"The Populist Politics of Euroscepticism"

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Introduction

The process of European integration represents one of the most important political processes in Europe in recent decades. As befitting any change as fundamental as this, there are conflicts about the way integration is, and should be, occurring. In some countries there are significant levels of misgiving about the EU, if we examine public opinion (see Gabel & Palmer, 1995; Anderson, 1995; Anderson & Kaltenthaler, 1996). With increasing concerns about the 'democratic defiit' and with the accelerated process of integration since the mid-1980s, anys sign of scepticism about EU on the part of mass publics are serious causes of concern for the EU.

The role of the established parties in mediating this scepticism and in formulating a consensus around European integration is problematic. The reason is that there is a misfit between established parties and a significant part of public opinion. While Euroscepticism manifetsed through public opinion polls and, perhaps more concretely through EU-related referendums shows sizeable scepticism (Franklin et al, 1994), the established political parties are in broad agreement about the desirability of the process of European integration and therefore have not reflected the disquiet. The problem with this misfit between public opinion and established parties is compounded by the state of parties.

The established parties of Europe are not in the best of shape. The rise of new protest parties has transformed party systems and has taken away their electoral hegemony (Taggart, 1996a). Recent elections seem to show publics increasingly happy to push governmental parties out of office. They have reacted to this loss of support and certainty by transforming themselves into 'cartel parties', colluding with each other to share out the spoils of office and becoming increasingly dependent on the state for financial and institutional support (Katz & Mair, 1995). This has done nothing to shore up their tenuous position and has indeed added further fuel to the fire for those new protest parties critiquing the cosy corporatism of the old parties. As potential partners in the enterprise of strengthening support for the EU the established parties are somewhat tainted.

This paper is based around the suggestion that Euroscepticism is often tied to a wider populist politics, and that there is even more potential for a populist Euroscepticism to grow

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as the EU develops. The focus is on mass politics in general and on parties in particular. The paper is structured in three sections. The first section provides a survey of party-based Euroscepticism across EU member-states. This demonstrates that Euroscepticism primarily comes from the periphery of party systems and from a wide range of parties. The second section is an attempt to point at how this disparate grouping is unified in its populist politics. The third section introduces the concept of *attentisme* and, using an illustration from the Britsish relationship with the EU, suggests that populism is encouraged by *attentiste* politics and that the European integration is particularly susceptible to the conditions that give rise to *attentisme* and therefore that a strong populist Eurosceptic backlash is a very real future possibility for the EU.

Party-Based Eurospecticism in EU Member-States

Opposition to and support for the EU are rarely either binary or absolute. In reality Euroscepticism incorporates three different positions towards the EU. Firstly, there is the anti-integration position of those who oppose the very idea of European integration and as a consequence oppose the EU. Secondly, there are those that are not in principle opposed to European integration but are sceptical that the EU is the best form of integration because it is too inclusive. In other words the EU is trying to force together elements that are too diverse to be compatible. This will often be framed in terms of 'states-rights' (see Bogdanor, 1989) but could also apply to other positions such as those who oppose the EU seeing it as a gateway to increased immigration. Finally, there are those that are not in principle opposed to European integration but are sceptical that the EU is the best form of integration because it is too exclusive. This sense of exclusion can be either geographical or social. This includes those who oppose the EU because it excludes poorer regions of the world or those that see the EU as cutting across the interests of the international working class.

The term 'Euroscepticism' is used in this paper as an encompassing term. Euroscepticism expresses the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration. The justification for using the broad term Euroscepticism, apart from its popular usage, is that it exists, albeit in a variety of guises, in the face of an on-going de facto process of integration at the institutional and elite level. The context is one of European integration and so the term Euroscepticism encompasses those who stand outside the status quo. Scepticism in the face of an institutional reality is here taken as equivalent to opposition in the face of uncertainty. It is also used because it is more inclusive. All opponents of the EU are, at least, sceptical, but not all sceptics are opponents.

Much of the recent opposition to the EU has been framed in terms of opposition to the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. The crisis created by the ratification process brought into sharp relief different conceptions and evaluations of the European project that might otherwise have remained unexamined (Franklin et al., 1994). The logic that sees Maastricht as the over-extension of the idea of the European integration does not necessarily equate with the idea that European integration is, in itself, a bad thing. Certain parties may well contest some elements of European integration while accepting or indeed actively campaigning for other elements of integration. However, the very process of ratification that has taken place with Maastricht has served as a focus for both debate about and opposition to the EU. Indeed some authors have suggested that the very contentiousness of the ratification process has, in the past, promoted deeper integration (Dinan, 1994).

