a result of his parliamentary party 'pressing for a referendum'. However, Cameron continued by saying that if it was only about managing the party, he could have come up with a different sort of referendum (Cameron, 2019: 406). John Bercow (2020), then Speaker of the House of Commons, perceived Cameron as being pressured by Eurosceptic MPs to 'resurrect the referendum plan' (p.311). MPs like Michael

Fabricant and David Davis both publicly expressed their support for a referendum on the EU (Fabricant, 2012; Davis, 2022).

Thus, there were high levels of dissent on EU issues, but parliamentary votes are not the only way to show disagreement with a party. Bob Spink was technically the first Tory MP who defected to UKIP in April 2008, 'before finally opting to sit as an independent in the House of Commons' (Tournier-Sol, 2015: 146). However, in the period of analysis, in 2014 Conservative MP's Douglas Carswell and Mark Reckless defected to UKIP, triggering a by-election in which they both won (Lynch and Whitaker, 2018). Cameron (2019: 557) reacted to Carswell's defection by observing that it was no surprise as he was 'anti-EU and a serial rebel' but after that the Conservatives were on 'defector watch'. Additionally, Cameron reflected on Carswell's 'unintellectual' decision, as he emphasised that Carswell stood for the Conservatives when it was not offering an EU referendum pledge, and then switched to UKIP when the Conservatives were. In Cameron's thinking 'that demonstrated the attraction UKIP still held for some colleagues' (Cameron, 2019: 557). Moreover, Carswell stated that he defected to UKIP because the Conservative Party was not 'serious about real change' on the EU (Watt, 2014). Therefore, defecting to another political party was another way to put pressure on the party leadership.

Labour Party

In comparison to the Conservative Party, the Labour Party's factions on Europe have not received as much attention from scholars with the exception of Watts and Bale (2019). EU membership 'has caused deep divisions at all levels of the Labour Party' (Daniels, 1998: 74). Since the mid-1980s, the Labour Party had shifted from Euroscepticism to Europhilia (Hertner, 2018) or as Holden (2011) suggests a 'moderately pro-European line (p.158).

> 'Labour has always had factions' in the sense of 'clubs with people who lean this way and lean that way'. 'In the 1970s […] most of the left was anti-Europe […] and most of the centre or right of the Labour Party was pro-Europe'. 'By the mid-1990s […] all factions had more or less become pro-

European, that doesn't mean not critical of the European Union of course we want to change it and so on, nonetheless no-one was seriously advocating a British exit' (personal interview 2, former Labour MEP, 2021).

However, there was a group of Labour MPs who consistently voted against further integration and rebelled against the party. While this section focuses on the period after 2013, it is important to understand the previous voting record of those MPs who voted against the party line. Table 5.6 shows that the most notable rebellion occurred in 2011 on the motion of a national referendum where 19 MPs went against the Labour Party's instruction to oppose it (Sparrow, 2011). In 2013, Labour MPs were told to abstain on the EU Referendum Bill 2013, and while some did, there were still some Eurosceptic MPs who supported it (Wintour, 2013). Dennis Skinner had voted against every major piece of European legislation, even under Blair and Brown (Skinner, 2015). Furthermore, Austin Mitchell discussed the purges of Eurosceptic MPs within Labour, replaced by those who favoured Europe and Gordon Brown replacing Eurosceptic MPs in the Treasury Committee (Mitchell, 2018). Unlike the Conservative Party, there did not appear to be any formal groups based on Euroscepticism, but there was a group of MPs who consistently voted against the party line on the question of Europe.

Table 5.6 Voting Record of Labour Party MPs

	Aye	**No**	**Abstained**
EU (Amendment Bill) 2008	298	18	85
EU Economic Governance 2010	1	13	387
EU Bill 2010	187		214
EU 2011	269	189	212
National Referendum on the EU 2011	19	210	172
EU (Referendum) Bill 2013	7	28	366

Note: Shading refers to how the Labour Party told MPs to vote.
Areas with no shading refers to no clear Labour position

Furthermore, unlike the Conservative Party whose leadership had generally been occupied with Eurosceptic leaders, the Labour Party from the mid-1980s was described as 'moderately pro-European' (Holden, 2011: 158). Peter Mandelson (2002) set out the changes that New Labour had made to party policy, one of which would be that it would be 'pro-European'. It can be debated about the extent to which New Labour was pro-EU in the sense that most research describes its position alongside the words 'relatively' (Opperman, 2008) or 'moderately' (Holden, 2011). Furthermore, both Gordon Brown and Ed Miliband are said to have 'distanced themselves' from Tony Blair's 'trumpeted Euroenthusiastic rhetoric' (Hertner, 2018: 51). However, what the previous research and MPs alike agreed on was the fact that the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party in 2015 marked a shift from previous leaders of the Labour Party such as Blair, Brown and Miliband. While endorsing the 'Remain' campaign, Corbyn had regularly expressed Eurosceptic arguments previously, voted to leave the EEC in 1975, and did not take a clear stand on the issue during the 2015 Labour leadership contest (Vasilopoulou, 2016).

Manwaring and Smith (2020) stated that there were deep divisions within the Labour Party over Corbyn's leadership on the European issue. Corbyn was blamed for Labour's 'lacklustre' campaign to remain. Corbyn was a 'lifelong anti-European' (personal interview 4, former Labour MEP, 2021), 'he was not a natural enthusiast for Europe to be frank' (personal interview 6, Labour MP, 2021). Corbyn 'did campaign to remain but […] not, well should we say with a marked lack of enthusiasm' (personal interview 2, Labour MEP, 2021). 'The Labour Party's position was totally disabled by the fact that it had a leader who was fundamentally anti-European and therefore as a result of that a campaign that was very lacklustre' (personal interview 4, former Labour MEP, 2021). Corbyn's 'election as leader […] destroyed any chance I think of a strong anchored pro-European message for that referendum'. 'I mean I will never know how we got 48 percent. That is an astonishing result given just how lacklustre the Labour Party's message was' (personal interview 3, former Labour MEP, 2021). John Bercow, former Conservative MP and speaker of the House also perceived Corbyn's backing of remain as 'lukewarm' (Bercow, 2020: 311).

However, some Labour MPs indicated that Corbyn's leadership was not all to blame. John McDonnell stated that 'this idea that Jeremy didn't do the groundwork or the legwork in campaigning, I don't accept that at all' (UKICE, 2021: 4). While Emily Thornberry stated that 'the other thing to bear in mind is the Labour leadership of the Remain campaign was not Jeremy Corbyn' (UKICE, 2020d: 4). Furthermore, Caroline Flint said that the campaign 'was very disjointed, and Jeremy played his part in that, but he isn't the only one to blame for Remain not winning' (UKICE, 2021a: 11). Another Labour MP said, 'it must have been difficult for Jeremy'. 'Jeremy Corbyn was elected the leader of the Labour party; everyone knows that Jeremy […] had been a Eurosceptic for 40 years but he found himself leading a party that wasn't' (personal interview 6, Labour MP, 2021). Therefore, there were divisions not only on the question of Europe within the Labour Party but also who was to blame for the remain campaign losing.

5.5.2 Addressing the Question of Europe

Having established that factions existed within Conservative Party and more informally within the Labour Party on the EU, and that the leadership of both parties' had different attitudes on European integration at any given time, we now examine the extent to which the question of Europe was debated within the House of Commons. National parliaments play an important role when it comes to debating EU politics (De Wilde, 2014; Auel and Raunio, 2014; Wonka, 2016). While Figure 5.6 shows the overall number of debates between 1990 and 2019, it is in this context that it can be seen that from 2014 there was a rise of debates on the EU, coinciding with discussions on the Brexit referendum (UK Parliament, 2022). UKIP's presence within the Parliament was limited to two former Conservative MPs, and thus while UKIP had limited or no representation within parliament, debates on the EU increased.
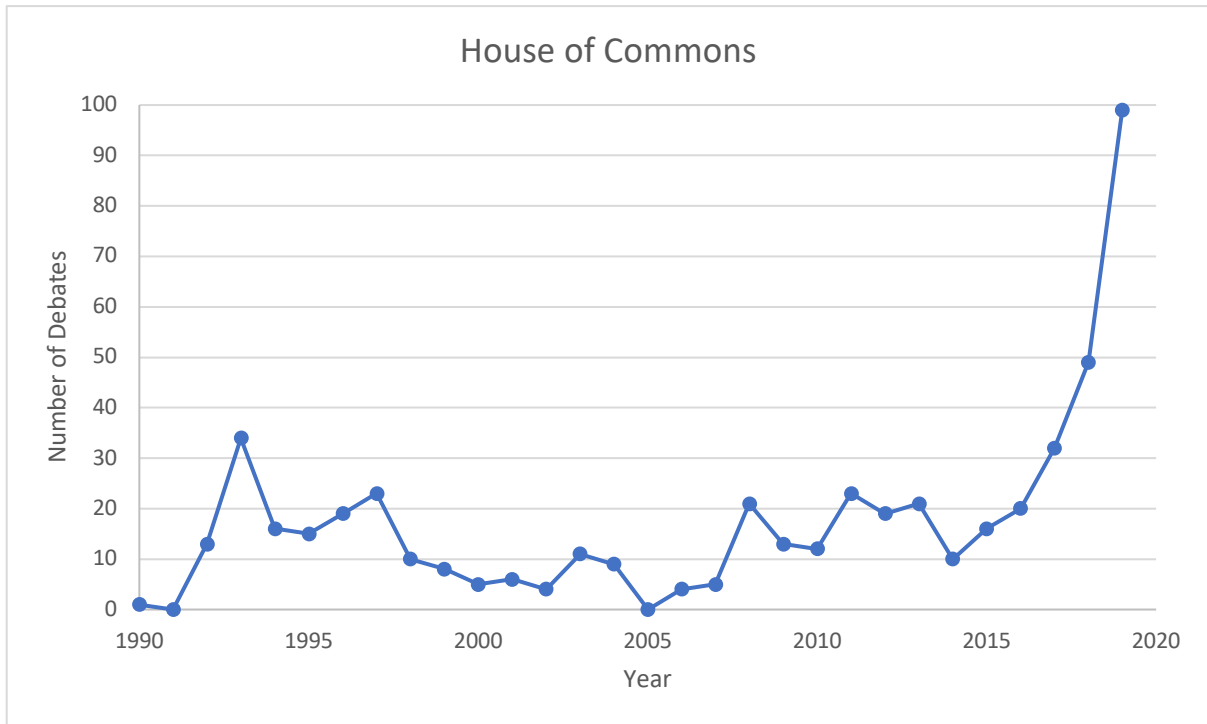
Figure 5.6: Debates on the EU in the House of Commons 1990-2019

Influence of UKIP

Despite UKIP's lack of representation in the House of Commons, Labour accused the Conservative Party of reacting to UKIP. Labour MP Ian Davidson said 'this [The EU referendum bill] would not be coming forward in this way if the Conservatives were not under pressure from UKIP. […] 'The Conservatives have reacted to UKIP almost solely on this [EU] issue' (HC Deb 5 July 2013: 1204). John Denham, another Labour MP said, 'there is no doubt that this whole exercise is driven by the Conservative Party's terror of UKIP' (HC Deb 5 July 2013: 1197). A similar sentiment was echoed by Labour MP Mike Grapes that 'the [Referendum] bill is another example of the Conservative Party chasing the UKIP vote' (HC Deb 17 October 2014: 625). As Geraint Davies (Labour) summed it up, 'the government give UKIP credibility by saying that we will have a referendum […] the government are feeding the monster of UKIP and it will be the tiger that devours them' (HC Deb 19 November 2014: 367). Interestingly Labour MPs focused on criticising the Conservative Party's co-optation strategy rather than how it would respond to UKIP.

While Labour's emphasis on the Conservative Party reacting to UKIP could be construed as a political strategy, Conservative Party MPs indicated that it needed to react. For instance, Conservative MP Richard Drax said that 'the votes for UKIP two weeks ago only showed what thousands and millions of voters believe. […] they believe that we have a major problem and that we […] have to deal with our relationship with the EU (HC Deb 15 May 2013: 706). Furthermore, Conservative MP Peter Bone indicated that he was 'trying to help the opposition by saying that if they do not adopt the position that there should be a referendum, a lot of their voters will go off and vote UKIP. I do not think UKIP will make any gains, but it might let the Conservatives win' (HC Deb 17 October 2014: 621). Therefore, the Conservative Party recognised that it needed to respond to UKIP by addressing the UK's relationship with the EU and having a referendum.

Policy Distance

Additionally, the Labour Party emphasised that the Conservative Party was similar to UKIP, without addressing its own position on the EU. Labour MP Jim Dowd stated that 'there is widespread sympathy on the Conservative Benches for UKIP's aims and objectives' (HC Deb 14 May 2013: 531). Labour's Douglas Alexander described the Conservative Party's strategy as 'first insulting UKIP, then ignoring UKIP and then imitating UKIP' (HC Deb 17 October 2014: 592). A similar sentiment was expressed by Labour MP Chris Leslie, 'I have to tell them if they spend all their time trying to be like UKIP, they should not be surprised when people vote for the real thing' (HC Deb 15 May 2013: 740).

To some extent the Conservative Party tried to distance themselves from UKIP. Damian Green suggested that 'UKIP's position was that it would prefer the House of Commons to vote to pull Britain out of Europe without consulting the British people in a referendum' (HC Deb 17 October 2014: 600). However, Bernard Jenkin stated that 'the irony of this [referendum] debate is that a lot of people in UKIP are saying things that are similar to what is felt by a lot of people who would like to vote Conservative at the next election' (HC Deb 15 May 2013: 689). Furthermore, William Cash argued that 'the UK Independence Party argument is self-defeating, for a simple reason. If UKIP were to take a number of marginal seats on the scale that seems likely and we were

to lose the next general election, UKIP will not get the referendum or make the changes it wants' (HC Deb 15 May 2013: 693). Therefore, in terms of position, the Conservative Party advocated a co-optation strategy, whereas Labour focused on criticising the Conservative Party response. While Labour and Conservative parties opted for different strategies to respond to UKIP, it is also important to address the framing of the question of Europe.

5.5.3 Framing of the Question of Europe

The analysis of the framing of the question of Europe from 2013 onwards is outlined in Table 5.7. Similar to the findings presented in Stage 1 (Table 5.3), UKIP and the Conservative Party largely mobilised arguments to oppose European integration, while Labour continued to express their support for the EU. It is important to note that as UKIP was not represented in parliament with the exception of two former Conservative MPs, the results in Table 5.7 for UKIP are based on its national and European manifestos. Therefore, there was no data for the years 2013, 2016 and 2018 when there were no elections. Furthermore, it is also important to note that the data for the Conservative Party for 2013 relies on a small amount of data from parliamentary debates.

UKIP used all three frames to express opposition to the EU and thus support its policy of Britain's withdrawal from the EU. UKIP (2015) predominately employed institutional arguments to oppose 'political integration within Europe' (p. 70). UKIP also used economic frames to argue that Britain should leave the EU because it costs too much (2014) and cultural frames to argue that mass immigration from EU countries was a threat to British jobs (UKIP, 2014). After the Brexit Referendum, UKIP (2019) used institutional frames to oppose Britain's EU membership and argued that 'UKIP stands for Brexit and an independent democratic Britain governed under its own laws' (NPN).

While the Conservative Party's official policy did not advocate Britain's EU withdrawal, it mostly mobilised arguments to oppose European integration. In 2014, the Conservative Party used institutional frames to oppose an ever-closer union (Conservative Party, 2014). Economic frames were also used to express opposition to the Single Currency, but also to express support for preserving 'the integrity of the

Single Market' (Conservative Party, 2015: 73). The Conservative Party (2017) used cultural frames to argue that Britain's choice to leave the EU means 'for the first time in decades, that we will be able to control immigration from the European Union too' (p.55).

The use of framing by the Labour Party had changed from supporting EU membership using mostly institutional frames from 2013-2016, to using economic frames after the Brexit referendum. The Labour Party (2015) used institutional frames to support Britain's EU membership. However, Labour also used institutional frames to oppose the further centralisation of the EU. In its 2014 European manifesto, Labour stated that it would 'legislate for a lock that ensures no future Government can transfer powers to Brussels without the explicit consent of the British people' (Labour Party, 2014:.25). Economic frames were also used to express support for the Single Market because it promotes trade and jobs (Labour Party, 2014). Post-Brexit the Labour Party (2019) continued to support 'close alignment with the Single Market' (p.90). The Labour Party rarely used cultural frames to support or oppose the EU. Table 5.7 summarises the framing used by Labour, the Conservatives and UKIP.

Table 5.7: Framing of Supporting or Opposing Statements by Parties (Percentages)

	Years	Cultural		Economic		Institutional	
		-	**+**	**-**	**+**	**-**	**+**
Labour Party	2013						
	2014	2.5			35.0	25.0	37.5
	2015			33.3	11.1	22.2	33.3
	2016			50.0			50.0
	2017		6.1	3.0	39.4	21.2	30.3
	2018			6.7	73.3	6.7	13.3
	2019				76.2	9.5	14.3
Conservative Party	2013					100.0	
	2014	2.6		7.7	20.5	43.6	25.6
	2015				33.3	44.4	22.2
	2016			18.2	9.1	54.5	18.2
	2017			20.0	2.0	74.0	5.0
	2018			72.4	10.3	17.2	
	2019			37.5	4.2	58.3	
UKIP	2013						
	2014	9.5	14.3	4.8		71.4	
	2015	35.0		5.0		60.0	
	2016						
	2017	28.6				71.4	
	2018						
	2019	8.3		16.7		75.0	

Notes: The percentages represent the statements for one frame divided by the total number of statements each year. **The shaded fields indicate whether a party family uses cultural, economic, and institutional frames more in a given year.** Frames without direction (-0.5,0 and +0.5) have been excluded from this analysis.

Similar to the framing of the question of Europe that was discussed in Section 5.3.3, the following section will discuss the use of framing in relation to economic policy. As enlargement policy was rarely discussed by the parties during this period, the use of framing will also be analysed in relation to the parties' Brexit policy.

Economic Policy

Labour (2015) used economic frames to support the UK's membership of the EU because membership 'is central to our prosperity and security' (p.75). After the Brexit referendum in 2016, Labour (2017) continued using economic frames to support 'retaining the benefits of the Single Market and the Customs Union' (p.24). Labour MP Yvette Cooper also reiterated that the UK 'should stay inside the customs union, because that will help our manufacturing in the future' (HC Deb 1 Feb 2017: 1041). By 2019, Labour supported 'close alignment with the Single Market' (Labour Party, 2019: 90). While Labour continued to use economic frames to support the economic benefits of the EU, it had changed from supporting 'retaining the benefits of the Single Market' to 'close alignment with the Single Market'.

There was a notable shift in the Conservative Party's support for the economic elements of the EU after the Brexit referendum. Prior to the referendum, the Foreign Secretary, Phillip Hammond, stated that 'we are clear that Britain benefits from access to the single market' (HC Deb 12 January 2016: 685). However, in the aftermath of the result, the Conservative Party used economic and institutional frames to argue that the UK needed to leave the Single Market and Customs Union. Conservative MP John Whittingdale stated 'we have no alternative but to leave the single market, as it is essential that we have control over borders once more and that we are no longer subject to European Union laws' (HC Deb 1 Feb 2017: 1043). A similar position was highlighted by Conservative MP Charlie Elphicke 'if we want to do unfettered trade deals with the rest of the world, we must leave the customs union' (HC Deb 1 Feb 2017: 1068). The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, Suella Fernandes argued that 'leaving the customs union liberates the UK to establish new and fruitful trade deals' (HC Deb 1 Feb 2018: 955). Therefore, the Conservative Party had changed position using institutional framed to argue that to 'regain control', Britain needed to leave the Single Market and Customs Union.

UKIP (2014) used economic frames to support the UK leaving the EU because it would save the taxpayers' money. A similar statement was made in 2015 that by leaving the EU the UK could 'save £9 billion a year net contributions to the European Union budget' (UKIP, 2015: 8). After the Brexit referendum, UKIP (2019a) used economic

frames to argue that the whole of the UK should leave the Single Market and the Customs Union. UKIP's position after the referendum was notably similar to the Conservative Party's argument that the UK needed to leave the Single Market and Customs Union to 'regain control'.

Brexit Policy

Both Labour and the Conservative parties are committed to 'accepting the result' of the Brexit referendum, however they interpret differently how best to follow through with that result. The Labour Party in 2017 used institutional frames to support 'close co-operative future relationship with the EU, not as members but as partners' (Labour Party, 2017: 24). The Conservative Party (2017) also used institutional and economic frames to support 'a deep and special partnership including a comprehensive free trade and customs agreement' (p.36).

Labour MPs often expressed their disappointment in the result of the Brexit referendum before committing to follow through with Brexit. Labour MP Julie Cooper used institutional frames to support triggering article 50 stated because 'I respect my constituents and the democratic process; I will vote to trigger article 50'. However, Cooper also used economic frames to suggest that 'I will not vote blindly for a Brexit deal that leaves my constituents poorer or worse off' (HC Deb 1 February 2017: 1091). A similar position was also echoed by Labour MP Clive Betts, 'I still have concerns about voting for the Bill—concerns that I felt when I argued strongly for remain in the referendum. In the end, though, I am more concerned about the damage to democracy if I do not vote for the Bill' (HC Deb, 1 February 2017: 1065).

Some members of the Conservative Party also expressed similar sentiments. Conservative MP Sir Nicholas Soames stated that 'I believe that our wonderful country has made an historically bad decision. I also believe very strongly that the decision that was made in the referendum of 2016 to leave the European Union must be honoured' (HC Deb 11 January 2019: 711). Another Conservative MP Ben Howlett used institutional frames to argue that Britain must leave the EU because 'the country voted to leave the EU, and it is the democratic duty of this sovereign Parliament and Government to ensure we do just that' (HC Deb 1 February 2017: 1113).

However, other members of the Conservative Party supported leaving the EU wholeheartedly. The Conservative Party's framing of its Brexit policy was centred on bringing back control from the EU. The Conservative Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, David Davis used economic frames to oppose Britain's monetary contributions to the EU. 'This money is British money: it will come back to us, and we will decide what to do with it' (HC Deb 1 December 2016: 1648). Suella Fernades also stated that 'leaving the customs union liberates the UK' (HC Deb 1 February 2018: 955).

Similar sentiments were also echoed by UKIP. In UKIP's national manifesto in 2019, UKIP used institutional frames to oppose EU membership arguing for a 'complete and total withdrawal from the European Union' (p.3). In its 2017 national manifesto, UKIP (2017) used institutional frames to oppose EU membership on the basis that leaving the EU would mean we can 'take back control' (p.8). Therefore, both the Conservative Party and UKIP used institutional frames to argue that leaving the EU would allow the UK to have more control.

Therefore, this discussion has shown that most Labour members used institutional frames to oppose Britain's EU membership because they felt they had to honour the result of the referendum. However, Labour used economic frames to support access or 'close alignment' to the Single Market and Customs Union. In contrast, the Conservative Party used institutional frames to oppose Britain's EU membership, arguing that the UK can 'take back control'. The Conservatives also used economic frames to oppose Britain's membership of the Single Market or Customs Union. In doing so, the Conservative Party converged with UKIP's position that leaving the EU would allow Britain to take back control.

5.6 Outcome: The Labour and Conservative parties Changed Their Policy or Framing of the EU

UKIP's presence facilitated both Labour and the Conservative parties to change their position on the question of Europe as they sought to follow through with the UK's

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withdrawal from the EU as a consequence of the vote to leave. Prior to the referendum, while the Conservative Party had long-held Eurosceptic views, Labour was characterised as the 'pro-EU' party. To some extent this was evident by the fact that the vast majority of Labour MP's supported remaining in the EU, in contrast to the split that was apparent within the Conservative Party. 185 Conservatives and 218 Labour MP's declared their support for remain, while 138 Conservatives and 10 Labour MP's supported leave (BBC News, 2016).

The Conservative Party pursued a strategy of co-optation, advocating a referendum on the UK's EU membership and then following through with Britain's withdrawal. In response to UKIP's electoral success, 'clearly we adopted more Eurosceptic tones ourselves and ultimately you know I think from David Cameron's point of view the referendum was an opportunity to sort of lance the European boil' (personal interview 1, Conservative minister, 2021). Amber Rudd, a Conservative MP stated that prior to David Cameron's referendum pledge 'nobody was really pushing for a referendum […]. That was Nigel Farage. That was UKIP' (UKICE, 2021b:2).

In terms of the framing of the question of Europe, the Conservative Party co-opted the framing used by UKIP and the vote leave campaign. It used institutional frames to oppose the UK's EU membership on the grounds that 'we are able to deliver all the advantages of leaving the EU: making our own laws, controlling our own borders, taking back our money, and exercising all kinds of new freedoms' (Conservative Party, 2019: 3). Therefore, 'there will be no political alignment with the EU. We will keep the UK out of the single market, out of any form of customs union, and end the role of the European Court of Justice' (Conservative Party, 2019: 5). Thus, UKIP's influence contributed to a change of position and framing of the Conservative Party.

On the other hand, Labour's belief that UKIP was not a significant threat to them resulted in it largely pursuing a dismissive strategy, and its ambivalent EU position continued even when Labour was forced to address it during the referendum campaign and after. The impact of UKIP's electoral success 'might have made Labour a bit more cautious about sticking its neck to defend the European Union, more let's avoid that issue. So, it probably contributed to Labour avoiding the issue more than changing its position on the issue' (personal interview 2, former Labour MEP, 2021). 'There was a

debate in the shadow cabinet in the run up to the 2015 election about whether we should say there would be a referendum on the EU. But Ed Miliband was very clear that he was not going to do that' (personal interview 6, Labour MP, 2021).

The result of the referendum meant that the Labour Party was forced to address the question of Europe. Initially, Labour pursued a strategy of co-optation, seeking 'a Brexit deal that delivers for all regions and nations of the UK' (Labour Party, 2017: 27). By 2019, the Labour Party had adopted an adversarial strategy, advocating holding a second referendum, 'we will get Brexit sorted in six months by giving people the final say – with a choice between a sensible leave deal or remain' (Labour Party, 2019: 8).

Additionally, in terms of framing of the question of Europe, the Labour Party pursued an adversarial strategy emphasising the importance of 'retaining the benefits of the Single Market and the Customs Union' (Labour Party, 2017: 24). However, by 2019, the framing had changed to emphasise a 'close alignment with the Single Market' (Labour Party, 2019: 90). Therefore, Labour's belief that UKIP was not a threat contributed to Labour trying to avoid the issue. When UKIP's influence forced the issue, Labour did not know how to respond and thus presented positions that fluctuated between co-optation and adversarial strategies.

Conclusion

The aim of the chapter has been to examine the influence of UKIP on the change of mainstream party positions on the question of Europe between 1993 to January 2020. It has argued that UKIP has influenced the Conservative Party to co-opt UKIP's EU position and framing of the question of Europe. It also argues that the Labour Party's response has changed from an initially dismissive response to an adversarial strategy, interchanging between co-opting UKIP's position of EU withdrawal and clashing with UKIP as an actor and its Eurosceptic position. To illustrate this argument, the chapter used a novel process-tracing mechanism that had three stages including: shaping the debate (1993-2008), public opinion and the awareness of mainstream parties (2009-2012) and the response of mainstream parties (2013 onwards).

Following a discussion of the absence of party competition on the question of Europe among Labour and the Conservative parties, the mechanism starts with the Maastricht Treaty and the entrance of UKIP into the party system in 1993. The chapter argues that UKIP was able to shape the debate on the question of Europe (Stage 1) by establishing itself as an 'alternative' to Labour and Conservative parties' positions on the EU. The media coverage helped to reinforce the notion that UKIP was different by emphasising its anti-EU position in contrast to the 'pro-EU' Labour Party and the Eurosceptic Conservative Party who was still committed to the EU. While UKIP and Conservative Party used cultural, economic and institutional frames to oppose European integration, the Conservative Party used economic frames to also support the EU. The Labour Party also differed from UKIP using all three frames to support European integration, although there was some opposition to aspects of European integration.

Between 2009 and 2012 UKIP's Eurosceptic message resonated with public opinion and that both parties recognised that UKIP was an electoral threat (Stage 2). While public opinion was Eurosceptic, Labour and Conservative parties did not believe that the EU was a big issue for the public. At this time, UKIP was also increasing its electoral success with previous research establishing that Euroscepticism was one of the main drivers of its support. While the Conservative Party acknowledged the electoral threat that UKIP posed and recognised that it needed to respond, Labour focused on emphasising the threat that UKIP posed to the Conservative Party.

In Stage 3 there were internal party divisions within Labour and Conservative parties on the question of Europe. The leadership played an important role in influencing the party's attitudes on the question of Europe. The analysis of parliamentary debates indicates that Labour and Conservative parties emphasised that they held different positions on the question of Europe compared with UKIP. However, the Conservative Party co-opted UKIP's EU policy while clashing with UKIP as an actor. The Labour Party continued to advocate an adversarial (clashing) response to UKIP, but as a result of the Brexit referendum pursued a policy of withdrawal from the EU. Therefore, both Labour and Conservative parties converged with UKIP's position of EU withdrawal. Furthermore, the Conservatives used institutional frames similar to UKIP to argue that leaving the EU would allow Britain to take back control.

However, while a few Labour MPs supported Britain's exit from the EU, Labour's official policy was based on honouring the result. As discussed throughout, Labour had difficulty addressing the question of Europe, and as a result Labour focused on criticising the Conservative Party. The difficulty Labour experienced when trying to address the question of Europe continued after the referendum result. Labour used economic frames but changed its position by moving from advocating 'retaining the benefits of the Single Market' to 'close alignment to the Single Market'.

The empirical results of this chapter demonstrate that while some type of electoral success is needed, it is not enough on its own for far-right parties to have influence. While UKIP had limited success at the national level, the Conservative Party co-opted UKIP's position and framing of the question of Europe. In contrast, Labour changed from an initially dismissive response to an adversarial strategy, interchanging between co-opting UKIP's position of EU withdrawal and clashing with UKIP as an actor and its Eurosceptic position. The fact that Labour did not know how to respond to UKIP or the issue of European integration resulted in Labour not having a clear policy or response. Therefore, while Labour continued to be supportive of the EU, particularly in relation to the economic aspects, UKIP had influenced Labour's unclear policy on the question of Europe. The following chapter will discuss the influence of the AfD on the SPD, CDU, and CSU.

Chapter 6

The Influence of the AfD on the Positions and Framing of the SPD, the CDU and the CSU on the Question of Europe.

Introduction

The previous chapter explored how UKIP's influence encouraged the Labour and Conservative parties to co-opt its Eurosceptic position. This chapter studies the second case study, namely Germany and the influence of the AfD on the SPD, the CDU and the CSU. While Germany has not had a history of Euroscepticism, party based or otherwise (Lees, 2008), in 2013 the German party system witnessed the rise of a new Eurosceptic challenger, the AfD, which campaigned almost exclusively on the European issue (Moroska-Bonkiewicz and Pytlas, 2014). Despite the fact that there had been parties on the right that held similar attitudes to the AfD including the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (National Democratic Party of Germany - NPD), Die Republikaner (The Republicans) and Die Rechte (The Right), the AfD has experienced more electoral success.

This chapter extends Turnbull-Dugarte (2020) and Pautz's (2021) argument that the SPD, CDU, and CSU used an adversarial strategy by producing a more nuanced picture that reveals variation between the pro-EU positions presented by the three parties. It does so by applying the mechanism that was developed in Chapter 2 to explain the influence of the AfD on the SPD, the CDU and the CSU's positions and/or framing of the question of Europe. This novel mechanism will be used to analyse the change in position of the mainstream parties that was identified in Chapter 4. To recap, Chapter 4 found that the SPD was an 'enthusiast Europhile' and continued to advocate greater cooperation between member states and the EU. While the CDU also expressed support for greater cooperation, it changed position on the question of Europe becoming more reluctant to accept more integration. In doing so, it converged with its sister party, the CSU, which had a long establish history of being more critical of the EC and some European policies than the CDU (Arzheimer 2015). Thus, Chapter 4 characterised both the CDU and CSU as 'equivocal Europhiles'.

This chapter examines the influence of the AfD between 2013 and January 2020 through a process-tracing mechanism that is triggered by the Euro crisis and the AfD's entrance into the party system on a Eurosceptic platform. It is then followed by three stages: shaping the debate (2013-2014), public opinion and the awareness of mainstream parties (2015-2017), and the response of mainstream parties (2017 onwards). In order for this mechanism to function as predicted, the AfD's presence needs to encourage party competition on the question of Europe. The mechanism appears to work similarly in Germany and the UK despite the different contexts. To support this mechanism, this chapter engages with numerous sources including manifestos, media coverage, public opinion and parliamentary debates.

The application of the mechanism to the German case study reveals that the SPD, the CDU and the CSU embarked on an adversarial (clashing) strategy by attacking the AfD as an actor and its anti-EU position. By using a similar strategy, the SPD, the CDU and the CSU actively opposed the AfD's anti-EU position, which focused on singling the AfD out as different, in comparison to their pro-EU position. Furthermore, despite the CSU's history of being more critical of aspects of European integration, for the first time the CDU and CSU fought the 2019 European elections on a joint election platform. While the success of the AfD was not explicitly given for this move, the CDU and CSU suggested it was to 'fight against nationalism'. Given the CDU and CSU's previous refusal to run on a joint platform due to differences on EU policy, this decision was notable.

While the positions of the SPD, the CDU and the CSU remained supportive of European integration, the framing used by the CDU and CSU changed. The EU's enlargement policy was a notable example. The CDU and CSU continued to support the enlargement of the EU in principle, but in practice they became more reluctant in the short term for further integration. Furthermore, while the CDU and CSU had continued to oppose Turkey's membership of the EU, the arguments used to justify this opposition had changed. The opposition to Turkey's membership became based on cultural arguments that focused on Turkey not being European, rather than economic ones, converging with the AfD. The importance of these findings is that not only has the AfD influenced a change of the CDU and CSU's framing of the question of Europe, but also that the mechanism has been able to outline how the AfD has

influenced the SPD, the CDU and the CSU on the question of Europe. As such, the chapter makes a significant contribution to the party politics literature. The following section precedes by outlining what environment is needed for the mechanism to act.

6.1 Scope Condition

The environment which is needed for this mechanism to act is the absence of party competition on the question of Europe, as a result of the pro-EU consensus that existed among mainstream parties. While critical attitudes towards Europe have existed within governing parties, party competition on the question of Europe was minimal because there was broad pro-EU cross-party agreement (Paterson, 1996; Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008).

The main focus of this research is on the centre-left SPD and the centre-right CDU and CSU. However, it is important to address the context in which the question of Europe was discussed, if at all. The SPD briefly flirted with a more 'sceptical' attitude towards Europe in the mid-1990s, but since then the SPD has been staunchly pro-integration. While the Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party - FDP) has sometimes been ambiguous when it comes to European integration, the Bündis '90/Die Grünen (Alliance 90/The Greens) since its formation in the late 1970s, has been broadly pro-EU despite some occasional criticism. On the centre-right, the CDU remains broadly pro-EU, but the CDU's Bavarian sister party, the CSU has resisted some elements of the integration process (Lees, 2008; Baluch, 2017). Therefore, the SPD, CDU and to some extent the CSU was pro-EU.

