

The Impact of National Welfare State Dissatisfaction and the Type of Welfare Regime on Euroscepticism: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

This paper explores the effect of welfare state dissatisfaction on Euroscepticism by means of European Social Survey data of 2018, focussed on four countries (Norway, Germany, Czech Republic and the United Kingdom). It is believed that citizens tend to 'blame Europe' for defaults in their national welfare system and that this results in Eurosceptic attitudes. The data suggest that variations in this relationship can be accounted for the type of welfare regime. Previous literature states that the effect of dissatisfaction on Euroscepticism may be stronger for more protective welfare regimes (socio-democratic, conservative, post-communist) than the liberal regime, as there might be more at stake for these welfare regimes regarding EU unification and integration. Nevertheless, results show that the most protective regimes are less Eurosceptic than the liberal regime. However, the relationship between welfare state dissatisfaction and Euroscepticism is stronger in more protective welfare regimes. The moderating effect of welfare regime can't be explained by theories about European integration and how generous a welfare regime is. Future research could help clarify these findings.

Keywords: Euroscepticism, welfare state dissatisfaction, welfare regime, EU attitudes, European integration

1. Introduction

There has been growing interest in causes of 'Euroscepticism'; a term which has been frequently used in public debate. Additionally, this term is broadly known and excessively used in politics, media broadcasting and research, especially during the Brexit referendum in the UK in 2016. Researchers have been scrutinising 'Euroscepticism' amongst citizens of the EU and its possible indicators on both individual as contextual level. Individual factors possibly influencing attitudes towards the EU are political distrust, support for protectionism, negative attitudes towards immigration and various other factors (Abraham & Travaglino, 2018; Vasilopoulou, 2016). Studies also focussed on other factors, such as dissatisfaction in national governments or welfare states on individual level, and whether it has a negative effect on trust in the EU (Anderson, 1998; Kumlin, 2009; Beaudonnet, 2015). This correlation is discovered in a majority of EU member states. Findings suggest that citizens perceive European integration as a threat to their welfare state. If they are dissatisfied with the organisation of their welfare state, people tend to 'blame Europe' and therefore are more Eurosceptic (Kumlin, 2009).

However, other research found an opposite trend or no significant effect of national government, democracy or welfare state dissatisfaction on Euroscepticism (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2000; McLaren, 2007). Previous research does not give a clear indication of how this dissatisfaction in national performances play a role in the Euroscepticism debate. Furthermore, research about the effects of national government satisfaction has been measured in various ways, but little studies focus on the effects of welfare state satisfaction on Euroscepticism. It is interesting to investigate whether theories about the effects of general national government satisfaction on Euroscepticism are also applicable to welfare state satisfaction independently, as most of the research related to dissatisfaction in national government performances and Euroscepticism is mainly focussed on perceptions of economic and democracy performances and trust in the national government.

The percentages of people having negative attitudes towards the European Union also seem to differ per EU member state in a significant manner. The Eurobarometer (2018) presented variations of trust in the EU per country. High levels of distrust in the European Union are found for example in Greece (81%), Cyprus (72%), Austria (65%) and France (65%). On the other hand, high levels of support for the European Union are found mainly in Malta (93%), Ireland (91%), Lithuania (90%) and Poland (88%). This raises the question whether country- or -institutional specific characteristics per EU member state could explain differences in attitudes towards the European Union. Earlier research argues that differences in media broadcasts, the duration of the EU membership of a country and the distance to Brussels

potentially have an influence on EU attitudes (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2007; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2010). However, these indicators only seem to partially explain Euroscepticism amongst citizens per EU member state and do not seem highly significant. Findings suggest variations between countries in the extent of EU-trust and that this relates to the type of welfare benefits per country. Citizens in countries where more money is spent on welfare services experience greater risk of EU integration, as this might entail a loss of social benefits or adjustments of the welfare system in general (Ray, 2004). It is argued that public service dissatisfaction is related to the social spending or GDP of a country, and that this relates to Eurosceptic attitudes amongst citizens of a country (Kumlin, 2009). However, it is reasonable to assume that the type of welfare state is not only measured by the amount of social expenditure, but also how a country designs their welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Fenger, 2007). Theories imply that citizens in regimes where social security is more protected, are more likely to feel threatened by European integration as this might mean the welfare system has to adjust more than in liberal market regimes (Beaudonnet, 2015).

Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that not so much the social spending, but the type and design of welfare regimes (e.g. socio-democratic, conservative, post-communist and liberal) have an effect on attitudes towards the national welfare system and therefore the European Union in general. It might be worthwhile to explore whether dissatisfaction with national welfare state performances and Eurosceptic attitudes are related. If citizens tend to 'blame' Europe or the EU for perceived national defaults in the welfare system and therefore have lower trust in the EU, political institutions could use this information to improve this trust. As Berghauer, Jamet, Schölermann, Stracca and Stubenrauch (2019, p.1) explain, Euroscepticism can teach political institutions to "take citizens' concerns seriously and address salient issues, build on a sense of togetherness and care about public trust." Additionally, researching whether differences in EU-attitudes exist between welfare regimes might unravel how designs of welfare regimes can shape citizens' level of trust in the EU, which may be useful information for political institutions and for reconsidering welfare state interpretations. Accordingly, the question posed in this paper is: *To what extent can Euroscepticism be explained by dissatisfaction in the national welfare state and are differences in attitudes towards the national welfare system and the EU across countries related to the type of welfare regime (socio-democratic, conservative, post-communist and liberal)?*

Firstly, it will be explained how welfare state dissatisfaction potentially has an effect on Eurosceptic attitudes. Subsequently, it will be discussed how welfare state regimes may have an impact on EU attitudes. To test the research question, quantitative research will be executed

based on data of the European Social Survey (2018), round 9. Four countries are analysed, which can be categorised as ‘ideal-type’ welfare regimes in the category ‘socio-democratic’ (Norway), ‘conservative’ (Germany), ‘post-communist’ (Czech Republic) and ‘liberal’ (the United Kingdom). The grounds on which these countries are selected and other methodological items will be discussed in the methods section. Four hypotheses emerged from the research question and are tested by means of multiple linear regressions in SPSS. The outcomes of these analyses are shown in the results section. Finally, a conclusion and points for discussion will be presented.

2. How perceptions of national welfare state and welfare state conditions shape Euroscepticism

2.1 European integration and Euroscepticism

European integration can be interpreted as the process of political, economic, social and cultural integration of the European Union and its institutions (Wiener, Börzel & Risse, 2019). Positive or negative attitudes towards European integration on a national level, are linked to the European Union and its perceived responsibilities and policies. Euroscepticism can generally be defined as the negative attitude towards the European Union and/or European integration (Szczerbiak & Taggart, 2008). While earlier literature and debates demonstrating Euroscepticism focussed more on the question whether citizens want to leave or remain the European Union, it is clear that the level of Euroscepticism can vary (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2002). ‘Being Eurosceptic’ does not just refer to the stance ‘leave or remain in the EU’, but it also refers to trust in the EU or whether EU unification should go further or should be limited. Therefore, Euroscepticism can range from low levels (soft Euroscepticism), where one might believe the EU has to change in order to make it work and further unification is not specifically wanted, to high levels (hard Euroscepticism), where one opposes the EU completely and does not believe being part of the EU is beneficial at all (Szczerbiak & Taggart, 2008).

