

MERVE ÜSTAŞ THE POSITION OF THE UK'S CONSERVATIVE PARTY VIS-À-VIS EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Bilkent University 2016

THE POSITION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM'S  
CONSERVATIVE PARTY VIS-À-VIS EUROPEAN  
INTEGRATION

A Master's Thesis

by

MERVE ÜSTAŞ

Department of  
International Relations  
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University  
Ankara  
June 2016

THE POSITION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM'S CONSERVATIVE  
PARTY VIS-À-VIS EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences

of

İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

MERVE ÜSTAŞ

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

THE DEPARTMENT OF  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY  
ANKARA  
June 2016

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations.



Asst. Prof. Dr. Can Emir Mutlu

Supervisor

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations.



Asst. Prof. Dr. Clemens Maximilian Hoffmann

Examining Committee Member

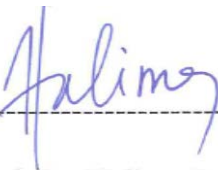
I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations.



Asst. Prof. Dr. Başak Zeynep Alban

Examining Committee Member

Approval of the Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences



Prof. Dr. Halime Demirkan

Director

## ABSTRACT

### POSITION OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN VIS-À-VIS THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Üstaş, Merve

M.A., Department of International Relations

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Can Emir Mutlu

June 2016

This thesis explores the position of the Conservative Party of United Kingdom of Great Britain vis-à-vis the European integration. It aims to contribute to the literature of party-based Euroscepticism. The main objective of this thesis is to find out any change in the Conservative Party position on European integration and determine factors contributing to this position. In order to accomplish this objective, the general election and European election manifestos of the Conservative Party since 1970 and also the parliamentary debates are analyzed through qualitative content analysis. The research question of this thesis is “What factors contribute to the positioning of the Conservative Party of the UK vis-à-vis the European integration?”. This study argues that the incompatibility of the Conservative Party values such as parliamentary sovereignty, strong state and democracy with the current and future trajectory of the European Union and the intra-party dissent contributed to the position of the Conservative Party vis-à-vis the European integration. This thesis commences with a review of the literature on party positioning and party-based Euroscepticism and proceeds by presenting the national political context of Britain and an in-depth discussion of the Conservative Party position on European integration.

Keywords: European Integration, Party-based Euroscepticism, the Conservative Party of UK.

## ÖZET

### BÜYÜK BRİTANYA BİREŞİK KRALLIK MUHAFAZAKAR PARTİSİ'NİN AVRUPA ENTEGRASYONUNA KARŞI ALDIĞI POZİSYON

Üstaş, Merve

Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü  
Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Can Emir Mutlu  
Haziran 2016

Bu tez, Büyük Britanya Birleşik Krallık Muhafazakar Partisi'nin Avrupa entegrasyonuna karşı aldığı pozisyonu belirlemeyi ve partilerin Avrupa kuşkucu politikaları literatürüne katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu tezin hedefi, Muhafazakar Parti'nin Avrupa entegrasyonuna karşı olan pozisyonunda bir değişiklik olup olmadığını bulmak ve bu pozisyona katkı sağlayan faktörleri saptamaktır. Bu hedefe ulaşmak için, Muhafazakar Parti'nin 1970'den itibaren olan genel ve Avrupa seçim manifestoları ve ayrıca parlamento tartışmaları nitel içerik analizi yöntemi ile incelenmektedir. Bu tez "Hangi faktörler Birleşik Krallık Muhafazakar Partisi'nin Avrupa entegrasyonuna karşı aldığı pozisyona katkıda bulunur?" sorusunu sorar. Bu tez, parti pozisyonları ve partilerin Avrupa kuşkucu politikaları literatürünün incelenmesiyle başlar ve İngiltere'nin milli politik durumunun sunumu ve Muhafazakar Parti'nin Avrupa entegrasyonuna karşı olan pozisyonunun detaylı tartışmasıyla devam eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Avrupa Entegrasyonu, Birleşik Krallık Muhafazakar Partisi,  
Avrupa Kuşkucu Politikalar.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank to my thesis advisor Asst. Prof. Dr. Can Emir Mutlu for his continued support, guidance and positive reinforcement throughout my study. This thesis would not have been possible without his academic and personal support.

Special thanks should be given to Berk Yılmaz, Sevgi Ediğ and Uygur Altınok for their support and patience; and to Gökhan Şensönmez for his companionship and motivating attitude throughout this work.

I also thank my parents for believing in me and their unconditional support. I dedicate my thesis to them.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iv
ÖZET .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER II: EUROSCEPTICISM .....	17
2.1 Approaches to Euroscepticism .....	18
2.2 Elements of Euroscepticism .....	32
2.3 Euroscepticism in Britain .....	35
2.4. Summary .....	42
CHAPTER III: PARTY POLITICS IN BRITAIN .....	44
3.1 The Party System .....	45
3.2 Political Parties in Britain .....	51
3.2.1 The Conservative Party .....	51
3.2.2 The Labour Party .....	64
3.2.2 The Liberal Democratic Party .....	66
3.2.3 UKIP .....	67
3.2.4 The BNP .....	68
3.3 Summary .....	68
CHAPTER IV: THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY POSITION ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION .....	70
3.1 The Conservative Party Manifestos .....	71
3.1.1 Analysis .....	72

3.2 The Parliamentary Debates and Intra-party Dissent in the Conservative Party .....	87
3.3 Discussion .....	92
CHAPTER V: CONCLUDING REMARKS .....	101
REFERENCES .....	109



## LIST OF TABLES

1. Typology of party positions on Europe .....26
2. Flood and Usherwood's typology on party-based Euroscepticism .....29



LIST OF FIGURES

1. Political Parties' Share of Vote in Britain .....47



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which was founded by France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxemburg with the Treaty of Rome, has now reached 28 member states and is called the European Union (EU). The main objective of the establishment of the EEC was to contribute to the economy and security of the member states in the aftermath of Second World War. The Community has kept enlarging deeper and wider with several other treaties and enlargement rounds. First of all, 1987 Single European Act was signed with the purpose of creating a single market by the end of 1992 and gave more competencies to the European Parliament, and then the 1991 Maastricht Treaty, which was signed to form cooperation in economics, foreign affairs and home affairs and to establish Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), changed the name to the European Union. Treaty of Amsterdam, Treaty of Nice and Lisbon Treaty followed the Maastricht Treaty and introduced new institutional arrangements and enlargement of new states. Through these institutional changes and increasing number of member states, the EU started to include a political and social cooperation as an economic organization.

The United Kingdom tried to join the EEC in 1961 for the first time and encountered French veto two times in 1963 and 1967. The UK joined the European Community in 1973 together with Ireland and Denmark. The UK had a distinct political position towards the European integration with ratification of new treaties as a result of rebates, opt-outs and referendums. Nowadays, the UK is experiencing debates on whether to stay in or leave the EU since the Conservative Party, one of UK's major political parties, announced that they will hold a referendum on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2016. It is interesting that the Conservative party, who led the UK to EU membership, decided to hold a referendum on Britain's future in the EU. In addition, the Conservative Party was a significant actor in the government in some of the major rebates and opt-outs but also in the ratification of major treaties such as the Single European Act. Thus, the position of the Conservative Party on the European integration over the years draws attention in order to analyze the process leading to an in-out referendum.

With the expansion of integration from economics to political and social fields, the European project started to draw significant criticism and this critical stance is called "Euroscepticism" in the literature. Britain and the Conservative Party are major actors associated with Euroscepticism in recent years. The main definition of Euroscepticism is "opposition and doubt to the process of European integration" (Taggart, 1998: 365). A speech by the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Margaret Thatcher, to the College of Europe in 1988 which is also called "The Bruges Speech" presented the historical roots of Euroscepticism. The tension between Margaret Thatcher and the European Commission demonstrated the anti-EU sentiments of Margaret Thatcher as well as laid the foundations of the term "Euroscepticism" since her speech focused on national identity and interest rather

than a European identity and state. Following quotation includes some remarkable statements from her speech:

Europe will be stronger precisely because it has France as France, Spain as Spain, Britain as Britain, each with its own customs, traditions and identity. It would be folly to try to fit them into some sort of identikit European personality.

We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them re-imposed at a European level with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels. (M. Thatcher, 22 September 1988).

Thatcher's Bruges speech was a beginning of the explicit Eurosceptic stance of Britain, which makes Harmsen and Spiering (2004: 13) present that Euroscepticism was a particular English phenomenon from the start. In time, the use of the term displayed a remarkable increase in the rest of the Europe through its usage in the media and academia. Thus, the term Euroscepticism is also a major component of this research in order to identify the position of the Conservative Party.

### **1.1 Research Question**

The objective of this thesis is to find out the changes in the position of the Conservative Party vis-à-vis the European integration, identify the changes and the corresponding events as well as to determine the contributing factors of this position and also to analyze its position in consideration with Euroscepticism. The aim is to identify the position of the Conservative Party on European integration through the Conservative Party manifestos and the parliamentary debates to discern the change of position and discourse over the years. To acknowledge the positional changes and the contributing factors of a leading political party in Britain and European politics is significant in the eve of the Brexit referendum. If the Conservative Party is a

eurosceptic party or not and if so, how did the party adopt a eurosceptic stance is an important question for this thesis. Based on these objectives, this thesis aims to answer the following research question: What factors contribute to the positioning of the Conservative Party of the UK vis-à-vis the European integration?

The motivation of this thesis is to conduct research to explain the factors contributing to the position of the Conservative Party on European integration. The answer will be a descriptive analysis of the Conservative Party's position, without a major attention dedicated to other political parties in Britain. The further supplementary questions will be, first, "Is there a change in the position of the Conservative Party on European integration?", "If so, when and how?" and "If so, what are the corresponding major events in this positional change?". In order to answer these questions, a detailed and comprehensive definition of Euroscepticism is necessary since it is the main determinant of a party's position on Europe. One of the first scholars, who defined Euroscepticism, was Paul Taggart and his typology together with Aleks Szczerbiak is widely accepted in the literature. This typology will be used to identify the Conservative Party's position and will be explained in-depth in the following sections.

The hypotheses of this thesis is that the Conservative values such as sovereignty, prosperity, strong state and democracy is damaged with the deeper enlargement through social and political reforms and also the intra-party dissent on the key policies of the EU contributed to the ever-changing position of the Conservative Party of the UK vis-à-vis European integration since 1973. This means that the dependent variable of this research is the position of the Conservative Party on European integration. The independent variables will be identified as the contributing

factors of this position and the hypotheses presents these independent variables as the Conservative values such as sovereignty, strong state, prosperity and democracy and also the intra-party dissent. Therefore, this thesis will also focus on the values of the Conservative Party and the internal party rebellion on significant European treaty and policies.

## **1.2 Research Design**

### **1.2.1 Data**

This research is exploratory and descriptive since it aims to identify the position of the Conservative Party on European integration. In order to study a party's position, the major source is the party manifestos in which the party declares its position itself to the electorate and the party members. Thus, the Conservative Party general election manifestos and European election manifestos are the main data for this thesis. The general election manifestos will be examined from the 1970 national election manifesto until the 2015 national election manifesto. This time period includes 12 national election manifestos and two European election manifestos<sup>1</sup>, which are available from the Conservative Party official website. The reason for the inclusion of the 1970 general election manifesto, which was published before the British accession to the Community, is that it also provides an insight for the Conservative position on accession negotiations and membership. All general election manifestos include a European section although they are different in length and emphasis. Thus, the manifestos present a detailed and credible source of data for this thesis.

---

<sup>1</sup> The European election manifestos from 1979 until 2004 are not available online. The manifestos are not available in the parliamentary archives of the British Parliament either. They are stored in the Bodleian Library of the Oxford University as hard copies. This is the reason why this thesis does not have an access to these manifestos.

In addition, in order to discern the internal party behavior, which is also another component of a party's position, the other source of data is the parliamentary debates of the Conservative Party. The British Parliament stores the debates, speeches and other important reports such as motions under the Hansard Online database. Hansard online keeps the official report of all parliamentary debates and includes the necessary data for this thesis since 1970s. In addition, the official website of the British Parliament also presents other complementary data such as motions, briefings and other official reports. Thus, British Parliament and the Conservative Party itself present the main sources of data for this thesis.

### **1.2.2 Methodology**

The main objective of this thesis is to identify the changes and contributing factors of the position of the Conservative Party on European integration. The data collected for this research is the party manifestos and parliamentary manifestos including speeches of several actors of the Conservative Party. In order to analyze the chosen data, qualitative content analysis will be used in this thesis. The reason for the usage of the qualitative content analysis is that this method is not about counting particular words and coding them but it provides the necessary space to see the flow of ideas and arguments to have a wider understanding of the data. The analysis of the data will be based on identifying the frequency and emphasis of the statements in the manifestos and in the parliamentary debates. The qualitative approach is chosen to show the differences in the party manifestos and the speeches of the actors in the debates since a quantitative approach might result with numerical coding of words or phrases, which might not show the correct result and difference. Therefore, the data will be analyzed whether it presents pro-European or anti-European position through

the theoretical framework and will be coded by the analysis of this content qualitatively.

However, there are disadvantages of using the qualitative content analysis in this thesis. This method might not reflect the full idea and conclusions that this will make. In order to prevent this, the thesis uses summary of the data and presents the whole source of data in the manifestos and parliamentary debates for the reader to fully grasp the arguments. In addition, the theory will be presented with direct quotations to show the change of the party position and why this is interpreted as change and categorized as a specific type. Yet, this method also has reliability and validity problem, which is effectual for qualitative methods since the data is analyzed by one person and open to interpretation, which makes it subjective. However, using a quantitative method would not fit into the data and present wrong results. the problem of reliability and validity might be solved by using native speakers to professionally code and analyze them but this solution cannot be used for monetary and time-wised problems.

The specific theoretical framework chosen to qualitatively analyze this data and determine the position of the Conservative Party is the final version of Taggart and Szczerbiak's hard and soft Euroscepticism categorization in 2008. Taggart and Szczerbiak's typology holds significant place on the literature and alters itself with directed criticism. However, they still stand behind the hard/soft Euroscepticism dichotomy even in their latest study but introduce some changes to make hard Euroscepticism clearer and to transform soft Euroscepticism from being too inclusive. They present a typology of party positions including pro-European parties, hard eurosceptic parties and soft eurosceptic parties (2003). Taggart and Szczerbiak's

final study on this typology presents a distinction between principled opposition and opposition to the current and future trajectory of the European integration in order to identify a party's position on European integration (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008). Thus, the hard Euroscepticism is defined as a principled opposition to the EU and the European integration, which is evident from a desire for withdrawal or opposition to the whole European project not to transfer power to supranational institutions (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008: 240). It means, the way to identify and measure hard Euroscepticism is to find out whether or not that party favours withdrawal and in opposition to the EU and integration completely. On the other hand soft Euroscepticism is defined as not being in a principled opposition to the EU or European integration but opposing the "EU's current or future planned trajectory based on the *further* extension of competencies that the EU is planning to make" (2008: 241). This implies that the way to measure whether the position of the Conservative Party is soft eurosceptic is to determine whether there is opposition to the current or future trajectory of the Union and to the deepening of the integration. Thus, assessing the kind of opposition determines the change in the position of the Conservative Party and this position with the contributing factors would be analyzed with reference to the oppositional divide on EU's trajectory.

Taggart and Szczerbiak do not present their typology with just definitions but add several components in the following years of their first study not to have too inclusive categories. These components include four particular headlines to measure the party positions on European integration. These headlines include opposing the EU on the basis of national interest, opposing particular EU policy areas, opposing the enlargement of the EU and opposing the EU since it is undemocratic (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008: 248-252). It should be noted that the major determiner of the

position of a party above all these headlines is whether the party opposes to the whole European project and wants to withdraw from the Union or it opposes to the current and future trajectory of the EU referring to the hard/soft dichotomy of Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008). However, they present these headlines for a better and detailed understanding of the party positions in order not to include every opposition to a policy area or the concern for national interest as a eurosceptic position.

The concern for national interest and criticizing the EU since it does not reflect the national interest of that particular country was a component of soft Euroscepticism since the definition of it included the condition of "...where there is a sense that national interest is currently at odds with the EU's trajectory" (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2002: 7). However, Taggart and Szczerbiak found soft Euroscepticism category over-inclusive over the years since any party could include the focus of the national interests in their rhetoric whether in budget or accession negotiations; and they rejected that this critique is not adequate for a party to be eurosceptic (2008: 248-249). Yet, this does not mean that criticizing the EU for not reflecting the national interests is never a sign of eurosceptic position. Taggart and Szczerbiak rejected their first position in 2008 but the part they left for the rejection of the national interest as a determiner covers a small paragraph and include a small explanation. Thus, it is insufficient to overlook to the national interest rhetoric of a political party in its position, thus, this thesis will evaluate national interest as not a sole determiner for a party's position but with a reference to the particular policy that the party is opposing for protection of national interest. By doing this, soft Euroscepticism category will not be too inclusive as Taggart and Szczerbiak trying to achieve, but the impact of national interest would also be examined.

Another change in the soft Euroscepticism was to differentiate between qualities of the opposed policies. Since defining soft Euroscepticism including every policy opposition even in one area would make the category too broad, Taggart and Szczerbiak introduce core and peripheral policy distinction. This distinction refers to the major defining character of party positions, which is opposing the current of future trajectory of the European integration. This means that if a party is in favour of the current and future trajectory of the EU but opposes one or more policy areas, identifying that party eurosceptic is not sufficient. What matters according to Taggart and Szczerbiak is the quality of the policy rather than the quantity that is while opposition to the core policies such as Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), which is significant for the current and future trajectory of the EU, would make a party Eurosceptic, opposition to the peripheral policies such as Common Fisheries Policy would not be enough to identify that party eurosceptic (2008: 250). Therefore, it is important to check the quality of the policy and its significance for the current and future trajectory of the EU for a better identification of party positions. Although this distinction may seem as a quite subjective perspective, Taggart and Szczerbiak add another component to the specification of core and peripheral policies. They argue that how the European integration is perceived by the member or candidate country as in a mostly economic project or a political project helps to define core and peripheral policies (2008: 250). This may also contribute to the understanding of different party positions and their understanding of the current and future trajectory of the European integration.

Taggart and Szczerbiak present two more issues to clarify in their study, which are opposing the EU enlargement and regarding the EU as insufficiently integrationist and undemocratic. Their position on the EU enlargement issue is that since opposing

enlargement means opposing the widening of the integration not deepening of it, it has nothing to do with the current and future trajectory of the EU or extending competencies, therefore, should not be described as a Eurosceptic stance (2008: 251). However, when it comes to the democratization of the EU and deepening integration, if the country is trying to retrieve its power from Brussels and give it back to the national governments, this is against the current and future trajectory of the EU and, therefore, a Eurosceptic stance (2008: 250-251). However, this does not mean that the democratization call for strengthening European Parliament or institutions in general would be identified as Euroscepticism. Again, the distinction is the opposition to the state of affairs of the EU whether at present or in the future.

To summarize, it is a complex task to identify party position properly in consideration of every aspect of the opposition. However, the new changes of Taggart and Szczerbiak strengthen and elaborate their typology with the clarification of some confusing and broad statements. Therefore, opposing the EU in any possible way does not make a party eurosceptic and identifying any opposition as Euroscepticism requires several more aspects than that. Thus, this thesis will also take the changes of Taggart and Szczerbiak into consideration to achieve an extensive study.

Taggart and Szczerbiak's changes in the hard/soft categorization are important contributors of this thesis to choose its theory. Since they published several studies since Taggart's first study in 1998, their typology replied the directed criticisms and strengthened. With the clarification of major confusions, this categorization fitted the data most and explained it elaborately and left little room for wrong conceptualization. In addition, other typologies by Kopecký and Mudde (2002) or

Flood and Usherwood (2005) created more detailed categorizations but since this thesis aims to explain the changing position of the Conservative Party only and not to compare several party positions, these categorizations would make the study much more complex. I share Taggart and Szczerbiak's criticism to these studies, which is as the typology becomes more complex, it becomes harder to functionalize (2008: 246). Thus, this thesis uses the hard and soft categorization as its theoretical framework to define changing party positions of the Conservative Party.

