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Why Further European Integration Needs both Eurosceptics and Europhiles

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Abstract:

The crisis of the EU has revealed an antagonizing conflict between Eurosceptics and Europhiles since the integration project has reached a critical juncture. Its polity, however, has little to offer to integrate this conflict into the EU's political system. Growing Euroscepticism among the people and the elites, defined as anti-system opposition against the supranational system, is the political driving force behind the current fundamental questioning of European integration. Euroscepticism is rooted in an increasing need for further legitimization of EU decision making that has gained significant impact on member states and its citizens. At the same time, the EU faces a loss of governmental capacity that goes hand in hand with depoliticised technocratic decision making. However, as long as the EU fails to integrate organised opposition within the institutions, it will commonly be expressed as Eurosceptic anti-system opposition against the EU as such. Hence, the analyzation of Euroscepticism helps us to understand the real democratic deficit of the EU, which in fact is a lack of government-opposition dynamic on the EU level. Consequently, the polarizing conflict between Eurosceptics and Europhiles should help to enhance the politicization of the EU by providing political alternatives about the manner of European integration and thus fostering both the democratisation of the EU and the transformation of anti-system opposition against the EU towards classical opposition within the EU.

Keywords: Euroscepticism, EU-crisis, democratic deficit, government-opposition dynamic, European identity

Introduction: Raising Euroscepticism in a crisis-ridden EU

The European Union faces a fundamental financial, economic and political crisis; its outcomes on the integration process are not predictable yet. Unlike previous crises, like the period of Europessimism in the 1970s, from which the European project had emerged strengthened, the current political and economic challenges seem to be structural rather than contemporary. For the first time in the history of European integration, the EU and its sub-fields, such as the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), are recognized as the actual cause of the crisis. The fundamental threats related to the crisis have fostered the refocusing on national interests rather than the emergence of substantial European solidarity among member states and societies, which is why the EU may even fall apart from its internal contradictions (Offe, 2015). This is why Euroscepticism did not just significantly increase in crisis-ridden member states of the south, yet it went hand in hand with an increase in exclusive national identification within EU member states (Serriccho and Tsakatika and Quaglia 2013, 56-61).

The EU is increasingly questioned entirely since the ongoing crisis has caused reasonable doubts about the use, benefits and obligations of EU membership. Being a member state of the EU cannot be taken for granted anymore. In fact, the ongoing crisis has strengthened Eurosceptic forces in all member states – most remarkably in the UK, which has held a rather critical stance on European integration for most of its time as an EU member (Young 2000). UKIP, as the organized political avant-garde of Eurosceptic positions within the UK, already reached 27 % in the last European Parliament elections, thus causing serious uncertainty about the outcomes for the announced referenda about British EU membership in 2017. Another remarkable example is the rise of Front National (FN) in France, which opposes French EU membership entirely, although France has ever since played an essential role for the functioning of the EU as a founding state. FN won the French European Parliament elections with a great lead and a total share of 25 % of the votes. These examples illustrate dramatically that the so called permissive consensus, which can be defined as the absence of any relevant outbreak of opposition against the EU, and on which the European integration process has been based on for decades, came to an unyielding close. Obvious indications for such an end of the permissive consensus were recognizable before as it was the case with the rejection of the proposed EU constitution in national referenda in France and the Netherlands in 2005. Instead of taking agreement on European integration as given, growing concealed or open opposition entered wide ranges of society, thus having significant impact on the decline of the supranational character of EU policy making (Leconte 2010, 24-32). Moreover, when opposing membership in the EU meets higher agreement than the support of membership in the EU, as is the case in the UK, one can raise reasonable doubts about the legitimacy of EU policies and the EU as a political system. In a time of multiple crises the perspicuous rise of Eurosceptic parties as major players in the national party system, as it is the most obvious case with FN and UKIP, the dissolution of the EU becomes seriously conceivable for the first time in EU history.

How to express opposition to European integration within EU institutions?