Especially after the United Kingdom’s EU referendum many anti-EU parties have moved from this ‘hard’ form of Euroscepticism to a softer stance and this is also seen amongst citizens of the EU (Chopin, Fraccaroli, Hernborg & Jamet, 2019). Accordingly, parties and citizens tend to focus more on questioning or criticising the EU, their institutions, policies etc.

rather than just focus on the question whether it would be beneficial to leave or remain in the EU.

2.2 Dissatisfaction with national welfare state performances and Eurosceptic attitudes

Much research has been done about Euroscepticism or attitudes towards European integration and its possible explanations. Explanations on an individual level were found to be mostly related to educational level, political trust, support for protectionism and attitudes towards immigration amongst EU citizens (Abraham & Travaglino, 2018; Vasilopoulou, 2016). Focussing on political trust, it seems that citizens who experience low levels of political trust in the EU are more likely to carry Eurosceptic views. According to Abts, Heerwegh and Swyngedouw (2009): “negative evaluations of the egocentric benefits of European membership, social distrust in European fellow citizens and institutional distrust in the EU are most important determinants of Euroscepticism”. Focussing on Euroscepticism and satisfaction with or trust in the national government in general, Europeans who evaluate national economic conditions positively, tend to be more positive towards the European Union (Anderson, 1998). This is based on the citizens’ thoughts that the EU improves the national economy. This seems to be consistent with previous studies that show that satisfaction with the national economy is related to positive attitudes towards the EU (Anderson, 1998; Kumlin, 2009; Serricchio, Tsakatika & Quaglia, 2013). It seems that dissatisfaction in the national economy and democracy affects political trust towards the EU negatively. Consequently, this suggests that it has a negative impact on attitudes towards the European Union as a whole.

European integration can be perceived as economic integration on national level. Adding to this line of argument, Kumlin (2009) argues that citizens do not only evaluate the integration based on the economic performances of their country, but also non-economic performances, such as cultural and political decisions. It appears that perceived performances of the national welfare state can affect citizens’ opinions about the EU and the belief that European integration might entail a loss of their welfare state policies and designs.

Support for European integration or support for the EU in general seem to be closely linked to individual characteristics like economic benefits or national identity (Gabel, 1998; McLaren, 2007; Beaudonnet, 2015). At the same time, studies suggest citizens might be concerned about the direction this integration is going regarding EU influences on national public policies or social security systems (Beaudonnet, 2015). Specifically, European

integration seems to have an effect on the welfare state of EU member states, as the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) inhibits national choices regarding welfare states. The European integration and free movement seem to limit the choices of EU member states, which leads to minimising social security standards (Atkinson, 2002; Scharpf, 2010). This means that social protection could be minimalised on national level. Not only does this have an effect on the economic redistribution of EU member states, it could have an effect on citizens' perceptions on their national welfare state in general. It is evident that welfare state performances shape its citizens' thoughts and political attitudes (Kumlin, 2009; Beaudonnet, 2015). Therefore, it is also likely that the welfare state, its performances and citizens' perceptions of them shape people's opinion about the European Union. Accordingly, it is expected that dissatisfaction with the welfare state might entail Euroscepticism among citizens of the European Union. Kumlin (2009) calls this phenomenon 'blaming Europe' for perceived defaults on national level.

Gabel (1998) suggests in the policy appraisal model how perceptions about dissatisfaction in the national government in general potentially has an impact on Euroscepticism. Firstly, a distinction is made between 'utilitarian' and 'affective' types of support. The utilitarian support is considered to be dependent on short-term results of the benefits and costs of political actions and decisions. On the other hand, the affective support is dependent on long-term results and is imbedded in a long socialisation process, rather than short-term occurrences. Individuals who hold a utilitarian support are thought to be more influenced by short-term benefits and costs than people that hold affective support. Gabel (1998) argues that not many Europeans are attached to the European Union and its political systems and policies in general. Therefore, it is not likely it is incorporated in a form of 'affective' support, but perceptions about the EU are considered to be more short-term of nature and based on those short-term outcomes of the EU.

Gabel (1998) also argues that these assumptions at that point are based on economic performances. Anderson (1998) and Gabel (1998) argue that citizens who don't have a lot of knowledge about what is regulated in the EU and political systems in general, rely on political cues to form their opinion about the EU. This model suggests that citizens' opinions about the European Union are shaped through the stances of trusted politicians, political parties, organisations and institutions and its perceived performances. This appraisal model is mainly focussed on the economic performances of the national government as a whole. Nonetheless, Kumlin (2009) mentions that citizens can assess EU performances across a broader range of issues. In this respect, examining whether national welfare state performances have an effect on EU-attitudes is interesting. According to Svallfors and Taylor-Gooby (2007), welfare state

performances and challenges are quite high on the public agenda and it seems that institutions related to the welfare state experience overall support by citizens. Added to this, it seems that European integration might have a negative impact on welfare states and that this could lead to mistrust amongst citizens at both national as EU level (Kumlin, 2009). The first hypothesis will therefore be:

H1: Distrust in the national welfare state is positively correlated with Eurosceptic attitudes

2.2 Conflicting theories about welfare state dissatisfaction and Euroscepticism

Alternatively, some researchers argue that citizens of EU member states view the European Union as a positive institution, when citizens are dissatisfied with their own national government (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2000). The EU in this case is seen as a positive denominator when countries experience greater corruption and have less developed welfare states, as the EU might be able to provide the solution for problems in their national government. According to this line of thought, the cost of transferring sovereignty to Europe is lower in countries where citizens are not satisfied with their national government. Greece, Spain and Italy are considered to be more corrupt in comparison with Denmark, Finland and Sweden. Results suggest that citizens in Spain and Italy are more likely to have positive attitudes towards the EU than Denmark, Finland and Sweden (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2000). This potentially shows that dissatisfaction with someone's own national government might entail positive perceptions about the EU amongst citizens.

