

# **United or Divided We Stand? Perspectives on the EU's Challenges**

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# Tough on Europe: UK Media Coverage of Euroscepticism in the 2014 European Parliamentary Elections

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## Abstract

The British press has often been accused of representing the EU unfairly and predominantly negatively and thereby fuelling growing Euroscepticism in an already Eurosceptic country (see for example Anderson and Weymouth, 1999; Daddow, 2012; Hawkins, 2012). However, the representation of 'Euroscepticism' itself has not been given much attention. This paper considers articles from five UK national newspapers, tabloids and broadsheets, and news broadcasts from the BBC and Channel Four to uncover how different positions towards the European Union, expressed by labelling, are represented and evaluated.

This paper uses a critical discourse analytical approach to text analysis in which language as part of a larger discourse is seen as a consequence of and an influence on societal developments. Labels used to describe Eurosceptics on the one hand, and supporters of the European Union on the other, is therefore a crucial part of the analysis as it points towards underlying ideologies in the newsroom but also in the wider society. Furthermore production processes, which influence the news organisations' output, are taken into account.

While 'Eurosceptic' in other contexts is regarded as carrying negative connotations (Crespy and Verschueren, 2009), the analysis of UK media coverage of the run-up to the European Elections and its immediate aftermath suggests a more nuanced picture. Depending on the label and the labelled, Euroscepticism can be a desirable as well as undesirable attribute. Pro-Europeanism, however, is represented as a reason for electoral failure.

## 1. Introduction

The European Parliament Elections in 2014 resulted in gains for insurgent Eurosceptic parties from both left and right of the political spectrum: 109 of 751 seats went to those mostly Eurosceptic parties, 38 seats to the Eurosceptic, right-wing Europe of Freedom and Democracy bloc. While the rise of Eurosceptic non-mainstream parties has been analysed (for example Curtice, 2014; Pârău, 2014; Stoica, 2014; Treib, 2014; Hobolt, 2015; Mudde, 2015), the media representation of 'Euroscepticism' in the run-up and immediate aftermath of the election has not been considered. This study aims at analysing the labels, the adjective lexicon (Caldas-Coulthard and Moon, 2010), of British news coverage which is applied to the description of individuals and groups opposed to the European Union, European integration or aspects of it. The study is interested in their adjectival representation because it is assumed that categorisation by lexical labelling has social outcomes (Van Leeuwen, 1996; Caldas-Coulthard and Moon, 2010). Language in news coverage is not simply reflective of society but plays an active part in shaping society. Thereby it needs to be acknowledged that mainstream media

hold an elite position in this process and are interested in maintaining power relations which favour them (Fowler, 1991), in this case maintaining the support of mainstream parties for their media organisations.

Most studies covering Euroscepticism in the media are not looking at Euroscepticism per se but discover Eurosceptic attitudes in the coverage of the EU more generally (see for example Anderson and Weymouth, 1999; De Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2003; Anderson, 2004; Schuck and de Vreese, 2006; Vliegenhardt *et al.*, 2008; Daddow, 2012; Haeussler, 2014). While negative, biased representations of the EU is discovered in media coverage and subsequently discussed and criticised, the representation of Euroscepticism itself has not received much attention. How are those explicitly identified as opposed to the EU or European integration represented in media discourse? Does the language used to describe them furthermore matter in this representation?

This paper will look at UK media coverage of Euroscepticism in the election campaign running up to the 2014 European Parliamentary elections. It will do so by literally looking at 'Euroscepticism' as a label in news coverage of the election campaign across seven different UK news outlets: the *Daily Mail* and *Sunday Mail*, the *Guardian* and *Observer*, the *Mirror* and *Sunday Mirror*, *The Sun* and *Sun on Sunday*, the *Daily Telegraph* and *Sunday Telegraph*<sup>1</sup>, as well as *BBC News at Ten* and *Channel 4 News*. This paper is interested in answering the following questions:

(a) Which labels are used to describe Eurosceptic attitudes? Labels in this case refers to the categorisation of actors by the use of adjectives, which can be pre-modifiers (for example 'the Eurosceptic politician') but also used as nouns themselves (for example 'the Eurosceptic'). Firstly, the term Euroscepticism will be defined in order to clarify some of the ambiguity of the concept but also to show the different variations of Eurosceptic attitudes. Secondly, using a Critical Discourse Analytical approach, this paper will then look at the different labels used to describe attitudes towards the European Union and European integration.

(b) Who are those labels ascribed to? Lexical differences in labelling of groups and individuals opposed to the EU or European integration will be mapped out. This will show that different lexical choices are made depending on whether a mainstream or non-mainstream group or person is covered.

(c) How are those labelled evaluated? By coding how the labelled actors are evaluated in the news coverage, this paper will show that Eurosceptic establishment figures are labelled and evaluated differently to non-mainstream Eurosceptics by using different vocabulary choices and creating different connotations. It also argues that media language use helps to create the impression of a 'good', desirable and 'bad', undesirable kind of Euroscepticism.

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<sup>1</sup> From this point referred to by their respective daily edition's name.

(d) How can the results be explained in context of practices within the news organisation? The findings of the linguistic analysis will be put into context of news production in some of the most widely consumed UK media institutions to point out some of the influences which impact on the coverage of Euroscepticism but also explains some of the differences between the institutions included in the sample.

## 2. What is Euroscepticism?

The term *Euroscepticism* was first coined in the 1980s in Britain (Harmsen and Spiering, 2004), and is now widely used in both member states and candidate countries. Despite its popular use, however, its meaning is ambiguous and frequently contested (Vasilopoulou, 2011). Scholars apply different conceptualisations and definitions and use it in diverse research contexts, from party politics to public opinion, often ambiguously (Flood, 2002). This leads to the perception that opponents of the European Union and European integration can be summed up as one 'uninformed and undifferentiated group of people' (Usherwood, 2013, p. 280). An overview of different approaches will help understand what the media label as 'Eurosceptic' and 'pro-European' and provide a working definition for this paper. This will later be contrasted with the use of the term in journalistic texts.

One of the most prominent definitions was put forward by Taggart (1998): It 'expresses the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration' (Taggart, 1998, p. 366). Developing this conceptualisation further, Taggart and Szczerbiak (2001) assume a continuum of Euroscepticism with 'soft' Euroscepticism on the one end, and 'hard' Euroscepticism on the other. 'Soft' Euroscepticism is characterised by qualified or contingent opposition to European integration. 'Hard' Euroscepticism describes unqualified and outright opposition to the European integration process.

Taggart and Szczerbiak's (2001) concept, despite its popularity, has attracted criticism. Flood (2002), argues that especially 'soft' Euroscepticism cannot capture all the different degrees of support and scepticism for the EU. Furthermore, 'soft' Euroscepticism does not distinguish between opposition to the polity and policy aspects of European integration (Vasilopoulou 2009; see also Mair 2007).

This has led to several approaches trying to address the problem, for example by Kopecky and Mudde (2002). Basing their conceptualisation on Easton's (1965) differentiation between diffuse and specific support for a political system, they define Eurosceptic positions along two dimensions, support for European integration in general and the EU as the institutional realisation in particular. This leads to four categories: Euro-enthusiasts, Euro-pragmatists, Eurosceptics and Eurojects.

