

Party-Based Euroscepticism in the Czech Republic

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Outline

Why the Czech Republic?

Context

Party-based Euroscepticism – many faces but limited influence

Questions

Q1: Which Czech political parties are Eurosceptic? (including concept of Euroscepticism)

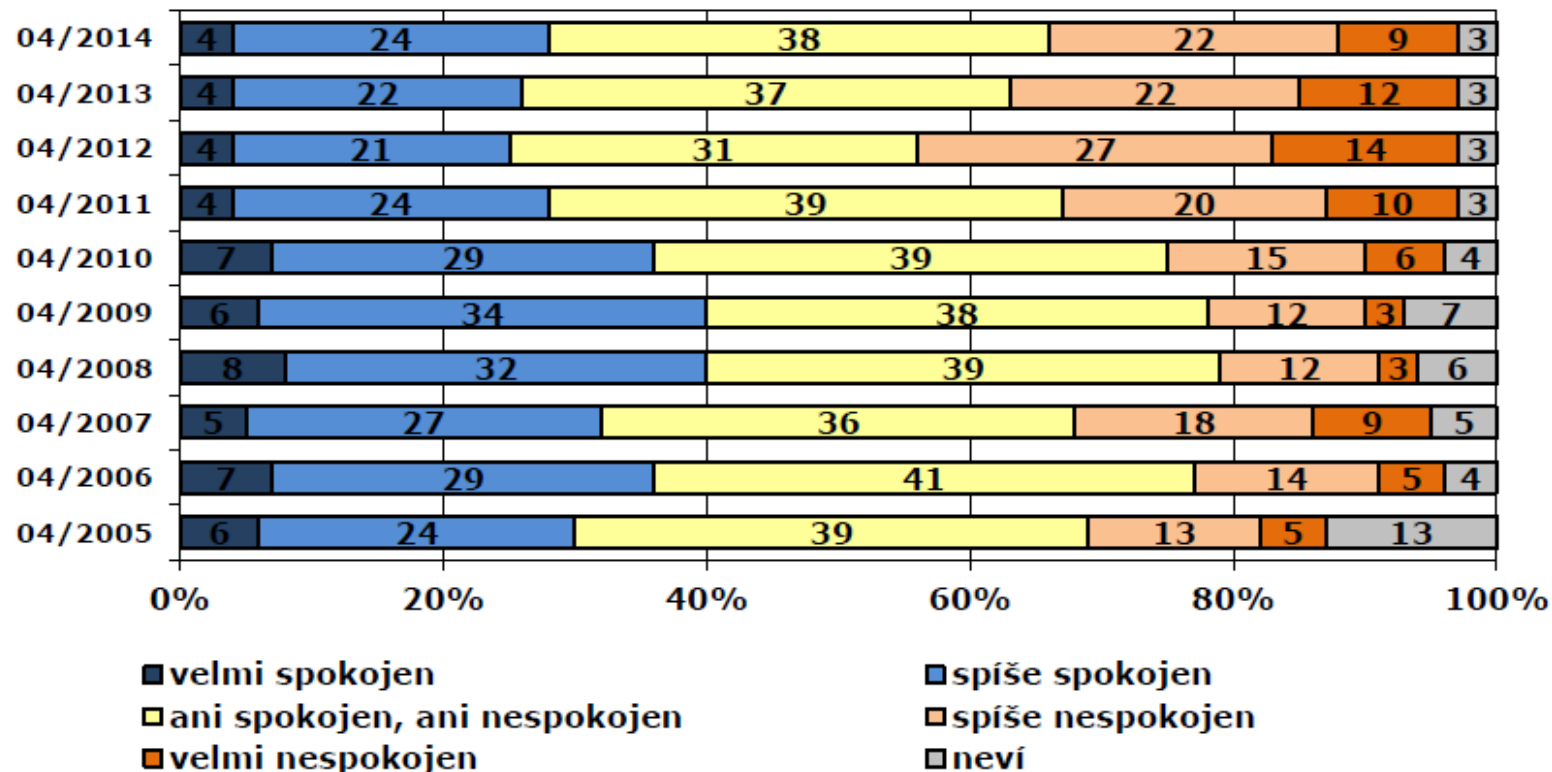
Q2: How (much) Eurosceptic are they?

Q3: Does it matter?

