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DRIVERS OF EUROSCEPTICISM IN FRANCE AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

Bachelor Thesis

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I declare I have written the bachelor thesis independently.

All works and major viewpoints of the other authors, data from other sources of literature and elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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ABSTRACT

Euroscepticism has in recent years been growing sharply in European countries. The European Union experiences numerous difficulties including crises in the economic and migration fields. In addition, Euroscepticism has become more visible in the party systems as Eurosceptic single issue parties and populist movements have grown and enjoy increased popularity in the countries' political systems. The objectives of the research are to examine Euroscepticism in France and in the United Kingdom and answer the research question "what is driving it". Different hypotheses of the causes are derived based on the current literature of the phenomenon. These two countries provide an intriguing base for this research, since they both are at a crossroad in terms of the future as a member of the EU. The UK is set to have a referendum in June of whether to stay or withdraw from the Union and France's next presidential elections in 2017 include candidates from the anti- EU stance as well which makes the elections striking in terms of the relations with France and the EU. This research concludes that there are various factors, both long term and short term that have an impact to the issue. In the case of France, the historical background with the EU isn't playing as big role as it is in the case of the UK. The main factors are in fact the changes in the EU, Euro crisis and migration crisis.

Keywords: Euroscepticism, France, European Union, referendum, Front National, UK Independence Party

INTRODUCTION

Euroscepticism has recently been growing and become more visible in many European countries. It has little by little started to emerge now also in smaller European societies in addition to large member states such as France and United Kingdom, where the phenomenon was first acknowledged. Although the concept of Euroscepticism is as old as the European Union itself, in recent years the skeptical attitudes towards the EU have grown stronger. This is starting to affect policy making in the Union and the relationship between it and its members. The lack of trust and growing criticism is starting to evolve into a big threat to European integration and cooperation.

Euroscepticism is becoming a better known concept because of recent events we have witnessed. Since the beginning of the current euro crisis political thinking has experienced a transformation in many cases and trust in the EU has fallen dramatically. In addition to the growing tensions among people due to the financial and economic situation, negative attitudes towards the European Union have been incited by the Greek debt crisis, the sudden extreme migration of Syrians and its neighboring nationals and refugees to Europe and other actions of the EU that are considered questionable in some ways.

Eurosceptic parties are growing very fast in influential member countries. For instance France, as one of the EU's founders, experiences the growing criticism of the EU as a problem. The upcoming presidential elections in 2017 include both EU positive candidates and eurosceptic ones, that have achieved surprising popularity amongst citizens. Marine Le Pen, who is the president of the French far-right Front National party is considered as one potential option to become selected, since the party is gaining popularity at good speed. Her antipathy to the EU is not a secret, and her presidency would presumably mean Eurosceptic policies. In addition to France, small Eurosceptic parties that strive towards the country's withdrawal from the EU, are in a rapid increase also in the UK. The UK Independence Party for instance gained last year the

third largest vote share in the general elections while the governing Conservative Party is increasingly split in to pro and anti-EU camps. The country has announced a referendum on EU membership that will take place in June. The referendum is a much followed topic all over the world since the UK's withdrawal from the EU would mean drastic changes for the European Union, its members, its economy and its politics. Consequently, the debate about the EU's acts and decisions is going strong at the moment, and these are the years that will be crucial for the union's future.

This thesis aims to elucidate the reasons behind the current surge in Euroscepticism. It aims to answer the research question "what is driving euroscepticism in France and the UK". This will be achieved through a qualitative research method of case studies of both countries. The objective is to explain the development and the background of Euroscepticism in order to understand its true situation today. First, there will be a literature review of Euroscepticism as a concept and its main drivers. In this section I will present the knowledge the already existing literature provides of the subject. The next part will present case studies from the perspective of two European countries, that differ in terms of history and the reasons behind the membership-France and the UK. The case studies will provide detailed insights to the countries own experiences of Euroscepticism, the whys and wherefores as well as detailed research of the countries main parties. France is crucial to include it in this research, since although it is a founding member, the country has been experiencing a strong surge in Euroscepticism. Moreover, the French/German axis has always been crucial to the functioning of the EU. The second case study looks at the United Kingdom, since the country is at a turning point in terms of membership. The United Kingdom joined the EU in 1973, therefore its historical path until this day is shorter and also more complex, than the French one.

The paper concludes, that there are several explanations for growing Euroscepticism in the two countries. Historical factors and cultural elements are still present today in shaping people's attitudes. In the case of France, the main drivers today consist of fears developed during the refugee crisis and disagreements in the measures of the economic crisis. The fears are highlighted particularly in the sudden popularity of the anti- immigrant Front National party. The recent terrorist attacks in France have prompted xenophobia and discussion about the position of Islam. In terms of the economic crisis, France has had problems with the EU Commission, which

repeatedly rejected the French budget and demanded more cuts from the government. This lead to a surge in popularity of the Front National.

The UK's situation is rather different from the France's. The country started the cooperation with a suspicious stance and largely from necessity. Its history within the EU shows that it has traditionally been the most Eurosceptic country in Europe. The findings present that the British Euroscepticism is in fact deeper than in any other country. The paper concludes that the current challenges opposing Europe have influence in both countries, but while France is largely concerned about the refugee crisis, the UK has in fact more reasons for its rejectionist stance.

1. THE LITERATURE ON EUROSCEPTICISM

During the last decade, the literature and academic research on Euroscepticism has witnessed an expansion. This is largely a result of the accelerated process of European integration and the simultaneously evolving opposition towards it. The euro crisis has also had its impact on this, largely because people are facing a new situation with an economic crisis within the Union. Although opposition to the EU is not a new phenomenon, there is not much information about it from the early days, largely because the issue was much more salient than it is nowadays. The literature expansion has lead to recognizing Eurosceptic tendencies better than before.

Today, there is wide-ranging academic research on the subject, which helps to gauge its possibilities and threats. However, the research is mainly focused on the perspective of large European countries often with more elevated levels of Euroscepticism. Of course the rise of Euroscepticism in smaller member countries is more recent, and therefore less examined. Studies can be found that are done both in comparative and single case study methods, and the literature about this topic is often just descriptive instead of analytical.

This literature review is divided into two sections; the initial section intends to elucidate the concept of Euroscepticism by looking at its historical background and at the current literature. Moreover, that section will describe the current definitions of the term. The next section will provide insights to the current drivers of Euroscepticism that are provided by today's literature.

1.1. The Concept of Euroscepticism

As a mind-set, Euroscepticism has existed as long as the European Union; from the beginning the idea of uniting the European people into a supranational foundation found its opponents in every country. Since then, discussion concerning resistance to European integration

have witnessed a whole range of terms. The term Euroscepticism appeared for the first time only in 1985 in the British newspaper, *The Times*, replacing the already existing terms "euro-phobia" and "anti-Europeanism" that were considered too inflexible in the context of opposition towards the EU. (European Sources Online 2015, 2). The term started spreading largely because of Margaret Thatcher, who served as a Prime Minister in Great Britain at the time. It was used to describe sceptic opposition towards the EU and its policies, and in terms of the previous words used, gave space to varieties of criticism and skepticism, too. In this matter it can be concluded that the concept of Euroscepticism is largely of British origin.

As for the meaning of the term, there are many definitions, although only a few of them are used in the academic field. Two political analysts, Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak are responsible for one of them. They have worked with the concept in more detail, and published various texts and researches on the subject. Their collaborative and conceptualizing work has been extremely influential. Interestingly enough, Taggart was the first to define Euroscepticism. He suggested that it is "the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration". (1998, 366). Taggart also developed the definition into three different positions to the EU. "The anti- integration position", referring to those who oppose the very idea of European integration and the EU, position to those who are not in principle against it, but believe that the EU is too inclusive because it accumulates too diverse interests/elements and lastly a position for those believing that the EU is too exclusive either geographically or socially. (Taggart 1998, 366).

In their later publications, Taggart and Szczerbiak also focus on party- based Euroscepticism in the EU. They are additionally known for their division of the term into hard and soft Euroscepticism in order to address the nature of Euroscepticism more specifically. Hard Euroscepticism applies, when "there is a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think that 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". (2008a, 7). The particular word "principled" is the main feature, that defines the distinction. Soft Euroscepticism, on contrary, is "where there is not a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified

opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that the 'national interest' is currently at odds with the EU's trajectory". They often use also terms contingent or qualified opposition that characterizes soft Euroscepticism. (2008a, 8). Soft Euroscepticism can further be sub-divided into "policy" Euroscepticism and "national- interest" Euroscepticism, which both are contingent since they don't meet the criteria for implying an opposition to integration on principled grounds. Instead, they imply that if there were alterations to either a policy area or a shift of national interest, European integration in its current form could be supported of even encouraged. (Taggart & Szczerbiak 2001, 10).