In addition, Taggart and Szczerbiak presents that in order to determine a party position, it is necessary to include the internal party politics and the type of party, which demonstrates its characteristics and values, in the research (2008: 255). This means, it is necessary to investigate how the party utilizes the European discourse in its own party politics and how the values of the party overlap with the principles of the European integration. Thus, the national context and the features of the Conservative Party and conservatism also carry utmost importance for this thesis.

This also highlights the party's wider agenda on the European integration and through parliamentary debates and party manifestos, this theory will be utilized. The reason for this thesis to choose Taggart and Szczerbiak's hard-soft categorization for the theoretical framework is that this theory is strengthened in several studies since 2002 and the final version in 2008 is chosen to interpret the data. In addition, its simplicity makes categorization of the party positions less complex and confusing, which helps to identify little changes and differences in detail. Since this thesis will focus on the Conservative Party position on European integration only, a simpler theory with fewer categories would help to identify the position better and fit the data most.

### **1.2.3 Choice of Country**

The particular country choice for this study is Britain. In order to have a more detailed perspective, the data will be analyzed not on a United Kingdom basis but from a narrower perspective through analyzing and focusing data on Britain. Britain is one of the major countries in the European Union since it is one of the oldest members of the Union and an active actor from the beginning. It is also a leading country in European economics and politics with its historical background on the Continent. However, what attracted attention for this thesis is that Britain was also a controversial member in the European project. The reaction of Britain in key treaties of the EU and the leaders' attitude on the European integration are different from other major members of the Union such as Germany and France. British membership was generally a debated topic from the accession in 1973 till the latest developments on holding an in-out referendum. Thus, Britain is chosen as the specific country to research in this thesis.

The Conservative Party is one of the most dominant parties in the British history from the 1688 Glorious Revolution onwards, which resulted in the formation of two major parties, Whig and Tories. As the continuation of Tory tradition, the roots of the Conservative Party originate from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, it is one of the most significant parties that held government after the accession to the EU and played an active role in the European politics. This is why this thesis focuses on the Conservatives particularly. Furthermore, the Conservative Party draws attention as a result of the referendum, which will be held in this year because it was the Conservatives, who promised to hold an in-out referendum by the end of 2017 and kept that promise with the declaration of the referendum on June 2016. Such an

active and enthusiastic partner at the beginning declared to hold referendum and this change in the position on European integration is the main focus and object of interest for this thesis.

This research topic is relevant to the field of International Relations, since it presents the domestic origins of international relations. Originating from a party's political position, this thesis investigates the relation between a major international organization, the EU and the Conservative Party. The EU is a significant non-state actor, which dominates European politics and economics since its establishment and its relations with Britain and its major actor, the Conservative Party grabbed the attention of this thesis. Since the EU is composed of several other members, the position of Britain is also a significant matter of concern for them, which could have impact on economics of politics among these states and Britain. These are why Britain and the Conservative Party are chosen as the main topic for this thesis.

#### **1.2.4 Time Perspective**

This thesis mainly has a contemporary time perspective with a focus of last 50 years in the relations between Britain and the European Union. Starting from the British accession to the EU in 1973, this thesis investigates the position of the Conservative Party on the European integration until 2016. This time frame also includes the major treaties, reforms and changes of the EU since Britain joined the Community in the first enlargement round. Thus, this thesis captures not only the whole British membership to the Union but also major developments in the European Union history.

### **1.3 Research Outline**

This thesis consists of three major chapters, which are Euroscepticism, Party politics in Britain and a discussion chapter. The first chapter, Euroscepticism is a presentation of the review of the literature on party positions on European integration and Euroscepticism. The second section presents the party politics in Britain through a review of the political system and parties in Britain. The discussion section includes the presentation of the theoretical framework in detail and the analysis and discussion of the data. The concluding remarks will be made in the end of discussion chapter as another chapter.

In particular, Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature first, which is based on the term “Euroscepticism”. Originating from Euroscepticism, several authors created typologies on party positions pertaining to the European integration but the first scholar to study party positions was Paul Taggart (1998). Other studies included qualitative and quantitative categorizations by Taggart and Szczerbiak (2002, 2003, 2008), Kopecký and Mudde (2002), Flood (2002), Flood and Usherwood (2005), Ray (1999) and Hooghe and Marks (2002). This chapter will consist of the presentations of these studies and the directed criticisms to them. In addition, in order to acknowledge how the parties are positioned on European integration, a separate section for the introduction of the elements of Euroscepticism will be presented. In this section, utility, sovereignty and democracy elements will be discussed as the determiners of the party positioning according to the studies on euroscepticism. Another section of this chapter will discuss British Euroscepticism in general and how the position of Britain and its reasons are presented in several studies.

Chapter 3 will be an explanatory chapter, indicating the party politics in Britain. This includes the party system in which the Conservative Party operates in, the political

parties in Britain and a historical background of the British membership of the European Union with major events and different positions taken by the Conservative Party. The party system section will be a discussion of two party system and British first-past-the-post electoral system with its characteristics and impacts on the British politics. Since intra-party dissent is an important focus for this study, backbencher tradition in British politics will also be demonstrated. The following section will present the significant political parties in British and European politics, which are the Conservative Party, the Labour Party, the Liberal Democratic Party, the British National Party and the United Kingdom Independence Party. The main focus will be on the Conservative Party and ideology, which can be examined through a conceptualization of Thatcherite Conservatism and one nation conservatism. The presentation of the Conservative values will follow in order to present an in-detail discussion for the Conservative position on European integration. The last section of this chapter will be a historical analysis of major events and Conservative reactions to them. This section is necessary to understand the Conservative position and conjuncture that the conservatives are in and the manifestos are published.

Chapter 4 is the main discussion of this thesis, which will present the analysis of the data and the discussion of it respectively. This chapter will give the answer to the research question through the analysis of the data. Thus, first, this thesis will summarize the party manifestos starting from 1970 general election manifesto to 2015 general election manifesto. This summary is necessary to detect the positional change and major oppositional areas of the Conservative Party. Then, another source of data, the parliamentary debates will be analyzed and investigated for any internal party dissent mostly in the form of backbench dissent. Whether there is any opposition from the party and any push and pressure on particular policy areas will

be determined and analyzed. This analysis of the party manifestos and parliamentary debates will be followed by a discussion of them and an answer to the question. This analysis will reveal the positional change of the Conservative Party on European integration and make room for a discussion of the contributing factors for this change. Then, a reference to the hypotheses, conservative values and elements of Euroscepticism will follow.

The concluding chapter will include remarks on the findings of the thesis and the research question. It will also present what the thesis suggests and whether it is overlapping with the hypothesis. It means the final comments on the Conservative position, whether the thesis found a change and the contributing factors of this probable change. The contribution of this thesis to the literature will also be highlighted. Suggestions, limitations and further research topics in the issue will compose the final part of this thesis.

## CHAPTER II

### EUROSCEPTICISM

Over the years, the way the British political parties addressed the issue of European integration has varied. With every new treaty and reforms, the reactions of these parties included vetoes, opt-outs and intents to hold referendums on whether leaving the EU or not. These skeptical moves led the way for the rise of the term “Euroscepticism” in Britain. Euroscepticism can be defined as “the opposition and doubt to the process of European integration” (Taggart, 1998: 365). In recent years, this skeptical stance started drawing much more attention from media and academia, originating from the rise of the eurosceptic parties both domestically and at European parliamentary level. Strong performance of eurosceptic and far-right parties in the latest European Parliament elections in 2014 might be the major demonstration of how Euroscepticism is expanding. The headlines after the 2014 elections included statements such as “Eurosceptic earthquake rocks EU elections” (Price, 2014) or “Europe’s elections: The Eurosceptic Union” (Europe’s Elections, 2014). As a result, the study of Euroscepticism became much more of a contemporary and substantial topic.

Britain and its position on European integration also draw serious attention lately since the Conservative Party, who led the UK into the European Community, will hold a referendum on staying in or leaving the EU on 23<sup>rd</sup> of June. The relationship between Britain and the European Union has been a controversial topic with varying degrees of enthusiasm and significant British opt-outs, divisions and renegotiations. One of the most important and active players of this position was the Conservative Party of UK, who has a quite dominant past in the British politics. This thesis will investigate the contributing factors of the Conservative Party's position on European integration since the British accession in 1973. Attitudes on the European integration and euroscepticism are major topics for this research since they will explain whether there are changes in the position of the Conservative Party leading a eurosceptic stance. Therefore, it is necessary to present what is Euroscepticism and how the political party positions on European integration can be categorized. Thus, this chapter will first, introduce the definitions and typologies of party positioning on European integration and Euroscepticism through presenting different approaches to Euroscepticism. Then, the elements of Euroscepticism, which determine support or opposition to the EU, will be demonstrated. As a final section of this chapter, the particular reasons for Euroscepticism in Britain will be identified. A small summary section will follow the Euroscepticism in Britain section.

## **2.1 Approaches to Euroscepticism**

This chapter reviews the scholarly accounts of party positioning on European integration and Euroscepticism, by providing definitions of the term used in the literature and change of the comprehension of the term in time with distinctive categorizations. The concept lacks a shared definition among scholars, which leads

the way for a variety of studies and typologies. The scholarly origins of the term can be identified from the studies of Paul Taggart in 1998 in which he defined the term through the party positions in the EU (Taggart, 1998). His article “A touchstone of Dissent: Euroscepticism in Contemporary West European Party Systems” was the first academic reference to the term and aroused interest on party-based Euroscepticism. His study inspired several other studies such as Kopecký and Mudde (2002), Flood (2002), Taggart and Szczerbiak (2003), Flood and Usherwood (2005). There are also numerous studies in search of a definition for Euroscepticism, focusing more on the public and identity rather than parties such as Sørensen (2008) and McLaren (2007). However, the study of Euroscepticism varies mostly on the method and data as qualitative studies focusing on the public statements, party programmes and manifestos; and quantitative studies with a focus of expert surveys. This chapter will focus on the major studies from qualitative and quantitative studies both and present their definition of the term as well as different classification of party positions on Europe.

Paul Taggart was the first scholar who attempted to define Euroscepticism and he based his research upon the party positions in Western Europe pertaining to the European integration. He receives support from the discipline of Comparative Politics for the first time to examine Euroscepticism closely and by doing so; he introduces a conceptual definition of it through distinguishing the term from the popular usage in the media and placing it in the political literature (Taggart, 1998: 368-369). In this study, Taggart (1998: 366) conceptualizes Euroscepticism as “an encompassing term expressing the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration”. Thus, the term refers to both qualified and unqualified opposition to the

European integration, which he develops this idea into a hard/soft Euroscepticism divide in his following study with Aleks Szczerbiak.

In this study, Taggart made a differentiation among political parties of EU member states and Norway, and presented four types of party based Euroscepticism with a focus of party ideology and positions (Taggart, 1998: 368-369). By classifying political parties, Taggart researches their ways of demonstrating the opposition and the main objective of this classification is to discern different manifestations of Euroscepticism with distinctive objectives. His conclusion for this study is that party based Euroscepticism depends on domestic contextual factors (Taggart: 1998).

Although this study is criticized and developed by scholars in time, the academic roots of Euroscepticism as well as the common accepted understanding of it are mostly based on the study of Paul Taggart. Even today, his 1998 study captures significant place and recognition in the literature.

The first type of Taggart's typology can be classified as single-issue Eurosceptic parties whose main objective or *raison d'être* is opposition to the EU (Taggart, 1998: 368). These parties' aim is to mobilize voters through politicizing Euroscepticism.

The second type can be identified as protest parties and Taggart defines them as "parties whose appeal stems either partly or wholly from being parties that both reject and stand outside the established group of (usually governmental) parties" (Taggart, 1998: 368). Thus, protest parties are founded on the principle of opposition to the current political representation but they also implement eurosceptic policies.

The French Communist Party or Swedish Green Party can be examples of protest parties. The third type consists of established parties with a eurosceptic position. These parties are in government or close to entering government and they are

supported widely by the electorate. They manifest eurosceptic attitudes based on political agonism or ideology. Taggart (1998: 368) argues that these parties regard themselves as worthy of support since they are close to the government. The Centre Democrats in Portugal, British Conservative Party or the Democratic Unionist Party in UK illustrate this type sufficiently. The last type includes eurosceptic factions in parties. These parties are in favour of European integration yet a faction of the party expresses eurosceptic attitudes. Taggart (1998: 369) states that these kinds of parties are hard to examine systematically and he (1998: 373) draws attention to whether factionalism is observable in the party. “Labour against the Euro” faction of the British Labour Party could also be an example of this type.

Additionally, Taggart (1998) presents three different positions towards European integration or it can be conceptualized as reasons for being eurosceptic. First of all, anti-integration position adopts the idea of opposing EU membership and integration with a strict oppositional stance. The second position refers to the idea of being skeptical about whether the EU is the best form of integration or not because it is claimed to be too inclusive. They are not in principle opposed to the idea of integration but skeptical about the form of integration. This opposition stems from the idea that whether the EU endeavours gathering up very distinct elements that are not coherent (Taggart, 1998: 366). The final position refers to the idea of not opposing the European integration but keep their skepticism about the form of integration similar to the second position but expressing that the EU is too exclusive. This idea of exclusion could be originated from geographical or social grounds yet they believe that the EU is not the best form of integration (Taggart, 1998: 366). Therefore, Taggart in this study classify party positions as well as different reasons forming these particular positions.

Following Taggart's first study, Taggart and Szczerbiak formulated new studies on Euroscepticism. First, Taggart and Szczerbiak (2002) split the initial definition of Taggart into two different forms of Euroscepticism. This new division was a result of the need to make a distinction between qualified and unqualified opposition. These two forms of opposition produced soft and hard variants, in other words soft and hard Euroscepticism. Taggart and Szczerbiak (2002: 7) define hard Euroscepticism as:

It is where there is a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived.

Therefore, hard Euroscepticism can be in the form of rejection of membership to the EU as well as political and economic integration or support for withdrawal from the EU depending on the current membership position of the country. This rejection is in the form of outright and unqualified reaction and expresses the demand of not being part of the Union. Taggart and Szczerbiak also provide two methods of assessing whether a party is hard eurosceptic or not. First method is to determine that if the party is a single issue anti-EU party meaning that the party is opposed to the integration on principle, which makes it a hard eurosceptic party. The second method can be explained through the ideology of a specific party since the party might be opposing the current form of EU integration because it is not compatible with the party's ideology, in other words, it is regarded as a capitalist, socialist or neoliberal entity making the party oppose on ideological bases (2002: 7). Thus, both forms of opposition is considered as de facto opposition to the Union and results with the identification of these parties as hard eurosceptic.

Taggart and Szczerbiak identify another type for Euroscepticism based on the distinction of principled opposition, soft Euroscepticism. Thus, soft Euroscepticism is defined as

where there is NOT a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that 'national interest' is currently at odds with the EU's trajectory. (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2002: 7)

Thus, soft Euroscepticism does not directly reject the integration but have a critical position on the practice of integration. This critical position can be inferred as the opposition to one or several policies of the EU, when the focus of the actor is on the national interest but there is no option of withdrawal from the Union. Therefore, the key distinction between hard and soft Euroscepticism is the manifestation of outright rejection and withdrawal on the one hand and qualified skepticism on specific policy areas on the other hand. This distinction helps identification of parties with critical stance and parties with just adverse expression. Therefore, while the PDS/Left Party in Germany can be classified as a soft eurosceptic party because of its critical stance on Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) (Lees, 2008: 21), the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) tend to be on the hard eurosceptic side of the typology (Gifford, 2006: 866).

Taggart and Szczerbiak received significant attention and acceptance due to their typology but also incurred serious criticisms with the definition of soft Euroscepticism. One of the main criticisms to this typology comes from Peter Kopecný and Cas Mudde (2002: 300), who argue that the conceptualization of Soft

Euroscepticism is too broad that every disagreement in a specific policy could be interpreted as soft Euroscepticism. Secondly, they argue that the distinction between hard and soft Euroscepticism is blurred and the criterion for this distinction is unclear (Kopecký & Mudde, 2002: 300). Additionally, they state that soft and hard Euroscepticism categories do not make any distinction among the relation with the European Union and with the European integration identifying the European Union as the current model of the integration idea (Kopecký & Mudde, 2002: 300). As a result, the concept of Euroscepticism can be combined with the pro-European parties, which may lead undervaluing of the term. In response to these criticisms, Taggart and Szczerbiak published a book called *Opposing Europe: The Comparative Politics of Euroscepticism* in 2008, which addresses the previous studies on Euroscepticism and replies to the criticisms of their previous works. This book presents a wider conceptualization for Euroscepticism with several case studies as well as expresses the term in the public and party-based form.

Taggart's efforts were first to describe Euroscepticism and different party positions on European integration and his study holds a significant place for this research because following studies on this topic all refer to or criticize his first study and built upon it. Throughout the time, his typology is changed and enhanced with replies to directed criticisms. This became the primary reason for the selection of his typology with Szczerbiak to be the theoretical framework of this research. Their categorization of party positions is simple and easy to understand and place. When the typologies became more comprehensive but more complex, the study of party positions became harder for this research. Thus, Taggart and Szczerbiak's study will be the major referring point during this thesis.

Kopecký and Mudde's typology proposes a distinction between diffuse support and specific support through drawing on David Easton's (1965) differentiation of political support. While diffuse support expresses "support for the general ideas of European integration that underlie the EU", specific support means "support for the general practice of European integration; that is, the EU as it is and as it is developing" (Kopecký & Mudde, 2002: 300). Therefore, they made a differentiation between the relation with the European Union and the European integration, which was their final criticism to Taggart and Szczerbiak's soft and hard Euroscepticism categories. This distinction leads an alternative dual dimensional explanation of Euroscepticism, consisting of four different types of party positions, where the axes of the dual dimensional explanation are Europhobe/Europhile and EU-optimist/EU-pessimist. First, they make a differentiation between Euroenthusiasts, Eurosceptics, Europragmatists and Eurorejects. Euroenthusiasts are the ones supporting the idea and practice of European integration while Eurorejects do not acknowledge the idea or the practice either; Eurosceptics support the idea of European integration but stand against of the practice of integration while Europragmatists reject the idea of integration but support the practice (Kopecký & Mudde, 2002: 300-303). Then, they transfer this distinction to a two dimensional explanation where Europhobe, Europhile, EU-optimist and EU-pessimist concepts enters into the frame. Europhobe and Europhile distinction depends on the support for the integration, and EU-optimist/EU-pessimist distinction depends on the current and future positions of the EU (Kopecký & Mudde, 2002: 302). Therefore, parties, who are Europhiles and EU-pessimists, are referred as Eurosceptics while the combination of Europhobes and EU-pessimists in a party is conceptualized as Eurorejects. Additionally, parties who

are Europhile and EU-optimists are Euroenthusiasts while both Europhobe and EU-optimist parties are labeled as Europragmatists (Kopecký & Mudde, 2002: 303).

Table 1: Typology of party positions on Europe (Kopecký & Mudde, 2002: 303)

		Support for European integration	
		<i>Europhile</i>	<i>Europhobe</i>
S U P P O R T  f o r  E U	<i>EU-optimist</i>	Euroenthusiasts	Europragmatists
	<i>EU-pessimist</i>	Eurosceptics	Eurorejects

Taggart and Szczerbiak directed criticisms to Kopecký and Mudde’s two dimensional typology in their 2003 study “Theorizing Party-Based Euroscepticism: Problems of Definition, Measurement, and Causality”. Taggart and Szczerbiak argue that Kopecký and Mudde’s typology led to confusion by introducing Europhobes and Eurorejects since the term Euroscepticism became a subset of Eurosceptic attitudes (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2003: 9). Additionally, it is hard to fit a party into the Europragmatist classification among the current member states, which is acceptable since there will be some parties that are hard to fit into any typology but creating different categories for these parties would be unreasonable (9). Additionally, Taggart and Szczerbiak think that the Euroenthusiast classification is too inclusive

and places distinctive parties into one category (Taggart &, 2003: 9). Therefore, it can be inferred that the criticisms towards Kopecký and Mudde (2002) claims that the borders of his classification is not clear enough and while they are criticizing Taggart and Szczerbiak's (2003) soft Euroscepticism for being too exclusive, Euroenthusiast classification remains too inclusive for them. This thesis agrees to the criticisms directed to Kopecký and Mudde's typology and finds their categorization complicated to position the political parties.