Again, this typology has been criticised as too reductionist (Flood, 2002). In his six-point-continuum, Flood (2002) tries to distance the different types of attitudes from any ideological standpoint or strategic motivations, which are implicit in Kopecky and Mudde's typology. Another attempt to refine and previous conceptualisations has been introduced by Conti (2003). He distinguishes between five

positions: hard Euroscepticism, soft Euroscepticism, no commitment, functional Europeanism and identity Europeanism.

The notion of 'Euroscepticism' itself is contested in recent research. Crespy and Verschuere (2009) criticise that criteria for classification remain unclear and the boundaries between different types of Euroscepticism are ambiguous. Therefore, research using these definitions and conceptualisations lack consistency as well. Moreover, the concept of 'Euroscepticism' as it has been introduced above, does not acknowledge the changing character of opposition to the evolving European project (Crespy and Verschuere, 2009).

Crespy and Verschuere (2009) therefore suggest an alternative conceptualisation of the phenomenon. By defining Eurosceptic attitudes in terms of resistances, they achieve a less normative, more comprehensive conceptualisation, which is more appropriate in the study of Euroscepticism outside the realm of party politics and the fluid, dynamic character of attitudes towards European integration and the EU is embraced. '[T]he EU as a whole is too complex and far-reaching for a generalised (in the sense of being non-specific) opposition to be sustainable' (Usherwood, 2013, p. 283). Resistances, in this context, are defined as manifestations of opposition towards one (or several) aspect(s) of European integration perceived as a threat with respect to one's values. As it is impossible to determine objectively the essence of European integration, hostilities towards it are contingent as well. Resistances are not directed towards Europe in general but rather towards forms and aspects of Europe. It is not an objective and univocal state of the EU that actors are hostile towards. It is a certain constructed representation of the EU and particular aspects of European integration that are the object of resistances. Resistances are not always exclusively directed towards certain policies, as some of the conceptualisations introduced above suggest. Hostile attitudes are often contesting policy, the competencies and constitutional settlement of the EU (Mair, 2007).

The definition of Euroscepticism in terms of resistances is the approach guiding the research process. As will be shown below, however, despite the ambiguity of 'Euroscepticism' which requires a refined definition, the term is used as a buzzword in the reporting of EU-related stories, especially when party positions or individual politicians' attitudes are described. Therefore, the resistance approach will be contrasted with the implied definitions in media coverage, which rather match Taggart's (1998) conceptualisation.

### 3. Sample

For the present study, data from five newspapers as well as two TV news shows have been collected over a period of three weeks, 8 May 2014 to 29 May 2014, two weeks in the run-up to the European Elections and one week after votes were cast in the UK to capture the immediate aftermath. The sample contains all daily and Sunday editions of the following newspapers: *Daily Mail*, *Guardian/Observer*, *Mirror*, *The Sun* and *The Telegraph*. Furthermore, *BBC News at Ten* and *Channel 4 News* were sampled over the same period. The selection of media outlets was based, on the one hand, circulation numbers and, on the other, diversity of partisanship, editorial line and ownership, as well as in the broadcasters' case financial model. From the sampled newspapers and broadcasts all relevant items were then imported into NVivo. For most newspaper articles, the LexisNexis version was used as the text format was more convenient to work with than PDF scans. Broadcast items were transcribed by the researcher. Items were then coded in NVivo. By keyword search (see

Appendix A) eligible items have been identified.

The search resulted in 153 items. Of these 153 items, in 62 labels to describe pro-European attitudes were used, in 127 labels to describe sceptical attitudes were used. As explained in the introduction, labels in this paper are understood as adjectives (pre-) modifying individuals or groups. Table 1 shows the distribution of all sampled items across media outlets and the week they were published in.

*Table 1 Total number of sampled items used in this study per news organisation by week*

	<b>WEEK 1 (8-14 MAY)</b>	<b>WEEK 2 (15-22 MAY)</b>	<b>WEEK 3 (23-29 MAY)</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF ORIGINAL SAMPLE</b>
<b>DAILY MAIL/MAIL ON SUNDAY</b>	2	4	19	25	17.7
<b>GUARDIAN/OBSERVER</b>	5	8	21	34	16.8
<b>MIRROR/SUNDAY MIRROR</b>	2	3	3	8	11.3
<b>THE SUN/THE SUN ON SUNDAY</b>	2	5	16	23	22.6
<b>TELEGRAPH/SUNDAY TELEGRAPH</b>	5	7	14	26	12.0
<b>BBC NEWS AT TEN</b>	0	2	4	6	16.2
<b>CHANNEL 4 NEWS</b>	1	2	3	6	15.0

#### 4. Method of text analysis: the dialectical-relational approach to Critical Discourse Analysis

This study uses a Critical Discourse analytical approach based on the framework set out by Fairclough (1995). In this approach, linguistic analysis is linked to more far-reaching discursive practices in newsrooms and society. As the focus of this paper lies on the analysis of lexical choice for labelling attitudes towards the European Union, CDA proves to be an apt choice since it not only provides tools to analyse linguistic features but also to link them to journalistic production processes and the wider socio-cultural context, the environment they have been produced and consumed in. Using CDA it is possible to unpack predominance of opinions, ideas and representations in the media and by extension in society, since it is assumed that media representations influence and are influenced by the socio-cultural context (Fowler, 1991; Fairclough, 1995; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). CDA can therefore be a useful approach to map out and scrutinise power relations in a society and ultimately to challenge them.

Figure 1 illustrates Fairclough's (1995) dialectical-relational approach to CDA. The first level of analysis is the news text itself. Unit of analysis will here be one article or one news story from the sample. In this study, lexical choice regarding the labels to describe attitudes and opinions towards the European Union, and particular resistances towards it or aspects of it, are the focus of textual analysis. Labels in this context refer to the adjectives (pre-)modifying individuals or groups. Nominalisations of those adjectives are included as well (see above).

Crawford (2012) follows a similar logic in his study of media representations of nationalists, those sceptical of states like the United Kingdom, which integrate separate nations, rather than the European Union. In a critical discourse study, he analyses the usage of the label 'nationalist'. Similar to this paper, the study tries to unpack what journalism understands as 'nationalist' which is used as a catch-all phrase for a variety of groups and individuals. Crawford (2012) analyses who is labelled as 'nationalist', where those 'nationalists' are located geographically and how they are evaluated in terms of their position on the political spectrum (extremist in tendency) but also with regard to their overall impression – which he concludes is rather negative. Other critical discourse studies analysing labelling and naming include for example studies of representations of gender (Caldas-Coulthard and Moon, 2010; Lünenborg and Maier, 2015) or race (Van Dijk, 1986).

CDA assumes that language can never be neutral and the lexical, grammatical and rhetorical choices made are indicative of underlying power relations in society (Fowler, 1991; Fairclough, 1995; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). Therefore, a linguistic analysis on its own, without considering the context within which the data was produced and consumed is not sufficient. A description, regardless of how detailed it might be, cannot fully analyse the discourse about attitudes towards the EU, nor can it explain why the texts have certain characteristics. According to Fairclough (1995, p. 9) 'analysis of texts should not be artificially isolated from analysis of institutional and discursive practices within which texts are embedded'. Therefore, on a second level of analysis, production, consumption and distribution processes are analysed in order to put the results of textual micro-analysis into context.