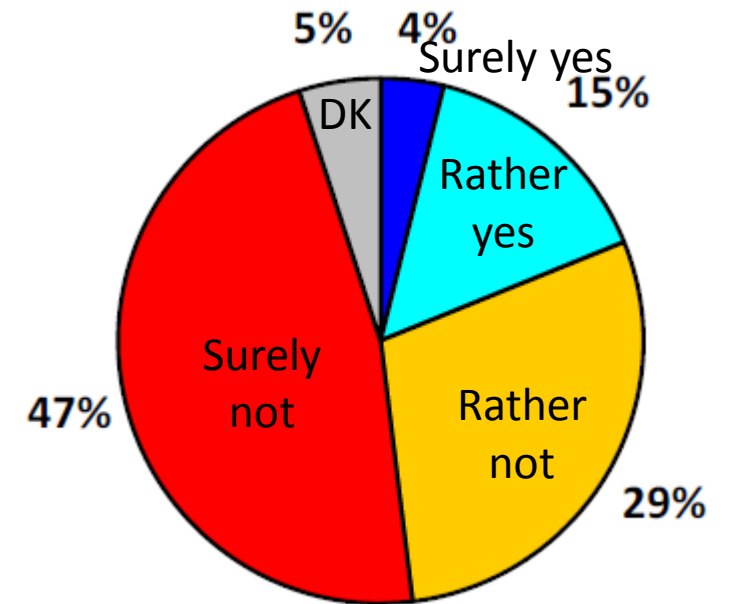
Why the Czech Republic?

Because of public Euroscepticism

Graf 1. Spokojenost s členstvím v Evropské unii¹



Adoption of Euro (April 2014)



Source: CVVM

Why the Czech Republic?

Because of many faces of party-based Euroscepticism



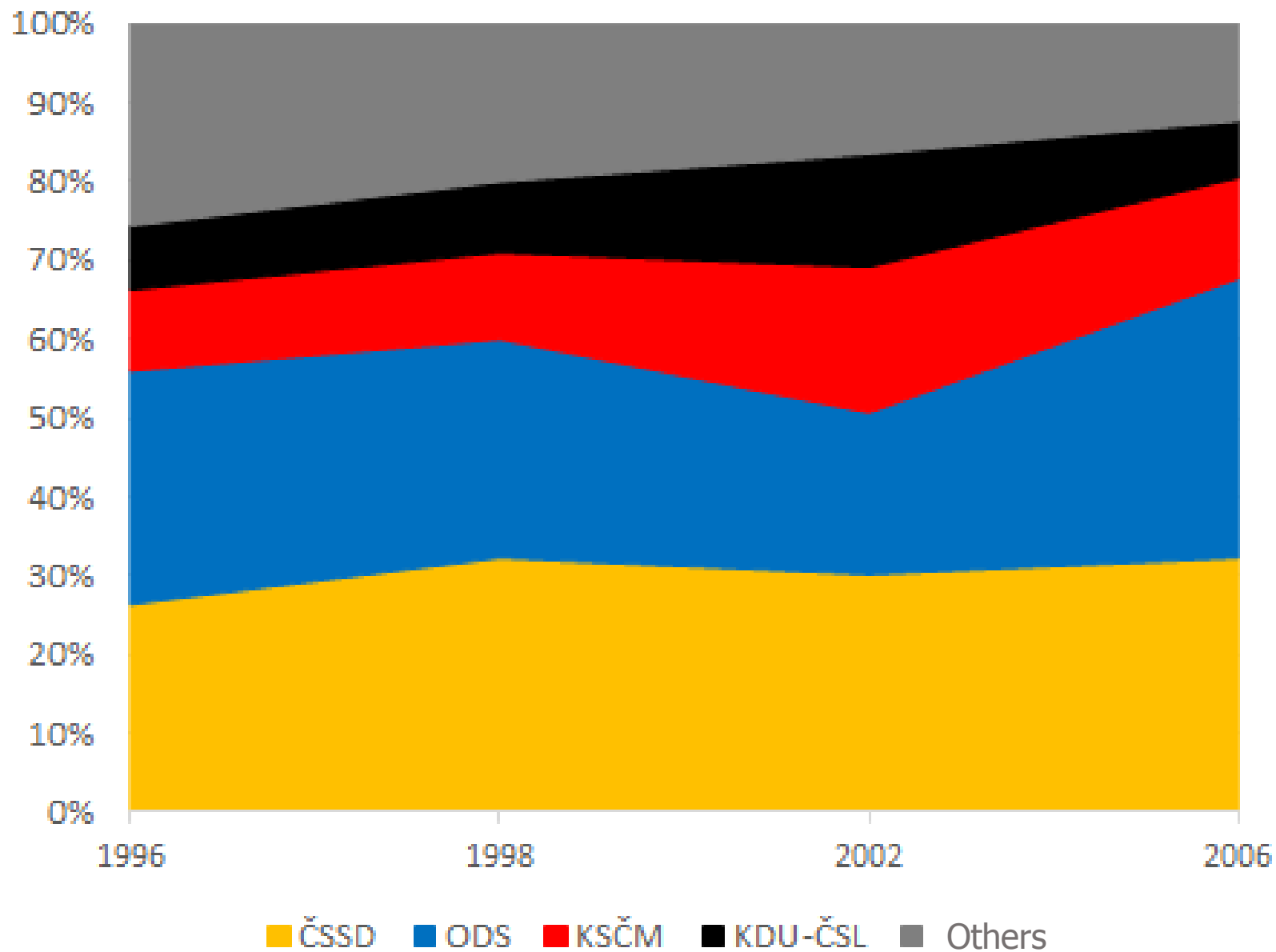
Context – party system in the Czech Republic

