

WP 5 – Civil Society and the Public Sphere

Euroscepticism in the European Parliament Elections of June 2009 Country Report: Germany

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Introduction

Never during the European unification process was Germany particularly known for adopting a eurosceptic attitude. On the contrary, as one of the founding countries of the European Union it was traditionally considered as the 'motor of integration', the *Musterknabe* of the European Union (Lees 2008:17) or 'the exception' which stood out clearly from the situation in other European countries, for instance, Britain or Denmark (Busch and Knelangen 2004).

In line with this observation, Teschner (2000) also ascertains a strong consensus in favour of the European Integration among members of the political elite as well as within the broad population. Two additional factors promoted the German affection with the idea of European integration: 'a strong manufacturing and banking sector that have clearly profited from the opening of the European market and the institutions and norms of governance that are analogous to the EU' (Lees 2008: 17). Teschner (2000: 2) also points out the institutional similarities between the EU and the Federal Republic of Germany as a reason for the German affinity towards the way in which the EU functions.

In this paper we explore the question whether this consensus is still valid in today's campaigns for the European Parliament elections or, rather, if we can detect a growing Euroscepticism even in Germany. This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 focuses on the theoretical debate on German Euroscepticism and discusses different categorisations of the concept. Section 3 deals with German citizens' and political parties' attitudes towards the EU and further European integration. Section 4 is devoted to the carriers and notions of Euroscepticism in the public debate during the European Parliament election campaigns 2009. Finally, section 5 summarises the findings and provides an overall assessment on the three previous sections.

Research on German Euroscepticism

This part of the paper is dedicated to the theoretical background of the euroscepticism concept in social science scholarship. It starts with a review as well as a short summary of the research conducted by German authors. In a second step, the section reviews literature of foreign authors on Euroscepticism in Germany. Finally, the paper attempts to indicate where further research on euroscepticism is needed.

The first contribution of a German author to the examination of Euroscepticism discussed here is *Bernhard Weßels' 'Discontent and European Identity: Three Types of Euroscepticism'*, published in *Acta Politica* in 2007. His paper tries to give answers to the question 'whether there are buffers preventing a total questioning of European Integration' (Weßels 2007: 288). Adopting Easton's model of political support, the author argues that European identity as a core element of political community could serve as a buffer against scepticism or discontent. A strong European identity, therefore, would lead to less discontent or scepticism towards integration and the other way around. In his work Weßels describes the utilized conception of euroscepticism as a multi-level attitudinal phenomenon that is hierarchical and cumulative. Meanwhile, the intrinsic meaning of this object remains uncertain. One can only presume that the lack of orientation towards the community of Europe – so to say a European identity – stands for euroscepticism in Weßels' model. He further develops a sophisticated statistical model of a factor analysis which tests the attitudes towards Europe, based on the EOS Gallup Europe 'Post European elections 2004' survey conducted in 25 European countries. Using seven items, he filters out four dimensions of orientation towards European integration: 'effectiveness' which stands for specific support for the authorities, 'responsiveness' which means generalized support, 'membership support' as a support for the political regime and finally 'European identity' as orientation toward the political community (Weßels 2007: 292). According to Weßels' calculation, 8% of the polled samples of German citizens can be characterized as adamant eurosceptics, while 12% are critical Europeans. However, if one looks for a comprehensive definition of euroscepticism, the different reasons for its emergence in the EU member states and the identification of relevant actors, this study will probably not be sufficient for further analysis.

The next paper reviewed -'Spielarten des Euroskeptizismus' (varieties of euroscepticism) - was also written by Bernhard Weßels. As part of his book 'Verfassung für Europa' (constitution for Europe), it was published in 2008. He starts his paper with a comment on the general trend of widespread support for European integration (for comparison see chapter 2 of this paper, table 3 and 4). After a steadily strong increase of support between 1981 and 1991 the value plummeted in the first part of the nineties and stabilized only to a considerably lower level, which is known in the literature as 'Post-Maastricht-Blues'. Weßels indicates that as a result of the strong increase of EU competences leading to noticeable effects on the national level, the citizens started to see the ventures of the integration (Weßels 2008: 50). For a long time euroscepticism was underestimated in its effects, since the negative polls on the Constitution for Europe in France and the Netherlands have shown massive leverage potential concerning further integration. As a next step, Weßels elaborates on the concept of euroscepticism, which originated in the beginning of the 1990s and was first used in the context of a media rather than a scientific discourse. Referring to the first influential but broad definition of Paul Taggart, he distinguishes between two main usages of the word: the word 'sceptic' has usually a negative connotation, while in science it is rather used in a positive manner, as critical analysis is a prerequisite for the accumulation of new insights. An essential departure point for the assessment of euroscepticism is whether one's goal is to scrutinize parts of a political system or the system as a whole entity. For this reason Weßels introduces the distinction between fundamental and constructive criticism.

Compared to his first paper discussed above, Weßels again refers to David Easton's influential theory on political support. Based on Easton's theoretical assumptions, Weßels understands the deprivation of political support for the EU as a form of euroscepticism. As a result, he criticises scientists (i.a. Taggart, Szczerbiak and Ray) who deal with more restricted notion of party-based euroscepticism.

Moreover, Weßels discusses in detail a typology of diffuse and specific support for a regime by *Kopecky and Mudde* (2002). This concept has been widely acknowledged and is frequently quoted in the research on euroscepticism. In this context, diffuse support stands for sharing the underlying ideas of European integration, while specific support is seen as a positive evaluation of the actual common practice of integration. On the basis of this typology Kopecky and Mudde form four ideal types of adjustment, which are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Typology of party positions on Europe

		Support for Integration	
		Europhile	Europhobe
Support for EU	EU-Optimist	Euroenthusiasts	Europragmatists
	EU-Pessimist	Eurosceptics	Eurorejects

Source: Kopecky and Mudde 2002

Weßels shortly summarizes each category without going into details. Starting with the description in the top left-hand corner with *Euroenthusiasts*, he paraphrases them as europhile optimists. Kopecky and Mudde explain explicitly that such groups support the general idea of European integration and believe that the EU is or will soon become the institutionalization of these ideas. *Eurosceptics* – as europhile pessimists for Weßels – support the general ideas of European integration but are pessimistic about the current arrangements and/or the future ideas, as Kopecky and Mudde outline. *Europragmatics* – described by Weßels as europhobe Optimists – neither support the general ideas of European integration underlying the EU, nor do they necessarily oppose them, as assumed by Kopecky and Mudde. Finally, *Eurorejects* – also understood as EU-opponents or europhobe pessimists – combine the negative positions. They neither subscribe to the ideas underlying the process of the European integration, nor to the EU (Weßels 2008; Kopecky and Mudde 2002).

In Weßels' perception, the crucial point within this typology is the fact that eurosceptics are composed of those individuals who have a positive diffuse attitude towards European integration, but criticise the current performance. For him, this implicates that they are not eurosceptics in the proper meaning but eurocritics. Beyond that, Weßels criticizes Kopecky and Mudde's model as too narrow, since it only offers an orientation of adjustment towards a political regime (Weßels 2008: 53). Following a review of other approaches towards euroscepticism, Weßels presents his own attempt, which is similar to that published in *Acta Politica* 2007, as discussed above.

Klaus Busch and Wilhelm Knelangen's article 'German Euroscepticism' was published 2004 in the edited volume 'Euroscepticism: Party Politics, National Identity and European Integration' by Robert Harmsen and Menno Spiering. It is concerned mainly with empirical and historical facts and less with normative theory on euroscepticism.

Busch and Knelangen first trace the historical pathway of European integration from a German perspective. They observe that since the beginning of the unification process the German public has harmoniously supported the European integration. By using data from *Eurobarometer*, they point to the year 1990 as the turning point in German attitudes towards the European Union (Busch and Knelangen 2004: 86). The authors explain this shift in public opinion with two main reasons: plans to introduce a single currency and the German unification. The study also reflects on the characteristics of the party spectrum in Germany. Despite the shrinking support, Busch and Knelangen clarify that no single party in the spectrum of German politics posed a serious threat to Germany's traditional pro-European stance. They underpin their argument by results of European policy votes in the Bundestag and Bundesrat (see Table 5 in chapter 3 of this paper). To sum up, it can be said that the article gives a comprehensive overview of the public attitude in Germany at different stages of European integration. Noteworthy, party politics is identified as an important factor in the research on euroscepticism.