The third level of analysis, the level of sociocultural practices, contextualises the results further by linking them to the specific cultural and historical background. In the case of this study, for example myths concerning the British relationship with the EU could be taken into account for explanation. A social analysis on this level leads to an explanation of the results by taking into account social relations within the particular society.

This paper will focus predominantly on the first two levels, the textual level and the discursive practices of consumption. Sociocultural practice will be considered in the discussion, however not in as



much depth. Analysis of the second level at this stage, will rely on some interviews taken with journalists, but, at this stage, mainly on previous literature research.

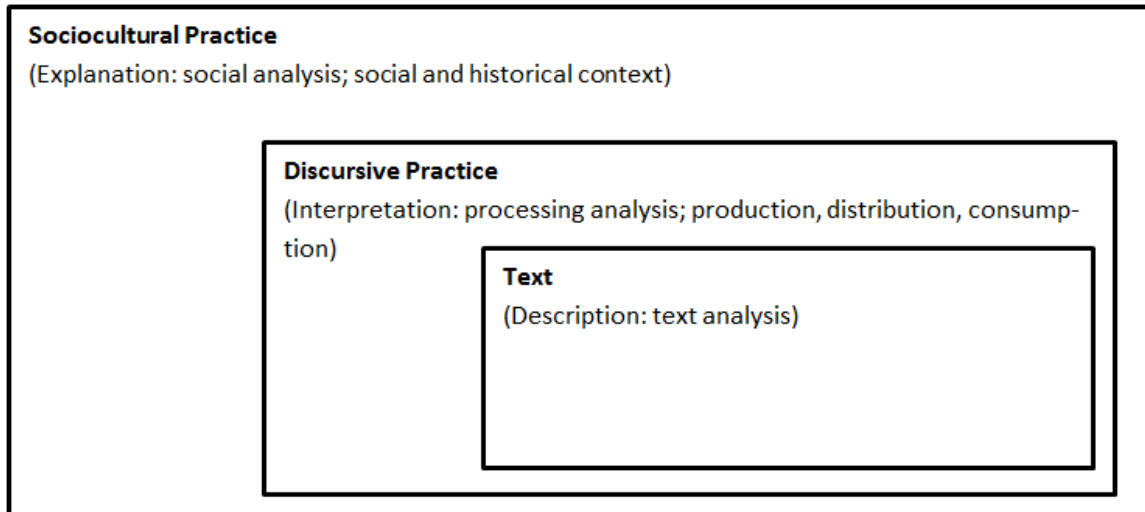


Figure 1 Norman Fairclough's dialectical-relational approach to CDA

## 5. Findings

### 5.1. General Findings

A look at Table 1 and Figure 2 gives an indication of which news organisations reported most frequently about Eurosceptic opinions and used respective labels. An increase in usage of the labels is evident in all news organisations, especially in the week following the European elections. This is not surprising since the rise of Eurosceptic fringe parties was one of the main news stories in the days following the results. The *Daily Mail* and *Sun* in particular produced a high volume of items which used the labels, while both the *Mirror* and *Telegraph* did not use them as much.

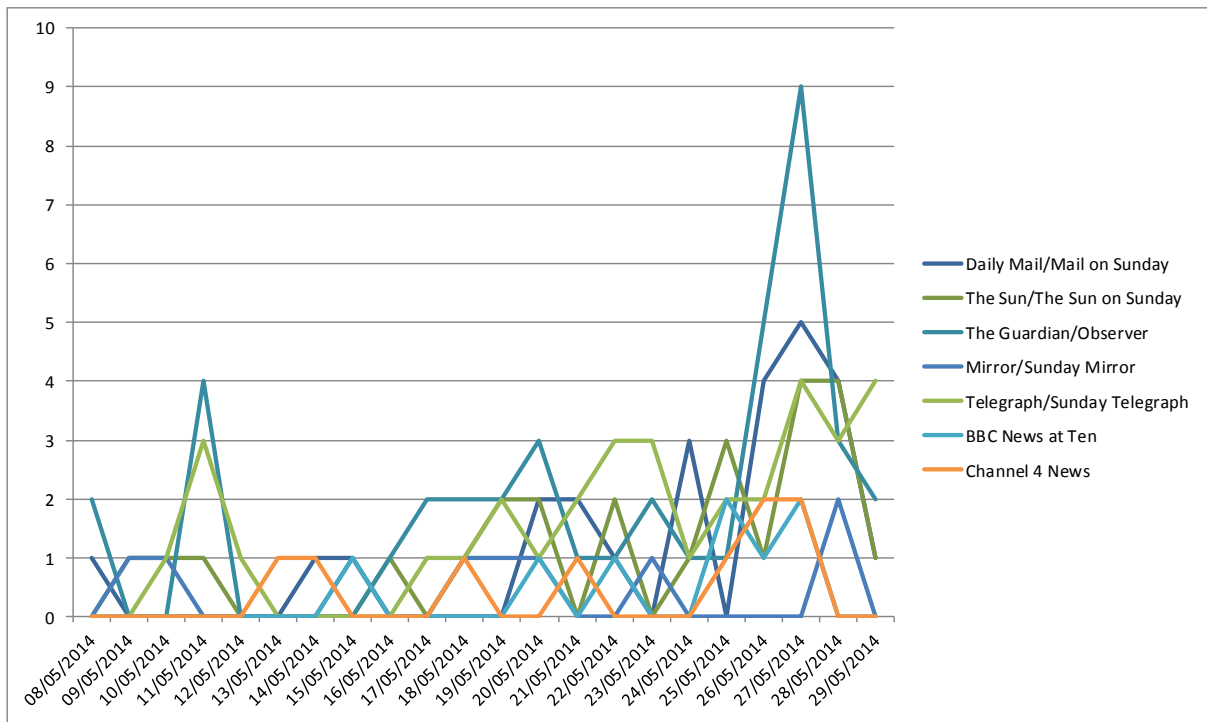


Figure 2 Number of sampled items by day

The above Figure 1 and Table 1 summarise both the usage of labels to describe Eurosceptic attitudes as well as pro-European attitudes. As can be seen in Table 2, labels to describe Eurosceptic attitudes are used more frequently than labels describing pro-European attitudes. This contrast is particularly stark at The Sun, with a 15.7% difference. For the *Mail*, the *Guardian/Observer* as well as the *Mirror*, the difference is around 10%. For print news, the *Telegraph* shows the smallest gap between items in which these labels are used (4.2% difference). Both broadcasters are relatively balanced in this regard as well, particularly the *BBC News at Ten*, which might be partly caused by their obligation to provide balanced reporting. The following analysis will look at the labels used to describe Eurosceptic opinion as well as the evaluation of groups and people labelled. The last part of this analysis will look at the implications this may have on electability.

