Eurosceptic Parties and the EU: MEPs' attitudes in the roll-call votes on immigration policies.
A cross-country analysis (Italy, France and UK)

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Abstract.
The main aim of this paper is to tackle the voting behaviour of Eurosceptic parties within the EP. Voting behaviour of legislators is a relevant topic in legislative studies and party politics as well. In literature, we can find two different explanation of voting cohesion: Kreppel (2002), in her seminal work, suggested that the European Political Groups (EPGs) vote following two dimensions: the traditional left-right dimension and the EU integration and that their cohesion in voting behaviour parallels their preference coherence; conversely, Hix et al. (2007) argued that EPGs vote as a block despite their increasing ideological heterogeneity, and that this cohesion can be explained by party discipline within political groups. An interesting strategy of enquire to tackle this leading research question is to analyse voting behaviour of national delegation in different groups but with similar ideological preferences: if they vote in the same way in relevant issues, despite their group affiliation, the main factor shaping voting behaviour in the EP is the ideological proximity; otherwise, if they vote following instructions from their political groups, the voting cohesion is explained by party discipline.
In this paper, we focus on the behaviour of four Eurosceptic parties (Taggart and Sczerbiack, 2008): Front National (France), UKIP (UK), Northern League (NL) and Five Star Movement (FSM) (Italy). The choice of this kind of parties is twofold: first of all, they show common ideological traits inside their election manifestos, especially on the EU dimension; secondly, they have increased in electoral terms especially after the economic crisis and the migration concern, becoming relevant actors at national and supranational level. Our main hypothesis is that, despite their allocation in the EP, Eurosceptic parties vote together following their common ideological proximity, and not by party discipline within political groups. In fact, UKIP and FSM belong to the European Freedom and Direct Democracy group (EFDD), while Northern League and Front National to the Europe of Nations and Freedom group (ENF).
This kind of analysis gives us the opportunity to tackle two different topics: the first one concerns the voting behaviour in the EP; the second one concerns the behaviour of Eurosceptic parties at European level and in particular within the EP.

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Introduction

The development of EU policy competence on immigration and asylum matters has been incremental (Geddes, 2003). Despite the attempts to lay out the foundations of a common immigration policy in the Amsterdam Treaty (1997) and European Council meetings in Tampere (1999), Seville (2002) and The Hague (2004), the reluctance of member states to grant power to the supranational bodies of the EU was obvious in the failure of the Commission's directive on conditions of admission and stay of third-country workers. Overall, there has been a general lack of progress in realizing the ambitious agenda set out in Tampere although the Reform Treaty would open up the prospect of more qualified majority voting on legislation surrounding legal migration (Duncan, 2008). Migration and immigrant integration policies in Europe are increasingly determined at the European Union (EU) level as well as at the national level. The Maastricht Treaty (1993) established an EU Justice and Home Affairs policy, which was then reformed by the Amsterdam Treaty (1999) as part of the EU's Area of Freedom Security and Justice. Since Amsterdam, the EU has adopted a raft of migration and immigrant integration legislation. EU rules now cover, *inter alia*, the right of third-country nationals to family reunification, the working rights of third-country nationals, the admission of third-country nationals as students or volunteers, financial and technical assistance to third countries facing migration and asylum crises, the temporary protection of persons displaced by economic, political, or environmental disasters, which member state is responsible for examining an asylum application, standards for the treatment of asylum seekers, and non-discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin. Hence, EU rules now cover the full range of "migration policies," from entry, residence, and economic rights of immigrants to societal integration of immigrants and their descendents.

Furthermore, the European Parliament now has significant amendment and veto powers in the adoption of these policies. Most EU migration and related policies are now adopted under the so-called "ordinary legislative procedure." This procedure is a classic bicameral system (Hix and Hoyland, 2011), where the European Parliament has the same legislative authority with the EU Council. Under the ordinary procedure, legislation is initiated by the EU Commission, amended by either a qualified-majority vote (QMV) in the Council or a simple majority in the European Parliament, and finally adopted by QMV in the Council and a simple majority in the European Parliament. The two chambers represent different interests: in the EP, functional and ideological interests emerge, while territorial and national preferences dominate political conflicts in the Council.

So, when making migration and immigrant integration policies, do EU politicians promote their own personal ideological preferences or do they simply vote along party groups lines? This question has direct implications for understanding the evolution of migration policies in Europe. However, this question is also important for the broader issue of whether policy preferences or party discipline shape legislative voting in the EP. In literature, we can find two different explanation of voting cohesion: Kreppel (2002), in her seminal work, suggested that the European Political Groups (EPGs) vote following two dimensions: the traditional left-right dimension and the EU integration and that their cohesion in voting behaviour parallels their preference coherence; conversely, Hix et al. (2007) argued that EPGs vote as a block despite their increasing ideological heterogeneity, and that this cohesion can be explained by party discipline within political groups. An interesting strategy of enquire to tackle this leading research question is to analyse voting behaviour of national delegations in different groups but with similar ideological preferences: if they vote in the same way in relevant issues, despite their group affiliation, the main factor shaping voting behaviour in the EP is the ideological proximity; otherwise, if they vote following instructions from their political groups, the voting cohesion is explained by party discipline.

In this paper, we focus on the behaviour of four Eurosceptic parties (Taggart and Sczerbiack, 2008): Front National (France), UKIP (UK), Northern League (NL) and Five Star Movement (FSM) (Italy). The choice of this kind of parties is twofold: first of all, they show common ideological traits inside their election manifestos, especially on the EU dimension;

secondly, they have increased in electoral terms especially after the economic crisis and the migration concern, becoming relevant actors at national and supranational level. Our main hypothesis is that, despite their allocation in the EP, Eurosceptic parties vote together following their common ideological proximity, and not by party discipline within political groups. In fact, UKIP and FSM belong to the European Freedom and Direct Democracy group (EFDD), while Northern League and Front National to the Europe of Nations and Freedom group (ENF).

