

EUROSCEPTICISM



- A multidimensional understanding of the concept and a comparative analysis of public scepticism in Britain and Denmark

European Studies – Master Thesis



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Euroscepticism

- **A multidimensional understanding of the concept and a comparative analysis of public scepticism in Britain and Denmark**

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Euroscepticism

- A multidimensional understanding of the concept and a comparative analysis of public scepticism in Britain and Denmark

1 Introduction

As the power of the European Union (EU) has expanded over time so has the interest in the European public's view on the EU and European integration. In the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's, the development of the European project relied more or less on compliant European populations. European elites have been largely very supportive of European integration and they have been able to assume at least mass quiescence, if not support, on this issue from the public. For many years, relatively little importance to public opinion was therefore attributed. This was in line with neo-functionalist thinking which views elite behaviour as the key to European integration. Even those who acknowledged that public opinion played a part in informing the choices made by national elites identified a so-called 'permissive consensus' on the part of the European population (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970: 297-299). In other words, public opinion was seen as contributing to national choices but not ultimately determining the way the European project evolved.

But this assumption in a larger and more integrated Europe has become harder to sustain. As the EU has become more integrated the publics have become more questioning. This was first visible in the early 1990's when first Denmark rejected the Maastricht Treaty in a referendum and then France only gained a very tight yes-vote in their referendum. In addition, the following opinion surveys showed a marked downturn in public support for European integration. There seemed to be a gap between the European population and the European elite regarding the direction of the European project (Milner, 2000; Wessels: 2007). This situation in the early 1990's gave rise to the concept of **euroscepticism** or more to the fact that euroscepticism was a far more prevalent phenomenon than previously assumed.

The first interpretations from the European political elite on this prevailing phenomenon were directed towards the lack of democracy in the EU, hence the discussion about the democratic deficit. Similarly, euroscepticism was explained as though the European populations did simply not know enough about the European project i.e. the information deficit. Since the early 1990's and until today, the European elite has made several efforts in an attempt to rectify these deficits. However, despite these attempts, euroscepticism has come to the fore in several ways and has become an increasing concern among the European political elite, with direct bearing on the process of further integration. For instance, referendums on treaties in member states have rejected significant moves forward. The EU witnessed a recent example of this when the French and Dutch referenda on the EU's Constitutional Treaty led to rejection by the public and prompted the European leaders to call for a lengthy 'period of reflection'. In addition, European parliamentary elections are marked by continuously low turn-outs and Eurosceptic members of Parliament (MEP) have successfully been elected.

The European political elite has made several attempts to win the hearts of the European populations as it is for instance formulated in the European Commission's 'Plan D'¹. The central notion of this initiative as well as others is the belief that democratic deficiencies and lack of information about the EU are the main foundations for public scepticism. Nevertheless, it seems as somewhat of a paradox that euroscepticism reached its 'high' with the Dutch and French rejection of the Constitutional Treaty along with a very debated ratification process, when one of the aims of the Constitutional Treaty was to enhance democratic participation of the European public. Even the drafting process was conducted according to a new and more open method and overall, attention was also focused on improving democracy and transparency. This attempt to improve democratic credentials was done in order to gain broader public support but it seems that the opposite result was achieved. In other words, it does not seem that the efforts made by the political elite have had the desired effect as there are few signs that the public opinion throughout the EU is becoming more positively inclined. A study of the concept of euroscepticism is therefore important to more fully understand what this prevailing phenomenon really entails. It does

¹ In 2005 the European Commission launched its plan for 'Democracy, Dialogue and Debate' in order to win back the populations confidence in the European project through local and national exercises of listening and debate which should lead to the creation of a 'European public sphere'.

not seem as though the political elite's accreditation to simply lacking of democratic credentials can solely explain this phenomenon. Instead this thesis believes that it is necessary to look at several dimensions to explain the concept as the different eurosceptic dimensions and positions might differ between the EU member states. Additionally, public opinion and their attitudes change over time as is also the case with political parties and society in general, and consequently scepticism towards the EU will also change over time. To fully understand the concept of euroscepticism, one therefore needs to investigate the concept's different dimensions and also explore the developments over time. This will be elaborated more in the following sections.

1.1 A brief introduction to Euroscepticism and its different dimensions

The phenomenon of euroscepticism really crept into mainstream discourse in the early 1990's. Historically, the term appears to have surfaced in Britain where the word was used interchangeably with the older term 'anti-marketeters' who were oppositionists to British participation in the European integration project in the 1960's. In line with that, the Oxford English Dictionary defines a 'eurosceptic' as '*a person having doubts or reservations regarding the supposed benefits of increasing cooperation between the member states of the European Union*'. In a more semantic perspective, there seems to exist a consensus about the fact that *euro* in euroscepticism refers to the European Union and its precursors as well as towards specific formulations of co-operation proposed by the EU. Similarly, *sceptic* is interpreted as '*an attitude of doubt or a disposition of disbelief*' (Hooghe and Marks, 2007: 119). The above is what most academics can agree on but there exist several different degrees and definitions of this phenomenon. These eurosceptic positions and definitions range from criticism of particular aspects of the EU but still remaining generally sympathetic towards the idea of European integration to outright rejection of membership of EU advocating withdrawal of one's country of reusing the idea of joining. Similar to the different definitions and interpretations of the phenomenon, there also exist a variety of different opinions related to the concept. Some would argue that euroscepticism is a negative signal of a gap between the wants of the political elite and the European public as well as it has normative implications for the democratic credentials of the European integration project when a significant and growing section of the EU public does not buy into the European project. However, it is also important to recognise that euroscepticism

can be attributed positive aspects as it demonstrates increased awareness, interest and critical capacity of the public as well as it reminds the political elite that it cannot govern without popular consent. Some would even go as far as to argue that euroscepticism is 'healthy' because it invites closer examination of the policy options open to Europe and thus increases the involvement of ordinary people in the EU's policymaking process (Milner, 2000: 11). It is therefore important to stress that the aim of this thesis is not to 'judge' or argue for and against the concept of euroscepticism.

Rather than arguing for and against the concept of euroscepticism, the thesis wishes to investigate what the concept more specifically entails. The thesis agrees with the above claims that different variations of euroscepticism exist but argues that the concept is more multidimensional and it wishes to explore the different types of euroscepticism which are prevailing in the EU today. Taking its point of departure in the existing literature on public opinion, several past researches have built on trade theory to theorize a calculus of economic costs and benefits. The underlying assumption is that citizens evaluate European integration in terms of its economic effects and the benefits provided to the country and its citizens (for instance Gabel, 1998; Marks and Steenbergen, 2002). A notion that supports the fact that the public takes these utilitarian concerns into consideration is the fact that the political elite often resort to these arguments when attempting to 'sell' the idea of further integration to the public. Another central aspect in public opinion research is the topic of identity. According to such an approach, opposition to the European project is associated with fears of a symbolic threat to the national community (for instance McLaren, 2007). In other words, citizens can be hostile towards the EU because it threatens the group or country to which they identify themselves. This approach can be supported by looking at the debate concerning the introduction of the Euro where for instance the Danish public has been very much against the introduction of a common currency because this would mean a loss of their national currency which can be viewed as a central part of the Danish national identity. A different aspect in public opinion research is the topic of democracy. As mentioned, the first interpretations from the political elite on how to explain the prevalence of euroscepticism in the 1990's, was the fact that the EU was not democratic enough in the eyes of the European populations – hence the discussion about the democratic deficit (for instance Rohrschneider, 2002). A last central part of public opinion research is the aspect

of sovereignty where the EU is seen as a threat to the nation state and the developments of further integration are seen as having a negative impact on the national sovereignty. Take for instance the case in Denmark, where there have been many heated debates concerning the EU and especially in relation to rendering more sovereignty to the EU. The above mentioned factors are just some of the dimensions, which could be argued, determines the public's attitude to the EU and European integration. It is therefore argued by this thesis that these factors also play a central part in the public becoming eurosceptic². In other words, the thesis wishes to prove that euroscepticism is more than just dissatisfaction with democracy as focused on by the European political elite and to some extent also the academic world. Instead it is the aim of the thesis to explain what lies beneath this concept of scepticism towards the EU and whether it has changed over time and between the European populations.

1.2 Research question

Based on the above deliberations, the thesis wishes to explore and explain the variations and dimensions within public scepticism towards the EU. In other words, the thesis wishes to answer the following research question:

To what extent can euroscepticism be considered a multidimensional concept which affects the European Union's integration process and does the concept differ between European member states and over time?

The research question naturally needs to be elaborated as one could have chosen a number of ways to approach and investigate it. As was briefly explained in the above deliberations, the aim of this thesis is to conduct an in-depth account of the motivations i.e. dimensions that together make up the concept of euroscepticism. Based on the existing theory I will deduce these dimensions which are central in forming public opinion and scepticism towards the EU. By operationalizing the concept, I am aiming to demonstrate that euroscepticism can take several forms and varieties and thereby also differ between

² Naturally, other dimensions like for instance culture and socio-demographic features also plays a central part when investigation public opinion. The topic of other relevant dimensions for this investigation will be discussed in the chapter of methodology (see section 2.1) as well as in relation to the operationalization process (see section 3.3).

the European countries. The different dimensions are subjected to empirical scrutiny by conducting a comparative longitudinal investigation of public scepticism in Britain and Denmark using Eurobarometer data. Britain and Denmark are renowned for being the most sceptic members of the EU, however, the thesis wishes to demonstrate that euroscepticism is not a uniform phenomenon but instead differs between countries both with regard to degree and different dimensions (types) as well as over time.

As is briefly outlined in the above elaborations, the underlying hypothesis of this investigation is the fact that the present understandings and perceptions of the concept of euroscepticism, both within the European political system and in the academic world, are rather restricted and somewhat incomplete³. In order to better fully understand the concept, and also if the political elite wishes to come the concept to life, the thesis argues that a more deep and more complex understanding of the concept is needed. As will be elaborated on further, the thesis is aware that due to the limitations of this investigation, the thesis will not be able to develop a concept which can be generalized beyond this particular study. Nevertheless, the thesis wishes to draw attention to the fact that euroscepticism need to be understood in a more multidimensional and comprehensive way.

This is exactly why this investigation is interesting as well as relevant to conduct. First of all, the thesis argues that there is a need for a more comprehensive understanding of the concept of euroscepticism. In contrast, some would naturally argue that this is not at all necessary and that euroscepticism is just a natural part of a democratic society. However, the thesis' main argument is that the EU has made several attempts to come euroscepticism to life, but has so far not successfully succeeded despite its attempts at improving democracy, transparency as well as connecting and communicating better with the public. In order for the European political elite to come euroscepticism to life or at least to better predict eurosceptic tendencies a more comprehensive and multidimensional understanding is needed.

Secondly, the thesis' interest in public euroscepticism naturally builds on the assumption that public opinion exists and represents a worthy topic of investigation. The days of the so-called 'permissive consensus' are over and there is clear evidence that the

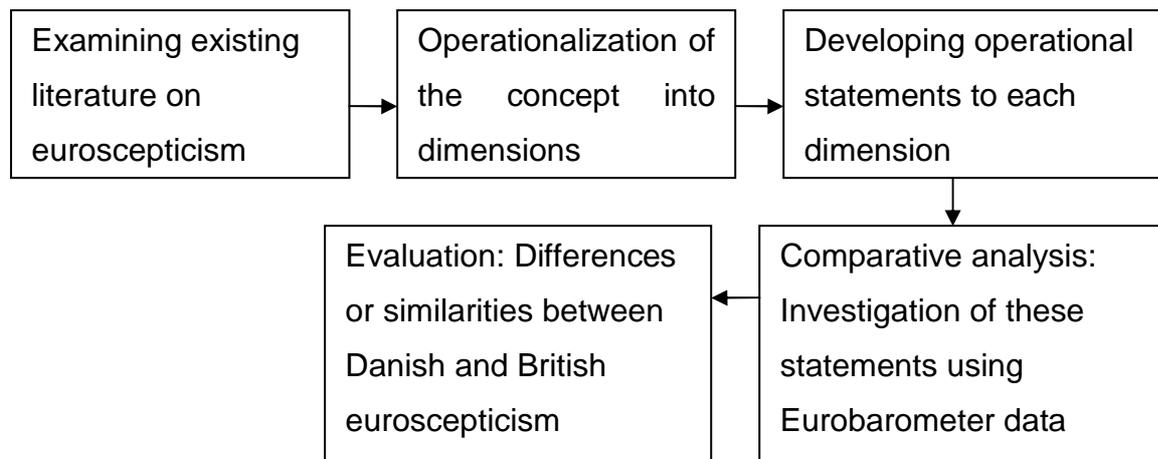
³ This claim is based on the findings presented in the introduction i.e. euroscepticism is interpreted as a uniform concept which can be eliminated with a one-strategy approach.

opinions of the EU's citizens have a direct effect on what happens at the EU level. This comes most obviously in the form of EU-related referenda which periodically gives the EU a so-called 'splash of democracy' and which has clear effects on what governments can and cannot do. As mentioned, a recent example of this is the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty by the French and Dutch publics. There are also other situations in which the European public are likely to be playing a considerable role in their governments' EU policies⁴. On that basis, it is therefore essential to gain a deeper and more complex understanding of public scepticism towards the EU as it affects the entire integration process.

1.3 Presentation of the Investigation

This section will briefly present how I wish to go about conducting this investigation (see figure 1 on the following page), which will be elaborated more in the methodology chapter. The theoretical chapter of this essay will examine the existing 'theory' on euroscepticism. On that basis I will operationalize the concept into dimensions of euroscepticism which will be deduced into operational statements i.e. indicators that will be subjected to empirical analysis. These will be tested on the case countries, which are Britain and Denmark, by using Eurobarometer data.

⁴ There does not seem to exist any systematic analysis which investigates the impact of the European public on the EU's policy-making. Nevertheless, the thesis believes that there are good reasons to expect that the opinions of the public do constrain the EU political elite. An example could be the British population and the introduction of the Euro. Tony Blair came to power with one of his main European policy goals being to introduce the Euro in Britain. However, the British government has been unable to move forward with this plan because it is politically unpopular and a fear of a 'no vote' in the referendum on the issue. In a way, one could argue that the British public is indirectly restricting the government from taking Britain into the Euro. The same could be said about the Danish population as well as the strong French public opinion related to the reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy.

Figure 1: Presentation of this investigation

To sum up, this investigation is first of all exploratory since it aims at operationalizing the concept of euroscepticism on the basis of the existing theory on the subject and thereby illustrate the different facets of euroscepticism. In addition, the focus is comparative as it empirically attempts to compare the concept over time as well as between the case countries. And lastly, it is evaluative as regards the differences and similarities of euroscepticism but also what consequences this has for the European integration process as well as the European political elite attempts to come to terms with the concept.

1.4 Delimitation

The purpose of this section is to outline the central limitations that have been made in relation to this investigation. This will be further elaborated in the methodology chapter, however, two central delimitations have already been made as regards the case countries investigated and the time perspective.

1.4.1 Choice of countries

When choosing the countries for the comparative analysis and for evaluating the theoretical operationalization of euroscepticism I have had the following deliberations.

First, the country should be a member of the EU and preferably one of the 'older' member states of the EU. Since this is a longitudinal investigation, one could argue that the longer the better so that one can track and compare the concept over time. Furthermore, in order to evaluate whether this is a stabile tendency, a longer time period would be preferred.

Both Denmark and Britain joined the European Community in 1973 and though they are not part of the founding countries it is still possible to examine variations of euroscepticism over a long time span.

Secondly, the country should have an indisputable presence of euroscepticism which is visible from for instance rejecting treaties in referendums, opt-outs from central areas of the integration project, eurosceptic members of the European Parliament (MEP's) or unenthusiastic public polls. I argue that in principle all of the European populations ought to be sceptical on some level or to some degree. It is very few who uncritically accepts all parts of the European co-operation process. Therefore, when using the term euroscepticism it needs to refer to a more stabile tendency in a country which is more sceptical than the average EU population. Both Britain and Denmark comply with the above criteria and are often designated as 'the eurosceptic' pair in the EU.

Regarding Britain, few are in doubt that some kind of euroscepticism is present in the country. The British public has always seemed distinctly unenthusiastic about the EU, as is reflected in regular surveys and polls where, generally, the majority of the British public opinion has varied from lukewarm to positively hostile and it is consistently lower than the European average for those considering membership of the Union to be a good thing. However, the only time that the British public was asked about membership in a referendum the result was a 2/3 majority in support of membership⁵.

The widely held suspicion of the EU has been further stimulated by the eurosceptic discourse adopted by the popular press. In addition, turnout levels for elections to the European Parliament have in general been the lowest in Europe since the first election in 1979 and anti-EU parties like the United Kingdom Independence Party campaigning for withdrawal of British membership of the EU have been extremely successful. Both major parties in Britain, the Conservative and the Labour Party, have internal divisions on the issue of the EU and they have changed their position of the issue from opposition to membership to support of membership and vice versa. In addition, Britain has a number of special agreements with the EU as opt-outs from the third phase of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the country is not part of the Schengen

⁵ The British Labour Party was very much divided on the issue of membership of the EU. When the party gained power again in 1974 it entailed a renegotiation of the terms of entry and a public referendum.