The absence of political choice was exacerbated by the fact that from 1949 the SPD or the CDU/CSU had been part of every government (Rohrschneider and Whitefield, 2017). As a result of the SPD and CDU/CSU cohabiting in four 'grand coalitions', it meant that their positions became 'harder and harder to distinguish, as they collectively morph into one large pro-EU collective/pole' (Filip, 2021: 168). Therefore, the absence of political choice fuelled the politicisation of the question of Europe.

6.2 Trigger: Euro Crisis and the Entrance of AfD

The pro-EU consensus among the SPD, the CDU and the CSU that the previous section outlined was further highlighted by the Euro crisis. In 2010, the Euro crisis was described as the 'struggle to resolve the debt problems facing Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain without breaking up the monetary union or precipitating a wider financial crisis in Europe' (Hall, 2012: 355). In response to the Euro Crisis, from 2010-2013 there was an agreement in the Bundestag that it was Germany's duty to underpin the Euro, support struggling member states, and opposition parties did not question the bailout policies (Grimm, 2015).

In this context, Germany's central role in leading responses to the economic and financial crisis, 'provided the mobilizing narrative for the AfD' (Lees, 2018: 300). The AfD was not the first party on the right of the political spectrum to be critical of Europe. For example, on the right of the political spectrum the NPD, Die Republikaner and Die Rechte were classed as hard Eurosceptic, but only the NPD founded in 1964 has gained representation in the EP. However, unlike the AfD, the NPD has never entered the Bundestag, and in recent elections the NPD has lost votes to the AfD (Lees, 2008; Baluch, 2017). The AfD was more electorally successful than those parties that hold similar attitudes including the NPD, Die Republikaner and Die Rechte.

The entrance of the AfD on a Eurosceptic platform was evident from its first party programme which had a clear commitment to work for the abolition of the Euro (AfD, 2013). 'The AfD sees itself as an alternative to prevailing pro-Euro politics among Germany's mainstream parties' (Grimm. 2013). The AfD 'played a key entrepreneurial role in polarizing EU issues and, therefore, breaking a pro-EU consensus among German parties' (Carrieri, 2018: 858). Consequently, the Euro Crisis and entrance of the AfD into the party system can be seen as the starting point of this mechanism and that triggered the influence of the AfD on the positions and framing of SPD, CDU, and CSU on the question of Europe. An overview of the mechanism is provided in Figure 6.1.
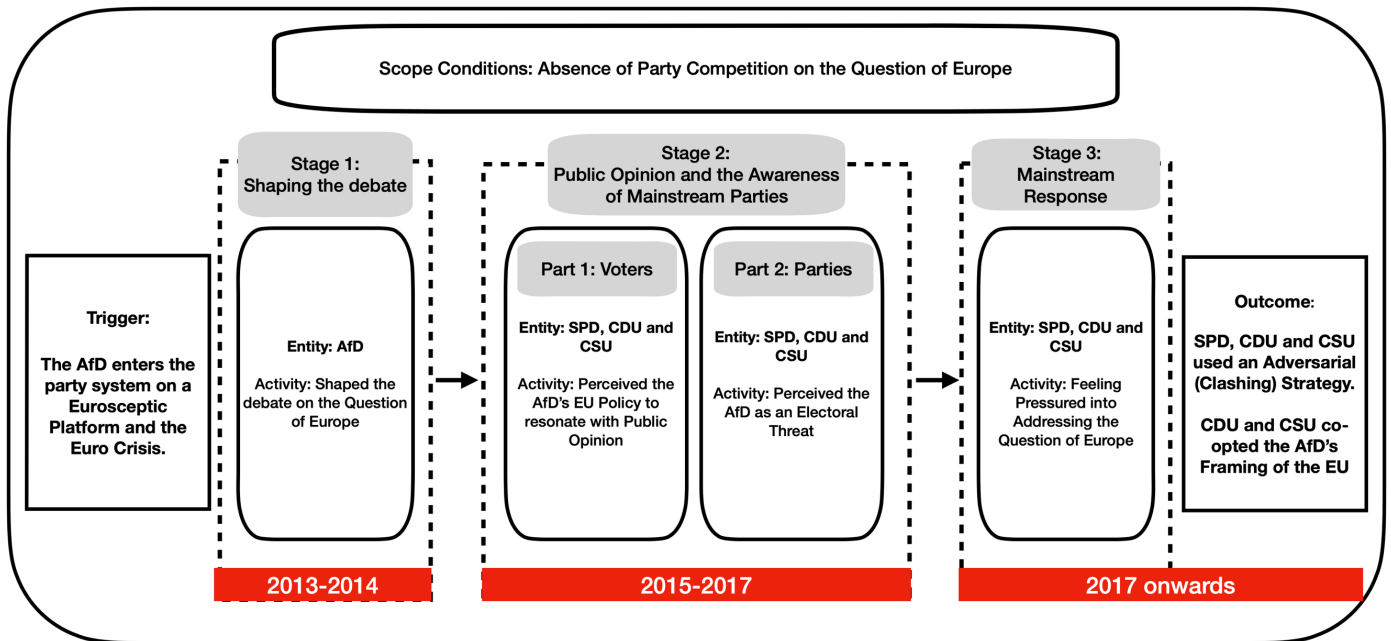
Figure 6.1: Process-Tracing Mechanism

6.3 Stage 1: Shaping the Debate: 2013-2014

This section analyses how the AfD shaped the debate on the question of Europe over the period 2013-2014. This timeframe was used for stage one because at this time the AfD's core message was the 'kind of contingent and limited contestation of the European project that Taggart and Szczerbiak (2001) classified as "soft" Euroscepticism' (Lees, 2018: 304-305). As Arzheimer and Berning (2019) highlight the AfD began as a soft-Eurosceptic, market-liberal and socially conservative party, only later developing into a 'fully-fledged populist radical right party once it had gained a foothold in several state parliaments' (p. 2). Alongside the ideological development of the AfD, it also narrowly missed the electoral threshold in the federal parliament elections in 2013 and it won 7.1 percent of the vote in the EP elections, entitling them to seven seats in the EP (Arzheimer, 2015: 541-542).

Therefore, this section shows that the AfD was able to shape the debate on the question of Europe, establishing itself as different from the pro-EU consensus of the SPD, the CDU and the CSU. The divergent position of the AfD compared to the SPD, the CDU and the CSU was also reinforced by the media, as well as the framing that the parties used to justify their EU positions.

6.3.1 Coverage of AfD in Print Media

A growing literature seeks to explain how parties can shape the debate on political issues such as the question of Europe. Political parties are in constant need of media attention to make their policy positions publicly visible and to shape public opinion (Tresch and Fischer, 2014). The role of media coverage of political actors can determine the extent to which the AfD's Eurosceptic message was transmitted to a wider audience (Kriesi et al, 2009).

Previous research suggests that German newspaper coverage of EU events was higher than in other countries. Trenz (2004) found that in 2000 in comparison to other countries such as the UK and France, the centre-left SZ and centre-right FAZ had the highest number of articles that discussed national topics as dominant issues, with reference to one or several European sub-issues. Novy's (2013) research went further by analysing the years 2000-2005, in which SZ and FAZ had the greatest number of articles compared to UK newspapers, and FAZ had consistently more articles than SZ, that covered EU events. In the three weeks leading up to the 2009 European elections EU news was visible in 11.04 per cent of Germany's newspaper front-pages, including SZ and FAZ (Schuck et al, 2011), while in 2014 media coverage of the *Spitzenkandidaten* in Germany had a greater volume of articles than the UK in the eight weeks prior to the election (Hix and Wilks-Heeg, 2014). Therefore, German newspapers appeared to provide more coverage of the EU in general, and in relation to EU events.

The coverage by the SZ and FAZ (Table 6.1) showed that the EU was less salient in the coverage that also referred to the AfD compared with coverage that referred to either the SPD, CDU or CSU. As some parties are more relevant than others in both the government formation process and everyday law-making, it can be expected that coverage of the EU in relation to the AfD would be lower because it was not in office (Hopmann et al, 2010). Both newspapers had a similar amount of coverage of the AfD in relation to the EU, while the coverage of the EU that also referred to the SPD received more coverage than the other parties in the SZ and FAZ. However, this does not give the whole picture. Previous studies have shown that it is important to break

down the number of articles into yearly figures to acknowledge that coverage of the EU that referred to the AfD can vary.

Table 6.1: Newspaper Coverage on the Question of Europe 2013-2014

Newspaper (Total Number of Articles mentioning the EU)	Articles on the EU and at least one party	Percentage of articles on EU and Parties
SZ [From 2013-2014] (13,020)		
SPD	1,569	**12.1%**
CDU	865	**6.6%**
CSU	1,250	**9.6%**
AfD	197	**1.5%**
FAZ [From 2013-2014] (9.228)		
SPD	899	**9.7%**
CDU	828	**9.0%**
CSU	404	**4.4%**
AfD	168	**1.8%**

Note: Total number of articles on EU and at least one party: SZ 3,881. FAZ 2,299. Percentage calculated by dividing number of articles on party and EU in one newspaper, by the total number of articles in that newspaper.

Figure 6.2 shows that media coverage of the EU in relation to all the political parties increased from February 2013 (when the AfD was formed) to 2014. The coverage of the EU that referred to the AfD received a similar amount of coverage in both newspapers. Furthermore, the frequency of mentions of the EU that referred to the pro-EU positions of the CDU and SPD and the more critical EU position of the CSU was more salient than the AfD's anti-Euro position. That being said, coverage of the EU that discussed the AfD's anti-Euro position allowed the public to have access to the AfD's position without which the AfD would be limited in its ability to attract support (Schuck et al, 2011; Statham and Trenz, 2015).
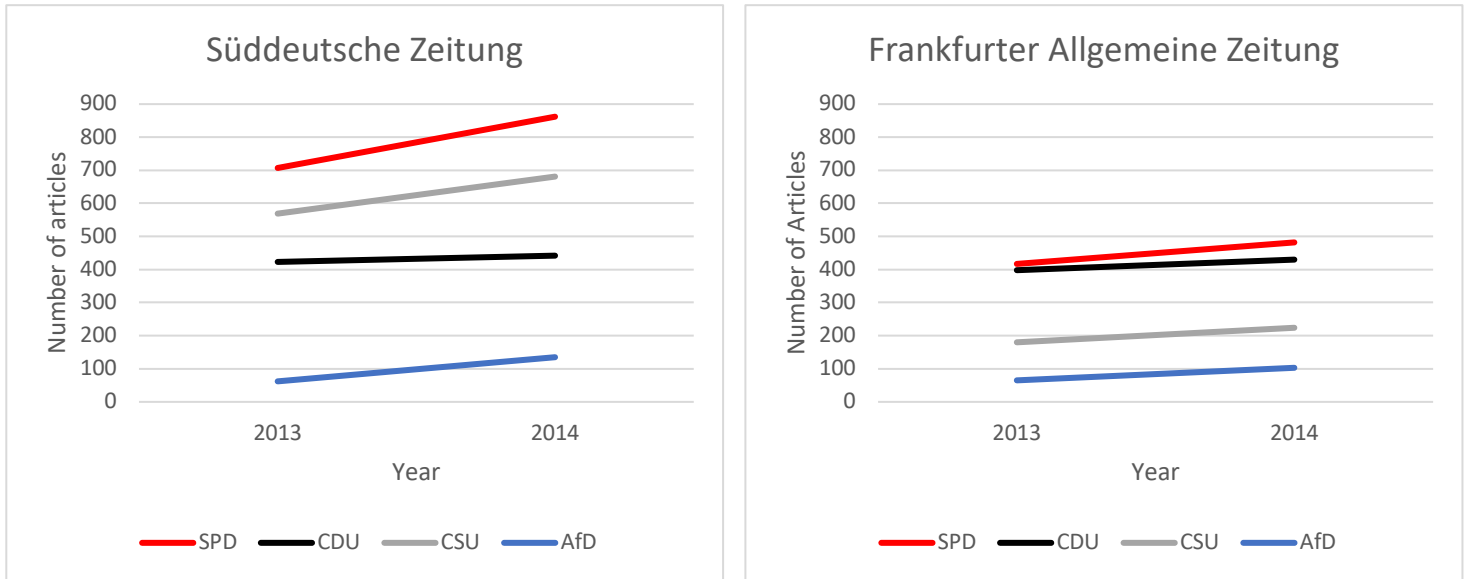
Figure 6.2: Newspaper Coverage of Political Parties and the EU or Europe in Germany

6.3.2 German Political Parties' EU Policy: Coverage Before and After Key Events

While previous research suggested that newspaper coverage increased during major EU events (Schuck et al, 2011; Hix and Wilks-Heeg, 2014), coverage of specific EU issues such as the Common Foreign and Security Policy featured more frequently in the German broadsheets, SZ and FAZ, than in the broadsheets of other countries and also during non-routine periods[62] (Kandyla and Vreese, 2011). Therefore, to fully understand the coverage of the parties' EU policy, the next section will analyse the content of articles that were published a week before and after two key events in Germany: 22 September 2013 (German Federal Election) and 25 May 2014 (European Election). The aim of this comparison is to analyse whether coverage was higher in the run up to or after the key event, and if the content of the coverage of the EU in relation to the political parties changes. These dates were selected because the question of Europe, specifically Eurosceptic attitudes, was introduced by the AfD and developed from 2013-2014.

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[62] Non-routine i.e. not EU summits, EU elections.

The number of articles on the EU and one of the political parties per newspaper and key event are shown below in Table 6.2. It shows that the coverage of the EU in relation to the AfD was not as salient in the SZ and FAZ compared to the coverage of the EU that referred to the SPD, the CDU and the CSU. However, the coverage of the EU that referred to the AfD received similar levels of coverage in the aftermath of the European election in the SZ and FAZ. Notably the SZ had generally more coverage on the EU in relation to all the parties compared to FAZ. The following discussion will analyse two key themes from the coverage including whether there was a pro-EU consensus and partisan responses to the AfD.

Table 6.2 Number of Articles on EU and Key Event

Key Event			Number of Articles		
		Week Before	Week After	Week Before	Week After
	The EU and…	SZ		FAZ	
22nd September 2013 – German Federal Election	SPD	17	21	11	12
	CDU	8	12	9	12
	CSU	13	12	3	6
	AfD	5	10	5	5
25th May 2014 – European Elections	SPD	37	50	14	10
	CDU	16	12	11	13
	CSU	29	50	5	10
	AfD	10	48	2	13

Note: The shaded fields indicate whether there are more articles in the 7 Days before or after the event

A Pro-EU Consensus?

An analysis of the newspaper coverage of the key events in the SZ and FAZ described the AfD as anti-Euro or more broadly Eurosceptic, in contrast to the pro-EU SPD, the CDU and the CSU. For example, in 2013 prior to the German federal election SZ's coverage of the EU in relation to the AfD stated that the AfD represented an alternative

due to its clear positioning on the EU (Hulverscheidt, 2013).[63] *'Euro-Kritischen'* (Euro-critical) was also used frequently within both the newspapers to describe the AfD (Ulrich, 2014). At the same time, the coverage of the EU in relation to the SPD and CDU before and after the 2013 federal election reflected the SPD's position of agreeing with almost all of Merkel's manoeuvres in the Euro crisis (Frankfurter Allgemeine, 2013; Hulverscheidt, 2013; Steltzner, 2013). The coverage of the EU also reflected the consensus between the two main parties by the perceived understanding that the SPD agreed with the CDU's enlargement policy (Frankfurter Allgemeine, 2014). Post-election both newspapers suggested that the coverage of the EU that referred to the SPD's Martin Schulz, the new Party of European Socialists (PES) Spitzenkandidat, had created new interest in Europe (Lohr, 2014; Frankfurter Allgemeine, 2014b).[64] Therefore, the coverage of the EU between 2013-2014 established the AfD as anti-Euro in contrast to the pro-EU consensus of the SPD, the CDU and the CSU.

Despite the CDU and CSU's alliance and both being described as pro-EU, the coverage of the EU in relation to the CSU indicated that it was more Eurosceptic than the CDU. In the 2014 European elections, the CSU's EU enlargement policy was considered to be more restrictive than the CDU, and similar to the AfD in that 'it was against the admission of new member states in the coming legislative period' (Frankfurter Allgemeine, 2014).[65] Furthermore, the US free trade agreement was criticised by the CSU but defended by the CDU (Rossmann, 2014). The SZ also suggested that the CSU's EU policy was a balancing act, coined the 'yes, but, but, but' rather than an overtly pro-EU strategy (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2014).[66] In addition, the poor performance by the CSU was discussed in relation to the fact that in terms of Europe they would 'agree in Berlin and Brussels, but oppose Europe in Munich' (Schäffer, 2014).[67] Therefore, despite the CDU and CSU being described in the coverage as pro-EU, there was variation within that pro-EU position.

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[63] 'Dank der klaren Positionierung der AfD […] stehen dem Wahlbürger zwei Klare Alternativen'
[64] 'Neues Interesse an Europe geweckt und viel zur Mobilisierung der deutschen Wähler beigetragen'.
[65] ‚'Ist gegen die Aufnahme neuer Mitgliedstaaten in der kommenden Legislaturperiod'
[66] ‚ Ja aber aber aber'
[67] 'In Berlin und Brüssel zuzustimmen und in München zu opponieren'.

Partisan Responses to the AfD

While there was some discussion in the coverage of the EU that referred to the SPD that the AfD was not a threat to them, the coverage in relation to the CDU and CSU emphasised that the AfD posed a threat. In the week leading up the 2013 election, the focus in the SZ and FAZ was that the AfD could pose a threat to the CDU's response to the Euro economic crisis (Frankfurter Allgemeine, 2013a; Steltzner, 2013; Fischer, 2013). Brussels hoped Merkel's policy of shifting EU powers back to member states was simply a tactical manoeuvre prompted by the electoral threat posed by the AfD (Gammelin, 2013).

The coverage of the EU also highlighted that the Union parties (CDU and CSU) had different strategies towards dealing with the AfD. The CDU wanted to ignore the AfD in the 2014 European elections. Post-election, the dismissive strategy was considered the incorrect response but the CDU must not take over the 'Antieuropäische Ressentiments' (Anti-European Resentment) of the AfD (Bannas, 2014; Rossman, 2014). In contrast, the losses of the Union parties focused on the CSU's Seehofer's attempts to take votes away from the AfD by becoming the 'AfD light' (Frankfurter Allgemeine, 2014a). In other words, by becoming more Eurosceptic. The response after the 2014 European elections was that 'the almost seven percent for […] the AfD is also noted without reaction' (Frankfurter Allgemeine, 2014a).[68] Sigmar Gabriel, leader of the SPD indicated that the SPD should be more concerned with the Greens than the success of the AfD (Frankfurter Allgemeine, 2014b). Thus, the coverage indicated that between 2013-2014 the AfD was recognised as a threat to the CDU and CSU. The responses of both parties to the AfD, the CDU's dismissive strategy and the CSU's strategy of co-optation was not successful in reducing the electoral threat of the AfD, which will be shown in Stage 2.

The coverage of the SPD, CDU, CSU and the AfD on the two key events identified in Table 6.2 highlighted that the AfD was described as anti-Euro or Eurosceptic, the SPD and CDU as pro-EU and the CSU pro-EU but more Eurosceptic than the CDU. While the section focuses on 2013-2014, CHES collected data in 2010 and 2014. Therefore,

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[68] Auch die knapp sieben Prozent für die "Alternative für Deutschland", der AfD, werden reaktionslos zur Kenntnis genommen.

Figure 6.3 suggests that the CSU was more divided than the CDU, SPD and AfD. It is important to mention that as the AfD was formed in 2013, there was only data for 2014 in the period under analysis. The CHES data showed that the AfD was the most internally united party on European integration. The divisions on European integration reflect the previous discussion that the CDU and CSU did not know how to respond to the AfD on the question of Europe, and thus adopted different positions towards the EU.
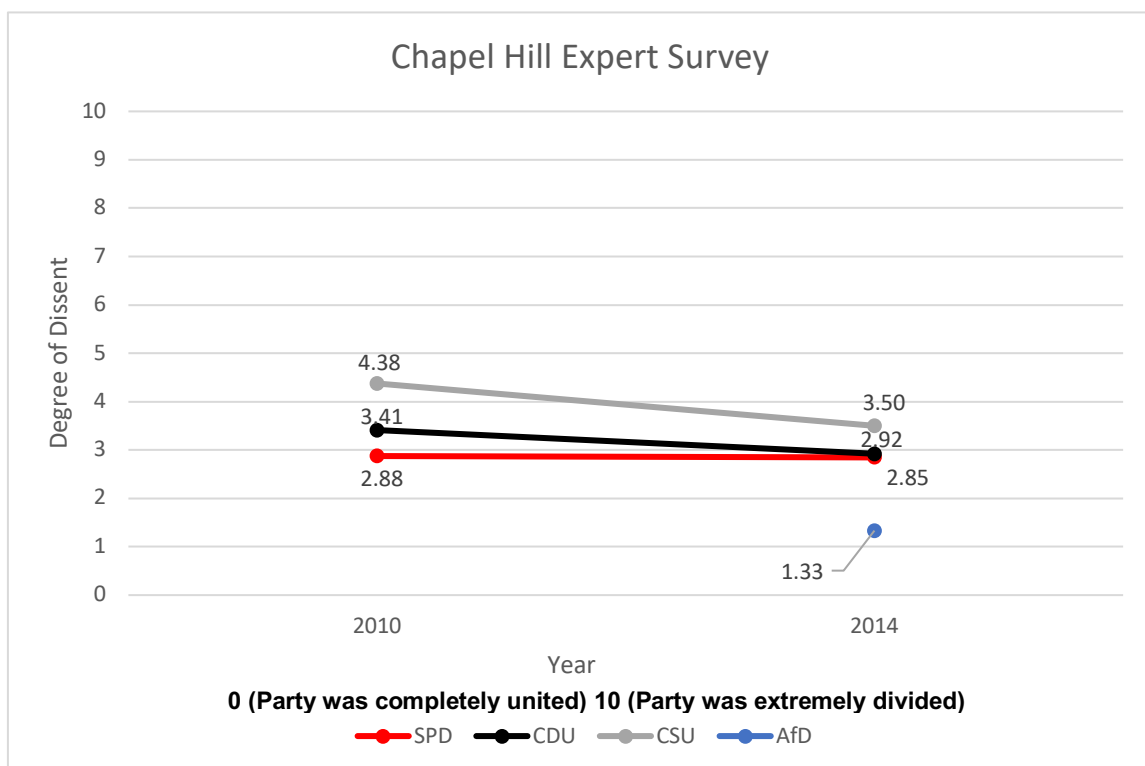
Figure 6.3: Degree of Dissent on European Integration

6.3.3 Framing of EU Policy

To further understand how the AfD shaped the debate on the question of Europe, it was necessary to analyse the justifications or frames that the SPD, CDU, CSU and AfD used to discuss their EU policy. To analyse the frames used by the SPD, CDU, CSU and AfD, parliamentary debates are used alongside manifestos because they continue 'to provide a strong institutional locus for researching political positioning among the political elite over time' (Huysmans and Buonfino, 2008: 766). Debates in the state parliaments were used between the period 2013 and 2014, because the AfD

was only represented at the state level until 2017 and the debates provided an insight into the parties' EU policy between elections.

To analyse the framing of EU policy, this research differentiates between cultural, economic and institutional dimensions because this is where contestation between political parties on EU integration and EU polices takes place (Helbling et al, 2010; Kriesi et al, 2012; Wonka, 2016). Table 6.3 summarises the frames that the parties used to discuss their EU policy. The analysis revealed that the SPD, CDU, CSU and AfD used all three frames – cultural, economic and institutional – in their manifestos and in parliamentary debates. The findings also reflected the newspaper coverage of the parties' positions in the sense that the SPD, the CDU and the CSU mostly used frames to express support for the EU and the AfD to express opposition. However, Table 6.3 also shows that despite the pro-EU positions of the SPD, the CDU and the CSU, they still used frames to express opposition, with the CDU and CSU typically having a higher percentage of opposing statements than the SPD. For a more detailed discussion of how the frames were operationalised see Chapter 3 (Section 3.1.2).

On European integration, the supporting statements focused on advocating more cooperation and integration, including wanting an 'economic government' or more cooperation in the case of creating an EU Army. In contrast, the opposing statements included an emphasis on opposition to Turkish EU membership because it was not European (cultural), or it would overwhelm the EU (economic). Furthermore, opposing statements also expressed that 'not every task is a task for Europe'.

Cultural frames were used to express either support for a particular policy that would promote EU values such as democracy or oppose policies such as enlargement on the basis that it would go against EU identity. The SPD, the CDU and the CSU in general spoke out in favour of the enlargement of the EU to include the Western Balkans because it would promote EU values of 'stability, democracy and the rule of law'. However, while the CDU and CSU continued to support enlargement policy in general, the potential enlargement of the EU was framed negatively in the sense that it should be restricted to states who share the EU's Christian culture. The AfD (2014) also framed enlargement negatively by emphasising that Europe has 'geographical

and cultural borders' which was used as a justification to oppose Turkey's EU membership.

Economic frames were generally used by the mainstream parties to express support for closer cooperation or for certain policies such as the Single Currency. While the SPD, the CDU and the CSU expressed their support for the Single Currency, the CDU and CSU also opposed the harmonisation of European debts. In contrast to the SPD, the CDU and the CSU's support for the Single Currency, the AfD (2014) opposed the Euro, the banking union and the ESM.

The use of institutional frames focused on the debate on whether the EU should be centralised further or not. Typically, the CDU, CSU and SPD advocated closer cooperation in terms of policies. For example, the CDU/CSU (2013) and the SPD (2014) wanted to deepen military cooperation by creating an EU Army. On the other hand, the CDU and CSU also emphasised that 'not every task should be a task for the EU'. Therefore, the CDU and CSU opposed further centralisation and sought to bring powers back to the member states. In the case of the SPD (2014) it emphasised the need for a 'culture of restraint in legislation' and for the EU to focus on 'what is really important' (p.5).[69] Therefore, there was some opposition to the further centralisation of the EU, but generally the SPD, the CDU and the CSU supported closer cooperation. In comparison, the AfD (2014) used institutional frames to oppose an EU army, and further centralisation, advocating that more powers should be given back to member states. Table 6.3 summarises the frames that were used.

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[69] Deshalb wollen wir, dass sich die EU und ihre Organe auf das wirklich Wesentliche konzentrieren: Auf die Zukunftsaufgaben, die wir nur mit gemeinsamer europäischer Kraft meistern können. Europa braucht eine neue Kultur der Zurückhaltung in der Gesetzgebung.

Table 6.3: Framing of Supporting or Opposing Statements by Parties (Percentages)

	Years	Cultural		Economic		Institutional	
		-	+	-	+	-	+
AfD	2013			50.0		33.3	16.7
	2014	25.9		29.6	3.7	37.0	3.7
CDU	2013	8.7	8.7	8.7	16.7	4.3	50.0
	2014	14.6	14.6	2.1	14.6	16.7	37.5
CSU	2013	8.7	8.7	8.7	16.7	4.3	50.0
	2014	16.0	4.0	16.0		52.0	12.0
SPD	2013		6.3		18.8	12.5	62.5
	2014	3.6	25.0	3.6	14.3	10.7	42.9

Notes: The percentages represent the statements for one frame divided by the total number of statements each year. **The shaded fields indicate whether a party family uses cultural, economic, and institutional frames more in a given year.** *Frames without direction (-0.5,0 and +0.5) have been excluded from this analysis.*

To further analyse the framing of the AfD, CDU, CSU and SPD, the next section will discuss the use of framing in relation to economic and enlargement policy. These two topics have been chosen because all parties discuss these issues in their manifestos, and in parliamentary debates, and they are fundamental to the EU. The Euro crisis began in 2010 and the effects of which were still being felt in 2013. Enlargement was also notably tied with economy policy, as Latvia in 2014 acceded to the Eurozone (Kruliš, 2014). Enlargement was also an important topic given Croatia's accession in 2013 and the end of the transition period for Romania and Bulgaria in 2014.

Economic Policy

In regard to economic policy, the ESM and the EMF, economic and institutional frames were used by all four parties. However, the AfD used institutional and economic frames to oppose the European economic policy, whereas the SPD, the CDU and the CSU used them to express support. The AfD used negative economic frames to advocate dissolving the ESM (AfD, 2014).[70] In contrast, the SPD used both economic and institutional frames to support more coordination and integration, including advocating a European economic government (SPD, 2013). The CDU/CSU (2013) also used

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[70] 'Der ESM ist aufzulösen'

economic and institutional frames to support 'greater economic policy coordination' (p.14).[71] As a result, the SPD, the CDU and the CSU diverged their positions away from the AfD, with the AfD establishing itself in the years 2013-2014 as being opposed to economic aspects of the EU.

EU Enlargement

In terms of the framing of EU enlargement, the SPD, CDU, and CSU mostly used institutional and cultural frames to express support for the enlargement to the Western Balkans, and opposition to Turkey's EU membership. The AfD shared a similar position on Turkey's EU membership using institutional and cultural frames but diverged in the sense that the AfD was also hesitant when it came to enlargement to the Western Balkans.

Western Balkans

In the case of the Western Balkans there was continued support from the SPD, the CDU and the CSU. The SPD used cultural and institutional frames to support the accession of the Western Balkans to 'promote stability, democracy, the rule of law and economic development' (SPD, 2014: 12).[72] Similar frames were also used by the CDU/CSU (2013) to express support for the accession of the Western Balkans. However, the CDU emphasised that 'every candidate country must meet the criteria' (CDU, 2014: 79).[73] The CSU diverged from the CDU and converged with the AfD in 2014, using institutional frames to oppose further enlargement as 'there cannot be unlimited growth for the EU' (CSU, 2014: 3).[74] In the same year, the AfD (2014) also used institutional frames to oppose further enlargement to allow the EU to consolidate in its present state. Therefore, 2013-2014 represented a period in time when the AfD was able to shape the debate, by distinguishing its position on enlargement, and the CSU's change in attitude also helped to politicise the AfD's position.

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[71] Dazu brauchen wir eine stärkere wirtschaftspolitische Abstimmung darüber, wie wir die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit Europas verbessern können.

[72] 'Wir halten deshalb an der Beitrittsperspektive dieser Länder fest'. […] Es liegt im vitalen Interesse Deutschlands und der EU, Stabilität, Demokratie, Rechtsstaatlichkeit und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung in angrenzenden Regionen zu fördern'.
2019: Frieden, Stabilität und Zusammenarbeit'

[73] ‚Allerdings muss auch hier jeder Beitrittskandidat die Kriterien erfüllen'.

[74] 'Es kann für die EU kein unbegrenztes Wachstum geben'.

Turkey

Turkish membership proved difficult for the SPD, CDU, and CSU to address. The SPD (2014) wanted negotiations to continue with the aim of accession.[75] In contrast, opposition to Turkish membership was more keenly expressed by the CDU, CSU and AfD. The CDU/CSU (2013) used economic frames to oppose Turkish membership, 'given the size of the country and its economic structure, the European Union would be overwhelmed' (p.119).[76] On its own platform, the CSU (2014) used institutional frames to state that it wanted negotiations to be terminated as Turkey had no accession perspective. The AfD also opposed Turkish membership by using institutional and cultural frames because 'Europe has geographical, cultural and historical borders' (AfD, 2014: 10).[77] Therefore, while the CDU, CSU and AfD opposed Turkey's EU membership, the CDU and CSU used different frames in comparison to the AfD. As a result, this highlights that while the positions of the parties may be the same, the justifications for their positions were different.

The previous literature indicated that for the first two years of the AfD's existence, it was a soft-Eurosceptic party, but 'not (yet) populist or radical right' (Berbuir et al, 2015; Arzheimer, 2015; Grimm, 2015; Schmitt-Beck, 2017; Arzheimer and Berning, 2019). As discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.1.1), nationalism was identified as a core feature of the far-right party family. Therefore, as the literature does not identify AfD as a 'populist or radical right' party, it can explain the relative absence of cultural frames in 2013 and 2014. Instead, Arzheimer (2015) describes the AfD as an anti-Euro party which can explain why it focused on economic and institutional frames, as the Euro was opposed on the basis that it took sovereignty away from Germany. From 2013, the AfD gradually moved to a more broadly Eurosceptic party and this was reflected in the frames that the AfD used (Havertz, 2021).

Regarding the literature on the SPD, the CDU and the CSU, Table 6.3 reflects the expectation that the CDU, CSU and SPD favoured economic and political integration (Bale and Krouwel, 2013; Pelinka, 2013), as all three parties used frames to show

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[75] 'Die laufenden Verhandlugen mit der Türkei führen wir mit dem erklärten Ziel eines Betritts weiter'.
[76] 'Angesichts der Größe des Landes und seiner Wirtschaftsstruktur wáre zudem die Europäische Union überfordert'
[77] 'Europa hat geografische, Kulturelle und historische Grenzen',

support for the EU. However, reflecting the different attitudes that the CDU and CSU have on the EU, the CSU appeared to express more opposition through using institutional frames (Hooghe and Marks, 1999). The results also suggested that all three parties alongside their supportive positions used frames to express varying levels of opposition to the EU. The findings reflect the literatures' understanding that mainstream parties have incorporated increasing criticisms of the EU into their agenda (Nicoli, 2017), but still remain broadly supportive of deepening European integration in principle (Raunio, 2002).

In summary, the AfD was a new party in 2013-2014 which allowed it to establish itself as Eurosceptic in contrast to the pro-EU agenda of the SPD, the CDU and the CSU. The AfD's ability to shape the debate primarily occurred during the foundational phase of the AfD when it was establishing its position in the German electoral system. This initial stage established the divergent Eurosceptic position of the AfD to the public compared to the SPD, the CDU and the CSU.

6.4 Stage 2: Public Opinion and the Awareness of Mainstream Parties 2015-2017

The above understanding that the AfD shaped the debate on the question of Europe is linked to the idea the mainstream parties are aware, firstly, that public opinion resonated with the AfD's Eurosceptic message and, secondly, as a result of this the AfD was considered an electoral threat (Figure 6.1). Therefore, this section is split into two separate parts. The first part discusses the extent to which the AfD's Eurosceptic message resonated with public opinion by analysing the indirect (opinion polls) and direct (voting in elections or referenda) forms of public resonance (Trenz and Eder, 2004; De Wilde, 2011). The second part discusses, firstly, the SPD, the CDU and the CSU's acknowledgement that public opinion had changed on the question of Europe and, secondly, the recognition that the AfD posed an electoral threat. Both parts of stage 2 focus on the period between 2015 and 2017 because the AfD broadened out its ideological appeal and increased its electoral success which resulted in it entering the federal parliament in 2017 (Lees, 2018; Conrad, 2020).