Party Politics, EU-crisis and immigration

All four parties in this paper articulate a strong populist anti-establishment agenda and they oppose European integration. The FN, the NL and UKIP exemplify 'hard Euroscepticism' which is defined by Szczerbiak and Taggart (2008) as "a principled opposition to the EU and European integration". These parties share common ideological traits as regards the EU and their opposition to Europe concerns a wide range of institutional, economic and national identity issues. They defend a concept of 'Europe of Nations', whereby institutional cooperation should only take place between sovereign nation-states, opposing the EU as a supranational entity, criticizing also the EU as elitist and bureaucratic. Their distrust of European integration revolves also around immigration and national identity issues, and it is often linked with welfare-chauvinist positions. Finally, the rejection of the EU by parties such as UKIP, the FN and the NL has economic roots although the parties diverge with regards to the economic goals they promote. Whilst the FN and the NL oppose primarily the free market liberal agenda of the EU and its austerity policies, vilipending also the EU as a 'Trojan horse' of globalization, UKIP's criticism of the EU concerns predominantly the cost of membership and the European regulations and laws which are deemed harmful to British companies and small businesses.

The principled opposition to European integration is best epitomized by UKIP's core policy of withdrawal from the EU. In 2014, UKIP claimed to "get Britain out, and return to the UK the power to govern itself". According to Farage's party, leaving the EU would begin the process of "repairing the UK". A similar pledge for a return of competences and powers to the national level has been central to FN electoral platforms since the early 1990s. The 2014 FN party's programme featured primarily the promise to shed the Euro which was portrayed as an 'anomaly' and a 'jail' serving the "sole interests of bankers and the wealthy", and from which the French people "should free themselves". The Lega under Salvini has taken more stringent positions on European integration and it has endorsed hard Eurosceptic narratives, which is an accentuation of the post-1998 U-turn from Europhile to Eurocritic. Since 2013, the NL has been calling for Italy to leave the Euro –"*Euro basta!*"–, while vilipending the EU as a "medieval and totalitarian empire". In December 2013, Salvini called the Euro a 'crime against humanity'. The positions of the Italian FSM concerning European integration have been more ambiguous however. Prior to 2014, EU related issues had very little salience in the party's platform which focused on national rather than international issues (Dehousse, 2013). The party's critical views of the EU have become more apparent in its anti-Euro campaigns since 2014, suggesting a strategic shift from almost inexistent to 'hard' anti-Europeanism. This was reflected in the decision to join the EFDD group, which raised criticism within the party because of the xenophobic positions of UKIP and other members such as the Sweden Democrats and the Polish Congress of the New Right. According to Castelli Gattinara and Froio (2014: 23), the FSM's "discourse is never fully Europeanized, and remains strongly anchored to the interests, rights and benefits of Italy and Italian people".

Why these cases are relevant to our paper

Whilst all four parties can be classified as Eurosceptic, there is however significant variation in the positions they take in their respective party system, and the manner in which Euroscepticism is embedded in their ideology. Examining the positions of extreme right parties, Vasilopoulou (2011) suggests that the European extreme right should not be regarded as a monolithic entity as

those parties adopt varying positions on European integration. The French FN epitomizes the West-European radical right (Kitschelt, 1995: 19). As suggested by Conti et Memoli (2012), Euroscepticism has become central to the programmatic supply of the radical right. In the case of the French FN, the hostility towards the EU is underpinned by the party's traditional ethno-nationalist policies. Anti-EU positions are incorporated into a typical populist radical right agenda, which combines nativism, authoritarianism and anti-establishment populism (Mudde, 2007: 41), while challenging also the fundamental liberal and universalistic values of the European Union. In the United Kingdom, on the other hand, UKIP emerged in the early 1990s as a single-issue right-wing Eurosceptic party advocating British withdrawal from the EU (Norris 2005: 233). More recently, it has moved from this narrow Eurosceptic platform to a more classic populist radical right strategy (Mondon, 2015). While keeping with its anti-EU ideological core, UKIP has emulated the populist and anti-immigration messages of the radical right, successfully widening its electoral appeal to the 'Left behind' i.e. blue-collar, old, white, and male voters with few qualifications (Ford and Goodwin, 2014).

A similar strategy is found in the case of the Italian Northern League. The NL gained prominence during the 1990s on a predominantly populist regionalist agenda exploiting resentment against Rome's centralism and defending the economic interests of northern Italy (McDonnell, 2006: 126). Under Umberto Bossi, the Lega's regionalist populism then incorporated a typical ethno-cultural exclusionary platform, articulating a strong anti-immigration message. This has led in many cases to its inclusion by scholars, albeit as a 'borderline case', into the radical right family (Zaslove 2004, Norris 2005: 65, Mudde 2007: 56). As suggested by Woods (2009: 164), the Lega's positions regarding European integration have always been ambiguous, however, and they have also evolved over time. According to Bartlett et al. (2012: 25) "until the late 1990s, the party was pro-European given the possibilities for greater regional expression offered at the supranational level. Since then, however, it has been characterised by its strong opposition to both the current construction of the EU and the trajectory of European integration". The party began to radically shift its platform more explicitly towards Eurosceptic anti-globalization positions after 1999, increasing in particular its attacks against the Euro at a time when many Italians were dissatisfied with the introduction of the European single currency (Chari et al. 2004: 447). Looking at the anti-EU positions of the NL in the early 2000s, McDonnell (2006: 128-129) argues that the party then fulfilled the criteria both for Eurorejectionism and hard Euroscepticism. Bartlett et al. (2012) see in the Lega the "harshest critic among Italian parties of the EU and European integration" (p.26). Under Salvini, the NL has intensified its Eurosceptic message, attesting once again to the chameleonic nature of the phenomenon. The increased salience of the anti-EU agenda was sanctioned by the decision to leave the Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD) group to join the Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF) group formed by Marine Le Pen's FN and Geert Wilders' PVV in June 2015. In an interview in December 2014, Salvini exhibited hard Euroscepticism calling for the EU to be "demolished" and stating: "The Europe of today cannot be reformed in my opinion. There's nothing to be reformed in Brussels. It's run by a group of people who hate the Italian people and economy in particular" [1].

