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### Campaigning Against Europe? The Role of Euroskeptic Fringe and Mainstream Parties in the 2009 European Parliament Election

Silke Adam<sup>a</sup>, Michaela Maier<sup>b</sup>, Claes H. de Vreese<sup>c</sup>, Andreas R.  
T. Schuck<sup>c</sup>, Vaclav Stetka<sup>d</sup>, Carlos Jalali<sup>e</sup>, Gilg U. H. Seeber<sup>f</sup>,  
Ralph Negrine<sup>g</sup>, Lilia Raycheva<sup>h</sup>, Rosa Berganza<sup>i</sup>, Jolán Róka<sup>j</sup>,  
Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska<sup>k</sup>, Lars Nord<sup>l</sup>, Matthias Balzer<sup>b</sup> &  
Manuela Baumli<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> University of Bern, Institute of Communication and Media Studies,  
Bern, Switzerland

<sup>b</sup> University of Koblenz-Landau, Landau, Germany

<sup>c</sup> University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

<sup>d</sup> University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom

<sup>e</sup> University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal

<sup>f</sup> University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria

<sup>g</sup> University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom

<sup>h</sup> St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria

<sup>i</sup> University Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid, Spain

<sup>j</sup> Budapest College of Communication and Business, Budapest,  
Hungary

<sup>k</sup> University of Wrocław, Wrocław, Poland

<sup>l</sup> Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall, Sweden

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## **Campaigning Against Europe? The Role of Euroskeptical Fringe and Mainstream Parties in the 2009 European Parliament Election**

SILKE ADAM

*University of Bern, Institute of Communication and Media Studies,  
Bern, Switzerland*

MICHAELA MAIER

*University of Koblenz-Landau, Landau, Germany*

CLAES H. DE VREESE and ANDREAS R. T. SCHUCK

*University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

VACLAV STETKA

*University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom*

CARLOS JALALI

*University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal*

GILG U. H. SEEGER

*University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria*

RALPH NEGRINE

*University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom*

LILIA RAYCHEVA

*St. Kliment Obridski University of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria*

ROSA BERGANZA

*University Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid, Spain*

JOLÁN RÓKA

*Budapest College of Communication and Business, Budapest, Hungary*

BOGUSLAWA DOBEK-OSTROWSKA

*University of Wrocław, Wrocław, Poland*

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Address correspondence to Silke Adam, University of Bern, Institute of Communication and Media Studies, Lerchenweg 36, CH-3000 Bern 9, Switzerland. E-mail: silke.adam@ikmb.unibe.ch

LARS NORD

*Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall, Sweden*

MATTHIAS BALZER

*University of Koblenz-Landau, Landau, Germany*

MANUELA BAUMLI

*University of Bern, Institute of Communication and Media Studies,  
Bern, Switzerland*

*In this article, we analyze political parties' campaign communication during the 2009 European Parliamentary election in 11 countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the UK). We study which types of issues Euroskeptic fringe and Euroskeptic mainstream parties put on their campaign agendas and the kind and extent of EU opposition they voice. Further, we seek to understand whether Euroskeptic and non-Euroskeptic parties co-orient themselves toward each other within their national party systems with regard to their campaigns. To understand the role of Euroskeptic parties in the 2009 European Parliamentary elections, we draw on a systematic content analysis of parties' posters and televised campaign spots. Our results show that it is Euroskeptic parties at the edges of the political spectrum who discuss polity questions of EU integration and who most openly criticize the union. Principled opposition against the project of EU integration, however, can only be observed in the UK. Finally, we find indicators for co-orientation effects regarding the tone of EU mobilization: In national political environments where Euroskeptic parties strongly criticize the EU, pro-European parties at the same time publicly advance pro-EU positions.*

**KEYWORDS** *campaign communication, comparative content analysis, co-orientation of Euroskeptic and pro-European parties, European Parliament elections, Euroskeptic parties*

For a long time, EU integration has been regarded as a political process which is depoliticized and uncontested. This depoliticized form of integration has been characterized, on the one hand, by citizens' permissive consensus (Lindberg and Scheingold 1970). On the other hand, it was national parties, social movements, as well as the mass media—the intermediary organizations of our societies—that did not publicly communicate European matters and did not place them on the public agendas. However, more and

more researchers challenge the idea of a depoliticized integration process in Europe. On the side of citizens, support for EU integration has been declining since the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty (Eichenberg and Dalton 2007). Eijk and Franklin (2004) were able to show that citizens' pro- and anti-EU orientations constitute relatively stable attitudes and that these attitudes not only differ but are more extreme than citizens' attitudes on the left-right dimension. Such attitudes, they claim, "constitute something of a 'sleeping giant' that has the potential, if awakened, to impel voters to political behavior that ... undercuts the bases for contemporary party mobilization in many, if not most, European polities" (Eijk and Franklin 2004, p. 32).

Scientific dispute today refers to the degree of awakening of this sleeping giant. It is the intermediary organizations, specifically the parties, that foster or hinder such a process; others would call it the politicization of EU integration. Only if these organizations publicly advance EU matters and contest different positions will it be likely that voters will engage in political behavior (De Wilde 2007). Eijk and Franklin (2004) claim that parties still offer little choice with respect to EU integration but still follow a silent pro-EU consensus. But even these authors see it as only a matter of time "before policy entrepreneurs ... seize the opportunity ... to differentiate themselves from other parties in EU terms" (Eijk and Franklin, 2004 p. 47). Other researchers observe that Euroskeptic parties have already started to break the silent pro-European consensus of the mainstream (e.g., Kriesi et al., 2006) as EU mobilization offers them the opportunity to differentiate themselves from others and thereby win votes.

In our eyes, it is time to go beyond "lots of speculations" (Kriesi 2008, p. 224) and actually empirically tackle the question how Euroskeptic parties campaign against Europe and how this might result in processes of co-orientation between Euroskeptics and non-Euroskeptics. Thereby we focus on the campaign communication during the 2009 European Parliamentary elections. The data for this study were collected within the framework of the project "Between Integration and Demarcation. Strategies and Effects of Party Campaigns in the Context of the 2009 European Parliament Election."<sup>1</sup> For this paper, we analyze the data from a systematic content analysis of parties' posters and televised spots in the 2009 European Parliamentary campaign in 11 countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the UK). These countries were chosen because all of them have Euroskeptic parties and most even have different types of Euroskeptic parties.