A similar approach to that of Busch and Knelangen is applied in *Julia Teschner's* article 'No longer Europe's Europhiles? Euroscepticism in Germany in the 1990s' published 2000 in the *Journal of European Integration*. Based on a definition from the Oxford Dictionary, Teschner describes a eurosceptic as 'a person who is opposed to increasing the powers of the European Union' (Milner 2000: 2). Her article gives a very detailed historical background of Germany's position in the process of European integration. Regarding the question at what time euroscepticism became first visible in Germany, Teschner identifies the moment of German unification. In this context, she claims two facts: first, a number of people had seen European integration as a protective shield against communism – a function which is now obsolete, and second, the financial burden of unification affected the willingness to make contributions to the EU. As the most emotional response which had a large negative influence on the German attitude on integration, Teschner identifies the plan for introduction of a single currency with the abolition of the Deutschmark.

The next discussed article here is *Florian Hartleb's* 'Party-Based Euro-Skepticism in Germany'. It was published in the *Romanian Journal of Political Sciences* in 2007. Using the cases of the Christian Social Union (CSU), the Union of Free Citizens (BfB), the National-democratic Party of Germany (NPD) as well as The Left Party with its predecessors, the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) and the Electoral Alternative Work and Social Justice (WSAG), Hartleb tries to examine to what extent euroscepticism plays a role in the German party system. The article starts with a review of populist right-wing party movements in Europe. Hartleb takes the examples of Jean Marie Le Pen's *Front National* in France, Jörg Haider's Freedom Party in Austria, Umberto Bossi's Northern League in Italy and Pim Fortuyn's Party in the Netherlands, which have all advocated strongly against further European integration. With the loss of social welfare, abandonment of national identity and the crisis of political representation, they all name similar reasons for their rejection (Hartleb 2007:15). At the same time, he explains that this does not preclude the existence of left-wing populism which also opposes European integration, but for other reasons. Here the cultivation of anti-elitist sentiments, rejection of economical globalization and opposition to the system to protect the needs of the 'common people' are the central arguments. For a precise definition of euroscepticism in party politics, Hartleb refers to the conceptualisation by Kopecky and Mudde (2002) discussed above. Surprisingly, he names only the categories of Euroenthusiasts, Europragmatists and Euroskeptics, neglecting the category of Eurorejects. On the other hand, he mentions the distinction of Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart between hard and soft euroscepticism.

This concept is very prominent and frequently cited in the literature on euroscepticism, therefore the whole definition from the last publication of *Szczerbiak and Taggart* (2008a: 7-8) shall be given here:

- **Hard** euroscepticism is to be observed in case of a total opposition to the EU and European integration and therefore can be seen in the behaviour of parties who think their counties should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration, as it is currently conceived.
- **Soft** euroscepticism is to be seen not as a total objection to the European integration or the EU membership but in cases where concerns about one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that 'national interest' is currently at odds with the EU's trajectory.

As a result, Hartleb outlines the fact that "the left-wing populism embodied by the PDS and the new Left Party shows remarkable similarities to its right-wing counterparts, not only in its agitated style and methods but also in the programmatic and ideological terms" (Hartleb 2007: 22). Concerning euroscepticism in Germany, he claims that the CSU has a certain amount of soft euroscepticism, while the NPD embodies hard euroscepticism. The Left Party is characterized by him as something in between or middle eurosceptic.

Having discussed a few contributions by domestic authors, the paper will now address the analysis of euroscepticism in Germany by a foreign author, namely *Charles Lees* (2002; 2008). Lees published two articles on euroscepticism in Germany. Although one of the two articles has been published in the edited volume of Szczerbiak and Taggart, six years after the first one, the findings regarding party-based euroscepticism are similar. The difference between the articles is that the older one (2002) is more concerned with the German institutional setting and tries to explain the absence of stronger eurosceptic tendencies in Germany. This is an interesting approach since it gives some insight into the structure of German federalism. It is quite unlikely that extreme political positions are incorporated into government policy. A veto player-based system of checks and balances among the Bundestag and the Bundesrat ensures consensus-oriented policy.

The more recent work of Lees focuses on the respective position of each party. It shares the understanding of hard and soft euroscepticism conceived by Szczerbiak and Taggart. Lees adds with 'European Consensual' a third category to that model. In his opinion this dominant category of Pro-European consensus encompasses all of the mainstream parties at the federal level of party politics (Lees 2002: 250). Table 2 shows Lees' classification for the German parties.

Table 2: A typology of party positions on European integration in the Federal Republic of Germany

European Consensual	Soft Eurosceptic	Hard Eurosceptic
Greens	PDS/Left Party	DVU
SPD	Elements of SPD Left	NPD
FDP	National-Liberal FDP	Republicans
CDU/CSU	Elements of CDU right	
	CSU State Party	

Source: Lees 2002, 2008

Lees' classification is still quite reasonable. Nevertheless, it seems disputable to us if there is a total absence of eurosceptic attitude among the Greens or if the Left Party can be classified purely as a soft eurosceptic.

The last approach to be discussed here is the concept of *Catharina Sørensen* (2008). Because of its theoretical stringency and practical applicability, it is adopted for the evaluation of key actors regarding euroscepticism in Germany in section 4 of this paper. Sørensen defines the term euroscepticism as a sentiment of disapproval – reaching a certain degree and durability – directed towards the EU in its entirety or towards particular policy areas or developments (Sørensen 2008: 6). Furthermore, she also refers to the distinction of hard and soft euroscepticism by Szczerbiak and Taggart for an advanced classification of her categories. Based on the latest *Eurobarometer* surveys, Sørensen has identified four ideal types of euroscepticism (Sørensen 2008: 10), which shall be described here:

- Euroscepticism can assume an economic character. Central to one's evaluation of the Union are primarily **money-based** calculations – whether one sees a benefit from the economic cooperation or not.
- Euroscepticism can be **sovereignty-based**. In this case citizens experience the EU as an economically successful undertaking, but remain sceptical: what is decisive for them is that co-operation should not be experienced as a challenge to national sovereignty. Sovereignty-based euroscepticism, for instance, is thus likely to evaluate critically issues with supranational elements of cooperation.
- The third category of euroscepticism does not predominately deal with issues of economic calculations or sovereignty-based concerns but, instead, scepticism centres on what is perceived to be inadequate structures of the existent political 'set-up' – perhaps as the results of feelings that one's voice is not being heard, or that the European Parliament does not have the sufficient weight. It may be labelled as **democratic** euroscepticism.
- The fourth type is more political. According to this approach, the EU is evaluated on the basis of the same broad cleavages that characterise national politics. In other words, if one is a socialist, he or she may be sceptic towards initiatives launched by a liberal Commission President, and vice versa. Based on the existing literature, Sørensen expects that the dominant form of '**political euroscepticism**' today is '**social**', since Europe is constantly criticised for its social deficit.

To shortly sum up, it can be stated that there is obviously a lack of recent research on euroscepticism in Germany. The present party positions are more fragmented concerning the topic of European integration as they were maybe decades ago. Indisputably, there are eurosceptic tendencies on the left as well as on the right fringe of the political spectrum. Further research on the role of the mainstream political actors is still needed. Furthermore, an analysis of other influential domestic actors - for instance, trade unions, NGOs or large companies representing sectoral interest such as that of the car industry - could also be fruitful.

German Mass and Elite Attitudes towards the EU

In this section we give an overview – based on survey and roll call data – over 1) the public opinion on the EU and 2) the position of parliamentary political parties on further European integration. We find that the broad societal consensus on the merits of European integration is still largely intact in Germany.

Citizens' Attitudes towards German membership in the EU

Table 3 provides an overview of the *Eurobarometer* results regarding the attitudes of German citizens to the EU-membership of Germany.

Table 3: Membership is ...

