

B3.8 Framing Europe: Eurosceptic Cues and Citizen Attitudes



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Objectives

- Examine how variation in the **content** of elite-generated messages about the EU affects public attitudes.
 - 3 types of Eurosceptic message frames analysed: **(a)** economic, **(b)** cultural and **(c)** 'democratic deficit'/institutional content
- Examine how variation in the **source** of these messages systematically influences public opinion.
- Examine the 'indirect effects' of Eurosceptic cues
 - Valence frames and emphasis frames
 - In their function as 'emphasis frames', Eurosceptic messages also influence attitudes toward the domestic policies and values they implicate.

Research Design

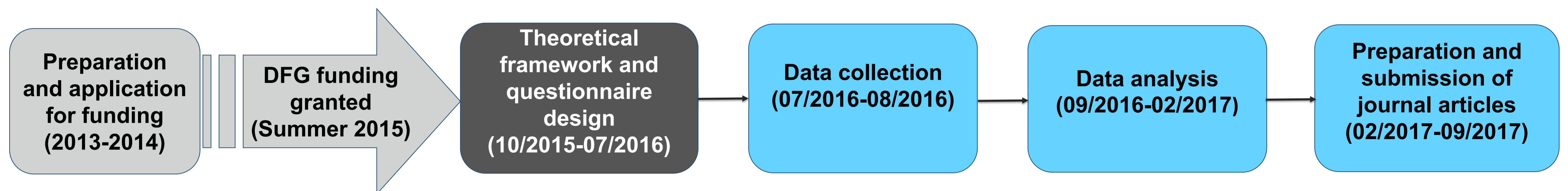
The central goal of this project is to examine how different *types of Eurosceptic messages* and *different types of messengers* affect public opinion. The realities of disseminating political information include both a message with a particular direction and content (i.e. the valence and emphasis frame) and the attachment of this message to a specific party or person (i.e. a source cue).

- Survey experiments in 3 EU countries (Germany, France, UK)



- Country selection based on variation in average support for European integration (last 5 years EB trends).
- **Experimental treatment 1:** exposure to a different type of Eurosceptic message content (or control = no message). Three main types of Eurosceptic message frames analysed – cultural, economic and "democratic deficit" content. Respondents fill in a brief pre-test containing control questions, are exposed to treatment, and complete a post-test questionnaire.
- **Experimental treatment 2:** exposure to a different type of Eurosceptic source cue: the project focuses on the most common messenger when it comes to Eurosceptic rhetoric – political parties. Respondents view the same type of message content described above, but attributed to a mainstream political party or a Eurosceptic political party (or control = no source attribution).

Timeline



Overview of Project Structure

Research Question	Explanatory variable	Outcome Variables
<p>How do different types of Eurosceptic frames affect citizens' attitudes?</p> <p><u>Types</u> Economic Cultural Democratic deficit</p>	<p>Eurosceptic <i>content cues</i> (economic, cultural, democratic deficit)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes towards the EU and European integration • Non-EU attitudes related to each frame content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - economic attitudes - attitudes towards immigrants, multiculturalism - support for democratic values and procedures, political tolerance
<p>How do different types of Eurosceptic sources affect citizens' attitudes?</p> <p><u>Types</u> Mainstream party source Fringe party source No partisan source</p>	<p>Eurosceptic <i>source cues</i> (mainstream, fringe, non-partisan)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes towards the EU and European integration • Non-EU attitudes related to each frame content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - economic attitudes - attitudes towards immigrants, multiculturalism - support for democratic values and procedures, political tolerance