In terms of analysis of Euroscepticism, one should also mention Kopecký and Mudde, two European Union politics scholars, whose comprehensive alternative categorization of the term has gained a lot of attention in the academic discourse. They criticize Taggart and Szczerbiak for forgetting the ideological dimension of policy positions leaving their definition too broad. They suggest a scheme less exclusive, yet more precise, distinguishing the term into a "diffuse" and "specific" support for European integration. Diffuse support is used when referring to support for the general ideas of European integration that underlie the EU, whereas specific support for the general practice of European integration. (Kopecký, Mudde 2002, 300).

These two dimensions are further divided into four sub-categories of support. According to Kopecký and Mudde, the first dimension "support for ideas of European integration" separates the Europhiles and Europhobes. Europhiles support the key ideas of the EU, institutionalized cooperation on the basis of pooled sovereignty and an integrated liberal market economy. They believe in those ideas regardless of how European integration is defined and realized in detail. Practically this means that both those who see European integration as a project of creating a new supranational state and those who see it exclusively in economic terms can both be included into this category. As an example, the authors present the Father of Europe Jean Monnet and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. They both believed in European integration for economic reasons, although Monnet clearly supported it also for political reasons. Europhobes, then again, do not support (or often even oppose) the general ideas of integration underlying the EU. Nationalists, socialists and isolationlists are all counted into this section, even though they might support the idea of some kind of cooperation among European states.

The second dimension, "support for the European Union", aims to separate EU- optimists and EU- pessimists. EU- optimists are, in accordance with their name, optimistic about the EU, its running and its direct of development whereas EU- pessimists are feeling pessimistic about the direction the Union has taken. However, if a party experiences critical attitude or objections to EU membership, this alone does not determine whether it is EU- optimist or –pessimist. The division is more complex than that, since one character of the party's politics doesn't affect its principles. (Kopecký, Mudde 2002, 302). This categorization is illustrated in the figure below.

Support for European integration

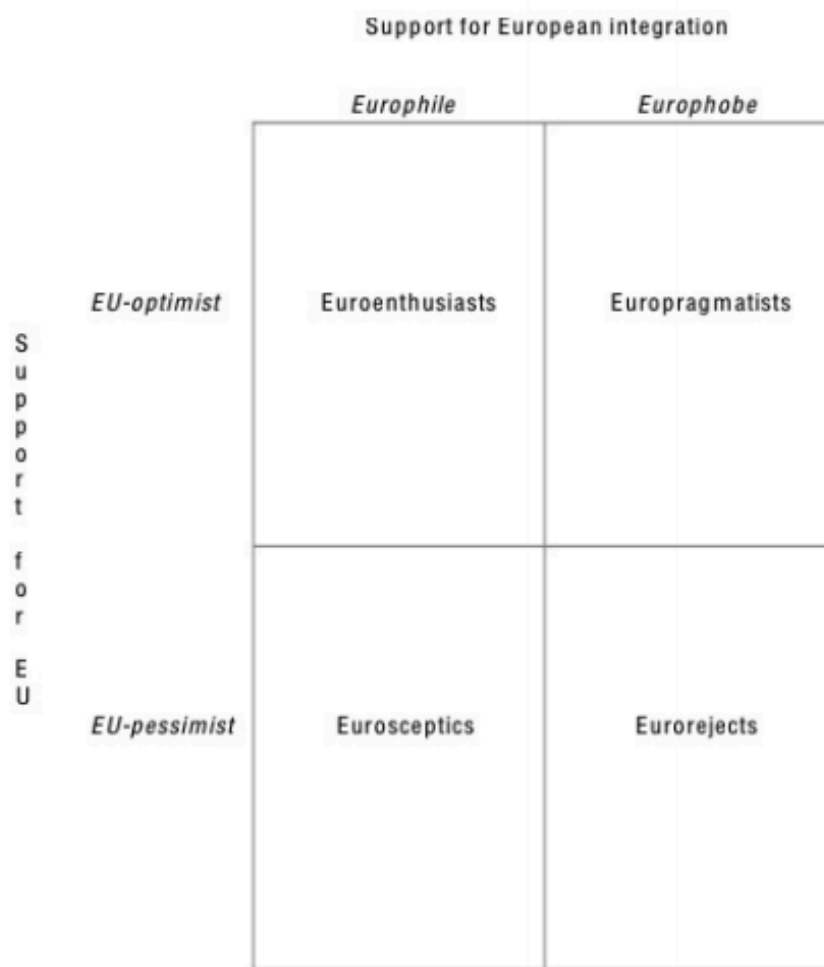|	Europhile	Europhobe
EU-optimist	Euroenthusiasts	Europragmatists
EU-pessimist	Eurosceptics	Eurorejects

Figure 1. Party position matrix

Source: Kopecký and Mudde 2002, 303

Chapter 3 of this thesis is a case study examining Euroscepticism in the United Kingdom. Euroscepticism is largely a British phenomenon, and many scholars have presented a separate definition for British Euroscepticism. According to Spiering, for instance, the "majority of scholars regard every British doubt, past and present about the European institutions as a sign of Euroscepticism" (2004, 128). In addition, Anthony Forster, (2002, 9) suggests the term means every British reservation towards the European integration. Spiering states that this kind of broad definition makes the concept meaningless, and says that often British Euroscepticism is considered stronger than other kind. Consequently, he suggests that the term should be reserved for those who actively reject membership and aim to withdraw from the EU. He explains this with the conditions in which the term originated. It dates back to the 1980s, where Margaret Thatcher was in charge for the term acquiring connotations of extremism. (Spiering 2004, 128). In the early days of the term, it was mixed with the term "anti- Marketeer", which was usually used in the context of people who rejected continued EEC membership.

Another indication for this definition is the fact that Euroscepticism as a term is known to be used by people who actively seek to withdraw the UK from the EU. Spiering states that there are numerous British organizations that go with this definition. One example is the Campaign for an Independent Britain, which is among the oldest ones. The party doesn't try to hide its ideas, but on the contrary brings them very openly into discussion. It is Eurosceptic, and naturally its opponents are Europhiles and they strive to free Britain from the European Union. (Spiering 2004, 129). The parties, that criticize the EU, but don't vote for withdrawal, feel again that the term is sobriquet for them, and doesn't fit their ideology. For instance, The New Europe group is openly against British participation in the European Monetary Union, but they still advocate for the UK to be a dedicated member. Instead of calling themselves Eurosceptics, they prefer the terms Eurorealist and Europragmatist, and view the Eurosceptics actually as Europhobes. (Spiering 2004, 130).

1.2. Drivers of Euroscepticism

Public opinion about European integration has varied from positive to negative and everything in between. It has been measured through extensive Standard Eurobarometer surveys, that have been conducted ever since 1974 by the European Commission. The initial results showed that the public was largely concerned with economic questions. The most important problem among the citizens was inflation, and about sixty per cent thought that the EEC was a "good thing". (Standard Eurobarometer 1 1974, 17). Since then, the percentages have been around fifty. In 1991 the public trust was at its highest with 72 per cent voting on behalf of the Community, while the lowest was conducted in times of the euro crisis, 2010. (Standard Eurobarometer 41 & 81 1994 & 2014).

Today's literature on European integration provides interesting insights to the question "what is driving this phenomenon?". Euroscepticism occurs in so many different modifications, that there is a variety of diverse causes behind it. In their first volume, Taggart and Szczerbiak propose three different issues, that they believe have caused increasing amount of Euroscepticism. The first one is the sense of decline of the "permissive consensus", that is closely linked to the difficulties in ratifying the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. The concept of the consensus signaled to the moderate support, rather than enthusiastic, among the public. The loss was seen for instance in the Eurobarometer surveys- the countries that had been members in the 1970s managed to keep the consensus, but still experienced a decrease in general trust and the UK for instance was even more doubtful. (Taylor 2007, 24). It was a time of more rejectionist movements in every country and in some it caused more difficulties than in others. European integration certainly was viewed as a threat to national sovereignty. In addition, due to the Maastricht Treaty, many policies of the national governments were passed on to the EU. As it is, Euroscepticism has raised its head every time referendums on European issues have had negative outcomes or difficulties.

Another reason these two political scholars put forward, is the increasing tendency in the European integration project to resort to referendums to ratify treaties, since that gives opportunity for sceptic attitudes to affect and break the surface. The third factor in driving Eurosceptic tendencies among the public is the enlargement of the EU which expands the

integration project bringing different and complex states into the set of European countries with particular politics. By this the political scientists mean particularly the states with a different cultural history and political system. (Taggart & Szczerbiak 2008a, 3).