Therefore, the first part of the section argues that the public continued to support the EU, but there was a subtle variation in that support. The variation of support for the

EU occurred alongside the increase in the electoral success of the AfD, with Euroscepticism and immigration considered important drivers of the AfD vote.

Part 1: The Voters

6.4.1 Public Attitudes on EU Membership: Indirect

The electoral support of the AfD had the potential to threaten Germany's pro-European consensus (Ash, 2020). Between 1992-2019, the Eurobarometer asked respondents, *'Generally speaking, do you think that (your country's) membership of the EU is?',* a good thing, neither a good nor bad thing, a bad thing or do not know (European Commission, 2020; European Parliament, no date, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019). The survey from the Pew Research Center from 2004-2019, asked *'Please tell me if you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable, or very unfavourable opinion of the European Union?'* (Silver et al, 2020). While this section is mainly focusing on the period from 2015-2017, it is important to recognise that German public opinion has fluctuated from 1992 onwards, and the period from 2015-2017 to some extent reflects a long-term downward trend in the attitudes on Europe as shown by Figure 6.4 (European Commission, 2020; Silver et al, 2020).

Relating specifically to the period 2015-2017, the Eurobarometer shows that over 70 percent of respondents said that Germany's EU membership was a good thing (European Parliament, no date, 2015, 2016, 2017)). While just below 10 percent said EU membership was a bad thing, and just below 20 percent said EU membership was neither a good nor bad thing, overwhelmingly the respondents believed that Germany's EU membership was a good thing. However, when the respondents were asked about their attitudes towards the EU, Pew Research shows that most respondents had somewhat favourable attitudes towards the EU, but between 2015-2016 somewhat favourable attitudes declined from 51 to 42 per cent and somewhat unfavourable attitudes increased from 34 to 38 percent. The year 2016 saw somewhat favourable attitudes at its lowest, and somewhat unfavourable at its highest, which coincided with the refugee crisis and Brexit. By 2017, somewhat favourable attitudes had bounced back going from 42 to 52 percent and somewhat unfavourable attitudes decreasing from 38 to 24 percent.

The period between 2015-2017 marked a break from the relatively steady somewhat favourable attitudes that typically were expressed by over 50 percent of respondents. Furthermore, prior to 2015 somewhat unfavourable attitudes had not gone above 30 percent, with the exception of 2004. Therefore, while the Pew Research shows that positive evaluations were expressed by most respondents, the second highest response described the EU as 'somewhat unfavourable'. Therefore, it suggested that there was continued support for the EU, but there appeared to be subtle variation in the extent of that support, particularly notable between 2015 and 2016.
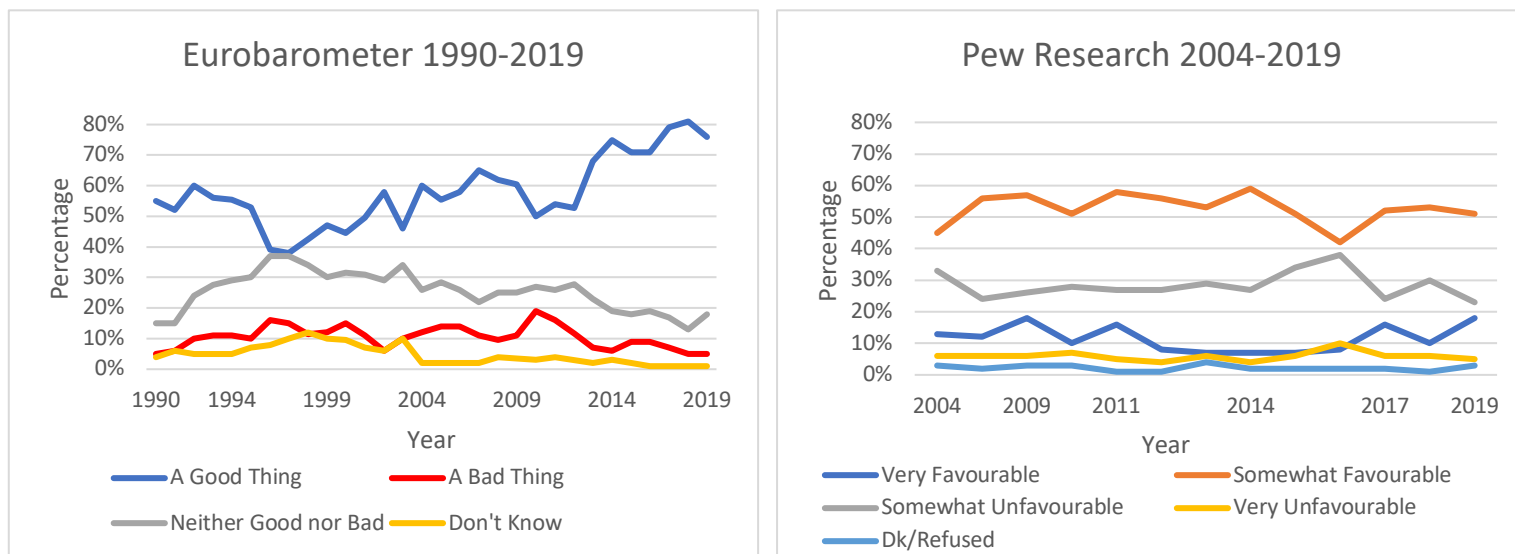
Figure 6.4: Attitudes Towards German Membership of the European Union

Another indicator of the German public's attitudes towards EU membership was provided by the GFK Verein on the proportion of people that think that the EU was the most important issue facing Germany. While the EU was rarely considered the most important issue facing Germany, it was a feature of public concern (GfK Verein 2015, 2016, 2017; 2017a). Given the complexity of the relationship between the EU and its member states, the top three most important issues identified between 2015-2017, such as immigration/integration of immigrants often were explicitly linked to the EU. Immigration and integration of immigrants was identified as one of the top issues between 2015 and 2017 coinciding with the refugee crisis and the opening of free movement of workers to all the new eastern European states (GfK, 2015, 2016a). This

reflected the scope and public perception of the involvement of the question of Europe in relation to other issues of domestic importance. In summary, public opinion has remained supportive of the EU, but the extent of that support has fluctuated over time.

6.4.2 Public Attitudes on EU Membership: Direct

6.4.2.1 Electoral Success of the AfD

The participation of the public in the debate on the question of Europe can also be direct through voting in elections (De Wilde, 2011). While the main focus of this stage is between 2015-2017, it is important to understand that since the AfD's establishment in 2013, the AfD increased its electoral success over a short period of time. An overview of the AfD's electoral success at state, federal and European level from 2013-2020 is provided in the Table 6.4.

The enforced cordon sanitaire that the SPD, the CDU and the CSU placed on the AfD has excluded it from government at federal and state level. Despite the AfD's exclusion from government, it increased its electoral success at the state, federal and also European level (Der Bundeswahlleiter, 2020, 2020a, 2020b). Between 2015 and 2017 the AfD increasingly took part in state elections and by 2017, the AfD overcame the 5 per cent electoral threshold to enter the German parliament for the first time, and in the process became the third largest party and the main opposition to the SPD and CDU/CSU coalition.

Table 6.4: Percentage of AfD Vote Share and Seat Distribution

Election Year	Vote Share	Seats	Largest Party	Governing Party/Coalition
Federal Elections				
2013	4.7%	0	-	CDU/CSU/SPD
2017	12.6%	94	3rd	CDU/CSU/SPD
State Elections				
2013				
Bavarian (west)	-	-	-	CSU
Hessian (west)	4.1%	-	-	CDU/Greens
Lower Saxony (west)	-	-	-	SPD/Greens
2014				
Brandenburg (east)	12.2%	11	4th	SPD/The Left
Saxony (east)	9.7%	14	4th	CDU/SPD
Thuringian (east)	10.6%	11	4th	The Left/Greens/SPD
2015				
Bremen (west)	5.5%	4	6th	SPD/Greens
Hamburg (west)	6.1%	8	6th	SPD/Greens
2016				
Baden-Württemberg (west)	15.1%	23	3rd	Greens/CDU
Berlin (east)	14.2%	25	5th	SPD/The Left/Greens
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (east)	20.8%	18	2nd	SPD/CDU
Rhineland-Palatinate (west)	12.6%	14	3rd	SPD/FDP/Greens
Saxony-Anhalt (east)	24.3%	25	2nd	CDU/SPD/Greens
2017				
Lower Saxony (west)	6.2%	9	5th	SPD/CDU
North Rhine-Westphalia (west)	7.4%	16	4th	CDU/FDP
Saarland (west)	6.2%	3	4th	CDU/SPD
Schleswig-Holstein (west)	5.9%	5	5th	CDU/FDP/Greens
2018				
Bavarian (west)	10.2%	22	4th	CSU/Free Voters
Hessian (west)	13.1%	19	4th	CDU/Greens
2019				
Brandenburg (east)	23.5%	23	2nd	SPD/CDU/Greens
Bremen (west)	6.1%	5	5th	SPD/Greens/The Left
Saxony (east)	27.5%	38	2nd	CDU/SPD/Greens
Thuringian (east)	23.4	22	2nd	-
European Parliament Elections				
2014	7.1%	7	5th	-
2019	11%	11	4th	-

*Note: Shaded areas represent an increase in the AfD's electoral success where the AfD has already participated in an earlier election.
Source: The Federal and Land Returning Officers.

The increased support for the AfD coincided with the development of the AfD from a soft Eurosceptic party aiming to dissolve the Eurozone, to a right-wing populist party that linked immigration and European integration together (Lees, 2018; Conrad, 2020). In the process of broadening out its programmatic profile, in order for public opinion to resonate with the AfD's Eurosceptic message, Euroscepticism needs to be the main motive for voting for the AfD. Previous research suggests that, firstly, AfD voters were associated with Euroscepticism and, secondly, that it was hard to disentangle anti-immigrant and Eurosceptic attitudes as the main motives to vote for the AfD because of the AfD's strategy to link the two issues.

To address the first point, AfD voters were considered to be more Eurosceptic than voters for other parties (Schwarzbözl and Fatke, 2016). While 79 percent of German citizens favoured remaining in the EU, only 17 per cent would vote to leave, of which over half (63 percent) were AfD supporters (Stern Magazine, 2015). Additionally, people who voted for the AfD and the rest of the German population associated restricting immigration and the abolition of the Euro with the AfD (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach, 2014). Therefore, both the AfD and its voters were clearly associated with holding Eurosceptic views and, prior to 2015, Euroscepticism was suggested to be the main motive for voting for the AfD (Schmitt-Beck, 2017), with immigration not being as influential (Arzheimer and Berning, 2019).

To address the second point, after 2015, it was difficult to establish Euroscepticism as the main motive of voting for the AfD. After 2015, Euroscepticism was linked to other issues such as immigration and the AfD had moved further to the right and broadened out its issue focus. In reference to the 2017 federal election, Hanson and Olsen (2019) suggested that anti-EU sentiment was not a dominant factor in voter choice for the AfD, when compared to anti-immigrant attitudes. Wurthmann et al (2020) also conclude that negative attitudes towards immigrant-related policies were the best predictors of AfD-voting, followed by EU-related attitudes. However, it was hard to disentangle the two because, as Hoerner and Hobolt (2017) argued, the AfD achieved representation in the German parliament because the AfD voiced anti-immigration and anti-EU sentiments that were shared by a segment of German voters, but rarely touched upon by other parties. As a result, the question of Europe played a role in driving the AfD vote, but it was hard to establish the extent of that role.

Therefore, this discussion has shown that while there was continued support for the EU, there was a subtle variation in the extent of that support, which occurred alongside the increase in the electoral success of the AfD, with Euroscepticism and immigration considered important drivers of the AfD vote. However, in order for the process-tracing mechanism to proceed as Figure 6.1 depicted, the following section outlines that the SPD, the CDU and the CSU need to acknowledge that public opinion on the question of Europe had changed and to perceive the AfD as an electoral threat.

6.4.3 Public Opinion and Electoral Threat of the AfD

The following discussion analyses the second part of this section, namely the SPD, the CDU and the CSU's acknowledgement that public opinion had changed on the question of Europe and that the AfD posed an electoral threat to them. Therefore, this part argues that the SPD, the CDU and the CSU recognised that public opinion on the EU had changed and therefore advocated reform of the EU. Furthermore, it also shows that the AfD was an electoral threat to the SPD, CDU, CSU, but the SPD and CDU favoured a clashing strategy to respond to the AfD, in comparison to the co-optation strategy of the CSU.

Part 2: Political Parties and Public Opinion

The SPD, the CDU and the CSU acknowledged that the German public varied in the extent of their support for the EU but perceived the variation of public support as a means to justify reform of the EU. Former MEP and leader of the SPD Martin Schulz (Schulz. M, 2017) justified his vision of a Europe by recognising that people cannot get excited/inspired about a Europe that focuses on smaller tasks.[78] The SPD's (2017) national manifesto stated that it wanted 'a Europe that focuses on the people and their everyday worries' (p.74).[79] Similar to the SPD, the CDU's leader Angela Merkel (2016) implied that to maintain a strong EU, it required putting the people at the centre of politics.[80] Therefore, the SPD and CDU recognised that the EU needed to change to satisfy public opinion.

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[78] 'Es ist doch ganz klar: Ein Europa, das darüber entscheiden will, ob in Italien das Olivenöl in einfachen Glasflaschen auf den Restauranttischen stehen darf oder nicht, das ist nicht das Europa, für das sich Menschen begeistern können.'

[79] 'Ein Europa, das die Menschen und ihre Alltagssorgen in den Blick nimmt.'

[80] ‚Deshalb ist es beständige Aufgabe einer jeden politischen Generation, sich für den Erhalt einer starken Europäische Union einzusetzen – indem sie den Menschen stets in den Mittelpunkt der Politik stellt'.

In contrast, the AfD stated that its Eurosceptic position represented the will of the people. For instance, Bernd Lucke (2019:257), founder and leader of the AfD until 2015, suggested that the people could not get inspired by the current form of the EU, and thus advocated EU reform on this basis.[81] Alice Weidel (2019: 58), the leader of the AfD since 2017 suggested that the aim of the Union parties and the SPD of a *'Vereinigten Staaten von Europa'* (United States of Europe), would never be democratic because it would lack the support the common will of the people.[82] A similar sentiment was also echoed by the AfD's 2017 election manifesto, the European project was 'against the obvious majority will of the people within the EU' (AfD, 2017: 16). Thus, the AfD believed that the German public were opposed to the development of the EU that the SPD, the CDU and the CSU supported, and suggested that more integration was not the answer.

The Electoral Threat of the AfD and its Supporters

As previously discussed, the SPD, CDU, CSU and AfD recognised that the EU needed to change to satisfy public opinion. Between 2015 and 2017, the AfD was increasing its electoral success culminating in it becoming the third largest party and the main opposition party in parliament as shown by Table 6.4. In the early days of the AfD between 2013-2015, the AfD attracted voters principally from the CDU/CSU, and less so from the SPD (Lochocki, 2015). However, as the AfD developed it gained from almost all parties, including the SPD in 2017 (Hoerner and Hobolt, 2017; Dilling, 2018). As Berning (2017) concluded the AfD's electorate consisted predominately of former CDU, CSU, and non-voters, but it also managed to attract support from across the entire political spectrum. Therefore, between 2015-2017 the AfD had continued to take votes away primarily from the CDU and CSU, but also from the SPD.

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[81] 'Die EU, nein: eine umgestaltete EU, eine EU der Vielfalt und der Einladung, Könnte dasselbe leisten. Für eine solche EU, für eine EU, die ohne jeden Zwang edle Ziele verfolgt und ihre Mitglieder zur Mitwirkung einlädt, würden sich Menschen auch wieder begiestern können'.

[82] 'Einem solchem europäischen Superstaat würde Staatsvolk als souverän fehlen, das einen gemeinsamen Willen zur staatlichen Organisation hätte, und damit die Möglichkeit, demokratische Öffentlichkeit ohne unüberwindlich kommunikationsbarrieren herzustellen'

Voting Intentions

The electoral threat of the AfD is not only measured through success at past elections, but also the potential for the CDU/CSU and SPD to lose further votes in future elections (Somer-Topcu, 2009; Zobel and Minkenberg, 2019). Figure 6.5 shows the voting intentions of the German public between 2013 and 2020 (Politico, 2020). The main focus of this section is between 2015-2017, but it is important to place these years within the broader trend of public opinion.

Prior to 2015, Figure 6.5 shows that the voting intentions for the CDU/CSU and the SPD had remained relatively stable, but from 2015-2017, there was greater volatility in voting intentions (Politico, 2020). Therefore, in the latter part of 2015, it can be seen that those who intended to vote for the AfD began to increase, reaching a high of 13 percent by 2016 coinciding with the European refugee crisis and Brexit. During the same time, voting intentions began to decrease from a high point of 41 percent for the CDU/CSU to a low of 32 percent in the middle of 2016. The SPD's voting intentions remained relatively stable between 20-25 percent, declining slightly in 2016. The increased volatility after 2015 meant that parties could not guarantee the public's support. However, while the extent of the public's support for the EU varied, and the electoral success of the AfD increased with Euroscepticism being one of the main motives for voting for the AfD, the SPD, the CDU and the CSU need to acknowledge these factors and perceive the AfD as an electoral threat.
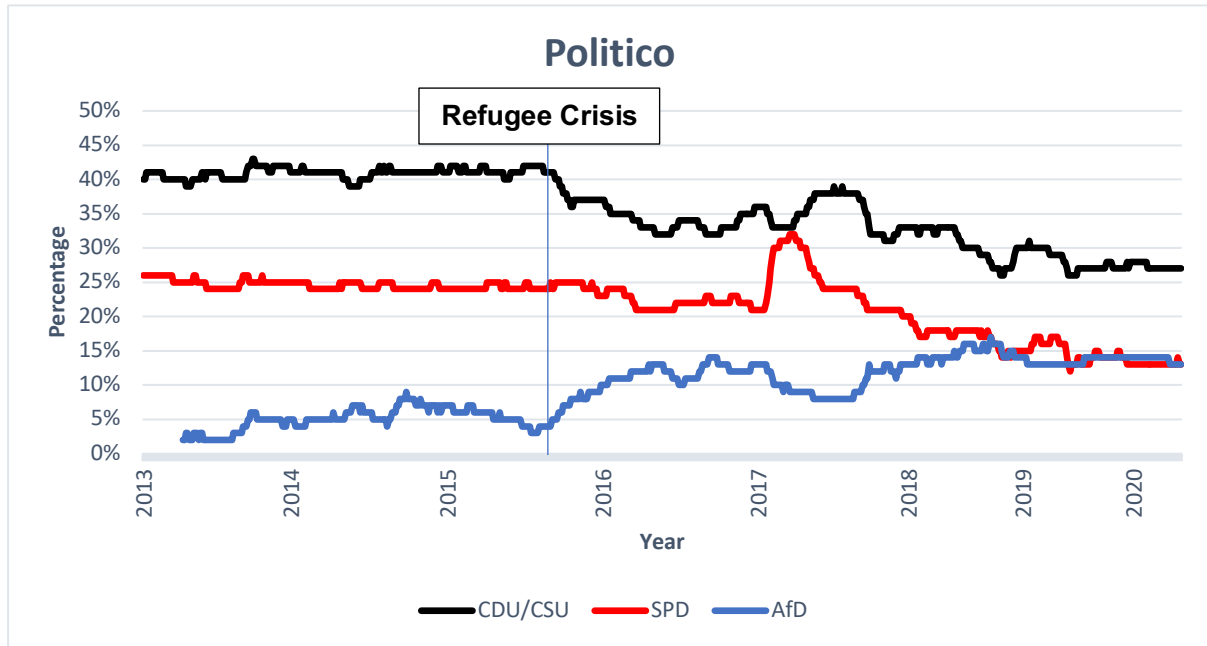
Figure 6.5: German Public Voting Intentions

The SPD, the CDU, and the CSU: An Acknowledgement of the AfD threat

Reflecting the research by Lochocki (2015), Hoerner and Hobolt (2017), Berning (2017) and Dilling (2018), the SPD, the CDU and the CSU acknowledged that the AfD was, firstly, an electoral threat and, secondly, that to combat the threat they needed to adopt an adversarial (clashing) response.

Firstly, the AfD was understood as an electoral threat by the SPD, CDU, and CSU, but each was keen to stress that the AfD was not just a threat to them. The General Secretary of the CDU between 2013 and 2018, Dr Peter Tauber, emphasised that the AfD was not just a challenge for the Union, *'only about 15 percent of the AfD voters come from us'* (Tauber, 2015).[83] A similar line of argument was expressed by the SPD leader Martin Schulz that the AfD's support was coming from all parties (Fischer et al, 2016).[84] However, interestingly in response to the AfD's success in three federal states, the CDU Chancellor, Angela Merkel, stated that the AfD was a 'problem' not an 'existential threat' (Oliveira, 2016).

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[83] 'Und die AfD ist nicht allein eine Herausforderung für die Union. […] Bei den Wählern der AfD kommen auch nur etwa 15 Prozent von uns'.

[84] 'Und in Sachsen-Anhalt existiert, wie offenbar überall in den neuen Ländern, eine tiefsitzende Unzufriedenheit mit der Politik insgesamt, die der AfD großen Zulauf von allen Parteien bringt'.

Despite the parties stressing that other parties also lost votes to the AfD, the CDU, the CSU, and the SPD acknowledged that they needed to win back the votes they had lost to the AfD. The General Secretary of the CDU Peter Tauber (2014), suggested that 'we as the CDU have to ask ourselves how we can get back voters who we lost to the AfD'.[85] A similar sentiment was echoed by the former CSU vice president Manfred Weber, 'the CDU/CSU as a whole has to analyse how we can win back these people. After all, it's not right-wing radicals who voted for the AfD there[86], but citizens who express concerns' (Schulz. S, 2017).[87] The SPD's governing mayor of Berlin Michael Müller recognised that there are AfD voters who felt neglected by politics, which both parties wanted to try to win back (Berliner Zeitung, 2016). [88] Thus, not only did the CDU, CSU, and SPD recognise the electoral success of the AfD, but also that they needed to appeal to 'some' AfD voters.

Furthermore, the CDU and SPD presented an adversarial (clashing) strategy to counter the success of the AfD. The chairman of the SPD's parliamentary group, Thomas Oppermann, was asked in an interview with Der Tagesspiegel (Daily Mirror) whether the rise of the AfD in Germany could be stopped. Oppermann replied that it 'depends on how we deal with the right-wing populists'. 'We have to keep putting them on the spot […]. There's nothing the right-wing populists fear more than a tough debate about real political problems' (Haselberger and Monath, 2016).[89] The CDU's MP Jens Spahn stressed that just because the AfD had taken on a topic it did not make sense to stop addressing the issue. 'Of course, we have to talk about and also solve the

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[85] ‚Aber natürlich müssen wir uns als CDU fragen, wie wir Wähler, die wir an die AfD verloren haben, wieder erreichen können'

[86] Referring to Baden-Württemberg, Saxony and Bavaria

[87] Deswegen muss die Union insgesamt analysieren, wie können wir diese Menschen zurückgewinnen. Es sind ja keine Rechtsradikalen, die dort die AfD gewählt haben, sondern es sind Bürger, die Sorgen äußern, die Sorgen eingebracht haben.

[88] ‚Eines werde ich auf keinen Fall tun, nämlich der AfD in ihren ausländerfeindlichen Positionen entgegenkommen. Ich bleibe dabei, dass wir Menschen, die in Not geraten sind, helfen. Da bestehen offenbar auch Sorgen, dass die Stadt für sie nicht mehr da oder erreichbar ist, dass sie verdrängt werden, dass Politik ihnen kein Gehör mehr bietet. Diesen Menschen will ich die Botschaft geben: Sie alle gehören zu Berlin! Und die SPD wird alles daransetzen, sie mit einer Politik für gute Arbeit, Bildung und sozialen Ausgleich zurückzugewinnen'.

[89] Das kommt darauf an, wie wir mit den Rechtspopulisten umgehen. Wir müssen sie immer wieder in der Sache stellen.[…]. Nichts fürchten die Rechtspopulisten mehr als die harte Auseinandersetzung um reale politische Probleme.

problems in the end' (Radio Welt, 2016).[90] However, the CDU's General Secretary Tauber (2016) rejected that there were any content-related overlaps between the CDU and the AfD and the CDU's EU Commissioner Günther Oettinger stated that 'our program must not approach that of the AfD' (Kaess, 2016).[91] Therefore, both the CDU and SPD acknowledged that they needed to address the question of Europe, but not by moving closer to the AfD's anti-EU position.

It was evident that the CSU responded to the AfD with a strategy of co-optation which diverged from the CDU and the SPD. The CDU's Minister-President in Saarland, Kramp-Karrenbauer (2014) emphasised that the CSU in reaction to the AfD presented critical tones when it came to Europe, and thus 'It is good that the CDU has its own European election programme'.[92] Therefore, the CSU was accused by the CDU as being more Eurosceptic. Furthermore, the SPD MP Ralf Stegner stated the 'Conservatives fail completely in dealing with the AfD […]. Either by adopting some of their slogans and thus really ensuring that they become acceptable. The CSU is doing this very strongly, supposedly because they want to keep them out of the Bavarian parliament, but in reality they are doing the opposite' (Kapern, 2016).[93] Therefore, despite the different strategies that the CDU and SPD on the one hand and the CSU on the other pursued to combat the success of the AfD, all parties aimed to prevent the AfD's electoral success.

Therefore, this discussion has shown that while public opinion continued to support the EU, there was a subtle variation in the extent of that support. During the period 2015-2017, the AfD was increasing its electoral success with Euroscepticism considered one of the main drivers of its support. The SPD, the CDU and CSU recognised the public's variation in the extent of their support for the EU, which was used to justify a policy of reforming the EU. Additionally, all three parties recognised

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[90] "Natürlich müssen wir darüber reden und am Ende die Probleme auch lösen."

[91] Das muss unsere Art zu argumentieren, uns dem Thema zuzuwenden verändern, aber unser Programm darf sich nicht dem der AfD annähern.

[92] ‚In dieser Konstellation ist es gut, dass die CDU ein eigenes Europawahlprogramm hat'.

[93] Konservative versagen im Umgang mit der AfD völlig […] Entweder indem sie teilweise ihre Parolen übernehmen und damit erst richtig dafür sorgen, dass sie hoffähig werden. Die CSU macht das ganz stark, angeblich, weil sie sie damit raushalten wollen aus dem bayerischen Landtag, aber in Wirklichkeit bewirken sie ja das Gegenteil.

the electoral threat that the AfD posed, but the SPD and CDU responded by adopting an adversarial (clashing) strategy, while the CSU co-opted the AfD's positions.

6.5 Stage 3: Mainstream Response From 2017 onwards

The previous section identified that the SPD, the CDU and the CSU acknowledged that the EU needed to change to satisfy public opinion and recognised that Euroscepticism was a factor in driving the support for the AfD. While the SPD, the CDU and the CSU recognised that the AfD was an electoral threat, the SPD and CDU responded differently from the CSU by favouring an adversarial (clashing) strategy over the CSU's co-optation strategy. The following section analyses the response of mainstream parties by looking at party factions and leadership, as well as debates within the German Parliament and the framing of their positions on the question of Europe. It does so by analysing the period from 2017 onwards because this point marked the first time that the AfD had overcome the electoral threshold to enter the German Parliament. Thus, it signified a new role for the AfD.

Therefore, the following section shows that there was internal party pressure in the CDU and CSU on the question of Europe, and that the leadership of the SPD, CDU/CSU influenced the party's attitudes on the question of Europe. The AfD's presence in the Bundestag resulted in the SPD and CDU/CSU being forced to defend their pro-EU positions and attacking (Clashing) the anti-EU policy of the AfD. While the SPD, the CDU and the CSU continued to support enlargement of the EU, the CDU and CSU changed their framing, justifying its opposition to Turkey's membership using cultural arguments.

6.5.1 Party Factions and Leadership

CDU/CSU

The rise of the AfD led to the establishment of the Werte Union (Values Union) group in 2017, with the aim of radicalising the CDU and CSU from within, while also distancing itself from the AfD. Membership of the Werte Union was comparably small (3,000) compared to the CDU (around 400,000), and CSU (just below 140,000)

(Datasmelter, 2020; Koptyug, 2020, 2020a). However, since 2013 membership of the CDU and CSU had declined, whereas the membership of the *Werte Union* had increased. The group had become increasingly visible at the national level as a result of the radical positions it shared with the AfD, and its relatively prominent members, including Hans-Georg Maaßen (Former president of Germany's Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution), and the group's chair Alexander Mitsch (Göpffarth, 2020). Additionally, the Werte Union was associated with other more radical groups inside the CDU including the Berliner Kreis (Berlin District), and the Christdemokraten für das Leben (Christian Democrats for Life) (Göpffarth, 2020).

The Werte Union's position on the question of Europe was noticeably similar to the AfD. The Werte Union rejected anymore 'Euro-rescue packages', a position adopted by the AfD (AfD, 2017; Werte Union, 2017, 2017a).[94] In addition, both the Werte Union and AfD called for a 'Europe of Fatherlands' (Werte Union, 2017; AfD, 2019; Meuthen, 2019). However, the CDU and CSU's position did not change regarding the Euro-rescue or to incorporate the Werte Union's vision of Europe. The same cannot be said for the issue of Turkish membership. The Werte Union (2017) used cultural justifications to oppose Turkish membership on the grounds of the EU's identity. 'Countries whose national territory is not at least 90 percent in Europe may not be admitted to the EU' (p.4).[95] While 'territory' might not be considered a cultural concept, the notion that the CDU and CSU was opposed to Turkey because it was not located on the European continent, meant that Turkey did not fit with the EU's identity. Furthermore, the Werte Union (2017) also stipulated that 'in order to preserve the character of Europe, it is necessary for accession candidates to be deeply rooted in European culture' (p.4).[96] Thus, the position of the Werte Union identifying Turkey as not European was a position shared by the AfD.

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[94] 'Wer diese auf Dauer nicht enhält, soll die Möglichkeit erhalten, die Eurozone zu verlassen'
[95] 'Staaten, deren Staatsgebiet nicht zu mindestens 90 Prozent in Europa liegt, dürfen grundsätzlich nicht in die Europäische Union aufgenommen werden'.
[96] Um den Charakter Europas zu wahren, ist es notwendig, dass Beitrittskandidaten tief in der europäischen Kultur verwurzelt sind.

SPD

While the main focus of this stage is from 2017 onwards, it is important to acknowledge that the SPD has not always been fully committed to European integration. In the 1950s the SPD was critical of the Schuman Plan and criticised the trajectory of the EEC. However, since the 1960s the SPD 'strongly supported the widening and deepening of European integration' (Hertner, 2018: 70). Therefore, while the SPD did not appear to be divided on Europe, the extent to which it focused on the EU during campaigns was criticised particularly in the 2009 European elections. By 2014, 'the SPD led the most EU-focused parliamentary election campaign in its history', arguably because of the PES decision to select Martin Schulz as their Spitzenkandidat (Hertner, 2018: 74).

The election of Martin Schulz, a former MEP as leader of the SPD in 2017, encouraged hope of a possible return of a true alternative to Merkel. In what became known by the media as the 'Schulz effect', he appeared to be a fresh face and the SPD's poll numbers increased (von der Mark, 2017). Schulz tried to benefit from Macron's win in the French Presidential election in Spring 2017, while calling for a common Eurozone budget (Göpffarth, 2017). In addition, Braeuner (2017) suggested that many moderates saw a vote for Schulz as a vote for the European Union, or even as a 'symbol of European integration' (Shoen, 2019: 721). However, the SPD only selectively touched upon Europe in the campaign, and thus Schulz's association with a pro-EU position was not capitalised on.

6.5.2 Addressing the Question of Europe

Having established that groups existed within the CDU/CSU specifically related to Euroscepticism, and that the leadership of the CDU/CSU and SPD influenced the attitudes on European integration, we now examine the extent to which the question of Europe was debated within the German Parliament because MPs 'express, defend and attack opinions and political positions' in parliamentary debates (Van Dijk, 2000: 97). While Figure 6.6 records the number of debates on the EU in the German parliament between 2013 and 2019. It is in this context that it can be seen that the AfD's presence from 2017 had not increased the number of debates on the EU.

(Deutscher Bundestag, no date). However, the AfD's presence in Parliament forced the CDU, CSU and SPD to defend their EU policy. Federal elections took place in 2013 and 2017 which accounts for the smaller number of debates on the EU in these years (see Figure 6.6). The following section analyses the differences that the presence of the AfD in parliament made and also the policy distance between the political parties.
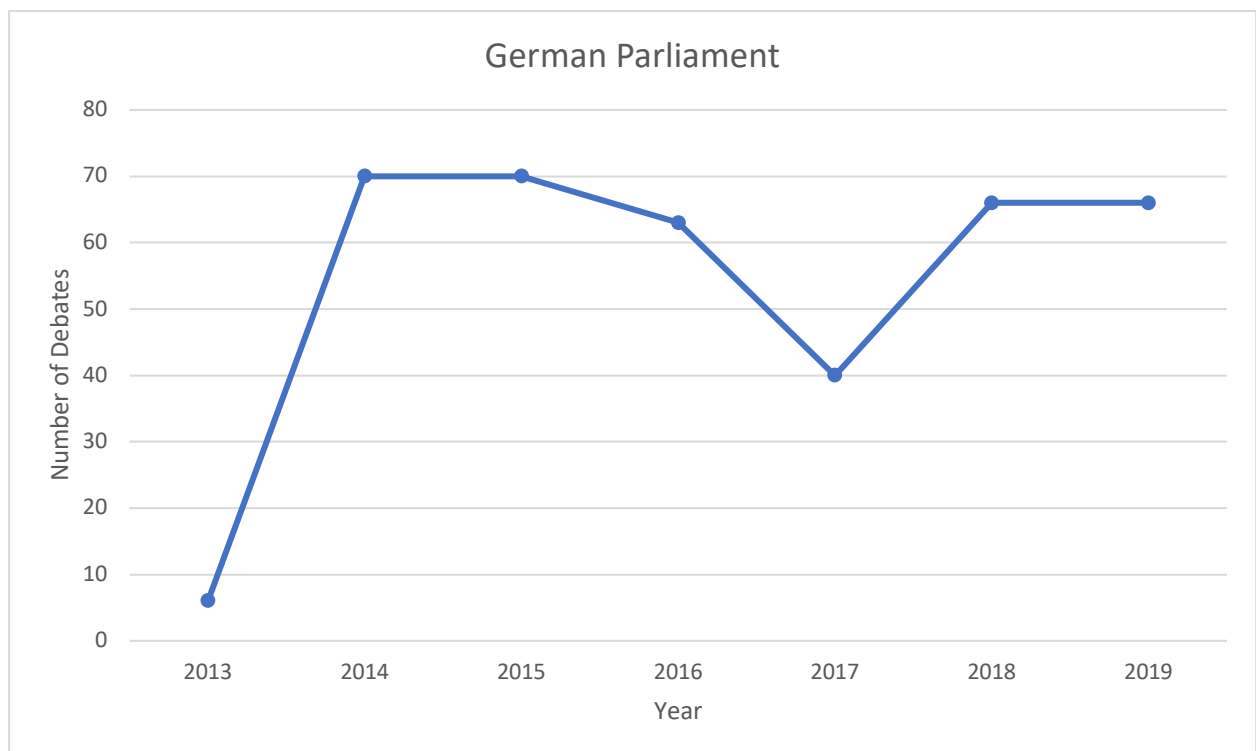
Figure 6.6: Debates on the EU in the Bundestag 2013-2019

Before and after the AfD's Presence

The effect of the presence of the AfD can be shown by looking at two debates on Brexit. The first occurred prior to the AfD's presence on the 28 June 2016, and the second when the AfD was in parliament on the 12 April 2019. In reaction to Brexit, the chairman of the SPD's parliamentary group, Thomas Oppermann stated that 'we must do everything we can to ensure that the EU 27 does not fall apart' and 'that we send a clear signal against anti-Europeans and nationalists' (Deutscher Bundestag, 28 June 2016: 17887).[97] Notably within this statement, there was merely applause from the

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[97] Deshalb müssen wir alles dafür tun, dass die EU-27 nicht auseinanderfällt, sondern zusammenbleibt.

other parties, and no clear expression of disagreement. In contrast, the CDU's Grosse-Brömer reiterates the rejection of nationalism, 'I believe this is the chance to develop Europe positively – not by hating others' which is interjected by the AfD's leader in the German Parliament Alexander Gauland 'we don't hate anyone' (Deutscher Bundestag, 12 April 2019: 11555).[98] Furthermore, when the AfD interrupted on another occasion, CDU Member of the German Parliament (MdB) Leikert attacked the AfD's position 'you prefer to applaud Brexit and […] support Russia in its actions to destabilise the European Union' (Deutscher Bundestag 12 April 2019: 11560).[99] Therefore, there was clear disagreement between the CDU and SPD on one hand and the AfD on the other.