For the sake of this paper, in those countries which were member-states at the time of Maastricht and therefore underwent the ratification process, opposition to Maastricht is taken to be an indication of Euroscepticism. The reasons for this are four-fold: firstly, the process and debates that surrounded the treaty amounted to fundamental re-evaluation of the nature of the EU (Wessels, 1994) and so to oppose Maastricht amounted to a de facto repudiation of the contemporary state of the EU, as the rejection of the treaty would have resulted in some sort of crisis and re-evaluation of the project of European integration. Secondly, the Maastricht process served as a focus and as a question of policy and therefore was one of the

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only ways that Euroscepticism could practically be expressed politically. Thirdly, as much of the literature on both public opinion and elections illustrates, the EU issue is often treated as either secondary to or as derivative of domestic considerations (Franklin et al, 1994; Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993). This means that opposition to Maastricht may be the 'soft' embodiment of a broader disquiet that is unlikely to be manifested in 'harder' form (i.e. out and out opposition to the EU) in a 'second-order' issue area like the EU (Reif & Schmitt, 1980; Irwin, 1995).

The final reason that Maastricht can be taken as an indicator of Euroscepticism in political parties lies in the levels of general public support for the EU. Levels of support for the EU among the public have dropped since 1991. Taking the aggregate of public opinion in twelve pre-1995 EU countries, 13% of the population claims that membership of the EU is a 'bad thing'. At the same time as this number has risen from 6% in 1991, the percentage who claim that membership is a 'good thing' has dropped from 72% in 1991 to 54% in 1994 (Commission of the European Communities, 1994). Some of this may well be independent of the effects of Maastricht. However, there is clearly some fit between increased integration and increased public Euroscepticism. The 'crisis' engendered by the process of ratification of Maastricht in member states both coalesced and catalysed opposition. The issue has provided the parties with a a potential issue to use in the search for electoral support.

For those countries which were not member-states at the time of Maastricht, but which subsequently joined the EU, Euroscepticism is relatively easy to gauge as all three potential members, Sweden, Finland and Austria underwent public debate and subsequent referendums in which parties took clear positions on the EU.

In **Austria**, the governing parties were united in their support for entry to the EU. Opposition came from the Greens who argued that entry would compromise Austrian neutrality and from the Freedom Party who despite still being lead by Jörg Haider who had been one of the first to suggest entry in the mid-1990s had reversed this decision since 1992 in an attempt to position and portray his party as outside the cosy consensus of the major parties (Kaiser, 1995: 414-15).

Finnish opposition was most visible in the factional conflict within the Centre Party which, although ostensibly pro-Union, was clearly divided on the issue with the bulk of opponents in the final parliamentary vote coming from the Centre Party despite strong pressure from the party leader and Prime Minister (Arter, 1995: 376). The source of Centre Party discontent was over the agricultural implications of EU as their support draws extensively from that sector. The EU discontents in the Centre Party were however joined by the Green Party, the Christian League and the Leftist Alliance in their opposition.

In **Sweden** opposition to the EU comes from three sources. Both the Green Party and the Left Party made much political capital out of their opposition and used the issue to strengthen their position in parliament the national election subsequent to EU entry in 1994. There is also faction of the ruling Social Democratic Party that has not abandoned the party's historical antipathy to the EU despite the initiative behind Swedish accession lying with the Social Democratic Party (Taggart, 1996b).

The **Danish** failure to achieve a yes in the first referendum to ratify Maastricht in 1992 served as a galvanising event for Eurosceptics across Europe. Around the two referendums arose two new formations whose purpose was to oppose Maastricht: the June Movement and the People's Movement Against EC-Union. The June Movement is seen as the more moderate of the two while the People's Movement Against the EC-Union wants Denmark to leave the EU. The party-based opposition of came largely from the Progress Party on the right in combination with the Socialist People's Party (a New Populist and New Politics party respectively). By the time of the second referendum in 1993 the Socialist People's Party had switched to a position of support for ratification but as, Thomas Pedersen (1996: 211) notes,: 'Given the fact that the present [Socialist People's Party] leadership only accepts the EU in the watered-down Edinburgh version, it is probably correct to categorize the party as EU sceptics.'

The role of **Germany** in the EU has dictated a strongly pro-EU bias among the parties. Despite this the Greens initially represented a Eurosceptical group who were opposed to the elite-lead nature of the EU and to the overly-bureaucratic and undemocratic institutional structure. However, as they have evolved and become more established within the German

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party system, that position has become muted so that, by 1994, it is hard to still describe the party as Eurosceptical (Rüdig, 1996: 265-6; Lankowski, 1997: 174-5). Their Euroscepticism has been taken up by the new populist Republicans. The constitutional challenge mounted by Manfred Brenner also lead to the establishment of a single-issue anti-EU party in one of the most Europhilic countries. There has even been evidence of cracks appearing among the established parties as the CSU has become more critical of the EU institutions (Paterson et al. 1996: 76-7; Paterson, 1996: 66-7) and with the appearance of Eurosceptical faction of the Free Democratic Party lead by Alexander von Stahl (Paterson et al. 1996: 81).