Table 2 Number of items and percentage of original sample using labels to describe Euroscepticism and pro-European attitudes by news organisation

	LABELS DESCRIBING EURO-SCEPTICISM	LABELS DESCRIBING PRO-EUROPEAN ATTITUDES
DAILY MAIL/MAIL ON SUNDAY	25 (17.2%)	11 (7.8%)
GUARDIAN/OBSERVER	34 (16.8%)	17 (8.4%)
MIRROR/SUNDAY MIRROR	8 (12.7%)	2 (2.8%)
THE SUN/SUN ON SUNDAY	23 (22.6%)	7 (6.9%)
TELEGRAPH/SUNDAY TELEGRAPH	25 (11.5%)	16 (7.4%)
BBC NEWS AT TEN	6 (16.2%)	6 (16.2%)
CHANNEL 4 NEWS	6 (15%)	3 (7.5%)

## 5.2. Eurosceptic equals anti-Europe? Missing clarity about the term 'Euroscepticism'

As explored above, Euroscepticism is a multifaceted concept which even lacks clarity in scholarly research and needs to be redefined constantly in order to capture its volatile nature. Similarly, the sampled news texts lack clarity regarding this term. Generally there appear to be two main groups of labels used in news discourse to describe resistances towards the European Union or European integration: labels which can be subsumed under the heading *Eurosceptic* and labels which can be summarised as *anti* (see

Appendix B). The diverse labels have been divided into those two groups due to semantic similarity but also because they imply different positions with regard to 'hard' and 'soft' Euroscepticism (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2001). Labels in the *anti* group imply by connotation outright, unqualified opposition, those in the *Eurosceptic* group qualified opposition.

Nevertheless there are common features. The exact position towards the European Union is rarely mentioned specifically and it remains unclear what Euroscepticism can be defined as. The audience might be expected to know what it is, although different individual conceptualisations might be held in the audience, since everyone's resistances are individual due to individual values (Crespy and Verschueren, 2009). In the sampled news texts these labels, although they carry different connotations, are used as catch-all phrases which can describe any position from a wish to reform, withdraw from the EU to a desire to destroy the EU. Particularly those subsumed under *Eurosceptic* are used as an umbrella term for a plethora of positions. *Anti* labels are more specifically describing 'hard' Eurosceptic positions. Nevertheless, what aspects of the European project are resisted in particular is unclear. Syriza's resistance will be directed by different values and interests and against different aspects than Hungary's Jobbik's resistances.

At the same time pro-Europeanism is used to describe full support for the EU, often uncritically. The labels used are often already an indicator of this trend, for example referring to supporters of EU integration as 'arch-federalists' (for example Frei, 2014; Martin, 2014) or 'Brussels-loving' (Reckless, 2014). This blurs the difference between the forms of Euroscepticism and does not recognise that pro-Europeans are not a homogenous, uncritical group of people.

Looking back at the paper's working definition of Euroscepticism in terms of resistances, it becomes clear that the representations offered in the sampled media texts do not account for the diverse opinions and attitudes but rather work with a broad brush to categorise them. The usage of these umbrella terms obscures the differences between resistances and does not normally account for particular aspects resistances are directed at. Exceptions might be labels such as *anti-euro* which points towards resistances against the single currency rather than the EU as a whole. Time and space constraints inherent in journalism may contribute to this missing clarity (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Catenaccio *et al.*, 2011) and labels such as *Eurosceptic* and *anti-EU* may provide a useful shorthand to convey intended meaning.

Labels like *anti-EU* or *anti-Europe* imply strong resistance against the EU as a whole due to the connotations of the prefix *anti*, which means to be in opposition of something. Scepticism, on the other hand, implies doubt but not outright opposition. The trends visible regarding the groups and people who are described as either *anti* or *Eurosceptic* reinforce these lexical connotations. While mainstream politicians and parties, as well as the general population is rather described as *Eurosceptic*,

insurgent parties, such as the German AfD, Italy’s Five Star Movement or the French Front National, but also Ukip, are much more likely to be described as *anti* (see Table 3, Figure 3).

This trend is more pronounced if we only look at UK actors labelled. 24 out of 30 *anti* references were used to label Ukip or Ukip politicians (two to describe David Cameron, three to describe other Conservatives and one labelling the UK public). *Eurosceptic* labels are used more frequently in general and refers most commonly to the Conservative Party and Conservative politicians (33 references) and the general public (18 references). Ukip is also labelled *Eurosceptic* in 18 instances. Nevertheless, they are the only group of UK actors which are routinely labelled with *anti*-references.

For Non-UK actors the pattern is similar: 63 *anti*-references label insurgent Eurosceptic parties, 9 refer to the general EU population. Again, Eurosceptic labels are distributed more evenly. However, because coverage of non-EU actors was based mainly on insurgent parties rather than mainstream parties, the vast majority of references here is made to those insurgent parties as well (57 references)<sup>2</sup>. The EU population follows with 17 references.

Table 3 Total number of references of 'anti' and 'Euroscepticism'

	ANTI	EUROSCEPTIC
<b>ESTABLISHMENT POLITICIANS AND PARTIES</b>	7	35
<b>INSURGENT POLITICIANS AND PARTIES</b>	86	67
<b>GENERAL POPULATION</b>	11	22

<sup>2</sup> Some of these references refer to both Ukip and European parties at the same time, therefore the numbers don't add up exactly if compared to Table 3.

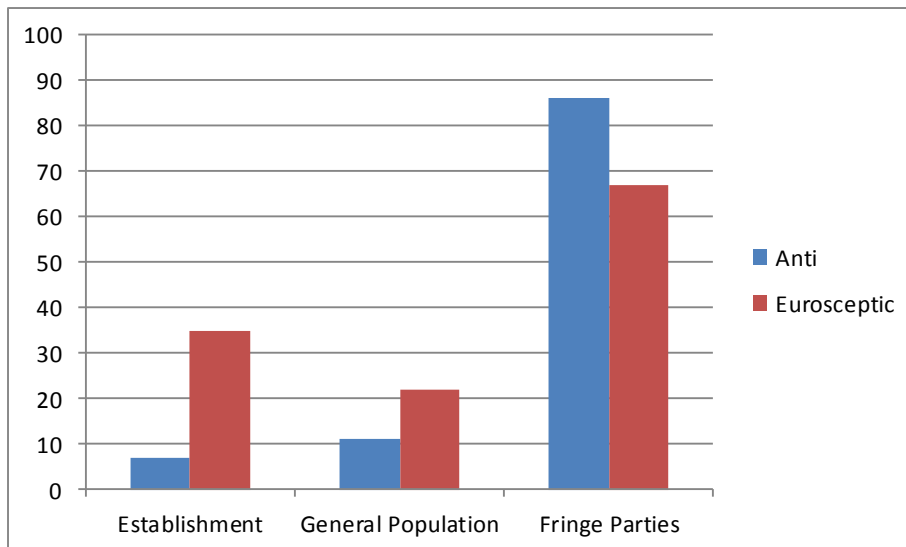


Figure 3 Number of references 'anti' and 'Eurosceptic'

Although this is a general trend there are differences regarding the news outlets. The sampled media show differences in terms of their usage of those labels, particularly in the frequency they use either of them. While the *Daily Mail* and *Guardian/Observer* use both labels to an equal amount, the *Sun* uses *anti* labels more often, while the *Telegraph* and both broadcasters are more likely to use the *Eurosceptic* label. The *Mirror* uses them both very rarely (see Table 4)

All *anti* references by the *Mirror* describe Ukip, not any of the other non-mainstream Eurosceptic parties which were successful in the European Elections in 2014. This is due to a strong domestic focus of the *Mirror*. The *Guardian/Observer* on the other hand appears to be more likely to label those as *anti* (in 15 sources), while referring to Ukip more frequently as *Eurosceptic* (in eight sources). Both broadcast news shows refer to either of them as *Eurosceptic* rather than *anti*, as does the *Telegraph*. The *Sun* on the other hand uses the *anti* label more often for describing both Ukip and other European Eurosceptic parties.