Another important study that should be addressed is by Christopher Flood (2002). He presents six different party positions and in order to understand this comprehensive grouping, it is necessary to give Flood's definition of Euroscepticism. He defines Euroscepticism as

attitudes and opinions represented in discourses and behaviours ... which express doubt as to the desirability and/or benefits and/or long-term viability of European or/and EU integration as an objective or in the general framework created so far or in some important aspects of that framework of institutions, processes and policies and/or as it is anticipated to occur in the future (Flood, 2002: 3)

As Flood suggests, both attitudes and opinions leading a skeptical stance and having distrust about European and/or EU integration and the institutions, processes and policies is the key to understand eurosceptic behaviour. He supports a broad categorization of party positions with explicit descriptions in order not to question the term with vague assumptions (Flood, 2002: 5). Since the term covers several elements from attitudes, ideas and ideology to party positions, his definition and categorization remains broader than the previous studies. First, Cristopher Flood

himself in 2002, then together with Simon Usherwood in 2005 classify six groups, which are rejectionists, revisionists, minimalists, gradualist, reformist and maximalist (Flood, 2002: 5; Flood & Usherwood, 2005: 6).

According to the classification of Flood and Usherwood, rejectionists are opposed to being a member of the EU or participating in the specific institutions and policies, which would mean to be opposed to the integration (Flood & Usherwood, 2005: 5).

Revisionism as a party position, on the other hand, favours a return to an earlier trajectory before the major revision of a treaty (Flood & Usherwood, 2005: 5).

While minimalists are content with the status quo but opposed to the further integration, gradualists favour further integration if it is handled in a slow and meticulous manner (Flood & Usherwood, 2005: 5). The reformists focus on the necessity for constructive engagement or in other words overcome the insufficiency of current institutions and practices, and maximalists positions themselves “in favour of pushing forward with the existing process as rapidly as is practicable towards higher levels of integration” (Flood & Usherwood, 2005: 5). It is necessary to specify that the integration comprises of both the current structure of the EU and particular policy areas and components such as treaties, institutions and integration in this typology. The following table will summarize this typology by presenting the significant points of all categories.

Table 2: Flood and Usherwood's typology on party-based Euroscepticism

<b>Maximalist</b>	pushing integration as far and as fast as is feasible towards the practical realisation of a chosen model
<b>Reformist</b>	endorsing advance of integration, subject to remedying the deficiencies of what has already been achieved
<b>Gradualist</b>	accepting advance of integration, as long as it is slow and piecemeal
<b>Minimalist</b>	accepting the <i>status quo</i> , but wanting to limit further integration as far as possible
<b>Revisionist</b>	wanting to return to an earlier state, usually before a treaty revision
<b>Rejectionist</b>	outright refusal of integration, coupled to opposition to participation

Flood and Usherwood (2005: 6)

Two major points of criticisms towards Flood and Usherwood's typology emphasize the difficulty of categorization of parties in practice. Taggart and Szczerbiak indicate that this classification of such a wide range requires a great amount of data, which is not available (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2003: 9). Since parties tend to show their policies in detail rarely, the precision of the classification will be inadequate.

Therefore, although wider categorizations are made to explain the party positions and the term better, it becomes harder to identify and locate them precisely in practice.

Additionally, this typology does not present a mutually exclusive categorization since some parties could easily move between different classes and be placed in more than one group (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2003: 10). The main objective of this

research is to present the contributing factors to different positions of the

Conservative Party and the categorization of Flood and Usherwood's would be a better theoretical framework for a comparative study of different political parties.

Having too much category would make the explanation of the position of a single party harder and might lead the location of a manifesto to more than one category.

Thus, this thesis prefers the study of Taggart and Szczerbiak over Flood and Usherwood's in order not to make the positioning of the Conservative Party complex.

Leonard Ray's 1999 research note on "Measuring Party Orientation towards European Integration: Results from an Expert Survey" marks the birth of the North Carolina School on Euroscepticism. This research note demonstrates the results of an expert survey on party positions on European integration. This research focuses on the three major themes, which are the support for European integration, the salience of the issue of European integration and the internal dissent over the European integration. Through focusing on the period 1984-1996, Ray presents a comprehensive dataset gathered from the surveys filled by experts (scholars of Euroscepticism and party positions on European integration). The results of this research are that the political parties became pro-European in this period although their locations are dispersed scruffily in the first instance (1999: 291). This states that the mean of the party positions has shifted towards the pro-European side. Other conclusions of this study are that the salience of the issue has increased and the internal dissent in the political parties is mostly low with several significant exceptions (292-293). Thus, focusing on three major themes, Leonard Ray studies was the pioneer of quantitative Euroscepticism study, who inspired other scholars on the issue of European integration.

Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks are the other scholars, who used quantitative method to study party-based Euroscepticism. Instead of seeking a definition of Euroscepticism as in the qualitative studies, they asked the question of "What drives Euroscepticism?". These scholars published their research on the impacts of ideology

on Euroscepticism in 2002. Through using expert data on 125 parties in 14 countries, they came to a conclusion that there is a strong relationship between ideology and party positions that the political parties at the extreme ends of Right-Left spectrum are more Eurosceptic than the ones located around the Center (Hooghe & Marks, 2002: 985). Later on 2004, these scholars searched whether the identity or economic rationality influence the public opinion on the European integration. According to them, economic effects of European integration are significant but identity in the form of a group membership seems to be more powerful in determining public opinion on the European integration (Hooghe & Marks, 2004). Following that argument, they regard the strong national identity as the determinant of identification with Europe (Hooghe & Marks, 2004: 1). Therefore, instead of presenting a definition and typology, Hooghe and Marks studied the impacts of ideology, identity and economic interests on the position of both parties and citizens towards the European integration.

There are also other several studies describing and categorizing party positions and Euroscepticism but they are not accepted widely. Catharina Sørensen (2008) presents distinctions between utilitarian, sovereignty-based, democratic and social Euroscepticism while Søren Jacob Riishøj (2007: 508-509) explains Euroscepticism with nine different types, which are identity based, cleavage based, policy based, institutionally based, national interest based, experience based, party based, Atlantic based and practice based Euroscepticism. Amandine Crespy and Nicholas Verschuere (2009: 381) criticize the explanation of Euroscepticism through a party-based method and embrace it as the reason for an ambiguous and complicated definition of the term. Finally, Cécile Leconte contributes to the literature by differentiating between utilitarian, political, value based Euroscepticism and cultural

anti-Europeanism (Leconte, 2010: 46-67). However, these studies are criticized for being harder to operate since too many concepts are introduced to the explanation of the term, or being too simplistic and limited. “The more complex and fine-grained the typology is, the more difficult it is to operationalise” (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2003: 5). Thus, Taggart and Szczerbiak’s hard/soft Euroscepticism distinction attracts attention as the most widely accepted explanation of Euroscepticism and the theoretical framework of this research.

## **2.2. Elements of Euroscepticism**

In addition to the review of the existing literature on the conceptualization of Euroscepticism, it is also necessary to present different elements determining support or opposition towards the European integration. When studying the position of the Conservative Party on European integration, the start of a eurosceptic stance and the elements behind that draws attention. Before explaining the British Euroscepticism, a short description of the elements of Euroscepticism in general is necessary for the in detail comprehension of the party manifestos and the statements. The analysis of the data will be made in consideration of these elements since the understanding of European integration for the Conservative Party is shaped by these elements, which constitutes the meaning of the current and future trajectory of the EU. The literature concentrates on three major elements determining the position towards the European integration and these elements can be categorized as utility, democracy and sovereignty.

First of all, the discussion of utility as a determinant of Euroscepticism was a major focus of several studies. The idea of “whether the motive of utility was a significant determinant of the position of the parties towards the European integration” was

discussed by many scholars such as Hooghe and Marks (2004), Gabel (1998) and George (2000), who have different standpoints on the issue. George (2000: 21) argues that the benefits gained from the EU membership and/or further integration is a major determinant of party based Euroscepticism. Therefore, George discerns that the utility of the EU membership or the further integration is decisive in the position of the parties towards the EU. On the other hand, Hooghe and Marks (2004) regard the utility as a significant factor but places identity as the main determinant of a party's position rather than the calculated benefits and losses obtained from the EU. Matthew Gabel, on the other hand, holds similar point of view with George and argues that membership and further integration serving the interests of a country would be a determinant of support for the political parties while gaining lesser benefits leads a skeptical attitude towards the EU (1998: 336-337). Taggart and Szczerbiak also have a closer opinion that the socio-economic interests of a party might move a party's position towards a pro-European stance (2013: 23). Therefore, although there are scholars, who identify utility as a lesser significant determinant of the party based Euroscepticism, the idea of the benefits gained from the EU membership or further integration is the major factor of the party's position holds important place in the literature. Yet, it seems to be an expected inference since the EU was founded on the goal of economic growth and progress while it was called as the European Coal and Steel Community.

Another element determining the support and skepticism towards the EU is centered on the democratic deficit. Similar to the term Euroscepticism, there is not a consensus on the definition of the democratic deficit. It was first introduced to the literature by a British Political Scientist David Marquand (1979) and referred to the inability of European Community institutions to function pursuant to the democratic

constituents (Mény, 2002: 8). Additionally, Mény argues that the feeling of a democratic deficit originates from indirectly elected members chosen by the national government, which distances the citizens from the EU (2002: 8). Therefore, the term refers to the lack of democracy in EU institutions as well as the feeling of the EU citizens to have no accessibility to the course of politics in the EU. Since the EU is a sui-generis entity with no government, the voters feel a lack of democratic legitimacy. However, it is also necessary to state that the EU is working towards extending the powers of the European Parliament and the changes made by the Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice Treaties support the effort of the EU to remove the democratic deficit. Yet, the idea of a lack of democracy in the institutions of the EU demonstrates the indication of skepticism towards the EU. Rohrschneider also agrees with this idea and argues that “the EU’s democratic performance substantially shapes support for integration” (2002: 473). Therefore, the democratic standing of the EU is significant for determining support or skepticism towards the Union.

Another significant determinant of Euroscepticism is the element of sovereignty. This refers to the skepticism originating from the concerns of national sovereignty and identity. Thomson (1995) defines sovereignty from the perspectives of both liberal interdependence theorists and realists. While the capability of the state to control actors and activities in its territory is defined as sovereignty for liberal interdependence theorists, realists define it as the “ability to make authoritative decisions” (Thomson, 1995: 213). Therefore, when membership and further integration to the EU would mean the loss of national sovereignty to the EU citizens and parties, the position towards the EU becomes more skeptical. Thus, the Union becoming more and more supranational would jeopardize national sovereignty and shape the eurosceptic attitudes towards the EU. Although the EU is trying to give

more powers to the European Parliament and Brussels in order to remove the democratic deficit, the increasing supranationalism of the Union is regarded as a threat to the national sovereignty, which leads changes on the position of the parties towards the EU. The idea of jeopardizing national sovereignty originates from the preservation of national interest and identity. How the citizens define themselves determine both support and skepticism towards European integration (Hooghe & Marks, 2004). McLaren (2007: 248) argues that the position towards the EU tend to become eurosceptic when European Integration poses a threat to the national identity. If the identity of the citizens is defined through a European identity, they demonstrate more pro-European attitude. Thus, the national sovereignty and identity is a factor determining the position towards the EU since commitment to these factors hinders a European definition of identity and interest, resulting with skepticism towards the EU.

To summarize, these elements of Euroscepticism are major determinants of a party's position on European integration. The values that a party adopts and the intra-party dissent could be explained with reference to the utility, democracy and the sovereignty elements. Taggart and Szczerbiak's theoretical framework that this thesis uses needs to refer to these elements during the analysis of the party manifestos and speeches in order to see the change in the position and the contributing factors of this change. Therefore, these elements should be kept in mind and to be referred in the discussion of the data part to discern the determinants of the party position.

### **2.3 Euroscepticism in Britain**

The previous sections presented Euroscepticism and elements determining support and opposition to the European integration. Additionally, this thesis mentioned the

historical origins and first explicit demonstrations of Euroscepticism for Britain. However, it is necessary to state a summary of particular reasons behind British Euroscepticism before presenting a party-based Euroscepticism research. How the literature identifies British Euroscepticism, what are the major determinants for the British position on European integration is necessary to identify the Conservative Party position in order to have a general framework and see the place of the Conservatives in it. Starting from the British application to the Union, Britain had not been an enthusiastic partner since Charles de Gaulle, the incumbent President of France during the British application period, vetoed British entry two times in 1963 and 1967. Britain joined what was then called European Community in 1973 with lesser enthusiasm originating from the vetoes. However, the country was experiencing serious economic problems such as great oil crisis and inflation, and had the objective of benefiting from European free trade while joining to the EC, which experienced prospering economy throughout 1960s.

When the Union was getting bigger in time and the economic objectives of the Union required social and political policy measures, critical attitude changes started to come up in Britain. Even before the entry to the EC, de Gaulle criticized Britain for being particularly different from the other European states in several ways in a press conference that might be referred later as the reasons for British Euroscepticism.

... England is, in effect, insular, maritime, linked through its trade, markets, and food supply to very diverse and often very distant countries. Its activities are essentially industrial and commercial, and only slightly agricultural. It has, throughout its work, very marked and original customs and traditions. In short, the nature, structure, and economic context of England differ profoundly from those of the other States of the Continent... (Charles de Gaulle, 1970, as cited in Blair, 2014: 181)

These differences stated by de Gaulle played a significant role in the development of Euroscepticism in Britain. However, the Conservative government of Edward Heath, which was the incumbent government in the first years of British entry, was willing to take full responsibility in the European project but his term of office was not long enough to undertake significant part. The following governments whether Labour or Conservative with few exceptions, did not mostly show pro-European attitudes for different motives and reason. In this chapter, British Euroscepticism will be described as the difficulty and willingness of current and further integration with regard to participation to new political, social and economic reforms as well as the calculated utility of Britain. In this sense, the reasons of British Euroscepticism can be generalized and listed under geographical, historical and cultural, political, and economic aspects.

When the British geographical position is considered, it is an island at the edge of the European continent, whose interest and history lies on the other continents as much as Europe. Its history is different from the other continental powers and its colonies, trade and ways of immigration lies on the American and African continent (Grant, 2008: 2). This focus on the other continents more than Europe has a reflection on the formation of European integration after the World War Two since Britain was not tied to a continent with economic and cultural links. After a devastating war, while other parts of Europe was trying to find a solution to the German problem and seeking peace and prosperity from an organization of continent-wide, Britain was relatively far from the debate with more concerns transferred to the American and African continents as a result of cultural affinity and economic benefits. Links with the American and African continents was one of the reasons for Churchill not to attend the initial discussions of the European project in the 1950s (Grant, 2008: 2).

Britain did not want to bide its trade and ambitions under the regulations of Brussels, which later lay the origins of the Euroscepticism. Additionally, as an island nation, Britain was not occupied while Europe was fighting major wars and being occupied many times throughout the history. These characteristics of Britain as an island nation strengthened the idea of being different from Europe and choice to leave it to follow its own way (Corner, 2007: 467). Therefore, geographically being on the edge of the European Continent and a nation inhabited an island; Britain's interest was not on the newly founded ECSC, but on preserving its links with America and Africa from the Brussels regulations. This idea was the first steps for Britain to be the awkward partner of the EU and increasing Euroscepticism in the country.

Originating from the same roots as the geographical aspect of Euroscepticism, historical roots of Britain also guided British approach to the European integration. Being an imperial power with a broad existence over the several parts of the world gave Britain global role and interests, which made European integration appear as a limiting project. As a result of the acceptance of Britain's interests as global not regional, European integration was regarded as a smaller objective even as an obstacle for the global destiny of Britain (Daddow, 2013: 213). Since Britain has other options like the Commonwealth or the USA, the European choice might be disregarded. Britain still has stronger links with the Commonwealth and the USA, thus, Britain can afford to have a Eurosceptic stance since being included in the European project is not its only choice (Spiering, 2004: 137). Therefore, the history and geography factors with the motive of greater utility affect British position towards the EU since its interest lies on other continents and the European integration is not only British option. These factors made Britain a detached habitant of the European Continent and later the European integration.

Another important historical aspect of British Euroscepticism is the legacy of the Second World War as well as British prejudices against France and Germany. Although the Second World War was a devastating experience for all the European countries, Britain did not share the same pattern of events since its lands were not invaded such as France or it was not an aggressive invader such as Germany. Britain also did not share the history of suppression and war of Europeans as a result of its history of progress in the individual freedom. What Britain attaches itself as a role in the Second World War was glorious saver and describes the war as the finest hour of the country while other countries of the European Continent had reasons to be ashamed in the war (Grant, 2008: 2). Therefore, while other European countries supported the formation of the European integration and new efforts to ensure peace in the Continent as well as the removal of the bloody past from the minds of the Europeans with a shared will, Britain felt proud about the past and did not show the same enthusiasm like others. While Grant defines it as a smug sense of moral superiority, even with a much more straightforward inference, the European integration did not mean the same to Britain as it meant for other European countries.

Another important aspect of British Euroscepticism is the political effects on the attitude of Britain towards the European integration. These political effects can be classified under the sovereignty and the British political system headings. British focus on the sovereign nation state does not overlap with the EU, which is trying to perform supranational reforms since its formation. As stated earlier, although the Union started as an economic organization, political and social reforms were required to make necessary regulations for the economic reforms. However, ongoing British focus on sovereignty created resistance to the political and social reforms. This focus of Britain on the national sovereignty comes from its political system

traditionally characterized as a powerful government who does not share power and has high representation and accountability. Franklin and Wilke describes British political system as an indivisible political power in the hands of the incumbent government and not shared, and continues with the argument that while other European countries' political system depends on consensual politics with alliances and compromises in other words power sharing, Britain is obsessed with sovereignty (1990: 11). Thus, this obsession creates a resisting attitude to the current and further integration unlikely to several European countries in the EU. With new reforms for making the Union more supranational, Britain acquires the feeling of the loss of national sovereignty and that results with incomprehensible British focus and rejection of participating the Union's new formation.

In addition, it is not just the sovereignty focus that distances Britain from the EU politically since British political system with a consideration of its democratic success over the years rejects the regulations of Brussels. With every new step to deeper integration can be interpreted as a violation of liberties of British people, which makes it harder to adapt Brussels inference to daily lives and national sovereignty (Daddow, 2013: 216). The idea of loss of the control over a supranational organization might create the fear of dissolution of the already successful functioning British political system. While other European states still experience problems regarding authoritarianism or corruption, British system is enjoying individual freedoms and sovereignty, and far from being dependent on the EU, which might also be corrupted with the administration and presidency of other states. Thus, the way to prevent the perfectly functioning British political system from crisis, it is better for Britain to stay outside from political and social reforms, which is evident from the opt-outs of the British government.

British Euroscepticism also has an economic aspect, which centers on the British economic benefits and costs in the membership of the EU. David Sanders (1990: 136) argues that the visible benefits of the membership of the EC on the economy of Britain as well as a shift in the pattern of trade relations with a boost were the British economic objectives in the membership and a major determinant for the further attitudes of Britain towards the European integration. Britain as a global trading country, focus on the free trade with new routes except from the Commonwealth. However, when it comes to British budgetary contributions, British payments of import levies are much higher than other European countries arising from its trading role. These high contributions results with the feeling of not benefiting from the Union as much as it is planned and desired. This results with the decrease of the utility gained from the membership to the Union and the start of a skeptical stand against it since the expected objective of membership cannot be achieved.

Additionally, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which aimed preventing food shortages as in the following years of the World War Two, has been a reason for discontent for Britain since the British accession to the European Community. While the benefits from the EU budget are mostly dominated by the CAP, Britain with a huge industrial but small agricultural sector benefited little from the CAP. As a result of these two disadvantages, Britain and EU having disputes over the budgetary contributions and CAP; which establishes the basis for Euroscepticism in Britain (George, 2000: 21). Britain joined the Community driven by economic objectives principally and experienced several disputes over the accomplishment of these objectives. Still in today, Britain is discontent with the CAP, which pushes Britain in the way to have a skeptical stance towards European integration.