	1975/ 2		1980/ 2		1985/ 2		1990/ 2		1995/ 2		2000/ 2		2005/ 2		2008/ 1	
	D	EC	D	EC	D	EC	D	EC	D	EU	D	EU	D	EU	D	EU
... a good thing	56	63	62	53	61	60	73	69	51	53	48	50	53	50	64	53
... neither good nor bad	28	21	22	23	24	22	17	18	32	26	30	27	31	30	11	27
... a bad thing	8	9	6	16	8	11	5	7	10	15	14	14	14	16	11	15

Source: *Eurobarometer 4, 14 (EC-9), 24, 34 (EC-12), 44, 54, 64, 70*

Starting with the year 1975, the enthusiasm for the membership was with 56% quite solid but clearly under the EU-average value. In the next fifteen years the acceptance was steadily growing and reached a figure over 60%, consequently over the average value in Europe. Germany indisputably benefited from the integration, especially as regard to growth and employment yield until the end of the 1980 (Busch and Knelangen 2005: 84). This fact explains the all-time peak of approval in 1990, although the general positive perception was also visible in other European countries (Teschner 2000: 60). Since then, however, the value has decreased considerably. The problems of unification, which resulted in a stagnation of Germany's economy and the closely connected large number of unemployment, decreased the compliance with the liberal idea of an open market and Europe in general in the following years, reaching the lowest figure in 2000. At that time, 14% of the interviewed citizens thought that the membership was a bad thing. This negative figure was again reached in 2005, possibly due to the eastern enlargement of the EU and the feared negative consequences for Germany. Since then, however, an improvement is visible. In the current 2008 *Eurobarometer* survey almost two-thirds evaluated the membership as positive.

Very similar observations can be made concerning the *Eurobarometer* question whether Germany has benefited from the membership or not. Table 4 gives information on that question.

Table 4: Has your country benefited?

	1985/2		1990/2		1995/2		2000/2		2005/2		2008/1	
	D	EC	D	EC	D	EU	D	EU	D	EU	D	EU
benefited	53	53	57	59	40	44	39	47	46	52	58	56
not benefited	31	30	24	30	36	35	39	32	46	36	33	31

Source: *Eurobarometer 24, 34 (EC-12), 44, 54, 64, 70*

A first peak in acceptance was simultaneously reached in 1990 with 57%. Afterwards a dramatic downfall of compliance was detected reaching the negative extreme in 2000, with a value of only 39% of the respondents seeing benefits from the EU membership. The 2005 polls indicated with 46% the highest number of people who saw no benefit for Germany.

In the last available survey the figures have clearly improved. Whereas 58% of the respondents were positive about Germany's benefits from its membership, over a third of them were of the opposite opinion.

Political Parties' Stances towards the EU

Regarding the political parties in Germany, no major disagreement concerning the fundamental issues of integration can be detected, either. Only the ex-Communist party Die Linke ¹ voted against all major treaties (Busch and Knelangen 2005: 88). Table 5 provides an overview of the voting behaviour in the upper house of the German parliament (Bundesrat) and the federal parliament (Bundestag) concerning the vital treaties of the European integration.

Table 5: Results of European policy votes in the Bundestag and Bundesrat

		Yes	No	Abst.
Ratification of the Maastricht Treaty	Bundestag (2.12.1992)	543 (95.6%)	17	8
	Bundesrat (18.12.1992)	16	0	0
Ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty	Bundestag (5.03.1998)	561 (87.0%)	34	50
	Bundesrat (27.03.1998)	16	0	0
Participation in the 3 rd stage of the monetary union	Bundestag (23.04.1998)	575 (93.5%)	35	5
	Bundesrat (24.04.1998)	15	0	1
Ratification of the Nice Treaty	Bundestag (18.10.2001)	570 (94.4%)	32	2
	Bundesrat (09.11.2001)	16	0	0
Ratification of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe	Bundestag (12.05.2005)	569 (94.2%)	23	2
	Bundesrat (27.05.2005)	15	0	1
Ratification of the Lisbon Treaty	Bundestag (24.04.2008)	515 (89.7%)	58	1
	Bundesrat (23.05.2008)	15	0	1

Source: Extension of Busch and Knelangen (2005)

The table shows that all treaties received very broad acceptance. Only the ratification of the Amsterdam and the Lisbon Treaty did not reach an approval rate higher than 90%. This confirms the above-mentioned broad elite consensus on European integration.

¹ The party emerged in 2007 as an association of PDS, the successor to the East German state party SED, and the WSAG.

One reason for this can be found in the German electoral system: The 5% threshold for national parliamentary elections prevents fringe parties on the left or the right side of the political spectrum, which in Germany and other Western European countries tend to be most hostile towards European Integration (Tenschner 2000: 71), from entering the national parliament, the Bundestag. However, an involvement of such parties from the periphery of the party system is more likely to be observed in state parliaments or even in government coalitions.

An example of this trend is the coalition of SPD and the eurosceptic Die Linke in the city state government of Berlin. In the Bundesrat decision on the Lisbon treaty, Berlin abstained from voting due to the fact that The Left was involved in the federal government.

Key Actors and Issues in Framing Euroscepticism in the EU Parliament Election Campaign in Germany

This part of the paper identifies the main actors and issues in the EU parliamentary election campaigns in Germany. It is based primarily on a preliminary analysis of the German print mass media coverage on the EP elections. Additionally, poster and TV advertisements are examined. The study of party manifestos completes the picture. This work deliberately refrains from studying the digital media as these are the subject of further in-depth analysis.

The German European Parliamentary election campaigns were characterized largely by indifference and low-key campaigns on behalf of the political parties. The low interest in the EP elections might have been further decreased by the specific context of the *Superwahljahr*, the super election year. In 2009 no less than 15 regional and national elections take place in Germany, including the EP elections in June and the National Parliament elections in September. In accordance with the 'second order thesis' (Reif/Schmitt 1980), the political actors perceive the *Bundestagswahlen* as 'first order elections'.

We can assume that as regards the campaigns, political parties were in a dilemma: On the one hand, the parties would not want to 'shoot their wad' all at once, i.e. there was the need to be careful with financial as well as non-material resources such as voluntary work by party activists. On the other hand, the European elections were seen and framed as an important *Stimmungstest*, a test election for the Bundestag-elections. German finance minister, Peer Steinbrück (SPD), for example, when asked for an evaluation of the weak results of his party, answers that '*The launch pad for the Bundestag elections has just been damaged*' (Spiegel_1506_6)². As such, the EP elections were important and could not be ignored, but not in their own right. Thus, the campaigns seemed poignantly unmotivated.

It should be noted at this point that the broad consensus for supporting European integration was neither challenged seriously by the public debate nor by the final electoral results. Therefore, this analysis tries to track and capture rather *soft* traces of euroscepticism (Szczerbiak/ Taggart 2008a). Not even the Bild-Zeitung, the best known daily tabloid, which often takes a rather populist stance on the EU, keeps true to its image. Rather BILD features, among others, an article on '*Decisions in Brussels. This is*

² The cited articles were taken from the newspaper sample which was prepared for the RECON-Study on European elections in Germany conducted at the University of Bremen. For further information concerning the sample or the study please contact the authors. To give an example regarding the abbreviation: Spiegel_1506_6 is an article taken from the *Spiegel* on June 15th, 2009. The last figure refers to the fact that the paper published more than one article on that date.

what we gained from the EU presents the ten most important legislative acts in the last four years (BILD_0529_2).³

The dominant actors in the German 2009 European Election campaigns were – unsurprisingly – national political parties. Other collective actors, such as economic interest groups or civil society organisations, were rather rarely visible in the mass media. The organisation ‘Mehr Demokratie e.V.’ (More Democracy) is an example for this trend. The organisation campaigns for the enhanced use of direct democracy at all political levels, also in EU treaty ratification. It can thus be understood as constructively critical, in Sørensen’s (2008) terms as democratic eurosceptic, but not fundamentally eurosceptical.

Apart from the presentation of national parties’ platforms, two issues stand out in regard to euroscepticism. Firstly, the German media has closely and critically observed the electoral success of extreme right parties in several other member states. Secondly, the overall low turnout in Germany gives rise to a discussion about the reasons for this indifference on behalf of the citizens, one of which could supposedly be a eurosceptic attitude. In this section of the paper we will now briefly discuss 1) the observation of eurosceptic nationalist tendencies in other member states and 2) the ‘whose fault?’ debate on the low turnout. Finally, we will focus on 3) national political parties’ position as represented in their respective manifestos and in the mainstream media.