Looking at mainstream politicians and parties, all sampled media organisations tend to use the *Eurosceptic* label to describe their position. One small exception is the description of Eurosceptic Conservatives as anti-EU, which is only explicitly used by the *Guardian* (twice).

Table 4 Total number and percentage of 'anti' and 'Eurosceptic' references by media organisation

	ANTI	EUROSCEPTIC
<b>DAILY MAIL/SUNDAY MAIL</b>	22 (43.14%)	29 (56.86%)
<b>GUARDIAN/OBSERVER</b>	32 (43.84%)	41 (56.16%)
<b>MIRROR/SUNDAY MIRROR</b>	4 (50%)	4 (50%)
<b>TELEGRAPH/SUNDAY TELE-GRAPH</b>	11 (27.5%)	29 (72.5%)

<b>SUN/SUN ON SUNDAY</b>	21 (70%)	9 (30%)
<b>BBC NEWS AT TEN</b>	2 (15.38%)	11 (84.62%)
<b>CHANNEL 4 NEWS</b>	4 (25%)	12 (75%)

### 5.3. Anti-EU equals extremist? Evaluation of different types of Euroscepticism

Different labels are used to describe different groups of people. Furthermore, there is also a difference in how people or groups labelled as *anti* or *Eurosceptic* are evaluated.

Immigration has been one of the defining issues in the European Election campaign 2014, particularly in the UK but also across the continent. Interestingly, however, despite mainstream parties' attempts to address these voter concerns, it is the groups and people described as *anti* which are evaluated to be opposed to immigration and migrants, xenophobe or even racist while those groups and people described as *Eurosceptic* are less likely to be evaluated this way. In these references resistance against EU-migration policies is emphasised as a defining part of their attitudes towards the EU. Of the 29 references to anti-immigration attitudes, 21 referred to groups and people labelled as *anti* (15 times insurgent European parties, five times Ukip) while only 8 to the *Eurosceptic* group (6 references to insurgent European parties, two references to Ukip) (see Figure 4).

The difference becomes even more striking if these references are set in relation to all references coded for each group. Within the *anti* group, 21.65% of all references refer to negative attitudes towards migrants while this is the case for only 5.67% of the *Eurosceptic* group references. Furthermore, both of the evaluations as anti-Semitic referred to those labelled as *anti* and two of three references to Islamophobia were used to describe groups or individuals labelled as *anti*. Although these are small numbers, it continually reinforces the image of extremist, undesirable parties challenging the democratic order in Europe by establishing the connotation through collocations of the anti-label with those evaluations.

Regardless of the label, the negatively connoted evaluation as anti-immigration or anti-immigrant is reserved for those insurgent Eurosceptic parties, despite demands from mainstream parties, particularly by the right-wing press, to listen to voters concerns about immigration. On the other hand, these evaluations are predominantly used for insurgent parties across the continent, not so much Ukip.<sup>3</sup> Evaluating Ukip negatively with regard to their policy on immigration might backfire for media organisations since their audiences might agree with them. Therefore a more careful approach in judging Ukip might be used as compared to other right-wing parties gathering support in the 2014

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<sup>3</sup> In the original sample the picture looks a little bit different. Ukip has been scrutinised thoroughly by all included media organisations with regard to their attitudes towards immigrants and ethnic minorities, however these do not mentioned any of the pre-defined labels.

European Elections while justifying concerns about immigration assumed to be widely held in the British population.

Juxtapositions are used to discredit those insurgent parties of the 2014 European Election while legitimising some of their policies. For example Harry Cole from the Guido Fawkes blog on Channel 4 on 18 May 2014 put it this way: 'I think there is a lot of people on the right, there's a lot of Eurosceptics, it's not racist to be Eurosceptic.' An article by Stephen Glover in the Daily Mail on 22 May 2014, the day of the elections in the UK carries the headline 'Dave And Ed Just Don't Get It: Branding Ukip Racist They're Damning Millions Of Decent Britons'. Euroscepticism here is mainly defined by resistance against EU-migration law and the freedom of movement of people.

When insurgent parties' policies resonance in the electorate is emphasised, as with the strategies above, they are referred to as *Eurosceptic* rather than *anti*. The general population is in this context generally labelled as *Eurosceptic* rather than *anti*. It appears that those in the *anti* group are deemed racist and therefore illegitimate, while those in the *Eurosceptic* group have understandable concerns about immigration and therefore those opinions and attitudes directed towards EU migration are legitimate, regardless of the individual or group evaluated.

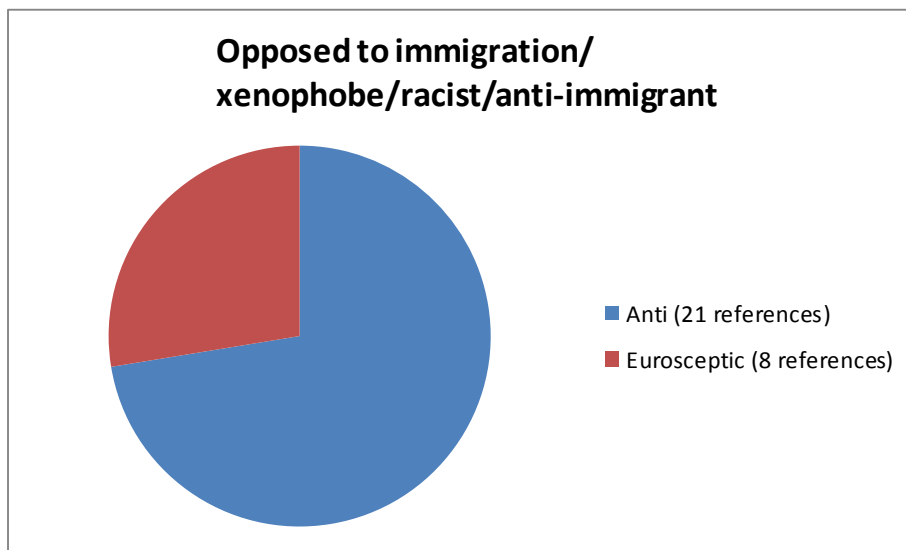


Figure 4 Evaluated as opposed to immigration

However, it is not only opposition to migration which is used to evaluate both groups. Those in the *anti* group are more likely referred to as eccentrics (6 references or 6.4% of references; 5 times referring to parties, once to individuals) than the Eurosceptic group (1 reference or 0.7% of references; individuals). Both groups, anti and Eurosceptic, are represented as extremist in 15 references (15.5% and 10.6% respectively). However, this attribute is only given to insurgent Eurosceptic parties contesting the 2014 European Elections.