On the basis of this data, we study how Euroskeptic parties publicly articulate and contest EU integration in their European Parliamentary campaigns. We are especially interested in finding out whether there are systematic differences between different types of Euroskeptic parties, that is, Euroskeptic fringe and Euroskeptic mainstream parties. More specifically, we address the research questions which type of EU issues Euroskeptic fringe

and mainstream parties address in their campaigns and whether these parties differ with regard to the degree and form of EU opposition. Second, we analyze whether there is a co-orientation between Euroskeptic parties and pro-European parties with regard to the type of EU issues addressed in the campaigns and the willingness to voice their position in reference to European integration.

To answer these questions, we proceed in five steps. First, we need to define what Euroskepticism means in reference to parties and which parties have as yet been classified as Euroskeptic. Second, we derive hypotheses about the role of such Euroskeptic parties for EU politicization from the literature. Third, we introduce our data, operationalizations, and methods of how we identify and categorize Euroskeptic and pro-European parties and how we analyze and compare their campaigns. In a fourth step, we present our empirical results. We end with a summary of what we have learned about the role of Euroskeptic parties for the politicization of European integration and where future research should head.

## THE IDENTIFICATION OF EUROSKEPTIC PARTIES AND THEIR LOCATION ON THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM

### Euroskeptic Parties Between Ideology and Strategy

The conflict potential on the side of the citizens has triggered quite some research on parties' positions and their mobilization strategies toward Europe. Researchers have been especially interested in those challenging the pro-European mainstream, namely the Euroskeptic parties. Euroskepticism is a term widely used, but used with different connotations (Krouwel and Abts 2007). To clarify the term Euroskepticism, we follow the general distinction made by Szczerbiak and Taggard (2003). On the one hand, Euroskepticism describes parties' general ideological position. On the other hand, it is also used to describe a concrete contestatory political discourse. These two concepts differ fundamentally, as a party's broad underlying ideological position may be different from what this party chooses to publicly advance in a specific campaign. A party might be Euroskeptic in its fundamental position but, for strategic reasons, might decide not to voice this skepticism in the context of an election campaign. In contrast, there may be mainstream parties with pro-EU positions that criticize EU integration for specific matters in the context of a specific campaign. Following this reasoning, we distinguish between a party's general ideological position and its strategic campaign communication. The question of whether parties with an underlying Euroskeptic ideology also conduct a contestatory political discourse is one guiding research question of this paper. The other central question is whether, in a specific political environment where Euroskeptic parties publicly voice their

criticism, pro-European mainstream parties also put specific types of EU issues on the agenda and voice their positions on EU integration.

### Euroskeptic Parties and Their Location on the Left-Right Spectrum

So far most research shows that Euroskeptic parties are primarily found at the fringes of the ideological left-right spectrum (De Vries and Edwards 2009; Eijk and Franklin 2004; Hix and Lord 1997; Hooghe and Marks 2002; Kriesi et al. 2006; Taggart 1998). The political spectrum can be described as an inverted u-curve. Traditional mainstream parties with ideologically non-extremist positions are located in the middle of this inverted u-curve. Most of them agree on a moderate pro-integration position. At the edges of this inverted u-curve, we find the more extreme parties that show a stronger tendency toward Euroskepticism. Those at the right end of the spectrum oppose EU integration primarily on cultural grounds, whereas they see less of a problem with the economic dimension of EU integration. These parties perceive transnational integration as a threat to the sovereignty of the nation state, their culture, and traditions. Those at the left end of the spectrum oppose EU integration for economic reasons. It is the liberal free-market character of the EU that is perceived as a threat to social welfare achievements (Kriesi et al. 2006). Euroskepticism in this perspective is treated as a fringe phenomenon in the party system. However, Ray (2007) shows that there are some important exceptions where Euroskepticism has been taken up by mainstream parties, especially by the center-right parties. Consequently, in the following we distinguish two groups of Euroskeptic parties: Euroskeptic parties that are located at the fringes of the party spectrum are separated from those Euroskeptic parties with mainstream ideology. In the following we will derive expectations about the roles that these two types of Euroskeptic parties play for the politicization of European integration.

#### THE ROLE OF EUROSKEPTIC PARTIES FOR EU POLITICIZATION: HYPOTHESES

Regarding the contestatory political discourse of parties, that is, the question of which type of EU issues political parties raise in their campaigns, Mair (2007) identifies two mobilization dimensions: the functional and the Europeanization dimension. The functional dimension refers to policy areas where the EU already has competences. On this dimension the dispute concerns the approach and priorities. The Europeanization dimension, in contrast, refers to the shape and reach of the EU, that is, so-called polity issues. The type of issues that should be discussed in European Parliamentary elections are functional policy issues, as here the European

Parliament is on equal footing with national parliaments, at least in those areas where the co-decision procedure is applied (Jones, 2011). In contrast, the shape and reach of EU integration is still primarily decided by national politicians, and therefore these polity issues should rather be discussed in national elections. However, Mair (2007) claims that in reality we find the opposite: If political parties decide to articulate EU issues in their election campaigns, most often these are polity issues that deal with the shape and reach of EU integration. Since such polity issues raise the fundamental questions of EU integration, we expect that Euroskeptic parties, especially those at the fringes of the party spectrum, will best fit Mair's expectation and raise polity issues in their campaigns. As a consequence, hypothesis 1, dealing with the articulation of the *fundamental questions of EU integration*, claims:

H1: Euroskeptic fringe parties put EU polity issues on the campaign agenda more often than Euroskeptic mainstream parties.

Besides these dimensions of mobilization, another crucial variable for the description of the political discourse is the strength of opposition against the European Union that is put forward in the parties' campaigns. Here again, we expect that the two groups of parties—although both are Euroskeptic in their general position—will shape contestatory political discourses very differently. We expect the fringe parties to voice their Euroskeptical perspectives more openly than the Euroskeptic mainstream parties because mainstream parties' voicing of Euroskepticism is restricted by actual and potential government involvement, which makes these parties part of EU decision making on the national as well as European level. The best example is the Czech ODS, a conservative Euroskeptic party, whose leader was the president of the European Council at the time of the European election. In such a position, it is hard to openly voice Euroskepticism. On the basis of these arguments, we would expect that fringe parties will have more incentives (in terms of possible vote gains) and fewer reservations (in terms of possible governing duties) to openly voice their criticism of the European Union in its current form. Therefore, hypothesis 2a, referring to the *degree of EU opposition*, claims:

H2a: Euroskeptic fringe parties articulate stronger criticism toward the European Union in its current form than Euroskeptic mainstream parties.