Euroscepticism has left political fringes and entered into mainstream. Its rise has caused disagreement within European elites about the use and obligations regarding EU membership, thus the open question about the future of European integration has become increasingly depend on the support of EU citizens more than any time, yet this support is constantly diminishing. Because the growing opposition against the EU has been evident and already tapped by political actors for several years, the European issue is ultimately “ripe for politicization” (van der Eijk, and Franklin 2004, 47). However, the EU has by no means developed a *modus vivendi* on how to cope with growing distrust among EU citizens. Once we understand raising Euroscepticism as expression of increased consciousness for transnational problems and dissatisfaction with the lack of problem-solving abilities and legitimacy on EU level, analyzing Euroscepticism might help to make the fault lines of European integration clearly apparent: While the EU has not been able to develop an adequate institutional form for solving the politico-economic crisis yet, its decision making has nonetheless significant impact on member states and EU citizens. This is why the EU as it happens to exist in the crosshairs of different – even antagonistic – interests, from which Eurosceptic approaches are one version. Therefore, the real issue at stake is whether the EU will be able to integrate various types of criticism on integration by turning into an arena for EU-wide deliberation and further legitimization of EU decision making while offering an outlet for policy opposition within its institutions.

To tackle the question on how to develop a *modus operandi* to integrate criticism on European integration, an analyzation of the democratic conditions in which European integration materialize is necessary. Concerning this matter we can see that the EU as a political body *sui generis* lacks essential elements of liberal democracy, which raises doubts on the legitimacy of EU institutions and EU policy-making. The multilevel system of EU decision making is an obstacle for EU citizens to understand clear responsibilities for EU policies outcomes. What is negotiated in Brussels mostly takes place without feedback of the EU electorate. Well-organized lobby groups can demonstrate their interests sufficiently through backroom politics at the European Commission, which holds the political monopoly on policy initiatives. Qualified majority voting at the Council of ministers makes consent-seeking decisions among the member states more likely, which demands discrete and thus non-transparent negotiations to the detriment of EU civil society. Neither the European Council, that serves as somewhat the collective head of the EU, nor the council of ministers are replaceable through EU-wide elections. Distrust with certain EU policies, however, can barely find an outlet on EU parliament elections since it has neither a sole competence on EU budget, nor can it raise taxes by its own legislation. In several key policy fields, such as fiscal, agricultural or foreign policy, it is by no means an equal legislator to the institutions dominated by EU member states. Consequently, elections to the European parliament are mainly perceived as second-order elections within member states. Its outcomes have no relevance in favour or against an EU government, because there is no such government, rather the EU itself has been depoliticised, dominated by technocratic decision making of EU agencies. The consequences of such an institutional composition have considerable effects in regard to growing opposition against the manner of European integration: “[W]hile there is clearly growing opposition to Europe, and while this opposition might well approximate to a sleeping giant, there is relatively little opposition in the sense of the government-opposition dynamic.” (Mair 2007, 5) The question for what government is accountable for certain EU policies and what opposition can offer alternatives to current EU policies is an essential element of liberal democracy. Once there is no institutional arrangement to express classical opposition as it is the case in the EU, criticism is more likely to be articulated as principle or anti-system opposition. Hence, opposing current European integration does not mean to propose an alternative to existing government policies while recognizing the legitimacy of such government within the EU’s institutional body. Instead, opposing European integration is more likely to object both the governmental policies and the political system as such, thus denying the legitimacy of the entire institutional body: “Once we cannot organize opposition in the EU, we are then almost forced to organize opposition to the EU. To be critical of the policies promulgated by Brussels is therefore to be critical of the polity; to object to the process is therefore to object the product.” (Mair 2007, 7)