The FSM occupies a different location in the Italian party system, relying primarily on anti-establishment populism and direct democracy, while showing no clear ideological position on the traditional left-right dimension of competition. As suggested by Bordignon and Ceccarini (2013), the FSM started as a left-wing pro-environment party before turning to a more 'catch-allist' strategy, attracting voters from both sides of the political spectrum. Grillo's party has augmented its support across a wide sector of the Italian electorate, in particular among younger voters with higher education. As regards European integration, the positions of the FSM are often vague and ambiguous. EU-related issues had little visibility and presence in the electoral platform of the party during its phase of entry into the Italian party system (Bartlett et al. 2013, Natale 2014) and they

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[1] http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-italy-politics-salvini-idUKKBN0JO25A20141210 (last seen: 22 February 2016).

have not been pivotal to its competitive strategies since then (Castelli Gattinara and Froio, 2014). To be sure, the FSM does not share the identity-based ethno-nationalist agenda of the radical right and it is not tapping into xenophobic sentiments. Its main roots of Euroscepticism centre primarily on democratic and socio-economic issues: the party opposes European bureaucracy and elitism, calling for more transparency, while also vilipending EU austerity policies. In the 2014 European election campaign, the party's 7-point electoral programme advocated a national referendum on the Euro, together with the creation of Eurobonds and putting an end to the so-called 'fiscal compact'. Based on their analysis of the FSM's voting behaviour in the European Parliament, Franzosi et al. (2015) show that the EFDD cohesion rate has been the lowest of all political groups during the first six months of the new legislature, reflecting in particular the low loyalty rate of FSM members who have been more prone to vote together with the Greens in the EP. Franzosi et al. (2015) conclude that "unlike the UKIP, the FSM's Euroscepticism does not have a specific and sound ideological base (…) To a large extent, its critical stance on Europe can be interpreted as a strategic move of an opposition protest party trying to capitalise on the growing disaffection, distrust and frustration of the Italian electorate" (p.120).

Party positions on immigration

National identity and immigration issues are central aspects in the programmatic supply by right-wing Eurosceptic parties. Halikiopoulou et al. (2012) find a correlation between levels of nationalism and Eurosceptic party positions, showing that in radical right parties anti-EU attitudes are linked with ethnic nationalism (p.532). Parties such as the FN, UKIP and the NL articulate a strong anti-immigration agenda, tapping into xenophobic and nativist sentiments. The French FN is notorious for its politicization of immigration issues. During the 1980s, Le Pen's laid out the basis for a potent ethno-nationalist and welfare-chauvinist 'master frame', which later diffused throughout Europe (Rydgren, 2005). In 2014, the European campaign by the FN was marked by the continuation of xenophobia and welfare-chauvinism, showing no significant departure from the party's traditional ethno-nationalist ideology. The FN committed to "defending, in all circumstances, France's values, identity, traditions and way of life" against what would be stigmatized as a "sieve Europe". The party's 2014 platform lashed out in particular at the Schengen agreement, campaigning on withdrawal, and claiming that the FN would close France's borders to "stop uncontrolled immigration and put an end to the free movement of Roma and delinquents across Europe". Welfare-chaunivist positions surfaced in the FN's pledge to end the Posting of Workers Directive in order to stop the "massive flow of cheap foreign labour" into the country. In line with its 2012 manifesto, the FN proposed also policies which would remove the possibility within French law to regularize illegal migrants. The party's 2012 presidential platform featured a range of nativist policies, including the FN's traditional 'national preference' scheme which seeks to give priority to the French over foreigners in welfare, jobs and housing.

Lynch and Whitaker (2013) suggest that, while keeping with its niche strategy of hard Euroscepticism, UKIP has developed a broader narrative in order to widen its electoral appeal. Ford et al. (2012) show that xenophobia has become an important driver of support for UKIP. They argue that Farage's party has managed to mobilise beyond its core issue of Euroscepticism to assemble a coalition of Eurosceptic conservative voters and economically insecure working class voters who show anti-immigrant hostility and anxiety about Islam. UKIP's 2014 manifesto placed a strong emphasis on intra-EU migration, pledging to "regain control" while holding the Union responsible for "throwing open UK borders to unlimited numbers of Bulgarian and Romanian citizens". According to UKIP, British people should "decide who they want to come and live and work in the UK". During the European election campaign, Farage's party proffered also an explicit welfare-chauvinist platform of limiting access to housing and healthcare to legal residents in the UK, excluding migrants and visitors. The party claimed that "unlimited EU immigration is putting pressure on schools (…) and a massive strain on the NHS" and pledged that it would "prioritise social housing for those with parents and grandparents born locally".

In Italy, the Lega Nord (Northern League – NL) has transformed from its regionalist roots to converge into the radical right populist party family (Zaslove, 2011). During the 1990s, Bossi's party combined regionalist populism with the stigmatization of immigrants, Gypsies and Roma, espousing cultural racism and exhibiting nativism while simultaneously toning down its anti-Southerner rhetoric (McDonnell, 2006: 129; Woods, 2009). Recently, the NL has shifted further its policy goals. It has abandoned –at least temporarily– its federalist platform to emphasize anti-immigration and anti-Islam stances in order to capitalise on rising levels of hostility towards migrants in the Peninsula. In its 2014 European manifesto, the NL called for a return to "national sovereignty" "without the intrusion of Brussels" to manage immigration flows from Arab countries, while echoing the French FN in the pledge to end the Posting of Workers Directive. Under Salvini, the Lega has developed a strong anti-immigration message, using slogans such as "stop the invasion" (*stop invasione*), "strop immigrants" (*stop immigrati*), "today we leave in [Indian] reservations" (*ora vivono nelle reserve!*) and "Islam in school? No thank you!" (*Islam a scuola? No grazie!*). As noted by Bartlett et al. (2012: 26), negative representations of Islam as a threat to the values and Christian identity of the people of Padania have become more in the NL over the past decade. The party's rhetoric embraces also nativist arguments such as "our people first" (*prima i nostri*), "For Mare Nostrum, 1bn Euros. For our unemployed, nothing!" (*Per Mare Nostrum 1 miliardo di euro, per i nostril disoccupati niente!*) and "Guess who is going to be last?" (*indovina chi è l'ultimo?*), showing an old Italian waiting in line in health services behind Chinese, Roma, African and Muslim immigrants.