Another concept closely related to the amount of criticism that Euroskeptic parties voice against the European Union is the form of opposition they choose. Here, researchers have worked on differentiating between soft/unprincipled opposition that refers to a number of policy areas and



hard/principled opposition that involves the rejection of the whole integration project including demands to withdraw from the union (Szczerbiak and Taggart 2003; Taggart 1998). This soft-hard criterion allows us to understand whether Euroskeptics publicly fight the EU per se or whether they just advance different ideas about how EU integration should proceed. As we already argued above, we suppose that it is the parties at the fringes of the political spectrum that most likely will articulate principled opposition against the project of European integration. Hypothesis 2b, referring to the *form of EU opposition*, claims:

H2b: Euroskeptical fringe parties voice principled opposition against EU integration more often than Euroskeptical mainstream parties.

Our research hypotheses so far have dealt with differences between fringe and mainstream Euroskeptical parties. As we mentioned above, we will also seek to tackle the question of whether there exists a co-orientation between Euroskeptical and pro-European parties within each country. The rationale for this expansion of our research question is based on the understanding that parties strategically decide on their campaigns always with reference to the other competitors in their own system. No party has a monopoly on the overall campaign agenda. Steenbergen and Scott (2004) show empirically that EU mobilization of a party also affects the salience of EU issues for other parties in the same country. This result is also supported for the campaign communication in six countries in the context of the 2009 European Parliamentary elections (Adam and Maier 2011). It is this idea of a co-orientation between pro-European and Euroskeptical parties within their respective national party system that we will implement in our study. First, we expect co-orientation regarding the type of EU issues on the agenda. If Euroskeptical (fringe) parties campaign on the fundamental questions regarding the shape and reach of EU integration in a specific country, it is likely that these political issues will also be prominently featured on the campaign agendas of pro-European parties. Hypothesis 3, referring to *co-orientation regarding the type of EU issues discussed*, claims:

H3: Pro-European parties will also put EU political issues on the agenda if Euroskeptical parties do so within a specific country.

In a final step, we ask whether co-orientation between Euroskeptical and pro-European parties also exists regarding a clear position on EU integration. However, here we expect a reversed effect. Clear criticism from Euroskeptical parties forces the silent pro-European mainstream parties to also position themselves regarding EU integration and therefore to openly voice their pro-European standpoints. Hypothesis 4 therefore claims that Euroskeptical

opposition is accompanied by articulated EU support and therefore can be labeled as *politicization* hypothesis:

H4: If Euroskeptical (fringe) parties clearly voice their negative evaluation of the EU in the campaigns, pro-European parties will clearly state their positive views.

## DATA, OPERATIONALIZATIONS, AND METHODS

Before we test our hypotheses, we need to describe how we identify and classify parties as Euroskeptical or not and as being fringe or mainstream and how we study their actual campaign communication.

### Classification of Parties

To classify parties in the 11 countries under study as Euroskeptical or non-Euroskeptical and as fringe or mainstream, we rely on expert judgments (see the author list in this paper). Alternative sources of data (i.e., party manifesto data) are not available for all parties in our analysis and therefore cannot serve as the main basis for our classification. However, if manifesto data are available, we make use of them to validate our experts' judgments. In a first step, we need to distinguish Euroskeptical parties from non-Euroskeptical parties. For this purpose, we use a broad concept of Euroskepticism that includes soft and hard and principled and non-principled forms of opposition as well as opposition against integration per se or against the European Union as such (for these concepts, see Kopecký and Mudde 2002; Szczerbiak and Taggart 2003; Taggart 1998). On the basis of this broad definition, we asked the experts to identify those parties that have an underlying Euroskeptical position.

However, as Euroskepticism today is no longer just a fringe phenomenon (Ray 2007), in a second step we further divide the group of Euroskeptical parties into parties with an extreme ideology and parties that belong to the mainstream. Parties that our country experts classified as conservative/Christian democratic, liberal, social democratic, or green were rated as mainstream, whereas radical right and left parties classify as fringe parties. Table 1 summarizes our classification of Euroskeptical parties in the 11 countries on the basis of these experts' judgments.

Table 1 indicates that we find Euroskeptical parties in all 11 countries. Our categorization supports the notion that Euroskepticism is not a pure fringe phenomenon anymore. In contrast, in 8 of the 11 countries, mainstream parties have been classified at least as partly Euroskeptical. Only in Germany, Hungary, and Spain were solely radical right- and left-wing parties classified as Euroskeptical. In order to validate the judgments of our experts regarding