Agreement. Lastly, Britain has often been regarded as an ‘awkward’ partner in the integration process and its special relationship with the USA has often strained its commitment to the European project (Coxall, 2003: 269-287).

Denmark has had six emotionally contested referendums⁶ relating to the EU, starting with the 1972 vote to join the European Community. This resulted in a ‘yes’ to membership after a debate focusing heavily on the economic advantages of participation i.e. it was pragmatic consideration rather than political visions about a closer union that was the main concern for the Danes. A seventh row was shaping up as the country planned to go to the polls in 2005 over whether to adopt the draft constitution. Two of the referendums have returned ‘no’ votes. In 1992, the country rejected the Maastricht Treaty, resulting in the creation of the four opt-outs from EU-policies, which exempt the country from participating in the single currency, defence policy, EU citizenship and justice and home affairs. In 2000, the Danish population rejected the euro by voting to keep the single currency opt-out. These referendums have resulted in Denmark being referred to as a eurosceptic country. Generally, the Danish population is, however, positive towards the EU co-operation but most opinion polls indicate a touch of reserve especially when it comes to ‘deepening’ political integration. Lastly, Denmark has a long-standing tradition for electing people who opposes the EU as members of the European Parliament (EU-oplysningen).

To sum up, Denmark and Britain have both gained the reputation of being eurosceptic countries. Denmark has earned this status due to its rejection of the Maastricht Treaty and the euro whereas the British population has manifested a stable eurosceptic public opinion as polls and surveys have proved. Nevertheless, I expect that the thesis will show that there exist both similarities and variances in the two countries’ versions of euroscepticism. Naturally, one could have chosen to include more countries in the comparative analysis. For instance, countries like the Netherlands and France could be interesting to examine after their rejection of the Constitutional Treaty. Another interesting country would be Ireland who has had the reputation of being one of the most Europhile countries but, like

⁶ The Danish referendums about EU issues took place in 1972 about membership of the European Community, in 1986 about the Single European Act, in 1992 about the Maastricht Treaty, in 1993 about the Edinburgh Agreement, in 1998 about the Amsterdam Treaty and lastly, about the European Single Currency in 2000.

Denmark, shocked their European partners by rejecting the Nice Treaty in 2001. Germany could be another interesting case country as historically above-average levels of public support for European integration have dropped to below average levels and the public opinion is becoming increasingly sceptical. Even so, this thesis is constrained to a certain size and I therefore believe that a comprehensive investigation will not be possible if one was to increase the numbers of case countries. Instead the thesis will focus on the comparative analysis with two countries in order to see whether or not euroscepticism converges along a similar line and whether or not there are similarities or differences in the development of euroscepticism over time.

1.4.2 Time perspective

As mentioned this thesis aims at conducting a longitudinal investigation to examine the variations and dimensions of euroscepticism over time. A long time perspective allows for the most valid evaluation of the character of euroscepticism and the variations over time. I argue this because I have the hypothesis that one can expect that one dimension of euroscepticism might be very prevalent in a country whereas it over time might disappear or shift in relevance and another dimension would become the prevailing. The data material which is Eurobarometer surveys gives the thesis the possibility of adopting a time perspective from spring 1974 which is the first survey conducted after the countries entered the EU up until today where the latest survey is autumn 2007. As written in the introduction the phenomenon of euroscepticism first gained its prevalence in the early 1990's, nevertheless, I argue that euroscepticism is not a new phenomenon and has been present in the public opinion since and before entry into the Community and therefore the thesis's time perspective will be from 1974 and until today. However, when evaluating the results of the empirical investigation, I will mostly focus on the contemporary types of euroscepticism i.e. the euroscepticism present since 2000 and until today since this is most useful if the political elite wishes to tackle it in a different way than has been the case so far. As will be elaborated in the section on Eurobarometer, it is worth mentioning that due to the availability of Eurobarometer surveys it may not be possible to establish an even representation of the four decades investigated in this thesis⁷.

⁷ This will be elaborated more in the section on Eurobarometer 2.4.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

Once introduced with the motivations and aims of this thesis, I will briefly outline the structure of the remaining part as to give the reader an overview of the thesis. In the following chapter, the considerations about the methodological framework related to this investigation will be outlined. This involves an introduction to the operationalization process as well as a discussion about the empirical material used to conduct the analysis. Chapter three introduces the existing theoretical framework for analysing euroscepticism and on this background the operationalization is conducted. Based on the existing theory on euroscepticism and public opinion, the different dimensions will be deduced. The empirical section of this thesis is chapter four, where the operational statements are subjected to empirical scrutiny using Eurobarometer data. The last chapter evaluates and discusses the implications of the findings as to what consequences this will have for the European integration process.

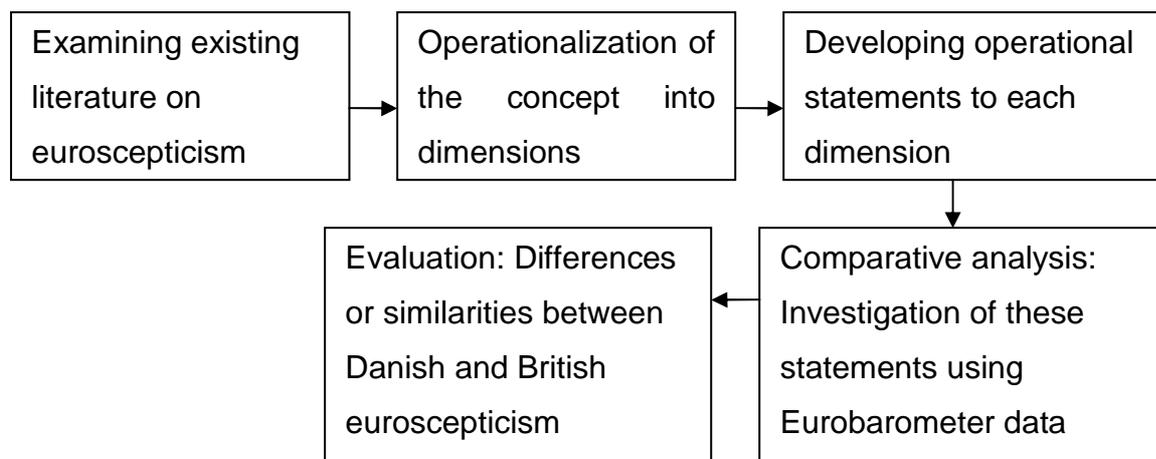
2 Methodology

This part of the thesis will account for the methodological framework which very broadly can be said to consist of two parts: an operationalization and a comparative, longitudinal analysis. This chapter will therefore focus on the chosen way to deal with the research question and which advantages and disadvantages this will have on the achieved results.

2.1 Operationalization and its pros and cons

In order to answer the research question the thesis wishes to operationalize the concept of euroscepticism by examining the existing ‘theory’ on euroscepticism. The current literature does provide different variants of euroscepticism ranging from ‘rejectionist’ positions to positions which are identified by either an acceptance of the status quo, accepting further integration but only at a slow pace as well as positions wishing just to improve on the existing arrangements. But the definitions provided by the literature do not allow one to ‘measure’ or empirically test the phenomenon of euroscepticism. In order to conduct the comparative analysis one therefore, needs to translate the phenomenon into something observable which can be measured. By reviewing the existing literature and the different definitions I will decide on a definition used in this thesis. Following, I will delineate the dimensions of the concept.

The top part of the figure on the following page, which has been presented previously, sums up on how the first part of the investigation, i.e. the operationalization, will be conducted.

Figure 1: Presentation of this investigation

When operationalizing a concept like euroscepticism, one naturally gains the advantage that it becomes more specific and thereby easier to measure which is the purpose of the following investigation. However, one also has to be aware of the disadvantages which involve interpretation and a narrowing down from broad, though less clear, concepts, to sharper and often less generally agreed to specifications. I am aware that the operationalization process is crucial and that deducing the most relevant and precise dimensions and elements is a difficult task and that it can always be debateable whether the dimensions reflect real-world trends. Furthermore, a concept like euroscepticism most likely will contain several dimensions which could be investigated but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore all these aspects and elements. This naturally leads to a discussion about the extent to which results from this investigation can be generalized beyond the particular study i.e. the *external validity*. In this context it is crucial to recognise, as mentioned previously, that the aim of the thesis is not to construct a distinct, all-purpose and all-encompassing definition which can be used over time, place and purpose. This would naturally be very interesting and challenging but I believe it will be beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, I wish to draw attention to the fact that I believe that this thesis will show that euroscepticism is a multidimensional and multifaceted concept which I do not think is apparent from the existing literature. Some academics focus on different aspects and the aim in this thesis is to gather the most central of these dimensions in order to give a clearer and more complex picture of a eurosceptic country, what this refers to and the differences and similarities between eurosceptic countries and how this has developed over

time. I therefore acknowledge that the results of this investigation might not be possible to apply in a broader context and that they might not capture all elements of the research question. Nevertheless, I believe that the thesis has the possibility of providing a probable explanation as part of a more complex answer.

As just mentioned, the thesis is aware of the limitations of this investigation and whether a generalization of the results is at all possible. Another way that one could have approached this investigation, and which could perhaps have improved the validity of this study, could have been to go more in depth with the chosen dimensions. By that I mean that in contrast to investigating euroscepticism at the country-level as will be the case here, one could also have chosen to investigate the concept at the regional or perhaps individual level. This would have involved an investigation of socio-demographic features like for instance age, gender, education, employment etc. If one had chosen to go more into depth with the concept this could perhaps have improved the validity as would have been the case with investigation of several dimensions. This aspect will be elaborated more after the operationalization process in section 3.3.

Nevertheless, the big question still remains when one investigates public opinion and its scepticism towards the EU i.e. how much is it possible to conclude? First of all, the thesis needs to clarify what exactly is referred to when it mentions public opinion. Briefly, public opinion is the aggregate of individual opinions held by the adult population in a given country or union. Public opinion need not necessarily be rational and can be driven by beliefs and emotions as well as it can be influenced by any number of things i.e. media, family etc. A central aspect when investigating public opinion is therefore whether one actually investigates the intended and what one can conclude on the basis of the investigation. As mentioned previously, the thesis argues that in principle all of the European populations ought to be sceptical on some level or to some degree. It is very few who uncritically accept all parts of the European co-operation process. It is therefore essential that the thesis is able to distinguish between actual euroscepticism and public discontent. When investigating euroscepticism one therefore needs to select the most relevant empirical data which in this case is Eurobarometer surveys and the pros and cons

related to these surveys will be discussed later. In addition one has to be aware of the limitations related to investigating public opinion.

2.2 The Comparative Analysis

Through the comparative, longitudinal analysis, the thesis' operationalization of euroscepticism is subjected to empirical scrutiny. In addition to showing similarities and differences between eurosceptic countries, it will also help to identify strengths or shortcomings in the operationalization i.e. has the most suitable dimensions been used. The empirical material in this comparative analysis is Eurobarometer data which will be discussed in the following section as well as the implications of conducting a longitudinal investigation.

2.3 Longitudinal Design

Previously, I argued that a long time perspective allows for the most valid evaluation of the character of euroscepticism and the variations over time. Therefore a longitudinal design has been chosen for this thesis. Several variants of longitudinal designs exist but they all share the common goal of measuring change over time and doing so by collecting data concerning at least two points in time (de Vaus, 2001: 49). The specific type of longitudinal design used in this thesis is the *trend study*. This design collects data material from comparable random samples over a period of time but these are not necessarily from the same group of people. Eurobarometer surveys are an example of trend studies as a large number of different people are asked similar questions each year (de Vaus, 2001: 113). This design therefore allows the tracking of changes in attitudes over time which is in agreement with the aim of this thesis.

2.4 Eurobarometer

The empirical material in this thesis relies on Eurobarometer data. Very shortly introduced, the Eurobarometer survey series is a programme of cross-national and cross-temporal comparative social research which is designed to monitor social and political attitudes. Eurobarometer surveys have existed since the early 1970's and were established to make the EU's information and communication strategy more efficient and to serve as a tool to

help to shape a real 'European' public opinion. The surveys are conducted on behalf of the European Commission, more specifically the Directorate-General for Press and Communication and they come in four main types i.e. *Standard Eurobarometer polls*, *Special Eurobarometer*⁸, *Flash Eurobarometer*⁹ and *Qualitative studies*¹⁰. The data-sets used in the analysis in chapter four will be the standard Eurobarometer polls and therefore, the following sections will relate solely to the techniques and pros and cons of these polls (Eurobarometer website).

The standard Eurobarometer polls (standard EB) have been published biannually since spring 1974, where a number of recurring sets of questions is asked of representative samples of the population aged fifteen and over in each member state. Over time, the size of the standard Eurobarometer survey has grown not only due to the increase in member states but also because the number of questions posed has increased over time. The nature of the posed questions has also evolved and in an attempt to reflect the evolution of European integration, certain questions have been dropped and others added to reflect if not specific events, then at least the official concerns in Brussels at a given time. This is related in this investigation as the data material available might not be able to equally emphasise the decades investigated i.e. an interesting question from this thesis' perspective might not have been asked in each survey.

Regarding the more technical details, Eurobarometer's sampling design is a multi-stage, random probability one. This means that in each country, a number of sampling points is drawn with probability proportional to population size and to population density. With a few exceptions, the regular sample size of a standard Eurobarometer poll is 1000 respondents¹¹. The sampling points are drawn systematically from each of the so-called 'administrative regional units' after stratification by individual unit and type of area. In each of the selected sampling points a starting address is drawn at random. Further addresses

⁸ Special Eurobarometer polls have since the early 1970's surveyed public opinion towards specific issues of the EU such as attitude towards enlargement, biotechnology or consumer protection. These are integrated in the Standard Eurobarometer reports.

⁹ In the late 1980's the European Commission launched the Flash Eurobarometer, which are ad hoc thematical surveys conducted over the phone, which are very suitable at targeting specific groups and get a quick response on their opinion towards a specific EU topic for instance post-referendum survey.

¹⁰ Eurobarometer has begun to produce Qualitative studies, through for instance focus groups, with the aim of investigating the motivations of specific social groups towards a given subject in a more in-depth way.

¹¹ One of the exceptions is Britain, where 1300 respondents are included in the survey.

are selected as every n^{th} address by standard random route procedures from the initial address. In each household the respondent is drawn at random, following the closest birthday rule. The survey covers the population of the respective nationalities of the EU member states, resident in each of the member states from the age of 15 years and older. Lastly, interviews are conducted face-to-face in people's homes and in their appropriate national language (Eurobarometer website).

2.4.1 Pros and cons related to using Eurobarometer

Eurobarometer surveys are the ideal tool when attempting a comparative longitudinal investigation of for instance the opinion of the Danish and British population on EU issues. The surveys are widely recognised by scholars and as Schmitt (2003: 246) argues '*...no other cross-national survey programme is as widely used as Eurobarometers*'. However, using Eurobarometer data is not unproblematic and it does have some disadvantages which one should be aware of.

First of all, one has to be aware of the questions posed. A lot of Eurobarometer questions are changed often and are rarely one-dimensional i.e. the questions combine a multitude of concerns that are difficult to decipher. Moreover, it is quite possible that Eurobarometer emphasises variables which can be secondary to the respondent. This problem primarily applies to surveys operating with closed questions. In most cases Eurobarometer does not operate with open questions and that prevents the respondent from adding other important answers. In addition, Schmitt (2003: 248) points out that the kind of questions asked is often not suited to the fact that the public at large are not experts on the policy process. Furthermore, he (Schmitt, 2003: 248) argues that when '*...reading through Eurobarometer questionnaires one sometimes wishes that they would concentrate somewhat more on public preferences towards policy ends rather than means*'. Connected to this investigation it is central that one chooses the appropriate indicators i.e. Eurobarometer questions for the right dimensions. In other words, the questions analysed should also reflect central parts of the dimension in question.

In addition, there is also scope for methodological improvements of Eurobarometer polls. Schmitt (2003: 248) points out that '*...applying pure probability sampling*' as well as larger

samples and higher interview completion rates would result in better data quality and larger representativeness. However, effects on actual surveys remain unclear and in relation to the current design the reliability is generally considered relatively high.