The FSM's position on immigration is ambiguous. The movement appears to be less cohesive on this issue than on socio-economic themes or the fight against political corruption, revealing internal divisions and disagreements. Immigration disputes within the movement suggest that Grillo and Casaleggio defend more restrictive immigration policies than many of their MPs [2]. The more culturally liberal attitudes in the party's grassroots was revealed in the online referendum of January 2014, whereby a majority (63%) of the movement's sympathisers voted for the abolition of the crime of illegal immigration [3]. This ambivalence reflects also the heterogeneity in the electoral support for the FSM. Bordignon and Ceccarini (2013) show that the movement's electorate originally inclined toward the left but progressively incorporated a larger number of former right-wing supporters. A similar trend is observed by Pedrazzani and Pinto (2015): their analysis of polls suggests a significant increase in the proportion of FSM voters leaning to the right of the political axis before the 2013 legislative elections. Despite the shift in the electoral support for Grillo's movement, immigration issues have yet failed to gain salience. Biorcio and Natale (2013) find no evidence of ethno-cultural nationalism in the party's electoral platform, nor of any anti-immigrant hostility. The FSM 2014 EP election manifesto was devoid of any proposal regarding immigration, with the exception of a "mandatory teaching of the Italian language to foreigners in cases of application for citizenship".

Data and methodology

The main political organizations inside the European Parliament are the transnational political groups, who bring together the national parties with similar policy preferences (Raunio, 1997; Kreppel, 2002). The political groups have significant organizational resources and hierarchical leadership structures. The political group leaderships influence the behaviour of their "backbenchers" by issuing voting instructions, employing "whips" to enforce their instructions, and

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[2] http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2015/06/18/despite-an-awkward-stance-on-immigration-the-five-star-movement-continues-to-offer-a-radical-opposition-to-the-italian-government/;
http://www.corriere.it/politica/14_gennaio_13/grillo-lancia-consultazioni-reato-clandestinita-dissidenti-politica-non-sia-videogame-b474ad60-7c49-11e3-bc95-3898e25f75f1.shtml (last seen: 22 February 2016).

[3] http://www.corriere.it/politica/14_gennaio_13/grillo-lancia-consultazioni-reato-clandestinita-dissidenti-politica-non-sia-videogame-b474ad60-7c49-11e3-bc95-3898e25f75f1.shtml?refresh_ce-cp (last seen: 24 February 2016).

by using "coordinators" in the committees of the Parliament to monitor and coordinate the behaviour of their members in the day- to-day legislative scrutiny work of the Parliament. In particular, Hix et al. (2007) conclude their empirical research on voting behaviour in the EP suggesting that 'transnational European parties are able to have a disciplining effect on their national members parties'. Group unity has increased over time despite an increase in ideological heterogeneity of the transnational groups, and this suggests that party group leadership are able to discipline their members in voting behaviour.

Research on general voting patterns in the European Parliament has shown that as a result of the organizational structure and membership of the political groups, the cohesion of the political groups in the European Parliament has grown over time and competition between the groups is mainly structured along left-right rather than pro/anti-Europe lines (Hix et al. 2007). This consequently suggests that when voting on migration and related issues, MEPs are more likely to act on their personal ideological opinions or the voting instructions of their national or European party leaders than the specific migration policy preferences of the citizens in their member state or the supporters of their national party.

It is particularly surprising that while a lot of scholarly attention has been devoted to both micro-level and macro-level developments related to the normalization of the EP and of MEPs' voting behaviour, practically very limited analysis has been conducted on the effects of exogenous pressures and issue-salience on the alleged trend of normalization and on the EP's dynamics of 'government-opposition'. More specifically, very few studies have been devoted to the analysis of the impact of highly salient issues on the EP voting dynamics and on the individual voting behaviour.

The present study has the ambition to contribute to a wider comparative assessment in this respect. Immigration policy is a significant and salient issue at EU level for two reasons. First of all, size and effects of immigration are increasing throughout the Europe (Lahav 2004); secondly, immigration represents a relevant topic for populist and extreme-right parties like FSM, FN, NL and UKIP. For these reasons and following findings in literature, we can hypothesize that voting behaviour of MEPs from populist and extreme-right parties is mainly shaped by ideological preferences rather than party group membership.

Our analyses are based on roll-call votes (RCVs) focused on immigration and registered during the current term of the EP. All data about RCVs, MEPs and directives are collected either from the website 'VoteWatch'[4].

Before moving on, it seems useful to briefly discuss the nature of the RCVs. When a RCV is requested, the voting choice (Yes, No and Abstention) of each MEP is recorded in the minutes, thereby providing the voting stance of each legislator on a specific vote. The RCVs represent only a portion (roughly one-third) of all the votes cast by the plenary. All the other voting procedures – either by a show of hands or by 'electronic vote' – do not record the way in which each individual MEP votes. The party groups usually call the RCVs. According to Hix (2002) and Carrubba et al. (2003), this procedure is requested by parliamentary leadership for achieving two specific goals: either to show their position to the public or to embarrass other divided groups (Corbett et al. 2000).

According to several scholars, the analyses based on RCV records might suffer from a structural bias determined by the particular nature of this procedure (Carrubba et al. 2002). On the other hand, Hix (2002) maintains that:

> RCVs cover a broad range of issues on the European Union agenda do not appear to be called disproportionately by one EP party or another. Hence, without empirical evidence to prove that roll-call voting is systematically biased towards a particular EP party or set of issues, it is reasonable to assume that these votes should produce a fairly accurate picture of voting behaviour in the EP.

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[4]   http://www.votewatch.eu/en/term8-european-parliament-latest-votes.html#/#EP/0/2014-07-01/2016-03-15/0   (last seen: 13th March 2016).

In conclusion, notwithstanding their still-controversial nature, the analysis of RCV records represents by far the most effective means currently available for studying MEPs' legislative behaviour from an empirical perspective.

Immigration policies in the EP

As discussed in the introduction, in this paper we are interested in analysing the voting behaviour of MEPs on a specific issue: immigration policy. For this reason, we have selected all the bills presented and voted by RCVs in the EP during the current term. All bills in the EP are coded by topic, and we selected only those based on the following keywords: *migration*, *immigration*, *refugees*, *asylum* and *borders*. Table 1 shows the 18 pieces of EU migration and immigrant legislation passed through the current term of the EP (2014-2015) and here analysed.