As a combination of reasons originating from history, geography, culture and identity, political traditions and economic orientation, Britain is not at the heart of the Europe as Prime Minister Major once wanted in order to build and maintain strong alliances in the EU (Smith, 1992: 155), but seriously considering withdrawing from the Union. Whether the EU serves the country's interests and Britain identifies itself as a European country determines British position in and attitude towards the EU. These reasons for British Euroscepticism are just the major ones that this thesis wants to present and develop but when British Euroscepticism is further researched in depth, a long list of reasons can be formed, including reasons such as the media and political elite as well as the interest groups. However, these major ones are adequate to understand the British attitude and the discussions that will build on this topic.

## **2.4 Summary**

Since the study of party positioning on Europe is centered around the Euroscepticism studies, this chapter, first, presented the conceptualization of the term by stating varied definitions for the term, distinctive categorizations by the scholars to determine the party positions and eurosceptic stances and the criticisms directed to these studies. Taggart and Szcerbiak's theory is chosen to identify the contributing factors of the party positioning of the Conservative Party of UK on European integration since it fitted the data and the one party case study the most. Then, the elements determining the party positions on European integration is mentioned to have a prior understanding of the utility, democracy and sovereignty elements and British Euroscepticism. As a final step, the reasons for British Euroscepticism in the literature are presented to acknowledge the wider framework that the Conservative

Party lives in so that when it comes to the discussion of their position on European integration, these elements and the specific British position should be referred. The next chapter will contribute to the development of the wider framework by presenting the party politics in Britain in consideration with the party system, the political parties and the Conservative Party in particular.



## CHAPTER III

### PARTY POLITICS IN BRITAIN

This chapter includes the description of the British party system, significant political parties in British politics, and a historical background of the British membership of the European Union with major events and different positions taken by the Conservative Party. An explanation of the party system is important for this thesis to understand the elections and the role of the Conservative Party since the main data for this research is the party manifestos. In addition, it is necessary to present other political parties, which also have a significant role on the European politics or the changing Conservative position. Additionally, which major events led particular positioning of the Conservative Party will be also presented in the final section of this chapter. In order to acknowledge the contributing factors of the Conservative position on European integration, the role of this party in its national politics and the historical background of its on European politics should be stated.

Research into a party's position should include a comprehensive study of its values and structure with reference to specific leaders and their introduced change. While the Conservative Party will be presented through a deeper study of its values and

history, other parties and their positions will be presented from a narrower perspective, focusing on their latest national manifesto to identify their position on Europe. In addition, the presented parties are chosen according to their significance in British politics and their interest on European integration in their latest manifesto. Therefore, this chapter will first describe the British party system with the dominance of the Conservative Party and the Labour Party since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the first-past-the-post electoral system and its effects on British politics, and intra party dissent or in other words the backbenchers. Then, a brief summary of the role of the major political parties in British politics will follow with a specific focus on the Conservative Party and the key elements of conservative ideology. Finally, a historical background of the Conservative Party positions on European integration will be stated in order to make reference to major events and changes of the party position while analyzing the party manifestos.

### **3.1 The Party System**

The revolution of 1688, the Glorious Revolution, introduced parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy to the British political system. The revolution also limited the powers of the Crown and started a new political tradition in Britain. Britain was the first state to form a functioning and effective parliamentary democracy. This enables a long constitutional and political history dated from the seventeenth century. The new political system created a powerful Parliament with executive, legislative and judicial authority, which includes House of Commons that the Prime Minister answers to and House of Lords. The House of Commons is the elected and lower House of the parliament and the House of Lords is the upper House while its members are not elected but hereditary or appointed

members. The Prime minister is the head of the government and the leader of the party holding majority in the House of Commons. The Monarch is a symbolic and traditional institution without a significant role in the Parliament. These characteristics form the major elements of the British political system or in other words, Westminster model of democracy.

Glorious Revolution also marked the beginning of the party system in Britain, which led the emergence of two powerful political parties: Tories and Whigs. According to Lijphart (1999), the domination of the Tories and Whigs at the elections and the alternation of power between them in holding significant ministerial positions characterize the Westminster model of democracy. These two political parties dominated the political arena and led the party system in Britain to be considered as a typical case of a two-party system (Sartori, 2005). In this parliamentary democracy tradition, which started at late 17<sup>th</sup> century, only members of Tories as the Conservative Party and Whigs as the Labour Party served as prime ministers. In addition, these parties roughly hold the office of the prime ministry evenly. This high share of votes and electoral balance led the domination of two parties in the political arena and the identification of the party system as a two-party system.

Although the Conservative and Labour parties enjoy a high share of the vote and seats since the Glorious Revolution, it would be wrong to describe the British party system as a two-party system. Since the 1980s, new parties emerged as political actors such as Liberal Democrats, the British National Party (BNP) or the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). For example, the Liberal Democrats got involved in the British politics as a significant option rather than the Conservative or Labour Party as well as a possible coalition partner and after 2010 general elections,

Conservatives formed a coalition government with the participation of Liberal Democrats. Additionally, there are other parties that are starting to get seats in the British Parliament or gain importance in the European Parliament such as the British National Party or the United Kingdom Independence Party. The significant decline of the vote shares of these parties and the growth of new coalition partners and minor parties revealed that Britain might not be a typical image of a two party system anymore. Although there is not a consensus on that the British party system is now a multiparty system as Dunleavy (2005) argued, it would be clearer to identify British party system with reference to the dominance of two major parties rather than as a two-party system since the competition in the electoral arena is not only centered on the confrontation between Conservatives and Labour. The following table shows the election results from 1945 till 2015 and reveals the dominance of Conservatives and Labour as well as their electoral balance.

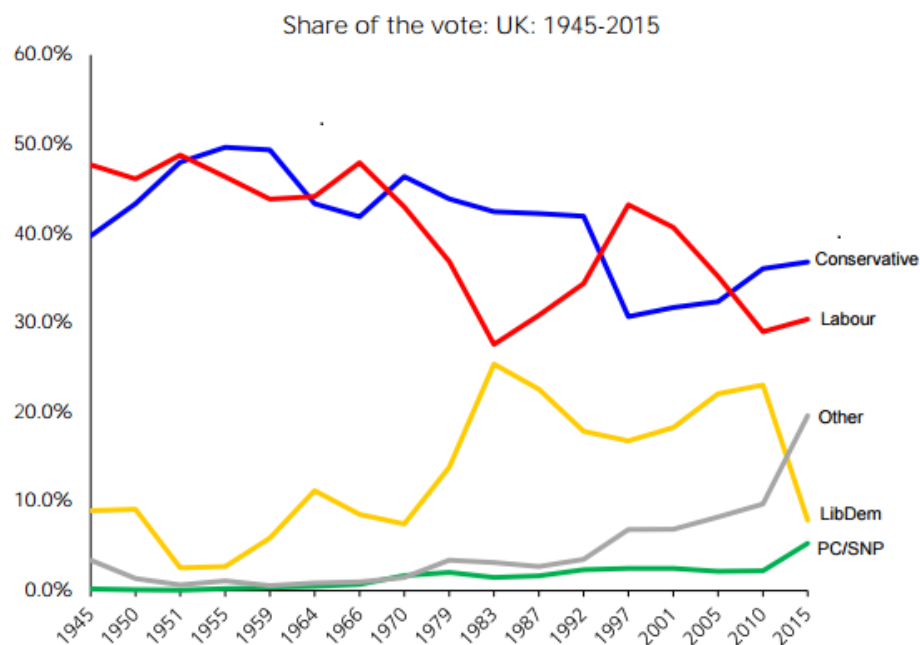


Figure 1: Political Parties' Share of Vote in Britain (General Election 2015, 2016)

The electoral system in Britain can be conceptualized as first-past-the-post or in other words winner-take-all electoral system. The representatives of the House of Commons are elected according to the first-past-the-post principle, which means the candidate who takes the most votes in a specific constituency is elected. Majority vote or proportional representation, in which the percentage of the votes determines the percentage of the seats, is not an essential element. Therefore, it could be likely for a party to have the most seats but not the most votes. For instance, in 2005 general election, the Labour Party had %35.2 of the popular vote and 355 seats in the House of Commons while the Conservative Party had %32.4 of the popular vote but 198 seats and the Liberal Democrats won 62 seats in the House of Commons with %22 of the popular vote (General Election Results, 2016). These results show that although the percentages of vote of the Labour and Conservatives are too close, Labour won 157 more seats in the House of Commons. Additionally, Liberal Democrats had roughly two thirds of the Labour's vote share, but only won 62 seats, which is less than one fifth of the share of the Labour's seats (General Election Results, 2016). Furthermore, when Conservatives had the best result since 1945 with %42.4 vote share and 397 seats in the House of Commons in 1983 General Elections, Labour got 209 seats with %27.6 of the popular vote (General Election Results, 2016). When Labour had the best result since 1945 with %43.2 of the popular vote and won 418 seats in 1997, the Conservatives had %30.7 of the popular vote but 165 seats (General Election Results, 2016). This shows how the winner takes all in the first-past-the-post election system since majority and proportion is not significant but what matters is who had the most votes in a particular constituency.

Although first-past-the-post electoral system is used for more than four centuries in Britain, it is a highly criticized system and was even taken to a referendum. On 5

May 2011, a UK-wide referendum was held and the voters were asked if they favoured changing the electoral system from first past the post to the Alternative Vote also known as Instant Runoff Voting or Ranked Choice Voting. In the Alternative Vote system, the voters prioritize candidates by preferences. The result of the referendum was 13 million “no” votes with %67.9 and 6.2 million “yes” votes with %32.1 (Alternative Vote Referendum, 2011: 1). However, the first-past-the-post system is criticized for being disproportional and supporter of strong one party rule and two party systems (Johnston, 2014; Abrahamian *et al.*, 2010). Candidates can have little support as well as few votes but getting more votes than the other candidate is adequate to be elected. In addition, “Parties do not get the same share of the seats as they do of the votes” and having the same share of the votes do not result with similar amounts of seats in the House of Commons (Johnston, 2014, p.1). Therefore, first past the post system tends to presents disproportional results.

The dominance of two parties or single party governments in British history should be examined with reference to the first-past-the-post electoral system. Since first past the post system allows parties to have more seats and easy parliamentary majorities in consideration with the share of the popular vote, the system tends to exaggerate the size of the victory (Abrahamian *et al.*, 2010: 85). This increase in the size of the victory tends to produce single party governments and leave smaller place and significance for the minor parties’ involvement. Even though the minor parties have a significant share of vote, their number of seats in the Parliament is low, which limits their role in the Parliament. The system in Britain favoured Conservatives and Labour leaving smaller place for other parties to be in the government. Their dominance for years with an electoral balance also explains the benefit of the system to the major parties and winners. Therefore, although other parties gain significance

in the political arena such as the Liberal Democrats as coalition partners and it would be inadequate to describe the British party system as a two party system, the first past the post electoral system provides major place for the domination of two parties, the Conservatives and Labour.

Another important factor that should be noted in the British politics is the backbench dissent. Party leaders try to prevent dissent and rebellious reactions in their parties with the commitment of ministerial position or with the threat of early elections. Benedetto and Hix (2007: 757) argue that dissent can be prevented and the discipline in the party can be ensured through ministerial patronage. Backbenchers are the members of the Parliament who do not hold any ministerial position and sit at the back benches of the Chamber. They can be both from the government party or the opposition party. The main characteristic of backbenchers is that they play a significant role in opposing the government. This opposition might be originated from ideological differences as well as the pressures from the interests of the constituency they are elected from (Benedetto & Hix, 2007: 757). Backbench dissent is a significant part of British politics. For example, Edward Heath government of 1970-1974 encountered with major backbench dissent on his policies and failed to get support for them. The impact of the backbenchers does not need to be in a negative or positive form. They might hinder legislative process as well as they might put pressure individually or collectively and push for a new legislation. It is argued that the reason for the in and out referendum in Britain by the Conservative Party is a result of backbencher dissent and push on the Prime Minister David Cameron (Watt, 2011). The backbencher dissent and its impacts on the Conservative Party on the European integration will be analyzed in detail in the discussion chapter.

## **3.2 Political Parties in Britain**

Since 1980s, minor parties gained importance as coalition partners or important actors on EU level in Britain. An evaluation of the political parties and their position on European integration is necessary to comprehend the position of Conservative Party and the political arena the Conservatives are in. While the Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and Labour are the major parties in British politics, UKIP and British National Party (BNP) increased their popularity recently. While the Labour Party tends to be the most left-wing party among them, the Liberal Democrats is closer to the center and the Conservatives, UKIP and BNP are much closer to the right of the left-right spectrum. The political parties in Britain also tend to have quite different positions on European integration. While Labour and Liberal Democrats are mostly pro-European actors, the UKIP and BNP are self-identified as anti-EU parties. This section will present the major political parties in Britain and their position on European integration for an understanding of British political arena and the Conservative Party in detail.

### **3.2.1 The Conservative Party**

The Conservative party shares a history of domination in the British politics along with the Labour Party. Its electoral record prevails other parties' since they were mostly a major part of the British Parliament as a single party or a coalition partner. Having roots from the Tory party, the Conservatives possess a long history and heritage. The word "conservative" can be first discerned from an article in the Quarterly Review in 1830, which is calling Tories as the Conservative Party (Blake, 2012: 5). Sharing an electoral balance with the Liberal Party after the Glorious Revolution and the Labour Party since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Conservatives dominated

the British politics since the Glorious Revolution. Their biggest success since 1945 was in 1983 general election, which brought 397 seats in the House of Commons and %42.4 of the popular vote while in 1955, they had %49.6 of the popular vote as the highest of their history (Hawkins *et al.*, 2015: 4). In the 2015 general election, they won 330 seats and %36.8 of the popular vote. Current leader of the party is David Cameron and some other important figures of the party include Margaret Thatcher, John Major and Edward Heath.

In order to understand what the Conservative party stands for, it is necessary to evaluate the key elements of conservatism. Clark (2012: 42) presents several elements including tradition, strong state with a parliamentary sovereignty, prosperity, rule of law and authority. While Conservatives give tradition great value in social and political life, they emphasize the need for a strong but a limited state, sovereign in its decisions. They also respect rule of law, authority and leadership; and want a prosperous economy for their nation to protect national interests. In addition, the Conservatives aim for harmony and stability in social and political life, created by properly functioning social and political institutions originating from a concern for the well-being of the nation (Whiteley *et al.*, 1994: 128). However, the common objective of all these elements is a powerful and free nation emphasis, preserved by traditions, prosperous economy, rule of law and great leadership. The Conservatives value nation and national interests most but Jones and Norton (2014: 72) present liberty as another greater objective in political life through checks and balances and in individuals' lives. These elements form the centuries old conservative ideology and what the Conservative party stands for.

In addition to the key elements of the Conservative ideology, Clark (2012: 42) identifies two major variants of conservatism in Britain; one nation conservatism and Thatcherite conservatism. The idea of one nation conservatism could be traced back to Benjamin Disraeli, who was the Conservative party leader and prime minister in 1868 for several months and later between 1874 and 1880. The objective of Disraeli was to transform conservatism to attract all classes in the society and unify the social classes under his one-nation conservatism and abolishing the divide between the rich and the poor (Cole & Deighan, 2012: 79). Thus, Disraeli aimed to increase the range of Conservative Party electorates and the result was victory in the 1874 election. This transformation led to a change in the Conservative Party to become a party of aristocratic, middle class and rural land-owners. This was a major transition for the Conservative Party and a significant effort to widen the Conservative electorates.

Another variant of the Conservatism was Thatcherite Conservatism, originating from the policies of famous British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. Thatcherite Conservatism reflects the ideas and values of Margaret Thatcher, which can be listed under two headings; the free market economy and the strong state that will restore order and authority in the British society (Heywood, 2015: 121). Therefore, the economic objective of Thatcher's new approach was a strong state without interfering the economy, which will lead a minimal state in the liberal economy. The social part of Thatcherite Conservatism consisted of preserving order through law and traditions. Clark argues that Thatcherite Conservatism was adopted within the party but not by the electorate discerned from the elections lost in 1997, 2001 and 2005 (2012: 62). Whether Thatcher's policies and attempted transition were successful or brought electoral defeats, she was an important figure, who had great impact on the Conservative Party and the British politics.

The Conservative position on European integration varied from a pro-European stance to anti-European stance throughout the years and kept changing. According to Spiering (2004: 127), “Britain is the home of the term Euroscepticism”. Currently, Britain is one of the most important countries associated with Euroscepticism since it draws attention on the issue of European integration as a member, who is about to have a referendum on whether the Britain should remain in the EU on June, 2016 as well as a country, whose position towards the EU has kept changing throughout the time. It was the Conservative Party, who led British entry to the EEC with the leadership of Edward Heath and it is the Conservative Party, who proposed and also will hold a referendum on withdrawal from the EU. Several other examples can be found from the British history since it experienced varying positions on European integration by the Conservative Party since its accession. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the major events and positions of the Conservative Party from 1973 till 2016.

This section will present a historical background for the positions of the Conservative Party and leaders as well as the major events of the era and how the party leaders reacted to them. The goal of this section is to highlight periods of Euroscepticism in Britain rising and declining with distinctive politicians and events. However, the major focus will be on the Conservative Party leaders that hold the Prime Minister’s Office since 1973, who are Edward Heath, Margaret Thatcher, John Major and David Cameron. Six particular periods with major rise and declines classified as 1970-1976 period of Edward Heath and Harold Wilson’ Labour government with the effect of anti-Marketeters, 1976-1990 period marked by Labour leader James Callaghan and Margaret Thatcher governments with demonstrations of explicit Euroscepticism, 1990-1997 period with John Major government with a

continuation of Thatcher's policies, 1997-2003 period with Labour leader Tony Blair's pro-European stance towards the EU, 2003-2009 period with the crisis in the EU and Blair and Gordon Brown governments in office and finally 2009-present period with a new Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron and a new Eurosceptic stance.

The beginning of British scepticism on European integration can be traced back to the rejection of the British application to the European Economic Community by France in 1963 and 1967. George (2000: 16) calls it an awkwardness of Britain and attributes this awkwardness to the renegotiations of the terms of British entry to the European Community. According to him, the language of the negotiations and this exercise itself was a source of confusion to both Britain and other member states (George, 2000: 16). Edward Heath's Conservative government was in the office during the British entry to the Union and very enthusiastic about the lately joined European project. However, he did not remain in the office for long after the accession to the EC to show this enthusiasm. Successor of the Heath government was the government of pro-European Labour politician Harold Wilson, which formed in 1974. The Labour Party under Harold Wilson wanted to renegotiate the accession terms and hold a consultative referendum on membership (Kerry, 2016: 19).

Although, Wilson was facing anti-Marketees, who were a group of people, who oppose to the principles of the Common Market (Spiering, 2004: 128) and campaigning for a "No" vote in the consultative referendum, the result was confirmative.

James Callaghan, successor of Wilson and a Labour politician, who had the chance to join the renegotiations of the terms of accession, presented an explicit opposition

to the increase of the powers of the European Parliament. He advocated for the national sovereignty and opposed the idea of limitation through the objectives of a supranational organization with an open letter in 1977 (George, 2000: 16). Thus, for the defense of the national interests of Britain, Prime Minister James Callaghan refused to join the European Monetary System (EMS) as well, which also distanced him from the EU. Callaghan refused to be a part in the European Monetary System, which intended to create monetary stability in Europe, for the reasons of internal Labour party confusions and deflationary results of the system to the British economy (Robins, 2014: 379). Therefore, it can be argued that while the Labour Party was holding a critical stance on European integration, the Conservative Party was pro-European during Edward Heath's term of office as the leader of the Conservatives.

During some of the Wilson government and throughout the Callaghan government, the Conservative Party leader was Margaret Thatcher. Although most of the scholars see the rise of the term Euroscepticism and British Euroscepticism as an effect of the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, her position on European integration shifted over the years. It is possible to divide Thatcher's term of office into two different periods regarding her stance on European integration. The breaking point of her period is the famous Bruges Speech that later directed her stance on the integration to a different form. The first period included the negotiations on the contribution to the budget, which can be called as the British rebate and the signing of the Single European Act. The British rebate included the negotiations on the proportions of the EU budget, in which the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has the greatest part. Most of the EU budget is spent on the Common Agricultural Policy and Britain is the one who benefits less from this agricultural contributions. Yet, the European project was not a

major source for criticism for the Conservative government and public (Forster, 2002: 50). Although Britain was labeled as a difficult and awkward partner from the beginning of the accessions, the position of the Thatcher government and Thatcher herself was much more positively engaged with the EU.