Interestingly, there is little difference between evaluations of either group as a threat<sup>4</sup>. In 39 references, or 40.2% of references, those labelled as *anti* are evaluated as a threat. For the *Eurosceptic* group, 43 references, or 30.5% of references, point out the threat they pose. However, the code threat includes different kinds of threats directed against different groups of people, for example the Conservative Party, the Labour Party and the establishment more generally. It also includes a threat to the EU as a whole, threat to EU reform, and threat to the economy. The remaining codes describe a more unspecified threat. While Ukip is most commonly evaluated as a threat to the Conservatives and Labour, other Eurosceptic parties across the continent are seen as a threat to the EU itself and the establishment more generally. For the Conservatives, Eurosceptic Tories are represented as a source of threat themselves. Not always are those threats seen as negative but also a positive factor, particularly for the next General Elections since resistance to different aspects of the EU is believed to resonate with the electorate. By posing a threat to the establishment, both on a domestic and European level, desired reform and change of policies might become possible. On the other hand, insurgent parties on an EU level are also evaluated as a threat to reform because centrist parties will work together more closely, shutting out resistances to further integration.

Related positive evaluations are linked to the insurgent parties. Their successes have been highlighted and attributed to widespread discontent across the continent, a backlash against the EU establishment and its failures for example in managing the eurocrisis. When explaining the different reasons for discontent among the electorate, some of the diverse resistances become visible, for example resistance against the austerity policies, EU migration, the process by which decisions are made within the EU and the expansion of EU powers. Despite those various reasons within the population, differences between Eurosceptic parties are rarely mentioned apart from a general (but rare) categorisation of left-wing and right-wing.

In 21 cases, *anti* groups or individuals are evaluated as the logical consequence of discontent within the EU population, for the *Eurosceptic* group this happened in 9 cases. Although those labelled as *anti* in particular are evaluated as problematic and even threatening, their successes are represented as the logical consequence of the EU establishment's failures and therefore legitimate. Furthermore, the potential to change the EU institutions for the better has been highlighted as a consequence of the rise of insurgent Eurosceptic parties.

However, it can be observed from the data that not every type of Euroscepticism is regarded as equally desirable. The evaluations discussed above as well as the distinctive use of these labels for particular people and groups exemplifies certain connotations already inherent in the labels them-

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<sup>4</sup> Evaluation as a threat has been identified mainly by the language used. For example, the word 'threat' itself but also 'force', 'fear', 'alarming' indicated threat. Threat can be directed towards different groups, institutions or plans, such as further integration within the European Union.

selves. While labels such as 'anti-EU' or 'anti-Brussels' carry negative connotations and associations of extremism, 'Eurosceptic', 'EU-sceptic' or 'EU-critic' appear less negative, particularly in a British context in which Euroscepticism from different sides of the political spectrum has had a longstanding tradition. To be sceptical and critical can be regarded as a rather positive attitude, a common sense one even, whereas 'anti-EU' appears uncritical, extreme or disruptive. In combination with the evaluations discussed above, particularly the tendency to combine the anti-labels with attributes like anti-immigration attitudes enhances this effect. Thereby different kinds of resistances are not acknowledged and do not seem to play much of a role when judging those insurgent parties.

#### 5.4. Eurosceptic equals Electable? 'Euroscepticism' as argumentative strategy for guiding electoral opinion

The previous sections looked in particular at the linguistic nuances of labels describing groups or individuals opposing the EU or European Integration, as well as the connotation carried by those different labels due to naming and evaluation of different groups. In this section labels describing pro-European attitudes will be taken into account as well, albeit rather as contrast and in less detail.

The above discussion showed that different degrees of desirability are ascribed to those described with *anti* labels and *Eurosceptic* labels. Both, however, are overwhelmingly described as successful, in 37 (38.1%) and 41 (29.1%) references respectively. Those labelled as pro-European (or similar, see

Appendix B)) are described more commonly as unsuccessful, in 22 references out of 74, so in 29.73% of cases. Only 15 out of 238 (6.3%) references mentioning negative attitudes towards the EU were referring to them being unsuccessful. This is not surprising considering the outcome of the 2014 European Elections. However, even in the run-up to the elections, before results were known, this evaluation manifested itself.

Success cannot be equated with desirability. As explored above, often those labelled with *anti* variations are portrayed as rather undesirable. Their success is nevertheless emphasised and the failure of pro-European parties and politicians (especially Nick Clegg and the Lib Dems) is represented as symptomatic for the mood in Britain and indeed across the whole continent. It is used as proof that the support for European integration and the EU as an institution is waning. Thereby Eurosceptic votes are mostly represented as uniform, despite the fact that various resistances due to different circumstances and values triggered the election results. As mentioned above, the success of Eurosceptic parties in the European Election is represented as effect of discontent across the continent and therefore gives them electoral legitimacy. Other policies apart from those on Europe, however, and individual politicians are rather represented as dangerous and undesirable.

Groups and individuals labelled as pro-European on the other hand are evaluated as out of touch with the electorate in 18 references out of 74 (24.3%), while this evaluation was not applied to any of the *anti* or *Eurosceptic* references. This group is furthermore rarely evaluated as legitimate, in 3 references (4.1%). In twice as many references, 6 out of 74, they are instead evaluated as untrustworthy. Pro-European untrustworthiness and ignorance of voters concerns is furthermore reflected in the actual labels and adjacent adjectives used, for example 'eurofanatic' (Anon., 2014), 'complacently Europhile' (Booker, 2014) or 'unashamedly pro-European' (Snow, 2014). This creates the image of pro-Europeans as untrustworthy, metropolitan elite who do not share the same concerns, mostly about immigration, as their voters. Therefore they are unelectable, illegitimate and electorally unsuccessful.

However, there are differences between the different media outlets in the sample. Broadcasters stay largely away from value judgements but stick to their evaluation of pro-European parties and individuals as unsuccessful. Print media, particularly the *Daily Mail* and *The Sun*, emphasise that pro-Europeans are out of touch with the electorate. The judgment of untrustworthiness is exclusively made by those two.

In 21 references (8.8%), groups and individuals opposed to the EU are evaluated as putting pressure on establishment and mainstream parties. Particularly with regard to UK parties, those opposed to the EU are furthermore evaluated as a threat to mainstream parties (23 references; 9.7% of references). The logic across all media organisations included dictates that UK mainstream parties need

to adjust their European policies in order to win the next General Elections. Labour is advised to hold a referendum, the Conservatives are pressured to do a pact with Ukip to make sure their vote – and party – does not split. All UK mainstream politicians are expected to declare their Eurosceptic views, especially with regard to immigration, otherwise they will lose votes. Europe is pushed up on the agenda and treated as one of the defining issues for the next General Elections.