As mentioned earlier, standard Eurobarometer polls rely on face-to-face interviews in people's homes and in their national language¹². This way of collecting data is widely recognized and has some advantages. The interviewer has the possibility to answer questions from the respondents (e.g. if the respondent does not understand something in the questions asked) and to prevent misunderstandings that can easily arise if the questionnaires are sent by mail. Some critique about this method can also be pointed out. It is possible that the presence of the interviewer leads to biased answers. The respondent does not always answer completely honestly to the posed questions. This can be due to the fact that one would like to seem better than one really is and this tendency can be increased if the interviewer is physically present. Another disadvantage in relation to the role of the interviewer is the time perspective. It is possible that the respondent does not feel that he/she has the proper time to reflect on the questions and this type of pressure is always present although the Eurobarometer tries to take measures against this problem¹³. Also related to this, is the fact that this investigation uses retrospective data and one has to keep in mind that the questions posed may not be interpreted the same way year after year. Thus, it is important to be aware of the circumstances in which the surveys are conducted as regards to the research work, the geography and the historical context. This is due to the fact that data are not an objective extract of the world but instead a constructed picture of the world i.e. an interpretation. The data material represents firstly, the interviewer's own orientation towards the questions as well as the respondents' and finally, my interpretation and understanding of the EU populations' attitudes. Once again it is therefore central that one chooses the appropriate Eurobarometer question which reflects the right dimension.

A last point, which needs brief mentioning, is the risk of bias resulting from the fact the Eurobarometer surveys are sponsored by the Commission, who could have a potential

¹² Another sensitive issue is the wording of the posed questions which may have different meanings and connotations in different countries.

¹³ The interviewers that Eurobarometer use are professionals and have gone through an extensive training program. Furthermore, they have strict guidelines that they have to follow.

political and strategic interest in publishing their findings at a certain point or framing questions in a certain way that will create and favour more agreeable and EU friendly responses. Whether this is the actual case is naturally impossible to determine.

To conclude, I believe that Eurobarometer data is very useful when conducting a comparative, longitudinal investigation of euroscepticism as long as one is aware of the limitations of using the data material. As mentioned above, Eurobarometer certainly has disadvantages which one has to keep in mind when interpreting the results and arguing for the validity of the investigation i.e. what is one really able to say on the basis of this investigation. Nevertheless, despite Eurobarometer's flaws, when wanting to conduct a comparative as well as longitudinal analysis about public opinion in EU member states, there does not really exist any alternative as regards to the data material.

2.5 Conclusion on Method Chapter

The purpose of this chapter was to present and discuss the methods used when investigating the research question. Firstly, the operationalization process was explained and more importantly which conclusions one can draw based on this process. When investigating public euroscepticism one could also have chosen different approaches such as studying the case countries more in-depth as regards to the socio-demographic features rather than exploring the aggregated level as is the case in this thesis. However, the purpose of this investigation was to investigate euroscepticism from a country-level and the aim of this chapter was to argue for the chosen decisions in this relation. Lastly, the chapter also presented the empirical material used in the investigation which is Eurobarometer data. Eurobarometer is widely used when investigating the European public opinion. However, when using the surveys one also has to be aware of its limitations and how much one really can conclude about real-world trends on this basis.

3 Theory and Operationalization

This section of the thesis outlines the academic discussion centred on the issue of the definition of euroscepticism. It is important to note that despite the interest in public opinion since the early 1990's, most of the studies related to euroscepticism are focused on party-based euroscepticism which is also the case for several of the definitions presented in this thesis. It has been extremely difficult to find academic material focusing on and providing a thorough definition of public euroscepticism. Nevertheless, many of the understandings of euroscepticism are very broad concepts which I believe can also be directly applicable to the general public. The aim of this section is to develop the understanding of euroscepticism used in this thesis. Secondly, it introduces the existing literature on the subject of euroscepticism and, as will be apparent, it focuses very much on identifying specific categories of euroscepticism and not so much on what the concept more precisely entails. Lastly, this chapter will present the operationalization of euroscepticism.

3.1 The theory on Euroscepticism – in search of a definition

Scepticism, doubt or lack of satisfaction towards the European project has acquired many labels and definitions such as euro-pessimists, euro-phobia, euro-criticism etc. which like euroscepticism are not very specific concepts. One can even argue that euroscepticism has become kind of a catch-words used by the media, the political elite and the academic world with consequently a lot of different meanings and connotations. As mentioned the different variants range from criticism of particular aspects of the EU but still remaining generally sympathetic towards the idea of European integration to outright rejection of membership which is illustrated in the following definitions. For Flood (2002: 73) euroscepticism *'carries the meaning of doubt and distrust on the subject of European integration'* whereas Harmsen (2005:2) defines it exclusively as a fundamental opposition towards the European Union and he traces the term to Britain where he argues that it constitutes a very different and much more intensive phenomenon than in the rest of the EU. In his view euroscepticism can only be viewed as a principle scepticism towards the entire project. He thereby rejects Flood's broad interpretation that scepticism or doubt can be directed at just part of the European project for instance the Common Agricultural Policy or other areas of the EU. George's (2000: 15) definition of euroscepticism combines the

above definitions as he puts forward three degrees of euroscepticism: 1) doubts about the form that integration is taking, 2) doubts about the benefits and advisability of further integration and 3) hostility to the European project as a whole. The thesis agrees a long way with this definition as it combines dimensions of euroscepticism. Part of euroscepticism is naturally a principle rejection of the entire EU co-operation. The other dimensions in this definition make references to firstly, a utilitarian approach since it focuses on the benefits whether they are individual or for one's country and secondly, to scepticism about the widening and deepening of the European project.

It is clear from the above that euroscepticism is a problematic term and therefore there does not exist a clear-cut definition. In the following sections, the thesis will introduce three influential definitions or 'theories' on euroscepticism.

3.1.1 Hard vs. Soft Euroscepticism

One of the most widely used and most cited definitions of euroscepticism is Taggart and Szczerbiak's initial observations about the term where they argue that euroscepticism '*expresses the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration*' (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2003: 6). This definition, though broad and incorporating a wide range of varying positions, was subsequently redeveloped. The authors found it useful to break the definition into two in order to distinguish between contingent or qualified opposition (soft) and the more outright principled rejection (hard) of the European integration process. It should be noted that Taggart and Szczerbiak's definition is directed at party-based euroscepticism, however, like others this thesis argues that the central distinction between contingent and principle euroscepticism can also be transferred to the public level. On that note, Taggart and Szczerbiak define *hard euroscepticism* as '*... a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and therefore can be seen in parties [or in the public] who think that their countries 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*' (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2002: 4). In contrast, *soft euroscepticism* is defined as '*... where there is NOT a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas leads to the expression of*

qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that ‘national interest’ is currently at odds with the EU trajectory’ (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2002: 4).

One can argue that both the strengths and weaknesses of this two-fold division developed by Taggart and Szczerbiak come from its simplicity. Due to its simplicity it can easily be applied in different studies concerning both established EU member countries, countries outside the EU, candidate countries but also to the general public as is the case here. Nevertheless, despite its wide usability the definition has also encountered critique for being too inclusive and all encompassing (Kopecky & Mudde, 2002: 300). Especially, the definition of *soft* euroscepticism has been held as being too broad and failing to capture varying degrees of support or opposition towards the European project. In addition it is argued that the criteria used to separate the two forms of euroscepticism remains largely unclear and consequently makes it difficult to explain why different forms of euroscepticism appear.

The criticism is well-founded and also accepted by the authors themselves who argue that their working definition needs to *‘reflect [more] nuances... within a broader typology’* (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2003: 9). They therefore propose that the two forms of euroscepticism should be seen as opposing poles on a spectrum with some levels in-between. Nevertheless, an important problem related to *soft* euroscepticism is still the fact that there are hardly any political parties or the public at general that would not object to some features of the EU or to the EU policies. It therefore causes problems when trying to distinguish between *soft* eurosceptic positions and constructive and positive campaigning in order to improve and develop the EU.

3.1.2 Ideology and strategy – Euroscepticism according to Kopecky and Mudde

Based on the critique of Taggart and Szczerbiak’s definition, Kopecky and Mudde (2002) have attempted, according to themselves, to construct a more *precise* definition of euroscepticism. Their fundamental criticism of Taggart and Szczerbiak’s definition is based on the fact that the *soft* and *hard* classification does not pay any attention to the ideological dimension of policy position adopted by parties or the public. The classification does not

distinguish between, on the one hand, support/opposition towards the idea of European integration in principle and, on the other hand attitudes towards the EU as the current embodiment of this idea. As a result of this criticism, Kopecky and Mudde have proposed another classification which draws on Easton's famous distinction between *diffuse* and *specific* support. By *diffuse support* they mean support for the general ideas of European integration whereas *specific support* refers to support for the general practices of the EU. This has led them to propose a four-fold classification of party-based euroscepticism which can also be transferred to the general public (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002: 302).

As shown in the figure on the following page, Kopecky and Mudde (2002: 303) understand euroscepticism as one of four ideal types produced by intersecting orientations towards the EU with orientations towards the idea of European integration. Related to the dimension of European integration, they distinguish between Europhiles, who in principle accept the idea of European integration and pooled sovereignty, and Europhobes who argue for outright rejection of integration on the basis of ideological reasons. Regarding the second dimension, which deals with the acceptance of the EU itself, the authors separate the EU-optimist from the EU-pessimists. The EU-optimists endorse both the EU as well as the way it develops, however, they can also be critical about a certain EU policy. In contrast, EU-pessimists do not support the EU or the way it is developing but this does not necessarily mean objection of membership but more a wish of transforming the EU along the original ideas for the cooperation (Kopecky & Mudde, 2002: 300-302).

Figure 2: Kopecky and Mudde's typology of euroscepticism

		Support for European Integration	
		Europhile	Europhobe
Support for EU	EU-optimist	Euroenthusiast	Europragmatist
	EU-pessimist	Eurosceptics	Eurorejects

(Kopecky & Mudde, 2002: 303)

These two dimensions lead to a four-fold typology of parties, or the public, into separate categories in accordance with their stance on European issues. **Euroenthusiasts** combine Europhile ideological support for the concept of European integration with acceptance of the EU. **Eurosceptics** support the general idea of European integration but are pessimistic about the current or future reflection of these ideas. **Europragmatists** do not support, nor necessarily oppose, the idea of European integration. They accept the EU as a necessary element of the European set-up and assess it positively because they deem it (often economically) profitable for their own country. Lastly, there are **Eurorejects** who combine Europhobe and EU-pessimist positions and subscribe neither to the idea of European integration nor to the EU (Kopecky & Mudde, 2002: 302-303).

Despite Kopecky and Mudde's attempt of providing a more precise definition on euroscepticism it can similarly to Taggart and Szczerbiak be argued that their categories are too inclusive – especially the Euroenthusiast category which does not leave room for criticism. Additionally, Kopecky and Mudde have received a great deal of criticism on their

Europragmatist category for failing to develop a coherent definition of what this position entails. It seems somewhat contradictory that, on the one hand, it combines rejection of European integration as a principle, with support for the EU, which, regardless of whether it is successful or not is an embodiment of integrationist ideas in Europe.

3.1.3 Flood and Usherwood's six categories of Euroscepticism

In an attempt to come up with a more detailed and accurate classification of euroscepticism, Flood and Usherwood (2005: 3) have proposed six categories which try to distinguish between different shades of euroscepticism as well as euro-optimism. They have deliberately avoided using the term euroscepticism and have resorted to terms conventionally applied in political science. Their classification comprises the following six categories (all carrying the prefix EU-):

- Maximalist: position in favour of pushing forward with the existing processes as rapidly as is practicable towards higher levels of integration (either of the overall structure or specific policies)
- Reformist: position accepting advance of integration combined with constructive criticism. Support for integration is subject to remedying the deficiencies of what has already been achieved.
- Gradualist: position accepting advance of integration (overall + specific) as long as it is slow and gradual.
- Minimalist: position accepting the status quo but rejecting any further advance in integration
- Revisionist: position in favour of returning to an earlier state, usually before a major treaty revision.
- Rejectionist: position of an outright opposition to both membership and to integration itself.

Flood and Usherwood's conceptualisation of (party-based) euroscepticism provides us with a very comprehensive classification which escapes the trap of too inclusive categories. Their classification distinguishes between different degrees of support for the EU/European integration project ranging from unrestricted backing of the process of integration to acceptance of its slow and piecemeal progress. On the other end of the spectrum, there

are categories which reflect different types of euroscepticism ranging from outright rejection to acceptance of the status quo. Nevertheless, the categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive and some would find themselves comfortably located in more than one category depending on the policy and maybe in a completely different category when it comes to the question of the overall direction of the European project. This could be the case regardless of whether one focuses on parties or the public in general and it raises questions concerning the weighting which seems to be lacking from their paper. Additionally, it can be pointed out that parties and let alone people rarely elaborate their policies on the key issues of European integration in such detail that one can categorise them in such a fine-grained scheme proposed by the authors.

3.1.4 Sum-up on Theory part

As is apparent from the existing literature on the subject of euroscepticism, it focuses more on categorising the concept than on what it more specifically entails. The above categorisation and definitions all have their pros and cons but they all share that, their analytical categories are difficult to operationalize when attempting to understand what lies beneath such eurosceptic stances. However, the above definitions have given us a more thorough understanding of the semantics of euroscepticism. 'Euro' refers to the European co-operation as a whole as well as towards specific parts of the co-operation. Similarly, 'scepticism' refers to an attitude of doubt or a disposition of disapproval which is a reflection of a more long-lasting approach and feeling.

In other words, **euroscepticism is disapproval and reservations which are of a more durable character and are directed towards the entire EU or towards special policy areas or developments.**

The aim of the next section, i.e. the operationalization, is thus to go more in depth with the concept of euroscepticism and deduce and develop expectations as to the nature or sources of various eurosceptic concerns. In other words, investigate the different dimensions of euroscepticism and what they entail.

3.2 Operationalization and the Dimensions of Euroscepticism

Based on parts of the review of the existing literature on euroscepticism, the purpose of this part of the thesis is to deduce and develop the different types of euroscepticism. The above examined definitions of euroscepticism and the different approaches to public opinion offer evidence as to the diverse nature of scepticism towards the EU.

3.2.1 The Utilitarian Dimension

An obvious starting point when investigating euroscepticism in-depth is the discussion of utility. The fact that utilitarian motivations are decisive for the public's opinion related to EU has been the centre of attention in many studies (for instance Anderson & Reichert, 1996; Gabel, 1998; Hooghe & Marks, 2004). Related to the above definitions George (2000) was one of the authors who argued that one element of euroscepticism was doubt related to the benefits that the public will obtain from further integration. Additionally, Kopecky and Mudde's (2002) much criticised Europragmatist category also accepts the EU with reference to the benefits, in this case often economic benefits, which one gains from the European co-operation.

Central to this discussion about utility, is the calculation of expected economic gains and losses through membership. The main argument is the rational idea that the EU itself is driven primarily through an economic agenda and consequently the public evaluates the EU according to its economic achievements. In other words, the assumption is that individuals are making utilitarian calculations of the costs and benefits of EU membership. Therefore, those who think that membership is serving to their interest would support the EU, while those who perceive it as disadvantageous to their own benefit would disapprove of the EU (Gabel, 1998: 336). According to Gabel (1998: 337) market liberalisation, which is seen as the EU's primary objective, provides differential benefits for the EU public depending on their physical proximity to other EU markets and their human and financial capital (income, education, occupation etc.) and these are positively associated with support or scepticism towards European integration. The investigation¹⁴

¹⁴ The aim of Gabel's investigation is to test the explanatory power of five different theories of public support for the EU i.e. cognitive mobilisation, political values, class partisanship, government support and the utilitarian approach.

concludes with Gabel finding empirical evidence for the thesis of utilitarianism as being powerful and central in explaining public opinion towards European integration.

The European public may be sensitive to their collective economic circumstances, as well as to those that affect them individually. The utilitarian approach can therefore be perceived from the micro-level where socio-economic determinants and subjective economical conditions play a role in the individual's calculation of costs and benefits. Seen from the macro-level, the public calculates national returns from the EU budget as well as takes into consideration their country's level of trade with other EU members when formulating their opinion (Ehin, 2001: 34). Based on this argument, it seems reasonable to expect that residents in countries that are net recipients of European Union spending will be inclined to support European integration, while those in donor countries will tend to oppose¹⁵. Related to both the micro and macro-level, there are two kinds of economic beliefs that can be used to explain differences in support for integration across member states and individuals: direct and indirect. Direct benefits refer to payments made by the EU to member states or individuals whereas indirect benefits are those associated with membership in the Union, such as trade with EU members, opportunities for professional mobility, etc. (Anderson & Reichert, 1996: 233).

Overall, one can therefore argue that *'...theories that seek to explain support for EU membership based on notions of economic benefits and attitudes are useful for understanding public opinion towards integration'* (Anderson & Reichert, 1996: 245).

Related to the utilitarian dimension, the theoretical point of departure is Easton's (in Hix, 2005: 148) classic distinction between diffuse and specific support. Citizens diffuse or affective support i.e. an ideological or non-material attachment remains with the nation state and the EU therefore has to depend on or to secure specific or utilitarian support which is based on the institutions promoting an individual's economic or political interests. In other words, Easton argues that *'... utilitarian cost-benefit calculations determine whether the*

¹⁵ Related to the aspect of gaining on the micro and macro-level it is important to point out that some citizens would evaluate both aspects where others would perhaps only evaluate the EU according to gains from one level. Additionally, even if citizens gain at the micro-level from membership of the EU (for instance farmers gaining economically from the Common Agricultural Policy) they could still be eurosceptical at the macro-level i.e. opposing the EU because they for instance fear losing national sovereignty.

underlying level of support [for an institution] goes up or down over time' (in Hix, 2005: 148)¹⁶.