When Margaret Thatcher formed the British government in 1979, Britain was experiencing economic problems and needed an economic boost. European Community was a way for the promotion of liberal economy and Thatcher became a supporter for the Single European Act, which was signed in 1986. The treaty was a revision for the Treaty of Rome and carried the objectives of creating a single market until 1992 that would promote free market and trade among the Continent. Although the Treaty included institutional reforms such as expanding the powers of the European Parliament, British focus was on economic provisions and the outcome of the Treaty was satisfying. Forster states that the negotiation over the Single European Act was discerned as a British victory through prioritizing economic integration and compromising on the institutional changes (2002: 67). British rebate and the Single European Act showed that Thatcher might be identified as a pro-European in the first years of her term of office. However, the Bruges Speech marked a significant breaking point in her stance against Europe.

Single European Act was coincided with British economic objective, which was centered on free trade. However, the formation of a single market necessitated following social and economic measures. The completion of the single market with a single currency and the idea of Jacques Delors', the President of the European Commission, about the Social Europe can be described as the economic and social measures of the single market. The reply of Margaret Thatcher through the Bruges

Speech was an opposition to the social dimension since it was an introduction of socialism in Britain and support to the sovereign nation-states (George, 2000: 17). Thus, the Bruges Speech marked the beginning of a new period in the British-European relations. A Prime Minister of Britain was explicitly involved in a tension with the European Commission and demonstrated anti-EU stance that will later be described as the origins of the British Euroscepticism. To demonstrate the context and meaning of the speech and also its significance, following is a part from the Bruges Speech.

To try to suppress nationhood and concentrate power at the center of a European conglomerate would be highly damaging and would jeopardize the objectives we seek to achieve.

[...]working more closely together does not require power to be centralised in Brussels or decisions to be taken by an appointed bureaucracy. (Thatcher, 1988).

The Bruges Speech demonstrated the Conservative focus on nation and national interests with a focus on sovereignty as well as a major breakdown in Thatcher's position on the European integration.

As a strong leadership figure, Margaret Thatcher started a new period, a period of Eurosceptic movement, with the Bruges Speech. She significantly drew attention on the states and sovereignty primarily and criticized the EU for centralizing power at Brussels not at the governments. It cannot be referred directly that her stance is anti-European but it paved the way for explicit Euroscepticism. She contributed to the beginning of a new period of Euroscepticism since the opponents of the integration changed their position with the Bruges speech from an anti-Marketeer one to a Eurosceptic one including criticisms towards both political and economic integration

(Forster, 2002: 64). She provided the discursive environment for the instant progress and deeper support for the Eurosceptic tradition (Daddow, 2013: 218). Consequently, the Bruges Speech put distinctive groups together under skepticism against European integration umbrella, which has made Thatcher a symbol of Euroscepticism even at the present time.

Thatcher's influence on the rise of the Euroscepticism is undeniable since she had a chance to exert her position on European integration to create an effect during her long term of office. While Labour leaders Harold Wilson and James Callaghan were in office for two and three years respectively, Margaret Thatcher holds the office of the Prime Minister for eleven years. There are also several scholars stating the significant personal effect of her on the British position towards the EU such as Fontana and Parsons, who argue that bitter ties of Britain with EU originate from the personal legacy and individual actions of Margaret Thatcher (2015: 89). Taking this argument much further, Michael Heseltine, who worked for the government of Thatcher but then challenged her for the party leadership, says that "Britain will simply slide slowly out of the [European] picture, mainly owing to one woman's prejudice" (Young, 1998: 371). Even though her acts and decisions regarding the European project gathered significant attention and criticism, her personal influence cannot be underestimated as she left her mark on the 1980s Conservative Party and Britain.

Thatcher's successor was John Major, who came in to office in 1990, and became the leader of the Conservative Party. He led the Conservative Party to a new position on Europe but not on domestic politics. His major focus and objective was to place Britain "at the heart of Europe" in order to build and maintain strong alliances in the

EU (Smith, 1992: 155). Establishing close links with other parties in the European Parliament such as Christian Democrats of Germany was an example for this idea. Although he has a softer and moderate stance on European integration, he demonstrated a continuation of Thatcher's policies for political survival (Gifford, 2008: 104). In this sense, an emphasis on the free trade but also on the sovereignty was evident from Major's policies similarly to Thatcher. He showed cautious engagement with the EU but complete opposition to the federalism with a strict sense (Gifford, 2010: 322). While trying to engage with the EU and make Britain a significant actor, the Conservative ideology of powerful nation state with full sovereignty lying in the British Parliament was not abandoned.

What remarked Major government's attitude towards EU was the negotiations on the Maastricht Treaty. The objectives of the Maastricht Treaty included the creation of a political union with common foreign and security policies, establish economic and monetary union along with a social policy. However, with a focus on national sovereignty and common market, the Conservative Party did not carry the same objectives with the Maastricht treaty. The Conservative Party saw the single currency, common foreign and security policy as well as a common social policy as the loss of national sovereignty and major steps for a federal Europe (Gifford, 2008: 126). As a result, the government of John Major negotiated for an opt-out of the social chapter and monetary union with the right to decide to join the single currency later as a result of opposition from his own party. His idea of putting Britain at the heart of the Europe failed with this opt-out since Britain was not at the center of the debate and the new reform but trying to be able to opt-out of social and monetary provisions. Major's term of office between 1990 and 1997 indicated a continuation

of Thatcher's stance against Europe despite the efforts of engaging with the EU closely.

With the loss of the elections by the Conservatives in 1997, Labour Party came to the office with the leadership of Tony Blair. Labour's return with Tony Blair started a new period with more pro-European and modernizing policies. Just like John Major, Blair wanted to place Britain at the heart of Europe. However, the difference between the two Prime Ministers was that Blair actually meant and desired to make Britain an important actor of the European Union (Smith, 2005: 703). Blair signed the Treaty of Amsterdam and described Labour Party's policy as cooperative and pro-European.

Although he was not supportive about the Federal Europe like the Conservatives and need the national veto factor in several policy areas such as taxation or immigration, Blair in his first term show significant effort to make Britain a cooperative partner of the EU and delete the image of an awkward partner (Smith, 2005: 704). Another significant act of his term was that the Labour was forming alliances with European states, whether ruled by Conservative governments or not, and trying to have closer links with France and Germany (Gifford, 2010: 323). Signing St Malo Declaration in 1998 with France illustrates this argument. Additionally, cooperation in the economic reforms originating from globalization marked Blair's term although he was not in favour of the common currency and put preconditions for entry including a referendum.

Although Blair attempted to make Britain a cooperative and significant partner, he had severe opposition from the general public, politicians and academics, and his success in this endeavor is contradictive. Blair was showing his efforts on the European project with discourse and acts such as his famous speech on Europe,

which was the Warsaw Speech. This speech was on the future of Europe in Poland on October 2000 and stressed how committed Britain is in the integration process. However, the problem was that the Labour Party was focused on the longevity of their term of office and not sharing Blair's desires about Europe, which resulted with the opposition from public and academics (Smith, 2005: 712). The results of the European Parliament elections can be an example for that since the turnout was low and eurosceptic United Kingdom Independence Party won two seats in the Parliament. Yet, what changed the course of events was not the disputable success of Blair in the way to the center of European project, but it was 9/11 events and Britain's special relationship and alliance with the USA that distanced Britain from the EU (Daddow, 2013: 215). Therefore, Labour Party also demonstrated different stances on Europe during Blair's term of office. The breakdown of major events marked this change of Labour's position.

The defeat of the Conservative Party in 1997 general elections left only 165 seats to the party in the House of Commons and led to a decrease of 171 seats compared to the previous election. First William Hague, then Ian Duncan Smith and Michael Howard served as the leader of the Conservative Party during the Blair governments. During Hague's leadership, the Conservative Party did not change its position on Europe and opposed to the common currency. His "Foreign Land" speech, emphasizing the alienation of Britain from Europe and it becoming a foreign land marked the Conservative position on Europe. Ian Duncan Smith was the next leader of the party, who started his term of office after the 9/11 attacks. His term presents a continuation of Thatcherite stance on Europe, and reflected a position "to be in Europe, but not run by Europe" (The Conservative Party Manifesto, 2001). Michael Howard became the Conservative leader after Ian Duncan Smith between 2003 and

2005. The position of the Conservatives on euro and keeping the independent Bank of England and interest rates did not change in his term of office either. The stance of the Conservative Party on the EU Constitution marked his term of office and the position of the Conservatives were to oppose the constitution and give the public a “chance to reject its provisions in a referendum” (The Labour Party Manifesto, 2005). Therefore, the Conservative Party during the Blair governments did not change its position on Europe and opposed the single currency and the EU Constitution.

During the last two years of the term of office of Blair, David Cameron started to lead the Conservative Party as well as during the term of office of the Labour Leader Gordon Brown. The position of Labour and Conservatives seemed to overlap in these years since they were holding the same positions on the single currency, CAP, EU enlargement and a Common Foreign and Security Policy. The Conservative Party still opposed joining the euro, which was the case since Duncan Smith but so was the Labour Party. They also shared the same position on the CAP, which was to reform it rather than scrapping it while favouring the EU enlargement for economic dynamism (Bale, 2006: 394). In addition, with the rising importance of the alliance with the USA after the 9/11 attacks, the Labour and the Conservatives opposed a common foreign and security policy, which might risk its special relationship with the USA:

Cameron as the leader of the Conservatives, first started a new modernizing recovery against the Thatcherite Conservatism and distanced Britain from Europe. In order to remove the negative image of Thatcherite policies and her legacy in the party, Cameron tried to soften the British image and be more socially inclusive, which could be discerned from moderate rhetoric on non-Conservative themes such as the

environment, international aid or poverty (Heppell, 2013: 241). These modernization efforts led the Party to a victory in the 2010 general elections with %36.1 of the popular vote and 306 seats in the House of Commons. Thus, the Conservative party finally became the majority in the Parliament since John Major and this success also continued in the 2015 general election with winning 24 more seats in the House of Commons. The Conservative position on Europe was an emphasis on economic relations with the EU with a focus of national interests and security through working constructively with the EU (The Conservative Party Manifesto, 2010). However, the emphasis on never joining the euro in the manifesto should also be noted. However, in the 2015 manifesto, the Conservative Party hardened its position on Europe with a promise of real change. The Conservatives were committed to hold an in-out referendum by the end of 2017, safeguard British interests in the free market and not joining the Eurozone as well as reforming the EU and reclaiming power from the Brussels (The Conservative Party Manifesto, 2015). Thus, the Conservative position in the last two years became highly critical of the EU on many policy areas while the Conservatives kept their promise and will hold a referendum on June 2016.

### **3.2.2 The Labour Party**

The Labour Party is another dominant party in the British political arena, which started to have mass membership in the 1920s. Labour first came to power in 1924 and held office for several months. Their first significant victory was in 1945, which brought full parliamentary majority and 393 seats in the House of Commons. Since then, Labour government held the British Prime Ministry office from 1964 to 1970, 1974 to 1979, 1997 to 2010. In the latest general election held in 2015, the Labour Party won 232 seats in the House of Commons with %30.4 of the popular vote. Some

of the known figures of the party are Ramsay MacDonald, who formed the first Labour government in 1924, Harold Wilson, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Jeremy Corbyn, who is the current leader of the party.

The Labour Party can be described as a left-wing party who experienced revolutionary movements of the working class with the impacts of the Industrial Revolution and aroused from the collaboration between trade unions and socialist groups in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This historical background brought along several principles to the Labour party, which are equality of income and opportunity, redistribution through progressive taxation and providing public services, common ownership of industry and accomplishing these objectives through parliamentary democracy rather than a revolutionary movement (Clark, 2012: 65). Although the formation of the party reflects a working class organization, in the 1990s it moved to the centre ground and became a catch-all party with closer position to the social liberal thinking (Cole & Deighan, 2012: 39). This change in the party took place under the Blair leadership and the Labour Party became the “New Labour”. In the latest general election in 2015, the key pledges of the Labour Party were cutting the deficit, stopping additional borrowing for new spending, increasing the minimum wage and making reforms to give more power to people (The Labour Party Manifesto, 2015). In the last Labour Party Manifesto, the nature of the relations with the EU with a focus of national interests is also highlighted. The manifesto states the importance of the EU as an important ally with the need of empowering the relations but with the emphasis of reforming the EU and defending the national interests (The Labour Party Manifesto, 2015). Therefore, it will be accurate to state that the Labour party has been transformed through years but key values; equality, redistribution and parliamentary democracy still constitute the basis of the Labour Party.

### 3.2.3 The Liberal Democratic Party

Another significant party, which claim to have roots based on the seventeenth century Whigs is the Liberal Democratic Party. The party was established in 1988 with the merge of the Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party. The party's major success came in the 2005 general elections with %22 of the popular vote and 62 seats in the House of Commons, continued in the 2010 general election with %23 of the popular vote and 57 seats in the House of Commons and became the partner of the coalition with the Conservatives (Hawkins *et al.*, 2015: 4). Although, the Liberal Democrats had %7.9 in the latest election in 2015 and won only 8 seats in the House of Commons (General Election Results, 2016), they still play a major role as a potential coalition partner for both Conservatives and Labour. The ideology of the Liberal Democrats can be identified as liberalism but Heywood (2015: 134) describes it as two-fold and consisting of a classical liberal understanding of minimal state and free market as well as modern liberal understanding of social and economic state intervention to maximize the potential of individuals. Their position pertaining to the EU reflects a stable support for the EU. In the Liberal Democrats Policy Consultation Paper in 2013, the party defines itself as having a "proud record as the most consistently pro-European party in British politics" while accepting that the EU is not a perfect organization and facing several significant challenges (Liberal Democrats Policy Consultation, 2013: 3-4). The Liberal Democrat position on the 2015 party manifesto also reflects this idea by stating that Britain should not withdraw from the EU since the EU gives Britain power in the world on political, economic and social policies but the Union is far from being perfect and needs reforms (Liberal Democratic Party Manifesto, 2015). Therefore, the Liberal

Democrats share a closer position on European and British politics with the Labour Party.

### **3.2.4 UKIP**

UKIP is another significant party in the European and British politics. It was founded on 1993 as a right wing single issue Eurosceptic party. From the very start, UKIP's position was opposing the Maastricht Treaty and it was transformed in the latest election manifesto as the withdrawal from the EU. The main ideology of the UKIP lies around the idea of nationalism and free-market economy while its European stance reflects a will for the withdrawal, claiming that the EU is anti-democratic, costs much for Britain, influences parliamentary sovereignty and limits Britain in its national policy priorities (Clark, 2012: 110). Therefore, it can be inferred from UKIP's critical stance on European integration that the party discerns no advantages from the continuation of membership but only disadvantages politically and economically. The 2015 UKIP general election manifesto states that leaving the EU serves British interests and not cause any disadvantages (UKIP Election Manifesto, 2015). Thus, the key to the Britain's regaining of sovereignty and the solution of economic problems lies with the withdrawal from the EU. Since UKIP's main principles revolves around the EU and withdrawal, the party shows its success in the European Parliament elections more than the British general elections. In European Parliament elections, first in 1999 with %7 of vote share and 3 seats in the European Parliament, then in 2004 with %16 vote share and 12 seats and finally in 2009 with %16.5 vote share and 13 seats, UKIP demonstrated having an increasing support from the electorates (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu>). UKIP also showed a significant success in the latest European Parliament elections held in 2014 with

%26.77 vote share and 24 seats in the European Parliament, ranking before the Labour Party with 24.74 vote share and 20 seats and the Conservative Party with %23.31 vote share and 19 seats (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu>). Although UKIP's success in the British parliamentary elections is low since it has just one seat in the House of Commons according to the 2015 general election, its success in the European parliamentary elections is considerable. Thus, it protects its place as a significant party in the British politics as well.

### **3.2.5 The BNP**

Being founded in 1982, the British National Party (BNP) also shares the anti-EU position of the UKIP. The BNP is a far right party, expressing its anti-immigrant and anti-EU policies with a focus of nationalism and race (Clark, 2012: 115). Major focuses of the party in its latest election manifesto in 2015 include pledges such as stopping mass immigration and leaving the EU in order to protect British identity and economy (The British National Party Manifesto, 2015). Therefore, the BNP saw membership to the EU as a threat to the sovereignty, national identity and its national economics. The party reflects this idea from the very start in its election manifestos and insists on leaving the EU to secure the future of the Britain. However, the success of the BNP in the British and European elections is low. Yet, the BNP occupies a critical role on European integration, which favours leaving the EU in the British politics.

### **3.3 Summary**

To summarize, major parties in Britain hold different positions pertaining to the domestic politics and European integration. These positions range widely from an explicit anti-European stance with the will of withdrawal to pro-European stance

with the need of reforming the EU. Although the impacts of other parties in the British politics could be discussed as major influencers or less significant actors, this thesis presents the Labour Party, the Liberal Democratic Party, the United Kingdom Independence Party and the British National Party as the major actors and this is based on the idea that these parties have and had more seats in the House of Commons and reflect British politics more than the other parties, which have a wider range as the actors of the politics of the UK.

This chapter presented the British party system with the dominance of the Conservative Party and Labour Party in which their opposition to each other shapes several policy positions. Additionally, the first-past-the-post electoral system, which is criticized for being disproportional and supporter of strong one party rule and two party systems, strengthened the position of the Conservative party in the British politics. The characteristics of the backbenchers as the significant oppositional players on particular policy areas are also stated and will be discussed in the following chapter more in detail. The key elements of the Conservative ideology are explained with a historical background of the Conservative Party positions on European integration. These elements will also be referred in the following chapter in the discussion of the manifestos and the backbencher effects. Thus, the next chapter will discuss the position of the Conservative Party of UK on European integration by presenting the election manifestos and the effects of the backbenchers since the accession of UK in 1973.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY POSITION ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

This chapter's objective is to discuss the position of the Conservative Party of UK vis-à-vis European integration by analyzing the election manifestos and the parliamentary debates since the accession of UK to the EEC. In order to assess the position of the Conservative Party, Taggart and Szczerbiak's 2002 and 2008 studies on Euroscepticism and European integration are used in the analysis of the election manifestos and the parliamentary debates. The Conservative Party's official position on European integration has changed throughout the years. Party manifestos and debates in the Parliament carries utmost importance in order to discern the position of the Conservatives since they are the visible sources of the party's stance and show what the party presents to its electorate. The analyzed data show that the Conservative Party identifies the introduction of a social or political reform in a policy and/or treaty with a supranational focus as a threat to the sovereignty, national interest and identity, which distances the Party from the European integration and puts it as an oppositional place to the current and future trajectory of the EU. In addition, the critical stance of the backbenchers pushes the party on several policies and treaties and hinders the legislative process and the control of the leader of the

party, which was evident in the parliamentary debates on mostly John Major and David Cameron governments. Thus, this thesis argues that the firm attachment of the Conservative Party to the sovereignty and interests of the British nation as well as the effect of intra-party dissent on particular policies and treaties contributed to the ever-changing position of the Conservative Party of the UK vis-à-vis European integration since 1973.

This chapter will first introduce the data respectively with a reference to the discussion of the research question. This means the discussion of the party manifestos will follow the summary of each manifesto since 1970 with the identification of the party position of that manifesto. Consequently, the analysis of the parliamentary debates and the discussion of the intra party dissent in the Conservative Party on European integration will be presented. Then, a concluding section will summarize the findings of the study and add final remarks of the thesis.