Observation of eurosceptic tendencies in other EU member states

The German media devoted a great deal of attention to the observation of the election campaigns and the results in other EU member states (Welt_0610_3; Welt_0606_4; BILD_0607_3). Here, indeed, euroscepticism has become an issue, as the newspapers evaluated critically the electoral success of eurosceptic nationalist parties all over Europe, namely of the List Hans-Peter Martin and the FPÖ in Austria (SZ_0525_10; SZ_0525_11; SZ_0608_61; BILD_0608_2; taz_0609_5; Welt_0530_1), of the UKIP and the BNP in the United Kingdom (SZ_0520_2; SZ_0516_2; Spiegel_0525_9; Welt_0609_10; Welt_0606_4), of Gert Wilders’ Freedom Party in the Netherlands (SZ_0609_23; BILD_0605_4; taz_0602_1), of Declan Ganley’s Libertas in Ireland (SZ_0608_22; SZ_0609_13; taz_0603_4), of the Anti-Roma FIDESZ party in Hungary (Welt_0606_4).

The following quotes are supposed to give an impression from the debate:

The left-liberal daily Tageszeitung (taz_0606_10) comments on the success of Gert Wilders’ Freedom Party in the Netherlands, where the election results were published unusually early:

*The success of the PVV could give a boost to eurosceptics in the elections in the other EU countries. It is likely to also impact on the performance of xenophobic and anti-immigration parties. Wilders’ party scores not only with the enemy-image of “Brussels” but also with the preservation of national identity and the fight against Islamisation.*⁴

³ This as well as the following translations are made by Kathrin Packham. The respective original text in German is provided in footnotes.

‘Entscheidungen aus Brüssel Das hat uns die EU bisher gebracht. Die Wahl des Europaparlaments ist wichtiger als viele Bundesbürgern glauben. Denn die Politiker in Brüssel beschließen viele Gesetze, die das Leben der Deutschen beeinflussen. BILD.de zeigt die zehn wichtigsten Entscheidungen der letzte vier Jahre.’

⁴ Bei den Wahlen in den anderen EU-Ländern könnte der Erfolg der PVV Euroskeptikern weiteren Auftrieb geben. Auch auf das Abschneiden xenophober und Anti-Einwanderungs-Parteien dürfte er sich auswirken. Wilders’ Partei punktet nicht nur mit dem Feindbild „Brüssel“, sondern auch mit dem Bewahren nationaler Identität und dem Kampf gegen Islamisierung.

The conservative Die Welt sees the British government and the mainstream parties as responsible for the success of the British National Party (Welt_0604_7):

*The voters of the British National Party, which could only slightly increase its vote share in comparison to the last European elections, are usually not considered as ardent followers of the shrill xenophobic BNP core. The party calls, for example, for the possibility to deport coloured immigrants and asylum-seekers, who "do not belong to England". No black person is yet allowed to become member of the BNP. The anti-Semitism in its rows is obvious. The reason that still so many voters align with the nationalists, is because of a basic omission of the Labour government but also of other parties in the Commons. The sheer unregulated flood of economic immigrants and asylum-seekers into Britain leads to increased opposition, because the settled population believes to be passed over and set back in social concerns in favour of the newcomers.'*⁵

The election campaign in Austria, German-language neighbouring country, was followed particularly closely. The taz describes poignantly the position of Austrian eurosceptics (taz_0609_5):

*"Occident in Christians' hand", was the slogan on the European election posters of the radical Austrian right. (...) In the approximately fourth most wealthy member state of the EU more than one third of the voters voted anti-European. The issue of EU enlargement was so popular in the election campaign as if it was to be decided in Vienna alone. Welfare racism finally finds its mantra: Turkey is by all means and for all times to be kept from the Union's pork barrels.*⁶

While the German press refrains from engaging in-depth with the phenomenon, the general approach to the increase in radical right xenophobic tendencies is clearly critical. However, editors and journalists seem quite stunned and unable to analyse the implications of the rise of the extreme right. Thus, they fall back on reporting the bad news and quoting, for example, German SPD chair Franz Müntefering commenting on these trends: *'SPD chair Franz Müntefering last weekend warned against the "right pest which begins to again spread across Europe"'*.⁷

⁵ Die Wähler der British National Party, die ihren Stimmenanteil gegenüber der letzten Europawahl nur geringfügig steigern konnte, gelten gemeinhin nicht als glühende Anhänger des schrillen xenophoben BNP-Kerns. So ruft die Partei zum Beispiel nach Möglichkeiten der Ausweisung von farbigen Immigranten und Asylanten, die ihrer Meinung nach "nicht nach England gehören". Kein Schwarzer darf bislang Mitglied der BNP werden. Der Antisemitismus in ihren Reihen ist offensichtlich. Dass dennoch so viele Wähler den Nationalisten zulaufen, ist einem Grundversäumnis der Labour-Regierung, aber auch der anderen Unterhausparteien anzulasten. Die schier unregelte Flut an Wirtschaftsimmigranten und Asylanten in britische Richtung führt vielerorts zu steigender Opposition, da die eingeseessene Bevölkerung glaubt, in ihren Sozialbelangen durch die Neuankömmlinge übergangen, zurückgestellt zu werden.

⁶ „Abendland in Christenhand“, plakatierte die radikale österreichische Rechte zur Europawahl. (...) Im ungefähr viertreichsten Land der EU votierten mehr als ein Drittel der WählerInnen antieuropäisch. Das Thema EU-Erweiterung war so präsent im Wahlkampf, als ob hauptsächlich in Wien darüber zu entscheiden wäre. Der Wohlstands-rassismus findet endlich sein Mantra: Die Türkei ist unter allen Umständen und immerwährend von den Fleischtöpfen der Union fernzuhalten.

⁷ SPD-Chef Franz Müntefering hatte am Wochenende vor "der rechten Pest" gewarnt, "die in Europa beginnt, sich wieder breitzumachen".

Low Turnout – whose fault?

Poignantly, the tabloid BILD (BILD_0607_4) asks: *„Europe is not sexy – but why?“*⁸

The expectation, followed by a reality of an extremely low turnout, is a major issue in the German public debate on the European Elections. It is perceived as a major problem for the legitimacy of the EP and the EU itself. The SZ (SZ_0606_8), for example states: *‘The EU is in acute danger to perish due to indifference and egoism.’*⁹

While all speakers in the debate share this framing of the *problematique*, they disagree on the reasons for the presumed indifference of voters. Whereas some see the political parties as the root cause of the malaise, others perceive the media as responsible, and again others point to more general factors, e.g. the lack of knowledge of the EU decision-making process (BILD_0606_3; SZ_0520_2). Similarly, the list of possible ‘solutions’ to the problem is highly diverse, but not that long.

The SZ accuses the *‘Berlin parties’* who abuse the European elections as a test camp for the Bundestag elections. Citizens would, so the argument, react to this voting exercise by either non-voting or by protest-voting. The latter would lead to a weaker European Parliament comprising over-proportionally high numbers of right-wing eurosceptics. More generally, the SZ claims that *‘Almost all political parties in almost all member states of the European Union fail to contribute to public opinion formation of the citizens.’*¹⁰ This view is widely shared among journalists (BILD_0606_3; taz_0610_2; Welt_0518_3; Welt_0610_3; SZ_0609_11).

Not only journalists, but also politicians lament political parties’ performance. EU commissioner Günther Verheugen sues the political class, too. German politicians would tend to scape-goat the European Union. On other hand, citizens could not be mobilised when politicians did not talk or bad-mouth the EU. Martin Schulz, SPD top candidate, expresses the same opinion in an interview with a German quality weekly (Spiegel_0525_9). A former CSU campaign manager complains in Die Welt (Welt_0514_1): *‘The parties do not take the European elections seriously. They deal with it like a cumbersome duty’*.

Prominently advocating for more media coverage on EU politics, the president of the EU Parliament, Hans-Gert Pöttering (CDU), *‘blames the media for the lack of a public interest in the European elections. Press, Radio and TV are focused too much on the national level, said Pöttering (...)’*. *“The media don’t think the Parliament’s every-day business is sexy enough”*, he said in Die Welt (Welt_0514).¹¹ In June he partly revises this view, admitting that (Welt_0604_7): *‘We politicians must improve our self-portrayal’*.

A TV executive turns the table, asking about what, please, he should report about? The parties, he goes on, do not demonstrate the will to fight for political changes in EU politics (taz_0511_1). Of course, the critical stance on parties’ performance in the German press might be due to the platform under scrutiny here, i.e. the media themselves. The assessment does, however, mirror the tenor of the publicised debate.

⁸ EUROPA IST NICHT SEXY - ABER WARUM?

