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JOOST VAN SPANJE and CLAES DE VREese

Extant research is not very specific about when the media matter for vote choice. In this study, we test multiple theories about the influences of the media on vote choice in 21 countries. The European Parliamentary (EP) election campaign offers a unique research context to test these influences. We rely on a two-wave panel survey conducted in 21 European Union (EU) member states, asking both vote intentions before the campaign and reported actual votes (among 14,000 voters). We link these data to media content data of campaign coverage between the two waves in these countries (37,000 coded news items). We conclude that media evaluations of the EU affect voting for Eurosceptic parties. On average, the more positive the evaluations of the EU a voter is exposed to, the less likely she or he is to cast a vote for a Eurosceptic party. In addition, our findings indicate that in countries where political parties have markedly different views on EU issues, the more a voter is exposed to framing of the EU in terms of benefits derived from membership in these countries, the less likely she or he is to cast a Eurosceptic vote. This suggests that the outcome of the 2009 EP elections was influenced by how the media covered EU-related news during the campaign.

Keywords media effects, evaluative tone, framing, Euroscepticism, voting

Common wisdom holds that the media matter for vote choice. In established democracies, considerable amounts of resources are spent on campaigns designed to maximize votes by influencing media content. This spending is all based on the assumption that what voters hear, see, or read in the media in the run-up to elections affects their choice in the voting booth. In the United States, a sizeable literature focuses on the role of political advertising (e.g., Geer, 2006), while in other countries news media coverage of politics seems more important (e.g., Baek, 2009). Convincingly demonstrating effects of news media coverage of politics on electoral behavior is challenging, however. In this article, we assess the effects of the visibility, tone, and framing of news media coverage of political actors on vote choice. In doing so, we present a rare case of evidence that the media affect individual-level party choice.

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Only few campaign effect studies have assessed media effects on vote choice directly. At least four problems plague the extant literature on media effects on vote choice. First, in the absence of precise measurement of exposure to media, media effects might be underestimated (Zaller, 1996). In this article, we use an integration of media content analysis data and survey data, as was also recently advocated by Dilliplane, Goldman, and Mutz (2013). Second, we overcome limitations arising from reliance on cross-sectional designs by employing panel survey data, including pre- and post-election vote intention, in combination with media content data (as argued by De Vreese & Semetko, 2004a). Third, although various types of media effects likely occur simultaneously, they have rarely been assessed in concert in one study. Our analysis allows for the joint assessment of all three types of media effects mentioned above (visibility, tone, and framing). Fourth, media effects are often suppressed due to the common lack of variation in message flows in the media (Zaller, 1996). We study 21 different countries in this article, thereby maximizing the variation in message flows. The European Parliamentary (EP) election campaign offers the opportunity to do so. This allows us to add to the literature also in another way: by examining how media effects are moderated by relevant contextual factors.

We load the dice against finding any campaign effects by focusing on an arguably strong and relatively rare type of vote change: switches from one party to another (as opposed to abstention)—moreover, not just any switching, but direct changes from non-Eurosceptic voting to Eurosceptic voting, and vice versa, over the course of an election campaign. We focus on such switching to make our empirical tests conservative, but also because Eurosceptic voting is highly politically relevant. EP election outcomes are important, as Eurosceptic MEPs tend to obstruct the European project while their Europhile counterparts try to pave the way toward more European unification. As the composition of the EP thus partly determines the future of one of the world’s largest supranational cooperation efforts, it is important to study how the media affect the vote for this legislative body.

**Media Effects on Vote Choice**

Previous studies have gravitated toward examining electoral effects of three aspects of media coverage of political actors: visibility, tone, and framing. The visibility of media coverage of political actors influences vote choice (Herr, 2002; Hopmann, Vliegenthart, De Vreese, & Albaek, 2010; Walgrave & De Swert, 2004). This may be because it enhances the actors’ importance relative to other actors (Weaver, 1996). Alternatively, it might be a result of voters generally expecting a very visible actor to be more effective in terms of enacting their favorite policies after the election than a not very visible one. In contexts where many political parties operate, their relative importance and effectiveness are potentially relevant for party choice (Hopmann et al., 2010). Effects of party visibility on vote choice have not been found in experimental studies (Norris, Curtice, Sanders, Scammell, & Semetko, 1999). Yet, they have been detected in non-experimental research among voters uncertain of their vote (Hopmann et al., 2010) and among voters more generally (Semetko & Schoenbach, 1994). Related to this, candidates’ campaign appearances have also been found to affect vote choice (Herr, 2002). Turning to our study, we distinguish between Eurosceptic and other political actors. We assess effects of the visibility of Eurosceptic actors on voting for a Eurosceptic party.

A second type of effect is associated with the persuasive impact of tone. Scholars assume that the tone of media coverage of a political actor considerably affects public perceptions of this actor. This is because most voters do not regularly meet political candidates and thus have to rely on media reporting for their impressions of the available options.
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In other research, effects are tested that are related not to evaluations in general but to a particular kind of evaluation: perceived success and failure (Kleinnijenhuis, Van Hoof, Oegema, & De Ridder, 2007). Theoretical reasons for such impact can be found in bandwagon effects, and in voters’ considerations regarding policy implications resulting from (anticipated) election outcomes. First, bandwagon effects imply that voters want to belong to the winning side. As a result, apparent success in the campaign breeds success in the actual election (e.g., Hardmeier, 2008). Second, voter expectations about election results may lead to strategic voting with a view to influencing policy outcomes after the election (e.g., Bartels, 1988). In accordance with this, voters prefer larger parties to smaller ones, all other parameters held constant (e.g., Tillie, 1995). Several studies have shown effects of all sorts of media evaluations on voter evaluations of parties (e.g., Norris et al., 1999) and party leaders (e.g., Brettschneider, 2002). Media evaluations have also been found to influence voting behavior (Balmas & Scheafer, 2010; De Vreese & Semetko, 2004a; Druckman & Parkin, 2005; Hopmann et al., 2010; Mendelsohn & Nadeau, 1999; Schuck & De Vreese, 2006; Shaw, 1999; Walgrave & De Swert, 2004). This said, effects during the campaign may often be too short-lived to affect actual vote choice in the ensuing election (Dobrzynska, Blais, & Nadeau, 2003). In this study, electoral effects of the evaluative tone of media coverage of political actors are assessed. We concentrate on how the EU, Eurosceptic parties, and their candidates are evaluated in the media coverage a voter is exposed to and how this influences her or his vote choice.

A third way for the media to affect voting behavior is by framing. Framing is “the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue” (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 104; De Vreese, 2004; see also Entman, 1993). It implies that the way in which news, an issue, or event is presented helps “determine what aspects of a problem the audiences focus on” (McLeod, Kosicki, & McLeod, 2009, p. 230). Most framing effects studies have looked at attitudinal responses, but framing is also a factor potentially influencing vote choice, as “each side has the potential to draw voters away from its opponents using frames for its own position that may also appeal to the other side’s voters” (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 114). Only a few framing effects studies have focused on vote choice. Being exposed to media coverage with strategic framing has been associated with voting “no” in an EU referendum in the Netherlands (e.g., Elenbaas & De Vreese, 2008). The findings we present in this article are based on news frames that have been found to affect attitudes toward the EU: “benefit frames” (Schuck & De Vreese, 2006; Vliegenthart, Schuck, Boomgaarden, & De Vreese, 2008). Benefit framing implies that EU news is described in terms of the benefits that EU membership brings to the country and was associated with increases in public support for the EU in seven countries between 1990 and 2006 (Vliegenthart et al., 2008). In this article, we set out to assess to what degree this news frame has effects on Eurosceptic voting.

