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From Ambiguity to Euroscepticism? A
Case Study of the Norwegian Progress
Party's Position on the European Union

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Abstract

Drawing on interview and survey data and an analysis of the party's manifestos, the paper looks at developments in the Norwegian Progress Party's (FrP) position on the European Union (EU) since 1973 in order to ascertain to what extent the party can be said to be Eurosceptic, and what type of Euroscepticism it exhibits. It demonstrates that in the Progress Party's ambiguous stance towards the EU there is a discernible Euroscepticism which is characterized by an aversion to the deepening of integration, the EU's social dimension, EU bureaucracy, EU regulation and foreign policy cooperation, and that since the 1990s, there has been a considerable shift towards Euroscepticism within the party's rank and file. Among the existing Euroscepticism typologies, it is argued that the Progress Party's position on Europe comes closest to *revisionist* Euroscepticism, preferring the EU as it was pre-Maastricht, as the party acknowledges the need for supranational cooperation in certain areas, especially in economic policy, but is sceptical about the political integration which has taken place in the EU in recent years.

From Ambiguity to Euroscepticism? A Case Study of the Norwegian Progress Party's Position on the European Union

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Introduction

The Norwegian Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet* - FrP) has, since it was founded in 1973, never given out any clear signals that it is particularly enthusiastic or negative about European integration. Before the referendum on Norwegian European Union (EU) membership in 1994, the party stance was 'Yes to the EC, no to union',² and since 1997, the party has refrained from taking a position on the issue, casting its stance as 'neutral'.

Much has changed in the EU since Maastricht and in the Progress Party since the 1993 election and the Norwegian referendum on EU membership in 1994. European integration is no longer purely a matter of economic cooperation, synonymous with 'more market and less state', but has multiple political dimensions tied to it, ranging from social policy to security policy. Moreover, with its membership having risen from 12 to 27, the EU has become more supranational in character, with extended use of majority voting throughout its decision-making structures. Meanwhile, in Norway, the Progress Party has become one of the three largest parties in the party system, having consistently polled above 14 percent of the vote in all the general elections since 1997 (see Table 2 below for an overview of the development of the party's electoral fortunes). In the September 2009 general election, the Progress Party

¹ The author would like to thank Dr. Susan Milner, Prof. Richard Whitman and Dr. Nicholas Startin for their support and helpful comments on the first draft of this paper, and also the anonymous individuals who provided valuable advice on subsequent drafts.

² The party was sceptical to increased political integration, i.e. the changes introduced by the Maastricht Treaty, which transformed the EC into the EU.

achieved its best ever electoral result, as it won 22.9 percent of the vote and gained 41 of the 169 seats in the Norwegian parliament, the Storting.

Political scientists have commonly included the Progress Party in studies of the European radical right³ (RR) party family (e.g. Ignazi 2003; Betz 1994; Oesch 2008; Swank & Betz 2003; Bjørklund & Andersen 2002), due to shared characteristics such as a neo-liberal economic position, a key feature of Kitschelt's radical right parties' 'winning formula' (Kitschelt & McGann 1995),⁴ focus on stricter asylum and immigration policy, welfare chauvinism, strong leadership and populist political style. Moreover, in elections, the Progress Party appears to 'feed from the same sources' as other parties in the radical right party (RRP) family (Andersen & Bjørklund 2000: 220). The Progress Party draws a disproportionate amount of its support from the youngest strata of the electorate, men, the working or middle class, private sector employees and people on low or medium incomes. Its voters are less likely to be highly educated and commonly harbour anti-system and anti-immigration sentiments (Widfeldt 2000; Bjørklund 2007).

These similarities notwithstanding, the Progress Party's stance on European integration is one of the elements that sets the party apart from the RR grouping. Whereas most other RRP, such as the French Front National (FN), The Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) and the Danish People's Party (DF), are Eurosceptic, the Progress Party stands out in its seeming lack of Euroscepticism. For the 1994 referendum on membership the Progress Party advocated

³ Alternatively, 'extreme right', 'right-wing populist', 'far right' and 'anti-immigrant' have been used to denote the parties on the right of the mainstream right in Europe.

⁴ It should be noted that Kitschelt's radical right thesis has been refuted (e.g. Eatwell 2003) and modified (Kitschelt 2004; De Lange 2007).

Norwegian entry to the European Union⁵ and since 1997, it has refrained from taking a stand on the issue of Europe.

Due to the Progress Party's reluctance to take a stand on the issue of EU membership, very little is known about its position on European integration,⁶ and this has created some confusion in the literature.⁷ To bridge this gap, this paper aims to achieve a fuller understanding of the Progress Party's position on Europe: to uncover whether the Progress Party can be classed as Eurosceptic and if so, what kind of Euroscepticism the party exhibits. Thus, the paper contributes to the literature on radical right parties.⁸ The paper is also complementary to Tarditi's (2010) case study of the Scottish National Party's European position, as both papers trace the evolution of party positions on the EU. Moreover, the analysis of the Progress Party's stance aims to assess existing Euroscepticism typologies, their strengths and their shortcomings, thereby contributing to the continuing discussion about Euroscepticism conceptualizations. In addition, the paper provides a contribution to knowledge in the context of the political situation in Norway. With the four Eurosceptic parties having generated 21.8 percent of the votes in the last general election and the two pro-EU parties having achieved 52.6 percent (see Table 1 below for details on party positions), it is clear that the EU-'neutral' Progress, with its 22.9 percent of the vote, is in a pivotal

⁵ The paper will mainly use the term European Union (EU) when referring to what was previously the European Communities (EC). However, when pointing to specific times and events prior to 1992, when the EU was created, the term EC will be used.