### **3.1 The Conservative Party Manifestos**

In order to identify the position of the Conservative Party on European integration, this thesis examines the national and European Conservative Party manifestos since 1970. These manifestos show the issues directed and criticized by the Conservative Party as well as their major policy focus. This thesis analyzes them starting from 1970 national manifesto before the British accession to the EEC, until the 2015 general election manifesto including the European election manifestos of 2009 and 2014. These manifestos are analyzed pertaining to their position on European integration by using Taggart and Szczerbiak's (2008) hard/soft typology. As discussed in this theory, the main distinction of a position taken in a particular manifesto will be whether the commitments of the Conservative Party are in

opposition to the EU's current or future trajectory (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008: 250). Each manifesto will be assigned a position whether not eurosceptic or hard/soft eurosceptic in consideration with the definitions soft/hard Euroscepticism and the specific components of soft Euroscepticism such as national interest, opposition to the EU policies and the perception of the EU as undemocratic. These components are also related to the elements of Euroscepticism, which are discussed under utility, democracy and sovereignty dimensions. Thus, while perception of the EU as undemocratic can be referred to the democracy element of Euroscepticism, national interest, opposition to the EU policies, EU enlargement can be discussed under the utility and sovereignty dimensions. But it should be noted that all components are discussed with a reference to the main distinction on EU's trajectory. This means, while the national interest emphasis in the manifesto is analyzed, it will present a skeptical position if the Conservative Party is using national interest argument to oppose future or current trajectory of the EU. Thus, the positional change of the Conservative Party with the general and European election manifestos will be introduced by first summarizing each manifesto and then presenting the position of a particular manifesto in terms of interests, opposition to the core policies, and the perception of the EU as undemocratic.

### **3.1.1 Analysis**

*1970 General Election Manifesto, "A Better Tomorrow"*. This manifesto was the latest manifesto before the British accession to the EEC in January 1973. The Conservative Party leader of the time was Edward Heath while the leader of Labour Party was Harold Wilson and the leader of the Liberal Party was Jeremy Thorpe. The election resulted with the Conservative victory of the vote share and the number of

seats in the House of Commons. After several sections of domestic commitments about economy, education, housing or farming, this manifesto touches upon on the European integration issue in the “A Stronger Britain in the World Section”.

Although this issue covers a small part in this manifesto, the idea of the Conservative Party is clear. Their major focus is on the benefits and losses that membership to the EEC would bring but they argue that the advantages outweigh. This manifesto shows that the Conservatives favour membership to the EEC since they believe that it will contribute to the economy and security of Britain through a larger market and new alliances but their only commitment is to negotiate to see the advantages and disadvantages of the membership.

Since this manifesto was published before the British accession, it does not have a detailed position on European integration. It states that there are several benefits of membership such as the contribution of the EEC to economy and security; where these benefits outweigh the obstacles. This statement shows that this manifesto should be conceptualized as not eurosceptic one without an opposition to the current or future trajectory of the EU and the main commitment of the Conservative Party, which is given as only to negotiate shows no opposition.

*1974 February General Election Manifesto, “Firm Action for A Fair Britain”*. This manifesto is the first manifesto after the British accession. The leaders of the all three parties are still the same and this election is repeated in 1974 October as a result of the failure to produce an overall majority in the House of Commons. One of this manifesto’s major points is the ongoing economic problems of Britain as a result of the increase in food prices and raw materials, the rise in the cost of living, high inflation and the increase in the oil prices originating from the 1973 Arab-Israeli

War. The way to solve these economic problems lies with the collaboration with the EEC, which, according to the Conservatives, already showed its positive impact on export trade and economic strength. In addition, this manifesto mentions the effects of the membership on agriculture, which could enjoy an enlarged market, increased returns and better protection from fluctuations but also states the need for improvement in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). As another aspect of this manifesto, the Conservatives state their foreign policy objective as preserving peace and security, which could be achieved through alliances and membership to the EEC. They conclude by stating that the membership to the EEC in which Britain is a full and effective partner, serves British interests of providing prosperity, peace and security but the Community needs improvements on economy, CAP and institutions. In addition, the Conservatives explicitly oppose withdrawal from the EEC in this manifesto.

This manifesto does not include any opposition to the current or future trajectory of the EU. First of all, it presents the EU as a way to achieve the national interests, which are providing peace, security and prosperity. Secondly, it believes in a united Europe without consideration of internal differences in order to increase the economic strength of all members and promote partnership instead of wars. These show that since the national interests of Britain lies with the EEC, there is no opposition to the European integration; the Conservatives even present European integration as a solution to their problems. However, The Conservatives state that they are not content with every aspect of the Community, yet they present no opposition or skepticism but state the need for improvement on CAP, industrial policy and the Community's institutions to make them more responsive to public opinion and strengthen democracy. This does not mean opposing the current or

future trajectory of the EU but just a need for improvement for the future state of affairs of the EU. Thus, it can be argued that this manifesto does not have the characteristics of a soft eurosceptic party position. Finally, they strictly oppose withdrawal, which could be interpreted as the Conservative party does not have hard eurosceptic position either. Therefore, it can be argued that this manifesto is not a eurosceptic one with an emphasis of improving the EEC and also the relations with it.

*1974 October General Election Manifesto, "Putting Britain First".* 1974 General election resulted with the close defeat of the Conservative Party led by Edward Heath and the Labour leader Harold Wilson became the Prime Minister. As in the February manifesto, major focus of the Conservatives was on the high prices and inflation. An emphasis for the improvement of the CAP to prevent the high food prices follows these economic problems. This manifesto states the economic advantages of the membership to the EEC and discerns the membership as a Conservative Party achievement. It argues that the membership is the way to reverse economic and political decline and withdrawal would only bring disadvantages on export and job opportunities, industrial development and security of Britain, leading it to a weak isolation. There is also a focus of protecting British interests in the Parliament while improving EEC policies and making it more democratic.

Since membership is a way to deal with the challenges of Britain and serve its interests by reversing economic decline and preventing wars, this manifesto favours European integration. There is also criticism of CAP and emphasis to make Europe more democratic, but these are again presented with the efforts to strengthen the Community, thud, the current and future trajectory of it. As a matter of fact, the

Conservatives state their objective as to put more efforts for closer European unity. Additionally, this manifesto strongly opposes to withdrawal and presents its dangers. Thus, the Conservative position in this manifesto is not eurosceptic since it has none of the soft or hard Euroscepticism characteristics.

*1979 General Election Manifesto.* This manifesto starts with a foreword by the incumbent leader of the Conservative Party Margaret Thatcher. She will be the leader of the party and the prime minister until her resignation in 1990. The major focus of this manifesto is on the domestic commitments such as restoring economic and social life and the rule of law. European focus comes on the agriculture and fishing section where the need for radical changes in the CAP and fisheries policy is emphasized. This manifesto shows the need of reforms in some policies since they do not suit British interests but also argue that it would be wrong to say that the Union failed Britain. In addition, the Conservatives claim to play a leading and constructive role in the Community, which will ensure the protection of British interests and work for preventing excessive bureaucracy of the Community.

Although the language of criticisms directed to the CAP, fisheries policy and the language of whether the Community serves British interests harshened in this manifesto with the transition to need for improvements to need for radical changes, the Conservative Party still does not oppose these policies and protecting national interest and criticism to one or more policies does not mean that the party is soft eurosceptic according to Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008: 248-249). The Conservatives stated the need for change in order to suit British and European interests as well and called for collaboration in the Community. The preservation of national interests is required for better serving the Community and the call for working together on

resisting unnecessary bureaucracy of Brussels is for not to hinder the improvement of free trade and related policies. Thus, there is not an opposition to the current trajectory of the Community but the need for improvement, which brings the conclusion that the Conservative position is not soft or hard eurosceptic.

*1983 General Election Manifesto.* This manifesto presents defense, prosperity of the economy and unemployment as the biggest challenges of the time. British identity and distinctiveness is argued to be the solution to these challenges. On the European aspect this manifesto states that the fields of agriculture and fishing now enjoys great advantages as a result of successful negotiation with the EU and the efforts for improving these policies will continue. “Britain in Europe” section starts with three sentences of membership advantage, which was to preserve peace in Europe and continues with several criticism on budget, economy and bureaucracy of the Community. The first objective of the Conservatives on the European issue is to cut down their financial contribution to the Community budget, which is not overlapping with the national interest and shifting the Community’s spending priorities from agriculture to industry, which would serve Britain more. Another objective of the Conservative Party is to reduce the bureaucratic restrictions of Brussels on free market economy. This manifesto also has a withdrawal focus that the Conservative Party still rejects since it is the world’s biggest trading union and a significant export market, which prevents Britain from isolation too.

While in this manifesto, the Conservatives enjoy change in the CAP and fisheries policy, their criticisms are directed to the budget mostly. Since these criticisms do not include opposition to integration but present the need for change such as cutting down the contribution or create shift in spending areas, it would be wrong to describe

this stance as soft eurosceptic. Additionally, the Conservative position on the bureaucratic restrictions on Brussels focus specifically on free market and not an opposition to the whole trajectory, this is not soft eurosceptic either. Furthermore, the Conservatives explicitly oppose to withdrawal from the Union and present the benefits of membership, their position in this manifesto is not hard eurosceptic too. However, it should be noted that the Conservative Party started to use a harsher language and more national interest emphasis although it is still not a eurosceptic one according to Taggart and Szczerbiak's typology (2008).

*1987 General Election Manifesto, "The Next Moves Forward"*. This manifesto includes further moves of Thatcher's previous term of office and some of the major focuses of this manifesto consist of CAP, budget and Common Fisheries Policy, which the Conservative Party continues to emphasize the need for a reform and the Conservative efforts for renegotiations and rebates. The Europe section of this manifesto, which is under the "Britain in the World" section as usual, is relatively smaller than previous manifestos and starts with stating that Britain is now a significant part of Europe but still will stand up for its national interests. Following paragraphs emphasize the need for reforms on budget and free trade and the final sentence of this section states British role in the Community with national interest focus.

This manifesto is not different from the previous ones in criticizing the CAP, which is a commitment to reform and improvement. In addition, the critiques of the budget is presented as to keep trying for tighter controls on the budget, which again refers to an improvement of the Union not an opposition to the integration. Furthermore, the Conservatives emphasize their will to work together for improvement and play a

leading role. This shows their enthusiasm in the European project rather than soft or hard Euroscepticism. Thus, this manifesto can be identified as not eurosceptic.

*1992 General Election Manifesto, "The Best Future for Britain"*. The leader of the Conservative Party is John Major in this election, whose result is the Conservative victory again since 1979. The structure of this manifesto is different than previous ones since this manifesto does not include a "Britain in the World" section and the European Community section as a longer part has its place in the initial pages. This manifesto states that Britain is at the heart of Europe and a significant and decisive partner. It also emphasizes the strong role of Britain in the Single Market programme, Community's finances, foreign policy, enlargement and the Maastricht Treaty. The Maastricht Treaty except the Social Chapter and monetary union is regarded as a successful move for Britain and Europe in terms of its provisions on law and order and subsidiarity. The refusal of the Social Chapter and the will of exclusion from the monetary union but not from the Community are also stated in the manifesto. The need for reform on CAP and Common Fisheries Policy is also stated in this manifesto.

This is the manifesto where the Conservative Party started to carry soft eurosceptic characteristics. Although the major intent of the Major government is to place Britain at the heart of Europe, what changed the position of the Conservatives is a significant opposition to a core policy of the EU, which can be interpreted as an opposition to its current and future trajectory. As stated earlier, criticisms to CAP and Common Fisheries Policy are not the core policies of the EU, having little effect on its current or future trajectory. However, the introduction of new changes in the Maastricht Treaty such as the Social Chapter and monetary union, which are core policies and

have important impact on the state of affairs of the integration, lead the Conservative Party to opposition and thus to soft Euroscepticism. The decision to refuse the Social Chapter and monetary union with no sign of withdrawal changes the position of the Conservative Party in this manifesto to a soft eurosceptic party.

*1997 General Election Manifesto, "You Can Only Be Sure With the Conservatives".*

Starting from the Foreword of the Conservative leader John Major, this manifesto is mostly about the failing European social model and the threat to the nation states.

The Conservatives are decisive on not signing the Social Chapter, which will impose regulations and burdens on business and damage the British interests in Europe.

Britain and the Europe section is under the Britain and the World section as in previous manifestos except the 1992 manifesto and starts with an emphasis of the significance of the nation state, common heritage, culture and values, which provides stability, security and a sense of belonging. The Conservatives specifically state that they have a positive vision for the EU but state that they want to be in EU but not run by EU. They demonstrate the importance of the EU for trade and peace but also their opposition to the federal Europe rather than a partnership of nation states since they discern the power of the EU as the diversity of its nations. The priorities of the Conservatives are stated as the enlargement, completion of the single market, reform of the European Court of Justice, empowering the nation states, creating a flexible Europe, retaining Britain's veto, protecting national interest through opposing the extension of qualified majority voting and the powers of the European Parliament. Additionally, the Conservative Party guarantees a referendum in case of a possible decision to join the single currency in this manifesto.

In this manifesto, the emphasis of national interests and sovereignty increases. However, the Conservatives state their positive attitude towards the EU in trade and providing peace, which was their expectation from the Community from the beginning. Yet, the failure of Social Model for the conservatives is also present in the manifesto originating from the idea of “want to be in Europe but not run by Europe” (The Conservative Party Manifesto, 1997). Conservative efforts of opt-out combined with the opposition to monetary union and Social Chapter determines their position as soft eurosceptic since the Conservatives are in opposition to a core policy. In addition, the Conservative opposition on the federal Europe, which is the future objective of the Union and opposition to centralization of decision-making, reduction of the powers of the nation states and extension of the European Parliament’s power, indicate that the Conservative Party is in opposition to the current and future trajectory of the EU. Thus, it can be argued that the position of the Conservative Party on European integration consolidated and carries the characteristics of soft Euroscepticism.

*2001 General Election Manifesto, “Time for Common Sense”*. William Hague is the leader of the Conservative Party in this election and major headlines from this manifesto include a more flexible Europe and vetoing further transfer of power to Brussels. The flexibility is described as other than single market and free trade areas, the members need to participate in only new legislative actions if it is their national interest. The principle of being in the Europe but not run by it is again stated in this manifesto. The Conservatives favour a network of Europe with distinct nations and purposes rather than a federal Europe. Opposition to the single currency and the maintenance of national veto is also present in this manifesto while the

Conservatives strictly oppose the Nice Treaty but want to renegotiate it in order not to lose its veto.

In the beginning of the 2000s, the negotiations of a new significant treaty steps in, which is the Nice Treaty. However, the reaction of the Conservatives is to oppose this treaty along with the previous changes such as the single currency and federal Europe. These core policy oppositions are soft Euroscepticism originating from the opposition to the current and future trajectory of the Union. The focus of keeping the national veto on European legislation and creating a flexible Europe shows the opposition to the functioning of the EU since the EU is trying to extend the competencies of the Parliament and have more power in Brussels. Thus, the position of the Conservatives remains as a soft-eurosceptic one.

*2005 General Election Manifesto, "It's Time for Action"*. The Conservative Party leader becomes Michael Howard and the main focus of this manifesto is taking powers back from Brussels to Britain. The Conservatives want to reform the EU to make it more flexible, decentralized and liberal. They oppose the EU constitution and plan to hold a referendum on it, which they will campaign for a "no" vote. They still state their opposition to joining the euro and the Social Chapter in order to have a deregulated Europe. The need for a reform and national control on CAP and Common Fisheries Policy is also indicated in this manifesto.

Opposition to the EU Constitution, the single currency and the Social Chapter marks this manifesto and gives the Conservative Party a soft eurosceptic position as a result of their opposition to several core policies. In addition, the Conservatives keep their critiques of the EU stating that it is undemocratic and imposing unnecessary regulation, which threatens the British national interests, transformed the need for

improvement to an opposition to the trajectory of the EU since the core policies of it are now interpreted as unnecessary restraints of Brussels. Since there is no intent of withdrawal but just a referendum for acceptance of a policy, it would be wrong to identify the Conservative Party position as hard eurosceptic rather than soft eurosceptic.

*2009 European Election Manifesto.* The focus of this manifesto is to change the EU, which cannot continue as it is and this is not in Britain's or Europe's interests. While the Conservatives appreciate the efforts of the EU on providing peace, spreading democracy and the rule of law to Europe and establishment of the Single Market, they criticize the EU as a result of its efforts on centralization of power, intervening excessively, achieving an ever closer union, focusing on the internal structure of the EU more than the outer world and pushing for a European Constitution. In addition, this manifesto conceptualizes the EU as too inflexible, too bureaucratic and too out of touch. Main commitments of this manifesto are staying out of the Eurozone, bringing powers back from Brussels, decrease the EU intervention in every aspect of their lives, resist the extension of EU competencies, reform CAP and Common Fisheries Policy, increase the benefits of the Single Market, increase the transparency and accountability of the EU and oppose the EU Constitution while campaigning for a referendum.

This manifesto starts with an explicit opposition to the current trajectory of the EU, which is too inflexible, too bureaucratic and too out of touch. The core policy oppositions of the Conservative Party continue as they oppose the monetary union and the EU Constitution. The emphasis of the protection of national interest against the excessive EU interventions increases. Resistance to the EU Constitution and the

extension of the EU competencies, voting against EU regulations since it is undemocratic shows the change in the perception of the EU through opposing its trajectory. The Conservative perception of the EU is rigid, old and too focused on centralizing power; these should be changed if it wants to deal with the new century's challenges. In addition, this manifesto calls for an opposition to the Lisbon Treaty, which is again a core policy and leads a soft eurosceptic stance in case of an opposition. Thus, the Conservatives keep their soft eurosceptic attitude also on the European election manifestos.

*2010 General Election Manifesto, "Invitation to Join the Government of Britain".*

The leader of the Conservative Party is David Cameron in this manifesto and he still is in 2016. The section on Europe carries the headline of "Promote Our National Interest/An open and Democratic Europe". The Conservatives state that they will be positive members of the EU but continue to oppose giving further powers to Brussels and joining euro. Since the EU played a significant part in the provision of peace and spread of democracy in Europe, the Conservatives will take an active part in the further challenges of Europe such as global poverty and boosting economic growth. Thus, this manifesto states that being a member of the EU best serves the British interests but the Conservatives are against a federal Europe and more powers given to Brussels since consistent and inexplicable intervention of the EU in all aspects of their lives is impertinent.

The opposition to single currency as well as giving further powers to Brussels continues, which keeps the position of the Conservatives same as a eurosceptic party. In addition, the perception of the Conservatives on the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty by the Labour Party as a betrayal shows another opposition to a core policy.

Furthermore, this opposition contains an opposition to the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty on extending the EU's competencies means an opposition to the future trajectory. The EU is regarded as an institution including consistent and inexplicable intervention and as a result the Conservative position is soft eurosceptic. The manifesto also states that the membership benefits the British interests and the Conservatives will play an active role, which demonstrates that they do not have a hard eurosceptic position since they do not have any withdrawal cause.

*2014 European Election Manifesto.* This manifesto starts with what the Conservatives done such as the EU budget cut, vetoing a treaty, which was against the national interests and staying out of single currency; and what they will do such as holding a referendum on leaving the EU, bringing powers back from Brussels and having more economic independence. The major focus of this manifesto is the need for change in the EU and the Conservative will to deliver this change since the EU is too bureaucratic, undemocratic and constantly making unnecessary interventions to British daily lives. The Conservatives does not want to commit themselves to the idea of "ever closer union" since it is a political project and not right for Britain. Additionally, the new principle introduced in this manifesto is "Europe if necessary, national when possible".

One of the major points of this manifesto is taking power back from Brussels since the EU is too bureaucratic and undemocratic through stating that reforming the EU does not happen with pushing new agreements but creating more jobs and opportunities. Another point of this manifesto is to say "no" to an ever-closer union, which is the future trajectory of the EU. The Conservatives also oppose the single currency and a European army, which are core policies of the EU. The principle of

the Conservative Party is “Europe if necessary, national when possible” in this manifesto, which contains making decision for themselves, favour a new establishment for the EU and give bigger role to the nation states. These all show that the soft Euroscepticism originating from the opposition to core policies and competencies of the EU. However, the intent of the Conservative government is to hold an in-out referendum, which changes the position of the Conservatives from soft eurosceptic to hard eurosceptic.

*2015 General Election Manifesto, “Strong Leadership, A Clear Economic Plan, A Brighter, More Secure Future”*. The main commitment of this manifesto on Europe is a strict change in the relations originating from the ignorance of British voices on the EU, thus, holding a referendum on whether to leave or stay in the EU. Other several focuses include opposing to join the Eurozone, reforming the functioning of the EU, which is regarded as too undemocratic and bureaucratic by the Conservatives and bringing power back from Brussels and protect the national interests. On the other hand, what the Conservatives positive for the EU are the Single Market, a family of nation states and working in collaboration to be stronger together.