**TABLE 1** Euroskeptical Parties Included in the Study (Experts' Judgement)

	Euroskeptical fringe parties	Euroskeptical mainstream parties
Austria	<i>Bündnis Zukunft Österreich [BZÖ]</i> (4.6; <i>Rext</i> ), Freiheitliche Partei Österreich [FPÖ] (12.7; <i>Rext</i> ), Liste Dr. Martin [Liste M] (17.7; <i>Rext</i> )	<u>Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs</u> [SPÖ] (23.7; L; PIREDEU: +2.0.)
Bulgaria	National Union Attack [ATAKA] (12.0; <i>Rext</i> )	<i>Order, Law and Justice [RZS/P3C]</i> (4.7; <i>R</i> )
Czech Republic	<i>Suverenita [Suveren]</i> (4.3; <i>Rext</i> ), Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy [KSCM] (14.2; <i>Lext</i> )	Občanská demokratická strana [ODS] (31.5; R)
Germany	<u>DIE LINKE</u> [Linke] (7.5; <i>Lext</i> ; PIREDEU: +0.24)	
Hungary	Jobbik Magyarországot Mozgalom [JOBBIK] (14.8; <i>Rext</i> )	
Netherlands	Socialistische Partij [SP] (7.1; <i>Lext</i> ), Partij voor de Vrijheid [PVV] (17.0; <i>Rext</i> )	<b>Christen Unie</b> [CU] (6.8; R; PIREDEU: +11.03), Partij voor de Dieren [ <i>PvdD</i> ] (3.5; <i>R</i> ), <b>Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie</b> [VVD] (11.4; Lib; PIREDEU: +9.41)
Poland		<b>Sojus Lewicy Demokratycznej-Unia Pracy</b> [SLD-UP] (12.3; L; PIREDEU: 6.73), <b>Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe</b> [PSL] (7.0; R; PIREDEU: 10.65), <b>Prawo i Sprawiedliwość</b> [PIS] (27.4; R; PIREDEU: 6.27)
Portugal	Bloco de Esquerda [BE] (10.7; <i>Lext</i> ), CDU-Coligacao Democratica Unitaria [PCP/PEV] (10.7; <i>Lext</i> )	<u>Partido Popular</u> [CDS-PP] (8.4; R; PIREDEU: +1.51)
Spain	<u>Izquierda Unida</u> [IU-ICV-EUIA-BA] (3.7; <i>Lext</i> , PIREDEU: +.74)	
Sweden	Vänsterpartiet [V] (5.7; <i>Lext</i> ), Sverigedemokraterna [ <i>SD</i> ] (3.3; <i>Rext</i> )	Miljöpartiet de gröna [MP] (11; Greens), Junilistan [Junilistan] (3.6; —), Piratpartiet [PP]. (7.1; Lib), <u>Arbetarepartiet-Socialdemokraterna</u> [S] (24.4; L; PIREDEU: +1.39)
UK	British National Party [BNP] (6.0; <i>Rext</i> )	Conservative Party [Cons] (27.0; R), United Kingdom Independence Party [UKIP] (16.1; R)

*Note.* In bracket (vote share in the 2009 European Parliamentary election; ideological orientation of party; L = left (social democrats), R = right (conservatives/Christian democrats), *Lext* = radical left/communists, *Rext* = radical/populist right, Lib = liberals, Greens; — = not classifiable); italics = not included in EES study; underlined = slight positive value in EES study; bold = value significantly above 0 in EES study.

the EU positions of parties, we rely on party manifesto data collected for the 2009 European Parliamentary elections, more specifically on an index that subtracts all anti-EU statements from all positive EU references within these party manifestos. A value below 0 indicates Euroskepticism, whereas a value

above 0 shows that EU support dominates (Braun, Mikhaylov, and Schmitt 2010; EES 2009). Overall, a comparison of these two data sources reveals satisfactory results. First, party manifesto data do not add a single Euroskeptic party to our Euroskeptic party sample. Consequently, we are sure that all Euroskeptic parties have been taken into account. Second, of the 32 parties that were identified as (partly) Euroskeptic by our experts, 17 also have a negative value on the party manifesto index. Further, there are five parties that have been identified as Euroskeptic by our experts and show only slightly positive index values pointing to mixed evaluations of the EU in the manifesto analysis (underlined, Table 1). For five parties, we lack manifesto data (in italics, Table 1). Altogether, there are five parties where expert judgments strongly diverge from party manifesto results (in bold font, Table 1): the CU and VVD in the Netherlands and the SLD-UP, PIS, and PSL in Poland. As there is no indication that the data from the party manifesto analysis are more accurate than our experts' judgements,<sup>2</sup> we rely on the data source that offers information for all parties in our study. Yet we keep these five discrepant cases in mind when interpreting the results.

### Content Analysis of Parties' Campaign Communication

To study the campaign communication of parties, we conduct a content analysis of parties' campaign posters and their televised campaign spots. To date, different analyses have been carried out to study the actual behavior of parties: Party manifestos have been analyzed, print media coverage studied, and expert and citizen surveys conducted. All of these methods have their strengths, but they also have their shortcomings (Netjes and Binnema 2007), since they only partly measure what parties publicly articulate. The most direct way to measure domestic parties' public mobilization is the analysis of their campaign communication. The core messages of parties' campaigns are epitomized in their campaign instruments, the most important being their televised campaign spots and their posters. With these instruments, parties directly reach out to the citizens without having to pass through the selection filter of the mass media.

For each country, we include all televised campaign spots and posters of those parties that won more than 3% of the votes in the 2009 European Parliamentary election. Only for Austria, where televised spots are not common, we include newspaper ads as a functional equivalent. The cutoff of 3% of the votes is necessary to limit the number of parties that are analyzed to a manageable size and to create a database that allows for cross-national comparisons. However, we chose a low cutoff so that fringe parties without electoral success will also be included in the sample. All posters and spots were collected and content analyzed by our cooperation partners in the 11 countries. To ensure the quality of the content analysis (Adam, Maier, and Kaid 2009), a common coder training took place in Berlin and was

followed by coding exercises and a reliability test that produced satisfactory results (Holsti's reliability coefficient for spots: .73; for posters: .83). After the actual coding had been conducted by the native-speaking cooperation partners, the data were checked for internal consistency and, if necessary, recoded in order to ensure the best possible quality of data.

To study which *type of EU issues* Euroskeptical parties put on their campaign agenda (H1), we first of all analyze whether the issues referred to in the spots and posters are discussed from a national, a European, or a national and European perspective.<sup>3</sup> For our analysis, only issues with a reference to Europe are relevant. For each spot/poster, it was possible to code up to 10 predefined issues that can be categorized as classical policy issues (economy, social welfare/education, homeland security/law and order, immigration, international affairs, culture, environment/agriculture/traffic), polity issues (constitutional questions as well as enlargement questions), and politics issues (administration/bureaucracy). To test whether Euroskeptical fringe parties focus more strongly on EU polity issues compared to Euroskeptical mainstream parties (H1), we compare the share of EU policy, EU polity, and EU politics issues for both party types.

To test hypothesis 2a (*degree of EU opposition*), we study the amount of criticism that is directed toward the European Union. To do so, for each spot or poster we code how the party evaluates the EU/EU integration in its current form. The evaluations can either be explicit or expressed indirectly by giving positive or negative descriptions of the EU. A value of -1 indicates criticism, a value of +1 indicates support, and a value of 0 shows that the evaluation is either balanced or that there is no evaluation of the EU/EU integration. We expect Euroskeptical fringe parties to articulate stronger criticism toward the European Union than Euroskeptical mainstream parties (H2a).