- One of the most stable party systems in CEE
- 1996 – 2010: two main poles + several smaller parties
 - Unidimensional competition (+ religious question)

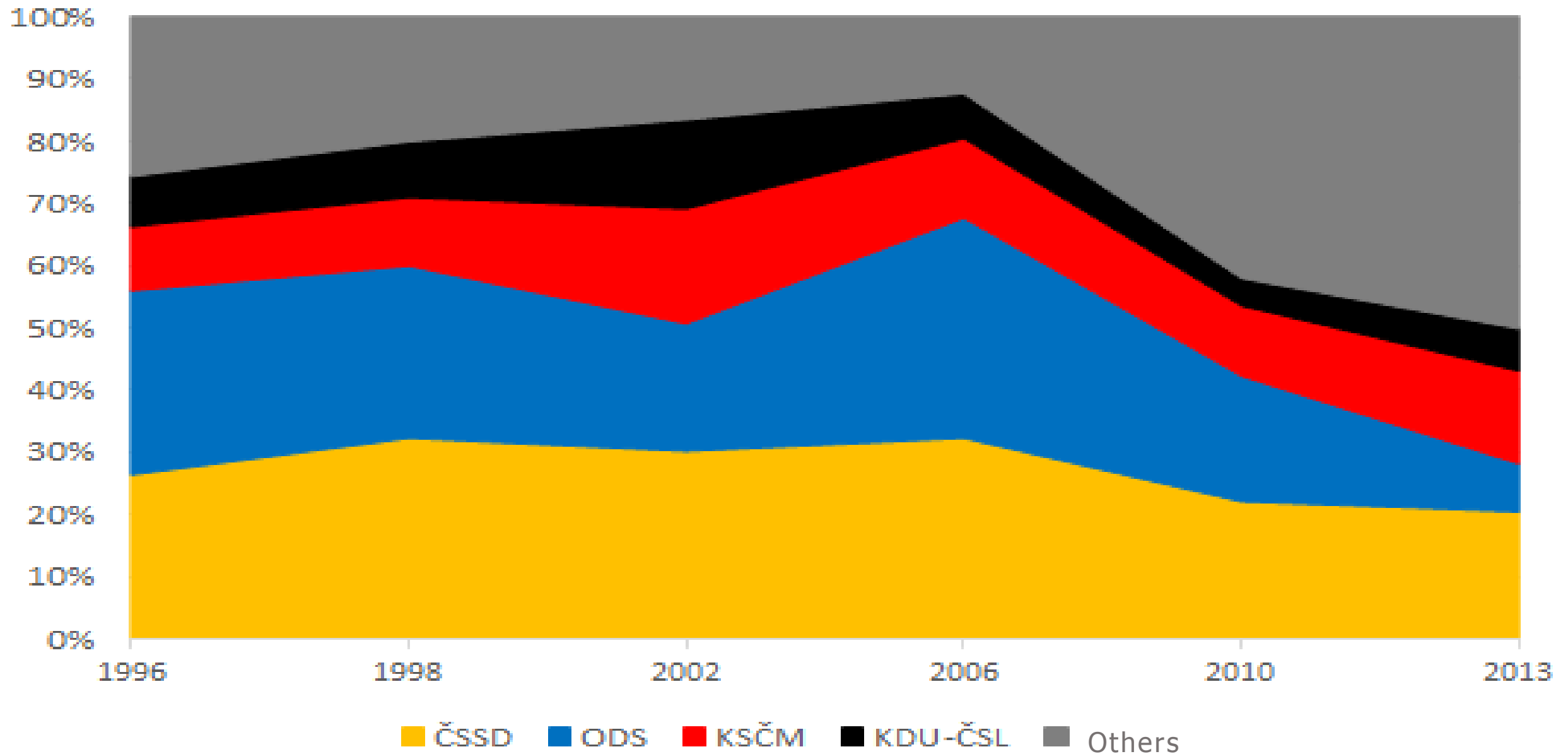
KSČM – ČSSD – liberal centre (SZ, US) – KDU-ČSL – ODS



Election results (1996-2006)



Election results (1996 – 2013)



New political parties (2010 – 2013)

TOP09

S podporou Starostů (2010: 16.7 %) – split from KDU-ČSL, conservative-liberal „purifier“ of ODS