⁶ Admittedly, the Progress Party is included in Saglie's (2002) study of the Norwegian parties' treatment of the EU question between 1989-1994, but it has only been published in Norwegian.

⁷ In the RRP literature it is not uncommon to find the party connected to Euroscepticism when included in the ER party family (e.g. Oesch 2009: 351), or misrepresented as a pro-EU entry party, due to its adopted 'yes' stance for the 1994 referendum (e.g. Svåsand 1998; Ignazi 2003).

⁸ It is questionable how appropriate it is to include the Progress Party in the same party family as the FN or the FPÖ. However, because the Progress Party share a number of traits with these parties and the Progress Party remains difficult to label according to existing party classifications, it seems reasonable to predict that the Progress Party will continue to be compared with other RRP in the future.

position when it comes to making or breaking a future application for EU membership in the Storting.⁹

The paper is structured as follows. First, it presents the research questions and the data and methods used in the study. Secondly, it gives a review of the literature on conceptualizations of Euroscepticism, presenting the three typologies which are used in the analysis. Thirdly, the paper gives an account of the history of the Progress Party's handling of the EU issue, and in the fourth section, the findings of the interview and survey are reported. It concludes with a discussion of the findings. For the purposes of the paper, Euroscepticism is defined as 'the idea of contingent or qualified, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration' (Taggart 1998: 366).

The Research Questions, Data and Methods

The objective of the paper is to achieve a fuller understanding of the Progress Party's stance on European integration, as well as testing the most prominent typologies in the Euroscepticism literature. Specifically, the paper aims to address the following two questions: Is the Progress Party Eurosceptic? And if it is, what type of Euroscepticism does it exhibit?

The study utilizes both qualitative and quantitative data, employing a concurrent triangulation mixed methods research design in order to maximize the validity of the findings and strengthen the conclusions. The first source of data used is party manifestos.¹⁰ Although manifestos are very beneficial in that they first, provide valuable insight into the official,

⁹ Although it should be noted that as long as the power is held by either the Red-Green coalition, made up of the pro-European Labour and the hard Eurosceptic Centre and Socialist Left parties (in office since 2005), or the centre-right alternative, comprised of the Conservative, Christian Democratic and Liberal parties (in office 2001-2005), a new bid for EU membership is unlikely to appear on the agenda, as it would entail a breach of their cooperation agreements, which are built on so-called 'suicide clauses' on the EU issue (Sitter 2005).

¹⁰ All of the Progress Party's manifestos (1973-2009) are included in the study. The 1973-2001 manifestos are taken from the CD-ROM *Vi vil...! Norske partiprogrammer 1884-2001*, compiled by the Norwegian Social Science Databank (NSD), and the most recent manifestos are sourced from the Progress Party's website.

recorded position of parties at different points in time and second, are products of democratic processes within the parties, they also carry considerable weaknesses. Firstly, the attention devoted to Europe and the EU in each of the manifestos from 1973 up until present day varies considerably from document to document. This makes it particularly difficult to make any inferences about the party's stance on the European Communities (EC) the first couple of decades of the party's existence, when Europe was barely mentioned in the manifestos.¹¹ To address these gaps, Saglie's (2002) study of the Norwegian parties' EU stances and strategies is a valuable source: it compliments the manifesto analysis well in the mapping of the development of the party's official position. Furthermore, because party manifestos do not offer much information about internal struggles and dissidence, a triangulation strategy is used to get a fuller picture of the Progress Party's position on Europe.

An elite survey, conducted by the author, probing the individual Storting representatives' (MPs) attitudes towards the EU and EU membership is used to ascertain the extent to which the party is divided on the question of EU membership and the party MPs are homogeneous in their opinions and attitudes towards various EU initiatives and policies. The survey questionnaires were distributed to all the 169 MPs in the Storting in November 2006 and contained one open-ended and nine closed-ended questions about the individuals' attitudes towards EU membership, various EU initiatives, and arguments for and against Norwegian EU membership. The survey generated an overall response rate of 53 percent and among the Progress Party respondents 63 percent (24 of 38 MPs).

Finally, to supplement the findings from the manifestos and the survey, data from a semi-structured, in-depth interview with the Progress Party's foreign policy spokesman (FPS),

¹¹ It should be noted that this was the case for all the Norwegian Storting parties, as the issue was off the agenda from after the first referendum on membership in 1972 to 1989, when European integration had started to gather speed as a result of the developments introduced in the Single European Act in 1986.

Morten Høglund,¹² is used. The topics for the interview centred around the development of the Progress Party's position on the EU and its context and contents. The following section reviews the different Euroscepticism typologies found in the literature.

Types of Euroscepticism

Taggart and Szcerbiak's (2001) soft/hard dichotomy is perhaps the most widely known and used conceptualization in the literature. Hard Euroscepticism entails rejection of or principal objection to European integration, whereas the soft variety encompasses opposition to certain aspects of the integration process. In other words, to be classified as a hard Eurosceptic, one would either have to be against one's country's membership of the EU, thus advocating withdrawal if already a member or opposition to joining if a non-member, or oppose European policy initiatives to such an extent that membership would, by implication, be untenable. Soft Eurosceptics, on the other hand, commonly oppose one or several aspects of the EU and/or the integration process, such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and/or Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). Despite its popularity, the soft/hard distinction has attracted considerable criticism, its major flaw being its all-inclusiveness.¹³

Vasilopoulou (2009: 6) argues that it is useful to look at parties' positions on Europe according to their (lack of) support for European integration in *principle*, its current *practice* ('the EU institutional and policy status quo'), and its *future* ('the deepening of European integration'). This differentiation produces three types of Euroscepticism: 'rejecting',

¹² The date of the interview was 30 March 2009. Consent to disclose his identity and to quote has been obtained.