## 6. Discussion and Conclusion: Findings in context of discursive practices of production and the wider British sociocultural context

Above findings suggest that in British news coverage there is a ‘good’ way of being Eurosceptic and a ‘bad’ way. Generally, the good kind is described as ‘Eurosceptic’ (or similar) and refers to mainstream politicians and parties whereas the bad kind is labelled as ‘anti-EU’ (or similar) and describes non-mainstream parties, usually coming from the far ends of the political spectrum. Thereby the actual position of a group or individual is not normally of central concern. As mentioned above, the fluid and complex nature of resistances towards the EU is neglected. Shorthand labels are used instead to describe opposition to the EU. Time and space constraints may limit the capacity of explaining the differences between Eurosceptic positions. If these differences are made they rather match the continuum proposed by Taggart and Szczerbiak (2001), whereby it still remains ambiguous if ‘hard’ Eurosceptics want withdrawal, radical reform or a dissolution of the EU altogether. What Taggart and Szczerbiak (2001) would label ‘soft’ Euroscepticism, for example David Cameron’s idea of reform and renegotiation, is not recognised as such but rather seen as pro-Europeanism. If particular resistances are emphasised then it is normally resistance against EU migration policies, an issue ranking high on citizens’ agendas<sup>5</sup>.

Furthermore, those labelled as pro-European (or similar) are not only evaluated as unsuccessful – this seems logical in light of the European election results in 2014 – but also out of touch with the electorate, as a metropolitan, untrustworthy elite which does not connect with voters, while those showing strong resistance against the EU, in whatever form, do. Less obvious resistances, which do not match typical discourses about migration and sovereignty, of those labelled as pro-Europeans are ignored.

Overall those labelled as *pro-European* as well as *anti* are represented rather negatively. Resistance against different aspects of the EU, however, is represented as shared, legitimate sentiment across the EU, despite the fact that this bundles a variety of different resistances. The insurgent parties are nevertheless not represented as appropriate agents of change but rather as extremist and therefore

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<sup>5</sup> One week ahead of the European Elections the European Union ranks lower as one of the three most important issues facing Britain today (14%) than immigration (52%), the economy (52%), health (34), welfare (26%), housing (20%) and education (17%) YouGov (ed.) (2014) *Which of the following do you think are the most important issues facing the country at this time?* London: YouGov.

a threat. Eurosceptic Conservatives in particular are identified as those actors which can answer to the electorates' desires. Insurgent parties across the continent and Ukip in the UK are welcomed as a wake-up call to political elites but are in themselves represented as undesirable.

These findings need to be put into context of production processes but also the wider socio-cultural context. News are not produced in a vacuum but always within discursive systems which have an impact on the reporting because they provide cultural knowledge about the subject, its relevance for society as well as the news organisation and the language which is appropriate to use in the context of the subject matter and within a particular news organisation (Fowler, 1991; Fairclough, 1995).

Within a news organisation, discursive practices are impacted by three level of influence: individual level influences, such as personal experience and opinion, organisational level influences, for example editorial line, ownership, target audience or news values, and influences from outside the specific media organisation, such as economic pressures or changing media landscape (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). This discussion will focus on organisational level influences.

Although the editorial line of *The Sun* and *Daily Mail* appears to support many of the positions of Ukip and other Eurosceptic parties across the continent with regard to immigration and EU membership, there also seems to be a reluctance to fully embrace them. For example, none of the included newspapers suggests in their editorials to vote for Ukip. At the same time, in editorials and opinion columns, understanding is expressed for all voters who decide to vote for Ukip. Audience preferences with regard to the EU might play a role here but also ownership preferences. Both *The Sun* and the *Daily Mail* are owned by opponents of the European Union and Britain's membership in the EU. Some of Ukip's resistances might be shared among them.

They still point out that those newly successful parties as problematic and instead support the Conservative party. Particularly with regard to non-EU actors they are similarly critical of the insurgent parties. Nevertheless, they do support some of their – and particularly Ukip's – ideas with regard to the EU, EU membership and EU migration. Doing so they build up pressure on mainstream parties to follow the electorate opinion on the EU and migration by stressing the general public's resistance in these areas. Traditional partisanship is unlinked from the position towards the EU and resistance against the freedom of movement of people in particular is justified and normalised.

The print news in this sample still defend mainstream politicians, potentially due to their partisanship and partisan editorial line. However, editorial line on the EU might deviate from the party policy. In *The Sun's* case in particular this might be due to ownership, with Murdoch's ventures having a track record of conflict with European institutions with regard to competition regulations. Furthermore, audience opinions can deviate from party policies. This might lead media organisations to ad-

dress their audiences' concerns with regard to the EU while at the same time balancing this with overall partisanship. If news organisations ignore those concerns this may lead to decreasing sales and therefore decreasing profits.

Jason Beattie (2016), political editor of the *Mirror*, pointed out this dilemma. Although most *Mirror* readers are, according to him, Labour voters, they are split on the issue of the EU. While one half believes they benefit from the EU, mainly because the companies they work for benefit from it, the other half opposes the EU on grounds of what is perceived to be lost sovereignty. According to Beattie, the *Mirror* tries to circumvent this problem by remaining balanced and provide information instead of judgement. After all, newspapers are 'a business' that need to 'make money' (Beattie, 2016). Nevertheless, Ukip is represented as problematic as well, while there appears to be a reluctance to openly side with Eurosceptic opinion despite the fact that parts of the readership might share it. Instead of balance this could rather be interpreted as silence.

Although this needs to be confirmed in further interviews, the *Daily Mail* and *Sun* in particular address it by legitimising some resistances and policy ideas of Ukip which are perceived to resonate well with the audience. Those two outlets promote the idea of a Conservative deal with Ukip for the general elections most clearly but stop short from editorially embracing the party as a whole. Partisanship remains Conservative.

The *Telegraph* does not use *anti* labels as much as any of the other sampled newspapers, despite the fact that it appears to reject Ukip more decisively than the *Mail* and *Sun*. Instead of using *anti* labels, the *Telegraph* uses the more neutral *Eurosceptic* labels to describe resistance to European integration and institutions. This does not necessarily mean that the *Telegraph* is less critical of insurgent parties gaining support in the European Elections. However, by employing less emotive language to label them, they achieve to sound more impartial, more professional and less emotional. This may be due to the readership's preferences. Business is given much attention in the *Telegraph*, with a substantial and separate part of the print copy dedicated to business news. Readership interested in business news might share the majority of businesses' preference of remaining in the EU. This, in turn, could soften a hard Eurosceptic line and rather lead to more nuanced resistances. Again, this would have to be confirmed in interviews with journalists.

The *Guardian* and *Observer* take a different position, mainly because their editorial line tends to be more openly supportive of the European Union and European integration than the other newspapers in the sample. The editorial line on Europe might resonate more with its readership. Therefore it is understandable that the *Guardian/Observer* judges the insurgent Eurosceptic parties at least as harshly as the other news outlets. The anti-immigrant attitude and extremist tendency of many of

them are particularly emphasised (13 references and 9 references), but also the threat they pose to establishment parties and the EU itself (29 references).

Although the Guardian seems to generally support the EU and European integration, they nevertheless point out the deficiencies of pro-Europeans, by evaluating them as out of touch with the electorate and incompetent (3 references each out of 27 references evaluating 'pro-European'). The motive here might, however, be different from the *Sun's* or *Daily Mail's* for example. Instead of enforcing the Eurosceptic case and pressurising pro-European politicians to adapt to it, the *Guardian/Observer* tries to come up with strategies to further the pro-European case. With two references, the chance of pro-Europeans to make a better case and bring needed change in the EU is highlighted as well, only one other reference, from the *Daily Mail*, makes this argument. Different resistances are expressed here rather than an unqualified opposition.