On Turkish accession, one debate occurred prior to the AfD's presence in parliament on the 16 March 2016, and the other the 4 April 2019 which included the AfD. Once again there was little challenge and confrontation in parliament when the AfD was not present. The SPD's Oppermann stated that 'if new negotiating chapters are now opened, this is also an opportunity to work towards fundamental changes in Turkey' (Deutscher Bundestag, 16 March 2016: 15753).[100] In contrast, in 2019 the SPD MP Petry expressed that the AfD's motion to end EU accession negotiations with Turkey 'goes in completely the wrong direction' (Deutscher Bundestag, 4 April 2019: 10978).[101] Thus, the AfD's presence in parliament appeared to vocally challenge the positions of the SPD, the CDU and the CSU, as well as resulting in the SPD, the CDU and the CSU putting a spotlight on the AfD's positions.

Policy Distance

Once in the Bundestag, the SPD and CDU/CSU addressed the AfD's anti-EU stance by presenting their divergent pro-EU positions. The CSU MdB Dr Volker Ullrich

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Noch etwas anderes schulden wir diesen jungen Leuten und allen, die für ein vereintes Europa kämpfen: dass wir ein klares Zeichen gegen Antieuropäer und Nationalisten setzen.

[98] Ich glaube, das ist die Chance, Europa positiv weiterzuentwickeln – nicht indem man andere hasst, (Dr. Alexander Gauland [AfD]: Wir hassen niemanden!)

[99] Hören Sie einfach mal ein bisschen zu, und nehmen Sie das zur Kenntnis. Sie klatschen lieber dem Brexit Beifall, und neuerdings – oder wahrscheinlich schon immer – unterstützen Sie auch Russland in seinen Aktionen, die Europäische Union zu destabilisieren.

[100] Und wenn jetzt neue Verhandlungskapitel eröffnet werden, dann ist das auch eine Chance, auf grundlegende Veränderungen in der Türkei hinzuarbeiten und die Menschenrechtslage dort nachhaltig zu verbessern.

[101] Insoweit geht der Antrag der AfD in die völlig falsche Richtung .

highlighted that 'we, ladies and gentlemen, stand on the side of freedom and the European project of unification' (Deutscher Bundestag 18 January 2018:550).[102] Another CDU MdB Katja Leikert further highlighted that most of the parties within the Bundestag, except the AfD, felt that Europe was a vision of peace and freedom (Deutscher Bundestag, 9 November 2018:7136).[103] The AfD was singled out as 'the only one involved in EU bashing' by the CSU's MdB Hahn (Deutscher Bundestag 13 December 2018).[104] A similar sentiment was echoed by CDU MdB Philipp Amthor (Deutscher Bundestag, 17 January 2019) that what the AfD was doing was 'only part of a general strategy to raise the mood against the European Union' (p. 8642).[105] Furthermore, the SPD MdB Bettina Hagedorn (Deutscher Bundestag, 21 November 2017) stated that 'we will – fortunately, just like large parts of this House – help ensure that a good and objective, but also a pro-European discussion is conducted here (p.114).[106] However, a pro-European discussion also involved recognising that the EU needed to be improved, as highlighted by the CSU's MdB Alexander Radwan that 'with most of the people here, we are discussing how we can make Europe better', except the AfD (Deutscher Bundestag, 20 April 2018: 2548).[107] Thus, the AfD was identified as being in opposition to the CDU/CSU and SPD's pro-EU positions.

Additionally, the CDU/CSU and SPD also tried to counter the positions and arguments that the AfD were making on the EU. The CSU's MdB Florian Hahn (Deutscher Bundestag, 17 October 2018) said that the AfD would like to have an 'attractive EU exit model' which others join so that the EU in its current form collapses (p.6271).[108] Thus, 'we have to prevent that'.[109] The CSU MdB Volker Ullrich also expressed that it would not let the AfD get away with its path of discussing Germany's exit from the EU

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[102] ,Wir, meine Damen und Herren, stand auf der Seite der Freiheit und das europäischen Einigungsprojekts'.
[103] Wir hier, zumindest die meisten von uns – Sie dort auf der rechten Seite nicht; das haben wir ja eben wieder gehört -, empfinden es so, dass Europa unsere täglich gelebte Vision von Frieden und Freiheit'.
[104] ,Sie betreiben allein EU-Bashing'
[105] , Das, was Sie hier machen, ist nur Teil einer allgemeinen Strategie, Stimmung gegen die Europäische Union zu verbreiten . Das lassen wir nicht zu ,
[106] 'Wir werden – genauso wie glücklicherweise weite Teile dieses Hauses – dazu beitragen, dass hier eine gute und sachliche, aber auch eine proeuropäische Diskussion geführt wird'.
[107] ,Mit dem Großteil hier diskutieren wir über den Weg, wie wir Europa besser machen'.
[108] ,Das ist im Übrigen genau das, was die AfD gerne hätte: ein attraktives EU-Austrittsmodell, dem sich andere anschließen, damit die aus Sicht der AfD verhasste Europäische Union so, wie sie ist, endlich in sich zusammenbricht'.
[109] ,Und das müssen wir verhindern'.

(Deutscher Bundestag, 17 January 2019: 8593).[110] Thus, the CDU/CSU and SPD explicitly sought to distinguish their position on the EU in comparison to the AfD. Furthermore, the CDU's MdB Andreas Jung (Deutscher Bundestag, 22 January 2018) stated that 'there has only been two speakers in this debate who have spoken of a European superstate and a federal state of the United States of Europe, [...] and these two members are sitting in front of you' (p.703).[111] Thus, not only did the CDU/CSU and SPD explicitly express the contrast of positions between their pro-EU position and the AfD's anti-EU stance, they also tried to counter the arguments of the AfD. Therefore, in terms of position the CDU/CSU and SPD clearly advocated an adversarial (clashing) response to the AfD. While, the SPD and CDU/CSU's positions continued to express pro-EU attitudes, it is also important to address the framing of the question of Europe.

6.5.3 Framing of the Question of Europe

The analysis of the framing of the question of Europe between 2017 and 2019 is outlined in Table 6.5. Similar to the findings presented in stage 1 (Table 6.3), the AfD largely mobilised arguments to oppose European integration, while the SPD, the CDU and the CSU expressed arguments in favour of European integration. The AfD (2017) employed institutional arguments to oppose further centralisation in terms of a 'united States of Europe' or a federal Europe. The AfD used economic arguments to continue to advocate for the abolition of the Euro (Deutscher Bundestag, 15 March 2019: 10297), and cultural frames to argue that immigration must be controlled to preserve the 'identity of European cultural nations' (AfD, 2019:37).[112]

While the CDU/CSU (2019) and SPD (2019) continued to support enlargement policy as a way to spread the EU's values, the CDU/CSU (2019) also used cultural arguments to oppose Turkish membership, because it was not European. The SPD

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[110] ,Sie diskutieren über den Austritt Deutschlands aus der Europäischen Union. [...] Das lassen wir Ihnen nicht durchgehen'.

[111] Ich möchte Sie daran erinnern, Herr Dr . Baumann, in dieser Debatte gab es bisher zwei Redner, die das Wort von einem europäischen Superstaat und von einem Bundesstaat der Vereinigten Staaten von Europa in den Mund genommen haben, und das sind die beiden Abgeordneten, die vor Ihnen sitzen .'

[112] Jegliche Einwanderung nach Europa muss so begrenzt und gesteuert werden, dass die Identität der europäischen Kulturnationen unter allen Umständen gewahrt bleibt.

used economic justifications to argue for more cooperation including deepening the banking union and having a common EU budget. Similarly, the CDU/CSU used economic arguments to support the creation of an EMF. The CDU/CSU and the SPD also used institutional frames to support the creation of defence union and defence fund, as well as a European army. Table 6.5 summarises the framing used by the SPD, CDU, CSU and AfD.

Table 6.5: Framing of Supporting or Opposing Statements by Parties (Percentages)

	Years	Cultural		Economic		Institutional	
		-	+	-	+	-	+
AfD	2017	12.9	2.9	21.4		60.0	2.9
	2018			35.7		64.3	
	2019	13.0	1.3	18.2	3.9	54.5	9.1
CDU	2017	3.8	3.8	7.7	7.7	26.9	50.0
	2018		3.1	9.4	18.8	28.1	40.6
	2019	1.9	11.5	9.6	11.5	28.8	36.5
CSU	2017	8.3		8.3	16.7	8.3	58.3
	2018		3.1	9.4	18.8	28.1	40.6
	2019	1.9	11.5	9.6	11.5	28.8	36.5
SPD	2017	12.9	3.2		12.9	9.7	61.3
	2018				36.0	8.0	56.0
	2019	4.3	13.0		21.7	4.3	56.5

Notes: The percentages represent the statements for one frame divided by the total number of statements each year. **The shaded fields indicate whether a party family uses cultural, economic, and institutional frames more in a given year.** Frames without direction (-0.5,0 and +0.5) have been excluded from this analysis.

Similar to the framing of the question of Europe that was discussed in Section 6.3.3, the next section will discuss the use of framing in relation to economic and enlargement policy.

Economic Policy

It is worth noting that the CDU/CSU did not support a European economic government throughout 2013-2019 which was why in the coalition agreement with the SPD there was no mention of it (Deutscher Bundestag, 17 October 2018). Furthermore, an economic government was rejected on the basis that it represented 'illegitimate encroachments on the democratic decision processes of participating nations' (AfD, 2017).[113] The AfD's 2019 manifesto used institutional frames to suggest that the reintroduction of national currencies would allow states to regain domestic sovereignty (AfD, 2019: 30).[114]

The SPD's Vice President of the Bundestag, Thomas Oppermann advocated greater cooperation in economic policy using economic frames to support the development of an EMF because it was 'in the interests of our country' (Deutscher Bundestag, 1 February 2018: 832).[115] A similar argument was made by the CDU/CSU. The CSU's Alois Rainer used economic frames to support the further development of the ESM into the EMF in order to help crisis management in the Eurozone (Deutscher Bundestag, 1 February 2018). Thus, on economic policy, the SPD, the CDU and the CSU notably differed from the AfD.

Enlargement Policy

In terms of the framing of EU enlargement, the SPD, CDU, and CSU mostly used institutional and cultural frames to express support for the enlargement to the Western Balkans, and opposition to Turkey's EU membership. However, the CDU/CSU was notably more reluctant to push ahead with enlargement in the immediate future.

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[113] Manifesto in English
[114] 'Durch die wieder eingeführten, nationalen Währungen ist jeder Staat wieder für seine Wirschafts-, Währungs-und staatliche Finanzpolitik verantwortlich und erhält damit seine innenpolitische Souveränität…'
[115] Wir sind überzeugt, dass ein Europäischer Währungsfonds im Interesse unseres Landes liegt.

Western Balkans

The SPD, the CDU and the CSU continued to support the enlargement of the EU which was expressed through both cultural and institutional frames. The SPD MP Josip Juratovic used cultural frames to support enlargement of the EU to the Western Balkans because 'the EU is the only alternative for securing peace' (Deutscher Bundestag, 26 September 2019: 14105). [116] A similar argument was made by the CSU MP Florian Hahn, 'the accession process is the best way to help the country [Albania] get closer to European standards' (Deutscher Bundestag, 26 September 2019:14107).[117] Therefore, enlargement was seen as a crucial process to spread the EU's values. In contrast, the AfD used economic justifications to oppose the accession of the Western Balkans. AfD MP Siegert Droese stated that 'an accession of these countries has hardly any economic added value for the European Union' (Deutscher Bundestag, 9 May 2019: 11826).[118]

However, despite the support for enlargement policy in principle, in practice the CDU/CSU was more reluctant in the near future to enlarge the EU further. 'We do not consider the admission of further countries to be possible in the next five years' (CDU/CSU, 2019: 21).[119] Therefore, this ruled out enlargement of the EU until the next European election in 2024. In addition, Hahn (Deutscher Bundestag, 9 May 2019: 11827) highlighted that 'the start of accession negotiations does not mean accession'.[120] Thus, on the face of it both the CDU and CSU continued to support accession of the Western Balkans through institutional frames, but in 2019 they became reluctant to suggest a time when this would happen or even if it would happen.

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[116] Die EU ist die einzige Alternative zur Sicherung des Friedens.

[117] Außerdem: Im Beitrittsprozess können wir dem Land am besten helfen, an europäische Standards heranzukommen.

[118] Ein Beitritt dieser Länder hat kaum einen ökonomischen Mehrwert für die Europäische Union, der ansonsten immer so stark beschworen wir

[119] ‚Aufgrund unserer Erfahrung mit den bisherigen Beitrittsprozessen halten wir die Aufnahme weiterer Länder in den nächsten fünf Jahren nicht für möglich'.

[120] 'Meine Damen und Herren, die Aufnahme von Beitrittsverhandlungen bedeutet noch lange keinen Beitritt'

Turkey

The SPD's framing of Turkish membership diverged from the CDU and CSU. The SPD used institutional frames to argue that accession talks should not be ended with Turkey because they were the only ongoing dialogue between the EU and Turkey (SPD, 2017). While in 2019, the SPD, did not explicitly rule out Turkish membership, 'neither Turkey nor the European Union are ready for it to join in the foreseeable future' (SPD, 2019:61).[121]

In contrast, the CDU and CSU's position continued to oppose Turkish membership through cultural frames. However, even though the CDU and CSU had opposed Turkey consistently, the framing used to justify the CDU and CSU's opposition changed in 2019. As discussed in Section 6.3.3, economic frames were used to justify opposition to Turkish membership, 'the size of the country and its economic structure' would overwhelm the EU (CDU/CSU, 2014: 77).[122] In 2019, the CDU/CSU's framing changed to oppose Turkish membership on the grounds that it was not European. CDU MdB Philipp Amthor (Deutscher Bundestag, 9 May 2019: 11835) argued that the CDU/CSU stood for a 'Europe that knows its borders' and hence did want Turkey to become a member.[123] The CDU/CSU's (2019) manifesto also echoed that 'our Europe knows its borders, […] there will be no full membership of Turkey in the EU with us' (p.22).[124] Thus, the CDU and CSU's arguments converged with the AfD's, emphasising that Turkey cannot be a member because of the EU's geographical borders, which previously had not been a justification that the CDU and CSU had used to oppose Turkey's membership.

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[121] 'Weder die Türkei noch die Europäische Union sind in absehbarer Zeit für einen Beitritt bereit'.

[122] Angesichts der Größe des Landes und seiner Wirtschaftsstruktur wäre zudem die Europäische Union überfordert.

[123] , Wir stehen für ein Europa, das seine Grenzen kennt~.
Zu einer Europäischen Union, die ihre Grenzen kennt, gehört es, dass wir sagen: Wir wollen zum Beispiel in der Erweiterungsdebatte keine Vollmitgliedschaft der Türkei~. Wir haben uns – das ist für uns ein wichtiger Grundsatz – zu den Balkanstaaten bekannt~. Das ist unsere Agenda, auch wenn Sie uns anderes unterstellen wollen~. Für uns gilt: Vertiefung vor Erweiterung~. Das ist für uns der entscheidende Punkt, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen'

[124] ,Unser Europa kennt zudem seine Grenzen. Eine Vollmitgliedschaft der Türkei in der EU wird es mit uns nicht geben'.

As a result, the CDU/CSU's use of cultural frames to oppose Turkish membership was similar to the AfD. The AfD's framing was dominated by cultural justifications that defined the EU's borders. The AfD rejected Turkish membership because 'Europe has geographical, cultural and historical borders' (AfD, 2014: 10).[125] In 2017, the AfD specifically stated that Turkey was not a European country, and thus does not meet the requirements of a member state of the EU (AfD, 2017; AfD, 2019).

Therefore, this discussion has shown that while on the whole the SPD, the CDU and the CSU used frames to express support for European integration, the CDU and CSU had changed the justifications for their opposition to Turkey. In doing so, the CDU and CSU converged with the AfD's position that Turkey should not be an EU member because it was not European.

6.6 Outcome: The SPD, the CDU and the CSU changed their Policy or Framing of the EU

The entrance of the AfD into the Bundestag resulted in the SPD, the CDU and the CSU having to defend their pro-EU stances, a position which they had previously not found themselves in to any great extent. This was exacerbated by the fact that the SPD, and the CDU/CSU were in a coalition, and thus had set out guidelines for agreement over EU policy. It also meant that the AfD was promoted to the main opposition party, as a result of the grand coalition (Decker and Adorf, 2022).

The CDU and the SPD pursued an adversarial (clashing) strategy, continuing to support greater cooperation in a variety of different EU policy matters, including economic, foreign and security, immigration and asylum, as well as commitment to the EU's enlargement policy, while also attacking the AfD and its anti-EU policy (CDU/CSU, 2013, 2017, 2019; SPD, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2019). However, within this strategy there were slight differences in the sense that the SPD became more overtly pro-EU. Martin Schulz (2017: 55) stated that the only thing that you can say to those who want to dissolve the EU was that 'the European Union is a guarantee for peace, for prosperity and for freedom on our continent'.[126] Thus, with the exception of issues

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[125] 'Europa hat geografische, Kulturelle und historische Grenzen',

[126] 'Denjenigen, die jedoch angesichts der Probleme, die die Europäische Union zweifelsohne hat, fordern, dass sie abgewickelt werden sollte, allen, die schreien: Brexit, Frexit, Nexit, denen kann man nur zurufen: Die Europäische Union ist der Garant für Frieden, für Wohlstand und für Freiheit auf unserem Kontinent.'

relating to the principle of subsidiarity, the SPD advocated more cooperation in all areas. 'Europe is part of the solution, not part of the problem' (Schulz, 2017: 67).[127] 'The goal remains the further development of the Euro zone into a social, economic and political union' (SPD, 2019:42).

In terms of the framing, the CDU and CSU appeared to co-opt the framing of the AfD, as well as its own internal party faction, the Werte Union created in response to the AfD. The CDU and CSU emphasised that opening accession talks did not mean accession (Deutscher Bundestag, 9 May 2019). This distinction and separation between accession talks and accession, suggested that there was some reluctance to support the immediate enlargement of the EU. Furthermore, the CDU/CSU (2019) acknowledged that 'our Europe knows its borders', ruling out Turkish membership on cultural grounds. In addition, the development of the EMF was justified on the grounds that 'the control of the German Bundestag remains in place' (CDU/CSU, 2019).[128]

The change in framing coincided with the CDU and CSU for the first time adopting a common programme for the European elections. It could be said that the change of framing was a result of the CSU's more Eurosceptic attitude to the CDU. However, while reluctance to immediate enlargement had played a role in both the CDU and CSU's campaigns, the notion that starting accession negotiations did not equate to accession was a previously unsaid concept. Furthermore, opposition to Turkish membership on the basis that it was not 'European' had previously not been used by either the CDU or CSU.

The reason that the CSU's MEP Manfred Weber gave for the joint election programme was that 'Europe must be defended against the nationalists and the egoists' (Deutsche Welle, 2019). Although not referring to the AfD specifically, the significance of this decision was that the CDU previously refused a joint programme on the basis that the CSU had a different position on the EU. Therefore, the AfD's influence contributed to the change in the framing used by the CDU and CSU, and the decision to run on a joint campaign in the 2019 European elections.

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[127] 'Europa ist Teil der Lösung, nicht Teil des Problems.
[128] ‚Die Kontrolle durch den Deutschen Bundestag bleibt dabei bestehen'.

Conclusion

The aim of the chapter has been to examine the influence of the AfD on the SPD, the CDU and the CSU's position and/or framing of the question of Europe over the period 2013 to January 2020. It has argued that the AfD has influenced the SPD, the CDU and the CSU to take an adversarial (clashing) response, attacking the AfD as an actor and its anti-EU position. Additionally, the AfD has also influenced the CDU and the CSU to change the framing of its position on enlargement generally and Turkish membership. To illustrate this argument, the chapter has employed a novel process-tracing mechanism that was outlined in Chapter 2.

The mechanism is made up of three main stages. Following a brief discussion of the absence of party competition on the question of Europe among the SPD, the CDU and the CSU, the chapter suggests that the mechanism starts with the Eurozone debt crisis and the entrance of the AfD into the electoral system in 2013. The chapter argues that the AfD was able to shape the debate on the question of Europe (Stage 1) by establishing itself as an 'alternative' to the SPD, the CDU and the CSU's pro-EU positions. The coverage in the media helped to reinforce the notion that the AfD was different by emphasising its anti-EU position in contrast to the pro-EU positions of the SPD, the CDU and the CSU. Furthermore, the AfD used cultural, economic and institutional frames to oppose European integration in comparison to the mostly positive statements used by the SPD, the CDU and the CSU.

The chapter argues that from 2015-2017 the AfD's Eurosceptic message resonated with German public opinion and that the SPD, the CDU and the CSU acknowledged that the AfD was an electoral threat (Stage 2). While public opinion continued to support the EU, there was subtle variation in the extent of that support. At this time, the AfD was also increasing its electoral success with the previous literature establishing that Euroscepticism was one of the main drivers of the AfD's support. The SPD, the CDU and the CSU acknowledged the public's variation in their extent of support to justify a policy of reforming the EU. While all three parties recognised the electoral threat that the AfD posed, the SPD and the CDU responded by adopting an adversarial (clashing) strategy, while the CSU co-opted the AfD's positions.

In Stage 3 there were internal party divisions within the CDU and CSU on the question of Europe. In addition, it also highlighted the role that leadership played in influencing the party's attitudes on the question of Europe. The analysis of the parliamentary debates indicates that the SPD, the CDU and the CSU emphasised their pro-EU position in comparison to the AfD's anti-EU position. Therefore, the SPD, the CDU and the CSU continued to advocate an adversarial (clashing) response to the AfD. However, the CDU and CSU co-opted the AfD's framing of enlargement policy.

As such the adversarial response of the SPD in its position and framing, and the CDU and CSU (except in 2014) in their position was a result of the AfD's electoral success and trying to distinguish themselves from the AfD's Eurosceptic position. The SPD, the CDU and the CSU's need to distinguish themselves from the AfD became ever more important when the AfD introduced a confrontational approach in the Bundestag and became the 'noisy opposition'.

The empirical results of this chapter demonstrate that while mainstream parties may not change their positions on the question of Europe, the AfD can influence the change of framing of EU policy. While the CDU and the CSU adopted an adversarial positional stance, they co-opted the framing of the AfD, as well as the parties' own internal faction, the Werte Union, particularly in 2019. It is important to mention that the Werte Union was reacting to the AfD's success, but it was unclear the extent of the influence of this faction within the CDU/CSU. That being said, prior to the 2019 European elections, the CDU and CSU had run on separate campaigns citing differences of opinion on the EU, but 2019 marked a decision to run a joint campaign to 'defend Europe against the nationalists'. Even though the CSU was considered more Eurosceptic, and a joint campaign requires compromise, defining Europe by geographical borders, the need to justify their EU support, as well the separation of accession talks with the end game of accession, had not been a feature of previous campaigns. Thus, while the CDU, the CSU and the SPD continued to be pro-EU, the AfD had an impact on the framing around the CDU and CSU's EU policy.

Chapter 7

The Influence of FPÖ on the Positions and Framing of the SPÖ and the ÖVP on the Question of Europe

Introduction

The previous chapter revealed how the AfD influenced the SPD, the CDU and the CSU to adopt an adversarial (Clashing) strategy in relation to their EU positions. However, the CDU and the CSU co-opted the AfD's framing of the question of Europe, particularly in regard to enlargement and Turkey's membership of the EU. This chapter studies the final case study of this research, Austria and the influence of the FPÖ on the SPÖ and the ÖVP's positions and/or framing of the question of Europe.

This chapter extends Fallend and Heinisch (2018), Hafez and Heinisch (2019) and Heinisch et al's (2021) argument that the SPÖ and the ÖVP used an adversarial and accommodative strategy as defined by Albertazzi et al (2021) by producing a more nuanced picture that reveals variation in the position and/or framing of the SPÖ and the ÖVP. It does so by applying the mechanism that was developed in Chapter 2 to explain the extent of the FPÖ's influence on the changes made by the SPÖ and the ÖVP on the question of Europe. This novel mechanism will be used to analyse the position change of mainstream parties that was identified in Chapter 4. To recap, Chapter 4 outlined how the SPÖ had continued to be an 'Equivocal Europhile', while the ÖVP moved from an 'Equivocal Europhile to a Critical Europhile'. This finding challenges the common assumption that mainstream parties are 'pro-EU', instead arguing that mainstream party positions on the question of Europe fluctuate over time.

This chapter examines the influence of the FPÖ from 1994 to January 2020 through a process-tracing mechanism that is triggered by Austria's accession to the EU and the presence of the FPÖ in the party system on a Eurosceptic platform. It is then followed by three stages: shaping the debate (1994-2013), public opinion and the awareness of mainstream parties (2014-2017), and the response of mainstream parties (2017 onwards). To support this mechanism, this chapter engages with numerous sources that have also been used in the UK and German case studies including manifestos, media coverage, public opinion and parliamentary debates. The contribution of this

chapter is two-fold. Firstly, it uses a novel process-tracing mechanism to link the influence of the FPÖ to the change of position and/or framing of the SPÖ and the ÖVP, and secondly, unlike previous research it provides a greater focus on the question of Europe, while questioning the simplistic understanding of the SPÖ and ÖVP as pro-EU.

The application of the mechanism to the Austrian case study reveals that the SPÖ and the ÖVP embarked on an adversarial (clashing) strategy by attacking the FPÖ as an actor and its anti-EU position. Both the SPÖ and the ÖVP actively opposed the FPÖ anti-EU position, which focused on singling the FPÖ out as different, in comparison to their pro-EU positions. However, the ÖVP's strategy changed when it decided to cooperate with the FPÖ in government in 2017, co-opting both the FPÖ's framing and position on the question of Europe. The ÖVP-FPÖ coalition also meant that the ÖVP no longer attacked the FPÖ as an actor or its anti-EU position. The SPÖ used the ÖVP-FPÖ coalition to distinguish itself as pro-EU, and thus used an adversarial (clashing) strategy to attack the ÖVP-FPÖ coalition. The chapter also shows that the mechanism appears to work similarly in Austria, Germany and the UK, despite the different country contexts. The following section continues by outlining what environment is needed for the mechanism to act.

7.1 Scope Condition

The environment that is needed for the mechanism to act is the absence of party competition on the question of Europe, as a result of the pro-EU consensus that existed among mainstream parties (Bale and Krouwel, 2013, Waele et al, 2013; Hobolt and Tiley, 2016; Whitefield and Rohrschneider, 2019).

The main focus of this research is on the centre-left SPÖ and the centre-right ÖVP. However it is important to address the context in which the question of Europe was discussed, if at all. The SPÖ was for a long time a 'predominately Eurosceptic party', moderating in the 1970s and advocating EC membership and deeper integration in the 1990s (Fallend, 2008: 208). The ÖVP from the 1960s 'built up an image as the "European Party" of Austria (Schaller, 1997: 54-56). Die Grünen (Green Party) was the only party besides the Communists opposing European Community membership

in the 1980s. However, after the EU membership referendum, Die Grünen, like the SPÖ, gradually became supporters of European integration (Fallend, 2008).

The pro-EU consensus and thus the absence of party competition on the question of Europe was evident by the positions taken by the SPÖ and ÖVP on Austria's EU membership. On the 12th of June 1994, Austria held an EU referendum on its membership and the grand coalition of the SPÖ and the ÖVP stood united to support Austria's EU membership (CVCE, 2016). Therefore, despite the SPÖ's initial Euroscepticism, the SPÖ along with the ÖVP 'maintain pro-EU positions', Furthermore, the grand coalition government of the ÖVP and SPÖ had been the 'hallmark of post-war Austria' (Müller, 2021:41). As a result, the ÖVP and the SPÖ collectively morphed 'into one large pro-EU collective/pole' (Filip, 2021: 168). Therefore, the absence of party competition and political choice fuelled the politicisation of the question of Europe.

7.2 Trigger: Austria's EU Accession Referendum and the Entrance of the FPÖ

As discussed previously, the pro-EU consensus among the SPÖ and the ÖVP was highlighted by Austria's EU accession referendum on the 12th of June 1994. Particularly after 1992, the campaign for accession, supported by the SPÖ and the ÖVP, organised an 'intense and broad information campaign' which focused on contrasting the advantages of EU membership with the negative consequences of getting left behind (Auel, 2018: no page number). On the 12th of June 1994, 66.6 per cent of the Austrian people voted for accession, and 33.4 per cent voted against (Auel, 2018; ÖGFE, 2019). After the referendum, the supporters simply 'stopped talking about the EU' (Auel, 2018: no page number).

Therefore, this silence created an information gap 'that provided an opportunity for Eurosceptics to dominate public discourses', including the FPÖ (Auel, 2018: no page number). The FPÖ was the most vocal opponent of Austria's accession (Wodak and Pelinka, 2009) and was the only party in parliament to offer a political home to Eurosceptic voters (Heinisch et al, 2020). However, the FPÖ was not always a Eurosceptic. The FPÖ was the first party to demand full membership of the EU in spring 1987, followed by the ÖVP in early 1988 (Falkner, 2001). However, the FPÖ moved from a pro-accession stance (1986-1992) to a Eurosceptic position in 1992-

1993 (CVCE, 2016; Hafez and Heinisch, 2019). The FPÖ's change from a pro-EU to an anti-EU party occurred at the same time as it became a 'radical right populist party' (Riekmann, 2011). Since that transformation the FPÖ had been treated as a 'pariah' by the SPÖ, the Greens, the Liberals and the ÖVP and excluded from joining a coalition government after 1986. While other parties have existed that were critical of Europe including the Greens and the SPÖ, the FPÖ was the only party that has remained Eurosceptic.

Therefore, the FPÖ stood on a clear Eurosceptic platform, distinguishing itself from the SPÖ and the ÖVP. Consequently, Austria's accession to the EU and the entrance of the FPÖ in the party system on a Eurosceptic platform can be seen as the starting point of this mechanism and that triggered the influence of the FPÖ on the positions and framing of the SPÖ and the ÖVP on the question of Europe. An overview of the mechanism is provided in Figure 7.1.

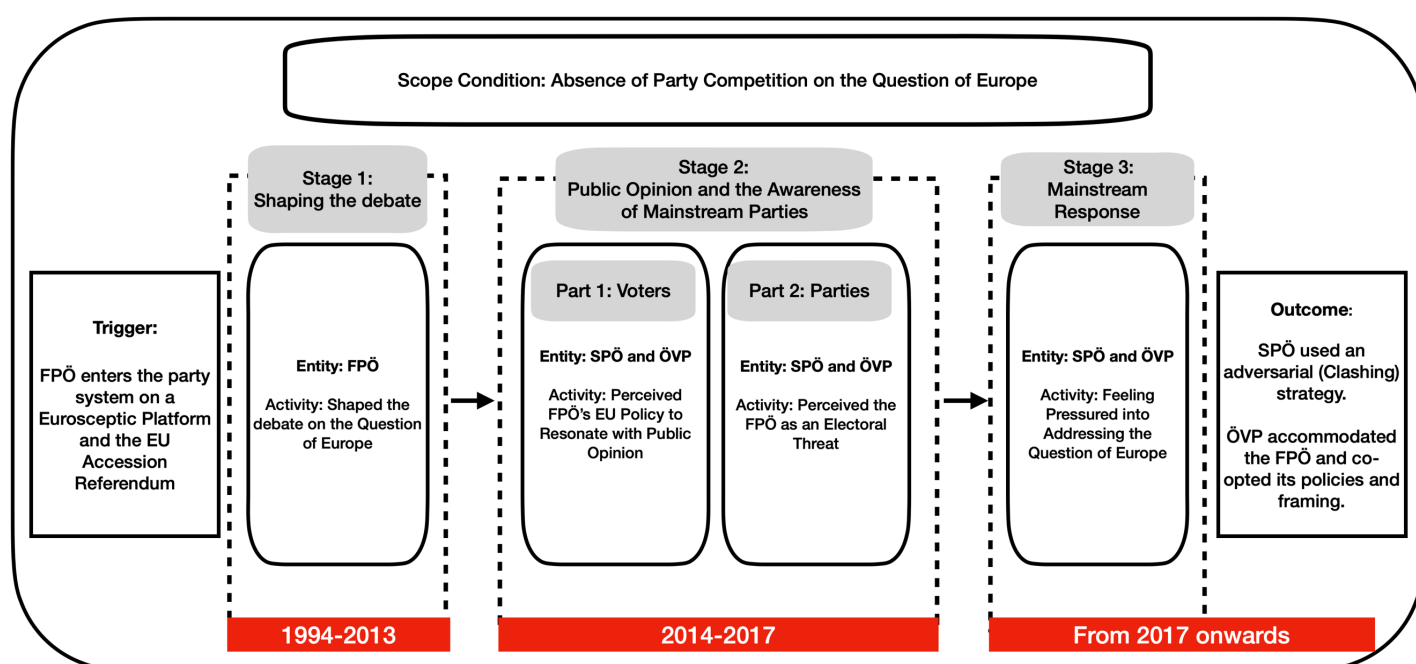**Figure 7.1: Process-Tracing Mechanism**

7.3 Stage 1: Shaping the Debate: 1994-2013

This section analyses how the FPÖ shaped the debate on the question of Europe over the period 1994-2013. This timeframe was used for stage one because the FPÖ was continuing to develop its anti-EU position in these years becoming increasingly negative (Fallend, 2008). As discussed previously, after the accession referendum,

the supporters stopped talking about the EU, including the SPÖ and the ÖVP (Auel, 2018). Alongside this, the increasingly negative position of the FPÖ coincided with the further integration of the EU through enlargement but also treaty change. Furthermore, Austria also joined the Euro during this timeframe.