- Public Affairs - VV (2010: 10.9%) – centrist populist party

ANO BUDE LÍP
POLITICKÉ HNUTÍ

(2013: 18.7%) – centrist populist party

- Tomio Okamura`s Dawn of Direct Democracy – Úsvit (2013: 6.88%) – (radical right-wing) populist party

- Party of Free Citizens (EP 2014 – 5.24%)



Euroscepticism

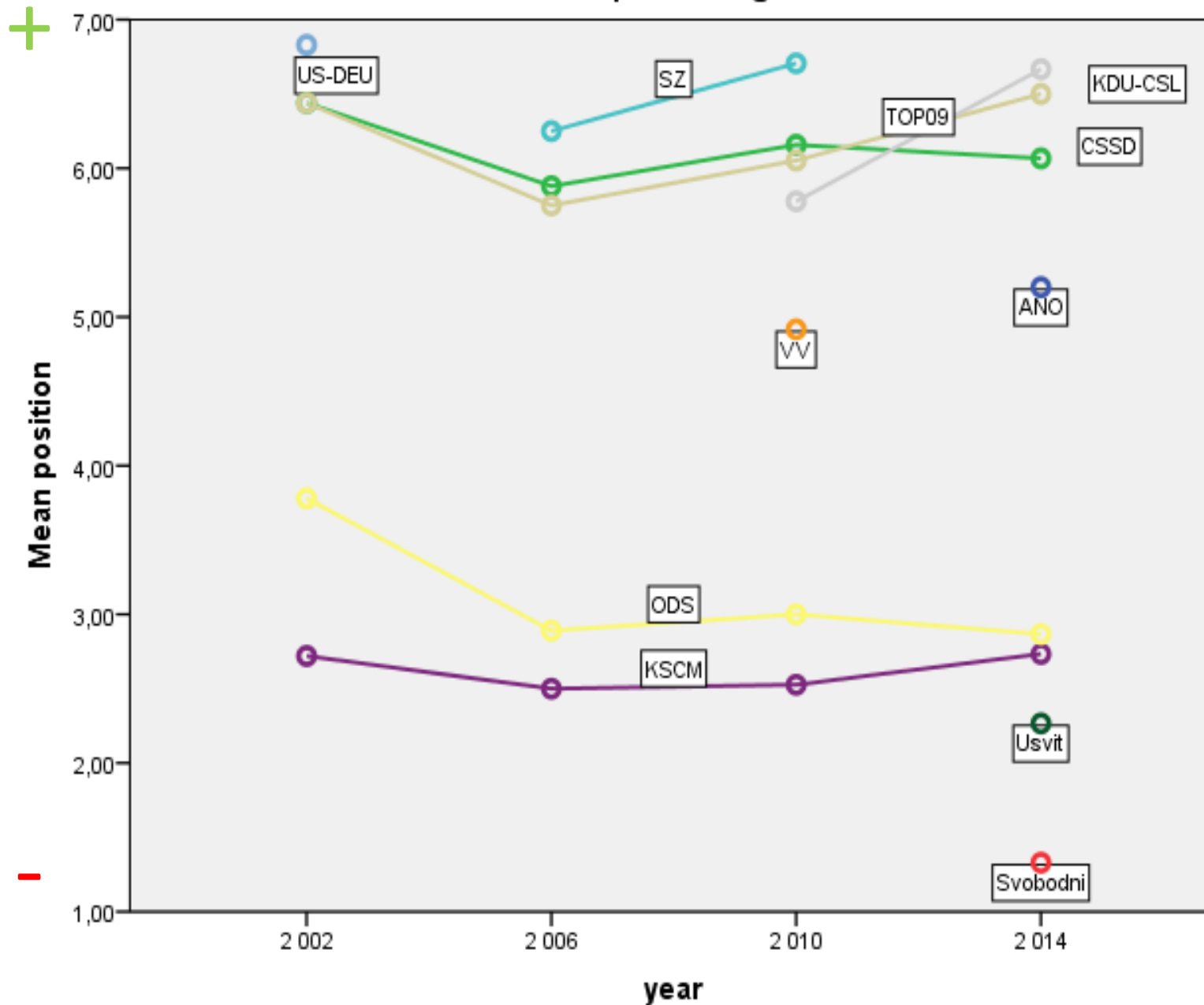
Hard Euroscepticism: *“a principled opposition to the project of European integration as embodied in the EU, in other words, based on the ceding or transfer of powers to [a] supranational institution such as the EU.”*

Soft Euroscepticism: *“not a principled objection to the European integration project of transferring powers to a supranational body such as the EU, but there is opposition to the EU's current or future planned trajectory based on the further extension of competencies that the EU is planning to make.”*

(Szczerbiak and Taggart 2003: 12)

Which Czech parties are
Eurosceptic?

