British Euroscepticism and the Eurozone Crisis 2008-2013

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To my parents for their unconditional love

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PREFACE

This book provides a thorough examination of the phenomenon of Euroscepticism in the United Kingdom. It begins by arguing that Euroscepticism has roots as far back as when the process of European integration first came into being, and that it is not new in British politics. As a suggestion of opposition to the process of European integration, Euroscepticism dates back to the early days of founding a union in Western Europe. This book shows that Eurosceptic Britain[1] is a product of a variety of factors particularly related to history, politics, culture, and geography. The unique specificities of the British political system comprise another important reason for Eurosceptic attitudes in Britain. The book also examines the relation between the Eurosceptic discourse in Britain and the structure of the European Union's institutions. It argues that much of British Euroscepticism is about the way these institutions are operated. Most importantly, it highlights that the enduring Eurozone crisis has contributed to shaping recent varieties of scepticism towards the European Union as a whole, before concluding that Euroscepticism could not relocate Britain outside its natural place within Europe.

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[1] Even official government documents often make no distinction between Great Britain and the UK. For the purpose of this study the name "Britain" is used concurrently with the name "United Kingdom" to refer to the political union constituting England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The European issue is one of the most controversial issues in contemporary British politics. Britain's partnership with the Continent has never been full. Ever since Europe moved towards a unity among a group of independent nations, the United Kingdom (UK) has been reluctant to play a principal role in the process of European integration. The British tendency to stand apart from the Continent and play the policy of being "in Europe but not of it," in Winston Churchill's famous words, is a matter of typical strategies specific to British politics. The question of Europe has become, therefore, a thorny issue with its own complexities. It is probable that nowhere else in Europe is the phenomenon of Euroscepticism complicated the way it is in Britain. It has to do with things that are only British; things of which Britons are proud. These are mainly connected with history, geography, the political system, democracy, and the inexorably different culture. Even differing views about Europe within the UK could not entirely mean that those who show enthusiasm to become wholly integrated are not sceptical about certain affairs. Some prefer the Single Market, while they detest the single currency. Others favour a free trade movement, while they reject the free movement of people. The most sceptical groups of all never feel at ease with even the idea of one political Europe, one superstate status. These frictions have helped give birth to multi-form Euroscepticisms in Britain.

The burgeoning movement of Euroscepticism in Britain is correlated with major political and economic challenges facing the European Union (EU). In fact, after Maastricht a problem of governance started to appear. The Treaty on the European Union (TEU) deepened the framework of the European organization towards an "ever-closer union" or an "ever-closer political union," and then a crisis over where the power lies and who the real policy-maker is began to dominate the sceptic discourse in Britain. Furthermore, the enduring economic troubles in the Eurozone, the core basis of European integration, have led to a revival of British Euroscepticism. Such difficulties facing the Euro mean new difficulties in the UK/EU relationship.

The term "Euroscepticism" first appeared in *The Times* in 1986; thenceforth, it entered the British journalistic lexicon, and it has gained wide currency in the political discourse around Europe. It should be noted, however, that this has not been the only tag used to define the awkward responses to the process of European integration. Long before the term "Euroscepticism" became a subject of academic research, concepts like "anti-Europeans" and "anti-Marketeers" had been used to depict those who expressed doubts towards the idea of European unity. These terms are no longer used frequently. They have become obsolete concepts. Noteworthy is the fact that labels used by scholars and journalists kept changing. Generally, the concept "Euroscepticism" reflects expressions of discontent with the process of European integration as it has been conceived since the signing of the TEU in 1992. Plans for a federal system and a common defence policy, together with the single currency, have been subject to a significant amount of criticism, especially in Britain.