¹³ For example, Kopecky and Mudde (2002) argue that it has the potential of ascribing Eurosceptic attitudes to people who are largely pro-European and only have reservations about limited aspects of the process. For other critiques of the hard/soft distinction and Kopecky and Mudde's alternative two-dimensional Euroscepticism typology, which differentiates between diffuse and specific support for European integration/the EU, see e.g. Szcerbiak & Taggart (2008); Mudde (2007) and Vasilopoulou (2009).

‘conditional’ and ‘compromising’ Euroscepticism. The ‘rejecting’ type of Euroscepticism entails opposition to the principle of European cooperation and thus its practice and future; the ‘conditional’ type equals support for the principle of European cooperation, but rejection of the practice and the future; whereas the ‘compromising’ type entails support or acceptance of the principle and practice of integration, but oppose any further future integration (Vasilopoulou 2009: 8). A benefit of Vasilopoulou’s conceptualisation is that nuances in different types of Euroscepticism can be more easily captured than with Taggart and Szczerbiak’s (2001) hard/soft typology, which produces distinctions based on subjective estimations because it does not specify towards what parts of the integration process opposition is directed towards. Nevertheless, Vasilopoulou’s typology fails to compete with Taggart and Szczerbiak’s (2001) typology in two respects, namely in familiarity and usability.

Flood (2002a, b) provides another alternative categorization solution. He believes the term is best used to describe three Eurosceptic positions: the first and softest group, the ‘minimalists’, oppose further integration; the second group, the ‘revisionists’, desire to reverse integration to a former stage (most commonly before Maastricht); and the third grouping, the ‘rejectionists’, advocate withdrawal or refuse to join the EU. He also includes supporters of the EU in his model, as he contends that the Euroscepticism classification should not be extended to include reformist positions which involve opposition to specific aspects of the EU but are broadly pro-integration (i.e. policy and/or national interest variations of ‘soft’ Euroscepticism). Europhile positions are therefore divided into three different groups (from most pro-EU to least): ‘maximalists’, ‘reformists’ and ‘gradualists’ (also see Flood *et al.*, 2007).

A benefit of Flood's (2002a, b) model is that, as it includes both pro-European and anti-European attitudes, he avoids problems of separation between supportive and opposing positions altogether. In other words, an overall pro-European position will not be wrongly ascribed Euroscepticism. Also, Flood's labels are more straightforward than those put forward by Vasilopoulou (2009); the underlying meaning behind 'revisionist' and 'minimalist' is arguably clearer than 'conditional' and 'compromising'. Conversely, Flood's model lacks rigorous definitions, which are the key strength of Vasilopoulou's model. Nevertheless, there are many similarities between Vasilopoulou's typology and Flood's. Their 'rejectionist' categories are essentially the same, as are Vasilopoulou's 'compromisers' and Flood's 'minimalists'. This is expected, as they are the categories at either end of the Euroscepticism scale. The middle type, the 'revisionist' and the 'conditional' Euroscepticism categories, however, differ. Here, the litmus test seems to be whether one accepts the policy status quo anno 2010 (Vasilopoulou) or wishes to go back to integration pre-Maastricht (Flood). The question is: which of them can best capture the Progress Party's Euroscepticism?

In the subsequent analysis of the Progress Party's Euroscepticism, the three above conceptualizations, those of Taggart and Szczerbiak (2001), Vasilopoulou (2009) and Flood (2002a), are used to establish what type of Euroscepticism the Progress Party exhibits. Additionally, a critique of the major typologies in the literature is carried out. The next section communicates the findings of the research, starting with the development of the party's stance from the 1970s onwards.

The History of the Progress Party's Position on European Integration

The predecessor of the Progress Party, 'Anders Langes parti til sterk nedsettelse av skatter, avgifter og offentlige inngrep' (Anders Lange's party for a strong reduction of taxes, duties and public intervention), was founded in 1973, and was in the early 1970s more like an anti-tax movement than a regular party (Iversen 1998). Thus, in the 1973 manifesto, there was little mention of anything other than criticism of the nanny state and calls for reductions in taxes and state intervention; indeed, there was no mention of the EC or foreign policy at all. After the divisive and bitter referendum battle which culminated in the people's first 'no' to EC membership, the issue was removed from the political agenda for the next 14 years: neither of the parties in the Storting raised the EC issue until the developments surrounding the EC's single market in the late 1980s reactivated the debate on European cooperation. In effect, with the exception of the 1977 manifesto, which in one sentence acknowledges that it is in national interest to maintain close cooperation with the EC countries, the Progress Party's pre-1989 manifestos do not refer in one single instance to the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the EC, or Europe. The issue of Europe played in other words an insignificant part in the party's programmes in the 1970s and the early 1980s, but the various central figures in the party had advocated different outcomes in 1972. For example, the founder and chairman, Anders Lange and his adversary and from 1978 chairman, Carl I Hagen, were both proponents of EC membership in 1972. The chairman between 1975 and 1978, Arve Lønnum, on the other hand, was opposed (Saglie 2002).

Like in other Norwegian parties, European integration resurfaced as a topic for discussion in Progress' party conferences from 1986, after the Single European Act (SEA) had started thawing the freeze of the EC question. As the issue had been buried throughout the party's existence, the Progress Party was the only party in the Storting without a history of the EU

issue. Deciding on which line to go with was to prove difficult. The party's FPS, Morten Høglund, puts it like this: 'There were challenges in finding a profile and an identity on the question. [...] We could not figure out where we belonged'. Despite a clear tendency towards a pro-European majority within the party in the late 1980s, the Progress Party decided not to take a stand on membership for the 1989 general election (Saglie 2002). In effect, its 1989 manifesto only advocated the need for a new referendum.

