

# Euroskepticism: Causes and Consequences

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and UNC-Chapel Hill

July 1 to July 2, 2005

Organizers: Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks

Venue: Pulitzer hotel, Prinsengracht

No major theory of regional integration or political conflict predicted the rise of Euroskepticism. Yet Euroskepticism is potent in the domestic politics of the 25 member states and is a vital constraint on the future of the European Union. (The response to the Constitutional Treaty is likely to be a case in point.)

## Goal

This project brings together researchers who can provide keen insight on Euroskepticism—causes and consequences—from several angles. While the authors may take diverse approaches, they share a bias towards comparison, drawing explicitly or implicitly on the comparative method(s) in making or evaluating claims. And all present new work on the topic. The purpose of this project is to produce a special journal issue and edited book on the topic.

The workshop in Amsterdam is the first of two consecutive meetings; the next one will be held at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill in April 2006. The purpose of the Amsterdam is to discuss first short drafts (3,000-5,000 words) for the joint project; for the Chapel Hill meeting we will be expecting revised and complete drafts.

## Format

Paper writers were asked to produce a draft by June 20, which will be made available on this workshop website. Short presentations (appr. 10 minutes) will be followed by commentaries from invited discussants. The workshop will be held on July 1 and 2, 2005, and the workshop venue is the Pulitzer hotel in Amsterdam. Start at 9 am.

## Research question

Our framing question is straightforward: ***How can one explain Euroskepticism over time and space, i.e. what are the causes of Euroskepticism?*** To what extent, and why, have citizens, political parties, social movements, and interest groups, become more Euroskeptical over the past dozen years? Is Euroskepticism generated by economic concerns or by conceptions of identity, by general political distrust, or by specific EU policies, or by something else? Will the same explanations work over time, within and across countries, and across different kinds of groups? These questions imply several others:

- *Who* are the Euroskeptics? How do they differ from Euro-enthusiasts?
- To what extent is Euroskepticism a *coherent* phenomenon? Does the concept conflate conceptually distinct and causally diverse phenomena? Are there distinctive types of Euroskepticism—hard vs. soft; political vs. economic vs. cultural; individual vs. organized?
- How European is Euroskepticism? Is Euroskepticism a function of ills that afflict non-EU democracies, such as political apathy, distrust in political institutions,

declining voter turnout, unconventional protest, economic insecurity, or cultural threat?

- How is Euroskepticism *cued* by the media and by elites? Is Euroskepticism primarily elite-driven or public-driven? Under what circumstances, and how, are attitudes about the European Union *mobilized* in (non-)participation and protest?
- Is Euroskepticism *durable* or *ephemeral*? Can the rise of Euroskepticism inform us about its possible decline?

We also wish to inquire into the *consequences of Euroskepticism*. To what extent, if at all, has Euroskepticism constrained European integration? To what extent, if at all, does it shape national politics?

- How has Euroskepticism constrained the *political architecture* of the European Union? Has it closed off some options (e.g. federalism) and enabled others (e.g. variable geometry)?
- What are the connections between Euroskepticism and the *democratic deficit*? Does Euroskepticism help or inhibit EU democratization?
- To what extent, and how, has Euroskepticism shaped *national elections*? When, and how, has it altered the structure of political competition?
- What are the *normative* consequences of Euroskepticism? Has it undermined collective solidarity in Europe or has it usefully revealed the limits of solidarity in a diverse polity?

### **Funding**

For the meeting in Amsterdam, we have requested funding from the NIB, the Netherlands, as well as from the Nederlands Wetenschappelijk Onderzoeksfonds (NOW). The department of political science and the Chair in Multi-layered Governance are committed to provide administrative and some financial support. We have secured a subsidy from the European Union Center of the University of North Carolina.

In addition, we have secured funding for the Chapel Hill meeting in April 2006 from the European Union Center of the University of North Carolina.