To test whether Euroskeptical fringe parties voice principled opposition against EU integration more often than Euroskeptical mainstream parties (Hypothesis 2b), we need to study different *forms of EU opposition*. To do so we code the visions formulated by parties about EU integration. A clear indicator for principled, in other words, hard forms of opposition is a vision that calls for a withdrawal from the union. Other visions indicate a non-principled/soft form of EU opposition (for this distinction, see Szczerbiak and Taggard 2003), for example, if parties set their priorities by defining the entity the EU should constitute (a trading bloc or a social protection shield, etc.), by emphasizing enlargement or deepening, by focusing on democracy or efficiency, or by calling for different concepts of democratization. Finally, there are visions that can neither be classified as purely principled nor as purely non-principled, as they do not object the whole integration project per se but question the existing allocation of competences. These visions see to the nation state as the appropriate level of problem solving or they push for intergovernmental integration.

To study processes of co-orientation, we compare the campaigns of Euroskeptical parties to the campaigns of pro-European parties within each country. For an analysis of hypothesis 3, we calculate the share of EU polity issues of all EU issues put on the campaign agenda. We expect that pro-European parties discuss the shape and reach of EU integration (EU polity issues) within a specific country if Euroskeptical parties do so too (H3). Finally, for an analysis of hypothesis 4, we compare the evaluation of the EU/EU integration in its current form voiced by Euroskeptical parties to the evaluation by pro-European mainstream parties. We expect that a strong negative evaluation of the EU by Euroskeptical parties is accompanied by pro-European mainstream parties' clear, positive statements on EU integration (H4).

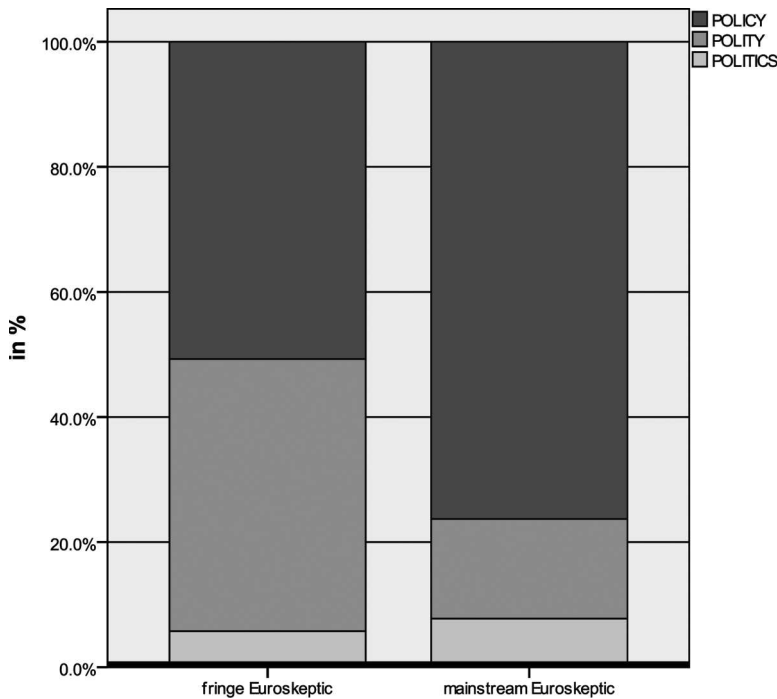
Before turning to the results, we need to add a final note on the logic of our data analysis. First, our unit of analysis is the party campaign, not the individual spot or poster. As a consequence, we calculated summary scores for each party to which each poster or televised spot contributes the same. These summary scores are based on 218 spots and posters of parties that were classified as Euroskeptical by our experts ( $N=112$  spots [including newspapers ads in the Austrian case];  $N=106$  posters). For non-Euroskeptical parties, we coded  $N=292$  spots and posters ( $N=112$  spots [including newspapers ads in the Austrian case];  $N=180$  posters). Second, any analysis beyond the level of single parties is based on these summary scores per party. This means that each party contributes the same to these summary scores independent from the number of campaign materials it produced. Further, when calculating averages across countries, we additionally controlled for the number of parties within a country to make sure that countries with many parties do not distort the overall picture.

## RESULTS

### Campaign Communication of Euroskeptical Parties

On the basis of the party classification in Table 1, we now select parties with a Euroskeptical position and study their campaign communication in the 2009 European Parliamentary elections. Here, we are especially interested in finding out whether there are systematic differences between fringe and mainstream Euroskeptical parties regarding the type of EU issues they put on the agenda and the degree and form of EU opposition voiced in their campaigns.

Regarding the *type of EU issues* on the agenda, we expect that Euroskeptical fringe parties feature EU polity issues more prominently compared to Euroskeptical mainstream parties because a discussion of EU polity issues allows them to put the fundamental questions of EU integration on the campaign agenda (H1). Figure 1 supports hypothesis 1. It is the Euroskeptical fringe parties that most openly put EU polity issues on the campaign agenda.



**FIGURE 1** The average share of polity, politics, and policy issues of all issues with an EU reference per type of Euroskeptic party. *Note.* Basis:  $N=26$  party campaigns (6 missing, as these parties do not discuss issues with an EU reference, at least for the fixed issue categories). Test: ANOVA; difference between fringe and mainstream Euroskeptic parties regarding their EU policy issue articulation is statistically significant on the  $p < .05$  level.

Around 50% of all issues addressed in their campaigns with a European reference refer to polity (and to a much lesser degree to politics) issues. Euroskeptic mainstream parties, in contrast, primarily feature policy issues if they discuss European matters. ANOVA analysis shows that the difference between Euroskeptic fringe and mainstream parties is statistically significant. For the more ideologically extreme parties, we find support for Mair’s thesis: They campaign exactly on those issues in which the European Parliamentary has only little competence. Here, right-wing extremists stand out: 60% of EU issue mobilization by radical right-wing parties refer to polity issues, whereas radical left-wing parties have a share of only 20%. It is the right-wing extremist parties that not only campaign against Europe on a cultural dimension (Adam and Maier 2011; Kriesi et al. 2006) but also stress the fundamental questions regarding the shape and reach of EU integration within their campaigns.