On the contrary, research suggests that perceptions of the national government and their performances are not linked to Euroscepticism in a significant matter, and therefore this dissatisfaction with the national government does not explain Euroscepticism (McLaren, 2007). Rather, the perceptions of EU institutions are more likely to shape Euroscepticism than perceptions of national institutions. Different and conflicting views seem to exist about whether satisfaction in the national government has a negative, positive or no significant impact on attitudes towards the European Union, even though more evidence points to dissatisfaction in the national governmental performances leading to Euroscepticism. Differences in findings however, can be assigned to the way researchers measured 'dissatisfaction in national performances'. Some researchers only focussed on the welfare state policies on national level (Kumlin, 2009), others on democracy (Anderson, 1998) and others on economic performances

(Serricchio et al., 2013) or general performances of the national government (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2000). This shows that no standard measurement has been used to analyse the satisfaction in the national government. In addition, it seems that theories about dissatisfaction with countries' performances (e.g. welfare state, economy redistribution, democracy or general performances of the national government) also provide an explanation whether dissatisfaction in the national welfare state relates to Euroscepticism. Therefore, dissatisfaction with the welfare system and its relationship with Eurosceptic attitudes will be tested based on perceived welfare state performances such as the state of health and education in a country. As more literature demonstrates that dissatisfaction in the national government affects Euroscepticism positively than negatively, it is more likely that dissatisfaction in the welfare state also positively affects Euroscepticism. Thus, the second hypothesis will be tested regarding the relationship between dissatisfaction with the welfare state and Euroscepticism and is shown in *Figure 1*:

H2: Distrust in the national welfare state is negatively correlated with Eurosceptic attitudes

2.3 Welfare state conditions and attitudes towards the European Union

Dissatisfaction with the national government might be an individual explanation for Eurosceptic attitudes. However, this cannot explain the significant differences in attitudes between EU member states. According to the Eurobarometer (2018) on the survey question whether their country has benefited from being a member of the EU or not, differences in countries ranged from 41% to 91% (percentage of people per country saying they benefitted from being a member of the EU). These variations in percentages say something about the general opinion per country and that it potentially relates to country specific circumstances.

Earlier research suggests that differences in EU-attitudes across countries could be explained by the length of EU membership of a country, distance to Brussels or differences in television broadcasts (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2007). In other research, evidence has been found that the introduction of the Euro has an increasing effect on Euroscepticism, especially in countries with a high GDP, whereas the introduction of the new currency at the time has reduced levels of Euroscepticism in countries with a lower GDP (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2010). Findings also suggest that people tend to be less Eurosceptic in countries where political parties favour EU membership and that media attention to the EU increased Euroscepticism in some countries. These factors and differences between countries however, only seem to partially explain

differences in EU-attitudes on a cross-country level (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2010) and were not fully sufficient. Accordingly, other explanations that might add to the question whether differences between countries can explain differences in Eurosceptic attitudes have to be explained.

Some studies looked for explanations for the differences in the type of welfare states across countries. According to Kumlin (2009), the institutional nature of the welfare state could explain differences in Euroscepticism between countries. This is based on the idea that citizens in welfare states with a larger tax-financed welfare system and public services might see European integration as a threat (Gustavsson, 2004; Ray, 2004). Possible causes for this phenomenon, according to Kumlin (2009, p. 412), are: “immigration and social tourism potentially could be recognised as a threat to their national welfare system as this has the ability to have a negative effect on economic conditions for the social protection services in said country.” Another explanation is that in countries with greater social protection expenditure, it is perceived that those countries would face greater risks in times of recession and high unemployment. These theories about the influence of welfare states however, are only aimed at differences in the amount of social spending of a country. Welfare state in this sense is measured by the social spending of a country whereas the type of welfare state (i.e. design of the welfare state) can also be measured by other indicators.

Theoretical models of the welfare state are mostly based on the social expenditure of a country and the models are lacking other characteristics. Esping-Andersen (1990) claims that comparing welfare states by the welfare state expenditure is an outdated way of measuring the type of welfare state. Consequently, he created a welfare regime typology: ‘the three worlds of welfare capitalism’. Esping-Andersen (1990) argues that around the world three types of welfare regimes can be recognised: liberal, socio-democratic and conservative regimes. The liberal welfare state is characterised as a regime that has the least intervention in the market and in which unemployment is low. This type of regime is characterised by low levels of government expenditures and low levels of social security spending (Fenger, 2007). This is seen mostly in Anglo-Saxon countries like the UK and the US. The social-democratic regimes are seen to have a large and extensive intervention in the market and healthcare by the state and the unemployment rates are considerably low, because the state provides jobs in the ‘care’ sector. Additionally, there is a focus on reducing (economic) divisions between citizens and it tends to socialise the costs for helping minorities, majorities and people in need (Esping-Andersen 1990; Fenger, 2007). In the conservative regime, traditional values play an important role. In these types of welfare states, the traditional family-working model is encouraged

through the welfare state. The conservative regime shows similarities to socio-democratic regimes regarding government expenditure and income redistribution, however, countries that implement this regime type show lower levels of female participation as the ideology focuses more on the role of ‘male as the breadwinner’ (Fenger, 2007).

However, in earlier ‘traditional’ welfare regime typologies, Eastern European countries are excluded and this created theoretical gaps in research (Aidukaite, 2009). Fenger (2007) adds to the welfare regime typology of Esping-Andersen (1990) by creating other types such as the ‘Former-USSR type’ and the ‘Post-communist European type’ by including Eastern European countries based on new ideas and definitions. These regime types resemble the corporatist regime regarding governmental spending.

Support for the European Union is also expected to be lost “when individuals perceive the EU as reducing the ability of their governments to provide social security” (Beaudonnet, 2015, p. 460). Svallfors and Taylor-Gooby (2007) suggest that the more radical a change of organisation is, the more likely it is that this fails to attract support from citizens. Therefore, it seems that the higher the cost of EU integration for the welfare regime, the less its citizens support the EU. Mainly social market economies, especially socio-democratic, corporatist and post-communist regimes, are under pressure to adjust to liberal market economies because they have to remain attractive and to lower the social protection burden for its citizens (Beaudonnet, 2015). On the contrary, liberal economies, such as liberal regimes, are perceived to benefit from European integration, as this holds new market openings without having to fully adjust their welfare state design. European integration in liberal regimes is less likely to have a reducing effect on the level of protection that the regimes provides (Scharpf, 2010). Accordingly, citizens in liberal regimes will be less likely to perceive European integration as threat to their national welfare state. Consequently, socio-democratic especially and corporatist and post-communist regimes are considered to have a more protective welfare state than liberal regimes (Beaudonnet, 2015). This suggests that citizens in socio-democratic, conservative/corporatist and post-communist regimes are less in favour of European integration in general than liberal regimes, as this might affect the whole national design of a country (See *Figure 1*). Accordingly, the third hypothesis will be:

H3: Citizens of socio-democratic, corporatist and post-communist regimes are more likely to be Eurosceptic than liberal regimes.