The European section of this manifesto starts with stating that the EU ignored people’s voice and it is time for an in-out referendum. Thus, the Conservative Party continues to be a hard eurosceptic party with this intention. Several reform calls continues in order to prevent the EU from being too bossy and undemocratic. The unnecessary intervention of the EU requires taking power back from Brussels according to the Conservatives. Opposition to core policies such as monetary union and European army also continues in this manifesto.

Therefore, it can be argued that the 1990s and 2010s carry utmost importance in the change of the position of the Conservative Party. Several common policy oppositions were shared in the manifestos such as opposition to CAP, the Common Fisheries Policy, Economic and Monetary Union and Social Chapter. Opposition to the last two created a shift in the Conservative Party position.

### **3.2 The Parliamentary Debates and Intra-party Dissent in the Conservative Party**

This thesis aims to analyze party manifestos and parliamentary debates with leader's speeches in order to find the contributing factors of the Conservative Party position on European integration. The analysis and discussion of the party manifestos are presented in the previous section. This section will present the analysis of the parliamentary debates and intra-party dissent as a contributing factor of the Conservative position on European integration. On the issue of European integration, the political parties of Britain as well as the party members take different positions. In the British politics, backbencher dissent plays a significant role in legislative process on both domestic and international context. On the European integration, the Conservative Party members may also oppose its party's proposed policies and make the passing of a regulation or a bill harder and may affect the position taken by that party. Therefore, this section will analyze parliamentary debates on European integration and discuss the impact of intra-party dissent on the positional change of the Conservative Party on the integration.

After a review of major parliamentary debates on European integration by the British Parliament, this thesis identifies two major periods of significant positional change and intra-party dissent. The first period includes the John Major government and

leadership of the Conservative Party and the other period includes the David Cameron government and leadership of the party.

Although Thatcher's famous Bruges speech marked a beginning of an explicit anti-Europeanism, her term of office was analyzed as not eurosceptic according to Taggart and Szczerbiak's typology. The Conservative government of Thatcher played an active role in economic reforms and the completion of single market through the Single European Act. Her successor John Major experienced a different form of reform including a Monetary Union and social reforms, which was the Maastricht Treaty. John Major's objective on European integration was to put Britain at the heart of Europe (The Conservative Party Manifesto, 1992) and in a speech to the Conservative Central council he demanded enthusiasm to actively participate in the Union as in the Single Market programme (EU: Speeches and Manifestos, 2016: 4). However, his acts included an opposition to single currency, Social Chapter and a federal Europe, which changed the position of the Conservative Party to a soft eurosceptic one (The Conservative Party Manifesto, 1992).

The Conservative position on the Maastricht Treaty was at first favoured joining to the Economic and Monetary Union in order to stop the rise of inflation. John Major also agreed to this idea with the principle of putting Britain at the heart of Europe. However, the intra-party dissent challenged him on the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty since the backbenchers were against the monetary union and introduction of a political union along with the economic one. In the second reading of the bill on the ratification of Maastricht Treaty, John Major expresses support for the Treaty, regards it in the country's interests and demands the approval of the Bill (Hansard, 20 May 1992 col 264-268). However, he faces internal dissent on transferring

powers to Brussels and common economic and foreign policies (Hansard, 20 May 1992 col 268-470). Major could not find the required vote to approve the Bill and in the third reading of the Bill, the backbenchers call for a referendum on the ratification of the treaty and criticize the Social Chapter and the single currency mainly (Hansard, 20 May 1993 col 381-471). Major government continued to face several bills by the backbenchers on single currency to hold a referendum (Hansard, 14 December 1994 col 945) and strict opposition to monetary union and social chapter indicating that the Government's position is soft (Hansard, 11 December 1996 col 297-299).

John Major's term of office included several discontents from his party on the European integration including amendments to the treaty and opposition to its particular provisions leading a second and third reading of it. The Conservative backbenchers presented too many amendments to the Treaty and the debates on the Maastricht Treaty kept going between December 1992 and April 1993. The concerns grow in the Conservative Party over the European integration and calls for referendums and rebellions continued (Hansard, 21 December 1992, col 581–650). This opposition on Maastricht even from the Conservative Party led a confidence motion on 23 July 1993, on the adoption of the Social Chapter, which Major could not restore confidence and was defeated on the Social Chapter with 301 ayes and 339 noes (Hansard, 23 July 1993 col 625-724). The result was withdrawal from Exchange Rate Mechanism and a strict end to joining single currency. This opposition to Economic and Monetary Union, which is a key policy of the European integration and demands for opt-outs presents a soft eurosceptic stance and the change of the position of the Conservative Party in the 1990s.

Another leader of the Conservative party who experienced opposition from his own party was David Cameron. The position of the Conservative party in 2010 general elections stated that the membership serves British interests but the Conservative Party opposes a federal Europe and further extension of the competencies of the EU (The Conservative Party Manifesto, 2010). The coalition partner of the Conservatives, which are the Liberal Democrats, also shared this opinion on the benefits of the membership (The Liberal Democratic Party Manifesto, 2010: 66). The program of the coalition government also stated that Britain will have an active role and hold a referendum on amending Treaty on European Union (The Coalition: Our Programme for Government, 2010: 19). However, the intra party dissent was also visible in Cameron government too, which a backbencher David Nutall called for an in-out referendum (Hansard, 24 October 2011, col 46–144). This motion also found support from other backbenchers on the need for a referendum yet the government opposes that since the EU is in crisis and still the benefits outweigh (Hansard, 24 October 2011 col 55). The result of the motion was a defeat yet 81 Conservatives voted against the government (Hansard, 24 October 2011 col 140-144). The Conservative Party position was clear on the referendum and the party was soft eurosceptic in the first years of Cameron's term of office.

Although the Conservative Party favoured membership to the EU, the need for a change was emphasized in several speeches of Cameron and in the manifestos. Cameron in a speech in European Council stated this need of change with a reference to “new settlement” to change the status quo in 2012 (Cameron, 2012) and also presented the Conservative commitment to the EU and single market in a report (The Coalition: Together in the National Interest: 2013). In a speech on 23 January 2013, Cameron indicates his vision to continue membership and create a flexible,

accountable, competitive and fair Union, which will give powers back to national governments despite the calls for referendums by several backbencher Conservative Parliament members (Cameron, 2013). Yet, one bill from Conservative member James Wharton with the support of 81 other Conservatives and one from another Conservative member Robert Neill were presented in the House of Commons to hold an in-out referendum in 2013, which did not progress (Hansard, 19 June 2013, col 937; Hansard, 17 October 2014, col 565–632). This states that although the Conservative Party still remains in the same soft eurosceptic position on European integration intra-party dissent keeps increasing by emphasizing the need for a referendum on staying in or leaving the EU.

As the criticisms inside the party on European integration grow, criticisms from the other parties also became harsher. At Prime Minister's Question Time, the Labour Party leader Ed Miliband stated that Cameron is driven by the Conservative backbenchers and powerless to confront or do anything (Hansard, 23 January 2013, col 305). Backbencher Conservatives on European integration kept proposing other bills on sovereignty, Common Fisheries Policy and other European regulations and opposed several bills on EU presented by the government. The increased opposition to membership and increasing the EU competencies was followed by the 2015 General Election Manifesto stating that the Conservative Party will hold a referendum by 2017. This was a serious positional change for the Conservative Party. One month later, the Government presented the European Union Referendum Bill stating that a referendum will be held before December 2017 (Hansard, 28 May 2015 col 200).

To summarize, the Conservative Party experienced severe oppositions mostly in the John Major and David Cameron governments. These oppositions pushed the party to oppose the monetary union and hold a referendum, which the results was an opt-out from EMU and a referendum on June 2016. The introduction of Maastricht Treaty and the obstacles created by the backbenchers through complicating the acceptance of several legislations and proposal of numerous motions and bills was followed by a soft eurosceptic position taken by the Conservative Party. Increasing calls for referendum through highly supported bills in the House of Commons was also another obstacle for the Conservative Party's "new settlement". The result was a European Union Referendum Bill stating that a referendum will be held before 2017. The next section will be a discussion of these findings on both the party manifestos and parliamentary debates in which the positional changes and backbench dissent in the Conservative Party will be discussed respectively.

### **3.3 Discussion**

At this stage, it is necessary to state the research question again, which is "What factors contribute to the positioning of the Conservative Party of the UK vis-à-vis the European integration?". In order to answer this question, this thesis analyzed national and European manifestos of the Conservative Party and the parliamentary debates on the European integration. The result of the analysis showed that the Conservative Party position on European integration changed, first in the 1990s and then after 2013, sliding into a more Eurosceptic stance. The party manifestos demonstrated this change in the position in detail by including criticisms on several aspects of the Union. However, in order to discern the party position and this change better, an analysis of the intra-party dissent was essential. As a result of the analysis of the

parliamentary debates, serious backbench dissent on the European integration on 1990s and 2010s was evident. This thesis will now discuss these finding with reference to values of the Conservative Party and the elements of Euroscepticism.

The accession of UK to the European Community was first regarded as a success for the Conservative Party (The Conservative Party Manifesto, 1983). However, the perception of the Conservatives on the EU has never been perfect. From the 1974 February national manifesto to the latest one in 2015, the Conservative Party keep criticizing the EU institutions and several policies such as the CAP. Yet, the Conservatives insistently emphasized the economic and security benefits of the membership until the latest European and national manifestos. As a result of ongoing economic crises in the country and the political conjuncture at the end of World War Two, membership to the Union was a solution to the economic decline with a larger market, which can also ensure the security through alliances (The Conservative Party Manifesto, 1974a). As presented earlier in describing the elements of conservative ideology, prosperity and national interest carries utmost importance for the Conservatives. Since the Union served these interests in the 1970s, the Conservative Party was content with the membership with criticisms directed to the improvement of CAP and democracy. The manifestos of 1970, 1974 February and 1974 October presents this benefit-based relation with the Community and these manifestos were coded as not eurosceptic in the analysis section.

In 1979, Margaret Thatcher rose to the prime ministry office as a strong figure, creating a variant of conservatism, which was Thatcherite Conservatism. Main focus of the Thatcherite Conservatism was the free market economy and a strong state. This idea was evident in the party manifestos of her term of office as well with an

emphasis of national interests since the 1979, 1983 and 1987 national manifestos showed that the reforms were demanded in order to suit British interests. However, the protection of the national interests was an important criterion for better serving the Community. In addition, in 1979 manifesto, the Conservative Party started to criticize the unnecessary bureaucracy of the Community that is hindering the development of free trade and other economic policies and continued to criticize it in 1983 and 1987 manifestos. At this point, a strong state with parliamentary sovereignty value of Conservatism steps in and created the first sparks of an opposition to increasing regulations of the Union. A free market economy and strong state emphasis of the Conservative Party contradict with the growing Community policies. Yet, the membership of the Community is better for a free market economy and the Conservatives kept playing active role during Thatcher's term of office. They hold their not eurosceptic position for the benefits of single market but the hindered sovereignty of the British Parliament by the Community regulations will pose threat to this position in the following manifestos.

1992 general election manifesto marked the beginning of the change in the British party position on European integration. The Conservative Party started to criticize the regulations of the Community already but in order to protect the benefits of the free market; they were not eurosceptic before the 1990s. The Single European Act, which will also impose severe regulations, did not mean an intervention to the British parliamentary sovereignty since it provided greater benefits to the economy of Britain, whose economic objectives lead the way to state that Britain supported the European integration as an economic project. The introduction of Maastricht also enhanced this point since when the social and political reforms started to follow the economic regulations, the Conservative renegotiations and opt-outs arose. The

regulations that the Social Chapter and a monetary union will create started a strict opposition from the Conservative Party. If the Social Chapter and monetary union were accepted, the control of the currency and economy will be transferred to the Community and the strong and sovereign state understanding of Britain would be damaged. As a result of this danger, the Conservative Party changed its position, negotiated for an opt-out and continued to oppose the Social Chapter and Economic and Monetary Union key policies of the Community. This opposition was interpreted as a soft eurosceptic stance in this thesis since the Conservative Party was opposing the current and future trajectory of European integration. Thus, this thesis argues that the change in the position of the Conservative Party was a result of the concerns on the loss of the parliamentary sovereignty and also the loss of it on the values free trade and whole economy. The strong state understanding of the Conservatives did not voluntarily give the control of economy, which benefits most from the membership to the Community and this is interpreted as a contributing factor of the serious positional change to a soft eurosceptic party.

Another interesting point of this change in this manifesto was the backbench dissent against the Maastricht Treaty before the 1992 manifesto. A significant number of Conservative Party opposed John Major's principle of putting Britain at the heart of Europe as a result of the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty, which were mainly concentrated on the Social Chapter and Maastricht Treaty. Although the Conservative Party was not eurosceptic before the 1990s, John Major's government faced policy oppositions, confidence motions, long readings of the bill on the Maastricht Treaty, which was also a contributing factor for the changed Conservative position. This series of backbench revolt pushed a tighter stance on European integration, called for referendum on the ratification of the Treaty and decelerate the

adoption of the legislations. This division in the party also pushed for a positional change, which is evident from the 1992 manifesto and became another factor affecting the position of the Conservative Party.

1997 was a continuation of soft eurosceptic stance. Opposition to core policies such as single currency and Social Chapter continued with an increased emphasis of sovereignty. Although the vision of the Conservatives on European integration was positive, increasing regulations of the Union including a Constitution and further extension of the European Parliament's competencies again is in conflict with the Conservative value of sovereignty and strong state. As the power shifted from the hands of the government to the European Union, the Conservative opposition on new regulations increased with renegotiations and opt-outs. Since the Union was an economic project serving the British economic interests, the political and social regulations introduced with new treaties created discontent in the Conservative Party. They rejected the idea of a federal Europe and discerned the EU as a community of nation states not as a one European state. This meant loss of national sovereignty, which would threaten the British interests and its long tradition of parliamentary sovereignty. Major principle of putting Britain at the heart of Europe was replaced with the principle of want to be in Europe but not run by it. Thus, the intergovernmentalist understanding of the Conservative Party on the EU, which is putting efforts on being a supranational body with increased competencies on the European parliament contradicted.

The Conservative soft eurosceptic position continued in the following 2001, 2004 and 2010 national manifestos and 2009 European election manifesto. The main objectives of the Conservative Party on European integration became opposition to a

federal Europe, centralization of decision-making, reduction of the powers of the national parliaments and the extension of the European Parliament's competencies in return. Another core treaty of the European Union, the Nice Treaty, was opposed by the Conservative Party and keeping the national veto, making the EU more flexible, taking powers back from Brussels and decrease the EU intervention started to be prior moves of it. The critique of the EU since it is undemocratic and bossy increased and the soft eurosceptic position of the party remained the same. Another core treaty, the Lisbon Treaty was opposed in the 2009 European election manifesto, which also presented similar provisions with the Constitutional Treaty. The increasing number of treaties and regulations resulted with a distance from the Union and shaped the position of the Conservative Party.

In the first years of the Cameron's term of office, the Conservative Party was still soft eurosceptic. Cameron insistently emphasized the need for change in the EU and proposed a new settlement including creating a flexible, accountable, competitive and fair EU and taking powers back from Brussels. The 2010 manifesto stated the benefits of the membership and the conservative will to continue to play an active role in the Community politics. The coalition partner of the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats, also shared the same opinion but the Conservative emphasis on taking back the parliamentary sovereignty marked the 2010 manifesto. Although, the Conservative Party opposed withdrawal in this manifesto, backbench dissent was dominant in Cameron's term of office calling for an in-out referendum. Several propositions of bills and oppositions to government's bills lead the way for Cameron to meet the demands of the backbenchers of the party. Cameron faced criticisms at the parliamentary debates and at the Prime Minister's Question Time and this much dissent from his own party could lead the loss of control of the party and the British

politics. Thus, the increasing number of the backbenchers on European integration and in/out referendum demand also contributed to the position of the Conservative Party. The next manifesto of the Conservatives presented another change in the position of the party and the analysis of the inter-party relations revealed severe opposition and push towards a referendum and a stricter stance on European integration.

The 2014 European election manifesto and the 2015 general election manifesto demonstrated that the Conservative Party changed its position from soft Euroscepticism to hard Euroscepticism. Principled opposition to the membership and holding an in-out referendum showed a hard eurosceptic stance. What was also crucial in these manifestos was a serious criticism of the EU's bureaucracy, accountability and unnecessary interventions in the parliamentary sovereignty. Thus, the focus of Conservatives on the sovereignty, national interest and a strong state increased and brought the Conservative Party to its current position as a hard eurosceptic party. Opposition to the EU as a political project and a too bureaucratic organization intervening too much in the British daily lives resulted with the principle of "Europe if necessary, national when possible". Giving bigger role to the national parliaments was an indispensable for the Conservative Party and contributed to where it is now on the European integration. The EU is now perceived as undemocratic and unaccountable, which is against the rule of law element of conservatism. British parliamentary tradition is strong in the perception of the Conservatives and does not want to be jeopardized with a bossy and bureaucratic EU. Thus, this thesis argues that the values of conservatism such as sovereignty, strong state and rule of law contributed to the position of the Conservative Party on European integration since 2013.

To conclude, the Conservative Party position on European integration changed in the 1990s and 2010s. The contributing factors of these positions and change were the conservative values and backbench dissent. Although the Conservative values led a not eurosceptic stance before the 1990s with a focus of free market economy and prosperity principle of the Conservatism, sovereignty, strong state, rule of law and democracy principles were challenged in the following years with the increasing number of treaties, regulations and supranationalism efforts of the Union. This challenge led to a shift in the party position of the Conservatives to first soft Euroscepticism and then hard Euroscepticism. In addition, in order to examine a party's position, it is necessary to manifest the inter-party relations and the parliamentary debates indicated severe backbench dissent and push on several policy areas in John Major's and David Cameron's term of office. Although these two leaders did not share the same position with the backbenchers at first with their different principles such as Major's making Britain a more active player at the heart of Europe and Cameron's new settlement, the results met the demands of the backbenchers with opposition to the Maastricht Treaty and holding a referendum. Therefore, this thesis identifies major contributing factors of the Conservative position on European integration as the key conservative values such as liberal economy, parliamentary sovereignty, strong state, rule of law and democracy and their contradiction with the continuing reforms and treaties of the EU; and also severe backbench dissent on John Major's and David Cameron's terms of office. In order to come to this conclusion, this chapter first presented its methodology to identify the party positioning on European integration and its components. Then, the national party manifestos since 1970 and the European election manifestos of 2009 and 2014 were examined and coded with their particular position on European

integration. An analysis of the parliamentary debates in the House of Commons followed with the findings of backbench dissent in specific leaders' prime ministry. Then, a discussion of these findings led the conclusion of this chapter with the presentation of the contributing factors as the Conservative values and intra party dissent.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

This thesis' interest was the Conservative Party position on European integration and whether there was any change in this position. The Conservative Party, who was in government when Britain joined the Community, had emphasized the economic and security benefits of being a member to the Community. In addition, the Community was a way to solve the problems in economy and of the post-World War Two political conjuncture. However, the Conservative Party declared to hold an in-out referendum and this was the main intriguing starting point of this research. Thus, the thesis departed from the question of "*What factors contribute to the positioning of the Conservative Party of the UK vis-à-vis the European integration?*". The objective of this thesis was to determine the positional change of the Conservative Party pertaining to the European integration and to find out the contributing factors of this position. Thus, this thesis argued that the firm attachment of the Conservative Party to the sovereignty and interests of the British nation as well as the effect of intra-party dissent on particular policies and treaties contributed to the ever-changing

position of the Conservative Party of the UK vis-à-vis European integration since 1973.

In order to answer the research question, national and European party manifestos since 1970 and parliamentary debates were analyzed. The main objective of this analysis was to discern the Conservative position by looking at the manifestos that the party presents its position explicitly to the electorate and examining the parliamentary debates, which show the dissent in the party on several policies. Including both types of data was significant for this research since the party manifestos would not be enough to understand a party's position since opposition within the Party would be neglected. In addition, inability to include the European election manifestos is another significant deficiency for this thesis. A research including all the manifestos would make this thesis more comprehensive and updated. However, in order to make up for these deficiencies, parliamentary debates were included in this research. Another limitation for this research was the method, qualitative content analysis, which would open the space for subjective interpretation. However, qualitative analysis of the data would present the frequency and emphasis on particular phrases properly since the flow of arguments in the manifestos and debates would be more visible. In addition, instead of coding specific words with a quantitative analysis, making interpretation in the wider context of the data would ensure a more accurate analysis. Furthermore, the main source of the data and references were given in order to prevent the subjectivity problem.