The EU is a global actor and as such the scope of its interests is global. Therefore, as shown in the last column in Table 1, bills on immigration policy cover a geographical space larger than the official borders of the EU. In fact, legislation on refugees and asylum may refer to situations located in territories outside the EU (i.e. Kenya, Ukraine, Nigeria). In our dataset five bills have an extra-European focus.

Table 1. Migration Legislation in the 8ᵗʰ Term of the EP (2014-2015).

N.	Date	Title	Adopted	Policy Area	N. RCVs	Type of Vote	EU scope
1	15/12/15	Arrangement with the Swiss Confederation on its participation in the European Asylum Support Office	YES	Civil liberties, justice & home affairs	1	LR	YES
2	25/11/15	Mobilisation of the Flexibility Instrument for immediate budgetary measures to address the refugee crisis	YES	Budget	1	MR	YES
3	24/11/15	Repealing certain acts from the Schengen acquis	YES	Civil liberties, justice & home affairs	1	OLP	YES
4	14/10/15	Mobilisation of the Flexibility Instrument for immediate budgetary measures under the European Agenda on Migration	YES	Budget	1	MR	YES
5	14/10/15	Draft amending budget No 7/2015: Managing the refugee crisis: immediate budgetary measures under the European Agenda on Migration	YES	Budget	4	MR	YES
6	17/09/15	Council Decision establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy, Greece and Hungary	YES	Foreign & security policy	10	PD	YES
7	10/09/15	Migration and refugees in Europe - Joint motion for resolution	YES	Foreign & security policy	16	MR	YES
8	09/09/15	Provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece	YES	Civil liberties, justice & home affairs	17	LR	YES
9	09/07/15	European Agenda on Security - Motion for resolution	YES	Foreign & security policy	27	MR	YES
10	09/07/15	Security challenges in the Middle East and North Africa and prospects for political stability	YES	Foreign & security policy	6	MR	NO
11	09/07/15	Review of the European neighbourhood policy	YES	Foreign & security policy	9	MR	NO
12	07/07/15	Draft amending budget No 5/2015 - Responding to migratory pressures	YES	Budget	1	MR	YES
13	30/04/15	Situation in Nigeria - Joint motion for resolution	YES	Foreign & security policy	1	MR	NO
14	30/04/15	Persecution of the Christians around the world, in relation to the killing of students in Kenya by terror group Al-Shabaab	YES	Foreign & security policy	14	MR	NO
15	29/04/15	Discharge 2013: European Asylum Support Office (EASO)	YES	Budgetary control	2	PD	YES
16	29/04/15	Report of the extraordinary European Council meeting - The latest tragedies in the	YES	Civil liberties, justice & home	15	MR	YES

		Mediterranean and EU migration and asylum policies		affairs			
17	17/12/14	Situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration	YES	Civil liberties, justice & home affairs	1	MR	YES
18	17/07/14	Situation in Ukraine - Joint Motions for a resolution	YES	Foreign & security policy	8	MR	NO

Note: LR= legislative resolution; MR= motion for resolution; PD= proposal for a decision; OLP= ordinary legislative procedure.

The first bill on modalities of Swiss participation in the European Asylum Support Office aimed to establish a full engagement of Switzerland in administrative and financial activities of the Support Office. In particular, the arrangements between EU and Switzerland were expected to support the exchange of best practices and expertise, to gather information and to offer support in case of emergency.

Two bills (n.2 and n.4) proposed a re-allocation of respectively EUR 1,504 million and 66.1 million to deal with the refugees and migrants crisis in Europe. The bills mobilise financial resources under the expenditure heading 'Security and Citizenship' in the multi-annual financial framework of the EU.

The third bill had the purpose to repeal a number of legal measures in the area of freedom, security and justice that have been identified as obsolete. In particular, the proposed bill concerns either police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters in order to identify illegal migrants and refugees crossing the borders.

The fifth bill aimed (a) to increase the number of posts for FRONTEX, EASO and EURPOL; (b) to re-direct EUR 300 million for the 'European Neighbourhood Instrument'; (c) to increase financial resources for Humanitarian Aid for an amount of EUR 55.7 million. All these actions are based on the conviction that the EU needs to do more to address the current migration and refugee crisis and to help stabilise countries of origin and assist countries of transit as the proposed measures will certainly not be sufficient, given the overall number of persons seeking protection in the Union.

The sixth proposed decision aimed to establish provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy, Greece and Hungary, in order to enable them to deal in an effective manner with the current significant inflow of third country nationals in their territories, putting their asylum systems under strain. More precisely, the EP proposed to relocate 66,000 persons from Italy and Greece (15,600 from Italy and 50,400 from Greece). Moreover, Member States participating in the mechanism of reallocation receive a lump sum of EUR 6,000 for each relocated person. The eighth legislative resolution approved by the EP had a similar content: the bill proposes a new scheme of migrant relocation based on the lessons learned from the pilot project expired in Malta (EUREMA) and, in particular, the Parliament suggests that applicants must have the opportunity to express their preferences to the relocation to a new Member State. The new scheme was aimed to give support to Italy and Greece and to make relocation less traumatic for refugees.

The seventh resolution expresses the general purpose of political forces in the EP over refugees and migrants crisis in Europe. In particular, the Parliament reiterated its support for its resolution of 29 April 2015 on EU migration and asylum policies, and the need for an immediate response to the current refugee situation based on solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility, as stated in Article 80 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Moreover, the EP regretted that the leaders of some Member States and the far-right parties were using the current situation to fuel anti-migration sentiments while blaming the EU for the crisis.

Even if it is not directly related to migration policy, the ninth bill recalled the urgent need for the EU to assess better the threat against EU security and to focus on immediate priority areas for the fight against terrorism. What is of interest for us in this proposal is that Parliament condemned any analysis that leads to confusion between terrorism, insecurity, Islam and migrants.

Extreme-right and populist parties very often state that migrants increase insecurity and they are related to terrorist attacks.

The tenth bill recognises that the conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya and the increase in tensions in the MENA region were major sources of destabilisation of that region and that the risks for European security, citizens and interests were serious. For these reasons the EP stresses that all Member States must increase their commitments in relation to refugee crisis, they must absorb the biggest share of refugees in proportion to their population and they should step up their efforts in hosting asylum seekers especially from Syria and Iraq.