Thus far, research has tended to focus on just one of these three ways in which exposure to news messages can affect electoral behavior instead of on all three simultaneously. A difficulty arising from this is the lack of cumulative evidence across studies and elections. Some studies have looked at the combination of, for example, visibility and tone (e.g., Hopmann et al., 2010) and found that both aspects matter, especially for explaining the vote choice of undecided voters. We jointly test the influence of visibility, tone, and framing in one comprehensive study.

Eurosceptic Voting in EP Elections

The vast majority of campaign studies has been conducted either in the United States (e.g., Bartels, 1993; Finkel, 1993; Holbrook, 1996) or in Britain (Andersen, 2003; Andersen,
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Tilley, & Heath, 2005; Norris et al., 1999). In this study, we focus on an EP election campaign. Besides giving us the opportunity to study several campaign contexts at once, this study provides information about campaign effects in a type of election that substantially differs from U.S. presidential elections or UK general elections. It is difficult to say to what extent EP election campaign effects should be similar to effects reported in the literature. On the one hand, they should be similar, as to many voters EP elections are relatively unimportant, “second-order” elections (Reif & Schmitt, 1980). As a result, voters may be strongly guided by domestic politics in these elections (Brug, Eijk, & Franklin, 2007; De Vries & Tillman, 2010), just as in U.S. presidential and UK general elections. For example, voters may use EP elections mainly to punish or reward national incumbents for how they are dealing with the economy, regardless of what else the campaign is about, for instance EU matters.

On the other hand, several considerations would speak for a study of EP election campaigns resulting in larger electoral effects than studies of U.S. and UK general election campaigns. First, U.S. campaign studies have mostly been conducted in the last 2–3 months of the campaign, when its effects may have already taken place (Iyengar & Petrocik, 2000, p. 119). In this study, we look at entire EP election campaigns, which are much more compressed, usually lasting less than a month. This way, we should miss few, if any, campaign effects. Second, the U.S. and UK elections studied are two-party or three-party contests. In races involving more than three parties, such as in EP elections, voters face more complexity. They are therefore expected to rely more on media messages. The relative lack of knowledge about European institutions as compared to national ones is likely to reinforce this reliance on the media.

Third, and related to this, the higher number of possibilities to switch parties means that a particular amount of voter opinion change in ideological terms would lead to a change in party choice in a multiparty system but not in a two-party system. Switching from one left-wing party to another, for instance, is usually not as radical in terms of party ideology as a switch from the Democrats to the Republicans in the United States. As many voters in European countries feel close to several parties at the same time (Eijk & Franklin, 2009), weak media effects may cause switching in EP elections but not switching in the U.S. or in UK general elections. In line with this argument, Finkel and Schrott (1995) find media effects on the vote in the 1990 German federal elections that were somewhat larger than those found in U.S. and UK contexts. This said, Finkel and Schrott estimate the net effect of the campaign at only 3%–4% of the vote (Finkel & Schrott, 1995, p. 375). In our data, we observe a net effect of 3% (in favor of Eurosceptic parties). The strength of this effect ranges from less than 1% in Germany to 12% in Sweden. Fourth, campaigns are said to have only limited effect when voters mainly decide on the basis of their “fundamental variables” (Gelman & King, 1993; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1965). Fundamental variables are aspects that generally play a role in party choice, such as party identification and socioeconomic characteristics. However, in EP elections fundamental variables have not been identified as clearly as in U.S. presidential or British general elections. In EP elections, no factor points as clearly in the direction of a particular party as, for example, race and party identification do in U.S. elections. In the absence of such guidelines, voters may turn to the media for cues on who to vote for.

Although EP elections are also about domestic issues, a main choice in these elections is about European integration. Public opinion over the EU has been increasingly dividing. The public “permissive consensus” (Inglehart, 1971) that characterized the first few decades of the European project has gradually changed into “constraining dissensus” among the
EU citizenry (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). Widespread opposition to European unification has affected national election outcomes (De Vries, 2009; Tillman, 2004), EU referendum outcomes (Hobolt, 2009; Schuck & De Vreese, 2008), and EP election outcomes (Brug et al., 2007; Spanje & De Vreese, 2011). Eurosceptic parties are highly relevant political actors in EP elections. At the country level, the presence of Eurosceptic parties tends to structure party competition: Party contestation over EU integration is particularly visible in countries with many Eurosceptic parties (Adam & Maier, 2011). EU matters may thus be particularly salient in voters’ eyes in these countries. We take such country differences into account in our analyses. Based on the theoretical considerations above, we formulate five hypotheses.

Hypotheses

We expect three aspects of media coverage of EU-related matters to affect Eurosceptic voting: visibility, tone, and framing. We start from the expectation that media visibility is a necessary condition for political actors to get many votes, also for Eurosceptic parties.

H1: The more a voter is exposed to coverage of Eurosceptic parties during the campaign, the more likely she or he becomes to vote for a Eurosceptic party.

Following from research on the impact of evaluations in the news, we also expect that positive media evaluations of Eurosceptic parties and candidates are conducive to Eurosceptic voting.

H2: The more positive the campaign coverage of Eurosceptic parties a voter is exposed to, the more likely she or he becomes to vote for a Eurosceptic party.

In addition, we take into account media evaluations of the European Union, as it is the core institution around which European elections revolve. Exposure to positive evaluations is predicted to be associated with weaker support for Eurosceptic parties, whereas exposure to negative evaluations is expected to increase their support. Media evaluations thus play a two-sided role in this study.

H3: The more positive the campaign coverage of the EU a voter is exposed to, the less likely she or he becomes to vote for a Eurosceptic party.

In terms of the framing of news, we posit that a country’s membership in the EU can be framed in various ways, emphasizing various aspects of its membership. We build on literature that emphasizes economic rationality as a driving force of support for European integration. Citizens are supposed to make some (albeit rudimentary) calculation of how much they have benefited, or have lost, due to past European unification. They are assumed to base their (lack of) support for further European integration on such calculations (cf. Gabel & Palmer, 1995). Framing may play a role here, as the angle at which an issue is approached has been demonstrated to affect public opinion about the issue (e.g., Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997). Framing effects on public opinion have been found with regard to support of EU enlargement (Schuck & De Vreese, 2006) and of the EU more generally (Vliegenthart et al., 2008). A clear positive frame would follow from stressing any benefits that have accrued to the nation-state during its EU membership. In accordance with
Schuck and De Vreese (2006) and Vliegenthart et al. (2008), we expect that benefit framing increases Eurosceptic parties’ support.

**H4:** The more benefit framing of the EU a voter is exposed to during the campaign, the less likely she or he becomes to vote for a Eurosceptic party.

Our final series of expectations concern the conditional nature of the relationships hypothesized above. A conditio sine qua non for these effects is that voters are given meaningful choices about the key issue dividing Eurosceptic and other parties: European unification. Indeed in contested contexts, voters rely more on cues about the EU when voting in EP elections (Spanje & De Vreese, 2011). In countries where all main parties have very similar stances about European integration, such as in the Netherlands in 1999 or in Latvia in 2009, the effects mentioned above are therefore unlikely to occur. By contrast, in EU member states where parties are clearly divided over issues of European integration, as in Denmark and Sweden in recent years, these effects are supposed to take place. Additional observable implications of our theory are thus that the campaign effects mentioned in H1–H4 are all larger in countries with great dispersion of parties on European issues than in countries where such choices are hardly on offer.

**H5:** The more dispersion of parties on European integration issues in a country, (a) the stronger the positive effect of a voter’s exposure to campaign coverage of Eurosceptic parties on her or his likelihood to vote for a Eurosceptic party; (b) the stronger the positive effect of a voter’s exposure to positive campaign coverage of Eurosceptic parties on her or his likelihood to vote for a Eurosceptic party; (c) the stronger the negative effect of a voter’s exposure to positive campaign coverage of the EU on her or his likelihood to vote for a Eurosceptic party; and (d) the stronger the negative effect of a voter’s exposure to benefit framing of the EU during the campaign on her or his likelihood to vote for a Eurosceptic party.