Therefore, this section shows that the FPÖ was able to shape the debate on the question of Europe, establishing itself as different from the pro-EU consensus of the SPÖ and the ÖVP shown through the framing of the question of Europe, as well as the media coverage of the political parties.

7.3.1 Coverage of the FPÖ in Print Media

The growing literature seeks to explain how parties can shape the debate through their media coverage. The media can play 'an instrumental role in rallying voters' support and disseminating the populist message' (Ellinas, 2018:273). As a result, media coverage or the lack of it can determine the extent to which the FPÖ's message was transmitted to the Austrian public.

Previous research suggests that Austrian newspaper coverage of EU events was, firstly, higher than in other countries and, secondly, political parties' contributed to setting the agenda of media coverage on the EU. In relation to the first point, Trenz (2004) found that in 2000 the centre-left Der Standard and the centre-right Die Presse's coverage of the EU amounted to 50 percent of the total sample, similar to that of Spain and Germany but higher than Italy, the UK and France. De Vreese et al (2006) also found that during the 1999 and 2004 European elections, EU news was most visible on the front pages of the Kronen Zeitung, Der Standard and Die Presse. Greece was the only other country that had greater coverage of EU news. Furthermore, in terms of the second point, Maier et al (2017) focused on the 2014 European elections and found that 45 per cent of the six Austrian political parties' publications led to follow-up publications by media or other parties. Thus, suggesting that political parties contributed to setting the agenda in the media's coverage of EU issues. Therefore, Austrian newspapers appeared to provide more coverage of the EU, particularly in relation to EU events.

While this section focuses on the period 1994-2013, there was no data relating to newspaper coverage prior to 2007, as a result the analysis of newspaper coverage starts from 2007. The coverage by Der Standard and Die Presse (Table 7.1) showed that the salience of the EU in relation to the FPÖ was much lower than it was for the SPÖ and the ÖVP. Both newspapers had a similar amount of coverage of the EU that referred to the FPÖ, while the coverage that referred to the EU in relation to the SPÖ and ÖVP received similar amount of coverage in Der Standard. However, in Die Presse the coverage of the EU in relation to the ÖVP was slightly higher. However, this does not give the whole picture because, as previous research suggests, coverage on the EU increases at certain points in time.

Table 7.1: Newspaper Coverage on the Question of Europe 2007-2013

Newspaper (Total Number of Articles mentioning the EU)	Articles on the EU and at least one party	Percentage of articles on EU and Parties
Der Standard [From 2007] (20,509)		
SPÖ	533	**2.6%**
ÖVP	530	**2.6%**
FPÖ	247	**1.2%**
Die Presse [From 2007] (25,638)		
SPÖ	605	**2.3%**
ÖVP	707	**2.8%**
FPÖ	295	**1.2%**

*Note: Total number of articles on EU and at least one party: SZ 1,310. FAZ 1,067. Percentage calculated by dividing number of articles on party and EU in one newspaper, by the total number of articles in that newspaper.

Figure 7.2 shows that media coverage of the EU in relation to all the political parties was highest between 2007 to 2009, with the exception of the coverage of the EU that referred to the FPÖ in Der Standard where coverage was highest between 2009-2011. The coverage of the EU that discussed the FPÖ received a similar amount of coverage in both newspapers. The frequency of mentions of the EU that referred to the pro-EU

positions of the SPÖ and the ÖVP was more salient than the frequency that mentioned the EU in relation to the FPÖ's anti-EU position. That being said, there was a notable decrease in the coverage of the EU that referred to the SPÖ and the ÖVP in Der Standard from 2009 onwards. As a result, the extent of coverage of the EU in relation to the SPÖ and the ÖVP's was similar to amount of coverage of the EU that mentioned the FPÖ. The coverage of the EU in relation to the FPÖ helped the FPÖ to disseminate its anti-EU position to the public (De Jonge, 2021).
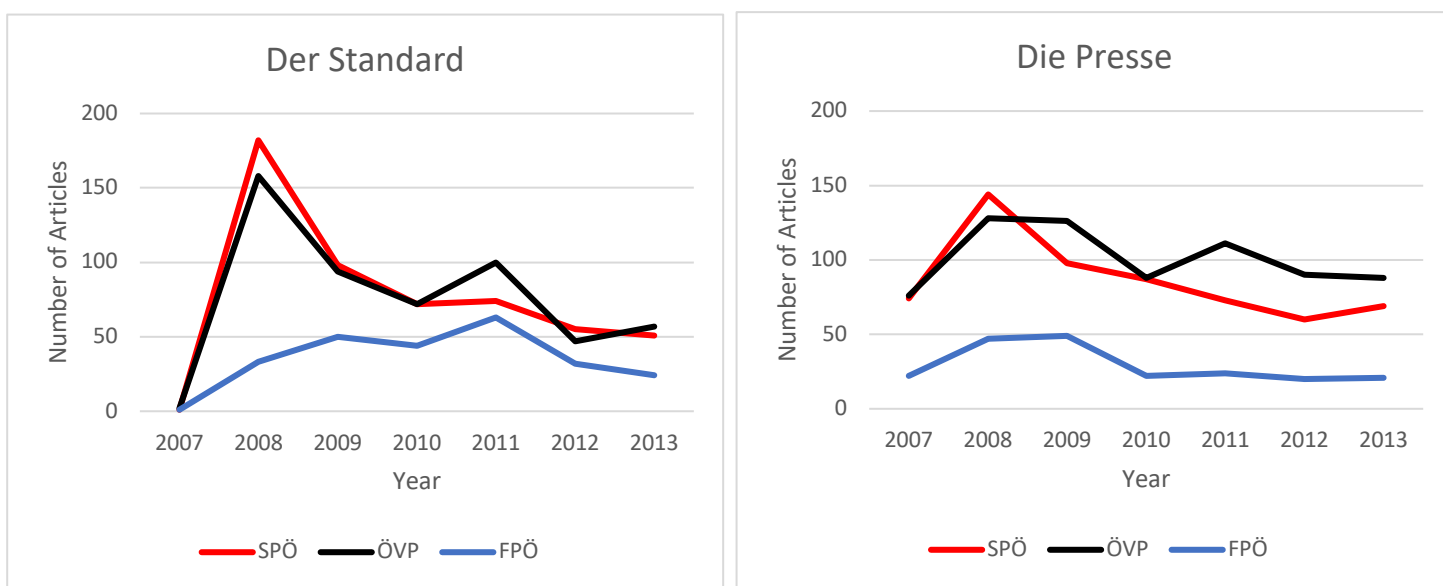
Figure 7.2: Newspaper Coverage of Political Parties and the EU or Europe in Austria

7.3.2. Austrian Political Parties' EU Policy: Coverage Before and After Key Events

While previous research suggested that newspaper coverage increased during major EU events (Schuck et al, 2011; Hix and Wilks-Heeg, 2014), the EU was still covered outside of EU elections or other important EU related events. Between 2005 and 2007, Gattermann (2013) found that coverage in Austrian broadsheet newspapers of the EP was higher than in the broadsheets in Britain, but considerably lower than in Germany. Therefore, to further understand the coverage of the parties' EU policy, the next section will analyse two key events in Austria: 28 September 2008 (Austrian Legislative Elections) and 7 June 2009 (European Elections). The aim of this comparison is to analyse whether the coverage was higher before or after these key

events, and if the content of the coverage of the EU in relation to the political parties changes. These dates were chosen because the question of Europe was at the forefront of discussion during these events.

The number of articles on the EU and one of the political parties per newspaper and key event are shown below in Table 7.2. It shows that on the whole the coverage of the EU in relation to the FPÖ was not as salient in Der Standard and Die Presse compared to the coverage of the EU that referred to the SPÖ and the ÖVP. However, the coverage of the EU in relation to the FPÖ received similar levels of coverage in the aftermath of the European election in Der Standard and Die Presse. The following discussion will analyse two key themes from the coverage including the ambivalence of the SPÖ, the ÖVP and the FPÖ's EU policy and the importance of EU policy to government coalition formation.

Table 7.2: Number of Articles on the EU and Key event

Key Event		Number of Articles			
		Week Before	Week After	Week Before	Week After
	The EU and...	Der Standard		Die Presse	
28th September 2008 – Legislative Elections	SPÖ	9	13	3	5
	ÖVP	8	12	4	6
	FPÖ	5	13	2	8
7th June 2009 – European Elections	SPÖ	10	11	11	10
	ÖVP	13	10	13	10
	FPÖ	5	4	9	7

Note: The shaded fields indicate whether there are more articles in the 7 Days before or after the event

EU Ambivalence

An analysis of the newspaper coverage of the key events in Der Standard and Die Presse indicated that the SPÖ and the ÖVP expressed ambivalent positions on the question of Europe. Before the legislative election, the coverage of the EU in Der Standard reported that 'the ÖVP and SPÖ embarrassingly avoid talking about really

important issues like economic and European policy' (Blom, 2008).[129] In the week before the 2009 European elections, the coverage of EU in relation to the SPÖ and the ÖVP claimed that 'empty slogans mask the pettiness of the Austrian EU election campaign'. For instance 'the EU should be more democratic' (Seidl, 2009).[130] Der Standard (2009) stated that 'not much can go wrong with statements like that'.[131] The coverage of the EU in relation to the SPÖ's defeat was explained by Die Presse as the result of it being 'unable to make its ideas about Europe clear' (Prior, 2009).[132] Despite the vague and empty statements, the coverage of the EU that referred to the ÖVP in Die Presse discussed how being pro-European was a strong motive for young voters to vote for the ÖVP (Salomon, 2009).[133] Thus, voters seemed to identify the ÖVP with a pro-EU position, even though the newspaper coverage suggested the SPÖ and the ÖVP did not have a clear EU position.

The coverage of the EU in relation to the FPÖ appeared to be inconsistent, either suggesting that the FPÖ did not have a clear image of the EU or that it did. The coverage of the EU that discussed the FPÖ after the legislative election, focused on emphasising that the success of the FPÖ was concerning for Brussels, 'there are fears that the Austria virus, which is critical of the EU, could infect other countries' (Die Presse, 2008).[134] After the European elections, the coverage in Der Standard (2009) of the EU in relation to the FPÖ reported that 'a decision to vote for the FPÖ is not made because Mr Mölzer has a convincing idea of the future shape of Europe'.[135] However, the article continued that no potential FPÖ voter was won over by the SPÖ and the ÖVP on the basis of their EU position (Der Standard, 2009).[136] Therefore, the newspaper coverage of the EU in relation to the FPÖ suggested that it was not clear

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[129] Überzeugtheit oder Überzeugungskraft. ÖVP und SPÖ vermeiden es peinlich, über wirklich wichtige Themen wie Wirtschafts- und Europapolitik oder die verpassten Chancen der letzten Regierung zu sprechen

[130] Leere Schlagworte überdecken die Kleinlichkeit des österreichischen EU-Wahlkampfs.

[131] Kernfragen nach der Zukunft Europas werden dagegen von allen Kandidaten eher vage beantwortet: Demokratischer soll sie werden, die EU. Und sozialer. Mit solchen Aussagen kann nicht viel schiefgehen, oder?

[132] Doch Faymann hat einen ziemlich genauen, wenn auch zweiteiligen Befund. Zum einen habe die SPÖ ihre Vorstellungen von Europa "nicht klar machen können".

[133] Jungwähler der ÖVP sind klar pro-europäisch, ein starkes Wahlmotiv.

[134] Man fürchtet, dass das EU-kritische Österreich-Virus andere Länder infizieren könnte.

[135] Eine Wahlentscheidung für die FPÖ wird ja nicht etwa deshalb getroffen, weil ein Herr Mölzer eine überzeugende Vorstellung von der künftigen Gestaltung Europas hätte.

[136] Kein potenzieller FP-Wähler wird so für andere Parteien gewonnen. Aber das liegt auch daran, dass SPÖ und ÖVP, BZÖ und teilweise auch Grüne selbst einen provinziellen, kaum an einem klaren Europabild orientierten Wahlkampf führen.

whether the EU played a role in voting for the FPÖ. That being said, the coverage indicated that the FPÖ was Eurosceptic, in contrast to the pro-EU SPÖ and the ÖVP.

EU Policy and Government Formation

Furthermore, the question of Europe was an important factor in the break-up of the coalition with the SPÖ on the 9th of July 2008 and in the formation of a new coalition government. The coverage in Die Presse of the EU in relation to SPÖ stated that 'before coalition negotiations have even begun, the conflict between the SPÖ and ÖVP over future EU referendums threatens to become a stumbling block for a new edition of red-black coalition' (Ettinger, 2008).[137] Pröll, the ÖVP chief, emphasised that 'it's crazy to sweep the EU issue, which led to the breakup of the coalition, under the carpet. I don't want issues to be left out of government negotiations or the government program just because they are difficult to resolve politically' (Seidl and Weißensteiner, 2008).[138] In coverage of the EU in relation to the SPÖ, Die Presse highlighted the SPÖ's announcement that it wanted to hold a referendum in Austria on new EU treaties 'was one of the main reasons why the ÖVP declared the early end of the coalition'. However, 'in order not to jeopardise a new red-black coalition from the outset, SPÖ leader Werner Faymann […] added that further action on a new EU treaty could be kept out of the pact' (Ettinger, 2008).[139]

The coverage of the EU in relation to the FPÖ suggested that it did not want to be a part of a coalition government. Oswald (2008) reported that 'Strache is making it almost impossible for the SPÖ and ÖVP to enter into concrete coalition negotiations'. Strache formulated several conditions that would be prerequisites for joining the

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[137] Noch bevor Koalitionsverhandlungen überhaupt begonnen haben, droht der Konflikt zwischen SPÖ und ÖVP um künftige EU-Volksabstimmungen zum Stolperstein für eine Neuauflage einer rot-schwarzen Koalition zu werden.

[138] Schauen Sie, das ist ja irrwitzig, die EU-Frage, die zum Koalitionsbruch geführt hat, nun unter den Teppich zu kehren. Ich will nicht haben, dass bei Regierungsverhandlungen oder im Regierungsprogramm Themen ausgespart werden, nur weil es schwierig ist, sie politisch zu lösen.

[139] Der im Juni via "Kronen Zeitung" verkündete Schwenk, dass die SPÖ bei neuen EU-Verträgen jedenfalls eine Volksabstimmung in Österreich abhalten will, war ein Hauptgrund dafür, dass die ÖVP Anfang Juli das vorzeitige Ende der Koalition ausgerufen hat. Um eine neue rot-schwarze Koalition nicht von vornherein zu gefährden, hat SPÖ-Chef Werner Faymann nun in der "Kleinen Zeitung" erklärt, er werde keinem Regierungsprogramm zustimmen, "in dem drinnen steht, dass es keine Volksabstimmung geben darf". Man könne das weitere Vorgehen bei einem neuen EU-Vertrag aber aus dem Pakt heraushalten.

government: 'By February or March 2009, a referendum must be held on the EU reform treaty and the continuation of EU accession negotiations with Turkey'.[140] Furthermore, there was a suggestion that the FPÖ and the ÖVP held different positions on EU. The similar positions of the SPÖ and the FPÖ on holding referendums on EU treaties meant that the coverage suggested that 'on paper, the SPÖ's natural coalition partner would be the extreme right' (Amon, 2008).[141]

The coverage of the EU that referred to the SPÖ, the ÖVP and the FPÖ on the two key events identified in Table 7.2 highlighted that the FPÖ was described as Eurosceptic whereas the SPÖ and the ÖVP were described as pro-EU. While the main focus of this section is on 1994-2013, CHES collected data from 1999-2014. Therefore, Figure 7.3 suggests that the ÖVP was the most internally united on European integration throughout the period from 1999-2014 when compared with the SPÖ. The FPÖ in 2002 was the most divided on European integration, but after 2002 it was the most united. The SPÖ was more internally divided on European integration from 2006 than the ÖVP and the FPÖ, but by 2014 it was less divided (Bakker et al, 2015; Polk et al, 2017). The divisions to some extent reflect the newspaper coverage that the parties' EU positions were not clear.

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[140] Wohl nicht zuletzt deshalb macht es Strache SPÖ und ÖVP fast unmöglich, in konkrete Koalitionsverhandlungen ein zutreten.Am Dienstag formulierte der Parteichef mehrere Bedingungen, die Voraussetzungen für eine Regierungsbeteilung seien. Bis Februar oder März 2009 müsse eine Volksabstimmung über den EU-Reformvertrag und die Fortführung der EU-Beitrittsverhandlungen mit der Türkei abgehalten werden, sagte Strache.
[141] Der natürliche Koalitionspartner der SPÖ wäre nach der Papierform zwar die extreme Rechte,

Chapel Hill Expert Survey

Figure showing a line graph titled "Chapel Hill Expert Survey". Y-axis labeled "Dissent on European Integration" ranging 0 to 10. X-axis labeled "Year" with values 1999, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014. Below the x-axis: "0 (Party was completely united) 10 (Party was extremely divided)". Legend: SPÖ (red), ÖVP (black), FPÖ (blue).

Data points:
- SPÖ: 2.50 (1999), 3.61 (2002), 4.00 (2006), 3.54 (2010), 2.80 (2014)
- ÖVP: 1.00 (1999), 0.98 (2002), 1.86 (2006), 2.43 (2010), 1.90 (2014)
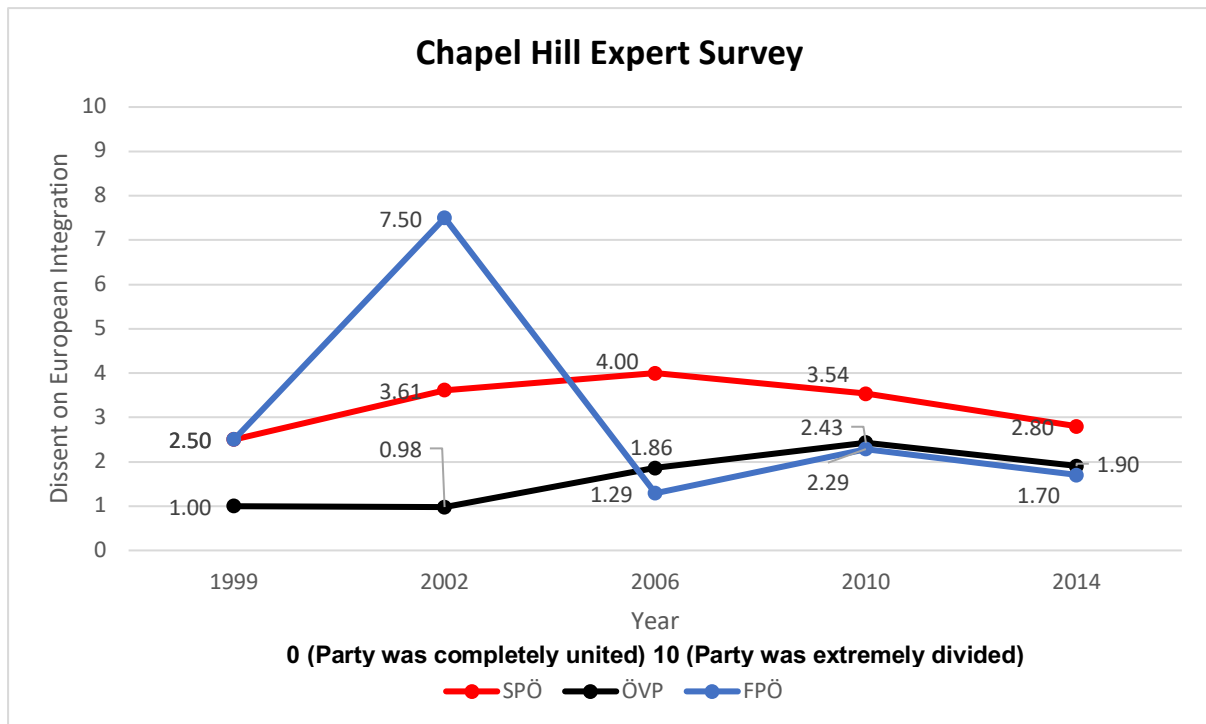- FPÖ: 2.50 (1999), 7.50 (2002), 1.29 (2006), 2.29 (2010), 1.70 (2014)

Figure 7.3: Degree of Dissent on European Integration

7.3.3 Framing of EU Policy

To further understand how the FPÖ shaped the debate on the question of Europe, it was necessary to analyse the justifications or frames that the SPÖ, the ÖVP and the FPÖ used to discuss their EU policy. Debates in the National Council are used alongside manifestos because the FPÖ was represented at the federal level throughout the period 1994-2013.

Table 7.3 summarises the frames that the parties used to discuss their EU policy. The analysis revealed that the SPÖ, the ÖVP and the FPÖ used all three frames – cultural, economic and institutional – in their manifestos and in parliamentary debates. The findings reflected the newspaper coverage of the parties' positions in the sense that the SPÖ and the ÖVP mostly used a range of frames to express support for the EU and the FPÖ to express opposition. Table 7.3 also shows that despite the pro-EU positions of the SPÖ and the ÖVP, they still used certain frames to express opposition, with the ÖVP typically having a higher percentage of opposing statements. For a more detailed discussion of how the frames were operationalised see Chapter 3 (Section 3.1.2).

On European integration, the supporting statements focused on advocating more integration, including the expansion of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, strengthening the rights of the European Parliament and enlargement of the EU to include the Western Balkans. In contrast, the opposing statements included an emphasis on returning powers to member states, and on Turkish membership overstretching the EU's political, social and economic capabilities.

Cultural frames were typically used to express support for a particular policy that would promote EU values such as enlargement or oppose specific countries' membership of the EU because it would threaten the EU's identity, such as Turkey. In general, the SPÖ and ÖVP supported enlargement of the EU to include the Western Balkans because the EU can spread 'peace and stability'. However, the SPÖ argued against a 'United States of Europe' because it would present a threat to diversity of the member states within the EU (Nationalrat, 18 January 2012). On enlargement, the FPÖ used cultural frames to support Serbia's membership on the basis that it was 'European' in the geographical sense and used the same argument to justify its opposition to Turkey because it was not 'European'. Therefore, identity was an important factor that determined a party's support or opposition to a specific country's membership of the EU.

Economic frames were mostly used by mainstream parties to express support for closer cooperation in relation to the EMU and the Euro. While the SPÖ and the ÖVP supported expressed support for EU enlargement because it had economic advantages for Austria (ÖVP, 2004), the SPÖ supported the completion of the Single Market and the EMU (SPÖ, 1999). In contrast to the SPÖ and the ÖVP, the FPÖ (2004) opposed Turkey's EU membership because it would cost too much and wanted to reduce Austria's payments to the EU (FPÖ,2009).

The use of institutional frames focused on the debate on whether there should be more centralisation. Typically, the SPÖ and the ÖVP wanted more cooperation in certain policies. For instance, both the SPÖ and the ÖVP wanted greater cooperation on the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and they expressed commitment to Austria's membership of the EU. On the other hand, the ÖVP (2002) was against a 'European Superstate' and wanted cooperation in only those areas that nation states are not able

to do themselves. In the case of the FPÖ, it argued that the EU was a threat to national sovereignty (Nationalrat, 10 July 2008). Table 7.3 summarises the frames that were used.

Table 7.3: Framing of Supporting or Opposing Statements by Parties (Percentages)

	Years	Cultural		Economic		Institutional	
		-	+	-	+	-	+
FPÖ	1994-2000	20.0		10.0		60.0	10.0
	2001-2007	25.0	3.1	9.4		48.4	14.3
	2008-2013	17.5	1.6	19.0		55.6	6.3
ÖVP	1994-2000	3.7		3.7		22.2	63.0
	2001-2007	5.7	1.9		5.7	41.5	45.3
	2008-2013		2.9		22.9	17.1	57.1
SPÖ	1994-2000				9.5	28.6	61.9
	2001-2007	3.2			6.5	9.7	80.6
	2008-2013	6.7	6.7		20.0	20.0	43.3

*Notes: The percentages represent the statements for one frame divided by the total number of statements in a given year. **The shaded fields indicate whether a party family uses cultural, economic and institutional frames more in certain years.** Frames without direction (-0.5,0 and +0.5) have been excluded from this analysis.*

To further analyse the framing that was used by the FPÖ, the SPÖ and the ÖVP, the next section will discuss the use of framing in relation to subsidiarity policy and enlargement policy. These topics have been chosen because all the parties discussed these issues in their manifestos and in parliamentary debates and were fundamental to the EU. Throughout the period 1994-2013, there had been continuing discussions on treaty change and establishing the competencies of the EU. EU enlargement policy was also topical due to the various rounds of enlargement the EU went through, as well as the firm commitment of SPÖ and ÖVP to support membership of the Western Balkans (Jordan, 2006).

Subsidiarity Policy

In regard to the principle of subsidiarity, all three parties used institutional frames to mostly express opposition to further centralisation. While in a coalition with the ÖVP, the FPÖ's MP Bosch supported a referendum and suggested 'we must ask ourselves to what extent this new European Constitution interferes with the […] Austrian

Constitution' (Nationalrat, 28 June 2004: 50).[142] Outside of government, the framing remained the same but the justification for its opposition to centralisation became more direct. As was illustrated by the FPÖ's chairman Strache who stressed that 'we are witnessing a further abolition of our sovereignty in many areas of this reform treaty' (Nationalrat, 9 April 2008: 84).[143] Furthermore, Strache stated that 'we do not want a process or path that leads towards a European centralist superstate, we want to remain a sovereign state' (Nationalrat 19 September 2012: 97).[144] Therefore, while the FPÖ continued to use institutional framing, the justification for the opposition to further centralisation was more direct, from complaining about the potential interference of the EU constitution to the notion that it would represent a further abolition of sovereignty.

Furthermore, the SPÖ and the ÖVP shared a similar position in regard to the importance of the principle of subsidiarity. In 2002, the ÖVP advocated that only competences that cannot be dealt with by the member states should be located at the European level and that the 'European Union should not and cannot replace the member states' (ÖVP, 2002: 46).[145] Similar positions were reiterated by the SPÖ (2013), which emphasised that 'the policy that the EU should only govern on areas that are useful, should also apply in the future' (p.13).[146] Thus, while there was similarities between the SPÖ, the ÖVP and the FPÖ regarding the principle of subsidiarity, the FPÖ's justification for its opposition to centralisation distinguished itself from the SPÖ and the ÖVP.

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[142] Aber wir müssen uns auch als Österreicher fragen, inwieweit diese neue Europäische Verfassung in die Verfassungsrealität unserer österreichischen Verfassung eingreift.

[143] Ich sage, ein europäisches Verfassungsdiktat, so wie Sie das heute hier in diesem Hohen Haus ohne Volksabstimmung vorhaben ratifizieren zu wollen, bedeutet einen Anschlag auf die österreichische Verfassung und auch einen Anschlag auf unsere österreichische Demokratie, erleben wir doch in vielen Bereichen dieses Reformvertrags eine weitere Abschaffung unserer Souveränität.

[144] Wir wollen aber keinen Prozess oder Weg, der in Richtung eines europäischen zentralistischen Superstaates führt, wir wollen ein souveräner Staat bleiben.

[145] Die Aufgabenteilung zwischen der Europäischen Union und den Mitgliedstaaten soll nach dem Subsidiaritätsprinzip erfolgen. Die ÖVP will, dass nur jene Kompetenzen auf europäischer Ebene angesiedelt werden, die von den Mitgliedstaaten nicht ausreichend erledigt werden können. Die Europäische Union soll und kann die Mitgliedstaaten nicht ersetzen.

[146] Der Grundsatz, dass die EU nur das regeln soll, was auf dieser Ebene sinnvoll ist, soll auch in Zukunft gelten.

EU Enlargement

Regarding the framing of EU enlargement, there was general agreement between all parties in favour of the accession of the Western Balkans and opposition to Turkish accession through cultural and institutional frames. In the case of the SPÖ and the FPÖ, opposition to Turkish membership was clear throughout. However, while the FPÖ was consistently opposed to Turkish membership, the justifications used was visibly more direct when it was not in a coalition government. The ÖVP initially adopted an ambiguous position regarding its support for Turkish membership, which gradually turned into outright opposition from 2013.

Western Balkans

All three parties were clearly supportive of the EU's enlargement to include the Western Balkans. The ÖVP (1996) used institutional frames to support enlargement to the Western Balkans because it will help 'to secure Austria's "return to the centre of Europe" politically, economically and culturally' (p.7). The SPÖ MP Maier used cultural frames to support the enlargement of the EU to the Western Balkans, 'the Western Balkan states […] have always been part of Europe' and therefore they should also become part of the European Union (Nationalrat, 18 November 2010: 91).[147] Similar sentiments were echoed by the ÖVP Foreign Minister Spindelegger that the ÖVP supported the Western Balkans joining the EU (Nationalrat, 18 November 2010) and by 2013 used institutional frames to express that it wanted 'EU accession of all Western Balkan countries by 2025' (ÖVP, 2013: 67).[148] Furthermore, the FPÖ used cultural frames to support the enlargement to the Western Balkans. The FPÖ rejected 'an unrestricted expansion of European integration to geographically, culturally, religiously and ethnically non-European areas of Asia and Africa'. Therefore, the FPÖ advocated a 'freeze on enlargement – with the exception of the Balkan states' (FPÖ, 2008: NPN). As a result, the FPÖ appeared to identify the Balkan states as 'European'. Therefore, all three parties supported the European perspective of the Western Balkans.

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[147] Die Westbalkanstaaten, so auch Serbien, waren immer ein Teil Europas. Daher sollen Serbien und alle anderen Westbalkanstaaten auch ein Teil der Europäischen Union werden.
[148] EU-Beitritt aller Westbalkanländer bis 2025

Turkey

In contrast, Turkish membership proved difficult for the SPÖ and the ÖVP to address. The SPÖ used all three frames to express its opposition to Turkey's membership as 'Turkey's accession would overstretch the EU's current economic, social and political capacities as well as its structures' (SPÖ, 2008, 37).[149] In contrast, the ÖVP's position remained vague throughout the period, but moved towards more clearly opposing Turkey's membership by 2013. The ÖVP's foreign minister Spindelegger questioned 'how far is this Europe supposed to expand' and used institutional frames to suggest that the question was 'whether the European Union can cope with Turkey becoming a full member of this Union one day' (Nationalrat, 29 September 2005:13).[150] Moreover, the theme of EU's capacity to absorb Turkey was discussed in the ÖVP's (2006) national manifesto which insisted that 'the absorption capacity of the Union itself is an equally important admission criterion' and that 'the EU's negotiations with Turkey will have an open outcome'(p.102).[151] The position of the ÖVP (2008) changed slightly to openly opposing Turkey joining the EU in the 'foreseeable future' (p.22).[152] However, the ÖVP did not rule out Turkish membership until 2013 when it favoured a 'tailor-made partnership for Turkey' (ÖVP, 2013: 67).[153]

In comparison, the FPÖ used cultural and institutional frames to oppose Turkish membership, and the justifications used were more direct when it was not a member of a coalition government. In 2004 when the FPÖ was in a coalition government, FPÖ MP Scheibner stated that 'Turkey has once again been given hopes that, in my view, cannot be fulfilled' (Nationalrat 28 June 2004: 34).[154] In comparison, in opposition the

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[149] Aus unserer Sicht würde ein Beitritt der Türkei die derzeitigen wirtschaftlichen, sozialen und politischen Kapazitäten der EU sowie ihre Strukturen überfordern.

[150] Wie weit soll sich denn dieses Europa ausdehnen? Ich glaube daher, dass eine besondere Sensibilität in die Frage der Erweiterung zu legen ist. Wenn jetzt in diesen Tagen entschieden werden soll, wie das Verhandlungsmandat mit der Türkei aussieht, sollten wir als Österreicher genau bei unserer Linie bleiben, nämlich auch die Skepsis an den Tag zu legen, ob die Türkei überhaupt aufnahmefähig ist und ob die Europäischen Union verkraften kann, dass die Türkei einmal Vollmitglied dieser Union wird.

[151] Wir werden aber in der künftigen Erweiterungsdebatte auch darauf bestehen, dass nicht nur die Reife des Kandidatenlandes, sondern auch die Aufnahmefähigkeit der Union selbst ein gleichwertiges Aufnahmekriterium ist. Österreich hat durchgesetzt, dass die Verhandlungen der EU mit der Türkei einen offenen Ausgang haben werden.

[152] Einen Beitritt der Türkei zur EU wird es auf absehbare Zeit nicht geben.

[153] Maßgeschneiderte Partnerschaft für die Türkei.

[154] Man hat der Türkei wieder Hoffnungen gemacht, die aus meiner Sicht nicht erfüllbar sind.

FPÖ used cultural frames to oppose 'unrestricted expansion of European integration to geographically, culturally, religiously and ethnically non-European areas. […] This applies above all to Turkey's membership aspirations' (FPÖ, 2008: NPN).[155] These sentiments are continued in the following years, 'Turkey is historically and culturally not a European Country' and in 2009, the FPÖ's leader Strache stated that 'It will not become a European country' (Nationalrat 21 January 2009: 102).[156] Therefore, opposition to Turkish membership was a position consistently held by the FPÖ, but outside of government, its justification for its opposition was more direct, increasingly emphasing the cultural aspect that Turkey was not 'European'.

The previous literature suggested that as a result of the FPÖ's 'hard Eurosceptical, nativist, xenophobic and blue-collar protectionist positions', particularly after the FPÖ split in 2005, it was expected that the FPÖ would use all three frames to express opposition (Hafez and Heinisch, 2019: 148). Furthermore, as a member of the far-right party family, the FPÖ was expected to use more cultural frames to express opposition because far-right parties perceive the EU to be a threat to the nation's homogeneity and oppose it predominately on ethnic grounds (Halikiopoulou et al, 2012). While institutional frames were used more to express opposition to the EU, it was also coupled with cultural and economic frames.

Regarding the literature on the party families of the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats, Table 7.3 reflects the expectation that SPÖ and the ÖVP were in favour of economic and political integration (Pelinka, 2013a; Waele, 2013; Gruber and Bale, 2014), as both parties used economic and institutional frames to show support for the EU. However, in light of the ÖVP's coalition with the FPÖ, Heinisch et al (2021) noted that the ÖVP was prepared to weaken its traditional pro-EU stance, and therefore, the ÖVP might increase the use of framing to oppose aspects of the EU. During the years 2001-2007 (at least some of these years included the FPÖ as a coalition partner) there was an increase in the ÖVP's use of negative institutional framing, which was similar to the FPÖ. That being said, the ÖVP still used institutional frames to express support

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[155] Die FPÖ erteilt einer schrankenlosen Ausweitung der europäischen Integration auf geographisch, kulturell, religiös und ethnisch nicht-europäische Gebiete Asiens und Afrikas eine klare Absage. Dies betrifft derzeit vor allem die Beitrittswünsche der Türkei.

