# Master Thesis Defence

## The Eurosceptic Misfit - Popular Euroscepticism and Electoral Support for Eurosceptic Parties

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# Overview

1. Motivation
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   - ▶ A gap in the research field

2. Methodology
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   - ▶ The statistical models

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   - ▶ Eurosceptic misfit across time
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   - ▶ Regression models

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# 1. Motivation

# The phenomenon of the "Eurosceptic misfit"

- ▶ Wide gap between popular levels of Euroscepticism and the aggregate vote share received by Eurosceptic parties
- ▶ First mentioned by Taggart (1998)
  - ▶ He suspected the translation of Eurosceptic attitudes into Eurosceptic vote was driven by national contextual factors

**Motivation 1: Understanding national contextual drivers of the "Eurosceptic misfit" is a puzzle-piece in understanding the political impact of Euroscepticism**

# A gap in the research field

- ▶ Literature on Euroscepticism mainly revolves around:
    - ▶ Categorisation of Euroscepticism
    - ▶ Derterminants of Euroscepticism in individuals

- ▶ The Eurosceptic misfit has received no thorough scholarly attention outside a few mentions (e.g. Taggart & Sczerbiak, 2002; Verney, 2011)

**Motivation 2: Possibility to make a contribution to an underdeveloped part of Euroscepticism literature**

# 2. Methodology

# 2.1. The data set

I created my own study data set from

- National results of European Parliament elections from 1979 to 2009
- Eurobarometer data adjacent to each election round
- Euromanifesto data on the political position of parties in the European parliament elections
- This yielded a strongly unbalanced panel which had
    - 110 observations
    - 27 unique panel units
    - 7 time periods

# 2.2. The statistical models

- **Models**
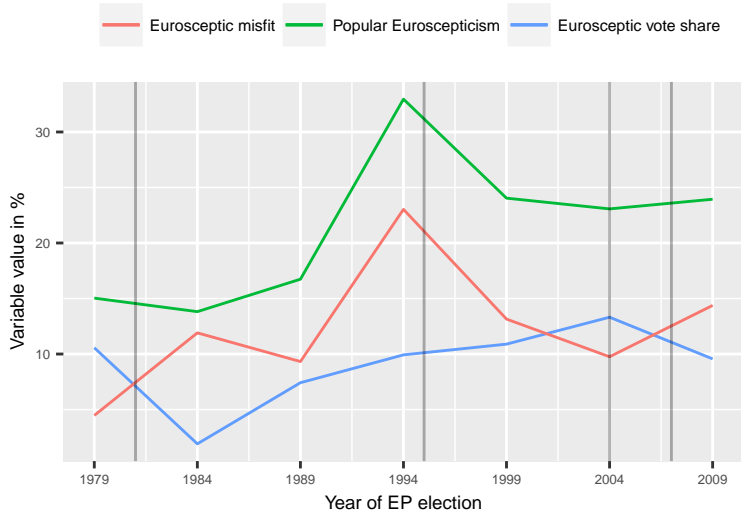    - Fixed effects, random effects (and pooled OLS)
- **Dependent variable**: share of voters holding Eurosceptic attitudes - sum of the vote share which all Eurosceptic parties received jointly
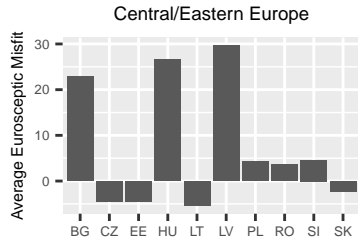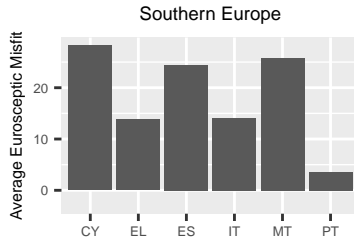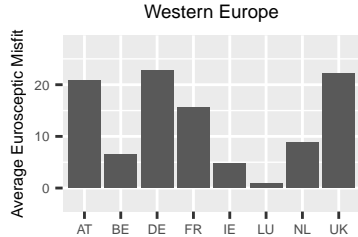- **Independent variables**
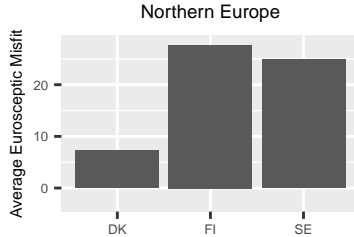    - Two measures of Eurosceptic attitudes
    - Party system polarisation
    - Effective number of parties
    - Membership duration in the EU
    - Location in Central and Eastern Europe

# 3. Findings

# 3.1. Average Eurosceptic misfit across time

# 3.2. Eurosceptic misfit across regions

# 3.3. Regression models

## Table 1: Regression results

| | Dependent variable: | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Eurosceptic Misfit | |
| | FE | RE |
| | (1) | (2) |
| General Euroscepticism | 0.48*** | 0.45*** |
| | (0.10) | (0.09) |
| Instrumental Euroscepticism | 0.38*** | 0.43*** |
| | (0.06) | (0.05) |
| Polarisation Index | −1.52* | −1.92** |
| | (0.84) | (0.74) |
| Effective Number of Parties | 0.02 | −0.06 |
| | (0.12) | (0.10) |
| Membership Duration | 0.08 | 0.04 |
| | (0.08) | (0.06) |
| Central/Eastern European | | −5.52* |
| | | (3.09) |
| Constant | | 0.57 |

# 4. Conclusion

- The Eurosceptic misfit has stayed relatively constant over time, except for a spike in 1994
- Eurosceptic misfit considerably smaller in CEE countries
- Eurosceptic vote share generally fails to "catch up" with increases in popular Eurosceptic attitudes
- Higher degrees of party polarisation shrink the Eurosceptic misfit

# Thank you for listening!

Please check out my Github repository for all source codes for the analysis and presentation documents:
*github.com/mberneaud/EuroscepticMisfitMasterThesis*

# Extra: Model considerations

- ▶ Combination of pooled OLS, fixed effects and random effects models used in the thesis
  - ▶ Fixed effects to cleanly isolate causal effects (read: removing unobserved heterogeneity) to measure country-specific variation
  - ▶ Random effects to allow for inclusion of time-invariant variables (like region) and higher efficiency
  - ▶ Pooled OLS for comparison