Continuing the theoretical perspective, Haas' theory on neo-functionalism (in Jensen, 2003: 81) also assumes that public support for the EU integration process is determined by perceptions of utility. Being one of the classic integration theories, neo-functionalism has been criticized for being too elitist, however, one can deduce some essential ideas about public opinion. The central notion in the early days of the European co-operation was that the public was passive and not very interested in the integration project and that they would follow the opinion of the political elite. Neo-functionalists argue that '*... states were expected to co-operate on economic matters in order to realize the economic advantages that come with increased levels of trade*' (Jensen, 2003: 91). Once the public observed these advantages they would transfer their loyalty to the European level. In other words, the public support was seen as a function of the efficiency of the EU in performing and producing policies. This leads the thesis to a last central point on utility which can also be associated with more than just economics but also refers to a performance based utility as the last sentence suggests. By this is meant that public support is connected to the efficiency of the EU system and whether it carries out its policies effectively as well as the effectiveness of its bureaucratic set-up.

3.2.2 Sum-up on the Utilitarian Dimension

Based on the above presentation it is evident that utilitarian calculations could be one factor determining support and thereby also scepticism towards the EU. Naturally, this approach is not accepted by all authors, however, it is clear from the literature that it is one of the most long-lasting arguments related to public opinion studies. This is expected since the European project started as predominately an economic arrangement with the coal and steel co-operation and even today, economic growth and progress is a central motivation for further integration. Based on these accounts, the thesis finds it reasonable to expect that a central part of the public opinion bases their evaluation of the EU on whether it brings benefits or not. In other words, utility based critique is one dimension of euroscepticism which will be empirically tested in the following chapter.

¹⁶ It is nevertheless important to point out that Easton viewed the two kinds of support as related.

3.2.3 The Democratic Dimension

As mentioned in the introduction the dominating explanation for the prevalence of public scepticism in the early 1990's was the idea of the democratic deficit. It takes its point of departure in the assumption that when the powers of the EU increases in several ways it is required of the EU to live up to standards of democracy¹⁷. Whether this dissatisfaction with democracy was a new element in the 1990's can be discussed as several authors trace its relevance back to much earlier (for instance Mény, 2003: 3). Similarly, the academic debate revolves around not only the nature of the problem but also on how to solve it. It is therefore important to point out that the following presentation of the democratic deficit will centre around whether the public perceives the EU's democracy as deficient and does not take a stand on whether there in fact are such deficits.

Like euroscepticism, definitions of the democratic deficit are varied and there does not exist a consensus or a clear-cut understanding of the concept. Nevertheless, the democratic deficit is essentially concerned with the degree to which the EU adequately represents and is accountable to its citizens. McCormick (2005: 135) defines the democratic deficit as being '*... the gap between the powers of the European institutions and the ability of European citizens to influence their work and decisions*'.

Rohrschneider (2002: 463) most clearly depict how the democratic deficit influences the public's support and scepticism towards the EU. His perception of the democratic deficit focuses on whether the public feels represented by the EU and how this influences support. Through his investigation Rohrschneider is able to prove that a majority of the EU public does not believe that the EU represents them which can be interpreted as a sign of scepticism toward an EU whose aim is to be close to its citizens. The author therefore establishes that '*Probably the single most important conclusion of this study is that the EU's democratic performance substantially shapes support for integration*' (Rohrschneider, 2002:

¹⁷ It is often argued that the EU cannot be assessed according to criteria applicable to a democracy in a nation state. Rather it is said to be a construction 'sui generis', i.e. 'in a class of its own' – whether this is somewhere between a confederation of states, a federal state, a supranational or an intergovernmental organisation will not be discussed here. The fact that the EU is in a class of its own is certainly correct but the thesis does not believe that it can be used to reject democratic criticism as the EU itself states in its treaties that it wishes to live up to the principle of democracy.

473). In other words, if the EU's democratic standing is something which is central for public support it could be equally as important for public scepticism.

Weiler's so-called 'standard version' of the democratic deficit is widely-used arguments in the academic debate. According to this approach the basic problem of the EU is the fact that there is a shift of political control from the democratic parliamentary systems of government at national level to the executive-centred system of government at the European level. The executive at the European level consists of both the European Commission and the European Council which are not accountable to the national parliaments and according to Weiler (1995: 8): *'The European Parliament does not offer an effective substitution'*. The EU system is accused of *'... an overall lack of transparency'* (Weiler, 1995: 10) and the interests of the European citizens are not taken into consideration. Furthermore, the principle of proportional representation is compromised (i.e. enhanced voice is given to smaller states) as well as national judicial control of legislation is seen as insufficient. Last on Weiler's (1995: 9) list of characteristics of the democratic deficit is the fact that *'... no one who votes in the European elections has a strong sense at all of affecting critical policy choices at the European level and certainly not of confirming or rejecting European governance'*.

Follesdal and Hix (2005: 4-6) agree along similar lines with Weiler and have updated the 'standard version' with five claims made by those who speak about a democratic deficit. The first claim refers to the fact that the European integration process has supposedly increased the powers of the executive at the cost of national parliaments. Secondly, the European Parliament, the only directly elected institution, has a relatively weak position in the European institutional configure between Parliament, Commission and Council, because it is unable to perform the central function of a parliament, namely controlling the executive and holding it accountable. Third, even though the powers of the European Parliament may have increased in recent years, European elections are primarily 'second-order' in nature, meaning that national policy concerns dominate and no European-wide political parties compete and the Parliament is still too weak compared to the other institutions. Fourth, European institutions are seen as too distant from ordinary European citizens. That is to say, the characteristics of the European polity exacerbate the lack of

direct input from European citizens. In addition, citizens cannot understand the EU system and '*... so will never be able to assess and regard it as a democratic system writ large, nor to identify with it*' (Follesdal & Hix, 2005: 6). Finally, the authors argue that the policies adopted at the EU level are not supported by a majority of European citizens. The predominantly neo-liberal character of the single market and the monetarist framework of the European Monetary Union (EMU) seem to have produced a 'policy drift' from voters' preferences, who on average are more in favour of a stronger regulated and social Europe.

Several authors have questioned the above claims and in particular Majone (1998) and Moravcsik (2002) have criticized the notion of a democratic deficit. The authors argue that the democratic deficit is not present since one cannot judge the EU using a national model of democracy. According to Moravcsik the EU is effective and successful in large part because it practices 'limited government'. It is constrained by national governments and tightly hemmed by constitutional checks and balances. Moravcsik believes that national governments are the most directly accountable politicians in Europe and since they run the EU this should be seen as a democratic feature (Moravcsik, 2002: 7-8). Related to the question of public support and scepticism Moravcsik (2006: 219) argues that '*... increased opportunities to participate do not, as a rule, generate more intensive and informed public deliberation or greater public trust, identity and legitimacy*'. Similarly, Majone claims that the problem is not as much a democratic deficit but more that what the EU is lacking is political accountability. By this he means that EU decision-making should be more transparent and that the EU should try to increase the credibility of its policy-making by introducing different procedural mechanisms. If the EU will be able to solve these problems the population will accept the EU as legitimate and talk about a democratic deficit will disappear (Majone, 1998: 8).

3.2.4 Sum-up on the Democratic Dimension

What is clear from the above is the fact that there is not an agreement or a consensus on whether the democratic deficit is present or what it entails. Nevertheless, the purpose in this thesis is connected to the perception of a democratic deficit and not whether it is actually present. It is nevertheless clear that much of the literature related to euroscepticism in the early 1990's postulated that the EU's failure to live up to citizens

ideals of democracy caused them to become sceptical. Based on the above presentation, the thesis finds it reasonable to assume that this could be the case and democratic concerns will therefore be investigated as one type of euroscepticism.

3.2.5 The Sovereignty Dimension

A different approach to understanding euroscepticism is concerned with sovereignty. In the introduction to the theories related to euroscepticism, the authors mentioned typologies referring to scepticism towards further integration and pessimism towards future reflections of European ideas. This reluctance to increase the competencies of the EU and thereby possibly weaken national sovereignty, and thus perhaps identity, is what constitutes the sovereignty dimension of euroscepticism.

At the heart of any discussion about sovereignty is the controversial question of what it is, who has it and what impact integration has on the powers enjoyed by member states. Sovereignty is usually defined as the right to hold and exercise authority (McCormick, 2005: 10). In democracies, sovereignty lies with the people even though the sovereign power is normally exercised by the institutions that the people elect to represent their interests. Based on this argumentation, eurosceptics are wrong when they argue that integration in the EU means loss of national sovereignty. Instead member states actually gain sovereignty once it is shared or pooled between member states. In other words, the nation state can acquire greater influence when working together with other states through for instance the EU or other international organisations. Not surprisingly, eurosceptics do not agree with this line of thinking. They perceive sovereignty as a zero-sum game where any increase in European sovereignty automatically diminishes its national counterpart. The following quote is from a eurosceptic organisation and it is a good illustrator of the eurosceptic stance related to the question of sovereignty: *'The claim that if a nation or State surrenders its sovereignty to the EU, it merely exchanges the sovereignty of a small State for participation in decision-making in a bigger supranational EU, is simply untrue. In practice countries and peoples which surrender their sovereignty to the EU become ever more subject to laws and policies that serve the interests of the bigger EU States. The State literally puts its existence at the mercy of those who have taken its sovereignty into their hands and who decide the policies of the larger body. In the European Union the big*

States, in particular Germany and France acting together, decide fundamental policy' (Coughlan, 2008: 8).

Following along those tracks, sovereignty remains a very emotive concept, particularly when raised in the context of EU policies. Since the European integration project entails the rendering of national sovereignty to supranational institutions as well as the harmonisation of national standards it is expected that such arrangements could cause public unease. Another related concern is that the erosion of national sovereignty means that the decision-makers fail to take account of national needs and interests. As the issue of sovereignty is related to the potentially weakening of the nation state it is not all forms of rendering of sovereignty to further EU-cooperation which causes concerns. As Hix (2005: 364) puts it the EU member states and their publics are *'... more likely to allow supranational policy competences on low-politics issues than on high-politics ones'*. High politics are so-called 'sensitive' issues which touch upon the fundamental definition, identity and security of the nation state whereas low politics are not nearly as threatening to the nation state. In relation to sovereignty, opposition centres on opposing the federalist challenge to the nation state. At most times, opponents of European integration are loosely unified by this aspect of opposition to federalism, and a desire to maintain the centrality of the nation state. However, sceptics often differ as to the ends to which the national state and autonomy should be put.

Increasingly, authors writing about public opinion and support to the EU point to the fact that debates about the sovereignty issue are correlated with the issue of national identity (for instance Hooghe & Marks, 2004; McLaren, 2007). The author on much literature on nationalism, Smith (2005: 1) defines a sceptic as *'... one who inclines to disbelieve'* and adds that with specific regard to euroscepticism that in general parlance it signifies *'... an emotional detachment from particular claims, doctrines and ideals'* (Smith, 2005: 1). It becomes more complicated as Smith addresses the nature of these ideals and doctrines which are disbelieved. He first turns to support for the EU where he classifies two sets of doctrines which are central for public support. The first perceives the EU as an irreversible economic and political project i.e. the EU is perceived along utilitarian lines where an effective and efficient EU produces economically beneficial policies. The second

perspective holds that *'Europe constitutes an underlying cultural identity which is being realised, that Europe's time has come, and that loyalty to and identity with Europe will subsume national loyalties and identities, even if it will never eradicate them'* (Smith, 2005: 1) which thereby represents a more identity-based support. Smith argues that opposition to both doctrines is an emotive phenomenon and public dissatisfaction with the EU is therefore not determined by economic benefits but more from an emotive stance. The utilitarian perspective is therefore secondary to Smith (2005: 2) who instead focuses on the public's identity and attachment in determining why the public becomes eurosceptical

Hooghe and Marks (2004) also argue for the fact that national identity plays an important role in determining attitudes to European integration. In their paper they are able to conclude that *'Citizens do indeed take into account the economic consequences of European integration, but conceptions of group membership appear to be more powerful'*. Looking further into the concept of identity, one's attitude or support to the EU is also determined by one's perception of national identity as being either exclusive (perceiving oneself as being 'purely' nationality – often more eurosceptic) or inclusive (perceiving oneself as being nationally and European – often less eurosceptic). In other words, Europeans who think of themselves as either in terms of some form of multiple identities that include an element of supranational or in entirely supranational terms will be most favourable to European integration. Despite the fact that Hooghe and Marks (2004) argue for the fact that utility also plays a role in determining public scepticism they believe that national identity overrides this dimension. McLaren (2007: 236) comes to a similar conclusion and argues that *'... opposition to the European project is less about hostility to the institutions of the EU or concerns about personal economic/financial losses and more to do with fears of symbolic threat to the national community'*. To conclude, it is therefore clear that many EU citizens view the European integration process as a threat to their national identities and that can explain them becoming eurosceptic (McLaren, 2007: 248).

3.2.6 Sum-op on the Sovereignty Dimension

As mentioned European integration touches upon central sensitive aspect of the functioning of the nation state, wherefore disapproval of further integration could logically constitute part of euroscepticism. Similarly, European citizens' concerns with loosing national identity are reflected in this dimension as it is unlikely that these concerns will exist

independently of sovereignty concerns. Based on the above elaboration the thesis therefore argues that aspects of sovereignty constitute a dimension of euroscepticism.

3.2.7 The Rejectionist Dimension

When investigating the concept of euroscepticism one can hardly leave out the principle objection to membership itself. The previously mentioned definitions on euroscepticism almost all refer to some kind of principle objection to the very idea of the EU or to any kind of integration and co-operation in general. Taggart and Szczerbiak (2003) termed it 'hard' euroscepticism, Kopecky and Mudde (2002) referred to it as 'eurorejects' which is similar to Flood and Usherwood's (2005) labelling of 'rejectionists'. All the typologies refer to refusal of integration and opposition towards participation. Though maybe not the most interesting aspect of euroscepticism when investigating the concept, it nevertheless would be somewhat misleading to leave out such a central aspect. The thesis will therefore briefly account for this last dimension of euroscepticism.

One can argue that this rejection of the EU can be based on one, some, all or none of the previously mentioned dimensions of euroscepticism. The basic idea of measuring this principle objection is to evaluate the intensity or the prevalence of euroscepticism in the EU. If one was to follow along the tracks of for instance Inglehart's theory on post-materialism, one would expect that this dimension would become less widespread as times go by. As the older war-generations are being replaced by the more positive younger generations, as well as people are becoming more acquainted with the advantages of the European integration process, the support for the EU should become stronger i.e. scepticism should become less prevalent (in Hix, 2005: 162). This aspect will therefore be interesting to investigate over time and also in the light of the eurosceptic tendencies that the European project has been affected by recently.

3.2.8 Sum-op on the Rejectionist Dimension

To briefly sum up on this last dimension, one can argue that this is an 'overall' dimension which reflects the level and intensity of euroscepticism in the EU. As mentioned some of the other dimensions, which reflect types of euroscepticism, could be the basis and reason

for the European populations having this rejectionist attitude, however, it could also be caused by completely other parameters.

3.3 Discussion of other possible Dimensions

Before the thesis ends this chapter, which has introduced the theoretical framework on euroscepticism and based on this conducted the operationalization of euroscepticism, it will briefly touch upon the chosen dimensions as well as what other possibilities are present.

First of all, it should be pointed out that the dimensions used in this thesis have been chosen based on the literature reviewed on public support and opposition to the EU. Naturally, the question arises whether one should have chosen other dimensions. A central aspect which the thesis does not focus on is the question of knowledge and cognitive mobilization as proposed by Inglehart (1970: 4). According to Inglehart, individuals with greater cognitive skills i.e. those who are capable of digesting complex political events and who actually take the time to do so are more likely to support the EU and the integration process. Those who are not cognitively mobilized are not likely to have managed to receive much information about the EU and are therefore fearful of the unknown of it. Additionally, knowledge about the EU is also thought to reduce hostility and scepticism towards the European project. Nevertheless, one can argue against Inglehart's notion with the claim that knowledge and a greater understanding can also lead to the fact that people become more sceptical as regards to the methods and the entire set-up of the EU i.e. one becomes more aware of the failures and shortcomings also associated with the EU. Nonetheless, the thesis recognizes that knowledge and cognitive skills are certainly relevant when explaining public opinion, however, due to the limitations applicable for this thesis, choices had to be made. As also mentioned in the methodology chapter, the thesis limited itself from investigating socio-demographic features like for instance age, gender and education. One could argue that the notion of knowledge and cognitive mobilisation also attempts to assign such socio-demographic features on the individual. However, since the focus of this thesis is primarily related to the overall country level, this dimension has not been included in the investigation.