In their second volume, Taggart and Szczerbiak propose other potential causes, that in addition to public scepticism, applies also to the increasing amount of parties that adopt Eurosceptic positions. They suggest that the impact of the institutional environment acts as a cause largely because it gives space for "political opportunity structures". Other studies already published, including theirs, provide insight to the possibility that party systems may be an important factor for the implementation of the country's viewpoint of Europe. (2008b, 7). It is also suggested that the political parties in fact determine the extent and type of Euroscepticism in a country. (Lees 2008b, 49).

The causes listed above can be classified as potential long-term causes behind EU-criticism. These and the historical factors of member countries are still present today in shaping people's attitudes towards European integration. However, recent events and challenges that are facing the EU have inevitably had a strong impact on the particular growth in rejectionist impulses. The introduction of the Euro happened seventeen years ago, and constituted another step towards further integration. The common currency is often singled out as a driver of Euroscepticism, and today it is strongly linked to the Euro crisis that is afflicting Europe. However, this suggestion is highly inadequate to and distinguishes the UK from other countries. This may apply to some people who blame the Euro and the EU for the Euro crisis. Also the fear of losing national identity, the feeling that people have no say in what is decided in Brussels and the general economic malaise in Europe are often considered as factors driving Euroscepticism.

2. CASE STUDY: FRANCE

France has been a significant player in building a united Europe, and it has been considered as one of the most supportive countries of the EU. After the Second World War, in 1945, France in addition to the Benelux countries, Germany and Italy started to unite European countries in order to preserve lasting peace and cooperation. After seventy years, France is still known as the "proud architect of Europe". In May 2005, France rejected the European Constitution with 55 per cent voting against it and in 1992 narrowly approved the euro with 52 per cent advocacy, known as "un petit oui", as the French say. In May 2015, only 37 per cent of French had a positive image of the EU, and 44 per cent were totally pessimistic about its future. (Standard Eurobarometer 83 2015, 8 & 191). Why has EU membership raised so many objections in France after the establishment of the European Common Steel and Coal Community (ECSC)? Why has, the previously so strong support for Europeanization, changed course? The following case study attempts to answer to these questions. It outlines the Eurosceptic embodiment in France addressing the reasons behind it. The hypotheses presented above will be tested in every case study, in order to single out the root causes behind the opposition.

2.1. Historical background

After signing the Treaty of Paris, and creating the ECSC in 1951, the six founding members stepped into the path of building perhaps the most successful union in history, France being one of them. France has generally been considered as pro- European elite, voting for its common targets, lasting peace, integration and unity. However, from the six founding members, France had the lowest public support for the European Economic Community- but that didn't last for long. Soon French people noticed the actual benefits of the organization. (Milner 2004, 4). It

is difficult to imagine that the organization would have seen this day without France and its presence, bringing forth initiatives that are extremely significant today.

According to Gerard Grunberg (2008, 38), who has examined Euroscepticism in France in more detail, in 1992 European integration became the major political issue in which "French public opinion was significantly engaged". This was due to the Treaty of Maastricht, which, as mentioned before, meant the end of the "permissive consensus" among the public for some countries. The political debate about European matters was just starting to emerge, so no public opinion had formed yet. In addition, the EU was involved in relatively few issues- mainly trade and agriculture. In the previous decades, the issue had mostly concerned technocrats and government officials, and the public hadn't even had a possibility for referendums on adherence to the European Community. Consequently, since the citizens were never asked to form an opinion about the European institutions, the knowledge of the issue was weak. The only exception was the 1972 Referendum regarding the enlargement of the European Economic Community to the UK, Denmark and Ireland. That referendum, however, had been reduced by the opposition parties to a domestic political battle between left and right. (Grunberg, 2008, 39).

The French party system has been classified as a bipolarized multiparty system since the political changeover in 1981 that brought the left to power. There are two main parties, the Socialist Party (*Parti Socialiste*) on the left and Rally for the Republic (*Rassemblement pour la République*) on the right. The reason behind this bipolarism lies largely in the voting system, since the elections are requiring that only two candidates continue into the second and final round. This applies also to legislative elections, where a two- ballot majority vote encourages parties to create alliances in order to improve their chances of winning. This system forced parties to group themselves into either left- of right wing, pruning other orientations out of sight.

At this point we have to have a glance at the year 1984, when one of the European Parliament elections were held. These elections have left a mark in history with an exceptional result, especially in terms of the evolution of Euroscepticism. The National Front (*Front National*, FN) gained unexpected success with eleven per cent of the votes. This signified significant changes in the French party system, and made it more wide- ranging entailing other orientations than right- or left- wing. The FN emerged as a party, that refused to define itself either right or left, but rather used terms like nationalism and cosmopolitanism. (Grunberg, 2008,

39). It is a French extreme far- right party, that is also frequently characterized as a populist party. Grunberg explains its success with the anti- immigrant attitude the party adopts. The emergence of the far- right party changed the political spectrum of France into "allowing" a more radical thinking about general political questions.

This political changeover made the field of parties in France more interesting and colorful. Before, the right and left and centre had all governed the country alternately. After Charles de Gaulle's resignation in 1969, there have been three parties in charge, Rally for the Republic, the Socialist Party and Union for French Democracy. The right and the centre were in government first until the year 1981, when socialists ascended and in 1986 the right came into power again for two years. These two years were influential because of the European policy that got carried out then by the leaders of the Socialist Party and the Rally for the Republic. These years of struggle with power were crucial in terms of European integration. The Single European Act and the Treaty of European Union both saw light of day although the French domain parties shared Eurosceptic tendencies. The leaders, François Mitterrand and Jacques Chirac felt threatened by the sceptic attitudes they both knew their parties encompassed, largely because they wanted to lead France into the direction they thought was the best for it. Evidently, they were not in behalf of any anti- EUism, since they got France involved in the European project. (Grunberg 2008, 41).

The European question wasn't very significant in the French political debate and it definitely wasn't the factor that separated the right- and left- wing in the 1980s and 1990s. In this context, the fact that the right and the left were not black and white, and that the leaders of the domain parties agreed on the European issue, managed to make the EU question even more neutral. Consequently, Euroscepticism in the party system could only appear from parties that had split from the two dominating ones forming an extremist party.

The Maastricht Treaty is the landmark for the European question. Before it, extreme parties, such as the FN, had aimed only to affect the consensus lying between the citizens, rather than getting a majority. The FN for instance, strived to defend French nationality and since then the political debate focused only on the right/left cleavage. When the Maastricht Treaty and the referendum took place, every party actually had to form an opinion on the question of Europe, and the choices made then still applied in the Treaty of European Union and Treaty of Amsterdam, not forgetting however this day. (Grunberg 2008, 42).

2.2. The extent of Euroscepticism in France

The French have generally been supportive of the European Union, and their reputation within the EU has been that of a pro-integrationist, influential member aiming fervently towards Europe's unification. But there also were a few years in which the support was weaker. French Euroscepticism is not very exceptional compared to other countries, such as the UK's, it only has different starting points. The evolution of Euroscepticism has followed the same path as other European countries, to the extent that it is closely linked with big events and crises linked to the EU. In the opinion polls, the French have done averagely without particularly standing out. In the 1970s when the Eurobarometer surveys were launched, the French naturally were in favor of the EEC, and together with the five other founding members they registered almost a share of 70 per cent of voices agreeing on the Community being a "good thing". (Standard Eurobarometer 2 1974, 13). In 1980s already, the percentage had dropped to 48 per cent. (Standard Eurobarometer 14 1980, 18). (See Figure 2).