The resolution number 11 emphasises that a successful strategy to tackle the immigration crisis is to strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in order to create more stable political, economic and social environment in countries affected by civil wars, revolutions and economic diseases.

The twelfth bill presents two financial actions aimed, first of all, to increase the EU contribution to FRONTEX in 2015 by an additional amount of EUR 26.08 million, secondly to support the frontline Member States in receiving an increased number of migrants.

The resolution number 13 in our dataset strongly condemned the ongoing and increasingly violence committed by terrorist Boko Haram against civilian in Nigeria. In particular, the EP called the EU to set up a credible and holistic European system for managing the migration routes from sub-Saharan Africa to the Middle East and northern Africa and to offer sustainable development solutions to countries of origin, such as Nigeria. The EP expresses similar statements in the resolution n.14. It is focuses on the violence and the increasing number of refugees created in Kenya by Al-Shabaab.

The fifteenth bill approves the financial year of 2013 for the European Asylum Office (EASO). It could appear a technical and not a political issue to approve an agency budget, but many times parliaments decide on the basis of past votes and approval (or rejection) and, at the same time, contesting budget of EASO can be an instrument to challenge the political strategy behind the implementation of asylum policy in the EU.

The sixteenth resolution requested the European Union and Member States to develop existing cooperation and do everything that is in their power to avoid other people perishing at sea. In particular, the EP advocated (a) the establishment by the Commission of a binding quota for the distribution of asylum seekers between Member States; (b) the use of the existing possibilities for issuing humanitarian visas in the embassies and consular offices of the Member States; (c) the implementation of voluntary return policies, ensuring the protection of the rights of all migrants and guaranteeing a safe and legal access to European asylum system; and (d) a rapid and full transposition and effective implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) by all participating Member States.

The resolution number 17 is about the situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration. The resolution presses all Member States to make sufficient contribution to FRONTEX and EASO's budgets and operations.

Finally, the eighteenth bill analyses the situation in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia and recognises that, especially in Moldova and Ukraine, local government does not guarantee fundamental human, civil and minority rights. This condition creates waves of immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers at the doors of the EU, worsening the immigration crisis.

Measures of party unity in the EP

The main aim of the paper is to figure out voting behaviour on migration policy in the EP and, in particular, we postulate that MEPs vote following ideological pressure instead of EPG line. In order to empirically test our hypothesis, we need to calculate how may times each national delegation votes in the same way of the other national parties (regardless of their group membership) and like transnational groups (ENF and EFDD).

The simplest way to measure interparty dynamics is the coincidence of each national party's vote with the other national parties' vote. The *index of voting coincidence* (IVC) measures the convergence between two national delegations that is it shows the percentage out of total number of RCVs in which the political lines of the two national delegations coincided. We have defined the political line of either a European political group or a national party delegation as the position adopted by the plurality of MEPs within that Group or delegation. For example, if the majority of French Front National legislators votes 'yes' on a specific vote, we infer that the political line expresses by FN is 'yes'. In cases where an equal number of MEPs vote "for" and "against" in a European political group or in a national part delegation, the conclusion is that "there is no political line" and they are dropped out the dataset. Therefore, we calculate if the political line of each national party delegation (its plurality) matches the political line both of the groups and the other national party delegations. If it does, then they express a coincident vote, otherwise they show a separate vote.

Migration policy may be a divisive issue, where MEPs vote following different policy lines. For this reason it is important to understand the degree of cohesiveness of each national delegation. The party unity scores that we use in this paper is based on the Agreement Index (AI) developed by Hix et al. (2007) to analyse voting cohesion in the European Parliament. 'Agreement' refers to how united a European political group is in voting situations. The AI is calculated as follows:

$$AI = \frac{\max\{Yi, Ni, Ai\} - \frac{1}{2}[(Yi, Ni, Ai) - \max\{Yi, Ni, Ai\}]}{Yi + Ni + Ai}$$

where *Yi* denotes the number of Yes votes expressed by group *i* on a given vote, *Ni* the number of No votes and *Ai* the number of Abstain votes. The Index differs from the frequently applied Rice Index, as it also is able to take into account voting abstentions. The Index ranges from 0 to 1. If all party group members always vote in the same way the score is 1. If the party group is completely divided, e.g. 50% of the members vote yes and 50% no, the index score is 0 (Hix et al. 2007:91-95).

As suggested in literature, party unity can be explained by ideological cohesion of members. Therefore, we need to estimate policy positions of parties over main dimensions of conflict in the EP. In order to measure the positions adopted by parties, we rely on the Chapel Hill Expert Surveys (CHES). The CHES measures party positioning on European integration, ideology, and policy issues for national parties in a variety of European countries. The first survey was conducted in 1996, then repeated in 1999, 2002, 2006, 2010 with the most recent wave sent into the field in late 2014. Every wave of the survey contains questions on how the parties position themselves on European integration, several EU policies, the general left/right, the economic left/right and the social left/right scales. The range of policy questions within the CHES data, as well as the geographic and temporal scope of the surveys, makes the CHES data ideal for investigating the dimensionality of party spaces across a wide range of European countries. In particular, we are interested in four different dimensions: *left-right*, *EU*, *immigration policy* and *nationalism*. The first two are strictly related to dimensions of party politics in the EP (Hix and Lord 1997; Hix et al. 2007); the latter two are based on relevant topics for populist and extreme parties analysed in this paper. *Left-right* issue ranges from 0 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right) and the *EU* dimension measures 1 if the party is strongly opposed to the EU integration process and 10 if the party is strongly in favour. Immigration policy shows 0 if the party is fully opposed to restrictive immigration policy and 10 if the party is fully in favour of restrictive immigration policy. Finally, nationalism measures 0 if the party promotes an open and cosmopolitan society and 10 if the party strongly supports a nationalist identity.

We use a weighted mean (weighted by the distribution of seats in the case of the European Parliament) of national party positions to represent the ideological preferences of political groups in the EP. Party composition of ENF and EFDD is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. EFDD and ENF composition.