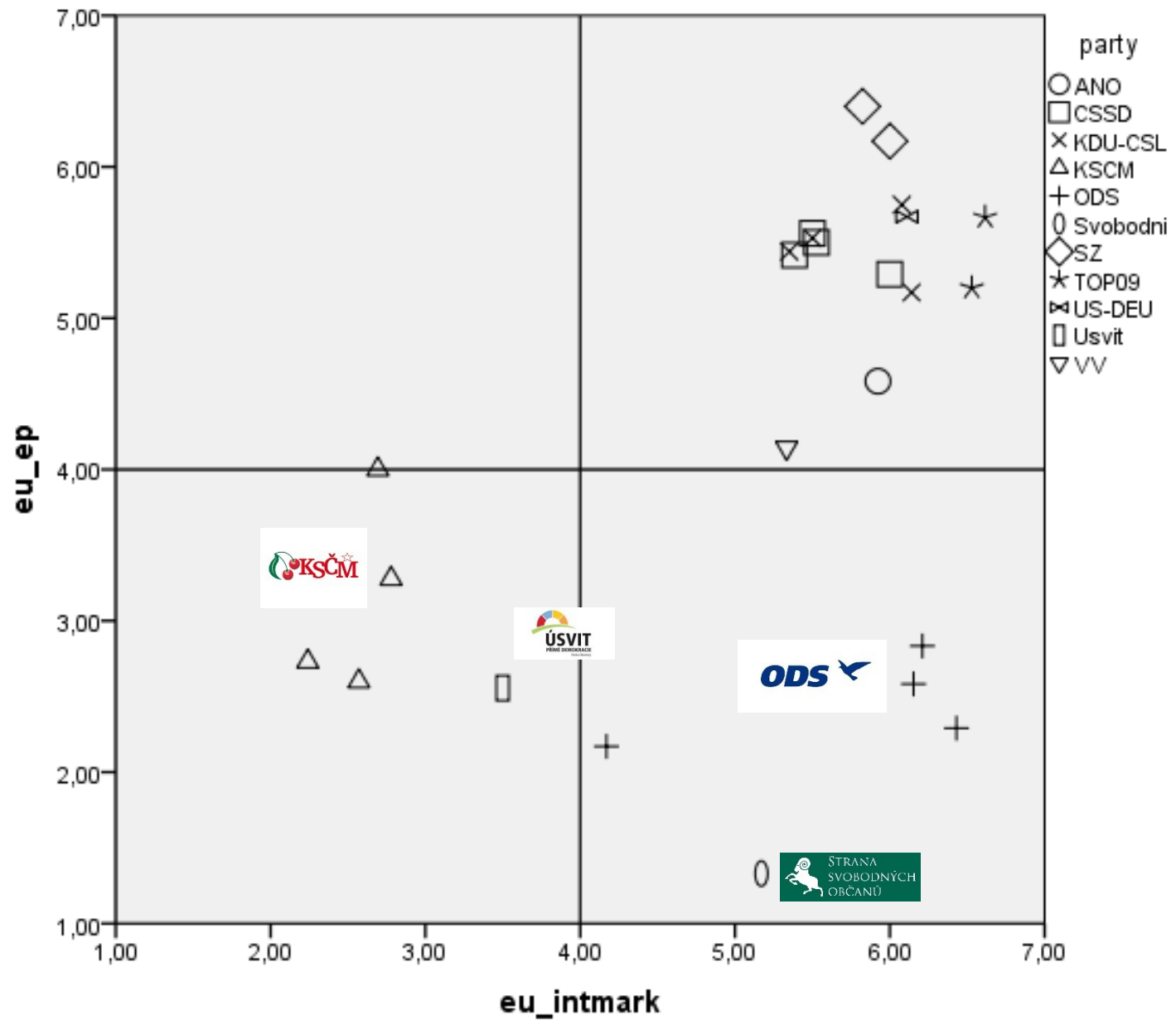
Position to European integration



Source: author,
based on CHES
(2002-2014)

Shapes of Czech party-based Euroscepticism

Position to to European integration (EP competencies X internal market)



Source: author,
based on CHES

Civic Democratic Party



- Not against membership (2003 referendum)
- National/sovereignty based Euroscepticism – opposing further integration, against the Lisbon Treaty
- Against: the „federal superstate“, strengthening of EP and ECom., majority voting in the Council
- Proponents of economic integration (Common Market) but against Euro (sovereignty + economic arguments), current CAP
- „back to the concept of free economic area“ (ODS 2014)
- Economically liberal arguments (againsts allegedly socialist EU)
- preference of „flexible integration“
- Pragmatic perception of the membership – „an instrument to support the Czech economy“
- Challenge of incumbency – the Constitutional Treaty

Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia



- Dilemma of socialist/communist internationalism
- Against capitalist, imperialist and right-wing EU of bureaucrats and financiers, initially critical to the membership (2003 referendum)
- For „more democratic, socialist integration and strenghtening of integration of the Eueopean left against the offensive of neoliberalism and sings of neofascism and neonacism“ (KSČM 2014)
- We want to rebuild Europe on the basis of solidarity and sovereignty of the people, equality and cooperation“ (KSČM 2014)
- A platform for socialist cooperation
- Internally divided (hardliners vs reformist/moderates)
- Socialization of MEPs of the party, softening of the Euroscepticism

Party of Free Citizens



- (neo)liberal frames of Euroscepticism – freedom as the main principle (with national sovereignty)
- Rejection of the Lisbon Treaty
- the Union of Nations as an alternative – „the European Union has to change into into a community of sovereign democratic nations, voluntarily collaborating on the basis of equality“
- Initially soft Euroscepticism, but gradually serious doubts about the membership, rejection of the current trajectory of the integration project – a case of a hard Eurosceptic party (?)

Dawn of Direct Democracy



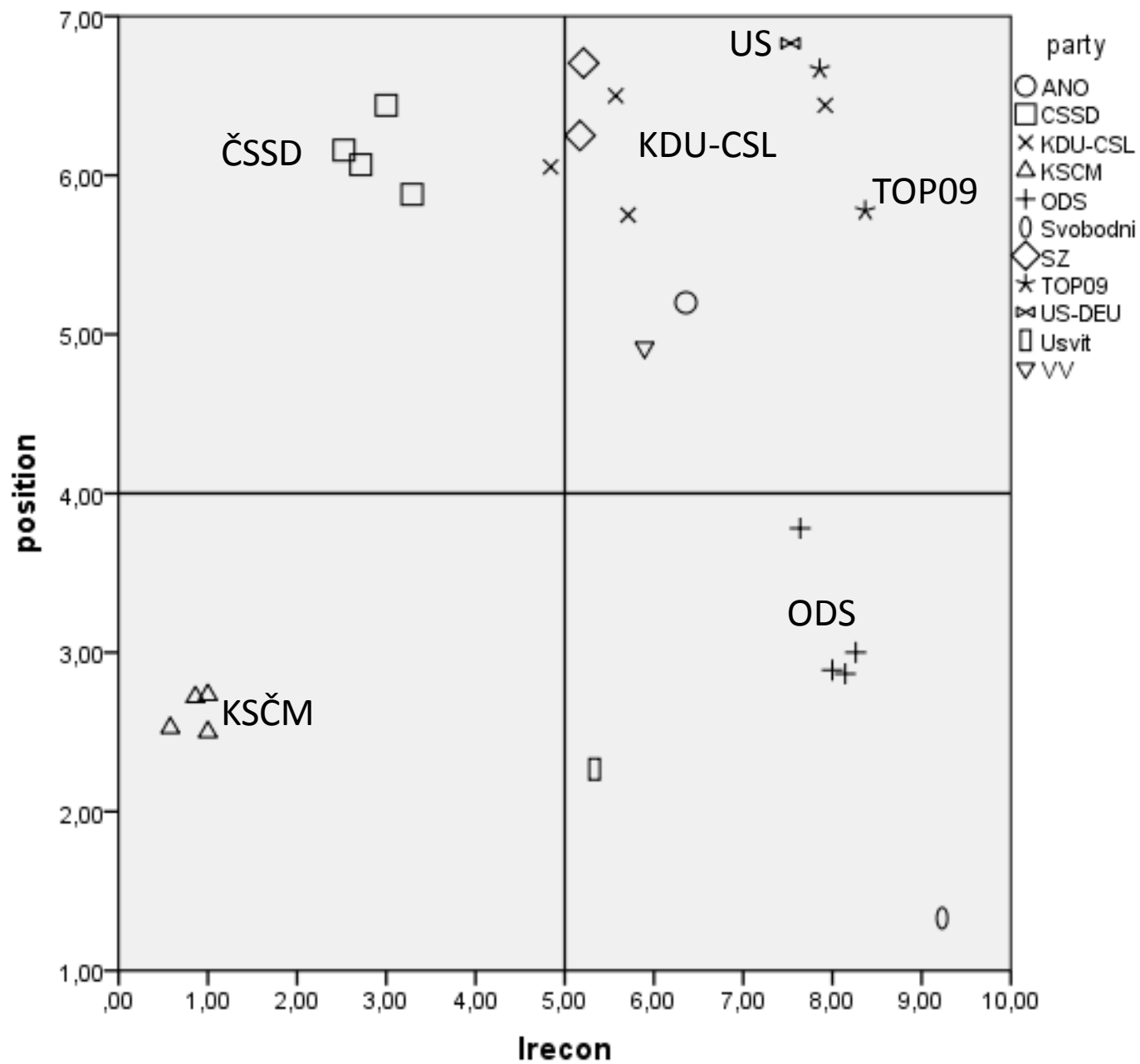
- Not too much focused on the EU
- Selective/non-systemic policy-based Euroscepticism – immigration policy X security and defence policy, internal market
- Eurosceptic frames – populism (sovereignty of the people, bureaucracy, corruption)
- Conditional acceptance of Euro (referendum)
- Sovereignty based arguments – „we are against weakening of the competencies of the Czech Republic, we do not agree with transformation of national states into provinces with limited powers, we do not want to be the slaves of the European Union.“ (Úsvit 2014)