Turning to *the degree of opposition* against the EU and European integration, respectively, we again expect that it is the Euroskeptic fringe parties that articulate their criticism more strongly than Euroskeptic mainstream parties (H2a). Table 2 summarizes the results regarding these evaluations of

**TABLE 2** Evaluations of EU Integration by Types of Euroskeptical Parties

	EU evaluation (Mean)	SD	N
Fringe Euroskeptics	-.38	.37	16
Mainstream Euroskeptics	-.20	.48	16
Total (Euroskeptics)	-.29	.43	32

*Note.* Basis:  $N = 32$  parties. Calculation: mean evaluation score [-1,+1]; -1 = criticism only; +1 = support only. Test: ANOVA; difference between fringe and mainstream parties does not prove to be statistically significant.

today's EU integration. A value of -1 indicates that a party voices criticism in each poster or spot it releases, whereas +1 stands for full support of the integration project. Also, hypothesis 2a seems to be supported as Euroskeptical fringe parties on average voice more criticism (-.38) than mainstream Euroskeptics (-.20). Yet, this difference does not prove to be statistically significant in ANOVA analysis.

The analysis so far shows that criticizing the EU in public is still the field of the ideologically more extreme Euroskeptical parties, with only small differences between right- and left-wing extremists: Right-wing extremists have an average score of -.37, whereas left-wing extremists score at -.40.

Finally, we expect that Euroskeptical fringe parties voice principled opposition against EU integration more often than Euroskeptical mainstream parties (hypothesis 2b). We study the form of EU opposition by analyzing the future visions for EU integration that parties publicly advance in their campaigns. In general, we can conclude from our data that Euroskeptical parties only seldom envision the future of EU integration. Of 218 televised spots and posters, only 81 items contain vision statements. These vision statements, however, do not support hypothesis 2b. Neither Euroskeptical fringe parties nor Euroskeptical mainstream parties do in general publicly advance a clear-cut, hard form of EU opposition. There is only one country, namely the UK, where Euroskeptical voices formulate clear-cut, principled opposition against the EU. The British UKIP and BNP are the only parties in our sample that call for a complete withdrawal from the union. The other Euroskeptical parties in our 11-country sample do not publicly advance a comparably hard form of EU opposition. Euroskepticalism therefore is communicated differently in the UK compared to the rest of continental Europe.

Within continental Europe, different forms of Euroskepticalism are voiced in the campaigns. Those forms that lie between principled and unprincipled forms of opposition are found among fringe Euroskeptical parties in Bulgaria (ATAKA), the Czech Republic (Suveren), the Netherlands (PVV, SP), and Portugal (PCP/PEV). In addition, the Polish PIS, a mainstream party, also shows this form of Euroskepticalism. These parties promote the national level as superior for problem-solving.<sup>4</sup> Such an evaluation does not necessarily indicate a rejection of the integration project per se, but it does cast doubts



whether competences should be shifted to the European level. The other visions formulated in the 2009 party campaigns point to unprincipled forms of EU opposition. Here, parties fight over the type of entity the EU should constitute or about its core tasks. Frequent among left parties are claims that see the EU as a social protection shield (SPÖ in Austria, Linke in Germany, SLD-UP in Poland, BE and PCP/PEV in Portugal, and IU-ICV-EUIA-BA in Spain) or as a peace force (KSCM in the Czech Republic, Linke in Germany, as well as the two left Portuguese parties BE and PCP/PEV) or that call for more transparency and democracy (BE, PCP/PEV in Portugal, IU-CIV-EUIA-BA in Spain as well as CDS-PP, a conservative party in Portugal). Visions formulated by right-wing parties call for less power of the European Parliament (CU, PVV in the Netherlands, Junilistan in Sweden as well as BNP in the UK). The liberals in the Netherlands (VVD) as well as the conservatives in Poland (PSL) stress efficiency considerations regarding EU integration.

### Euroskeptic Parties and the Overall Campaigns

In this final section we search for indicators of co-orientation between parties within the same national party system. We expect processes of co-orientation to occur as no party on its own has a monopolistic control over the campaign agenda. Instead, parties use other parties within the same country as reference points. Thus, we expect processes of co-orientation to also occur between Euroskeptic and non-Euroskeptic parties. By taking full advantage of the comparative research design, we study whether non-Euroskeptic parties put EU polity issues on the campaign agenda and voice clear-cut positions regarding EU integration if this is what Euroskeptic parties do.

Hypothesis 3 expects that pro-European parties will discuss the shape and reach of EU integration (EU polity issues) if Euroskeptic parties do so within a specific country. As in Figure 1, we divide all issues discussed with an EU reference into policy, politics, or polity issues. For our analysis here, we focus on the share of polity discussions dealing with the shape and reach of the union. We have chosen these discussions as they lie at the core of Mair's (2007) argument that European Parliamentary campaigns—even if they are Europeanized—deal with those issues for which the European Parliament lacks decision-making power. Table 3 summarizes the results. It shows that in our 11-country sample—contrary to Mair's argument—only about 17% of all issues with an EU reference deal with polity questions. Mair's general argument best describes the campaigning of Euroskeptic (right-wing) parties (26%), less so the campaigns of non-Euroskeptic parties (8%). Moreover, it is only in specific countries, namely Austria, Bulgaria, Portugal, the UK, and to a lesser degree also the Czech Republic and the Netherlands, where polity issues play a substantial role in the 2009 campaign agenda.

**TABLE 3** Share of Polity Issues of All Issues Discussed With an EU Reference: Co-orientation

% (average)	Aus	Bul	CZ	Ger	Hun	NL	Pol	Port	Sp	Sw	UK	Total
Euroskeptics	37.5	75.0	33.3	0	—	36.4	11.1	38.5	0	6.7	48.3	26.07
Non-Euroskeptics	7.1	16.7	0	0	0	0	28.6	10.4	0	4.2	25.0	8.36
Country average	27.4	36.1	20.0	0	0	20.2	15.5	27.3	0	5.2	36.7	17.13
<i>N</i> (party campaigns)	6	3	5	5	1	9	4	5	4	7	4	53

*Note.* Basis:  $N=53$  parties (13 missing, as these parties do not discuss issues with an EU reference, at least for the fixed-issue categories). Test: Pearson correlation between % EU polity issues of Euroskeptics and non-Euroskeptics per country; positive correlation ( $r=.41$ ); not statistically significant.