2.4 Welfare regimes: Differences between welfare regime types on effect of welfare state dissatisfaction on Euroscepticism

Theories do not only point out that citizens in more protective welfare regimes are more likely to be Eurosceptic in general, it is also suggested that citizens in protective welfare regimes are more likely to feel negatively affected by European integration and therefore would experience a stronger effect of welfare state dissatisfaction on Eurosceptic attitudes. According to those previous theories, citizens in a socio-democratic, corporatist and post-communist regime are more likely to feel and be affected by European integration and thus are more likely to ‘blame Europe’ for their own national defaults regarding the welfare state (Gabel, 1998; Hooghe & Marks; Kumlin, 2009; Beaudonnet, 2015). As Beaudonnet (2015, p. 460) argues: “The more redistributive the regime is, the higher the risk to be impacted by European integration, the higher the cost of integration for its citizens”. This would mean that the more citizens in those protective regimes are dissatisfied with their own welfare state conditions, the more likely they are to blame Europe for that, regardless of whether these national defaults are due to European integration and unification. Consequently, they would be less likely to support the European Union in general. This could be due to the ‘utilitarian perspective’; the more an individual benefits from EU unification, whether that is economically or emotionally, the more likely he or she is to support EU institutions (Gabel, 1998; Boomgarden, Schuck, Elenbaas & De Vreese, 2011). As protective states cover more social and economic benefits than lesser protective states, it is likely that citizens of socio-democratic states (e.g. Norway, Sweden, Denmark) experience the greatest risk of EU influence on their welfare state (Aidukaite, 2009), followed by the conservative regime (e.g. Austria, Belgium, France and Germany) Post-communist regimes however (e.g. Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland), experienced a growth in social insurance coverage since transitioning and now have similar welfare state conditions as the ‘conservative regime’ according to Fenger (2007) in the social well-being of citizens and provided healthcare and governmental programmes. Lastly, the liberal regime is considered to have “low levels of government expenditures, high level of inequality and a low level of spending on social protection (Fenger, 2007, p. 24).

Adding to this line of argument, institutions can be of great significance in the evaluation of what the state should do in terms of intervening in distribution of services (Svallfors, 2002). This means that specific welfare state conditions can influence people’s perspectives, attitudes and what can be recognised as social norms. As socio-democratic regimes are the most protective, EU influences could put the social norms in these welfare state at risk if it doesn’t

meet the welfare state criteria. This also holds for the conservative and post-communist regime, only that effect may be less strong as the state is less protective. Focussing on the liberal regimes, as there is a minimal state intervention in the market and fewer social expenditures, EU influences may be perceived to be less likely to put the welfare state at risk, as lesser social coverages are applied. Altogether, the type of welfare state is likely to have a moderating effect on the dissatisfaction with the welfare state. It can be expected that citizens of a socio-democratic regime would feel affected the most, followed by the conservative and post-communist regime and citizens of a liberal regime would be the least affected (See *Figure 1*). Therefore, the fourth hypothesis will be:

H4: The more protective the welfare regime, the stronger the positive effect of dissatisfaction with the welfare state on Euroscepticism is.

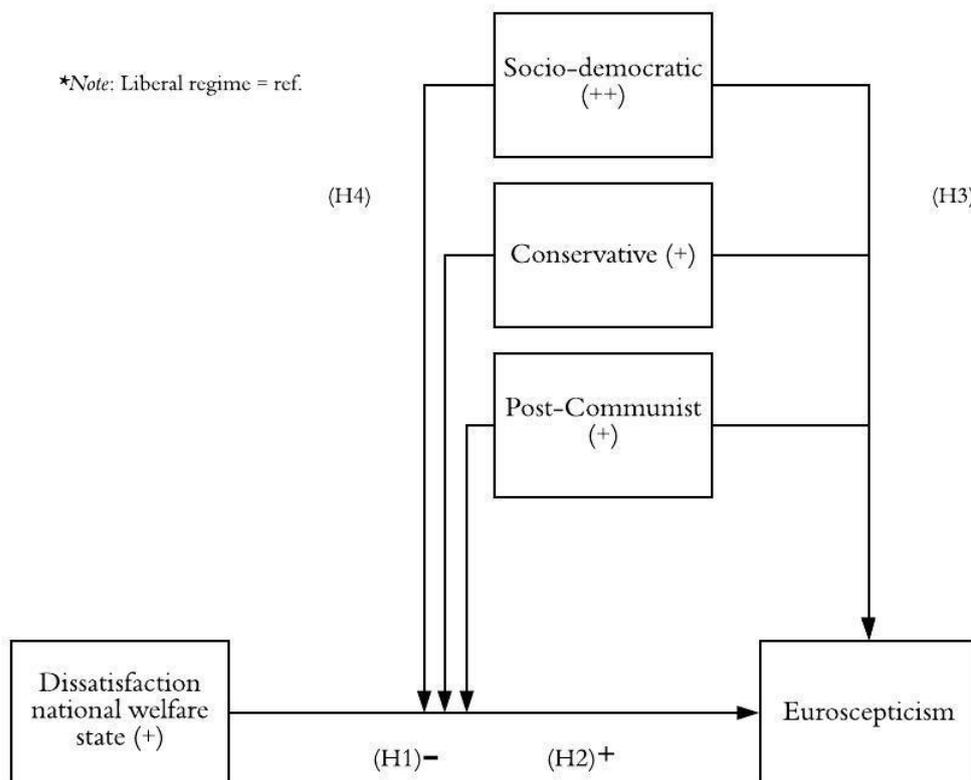


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the relationship between welfare state dissatisfaction, welfare regimes and Euroscepticism

3. Methodology

3.1 Data selection

Data used to test the hypotheses come from the European Social Survey (ESS) from 2018 (Round 9). The data contain various questions about satisfaction with the welfare state and general questions that are focussed on perceptions of the European Union. Data have been gathered in 19 countries, four of which are analysed in this paper; Norway, Germany, Czech Republic and the United Kingdom. Accordingly, 8366 respondents are used in total. The response rates differed per country; Norway (43.3%), Germany (27.6%), Czech Republic (67.4%) and the UK (41.0%) (ESS, 2018). Additionally, all respondents were aged above 15 and over with no upper age limit and all countries had to aim for a minimum effective achieved sample size of 1500 or 800. The participants were selected through a strict random probability method.

3.2 Dependent Variables: Distrust in European Parliament and Disapproval of European Union unification

The survey includes two questions regarding trust in the European Parliament and about perceptions on furthering the EU unification. Perceptions on EU unification were measured by the question ‘Should European Unification go further or gone too far?’ along scales ranging from 0 (unification gone too far) to 10 (unification go further). Trust in the European Parliament was measured with a scale from 0 (no trust at all) to 10 (complete trust). To test the level distrust in the European Parliament and disapproval of EU unification, the dependent variables were coded into variables on which a higher score indicates distrust towards the EP and EU unification disapproval. Results of the reliability analysis of the four countries show that both questions together are seemingly reliable (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.647$). However, it does not seem likely that both questions put together can form a ‘Euro scepticism scale’. According to Taggart and Szczerbiak (2002), Euro scepticism can be expressed on different levels. One might believe EU unification should not go further, but simultaneously have high trust in the European Parliament. Analysing the impact of dissatisfaction with the welfare state and the type of welfare regime on different conditions of Euro scepticism separately, such as trust in EP and perception of EU unification, might show different results per EU-attitude condition. Therefore, both variables ‘distrust in EP’ and ‘disapproval EU unification’ will be analysed separately to test the level of Euro scepticism.