**Method**

We test our hypotheses based on data collected before, during, and after the 2009 EP election campaign. For this, we constructed two data sets in each of 21 EU member states. First, we conducted a two-wave panel survey. Second, we coded media content of newspapers and television newscasts between the two waves of the survey. We then integrated these two data sets.

**Voter Survey**

In the survey, representative samples of the electorates of each country were interviewed approximately 1 month prior to the EP elections, and once again immediately after these elections. Fieldwork dates were 6–18 May and 8–19 June 2009. The survey was conducted using Computer Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI). More details about the survey can be found in De Vreese et al. (2010). The fieldwork was coordinated by TNS Opinion in Brussels and involved TNS subsidiaries in each country. All subsidiaries comply with ESOMAR guidelines for survey research. A total of 32,411 respondents 18 years or older participated in Wave 1, and 22,806 respondents participated in Wave 2. On average, 1,086 respondents per country completed the questionnaires from both waves, varying
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from 1,001 in Austria to 2,000 in Belgium. In each country, a sample was drawn from TNS databases. These databases rely on multiple recruitment strategies, including telephone, face-to-face, and online recruitment. Each database consists of between 3,600 (Slovakia) and 339,000 (the UK) individuals. Quotas (on age, gender, and education) were enforced in sampling from the database. The average response rate was 31% in Wave 1 and the re-contact rate was, on average, 80% in Wave 2. The samples show appropriate distributions in terms of gender, age, and education compared to census data (see Appendix A for details of the voter survey conducted). The survey data contained for each voter her or his vote intention at the start of the campaign (lagged dependent variable) and her or his reported vote in the EP elections (dependent variable). The dependent variable is coded 1 for a vote for a Eurosceptic party and 0 for a vote for another party. Non-voters are not included in the data. A total of 14,318 respondents actually cast a vote, varying from 496 (Czech Republic) to 1,738 (Belgium). The survey data also included self-reported exposure to particular newscasts and newspapers.

Media Content Analysis

In the media content analysis, the content of these newscasts and newspapers between the two waves of the survey was coded. Thus, we have quantified the content of each of the two main newscasts and of three main newspapers (two main quality newspapers and the main tabloid newspaper) during the campaign in each country (see Appendix B for the media outlets under investigation). Since election day varied across countries, the coding period varied as well, from 14 May to 4 June in some countries up to 17 May to 7 June in others. The content analysis was part of a project funded by the European Union’s FP7 Program titled “PIREDEU” (see http://www.piredeu.eu). All relevant news outlets were collected either digitally (TV and some newspapers) or as hard copies (other newspapers). With regard to story selection, for television, all news items were coded; for newspapers, all news items on the title page and on one randomly selected page as well as all stories pertaining particularly to the EU and/or the EU election on any other page of the newspaper were coded (within the political/news, editorial/opinion/comment, and business/economy sections). In total, 37,000 news stories were coded in the 21 EU member states, of which 14,000 specifically dealt with the EU, its institutions and policies, or the election campaign. Coding was conducted by a total of 49 coders at two locations, the University of Amsterdam (The Netherlands) and the University of Exeter (United Kingdom), using an online survey tool. Under supervision and in close cooperation with the principal investigators, coding was conducted by trained and supervised coders. All coders were native speakers of the respective languages.

All coders received extensive training and participated in a 2-week intensive coder training course. The coder training consisted of five full-day training sessions (8 hours each) spread over a period of 2 weeks with appropriate intervals for coding homework in between individual sessions. All training sessions took place in university classrooms where computers, beamers, and projection screens were available for training and instruction purposes. The training supervisors ensured that, after each session, specific problems or issues that came up during training were written down, discussed, and settled between the two research teams before the next session. Solutions were communicated to coders at the beginning of the subsequent session. The number of coders per country ranged from one (Denmark) to four (Belgium), with an average of 2.3. The unit of analysis and coding was the distinct news story. Coding was conducted electronically using an online survey tool in which coders could enter their codes, storing all data automatically in an online
An inter-coder reliability test based on all coders from both locations on a subset of news items was conducted as part of the coder training. The reliability test material included 30 randomly selected English TV and newspaper stories. We use Krippendorff’s alpha (bound between 0 and 1) as a measure of inter-coder reliability. This is because, unlike other measures, it can deal with any number of coders, missing values, and varying rating scales. The reliability test yielded a Krippendorff’s alpha value of .66 on average, with a standard deviation of .15 (N = 49). In the absence of any formal rule about acceptability levels, we deem any Krippendorff’s alpha value higher than .60 as sufficient considering the purposes of this study.

To measure the visibility of Eurosceptic actors (H1), for each TV news item as well as each newspaper story about the EU, the main actor was coded. Coders were to choose from a list of about 2,500 actors, categorized by country. If the main actor was a party that qualified as a Eurosceptic party or a member of a Eurosceptic party, the item was coded 1. Otherwise, it was coded 0. A party is coded Eurosceptic if its mean placement by voters is lower than 4 on a scale running from “European unification has already gone too far” (0) to “European unification should be pushed further” (10) (see Appendix C for all 175 parties under study in the 21 countries). Out of these 175 parties, 63 are labeled Eurosceptic (36%) based on this criterion. Eurosceptic actors are mentioned in 7% of the 14,000 items about the EU. To measure evaluations of Eurosceptic actors (H2), for each item in which a Eurosceptic actor was not only mentioned but also evaluated, the evaluation in each of the corresponding items was rated as negative (−2), mostly negative (−1), balanced (0), mostly positive (+1), or positive (+2). Eurosceptic actors receive evaluations in 7% of the EU-specific news stories. In a similar way, media evaluations of the European Union were measured (H3). In 9% of the stories about it, the EU is explicitly evaluated. The coders examined all news items about the European Union, its institutions and policies, the European Parliamentary election, and the campaign to check for the presence of a benefit frame. Benefit framing (H4) was present only if (a) the story or somebody in the story argues that one’s country has had any kind of benefits from the EU (EU membership, EU integration, and/or EU enlargement) or that the situation in one’s country has improved or will (potentially) improve because of the EU or (b) the article presents numbers, figures, and/or statistics that indicate that one’s country has benefited from the EU. Inter-coder reliability scores (Krippendorff’s alpha) for the two benefit frame items are .74 and .76, respectively. Stories with benefit framing are coded 1, and stories without framing are coded 0. Benefit framing is found in 5% of news items on the EU.

Linking the Survey and Content Analysis

In a next step, we linked the two resulting data sets. We did so by extending the survey database with the following procedure: Each voter in our survey data was attributed a score for visibility of Eurosceptics (H1), for evaluations of Eurosceptics (H2), for evaluations of the EU (H3), and for benefit framing of the EU (H4) based on the frequency of her or his media outlet use, on the one hand, and the content characteristics of each used outlet, on the other hand (see also De Vreese & Semetko, 2004a). If, for example, a voter saw newscast A each day of the week and read newspaper B three out of six times a week, she or he would receive a “visibility Eurosceptics exposure score” that would equal the average visibility of Eurosceptics in newscast A plus half the average frequency of visibility in newspaper B. Similarly, she or he would be attributed an “evaluation Eurosceptics exposure score” equal to the average evaluation of Eurosceptics in newscast A plus half the average evaluation...
Table 1
Descriptive statistics for the key variables included in the analysis (N = 14,318)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reported vote</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior vote intention</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility of Eurosceptics</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluations of Eurosceptics</td>
<td>−0.03</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>−1.05</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluations of EU</td>
<td>−1.29</td>
<td>6.23</td>
<td>−28</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit framing</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party dispersion</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>5.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individual-level exposure scores.

of Eurosceptics in newspaper B. This way, we constructed a database containing for each voter the degree to which she or he was exposed to the relevant types of campaign content (key independent variables) as well as her or his vote intention before the campaign (lagged dependent variable) and actual vote (dependent variable).