As mentioned above, the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty that later resulted in the Single European Act faced difficulties in France, and showed that the country was divided with regard to the European question. The 1992 referendum on the Maastricht treaty resulted in 51 per cent voting "yes". (Lequesne 2014, 1). 44 per cent of the French feared that the treaty and the following integration would weaken France. Today these fears have developed into evident assurances; almost 77 per cent believe that integration has weakened France's economy. (Pew Research Center, 2013).
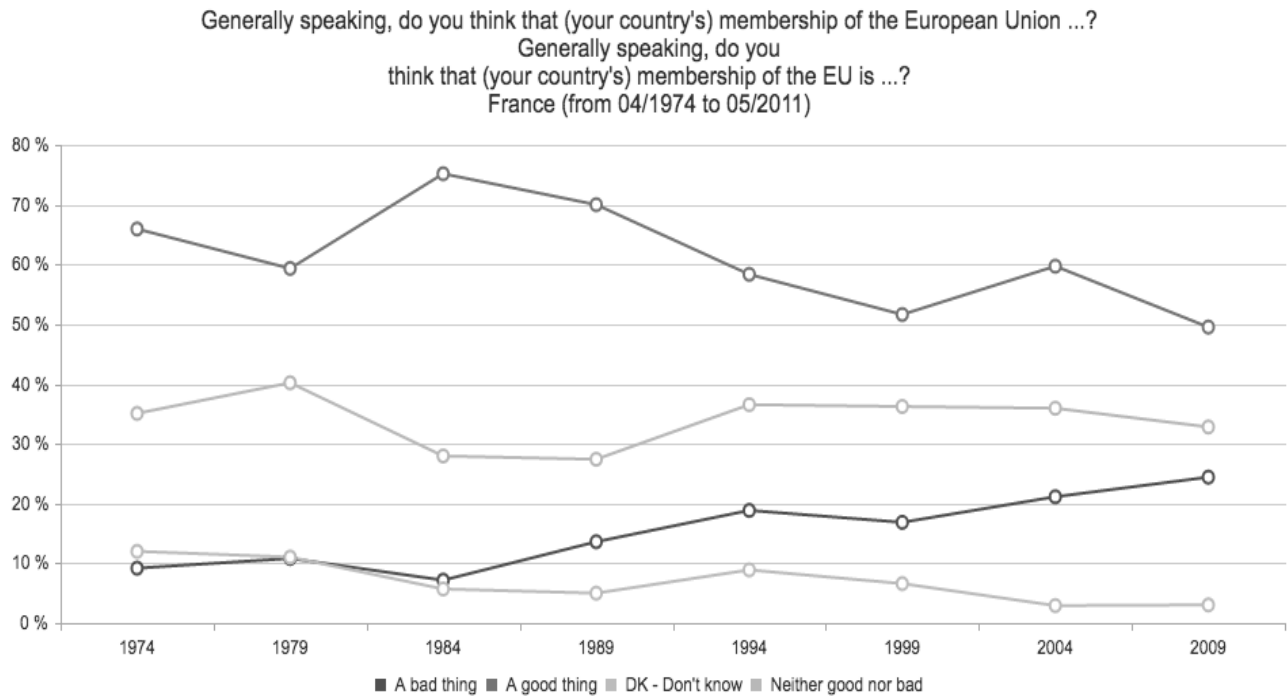
Figure 2. Membership of the European Union in France 1974-2011.

Source: Standard Eurobarometer

All in all, in the 1980s the number of French people thinking badly about the EU was the lowest, below 10 per cent. From 1990 to 2001 the percentage varied between 8-19 per cent, giving an average of 12,7 per cent which is very close to the EU's average of 12,5 per cent. (Eurobarometers 34-56). This illustrates the average position France occupies in terms of Euroscepticism. There are also separate statistics of the respondents that think membership is neither good or bad. In France, between 1990 and 2000, the percentage varied from 19 to 37 per cent, with an average of 28,9 per cent. When compared to the EU's average of 24,7 per cent, this is not a very exceptional result. (Flood 2002, 12). Already in 2005, the French viewpoint began to become clearer. Then they voted a firm "no" with 54 per cent voting against the Constitutional Treaty. In order to achieve a profound vision of the evolution of Euroscepticism, the most crucial years are however the ones after 2008, when inflation was the main concern of the Europeans and the economic crisis had its impact on Europeans attitudes. Since 2008, the percentage of the positive image of the EU in France has been in decrease. Similarly, the French have lost their

trust towards the EU. Both of these percentages have been below 40 per cent since 2008. (Standard Eurobarometer 69-83).

The latest results, from spring 2015, showed that 51 per cent of the French population did not have trust towards the EU and only 37 per cent had a positive image of it. In contrast to the EU's results, 46 per cent did not have trust in the EU and 41 per cent had a positive image of it. (Standard Eurobarometer 83 2015, 110-113).

2.3. Euroscepticism in French parties

The role of political parties is influential in terms of explaining the extent of Euroscepticism in a particular country. That is, essentially since they are often the most visible bearers of it within a country's framework. In all EU member states' party systems Euroscepticism has become a visible part and in France it has become a major political issue among the parties and electorate. As mentioned above, both left and right agreed and favored more European integration, but there were dissenting voices in both left and right- wing parties. France's party system encapsulates Euroscepticism both in right- and left- wing parties, which has weakened the cleavage between the right- left division. Consequently, there are two kinds of Euroscepticism in the party system; parties that have been founded before the question of Europe became central and whose Euroscepticism is not among the most important issues, and parties that have been founded more recently as the European issue became more salient and whose Euroscepticism is one of their key features. (Grunberg 2008, 42). The right- and left- wing Euroscepticism can share a common ground, but there are differences in their ideologies and beliefs. In the following section I will demonstrate the characteristics and evolution of Euroscepticism in the French left- wing and the right- wing focusing on the main parties.

2.3.1. Left- wing

When it comes to the leftist parties, the question of Europe is not among the important ones. Even with the far left parties, the issue with Europe remains in the shadows with more central ideas, such as support of anti- capitalism, market economy and market liberalism. These parties are not identified first as anti- European, but rather as anti- capitalist. In their election campaigns, the European issue is left aside. For instance old Trotskyite parties such as Lutte Ouvriére rather lean on other issues than the European one. (Grunberg 2008, 42).

Euroscepticism in the French left was at its most powerful at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century. The Maastricht Treaty was ratified barely a few years earlier with a lot of questioning from the French. Many new parties were founded at the time, mainly crusading against the Treaty. At the end of the 1990s, the European question had lost its interest among the citizens, but increased among the left- wing. The left generally didn't declare their anti- EU ideology other than within the party system to avoid offense and electoral risks. In the European Parliament elections in 1999, the left parties who had, didn't gather much votes. (Milner 2004, 60). At the time of the Maastricht Treaty, the opposition movements had succeeded in gathering more followers, and in 2000 near the ratification of the Treaty of Nice, the EU-critics started their movement again. Even more critical attitudes of the EU emerged among the left- wing, and the increase developed into an anti-globalization movement. There were demonstrations against unemployment especially, and the trade unions further highlighted the issue. (Milner 2004, 61).

As for the occurrence of Euroscepticism in the EU- critical leftist parties, according to Chris Flood, (2002, 9) it "attacks the EU on the grounds that its commitment to liberal capitalism, deregulation, free trade and globalization is inimical to the interests of disadvantaged sections of European and other societies". Their main goal is to achieve a social Europe that favors especially workers' rights. Other important themes are the importance of the public sector and – services, welfare provision and environmental protection. In addition, they aim for a more open Europe, since they regard Schengen still as too restrictive. Milner suggests that "anti- European attitudes are found mainly among those with lower levels of income and educational

qualifications", and that in the left especially the Euroscepticism is "concentrated among blue-collar workers and lower- level white-collar workers". (2004, 62).

In the next paragraphs I will demonstrate the main leftist parties with Eurosceptic tendencies in the French political system.

2.3.1.1. Mouvement républicain et citoyen

The Citizen and Republican Movement (*Mouvement républicain et citoyen*), is one of the leftist Eurosceptic parties in France. It replaced Jean- Pierre Chevènements Citizen's Movement (*Mouvement des Citoyens*, MDC) in 2002. The establishment of the MDC was due to its founders' disagreements with his previous party, the Socialist Party, with the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty and opposition towards the Persian Gulf War. The party gained fame especially for their ideology about European integration offering an alternative for it, that included an idea of a multipolar world, where no single power is in a dominant position. The multipolar world order in this case referred to anti- US foreign policy. The Common Foreign and Security Policy, according to Milner, "had opened the way for autonomous European action which could challenge US hegemony and contribute to the development of "multipolar world". In the political spectrum the party positioned itself in the centre-left. Since it advocates social democracy and intergovernmentalist decision- making, and opposes federalism its position largely highlights the general political line of the French. (Milner 2004, 65). Euroscepticism is seen within the party largely when reviewing its European integration policy, but also within the context of economic preferences. The overall picture of the party's alignment is that of a Europe with tighter regulation for multinational corporations and employment policy.

In 1999 the MDC managed to form an alliance with the Socialist Party. Their campaign was called "Europe of nation- states", but the MDC left out the word federation because of its rejectionist stance against it. Chevènement called their vision "*une Europe des projets*", that highlighted the role of nations in a project of democracy. (Milner 2004, 65). In 2000 Chevénement resigned from government because of a disagreement with policy on Corsica. The leader criticized the way integration in Europe was evolving- into a pro-capitalist direction with the elimination of national arena and –interests. He strongly advocated strongly a Europe of

Nations, and as a consequence, MCD walked out of the left and Chevénement welcomed a new party called Pôle Républicain at the same time as he was striving to become President in 2002. (Grunberg 2008, 44). According to Grunberg, the new party attracted Eurosceptics from both right and the left. (2008, 44).