In **Portugal** Euroscepticism came from the Communist Party who were anxious to retain Portuguese sovereignty and whose leader described the EU as the 'Europe of the bankers and bureaucrats' (Magone, 1996: 150). They were joined in their opposition to Maastricht by the Centre Democrats who advocated strengthening the role of national parliaments and of opposing a move to a more federal Europe (Magone, 1996: 150). Three tiny parties, the Movement for the Reconstruction of the Party of the Proletariat, the Democratic People's Union and the Movement for the Unity of the Workers all adopted anti-EU positions. While the major parties are broadly pro-European, there does exist a mildly Eurosceptic faction in the Social Democratic Party.

In **Greece** and **Spain** Euroscepticism is hardly present among the parties. The Greek Socialist party (PASOK) has moved from a strongly anti-EU line to one that is more consistent with other West European social democratic parties and therefore pro-European integration (Verney, 1996). Only the Greek Communist Party maintains an avowedly anti-EU line opposing Maastricht and going as far as to call fro Greek withdrawal from the EU.

The strongly pro-European nature of **Belgian** politics meant that the only parties that can be portrayed as Eurosceptic were the parties of the far right who mixed a populist opposition to over-regulation from Brussels with a xenophobic criticism of EU immigration and asylum policy (van Deelen, 1996: 42). It was the same story with the far right Centre Democrats in the **Netherlands**. A strange mixture of religious parties (the Calvinist parties), the Green Party and the communist Socialist Party also expressed Euroscepticism.

Scepticism towards the EU is nothing new in France. The Gaullists saw the EU in its earliest form as a threat to the nation-state. Dissent within the contemporary **French** right lead to the setting up of a single issue anti-EU party by Phillipe de Villiers who was a Republican Party MP in 1994. His party presented a more moderate anti-EU alternative to Le Pen's National Front. The departure from the pro-EU line of the French right was also apparent in the RPR where Philippe Séguin and Charles Pasqua campaigned against the ratification of Maastricht in the 1992 referendum (Shields, 1996; Burban, 1993; Guyomarch, 1995).[1] On the left this was matched by the defection of Jean-Pierre Chevènement from the Socialist Party in March 1994 and the establishment of the Alternative Politics formation which took a staunchly anti-EU line. The symmetry is completed with the Communist Party on the far left also opposing Maastricht. The internecine conflict within the New Politics parties manifested itself as the Greens took an anti-Maastricht line while Generation Ecology supported it.

The **British** Euroscepticism is represented most visibly in the openly Eurosceptical faction of the Conservative Party that saw eight of their members being thrown out of the parliamentary party for not supporting their party over the European issue in 1994. On the right, they have been joined by the Democratic Unionist Party in Northern Ireland (Tannam, 1995: 810-12). On the fringes of the party system there have been attempts to establish parties exclusively oriented towards the European issue in the shape of the UK Independence Party and, more recently, the Referendum Party of James Goldsmith. The Greens also have a somewhat Eurosceptic position.

In **Ireland** Euroscepticism has been confined to the smaller parties. On the left Democratic Left and the Worker's Party opposed Maastricht and were joined in that opposition by the Greens and Sinn Fein (Coakley et al., 1997: 223-4). The only party to reject membership of the EU in the 1972 referendum was the Labour Party. There is still some disquiet in the Labour Party, mostly at the membership rather than leadership level but while

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[1]Although, it should be noted that while Pasqua has stepped up his anti-EU stance in the current French election campaign, Séguin has become more conciliatory towards the EU.

two TDs voted against the party line by voting against Maastricht, it would be incorrect to say that there is a Eurosceptical faction within the party.

In **Italy**, the centrality of the European issue to Italian politics has made Euroscepticism something of a rarity. Italy is the exception of the "big four" West European countries as it lacks a clearly identifiable Eurosceptical formation. It has only been with the redrawing of the Italian political landscape in the past five years that any Euroscepticism has become manifest. David Bell points up the irony of the Italian situation which has effectively denied the PCI the option of pursuing the Eurosceptical line which has favoured other West European communist parties, while the extreme right and new populists have been able to appropriate the issue (Bell, 1996: 231-2). The Euroscepticism of the far fight can be seen in the opposition of the MSI and the Lega Nord to the Maastricht treaty. Reflecting their different identities as neo-fascist and new populist parties respectively, the MSI opposed Maastricht because of its endangering of national sovereignty while the Lega opposed it because it 'did not go far enough in ceding powers to the European Parliament and fell short of providing a a vehicle for domestic reform' (Fieschi et al., 1996: 249).

This survey allows us to differentiate between two different factors in Euroscepticism across Europe. The first is in terms of the ideological range of the parties. Table 1 below lists the Eurosceptical parties and Eurosceptical factions and categorises them according to their party family.[2]

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[2]Nine party families are identified here approximately in line with Klaus von Beyme's (1995) nine-fold categorisation but with slightly different terms used in order to make the classification more contemporary, and with the addition of a religious party category to identify Protestant rather than Catholic Christian parties, and with the addition of the new populist category to differentiate these parties from neo-fascist parties.