⁹ Die Europäische Union schwebt in akuter Gefahr, an Desinteresse und an Egoismus zugrunde zu gehen.

¹⁰ Fast alle Parteien in fast allen Ländern der Europäischen Union versagen bei der Aufgabe, an der europapolitischen Willensbildung des Volkes mitzuwirken.

¹¹ Der Präsident des EU-Parlaments, Hans-Gert Pöttering (CDU), gibt derweil den Medien die Schuld für ein mangelndes öffentliches Interesse an der Europawahl. Presse, Rundfunk und Fernsehen seien immer noch zu stark auf die nationale Ebene fixiert, sagte Pöttering (...). *“Die Sacharbeit des Europäischen Parlaments ist den Medien oftmals nicht sexy genug”*, sagte er.

Interestingly, the group immediately responsible for the low turnout, i.e. the voters, or better, non-voters, is rarely blamed. While the indifference or the lack of enthusiasm of citizens is taken for granted, the German media do never assume a eurosceptic attitude to be the reason for abstention in the European Parliament elections.

As to solutions, only few concrete measures are brought forward: Commissioner Verheugen pledges for the enhanced use of direct democracy in order to involve citizens in EU politics (SZ_0516_7). MEP Schulz bemoans the disappearance of a 'European gut-feeling' which could be strengthened by the use of European symbols (Spiegel_0525_9). After the elections, the BILD (BILD_0608_3) postulates: *'Low Turnout. Introduce Compulsory Voting!'*¹² Die Welt speaks out against compulsory voting (Welt_0610_4) pointing again to the elite's responsibility to mobilise and convince citizens of the importance of the EP elections.

German Political Parties in the European Election Campaigns

Although the election campaigns of German parties were largely free from *hard* euroscepticism (Szczerbiak/Taggart 2008a), this paper will examine the manifestos, positioning papers and campaigns of the six larger parties¹³, namely *CDU*, *CSU*, *SPD*, *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* and *Die Linke* who took part in the election campaign. In doing so, it reflects the preliminary work done by the *C.A.P.* (Horschmann 2009; Kläne 2009; Renken 2009; Schramm 2009; Tiedemann 2009; Walbrun 2009). To gain a comparable categorization of the party positions in eurosceptic terms, the analysis is based on Sørensen's distinction of four eurosceptic ideal types (Sørensen 2008), which was discussed in the second part of this paper. Furthermore, the paper examines briefly the position of smaller fringe parties, namely the extreme right Republikaner (REP, Republicans), Deutsche Volksunion (DVU, German people's Union), and the Bavarian Freie Wähler (FW, Free Voters), all of which presented an rather *hard* eurosceptic message.

Table 6 shows the results of the European parliament elections in 2004 and 2009 in percentages as well as the number of seats won in the European parliament.

Table 6: Outcome for the European parliamentary elections 2009 and 2004

Party	2009 election		2004 election	
	Votes in %	Number of seats	Votes in %	Number of seats
CDU	30,7	34	36,5	40
SPD	20,8	23	21,5	23
Grüne	12,1	14	11,9	13
CSU	7,2	8	8	9
Die Linke	7,5	8	6,1	7
FDP	11	12	6,1	7

Elections are when the posters are up. Posters draw attention to the event and thus represent an important instrument for mobilization. In Germany, the first posters were up in the beginning of May. Most posters were rather meaningless. Anja Kruke (FES) presented results from a cross-time content analysis of EP election posters asking:

¹² Schlechte Wahlbeteiligung. Führt jetzt die Wahlpflicht ein!

¹³ Six parties because the CSU organized its autonomous election campaign in Bavaria only. The CDU and CSU are members of a joint parliamentary faction in the Bundestag and are, therefore, affectively a single party at the Federal level.

Schaukampf oder eur. Vokation?¹⁴ She finds that generally, starting with the elections 1979, the second-order character of the EP elections in Germany has been cemented in the posters which are second-order in regard to finances and ideas. As a whole, one finds few European issues, but rather a symbolic representation of the European continent, with German and European flags, as well as that of women (SPD) and of peace (Grüne). The CDU proclaimed to represent the German interest on the EU level – the “We in Europe” expressed by the German flag, thereby stressing the predominance of the German ‘we’ (cf. taz_0518_5). The populist left and right, on the other hand, presented posters with clearly eurosceptic content (below).

In Germany, public broadcasting is legally bound to send party political campaign advertising, i.e. radio and TV spots. These spots are formally announced in the program and therefore, immediately recognizable as ‘propaganda’. This reportedly reduces the effect of political advertising (Kaid 2004). Most visible in terms of TV spots were the two main political parties - the Social- and the Christian-Democratic Parties SPD and CDU. Although it was not eurosceptic, the SPD spot was nevertheless interesting as it used predominantly negative campaigning, which is quite unusual in the German political landscape. The spot featured three dislikable characters which represented the three most important political adversaries, the CDU, the Liberals (FDP) and the LINKE respectively. The positive message at the end of the spot was threefold: clear rules for markets, fair salaries for the people and responsibility for Europe.¹⁵

In the following, we aim to study in more detail the question how political parties position themselves on European issues and how they frame their campaigns.

CDU

The Christian Democrats presented their manifesto during a party congress which took place on 19th March 2009 in Berlin. Examining their program by applying Sørensen’s concept of ‘money-based Euroscepticism’ (Sørensen 2008), the first passage under the headline *“for a Europe with economical prosperity and employment”* provides insight into the CDU’s position on that topic. It is stated several times that Germany clearly benefits economically from the EU membership. *“A strong European Union is a guarantor for growth, prosperity and social security in our land”* is the first statement. The program also underlines how Germany – as an export-oriented economy – benefits from the European internal market. Therefore, it is obvious that the CDU manifesto gives no evidence for the existence of ‘money-based Euroscepticism’. The only critical point the manifesto makes with regard to financial concerns is addressed in the part *“For a Europe with solid budget”*. The CDU is obviously not satisfied with the present financial system of the EU. The manifesto states that *“the financial plan of the EU needs an essential reform in accordance to the financial power of each member state”*, which can be described as a rather soft criticism.

Regarding ‘sovereignty-based Euroscepticism’ (Sørensen 2008), the CDU clearly stands for the European Unification. On the other hand, the manifesto makes clear that not all national and sub-national competences should be handed over to the EU. It claims that *“not every question is a task for Europe. We advocate for the fact that every identity of the member states should be respected and the respective responsibility should be organized under the principle of subsidiarity.”* This statement can be understood as a very soft notion of ‘sovereignty-based euroscepticism’. On the other hand, the CDU advocates an increase of competences for the EU, in particular in the field of the common

¹⁴ See outline of the conference „30 Jahre Direktwahlen zum Europäischen Parlament (1979-2009): Eine interdisziplinäre Bilanz“: <http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/iga/isb/isb-hauptframe/forschung/epwahlenflyerbeidseitig2.pdf>

¹⁵ The spot is still online (25. 06. 2009) at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65fij17NfRg>. The SPD’s internet campaign can be found here: <http://www.wahlkampf09.de/2009/6/klare-kante-fr-mehr-spd-in-europa>

foreign and security policy (CFSP). As a long-term objective the manifesto also aims at establishing common European forces. Another argument implying the absence of a 'sovereignty-based euroscepticism' is the request for a harmonization of the EU legal system, although the fundamental principles of national law-making and their standards should be equally respected. As a negative example for EU overregulation the manifesto points to the 'directive on services in the internal market'.

Nevertheless, the CDU perceives the EU as a *"political union of citizens and member states"* and keeps the long-time goal of a European constitution. As already mentioned above, the 'principle of subsidiarity' is a significant aspect of CDU's notion about European integration. This principle is intended to ensure that decisions and actions are to be taken at EU level, only in case they cannot be administrated efficiently at national level. Except for the distinct accentuation of the 'principle of subsidiarity', no other evidences for 'sovereignty-based euroscepticism' can be found in its manifesto. On the contrary, the CDU states its position in favour of delegating important competences like foreign affairs to the EU level.

Regarding the 'democratic euroscepticism' (Sørensen 2008), it is evident that the CDU recognizes a democratic deficit at the EU level. The manifesto affirms that *"The Lisbon Treaty strengthens the democracy and the European Parliament. With the Lisbon Treaty the European Parliament will become almost equal to the European Council within the legislation process."* This statement implies that the European democracy at present is not perceived as strong as the CDU would like to have it. The ratification of the Lisbon Treaty is seen as a cure for this problem, which is the reason why no real 'democratic euroscepticism' is visible from this declaration.