The concept of "Euroscepticism" has been defined in quite a variety of ways. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a "Eurosceptic" as "a person, especially a British politician, who is opposed to closer links with the European Union."[1] The phrase "especially in Britain" may confirm the fact that Britain has been the motherland of Euroscepticism. According to the *Macmillan English Dictionary*, "Eurosceptic" means "someone, especially a politician, who thinks that their country should not be part of the European Union."[2] Paul Taggart, who has been the first scholar to define "Euroscepticism" (1998), claims that it is "an encompassing term which expresses the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of integration" (Taggart 1998, 366). He argues that Euroscepticism can be understood with reference to three different positions on the European Union. First, there is "the anti-integration position of those who oppose the very idea of European integration and as a consequence oppose the EU."[3] The second position is that of those who are not in principle against European integration but think that the EU is too inclusive because it encompasses too-diverse interests and elements. The third position is endorsed by those who believe that the European Union is too exclusive either geographically or socially. Moreover, Taggart (1998, 366) points out

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[1] *Oxford English Dictionary*, 7th ed., s.v. "Eurosceptic."
[2] *Macmillan English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Eurosceptic."
[3] Paul Taggart, "A Touchstone of Dissent: Euroscepticism in Contemporary Western European Party Systems," *European Journal of Political Research* 33, no. 3 (1998): 363–88.

that "the term Euroscepticism encompasses those who stand outside the status quo."

Although they first appeared in Britain, critical discourses about the European project have roots elsewhere in Europe. Such discourses culminated during the long road to Maastricht. Debates have, therefore, unfolded throughout Europe. Since the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, the idea of Europeanization has faced great difficulties. The extension of the European Union to political issues has been subject to critical voices. Member states as well as candidate countries have witnessed the rise of the Eurosceptic stance. Steps towards a political union are said to be illegitimate.

Agnès Alexander-Collier defines a "Eurosceptic" as "someone who doubts the utility and viability of Economic and Political Union" (Alexander-Collier 1998, 17). She suggests three important aspects that define Euroscepticism. First, its opposition focuses on interconnected processes as well as economic and political integration within Europe. One may add that dissatisfactions with the European project mainly emanate from its recent intertwined politico-economic plans. Second, there is opposition to the transformation of the European Economic Community (EEC) into the European Union. The latter entails further integration towards a political union. Third, there is an implication that Eurosceptics are to be found only within the Conservative Party and not in other political parties.

Britain's reluctance towards the European project as a whole has been increasing since the late 1980s. In the British case, recent studies have based their views on two main features of Britain's system. First, some scholars shed light on the fact that Britain had maintained a one-party rule system (Aspinwall 2000, 434). The distinction between the British system and the European system has been the main reason for the rise of contemporary Euroscepticism. British governments, operating in a system of one-party rule, have to give greater consideration to backbench Eurosceptic opinion than they would in a Proportional Representation (PR) system that tends to produce broad centrist governments. Governments, in the one-party rule situation, have been shown to adopt negative positions towards European integration as a consequence of strong opposition within party ranks, particularly when expressed within small majorities (Aspinwall 2000, 434–36).

This clash between political systems has led successive governments in Britain to hold negative attitudes towards the process of European

integration as a consequence of strong opposition from MPs of the ruling party. This was the case with the Conservative Party, especially in the last years of Thatcher's premiership and John Major's "bastards." Second, in the view of Usherwood (2002) Euroscepticism is placed in a set of institutional dynamics in Britain. This makes the Eurosceptic factionalism within the main parties more significant. This view particularly studied Euroscepticism in terms of Britain's distinctive political system.

Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008) distinguish between two types of Euroscepticism: "hard" and "soft." Hard Euroscepticism, on the one hand, is "where there is a principled opposition to the EU and European integration."[4] This means "a direct advocacy of withdrawal from the EU in the case of member states or opposition to membership as regards candidate states."[5] This is the agenda of party-based Euroscepticism as displayed by the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and the Referendum Party in Britain. It may also take the form of policies towards the EU which turn out to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived. Soft Euroscepticism, on the other hand, refers to a position which 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."[6] This view was, however, challenged by Kopecky and Mudde for claims that it remains too broad. Kopecky and Mudde maintain that the demarcation line between hard and soft Euroscepticism is blurred and that "the criteria that are used both to connect and to separate the two forms of Euroscepticism remain unclear" (Kopecky and Mudde 2002, 300).

Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart—in a paper prepared for presentation at the 8th Biannual International Conference of the European Union Studies Association Conference, Nashville, March 27–29, 2003—reply to these critiques. They point out that, "We accept that our definition of soft party-

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[4] Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart, "Theorizing Party-based Euroscepticism: Problems of Definitions, Measurement and Causality," in *Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism, Volume 2: Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives*, eds. Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 238–62.

[5] Robert Harmsen and Menno Spiering, eds., *Euroscepticism: Party Politics, National Identity and European Integration* (Amsterdam: Rodopi B. V., 2004), 18–19.

[6] Szczerbiak and Taggart, "Theorizing Party-based Euroscepticism," 241.

based Euroscepticism may, indeed, have been too broad and included parties that were in essence pro-European integration." Szczerbiak and Taggart, however, emphasized that the term in its popular sense encompasses both principled and contingent opposition to the European integration project (Szczerbiak and Taggart 2003).

In Britain, other recent studies explain and analyze Euroscepticism. This phenomenon has become the subject of a plethora of work. A number of books made it their subject of study. Anthony Forster's *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics: Opposition to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour Parties since 1945* (2002) is one important such book. Forster states that Euroscepticism is a phenomenon that "has deeply divided the two major British political parties with the Labour Party splitting over European policy in the 1980s and the Conservative Party emerging from the 1990s gravely wounded."[7] Forster, like almost all the scholars who study Euroscepticism, concludes that this term "is not without difficulties, both in terms of its analytical purchase and as a descriptive tool."[8] Anthony Forster ends up contending that the previous studies provide a "narrow and contemporary understanding of Euroscepticism." He therefore argues that "the term needs to be seen as a particular manifestation of a school of sceptical thought about the value of Britain's involvement with moves towards supranational European integration."[9] Sceptical thoughts have been adopted by politicians and scholars no less than by the British public.

Forster mentions five schools which, according to him, failed to give a thorough examination of the phenomenon. This is because most of the scholars who studied Euroscepticism have been pro-integrationists (Forster 2002, 5). First, the "behaviouralist school" "has focused on the importance of leadership behavior."[10] He considers them as a "cosmopolitan school which has highlighted the weak motivations of British Governments in applying to join the EEC." Second, the "party school" has put its focus on political parties. This school considers the political parties as the source of the difficulties in Britain's relationship with Europe. Third, the "institutionalist" group of scholars highlights structural explanations as the cause of Britain's problematic relationship with the integration project.

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[7] Anthony Forster, *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics: Opposition to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour Parties since 1945* (London: Routledge, 2002), 1.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., 2.

[10] Ibid., 3.

Fourth, an emerging "international" political economy (IPE) school argues that British economic structures clash with European models of industrial organization. The fifth school is the "conjuncture" group of scholars. This school has offered a series of more contingent and electric explanations to account for British governments' reluctance to participate in the European integration project (Forster 2002, 3–5).

In a collective volume entitled *Euroscepticism: Party Politics, National Identity and European Integration*, political scientists Robert Harmsen and Menno Spiering argue that the European Union's expanding policy competence creates the potential for friction, which may give rise to forms of Euroscepticism (Harmsen and Spiering 2004, 15). They maintain that the term is associated with a basic opposition to British participation in the European integration project; however, the common British usages of the term "Euroscepticism" are harder than that suggested by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (ibid.). According to Spiering, British Euroscepticism has roots in a deeper sense of a (Franco-German dominated) continent as the "Other." The phenomenon of Euroscepticism in Britain, therefore, cannot be simply limited to an opposition to particular institutional forms which have been assumed by European integration (Spiering 1997).

The fact that Euroscepticism is a puzzling word that cannot be defined easily is also highlighted by Oliver J. Daddow (2006). In accordance with other analysts, this scholar refers to the problematic feature of this phenomenon. He points out that "it is impossible to give a convincing definition of 'Euroscepticism' despite its wide usage in contemporary political discourse."[11] According to Oliver J. Daddow (2006), there are two main reasons for this. First, the word is used by different people from different countries for "whatever motive" in opposition to European integration. Second, the interchangeable usage of this word with other terms like "Europhobes," "euro critics," "Euro-agonistic," "Euro-realist," and "Euro-pragmatist," is one other reason for the difficulty in finding one final convincing definition for this term.