Table 1: Party Families of Political Parties with Anti-EU Positions

Country	Party	Party Family
Austria	Austrian Freedom Party	New Populist
	Greens	New Politics
Belgium	Flemish Block	New Populist
	National Front	Neo-Fascist
Denmark	June Movement	Anti-EU
	People's Movement Against EC-Union	Anti-EU
	Progress Party	New Populist
Finland	Green Party	New Politics
	Christian League	Christian Democrat
	Leftist Alliance	Extreme Left
	Centre Party (faction)	Agrarian
France	'Alternative Europe' (de Villiers)	Anti-EU
	National Front	New Populist
	Communist Party	Extreme Left
	Greens	New Politics
	'Alternative Politics' (Chevènement)	Anti-EU
Germany	Free Citizens Alliance (Brunner)	Anti-EU
	Republicans	New Populist
	Free Democratic Party (faction)	Liberal
Greece	Greek Communist Party	Extreme Left
Ireland	Greens	New Politics
	Sinn Fein	Ethno-Regionalist
	Democratic Left	Extreme Left
	Workers Party	Extreme Left
	Labour Party (faction)	Social Democrat
Italy	National Alliance	Neo-Fascist
Luxembourg	Action Committee for Democracy	Anti-EU
	National Movement	Neo-Fascist
Netherlands	Socialist Party	Extreme Left
	Reformed Political League	Religious
	Political Reformed Party	Religious
	Reformed Political Federation	Religious
	Green Party	New Politics
Portugal	Communist Party	Extreme Left
	Centre Democrats	Christian Democrat
	Social Democratic Party (faction)	Christian Democrat
Sweden	Green Party (MP)	New Politics
	Left Party (V)	Extreme Left
	Social Democratic Party (faction)	Social Democrat
United Kingdom	Green Party	New Politics
	UK Independence Party	Anti-EU
	Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)	Ethno-Regionalist
	Conservative Party (faction)	Conservative

What is notable, even at first glance at the party types, is that different types of party appear in each country and the same types of party do not necessarily appear across the range of countries. Different parties in different countries are Eurosceptical and even the same types of parties are not Eurosceptical in different countries. There is a clear distinction between both national contexts and sources of EU opposition. Placing parties in their party families does not allow us to predict with any certainty their position on the EU.

A second way of differentiating between parties is to look at what type of Euroscepticism is manifest in political parties. I suggest that there are four ways it can be manifest in parties.

(1) Single Issue Eurosceptical Parties

The first of these is the parties whose very raison d'être is opposition to the European Union. They exist only to express Euroscepticism and to mobilise electors on the European issue. The most obvious examples of these are the June Movement and the People's Movement Against the EC-Union in Denmark, Phillipe de Villiers candidacy for the French presidency in 1995 and Manfred Brunner's Free Citizen's Alliance party in Germany which is defined in terms of its opposition to European integration. In this category we can also include ad hoc coalitions that may emerge to unite opposition movements in the face of a galvanising event such as a referendum, such as the June Movement in Denmark. These may develop into or out of parties and also have an impact on the party system and so can be classified as party-based opposition.

(2) Protest Based Parties with Euroscepticism

The second type of opposition comes from parties whose basis can be described as protest parties and who have taken an anti-EU position as an adjunct to their general opposition to the functioning of political systems. Here protest parties are defined as parties whose appeal stems either partly or wholly from being parties that both reject and stand outside the established group of (usually governmental) parties. Some parties make a virtue of their exclusion while others strive to play down their exclusion. Such parties promote themselves on the basis of their distance from the parties of government. Other terms have been applied

such as 'discontent parties' (Lane & Errson, 1991) or 'anti-establishment parties' (Müller-Rommel, 1995) that illustrate the same thing: that protest can come from very different ideological locations. Examples of such parties might be the Swedish Green Party and the French Communist Party.

(3) Established Party with Eurosceptical Position

The third type of party that can be Eurosceptical is when an established party adopts a position of Euroscepticism. Established parties are defined as either parties which have been parties of government or parties that have attempted to promote themselves as worthy of support because of their proximity to the governmental parties.

(4) Eurosceptical Factions

The final type of Euroscepticism occurs when a significant faction of an existing party expresses opposition while the party overall expresses support for European integration. This is difficult to identify systematically but it is certainly possible to identify features that give rise to the suspicion that factionalism exists. Factionalism can be the result of a prominent figure publicly breaking off from the overall party position. Other indicators of factionalism lie in organisation and identity: whether there is actually a degree of co-operation between activists on this issue and whether they have identified themselves under a particular rubric. The most obvious example of this sort of opposition can be seen in the Eurosceptical wing of the British Conservative Party.