Party Dispersion

Hypotheses 5a–d involve party dispersion on EU matters. Just as our classification of parties as Europhilic or non-Europhilic, the values of this variable are derived from respondents’ positioning of each significant party in their country on a 0–10 EU unification scale. Party dispersion is measured by subtracting the difference between the party with the highest rating and the party with the lowest rating on that scale in each country. In Germany, for example, the Social Democrats were the most EU-friendly party (5.65) and the Republicans the least EU friendly (1.88). The value for Germany is therefore 3.77 (5.65 – 1.88). Across the 21 countries under study, this results in a variable with a minimum of 1.25 (the situation in Latvia), a maximum of 5.04 (Greece), a mean of 3.77 (which happens to reflect the situation in Germany), and a standard deviation of 1.18. We center this variable around its mean so as to facilitate the interpretation of our findings. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the variables included in the analysis.

Controls

We control for several factors that might contaminate our results. The first is the composition of the news media agenda. Europhilic parties distinguish themselves by their opposition to further European integration. Leftist Europhilic parties typically mobilize on socioeconomic issues—most notably, against what they see as the neoliberal structure of the EU. The Europhilic left “regards the European Union as a one-sided capitalist project endangering social protection at the national level” (Hooghe & Marks, 2009, p. 16; see also Hooghe, Marks, & Wilson, 2002, p. 974; Marks, Wilson, & Ray, 2002, p. 587). Right-wing Europhilic parties, by contrast, tend to base their opposition on issues associated with immigration. Euroscepticism on the right expresses “defence of national community” (Hooghe & Marks, 2009, p. 21; see also Hooghe et al., 2002, p. 978; Marks et al., 2002, p. 587). Left-wing Eurosceptic parties should therefore benefit electorally from visibility of neoliberalism in news about the EU and right-wing Eurosceptic parties from visibility of immigration in EU news. The primary topic of all 37,000 items was coded. The primary
topic of a news item is defined as the subject of the story taking the most space (newspaper) or time (TV). The topic has to be mentioned or referred to at least twice in the article or newscast. Coders could choose from a list of 146 topics. If the main topic of the EU news item was coded “free enterprise capitalism” or “privatization,” the item was labeled “left-wing.” If it was coded “immigration,” “multiculturalism,” “national immigration policy,” or “ethnic minorities,” it was earmarked “rightist.” On the basis of outlet means and individual-level exposure measures, we control for the exposure to these issues for each individual (just as for the H1–H4 variables). We also control for the occurrence of “conflict framing” (Vliegenthart et al., 2008). This type of framing occurs when EU news is talked about in language of conflict. The presence of aggregate-level conflict framing news depressed EU support among the citizenry in several EU member states (Vliegenthart et al., 2008).

Furthermore, we control for several other factors: age (Hobolt, 2009), national identity (Hooghe & Marks, 2004; McLaren, 2002; Schuck & De Vreese, 2008), ideological extremism (De Vreese, 2004), political interest (Hobolt, 2009), trust in the national government (Franklin, Eijk, & Marsh, 1995), satisfaction with the national government (Hobolt, 2009; Schuck & De Vreese, 2008), attitudes toward immigrants (De Vreese & Tobiasen, 2007), and national economic expectations (Anderson, 1998; De Vreese & Semetko, 2004b). We also controlled for gender, education (lower, intermediate, higher level), religiosity, and perceived ideological distance to the party voted for (De Vries & Tillman, 2010; Eijk & Franklin, 1996). In addition, we take into account vote intention for a right-wing party and five EU attitude dimensions (Schuck et al., 2011) at the individual level. At the country level, we control for compulsory voting, unemployment level, and a Central/Eastern Europe dummy.

**Data Analysis**

We aim to explain Eurosceptic voting. Much literature on voting has discarded the role of the campaign and the media, and many previous studies have had to rely on cross-sectional survey data, limiting the ability to draw causal inferences. The data we have at our disposal, by contrast, are derived from panel surveys. As Kenski and Romer (2006) point out, panel survey analysis can alleviate many but not all problems of endogeneity. In particular, certain citizens may be more likely to expose themselves to negative views about the EU. However, for several of our media outlets, we would highly question if the overall EU evaluation is a predictor of selecting the outlet. The variation in overall tone of reports about the EU in various news outlets is small. For example, public broadcasting news shows cannot be classified a priori in terms of an “EU stance,” and therefore self-selection effects on this account are highly unlikely. More generally, analysis of our data shows that out of all media outlets under study (see Appendix B for the list), no outlet had more than 10% of articles coded positive about the EU except the German newscast SAT1 (13%). Also, no outlet had more than 10% of articles coded negative about the EU except the Austrian tabloid Kronen Zeitung in Austria (28%), the Belgian newspaper Le Soir (15%), the British tabloid The Sun (14%), the Belgian newscast JT Meteo (12%), and the Danish newscast Nyhederne (11%).

As our dependent variable is dichotomous, we estimate logistic regression models. We do not use ordinary but multilevel logistic regression analysis, in view of the nesting of our observations within 21 countries. We enforce a focus on vote change during the campaign by controlling for vote intention before the campaign. This way, we assess to what extent we can attribute a voter’s vote change since the start of the campaign to media content she or he was exposed to during the campaign. In a first model (Model 1), vote intention
Europhile Media and Eurosceptic Voting

before the campaign is the only independent variable we include. After this, we simulta-
necessarily include all of the individual-level exposure measures so as to assess Hypotheses
1 through 4 (Model 2). We add all controls in Model 3. In the next step, we estimate a
series of four models that include all of these variables as well as a cross-level interaction
between the (country-level) party dispersion variable and each of the four (individual-level)
exposure measures to assess H5a–d.

Results

Our first model only includes vote intention at the start of the campaign, which yields a
strong positive effect as expected (significant at the $p < .001$ level, one-tailed; see Table 2).

Based on 14,318 observations from 21 countries, Model 1 has a model fit of log like-
lihood = $-4,656$. When we also include the five media variables (Model 2), the model fit
improves, to a log likelihood of $-4,645$. The evaluations of the EU (H3) have the predicted
negative effect, as can be seen from the odds ratio below 1 (significant at the $p < .001$ level,
one-tailed). This means that the more a voter is exposed to positive evaluations of the EU
during the campaign, the less likely she or he is to vote for a Eurosceptic party, controlling
for her or his vote intention at the start of the campaign. The same holds for benefit framing
(H4, significant at the $p < .05$ level, one-tailed). When holding their vote intention at the
beginning of the campaign constant, the more voters see or hear media content framed in
terms of benefits from the EU, the less they tend to cast a Eurosceptic vote. None of the
other exposure measures has a significant impact.

When adding the appropriate controls (Model 3), the model fit substantially improves
again, to $-4,466$. Evaluations of the EU retain their effect ($p < .01$, one-tailed), but the EU
benefit framing impact just loses its significance at the $p < .05$ level (one-tailed). Thus,
there is empirical evidence in support of H3, but not in support of H1, H2, or H4. The
only control we show in the table is party dispersion, which turns out to have the expected
positive impact. This suggests that the more parties diverge on EU issues in a country,
the higher voters’ probability to vote for Eurosceptic parties, taking into account their vote
intention at the outset of the campaign. This effect is only just significant at the $p < .05$ level
(one-tailed).