[156] Genau da wollen wir auch vehement Widerstand leisten, weil die Türkei nichts in der Europäische Union verloren hat und weder in hundert noch in zweihundert Jahren ein europäisches Land werden wird

for the EU. The results also suggested that alongside expressing support for the EU, the SPÖ and the ÖVP used cultural and institutional frames to express varying levels of opposition to the EU, rather than economic frames. To some extent this can be explained by the fact that as the SPD as a Social Democratic party and the ÖVP as Christian Democrats were understood to be supportive of economic integration (Pelinka 2013a; Waele, 2013; Gruber and Bale, 2014). Furthermore, the SPÖ and the ÖVP were committed to the EU's key economic policies including the Single Currency, ESM, and EMU. Therefore, opposition to European integration on the basis of economic justifications was limited.

In summary, the FPÖ was already an established party prior to 1994. Yet it was able to shape the debate on the question of Europe by changing to a Eurosceptic position which, from the public perspective, distinguished it from the SPÖ and ÖVP's pro-EU position.

7.4 Stage 2: Public Opinion and the Awareness of Mainstream Parties 2014-2017

The previous section outlined how the FPÖ was able to shape the debate on the question of Europe by being distinct from its mainstream competitors, the SPÖ and the ÖVP. Following on from this, mainstream parties need to be aware, firstly, that the FPÖ's Eurosceptic message resonated with public opinion and, secondly, as a result of this the FPÖ was considered an electoral threat (Figure 7.1). Therefore, this section is split into two separate parts. The first part discusses the extent to which the FPÖ's Eurosceptic message resonated with public opinion by analysing indirect (opinion polls) and direct (voting in elections) forms of public resonance (Trenz and Eder, 2004; De Wilde, 2011). The second part discusses firstly, the SPÖ and the ÖVP's acknowledgement that public opinion had changed on the question of Europe, and secondly, the recognition that the FPÖ posed an electoral threat. Both parts of stage 2 focus on the period between 2014 and 2017 because the FPÖ was increasing its electoral success which resulted in the FPÖ entering a coalition government with the ÖVP in 2017 **(**Bodlos and Plescia, 2018).

Therefore, the first part of the section argues that while there was support for the EU, there was a significant proportion of the Austrian public that were sceptical about the

EU. Alongside this, the FPÖ increased its electoral success with Euroscepticism as one of the main motives driving its support.

Part 1: The Voters

7.4.1 Public Attitudes on EU Membership: Indirect

Despite the initially very positive attitudes of citizens towards the EU (66.58 per cent of voters supported Austria's accession to the EU), public opinion had subsequently shifted to Euroscepticism rather quickly (Liebhart, 2020). Fallend (2008) suggested that a majority of Austrian citizens can be classed as Eurosceptics. Between 1994 and 2019, the Eurobarometer asked respondents, 'Generally speaking, do you think that (your country's) membership of the EU is?*',* a good thing, neither a good nor bad thing, a bad thing or do not know (European Commission, 2020; European Parliament, no date, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019**).** The survey from the Austrian Society for European Politics ÖGFE (2019) [157] from 1995-2019 asked 'Should Austria remain a member of the European Union or leave it?'.

While this section mainly focuses on the period between 2014 and 2017, it is important to recognise that Austrian public opinion has fluctuated from 1994 onwards, and the period from 2014-2017 to some extent reflects a gradual long-term downward trend in attitudes towards Europe as shown by Figure 7.4 (European Parliament 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017; ÖGFE, 2019).

Relating specifically to the period 2014-2017, the Eurobarometer shows that most respondents thought that Austria's membership of the EU was a good thing. However, between 2015 and 2016 there was a decrease in those who thought membership was a good thing, and an increase in those who thought membership was a bad thing. The change in responses coincided with the refugee crisis and Brexit. Furthermore, the second highest response was that EU membership was 'neither a good thing nor bad thing', By 2017, EU membership as a good thing increased to 45 percent, the highest it has been since Austria joined the EU in 1994.

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[157] Österreichische Gesellschaft für Europapolitik

The survey conducted by ÖGFE shows that while most respondents wanted Austria to remain in the EU, between 2014 and 2016 there was a decline in those who said they wanted to remain and an increase in those who said they wanted to leave. By 2016, those who wanted to remain increased back to pre-2014 levels, and those who said they wanted to leave declined. This fluctuation coincided with the refugee crisis and Brexit.

During the period between 2014 and 2017 most respondents either thought that the EU was a good thing or neither a good nor bad thing. Furthermore, there was an increase in the respondents that thought that EU membership was a bad thing. The results are also reflected in the data from ÖGFE which saw an increase in those who wanted to leave, and a decrease in those that wanted to remain. Despite the increase of respondents that thought the EU was a good thing in 2017, it remained less than 50 percent of the total respondents. Additionally, over 50 percent of respondents thought that the EU was either a neither good nor bad, or a bad thing. Therefore, it suggested that while there was support for EU membership, it was limited.
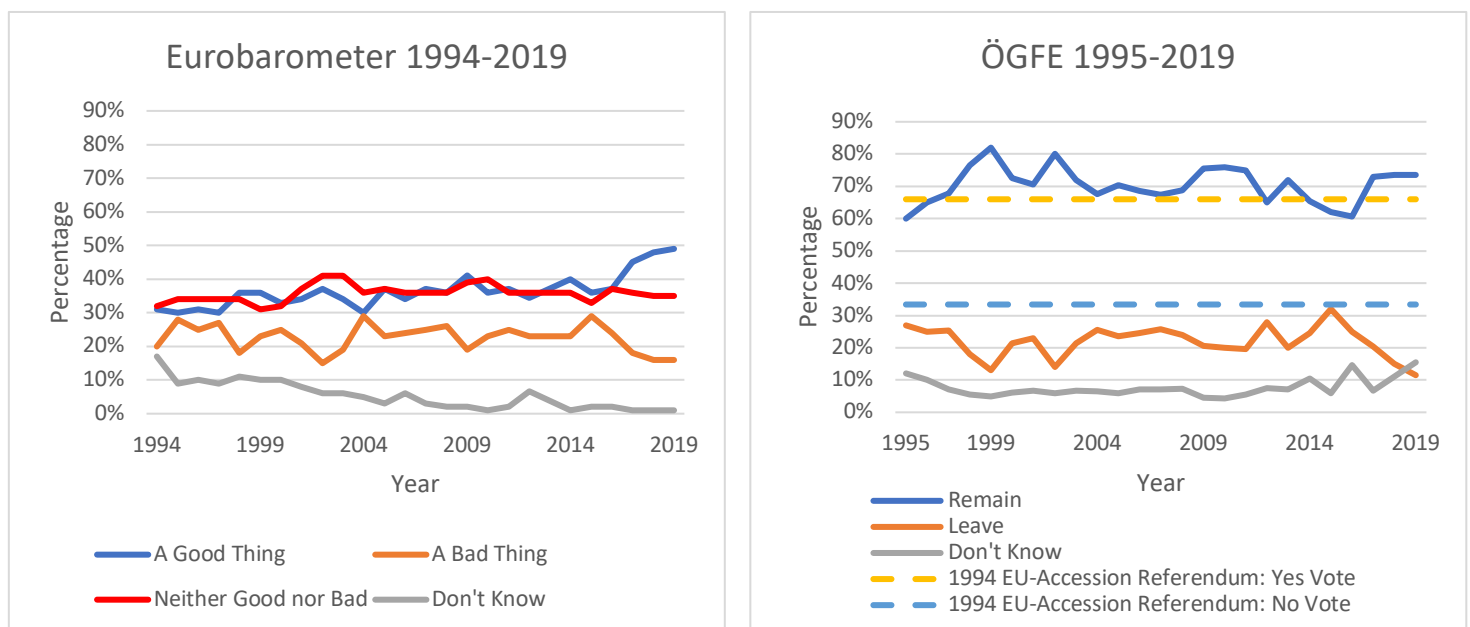

Figure 7.4: Attitudes towards Austrian Membership of the European Union

Another indicator of the Austrian public's attitudes towards EU membership was provided by the Eurobarometer (European Commission, 2019, 2019a) on the

proportion of people that think that the EU was the most important issue facing Austria. While the EU was rarely considered the most important issue, it was a feature of public concern (GfK Verein, 2015, 2017; European Commission, 2019, 2019a). As a result of the complexity of the relationship between the EU and its member states, the top three most important issues identified between 2014 and 2017, such as immigration, often were explicitly linked to the EU. Gfk Verein (from 2018 Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions) emphasised that the concern of immigration/integration of immigrants was directly related to the European refugee crisis (Gfk Verein, 2015, 2017). Thus, Europe was intrinsically linked to other issues including the economy and immigration. In summary, public opinion was supportive of the EU, but there was a significant proportion of the public that were sceptical about the EU.

7.4.2 Public Attitudes on EU Membership: Direct
7.4.2.1 Electoral Success of the FPÖ

The public can also participate in the debate on the question of Europe by voting in elections (De Wilde, 2011). While the main focus of this stage is between 2014 and 2017, it is important to acknowledge the broader trend of electoral success over the years. An overview of FPÖ's electoral success at state, federal and European level from 1995 to 2020 is provided in Table 7.4.

At the state level, Hafez and Heinisch (2019) noted that other parties' were increasingly willing to cooperate with the FPÖ. On a national level, the SPÖ and the ÖVP were reluctant to enter a coalition with the FPÖ. However, this reluctance appeared not to hinder the FPÖ, not least because it had been a junior partner on two occasions, but also the FPÖ increased its votes between 1986 and 1999 which changed the nature of competition (Fallend and Heinisch, 2018). The FPÖ's electoral success over the years meant that 'absolute majorities ceased being realistic goals for the major parties'. Instead the SPÖ and the ÖVP pursued a strategy of 'winning enough voters to ensure the continuation of their partnership' (Fallend and Heinisch, 2018: 36). As a result, the nature of grand coalition politics forced both the SPÖ and the ÖVP to explain and defend the government's record. Between 2014 and 2017 the FPÖ was increasing its electoral success at state, federal and a European level, which culminated in the FPÖ becoming a junior partner in a coalition with the ÖVP in 2017.

Table 7.4: Percentage of FPÖ's Vote Share and Seat Distribution

Election Year	Vote Share	Seats	Largest Party	Coalition
National Legislative Elections (Total 183 seats)				
1995	22.0%	41	3rd	SPÖ/ÖVP
1999	26.91%	52	2nd	ÖVP/FPÖ
2002	10.01%	18	2nd	ÖVP/FPÖ/BZÖ
2006	11.04%	19	3rd	SPÖ/ÖVP
2008	17.54%	34	3rd	SPÖ/ÖVP
2013	20.51%	40	3rd	SPÖ/ÖVP
2017	26.0%	51	3rd	ÖVP/FPÖ
2019	16.2%	31	3rd	ÖVP/Greens
European Elections				
1996	27.62%	6	3rd	-
1999	23.4%	3	3rd	-
2004	6.3%	1	5th	-
2009	12.71%	2	4th	-
2014	19.72%	4	3rd	-
2019	17.20%	3	3rd	-
State Elections				
2000				
Burgenland	12.63%	4	3rd	SPÖ/ÖVP
Styrian	12.41%	7	3rd	ÖVP
2001				
Vienna	20.16%	21	2nd	SPÖ
2003				
Lower Austria	4.49%	2	4th	ÖVP
Tyrol	7.97%	2	4th	ÖVP/SPÖ
Upper Austria	8.40%	4	4th	ÖVP/Greens
2004				
Carinthia	42.43%	16	1st	FPÖ
Salzburg	8.7%	3	3rd	SPÖ/ÖVP
Vorarlberg	12.9%		3rd	ÖVP
2005				
Burgenland	5.75%	2	3rd	SPÖ/ÖVP
Styrian	4.56%	0	5th	SPÖ/ÖVP

Vienna	14.83%	13	4th	SPÖ
2008				
Lower Austria	10.47%	6	4th	ÖVP
Tyrol	12.41%	4	4th	ÖVP/SPÖ
2009				
Carinthia	3.76%	0	5th	FPK[158]/ÖVP
Salzburg	13.0%	5	3rd	SPÖ/ÖVP
Upper Austria	15.29	9	3rd	ÖVP/Greens
Vorarlberg	25.1%	9	2nd	ÖVP
2010				
Burgenland	8.98%	3	3rd	SPÖ/ÖVP
Styrian	10.66%	6	3rd	SPÖ/ÖVP
Vienna	25.77%	27	2nd	SPÖ/Greens
2013				
Carinthia	37.1%	6	2nd	SPÖ/Greens
Lower Austria	8.21%	4	3rd	ÖVP
Salzburg	17.0%	6	4th	ÖVP/Greens/Team Stronach
Tyrol	9.34%	4	4th	ÖVP/Greens
2014				
Vorarlberg	23.4%	9	2nd	ÖVP/Greens
2015				
Burgenland	15.04%	6	3rd	SPÖ/FPÖ
Styrian	26.76%	14	3rd	SPÖ/ÖVP
Upper Austria	30.36%	18	2nd	ÖVP/FPÖ
Vienna	30.79%	34	2nd	SPÖ/Green
2018				
Carinthia	47.9%	9	2nd	SPÖ/ÖVP
Lower Austria	14.76%	8	3rd	ÖVP
Salzburg	18.8%	7	4th	ÖVP/Greens/NEOS
Tyrol	15.53%	5	4th	ÖVP/Greens
2019				
Styrian	23.02%	12	3rd	ÖVP/SPÖ

*Note: Shaded areas represent an increase in the FPÖ's electoral success where the FPÖ has already participated in an earlier election
Sources: Interior Federal Ministry, European Election Database, European Parliament, State Parliament

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[158] Regional Variation of the FPÖ

While the FPÖ's electoral success had increased, in order for public opinion to resonate with the FPÖ's Eurosceptic message, Euroscepticism needs to be [one of] the main motives for voting for the FPÖ. Previous research suggests that, firstly, FPÖ voters were associated with Euroscepticism and, secondly, that it was hard to separate the two issues of immigration and Euroscepticism as the main motives to vote for the FPÖ

To address the first point, the average position of FPÖ supporters on the EU was in line with the party's announced platform on EU integration (McGann and Kitschelt, 2005). Furthermore, McGann and Kitschelt identified that it was the specific concerns of opposition to immigration and the EU that made the most difference between constituencies of the FPÖ and the other parties. Additionally, Plasser (2016) found that different degrees of EU-scepticism existed between the party electorates, but by far the highest scepticism was found among FPÖ voters. Therefore, Euroscepticism was explicitly linked to the FPÖ.

In relation to the second point, it was difficult to establish Euroscepticism as the main motive of voting for the FPÖ because it was linked with other issues such as immigration. Aichholzer et al (2014) suggested that the drivers of the FPÖ's support were different from those underlying the support for the SPÖ and the ÖVP. While anti-immigration views strongly predicted the FPÖ's support, less strong but still important was Euroscepticism. In 2017, asylum and migration, security and social benefits were considered the most important motives for voting for the FPÖ, coinciding with the refugee crisis and Brexit (SORA, 2017). As a result, the question of Europe played a role in driving the FPÖ vote, but the extent of that role was hard to establish.

Therefore, this discussion has shown that while there was support for the EU, there was also a proportion of the Austrian public that was reluctant to support the EU. During this time, the FPÖ's electoral success increased with Euroscepticism as one of the main motives driving the FPÖ. However, for the process-tracing mechanism to proceed as Figure 7.1 depicted, the following section outlines that the SPÖ and the ÖVP need to acknowledge that public opinion on the question of Europe is sceptical and perceive the FPÖ as an electoral threat.

7.4.3 Public Opinion and the Electoral Threat of the FPÖ

The following discussion analyses the second part of this section, namely that the SPÖ and the ÖVP acknowledged that public opinion had changed on the question of Europe and that the FPÖ posed an electoral threat. Therefore, this part argues that the SPÖ and the ÖVP recognised that public opinion on the EU had changed which was used to justify a promotion of further integration. It further argues that the FPÖ was an electoral threat to the SPÖ and the ÖVP which resulted in both parties contemplating the possibility of a future coalition with the FPÖ.

Part 2: Political Parties and Public Opinion

The SPÖ and the ÖVP acknowledged that the Austrian public varied in the extent of their support for the EU and perceived the variation of public support as a means to promote further integration. Former Vice Chancellor and Chair of the ÖVP Reinhold Mitterlehner (2019) stated that 'citizens do not experience the EU as an institution that solves problems together, but often creates problems through bureaucratic overregulation' (p.193).[159] Furthermore, the ÖVP's leader Sebastian Kurz was asked about 'the public's discomfort' with the European project, and Kurz suggested that 'we need to honestly admit that it desperately needs to develop further' (Mayr and Rohr, 2016). A similar argument was made by the SPÖ (2014), that in order to 'regain the confidence in the European idea' it means admitting to mistakes and changing direction (p.16).[160] In contrast the FPÖ presented themselves as representing the Austrian people. The FPÖ's leader Heinz-Christian Strache stated that 'those who have Europe in their hearts – and that is what we have as Austrian patriots – must ultimately also articulate criticism of undesirable developments' (Zirnig, 2017).[161] Therefore, the SPÖ, the ÖVP and the FPÖ recognised that the EU needed to change to satisfy public opinion.

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[159] Last but not least erleben die Bürger die EU nicht als Einrichtung, die gemeinsam Probleme löst, sondern oft durch bürokratische Überregulierung Probleme macht.

[160] Das bedeutet auch, offen seine Fehler einzugestehen und mutig genug zu sein, um seine Richtung zu ändern. Wollen wir das Vertrauen in die europäische Idee zurückgewinnen, ist das entscheidend.

[161] Wer Europa im Herzen hat - und das haben wir als österreichische Patrioten -, der muss letztlich Kritik an Fehlentwicklungen auch artikulieren.

The Electoral Threat of the FPÖ and its Supporters

As previously discussed, the SPÖ, the ÖVP and the FPÖ recognised that the EU needed to change in light of the public's attitude towards it. Between 2014 and 2017, the FPÖ had increased its electoral success resulting in it joining a coalition government as a junior partner with the ÖVP as shown by Table 7.4. The voter flow analysis produced by SORA (no date) over the period between 1994 and 2019 suggested that both the SPÖ and the ÖVP lost voters to the FPÖ from 1994 to the election of 2017, except for 1999-2002 for the SPÖ. In 2017, the SPÖ and the ÖVP lost comparably fewer voters to the FPÖ compared to previous years. Therefore, between 2014 and 2017 the FPÖ had continued to take votes away from both the SPÖ and the ÖVP.

Voting Intentions

While both parties lost voters to the FPÖ, the electoral threat of the FPÖ can also be measured through the potential for the SPÖ and the ÖVP to lose further votes (Somer-Topcu, 2009; Zobel and Minkenberg, 2019). Figure 7.5 shows the voting intentions of the Austrian public from late 2013 to the end of 2019 (Politico, no date). The main focus of this section is between 2014 and 2017, but it is important to situate these years within the broader trend of public opinion over time. There did not appear to be data on the voting intentions of the Austrian public prior to 2013.

Figure 7.5 shows that between late 2013 to the end of 2014 the share of voters who intended to vote for the FPÖ and the SPÖ was similar, and the gap that existed with the ÖVP closed from the beginning of 2015 (Politico, no date). Therefore, the electoral support for all three parties was broadly similar, coinciding with the refugee crisis and the debate over Brexit. From the middle of 2015 until early 2017 the number of voters who said they would vote for the FPÖ was higher than for both the SPÖ and the ÖVP. By the end of 2017, those who said they would vote for the FPÖ declined, receiving a similar amount to the SPÖ, while the ÖVP's voting intentions increased. Interestingly, when it was in opposition between 2014 and 2017 the FPÖ's support was higher than support for either the SPÖ or the ÖVP, but it began to decline when the FPÖ participated in a government coalition in 2017. The increased volatility particularly in

the years 2014-2017 meant that parties could not guarantee the public's support. However, while there was a significant proportion of the public that were sceptical about the EU, and the FPÖ increased its electoral success with Euroscepticism being one of the main motives driving its support, the SPÖ and the ÖVP need to acknowledge these factors and perceive the FPÖ to be an electoral threat.
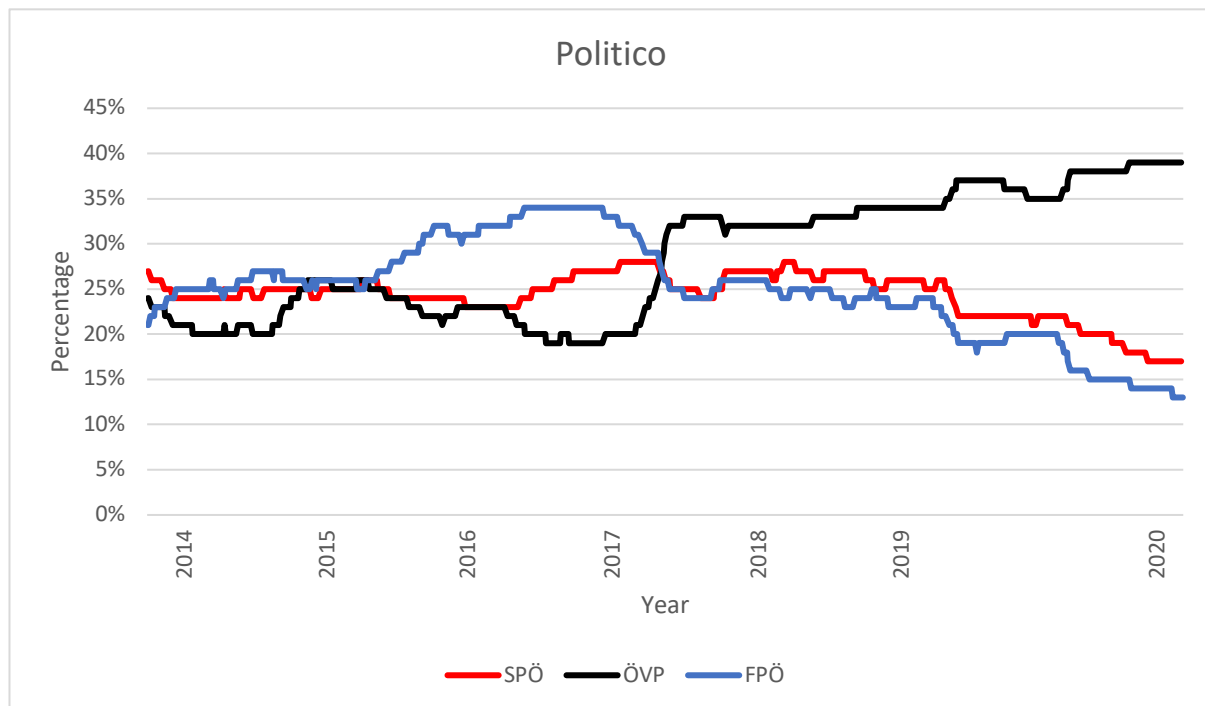

Figure 7.5: Austrian Public Voting Intention

The SPÖ and the ÖVP: An Acknowledgement of the FPÖ threat

Gruber and Bale (2014) suggested that the ÖVP had competed against the FPÖ over almost three decades and has 'tried all sorts of ways to deal with it' (p. 239). Indeed, the SPÖ and the ÖVP acknowledged the success of the FPÖ and that to combat the threat that the FPÖ posed, they were prepared to accommodate the FPÖ by welcoming it into a coalition government.

Firstly, the SPÖ and the ÖVP acknowledged the electoral success of the FPÖ. In the Austrian Presidential Elections in 2016, both the SPÖ and the ÖVP's presidential candidates were knocked out in the first round, with the FPÖ's candidate Nobert Hofer coming first, followed by the Green party candidate, Alexander Van der Bellen

(Zeglovits et al, 2016). In response, the ÖVP MP Fischler suggested that the voters knocking out the SPÖ and the ÖVP's Presidential candidate was 'an announcement against the grand coalition, which they no longer want' (Kaess, 2016a).[162] Moreover, in 2017, the ÖVP MP Wöginger recognised that the political landscape had changed and the FPÖ had been strengthened (Nationalrat 9 November 2017).

Furthermore, the prospect of a ÖVP coalition government with the FPÖ, and the debates within the SPÖ about how to deal with the FPÖ, also showed that both parties recognised the threat that the FPÖ posed. The SPÖ's leader Christian Kern refused to rule out a coalition with the FPÖ but pointed to 'all the difficulties the prospect of the FPÖ suddenly taking centre-stage in Austrian politics' (The Economist, 2017). However, the ÖVP's leader Sebastian Kurz highlighted that the SPÖ 'held talks with the FPÖ in 2017 and has a coalition with the FPÖ at provincial level' (Bild, 2019).[163] While former SPÖ MEP Hannes Swoboda recognised that cooperation with the FPÖ 'at the municipal level and to some extent also at the state level' cannot be avoided, 'at the federal level, where it's really about clear European issues, about foreign policy issues, I can't imagine that there can be this cooperation' (Armbrüster, 2016).[164] However, Swoboda also suggested that entering into alliances at municipal or regional level will 'push the FPÖ toward pursuing a sensible, pragmatic legal policy and not a racist or xenophobic policy' (Armbrüster, 2016).[165] Therefore, the SPÖ's policy of cooperation on the municipal and regional level was justified on the basis that it would moderate the FPÖ's policies.

The importance of the EU at the federal level was also acknowledged by ÖVP MP Franz Fischler, 'if both the Federal President and the Austrian government are then strongly dominated by a right-wing populist party then […] what I think […] the voters have to know is that Austria runs the risk, if something like that comes, that it isolates

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[162] Das war eine Ansage gegen die Große Koalition, die man nicht mehr haben will. Man will einen Wechsel.
[163] Kurz: „Es ist die SPÖ, die davon ablenkt, dass sie 2017 selbst Gespräche geführt hat mit der FPÖ und auf Länderebene eine Koalition mit der FPÖ hat.
[164] Schauen Sie, de facto gibt es auf Gemeindeebene und zum Teil auch auf Landesebene insbesondere jetzt auch im Burgenland eine Kooperation. Das wird nicht zu vermeiden sein. Auf der Bundesebene, wo es wirklich um klare europäische Fragen geht, um außenpolitische Fragen geht, kann ich mir nicht vorstellen, dass es diese Kooperation geben kann.
[165] Die Hoffnung ist, dass sie die FPÖ dahin treibt, dass sie eine vernünftige pragmatische Rechtspolitik betreibt und nicht eine rassistische oder fremdenfeindliche Politik.

itself in Europe' (Kaess, 2016a).[166] The ÖVP's leader Sebastian Kurz suggested that 'it may no longer be possible to have a coalition without the FPÖ. At the moment, I cannot rule out any coalition, whether it is one between the SPÖ and the FPÖ, or the ÖVP and FPÖ or one that is a purely FPÖ government – but I will work to ensure that things do not go that far' (Mayr and Rohr, 2016). Moreover, in an interview with Kronen Zeitung, Sebastian Kurz commented on the prospects of the FPÖ being in government: 'all parties represented in the Austrian Parliament are democratically elected. So, they all have the opportunity to work in a government' (Bischofberger, 2017).[167] While the SPÖ and the ÖVP were not opposed to being in a coalition with the FPÖ, they were both wary of the repercussions that the FPÖ being in government would have.

Therefore, this discussion has shown that there was a significant proportion of the Austrian public that were sceptical of the EU. During the period, 2014-2017, the FPÖ was increasing its electoral success with Euroscepticism being one of the main motives driving its support. The SPÖ and the ÖVP recognised that the public varied in the extent of their support for the EU and perceived the variation of public support as a means to promote further integration. Additionally, both parties recognised the electoral threat that the FPÖ posed, but they were both willing, to some extent, to cooperate with the FPÖ in a coalition government.

7.5 Stage 3: Mainstream Response: From 2017 onwards

The previous section identified that the SPÖ and the ÖVP acknowledged that the EU needed to change to respond to Austrian public opinion and recognised that Euroscepticism was a driving factor in the increase of support for the FPÖ. While the SPÖ and the ÖVP acknowledged that the FPÖ was an electoral threat, the SPÖ and the ÖVP responded by discussing the potential accommodation of the FPÖ into a coalition government. The following section analyses the response of mainstream

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[166] Es ist nicht ganz unwahrscheinlich, dass vor allem dann, wenn danach in den Nationalratswahlen, in den Parlamentswahlen auch die FPÖ als großer Sieger hervorgeht – die Umfragen sprechen dafür, dass das so sein könnte –, und wenn dann sowohl der Bundespräsident als auch die österreichische Regierung sehr stark von einer rechtspopulistischen Partei dominiert wird, dann hat das sogar auch Abfärbungen, glaube ich, auf das Ausland. Das ist dann ein echter Risikofaktor und was, glaube ich, die Österreicher wissen müssen, die Wähler wissen müssen ist, dass Österreich Gefahr läuft, wenn so etwas kommt, dass es sich selber in Europa isoliert.
[167] Alle Parteien, die im österreichischen Parlament vertreten sind, sind demokratisch gewählt. Also haben auch alle die Möglichkeit, in einer Regierung mitzuarbeiten.

parties by looking at party factions and leadership, as well as debates within the Austrian Parliament and the framing of their positions on the question of Europe. To do so it analyses the period from 2017 onwards because it marked the second time in which the ÖVP had agreed to form a coalition with the FPÖ (Bodlos and Plescia, 2018).

Therefore, the following section shows that the leadership of the SPÖ and ÖVP influenced the party's attitudes on the question of Europe. While the FPÖ's representation in parliament was nothing new, it was only the second time that the FPÖ had participated in a coalition government. Furthermore while the SPÖ and ÖVP used frames to express support for European integration, the ÖVP and FPÖ used similar justifications. The similar use of framing by the ÖVP and FPÖ reflected the fact that they were in a coalition government together. Therefore, the ÖVP and FPÖ had to defend the government's policies.

7.5.1 Party Factions and Leadership

SPÖ

As previously discussed, up until the 1980s the SPÖ had been a Eurosceptic party (Fallend, 2008). From the 1990s, the SPÖ adopted a pro-EU position. However, in 2008 SPÖ leader Gusenbauer and MP Faymann penned an open letter to the editor of the EU-Critical Kronen Zeitung, announcing that the SPÖ was now committed to a policy of a popular referendum on all future EU treaties. This change of policy was used as an excuse for the ÖVP to terminate their coalition with the SPÖ (Luther, 2009). In the aftermath of the letter, the SPÖ softened its stance (Falkner, 2017).

ÖVP

Following the decline of the ÖVP in the 2013 national elections and in the 2016 presidential elections, the party saw a change in leadership which resulted in an overhaul of the party's image. Former leader Mitterlehner resigned amid intra-party conflict (Der Standard, 2017a). The ÖVP rebranded itself as 'List Kurz – the New

People's Party',[168] putting the populist party leader, Sebastian Kurz centre stage. As Abdou and Ruedin (2021) noted, this change into a 'leader party' echoed similarities of the rebranding of the FPÖ under the leadership of Jörg Haider in the late 1980s.

The ÖVP has appropriated 'many policies formerly suggested by the FPÖ' (Wodak and Rheindorf, 2019: 177). Previous research including Heinisch et al's (2021) emphasised that the ÖVP's rebranding involved appropriating the topic of migration from the FPÖ, it also involved the question of Europe. As Schmidt (2017) noted, views on migration and positions on EU integration are closely correlated. For instance, Heinisch et al (2020) suggested that Kurz appeared more Eurosceptic than his predecessors and that between 2013 and 2017 the ÖVP dropped its pro-European stance in favour of more anti-multiculturalist and nationalist positions. However, despite the ÖVP labelling itself as a European party, for a long time its pro-European stance has been vague at best. Thus, the move away from a pro-European stance as Heinisch et al (2020) suggested between 2013 and 2017 had started before Kurz became leader.

7.5.2 Addressing the Question of Europe

The previous section established that the leadership and/or factions within the SPÖ and ÖVP had different attitudes on Europe over time. To follow on from this, we now examine the extent to which the question of Europe was debated with the Austrian Parliament (National Council). Figure 7.6 records the overall number of debates between 1994 and 2019 and shows that from 2013 there was a rise in the number of debates on the EU, with the exception of 2017 (Republik Österreich, no date). However, as there was a parliamentary election in 2017, it may have affected the total number of debates. The FPÖ was present within the Parliament either as an opposition party or between February 2000 and April 2005 and December 2017 to May 2019 as a member of a coalition with the ÖVP. While it might be expected that the FPÖ's presence in government might increase the number of debates on the EU, there did not appear to be a notable increase; rather European integration was a continued feature of the debates. Furthermore, in contrast to the FPÖ's first time in a

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[168] Liste Sebastian Kurz - Die neue Volkspartei

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coalition 1999-2005, there were more debates on the EU during the FPÖ's second spell in government.
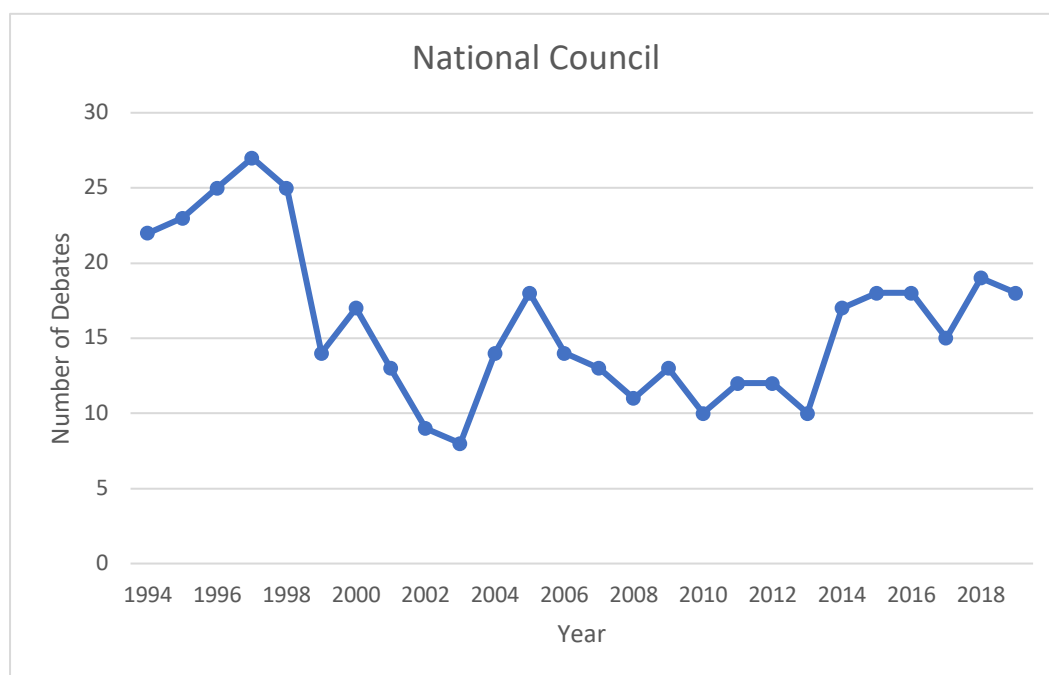

Figure 7.6: Debates on the EU in the Nationalrat 1994-2019

ÖVP-FPÖ Coalition: Pro-EU?