While the CDU publicly demonstrates clear support for the Lisbon Treaty, on the other hand, it strongly advocates against further enlargement, particularly against the accession of Turkey. The German chancellor, Angela Merkel is quoted in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ_0511_1) as follows:

*'In this context the chancellor makes a stand against all those countries in the EU, which oppose the Lisbon Treaty, but talked about new members all the time. "We will not shake hands with those." Europe must remain capable of action. That is the reason why Sarkozy and she stand for a privileged partnership of Turkey, but oppose a full membership of the country.'*¹⁶

In regard to the 'social/political euroscepticism' (Sørensen 2008), the CDU sees the EU as the ideal framework to offer social security for European citizens. The manifesto explicitly supports the social market economy anchored in the Lisbon Treaty as a way to achieve social justice. At the same time, the CDU opposes uniform social standards in Europe because these would not be congruent with the high level of social security in Germany. Overall, the CDU's message cannot be perceived as politically eurosceptic.

It should be noted that the CDU campaign was mainly headed by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Hans-Gert Pöttering, the top candidate for the election and former president of the European Parliament, was not present on most of the election posters and TV spots, although he participated in several talk shows with election topics. The CDU had probably already started to work on the popularity of Angela Merkel in order to strengthen her position for the elections to the Bundestag in September.

¹⁶ In diesem Zusammenhang stellte sich die Kanzlerin gegen alle Länder in der EU, die zwar gegen den Vertrag von Lissabon seien, aber dauernd über neue Mitglieder redeten. „Denen werden wir nicht die Hand reichen.“ Europa müsse handlungsfähig bleiben. Deshalb würden Sarkozy und sie zwar für eine privilegierte Partnerschaft der Türkei eintreten, eine Vollmitgliedschaft des Landes aber ablehnen.

CSU

The Christian Social Union in Bavaria – the sister party of the CDU – participated in the European election with its own electoral list on state level. Nevertheless, the party positions are closely linked to the CDU and, therefore, it is not possible to ascribe a general eurosceptic opinion to it. Similarly to the CDU, the CSU criticises the EU's institutional architecture in the areas which fall under the criteria of 'democratic and sovereignty-based euroscepticism' (Sørensen 2008), however, without questioning the system in general. Anyway, the CSU election campaign was obviously addressed to more eurosceptic voters as well, since it picked up the issue of the light bulb ban, which was supposed to be decided behind closed doors in Brussels. The most obvious contrast to the CDU is that the CSU advocates for the possibility of holding a national referendum on important EU-issues. This position brings them close to the FDP – which is no huge surprise – but also to Die Grünen or Die Linke - the parties who are on the other side of the political spectrum. Die Welt (Welt_0530_2) compares the CSU's claims to that of other parties:

*'Sister party CSU: True to the motto "For a Europe of values" one seeks to distinguish oneself from all those who claim the accession of Turkey, more anti-discrimination legislation, an "EU tax" or the cutback of CAP subsidies.'*¹⁷

This quote speaks for a category of soft euroscepticism that is missing from Sørensen's framework, namely that of a cultural euroscepticism which refers to a 'Europe of values', assumedly Christian or western values.

As a contested public figure in most debates appeared the CSU member of the Bundestag Peter Gauweiler, who filed a suit against the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe as well as against the Lisbon Treaty. Since 1988, the time when Gauweiler became Bavarian Minister for Environment, he has been known for his strongly eurosceptic voice in the CSU. He first received public attention when he demonstrated his reservation as regard to the Maastricht Treaty and Germany's participation in the EMU (Teschner 2000: 75).

CSU top candidate Markus Ferber did not have a high profile outside Bavaria, although he was a member of the European parliament for several years. The focus of the CSU campaign was on Bavaria in order to reach a strong result in the state and thereby get over the 5% hurdle on the federal level.

The Tageszeitung (taz_0526_1) assumes a more vote-seeking than policy-seeking rationale behind the eurosceptic image of the Bavarian party:

*'When Horst Seehofer in Munich decided to adopt a new rumbling EU-critical style in order to hoist the CSU over the 5% threshold in the European elections, the CSU-parliamentarians in the European Parliament eagerly followed suit.'*¹⁸

This attitude did, however, not remain undisputed. The former CSU chair Theo Waigel publicly challenged his party on its eurosceptic position. This was observed by the SZ (SZ_0511_6):

'The former CSU chair Theo Waigel rightly asked his party this weekend why it is always talking so bad about Europe. (...) Top candidate Ferber tries the balancing

¹⁷ Schwesterpartei CSU: Unter dem Motto "Für ein Europa der Werte" grenzt man sich von all denen ab, die einen Türkei-Beitritt, weitere Anti-Diskriminierungs-Gesetzgebung, eine "EU-Steuer" oder den Abbau der Agrarsubventionen fordern.

¹⁸ Als sich Horst Seehofer in München zu seinem neuen polternden EU-kritischen Stil entschloss, um die CSU bei der Europawahl über die Fünfprozenthürde zu heben, taten es ihm die CSU-Abgeordneten im Europaparlament eifrig nach.

act between euroscepticism and euphoria. "We are europe-realists", he said.'¹⁹

To summarise, the CSU demonstrates soft eurosceptic attitudes that are a) sovereignty-based, b) concerned with democratic features of EU politics and c) recur to a cultural dimension reflected in the party's opposition to further enlargement, especially of Turkey as a primarily Muslim country.

SPD

In the famous policy program of Heidelberg from 1925, the German social democrats outlined the need to found an economic union on the way of constituting the United States of Europe. At that time, this claim was far from reality, but in retrospect it had some predictive statements. Therefore, the SPD proudly referred in their 2007 policy program of Hamburg to the underlying ideals of Heidelberg.

In general, the SPD does not meet the characteristics of a eurosceptic party. Starting with the 'money-based euroscepticism' (Sørensen 2008), no evidence can be found that the SPD refers to this concept. The program of Hamburg names the European Economic Community as a necessary answer to the globalization challenges. The program makes clear statements that the internal market and the economical cooperation strengthen the export-orientated economy of Germany and are not perceived as threats to prosperity. Similarly, the 'sovereignty-based euroscepticism' (Sørensen 2008) also does not find ground in the political positions of the SPD. The Common European market is one of the greatest accomplishments in the perception of the social democrats. The delegation of sovereign power to the EU is a necessary and appropriate way to achieve their goals. The replacement of the EU confederal system with a true federal state is not a core value in the SPD policy, although there are advocates for in the ranks of the SPD. In principle, the transfer of competences always finds support for pragmatic reasons.

The lack of democratic legitimacy was often a controversial issue on the SPD agenda. This critical point falls into the area of 'democratic euroscepticism' (Sørensen 2008). In 1960, the SPD drafted a bill in the Bundestag for a direct election of the members of the European parliament which failed. In the Hamburg program the SPD stipulates more democracy for Europe. They postulate a parliamentary system of government with a Commission that depends on the trust of the Parliament, hence, is directly accountable to the will of the electorate. Although the SPD sees institutional failures in this area, it does not reject the European Union on this basis.

The central demand of the SPD is a more democratic and social Europe. Therefore, it is no surprise that the social policy is not only a national but also a European priority for the social democrats. The program of Hamburg states that *„a social union needs to be considered just as important as the economical or the monetary union.“* From the perspective of the social democratic values Europe needs functioning public services, social systems and a high level of education. Therefore, it is no surprise that the SPD considers these goals as neglected by the present conservative majority in the Commission and in the European Parliament. This assumption is not necessarily an indicator for the presence of 'social/political euroscepticism' (Sørensen 2008), since the SPD sees the situation rather as a challenge and stresses the need for further participation in order to achieve its political goals on the European level.

The SPD tailored the election campaign strongly to their top candidate Martin Schulz, although they also tried to position Chancellor Frank-Walter Steinmeier as one of their

¹⁹ Der ehemalige CSU-Chef Theo Waigel hat seine Partei am Wochenende völlig zu Recht gefragt, warum sie eigentlich immer so schlecht über Europa rede. Spitzenkandidat Ferber schließlich versucht den Spagat zwischen Europa-Skepsis und Euphorie. „Wir sind Europa-Realisten“, sagt er.

top candidate. In general, the campaign aimed at discrediting the political enemy with slogans like 'low wages would vote for CDU'.