Table 2 below offers a survey of the categories of party-based Euroscepticism in EU member states. In order to give some sort of indication of relative importance of parties I have included the electoral results of the parties that are wholly Eurosceptical from either the 1994 European elections for those countries that were EU members at the time, or from September 1995 European election in Sweden and October 1996 European elections in Austria and Finland. Those parties that did not gain more that 1% in the elections have been excluded (e.g. there were some anti-Maastricht lists in Belgium that did not cross this threshold).

Table 2. Types of Eurosceptical Parties in Contemporary West European Party Systems

Country	Single-Issue Parties	Protest Parties	Established Parties	Factions
Austria		Austrian Freedom Party (27.6) Greens (6.7)		
Belgium		Flemish Block (12.6)[1] National Front (7.9)[2]		
Denmark	June Movement (15.2) People's Movement Against EC-Union (10.3)	Progress Party (2.9)		
Finland		Green Party (7.6) Leftist Alliance (10.5)	Christian League (5.1) Centre Party	
France	'Alternative Europe' (12.3) 'Alternative Politics' (2.5)	National Front (10.5) Communist Party (6.9) Greens (3.0)		
Germany	Free Citizens Alliance (1.1)	Republicans (3.9)		Free Democratic Party
Greece		Greek Communist Party (6.3)		
Ireland		Greens (3.7) Sinn Fein (3.0) Democratic Left (3.5) Workers Party (1.9)		
Italy		National Alliance (12.5) Northern League (6.6)		

Country				
Luxembourg	National Movement (3.0)			
	Action Committee for Democracy[3] (7.0)			
Netherlands	Socialist Party (1.3)	Reformed Political League		
	Green Party (3.7)	Political Reformed Party		
		Reformed Political Federation (7.8)[4]		
Portugal	Communist Party (11.2)[5]	Centre Democrats (14.1)	Social Democratic Party	
	Greens			
Spain				
Sweden	Green Party (17.2)	Left Party[6] (12.9)	Social Democratic Party	
United Kingdom	UK Independence Party (Referendum Party)[7] (1.0)	Green Party (3.1)	Democratic Unionist Party (1.0)	Conservative Party

[1] As a percentage of the vote in Flanders
[2] As a percentage of the vote in Wallonia
[3] This party started life as the Five-Sixths Party in 1989 to promote the position of pensioners in the private sector but by 1994 had adopted an anti-Maastricht stance (Smart, 1995).
[4] All three parties stood as the Coalition of Orthodox Protestants
[5] The Communist Party and the Greens stood as the Democratic Unitary Coalition
[6] The Left Party is not categorised as a protest party despite that categorisation being applied to other communist parties because of its history of sharing power with the Social Democratic Party in government.
[7] Formed after last European election.

The range of parties expressing Euroscepticism across Europe allows us to make three comparative observations. The first is that Euroscepticism is manifest in parties of many different ideological groupings. Euroscepticism is neither the exclusive preserve of the left or of the right. Secondly, those parties unequivocally taking a Eurosceptical line tend to be parties on the periphery of their party system (Taggart, 1998). In other words, being a wholly Eurosceptical party is confined to parties that are not in government and that are not likely to be. Thirdly, insofar as Euroscepticism is manifest in the core parties in the party system, it is likely to be manifest in the form of factions. For the purposes of the rest of this paper, I wish to concentrate on the non-factional forms of Euroscepticism. Looking at parties that wholly adopt anti-EU positions shows the real possibility for populism.

The Politics of Populism

The survey demonstrates that Eurosceptical politics is largely the preserve of parties at the peripheries of their respective party systems. It also demonstrates that the parties expressing Euroscepticism come from a wide array of ideological positions. I suggest that what unites this disparate grouping of Eurosceptics is that many use the EU issue to embody a form of populist politics.[3] To show this I want to suggest that populism has three defining characteristics and that the Euroscepticism of the parties embodies these.

Populism is widely used and rarely defined. When commentators attempt definitions the result is invariably fundamental contestation (Ionescu & Gellner, 1969) or taxonomies of different types of populism (Canovan, 1981). This is often taken to suggest that there is no single identifiable concept as populism. This is mistaken. There is a flexibility in the way populism is used but the identification of a set of core ideas is possible. It is also possible, and useful, because those common features set up a common dynamic that we can identify as a populist politics. Identifying the dynamics of populism is as important as defining it.

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[3]There is a perennial difficulty in the use of the term populism. It is inherently seen as reflecting a normative evaluation and so the term in academic discourse is associated with negative connotations. I use the term here in a purely analytical sense and do not necessarily imply a judgement about the correctness or otherwise about these parties' politics.