The coalition with the FPÖ meant that both parties had to defend their 'pro-EU' positions. The ÖVP's leader Sebastian Kurz stated that 'I have always made it clear that this government will be a pro-European one' (Nationalrat, 20-21 December 2017: 36).[169] The ÖVP MP Berlakovich declared 'it is important that we address the problems of the European Union openly. Therefore, it must be viewed critically and also changed for the better' (Nationalrat, 27 February 2019: 74).[170] Similar sentiments were echoed by the ÖVP's coalition partner, the FPÖ. FPÖ MP Petra Steger stated that 'whoever carries Europe in his heart must also criticise the European Union' (Nationalrat, 26

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[169] Ich habe immer klar gesagt, dass diese Regierung eine proeuropäische sein wird, und das Programm, welches wir heute vorlegen, unterstreicht das auch.

[170] Es ist wichtig, dass wir die Probleme der Europäischen Union offen ansprechen. Daher muss sie kritisch betrachtet und auch zum Positiven verändert werden, nur dann kann man einen echten Fortschritt und eine Weiterentwicklung der Europäischen Union erzielen.

September 2018: 72).[171] The leader of the FPÖ, Heinz-Christian Strache also reiterated that 'particularly if one stands up for a peace project in Europe, one must criticise developments in the European Union' (Nationalrat, 26 April 2019: no page number).[172] The FPÖ MP Bösch stated that 'for us, everything is not in the best order at the European level. We want to reform the European Union because we want to save Europe' (Nationalrat, 28 March 2019: no page number).[173]

The FPÖ in particular defended its position on the EU by attacking the SPÖ. FPÖ MP Petra Steger said 'it is not those who criticise Europe, not those who point out undesirable developments and obvious wrong decisions, not we who are responsible for a divided Europe, no, your policy of silence, your attempts to prevent any critical debate in recent years by calling critics populists, enemies of the EU, nationalists or otherwise' (Nationalrat, 26 September 2018: 72).[174] Furthermore, in addressing the SPÖ's criticisms of the coalition government, FPÖ leader Strache stated that 'nobody in this government […] wants to destroy the European Union'.[175] 'Of course, there is a massive need for reform in the EU – hopefully not even you yourself, Mr Leichtfried, will deny that, because you would have to be really blind to think that everything is fine and dandy at the level of the European Union' (Nationalrat, 26 April 2019: no page number).[176] Therefore, not only did the coalition government claim to be 'pro-EU', but it also suggested that one can criticise the EU and still be pro-EU.

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[171] Wer Europa im Herzen trägt, muss auch die Europäische Union kritisieren, und die Europäische Union muss diese kritische Auseinandersetzung nicht nur aushalten, nein, es ist sogar die Pflicht der Europäischen Union, diese kritische Auseinandersetzung zu führen, sehr geehrte Damen und Herren.

[172] Gerade dann, wenn man für ein Friedensprojekt Europa eintritt, muss man Fehlentwicklungen der Europäischen Union kritisieren und auch zu einer Verbesserung der Struktur beitragen, damit die Akzeptanz für dieses Projekt bei den europäischen Völkern wieder steigt und nicht weiter sinkt.

[173] Für uns ist auf europäischer Ebene nicht alles in bester Ordnung. Wir wollen die Europäische Union reformieren, weil wir Europa retten wollen.

[174] Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren! Das möchte ich auch einmal sagen – weil Sie uns das immer gerne vorwerfen –: Nicht diejenigen, die Europa kritisieren, nicht diejenigen, die Fehlentwicklungen und offensichtliche Fehlentscheidungen aufzeigen, nicht wir sorgen für eine gespaltene EU, nein, Ihre Politik des Stillschweigens, Ihre Versuche, jede kritische Auseinandersetzung der vergangenen Jahre damit zu unterbinden, dass Sie die Kritiker als Populisten, EU-Feinde, Nationalisten oder anders bezeichnet haben, diese Politik hat dazu geführt, dass es immer mehr Unruhen, Streitereien und Konflikte zwischen den Mitgliedstaaten gegeben hat und gibt. Dafür sind auch Sie verantwortlich, sehr geehrte Damen und Herren von der Opposition! (Beifall bei der FPÖ und bei Abgeordneten der ÖVP.

[175] Niemand in dieser Regierung und auch niemand von den beiden Regierungsparteien will die Demokratie schwächen – niemand! Niemand will die Europäische Union zerstören – weil auch das in der Begründung Ihrer Dringlichen Anfrage heute zu lesen ist.

[176] Noch einmal: Niemand will die Europäische Union zerstören. Es gibt natürlich massiven Reformbedarf in der Europäischen Union – das werden ja hoffentlich nicht einmal Sie selbst, Herr Abgeordneter Leichtfried,

Policy Change

The ÖVP was also accused by rival parties of similarity to the FPÖ. The SPÖ MP Rendi-Wagner suggested that the ÖVP and the FPÖ 'cannot be distinguished from each other, neither in their rhetoric nor in their contents nor in their European political orientation' (Nationalrat 15 May 2019: 68).[177] Furthermore, the SPÖ MEP Regner also stated that 'this EU-bashing […] could come straight from the FPÖ's election programme' (Nationalrat, 15 May 2019: 76).[178] The FPÖ MP Roman Haider suggested that the ÖVP had copied the FPÖ's 'demands for a downsizing of the EU' (Nationalrat, 15 May 2019: 78).[179] In other words that the EU needs to do less. Therefore, in the coalition between the ÖVP and the FPÖ it was perceived that the ÖVP was similar to the FPÖ on the question of Europe. However, the SPÖ as the opposition party obviously had a political agenda in emphasising the similarities between the FPÖ and the ÖVP. The SPÖ wanted to smear the ÖVP as a far-right party. That being said, the ÖVP had undoubtedly become more Eurosceptic; despite continuing to declare that it was pro-EU, there was little evidence of a pro-EU agenda, except for not wanting actually to leave the EU. Therefore, the ÖVP accommodated the FPÖ by including it in a coalition government in 2017 and co-opted the Eurosceptic attitudes of the FPÖ.

The SPÖ, on the other hand, focused on emphasising that it was pro-EU in comparison to the Eurosceptic ÖVP and the FPÖ. The SPÖ MP Rendi-Wagner stated that the lack of distinction between the FPÖ and the ÖVP in their European political orientation, 'is a statement that fills us as pro-Europeans with more concern' (Nationalrat 15 May 2019: 68).[180] Furthermore, the SPÖ's parliamentary leader in the National Council Andreas Schieder addressed the ÖVP by saying 'we have to be careful that we don't fall into this cheap anti-European, anti-EU populism and then say

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leugnen (Zwischenruf des Abg. Wittmann), denn Sie müssten wirklich betriebsblind sein, wenn Sie meinen, es sei auf Ebene der Europäischen Union alles bestens und in Ordnung.

[177] Und ich sage ganz bewusst Block, denn es ist ein Block, weil diese Regierungsparteien – auf der einen Seite die türkise ÖVP und auf der anderen Seite die FPÖ – weder in ihrer Rhetorik noch in ihren Inhalten noch in ihrer europa- politischen Ausrichtung voneinander zu unterscheiden sind.

[178] Dieses EU-Bashing ist so platt, so vorhersehbar und könnte direkt aus dem Wahlprogramm der FPÖ stammen.

[179] Jetzt noch kurz zur ÖVP: Was soll ich da jetzt sagen? – Auf der einen Seite wird da wieder schamlos die Kopiermaschine angeworfen, werden freiheitliche Forderungen nach einer Redimensionierung der EU kopiert.

[180] Ja, das ist erstens besorgniserregend, das ist eine Feststellung, die uns als Proeuropäer mehr als mit Sorge erfüllt, und es ist zweitens vor allem auch eine gefährliche Perspektive, die sich hier anbahnt.

that the European Union is really just a bureaucratic, inaccessible, money-guzzling monster. – No: the European Union is the basis of our economic progress, our prosperity and our democratic and human rights freedom' (Nationalrat, 16 May 2018: 45).[181] However, the SPÖ MP Jörg Leichtfried also recognised that 'many people have an image of this Union that does not meet this requirement. I think there is something that needs to be worked on – regardless of party affiliation or other things (Nationalrat, 17 May 2018: 110).[182] Therefore, the SPÖ addressed the question of Europe because of the incorporation of the FPÖ into a coalition with the ÖVP by distinguishing themselves as pro-EU but recognising that the EU needed to be reformed.

7.5.3 Framing of the Question of Europe

The analysis of the framing of the question of Europe between 2017 and 2019 is outlined in Table 7.5. Similar to the findings presented in Stage 1 (Table 7.3), the FPÖ mobilised arguments to oppose European integration, while the SPÖ and the ÖVP mobilised arguments to support European integration. The FPÖ (2019) employed institutional arguments to oppose the creation of a 'United States of Europe'. The FPÖ also used some economic frames to oppose Austria's involvement in the ESM and cultural frames to limit European integration to those states who are 'geographically, spiritually and culturally constitute Europe' (FPÖ, 2017: NPN).

While the ÖVP continued to support a strengthening of the common foreign and security policy, it also used economic frames to support a strengthening of the ESM into an EMF. Furthermore, the ÖVP used cultural frames to oppose Turkish membership of the EU because Turkey had moved away from EU values. While the SPÖ used economic frames to support the completion of the EMU, it also used institutional frames to oppose Austria joining an EU army. The SPÖ did not use cultural justifications to either express support or opposition to European integration.

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[181] Wir müssen vorsichtig sein, dass wir nicht in diesen billigen Antieuropa-, Anti-EU-Populismus kippen und es dann heißt, die Europäische Union sei eigentlich nur ein bürokratisches, unnahbares, geldverschlingendes Monster. – Nein: Die Europäische Union ist die Basis unseres wirtschaftlichen Fortschritts, unseres Wohlstands und unserer demokratischen und menschenrechtlichen Freiheit.

[182] Im Gegensatz dazu besteht aber bei vielen Menschen ein Bild dieser Union, das diesem Anspruch nicht genügt. Ich denke, daran muss gearbeitet werden – unabhängig von der Parteizugehörigkeit oder von anderen Dingen.

It is important to highlight that in parliamentary debates, the SPÖ focused on attacking the policies of the ÖVP-FPÖ government instead of discussing their own policies. Furthermore, the table relies on a limited amount of data for 2018 for both the SPÖ and FPÖ. In addition, within the SPÖ's manifestos, there was a limited amount of actual polices particularly in regard to the 2019 European manifesto, rather the SPÖ focused on what it had already achieved. Furthermore, there was a significant amount of policy topics that were not discussed including the Single Currency, the Single Market or enlargement. As a result, the findings for the SPÖ were based on a limited number of policies on the question of Europe.

Table 7.5: *Framing of Supporting or Opposing Statements by Parties (Percentages)*

	Years	Cultural		Economic		Institutional	
		-	+	-	+	-	+
FPÖ	2017	25.0	8.3	8.3		50.0	16.7
	2018					100.0	
	2019	30.8				61.5	7.7
ÖVP	2017			22.2		55.6	22.2
	2018	10.0		20.0		20.0	40.0
	2019	14.3		14.3	14.3	14.3	42.9
SPÖ	2017				50.0		50.0
	2018						100.0
	2019				20.0	20.0	60.0

*Notes: The percentages represent the statements for one frame divided by the total number of statements in a given year. **The shaded fields indicate whether a party family uses cultural, economic and institutional frames more in certain years.** Frames without direction (-0.5,0 and +0.5) have been excluded from this analysis.*

Similar to the framing of the question of Europe that was discussed in Section 7.3.3, the following section will discuss the use of framing in relation to subsidiarity policy and enlargement policy.

Subsidiarity Policy

The ÖVP (2017) used economic justifications to argue that the EU should refocus on its core competencies, 'with common trade at the centre' because 'due to an oppressive burden of regulations, Europe is lagging behind economically' (p.42). Furthermore, the ÖVP used institutional frames to emphasise that 'Europe cannot and

does not have to take care of everything' (Nationalrat, 12 December 2018: 77).[183] The ÖVP's 2019 manifesto used institutional frames to argue for a strengthening of subsidiarity in the EU because 'common sense must rule in Europe again' (NPN). In contrast, the SPÖ (2019) used institutional frames to support more cooperation as 'many of the challenges we face will only be solved together in the European Union' (p.157).[184]

The FPÖ MP Rosenkranz also used institutional frames to argue that it wanted to 'ensure that Austria retains full sovereignty in the field of immigration and asylum law' (Nationalrat, 26 September 2018: 52).[185] The FPÖ Deputy leader and MP Johann Gudenus also reiterated the importance of subsidiarity, emphasising that it wanted 'less, but more efficient' (Nationalrat 16 May 2018: 47).[186] The FPÖ (2019) used institutional frames to also express support for the EU to have some competencies that bring 'European added value' including international trade, external border protection, security policy or research (NPN).[187] However, in 'other areas competences are to be shifted back to the member states' (FPÖ, 2019: NPN).[188] Therefore, the FPÖ used similar framing to the ÖVP on the subsidiarity policy.

Enlargement Policy

It is worth noting that the SPÖ made no reference to enlargement in its manifestos or parliamentary debates. In 2017, the ÖVP (2017: 45) continued its commitment to the accession of the Western Balkans 'as soon as the criteria for accession are fulfilled'.[189] In 2018, the ÖVP used cultural frames to support the accession of Western Balkans

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[183] Europa kann und muss sich auch nicht um alles kümmern.

[184] Viele Herausforderungen, vor denen wir stehen, werden wir nur gemeinsam in der Europäischen Union lösen können.

[185] Wir werden auch danach trachten, dass Österreich die volle Souveränität im Fremdenrecht, im Asylrecht behalten wird.

[186] Es geht aber um viel, viel mehr, meine sehr geehrten Damen und Herren. Die Regierung – und das steht im Regierungsprogramm ganz klar drinnen – steht für Subsidiarität; weniger, aber effizienter, aber vor allem Subsidiarität.

[187] Die EU soll sich auf Kernkompetenzen konzentrieren, die einen europäischen Mehrwert bringen (wie etwa internationaler Handel, Außengrenzschutz, Sicherheitspolitik oder Forschung).

[188] Die EU soll sich auf Kernkompetenzen konzentrieren, die einen europäischen Mehrwert bringen (wie etwa internationaler Handel, Außengrenzschutz, Sicherheitspolitik oder Forschung). In anderen Bereichen sollen Kompetenzen an die Mitgliedstaaten zurückverlagert werden.

[189] Die Europäische Union sehen wir ohne unsere Partnerländer am Westbalkan als unvollständig an: Daher setzen wir uns für die Beitrittsperspektive dieser Länder ein, sobald die Kriterien für einen Beitritt erfüllt sind.

because it means 'exporting stability' (Nationalrat, 16 May 2018: 64).[190] A similar argument was made in 2019. The ÖVP (2019) supported the EU"s enlargement to the Western Balkans because it is the only way to 'guarantee security and stability in Europe in the long term' (p.52).[191] Therefore, enlargement was a way to spread the EU's values.

While the FPÖ did not discuss the Western Balkans, in general the FPÖ used cultural frames to support enlargement in the sense that 'goal of European integration must be the community of those states that make up Europe geographically, spiritually and culturally' (FPÖ, 2017: 25). Following on from this, the FPÖ used institutional frames to oppose Turkey's accession to the EU.[192] A similar sentiment was expressed by the ÖVP. The ÖVP (2017) used institutional frames to oppose Turkish membership, 'we must break off the accession negotiations with Turkey' (ÖVP, 2017: 46).[193]

Therefore, this discussion has shown that while the SPÖ and ÖVP used frames to express support for European integration, the ÖVP and the FPÖ used similar justifications. The similar use of framing by the ÖVP and FPÖ reflected the fact that they were in a coalition government together. Therefore, the ÖVP and FPÖ had to defend the government's policies.

7.6 Outcome: The SPÖ and The ÖVP Changed their EU Policy or Framing of the EU

The presence of the FPÖ in the party system and its participation in government resulted in the SPÖ and ÖVP having to defend their pro-EU stances. The ÖVP

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[190] Das bedeutet, dass wir Stabilität exportieren, und alles, was für den Balkan gut ist, ist auch für Europa gut.
[191] Sicherheit und Stabilität in Europa können wir langfristig nur garantieren, wenn wir auch für stabile Verhältnisse in der europäischen Nachbarschaft sorgen. Dazu gehören insbesondere eine klare Beitrittsperspektive für die Länder des Westbalkans, eine Lösung des Ukraine-Konflikts und der Abbau der Spannungen zwischen der EU und Russland.
[192] Ziel der europäischen Integration muss die Gemeinschaft jener Staaten sein, die geographisch, geistig und kulturell Europa ausmachen [...]. Klares Nein zum EU-Beitritt der Türkei, sofortiger Abbruch der Beitrittsverhandlungen und Stopp jeglicher Zahlungen an die Türkei.
[193] Wir müssen folglich die Beitrittsverhandlungen mit der Türkei abbrechen. Die Haft europäischer Menschenrechtler in der Türkei zeigt einmal mehr, dass die türkische Regierung rechtsstaatliche Grundprinzipien nicht respektiert. Die EU-Beitrittsgespräche mit der Türkei müssen komplett beendet und durch ein Partnerschaftsabkommen ersetzt werden.
Manfred Weber, MdEP

accommodated the FPÖ by welcoming it into a coalition government in 2017. While the coalition agreement with the FPÖ sought to highlight the pro-EU position of the government, in practice the ÖVP co-opted the Eurosceptic position of the FPÖ. The ÖVP-FPÖ coalition provided the SPÖ with an opportunity to distinguish its EU position from the coalition and emphasise that it was pro-EU. Therefore, the SPÖ appeared to adopt an adversarial (clashing) response by attacking the FPÖ's Eurosceptic position.

The ÖVP changed its position on the question of Europe by co-opting the Eurosceptic position of the FPÖ. This was particularly evident through the coalition programmes of the ÖVP-FPÖ coalition in 2000 and 2017 in comparison to the ÖVP-Green coalition of 2020. By analysing the three coalition agreements it was clear that firstly, the 2017-2019 coalition agreement was more Eurosceptic than the ÖVP's first coalition with the FPÖ in 1999-2005, and secondly that the ÖVP was more Eurosceptic in a coalition with the FPÖ compared with Die Grünen (Greens).

In relation to the ÖVP-FPÖ 2017 coalition agreement, the FPÖ opposition to aspects of the EU was 'tamed' in the sense that the justifications used for its positions was not as direct. For instance, the FPÖ (2017) stated that the sovereignty of member states and 'the ideal of a Europe of fatherlands are increasingly threatened by current developments in the European Union, especially since the goal of the EU is a centrally run bureaucratic juggernaut' (NPN). While the ÖVP (2017) agreed that there was too much bureaucracy, it argued that the EU was 'increasingly expanding its competencies into areas that go beyond the original approach of an economic union. […] We need a change of course at the highest level and a stronger return to the founding idea of the Union' (p.43).[194] Therefore, both parties advocated that the EU needed to change, but the way in which their polices were justified was different. For the FPÖ, the EU was depicted as a 'threat', while the ÖVP suggested that the EU was going beyond its remit. In the coalition agreement, it stated that it wanted to stop

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[194] Die Union weitet aber auch ihre Kompetenzen immer mehr in Bereiche aus, die über den ursprünglichen Ansatz der Wirtschaftsunion hinausgehen. Heute regiert die EU in die nationalstaatliche Sozialpolitik hinein – wie bei dem Thema der Familienbeihilfe für nicht in Österreich lebende Kinder – und erlässt Verordnungen, die klar in den Gesundheitsbereich fallen, wie die Allergen-Verordnung oder die Zigaretten-Kennzeichnung, Wir brauchen hier einen Kurswechsel auf oberster Ebene und eine stärkere Rückbesinnung auf die Gründungsidee der Union. obwohl sie in diesem Bereich eigentlich keine Kompetenz hat. Wir brauchen hier einen Kurs-wechsel auf oberster Ebene und eine stärkere Rückbesinnung auf die Gründungsidee der Union.

excessive regulation 'by strengthening the idea of subsidiarity' and wanted to 'steer the European Union back in the right direction, in line with its fundamental idea' (ÖVP-FPÖ, 2017:4). Therefore, both parties agreed that change was needed, but the justifications used was more subtle in the coalition agreement, in comparison to the FPÖ's 2017 manifesto.

Schüssel I and II vs Kurz I: ÖVP-FPÖ Coalitions

The inclusion of the FPÖ in a coalition government politicised the question of Europe. In both coalition agreements in 2000 and 2017, the question of Europe was placed at the top of the agreements. Both the 2000 and 2017 ÖVP-FPÖ coalition agreements indicated that the government would be pro-EU despite being in a coalition with the FPÖ. The ÖVP former leader Schüssel (2009) reflected that the FPÖ signed a coalition agreement in 2000 which stated, 'Yes to Europe' and 'Yes to EU-Enlargement' (no page number),[195] while Kurz in 2017 stated that that 'I have always made it clear that this government will be a pro-European one' (Nationalrat, 20-21 December 2017: 36).[196] However, as Heinisch et al (2021) argued, while the 2017 coalition agreement may have been formally pro-European, it added a number of qualifiers.

The different attitudes of the ÖVP-FPÖ coalitions on the question of Europe can be seen through the framing used to discuss its EU policy. Under the Schüssel I and II coalition agreement (2000-2002 and 2002-2005), institutional frames were used to support deeper integration because it 'offers the best conditions for meeting the challenges of the new century in a wide variety of areas'. 'There is therefore no reasonable alternative to the path of EU integration' (ÖVP/FPÖ, 2000:2).[197] By contrast, the coalition agreement under Kurz I (2017-2019) stated that 'we are jointly committed to this Europe and want to actively use our role to steer the European Union back in the right direction, in line with its fundamental idea' (ÖVP/FPÖ, 2017: 4).[198]

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[195] Ja zu Europa, Ja zu Erweiterung
[196] Ich habe immer klar gesagt, dass diese Regierung eine proeuropäische sein wird, und das Programm, welches wir heute vorlegen, unterstreicht das auch.
[197] Es gibt daher keine vernünftige Alternative zum Weg der EU-Integration.
[198] In jedem Fall bekennen wir uns gemeinsam zu diesem Europa und wollen unsere Rolle aktiv nutzen, um die Europäische Union wieder in die richtige, ihrem Grundgedanken entsprechende Richtung zu lenken.

While the Kurz I coalition also used institutional frames, it used them to oppose the trajectory of the EU, instead of supporting deeper integration. The commitment of Kurz I (2017-2019) coalition to the further development of the EU was based on scenario four ("Fewer but more efficient") of the White Paper on the Future of Europe. Therefore, while the Kurz I (2017-2019) coalition was committed to integration, it wanted the EU to 'focus its attention and limited resources on a reduced number of areas' (European Commission, 2017: 22). Despite both agreements expressing commitment to EU integration, the Kurz I (2017-2019) coalition indicated that they would bring the EU back on track.

Kurz II: ÖVP-Green Coalition

In comparison, the ÖVP coalition with the Greens in 2020 appeared more supportive of the EU than the previous ÖVP-FPÖ coalition in 2017. However, the question of Europe was placed much lower down on the agenda in the ÖVP's coalition agreement with the Greens compared with the FPÖ.

The ÖVP-Green manifesto (2020) stated that 'in order to preserve and develop these achievements and our unique European model of life for the future, change is needed today: a new Treaty for Europe that takes into account the fundamental principle of subsidiarity' (p.174). [199] While the ÖVP-FPÖ coalition agreement did not refer to a new treaty, the importance of the principle of subsidiarity was evident. 'Subsidiarity is a key value in a common Europe. It is also a guarantee against centralist tendencies in the European Union' (ÖVP/FPÖ, 2017: 9).[200] An interesting aspect of the coalition agreements was the way in which they argue for the EU to change. The ÖVP-Green (2020) agreement emphasised that change was needed to 'preserve and develop' the EU, while the ÖVP-FPÖ agreement argued for change to correct 'undesirable developments at the European level'[201] and 'to steer the European Union back in the

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[199] Um diese Errungenschaften und unser einzigartiges europäisches Lebensmodell auch für die Zukunft zu wahren und weiterzuentwickeln, braucht es heute Veränderung: einen neuen Vertrag für Europa, der dem Grundprinzip der Subsidiarität Rechnung trägt.

[200] Subsidiarität ist ein Schlüsselwert im gemeinsamen Europa. Sie ist auch Garant gegen zentralistische Tendenzen in der Europäischen Union.

[201] Hier wird sich Österreich federführend dafür einsetzen, einige Fehlentwicklungen auf der europäischen Ebene zu korrigieren.

right direction, in line with its fundamental idea' (p.4).[202] The fundamental idea refers to the EU as an economic union. Therefore, the ÖVP-Green agreement used institutional frames to express support for the trajectory of the EU. In contrast, the ÖVP-FPÖ agreement used institutional frames to oppose the current trajectory of the EU and instead advocated a change of course. Therefore, while the positions of the ÖVP-Green and ÖVP-FPÖ agreements may be similar, the way in which European integration was framed was different.

SPÖ

In relation to the SPÖ, it took full advantage of the ÖVP's coalition with the FPÖ by distinguishing itself from the ÖVP and FPÖ's Eurosceptic position. In its 2017 national manifesto the SPÖ asked, 'Where did Europe take a wrong turn?' (SPÖ, 2017: 185).[203] 'Our goal must be a strong EU that is capable of action […]. Let's strengthen the progressive, pro-European forces against the national-conservative forces. […] Let's push ahead massively with the reform of the EU institutions in the next 5 years (SPÖ, 2017: 187).[204] Therefore, the SPÖ clearly identified itself as pro-EU while also focusing on the developments in the EU.

In the SPÖ's 2019 European manifesto, without directly naming the ÖVP and FPÖ, it attacked both parties' attitudes towards Europe. 'The right-wing nationalists like to present themselves as friends of Europe, but in reality they have been working for many years to destroy Europe. Unfortunately, more and more conservatives are fuelling nationalism. […] Social democracy is the strong counterweight to a nationalist and divided Europe' (SPÖ, 2019: 3).[205] In the SPÖ federal manifesto it emphasised that 'many of the challenges we face can only be solved together in the European

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[202] In jedem Fall bekennen wir uns gemeinsam zu diesem Europa und wollen unsere Rolle aktiv nutzen, um die Europäische Union wieder in die richtige, ihrem Grundgedanken entsprechende Richtung zu lenken.

[203] Wo ist Europa falsch abgebogen?

[204] Unser Ziel muss eine starke, handlungs- fähige EU sein, die ihr Grundversprechen von gerecht verteiltem Wohlstand wieder erfüllt. […] Stärken wir die soziale Säule der EU. Stärken wir die fortschrittlichen, pro-europäischen Kräfte gegen national- konservative Umtriebe. […] Treiben wir die Reform der EU-Institutionen in den nächsten 5 Jahren massiv voran.

[205] Die RechtsnationalistInnen geben sich zwar gerne als Freundinnen und Freunde Europas aus, in Wirklichkeit arbeiten sie aber seit vielen Jahren an der Zerstörung Europas. Leider schüren auch immer mehr Konservative den Nationalismus.
Die Sozialdemokratie ist das starke Gegengewicht zu einem nationalistischen und gespaltenen Europa.

Union' (SPÖ, 2019: 158).[206] Therefore, the SPÖ adopted an adversarial (Clashing) strategy emphasising a pro-EU position in the face of the Eurosceptic FPÖ.

Conclusion

The main objective of this chapter has been to examine the influence of the FPÖ on the SPÖ and the ÖVP's position and/or framing of the question of Europe over the period 1994 to January 2020. It has argued that the FPÖ influenced the SPÖ and the ÖVP to adopt an adversarial (clashing) strategy, attacking the FPÖ's anti-EU position and the FPÖ as an actor. However, after 2017, the ÖVP accommodated the FPÖ by including it in a coalition government and co-opted the FPÖ's Eurosceptic position. To illustrate this argument, the chapter has applied a novel process-tracing mechanism that was outlined in Chapter 2.

The mechanism is made up of three main stages and starts with the accession of Austria to the European Union and the entrance of the FPÖ on a Eurosceptic platform in 1994. The chapter argues that the FPÖ was able to shape the debate on the question of Europe (Stage 1) by establishing itself as 'different' from the SPÖ and the ÖVP's pro-EU positions. The coverage in the media helped to reinforce the notion that the FPÖ was different by emphasising its anti-EU position in contrast to the pro-EU positions of the SPÖ and the ÖVP. Furthermore, the FPÖ used cultural, economic and institutional frames to oppose European integration in comparison to the mostly positive statements by the SPÖ and the ÖVP.

Between 2014 and 2017 the FPÖ Eurosceptic message resonated with Austrian public opinion and that the SPÖ and the ÖVP acknowledged that the FPÖ was an electoral threat (Stage 2). While public opinion expressed some support for the EU, there was a significant proportion of the Austrian public that were sceptical of the EU. At this time, the FPÖ was also increasing its electoral success with the literature suggesting that Euroscepticism was one of the main drivers of the FPÖ's support. The SPÖ and the ÖVP acknowledged that the public varied in the extent of their support for the EU to justify the promotion of further integration. While both parties recognised the

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[206] Viele Herausforderungen, vor denen wir stehen, werden wir nur gemeinsam in der Europäischen Union lösen können.

electoral threat that the FPÖ posed, the SPÖ and the ÖVP were both willing to consider cooperating with the FPÖ in a coalition government.

Stage 3 argues that the leadership of the SPÖ and ÖVP influenced the party's attitudes on the question of Europe. The analysis of the parliamentary debates and the framing of the question of Europe indicates that the ÖVP accommodated the FPÖ by including it in a coalition government in 2017 and co-opted the position and framing of the question of Europe. The SPÖ used the ÖVP-FPÖ coalition as a means to promote its adversarial pro-EU response.

The empirical results of this chapter demonstrate that mainstream parties can change their position and framing of the question of Europe. The accommodation of the FPÖ into a government coalition by the ÖVP resulted in the ÖVP co-opting the FPÖ's Eurosceptic position and how the FPÖ framed the question of Europe. This is the last case study of the thesis giving further weight to the thesis' overall argument that by using the process-tracing mechanism identified in Chapter 2, far-right parties can influence mainstream party positions and framing of the question of Europe. The following chapter will provide a comparative analysis of all three case studies.

Chapter 8

Discussion: A Comparative Analysis of UKIP, AfD and FPÖ

Introduction

In the aftermath of the 2019 EP elections, the last time that the UK would hold an EP election, Donald Tusk, President of the European Council spoke to reporters in a press conference after an informal dinner in Brussels between EU leaders. In this press conference he said:

> 'I have no doubt that one of the reasons why people on the continent voted for a pro-European majority is also Brexit. As Europeans see what Brexit means in practice they also draw conclusions. Brexit has been a vaccine against anti-EU propaganda and fake news. The vast majority voted for a more effective, stronger and united EU while rejecting those who want a weak Europe' (Read, 2019).

Tusk's statement claimed a victory for the 'pro-Europeans' as a result of Brexit. The notion of a 'pro-European' sentiment was understood as promoting a 'more effective, stronger and united EU', which is a statement that has been expressed by many political parties, not just those who claim to be pro-EU. Yet what this means in practice is ambiguous and dependent on the mainstream party. As discussed in Chapter 4, mainstream parties justify their positioning on the basis that they are pro-EU, regardless of whether they seek further cooperation or want to limit it. Therefore, despite Tusk's statement, there is not a unified 'pro-EU' position.

Tusk's statement concluded:

> 'in fact, as people have become more pro-European, some major Eurosceptic parties have abandoned the anti-EU slogans and presented themselves as EU reformers. This is a positive development' (Read, 2019).

Tusk declared that it was a positive development that Eurosceptic parties had turned away from anti-EU slogans to present themselves as 'EU reformers'. Yet what he failed to mention was that a lot of mainstream parties have also become 'reformers'.

As this research has highlighted, most mainstream parties are no longer unconditionally Europhile.

The main purpose of this concluding chapter is to synthesise the analytical findings from the three empirical chapters and demonstrate the influence that far-right parties have in different countries. In the process of developing these findings, this conclusion also shows the contribution made to our understanding of far-right party influence on mainstream party positions and framing of the question of Europe.

Bringing together the findings from across the three empirical chapters, this chapter argues that while some type of electoral success is needed for far-right parties to have influence, a more nuanced approach is required. If there are no actors (parties) or channels (media) that pick up and diffuse the far-right parties' message on the EU, then far-right parties will struggle to have influence (De Jonge, 2021). Therefore, far-right parties need the media to disseminate their message to the public which in turn can influence the change of public's attitudes (Bale, 2003; Ivarsflaten, 2005). If the media portrays the far right as the alternative to mainstream parties on the question of Europe and this resonates with public opinion, then the far right will influence mainstream parties to change position and/or framing of the question of Europe.

As a result, this research contends that electoral success, the media and public opinion are important variables to explain the far-right party's influence on mainstream party positions and framing of the question of Europe. By using process-tracing, this research identifies a clear mechanism which links the influence of far-right parties to the change of mainstream party positions and/or framing of the question of Europe. This fills a notable gap in the literature which has failed to identify a clear mechanism that links far-right party influence with the change of mainstream party position and framing of the question of Europe. This mechanism suggests that mainstream parties including Conservative Party, Labour Party and ÖVP have changed their position on the question of Europe by co-opting the Eurosceptic positions of the far-right party. Mainstream parties have also changed how the question of Europe is framed and what topics they focus on.

This conclusion follows the steps of the mechanism and thus it consists of three sections. The first section provides a comparative analysis of Stage 1 (shaping the debate) across all three empirical case studies. The second section analyses Stage 2 (Public Opinion and Awareness of Mainstream Parties) and the third section discusses Stage 3 (Awareness of Mainstream Parties). The fourth section then discusses the wider relevance and generalisability of the thesis findings, which is followed by a discussion of future research in section five. The sixth section concludes.

8.1 The Process-Tracing Mechanism

The current section uses the steps of the process-tracing mechanism to provide a comparative analysis of the three cases discussed in this research. The first section discusses how far-right parties have shaped the debate across all three cases, followed by a discussion of stage 2 public opinion and the awareness of mainstream parties, and lastly stage 3 the response of mainstream parties.

8.1.1 Stage 1: Shaping the Debate

The first stage of the mechanism is that the far-right party shapes the debate on the question of Europe by holding a distinct position in contrast to mainstream parties. Across all three cases the media played an influential role in reinforcing the idea that far-right parties are different to mainstream parties on the question of Europe. This suits both far-right parties and mainstream parties as they do not want to be associated with each other. However, it also means that it reinforces the far right's ownership of the anti-EU position. UKIP was described as 'anti-EU', the AfD was described as 'Euro-Kritischen' (Euro-critical) or more broadly Eurosceptic and the FPÖ as 'critical of Europe'. In contrast, mainstream parties in the UK (except the Conservative Party), Germany and Austria were described as pro-EU by the media. The media merely described the British Conservative Party as being divided on Europe.