Table 3 does not support the idea of co-orientation between Euroskeptics and non-Euroskeptics parties regarding the type of EU issues discussed. With the exception of the UK and Bulgaria, where non-Euroskeptics parties also discuss EU polity issues (however to a lesser extent), we do not find any sign of co-orientation. Strong polity mobilization from Euroskeptics in the Czech Republic and the Netherlands is not taken up at all by the non-Euroskeptics. The results in Austria and Portugal are similar. This finding is supported by Pearson correlation: We do not find any significant correlation between the share of EU polity issues put on the campaign agenda by Euroskeptics parties and the share articulated by non-Euroskeptics parties. In sum, our data do not support hypothesis 3.

Finally we search for co-orientation regarding the articulation of clear-cut positions toward EU integration. For this research question, hypothesis 4 expects a reversed effect. The stronger Euroskeptics parties voice their negative evaluation of the EU in their campaigns, the stronger pro-European parties respond with positive evaluations regarding EU integration (H4). If this hypothesis holds true, we would be able to observe a true politicization of European politics. Similar to the procedure followed in Table 2, we calculate a score ranging from  $-1$  to  $+1$ , where  $-1$  indicates that all campaign material of a party contains EU criticism and a value of  $+1$  shows full support, while  $0$  indicates a balanced or neutral campaign.

Table 4 confirms our hypothesis regarding a co-orientation process with regard to the formulation of clear-cut positions toward EU integration. It shows that Euroskeptics parties on average pursue a moderate form of EU criticism ( $-.21$ ), whereas non-Euroskeptics parties in general campaign in a rather neutral way ( $.05$ ). However, there are three countries in our sample for which we find strong indicators that the pro-EU consensus is over, namely the Netherlands ( $-.55$ ), Sweden ( $-.59$ ), and the UK ( $-.67$ ). In these countries, however, we do not find signs that non-Euroskeptics parties take up this criticism. In contrast, we can observe the postulated reversed effect: In these countries, non-Euroskeptics parties show the strongest support for EU

**TABLE 4** Evaluation of EU Integration: Co-orientation

Mean	Aus	Bul	CZ	Ger	Hun	NL	Pol	Port	Sp	Sw	UK	Total
Euroskeptics	-.12	.00	-.06	.00	.00	-.55	.09	-.16	-.22	-.59	-.67	-.21
Non-Euroskeptics	.06	.06	-.10	.04	.09	.13	-.11	.04	.00	.24	.11	.05
EU evaluation (country)	-.06	.04	-.07	.03	.07	-.25	.04	-.08	-.06	-.26	-.28	-.08
<i>N</i> (party campaigns)	6	8	5	5	4	9	4	5	4	10	6	66

*Note.* Basis:  $N=66$  parties. Because each country contributes the same to the average score across countries, results slightly diverge from the numbers in Table 2. Test: Pearson correlation between mean evaluation of Euroskeptics and non-Euroskeptics per country; negative correlation ( $r=-.70$ ); statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

integration compared to all other countries in the sample. Thus, it seems that strong anti-EU mobilization makes the pro-European parties defend their pro-EU standpoints with more enthusiasm. If this holds true, we can observe a true politicization of EU integration, one that is characterized by a publicly visible polarization of opinions and values (De Wilde 2007). In all other countries, the difference between Euroskeptical and non-Euroskeptical parties is relatively small. This means that in most cases we find neither strong anti-EU mobilization by the Euroskeptics nor strong positive references by pro-European parties. How close both types of parties have become is especially visible in Poland: Here it is the non-Euroskeptics who even surpass the Euroskeptical parties in their public criticism of EU integration. By means of Pearson correlation we can also confirm such processes of co-orientation statistically. Regressing the evaluation scores of Euroskeptical parties and non-Euroskeptical parties in each country reveals a strong negative correlation that is statistically significant at the .05 level. This indicates that more extreme positions on one side are accompanied by more extreme positions on the other side.

## CONCLUSION

What have Euroskeptical parties done in their campaigns in the run-up to the 2009 European Parliamentary elections; which types of EU-issues have they put on their campaign agendas; which degree and form of EU opposition have they voiced? And is there co-orientation between Euroskeptical and pro-European parties with regard to their campaigns? To answer these questions we conducted an 11-country comparative study based on a quantitative content analysis of the parties' campaign materials (televised spots and posters). In this conclusion we summarize our main findings in three points and then close with some research desiderates.

The first central finding of our study refers to the type of EU issues parties place on their campaign agendas. Our findings question the general applicability of Mair's thesis (2007): Across all parties and countries, EU polity issues are used less often in the campaigns than EU policy issues. Consequently, at least in reference to parties' own campaigns, we do not find indicators that citizens' choices in these elections can be called irrelevant, as the issues they cast their vote on actually are issues for which the European Parliament has competences. However, our study has identified right-wing Euroskeptical fringe parties as those openly campaigning on the fundamental question of integration regarding the shape and reach of the union. With their focus on EU polity issues, Euroskeptical fringe parties clearly outweigh Euroskeptical mainstream parties (support for H1). The relatively low salience of EU polity issues in the overall campaigns is also the result of the lack of co-orientation (rejection of H3): Non-Euroskeptical parties in general do not

adopt the polity focus of their Euroskeptic competitors. Only in the UK and Bulgaria has the debate around the shape and reach of the union, which especially right-wing extremists have placed on the agenda, been picked up by non-Euroskeptic parties.

Second, Euroskepticism in European Parliamentary campaigns has different facets with regard to the degree and form of opposition presented in the campaigns. In general, it is Euroskeptic fringe parties that challenge the pro-EU consensus. These parties criticize the integration process loudly, whereas Euroskeptic mainstream parties still hesitate to voice their criticism (support for H2a). However, we could not find support for this clear distinction between Euroskeptic fringe and mainstream parties regarding the form of opposition voiced (rejection of H2b). Principled forms of opposition are only rarely voiced among Euroskeptic parties in our 11-country sample. Such a principled form of opposition can only be found in the UK. UKIP and BNP not only voice clear-cut EU criticism but also combine this criticism with a call for a withdrawal from the union. This finding indicates that Euroskepticism, also widespread today, has different manifestations that differ between Euroskeptic mainstream and fringe parties. Further, our results indicate that Euroskepticism means something different on the British Isles compared to continental Europe.