Turning to Models 4–7, only one of the four interaction effects is significant (at the
$p < .05$ level, one-tailed) in the predicted direction: the interaction of choice and benefit
framing (negative; see Model 7 in Table 2). This means that the more voters actually have
a choice between clearly Europhile and ostensibly Eurosceptic parties, the more benefit
framing has its negative effect on the Eurosceptic vote (H5d). Note that this effect is barely
significant at the $p < .05$ level (one-tailed) and does not exert a very impressive model
fit improvement. No significant interaction effect is found for visibility of Eurosceptics
(H5a), for their evaluations (H5b), or for EU evaluations (H5c). Concerning visibility and
evaluations, this means that no effect is found regardless of party dispersion. Concerning
exposure to evaluations of the EU, this means that it has an effect throughout the countries
under investigation (H3). This effect is significant across all models.

We illustrate the size of the media effect related to EU evaluations (H3) across a range
of most frequently empirically observed values by plotting the (individual-level) exposure
to items evaluating the EU against the (individual-level) probability to cast a vote for a
Eurosceptic party. We do so for values from one standard deviation below to one standard
deviation above the average exposure level. We focus on the countries with an above-
average party dispersion on EU issues. This yields a graph similar to a graph including
all countries (there is no significant difference between countries with high or low party
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1 OR (SE)</th>
<th>Model 2 OR (SE)</th>
<th>Model 3 OR (SE)</th>
<th>Model 4 OR (SE)</th>
<th>Model 5 OR (SE)</th>
<th>Model 6 OR (SE)</th>
<th>Model 7 OR (SE)</th>
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<td>24.55*** (1.48)</td>
<td>19.80*** (1.23)</td>
<td>19.76*** (1.23)</td>
<td>19.80*** (1.23)</td>
<td>19.89*** (1.24)</td>
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<td>Visibility of Eurosceptics</td>
<td>0.90 (0.13)</td>
<td>0.97 (0.19)</td>
<td>1.32 (0.51)</td>
<td>1.01 (0.23)</td>
<td>0.86 (0.18)</td>
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<td>Evaluations of Eurosceptics</td>
<td>1.35 (0.40)</td>
<td>1.10 (0.37)</td>
<td>1.28 (0.46)</td>
<td>3.85* (3.10)</td>
<td>0.91 (0.32)</td>
<td>1.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluations of EU</td>
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<td>0.98*** (0.01)</td>
<td>0.98*** (0.01)</td>
<td>0.98* (0.01)</td>
<td>0.98* (0.01)</td>
<td>0.99*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefit framing</td>
<td>0.87* (0.07)</td>
<td>0.87 (0.10)</td>
<td>0.89 (0.11)</td>
<td>0.80* (0.11)</td>
<td>0.93 (0.11)</td>
<td>0.79</td>
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<td>Dispersion</td>
<td>1.57* (0.32)</td>
<td>1.53* (0.31)</td>
<td>1.68*** (0.33)</td>
<td>1.63** (0.31)</td>
<td>1.80** (0.38)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visibility of Eurosceptics</td>
<td>0.89 (0.13)</td>
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<td>*Dispersion</td>
<td>0.88 (0.55)</td>
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<td>Controls included</td>
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<th>BIC</th>
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<td>-4,655.89</td>
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<td>-4,645.22</td>
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<td>-4,465.30</td>
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<td>p &lt; 0.05</td>
<td>-4,463.22</td>
<td>9,270.93</td>
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<td>p &lt; 0.01</td>
<td>-4,462.09</td>
<td>9,272.89</td>
<td>-4,462.09</td>
<td>8,996.17</td>
<td>0.68</td>
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</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001 level (one-tailed).
dispersion on EU issues, reflected by the insignificant interaction effect in Model 6 in Table 2). The lower line in Figure 1 denotes the likelihood of a Eurosceptic vote for respondents who stated a non-Eurosceptic vote intention before the campaign; the upper line indicates this likelihood among those who reported a Eurosceptic vote intention at the time.

From the graph, we can conclude that the likelihood of Eurosceptic voting decreases as the evaluations exposed to become more positive. However, among those who had stated a Eurosceptic vote intention (upper line), the decline is stronger than among those who intended to vote non-Eurosceptic (lower line).

Among those who intended to vote for a non-Eurosceptic party, a minority report having voted for a Eurosceptic party nonetheless. This minority is larger (9%) among those who were exposed to one standard deviation more negative EU evaluations than among those who saw news containing one standard deviation more positive EU evaluations (6%) (see the lower line in Figure 1). This difference borders on statistical significance at the \( p = .05 \) level (see the upper and lower bounds around the lower line).

The difference is more pronounced among those who stated a pre-campaign Eurosceptic vote intention. Not surprisingly, a majority of this group actually voted for a Eurosceptic party. Exposure to one standard deviation more positive EU evaluations decreases their probability of casting a Eurosceptic vote by 4 percentage points. When exposed to two standard deviations more pro-EU media content, the likelihood of a vote for a Eurosceptic party drops by 8 points, from 69% (one standard deviation more negative news than the average) to 61% (one standard deviation more positive). This reduction is just statistically significant at the \( p = .05 \) level.

Turning to benefit framing, this effect is restricted to countries where voters actually have above-average choices on EU issues available (H5d). Taking these countries
in isolation again, we again see both lines decrease. This means that exposure to benefit framing of the EU reduces the likelihood of Eurosceptic voting (see Figure 2).

Just as in Figure 1, in Figure 2 the decrease in probability of voting for a Eurosceptic party is larger among those who stated a prior Eurosceptic vote intention than among those who did not. When calculated in terms of two standard deviations more benefit framing, the difference is 5 points in the former group (from 67% to 62%) and 2 points in the latter (from 8% to 6%). Although the latter difference just fails to reach conventional levels of statistical significance, the effects are quite substantial. These figures indicate that the outcome of the 2009 EP elections was influenced by how the media covered EU-related news during the campaign.

Robustness Checks

In addition to alternative specifications of some of our variables reported in footnotes, we estimate our models in various additional ways to test the robustness of our findings. First, we reestimate Models 3–7 without any controls included. This is because one may consider vote intention before the campaign “reported vote at T1” and argue that our models are change models that do not have to include static control variables. We find that the results are similar, with the evaluations of the EU and benefit framing having the expected effects. The effects are similar to those derived from models that take controls into account in significance as well as in strength. A notable difference, however, is that in no fewer than four models, benefit framing has an effect for all countries instead of just for high-dispersion ones (see Appendix D for the results).
Second, we perform jackknife analyses. We estimate the most relevant model, Model 7, 21 times, each time leaving out one of the countries under study. The results hold each time we rerun our analysis, indicating that our results are not driven by one particular country.\(^\text{15}\)

Third, an interesting possibility is that the effect of EU evaluations presented in this article is driven by mere exposure to media outlets in general (as opposed to the particular media content trait we attribute it to). When we replace the media variables with a mere exposure newspaper variable and a mere exposure TV variable, however, they do not yield a significant effect. When we include both the mere exposure variables and the four media variables that are key to this study, the effect of EU evaluations is significant again. The same holds when we include variables similar to mere exposure in the model, such as political interest, political interest in the EU, or campaign interest. Thus, the impact of EU evaluations is not entirely caused by mere media exposure.