One principal argument of Oliver J. Daddow's study is that British Euroscepticism is a product of Britain's distinct history. Daddow contends that the "British history, as it was conceived, institutionalized, studied and written in the academy in the nineteenth century, may have been unwitting

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[11] Oliver J. Daddow, "Euroscepticism and the Culture of the Discipline of History," *Review of International Studies* 32, no. 2 (Apr. 2006): 309–28, accessed December 12, 2012. http://jstor.org/stable/40072140.

accomplice in the rise to prominence of Euroscepticism in the country at large."[12] In addition, there are many Eurosceptics who express enthusiasm for the European project but oppose British adoption of the euro. Daddow gives the example of the Eurosceptic writer James Forder, who, according to him, "professes enthusiasm for the European project as a whole but who is opposed to British membership of the Euro on economic grounds."[13]

A very interesting work is that of Chris Gifford (2008). In his book, *The Making of Eurosceptic Britain: Identity and Economy in a Post-Imperial State*, Gifford argues that Euroscepticism is mainly associated with the British Conservative politicians who opposed the second wave of European integration during the 1980s and 1990s (Gifford 2008). He agrees with Forster in maintaining that the history of Euroscepticism in Britain could be traced back to the first application for membership (ibid., 6). Since its formation, Eurosceptics in Britain have shared a common hostility to the EU. One important assumption of the literature, claims Chris Gifford, is the competitive party system of the liberal democratic political orders within the EU (ibid.). Gifford contends that the focus on the Conservative Party Euroscepticism should not obscure the history of Euroscepticism within the Labour Party. He concludes that British Euroscepticism should not be limited to the party system and the politics of the peripherality (Gifford 2008, 7).

Catharina Sørensen (2008) identifies three components in defining Euroscepticism*: euro*, *sceptic*, and *ism*. According to her, each of these three components is a problematic term of its own. She writes in her article "Love me, love me not… A typology of public euroscepticism," that "each (component) poses definitional challenges; indeed, it is not clear from most usages whether the term is taken to include scepticism towards EU (or Europe?) as a whole." This may seem ambivalent to some extent. Opposition to the EU could never equate opposing Europe. To combine them all into one invulnerable definition is a very ambitious task. She thus agrees with the other scholars of the field that defining the term "Euroscepticism" in one final way remains somewhat difficult.

Catharina Sørensen's definition is a broad one. She identifies Euroscepticism as "a sentiment of disapproval—reaching a certain degree and durability—directed towards the EU in its entirety or towards particular policy areas or

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[12] Ibid., 313.
[13] Daddow, "Euroscepticism and the Culture," 313.

developments."[14] Catharina Sørensen illustrates the behaviours of Euroscepticism in three member states of the EU, namely Denmark, France, and the UK. She observes that there is sovereignty-based Euroscepticism in the UK. She, therefore, notes that "the UK is not amongst the most eurosceptical member states when it comes to democratic and social Euroscepticism."[15] She classifies the UK's Euroscepticism as a "strong hard euroscepticism" (Sørensen 2008, 10).

In an essay entitled "Why is Britain Eurosceptic" published in April 2008 by the Centre for European Reform essays, Charles Grant relates British popular Euroscepticism to hostility to the EU. He argues that the British governments have their influence on slowing down the process of European integration. He supports his view by giving the example of Britain's opting out from both the euro and the Schengen Agreement. He also refers to the fact that Britain prevented the extension of qualified majority voting into areas such as tax, foreign policy and defence. Charles Grant goes on to maintain that this policy would not change. According to him, the enthusiasm would lessen with successive governments. He even predicts that "a government led by David Cameron will be markedly more eurosceptic,"[16] something that can be felt in the current Conservative government's European policy. Charles Grant argues, however, that Britain is not the most Eurosceptic member state of the EU.

Moreover, Charles Grant suggests five main reasons for British people's hostility to the EU. British history is one of the reasons for which Britons consider themselves different. According to Charles Grant, Britain's "history has been very different from that of most continental powers." Britain has oriented her attention to other continents. Imperial experience has affected Britain's relation to Europe.