The party took on a clearer 'yes' profile after the party conference in April 1990, expressing particular enthusiasm about the EC's four freedoms and the single market. But although there was a majority of roughly two-thirds in favour of EC entry, there were also central figures within the party who were opposed to membership (Saglie 2002: 102, 104). However, the 'no' side kept a relatively low profile. The infamous and ambiguous 'Yes to the EC, no to union' party line was launched in January 1993; it was inspired by Margaret Thatcher's support for the liberalist developments introduced in the SEA coupled with opposition to the Maastricht Treaty's plans for a political union. The aim was for Norway to negotiate similar opt-outs to Denmark and try to influence EC development in the future (Saglie 2002). As the 1993 manifesto reflects, the Progress Party's support was based on the EC's free market and competition dimension, the need to partake in EC/European Economic Area (EEA) level decision-making, the principle of subsidiarity, intergovernmentalism and cooperation on trans-national environmental issues. The pro-entry standpoint notwithstanding, uncertainty and scepticism surrounding the EU question was also clearly visible: the manifesto exhibits several elements of Euroscepticism, most importantly defence of sovereignty through opposition to union, EMU and supranationalism; scepticism of EC democracy, emphasising the need to avoid excessive EC bureaucracy; opposition to the EC's social dimension and

regulation; agricultural policy, calling for a reduction in EC subsidies and protectionism; and a preference for Atlantic security policy cooperation.

The ‘yes’ attitude of the youth wing of the Progress Party, the FpU, was clearer and stronger than in the main party organization in the build-up to the referendum. Its ‘yes’ stance was adopted already in 1990, and the stance was reaffirmed in 1994 when the negotiation result was published. It did not invoke much enthusiasm among the young Progress Party members, however: the volume of sustained agricultural subsidies was criticised and the negotiations were deemed ‘uninteresting’. They thought too much focus was put on fish and agriculture and too little on economic and security policy (Saglie 2002: 110).

Table 1 Official party positions on EU and EEA membership

PARTY	EU MEMBERSHIP	EEA MEMBERSHIP	INTRA-PARTY DISSENT*
Conservative Party	Yes	Yes	None
Labour Party	Yes	Yes	Anti-EU faction
Progress Party	Yes	Yes	Anti-EU faction
Liberal Party	No	Yes	Pro-EU faction & anti-EEA faction
Christian Democrats	No	Yes	Pro-EU faction & anti-EEA faction
Socialist Left Party	No	No	None
Centre Party	No	No	None

* Refers to whether there were any factions in disagreement with the official party stance.

Source: adapted from Saglie (1998: 352)

Table 2 Progress Party's electoral results

YEAR	PERCENT*
1973	5.0
1975	0.8*
1977	1.9
1979	1.9*
1981	4.5
1983	5.3*
1985	3.7
1987	10.4*
1989	13.0
1991	6.5*
1993	6.3
1995	10.5*
1997	15.3
1999	12.1*
2001	14.6
2003	16.4*
2005	22.1
2007	17.5*
2009	22.9
2011	11.4*

* Local (municipal) elections

Source: <http://www.aardal.info/> and www.nrk.no

The positions of the seven parties represented in the Storting from 1993 are displayed in Table 1. Like the Labour party, the Progress Party adopted a 'yes' stance on both EU and EEA membership, but struggled with intra-party dissent on full membership.

The Progress Party was facing a difficult time around the time of the referendum, with a poor election result in 1993 (see Table 2 above) and continuing struggles between the so-called neo-liberalists and populists within the party (Andersen & Bjørklund 2000). This was, in other words, a struggle between the free market driven Progress Party members on the one side, and on the other, the anti-establishment-driven members who were more concerned with appealing to 'common people' than ensuring that the party was adhering to a pure neo-liberalist ideology. The disagreements between these two main factions resulted in four of the party's ten MPs leaving the party¹⁴ and the predominantly neo-liberalist youth wing declaring

¹⁴ These were so-called neo-liberalists, whereas party chairman Hagen had ended up on the side of the populists.

its termination¹⁵ after the annual party conference in April 1994. Although the conflict did perhaps affect the Progress Party's ability to be visible in the debate about the EU, it did not correspond directly with the divisions over the EU question: Whereas many of the neo-liberalists were enthusiastic about EU membership on the basis of the 'four freedoms', others were of the view that the EU was, quite on the contrary, a barrier to free trade. Among the populists, there were Eurosceptics who worried about national sovereignty and immigration, and pro-Europeans who were excited about defence and security policy developments in the EU. As a representative of the populist side, the party chairman, Hagen, was in favour of EC membership mainly because of the European security policy efforts. In April 1994, he stated that if it had not been for the security policy aspects of Norwegian membership, then he would have been indifferent to the whole issue (Harbo 1994b). The same month, he stated that he was 55 percent for and 45 percent against, apparently directing his opposition towards the union and the plans for a single currency, as well as the EU's agricultural and regional policy (Harbo 1994a, b).

After the referendum on 28 November 1994, which resulted in 52.5 percent of the Norwegian population rejecting membership, the party resumed its non-position on the EU. Already in 1993, Hagen had declared his desire to revert to a more neutral and toned down stance on Europe in order to increase the party's voter appeal. In the light of the electoral losses of 1993, he pointed out that the 'yes' stance had been the party's biggest mistake (Saglie 2002: 115). As a result of this view and the traumatic experiences culminating in the 1994 party conference, it was decided that a more neutral stance was a better solution for the party than a muddled 'yes' position.¹⁶ Since 1997, the Progress Party's manifestos have defended the

¹⁵ This decision was repealed by chairman Hagen, and a new leadership loyal to the main organisation was instated (Saglie 2002).