Fourth, it is possible that our results are spurious. This is because of the possibility that in countries where strong Eurosceptic parties operate, the news is negative about the EU, on the one hand, and these parties are successful at mobilizing voters, on the other (and vice versa in countries where Eurosceptic parties are weak). This may have driven our results. To check this, we have rerun our analyses while excluding countries where Eurosceptic parties are particularly strong or particularly weak. The effects still hold when we do so without the three countries with the weakest Eurosceptic parties in Wave 1 (Spain, Germany, and Wallonia), although the benefit framing interaction just falls short of statistical significance at the \(p < .05\) level (one-tailed). When we perform analyses without the three countries where these parties were strongest (Sweden, Austria, and Flanders), we find that the effects of benefit framing are substantially weaker. The effect of the evaluations of the EU, by contrast, retains its strength and statistical significance. Thus, we find no clear reason to think that our results are driven by the presence of very weak Eurosceptic parties. Admittedly, however, our results concerning benefit framing may be affected by the existence of parties that are very strong.\(^\text{16}\)

Fifth, it is theoretically possible that the effects found partly reflect “enlightenment” of voters in the course of the campaign (cf. Gelman & King, 1993). In other words, some EU citizens may be likely to watch positive EU campaign news, and their vote intention unrelatedly becomes more in accordance with their pro-EU attitudes. Other voters might use Eurosceptic news media, with their vote intention independently becoming more in line with their Eurosceptic latent predispositions. However, this is unlikely to contaminate our results, as we hold several theoretically related parameters constant. To the extent that we adequately control for the variables determining media use and the adequate fundamental variables important for Eurosceptic voting, our findings should reflect media effects and not such enlightenment. A related potential problem is self-selective exposure. It is possible that Eurosceptics are exposed to more Eurosceptic news than others, producing the results we find. We can check if this is a problem in our analysis by assessing the degree to which prior vote intentions are related to media use. When we regress media use on prior vote intention, controlling for age, gender, education, and income, we find effects in the predicted direction for evaluations of the EU. By contrast, we find no significant effect of vote intention on exposure to benefit framing of the EU in the news (results available upon request). This suggests that concerning benefit framing, selection bias is not a major issue. However, selection bias may be problematic with regard to evaluations of the EU in the media.

We conclude that evaluations of the EU have a negative effect on Eurosceptic voting (H3). We find evidence in support of this hypothesis in all relevant models, no matter how we specify them. The extent to which this is driven by selective exposure is something for future (experimental) studies to focus on. Such studies should also concentrate on whether
benefit framing has an effect in general (H4) or in countries with high party dispersion (H5d). Our results depend on model specification.

Discussion

In this article, we have tested media effects on vote choice. While most extant research focuses on the impact of political advertising, this is of much less relevance when understanding media effects on vote choice in context with strict advertising regulations and strong public broadcasters. Theoretically, we note that when trying to understand media effects on vote choice, it is insufficient for us to model exposure without taking the content into account. This argument has been forcefully advanced by, for example, Slater (2004; see also Druckman, 2005) and was recently dovetailed in a discussion of how media exposure measures in surveys can be improved (see, e.g., Dilliplane et al., 2013).

To test our hypotheses, we have taken the 2009 EP election campaign as our case. The data we have used are from a two-wave panel voter survey conducted in 21 EU member states, asking both vote intentions before the campaign and reported actual vote for 175 parties. We have linked these data to content data on media coverage of the campaign between the two waves in all countries. This way, we improve upon existing analyses in that we adequately integrate media content analysis data and voter panel survey data (as argued by De Vreese & Semetko, 2004a), jointly assess various types of media effects, and maximize the variation in message flows by studying 21 countries at once. Based on our findings, we draw three conclusions. First, media evaluations of the EU affect the vote. On average, the more negative the evaluations of the EU a voter is exposed to, the more likely she or he is to cast a vote for a Eurosceptic party (H3). Second, in countries with high dispersion of parties on EU issues, EU benefit framing (H5d) has an impact on the vote as well. The more a voter is exposed to benefit framing of the EU, the less likely she or he is to vote for a Eurosceptic party. Third, no compelling empirical support was found for any of the other media effects.

How should we interpret the robustness of our findings? First of all, we would like to stress that the variation that we explain concerns only 11.7% of all respondents. That is, 4.2% switched from a Eurosceptic party to another party, and 7.5% switched the other way around. Given this limited change, the fact that we find media effects at all is suggestive. The effect of evaluations of the EU is significant across all models tested. It turns out to be robust to alternative model specifications, including different specifications of the dependent variable and different model estimations. This finding is in line with a study by Druckman and Parkin (2005) demonstrating that media evaluations in a U.S. Senate campaign, in their wording the “editorial slant of newspapers,” influence voters’ decisions. In our study, evaluations seem more powerful as an explanation than frames. This may be related to the fact that the number of observations of benefit framing is small as compared to the number of observations of EU evaluations, which reduces the certainty with which we can draw conclusions on this point. The effects of benefit framing on the vote in countries with high party dispersion do not seem very robust. More research should be done to see whether this finding holds.

What do our findings tell us about the media and their influence on Eurosceptic voting? The way the 2009 EP election campaign was covered by the media appears to have mattered for the election outcome. In this case, not visibility in the news seems to have mattered but actual evaluations and framing. It may be no coincidence that the four countries where the Eurosceptic parties gained the most ground in the course of the campaign according to our data—Sweden, Denmark, Britain, and the Netherlands—are among the
eight (out of 27) member states where the EU was most negatively in the news during the campaign (Schuck et al., 2011). The evidence for the existence of these effects does not automatically mean that the media can be held responsible for the election outcome. It would be difficult for them to avoid negative evaluations and framing, given the extent to which relatively powerful and relatively radical Eurosceptic parties in these countries dominate public discourse that the media are supposed to cover. This said, the media can be assumed to have considerable leeway, especially regarding the evaluative tone toward particular actors and with regard to how they frame news about the EU.

Based on our findings, at least three recommendations can be made to students of media effects on vote choice. First, not only media content features should be taken into account that touch upon the evaluative and persuasive nature of news such as visibility and evaluations, but also the more subtle processes such as the effects of frames (Chong & Druckman, 2007). In the 2009 EP election, benefit framing seems to have mattered; in other elections it could be the framing of particular socioeconomic or sociocultural issues. Second, it may be important to study how key actors and institutions in the election are covered by the media—in our study the EU, in other elections perhaps government actors or economic institutions. Third, the political context might matter considerably for the size of the effects. A context trait that turned out to be relevant in our study, concerning where parties stand on a core issue at stake in the election under study, is likely to also matter for media effects on voting in other elections.

On a final note, our findings seem to contradict some findings of campaigns not affecting election outcomes unless in rare, particular circumstances. This is possibly due to media effects being augmented in campaigns in the run up to “second-order” national elections in multiparty settings as compared to in (the most often studied) first-order national election campaigns in systems with two or three relevant contenders. As we should be cautious to generalize our findings to other settings, future research should focus on the question of to what extent, and under which circumstances, evaluation and framing effects also occur in other (types of) election campaigns. That said, this study is among very few that have demonstrated media effects on individual-level party choice. Thus far, it has proven challenging to empirically demonstrate such effects. The effects found are presumably influenced by moderators that are commonly investigated (such as political sophistication, ideological strength, campaign interest, vote certainty, and late decisions on who to vote for) and other moderators (e.g., ideological predisposition or political cynicism). Our observation of direct media effects in this study may be due to going beyond previous studies in several ways, including directly linking exposure to media content and voting behavior in a panel design at the individual level in 21 countries at once. The extent to which European elections are a special case with regard to media effects on vote choice is something for future studies to investigate.

Notes

1. A fourth type of electoral effects are those of media coverage of issues associated with a particular political actor (e.g., Walgrave & De Swert, 2004). This is why we control for individual-level exposure to “left” and “right” Eurosceptic issues (see controls section). When these factors are taken into account in our analyses, this does not substantially change our findings (see results section).

2. The opposite of benefit framing, framing the EU in terms of disadvantages for the member state, has not been found to influence EU attitudes (Vliegenthart et al., 2008). Inclusion of this type of framing in our models results in neither any significant findings nor any substantial changes to the conclusions of this article.

3. Fieldwork started on 6 May in all countries. In the UK and Ireland data collection finished on 11 May; in France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Greece, the Czech Republic, Austria, Portugal,
the Netherlands, Finland, and Slovakia on 12 May; in Hungary, Poland, and Latvia on 13 May; in Denmark and Belgium on 14 May; in Lithuania on 15 May; and in Bulgaria on 18 May.