Economy is also another source of British Euroscepticism. Unlike other European countries, Britain has had relatively high growth and low unemployment. The Thatcher period benefited the British economy. Its impact could be felt in today's British economy. Charles Grant argues that,

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[14] Catharina Sørensen, "Love me, love me not… A Typology of public euroscepticism," in *Sussex European Institute* (2008), 6. https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=sei-working-paper-no-101.pdf.
[15] Ibid., 9.
[16] Charles Grant, "Why is Britain Eurosceptic?" Centre for European Reform essays, December 2008, 1. https://www.cer.eu/publications/archive/essay/2008/why-britain-eurosceptic.

"The contrast in economic features between Britain and the Eurozone is the biggest reason why Tony Blair's government never found the courage to fight a referendum on joining the euro."[17] Charles Grant concludes that the clash of the recent financial crisis may lead some Eurozone member states "to copy many of the reforms that the British (and the Nordic countries) have implemented."[18]

Another extremely important factor in shaping Briton's hostility to the EU is "Britain's unique media." According to Charles Grant, "Some of the best media organizations that cover the EU, such as the *Financial Times*, *The Economist* and Reuters are UK-based."[19] Charles Grant argues that the Eurosceptic popular press contributes to rising British Euroscepticism. According to him, three-quarters of the roughly 30 million people who read a daily newspaper read papers that have a determination to make people dislike the EU.

The fifth reason Grant cites for British Euroscepticism is "Britain's parochial ruling class." For Charles Grant, Britain's Euroscepticism is also a product of cultural and social factors. He argues that few political, media, or business leaders have sought to lead and educate the British on how they can benefit from EU membership. British public as well as political figures would not devote much of their time to learning about the European Union. Charles Grant goes even further, maintaining that if one wants to succeed in politics they make sure they "do not know too much about Europe."

Another recent study of the phenomenon of Euroscepticism is that of Krisztina Arató and Petr Kaniok (2009). The editors of *Euroscepticism and European Integration* scrutinize the phenomenon of Euroscepticism from different angles. For them, "Euroscepticism has become a general term for opposition to the process of European integration." They note that the definitions given to this term are still "provocative and insufficient."[20] It seems that finding a definitive meaning for this phenomenon is somewhat difficult. Like previous researchers, Arató and Kaniok maintain that there cannot be an ultimate definition since all available studies are attempts. They state that, "The prevailing ending of such attempts can be summed up into the title of the famous Tom Cruise's movie: 'Mission Impossible'."[21]

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[17] Grant, "Why is Britain Eurosceptic?" 1.

[18] Ibid., 3.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Krisztina Arató and Petr Kaniok, eds., *Euroscepticism and European Integration* (Zagreb: Political Science Research Centre, 2009), 7.

[21] Ibid.

Hence, for them the "possible subtitle could be 'Euroscepticism differs from country to country'."[22] Krisztina Arató and Petr Kaniok point out that "after all Euroscepticism has methodological problems in its roots."[23] They, therefore, conclude that, "Hardly any phenomenon so strongly resists attempts of long lasting and useful definition as Euroscepticism does."[24] This view highlights the complicated nature of the word "Euroscepticism" in terms of definition.

Fabio Serricchio, Myrto Tsakatika and Lucia Quaglia (2013) have written an article entitled "Euroscepticism and the Global Financial Crisis." They examine the link between the financial crisis and Euroscepticism at the level of public opinion. While this study recognizes the global economic crisis' influence on the European economy, it scrutinizes its impacts on public opinion towards the EU's institutions. The scholars contend that this crisis "seems to have enhanced the role of public confidence in national political institutions."[25] Basing their analysis on data relevant to the study, these scholars observe that Euroscepticism has steadily increased from the onset of the financial crisis in 2007 (Serricchio, Tsakatika and Quaglia 2013, 56).