Summary – a paradise for Euroscepticism research

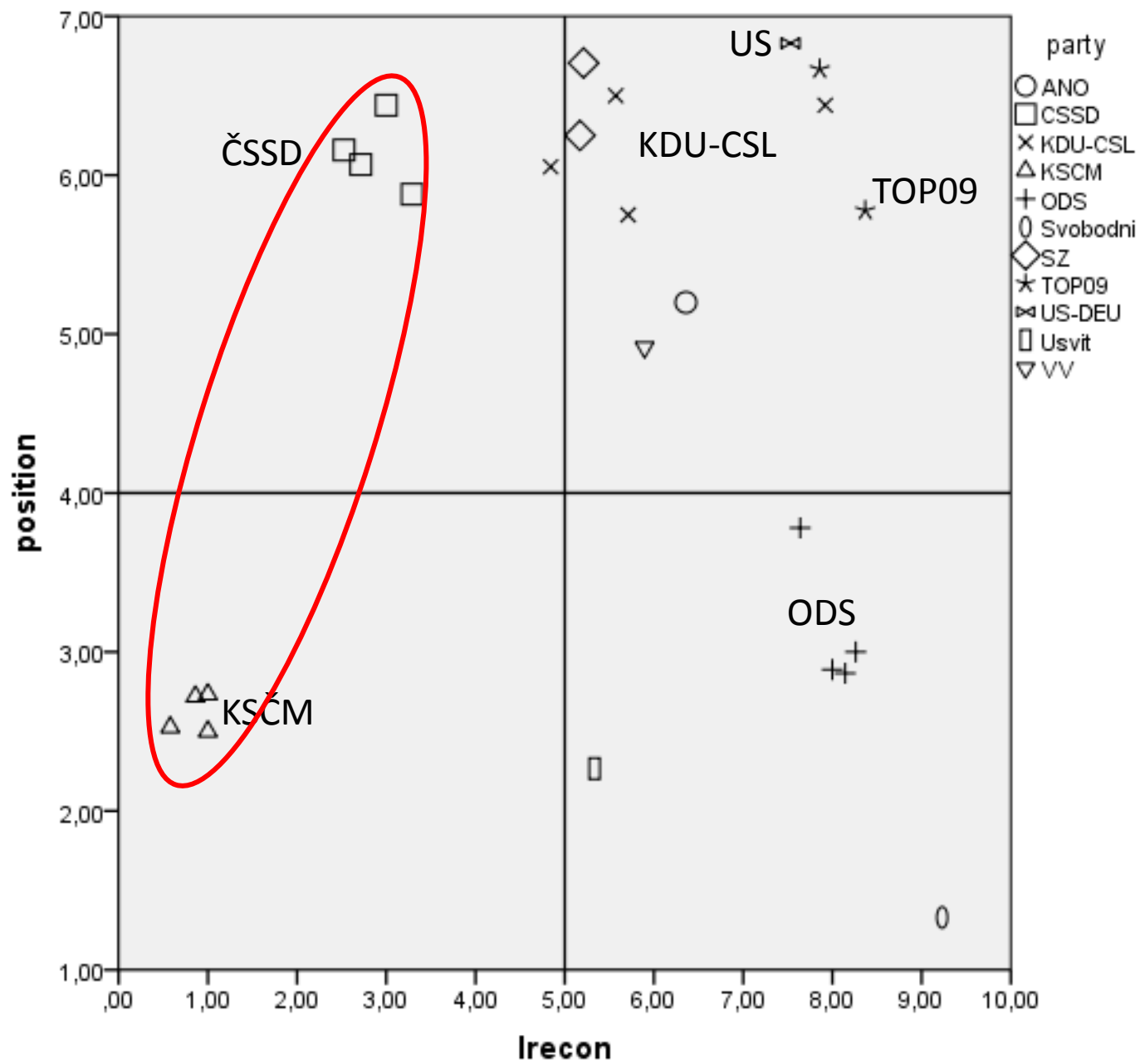
- Electorally successful Eurosceptic parties
- Varieties and different intensity of party based Euroscepticism
- Driven by the primary ideologies of the parties
- Dynamics of Eurosceptic stances

But does Euroscepticism matter for Czech party politics?