3.3 Independent Variables: Welfare state satisfaction and type of welfare regime

The survey contained two questions regarding the perception of citizens' welfare state performances: 'the state of health services in [COUNTRY]' and 'the state of education in [COUNTRY]'. The scales for both questions ranged from 0 (extremely bad) to 10 (extremely good). These variables together form a direct 'satisfaction in national welfare state scale', as Kumlin (2009) did in his previous research. The reliability analysis for the four analysed countries shows a score of 0.659. Therefore, these questions are reliable enough to form a scale. In order to test the level of dissatisfaction and its impact on EU-attitudes, the variables were coded into one scale on which a higher score indicates that the state of education and health is perceived as poor.

The type of welfare regime is measured by the country in which the respondents live. The citizens are all clustered within countries and therefore it is likely that they share similar experiences, values and ideologies as one another. Research measured welfare state mostly by the social expenditure of a country (Kumlin, 2009). However, the welfare regime types of Esping-Andersen (1990) and later work of Fenger (2007) are categorised based on various characteristics of governmental social programs (health and education expenditure, number of physicians per 1000 persons, spending on social protection, payments to government employees, etc.) and social situation variables (Inequality rates, female participation, GDP growth, unemployment rates, etc.). In this study, four countries are analysed which can be perceived as the 'ideal-types' per welfare regime based on those characteristics, according to the theories of Esping-Andersen (1990) and data analysis of Fenger (2007). The United Kingdom can be categorised as an European ideal-type of a 'Liberal welfare regime' (n= 2204), Germany is categorised as a 'Conservative or Corporatist welfare regime' (n= 2358) and Norway (n= 1406) is classified as a 'Socio-democratic regime'. Esping-Andersen (1990) has not included Eastern European countries in his typology, as most countries were in a transitioning state moving away from old Soviet connections. Fenger (2007) added to this by classifying said countries into 'Post-communist types'. However, classifying and researching this specific welfare regime type is still relatively new and therefore an 'ideal-type' of Post-communist regimes has not been established yet. However, characteristics such as government expenditures, the social situation and level of trust in these countries between Post-communist countries seem to be quite similar (Fenger, 2007). One of the countries included in this type of welfare regime is the Czech Republic (Fenger, 2007). Taggart & Szczerbiak (2002) mention that Czech Republic has conservative traits as well as some liberal traits in comparison to other post-

communist countries. As Fenger (2007) points out that post-communist types are similar to conservative, but still in a developing/liberal state. Therefore, this country will be categorised and analysed in this study as the ideal type 'Post-communist regime', as the European Social Survey data contain a significant amount of respondents in comparison to other countries of said regime type (n= 2398). It needs to be taken into account however, that ideal-types cannot directly be considered as 'real-types' (Ferragina & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2011). Whereas countries can seem similar to the welfare regime 'ideal-types', in practice no country meets all the welfare regime type criteria.

3.4 Control variables

In the analyses individual socio-demographic characteristics are controlled for. These include *age* (ranging from 15 to 90), *gender* (male = 0; female = 1), *educational level* (high = ref.), *occupation* (paid work = ref.). The educational level is categorised as 'low', 'middle' and 'high', based on the International Standard Classification of Education 2011 (ISCED 2011) (CBS, z.d.). Occupation is measured by whether someone has paid work, no work or 'other'. As some studies argue, institutional trust or dissatisfaction in performances of the national government, democracy and economy are likely to influence attitudes towards the EU as well (Ray, 2004; McLaren, 2007). Accordingly, to see whether these indicators and perceptions about the welfare state relate to each other, dissatisfaction in the national government, economy and democracy are taken into account in the analysis (range 1-10), as the possibility can't be excluded that the effect of dissatisfaction with the welfare state is a reflection of dissatisfaction with national performances. In addition, political preferences will be controlled for using the left/right scale in the questionnaire (left = ref.). As many researchers have studied the relationship between voting for a left or right party and Eurosceptic attitudes (Halikiopoulou, Nanou & Vasilopoulou, 2012; Van Elsas, Hakhverdian & Van Der Brug, 2016), it is clear that EU citizens on both end of the spectrums can hold Eurosceptic attitudes but with different manifestations.

3.5 Strategy of Analysis

The effects of welfare state dissatisfaction and the welfare regime types on Euroscepticism will be analysed through multiple linear regression analysis and comparative analysis. Six regression models are made. Model 1a focuses on the dependent variable 'Distrust in EP' and includes the welfare state dissatisfaction scale and the welfare regimes Norway, Germany,

Czech Republic and United Kingdom (ref.). The same model is made for the dependent variable ‘Disapproval EU unification’ (model 2a). Models 1b and 2b include control variables, which are used to test H1, H2 and H3. Whether a contextual effect of welfare regimes occurs on Euroscepticism and if a moderating effect exists on the individual relationship between dissatisfaction in the welfare state and Euroscepticism model 1c (Distrust EP) and 2c (Disapproval EU unification), including control variables, is analysed. These analysis methods can estimate how the dependant variables and the independent variables are influenced by the contextual welfare regime variable and how countries differ from each other in dissatisfaction with the welfare state and attitudes towards the EU (Hayes, 2012).

Table 1
Descriptive statistics

	N	Min	Max	M	SD
Independent variables					
Dissatisfaction welfare state	8349	0	10	3.93	1.94
Socio-democratic regime (Norway)	1406				
Conservative regime (Germany)	2358				
Post-communist regime (Czech Republic)	2398				
Liberal regime (United Kingdom)	2204				
Dependent variables					
Distrust in EP	7805	0	10	5.76	2.53
Disapproval EU unification	7888	0	10	4.97	2.67
Control variables					
Dissatisfaction Economy	8228	0	10	3.85	2.28
Dissatisfaction Government	8192	0	10	5.45	2.39
Dissatisfaction Democracy	8219	0	10	4.24	2.44
Gender (male=ref.)	8366	0	1	0.52	0.50
Age	8314	15	90	49.77	18.40
Level education (high=ref.)	8366	0	1	0.15	0.36
Placement left/right scale (left = 0)	7799	0	10	4.94	2.11
Labour market status (paid work = 1)	8366	0	1	0.09	0.29

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive statistics

In *Table 2* the descriptive results are shown per country for the dependent variables ‘Distrust EU’ and ‘Disapproval EU unification’ and the independent variable ‘Dissatisfaction national welfare state’. The sample seems to be relatively positive towards their national welfare state ($M=3.94$, $SD=1.94$). As for the dependent variables, the sample appears to be marginally neutral towards both ‘Distrust in the EP’ ($M=5.76$, $SD=2.53$) and ‘Disapproval EU unification’ ($M=4.97$, $SD=2.67$). In addition, the results in *Table 2* also imply that potential differences in attitudes towards the national welfare state and EU exist between welfare regimes to a certain degree. On the dissatisfaction scale (1-10), German citizens have the highest mean score ($M=4.53$, $SD=1.95$), followed by the United Kingdom, Czech Republic and Norway. Focussing on the dependent variable ‘Distrust in EP’ (1-10), the average score of United Kingdom was the highest, followed by Czech Republic Germany and Norway. Scores of the dependent variable ‘Disapproval EU unification’ also show little differences between the welfare regimes; the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic and Norway score higher on the EU unification scale than Germany.