The UK is one of the countries mentioned among those member states of the EU in which Euroscepticism is strongly related to a negative evaluation of the economy. These scholars rely on the Eurobarometer to show that the degree of scepticism differs from one level to another. When it comes to the level of EU institutions, for instance, the higher the trust is in EU institutions the lower the level of Euroscepticism. According to Serricchio, Tsakatika and Quaglia, "A high trust in national political institutions can strengthen or weaken the level of Euroscepticism."[26] What is most striking here is the fact that the steady increase in Euroscepticism is most pronounced in the countries of the Eurozone. The increase in Euroscepticism reaches 5.3% there compared to 3.3% in non-Eurozone countries (ibid.).

These scholars observe a considerable variation across countries in the upward trend in Euroscepticism between 2007 and 2011. The UK is

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[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Fabio Serricchio, Myrto Tsakatika, and Lucia Quaglia, "Euroscepticism and the Global Financial Crisis," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 51, no. 1 (2013): 51–64, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2012.02299.x.
[26] Ibid., 56.

classified among a third group which has consistently nourished a high level of public Euroscepticism (ibid., 57). It is, therefore, the second country that has greatly increased its level of Euroscepticism between 2007 and 2011, after Greece. About 30% of those who were asked "Generally speaking do you think that (our country's) membership is: a good thing; a bad thing; neither good nor bad; do not know; refusal" by the Eurobarometer, answered that the EU membership is a "bad thing" (ibid., 58). Accordingly, the UK is one of those countries in which Euroscepticism is "strongly related to a negative evaluation of the economy" (ibid., 59).

Having studied a considerable body of the literature that examines the phenomenon of Euroscepticism, one notices the common agreement among scholars of the field that Euroscepticism has become difficult to deal with in terms of its definition. The fact that this term was derived from journalism makes it even harder to come up with a final meaning. Despite the considerable amount of research, scholars remain divided as to how to define the word "Euroscepticism".

A study of the British case shows the correlation between a variety of factors that have contributed to increasing the prominent Euroscepticism. The sources may differ in identifying these factors; however, they agree on some of the reasons for British Euroscepticism. Factors of history, national identity, sovereignty, and economy are omnipresent in a number of studies. In a concluding comment on the examination of the literature, the Eurosceptic issue may seem mystifying. It cannot be understood or explained in a clear-cut way. This is primarily due to the mixture of mosaic factors that cause it. One may, therefore, quote Flood's view that Euroscepticism has remained an elusive phenomenon (Flood 2002, 2).

One of the factors that has contributed to the rise of recent British Euroscepticism is the Eurozone crisis. The current crisis in the Eurozone has raised sceptical voices inside Britain. This poses questions about rethinking British policy towards the whole European project. David Cameron's announcement that Britain will not join the euro[27] might be a reasonable response to the trouble of the economic crisis in the Euro area. Correspondingly, the choice of the topic is mainly to study a thorny issue in contemporary British politics. The fact that politics continue to develop and change daily makes it favourable to look at up-to-date issues in order to understand international relations; thus, the choice of this topic is

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[27] David Cameron, "Speech on Europe," EU speech at Bloomberg, London, January 23, 2013. http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/eu-speech-at-bloomberg/.

oriented towards exploring the problematic relationship between Britain and her European partners, particularly within the Eurozone crisis. The UK is a member of the European Union, but she is not a member of the Eurozone, and here lies the question that this study aims to answer.

To this end, this study seeks to provide a thorough examination of the phenomenon of Euroscepticism in the UK. It tries to unravel the complexities of British awkwardness towards the EEC/EU. First, it attempts to challenge the dominant views that Euroscepticism as a political movement that appeared in the late 1980s. Instead, the research in its first chapter goes back to the very origins of anti-European movements in Britain. The second chapter gives a critical study of the discourse of Euroscepticism, since this phenomenon is after all a kind of rhetoric based on opposing the process of European integration. In the third chapter, the study moves on to reach its most fundamental part—that which deals with Euroscepticism in relation to the enduring Eurozone crisis. In fact, the problematic phenomenon of Euroscepticism in the UK coincides with the question of the ever-problematic Eurozone. Therein lies a large part of the growing critical voices against the whole European project in the UK of today.

The major aim of this research is to study the extent to which the enduring Eurozone crisis has increased the value of scepticism in the UK. In addition, it shows how troubles in the Eurozone have caused a wide range of Eurosceptic arguments among political elites, who would consider rethinking Britain's relation to the European Union. It attempts to argue that rethinking British policy towards the European project as a whole would not mean fully withdrawing Britain from the European organization.