In this regard, what has growing Euroscepticism to do with the missing government-opposition dynamic, as mentioned by Mair? What are the connections of both phenomena? Can Euroscepticism actually be constructively integrated into EU decision making? And for what varieties of Euroscepticism can we approach this account? And in what way may growing Euroscepticism contribute to the development of a government-opposition dynamic? These will be the questions answered in the following two parts. To answer these questions, firstly an investigation of the elemental essence of Euroscepticism is needed, as it could be fruitful to detect and understand the defects of contemporary European integration. For this purpose, I will refer to existing theoretic approaches that describe the driving forces behind Euroscepticism. In the second part, I will discuss the opportunities occurring with growing Euroscepticism and its implications for the politicization of the EU in regard to the missing government-opposition dynamic on EU level. For this purpose, a brief comparison with the Eurosceptic counterpart – namely the Europhiles – shall also be made.

What is the essence of Euroscepticism?

To understand the significance of Euroscepticism on the prospect of European integration, we firstly need to understand what opposing Europe means in practical terms. Is it opposition against the EU’s policy, its polity or both – and if so – what are the relations between both types? Taggard’s (1998) catch all definition of Euroscepticism as

both unqualified opposition and qualified opposition to the process of European integration was specified as hard and soft Euroscepticism in other works (Taggard and Szczerbiak 2000). In their understanding, hard Euroscepticism is rooted in moral opposition against the European integration entirely with regard to the EU's polity system, meaning that both accession to the EU or its once accomplished membership were rejected. In their studies, Taggard and Szczerbiak concentrated on Eurosceptic position of political parties, coming to the conclusion that only marginalised parties develop hard Euroscepticism due to the anti-EU stance that had been previously structured by the party's anti-establishment position within the national party system. On the contrary, soft Eurosceptic parties largely oppose certain EU policies only if they are in conflict with specific national policies, which are supposed to be implemented according to the party's agenda. Henceforth, soft Eurosceptic criticism is rather modest and context dependent. It allows parties profiling against political competitors within the party system, which is why soft Euroscepticism "is more a kind of assertion than expression of a deep conviction." (Fuchs and Antoine and Magni-Berton 2009, 14) Although Taggard's and Szczerbiak's distinction between hard and soft Euroscepticism has crucial importance for my analysis it is quite strategic-centric and has little to offer as an example to normative and ideological driving forces behind both forms of Euroscepticism and its relation to Eurosceptic attitudes within the population. This, however, is of crucial importance since the future of European integration does not only rely on the political elites anymore but on attitudes within the population.

In order to understand ideologically-driven positions vis-à-vis European integration, a deeper investigation of the policy specific conflicts concerning the distinction of competences between national and supranational levels are needed. For this purpose, Mair distinguishes political conflicts occurring among two dimensions, on which political decision making has direct impact on the functioning of the EU polity (Mair 2007, 9-10). At the functional dimension, he locates interest-specific conflicts about numerous EU policies at one end. These conflicts can be solved through pragmatic and rational bargaining between the competing parties. At the other end of the functional dimension were the more ideological oppositions, where political contestation is mostly normative-driven depending on one's interpretation of history and moral understandings. On the functional dimension, occurring conflicts have no position on the EU as a polity, but the version of the EU happens to exist through allocation of resources and implementation of various policies. The functional dimension cuts across the Europeanization dimension, on which political conflict regarding the institutionalisation of the EU and its distinctive European political system is bounded at one end. The other end is obligated to conflicts over the impact of European norms and regulation into the national sphere. The Europeanization dimension gives opportunity for potential conflicts with regard to the territorial influence of supranational policy-making and its impact on national policies and practices. It is similar to the territorial dimension of national cleavage structures, previously described by Lipset and Rokkan, on which political conflict is structured between local opposition and the dominant national elites. The issues are related to the impact of national regulation on local affairs (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Likewise, Euroscepticism can be generally understood as opposition on the national level against interference from Brussels into national affairs. In this general regard, it makes no significant difference if this opposition is grounded against distinctive EU policies only or against the EU as a whole. The conflict line remains to be national competences against supranational competences. The only relevant question is whether agreement between both levels can be found through rational bargaining or if agreement is impossible due to a rather categorical rejection of European interference into national affairs. Once again the distinction between soft (rational) and hard (categorical) Euroscepticism becomes visible.