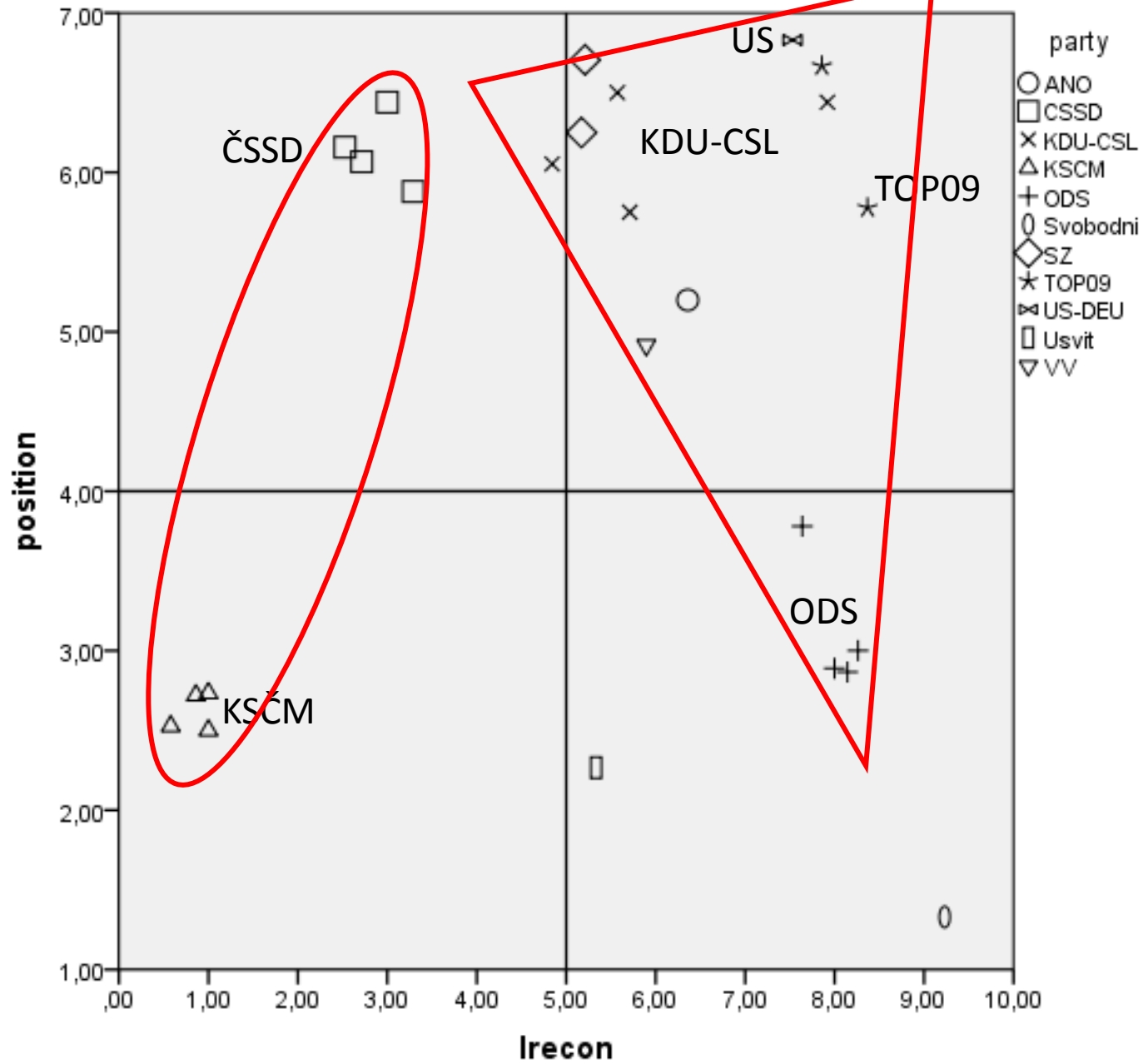
European integration and L-R positions



European integration and L-R positions



European integration and L-R positions



Does the EU issue matter?

- Interactions between parties
- The 2002 elections and the formation of the pro-European cabinet of ČSSD – KDU-ČSL – US

X

2006 and 2010 cabinets (ODS X KDU, SZ and TOP 09)

- Potential impact on volatility (party – voters congruence)
- The crucial role of the salience of the issue – low in a longterm perspective

Conclusion

- Electorally successful Eurosceptic parties – a variety of Euroscepticisms
- The role of the primary ideologies of the parties – from left wing, neoliberal to nationalist Euroscepticism
- Euroscepticism as established sets of ideas (the 2013 election)
- BUT limited impact on electoral competition

Thank you for your
attention.