The trends that have been discovered were not as strong for broadcasters. Stricter rules on balanced reporting for broadcasters and particularly the BBC, can explain the findings. Looking at the number of items in which both labels for pro-European and Eurosceptic attitudes were used, both broadcasters do not show the same stark difference between the groups (see Table 2), which points towards and attempted balance between the positions, particularly at BBC News at Ten.

The more emotive 'anti' labels were not used as much by the BBC than by other organisations in the sample. Also in comparison with Channel 4 News, the number of 'anti' labels is low. Again, this may be a result of its PSB obligations. 'Anti'-labels carry a stronger connotation, as discussed above, and might therefore be seen as more of a judgement. At the same time, the BBC has been accused of pro-EU bias in the past (Lord Wilson of Dinton *et al.*, 2005). Former Europe Editor Mark Mardell (2016) described the situation in an interview: 'If you have 9 out of 10 media outlets being hostile to the EU it's not surprising that the casual observer would say that the 10<sup>th</sup> that is more neutral is biased. It doesn't mean – if you're the only man in the room telling the truth it doesn't mean you're actually biased.' Channel 4 News follows more strongly the general trend in the sample. Because the programme is not funded by licence fees, Channel 4 News can, despite obligations to remain impartial, particularly during election campaigns, be delivered 'with a bit of attitude' (Newman, 2016).

The discussion emphasises the influence the audience can have on coverage of Eurosceptic opinion. This links production processes to the wider socio-cultural context in which the news organisations are embedded. Producers as well as consumers of news are not detached from historical roots of Euroscepticism in Britain and pertaining discourses about the UK's relationship with the EU. Rather, they can be creators, enforcers and challengers of these dominant discourses (Fowler, 1991;

Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1998). Some discourses constitute shared knowledge which do not need further elaboration in news coverage. Those are assumed to be shared mental models of the relationship between the UK and the EU in which news coverage is incorporated. Therefore, if the news discourse matches those preconceptions, some presuppositions are not mentioned in news coverage but are instead treated as shared knowledge (Van Dijk, 1985; Van Dijk, 1998). Without engaging in much detail in those discourses, some links can be made between the textual analysis, above discussion of discursive practice of production and the wider sociocultural level.

The UK has traditionally perceived itself detached from the rest of the European Union due to its geographical location as an island, its former status as a world power with a large empire and its particular role in the Second World War (Bogdanor, 2005; Gifford, 2006; Clements, 2009; Donnelly, 2012). At the same time, the UK's relationship to the EU has been more pragmatic than ideological, maintained for economic reasons rather than due to a commitment to the principle of ever closer union (McLaren, 2002; Cameron, 2013; Cameron, 2015). In contrast, the potential loss of sovereignty has been regarded as a great threat to the UK and its position in the world (George, 1998; Forster, 2002; Gifford, 2010).

Euroscepticism based on those discourses has been a feature of British politics and public opinion ever since accession talks began (Burgess and Edwards, 1988; George, 1998). Those discourses are shared and can therefore be picked up by media organisations without further explanation. They serve as underlying presuppositions which can explain the public's discontent with aspects of the EU and the disconnection between elite mainstream politicians' opinion and the electorate's opinion on the issue. It is emphasised that the elite pro-European position is out of touch with the British (and indeed the European) public, partly due to those shared assumptions about EU-UK relations. The evaluation of pro-Europeans as out of touch with the public fits neatly into those mental models, so do some of the resistances of Eurosceptic parties.

Pro-Europeanism appears to be in contradiction to the shared cultural knowledge about the UK's relationship with the EU. Therefore, Euroscepticism becomes desirable for politicians. The promise of a referendum on British membership given by David Cameron in the run-up to the 2015 General Election can be partly regarded as an attempt to reconnect with public (and backbench) opinion.

This does not yet explain why insurgent parties, and in particular Ukip, were not embraced more fully by the media organisations, particularly those with a rather Eurosceptic editorial line and respective ownership preferences. Fowler (1991) establishes that those in powerful positions aim to maintain these power relations of which they benefit. On the one hand, for newspapers in particular, partisanship and good relations with mainstream parties, especially those in power, might have advantages in terms of access to sources or even media regulations. On the other hand, politicians



and parties benefit from media support with regard to electoral support. This gives the media organisation the possibility to put pressure on politicians by threatening to withdraw this support, for example by embracing other parties' policies. It is not in the interest of either party, the media or the political elite, to disturb this balance of which they benefit. This can explain at least partly why insurgent Eurosceptic parties have not been more fully embraced.

All findings of the study need to be considered in relation to its limitations. This study is limited in its representativeness since only those texts were considered in which an explicit label was used to describe attitudes towards the EU and EU integration. Sources in which a position was expressed differently have not been included in this study. However, this paper was in particular interested in the use of labels.

Regarding the contextualisation of results, more interviews will have to be conducted in order to explore some of the assumptions made. The broader socio-cultural context needs to be explored more fully as well. Furthermore, critical discourse analytical studies are always subjective to an extent. My personal knowledge of the complete body of data collected before the European Elections may have had an impact on some of my coding decisions. Similarly, my personal motivation to conduct this study, the normalisation of Euroscepticism and – to a degree – resistance towards EU migration, may have had an impact as well. Nevertheless I believe this paper gives a sound account of the usage of labels describing Eurosceptic attitudes and the evaluation of labelled groups and individuals.

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## Appendix A

Although the entire sample of items covering the EU in different ways consists of 840 items, in this particular paper, only items which made explicit reference to attitudes towards the EU or European integration by labelling supporters and sceptics were included. The following search terms were used to find eligible items for the sample used in this paper:

- Eurosceptic, Euroscepticism, Eurosceptics
- Europhobes
- anti-Europe, anti-European, anti-EU
- Sceptic, sceptics, critics
- pro-European, pro-Europeans, pro-Europe, pro-EU
- Europhile, Europhiles
- Euro-enthusiast, euro-enthusiasts, EU-enthusiast, EU-enthusiasts
- Euro-fanatic, euro-fanatics, EU-fanatic, EU-fanatics

Although these search terms might not have found all items in which a position towards the EU was described, it found items in which these labels were used. Since labelling is the focus of this paper the search, which was updated throughout the study when new terms emerged from the data, provided a suitable basis for this paper.

## Appendix B

Table 5 Overview of labels by group (number references for each label)

EUROSCEPTIC	ANTI	PRO-EUROPEAN
critics (1)	anti-EU (65)	Brussels loving (1)
Europhobe(s) (2)	- EU + France (1)	EU enthusiast(s) (3)
Eurorebel(s) (2)	anti the EU (1)	eurofanatic(s) (2)
Eurosceptic(s) (113)	anti-Brussels (3)	Euro-idealist(s) (1)
EU sceptic(s) (1)	anti-euro (5)	Europhile(s) (19)
Euro-sceptical (1)	anti-Europe (4)	federalist(s) (7)
EU sceptic(s) (1)	anti-European(s) (13)	pro-Brussels (1)
sceptical (3)	anti-federalists (1)	pro-EU (12)
sceptic(s) (3)	hostile (3)	pro-European(s) (29)
	radicals (1)	