FDP

By credo the liberal party follows an explicitly positive policy towards the European Union. Their political actions are guided by the core values of freedom, citizenship and economic liberalism. In times of globalization and increasing worldwide competition the FDP sees the cooperation within the EU as the only adequate possibility for the nation states to maintain their prosperity. According to the liberal party, Germany has only benefited from its EU membership, especially in economic terms. Thus, it is very unlikely to find a 'money-based euroscepticism' (Sørensen 2008) in the FDP program.

The FDP supports the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, as it supports the strengthening of the EU executive as well as the increase of power for the national parliaments. Furthermore, it views the EU as the best example for a successful rapprochement, reconciliation and cooperation of formerly hostile countries. This achievement should be the starting point for further cooperation, which is possible if more self-determination power is transferred to the EU, but this conviction is, of course, no reason for the FDP to take a 'sovereignty-based eurosceptic' (Sørensen 2008) attitude.

Concerning the EU administration, the liberals advocate for a process of democratization to make the decision-making process open to scrutiny. In this respect, their position can be assigned to the category of 'democratic euroscepticism' (Sørensen 2008). Moreover, they aim at deregulating the EU bureaucracy, starting with downsizing of the Commission. Another important point in the liberal concept is the expansion of qualified majority vote to new policy areas. An interesting fact is their support for introduction of national referenda on EU issues, contrary to the positions of CDU or SPD but in line with CSU, Die Grünen and Die Linke.

As a result, the liberals plead for more citizen participation and legitimate policy-making. In line with the CDU and CSU, the FDP considers the principle of subsidiarity as a relevant factor for preserving the authority of the national parliaments. The liberals advocate for the abolishment of the European Social and Economic Committee and propose to transfer these competences to the European Parliament. If the FDP sees any negative aspects in the functioning of the European Union as a whole, these are probably related to its institutional design, and therefore, refer to the 'democratic euroscepticism' (Sørensen 2008). There are also no implications for 'social/political euroscepticism' (Sørensen 2008). As a result, the FDP can be characterized as open towards a deepening of the European integration in almost every policy field. A clear exception is the social legislation – in this field the liberals tend to prefer the national solution.

The FDP election campaign was designed around the charming top candidate Silvana Koch-Mehrin. She was present on literally every election poster. Critics tend to explain that with her appearance and deny her political credentials.

Die Grünen/Bündnis 90

The German green party went through a process of transformation regarding their attitude towards the European Union. They used to be pronounced eurosceptics, as it was shown in their lawsuit against the Maastricht Treaty. In due course, they have adopted a rather pro-European attitude. Regarding the 'money-based euroscepticism' (Sørensen 2008), the Green Party generally appreciates the economic integration with the free movement of goods, capital and service. This dynamic development was a prerequisite for the success of the German economy. On the other hand, *Die Grünen* criticise the financial market policy of the EU and consider it as one of the reasons for the financial and economic crisis. Therefore, they demand an advanced integration of the economic and financial policy. In their view, a new restructuring of this sector is necessary for the

economic recovery of Europe. The greens postulate a 'Green New Deal' with a consequent regulation of the financial market and investments in climate protection, education and social issues. Another point of criticism refers to the logic of steady subvention on the agricultural market. However, their focus still remains on the promotion of renewable energy, the reduction of CO₂² and the rejection of genetic modified food. Although the Greens point out several failures of the economic integration, they appreciate as a whole the achievements of the integration process and suggest constructive solutions, where it is necessary. Hence, they do not reject the integration for economic reasons. Similar observations can be made in relation to the 'social/political euroscepticism' (Sørensen 2008) of the Greens. One of the main aims they declare is a more social Europe. To achieve this purpose, they call for a deeper integration in the field of human, asylum, refuge- and migration policy. At the same time, they seek to achieve Europe-wide consistent wages as well as unemployment insurances.

Die Grünen pursue the aim of a real European Constitution. They support the expansion of qualified majority vote to further policy areas and promote a strengthening of the European Parliament. Furthermore, they advocate for a common foreign and security policy as well as an enhanced policy cooperation – in fact solidly contradicting an appearance of a 'sovereignty-based euroscepticism' (Sørensen 2008). More problematic seems to be their intention to abolish the European Atomic Energy Community, rather than to regain sovereignty control over this policy field. The greens make it clear that this institution is incompatible with their understanding of an ecological union.

The manifesto of the Greens criticizes more than once the democratic deficit of the EU. As a solution, they call for a transparent legislation process with full involvement of the European Parliament. To increase the democratic legitimacy, they stipulate direct parliamentary elections with a passive right to vote from the age of 16 years-old. Citizen participation should also be encouraged with the adoption of national referenda on EU issues. Summarizing, it is possible to find indicators for soft 'democratic euroscepticism' (Sørensen 2008) in the Greens' manifesto. However, they put forward counter-propositions to overcome the identified problems of the EU, so it is more adequate to identify this scepticism in constructive or positive terms.

The nomination of the ATTAC co-founder Sven Giegold for the European parliament election, a critic of the Constitutional and the Lisbon Treaty, shows the appearance of eurosceptic streams inside the party. The critical attitude voiced here falls under the category of sovereignty-based as well as political euroscepticism (Sørensen 2008).

The Green party headed their election campaign with the former party leader Rainer Bütikofer and Rebecca Harms, profiled members of the anti nuclear power movement and longstanding members of the European parliament. The party's stringent programme gained the support of the Financial Times Germany, who issued its widely acknowledged vote recommendation in favour of the party.

Die Linke

'The Left' is the only party with a fraction in the Bundestag which rejects the Lisbon Treaty. The party defines itself as eurocritic in terms of its prevailing policy of the European Union. Generally, they advocate for a completely new constitution for Europe which omits a 'failed neoliberal' economic policy. In general, 'The Left' characterizes the EU as antisocial.

The assumed commitment for armament in the Lisbon Treaty is a central point of criticism in their manifesto. This comes along with a perceived lack of pacifism in the EU. Another object of their eurosceptic attitude is the missing democratic legitimacy. Therefore, 'The Left' strongly advocates for a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty and the general introduction of national referenda on European issues. The negative aspects of the European integration, with which 'The Left' are strongly concerned, certainly prevail

in number. At the same time, they fail to offer alternative suggestions or if they have such, the proposals are usually with an ideologically illusive character. That is why 'The Left' is at present the most eurosceptic protest-oriented party in the Bundestag without a real concept for Europe. Following Sørensen's categorisation, the party's Euroscepticism can be identified as eurosceptic in regard to the democratic as well as the political dimension of EU integration (Sørensen 2008).

Lothar Bisky, together with Gregor Gysi, one of the party leaders, lead the election campaign of the Linke. As a long-time member of the European parliament, he also leads the Party of the European Left.

The Süddeutsche Zeitung writes on the position of the Linke, describing the breach between the party and its long-term MEP Sylvie Kaufmann on the grounds of the party's eurosceptic attitude (SZ_0515_2):

*'At the party congress on Europe in Essen, the Left "definitely set itself in concrete with its No on the EU's Lisbon reform project". During the party congress at the end of February, Kaufmann confirmed her support for the treaty. Subsequently, the European election top candidate of 1994, 1999, and 2004 was denied a position on the party list for the European elections in June. As a co-founder of the PDS, she strived towards a "clear pro-European profile" of the party, said the 54-year old. "Now I find that in this I failed completely", she stressed.'*²⁰

Consequently, it was difficult to present a pro-European attitude during the election campaign (taz_0606_5).



REP and DVU

The results of the two extreme Anti-European populist-right parties, namely the REP and the DVU, do not support a eurosceptic trend in Germany. Rather the contrary is the case. The REP received 1,4% of the votes, the DVU - only 0,4%. The German populist-right parties are not a significant factor on both the national and the European political scene. Nevertheless, the left-liberal daily taz warns against an all-clear (taz_0609_6). During the campaign they hit the media not because of their message but because of the problems in implementing their '*Deutschlandpakt*' (taz_0523_1; taz_0606_6). This is an

²⁰ „Beim Europaparteitag in Essen habe sich die Linke „in ihrem Nein zum Lissabonner Reformprojekt der EU endgültig einbetoniert“. Auf dem Parteitag Ende Februar hatte Kaufmann ihre Zustimmung zu dem Vertragswerk bekräftigt. Der Europa-Spitzenkandidatin von 1994, 1999 und 2004 blieb daraufhin eine neue Listenaufstellung für die Europawahl im Juni versagt. Als Mitbegründerin der PDS habe sie sich um ein „klares pro-europäisches Profil“ der Partei bemüht, sagte die 54-Jährige. „Nunmehr stelle ich fest, dass ich damit komplett gescheitert bin“, betonte sie.“

agreement which seeks to regulate the participation of the two German nationalist parties in elections with the main aim not to compete against each other for the same segment of voters.