2.3.1.2. Parti Socialiste

The centre- left Socialist Party (Parti Socialiste, PS) is the main party representing the leftist position in France. Founded in 1905, its history within the political system is colorful. The socialists don't bear Euroscepticism in their ideology, but it is crucial to examine the dynamics of its policies because they form an important part of the context of Euroscepticism in leftist parties. The PS actively strives towards-as Jacques Delors has stated- a "federation of nation-states". This, according to Milner, can be said to be "the pro- European mainstream of French politics". (2004, 63). The party actively carries ideals of economic justice in addition to social democracy.

The European issue is not a major question for the PS, just as it is not for the left in general. Their opinion of European integration is largely pro- European, with the support of the current European Union with a few revisions; European constitution, greater co-legislation powers for the European Parliament, European Commission formed from the parliamentary majority. (Milner 2004,63). The situation for the PS today is that of their former First Secretary François Hollande serves as the President of France. French Socialism has lost its previously strong support as the extreme right party FN and center- right UMP have achieved success among the electorate. Its future is therefore unknown, as the French political system is altogether in a turning point.

2.3.2. Right- wing

Unlike in the left- wing, in the right, the European question plays a more important role, largely because of the nationalism the parties bear. The right is known as opposing supranational institutions and striving towards the country's own national identity. The most important themes

in addition the European issue are immigration and questions of law and order. Consequently, these conceptions are interesting when reconciling them with the EU. (Grunberg 2008, 43).

2.3.2.1 Rassemblement pour la République

The Rally for the Republic (*Rassemblement pour la République*, RPR) was a neo- Gaullist party founded by Jacques Chirac in 1976. In 2002 it was merged into the Union for the Presidential Majority and later renamed the Union for a Popular Movement. The party was founded in order to restore the Gaullist domination over the republican institutions with its focus on themes such as national sovereignty. When it comes to Euroscepticism, according to Hainsworth, (2004, 37) RPR "has been the most divided of the mainstream parties on the question of Europe". The Gaullists traditionally display distrust towards supranational institutions and a federal Europe. Although the nationalism is very strong among the party, this has no always been the case. There have traditionally been two separate shifts in the party's policies. The first one occurred at the beginning of European integration; Gaullists voted against the European Defence Community, the European Economic Community and Euratom. However, in 1959 when de Gaulle was chosen as President, the party suddenly supported the EEC thinking that French- led European integration would in fact strengthen France's political and economic position and further the national interest. (Hainsworth 2004, 38).

The second shift within the party in terms of the question of Europe happened in the early 1980s, as suddenly as the previous one. The RPR agreed to the Single European Act and the introduction of Qualified Majority Voting, even though they were against de Gaulle's idea of national sovereignty. It had evidently shifted from national sovereignty to a more tacit acceptance of "pooling" of sovereignty. (Hainsworth 2004, 40).

At the time of the Maastricht Treaty, the Gaullists feared the loss of the nation-state and sovereignty, thus creating various disagreements within the party. Albeit that the discussion was intense in every French party, the RPR was strongly divided on the Euro- issue. For instance, Jacques Chirac voted on the behalf of the Treaty and 126 RPR deputies rejected it. (Hainsworth 2004, 41). This was followed by numerous campaigns for and against, and finally the party's majority opinion was clear; 67 per cent of the RPR voted against the Treaty in the referendum.

In 2014, the party got a new leader Nicolas Sarkozy, the former President of France. Immediately the new leader started his actions, and stated that he wanted a new name for the party; The Republicans. Despite criticism the name change succeeded with the party members also advocating it, and The Republicans became the successor of the UMP.

2.3.2.2. Front National

The *Front National* (FN) is an extreme right- wing party experiencing a significant rise today in its electoral support. It is additionally often regarded as the only powerful Eurosceptic party within the French party system. European integration has been an important factor for the FN in the context of their success. This is, largely shown by the party's popularity curve in 1984; the FN got 10 per cent of the votes in the Euro- elections, and they are to be regarded as the party's official breakthrough elections on to the national political stage. (Hainsworth 2004, 45). The FN, founded in 1972, has since continued its ascension and growth becoming a potential threat to other French parties. It definitely is worth analyzing in terms of France's current Euroscepticism, and the upcoming presidential elections. The 20th century has also introduced smaller single issue parties with an anti-EU stance.

The FN and its current leader Marine Le Pen enjoyed strong interest amongst European scholars and the academic field itself. It is often referred to as a phenomenon, that is predictable in many ways. The party itself might claim that there is widespread support for its policies, but this is hardly possible to prove. It is the party's questionable controversy that draw's attention and rises brouhaha. The nationalism, extremism and national conservatism are all quite new features in the current French party politics although there have been some small coalitions in the past. The support has been so small, that one would think it didn't have any influence. But the FN is presenting an era, that evidently proves that assumption wrong.

Jean- Marie Le Pen, father of the party's current leader Marine Le Pen, founded and lead the party in a whole different political environment than his daughter today. Extreme right- wing parties had lost their influence already before the Second World War, and after it only a few groups of radical ideologies remained; failing to achieve power. (Williams 2011, 680). The FN didn't perform good in the national elections, and sometimes didn't even succeed in polling one

per cent of the vote. The lowest point was in 1981 when Le Pen couldn't get together the five-hundred signatures needed in order to take part in the Presidential elections. After the breakthrough in the Euro-elections already mentioned, the FN managed to gain ground in other elections, too. (Davies 1999, 3). In 1980s the party claimed to support a coherent European project including common European defense and nuclear strategy, common foreign and security policy, common immigration controls, a common currency and a "European preference". (Hainsworth 2004, 45).

As mentioned above, the FN got a successful result in the 2014 European elections, and won 23 seats of a total 72 becoming the country's largest party in the European Parliament. Its campaign rejected French membership in the euro, but also the EU. Their arguments were that the Union was slowly killing off their welfare state. They also highlighted the unemployment situation and spoke against globalization. Their more current arguments take a stand on the lack of democracy within the EU, bureaucracy (particularly among the elites), dangers of immigration to the state and their culture. In 2017, Marine Le Pen will be running for President with her party's extreme policies.
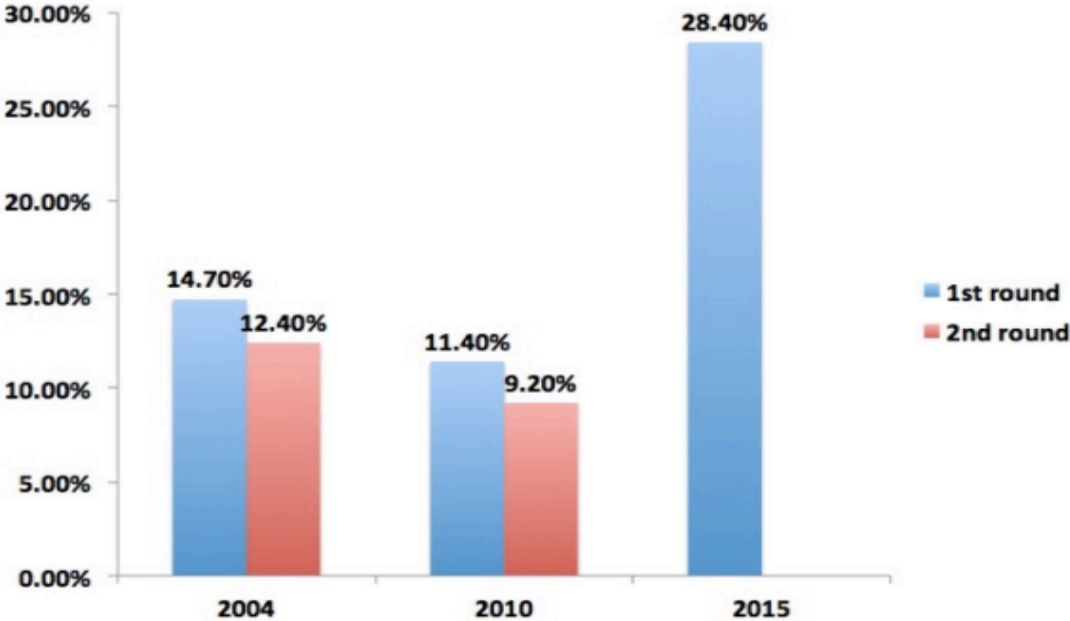

Figure 3. Percentage of vote won by National Front candidates in regional elections 2004-2015
Source: Independent Journal December 2015

2.4. What is driving Euroscepticism in France?

This section examines the current drivers of Euroscepticism in France by especially looking at why the Front National has climbed to success among the electorate.