The findings, which are analyzed through the theory of Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008) on party-based Euroscepticism and party positioning on European integration showed that there is serious positional changes in the Conservative Party position

since 1973, British accession to the Community. These changes manifested themselves during John Major leadership of the Conservative Party of 1990s and David Cameron's after 2013. First, during 1990s, the Conservative Party demonstrated a soft eurosceptic stance by opposing the core policies of the Union, which were significant milestones for the current and future trajectory of the European integration. Although the Conservative Party criticized several Community policies and institutions since 1974 February manifesto, the first breaking point came with the Maastricht Treaty and 1992 general election manifesto. Opposition to the Economic and Monetary Union and also the Social Chapter was interpreted as an opposition to core policies of the Community, which presents the current and future trajectory of it. Thus, it was argued that the Conservative Party position changed in the beginning of 1990s.

Additionally, the leader of the Conservative Party was John Major during the 1990s and he suffered from internal party dissent according to the analysis of the parliamentary debates. The Community introduced new changes in the trajectory of it with the Maastricht Treaty. A considerable number of the Conservative Party members opposed the principle of John Major, which was to put Britain at the heart of Europe. This opposition was in the form of confidence motions and long readings of the bills on European issues. This backbench revolt pushed the Conservative Party into a soft Eurosceptic position through opposition to the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty. Opposition within the party to the single currency and Social Chapter marked a change in the position of the Conservative Party, which paved the way for the conclusion that the serious backbench dissent contributed to the position of the Conservative Party on European integration in the 1990s.

The opposition to the core policies in the form Maastricht Treaty showed that, the reaction to Conservative Party changed when the values of the party is threatened. These values were a strong state, sovereignty and prosperity. Joining the monetary union and adoption of the Social Chapter was interpreted as loss of control on economic issues by the Conservative Party. This created a change in the position of the Conservatives on European integration and resulted with a soft eurosceptic stance. This opposition to core policies continued in the following years and strengthened the eurosceptic position of the Conservatives. Other oppositions such as resistance to further extension of the European Parliament's competencies were also interpreted as soft Euroscepticism and contrast with the trajectory of the Community.

Another shift in the position of the Conservatives was from soft Euroscepticism to hard Euroscepticism. Although Cameron as the Prime minister proposed a new settlement to create flexible, accountable, competitive and fair Union, he faced serious dissent within the party pushing for an in-out referendum. Propositions of several bills on holding this referendum and opposition and slowdown on bills proposed by the Cameron government might lead the loss of control by the Prime Minister. Thus, this push resulted with the contribution on the eurosceptic position of the Conservative Party. In addition, the declaration of holding an in-out referendum showed a principled opposition to the EU, which was presented as hard Euroscepticism.

The 2014 European election manifesto and the 2015 general election manifesto demonstrated severe criticisms of the EU's bureaucracy, accountability and unnecessary interventions in the parliamentary sovereignty. This showed the continuation of sovereignty, strong state and democracy emphasis of the

Conservative Party, which are the key values of the party. Reforming the EU in the way to make it more supranational, giving more competencies to Brussels and limiting the power of the member states were major contradictions that the Conservative values had. The idea that Brussels interfere in the daily lives of the people and taking competencies over the national governments challenged Conservative values. The new principle “Europe if necessary, national when possible” also contributed this idea and resulted with the current hard eurosceptic position of the Conservative Party. The future trajectory of the Union was not progressing towards the direction that the Conservatives want it to be. This total contradiction on parliamentary sovereignty, strong nation state and democracy understanding led a principled opposition to the EU and the European integration. Thus, the Conservative Party adopted a hard eurosceptic position in the last three year period.

As a result, when the Conservative oppositions were listed, they concentrated on the contradiction with the sovereign state. These position included opposition to a federal Europe, centralization of decision-making, reduction of the powers of the national parliaments and the extension of the European Parliament’s competencies. The objectives of the Conservatives on European integration included keeping the national veto, making the EU more flexible, taking powers back from Brussels and decrease the EU intervention on daily life while the EU is becoming more supranational and creating more regulations. Thus, this thesis argued that the Conservative values were incompatible with the future trajectory of the European Union, which resulted with a shift to soft and hard Euroscepticism in 1990s and 2013. While the supranational institutions of the EU tried to eliminate the nation state and national identity, and create a federal Europe with a European identity, the

Conservative commitments were on strong nation state and state sovereignty. With the impact of the internal party dissent on John Major and David Cameron governments, the Conservative Party changed its position on European integration over the years and the Conservative values also contributed to this position.

Therefore, this thesis identified major contributing factors of the Conservative Party position on European integration as the contradiction of key conservative values such as parliamentary sovereignty, strong state, rule of law and democracy with the current and future trajectory of the European Union and also the severe backbench dissent on John Major's and David Cameron's terms of office, which pushed for soft and hard eurosceptic stances against the European integration.

The European integration project deepened and widened over the years through the ratification of new treaties and reaching 28 member states. As the project grows, it becomes harder to determine the position of the member states and their particular political parties without an analysis of the national context. Yet, this thesis contributed to the literature of the European Affairs with a description of the position of the most dominant political parties of Britain, the Conservative Party. On the eve of an in-out referendum, this thesis touched upon the general framework of British Euroscepticism, elements of party-based Euroscepticism and the historical background of the major events in the British-European Union relations. Thus, it provided a detailed and comprehensive summary, which could help to understand the results and reasons of the upcoming referendum. In addition, since the Conservative Party is the main actor committed to the referendum, the analysis of its manifestos and parliamentary debates also contributed to the understanding of the values, objectives of the Party and the expectations of it from the European integration.

Therefore, this thesis might be a useful source to check before the in-out referendum to have an overall and comprehensive opinion.

This thesis benefited from the analysis of the British national context to examine the relations of Britain with the European Union and focused on a specific party to have a more detailed idea on the issue. However, Britain draws more attention in its relations with the Union and the Conservative Party is not the sole player in the European politics of Britain. Therefore, further studies on this issue might focus on the position of the other parties such as the position of the Labour Party since this party committed to withdrawal in 1980s but identified as a pro-European party in the recent years (Kerry, 2016: 20-21). Another topic of study might be the rising electoral support of UKIP, who gained significant number of seats in the latest European Parliament elections. However, the study of European politics became an immense and challenging topic with increasing number of member states and the varying degrees of support. Yet, this project might be discerned as a step towards more detailed analysis of national context and the EU level.

Aftermath of the Brexit referendum, the results and effects of this referendum might be another interesting topic for further studies. The British interest on the EU was based on economic and security benefits of membership. Although it seems that Europe lives in peace since the catastrophic World War Two and leaving the EU might not result with significant security problems for Britain, it might still lead problems in the economy. Britain and the EU are important trading partners. Leaving the EU and the single market that Britain showed significant efforts and enthusiasm in the formation of it, might end with a decrease in the foreign investment and budget contribution in the country and loss of a significant trade partner. In addition, the EU

also provides soft power for the member countries by presenting a place for having a louder voice. The exit scenarios might vary in order to prevent the disadvantages of leaving the EU. Britain might negotiate treaties on preferred policy areas to remedy for the deficiencies of not being a member of the EU. However, it might be another topic for further study whether negotiated arrangements would be a substitute for the benefits of Britain from the EU membership. And whether it would be best for Britain to leave the EU and the single market; and have a strong but flexible state with national sovereignty on political and economic measures is a decision that the British people will make in this June.

## REFERENCES

- Abrahamian, E. *et al.* (2010). *Introduction to Comparative Politics*. Boston: Wadsworth Publishing.
- Bale, T. (2006). Between a Soft and a Hard Place? The Conservative Party, Valence Politics and the Need for a New “Eurorealism. *Parliamentary Affairs*. 59(3), 385-400.
- Benedetto, G. & Hix, S. (2007). The Rejected, the Ejected, and the Dejected: Explaining Government Rebels in the 2001-2005 British House of Commons. *Comparative Political Studies*. 40(7), 755-781.
- Blair, A. (2004). *Britain and the World Since 1945*. New York: Routledge.
- Blake, R. (2012). *The Conservative Party from Peel to Major*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Cameron, D. (2012). Prime Minister’s Statement on European Council. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-on-european-council>.
- Cameron, D. (2013). EU Speech at Bloomberg. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/eu-speech-at-bloomberg>.
- Clark, A. (2012). *Political Parties in the UK*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cole, M. & Deighan, H. (2012). *Political Parties in Britain*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Corner, M. (2007). The EU and the Roots of British Euroscepticism. *Contemporary Review*. 289(1687), 466-469.
- Crespy, A. & Verschuere N. (2009). From Euroscepticism to Resistance to European Integration: An Interdisciplinary Perspective. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*. 10(3), 377–393.
- Daddow, O. (2013). Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair and the Eurosceptic Tradition in Britain. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*. 15, 210-227.
- Dunleavy, P. (2005). Facing up to multi-party politics: how partisan dealignment and PR voting have fundamentally changed Britain’s party systems. *Parliamentary Affairs*. 58(3), 503-532.
- Easton, D. (1965). *A Framework for Political Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Europe’s elections: The Eurosceptic Union. (2014). Retrieved from: <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21603034-impact-rise-anti-establishment-parties-europe-and-abroad-eurosceptic-union>.
- Eurosceptic earthquake rocks EU elections. (2014). Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27559714>.
- Flood, C. (2002). *Euroscepticism: A Problematic Concept*. Paper presented at UACES 32nd annual conference and 7th research conference. Queen’s University Belfast, 2–4 September.
- Flood, C. & Usherwood, S. (2005). *Positions, Dispositions, Transitions: A Model of Group Alignment on EU Integration*. Paper presented at 55th Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association. University of Leeds, 5-7 April.
- Fontana, C. & Parsons, C. (2015). “One Woman’s Prejudice”: Did Margaret Thatcher Cause Britain’s Anti-Europeanism?. *Journal of Common Market Studies*. 53(1), 89-105.

- Forster, A. (2002). *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics: Opposition to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour Parties Since 1945*. London: Routledge.
- Franklin M. & Wilke M. (1990). *Britain's Future in Europe*. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs.
- Gabel, M. (1998). Public Support for European Integration: An Empirical Test of Five Theories. *Journal of Politics*. 60(2), 333-354.
- George, S. (2000). Britain: Anatomy of a Eurosceptic State. *Journal of European Integration*. 22(1), 15-33.
- Gifford, C. (2006). The Rise of Post-imperial Populism: The Case of Right-wing Euroscepticism in Britain. *European Journal of Political Research*, 45(5), 851-869.
- Gifford, C. (2008). *The Making of Eurosceptic Britain: Identity and Economy in a Post-Imperial State*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Gifford, C. (2010). The UK and the European Union: Dimensions of Sovereignty and the Problem of Eurosceptic Britishness. *Parliamentary Affairs*. 63(2), 321-338.
- Grant, C. (2008). Why is Britain Eurosceptic?. *Centre for European Reform*. Retrieved from <http://www.cer.org.uk/publications/archive/essay/2008/why-britain-eurosceptic>.
- Hansard HC Deb vol 208 cols 264-470 (20 May 1992). [Electronic version].
- Hansard, HC Deb vol 216 cols 581-650 (21 December 1992). [Electronic version].
- Hansard, HC Deb vol 227 cols 625-724 (23 July 1993). [Electronic version].
- Hansard, HC Deb vol 251 col 945 (14 December 1994). [Electronic version].
- Hansard, HC Deb vol 287 cols 297-299 (11 December 1996). [Electronic version].
- Hansard, HC Deb vol 534 cols 46-114 (24 October 2011). [Electronic version].
- Hansard, HC Deb vol 564 col 937 (19 June 2013). [Electronic version].
- Hansard, HC Deb vol 586 cols 565-632 (17 October 2014). [Electronic version].
- Hansard, HC Deb vol 596 col 200 (28 May 2015). [Electronic version].
- Hansard, HC Deb vol 742 col 305 (23 January 2013). [Electronic version].
- Harmsen R. & Spiering M. (2004). Euroscepticism and the Evolution of European Political Debate. *European Studies*, 20(2004), 13-35.
- Hawkins *et al.* (2015). *General Election 2015 (CBP7186)*. London: House of Commons Library
- Heppell, T. (2013). Cameron and Liberal Conservatism: Attitudes within the Parliamentary Conservative Ministers. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*. 15, 340-361.
- Heywood, A. (2015). *Essentials of UK Politics*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- HM Government. (2010). *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government*. London: Cabinet Office.
- HM Government. (2013). *The Coalition: Together in the National Interest*. London: Cabinet Office.
- Hooghe, L. & Marks, G. (2002). Does Left/Right Structure Party Positions on European Integration. *Comparative Political Studies*. 35(8), 965-989.
- Hooghe, L. & Marks, G. (2004). Does Identity or Economic Rationality Drive Public Opinion on European Integration. *Political Science and Politics*. 37(3), 415-420.
- House of Commons. (2016). *General Election Results (Paper No: CBP7186)*. London: House of Commons Library.

- Johnston, R. J. (2014). *From Votes to Seats: The Operation of the UK Electoral System Since 1945*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Jones, B. & Norton, P. (2014). *Politics UK*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Kerry, E. (2016). *European Union: Prime Ministers' Speeches and Party Manifestos since 1970*. London: House of Lords Library.
- Kopecký, P. & Mudde, C. (2002). The Two Sides of Euroscepticism: Party Positions on European Integration in East Central Europe. *European Union Politics*. 3(3), 297-326.
- Leconte, C. (2010). *Understanding Euroscepticism*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lees, C. (2008). The Limits of Party-Based Euroscepticism in Germany. In Szczerbiak, Aleks and Paul Taggart, eds., *Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism: Case Studies and Country Surveys, Volume 1*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 16-37.
- Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- McGuinness, F. (2011). *Alternative Vote Referendum* (ISSN 1368-8456). London: House of Commons Library.
- McLaren, L. (2007). Explaining Mass-Level Euroscepticism: Identity, Interests and Institutional Distrust. *Acta Politica*. 42(2-3), 233-251.
- Mény, Y. (2002). De la démocratie en Europe: Old Concepts and New Challenges. *Journal of Common Market Studies*. 41(1), 1-13.
- Ray, L. (1999). Measuring Party Orientations towards European Integration: Results from an Expert Survey. *European Journal of Political Research*. 36, 283-306.
- Riishøj, S. (2007). Europeanization and Euroscepticism: Experiences from Poland and the Czech Republic. *Nationalities Papers*. 35(3), 503-535.
- Robins, K. (2014). *The Eclipse of a Great Power: Modern Britain 1870-1992*. New York: Routledge.
- Rohrschneider, R. (2002). The Democracy Deficit and Mass Support for an EU-Wide Government. *American Journal of Political Science*. 46(2), 463-475.
- Sanders, D. (1990). *Losing an Empire, Finding a Role: British Foreign Policy Since 1945*. London: Macmillan Education.
- Sartori, G. (2005). *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. Essex:ECPR Press.
- Smith, G. (1992). Britain in the New Europe. *Foreign Affairs*. 71(4), 155-170.
- Smith, J. (2005). A Missed Opportunity? New Labour's European Policy 1997-2005. *International Affairs*. 81(4), 703-721.
- Sørensen, C. (2008). *Love me, love me not... A Typology of Public Euroscepticism*. Brighton: Sussex European Institute.
- Spiering, M. (2004). British Euroscepticism. *European Studies*. 20(2004), 127-149.
- Taggart, P. (1998). A Touchstone of Dissent: Euroscepticism in Contemporary Western European Party Systems. *European Journal of Political Research*. 33(3), 363-368.
- Taggart, P. & Szczerbiak A. (2003). "Theorising Party-Based Euroscepticism: Problems of Definition, Measurement and Causality". SEI Working Paper No 69. Sussex European Institute, University of Sussex.
- Taggart, P. & Szczerbiak A. (2008). *Opposing Europe: The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

- Taggart, P. & Szczerbiak, A. (2002). "The Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU Member and Candidate States". SEI Working Paper No 51. Sussex European Institute, University of Sussex.
- Taggart, P. & Szczerbiak, A. (2013). Coming in from the Cold? Euroscepticism, Government Participation and Party Positions on Europe. *Journal of Common Market Studies*. 51(1), 17-37.
- Thatcher, M. 1988. The Bruges Speech. The Telegraph. Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/3562258/Full-text-of-Margaret-Thatchersspeech-to-the-College-of-Europe-The-Bruges-Speech.html>.
- The British National Party. (2015). [https://www.bnp.org.uk/sites/default/files/bnp\\_manifesto-2015.pdf](https://www.bnp.org.uk/sites/default/files/bnp_manifesto-2015.pdf).
- The Conservative Party. (1970). The Conservative Party General Election Manifesto. Retrieved from <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1970/1970-conservative-manifesto.shtml>
- The Conservative Party. (1974a). The Conservative Party General Election Manifesto. Retrieved from <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1974/Feb/february-1974-conservative-manifesto.shtml>
- The Conservative Party. (1974b). The Conservative Party Manifesto. Retrieved from <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1974/Oct/october-1974-conservative-manifesto.shtml>
- The Conservative Party. (1979). The Conservative Party General Election Manifesto. Retrieved from <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1979/1979-conservative-manifesto.shtml>.
- The Conservative Party. (1983). The Conservative Party General Election Manifesto. Retrieved from <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1983/>.
- The Conservative Party. (1987). The Conservative Party General Election Manifesto. Retrieved from <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1987/1987-conservative-manifesto.shtml>.
- The Conservative Party. (1992). The Conservative Party General Election Manifesto. Retrieved from <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1992/1992-conservative-manifesto.shtml>.
- The Conservative Party. (1997). The Conservative Party General Election Manifesto. Retrieved from <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1997/1997-conservative-manifesto.shtml>.
- The Conservative Party. (2001). The Conservative Party General Election Manifesto. Retrieved from <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/2001/2001-conservative-manifesto.shtml>.
- The Conservative Party. (2005). The Conservative Party General Election Manifesto. Retrieved from <https://www.conservatives.com/pdf/manifesto-uk-2005.pdf>.
- The Conservative Party. (2009). The Conservative Party European Election Manifesto. Retrieved from <http://conservativeeurope.com/downloads/publications/euro-manifesto-2009.pdf>.
- The Conservative Party. (2010). The Conservative Party General Election Manifesto. Retrieved from <https://www.conservatives.com/~media/.../Manifesto2010>.
- The Conservative Party. (2014). The Conservative Party European Election Manifesto. Retrieved from: <https://www.conservatives.com/europe/.../MANIFESTO>.

- The Conservative Party. (2015). The Conservative Party General Election Manifesto. Retrieved from: <https://www.conservatives.com/manifesto>.
- The Labour Party. (2005). The Labour Party General Election Manifesto. Retrieved from <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/wmatrix/tutorial/labour%20manifesto%202005.pdf>.
- The Labour Party. (2015). The Labour Party General Election Manifesto. Retrieved from: <http://www.labour.org.uk/manifesto>.
- The Liberal Democratic Party. (2010). The Liberal Democratic Party General Election Manifesto. Retrieved from: [http://www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/ge10/man/parties/libdem\\_manifesto\\_2010.pdf](http://www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/ge10/man/parties/libdem_manifesto_2010.pdf).
- The Liberal Democratic Party. (2013). Liberal Democrats Policy Consultation. London: The Policy Unit, Liberal Democrats.
- The Liberal Democratic Party. (2015). The Liberal Democratic Party General Election Manifesto. Retrieved from: <http://www.libdems.org.uk/read-the-full-manifesto>.
- The United Kingdom Independence Party. (2015). The United Kingdom Independence Party General Election Manifesto. Retrieved from: <http://www.ukip.org/manifesto2015>.
- Thomson, J. (1995). State Sovereignty in International Relations: Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Empirical Research. *International Studies Quarterly*. 39, 213-233.
- Watt, N. (2011). David Cameron Rocked by Record Rebellion as Europe splits Tories Again. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2011/oct/24/david-cameron-tory-rebellion-europe>.
- Whiteley, P. *et al.* (1994). *True Blues: The Politics of Conservative Party Membership*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Young, H. (1998). *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair*. New York: Overlook Press.