While it might be possible that discontent against interference from Brussels onto the national level can be interest-specific only, the ideological and thus unconditional rejection against interference from the EU raises attention to another relevant factor in order to understand the origins of opposition toward European integration; the importance of national identity related to a European identity. Does national identity outweigh a European identity? Research results came to different conclusions: While some understand a strong national identity as an obstacle to European identity (McLaren 2002), others argue that a strong national identity is compatible with pro-European attitudes (Citrin and Sides 2004). Indeed, most EU citizens ascribe themselves a multiple identity which can be both national and European as Fuchs, Guinaudeau and Schubert (2009) argue. In their view, most EU citizens have already developed some sort of European identity, which is somewhat a threshold against the emergence of Eurosceptic thoughts. However, they drew no conclusion on how resistant European identity is when it comes to negative impacts caused by EU decision making onto the national level. Rather, they emphasised that the evolved European identity among EU citizens remains comparatively fragile and context-dependending, as it can be observed during the ongoing Euro crisis and the challenge occurring in respect to the refugee immigration into Europe. This is why further clarification about the sources for both identities the European and the particular national is needed to draw conclusions about Eurosceptic attitudes.

David Easton's (1975) distinction between specific and diffuse support of political regimes helps to understand the fragile state of European identity in relation to national identity in regard to the conflicting dimension between both regimes the EU and the nation state. Whereas specific support for a regime is grounded on the satisfaction with certain policies and the performance of governments, diffuse support is important to the regime's persistence and ability to cope with political distrust that may occur on specific policies. Diffuse support offers "a reservoir of favourable attitudes [...] that helps members to accept or tolerate outputs to which they are opposed." (Easton, quoted by Leconte 2010, 249). Absence of diffuse support, on the contrary, makes it barely possible to translate positive government outputs into strengthened support for the political regime. In the case of the EU diffuse support is exceptionally weak

in comparison to member states because the political socialisation of EU citizens is mainly shaped in the national context. EU citizens remain national citizens first and foremost through national policy deliberation. Only a few can be considered to be conscious Union citizens, which demands profound intercultural competences and language skills. Furthermore, the loss of diffuse support for the EU might be rooted in the political system of the EU itself. The lack of a European civil society, government-opposition dynamic and full-fledged European parties makes it barely possible to transform even given specific support for EU policies into diffuse support in the long run. Without these aspects of political socialization, the overall majority of EU citizens may not be attracted to participate in EU decision making. This, however, is of crucial importance in order to gain experience on how to influence policy making on the EU level. Without active participation of EU citizens, discontent on EU policies will be translated into frustration about the inability to have an impact on policy change in the EU, thus fostering Eurosceptic attitudes. In addition, the fact that European nation states receive more diffuse support than the EU is of crucial importance related to one's identity. Especially in a time of fundamental crises with uncertain outcomes for the people in Europe, citizens may develop doubts and prioritise national regimes over the EU regime. The nation state may be perceived as safe haven since it can resort to its long-established institutions and the socialization of its citizens. On the contrary, the EU as fairly new political body might appear as the triggering cause for the crisis related to enhanced globalisation (such as the Euro crisis or the refugee crisis). In the worst case, impact of EU decision making into the domestic sphere might thereby be understood as illegitimate interference of external control from Brussels, thus fuelling the image of the EU as a threat demonized as 'EUSSR' or 'European super-state' to the perceived last existing safe harbour in an increasing globalised and uncertain world – the nation state.