4. In Slovakia and Bulgaria data collection finished on 11 June; in Italy, Germany, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, and the Netherlands on 12 June; in Ireland and the UK on 13 June; in France, Poland, and Austria on 14 June; in Spain, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Finland, and Latvia on 15 June; and Belgium on 19 June.

5. Concerning news media exposure, we find differences between voters and non-voters in our survey. Not surprisingly, non-voters reported lower exposure to news media outlets in general. In particular, non-voters are less exposed to Eurosceptics in the news ($M = 0.08, SD = 0.20$) than voters are ($M = 0.19, SD = 0.28$). They are also confronted with less negative evaluations of Eurosceptics ($M = -0.01, SD = 0.07$, versus $M = -0.03, SD = 0.11$), with less negative evaluations of the EU ($M = -0.31, SD = 4.21$, versus $M = -1.29, SD = 6.23$), and with less benefit framing ($M = 0.18, SD = 0.36$, versus $M = 0.43, SD = 0.51$). However, these differences are not substantial.

6. The question arises whether media attention to the EP elections varied across countries in comparison to national politics. This is because where the campaign was more about European politics, media effects on Eurosceptic voting should be larger than where the campaign was more about national politics. Relatively much attention to national politics is expected in countries where EP and national elections were simultaneously held (e.g., in Belgium). However, the proportion of campaign news about the EP elections did not vary much across countries. In our data set, 19% of news items have an EU-related primary topic. More importantly, this proportion is much higher in the items about the election campaign: At least 75% are about the EU in all countries except Lithuania (40%) and Belgium (53%). As expected, the effect of EU evaluations tends to be substantially smaller in these two countries than in the 21 countries overall ($p < .05$, one-tailed, in some model specifications but not in others). However, the lack of variation across countries prevents us from exploring this point further.

7. If we are more conservative and put the threshold at 3, only 32 parties qualify as Eurosceptic. The relationships found still hold when applying this criterion (results available upon request).

8. We cross-validate our classification of Eurosceptic parties using the 2006 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (http://www.unc.edu/~hooghe/data_pp.php) and the European Election Study (EES) 2009 voter survey (http://www.piredeu.eu/). The cut-off points used are 3 on a scale of position toward European integration, ranging from strongly opposed (1) to strongly in favor (7) (CHES), and 4 on a scale varying from European unification has already gone too far (0) to European unification should be pushed further (10) (EES). The share of misclassifications is 12% (CHES) and 9% (EES), and chance-adjusted agreement (Cohen’s kappa) is .69 (CHES, $N = 126$) and .77 (EES, $N = 143$). The differences in classification of parties as Eurosceptic or not do not substantially alter our conclusions, as our findings are robust to various classifications.

9. Inter-coder reliability for evaluative tone of media coverage of actors mentioned in the news items is sufficiently high (Krippendorff’s alpha = .62). This is an imprecise estimate, as small numbers of observations led us to fall back on calculating reliability on coded media content data that were collapsed into broader categories than what we used in our analysis. On the one hand, an alpha of .62 may be an overestimation of the reliability, as it is based on evaluations divided into one negative and one positive category instead of the two negative and two positive categories employed in the models. Coding of evaluative tone regarding two negative (or positive) categories is expected to be less reliable than regarding one negative (or positive) category. On the other hand, reliability may actually be higher than .62, as the estimate is based on all actors—mentioned as the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, or sixth actor of an item—whereas we took into account actors mentioned as first-mentioned main actors of an item in our analysis. Coding of evaluation of first-mentioned main actors is predicted to be more reliable than evaluations of sixth-mentioned actors in a news item.

10. The use of two alternative measures of party dispersion resulted in similar results (findings available upon request).

11. When we test the effects of this particular framing type using the same items as Vliegenthart et al. (2008), we do not find any effect on Eurosceptic voting (results available upon request).

12. We count 22 political systems in these 21 countries, as Belgium consists of two separate systems, Flanders and Wallonia, where Flemish citizens vote for Flemish parties and Walloon citizens for Walloon parties.
13. Multicollinearity is not a problem here, as the association of the exposure variables, expressed in correlation coefficients, ranges from $r = -0.27$ for evaluations of the EU and evaluations of Eurosceptics to $r = 0.29$ for EU benefit framing and visibility of Eurosceptics. These correlation coefficients clearly are low enough to include all variables without any problems associated with multicollinearity. As an illustration, the mean variance inflation factor is 1.12.

14. These countries are Britain, France, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Greece, Poland, Ireland, Portugal, the Netherlands, Finland, and Belgium.

15. This said, a country-by-country analysis reveals that only the EU evaluation effects are of similar size in most countries: The odds ratio is between 0.83 and 0.99 in 15 out of 22 contexts ($M = 1.00$, $SD = 0.25$, $N = 22$). The other effects vary widely from country to country.

16. We thank an anonymous reviewer for drawing our attention to this possibility.

References


Appendix A: Specifics of the voter survey conducted

The questionnaire was developed in English and translated into the different national languages. It was then translated back into English as an additional check of the accuracy of the translations. The translation was supervised by the research team and was carried out by TNS (which also executes and translates the Eurobarometer surveys). Irregularities and problems arising from this process were resolved by deliberation.

The age limit was 18 in all countries except Austria, where it was 16. This is because the voting age in Austria is 16, whereas it is 18 in all other countries.

In Belgium, 1,000 Flemish respondents and 1,000 Walloon respondents completed both waves of the survey.

We use the second (post-election) wave of the two-wave panel survey. The response rates vary from 19% (Denmark) to 63% (Lithuania) in Wave 1 and the re-contact rate between 67% (Latvia) and 89% (Hungary), with an average of 80%. An analysis of non-participation (i.e., respondents who were invited but did not participate or complete the interview) showed that non-respondents were generally younger and included more men compared to women in the UK, Sweden, and Denmark and more women in Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Austria. Concerning education, the pool of non-respondents had significantly lower education in six countries (Spain, Denmark, Czech Republic, Poland, the Netherlands, and Finland).

An overview of the composition of our sample vis-à-vis census data per country showed no differences between the adult population and the sample in terms of gender in Austria, Ireland, Slovakia, and Spain. The mean difference between the population and the sample was 2.76% (SD = 3.43%). Small deviations occurred (0%–8%), in some countries women overrepresented and in others men. One substantial overrepresentation (of women) by 15% occurred in Latvia. Young citizens were generally slightly overrepresented in the samples. The share of young citizens (under 35) deviated 9.62% on average (SD = 8.95%), in absolute terms, from the census data, with a minimum of 1% absolute deviation (overrepresentation) in Italy and Sweden and a maximum of 34% (overrepresentation) in Greece. The largest underrepresentation of younger citizens was found in Latvia (14%). The share of older citizens (55+) (M = 16.57%, SD = 9.91%) deviated from 1% in France and the UK (overrepresentations) to 33% (underrepresentation in Greece). Most countries had slight underrepresentation of older citizens. The German sample had the largest overrepresentation (2%). In terms of education (collapsed in three categories, following the European Social Survey), the sample reflected the population in Ireland and Spain, while deviations (M = 8.12%, SD = 8.37%) were found in other countries, with higher educated citizens being overrepresented in the samples. Underrepresentations were found in Greece (1%), France (6%), Slovakia (5%), and Sweden (11%).

Only political parties that received at least 1% of the vote, nationwide, in the latest European or the latest national elections before the 2009 EP elections are taken into account in this study. The mean EU position of these parties varied from 1.19 (British National Party) to 7.46 (Socialist Party, Portugal), with a mean of 4.70 and a standard deviation of 1.49.