Another dimension which the thesis wishes to briefly mention is the entire question about the national government and the national political context. Often results from election to the European Parliament have been interpreted as national protests

directed towards the government of the day i.e. people express their dissatisfactions with the party or parties in government by voting for one or other of the oppositions parties. In addition, those who are dissatisfied with the way democracy is functioning in their own country as well as dissatisfaction with the functioning of government in general can project this dissatisfaction onto the EU (Anderson, 1998: 570). Thus, another potential explanation for increasing euroscepticism is that it stems from dissatisfaction with national government and its functioning. The thesis agrees that the national political context certainly plays a role in people becoming eurosceptic. Nevertheless, this dimension has been difficult to operationalize and more importantly Eurobarometer indicators related to this aspect has been extremely difficult to locate.

Based on the above elaboration it is clear that when dealing with a broad and diverse concept like euroscepticism, one could have chosen several relevant dimensions and aspects to investigate the concept further. The thesis' purpose with this section was to point to the fact that the thesis is aware of the possible other dimensions (also dimensions which have not been elaborated on here as political orientation of the EU i.e. more social or liberal, culture, historical background etc.) which also influence people who are eurosceptic. Nevertheless, the thesis argues that dimensions chosen for this thesis is relevant for the investigation which will paint a broader and deeper picture of the concept of euroscepticism.

A last point which needs mentioning in this discussion related to the dimensions is the term used to designate the different dimensions i.e. the different terms such as sovereignty, democracy etc. each referring to a dimension. This could also be a point of discussion as other terms could have been just as appropriate. As regards the sovereignty dimension, one could argue that since it focuses so much on identity this could just as well have the term used to designate this dimension. As regards the democratic dimension, one could also have chosen to see this from a broader perspective and refer to this dimension as a more value-laden one. Nevertheless, the thesis believes that the terms used to designate the dimensions reflect in a broad sense the type of dimension in question as well as give a sense of what euroscepticism is about – in other words, not too broad or too narrow terms.

3.4 Conclusion on Theory and Operationalization chapter

The aim of this third part of the thesis was to introduce the theoretical framework and based on that conduct the operationalization of the concept of euroscepticism. The thesis was able to establish that euroscepticism is indeed a problematic terms which is difficult to define. The existing theories consist of several different typologies all ranging from 'mild' scepticism to some part of the EU to outward rejection of the entire co-operation. The thesis' own definition of euroscepticism draws on the fact that euroscepticism is disapproval and reservations which are of a more durable character and which are directed towards the entire EU or towards specific policies or developments.

The purpose of the operationalization was to go more in depth with the concept of euroscepticism and deduce central dimensions as to illustrate the nature or sources of various eurosceptic stands. Based on existing literature on euroscepticism and public opinion/support the thesis was able to develop four dimensions of euroscepticism and they are as follows:

Utility Dimension: Focuses on the lack of economic benefits gained from membership of the EU.

Democratic Dimension: Focuses on the EU's lack of democratic credentials.

Sovereignty Dimension: Focuses on fear of loosing national sovereignty and thereby identity.

Rejectionist Dimension: Focuses on the principle opposition and outward rejection of EU membership.

It is central to point out that the different dimensions of euroscepticism need not to be mutually exclusive i.e. citizens can object to the EU's lack of democratic credentials, however, the real objection to membership can be based on the fear of losing national sovereignty. In other words one can find all dimensions equally important for one's scepticism towards the EU, or one could just argue that one of the dimensions is the central arguments for ones eurosceptic stance.

In the following chapter these four dimensions of euroscepticism will be put to empirical scrutiny using Eurobarometer data and on that basis the thesis will be able to explore whether the eurosceptic dimensions change between member states i.e. the two case countries Britain and Denmark and over time.

4 Analysis

The purpose of this fourth chapter is to put the four dimensions to empirical scrutiny and thereby investigate whether euroscepticism differ between countries i.e. the two case countries being Britain and Denmark, and whether it changes over time. As just summarized in the last chapter the thesis was able to develop and deduce four dimensions of euroscepticism which are; the utilitarian, the democratic, the sovereignty and the rejectionist dimension. In this chapter these four dimensions will be analysed using Eurobarometer data and the thesis is thereby able to measure euroscepticism in Britain and Denmark¹⁸.

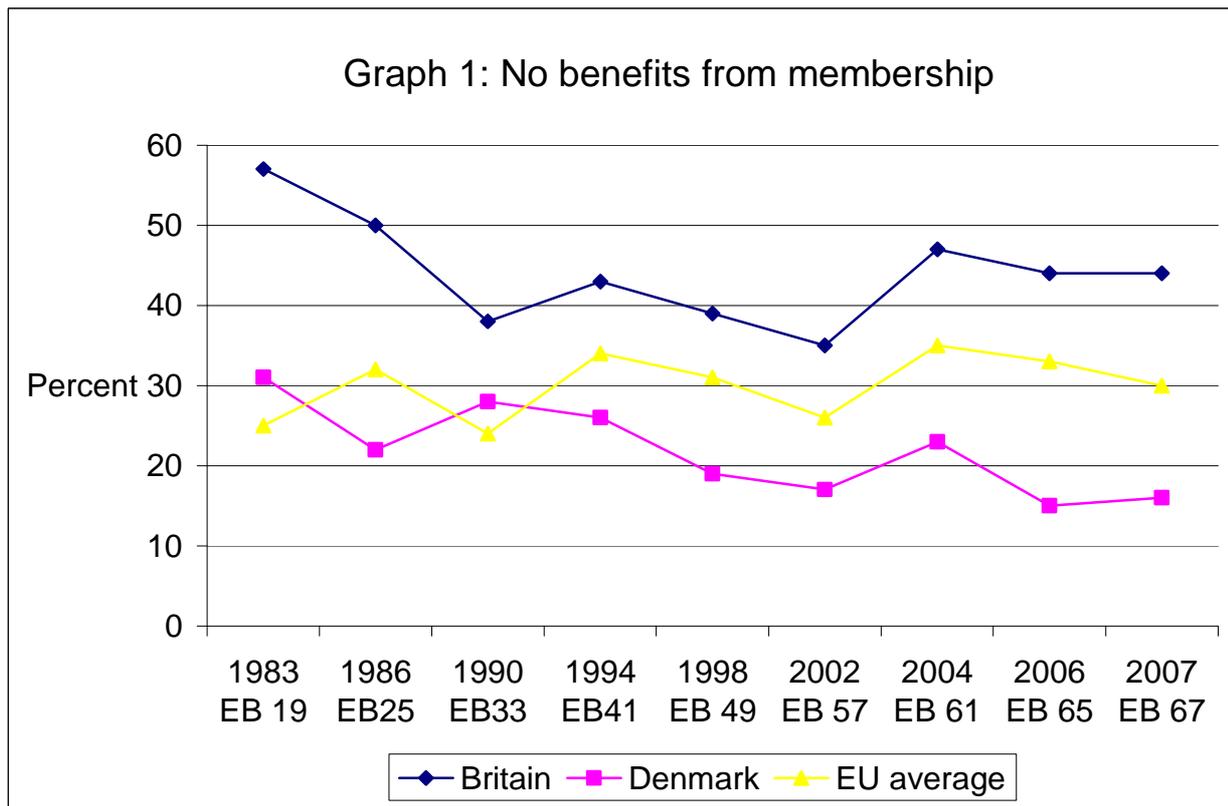
4.1 Analysis of the Utilitarian Dimension

This section accounts for the first dimension of euroscepticism and as was apparent during the operationalization; utility focuses very much on economic gains and benefits. The indicators i.e. the Eurobarometer questions chosen for this dimension therefore argue that people become sceptical when they do not feel that they gain anything from membership. The first indicator reflects in a very broad way whether or not the citizens perceive membership of the EU as being beneficial. The question refers to the macro-level but not specifically to economic benefits. Nevertheless, the thesis assumes that a great number of citizens would perceive it in that direction despite the fact that the question is very broad.

EB Question: *Taking everything into consideration, would you say that (your country) has on balance benefited or not from being member of the European Union?*

The graph shows the number of people who has answered that they have not benefited from membership of the EU in percentages and over a time span from spring 1983 to spring 2007. Lastly, one has to be aware that the EU average changes accordingly with the new members who have joined the Community/Union i.e. EU15, EU25 etc.

¹⁸ The thesis refers to appendix A for a figural overview of the dimensions of euroscepticism and the indicators used to measure scepticism within each dimension. Additionally, the Eurobarometer data used for the analysis is included in full detail in appendix B.



The first thing that springs to mind when interpreting the graph is the fact that Britain is clearly much more sceptical than Denmark and the EU-average. Though the British population is becoming less sceptical over time i.e. the number of people believing that there were no benefits from membership of the EU decreases from an all-time high of 57% in 1983¹⁹ to 35% in 2002 and the level has now stabilised at 44%. Yet, the thesis believes that nearly half of the population does not see any benefits of membership is fairly high.

Regarding Denmark, the population is quite opposite the British population and has since the early 1990's been more positively inclined about benefits from membership than the EU average. Over time the Danish population has generally become less sceptical, and compared to Britain over the last 15 years, only ¼ of the Danish population do not consider membership of the EU to be beneficial. In other words, the population is not sceptical based on utilitarian concerns as far as this indicator shows.

¹⁹ One could imagine that the reason why a large number of the British population did not associate membership of the EU with benefits in the 1980's could be associated with a heavy debate on that time about Britain's contribution to the EU budget being unfair. Britain, who is a net contributor to the EU budget, was able to negotiate an EU budget rebate where about 2/3 of Britain's contribution to the budget is paid back to the country, which is still in place today. This could explain the decrease during the 1980's.

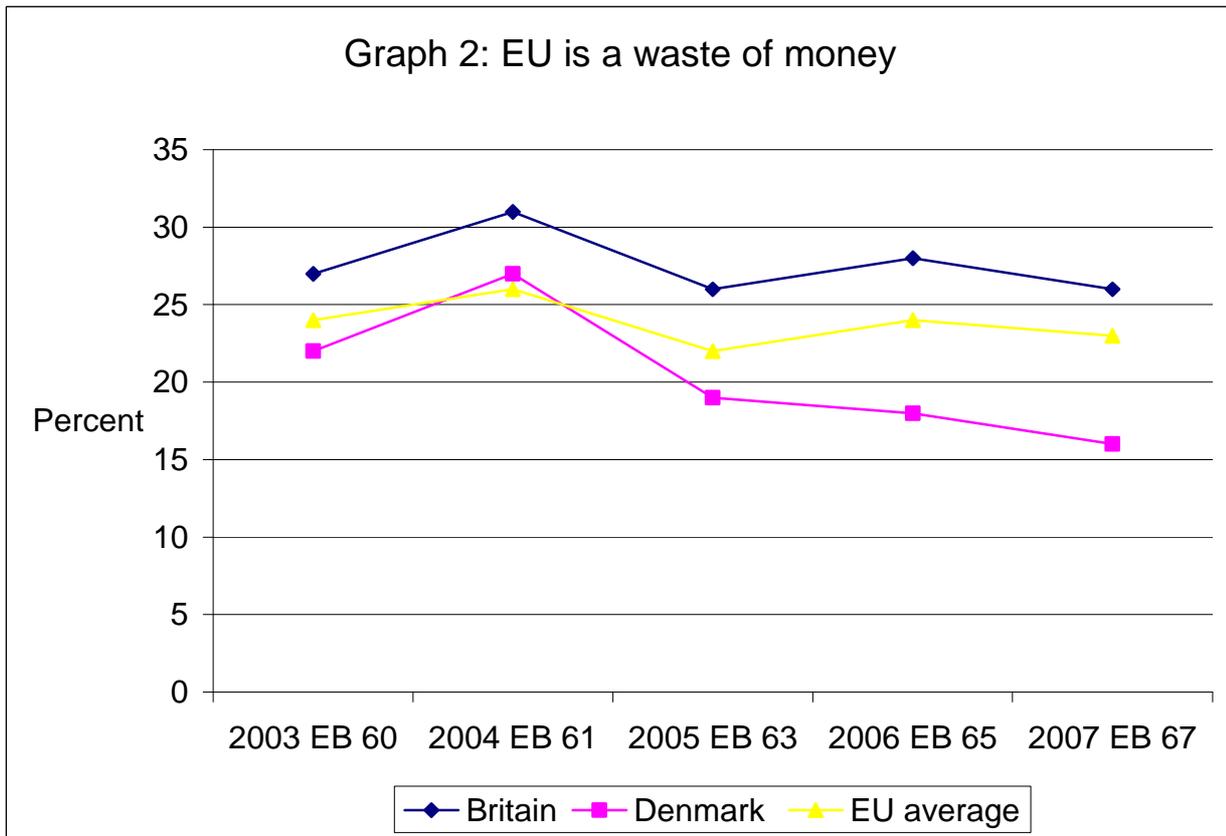
Generally, with the two case countries it is clear that despite some conjunctions, the peaks of low and high levels of euroscepticism follow along the same tracks. However, with one clear exception which is the early 1990's leading up to the establishment of the Union with the Maastricht Treaty. At that point it is clear that Danish scepticism is nearly peaking while British and EU-average reaches some of its lowest levels.

Lastly, concerning the EU average, it is clear that a general increase in sceptical opinion has taken place. One can actually note that the peaks of dissatisfaction with benefits from membership is present at similar times as the EU has enlarged i.e. 1986, around 1995 and latest in 2004. In other words indicating that as the EU widens there are more countries to 'split the cake' and the populations might not feel that they will continue to benefit as much as previously.

The second indicator related to the utilitarian dimension focuses on the meaning of the EU and where the first question related to the macro-level or the country as whole this focuses on the micro-level i.e. the individual level. In contrast to the first question this refers specifically to the utilitarian dimension as the publics are asked about the EU as being an economically unsound undertaking.

EB Question: *What does the European Union mean to you personally?*

This question has multiple answers where one refers to the EU as being a waste of money. The graphs below represent the number of people who has answered that they felt that the EU was a waste of money. The time span is autumn 2003 to spring 2007. Despite the fact that the time period includes the period before and after the eastern Enlargement with the joining of 10 new member countries, the EU average is only EU-15 through the entire time span.



Once again it is clear that it is the British population who is the most sceptical, however, the population is not nearly as sceptical as regarding the first indicator. Again the Danish population (despite 2004) is below the EU-average and over time the level of scepticism is decreasing. Despite a high level of scepticism in spring 2004, the curves follow along similar paths. The peak in scepticism is 2004 which was also present with the first indicator and could be explained by the entry of 10 new member states in May that year and which naturally would involve some economic ‘losses’ of the older member states.

4.1.1 Sum-up on the Utilitarian Dimension

Based on the above findings it is clear that Britain is the most sceptical country when it comes to the utilitarian dimension, where Denmark stands out as the sceptic level is lower than the average EU level. One can even argue that there does not seem to be any relative euroscepticism in Denmark when it comes to this dimension. Overall, both countries seem to have become less sceptical over time.

So what can one conclude on the basis of these results? One can argue that it did not come as any surprise that the Danes proved not to be sceptical towards the EU as regarding the utilitarian dimension. This goes to indicate that the rationale for Danish EU-membership can be argued was and still is economic²⁰. As for the British scepticism on this aspect, this was to some extent also expected as the thesis during the operationalization argued that countries where the net benefits from membership are negative tend to oppose integration. Despite Britain's budget rebate, the country still has large trade deficits with the EU and this could thereby translate into lesser support for the EU. If this knowledge is not new, one can ask oneself what to use this knowledge for? Overall, one can argue that if the political elite wants to come euroscepticism to life it needs to focus more on informing the population what benefits in this case economic that the public gets from membership. Naturally, talks about EU corruption, the so-called 'travelling circus' associated with the European Parliament's monthly sessions in Strasbourg does not help the public in perceiving the EU as an economically sound organisation. Nevertheless, surveys have also proved that the public are not aware of all the projects for instance in relation to the Union's regional and structural funds. If the political elite wishes to improve on utilitarian scepticism, one way is perhaps to make the public more aware of what their money is used for²¹.

²⁰ This claim can naturally be discussed as the Danes for instance rejected entry to the euro in a referendum in 2000 and in this case one could argue that political arguments overshadowed economic arguments.