	EFDD		
National Party	Country	n. MEPs	%
Party of Free Citizens	Czech Republic	1	2.22
Independent	France	1	2.22
Five Star Movement	Italy	17	37.78
Order and Justice	Lithuania	1	2.22
Independent	Poland	1	2.22
Sweden Democrats	Sweden	2	4.44
United Kingdom Independence Party	United Kingdom	22	48.89
	Total	45	100

	ENF		
National Party	Country	n. MEPs	%
Freedom Party of Austria	Austria	4	10.53
Flemish Bloc	Belgium	1	2.63
National Front	France	20	52.63
Northern League	Italy	5	13.16
Party of Freedom	Netherlands	4	10.53
Congress of the New Right	Poland	2	5.26
Conservative Party	Romania	1	2.63
United Kingdom Independence Party	United Kingdom	1	2.63
	Total	38	100

As discussed above, immigration policy in the EP has a wide geographical scope and, in particular, it is focused not just on the EU immigration crisis but also on refugees and migrants diseases around the world. Therefore, we calculate IVC and AI in general and differentiating among the geographical orientation of each vote.

Data analysis

This analysis represents a first step to understand voting behaviour of MEPs from the four Eurosceptic parties previously described. As we mentioned before, our cases are part of two different groups inside the European Parliament (EP). In fact, UKIP (UK) and FSM (Italy) belong to the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy group (EFDD), while Northern League (Italy) and Front National (France) to the Europe of Nations and Freedom group (ENF). The point is to understand how these MEPs vote despite their allocation in the EP. According to part of literature, Eurosceptic parties vote together following their common ideological proximity, and not by party discipline within political groups or national delegations. So in order to verify this hypothesis, we examine first of all MEPs' attitudes on the basis of their general behaviour in respect of their groups inside the EP and their national parties. Table 3 shows mean cohesion (inside the two EPGs) and loyalty of the four party delegations towards their EPG and their NP. The percentage values were calculated taking into account all policy areas of directives approved in EP by RCVs.

Table 3. Mean Cohesion and Loyalty – all policy areas (percentage values).

MEAN COHESION	EFN	89.88
	EFDD	69.29
LOYALTY EPG	NL	60.86
	FN	97.13
	FSM	47.47
	UKIP	86.15
LOYALTY NP	NL	97.78
	FN	97.87
	FSM	99.21
	UKIP	97.90

Looking at the same table, we notice a major mean cohesion inside the EFN group in relation to EFDD group. In general again, the less loyal party delegations inside its EPG is the FSM (47.47%) and the more loyal appears the FN (97.13%). By contrast, the most loyal national delegation, among these four parties, is just that of the Five Star Movement (99.21%). However, these four parties maintain a high level of cohesion and they are quite loyal towards their national party. The lower percentage is that of the Northern League with 97.78% in terms of loyalty. Again on the basis of all policy areas discussed in the EP and approved by roll-calls votes, the FSM appears quite loyal towards its EPG, the EFDD. The UKIP, which is part of the same group, is more loyal (86.15%). This aspect shows right away a general anomaly in the MPs' behaviour from FSM. The national delegation maintains a strong level of cohesion but the MPs have a very different voting behaviour towards its EPG and towards the other national delegations, that of UKIP from Britain. This aspect will be better explained because of the following data from our analysis on specific issues.

After this general outline, we move now to consider MEPs' behaviour on the specific area of immigration policy. As we mentioned, EU-directives regarding immigration problems represent an effective means to test ideological similarity among these parties and to analyse their placement about a very influential topic such as migration and immigrations problems.

Considering the 18 directives and the related 135 roll-calls votes about migrations policies, included in our dataset, we noticed some important differences among four party delegations. Table 4 underlines (in percentage values) how many times national delegations votes together during RCVs about all directives concerning immigration. Also the table shows how many time the four parties are loyal towards their EPGs.

Table 4. MEPs' behaviour – all directives about immigration policy (percentage values).

	NL	FN	UKIP	FSM	ENF	EFDD
NL		63.70	34.07	29.63	60.22	41.98
FN	63.70		46.67	18.52	92.47	50.38
UKIP	34.07	46.67		11.85	65.59	70.23
FSM	29.63	18.52	11.85		13.98	41.98
ENF	60.22	92.47	65.59	13.98		62.92
EFDD	41.98	50.38	70.23	41.98	62.92	

A first relevant datum relates to FSM that votes along with their EPG (EFDD) only 41.98% of the time, compared to 70.23% of UKIP. The highest level of proximity to its EPG is that of FN. The French delegation votes together with ENF group in 92.47% of cases. The Italian Northern League (NL) votes in the same way as its group (again ENF group) for 60.22%. The two national delegations – Northern League and Front National – vote together in 63.70% of cases. We can

understand this quite high level of proximity between NL and FN taking into accounts their political line and their electoral programs. Recently the two parties had an important and formal opportunity to expose, by the way, their common agenda specially concerning immigration policies. In fact NL organize an international meeting in Milan (January 2016) in order to bring together party delegates from ENF group and to discuss a contingency planning just about immigration as political problem. In the same occasion, the leader of FN, Marine Le Pen, declared her intention to develop a close cooperation with NL, in particular, to face immigration questions under a supranational level.

The view of the situation appears very different if we consider the dealing between FSM and UKIP. The two extensive delegations forming part of EFDD group – as shown in table 4 – vote together only in 11.85% of the time. This datum underlines a low level of proximity between the two parties representing the two more numerous national delegations inside the EFDD group (17 FSM; 22 UKIP[5]). Effectively the decision by Grillo's party to joint EFDD group was accompanied by a large debate among delegates and among party membership, too. On 12 June 2014, the FSM, having been rejected by The Greens/EFA and by Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) groups, offered its activists a limited-choice online referendum to choose a European Parliament group for their party, in which 78% of participating activists voted for the EFDD[6]. The EFDD group is a continuation for the 8th European Parliament (previous parliamentary term) of the Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD) group, proposed and chaired by Nigel Farage, the current UKIP's leader. Actually, the co-presidency of the EPG is entrusted to David Borrelli (FSM) and Nigel Farage himself. The group was formed following the 2009 European parliamentary election, under a declared strong hostility to European integration, preserving nationalistic and anti-immigration attitudes. In the current parliamentary term, the EFDD group has been recovered with significant changes to group membership and with some modifications to its statute, too[7]. In general, the EPG maintains its opposition towards EU-integrations and "favours an open, transparent, democratic and accountable co-operation among sovereign European States and rejects the bureaucratisation of Europe and the creation of a single centralised European super-state" (Statute, p. 3 - Political platform).