Populism is the agenda created around the negative reaction to the institutions of representative politics. Populism is then, in some sense, a reaction against modern politics. Politics in the modern world necessarily involves an element of representation and of administration: people need to be represented and government needs to be carried out. In a positive sense, this means that politics requires mechanisms to achieve linkage between the mass of people and the few that are directly involved in government. In a more negative light, the same thing can be described as a way of separating the mass and the elite to the disadvantage of the former. Populism is that negative response to the phenomenon of politics. Populism attacks the institutions of politics without attacking the system as a whole. Bureaucrats, bankers and politicians have historically become objects of attack. The EU and the "Eurocrats" become a natural addendum to that list of populist demons.

Populism has three key features. Firstly, populism is an ideology that, like nationalism, has an inherent flexibility. While all ideologies are composed of four elements (diagnoses of the present; key values; strategy; utopia), populism does not inherently stress key values (as other ideologies explicitly or implicitly do) which means that populism can be used widely and explains why it appears to cross the left-right ideological spectrum. The key values are actually derivative of populism's utopia (or, as I argue below, more properly, its heartland). In other words, what is stressed as fundamentally good depends upon the context of populism.

The second feature of populism is that populism has an inherently critical attitude towards the institutions of modern politics. Unlike other ideologies which attack institutions as a way of embodying their critique of the status quo, populism creates a critique around the institutions it attacks. It is this that shows why populism is fundamentally a reaction against modern representative politics. The ideas of direct democracy and the tool of the referendum are often seen as populist. This is because, what they both embody is an attempt to by-pass or to limit the institutions and the institutionalisation of politics.

The final feature of populism is the idea of a heartland. The notion of a heartland, as a version of reality both fundamentally at odds with present and embodying ideas of popular wisdom, is an essential feature of populism. The heartland is that vision of what is good and is usually associated with the community. It is because of it that many have described populism

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as tending to look back on the past as a golden age. Thus, some have described populism as an agrarian response to modernisation (Ionescu & Gellner, 1969). Others have seen it as naive and reactionary (Hofstadter, 1955). In truth, the heartland *is* often associated with the past but is not necessarily back-ward looking as it is an embodiment of a concept of utopia which the populists, by implication, view as attainable and as sometimes having been attained. The heartland is the yardstick by which the failures of the present are measured. The commonly noted emphasis on 'the people' by populists is therefore simply a concept that is derivative of the heartland as 'the people' are simply the heartland's populace.

The flexibility of Euroscepticism can clearly be seen in the range of different types of parties that adopt Eurosceptical positions. In Germany the process of ratification of the Maastricht Treaty lead to an unsuccessful constitutional challenge mounted by a former leader of the Bavarian FDP and Chef de Cabinet to a German EU Commissioner, Manfred Brunner, four Green MEPs and the far right German People's Union (DVU) and the Republicans. This apparently incongruous coalition sets the pattern for anti-EU sentiment across the rest of Europe. It mixes some strange ideological bedfellows. The idea of opposition to the EU can come from the old left and from the old right. It can come from the new left or new politics parties such as the Greens in Ireland, France, Finland and Sweden, and from the new populist parties of the right such as the Austrian Freedom Party. In other words, no matter which way the party systems are divided up, Euroscepticism comes from a wide ideological range.

The anti-institutionalism of Euroscepticism is clear in the way the EU is portrayed. Both the populist right and the new left and united in their condemnation of the EU as the extension of bureaucratic politics. They are united in their criticism of the EU as distant and detached. The portrayal of the EU as an alien set of institutions and of embodying the control of bureaucrats rather than the control of democratically-elected politicians, is a perennial theme of Euroscepticism.

The other way that Euroscepticism represents a populist anti-institutionalism, is in its attitude to the purveyors of pro-Europeanism. Often the object of attack for Eurosceptics are the established political parties. The actual issue of the EU can be used as a way of distancing and differentiating themselves from the traditional parties. As we saw above, the largest

category of Eurosceptical parties, is the category of protest parties. Their position in the EU represents only one part of the project that they have set themselves of shaping their electorate, their ideology and their organisation in a way that does *not* reflect the established parties.

The fact that the parties that wholly express Euroscepticism are using the issue as part of a populist critique is, in part a reaction to the nature of modern politics. It is also a reaction to the party systems in which they find themselves. If we take a Downsian perspective and assume parties as rational actors seeking to maximise their share of the vote, then it becomes rational for parties at the periphery of their party system to use a "second-order" issue like the EU as a means of differentiating themselves from parties at the core of their party system. Doing so carries little cost for them as their identity is often tied up with an explicit first-order issue (e.g. environment for green parties, immigration for neo-fascist etc.) and it has the benefit of further emphasising the differentiation of them from the parties at the core of the party system, that are portrayed as collusive and cartelised.