The current situation in France is that the Front National's ideologies and rejectionist impulse among the electorate constitutes a potential threat towards pro- European movements. In this case we can state that the suggestion of Taggart and Szczerbiak- that one of the drivers of Euroscepticism is exactly the Maastricht Treaty and the loss of "permissive consensus" is correct. In addition, the Treaty was discussed for economic and social reasons only. This leads to the reality that the French are in fact in an expectancy of direct benefits of the EU. These expectations often are not fulfilled right, since ordinary citizens don't get for instance EU subsidies, and that way it is harder for them to notice changes and potential benefits.

The second reason for the occurrence of Euroscepticism presented by Taggart and Szczerbiak is the various treaties connected with European integration that provoked opposition among the residents. This is seen in France particularly with many referendums on the treaties. In the French case, the question of Europe has become central and highlighted especially after the Euro crisis began to undermine its economy. The Euro crisis essentially corresponds to the decrease of the trust and optimism towards the EU, as the Eurobarometers illustrate; in 2010 for instance public trust among the Europeans was lowest in history. Some French citizens might for instance blame the EU for the crisis and the poor economic situation.

France experiences serious unemployment and, as other EU countries, decline in the economy. In addition, the recent terrorist attacks in France and the general concerns about the immigration affect the state of mind and the atmosphere and leads to extremism. In the case of the FN, the explanation behind its success lies in the general malaise among the French. People believe Marine Le Pen has finally offered alternatives to the EU and supposedly to the difficulties it has brought. The refugee crisis, security, Islam and national identity are all key issues of the FN, and also the ones of the French public.

3. CASE STUDY: UNITED KINGDOM

The United Kingdom has stood out of the Eurosceptic spectrum with its difficult relationship with the EU and the phenomenon itself has been a familiar and crucial element of the politics of the UK as long as it has existed. After all, the origins of the term are British. In fact, the UK is often referred to as "a hostile country". (Grant 2008). The British have opted out of the Euro and the Schengen Agreement, and thus created a special position within Europe and this reinforces the idea of the British exceptionality. The complicated situation didn't end even after the accession to the union. The debate about the relationship of the UK and the EU has increased largely in the context of the approaching referendum on the membership. It is clear that the referendum is crucial for everyone's future, whatever the result will be. In this case study I will provide a review of the British state of mind and detailed research of the Euroscepticism it is bearing. In the following sections I will examine how the UK got in to this situation in the first place, where the referendum is inevitable. In order to get a more detailed view of British Euroscepticism, I will present a section on the extent of British Euroscepticism and then go on to a brief demonstration of the historical background of the UK within the EU, presenting the main issues and events that have had an impact on today's attitudes. Next, there will be a section covering British party politics, and the history of the main parties, which is necessary to examine because it also explains a bit today's situation. The third section describes the drivers of today's Euroscepticism in the UK.

3.1. Extent of British Euroscepticism

When it comes to today's British politics and the study of Euroscepticism, the current year is extremely appropriate to implement this kind of research about the United Kingdom. The forthcoming referendum in June is going to have significant implications for the EU, and possibly also wider international implications, no matter what the outcome will be. Perhaps obvious, but the discussion about UK- EU relations has expanded into a concrete time of decisions- whether it developed too soon or just in time, this policy-making was predictable.

In the spring of 2015, according to the Standard Eurobarometer, only 30 per cent of UK's residents had a positive image of the EU. (83 2015, 7). 46 per cent of UK's citizens were optimistic about the future of the EU and 51 per cent think that the worst is yet to come in terms of the economic crisis and job market. This partly explains the necessity of the referendum, especially when it comes to the fact that these numbers are not the first ones in history that reflect a strong rejectionist impulse among the British.
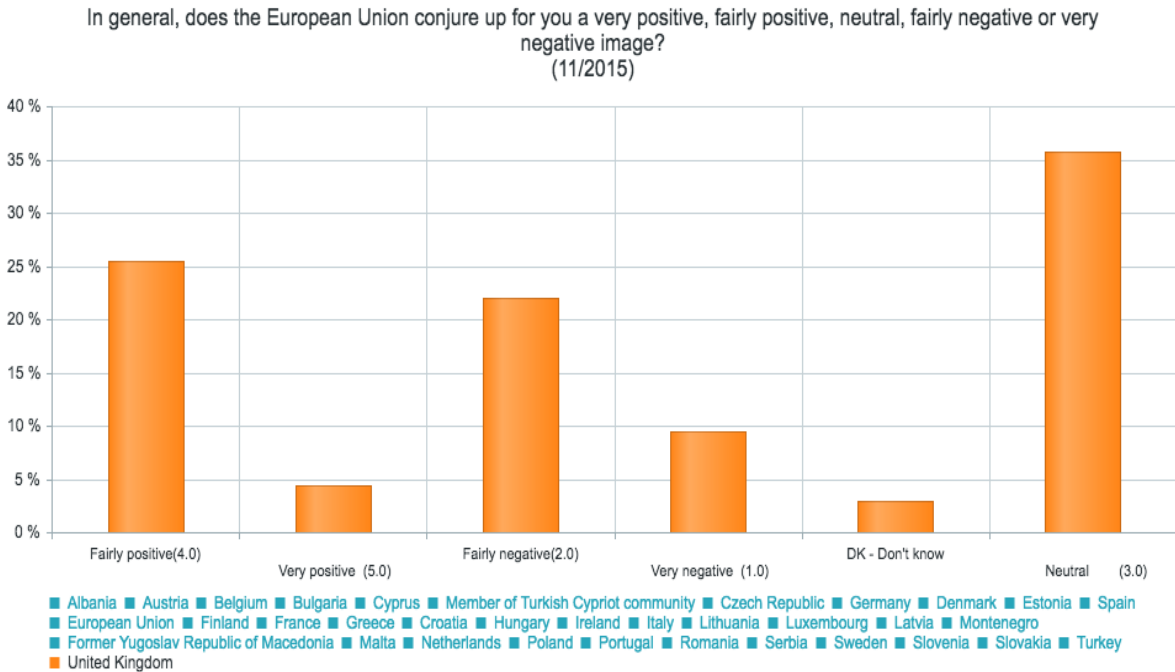

Figure 4. Image of the European Union in the UK, 2015

Source: European Commission Standard Eurobarometer 83 2015

When returning to the time the building of united Europe started, after the Second World War, it is obvious that already then the first signs of rejectionist stance of the UK were displayed, since the country didn't choose to take part in it itself. Gradually the British were prejudiced and considered themselves different from Europeans. Almost right after the UK's accession that was largely because of economic reasons in 1974, the European Commission started to conduct public opinion polls in the form of annual Standard Eurobarometers addressing attitudes towards the EU. These are intriguing especially in the context of the UK, since according to them, the British feel least European when compared with other EU countries. The first barometer this was measured in was the 17th, published in 1982, and only 7 per cent of the UK's residents felt often as Europeans. (Standard Eurobarometer 42). The following years provided the same kind of results placing the British at bottom of this scale.

Two years after the UK's accession, the British were offered another chance to withdraw from the Community. The results were clear- 67 per cent voted on the behalf of the EEC and 33 per cent against it. (Spiering 2004, 133). Since then, the percentage has been lower than the EU average, which makes them more Eurosceptic than any other European people.

The referendum on membership will take place on the 23rd of June this year. It is impossible to predict the result since the campaign is in progress. However, the Financial Times is updating the "Brexit poll tracker", whenever a national poll is published. At the moment the percentage of "stay" votes is 47 per cent, "leave" percentage 41 per cent and "undecided" 11 per cent. (FT 1.5.2016). David Cameron himself hopes the UK will stay in the EU, although he was the one who promised it if he won the 2015 general election. This was largely due to the campaigns of his own Conservative MPs and the UK independence party, that argued that the country had not had a say for a long time in the European question.

3.2. Why is Britain Eurosceptic?

In the following sections I will examine the causes behind the British Euroscepticism. The causes can be divided into three separate partitions; history, British party politics and media.

3.2.1. Historical Background

The UK's history is definitely still present today in shaping its attitudes towards European integration. The discussion of the European question is influenced by many historical features and they are strongly linked to the British exceptionalism, that is mentioned when referring to the cultural component of the UK in contrast to the rest of the world. British history differs a lot from other countries' histories- colonial history, status as a world power and special relationship with the United States all have an impact on its attitudes. (Cini, 2013). It is an island whose ambitions have been focused in addition to Europe also to the U.S, Africa and Asia.