Table 2

Descriptive scores of variables per welfare regime: Dissatisfaction national welfare state, Distrust EU and Disapproval EU unification

	<i>Dissatisfaction national welfare state</i>				<i>Distrust EP</i>				<i>Disapproval EU unification</i>			
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>V</i>
Norway (Socio-democratic)	1404	2.64	1.46	2.13	1140	4.55	2.12	4.50	1273	5.18	2.11	4.47
Germany (Conservative)	2350	4.53	1.95	3.79	2277	5.44	2.40	5.77	2305	3.74	2.72	7.38
Czech Republic (Post-communist)	2395	3.70	1.77	3.13	2287	5.91	2.56	6.53	2263	5.54	2.60	6.77
United Kingdom (Liberal)	2200	4.38	1.95	3.79	2101	6.61	2.52	6.37	2047	5.62	2.54	6.45
Total	8349	3.94	1.94	3.77	7805	5.76	2.53	6.41	7888	4.97	2.67	7.14

4.2 Levels of welfare state dissatisfaction and Euroscepticism

Multiple linear regression analyses are used to predict the effect of welfare state dissatisfaction on Euroscepticism (H1 and H2). The results are shown in *Table 3* for the dependent variable 'Distrust in EP' and *Table 4* for the dependent variable 'Disapproval EU unification'. Dissatisfaction with the welfare state significantly predicts 'Distrust in the European Parliament' scores when including welfare regime types, as shown in model 1a ($b = 0.392$, $p < 0.01$). When controlled for socio-demographic and other effects (model 1b), dissatisfaction with the national welfare state still significantly predicts the level of distrust amongst citizens, however seemingly marginal ($b = 0.179$, $p < 0.01$). The relationship between welfare state dissatisfaction and distrust in EP in both models are in the expected direction: the more dissatisfied citizens are with their welfare state, the higher their level of distrust in the European Parliament.

As for the dependent variable 'Disapproval EU unification', welfare state dissatisfaction seems to significantly predict the level of wanted EU unification amongst citizens in model 2a ($b = 0.280$, $p < 0.01$). However, when controlled for other effects (model 2b), the effect of this variable decreases ($b = 0.163$, $p < 0.01$). This relationship is also in the expected direction; the higher the level of welfare state dissatisfaction, the higher the level of disapproval of EU unification. The predictors welfare state dissatisfaction and the type of welfare regime explain 14.9% of the variance of distrust in the European Parliament and 12.8% for disapproval of EU unification. As expected, when taking control variables into account, the explained variance of the model increases for both models 'Distrust in EP' ($R^2 = 0.296$) and 'Disapproval of EU unification' ($R^2 = 0.193$).

These findings corroborate H1 and therefore H1 will be accepted. As no negative relationship was found between welfare state dissatisfaction and both variables for Euroscepticism, H2 will be rejected. In addition, it needs to be taken into account that including control variables in the analyses for both dependent variables, other factors explain Euroscepticism amongst citizens to a greater degree than welfare state dissatisfaction, which will be explained in paragraph 4.4.

4.3 Comparing welfare regimes in level of Eurosceptic attitudes

In order to research whether the type of welfare regime has an effect on levels of Euroscepticism, multiple linear regression analyses are also used to predict the influence of the type of welfare regime on Euroscepticism (H3) and whether the type of welfare regime has a moderating effect on the relationship between welfare state dissatisfaction and Euroscepticism (H4). In *Table 3*, model 1a, differences in levels of distrust in EP are shown between citizens of different welfare regimes. The type of welfare regime significantly predicts the level of Euroscepticism amongst its citizens; Norway ($b=-1.365$, $p<0.01$), Germany ($b=-1.238$, $p<0.01$), Czech Republic ($b=-0.435$, $p<0.01$). A negative effect is found of the protective welfare regimes on distrust in the European Union. When taking other variables into account in the analysis (model 1b), the effect of the type of welfare regime remains significant. However, the strength of the effect decreases for all welfare regime types. The direction of the relationship between the welfare regimes for Norway, Germany and Czech Republic are negative. This indicates that in general, citizens in those three countries score less on the distrust scale than the United Kingdom (ref.). The results of the analyses of the relationship between welfare state dissatisfaction, welfare regime types and perception on EU unification are shown in *Table 4*. Model 2a shows a small positive relation between the welfare regimes Norway ($b=0.039$, $p>0.01$) and Czech Republic ($b=0.115$, $p>0.01$) and the degree to which someone opposes EU unification, although no significance for this relationship was found. As for Germany, a significant negative relationship was found between the conservative welfare regime type and being against EU unification ($b=-1.933$, $p<0.01$).

As a side note, when taking other variables into account (model 2c), the relationships seem to change. The negative relationship between a conservative welfare regime and being against EU unification seems to be less strong than for the liberal regime (ref.), however significant ($b=-1.737$, $p<0.01$). Surprisingly, the strength and significance of the relationship between living in a socio-democratic regime (Norway) and disapproval of EU unification seem to increase ($b=0.463$, $p<0.01$) in comparison to the Liberal regime (ref.). These results will not be discussed further, due to the fact that both model 1c and 2c include moderating variables. The main focus of these models are the moderating effects of the welfare regimes, which will be discussed in the following paragraph.

Overall, the analysis of model 1b shows that, against the expectations, citizens of Socio-democratic, Conservative and Post-communist welfare regimes seem to have less distrust in the European Parliament than the Liberal regime (ref.). In addition, model 2b does not show that

Socio-democratic, Conservative and Post-communist welfare regimes together are less interested in EU unification than the Liberal regime (ref.). Therefore, H3 (*Citizens of socio-democratic, corporatist and post-communist regimes are more likely to be Eurosceptic than liberal regimes*) is rejected.

4.4 Comparing welfare regimes: Testing the effect of dissatisfaction welfare state on Eurosceptic attitudes per regime type

To test whether the type of welfare regime potentially has a moderating effect on the relationship between welfare state dissatisfaction and Euroscepticism, moderators are included in the analyses for both dependent variables in model 1c and 2c. In both models, the moderators show to be significant and show that the type of welfare regime potentially has an moderating effect on the relationship between welfare state dissatisfaction and Euroscepticism. Model 1c shows a positive significant interaction effect for the welfare regimes Norway ($b=0.109$, $p<0.01$), Germany ($b=0.129$, $p<0.01$) and Czech Republic ($b=0.121$, $p<0.01$) in comparison to the United Kingdom (ref.). This shows that the effect of welfare state dissatisfaction on distrust in the European Parliament is stronger in states who implement a more protective welfare regime (Socio-democratic, Conservative and Post-communist) than the Liberal regime (ref.).

As for the dependent variable 'Disapproval EU unification', model 2c shows a positive significant effect of the protective welfare regimes on the relationship between welfare state dissatisfaction and disapproval of EU unification: Norway ($b=0.152$, $p<0.01$), Germany ($b=0.126$, $p<0.01$) and Czech Republic ($b=0.155$, $p<0.01$) in comparison to the Liberal regime (ref.). This shows again for the other Euroscepticism variable that more protective welfare states experience a stronger positive effect of the individual relationship between welfare state dissatisfaction and the extent to which someone disapproves further EU unification. In addition, both models 1c as 2c show that the strength of the effects is not in line with the expected assumption that the Socio-democratic regime would be the most affected, followed by the Conservative, Post-communist and Liberal regime.