¹⁶ Interview with Morten Høglund, 30/03/09.

EEA agreement¹⁷ and the people's decision to stay outside the EU, and emphasised the need to reduce protectionism which hinders cross-border cooperation. Moreover, they state that the Progress Party accepts the principle of integration, namely the need for supranational solutions to address trans-national political issues, in areas such as security, the environment and free-trade. In addition, a few expressions of scepticism towards the EU's development are declared in the 2005 manifesto: opposition to the social dimension, and a new emphasis on the priority of existing security alliances and the relationship to the United States (and Russia) and retaining sovereignty over the country's ocean domain and its oil and gas resources. The 2009 manifesto refrains from directing any criticism at the EU, but merely states the following: 'The Norwegian people have twice said no to Norwegian EU membership, and we will respect the will of the people. The only thing which could prospectively change this is the result of a new referendum.'

The discussion above has provided a timeline of the Progress Party's attitude towards European integration, as reflected by the party's election manifestos and available secondary literature. The next section reports the interview and survey findings in order to further explore the nature of the Progress Party's Euroscepticism.

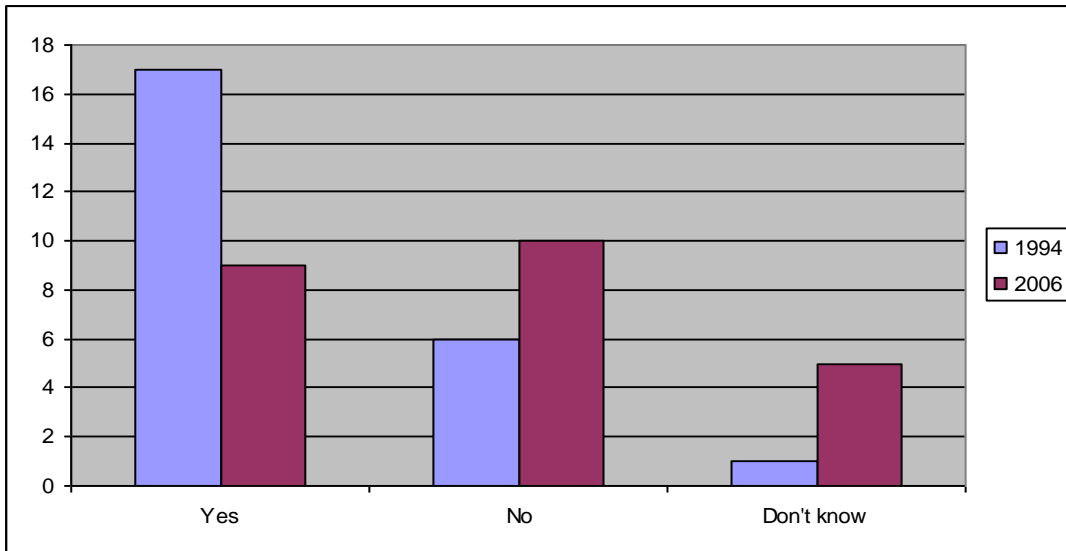
The Inside Story: Internal Divisions over the EU

Since the 1994 referendum, it seems that the balance of opinion among Progress Party MPs has shifted from a 'yes' majority to a small 'no' majority (see Figure 1 below). Whereas 71 percent of the MPs who participated in the survey report that they voted 'yes' in the 1994 referendum, only 38 said they are now in favour of EU membership. The 'no' proportion has

¹⁷ The 2005 manifesto mentions the influence deficit in the EEA agreement, indicating some dissatisfaction with the current situation, but the other sources used in the study suggest that the EEA agreement enjoys broad support in the party.

gone from 25 percent in 1994 to 42 percent in 2006, and 21 of the respondents are unsure about their preference.¹⁸

Figure 1 The changes in Progress Party MPs' opinions about EU membership 1994-2006



Source: Author's elite survey

Of the EU policy areas listed in the survey (see Table 3 below), support among Progress MPs is strongest for the EEA agreement, the Schengen agreement and the single market, and lowest for further enlargements, the CAP and the 2004 enlargement.

¹⁸ In 1994, the remaining 4 percent (1 MP) did not vote.

Table 3 Norwegian MPs' support for various EU policies

EU policy area	FrP MPs' support	Other MPs' support
Schengen agreement	17 71%	43 66%
EEA agreement	16 67%	41 63%
Single market	14 58%	32 49%
EMU	12 50%	30 46%
CFSP	9 38%	38 58%
2004 enlargement	7 29%	45 69%
CAP	5 21%	16 25%
Further enlargements	3 13%	33 51%
Total	24 100%	65 100%

Source: Author's elite survey

As the Progress Party has consistently defended the status quo since 1994, it is unsurprising that the EEA agreement enjoys broad support among the party's MPs. The dominant party view is that the EEA 'is by no means perfect, but it is, as the situation is now, the best alternative for Norway'.¹⁹ Moreover, on average, the EEA and Schengen agreements are the two policy areas which receive most support among all the MPs who participated in the survey, regardless of party affiliation. That the PP MPs are overall supportive of the Schengen agreement could indicate positive attitudes towards the strengthening of the external borders of the EU, and that Schengen is viewed as a means of stopping non-European immigrants before they reach the Norwegian border.