What do we know about Euroscepticism so far? Obviously one can differentiate between various types of Euroscepticism, ranging from principled opposition against European integration and interest-specific opposition of certain EU policies addressing the manner of European integration. While there is a relevant distinction between both types, the federal-national fault line between Europe and the nation state remains the same. In both cases the real issue at stake is about the legitimacy of interference from Brussels into national policy making. It is either rejected in total or rejected only to specific policies that are in conflict with reference to specific national interests. Especially in regard to political attitudes among the EU citizenry on European integration, the absence of a resilient European identity appears as an important resource for Eurosceptic sentiments. Although EU citizenship legally exists on the paper, it still has to be constituted through ongoing transnational political socialization of EU citizens in respect to EU policy making. Without a proper political socialization, EU citizenship will remain an illusion without any practical impact on the EU's decision making process. This has direct relevance to the question related to the lack of diffuse support for the EU's political regime. This diffuse support could only be generated through active participation of EU citizens. This does not necessarily need to bring the unmitigated implementation of citizen's demands. This neglects the fact that European societies are pluralistic and its citizens differ in a vast range of political issues. Citizens' influence is more important in the sense that EU policy makers should need to pay serious attention to the voice of EU citizens because it can be component to develop alternatives about concrete EU policies, thus contributing to overcoming technocratic decision making. The value of political participation of EU citizens may then be visible through ongoing lobbying of civil society groups for certain policies during the parliament's legislation period or on election day, when EU citizens should be empowered to effectively vote for or against specific EU governments and their policy programs.

This issue brings us back to the starting point of the discussion – the importance of a functioning government-opposition dynamic. While European integration has gone through two milestones of the development of democratic representation, namely the right of citizens to participate in governmental institutions and the right of citizens to be represented within the EU's polity, the third has not been achieved yet – the right of citizens for an organized opposition that can have a crucial impact in elections for or against a government. A precondition of an organized opposition, however, is a functioning civil society and an institutional arrangement within the EU that makes a real policy change through European-wide elections possible. As long as both is missing, soft Euroscepticism may be transformed into hard Euroscepticism, thus being expressed as anti-system opposition against the EU as a political system. In the following section I will argue that although Euroscepticism is a danger to integration, it will not inevitably bring European integration to an end because it makes the deficits of integration visible and thus brings the potential for change.

The conflict line between Europhiles and Eurosceptics – nucleus for European politicization

As I have argued, there is a clear interrelation between growing opposition against European integration, the missing government-opposition dynamic on the EU level, the transformation of soft into hard Euroscepticism and the lack of diffuse support for the EU. As we understand Eurosceptic thoughts as an indication for dissatisfaction with the current state of European integration in terms of democratic legitimization and efficiency of EU decision making, its growing share among political elites and European societies should be used to generate political affiliation among the federal-national fault line. This is reasonable since the articulation of massive criticism of the EU has also led to a public recall of federal positions on European integration (Verhofstadt and Cohn-Bendit 2012), although the influence of pro-

European approaches on the political debate might be less striking compared to Eurosceptics. For this purpose a brief overview on the concrete defects of European integration pointed out by Eurosceptics and Europhiles is necessary. Comparing the mentioned defects by Eurosceptics with those proclaimed by Europhiles, I will show that in many cases the problem analysis of both groups is moderately similar, although the political distinction between both groups becomes clearly visible concerning the political consequences drawn for the future of European integration. The distinction of both groups offers fundamental alternatives from which EU citizens can identify with. It can be understood as a chance for enhanced politicization of EU citizenry on integration issues and may contribute to the creation of a government-opposition dynamic on the European level.

After the implementation of the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993 and the creation of the common market, the EU became more than just a custom union. Since then, the integration process has been accompanied by the expansion of EU policies such as the monetary policy or asylum and immigration policy. Since EMU or EU enlargements were related to concerns over redistributive effects, its implementation automatically increased the possibility of growing opposition with several policies. In this view, politicization of the EU and growing opposition to certain EU policies were two sides of the same coin. However, the EU has barely been able to deliver proper outcomes on these policy fields as it can be observed in the current refugee crisis and Euro crisis. Maastricht created a capabilities-expectations gap as the EU was unable to develop transnational problem-solving skills. Likewise, the transfer of national sovereignty onto the supranational level has become discredited as growing distrust in the EU shows.