The 'heartland' of Euroscepticism is related to the changing context of global politics. For many the EU represents part of a broader trend in which the familiar institutions of politics are subject to the incursions of new institutions and forces. Thus the debate about national sovereignty that rests at the heart of many right-wing critiques of the EU locates the nation clearly as a heartland. For the French National Front the importance of France *as* a heartland lies squarely at the heart of their critique of an idea of an integrated Europe. In Italy the rise of the regional radicalism of the Northern Leagues has demonstrated the clearest conception of the heartland with clearly defined geographical boundaries. The importance of the idea of the nation of Lombardy, as both the future goal and as the past heartland is essential to the Leagues. In Belgium, the Flemish Bloc's call for regional devolution is inextricably bound up with the heartland vision of a Flanders free of immigration. In other words, those parties of the right that have the most explicit conception of the heartland are also likely to express antipathy towards an institution such as the EU. A supranational institution is, by definition, the opposite of the heartland because what binds the heartland together is the idea of a community which is associated with a number of like-minded individuals, and here scale

matters so that it is more likely to be more shared if that community is closer to the nation. The EU is, for the right, only possible as a heartland without the heart, and therefore a contradiction in terms.

Clearly not all Euroscepticism is populist, but it is clear that there are populist themes to the Euroscepticism expressed by parties on the fringes of their party system. It is possible to see the flexibility of populism in the ideological range of parties that are Eurosceptical. The anti-institutionalism of the parties is also apparent in both their attitude to the EU and to the other parties which embody pro-EU positions. The idea of a heartland is also apparent in the way the idea of nation is used by the right to mobilise opposition to anti-EU sentiment. In the next section of this paper, I want to suggest that there is also another factor that can reinforce the tendency for Eurosceptical politics to be populist. This factor is related to the behaviour of parties at the core of their party systems.

The Politics of *Attentisme*[4]

There is inherent in the project of European integration, the possibility of creating a certain type of discourse that makes a populist reaction more likely. In the formulation of policy options, it is necessary that debate explores various different options and that a series of choices is fully iterated. In certain specific cases, this does not happen. I suggest that the iteration of choices can, under specific conditions, be constrained by the phenomenon of *attentisme*.[5] One of the effects of *attentisme* is to encourage populist politics.

Attentisme can be defined as the reasoned refusal to make difficult choices. It is the choice of not choosing. The "wait and see" approach is therefore used in lieu of a strategy in the hope that the passage of events will render the choice unnecessary. In situations where there are difficult choices to be made, if political parties encourage an *attentiste* position then

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[4]This section draws on ideas developed jointly by the author and B.D. Graham.
[5]*Attentisme* is a term that has been used in French since 1918. It came to be used most freqeuntly to describe the position that lay between the two extremes of collaberation and resistance for those in occupied France during the Second World War. See, for example, Sadoun (1982: 70-7). For an example of the use of the term in an analytical sense see Graham (1994: 178-220).

they create a situation where the options are dichotomised. The combination of mass *attentisme* (that may easily be mistaken for apathy or alienation even though it is very different from those) and parties exploiting that *attentisme* creates a particular context in which choices are portrayed as polar opposites, when there might, in reality, be a range of possible options between the extremes. In other words, rather than the construction of a range of options, the range is closed down under *attentisme*.

Attentisme was the term applied by the French during the Second World War to those who did not choose to be either collaborators or resistance. It represented a middle position between two choices. The choosing of sides in a war situation is a useful illustration of the conditions under which *attentisme* can occur. The nature of conflict is such that it lends itself to polarisation: to the taking of sides. Some political decisions assume the importance of choosing sides in a war and therefore an equivalent *attentiste* position becomes a possibility.

Attentisme will only occur occasionally and it is possible to identify a distinct set of circumstances under which it will occur. There are four preconditions:

1. The issue must be one of fundamental importance. It must have multiple implications and must be resolvable only with reference to key values. In other words, it must be a quintessentially political issue.

2. The issue must be one in which the status quo is not an option. Exogenous events create a dynamic situation which force a decision to be made. In practice this may simply mean that the actors involved are not in of the most important factors affecting their decision-making environment.

3. Time is crucial factor and there must exist some moment in the future by which the decision must be made. This time horizon may be constructed or it may be the result of events.

4. While *attentisme* is a latent possibility in almost any situation that involves difficult, time-bound political choices forced by external events, its emergence as an option depends on the exploitation by political elites of the possibilities of gaining support by articulating *attentisme*.

If all the preconditions for *attentisme* occur, then political elites will, in effect, create a certain type of politics around a particular issue. The dichotomising of policy options that

occurs under the emergence of *attentisme* is peculiarly susceptible to a technocratic-populist interpretation. In other words, the choice becomes the choice between the elitist and the populist option. If a range of options is fully iterated then, with each option, comes the possibility of technical and operational difficulties. If the choices are dichotomised then all the technical difficulties become associated with one of the options and so this makes it easy to portray as a purely technocratic option. In doing this, it further strengthens the appeal of a populist option that is premised on being both anti-elitist and anti-technocratic. This is why *attentisme* can lead to populism.