The Second World War has had especially strong effect on the relationship between the UK and Europe, but also on the discussion and opinions the country is experiencing today about the membership of the European Union. The British exceptionalism got highlighted after the war. Spiering states that this exceptionalism got deepened mainly because the perception of "British Us" and "European Them" got a "tremendous boost" after the war. (2015, 10). In terms of perception, Spiering suggests that the Britain feels it was at war with the whole Europe, and not just Nazis or the Germans. British people feel proud of how the war went for their side, and believe that many of the UK's problems were caused by European countries.

For other European countries cooperation and unification was necessary, but the UK had different prospects. It was involved in post- World War II European integration, but didn't want to join the Economic Community itself. Prime Minister Winston Churchill only wanted to establish a United States of Europe, that was led by France and Germany. It was pointed out that Britain wanted to be an important part of Europe in a different way, in a way that didn't require accession. Their recent loss of Empire affected their attitudes towards cooperation with a skeptical and frightening way, and they only wanted to remain as a world power with good relations, especially with the United States. After long consideration, Britain finally decided to apply for membership largely due economic reasons. This was because of Harold Macmillan, the then Prime Minister who believed that continued exclusion would be harmful. The process was long and complicated, partly due to France and its president Charles de Gaulle, who wouldn't approve the accession. He was afraid of the increasing US influence in Europe and that the accession would harm the French efforts to build strong communities in line with its own model.

In 1973, Britain became a member of the European Community. However, the next years definitely didn't bring any expected ease for the state of economy. At that time, the rapid economic development of the area stopped and was replaced with oil crisis and economic recession of 1970s. In Britain emotions and opinions were facing challenges again, since the worsening living conditions and economic situation couldn't have come at a better seam. To tell the truth, the situation looked like it would be better if there had been no membership in the first place and it was time to have a referendum on the issue in 1975 which, as already mentioned, resulted in continuation of the membership.

3.2.2. British Party Politics

British party politics also partly explains how the current situation has originated. The history of party politics is very colorful, largely on the behalf of the indecision to the EU-question within the country, that is still present today. Parties have adopted and again rejected Eurosceptic policies and they have had rough times keeping a unified line with their objectives. Even the major political parties have had difficulties in developing stable policy commitments in terms of the EU.

Typically, the UK is known for its two- party system that consists of the Labour party and the Conservative party. Now, however, the largest parties are shrinking and not collecting the majority of votes simultaneously with smaller ones making room for themselves. The following sections will go on to examining how Euroscepticism has emerged in the two main parties, and what its impact has been on them.

3.2.2.1. The Labour Party

The Labour party's Eurosceptic tendencies date back all the way to the end of the Second World War, when the party was rejecting the Economic Community because it feared that membership would compromise national sovereignty. (Baker 2008, 95). At the time, Euroscepticism in the UK was largely covered only by this party and some other smaller ones in Scotland and Wales. Nonetheless, there were divisions within the party that didn't allow it to

adopt unequivocal policies. The pro- European members only comprised a minority. Subsequent economic crises in the UK led the Labour leadership consider membership again. (Gifford 2014, 58). When the UK submitted its second application for EEC membership in 1969, as already mentioned, it was largely due to economic reasons rather than emotional ones. When membership was secured, the UK witnessed strong polarization among the main parties; Labour and the Conservatives. This meant that more extreme and radical orientations appeared, and the situation wasn't easy in terms of the international economic crisis either. According to Gifford, the governing elites "began to dissociate themselves from the full political implications of membership" as European policies became harder to legitimate in the face of Eurosceptic opposition. (2014, 68).

In subsequent years, the Labour Party shifted from Euroscepticism to pro- Europeanism many times more. In 1970-1974, the party was strongly split on the question of Europe, and in addition, it was a major question among the party's ranks. Populism was strong and dominant, arguing that membership was a threat to British socialism and to the British nation. (Gifford 2014, 68). Many Labour politicians though that membership was in fact such a huge decision economically and politically that the British people should be consulted and that a general election would entail too many hazards; including for instance a chance for many Labour party's members to vote against the party's official line. Consequently, the Labour shadow Cabinet went on supporting a referendum on the issue. According to Gifford, this was mainly a populist stance to undermine the government but also to help to unite the Labour party. (2014, 69). Consequently, the referendum was forward by the party.

In 1988 the position of the Labour party was inclined into positive perspective of the EU and again into anti- Europeanism in 1989. Thereafter, the party focused mainly on the positive sides of the EEC and potential opportunities it could provide. It has continued to oppose a Federal Europe and promotes instead "a Europe which is a union of independent member states, coming together because they share common interests, not because they want to submerge themselves in a single European government". (Baker et al, 2008, 96). In addition, the Labour Party has insisted that Britain should participate in single currency only if it proved to be in the national economic interest. The 1990s brought a more stable line to the party, which was pro-European in many ways, albeit in the middle ground. The trust towards a better future economically experienced

growth, and increasingly novel commitment towards Europe had been achieved. Even support for the single currency was visible. (Gifford 2014, 131). After Tony Blair got the lead, New Labour was established. This meant a manifesto of five important issues; education, crime, health, jobs and economic stability. (Labour.org).

Today the Labour Party implements very pro- European policies- albeit that its optimism has become far more muted than it was when Tony Blair was the leader. (Gifford 2014, 168). This still remains although there are bodies and organizations within the party that encourages Eurosceptic tendencies. Due to the Euro crisis, the small hopes of single currency are vanished, and the Labour leader Ed Miliband in 2012 admitted that the EU needed reform in terms of the UK's relationship. (Gifford 2014, 168). The upcoming referendum is increasingly intriguing for the Labour party, since their newest leader Jeremy Corbin isn't known for optimism towards the EU. Before he has advocated the British withdrawal from the EU, fearing about the loss of worker's rights. However, he now campaigns on the behalf of the continuity of the membership with his party, as long as workers' rights remain the same. They have stated that they will work in order to keep Britain in Europe and end the uncertainty surrounding membership. Membership brings jobs and prosperity to the country- and this is what they use in their campaigns also.

3.2.2.2. The Conservative Party

Traditionally the Conservative Party has formed the Eurosceptic core of the British party politics. The Conservative Party, like the Labour Party, also started the post- war period with a EU- critical stance. The party resisted British membership in the EEC until 1961, when Harold Macmillan, the then Prime Minister opened discussion about finding potential terms for joining the EEC. He succeeded to influence the Conservative backbenchers and the grass roots in such a way that, in the House of Commons the issue got almost everyone's votes. Next it was time for the final vote in 1971, which result was 356-244 for membership in the EEC. From amongst the Conservatives only 39 voted against accession and abstained. The Conservative Eurosceptics had a second opportunity when the renegotiation and referendum on membership was held, but again they were unable to prevent accession. (Baker 2008, 97).

A stronger Eurosceptic stance started to emergence in Britain in the decade known as, "the decade of Euroscepticism", 1980s. It was the decade of Margaret Thatcher, who brought the criticism of the EU to everyone's awareness. Although she didn't advocate British withdrawal, she defended national sovereignty and independence of the UK from the European institutions. The rejectionist movements had an impact on the Conservatives, splitting the party in two on the question of Europe, with the Eurosceptic side being however in the minority. In subsequent years, Euroscepticism became more general and popular resulting in becoming the defining characteristic of the Conservative Party's ideology. At that time, a variety of Euroscepticism emerged among the British forming different kind of organizations that all had particular issue they opposed. Baker mentions for instance the Bruges Group that had had its influence on Thatcher. The group supported the Prime Minister's thoughts about the UK being different from the rest of Europe and the necessity to defend national sovereignty. The Bruges Group was just a beginning, and together with the European Foundation and the European Research group they formed definitely the core part of Euroscepticism in the Conservative Party. The Fresh Start Group rose and represented the Conservative rebellion and on the Maastricht Treaty ratification e forty-one MPs voted against it. (Baker et al 2008, 98).

The Maastricht Treaty still got ratified because of John Major, the then Prime Minister, who succeeded to negotiate the terms of it. After this, John Major largely focused on working against Eurosceptic positions and in 1996 he accepted a referendum on any future decision on the single currency. When proceeding towards the single currency, the new leader William Hague adopted Eurosceptic policies. In terms of Conservative Party politics, this was the ideology that had come to stay. Opposition against British membership was again strong, and their new leader, Smith, eagerly drove it forward. However, in Taggart's division of the term "Euroscepticism", the Conservative Party is counted in the soft- division. (Taggart & Szczerbiak 2002, 7).