Against this background, Europhiles and Eurosceptics argue whether the glass is half empty or half full in regard to the contemporary quality of European integration. While Europhiles may argue that nation states in a globalized world do not have proper capabilities to materialize certain policies within its own borders anymore, Eurosceptics set against the higher costs of transnational decision making on the European level due to the increased complexity related to the heterogenic interests of diverse members states. This is why Eurosceptics either reject European integration in total or assess the costs of relinquishing national sovereignty more negatively than the gains produced by transnational problem solving competences. Moreover, growing politicization of EU politics raises serious questions about the legitimization of European decision making since European democracy does not match expectations of liberal democracy known from the nation state as already described above. Eurosceptics doubt the possibility of a common European approach for politicized issues in key policy fields that are both democratic and efficient. The EU simply lacks a European demos considering that its citizens will remain attached primarily to the particular collective of each member state, thus making it impossible to develop an intra-EU solidarity that might serve as a basis for legitimating redistributive policies among EU member states. This is why Eurosceptics perceive the nation state as the platform for a democratically legitimated policy that can use the nation state's capabilities to deliver the promised policy outcomes. Consequently, European integration should be rejected (hard Euroscepticism) or at best implemented through intergovernmental coordination among member states while still keeping national policy interests in priority (soft Euroscepticism).

Interestingly, Eurosceptics and Europhiles share the view that the EU faces an efficiency and democracy problem. However, the political conclusions and proposed solutions differ fundamentally. Instead of reducing the impact of European decision making onto the national sphere, Europhiles criticize the dominance of negative integration triggered by the creation of the intra-EU common market. This negative integration has led to the diminishing of policy capabilities within the nation state because it has not been accompanied properly by positive integration on the European level. As we define the traditional role of the nation state as a means to adjust defect market processes to achieve an adequate balance between economic competition and social protection, Europhiles argue that the politico-economic defects of the EMU were simply not sufficiently guided by political union among Eurozone member states. As a result, the relationship between economic competition and social protection has been disturbed as it can be monitored in the ongoing crisis in the south of the Eurozone. Political union, however, is necessary to set macro-economic policies to counterbalance economic asymmetry. Instead of leaving the Euro as most Eurosceptics may argue, Europhiles share the view that the current EMU is not sustainable and must be reformed. Yet to face the grievances, any reform should aim at "economic, financial, fiscal and political union [...] to address the economic and institutional weaknesses that could eventually lead to its disintegration." (Spinelli Group 2015) In this respect, the European commission should serve as a kind of Eurozone government that can enforce macro-economic regulations among Eurozone member states. To match democratic legitimacy, the position of the European parliament within the legislation process in regard to the monetary union should be strengthened. By no surprise, these views can be understood as the political counterpart to Eurosceptics. Europhile solutions do not seek to disintegrate the EU but to foster integration in key policy fields such as economic, fiscal and even social policy in a federal manner. Competences and capabilities once proclaimed by the nation state should be adequately transformed onto the European level. Against the argument of Eurosceptics that such a political union is unachievable due to a none existing European demos, Europhiles emphasise the possibility of social change within European societies. In their constructivist understanding, national collectives are changeable through social interaction among European societies, thus contributing to the Europeanization of mindsets (Friedrich 1972, 86). A European identity, that is a precondition for fiscal and economic solidarity, could be achieved by any commonality and as European integration has advanced over decades, it has already created numerous economic and political commonalities, such as the common currency and the four liberties (of persons, goods, capital and services). Most remarkable might be the Schengen agreement that

regulates the absence of physical borders within the EU, thus creating a new dynamic of in-group and out-group relations between EU citizens and non-EU citizens. Whereas Eurosceptics stick to their national identity and thus defend their national regime and/or particular national policy against interference of Brussels, Europhiles may argue that European integration has taken a significant threshold with reference to the interdependence of European states and their societies. Instead of simply contesting Europe as Eurosceptics may demand, Europhiles believe what really matters is how EU citizens adapt to the processed integration.