Third, we can observe a true politicization of EU integration: one that is characterized by a publicly visible polarization of opinions and values. In those countries where Euroskeptic parties most harshly criticize EU integration (i.e., the Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK), non-Euroskeptic parties show the most positive EU evaluations in our 11-country sample. The notion that non-Euroskeptics are pushed into an active defense of their pro-EU positions is also confirmed statistically: The more extreme negative evaluations are voiced by Euroskeptics, the more positive positions are also presented by pro-Europeans (support of H4). This effect turns out to be statistically significant. If this holds true in other settings, we can speak of a reversed mobilization effect (for a similar concept applied to citizens, see Schuck and De Vreese 2009) that leads to politicization. In this election we have observed such politicization in the Netherlands, in Sweden, and the UK. In these countries parties have taken the opportunity to differentiate themselves in EU terms (Eijk and Franklin 2004). As a result, we question whether the description of European Parliamentary campaigns as uncontested and purely national is still valid. At least under specific conditions we find that contrary positions regarding EU integration are voiced.

Where should we head from here? Our analysis shows that the distinction between Euroskeptic positions and actual Euroskeptic mobilization is important. We agree with Szczerbiak and Taggard (2003) that this distinction can help eliminate much confusion in research about Euroskeptic parties. This goes along with the fact that one needs to measure and explain parties' Euroskeptic positions and campaign mobilization with different factors. Regarding explanations, we need to rely on strategic considerations to

explain mobilization, whereas ideological considerations are more important to understand positions (Szczerbiak and Taggard 2003). In reference to measurement, we have suggested to use expert judgments as indicator for the underlying ideological orientation, whereas we seek to measure parties' actual campaign communication with the method of content analysis. A combination of both data sources on Euroskepticism has its advantages. First, it allows us to show that Euroskeptic positions do not necessarily translate into Euroskeptic mobilization. In our study, Euroskepticism has gone mainstream position-wise but less so mobilization-wise. It is mainstream Euroskeptic parties that have refrained from discussing EU polity issues and that have been hesitant to openly criticize the EU. Second, we can compare whether ideologically similar types of Euroskeptic parties also use similar campaign strategies. In this paper, we have distinguished mainstream and fringe Euroskeptic parties. Yet, we see the necessity for future research to work with more fine-grained classifications. Finally, such a distinction has the advantage that we do not confound all criticism toward the EU with Euroskepticism. General EU supporters may well formulate criticism toward the union, which does not automatically turn them into Euroskeptic parties.

Last but definitely not least, further research should more closely analyze the concept of co-orientation. Our results suggest that co-orientation exists between Euroskeptic and non-Euroskeptic parties within the national party systems with regard to their campaign strategies. Yet, further research is necessary to analyze in which areas this co-orientation occurs and under which conditions it happens. Of special interest for further research is the reversed mobilization effect regarding parties' EU evaluations. If we can confirm that strong criticism toward the EU by Euroskeptic parties leads to a countermobilization on the side of pro-European parties, then we would have uncovered an important mechanism fostering the polarization of opinions on—and thereby politicization of—EU integration.

## NOTES

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2. For the Polish PIS party, for example, it is not only our country expert but other researchers (Kopecký and Mudde 2002) as well that classify this party as Euroskeptic, in contrast to the party manifesto data.

3. A spot dealing with national taxes is coded as a national scope; a spot dealing with Brussels bureaucracy is coded EU; a spot dealing with disputes among EU states (e.g., regarding nuclear power stations in border regions or the weighting of votes in the council) is also coded as an EU scope. Finally, a spot referring to national and EU taxes has a "mixed" scope (EU and national).

4. Although one needs to add that this national focus is sometimes combined with references to the EU level as the appropriate level for problem solving (e.g., PIS, Attack).

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#### AUTHOR NOTES

Silke Adam is professor of Political Communication at the University of Bern, Switzerland. Her research focuses on comparative political communication, media effects, European integration, and identity.

Michaela Maier is professor for Applied Communication Psychology at the University of Koblenz-Landau, Germany. Her research focuses on political communication with a specific interest in the reception and effects of campaign communication.

Claes H. de Vreese is professor and chair of Political Communication at the Amsterdam School of Communication Research, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. He has published widely on media effects, public opinion dynamics, media coverage of elections, issues of European integration, and political journalism.

Andreas R. T. Schuck is assistant professor of Political Communication at the Amsterdam School of Communication Research at the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. His research focuses on media effects and public opinion dynamics during election campaigns, electoral mobilization, and public support for EU integration and direct democracy.

Vaclav Stetka is senior research fellow at the Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford, UK. His current research interests include post-communist media systems, political communication, and processes of Europeanization and transnationalization.

Carlos Jalali is assistant professor and researcher at the Governance, Competitiveness and Public Policies Research Centre at the University of Aveiro, Portugal. His research focuses on Portuguese political institutions, parties, and electoral behavior in comparative perspective.



Gilg U. H. Seeber is professor of Statistics in the Department of Political Science at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. In the realm of social sciences, his research focuses on elections and public opinion.

Ralph Negrine is professor of Political Communication at the University of Sheffield, UK. His research interests are in the field of political communication and communications policy.

Lilia Raycheva is an associate professor at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at the St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia, Bulgaria. Her scientific interests relate to information and communication technologies' impacts and media developments.

Rosa Berganza is professor and chair of Theory of Communication and Political Communication at the Faculty of Communication at University Rey Juan Carlos, Spain. Her research primarily focuses on political communication, European Union campaigns, election coverage and campaigning, public opinion, and women and the media.

Jolán Róka is professor of Communication at the Budapest College of Communication and Business, Hungary. Her research focuses on political communication, interpersonal communication, media impact, and intercultural and cross-cultural communication.

Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska is professor of Political Communication and Media at the University of Wrocław, Poland. Her research focuses on political communication, comparative media systems, transformation of mass media in Central Europe, and journalistic professionalism.

Lars Nord is professor and chair of Political Communication at Mid Sweden University, Sweden. His research focuses on strategic political communication, political journalism, and media governance.

Matthias Balzer is student assistant at the Institute for Communication Psychology and Media Pedagogics at the University of Koblenz-Landau, Germany. His field of interest is political communication with a focus on the effects of election campaigns.

Manuela Baumli is graduate research assistant at the Institute of Communication and Media Studies at the University of Bern, Switzerland. Her main research interests are political communication, transnational communication, and ethnic media.