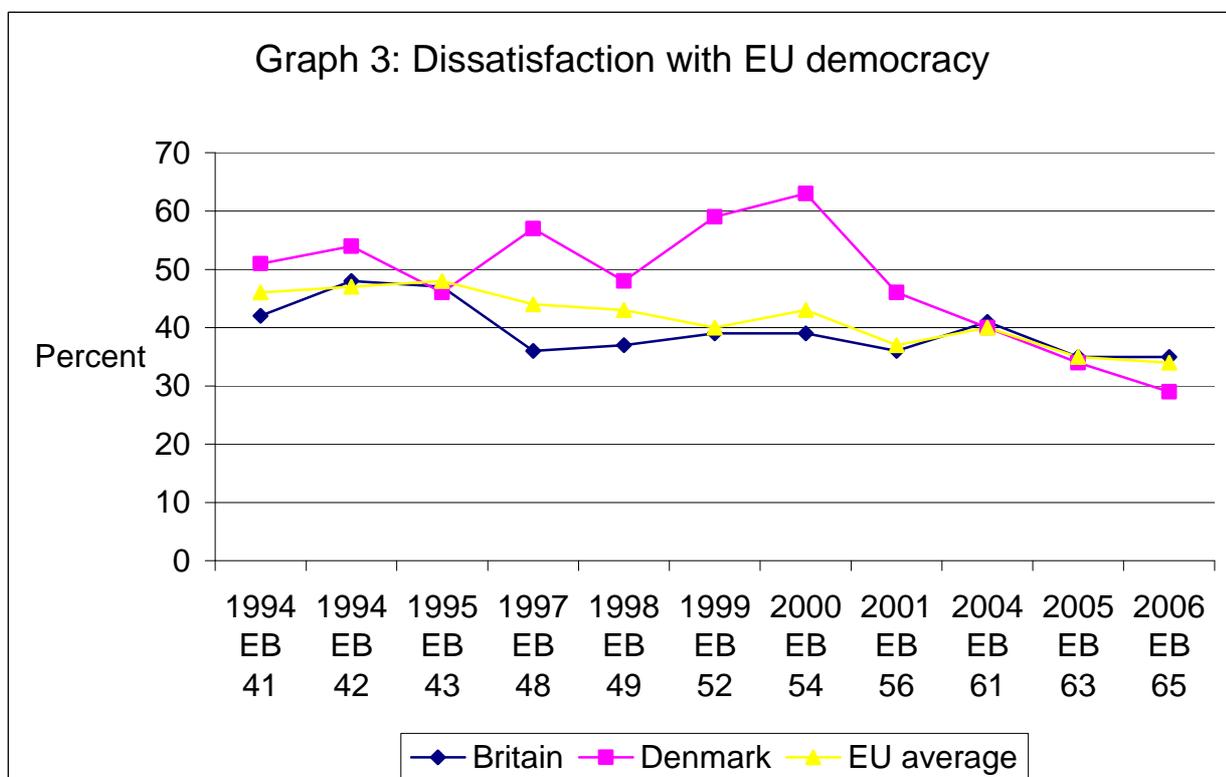
²¹ In this relation, one can naturally argue that the EU is already doing so and trying to make the public more aware. However, this also involves the public wanting and showing the will to learn more about the EU.

4.2 Analysis of the Democratic Dimension

This section will account for the indicators chosen for the democratic dimension which centres on the populations’ satisfaction with the EU’s democratic credentials. When trying to find indicators for this dimension, it was interesting to see that Eurobarometer only started focusing on EU democracy in the early 1990’s. For years Eurobarometer had asked questions about the national democracy but this sudden focus on EU democracy could help confirm the thesis’ claim that the EU explained the prevailing euroscepticism in the early 1990’s as being based on critique of the democratic standing of the EU.

EB Question: *On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in the European Union?*

The graph combines the number of people who answered that they were ‘not very satisfied’ as well as ‘not at all satisfied’ with EU democracy. Since 1994, the EU has almost consistently asked this question and the time span is therefore spring 1994 to spring 2006.



In contrast to the utilitarian dimension, this indicator for the democratic dimensions shows that the two countries have changed places. In this case it is Denmark which almost through the entire time span is more sceptical than the EU average. The scepticism peaked in 2000 with almost 2/3 of the Danish population indicating that they were not satisfied with EU democracy. Since then the number has drastically decreased, with only 29% of the population voicing their dissatisfaction in 2006, which is below the EU average.

In contrast, Britain shows less sceptical tendencies and the curve has almost followed the EU average except in the late 1990's where the British population actually was more positive than the EU average.

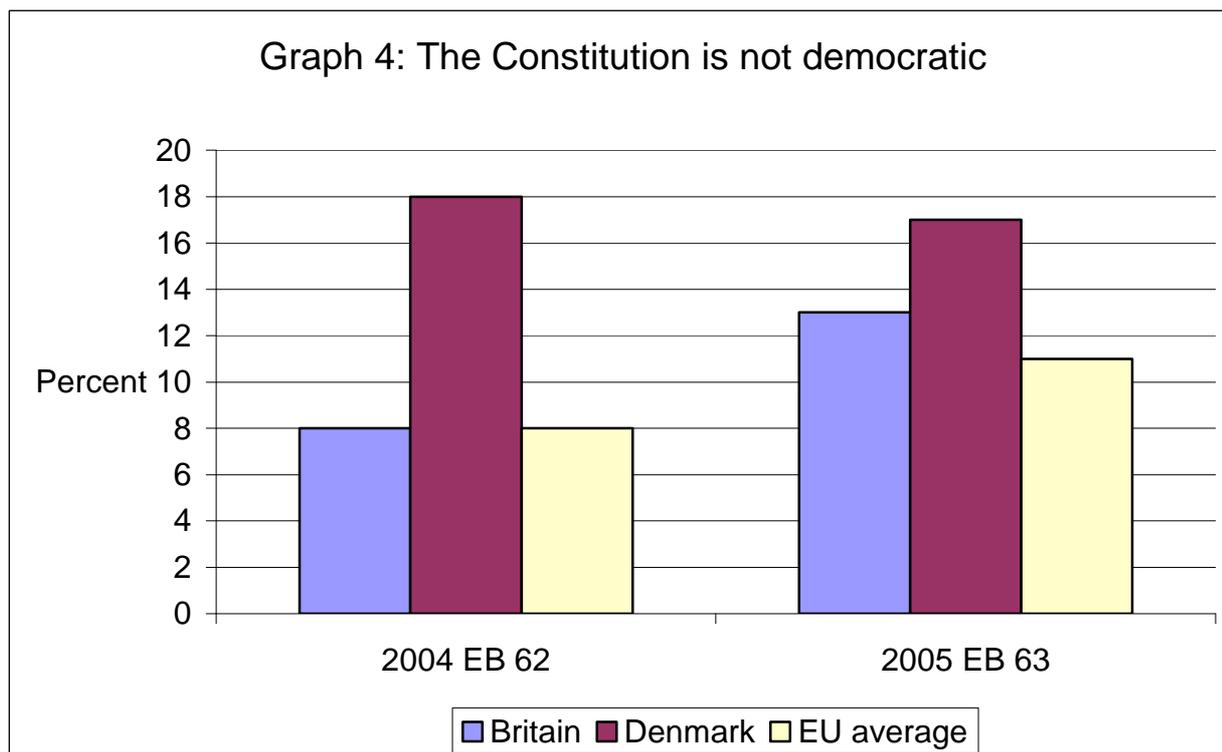
The EU average has been quite consistent ranging from around 40% to 45% of the populations which are not satisfied with EU democracy which must be said to be reasonably high and the level is higher than when it comes to the utilitarian dimension. Nevertheless, scepticism seems to be decreasing and has now stabilised at around 35%.

Overall, the tendencies regarding the peaks and lows of scepticism differ (despite in 2004) between the countries.

The next indicator related to the democratic dimension is linked to the Constitutional Treaty. As written in the introduction, one of the aims of the Constitutional Treaty was to strengthen democracy in the EU but it seems as though the population has interpreted this in a different way.

EB Question: *What are all the reasons why you are opposed to the European Constitution?*

The question has multiple answers where one being that the Constitution is not democratic enough. The question has only been posed twice during the ratification process of the Treaty and therefore the time span is rather brief i.e. from autumn 2004 to spring 2005.



As with the last indicator, it is clear that Denmark is the most sceptical country when it comes to dissatisfaction with EU democracy. The level of the Danish criticism is higher than the EU average, nevertheless the level of scepticism is still quite low i.e. 18% in 2004 and 17% in 2005. The British level of scepticism is in line with the EU average. Overall, one can argue that euroscepticism in this case is hardly present and that democratic concerns were not the primary concern of most citizens when it comes to the Constitutional Treaty.

4.2.1 Sum-up on the Democratic Dimension

In contrast to the utilitarian dimension, it is clear that regarding the democratic dimension it is Denmark which is the most sceptical country whereas British scepticism is in line with the EU average. Overall, scepticism for all parts is decreasing.

Once again, one can ask oneself the question about what to do with this knowledge. Seen from the perspective of the political elite, these results were expected i.e. that countries become eurosceptical based on democratic grounds. As has been argued for all along in this thesis, this has been the perceptive and main explanation used from

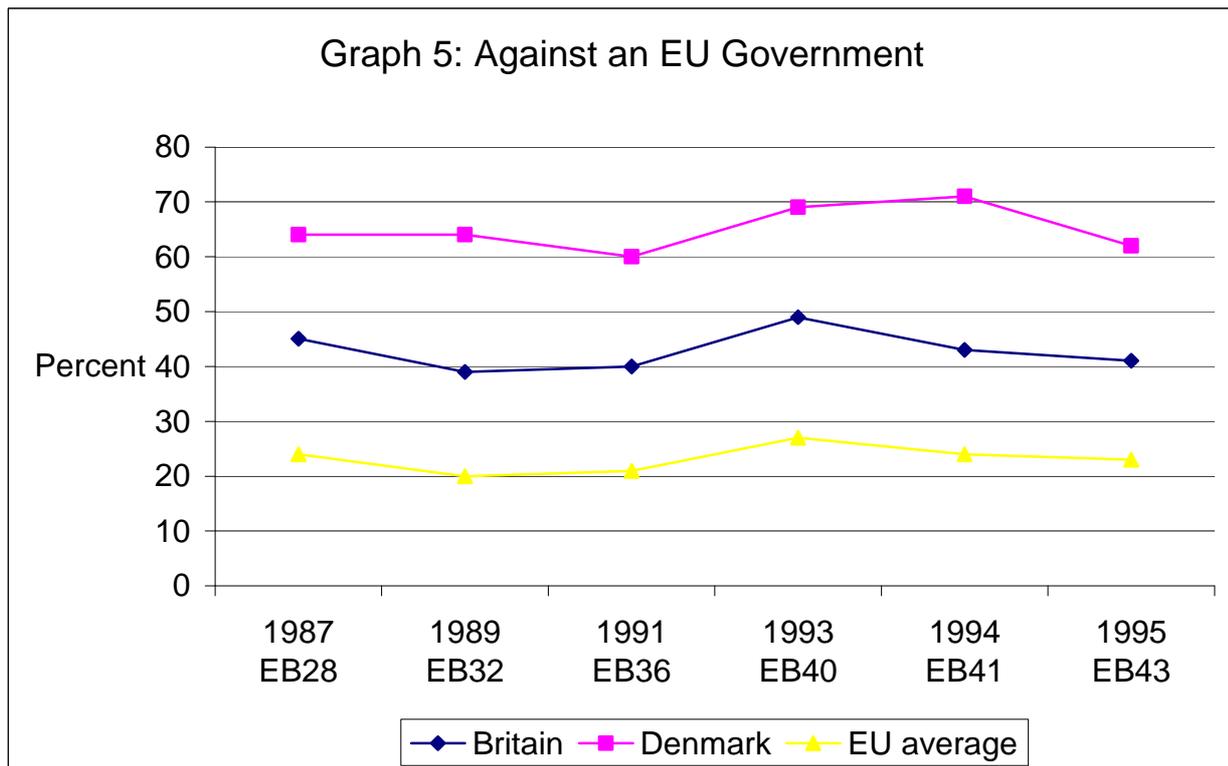
the political elite to explain euroscepticism. First of all, one can argue that the thesis' investigation supports this claim. Secondly, as also mentioned earlier the EU has made several attempts to improve democracy and transparency in order to reduce scepticism. Based on this brief investigation, one can argue that despite some increases within the time frame, scepticism based on democratic concerns seems to be decreasing overall since the early 2000 and until today. Naturally, this trend can have several explanations, however, one could be that the EU's initiatives have been successful. This has especially been the case with Denmark that has had very high level of democratic euroscepticism (regarding satisfaction with democracy) with a high of 63% in 2000 which has decreased to 35% in the two latest surveys. If the EU's initiatives have been successful within this dimension, it goes to indicate that the EU can come euroscepticism to life (to some extent naturally) and they therefore need to look into the other dimensions and target the member states accordingly.

4.3 Analysis of the Sovereignty Dimension

This third dimension will account for the indicators chosen for the sovereignty dimension which focuses on the fear of the nation state losing power and thereby the loss of national identity. The first indicator related to this dimension focuses on a possible EU government. The thesis perceives a government as a central element of a sovereign nation state. The question of an EU government is therefore likely to emphasise the supranational aspects of co-operation and is therefore a suitable indicator for this dimension.

EB Question: *Are you for or against the formation of a European Union with a European government responsible to the European Parliament?*

The question about an EU government has only been asked from autumn of 1987 until spring 1995. Unfortunately, the question has not been asked since that time and the data is therefore a bit outdated. Nevertheless, the thesis believes that the question is an appropriate indicator for the population's attitude to more supranational integration and it has therefore been included in the study.



As is evident from the graph, Denmark is very much against an EU government and depicts fairly high levels of euroscepticism. The level of scepticism reaches its high in the early 1990's when the Maastricht Treaty was ratified.

Britain is also consistently more sceptical than the average EU, though the level is not as high as the Danish.

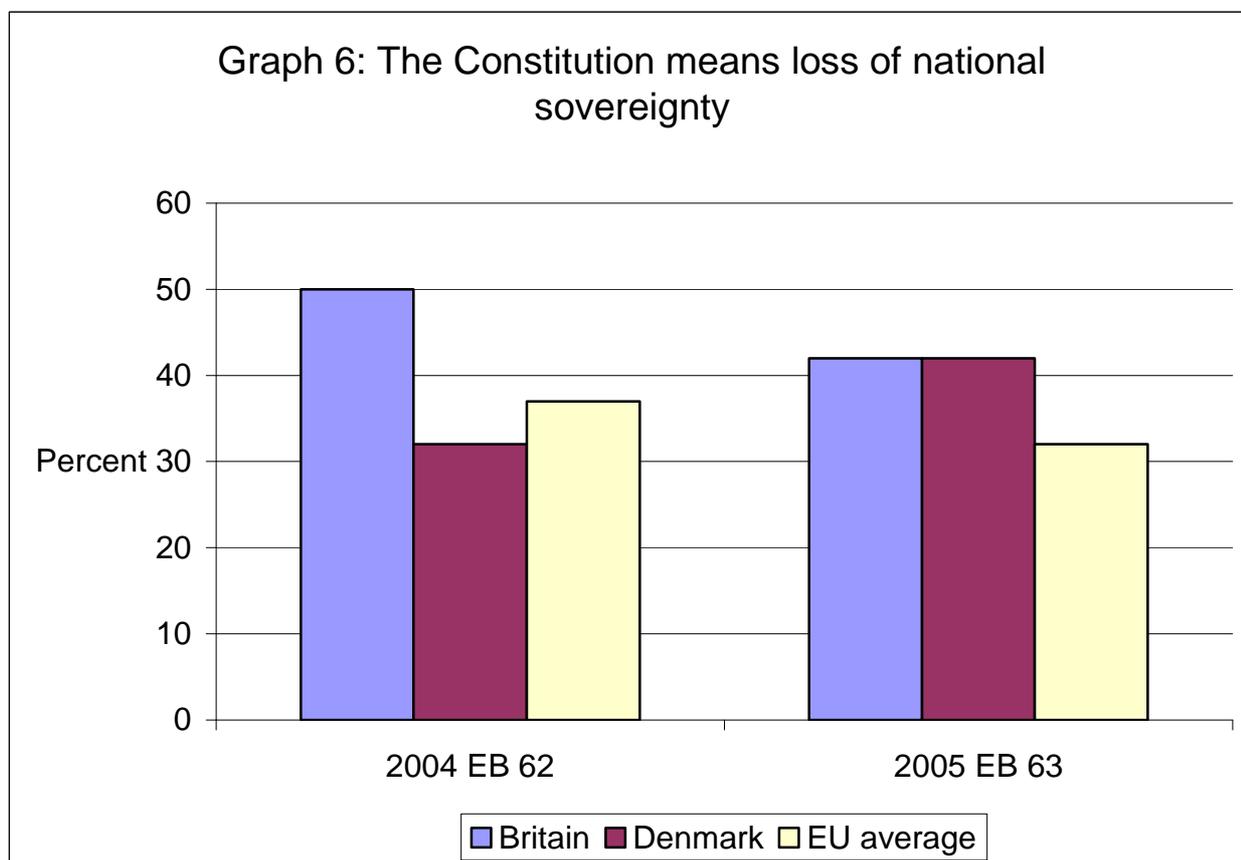
Overall, the level of euroscepticism is rather stable and consistent over the entire time span. This accounts for both countries and the EU average. Similarly, all graphs follow the same patterns and all show the highest levels of scepticism in 1993.

The second indicator for the sovereignty dimension focuses again on the Constitutional Treaty and whether the population opposes the treaty due to the rendering of more sovereignty.

EB Question: *What are all the reasons why you are opposed to the European Constitution?*

As mentioned in connection with the democratic dimension, this question has multiple answers where one being that the Constitution would mean loss of national sovereignty.

