Euroscepticism as Action, not Ideology

Dr Simon Usherwood, University of Surrey, s.usherwood@surrey.ac.uk

Abstract:
One of the most persistent challenges in the field of euroscepticism is the definition of the word itself. In part this reflects the fundamental differences of approach between the two main schools of academic thought, which stress party competition and political ideology respectively. However, it also is a consequence of the basic lack of understanding that the diverse expression of ‘euroscepticism’ is a consequence of the intrinsically negative formulation behind the concept, which necessarily is defined by an absence, rather than a presence. Consequently, this paper argues that it is essential to embrace the positive elements, in order to provide a useful and coherent definition. To this end, the paper discusses euroscepticism as a set of actions, rather than of motivations or dispositions, and offers an operationalisation of such a definition, that can be applied more generally.