As we are mostly interested in the underlying relationships between variables, we consider the deviations in the sample vis-à-vis the adult population less problematic, and we exert appropriate caution when making inferences about absolute values.
Appendix B: List of media outlets used

Television Newscasts

ATV Aktuell 19.20 (Austria)
ORF1 ZiB 19.30 (Austria)
VRT Het Journaal 19.00 (Belgium)
La Une JT Meteo 19.30 (Belgium)
RTL-TV Le Journal 19.00 (Belgium)
VTM-Nieuws 19.00 (Belgium)
bTV Новините 19:00 (Bulgaria)
BNT kanal 1 ПО СВЕТА И У НАС 20:00 (Bulgaria)
Ceska televize Udalosti 19.00 (Czech Republic)
TV Nova Televizni noviny 19.30 (Czech Republic)
TV2 Nyhederne 19.00 (Denmark)
DR1 TV-avisen 21.00 (Denmark)
MTV3 Kymmenen uutiset 22:00 (Finland)
YLE TV1 Tv-uutiset ja saa 20.30 (Finland)
F2 Le Journal 20.00 (France)
TF1 Le Journal 20.00 (France)
SAT1 18.30 (Germany)
ZDF Heute 19.00 (Germany)
RTL aktuell 18.45 (Germany)
ARD Tagesschau 20.00 (Germany)
ΕΙΔΗΣΕΙΣ NET 21.00 (Greece)
Mega ΚΕΝΤΡΙΚΟ ΣΕΛΕΤΙΟ 20.00 (Greece)
RTL Klub Esti Hirado 18:30 (Hungary)
M2 Hirado 20:30 (Hungary)
Rai Uno TG1 20.00 (Italy)
Canale 5 TG5 20.00 (Italy)
RTEI1 Nine News 21.00 (Ireland)
TV3 News 17:30 (Ireland)
LTV Panorāmas 20:30 (Latvia)
LNT T ZiHAS 20:00 (Latvia)
LTV Panorama 20.30 (Lithuania)
TV3 žiniòs 18.45 (Lithuania)
NOS Journaal 20.00 (Netherlands)
RTL Nieuws 19.30 (Netherlands)
TVN FAKTY 19:00 (Poland)
TVP1 Wiadomości 19:30 (Poland)
TV1 Jornal Nacional 20:00 (Portugal)
RTP1 Telejornal 20:00 (Portugal)
STV1 Spravy 19:30 (Slovakia)
TV Markiza Televizné Noviny 19:00 (Slovakia)
Antena3 Noticias2 21.00 (Spain)
Telecinco 20.30 (Spain)
TVE1 Telediario-2 21.00 (Spain)
TV4 Nyheterna 18.25 (Sweden)

(continued)
(Continued)
TV2 Rapport 19.30 (Sweden)
BBC1 News at 10 (UK)
ITV News at 10 (UK)

Newspapers

Der Standard (Austria)
Die Presse (Austria)
Neue Kronen Zeitung (Austria)
De Morgen (Belgium)
De Standaard (Belgium)
Het Laatste Nieuws (Belgium)
La Derniere Heure (Belgium)
La Libre Belgique (Belgium)
Le Soir (Belgium)
24 Chasa (Bulgaria)
Dnevnik (Bulgaria)
Trud (Bulgaria)
Blesk (Czech Republic)
Mlada Fronta (Czech Republic)
Pravo (Czech Rep.)
Ekstra Bladet (Denmark)
Morgenavisen Jyllandsb. (Denmark)
Politiken (Denmark)
Aamulehti (Finland)
Helsingin Sanomat (Finland)
Ilta-sanomat (Finland)
Le Figaro (France)
Le Monde (France)
Libération (France)
Bild (Germany)
FAZ (Germany)
SZ (Germany)
Eleftherotypia (Greece)
Kathimerini (Greece)
Ta Nea (Greece)
Blikk (Hungary)
Magyar Nemzet (Hungary)
Nepszabadsag (Hungary)
Irish Independent (Ireland)
The Irish Times (Ireland)
The (Daily) Star (Ireland)
Il Corriere della Sera (Italy)
Il Giornale (Italy)
La Repubblica (Italy)
Diena (Latvia)
Latvijas Avize (Latvia)

(continued)
Appendix C: Political parties under study (with vote shares in sample and in population, respectively)

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<th>Country</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Sample Share</th>
<th>Population Share</th>
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<td>Conservative</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FN**</td>
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<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verts</td>
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<td>16%</td>
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<td>LO**</td>
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<td>1%</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>5%</td>
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<td>95. Libertas IE**</td>
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<th>97. ÖVP %</th>
<th>98. FPÖ** %</th>
<th>99. Grüne %</th>
<th>100. Liste Dr. Martin* %</th>
<th>101. BZÖ** %</th>
<th>135. SDP 14%</th>
<th>136. VAS* 7%</th>
<th>137. VIHR 17%</th>
<th>138. KD 3% (see PS)</th>
<th>139. RKP/SFP %</th>
<th>140. PS** 16%</th>
<th>141. IP ** 0%</th>
<th>142. SMER–SD 21%</th>
<th>143. SDKÚ 27%</th>
<th>144. SMK (MKP) 3%</th>
<th>145. SNS** 4%</th>
<th>146. LS–HZDS* 2%</th>
<th>147. KDH 8%</th>
<th>148. KSS** 1%</th>
<th>149. SF 4%</th>
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<td>24%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<td>5%</td>
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<td>9%</td>
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<td>27%</td>
<td>103. PPD/PSD 20%</td>
<td>104. CDU* 8%</td>
<td>105. CDS-PP 11%</td>
<td>106. BE* 24%</td>
<td>107. MPT* 1%</td>
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<td>143. SDKÚ 27%</td>
<td>144. SMK (MKP) 3%</td>
<td>145. SNS** 4%</td>
<td>146. LS–HZDS* 2%</td>
<td>147. KDH 8%</td>
<td>148. KSS** 1%</td>
<td>149. SF 4%</td>
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<td>32%</td>
<td>143. SDKÚ 27%</td>
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<td>145. SNS** 4%</td>
<td>146. LS–HZDS* 2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgium (Wallonia)</td>
<td>108. MR 26%</td>
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<td>109. PS 16%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>110. CDH 9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>111. Écolo 26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>112. FN** 2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>150. Tautas Partija* 2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>151. ZZS* 4%</td>
<td>152. JL 7%</td>
<td>153. SC 19%</td>
<td>154. LPP/LC 6%</td>
<td>155. LNNK* 10%</td>
<td>156. PCTVL* 7%</td>
<td>157. PS 22%</td>
<td>158. Ricibas Partija** 1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgium (Flanders)</td>
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<td>24%</td>
<td>114. VLD 17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>115. VB** 12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>116. sp.a 14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>117. Groen! 10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>158. Ricibas Partija** 1%</td>
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<td>155. LNNK* 10%</td>
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<td>156. PCTVL* 7%</td>
<td>157. PS 22%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>159. Libertas.lv* 4%</td>
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<td>162. Partija Tvarda* 7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>163. LSDP 18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>164. DP 6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>165. LS 12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>166. LiCS 12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>161. TPP* 1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>162. Partija Tvarda* 7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>163. LSDP 18%</td>
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<td>9%</td>
<td>165. LS 12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>24%</td>
<td>168. BSP 12%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>169. DPS 1%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>170. ATAKA** 8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>171. NDSV 12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>172. SDS 6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>167. GERB 32%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>168. BSP 12%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>169. DPS 1%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>170. ATAKA** 8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>171. NDSV 12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * = Eurosceptic (unweighted average perception below 4 on 0–10 EU scale); only ** = very Eurosceptic (unweighted average perception below 3 on 0–10 EU scale).
### Appendix D: Models of Table 2 without control variables (odds ratios)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
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<th>Model 7</th>
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<td>0.90</td>
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<td>0.87*</td>
<td>0.85*</td>
<td>0.86*</td>
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<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.28</td>
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<td>(0.19)</td>
<td>(0.21)</td>
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(continued)
### Appendix D (Continued)

**Benefit framing**

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<td>(0.25)</td>
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* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ level (one-tailed).