The question has only been posed twice during the ratification process of the Treaty and therefore the time span is rather brief i.e. from autumn 2004 to spring 2005.



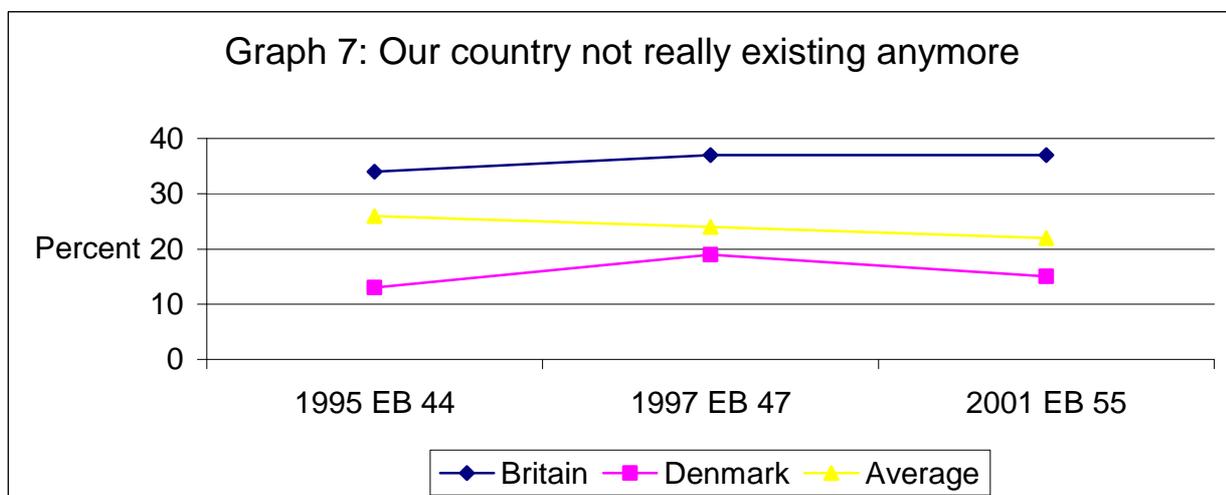
With this indicator Britain firstly depict a higher level of scepticism than Denmark and the EU average. However, at the second survey result both countries have exactly the same level of scepticism which again is higher than the EU average. When the thesis investigated this question in relation to the democratic dimension it was able to conclude that democracy could not explain why the populations were opposed to the Constitutional Treaty. In this case it seems as though loss of national sovereignty has a better explanatory power as these levels of scepticism is also the highest when it comes to all the possible answers. With reference to the debate about the Constitutional Treaty, there were extensive quests for skipping the more symbolic references as the European flag and anthem as well as the term Constitution. This reflects the idea that scepticism towards the

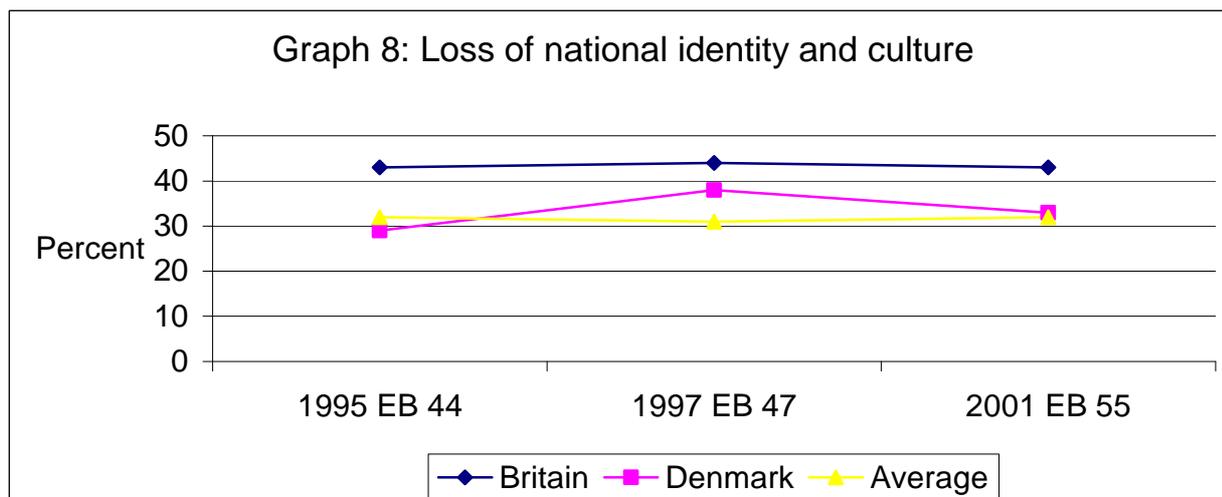
Treaty centred on the fear that the EU was coming to resemble a state or federation, in other words, sovereignty-based concerns which supports the above findings.

The last indicators for the sovereignty dimension are closely related to the question of national identity. As was discussed during the operationalization, the thesis believes that citizens who perceive EU integration as a threat to national identity are likely to feel that integration has a negative impact on their country's sovereignty. These indicators are the citizens' view on the future as they point to things that they fear is likely to happen.

EB Question: *Regarding the building of Europe, the European Union, some people may have fears. Here is a list of things which some people say they are afraid of. For each one, please tell me if you think that is likely to happen, or not?*

This question has multiple answers where two will be used as indicators for this dimension. The first being, people answering that they think it is likely that *our country not really existing anymore*. The second being, people answering that they think it is likely that *fear loosing their national identity and culture*. The time span is autumn 1995 to spring 2001.





Regarding the first indicator, it is clearly the British population who is most sceptical and has greatest fears about losing their nation state. In contrast the Danish population is not nearly as sceptical i.e. even below the EU average.

Regarding the second indicator, it is still the British population that is most sceptical or fearful about losing their national identity and culture with the Danish population being equal or just above the EU average. The level of scepticism is also higher in this second case than with the first indicator.

4.3.1 Sum-up on the Sovereignty Dimension

Based on the above finding it is clear that the sovereignty dimension is a central aspect of euroscepticism for both Britain and Denmark. Neither of the two countries seems very eager to render more sovereignty to the EU and they are consistently more sceptical than the EU average on this dimension.

So what are we able to conclude on this basis? Are the Danish and British population rather similar when it comes to the dimension of sovereignty? When it comes to the British population, the notion of Parliamentary sovereignty²² still remains the only widely accepted legitimate source of sovereignty to large parts of the population. At the same time British sovereignty is sometimes used interchangeably with British independence and while both terms are largely symbolic today the strength and durability

²² Parliamentary sovereignty means that Parliament has supreme power i.e. Parliament can make or unmake law on any subject whatsoever and it can do it retrospectively. Nevertheless, British membership of the EU has in many ways impaired the concept of Parliamentary sovereignty.

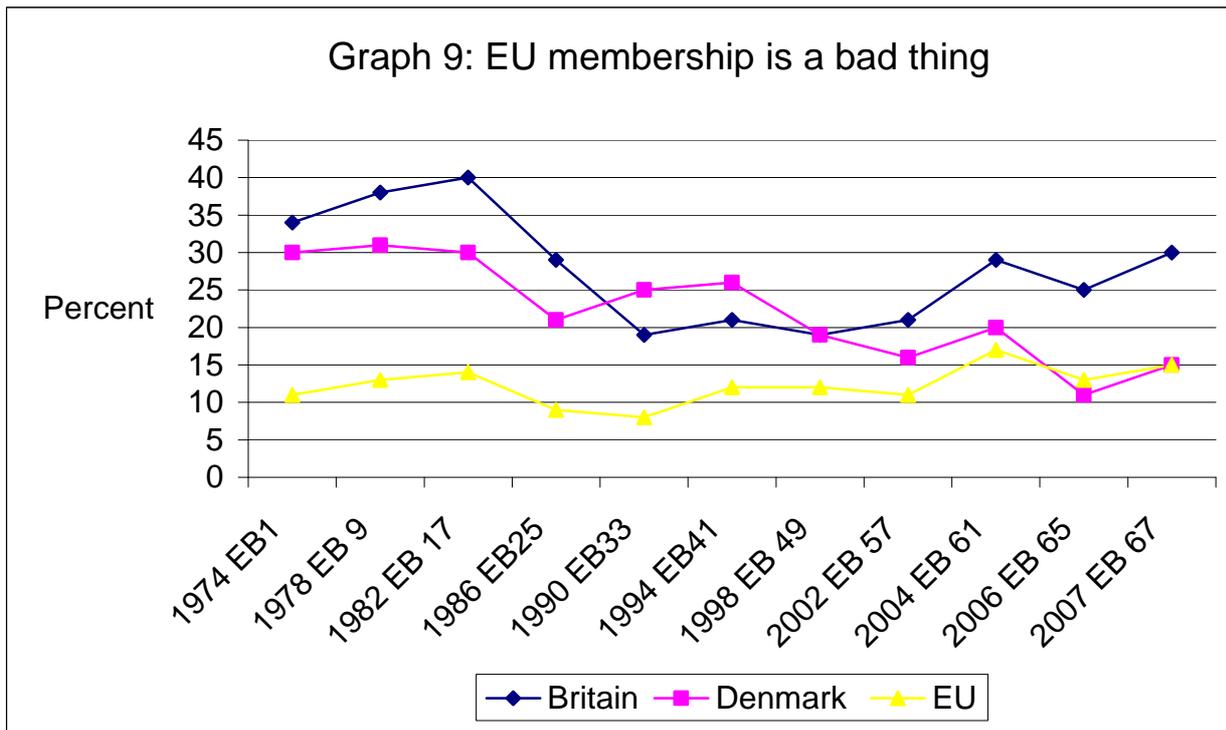
of belief in them are extraordinary by modern European standards according to Baker (2005: 4). As also argued for during the operationalization, sovereignty is for Britain an emotive concept with many meanings such as power, authority, influence, independence and individualism and a sense of national self-determination. According to Baker (2005: 4) this has meant that domestic political discourse in Britain struggles to view the EU as anything other than an external entity to the sovereign British polity. This perception is by no means restricted to Britain, however, with a British political culture which is dominated by the legacy of the Empire, the special relationship with the USA along with the experience from the world wars the perception of sovereignty is a very emotive and sensitive subject. One could argue that the story is different when it comes to Denmark. As a smaller nation the country has grown accustomed with having to depend on others and thereby does not perceive the concept of sovereignty as a zero-sum game which is the case in Britain. Nevertheless, major themes in all the debates leading up to referendums about EU matters have always been the question of national sovereignty, national identity and cultural traditions. In contrast to Britain, the Danish understanding of the nation state is strongly interwoven with the welfare state so that the inherent features of the Danish state are understood partly in terms of its welfare features. In order to defend the welfare state, the country is therefore very unenthusiastic about deepening of integration. To sum up, the challenge from European integration in the British case is primarily the threat to the sovereignty of Parliament whereas the challenge in the Danish case is also directed to the welfare state. Nevertheless, when it comes to the aspect of identity which is imbedded in sovereignty both countries depict high levels and the question of national integrity is just as central and perhaps even more difficult to come to life.

4.4 Analysis of the Rejectionist Dimension

The last dimension illustrates the principle rejection to membership of the EU and as was argued for in the operationalization it illustrates the overall level of euroscepticism in the EU where any one of the previous dimensions (or completely other dimensions and reasons) could be the cause of this rejectionist mind of thinking.

EB Question: *Generally, do you think that your country's membership of the European Union is a good thing, a bad thing, neither good nor bad or do not know?*

The graph illustrates the number of people answering that membership is a bad thing. This is one of the classical Eurobarometer question which has been posed since spring 1974 (the first Eurobarometer survey) and up until today with the last result being from spring 2007.

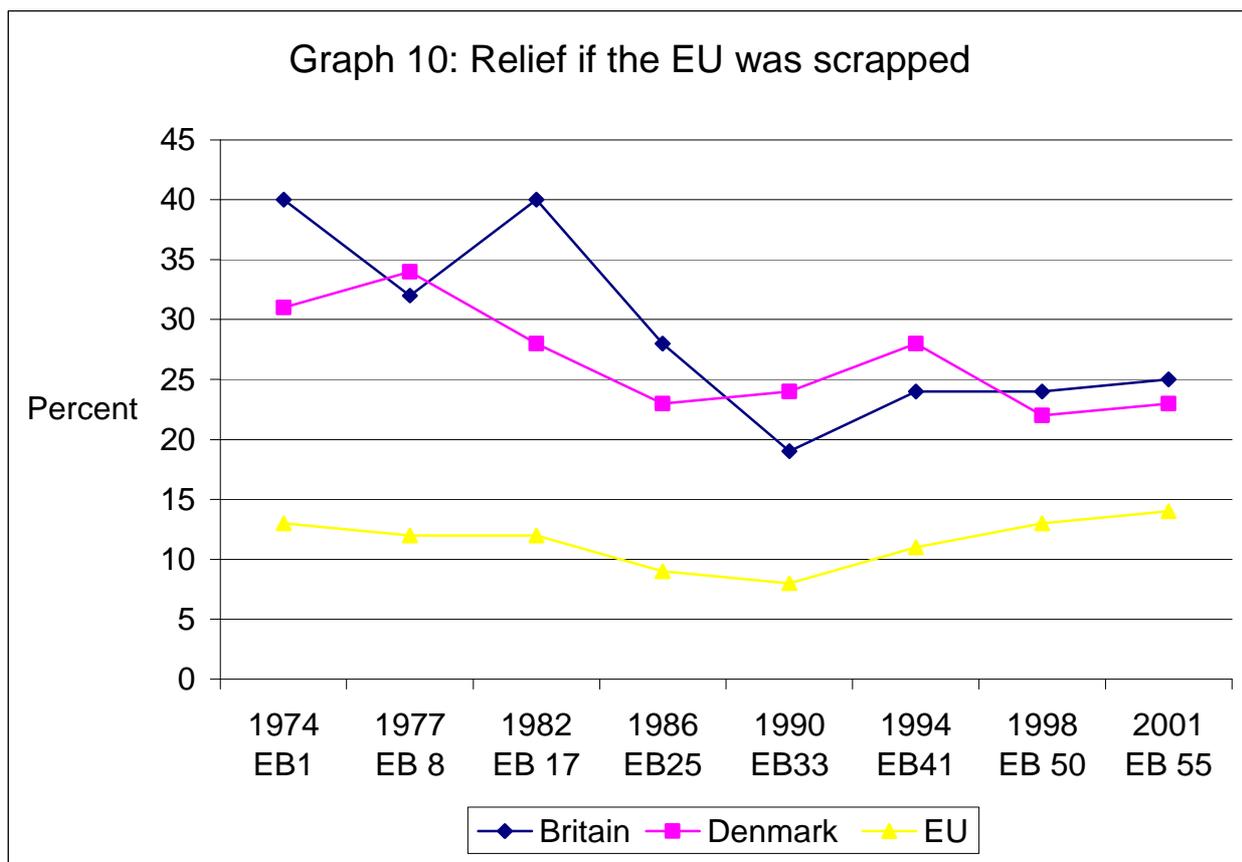


Once again both Britain and Denmark are overall more sceptical than the EU average. In the early days of entry both countries follow along similar lines of scepticism but as the countries become more acquainted with membership the sceptical attitudes are decreasing. In the early 1990's, around the time when Denmark rejected the Maastricht Treaty, it comes as no surprise that it is the Danish population who is most sceptical. Nevertheless, regarding both countries some of the lowest levels of euroscepticism (up until that time) are observed at that time which is quite interesting and surprising. At the beginning of the new decade the countries once again change places and Britain is clearly the most sceptical with hard levels of euroscepticism increasing in the 2000's whereas the overall level of scepticism is decreasing in Denmark.

The last indicator for this dimension is related to the aspect of abolition of the EU and what feeling this would give the populations.

EB Question: *If you were told tomorrow that the European Union had been scrapped would you be very sorry about it, indifferent or very relieved?*

The graph shows the number of people who answered that they would be very relieved.



Similar to the last indicator the countries are more sceptical in the early days of entry whereas this changes in the 1980's where levels of euroscepticism are decreasing. The countries also change positions in the early 1990's where the Danish population is clearly the most sceptical. Lastly, this changes in the late 1990's where the British population is becoming the most sceptical.

Overall, the average level of euroscepticism in the EU is rather stable, though there seem to be some increasing tendencies during the last period of the time span.

4.4.1 Sum-up on the Rejectionist Dimension

Overall, regarding this last dimension of euroscepticism one can argue that it is Britain who has been the most sceptical member, just outdone by Denmark in the early 1990's following in the wake of the debate about the Maastricht Treaty. One can argue that public opinion towards the EU in Britain is characterised by a relatively high level of principle euroscepticism. This decreased in the 1990's, however, one can detect an increase within the last few years. In contrast, Denmark has also proved to be relatively eurosceptic, however, the trend in this relation has been decreasing. It seems as though the British are becoming more sceptical whereas the Danes are moving in the opposite direction and are becoming less sceptical.