The fact that support for the CAP is low is not very astonishing either, considering the neo-liberalist profile of the party and scepticism towards the EU's 'socialist' policies, as well as the overall low support for the CAP in the Storting. The relatively low backing of a CFSP is also more or less as expected; FPS Høglund declares that the party 'was critical when the EU

¹⁹ Interview with Morten Høglund, 30/03/09.

took a turn in the direction of defence policy'. The division corresponds with the split mentioned above, between the sceptics worrying about national sovereignty on the one hand, and those in the party, like Hagen, in favour of European cooperation in the security sphere on the other. Alternatively, the relatively low support for the CFSP could be explained by the party's commitment to close links with the United States and NATO as the primary focus for Norway's security and defence policy. The emphasis on this in the 2005 manifesto suggests this.

What is puzzling about the results, however, is that support for the single market receives support from only 58 percent of the Progress respondents. Because of the party's neo-liberalism, the free market dimension of the EU is likely to be the major attraction of European integration, and thus it would be expected that the single market would garner more support from the party cadres. Additionally, the discrepancy between support for the single market (58 percent) and the EEA (67 percent), of which the single market is the key feature, indicates that support for the former should have been higher. So does the fact that 93 percent of the Conservative respondents, who share the Progress Party's free market philosophy, express support for it.

Furthermore, the low support for the eastward enlargements is in line with expectations, considering the anti-immigrant and welfare chauvinist profile of the party. The Progress Party's results of only 29 and 13 percent support for the 2004 and further enlargements respectively, are strikingly low compared to the average 69 and 50 percent support of the other parties' MPs. However, this lack of support is inconsistent with the official party line, as the party's FPS maintains that the party is and has been nothing but positive towards past and future enlargements, notably with the restrictions that were imposed on immigration in

2004. This indicates a case of incongruence of opinion between the party leadership and the party members.²⁰

The MPs' attitudes towards the Euro are interesting because here they are split exactly down the middle. Also FPS Høglund points out EMU as an issue of disagreement within the party. Again, it could be worries about sovereignty and identity playing a central role for the opponents of EMU, like in the British Conservative party, whereas the other half may be attracted to a monetary union as a result of market economic and/or pragmatic considerations. As Høglund says, the utilization of a 'kind of cost/benefit analysis, [considering] what is right, what is important for Norway' is quite central to attitude formation on European integration within the party.²¹

As Table 4 below shows, the party's main arguments for joining the EU seem to be increased competitiveness for Norwegian businesses (79 percent) and partaking in EU decision-making (67 percent). Among the other MPs, decision-making and maintaining the peace on the continent are the two most frequently cited 'yes' arguments, followed by showing solidarity with Europe (which only 21 percent of Progress Party MPs support). The economic argument, however, only attracts support from 42 percent of the non-Progress respondents. This indicates that economic utility is more central to the Progress Party's opinion formation than the other parties, which are more concerned with softer values, such as promoting peace and solidarity.

²⁰ Alternatively, the discrepancy could be down to weaknesses in using mixed methods. In the case of a qualitative in-depth interview, the findings are inevitably coloured by the respondent's personal perceptions, and in a survey, respondents do not necessarily attribute the same meanings to concepts or ideas. In addition, a survey provides little information about *why* the respondents give the answers they give. For example, it is not clear why only 12.5 percent of the Progress Party respondents support further enlargement or which countries' entry the respondents do not support. It could be Romania and Bulgaria, or the more controversial applicant country, Turkey.

²¹ Interview with Morten Høglund, 30/03/09.

Table 4 Progress Party MPs' support for 'yes' and 'no' arguments, in percent (%)

Which of the following arguments for/against Norwegian EU membership do you support?			
Positive arguments		Negative arguments	
EU membership would help maintain good relations and peace on the continent	11 46%	EU membership would add unnecessary bureaucracy	20 83%
EU membership would improve relations with Europe	12 50%	EU membership would damage the agricultural and fisheries sectors	4 17%
EU membership would enable Norway to take part in important EU level decision-making	16 67%	EU membership would threaten national sovereignty	13 54%
EU membership would give Norway the chance to join the EMU	9 38%	EU membership would rob Norway of its current influential position in foreign affairs	5 21%
EU membership would make Norwegian firms more competitive	19 79%	EU membership would threaten Norwegian regional policy and municipalities	1 4%
EU membership would make Norway more influential on the world stage	3 13%	EU membership would threaten the Norwegian welfare state	1 4%
EU membership would boost the Norwegian economy	9 38%	EU membership would be too expensive	11 46%
EU membership would show Norwegian solidarity with the less developed parts of Europe	5 21%	EU membership would threaten Norwegian culture and heritage	3 13%
Total	24 100%		24 100%

Source: Author's elite survey

When it comes to the 'no' arguments, criticism of EU bureaucracy (83 percent) and the EU threatening national sovereignty (54 percent) scores the highest among Progress respondents. The former is unremarkable when comparing them to the other Norwegian parties; the bureaucracy argument is overall the most supported 'no' argument in all the parties. The sovereignty argument, however, shows some interesting results; the Progress Party's concern about sovereignty is only surpassed by the two 'hard' Eurosceptic parties, the Centre party and the Socialist Left. Furthermore, the lack of concern for the primary sectors among the Progress Party is another remarkable difference between Progress and the other parties; only 17 percent of Progress Party MPs support the argument, compared to 60 percent of the other MPs. Moreover, 46 percent of Progress Party MPs agree with the statement that 'EU membership would be too expensive', whereas only 5 percent of the non-Progress

respondents agree with the argument. Both the cost argument and the business argument reinforce the view that attitude formation on Europe within the Progress Party is, to a larger degree than in the other Norwegian parties, subject to considerations of economic utility and the promotion of neo-liberalist economics.