Ironically, the rise of Euroscepticism has triggered the politicization of Europe. Its rise has generated a transnational debate about the future of the EU that concerns both political elites and people. The rise of Euroscepticism demands a visionary answer that goes beyond technocratic policy making. Europhiles, defined as the political counterpart to Eurosceptics, can contribute to another alternative for the contemporary EU that is not about less, but more integration. Because the conflict between both Eurosceptics and Europhiles is highly political, it may have inevitable effects on political socialization among EU's citizens with the continuation of the crisis. The conflict between Eurosceptics and Europhiles reveals the juncture at which the EU happens to exist and the uncertainty involved in the future of integration. Euroscepticism may even revoke its own foundation in the long run – provided that it is counterbalanced with an alternative vision and a proper institutionalization that can serve as an outlet for political will – because criticism of European policies structured along the federal-national line once integrated into a transnational deliberating process could contribute to stop the alienation of European citizens with the EU. One can say that opposition as a distinctive feature of deliberation first needs to generate the foundation for developing a European identity, which is a requirement for transnational democratization (Beichelt 2010). In this regard, dispute about different visions for the EU's future can have an integral effect on EU citizens. The EU is not an object of political arguments anymore; rather it has become an arena for political deliberation. In European history increasing contestation has contributed to the emergence of collective communities. Moreover, it has enforced citizens' access to political elites by adopting legitimate positions within existing power structures and direct possibilities for political participation. Similarly to the distinction between Federalists and Republicans in the early days of the US, the antagonism of Eurosceptics and Europhiles may help to create two collective political identities of which EU citizens could affiliate. Provided by a proper institutional arrangement, such a political socialization along the federal-national fault line on European issues could be the nucleus to generate the missing government-opposition dynamic on the European level that makes the vote for less integration (according to soft Euroscepticism) or more European integration (according to Europhiles) in various policy fields dependent on the EU citizens' choice. "It would be useful, as well as fun, for the argument between 'more' and 'less' Europe to become more direct, better informed and more systematic. [...] Eurosceptics and federalists can unite in seeking to stimulate more serious debate around the central question of how Europe might best be governed." (Duff 2013, 152) This may even transfer the character of Euroscepticism itself, because a stronger political socialization of EU citizens in European affairs tends to reduce resentments against European integration and strengthens diffuse support of the EU polity. It could keep the ideological driving forces along the federal-national dividing line in mind but transfer it to interest-specific policy measures. Anti-system opposition would then transform into classical opposition.

Conclusion

Analyzing Euroscepticism helps to understand the contemporary deficits of European integration. Without a government-opposition dynamic on the EU level, opposition against certain EU policies cannot find an outlet, which is important to express distrust with current policies, express alternative visions and voting out current governments. As a result, interest-specific Euroscepticism may transform into anti-system Euroscepticism that questions the entire legitimacy of the EU polity system. This process is accompanied with a lack of diffuse support for the EU among European citizens due to missing possibilities to participate in the integration process. Against the background of the underlying EU defaults in regard to legitimacy and efficiency, rising Euroscepticism has also contributed to a recall of Europhile's positions into the public debate. Both positions may come to similar results when analysing the EU's deficits. The consequences, however, differ fundamentally. Provided with an adequate institutional adjustment, the antagonism between Eurosceptics and Europhiles could contribute against the alienation of EU citizens by offering different alternatives about the EU's future. The deliberation along the federal-national fault line could deliver tangible policies to keep the ideological driving forces in mind while transforming them into specific policy alternatives. Through a distinct confrontation along the federal-national fault line, EU citizens might get politicized and empowered to participate into the deliberation process, which would consequently trigger a transnational political socialization, which is the basis for an increase of diffuse support for the EU's regime. Thus, Euroscepticism may revoke its own foundation by empowering participation of EU citizenry that would transform Eurosceptic attitudes in the long run.

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