This research relies on a number of both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include speeches of political figures (Prime Ministers, senior officials of the state, etc.), state publications (publications of the House of Commons, the House of Lords, the Foreign Office, and the Cabinet Office), print media (famous newspapers' articles), publications of people who have served in the government (former ministers, MPs), and international institutions' documents (the Institution of European and International Affairs, Eurobarometer surveys of the European Commission, etc.). Secondary sources, on the other hand, comprise the most recently published articles and books as well as other pieces of research (PhD dissertations). The research, therefore, uses these various forms of documents to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon of Euroscepticism in present British politics.

CHAPTER ONE

BRITISH EUROSCEPTICISM: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The UK has been one of the most sceptical countries about the process of European integration ever since the idea of Europe as a unity among a group of countries came into being. This first chapter provides an overview of the historical relationship between Britain and the idea of European unity. It analyzes why the UK has been reluctant to get fully integrated in the process of European integration. First, it deals with the main factors for Britain's awkwardness towards such a process. Second, much consideration is given to Euroscepticism as an outcome of the often-divergent relationship between Britain and the other "Big Two" nations of the European Community (EC)/European Union framework—France and Germany. Third, this chapter studies British leaders' position in relation to the idea of European unity, giving considerable significance to the American role in shaping this position.

1.1 Roots of British Euroscepticism

The roots of British Euroscepticism were sown earlier, before World War II. Anti-European sentiments grew particularly after 1945, when Western European powers began to draw the first lines of their cooperation. Attempts to build a strong Western Union during wartime were opposed by British leaders. Winston Churchill did not support the idea of such an organization because he was busy worrying about the outcome of the war. After VE-day, new circumstances would contribute to defining Britain's long awkward relation to Europe. The emergence of Britain as a major player in the victory, along with economic as well as historical realities, constituted the main basis upon which the foundations of such reluctance had been built. The first part of this chapter concentrates mainly on the roots of British Euroscepticism. The focus is on the factors that shaped Britain's ambiguity towards Europe.

1.1.1 Europe as the "Other"

Britain had experienced a history somewhat different from that of
continental Europe. Along with location traits, many incidents contributed
to Britain's detachment from Europe. Indeed, there was a feeling of
superiority among the British population towards their European
counterparts. Britain's historical, traditional, institutional, and strategic
background make a large percentage of British people look at Europe as
the "Other."

1.1.1.1 Geographical Perspective

Geography has been one major player in shaping the political world.
Geographical locations of countries represent an instrument of expressing
pride in belonging to one nation or another. Physical features of a given
area are important for national identities of countries. David Livingstone
highlights how geography has had an intimate involvement with exploration
and has been an instrument of imperialism. It has been exploited in an attempt
to point to a divine creator. Geography has vitalized the human experience
by extricating humankind from nature's grip and has also functioned as a
bridge between nature and humanity.[28] In fact, a diversity of factors raised
the issue of confronting difficulties when the British political elite
attempted to get integrated in Europe. Being an island by herself, Britain
has always been considered an independent nation far from its European
neighbours. In other words, the British Isles do not share borders with the
other European countries. In Britain, the term "Europe" refers to the whole
part of Europe apart from the UK. According to Justin Gibbins, "The
evocation of the 'Britain as island' narrative has emboldened the image of
Britain as a unique and geographically separate nation."[29]

British people's insularity is a product of the "island narrative." The
British Isles have their own specificities. The island vision of the UK is a
story of different people with a different view from that of continental
Europe. The fact that Britain is an island has even made the British history
different. Unlike its European neighbours, Britain had neither been
defeated nor occupied after 1707. Long before the creation of the United
Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, England had never been
occupied since 1066. The Norman Conquest which happened in 1066 was
"an important watershed in English history and marked the last successful

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[28] David Livingstone cited in Justin Gibbins, 2012, "British Discourse on Europe:
Self/Other and National Identities" (PhD thesis, University of Birmingham), 97.
[29] Ibid.