The existence of in-built time horizons for *attentiste* politics means that the dynamic is itself time-bound. By definition, *attentiste* politics can only be a temporary phenomenon. Once the key time horizon is reached then some sort of resolution is inevitable. This does not mean that the occurrence of *attentisme* has not had lasting effects. The choice finally made may be altered from that which it might otherwise have been if *attentisme* has artificially restricted the choice of options.

Latent within the issue of European integration is the possibility of *attentisme*. The potential is not always realised. This is because three of the four preconditions for *attentisme* apply. The issue is clearly one, if not *the* issue of fundamental importance for European politics. The second precondition is about the dynamic and changing context also apples. The nature of European integration is such that the status quo is not an option. With the evolving *process* of integration, the conditions under which national governments relate to the EU as whole are subject to constant revision.

The use of quasi-constitutional settlements in the form of acts and treaty revisions, such as the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty, mean that member-states are forced, through the ratification process, to react to the changed context. Ratification provides one way in which a series of time-hurdles are introduced into the process. Other particular policy domains may also have time horizons built into them. For example, the process of Economic and Monetary Union is a paradigm example of intergovernmental agreement resulting in a series of structured time horizons, to which member-states must react. Decisions

about opting in or opting out of the first wave of EMU in January 1999 are clearly time-bound.

The adoption of an *attentiste* position towards the EU by political elites is the precondition that has only, so far, occurred in the case of the most recent British Conservative administration. The government of John Major clearly adopted an attentiste position with respect to EMU and therefore by implication to other aspects of future European integration. By making explicit the policy to wait and see, or 'negotiate and decide' concerning British entry to EMU, the debate was effectively dichotomised. This allowed the Eurosceptics in the Conservative Party to assume a position of prominence and effectively forced together the more Europhilic wing of the Conservative Party with the other main parties. This had the effect of marginalising the pro-Europeans within their own party. They were seen to be in cahoots with the opposition whilst not enjoying the explicit endorsement of the party leadership. At the same time, promoting *attentisme* stymied the leadership's capacity to lead the party in either direction, so allowing the Eurosceptics a wide potential scope for action. As particular issues such as BSE and fish quota-hopping came to the fore, the *attentisme* of the Major administration forced the debate to be dichotomised and the British position succumbed to the polarity of Euroscepticism placing it "at odds with Europe" (Wallace, 1997).

At the same time, the effect of this dichotomisation of the debate was not only felt within the Conservative Party. As the 1997 election date approached, the Labour Party came to adopt a more sceptical line towards the EU. Although first impressions of the Labour administration are that the pre-Election Euroscepticism may have been more strategic than 'real', it is illuminating to note the effect that the *attentisme* of the Conservative leadership had on the Labour Party. The question is whether the temporary signs of Euroscepticism found any roots within the party that might have a long-term bearing on the party's policy on Europe now in government.

The recent debate about the EU in Britain illustrates both the potential for and the effects of *attentisme*. It is salutary for pro-Europeans that what seems like a relatively harmless equivocation on EU policy can have such major effects on both a party, a party system and the long-term framing of the debate on Europe and, by implication, on levels of

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public support for the EU. Combining *attentisme* of political elites with the three other preconditions for *attentisme* has fundamentally framed the relationship of one member-state with the EU and there is no reason why it should not do so for other member-states should their elites choose to take an *attentiste* position.

Conclusion

Surveying party-based Euroscepticism in member-states party systems it becomes clear that where parties adopt wholly Eurosceptical positions, they are parties that are peripheral to their party systems and so have incentives to use the EU as a policy by which they might differentiate themselves from the parties at the core of their party systems. Where parties display factions adopting Eurosceptical positions, those parties tend to be at the heart of their party systems and to often in government. Differentiating between those, and focusing on non-factional Euroscepticism allows us to see the three aspects of populism as themes running through Euroscepticism. It has a clear flexibility in that it is exhibited by parties of greatly differing ideological hues. It is clearly antithetical to institutions, both of the EU and of the parties that are pro-EU. In the invocation of nation and sovereignty, the final feature of populism - the idea of a heartland - is also apparent. This populism of some of the Eurosceptical parties can also potentially be exacerbated by *attentisme*.

The misfit between levels of public scepticism about the EU and the representation of public opinion through major parties that are supportive of the process creates the conditions for *attentisme*. While there is a significant pool of opinion that could be targeted electorally and which is so far only catered to by parties whose primary focus is not on the EU, there is the opportunity for established party elites to transform that potential into real support. In doing they have the potential to transform the debate about European integration. The future of the EU depends on sustaining levels of public support. The specifics of the future of the EU that we can already discern as embodied in policies such as EMU and in events such as IGCs, with their potential for quasi-constitutional renegotiations of the basis of European integration, also means that there is the increased potential for *attentiste* politics and therefore for a populist politics of Euroscepticism.

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