In this case, H4 (*The more protective the welfare regime, the stronger the positive effect of dissatisfaction with the welfare state on Euroscepticism is*) can be partially supported. It can be confirmed on the grounds that in more protective welfare states, the effect of welfare state dissatisfaction on Euroscepticism is stronger than it is in the United Kingdom (ref.). However, the order in which citizens in the most protective state should experience the strongest effect than others is not confirmed by the results. Additionally, theories imply that more protective

welfare regimes should experience a stronger positive effect of welfare state dissatisfaction on Euroscepticism due to the perception that European integration is more of a threat to protective welfare states than the least protective welfare regimes (Beaudonnet, 2015). Nevertheless, this hypothesis (H3) is rejected, so the grounds on which H4 is based cannot explain how and why the moderating effects of welfare regimes (countries) occur.

4.5 Additional results

In model 1b and 2b, control variables are added to the regression analyses. A strong, significant positive effect of the level of education occurs. Citizens with a lower education seem have less trust in the EP than citizens with a higher education ($b=0.520$, $p<0.01$) (high educational level = ref.). The same trend of lower education is seen for the dependent variable 'disapproval of EU unification' ($b=0.632$, $p<0.01$) (high educational level = ref.). In general, female citizens tend to be less Eurosceptic than males. Female citizens show to have more trust in the European Parliament ($b=-0.184$, $p<0.01$) and to be more accepting towards EU unification ($b=-0.153$, $p<0.01$) than men. The regression models also show a moderate positive effect of age on Eurosceptic attitudes for both distrust in EP ($b=0.024$, $p<0.01$) and disapproval of EU unification ($b=0.019$, $p<0.01$). Additionally, placement on the left/right scale (range 1-10) significantly predicts Euroscepticism scores; the more citizens consider themselves to be on the right end of the spectrum, the higher the level of both distrust in EP ($b=0.103$, $p<0.01$) as being against EU unification ($b=0.083$, $p<0.01$). Previous literature states that dissatisfaction with national governmental, economy or democracy performances could be a better explanation for Eurosceptic attitudes than welfare state dissatisfaction. All independent variables concerning dissatisfaction in national institution performances are measured in the same range (1-10). The results in model 2b reveal that government dissatisfaction ($b=0.039$, $p<0.05$) has a positive significant effect on disapproval of EU unification, though less positive than welfare state dissatisfaction ($b=0.163$, $p<0.01$). Nevertheless, democracy dissatisfaction ($b=0.184$, $p<0.01$) shows a marginally stronger effect than welfare state dissatisfaction. In model 1b, dissatisfaction with the government ($b=0.206$, $p<0.01$) and democracy ($b=0.232$, $p<0.01$) display stronger effects on disapproval of EU unification than welfare state dissatisfaction ($b=0.179$, $p<0.01$). In addition, dissatisfaction in the national economy does not have a significant effect on Euroscepticism levels in general (1b: $b=0.008$, $p>0.01$; 2b: $b=0.015$, $p>0.01$).

Table 3

Multiple linear regression analysis of welfare state dissatisfaction on distrust in European Parliament and moderating effects of welfare regimes

Variable	Model 1 (1a)		Model 2 (1b)		Model 3 (1c)	
	B	Sig.	B	Sig.	B	Sig.
Intercept	4.890		1.365		1.766	
<i>Dissatisfaction welfare state</i>	0.392**	0.000	0.179**	0.000	0.091**	0.001
<i>Norway (Socio-democratic regime)</i>	-1.365**	0.000	-0.680**	0.000	-0.691**	0.000
<i>Germany (Conservative regime)</i>	-1.238**	0.000	-0.775**	0.000	-0.841**	0.000
<i>Czech Republic (Post-communist regime)</i>	-0.435**	0.000	-0.273**	0.000	-0.302**	0.000
<i>Dissatisfaction government</i>			0.206**	0.000	0.207**	0.000
<i>Dissatisfaction economy</i>			0.008	0.604	0.009	0.550
<i>Dissatisfaction democracy</i>			0.232**	0.000	0.231**	0.000
<i>Age</i>			0.024**	0.000	0.023**	0.000
<i>Gender (male=ref.)</i>			-0.184**	0.000	-0.185**	0.000
<i>Labour market status (paid work=1)</i>			0.012	0.896	0.005	0.958
<i>Placement on left/right scale (left=0)</i>			0.103**	0.000	0.102**	0.000
<i>Low education</i>			0.520**	0.000	0.519**	0.000
<i>Middle education (high=ref.)</i>			0.486**	0.000	0.487**	0.000
<i>Dissatisfaction national welfare state* Norway (Socio-democratic)</i>					0.109*	0.037
<i>Dissatisfaction national welfare state* Germany (Conservative)</i>					0.129**	0.000
<i>Dissatisfaction national welfare state* Czech Republic (Post-communist)</i>					0.121**	0.001
R ²	0.149		0.296		0.297	
N	7796		7179		7179	

Note: Ref= Liberal regime. (**p<0.01; *p<0.05.)

Table 4

Multiple linear regression analysis of welfare state dissatisfaction on Disapproval of EU unification and moderating effects of welfare regimes

Variable	Model 1 (2a)		Model 2 (2b)		Model 3 (2c)	
	B	Sig.	B	Sig.	B	Sig.
Intercept	4.395		1.991		2.450	
<i>Dissatisfaction welfare state</i>	0.280**	0.000	0.163**	0.000	0.063*	0.037
<i>Norway (Socio-democratic regime)</i>	0.039	0.677	0.443**	0.000	0.463**	0.000
<i>Germany (Conservative regime)</i>	-1.933**	0.000	-1.671**	0.000	-1.737**	0.000
<i>Czech Republic (Post-communist regime)</i>	0.115	0.137	0.112	0.195	0.082	0.343
<i>Dissatisfaction government</i>			0.039*	0.014	0.042**	0.009
<i>Dissatisfaction economy</i>			0.015	0.397	0.015	0.383
<i>Dissatisfaction democracy</i>			0.184**	0.000	0.182**	0.000
<i>Age</i>			0.019**	0.000	0.019**	0.000
<i>Gender (male=ref.)</i>			-0.153**	0.007	-0.151**	0.008
<i>Labour market status (paid work=1)</i>			0.117	0.239	0.109	0.273
<i>Placement on left/right scale (left=0)</i>			0.083**	0.000	0.083**	0.000
<i>Low education</i>			0.632**	0.000	0.623**	0.000
<i>Middle education (high=ref.)</i>			0.526**	0.000	0.525**	0.000
<i>Dissatisfaction national welfare state* Norway (Socio-democratic)</i>					0.152**	0.007
<i>Dissatisfaction national welfare state* Germany (Conservative)</i>					0.126**	0.002
<i>Dissatisfaction national welfare state* Czech Republic (Post-communist)</i>					0.155**	0.000
R ²	0.128		0.193		0.195	
N	7880		7305		7305	

Note: Ref= Liberal regime. (**p<0.01; *p<0.05.)