The posters as well as the TV campaign of the far right were outright eurosceptic: The REPublikaner campaigned to *"Leave THIS EU"*, promoting the idea that they are not generally opposed to the European integration as such, but that the EU in its current form should be opposed. The poster does not provide any relevant arguments.

The Deutsche Volksunion (DVU) refers on its poster critically to Germany's image as the *'paymaster'* of the EU which transfers 12 billions Euro annually to 'Brussels'. The main message of the poster is: *"It's enough!"*. This is a typical ideal type of representation of a money-based Euroscepticism (Sørensen 2008).

The TV spot of the REP, broadcasted only twice, was also clearly eurosceptic as well as xenophobe in content. The first frame featured a pile of broken glass. Then Uschi Winkelsett, the top candidate, appears in the manner of a TV anchor woman. The background of the main poster shows: RAUS aus DIESER EU (LEAVE THIS UNION). The lady explains that the EU membership has cost Germany more losses than it benefits: Germany is the "paymaster". In addition, she claims that an accession of Turkey would lead to an increased Muslim immigration which would put further pressure on the social systems. Germany, so the report goes on, is already a magnet for immigration which has a hard impact on the social systems (in the background pictures of women with headscarves and praying Muslim men are portrayed). According to its message, the social system allows terrorists to rest in Germany. In the end, the spot persuades viewers to "dare" to vote for the REPublikaner who will defend the German interest in Europe.²¹

FREIE WÄHLER

The FW is represented by its top candidate, the former CSU member, Gabriele Pauli. Pauli and the Free Voters received a fair share of coverage in the German media (taz_0516_1; Welt_0516_3; Welt_0515_1). Their electoral results were less satisfactory and the party did not succeed in passing the five percent threshold.

Pauli toured mainly in Bavaria but also in the rest of Germany with a pronounced eurosceptic message: The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ_0529_17) writes:

*'Gabriele Pauli has a Mission. (...) The top candidate of the Free Voters for the European Elections wants nothing less than to free Europe from corruption and lobbyism. "I am concerned with this structure, which can generate nothing good and which is supported by politicians who do not want to change anything", says the 51-year old state parliamentarian. (...) She rails against the EU-Commission which "almost randomly seizes competences". She castigates the intransparent subsidies, which are "not controlled and scrutinised". And she criticises the European parliamentarians, who help themselves to tax money in order to secure themselves additional pensions. She calls this "a large-scale scandal".'*²²

However, when the SZ explicitly asked the state leader, Hubert Aiwanger, to comment on the eurosceptic attitude of his party, he answered:

²¹ <http://www.youtube.com/RepublikanerTV?gl=DE&hl=de>

²² Gabriele Pauli hat eine Mission. (...) Die Spitzenkandidatin der Freien Wähler für die Europawahl will nicht weniger, als Europa von Korruption und Lobbyismus befreien. „Es geht mir um die Struktur, die so nichts Gutes hervorbringen kann und von Politikern gestützt wird, die gar nichts ändern wollen“, sagt die 51-jährige Landtagsabgeordnete. (...) Sie schimpft auf die EU-Kommission, die „fast willkürlich Kompetenzen an sich reißt“. Sie geißelt die undurchsichtige Subventionspolitik, die „nicht überwacht und geprüft“ wird. Und sie kritisiert die Europaabgeordneten, die sich aus Steuermitteln bedienen, um sich Zusatzrenten zu sichern. Einen „Skandal großen Ausmaßes“ nennt sie das.'

"But it is the task of politics to point out problems and not to euphemise them. There are indeed extreme excesses of European politics. Admittedly, this often leads to a negative attitude in which the positive aspects of Europe are forgotten".
23

Although the party would certainly describe itself as eurocritical in Weßels' terms, according to Sørensen's categorisation (2008), it clearly demonstrates democratic Euroscepticism.

Conclusion

This last part of the paper seeks to summarize the main findings of the other sections. Its further aim is to point out gaps in the research of German Euroscepticism and show possible points of departure for further investigations in the field.

Reviewing first the public opinion, *Eurobarometer* results suggest a stable support of the German citizens for Germany's membership in the EU. What is more, the number of people perceiving EU membership as beneficial has increased steadily since 2000 and reached 58% in the latest *Eurobarometer* survey. According to this data, the vast majority of the German population stands behind the idea of European integration. The same attitude can be ascribed to the German political parties, as the results of European policy votes in the *Bundestag* and *Bundesrat* support this finding.

This broad consensus in German society is certainly one reason why the literature on German euroscepticism is so scarce. After a thorough review of the research on Euroscepticism in Germany, we come to the conclusion that further contributions are necessary to close this gap – especially concerning the relatively new phenomenon of party-based Euroscepticism. It is questionable, for example, that Lees (2002; 2008) did not detect any Euroscepticism within the Green party. The party manifesto as well as the nomination of the euro-critic Sven Giegold supports the hypothesis that – measured by more fine-grained criteria – the party has developed a critical stance in some policy areas.

Hartleb (2008) characterizes 'The Left' party as *middle* eurosceptic but it seems appropriate to raise the crucial question about the true nature of the eurosceptic 'The Left'. The party has almost steadily expanded its political power position, especially in the *Länder* governments and consequently in the *Bundesrat*. Overall, we distinguish quite eurosceptic features in its manifesto as well as in its public image are. A particularly interesting trend is also the CSU's increasingly eurosceptic rhetoric. The question is if and how this will shape government policy in the future, especially if the CDU/CSU can win the upcoming national elections.

Sorensen's (2008) categorisation of four ideal-typical soft forms of Euroscepticism has proven very valuable for the analysis of party political stances on Europe. Hard Euroscepticism (Szczerbiak/ Taggart 2008a) remains rare in Germany and only visible in the DVU's claim to 'leave this EU'.

We find that soft democratic Euroscepticism, in particular criticism regarding the intransparency of EU decision-making (FW, Grüne) or the call for transnational lists for the EP elections (SPD), is present in all party platforms, save for the CDU and the right-wing radical parties REP and DVU. In comparison, CSU and Die Linke demonstrate a 'harder' stance, calling for the introduction of national referendums on EU issues.

²³ 'Aber Politik ist dazu da, Probleme zu benennen und nicht zu beschönigen. Es gibt tatsächlich extreme Auswüchse europäischer Politik. Oft führt das allerdings zu einer Negativstimmung, in der positive Aspekte Europas vergessen werden(SZ_0602_9).'

Soft notions of sovereignty-based Euroscepticism, i.e. the unwillingness of political parties to transfer certain competences to the EU level, are also quite ubiquitous. Opposition against the Lisbon Treaty, as voiced by the CSU and Die Linke, identifies these parties as more substantially eurosceptic in this respect.

Soft political Euroscepticism – especially concerning the social dimension of EU politics – can be traced in the positions of the Green and the Left party.

Hard money-based Euroscepticism is displayed strongly only by the DVU who portrays Germany as the 'pay-master' of the EU.

One category, however, seems to be missing in Sorensen's typology - namely the notion of a culture-based Euroscepticism - which is to be found in the CSU's opposition against Turkish membership in the EU.

We find that soft forms of Euroscepticism can be observed in all party manifestos, although in different areas and to different degrees. The forthcoming project of the University of Bremen will examine the media discourse in the European parliament election campaigns in more detail. The precise party positions are often shaped by media discourse in demarcation from those of their respective party opponents. Applying a wider focus, this study is expected to yield more general insights in the patterns of party competition in Europe than the present preliminary analysis of manifestos and media debates.

Summing up, we find that compared to the party political stances that are more nuanced – or contentious – the publicised debate on the European election campaigns in the German print mass media still mirrors the traditionally broad societal consensus on European integration. Only by observing truly eurosceptic tendencies in other countries, do contentious issues gain salience in the German public sphere.

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