The survey results show that the Progress Party's view on European integration is characterised by a considerable degree of scepticism and uncertainty. It seems that the party's scepticism towards the Maastricht Treaty in the early 1990s, which was expressed as support for membership but opposition to union, has persisted through the last fifteen years. FPS, Morten Høglund describes it like this:

‘the integration as regards depth and the ever increasing appetite for new themes, that's where there has been a considerable scepticism. So, we feel that the EU's appetite, for new areas and so forth, has been too big. [...] From being a supranational cooperation in some areas of common interest, it has become a political project, [... and this] is something the party [...] to a large extent has been opposed to. So in the early nineties, we placed ourselves in a kind of Eurosceptic, call it British, attitude’.

Hence, it is very clear that the Progress Party and the majority of its parliamentarians, despite the party's official non-stance on EU membership, are, at least to some degree, Eurosceptic. The following section aims to establish what type of Euroscepticism it exhibits.

Defining the Progress Party's Euroscepticism: Again a Party With No Home?

It is evident that the Progress Party's real position on European integration is far from 'neutral', as marketed by the party since 1997. At the very least, its position could be considered 'soft' Eurosceptic, meaning contingent or qualified opposition to European integration or the EU (Taggart & Szczerbiak 2001). However, the divisions within the party and its reluctance to clarify its position on membership makes it problematic to determine whether its Euroscepticism is located at the 'soft' or the 'hard' end of the continuum. This is because opposition for a party's country's membership of the EU has been used as the qualifying factor to whether it can be considered to harbour 'hard' Euroscepticism as opposed to the 'soft' type. This problem also applies to Flood's (2002a), and arguably also Vasilopoulou's (2009) *rejectionist* categories. It could well be the case that the Progress Party should be classed as 'hard' Eurosceptic (or 'rejectionist'), as the sum of the Progress Party's reservations about the EU is likely to be irreconcilable with membership, as it is difficult to imagine that Norway would be able to negotiate opt-outs from policy areas of undesired cooperation if applying for membership a third time. On the other hand, the prevalence of pragmatic assessments of European cooperation and the seemingly common utilization of cost/benefit analyses in the Progress Party suggest that it is equally likely that the party would come down in favour of membership, and as a corollary, on the 'soft' end of the scale.

According to the Euroscepticism typology put forward by Vasilopoulou (2009), the Progress Party would certainly not qualify for 'rejecting' Euroscepticism, as the party is in favour of 'supranational solutions' to 'a multitude of political issues'.²² There is, in other words, no doubt that the Progress Party is supportive of the *principle* of European cooperation. Whether to ascribe 'conditional' or 'compromising' Euroscepticism to the Progress Party becomes

²² From the 2005 manifesto.

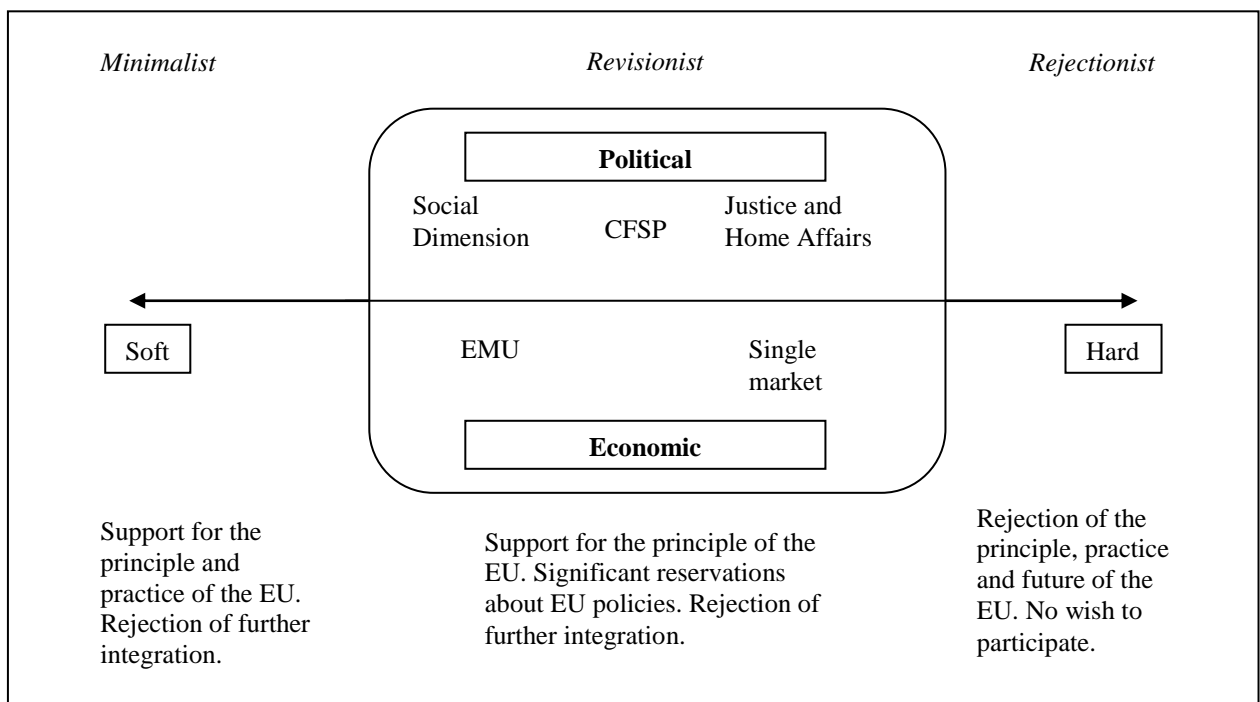
more problematic. On the one hand, the Progress Party clearly does not accept the entire EU policy status quo, suggesting that the party is ‘conditionally’ Eurosceptic, opposing not only the *future* of integration, but also significant elements of its *practice*. On the other hand, the party does acknowledge the need to move beyond intergovernmentalism and surrendering some national sovereignty in order to achieve economic prosperity, and thus ‘compromising’ Euroscepticism seems appropriate. Hence, the Progress Party falls between the two categories, ‘conditional’ and ‘compromising’ because the typology does not cater for variance in policy-specific Euroscepticism. This is a weakness in more elaborate typologies like those put forward by Vasilopoulou (2009) or Kopecky and Mudde (2002), because the complexity of European integration produces various positions according to support and opposition to different policy areas. This is the strength of the hard/soft conceptualization, which acknowledges the many varieties of Euroscepticism along a continuum.