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to answer the question whether Euroscepticism can be partially explained by welfare state dissatisfaction. In addition, it was scrutinised whether the type of welfare regime (Socio-democratic, Conservative, Post-communist and Liberal) has an effect on the level of Euroscepticism amongst citizens and whether differences in the effects of welfare state dissatisfaction on Euroscepticism exists between welfare regimes. Evidence suggest, as expected, the more dissatisfied citizens are with their national welfare state, the more likely they are to also be distrustful towards the European Parliament and disapproving of European Union unification. This corroborates previous literature stating that welfare state dissatisfaction positively relates to Euroscepticism (Kumlin, 2009; Beaudonnet, 2015). The evidence shows that citizens who are dissatisfied with their own national welfare state performances possibly 'blame Europe' for their defaults (Ray, 2004; Kumlin, 2009; Beaudonnet, 2015). It could mean that people who perceive their national welfare state as poorly executed, that this is due to European integration and unification as countries' welfare states might experience difficulties attributable to the European Union.

This contradicts other previous studies suggesting that the EU could be perceived as a positive influence when citizens are displeased with national institutional performances as a whole, as the EU can provide a solution to national problems (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2000). Additionally, welfare state dissatisfaction does seem to be a better explanation for Eurosceptic attitudes than dissatisfaction with the national economy, contradicting previous literature, stating that dissatisfaction with national economy conditions provides an answer to the Euroscepticism question (Sericchio, Tsakatika & Quaglia, 2013). However, dissatisfaction with the national government and democracy also seem to provide a good explanation for Euroscepticism than just welfare state dissatisfaction, in accordance to theories of previous literature (Anderson, 1998; Gabel, 1998).

The welfare regime types additionally show to be of importance in the question whether differences in Euroscepticism occur between citizens from different welfare regimes. Socio-democratic, conservative and post-communist regimes show to be less Eurosceptic than the liberal regime. Nevertheless, this goes against the initial expectation that more protective states are more Eurosceptic than the Liberal regime (Scharpf, 2010). Theories suggested that the more protective a welfare state is, the higher the stakes of EU integration as it is believed those welfare regimes have to adjust more than liberal regimes (Svallfors and Taylor-Gooby, 2007; Scharpf, 2010; Beaudonnet, 2015). However, the results do not confirm these theories.

Despite that citizens of the protective states may be less Eurosceptic than the liberal regime, the effect of welfare state dissatisfaction on Euroscepticism is stronger for more protective welfare regime types than the liberal regime, as expected. This means that it is likely that other country-dependent conditions could explain the differences between welfare regimes rather than the welfare state regime typology and Euroscepticism theories, which will be discussed in the following paragraph. Overall, the results suggest that dissatisfaction does relate to Euroscepticism. Nevertheless, the effect of welfare regimes should be analysed to a greater extent. For this reason, future research is required.

6. Discussion

This study sheds light on citizens' attitudes towards their national welfare state and the European Union. Even though some evidence is found that corroborates earlier research, it is important to mention some limitations of this study. In this research secondary data are used from the European Social Survey 2018. Due to the lack of questions regarding welfare state dissatisfaction, a scale is formed out of two questions in the survey. The lack of questions to form a scale or to test Euroscepticism in the survey could have potentially influenced the results regarding its external validity. As the data contained only two questions regarding the state of health and education in their country, other welfare state characteristics could not be included in the dissatisfaction scale. Therefore, the used scale might not have been the best means to measure welfare state dissatisfaction. The same problem occurred for the two dependent variables for Euroscepticism, as only two questions regarding attitudes towards the EU were posed in the survey. Moreover, distrust in the European parliament does not directly indicate a more general distrust in other EU institutions. Therefore, the construct validity may not be completely met, which indicates the extent to which a research instrument accurately measures all aspects of a construct" (Heale & Twycross, 2015, p.66). However, it also needs to be addressed as Kumlin (2009, p.413) argues: "empirical validation using Eurobarometer data suggests this assumption is valid. Trust in the European Parliament correlates very strongly with trust in other salient EU institutions and should therefore function as an acceptable, rather than optimal, proxy for more generalized EU trust". To get a better idea what welfare state dissatisfaction exactly is, it is possible to include other questions in the survey regarding a variation of welfare state characteristics such as the attitudes towards a variety of social and economic benefits and services of the welfare state along with perceptions on a diversity of

Eurosceptic characteristics in future research.

While the results strengthen the expectation that welfare state dissatisfaction and welfare state regimes are related to Euroscepticism, they say little about how those welfare state and EU perceptions are formed and how causality can be determined. As previous theories suggest that citizens are dissatisfied with their welfare state because they tend to ‘blame Europe’ and therefore are more Eurosceptic (Ray, 2004; Kumlin, 2009; Beaudonnet, 2015), it might as well be the case that citizens have Eurosceptic tendencies and therefore are more dissatisfied with their own national welfare state. Additionally, findings point out that the effect of more protective welfare regimes on welfare state dissatisfaction and Euroscepticism do seem to exist, however this cannot be explained by the perception that more protective welfare regimes are more Eurosceptic than liberal regimes as more protective states are shown to be less Eurosceptic.

Furthermore, it also needs to be recognised that this study only focuses on four countries that fit to the ‘ideal-type’ welfare regime typology of Esping-Andersen (1990) and Fenger (2007). It is more likely that other country-specific conditions shape citizens’ attitudes towards the European Union. Therefore, the results may be biased due to other country-specific conditions rather than the type of welfare regime of the countries. The findings suggest that citizens in the United Kingdom are more Eurosceptic than other countries. The Brexit referendum in 2016 and following political debates make it clear that the United Kingdom is a particular case. In general, from the onset of joining the European Union, citizens of the UK tend to have the strongest national sovereignty ideologies than any other EU nation (Wellings, 2012). Especially when the UK decided to leave the EU, political and public debates strengthened the tendency to leave the EU amongst citizens in the following years. As the data of the European Social Survey stems from the year 2018, this phenomenon certainly affected the way citizens’ answered the questions. Lastly, as Kumlin (2009) already addresses, it is difficult to determine if welfare state dissatisfaction and Euroscepticism are related, as many people may not have the exact knowledge and interest of the accountabilities of national and EU institutions. Therefore, they could have answered the survey questions based on political cues and other institutional views, rather than their own perceptions.

Further research on this topic could include more countries and should be clustered into welfare regimes in the analyses to see if those regimes have a significant effect on the level of welfare state dissatisfaction and Euroscepticism. In addition, other liberal countries should be taken into account to make up for country-specific conditions. Moreover, it might be interesting to explore the perceptions of welfare state dissatisfaction and how it exactly relates to

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Euroscepticism through interviews. In this way, it can be determined which welfare state conditions are important to the Euroscepticism question and to see whether welfare regime conditions do shape people's perspectives.

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