The fortieth anniversary of the UK's accession was in 2013 and the Prime Minister David Cameron proposed with his Conservative party an idea of an in/out referendum of the membership if they would win a parliamentary majority in the general election in 2015. He said he wanted to renegotiate the terms of it and allow people to decide. In 2015 a new government was elected and the Conservatives won a majority of seats, and Cameron stated again that he would have the referendum by the end of 2017, but first he would want to negotiate new terms

for the membership. The situation in the UK is distinctive especially because it is unusual to have a government that is mainly Eurosceptic, and openly. Today he is campaigning on behalf of EU membership, since he is perfectly satisfied with the terms, which included a permission for the UK to not be drawn into further political integration. (BBC News 20.2.2016). The forthcoming referendum it is not surprising in the light of recent events and factors I have described in this paper. In other words, some may argue that this was just a matter of time. After the 1975 referendum there have been various attempts and demands from British politicians to withdraw when from the EU and when from specific treaties. The Conservative Party particularly has been very active in this respect. In 1992 John Major was in charge when his party MP's aimed furiously towards a referendum on the Maastricht Treaty and in 2002 Tony Blair offered a vote in order to decide about the Constitutional Treaty.

3.2.2.3. UK Independence party

The UK Independence party (UKIP) has set a target to remove the UK from the EU. It is the Eurosceptic right- wing populist party that threatens the two-party system in the country with its growing support. The party's historical background is fragmented and it has tendency of internal problems and scandals. According to Cini (2013), the party aims to make a clear separation with the extreme right. Its leader from 2006, Nigel Farage, who also is a Member of Parliament, represents the voice of those who believe that the EU needs significant reforms. In terms of Euroscepticism, UKIP goes on the Taggart and Szczerbiak's category of "hard". (2002, 7).

UKIP was founded at the time of the Treaty of Maastricht, among many other opposing single issue parties. In 1997 the party became the predominant Eurosceptic party within the British party system replacing the Referendum Party. (Lynch et al. 2011, 2). UKIP's first major success happened in the 2004 European Parliament elections, when it managed to gather 16 per cent of the votes, implying 12 MEPs, and already in 2009 the party came second. (Ibid.). The general elections in 2015 resulted in a 12,6 per cent share of the votes for UKIP ensuring a third place for the party and one seat in Parliament. (Lochocki, 2015).

In order to get a better understanding of the factors behind UKIP's rise, it is necessary to specify the reasons behind its electoral success. The most crucial themes the party bears are opposition to the EU, an anti- immigration agenda and general loathing of other parties. Two of these are the most challenging issues in the UK at the moment; the EU is seen as responsible for the weak state of economy and immigration is seen extremely harmful for the country as well. UKIP expects that withdrawal from the EU would stimulate the economy and declares that it would use these extra revenues to increase the National Health Service's budget and decrease Britain's public debt. According to Lochocki, (2015,1) one of the main reasons why UKIP has gained support is because it has managed to successfully distance itself from fascism and open racism but also because its themes are extremely current. Figure 3 represents the most important issues of UKIP supporters. The party has lured voters from both the Conservatives and the Labour party, although their program is closer to the Conservatives. The Conservatives who today vote for UKIP advocates the nostalgic ideas of the UK becoming an independent world power. The previous Labour voters are lured with the promises of anti- immigration policies. (Lochocki 2015, 3).

The voters of UKIP, according to Lochocki, are white working-class voters, usually male with lower education and no migration background. (2015, 3).

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	All
Immigration	28	31	39	38	25	23	31	24	30
Economy	3	3	2	2	17	32	25	20	12
Europe	15	20	9	9	14	7	9	14	12
Dislike Labour	8	11	10	12	12	10	2	0	8
Total (N)	685	414	452	398	305	535	396	624	4,143
Total (%)	6.5	3.1	3.4	3.0	2.3	4.3	3.7	5.4	4.0

Figure 5. Most important issues for the voters of UKIP

Source: British Election Study Continuous Monitoring Survey 2004-12, fielded by YouGov. Standard demographic weights applied

3.2.3. British Media

Another cause behind British Euroscepticism is the EU-critical atmosphere that strongly prevails in the media and the public discussion in the UK. The British are traditionally not so interested in the issues concerning the EU, and already in 1974, 14 per cent of the British thought that the press, radio and television did not mention European issues sufficiently. (Standard Eurobarometer 1 1974, 20). British newspapers have traditionally been straightforward of their criticism and bias towards the EEC. Impartial media have hardly ever been a part of the UK' press and media, although there are a few neutral channels today. From the roughly 30 million people who read daily newspapers in Britain, three- quarters read Eurosceptic papers. (Grant 2008, 3).

At the time of the first discussion about membership, the press was generally supportive, with a few exceptions. For example, the daily magazine *Express* spared no words when stating that the UK shouldn't get involved in any way with the EEC. Another example is from the 1975 referendum, when the rejectionists complained about the bias for the EEC displayed by many newspapers. (Spiering 2004, 132). Both extremes have thus occurred. The 1980s was different in terms of the media's stance. It was the decade of Thatcher and discovering the term Euroscepticism. The press started to attract international attention with its headlines and stories all including the exact term. The cultivating of the term was broad- and according to Spiering, the press was responsible for the extreme connotations of the term. (2004, 132).

Today the majority of the tabloid- press take negative stance on the EU. Some of the neutral channels, such as BBC, makes one-sided reports of EU- issues. Only the *Financial Times* and the Independent are seen to be in favor of the EU. (Cini, 2013).

3.3 Current drivers of British Euroscepticism

I have now demonstrated in detail the three different partitions, that are all central in the research of British Euroscepticism. Historical background, party politics and media are factors that are in deep in the British opposition towards the European integration. In this section I will

provide a discussion of the current drivers of Euroscepticism with the focus on the one potential Eurosceptic party, UK independence party.

As already mentioned, the current factors considered as drivers of Euroscepticism are the ones strongly linked to the numerous challenges the EU is facing at the moment. Further integration, for example in terms of common currency, Euro crisis, fear of losing national identity and refugee crisis are considered main causes behind growing Euroscepticism. When it comes to the UK, its public opinion about membership has always been quite negative and with all the changes in Europe's situation, the referendum is not so surprising. In fact, it is necessary and desirable. Since the UK has been the most critical towards the EU, it already has a base for the rejectionist impulse. Current problems and current situation in Europe have only strengthened their scepticism thorough time.

UKIP's campaigning messages are current and appropriate with the regard of the situation in Europe. The voters of the party are largely frustrated with the economic malaise and immigration problem and the party's solutions are easy to advocate, although they are sometimes extreme. As shown, UKIP's voters share harder views of immigration and populism, and are ready for the more extreme acts on the problems of Europe. The party's candidates are promising results, that can be interpreted as necessary for UK's future. They lean on to arguments advocating British democracy, sovereignty and economic competitiveness, which makes it almost "mandatory" for people to think about these issues. The party's success is strongly proportional to the suffering in Europe, since their ideas are associated with the union's problems. It is therefore safe to state that it is in fact the difficult economic and political situation of the continent that pursues increasing rejectionist impulse in the country.

CONCLUSIONS

This bachelor thesis examined the growing Euroscepticism in France and in the United Kingdom, particularly focusing on the drivers of the phenomenon in the two countries. The concept of Euroscepticism is as old as the European Union itself, but in recent years skeptical attitudes have been growing in member states. France and the United Kingdom are especially relevant countries to implement this kind of research, since they both are witnessing the consequences of rising Euroscepticism at the moment. In France, the right- wing Eurosceptic party Front National has gained unexpected popularity and seats in the European Parliament. The upcoming Presidential Elections in 2017 include also candidates with an anti- EU stance, which increasingly raises questions about the condition of the country's political framework and France's future within the EU. The United Kingdom is even closer in changing their relations with the EU with the context of forthcoming referendum on the membership. This will inevitably be a breathtaking moment that will have an impact on everyone.

The research was implemented with qualitative research method focusing on literature and surveys about the topic, separating the two countries to their own case studies. The research reveals that there are several explanations behind growing Euroscepticism, both long term and short term. The findings show that the growing Euroscepticism hasn't occurred suddenly, but rather little by little as European integration has proceeded. In France, the history within the EU isn't as present today as it is for the British. The starting points for the two countries are rather different; France a founding member aboard in a process towards lasting peace and cooperation, and the UK merely without enthusiasm a member years later for rational reasons. The main driver for Euroscepticism in France has been the refugee crisis and the disagreements with the EU. France expects benefits, and is one of the countries the crisis has hit the strongest.

In the case of the UK, the situation isn't just about saying "no" to Europe, but rather about pondering the best kind of Europe for them. The research of the UK explains that the British

exceptionality is crucial to take into account when researching today's attitudes. The changes in the EU have driven the UK to a place that, one could analyze, needs a way out. Therefore the referendum is desired rather than surprised. The drivers of British Euroscepticism today are linked to the challenges the EU is currently experiencing, especially the economic crisis and immigration policies.

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