The reason why the ‘conditional’ and the ‘compromising’ types are problematic to apply is the lack of nuance in the definition of the EU’s *practice*. Regarding ‘conditional’ Euroscepticism, it is hard to imagine that parties and people who are for the principle of European integration reject the *entire* EU policy status quo. And when it comes to ‘compromising’ Euroscepticism, it can be argued that parties that accept the EU’s *entire* policy status quo anno 2009 (including economic policy, EMU, social/redistributive policy and security policy) are likely to be unambiguous about their support for the EU and an ‘ever closer union’. To the definition of the *practice* of the EU, it might be appropriate to differentiate between economic and political integration, or different policy areas (or treaties, according to Flood 2002a; b). This is supported by the fact that out of all of the existing typologies examined, the most fitting label for the Progress Party is Flood’s (2002a) ‘revisionist’ Euroscepticism. This is due to the party and its MPs’ overall positive views on

economic integration and overall critical attitudes towards the political integration which has taken place post-Maastricht.

Considering that all of these three typologies have their strengths (and weaknesses), the solution would arguably be to incorporate the best of all three into one model, using Taggart and Szczerbiak’s familiar hard/soft scale, Flood’s (2002a) straightforward terms, and Vasilopoulou’s (2009) rigorous definitions. All three already conform to the concept of a scale, ranging from hard (‘rejectionist’) to soft (‘compromising’/‘minimalist’). Flood (2002b) asserts that reformist positions which involve opposition to single EU policies but are broadly pro-integration should not be part of any definition or conceptualization of Euroscepticism, so in the centre of the scale, only opposition to policy *areas* are included.

Figure 2 The ‘Best of’ the Euroscepticism Typologies



Thus, according to the model, illustrated in Figure 2 above, people or parties who are sceptical about further integration should be located on the soft end of the scale, and on the

hard end, those who are opposed to the principle of European integration and do not wish to partake in it. In the middle of the scale, there are those who are sceptical about significant parts of the EU policy status quo such as the single market, EMU, the social dimension or the CFSP. This is different to Vasilopoulou's 'conditional' Euroscepticism, which treated it as an entity and made operationalization of the categories problematic. The policy-specific (alternatively treaty-specific) Euroscepticism can be divided into political or economic 'revisionist' Euroscepticism.

The 'best of' model makes it easier to pinpoint the Progress Party's Euroscepticism. As discussed above, it is not 'hard' or 'rejectionist', as the party has not specified that it is opposed to membership. It also becomes clear from the model that 'soft' or 'minimalist' (or 'compromising') is not an appropriate label either, as the party's strong opposition towards the social dimension, as well as the divisions over the CFSP and EMU,²³ places it in the 'revisionist' box. As a corollary, it becomes irrelevant to discuss whether the party's Euroscepticism is 'hard' or 'soft'; as the 'revisionist' position is in the middle, indeterminably soft or hard. Only if the party was to explicitly state that it is willing to 'compromise' and support membership would it be located on the soft end of the scale, and similarly, only if it decides that its reservations about the EU present barriers to membership, would it be on the hard side.

Conclusion

The paper has shown that below the surface of the Progress Party's non-stance on EU membership, there lies a tangible Euroscepticism which has remained largely unchanged since the 1990s. Although there is broad support for the EEA and Schengen agreements

²³ And potentially to Justice and Home Affairs cooperation, considering the MPs' opposition towards eastward enlargements.

within the party, as well as to the free market idea of the EU, the study shows that the Progress Party's attitudes towards the deepening of integration, the EU's expanding social dimension, increased regulation and EU bureaucracy are characterised by considerable scepticism. On the individual level, the party's MPs also express a marked opposition to the eastward enlargements, suggesting concerns about immigration from and financial transfers to poorer European countries, and the majority of the Progress MPs are also worried about the EU's large bureaucracy and the loss of sovereignty. When it comes to EMU and the CFSP, the party is split. Overall, the Progress Party's Euroscepticism seems to be directed at the political integration which has taken place during the last two decades, especially policies which run counter to the party's neo-liberalist economic position.

The party's attitude towards the EU is difficult to pin down according to the existing Euroscepticism typologies, mostly due to its unwillingness to clarify its position on membership. Whereas Taggart and Szczerbiak's (2001) hard/soft typology and Vasilopoulou's (2009) typology fall short of accounting for the Progress Party's Euroscepticism, Flood's 'revisionist' category seems to fit the party best. This is because the Progress Party is particularly sceptical towards political integration, most notably the social dimension of the EU, and to some extent EMU and the CFSP, policy areas which were all introduced in the Maastricht treaty. The paper presented a model based on the best of the three individual typologies, combining Vasilopoulou's definitions of the principle, practice and future of integration with Flood's (2002b) labels along Taggart and Szczerbiak's hard/soft scale, while adding a political/economic dimension to policy area-specific Euroscepticism. According to this model, the Progress Party as a party exhibits 'political revisionist' Euroscepticism. However, it is important to note that the individual Eurosceptics within the party come from all parts of the hard/soft scale.

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