On the whole, the far-right parties under analysis did not receive as much coverage as mainstream parties. However, when the far-right parties were discussed they were described in such a way that identifies them as the 'alternative' (Hulverscheidt, 2013). The coverage of far-right parties also feeds into their 'populist ideology', the idea that

they are distinct from the 'elites' such as established political parties (Golder, 2016). Therefore, newspaper coverage reinforced the notion that far-right parties are different from the mainstream parties on the question of Europe.

Alongside this analysis of newspaper coverage, by framing policies in a particular way, political parties define problems, and prescribe solutions which increase a party's influence on political debates and decisions (Wonka, 2016). As the radical variants of the far-right party family, UKIP, AfD and FPÖ used cultural, economic and institutional frames to express opposition to European integration. In contrast, mainstream parties typically used frames to express support for European integration. However, notably, some mainstream parties used frames to express more opposition than others. That being said, the far-right parties under analysis overwhelmingly expressed their opposition to European integration and therefore were distinct from the mainstream parties.

8.1.2 Stage 2: Public Opinion and the Awareness of Mainstream Parties

Following on from the previous stage, once the media has spread the views of the far-right party and the public have access to those views, mainstream parties must perceive the far-right party's EU policy to resonate with public opinion and perceive the far-right party as an electoral threat.

Part 1: The Voters

While in all three cases public opinion remained supportive of the EU, the extent of that support fluctuated over time. The British, German and Austrian public mostly had a 'somewhat favourable' view of the EU while the second highest response described the EU as 'somewhat unfavourable'. Therefore, while on the whole the public in each of the three cases supported the EU, their support was limited. The EU was also considered an issue of public concern, particularly as a result of the connections that the far-right parties made to other issues including immigration.

In all three cases, the far-right parties were increasing their electoral success. In line with previous research, Euroscepticism was one of the drivers of UKIP, AfD and FPÖ's

support (Ford et al, 2012; Ford and Goodwin, 2014; Aichholzer et al, 2014; Clarke et al, 2016; Schmitt-Beck, 2017; Hoerner and Hobolt, 2017; SORA, 2017; Evans and Mellon, 2019; Hansen and Olsen, 2019). Far-right parties were taking votes away from mainstream parties from both the centre-left and centre-right. This finding fits with Meguid's (2008) understanding that far-right parties can take votes off parties on the left and right of the spectrum. In addition, mainstream parties also faced the threat of losing further votes to far-right parties and therefore could not guarantee the public's support. However, electoral success on its own does not explain the influence that far-right parties can have on mainstream parties' use of framing or their positions. The empirical evidence in this thesis suggests that even in the absence of electoral success, defined in terms of representation in national parliaments, far-right parties can still influence mainstream parties. The three cases explored in this thesis show variation in terms of their electoral success. UKIP's electoral success was limited to the European level, in contrast to the AfD and FPÖ's representation in parliament, with the latter also participating in a coalition government.

Part 2: Awareness of Mainstream Parties

Mainstream parties recognised that the public's support for the EU varied. This thesis extends previous research by analysing mainstream party's acknowledgement of the association between Euroscepticism and far-right party support. The empirical evidence in the thesis suggests that mainstream parties recognised that Euroscepticism was an important driver of support for far-right parties but they were unsure how to respond. The British mainstream parties' believed that UKIP's success was connected with its hostility to the EU (HC Deb, 16 June 2009). In contrast, the German CSU co-opted elements of the AfD's Eurosceptic position (Kramp-Karrenbauer, 2014), while the CDU and SPD clashed with the AfD and the Austrian mainstream parties' questioned the possibility of governing with the FPÖ due to its association with anti-EU attitudes (Kaess, 2016; 2016a). Mainstream parties sought to respond to the varied EU support by either justifying EU reform in the case of the German and Austrian mainstream parties (SPÖ, 2014; Mayr and Rohr, 2016; SPD, 2017) or ignore the issue in the case of the UK mainstream parties (UKICE, 2020c). Despite the different responses in all three cases, mainstream parties recognised that

support for the EU varied. Furthermore, both the public and mainstream parties associated Euroscepticism with far-right parties.

As a result of the electoral success of the AfD and FPÖ, the German mainstream parties recognised the need to win some voters back from the AfD, while the Austrian mainstream parties contemplated including the FPÖ in a coalition. Despite UKIP having no representation in parliament, the Conservative Party perceived UKIP as an electoral threat because it was taking votes away which would lose them seats in Labour/Conservative marginal constituencies. While the far-right party's electoral success may vary, far-right parties are likely to have more influence if mainstream parties perceive the far-right party as an electoral threat. Therefore, the empirical evidence questions the literatures' argument that the more electoral success that far-right parties have the more influence they will have on mainstream parties (Van Spanje, 2010; Williams, 2015; March and Rommerskirchen, 2015; Sartori, 2016; Filip, 2021). Yet some kind of electoral success is necessary for far-right parties to have influence on mainstream parties, whether that be measured by the percentage of votes or number of seats. This conclusion supports existing research such as Zaslove (2012) who suggests that success can be measured in terms of policy influence or the actions of other parties outside of government.

8.1.3 Stage 3: Mainstream Response

Following stage 2, stage 3 suggests that as a result of the electoral threat that the far-right party poses, mainstream parties feel pressured to address the EU issue.

The analysis of factions/groups and leadership of mainstream parties showed that mainstream parties had internal divisions on the question of Europe. In keeping with the notion that mainstream parties are 'pro-EU', the factions or leadership tended to advocate a more Eurosceptic line. In the case of the British Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn was significantly more Eurosceptic than the official party line and the SPÖ's leader Gusenbauer advocated a more Eurosceptic line in comparison to his party. The same can be said of ÖVP's leader Kurz who made the ÖVP more Eurosceptic. Additionally, both the Werte Union in the CDU/CSU and the ERG in the Conservative Party were significantly more Eurosceptic than the official party's policy. In the case of

the SPD, Martin Schulz was strongly pro-EU but it did not come across in the SPD's 2017 federal election campaign. The empirical evidence thus fits with the existing research that the question of Europe is a divisive issue for mainstream parties.

The EU was debated in the national parliaments of all three cases. While the presence of the AfD and FPÖ did not increase the number of debates on the question of Europe, European far-right parties that hold public office utilise 'parliament to communicate their ideology and protest' (Rensmann, 2018: 65). Both the AfD and FPÖ's presence in parliament resulted in mainstream parties attacking them as an actor but also their anti-EU position. While UKIP was not present within the British Parliament, mainstream parties similarly acknowledged the threat of UKIP. As a result, parties do not need to be present in parliament to have influence. Therefore, while representation in parliament can be advantageous to far-right parties, electoral success does not always have to result in representation in the national parliament in order for far-right parties to have influence.

During the debates on the question of Europe, mainstream parties reinforced that they were supportive of the EU in comparison to the anti-EU position of far-right parties. Mainstream parties also sought to distinguish themselves from the far-right party as an actor. However, the incorporation of the FPÖ into a coalition government with the ÖVP changed the relationship between the mainstream ÖVP and far right FPÖ. The ÖVP's cooperation with the FPÖ resulted in the ÖVP having to defend the coalition's EU policies. It also provided the SPÖ with an opportunity to distinguish its 'pro-EU' position from the ÖVP-FPÖ's Eurosceptic position. Therefore, while mainstream parties may include far-right parties in a coalition to 'tame the dragon', mainstream parties may in fact be harming their reputation.

The analysis of the framing of the question of Europe, also suggests that mainstream parties largely mobilised arguments to express support, while far-right parties mobilised arguments to express opposition to European integration. In most cases, mainstream parties did not change their position on the question of Europe. However, there was change in terms of the nuancing, justifications and topics mainstream parties focus on.

8.1.4 Outcome

From the analysis of the three case studies, this thesis highlights that centre-right parties are more likely than centre-left parties to co-opt far-right parties' positions and/or framing. Thus, the thesis confirms previous studies that indicate that the centre-right are more likely to respond to far-right parties (Meguid, 2008; Albertazzi and Vampa, 2021). At the same time, only in Austria has the centre-right ÖVP entered into a coalition with the far right FPÖ. Table 8.1 summarises the findings from the thesis of the main strategies that centre-left and centre-right parties in the UK, Germany and Austria have used to respond to far-right parties over time.

Table 8.1 Mainstream Party Responses to Far-Right Parties

		Dismissive	Adversarial			Accommodation
			Clashing	Marginalisation	Co-optation	Co-operation
Centre-Left	Labour	X	X		X	
	SPD	X	X	X		
	SPÖ		X	X		
Centre-Right	Conservative	X	X	X	X	
	CDU	X	X	X	X	
	CSU	X	X	X	X	
	ÖVP		X	X	X	X

The empirical evidence suggests that mainstream parties pursued an adversarial strategy, while most parties refused to cooperate with the far-right party (marginalisation), particularly evident when far-right parties entered parliament, the mainstream parties in Germany and Austria embarked on a clashing strategy. Far-right parties have been subjected to cordon sanitaires in all three cases, with Austria the only example whereby mainstream parties have broken their commitment to not cooperate with the far-right party. While in the UK and Germany, the possibility of cooperating with the far-right party was not discussed or considered a possibility, in Austria cooperation with the FPÖ was not ruled out but there was clear reservations

about working with the FPÖ in a coalition government. Despite this, the ÖVP entered into a coalition with the FPÖ in 2017.

While most mainstream parties enforced a cordon sanitaire on far-right parties, it does not stop far-right parties entering parliament whereby mainstream parties can no longer ignore or exclude them from debates (Heinze, 2022). As a result, mainstream parties in Germany and Austria pursued a clashing strategy. 'When clashing Party A may actively oppose Party B's policy stances (e.g. parliamentary debates)' (Albertazzi et al, 2021: 57). In regard to Austria, the SPÖ MP Regner clashed with both the ÖVP and FPÖ, 'this EU-bashing […] could come straight from the FPÖ's election programme' (Nationalrat, 15 May 2019: 76).[207] A similar comment was made by the German CSU MdB Florian Hahn, the AfD was singled out as 'the only one involved in EU bashing' (Deutscher Bundestag 13 December 2018: 8200).[208] As Pautz (2021) showed German mainstream parties adopted a strategy of marginalising the AfD as a party and clashing with its anti-EU position. Therefore, there was a clear attempt by mainstream parties to marginalise (existence of a cordon sanitaire) and clash with the far-right parties' policy positions on the EU.

Table 8.1 also shows that the strategy of co-optation is typically restricted to centre-right parties, whether it be co-opting the far-right party's policies (Conservative and ÖVP) or co-opting the framing of the question of Europe used by the far right (Conservative Party, ÖVP and CDU and CSU). The co-optation strategy which Albertazzi et al (2021) defines as 'becoming a little more like it', in other words co-opting one or more of the far-right parties' policies (p.58). Co-optation implies 'a level of stylistic or programmatic convergence with the far-right competitor' (Albertazzi et al, 2021: 271). While the centre-right in Germany and the UK have not formally cooperated with the far-right party, they have 'stolen' important policy stances and how the question of Europe is framed in the case of the Conservative Party and framing in relation to the CDU and CSU on the question of Europe.

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[207] Dieses EU-Bashing ist so platt, so vorhersehbar und könnte direkt aus dem Wahlprogramm der FPÖ stammen.
[208] ‚Sie betreiben allein EU-Bashing'

The Conservative Party co-opted UKIP's referendum policy on EU membership, and as a result followed through with Britain's withdrawal from the EU. The arguments used to justify this position was to allow Britain to 'take back control'. A sentiment which was also reiterated by UKIP. In terms of the CDU/CSU, while their opposition to Turkey's enlargement did not change, the framing around its membership did. For example, while the CDU/CSU at first opposed Turkish membership on economic grounds that the EU would be overwhelmed, they changed their framing to justify opposition on the basis that Turkey was not European. As a result, this research recognises that mainstream parties can keep the same position, but change their framing, something which previous research has not analysed.

Alongside the co-optation strategy, the ÖVP was the only party in this research to adopt a cooperation response, a subcategory of the accommodative strategy when it invited the FPÖ into a coalition government. Rather than just 'stealing policies from each other, by cooperating two (or more) parties may join forces to achieve common goals' (Albertazzi et al, 2021: 273).The ÖVP co-opted the Eurosceptic positions and framing of the FPÖ. Interestingly the influence of the FPÖ was notable given that the EU as an issue was a priority in the 2017 coalition programme, but also more Eurosceptic in comparison to the ÖVP-Green coalition in 2020.

On the other hand, there was no example of a centre-left party cooperating with a far-right party. All three centre-left parties marginalised the far-right party by refusing to cooperate with it. However, while both the Labour Party and the SPD ruled out cooperation with the far-right party at both local and national level, the SPÖ did not completely rule out cooperation on the national level. That being said the SPÖ was more reluctant than the centre-right ÖVP, Hannes Swoboda suggested that on the federal level where it's really about clear European issues, […] I can't imagine that there can be this cooperation' (Armbrüster, 2016).[209] Therefore, far-right parties can influence mainstream party positions but also the framing of the question of Europe.

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[209] Schauen Sie, de facto gibt es auf Gemeindeebene und zum Teil auch auf Landesebene insbesondere jetzt auch im Burgenland eine Kooperation. Das wird nicht zu vermeiden sein. Auf der Bundesebene, wo es wirklich um klare europäische Fragen geht, um außenpolitische Fragen geht, kann ich mir nicht vorstellen, dass es diese Kooperation geben kann.

8.2 Wider Relevance of the Thesis

The current section outlines the wider relevance of the thesis. The first section highlights the three main contributions of the thesis to related fields of existing literature, while the second section argues how these findings are generalisable to other countries and issues.

8.2.1 Broader Contribution

By examining the influence of far-right parties on the question of Europe in three cases, the thesis has filled a significant gap in the literature on far-right party influence on mainstream parties. Moreover, it has also helped explain variation in mainstream parties' pro-EU positions. On a broader level, the thesis provides an opportunity to develop the understanding of the far right's indirect influence by including how an issue is framed. As a result, this has allowed the thesis to analyse 'trajectories of change' (Collier, 2011: 823) in terms of mainstream party positions and framing of the question of Europe and feeds into the wider literature on the influence of far-right parties on the positions of mainstream parties (Zaslove, 2004; Bale et al, 2010; Klingeren et al, 2017; Bale, 2018; Mudde, 2019; Biard, 2019; McKeever, 2020; Filip, 2021; Albertazzi et al, 2021). The thesis also feeds into the growing debate as to the importance of Euroscepticism to the ideology of far-right parties (Vasilopoulou, 2011; Szöcsik and Polyakova, 2019; Heinisch et al, 2020; Ganesh and Froio, 2020; Lorimer, 2021, 2022). In addition, the argument of the thesis, i.e. that mainstream parties vary in their pro-EU positions, mirrors that of related research on Euroscepticism (Vasilopoulou, 2011, 2018: Lorimer, 2021; Heinisch et al, 2021), which argues that far-right parties' positions on European integration vary. As such, the findings of this thesis feed into a wider debate in the party politics literature, specifically on the relationship between mainstream parties and a pro-EU position.

Firstly, the thesis makes a theoretical contribution by showing nuance within mainstream parties' EU stances. As noted in Chapter 4, much of the existing literature seeks to explain far-right party Euroscepticism rather than mainstream party Europhilism. However, this thesis has contributed to a more rigorous understanding of what being pro-EU actually means. It has contributed to the development of an

explanatory framework of different levels of Europhilism within mainstream party families. By using an adapted version of Vasilopoulou's (2011) four fundamental aspects of European integration, it provides a greater understanding of the variation of EU support that mainstream parties display. While the literature recognises that there is some variation in pro-EU positions that parties advocate (See: Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2001, Kopecký and Mudde, 2002; Hertner and Keith, 2017, Flood and Soborski, 2017), it does not grasp the full extent of this variation. In an age where mainstream parties are incorporating criticism of the EU while continuing to claim that they are pro-EU, it is ever more important to understand mainstream parties' EU position.

Secondly, the thesis makes an empirical contribution by showing that electoral success is not a pre-condition for a far-right party to have influence. As was noted in the literature review in Chapter 2, much of the existing party competition literature understands electoral success as the core explanation for the influence of far-right parties. However, this thesis has argued that while some type of electoral success is needed for far-right parties to have influence, the far right's influence is not dependent on electoral success alone. At a time when far-right parties' electoral success is varied across different countries, the far right's influence is not dependent on electoral success alone, but also can be explained by how the media portrays the far right and how this may (or may not) resonate with public opinion. Therefore, the thesis argues that additional variables including media and public opinion are also important to explain the influence of far-right parties. This has contributed to a more rigorous understanding of far-right party influence.

Thirdly, the thesis makes a methodological contribution by applying a novel process-tracing mechanism outlined in Chapter 2, to link the influence of far-right parties to the change of mainstream party positions and/or framing of the question of Europe. As a result, this research has contributed to a greater understanding of the independent variables that can explain far-right party influence, adding to existing literature on party competition by combining electoral success with public opinion and the media. Process-tracing enables this research to analyse the relationship between electoral success, public opinion and the media, which have previously not been linked together

by the existing research on far-right party influence. The identification of new variables is important because it broadens the explanations for the influence of far-right parties. This has contributed to a clearer understanding of the influence of far-right parties 'in different settings' (Biard, 2019: 165), as well as the notion that 'Eurosceptic challenger support is capable of influencing mainstream position shifts on European integration' (Meijers, 2017: 413). It also nuances the success of far-right parties by allowing this research to define it both in electoral terms (i.e. vote share/seats and government participation), and on the basis of 'policy influence, discourse, party systems and the actions of other parties outside of government' (Zaslove, 2012: 424).

8.2.2 Generalisability of the Model

Process-Tracing Mechanism

This thesis has put forward a mechanism which analyses the process that links the influence of far-right parties to the position change of mainstream parties on the question of Europe. Although specific aspects of the process would need to change (i.e. the starting point of the mechanism), the process can be applied to any case, as long as it meets the scope condition and trigger criteria. The mechanism can therefore be extended to other cases including for example the Rassemblement National (RN: formerly Front National - FN) in France.

A short study of the influence of the RN on mainstream parties reveals that the mechanism has the potential to be widely applicable and is relevant to our understanding of far-right party influence in different settings. However, this would depend on rigorous empirical testing which is beyond the scope of the PhD. The mechanism is shown below in Figure 8.1
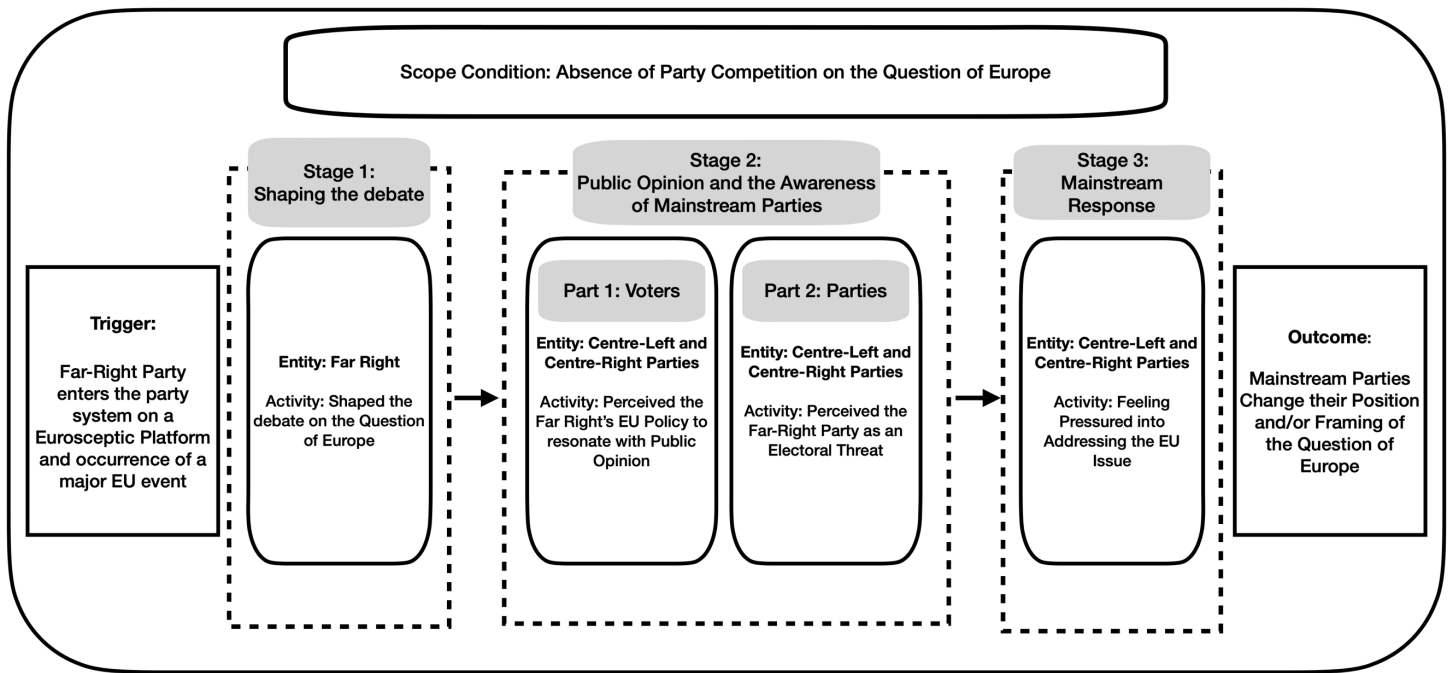
Figure 8.1 The Process-Tracing Mechanism

In relation to the French case, the governing parties were not 'openly hostile to European integration'. 'In France, as elsewhere, European integration was subject to a 'permissive consensus' (Grossman, 2007: 983). Therefore, this pro-EU consensus amongst mainstream parties meant that there was a lack of party competition. As a result, this left a gap for a political party to rise and challenge the mainstream parties' positive attitudes towards EU integration (Miklin, 2014).

The Treaty of Maastricht has been identified as a key turning point in European integration and Euroscepticism across the EU (Hooghe and Marks, 2009; Barth and Bijsmans, 2018). The treaty represented a significant deepening of the integration process. Despite politicians and pollsters expecting overwhelming support for the Maastricht Treaty, the French public nearly rejected the treaty (Lewis-Beck and Morey, 2007). While the French RN, formerly the FN have been around since 1972, since the mid-1990s, the FN has called for a restoration of French sovereignty and reverting to a loose coalition of membership states within a 'Europe of Nations' (Hainsworth et al, 2004; Ivaldi, 2018). As Usherwood and Startin (2013) highlight the RN has a 'long history of Eurosceptic dialogue and rhetoric' (p.5). The FN used Euroscepticism as a strategic device to 'antagonise the "permissive" pro-EU elite consensus' (Ivaldi, 2018:

281), thus helping the FN set itself apart from the other actors in the party system (Goodliffe, 2015). Therefore, 1992 marks the starting point of the mechanism, with a combined trigger of the FN on a Eurosceptic platform and the Maastricht Treaty. The following section will apply the typology of pro-EU that was discussed in Chapter 4.

Typology of Pro-EU Parties in France

The two main mainstream parties in France are the centre-left Parti-Socialiste (PS) and the centre-right Les Républicains (LR).[210] From the 1990s to 2017, PS and LR were 'Equivocal' Europhiles. Both parties supported European integration and enlargement of the EU on the basis that it promotes peace. In 1993, UDF supported a gradual enlargement of the EU because it has 'enabled the stability and prosperity of Western Europe' (UDF, 1993:99).[211] By 2019, LR wanted 'to change Europe, to defend and better protect France and the French, by […] refusing any further enlargement (LR, 2019: 11).[212] This included the Balkan countries. While LR from 2007 had clearly opposed the accession of Turkey to the EU, it had always been supportive of enlargement in general up until 2019. Similarly, PS was increasingly reluctant about the enlargement of the EU. In 2007, PS suggested that 'enlargement should first be limited to the examination of the current candidates' (PS, 2007:31).[213] After 2007, enlargement policy made little or no appearance in the manifestos of PS. Therefore, on enlargement both parties became more reluctant, with PS not mentioning it in its manifesto and LR refusing further enlargement.

Both parties supported the economic aspects of the EU, for instance the UMP (2007) wanted an 'economic government' or in the case of PS it wanted a 'Euro zone

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[210] Formerly Union pour la Démocratie Française (UDF) from 1978. Then Union pour un mouvement populaire (UMP) between 2002-2015.

[211] La communauté européenne a permis la stabilité et la prospérité de l'Europe de l'Ouest.

[212] Nous voulons nous appuyer sur les nouveaux leaders de la droite européenne pour changer l'Europe, défendre et mieux protéger la France et les Français, en bâtissant :I. L'Europe Frontière, qui arrête enfin l'immigration de masse, nous défend face au terrorisme islamiste et protège notre territoire, en refusant tout nouvel élargissement ;

[213] L'élargissement doit dans un premier temps se limiter à l'examen des candidatures actuelles dans le respect des critères exigés, qu'ils soient démocratiques, économiques ou sociaux.

Democratisation Governance Treaty' (2017:32).[214] However, there was a particular emphasis on subsidiarity, 'Europe must allow us to do together what only we do less well' (UMP, 2007:49).[215] Furthermore, PS (1997) stated that 'we do not want "nibbling" of our sovereignty, nor of dilution of France, we want shared sovereignty' (p.8).[216] Therefore, both parties supported the EU having competences in certain areas such as the economy.

Both parties supported multi-lateral cooperation, advocating reform from within. 'We want to build Europe, but without dismantling France' (PS, 2002:NPN).[217] PS argued for 'radical change in the policies pursued in Brussels' (2019:3).[218] 'LR wanted 'a strong France in a new Europe' (LR, 2019:7).[219] In terms of the future of Europe, PS wanted Europe 'be more powerful, more social and more democratic' (2017: 2), while LR wanted 'a freer and more sovereign France' which 'will make it possible to initiate an evolution of Europe' (2017: 7).[220] Therefore, while PS and LR continued to support the EU, it oscillated between support and opposition to certain EU policies. Both parties became reluctant to continue with the enlargement of the EU and envisaged different paths for the future of Europe. The patterns of support are summarised in Table 8.2.

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[214] Je proposerai aux États membres de la zone euro un TRAITÉ DE DÉMOCRATISATION DE GOUVERNANCE DE LA ZONE EURO qui prévoira la mise en place d'une assemblée démocratique représentative et qui sera l'émanation des Parlements nationaux et du Parlement européen.

[215] Enfin, l'Europe doit nous permettre de faire à plusieurs ce que seuls nous faisons moins bien

[216] Nous voulons redonner un sens à la construction européenne et, pour cela, faire avancer une Europe politique vers plus de démocratie. Nous ne voulons pas de "grignotage" de notre souveraineté, ni de dilution de la France, nous voulons une souveraineté partagée.-

[217] Il faut â la France une politique qui préserve ses intérêts. Nous voulons construire l'Europe, mais sans défaire la France.

[218] Il est temps de changer radicalement les politiques menées à Bruxelles.

[219] Une France forte dans une Nouvelle Europe.

[220] Une France plus libre et plus souveraine permettra d'amorcer une évolution de l'Europe.

Table 8.2 Wider Applicability of the Framework of Europhilism

Patterns of Support for European Integration		Position Change	
		Support enlargement in principle	Growing reluctance for further enlargement
PS	**Equivocal Europhile**	Continued to Support the Euro	
		Some EU competences	
		Support enlargement in principle	Refused future enlargement
LR	**Equivocal Europhile**	Continued to Support the Euro	
		Some EU Competences	Return some competences to France

8.3 Directions for Future Research

Building on the above suggestions regarding the wider applicability of the methodological and theoretical argument, future research may be directed towards analysing far-right party influence on mainstream parties' positions on the question of Europe in other cases, but also on other issues. The analysis of a wider range of cases has the potential to be highly informative in terms of providing a greater understanding of far-right party influence on the question of Europe. The above section has merely given a rough indication of how the thesis' argument may apply to the RN in France.

Furthermore, the typology for understanding mainstream party support, including enthusiast, equivocal and critical patterns may also be extended to mainstream parties such as the Liberal and Green parties. As these parties are increasing their electoral success and in the case of the Greens for example participating in government such as in Austria or Germany.

Further research may also be directed to further developing the role of the media, by analysing social media. Far-right parties are moving away from traditional media and using social media as a resource to target a specific audience. Social media appears particularly suited for the communication of far-right parties messages, employing populist content and style more frequently on Facebook and Twitter than in political

talk shows (Ernst et al, 2019). As well as traditional media, social network, content sharing and micro-blogging platforms are instrumental to promoting the messages of and facilitating the support for far-right parties (Herrman, 2016; Hendrickson and Galston, 2017; Gerbaudo, 2018). For instance, in the German case Dittrich (2017) and Müller and Schwarz (2021) highlight that the AfD recorded higher user engagement on Facebook than any mainstream party between September 2015 and April 2016. It would therefore be informative to see how the AfD used social media to help them shape the debate on the question of Europe. An analysis of the FPÖ's use of social media has the potential to show whether it facilitates political participation.

Furthermore, research may also be directed towards collecting further primary source material. While there is no evidence to suggest that the process-tracing mechanism would not proceed as followed because of lack of material, it would be highly useful to conduct more interviews not just in the case of the UK, but Austria and Germany. Conducting more interviews would merely add to the primary and secondary source data and identify whether politicians motives and preferences are different from the main party policy. The personal interviews that were conducted for the UK case have been helpful to understand the importance of the question of Europe, as well as the role of public opinion for instance.

Conclusion

By synthesising the literature on party competition and the study of Euroscepticism, the thesis has sought to explain the influence of far-right parties on mainstream party positions and/or framing of the question of Europe. It has also sought to explain the puzzle as to how we can conceptualise mainstream parties' pro-EU positions and how far-right parties influence mainstream parties on the question of Europe. Having identified a gap in the literature on far-right party influence on the question of Europe, the thesis has applied a process-tracing mechanism to analyse the influence of the far right in three case studies. The thesis also provides much-needed empirical contributions to the field by developing a novel process-tracing mechanism and a new conceptualisation of mainstream party Europhilism.

Firstly, by focusing on the question of Europe, the thesis fills a significant gap in the party competition literature, which has largely ignored the influence of far-right parties on the question of Europe. Secondly, by focusing on the pro-EU positions of mainstream parties, the thesis makes an important contribution to the literature on Europhilism, which has not grasped the full extent of the variation in mainstream party pro-EU positions. Thirdly, by using the literature on party competition, the thesis develops a mechanism that links the influence of far-right parties to the change of mainstream party positions and/or framing of the question of Europe.

The investigation has been conducted through a qualitative analysis, starting with an examination of the literature on far-right party influence to identify the independent variables that explain the influence of far-right parties. It proceeded by conducting a qualitative analysis of party literature of seven mainstream parties from the three cases studies to create a novel conceptualisation of Europhilism. The following section applied the process-tracing mechanism to three case studies, namely UKIP, the AfD and the FPÖ. These case studies were chosen because they are considered part of the 'radical' variant of the far-right party family and thus they share a similar ideology including opposition to the EU.

The thesis has shown that far-right parties influence the change of mainstream party positions and/or framing of the question of Europe. While electoral success is important, it is not enough on its own to explain the influence of far-right parties on mainstream parties positions and/or framing. This can be shown by the fact that UKIP has influenced the Conservative Party without having much national electoral success. As such, this research has identified the media, public opinion and electoral success as important variables that help to explain far-right party influence. These variables were used to create a novel process-tracing mechanism.

Despite the understanding that mainstream parties are pro-EU, the thesis has also shown that mainstream parties vary in the extent of their support. While mainstream parties claim to be pro-EU, those on the centre-right tend to be less supportive of the EU, while those on the centre-left either combine a mixture of support and opposition or are the most supportive of European integration. This finding has important implications for the understanding of mainstream party positions on the EU,

questioning the long-held understanding that mainstream parties are fully committed to the EU.

Appendix I: List of Interviewees

UK Interviewees:

1. Anonymous Conservative Minister (24 March 2021)
2. Anonymous Former Labour MEP (17 March 2021)
3. Anonymous Former Labour MEP (5 May 2021)
4. Anonymous Former Labour MEP (24 February 2021)
5. Anonymous Labour MP (29 March 2021)
6. Anonymous Labour MP (14 May 2021)
7. Anonymous Former Labour MP (5 March 2021)

List of Abbreviations

AfD   Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany, Germany

BNP   British National Party (Britain)

BZÖ   Bündnis Zukunft Österreich

CAP   Common Agricultural Policy

CD   Centrum Democraten (Centre Democrats, The Netherlands)

CDU   Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (Christian Democratic Union of Germany)

CHES   Chapel Hill Expert Survey

CSU   Christlich Soziale Union in Bayern (Christian Social Union in Bavaria, Germany)

DF   Dansk Folkeparti (The Danish People's Party, Denmark)

DVU   Deutsche Volksunion (The German People's Union, Germany)

EEC   European Economic Community

EC   European Commission

EMF   European Monetary Fund

EMU   European Monetary Union

EP   European Parliament

ERG   European Research Group

ESM   European Stability Mechanism

EU   European Union

FAZ   Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

FDP   Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party, Germany)

FN   Front National (National Front, France)

FPÖ   Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (Austrian Freedom Party, Austria)

FrP   Fremskrittspartiet (Progress Party, Norway)

IPSA   Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority

LAOS   The Greek Orthodox Popular Rally (Greece)

LR   Les Républicains (The Republicans, France)

MdB   Member of the German Bundestag

MEP   Member of the European Parliament

MP   Member of Parliament

MSI   Movimento Sociale Italiano (Italian Social Movement, Italy)

NPD   Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (National Democratic Party of Germany)

ODS Občanská demokratická strana (Civic Democratic Party, Czech Republic)

ÖGFE Österreichische Gesellschaft für Europapolitik

ÖVP Österreichische Volkspartei (Austrian People's Party, Austria)

PES Party of the European Socialists

PM Prime Minister

PRRP Populist Radical Right Party

PS Parti Socialiste (Socialist Party, France)

PVV Partij voor de Vrijheid (Party for Freedom, The Netherlands)

RLPs Radical Left Parties

RN Rassemblement National (National Rally, France)

RRPs Radical Right Parties

SORA Institute for Social Research and Consulting

SPD Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)

SPÖ Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs (Austrian Social Democratic Party)

SVP Schweizerische Volkspartei (Swiss People's Party, Switzerland)

SZ Süddeutsche Zeitung

TEU Treaty on European Union

UDF Union pour la Démocratie Française (Union for French Democracy, France)

UK United Kingdom

UKIP United Kingdom Independence Party (Britain)

UMP Union pour un mouvement Populaire (Union for a Popular Movement, France)

VB Vlaams Blok (Flemish Blok, Belgium)

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