So, once again what are we able to conclude on this basis? It is clear the Britain lives up to the country's reputation as being one of the most sceptical members of the EU. Somewhat surprisingly, its 'partner in crime' Denmark has over time become less sceptical when it comes to this rejectionist dimension. In other words, it seems as though Denmark has accepted the EU as an inevitable part of their everyday where this has so far not been the case in Britain where there are still talks about leaving the EU. These differences in attitudes among the publics are also present within the political system. In Denmark the political parties which once campaigned for withdrawal of membership from the EU are still critical towards membership but have, however, accepted that Denmark will probably be worse off outside of membership. This acceptance has not taken place in Britain where for instance the Conservative Party's attitude towards the EU is still very sceptical.

More worrying, seen from the political elite's perspective, is the fact that the general level of this type of euroscepticism seems to have increased. Regarding the first indicator it was clear that an increase took place in 2004 i.e. the same time of the Eastern enlargement and has since then stabilised at a higher level than previously. This could indicate that the new member states which joined at that time are also to some extent sceptical. As of what type or types of euroscepticism are the case, naturally needs investigating, however, one could imagine that once again they differ a lot between member states which makes the political elites' job at diminishing euroscepticism even harder.

4.5 Conclusion on the Analysis Chapter

Based on the above findings the thesis is able to conclude that public scepticism towards the EU comes in different types i.e. the population may base their scepticism on utilitarian, democratic or sovereignty-based grounds. Each of these types of scepticism can assume a principle character thereby meaning that there may be a correlation between the critique voiced regarding the dimensions and the rejection of EU membership.

The thesis will briefly sum-up the euroscepticism that it was able to deduce from each dimension. This will be done in the below table where '+' indicates that euroscepticism is present within that dimension in the following country and where '-' indicates that euroscepticism is not present within that dimension.

Figure 3: Brief overview of euroscepticism in Britain and Denmark

	Britain	Denmark
Utilitarian	+	-
Democracy	-	+
Sovereignty	+	+
Rejectionist	+	+

It is interesting that despite Britain's reputation for being the most sceptical member of the EU it is not the most eurosceptic within all dimensions. Nevertheless, Britain does show clear signs of relative scepticism when it comes to especially sovereignty and the utilitarian dimension. There is less scepticism than the EU average when it comes to the EU's alleged lack of democratic credentials.

Regarding Denmark, the country is especially eurosceptic when it comes to the dimension of sovereignty. In addition, the country is characterised by democratic euroscepticism, however, this type has decreased over time. Concerning the question of lack of economic utility from co-operation, Denmark shows little sign of any relative euroscepticism.

Both case countries show higher level of rejectionist euroscepticism than the EU average and in the early 2000's Denmark seems to have witnessed a decrease in scepticism where in contrast the level seems to be increasing in Britain.

Overall the development in euroscepticism over time has shown rather small variations when talking about the EU average i.e. the fluctuations as regards to all the indicators used in the investigation is less than ten percentage points. When it comes to the case countries, they have witnessed more large-scale variations, however, they do show some consistency when it comes to the types of euroscepticism present in the country. When starting this investigation, the thesis presumed that the types of euroscepticism within a country could also change with time. Despite some fluctuations this does not seem to be the case. Instead both Britain and Denmark are quite consistently sceptical within the same dimensions over the entire time span which has been investigated.

So, what is one able to conclude based on this investigation? It is clear that the thesis's hypothesis arguing that euroscepticism differ between member states is supported by this investigation. Based on the analysis it is clear that the types of euroscepticism are not equally relevant in the case countries and if one had chosen to include more countries as well as more dimensions the thesis believes that the picture would have been even more varied. This naturally has implications for the European political elite when it tries to come euroscepticism to life, which is still an important task as there are no indications that euroscepticism seems to be weakening in the EU. Because euroscepticism is a multifaceted concept, the types of euroscepticism that will characterise the European countries will differ. This has implications since the area where one population might wish the EU to focus on risks being an area where another population is sceptical of its influence. The EU's initiatives may therefore not play a dominant role in diminishing euroscepticism depending on the type of scepticism characterising the country in question – the initiatives could perhaps contribute to the contrary. In other words the EU is presented with a 'win-lose' situation or dilemma and this could contribute to our understanding of how the EU has tackled the question of euroscepticism so far.

Based on this investigation, the thesis is able to conclude that euroscepticism is indeed a multidimensional concept which varies between member states and over time. In the following chapter the results of this investigation will be discussed as well as its implications on the European integration process.

5 Discussion

This last chapter of the thesis will be used to discuss the results obtained through the analysis and which consequences this multidimensional understanding of euroscepticism will have on the European integration process and the European political elite's attempts at coming euroscepticism to life. The second part of this discussion will focus on the entire investigation and once again argue for the limitations related to conducting this study and what the thesis is able to conclude. Lastly, the thesis would like to point to other interesting aspects which could be investigated seen in the light of the experiences gained by conducting this study.

5.1 Consequences of multidimensional euroscepticism

As was argued in the introduction of this thesis, it has become increasingly apparent that EU governments and leaders cannot ignore public opinion without risk to the integration project as a whole. Days of the 'permissive consensus' are over and the European elite needs to take public opinion and thereby also public scepticism into account. However, as the investigation also showed, Britain and Denmark have been characterised by relative euroscepticism since the early stage and on that account one could argue that a 'permissive consensus' has never existed in either of these countries. To continue with the results from the investigation, the thesis was able to conclude that there exist both similarities and differences when it comes to the eurosceptic tendencies that characterise Britain and Denmark. Both countries were marked by high levels of scepticism when it comes to the issue of deepening the EU as the erosion of national sovereignty is of great importance. When it comes to the differences of euroscepticism between the two countries it was apparent that the Danish population was rather sceptical regarding the lack of democratic credentials associated with the EU where the British population was rather sceptical towards the utilitarian benefits from membership. Having established that euroscepticism differ between member states, one can return to the question of what one is able to deduce based on these results.

One of the things that needs reflection after the investigation is what potential consequences the above mentioned dynamics have on the integration process. As the

thesis touched upon briefly in the conclusion of the analysis, euroscepticism can also be counter productive i.e. what one country wishes from the integration process is what another population is sceptical towards. This depends on the type or types of euroscepticism which is prevailing in the individual country. This naturally influences the initiatives that the EU has initiated in order to come euroscepticism to life, for instance the EU's 'Plan D'. As previously mentioned, the aim of 'Plan D for Dialogue, Democracy and Debate' is to reinforce dialogue with the citizens of Europe and thereby organize a broad public debate on the future of the EU. This should lead to a more active European citizenship as well as '*... restore public confidence in the European Union*' (European Commission, 2005: 3). On that basis, one can argue that the relevance of 'Plan D' is mostly associated with democratic euroscepticism. As was mentioned in the operationalization process, the fact that the public does not feel that the EU listens to their opinions, the notion of not feeling represented as well as the functioning of the EU institutions can all lead to democratic euroscepticism. To the extent that citizens are actually aware of the initiatives posed by the EU like for instance 'Plan D' and recognize them as successful this could likely reduce democratic euroscepticism. Nevertheless, if this type of scepticism is not prevailing in a country, the initiatives may not play a role or they could also contribute to the contrary. By this I mean that initiatives which focus on one type of euroscepticism could increase other types of euroscepticism. An example which could illustrate my point could be related to the European Parliament where one of the notions related to the democratic deficit is to increase the powers of this institution. This could be successful in decreasing scepticism on democratic grounds but could at the same time be opposed by citizens who are sceptical on sovereignty-based reasons as it could be perceived as rendering more national sovereignty to the EU. In other words, giving more power to the Parliament could at the same time decrease democratic euroscepticism in one country but also increase scepticism based on sovereignty in another country. In other words, the EU is presented with a win-lose dilemma. This point not only affects the potential success of 'Plan D' but also other approaches which by one strategy seeks to come euroscepticism to life and create greater public support across member states.

This multidimensional understanding of euroscepticism also affects several other aspects of the European integration process. The thesis argues that in several cases knowledge about the type and intensity of euroscepticism within a country could assist the EU in better predicting the populations' positions towards central EU developments. A brief example could be the questioning about widening the EU co-operation with further enlargement. With more knowledge of the type of euroscepticism characterising a country, one could better predict the population's reaction. Some member states would be sceptical of further enlargements based on utilitarian grounds as enlargement often represents a potentially very costly development. Additionally, other countries may be sceptical based on sovereignty grounds i.e. the question of one's identity being threatened. For instance the possibility of the EU including Turkey has already created cultural divides across Europe and the issue of identity occurs in this debate. The consequences of the European political elite not listening to the public will be an even larger gap between the wants and wishes of the public and the political system.

To sum up, what the European populations want from co-operation within the EU is very different and they become sceptical based on different grounds. Additionally, the results from this thesis seem to depart from the assumption of a rather uniform euroscepticism situation across the EU member states. This poses the European political system with severe dilemmas, however, most would probably agree that such a situation is not unique for the EU. Instead one can argue that it is a perfectly normal feature of any democratic political system.

5.2 Discussion of the thesis' investigation – what is one able to conclude?

Lastly in this discussion, I will once again return to the overall question of how much I am really able to conclude based on this investigation. As I am aware, and have pointed out several times during the investigation, there are constraints on the results achieved in this thesis. Several things spring to mind when trying to evaluate this study.

First of all, there is the hypothesis that the interpretations of the concept of euroscepticism made by the political elite and the academic world have not been comprehensive enough. Naturally, not everybody would agree on my main claim that euroscepticism is a multidimensional concept. The authors used in this thesis are mostly

associated with writings related to public support. Some would therefore perhaps object to the fact that I am using their findings and argue that this is also related to scepticism. Nevertheless, in my mind it seems logical that what makes some people support the EU could be exactly what makes other people object to it and thereby be sceptical towards the European project. Additionally, when reading through the literature on public support, it seems rather evident that it is indeed a multifaceted phenomenon where several factors determine one's support to the EU. However, the existing literature on euroscepticism does not seem to acknowledge the fact that this could also be the case when it comes to public scepticism. As was evident in relation to the theory chapter the existing literature on euroscepticism seems to be focusing more on categorising the different stands related to euroscepticism and not as much as what this concept really entails and what makes the European public become sceptical. Therefore, I was aiming at improving the explanatory power of the concept of euroscepticism by investigating several dimensions and thereby not only focus on one aspect as several of the authors related to public support and opinion seems to have done. Despite the limitations related to this investigation, I believe that one of the things that I have succeeded with in this study is to illustrate that euroscepticism is indeed a multidimensional concept. Then naturally, it is debateable whether the operationalization process was successful i.e. have I chosen to focus on the most relevant dimensions. Additionally, there is the question of the comparative analysis i.e. the empirical data which I used as well as the countries that I investigated. As I have attempted all the way through the thesis, I have tried to argue for my choices and I have been very aware of the limitations related to these choices. Seen in retrospect, one might have chosen differently. Firstly, related to the countries which I investigated. Maybe my main argument related to the fact that euroscepticism differ between member states and over time would have become more apparent and obvious if I had chosen countries which differed more than was the case with Britain and Denmark i.e. like I also discussed in relation to the argumentation for the two countries, other cases like France, Ireland or Germany would have been interesting and one could perhaps have observed the differences of euroscepticism more clearly.

Secondly, there is the question of how much I am able to conclude based on the Eurobarometer questions chosen for this investigation. Once again it is debateable whether the questions or indicators reflect the dimensions investigated as well as whether

the Eurobarometer survey questions are the most relevant. The limitations connected to Eurobarometer have been mentioned previously, however, I would like to emphasise the extremely scattered nature of Eurobarometer data which reduced the nature, number and time perspective of the empirical tests that the thesis was able to do. Furthermore, one of the reasons why I did not investigate other dimensions was due to the lack of empirical material. One of the dimensions which I would have liked to investigate was in relation to the utilitarian dimensions, which I believe can denote not only economic concerns but also the functioning and effectiveness of the EU's institutions i.e. a more performance based euroscepticism²³. Nevertheless, I was not able to find any surveys touching upon this subject and it was therefore not included in the final investigation. Even with its limitations, I still believe that Eurobarometer data is the best alternative when one attempts to conduct the kind of investigation which has been the case in this thesis.

Lastly, despite all the limitations to this thesis and the fact that I might not be able to generalize the results beyond the scope of this study, I still believe that by conducting this investigation I have been able to point to an interesting aspect of investigation. By writing this thesis I have provided a probable explanation which is part of a more complex answer related to public scepticism towards the EU.

5.3 Ideas for further research

During the process of writing this thesis, I have come across several related aspects which could be interesting to investigate further.

As have been argued for during the thesis, one could choose to investigate more dimensions as well as other member states. For instance one could investigate regional scepticism or whether there are large differences between the so-called 'old' member states and the 12 'new' states which have joined within the last few years. Additionally, one could go more in depth with each dimension and investigate the socio-demographic features which are typically of those who are sceptical as regards each dimension. In other

²³ An investigation of a more performance-based euroscepticism with focus on the critique of the inefficiency of the EU's functioning and set-up could also be interesting seen in the light of one of the prominent calls during the EU reflection period i.e. a 'Europe of results'.

words, one could investigate if particular societal groups are more represented in one of the dimensions than in the rest.

Another interesting aspect could be to look at the internal dynamic and relationship between the dimensions. The thesis has briefly mentioned the intensity of each dimension, however, one could certainly investigate this aspect more in-depth regarding the mutual relationship between the dimensions i.e. what is most important for a country when determining why the population becomes sceptical. In other words, are for instance democratic concerns more central than utilitarian etc.

Lastly, another interesting aspect is related to the theory on euroscepticism. As the thesis mentioned in the theory chapter, much of the literature related to this topic focuses on party-based euroscepticism and the different categories or typologies presented in this thesis is constructed to the party-level. It could make an interesting study to investigate the different dimensions of euroscepticism from this thesis on the different European parties and which results one would gain.

Naturally, one could suggest other ideas for further investigation into euroscepticism which would further clarify this complex concept. In an era when the EU is facing some important developments regarding the extent of integration, possible more expansions of its membership as well as handling the already expanded EU, it appears vital for the European political elite to understand what drives support and thereby also scepticism towards the Union. The thesis believes this to be very central also with reference to the EU's plan about reconnecting with the European populations and thereby '*... creating a new consensus on the European project – anchored in the citizens' perspective*' (European Commission, 2005: 3).

6 Conclusion

The outset of this thesis was an interest in gaining a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the complex phenomenon of euroscepticism. The days of the so-called 'permissive consensus' are over and the European public plays an increasingly important role in the development of the European integration project. It is therefore important for the European political system to understand what drives the increasing scepticism towards the Union. Following along this track, the thesis argued that the perceptions of the concept of euroscepticism within the European political systems as well as in the academic world are rather restricted and deficient.

Therefore, the aim of this thesis was to investigate to what extent euroscepticism can be considered a multidimensional concept which affects the European Union's integration process and whether the concept differ between European member states as well as over time.

Based on the existing literature on euroscepticism, the thesis was able to define euroscepticism as disapproval and reservations which are of a more durable character and are directed towards the entire EU or towards special policy areas or developments. Nevertheless, the thesis wanted to go deeper and gain a more complex understanding of what euroscepticism is about. In other words, investigate the different dimensions of euroscepticism and what they entail.

Taking its point of departure in the literature on public opinion, the thesis was able to deduce central dimensions as to illustrate the nature or sources of various eurosceptic stands. Based on the operationalization process the thesis was able to develop four dimensions of euroscepticism. One dimension is related to utilitarian calculations as to whether the public feel that they economically benefited from membership of the EU. Another dimension is related to the EU's lack of democratic credentials whereas a third dimension focuses on the fear of losing national sovereignty and thereby identity. The last dimension measures the intensity of euroscepticism by focusing on the principle opposition and outward rejection of EU membership. Overall, euroscepticism comes in

four broad types; it may be utilitarian, democratic or sovereignty-based and it can take form of outright rejection.

These four dimensions were empirically scrutinized using Eurobarometer data. The aim of the analysis was to prove that the dimensions of euroscepticism differ between member states as well as over time. Based on the analysis the picture proved to be rather diverse. The British population is rather sceptical when it comes to the utilitarian dimension whereas there is no indication that this caused scepticism in Denmark. In contrast, the Danes prove to be rather sceptical on democratic grounds whereas the British population is in line with the EU average. The British and Danish population share their concern about sovereignty and both countries proved consistently more sceptical than the EU average regarding the rejectionist dimension. In other words, euroscepticism certainly differs between the two countries investigated in this thesis. Regarding the longitudinal indicators, the thesis was able to conclude that euroscepticism is not static and fluctuates over time.

The diversity and multidimensional character of euroscepticism presents the EU with a win-lose dilemma as the European member states want different things from the integration process. Seen from this perspective, the European political system needs to take the type of euroscepticism which characterises a country into consideration when launching initiatives in an attempt of coming euroscepticism to life.

Despite the limitations and the question of whether one can generalize this study, the thesis believes that one thing which has certainly succeed has been the improvement of the explanatory power of the concept of euroscepticism by pointing to the fact that euroscepticism is a multidimensional concept.

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