So the EU-alliance between FSM and UKIP, leads us to reconsider ideological placement of this Italian delegation or to interpret in a different way the choice of FSM to be a member of EFDD. Inside its country, the Five Star Movement set up its political agenda around a "citizens' sovereignty" opposed to corruptive political class. So FSM proposes a strong people calling in which the "people" are the "sovereign-people" (Mény and Surel, 2001). According to scholars, populist expressions such as FSM have different enemies: if the people are the sovereign people, then the enemy is the political representation (the parties and the politicians). However, it is possible to retrace other callings inside populist agenda. In one of the third instance identified by Mény and Surel - in a cultural sense - the people are the "nation people," or the wider community. According again to Mény and Surel (2001: 198), in this view "populism has been confused with a particular type of nationalism" and if the people are the nation people, the enemies become foreigners or immigrants. In this latter case, some political expression would accentuate the danger of an outside menace and it would create a collective identity and become a kind of socio-cultural cement. This is the case, for example, of the "Padania-people" invented by the Northern League in the 1990s. At the contrary, FSM's project grows up from a strong critic of the existing political party, the politicians, and the "political caste", in general. So, in the FSM's political agenda, clearly people calling has been asserted in terms of a sovereign people: with the slogan "the parties are dead" and with the statement "It is necessary to bring back the country to the people's will" (Cf. Grillo 2009), the Italian party resolutely declares its purpose and its distrust of traditional parties. In its original message the nation people appeal is totally absent: the party "we" does not refer to any form of ethnic or community affiliation (Lanzone, 2014: 60). In the FSM's project there are no a

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[5] UKIP is actually the largest UK party delegation represented inside the European Parliament.
[6] http://www.beppegrillo.it/2014/06/consultazione_o.html (last seen: 14th March 2016).
[7] http://www.efddgroup.eu/images/statute/EN.pdf (last seen: 14th March 2016).

declared xenophobic expressions or exclusion drives such as occurred in other parties considered there.

In general FSM maintains a very low level of proximity towards all party delegations considered in this study. The highest value is the percentage of votes in common with NL delegation (29.63%). FSM votes together with FN in 18.52% of the time. That relates to UKIP/FSM voting proximity rests the lower value noted in the table (11.85%).

Other party delegations we looked at, they have a quite good level of familiarity about voting behaviour in directives concerning immigration policy, in general. Data analysis is able to underline a quite level of proximity among MEPs from different EPG, too (EFDD/ENF). As an example, UKIP vote together with FN in the 46.67% of case and together with NL for 34,07%.

In order to better explore MEPs' attitudes towards EU-integration in general and migration policies in particular, we decided to separate the 18 directives in "directives with EU-scope" and "directives with extra EU-scope". Table 5 shows percentage values about voting proximity in directives with EU-scope. In the present case, national delegation from FSM votes together with that of UKIP in only 9.28% of case. This is an even lower value compared to data contained in table 4 (all directives). Also the percentage of proximity between FSM and its EPD (EFDD) is lower than previous table. So in these specific directives, FSM appears even more distant from other MEPs' attitudes. A quite high level of proximity is again that between NL and FN (62.89%). This value rests in line with data from voting about all directives. More in general, UKIP votes together with its group (EFDD) in 80.21% of case; FN (ENF) in 91.03% and NL (ENF) in 64.10%. Positions between FN and FSM rest very distant in the case of these specific directives (8.25%).

Table 5. MEPs' behaviour – directives with EU-scope (percentage values).

	NL	FN	UKIP	FSM	ENF	EFDD
NL		62.89	40.21	26.80	64.10	41.67
FN	62.89		48.45	8.25	91.03	48.96
UKIP	40.21	48.45		9.28	68.00	80.21
FSM	26.80	8.25	9.28		62.82	29.17
ENF	64.10	91.03	62.82	10.26		62.34
EFDD	41.67	48.96	80.21	29.17	62.34	

Considering now table 6 (directives with extra EU-scope), we can notice some differences in MEPs voting behaviour. Attitudes of certain party delegations towards this specific category of directives underline a more strong opposition against integration and immigration problems. In particular, one of the two delegations forming part of ENF vote together with their group more commonly in these cases compared to voting behaviour towards directives with EU-scope. It is the case of French FN that reaches the value of 100.00%. However the more interesting datum is again that relating to FSM: considering this specific category of directives, the level of proximity between national party and its EPG (EFDD) changes substantially. In fact, FSM votes together with its EU-group in 77.14% of the time. Also the level of similarity between FSM and UKIP arrives at 18.42% compared to 9.28% concerning directives with EU-scope and 11.85% among votes about all directives. Looking at UKIP and again at directives with extra EU-scope, we notice a more proximity between this national delegation and delegations from the other EPG, the ENF (80.00%).

**Table 6. MEPs' behaviour – directives with extra EU-scope (percentage values).**

	NL	FN	UKIP	FSM	ENF	EFDD
NL		65.79	18.42	36.84	40.00	42.86
FN	65.79		42.11	44.74	100.00	54.29
UKIP	18.42	42.11		18.42	80.00	42.96
FSM	36.84	44.74	18.42		33.33	77.14
ENF	40.00	100.00	80.00	33.33		66.67
EFDD	42.86	54.29	42.86	77.14	66.67	

In general, it appears that Eurosceptic parties traditionally ascribed at a right-oriented political agenda, such as Front National, Northern League and UKIP, express their general opposition to EU-integration and immigration policies in terms of ideological affinity (Mudde 2007; Minkenberg 2013). So, these parties vote together quite frequently in all cases (directives with EU-scope and directives with extra EU-scope). More controversial is the situation of FSM and its national delegation. From our first analysis (considering 18 directives about immigration) result some important differences between Grillo's party and other party delegations, specially considering directives with EU-scope. For the moment, the decision by FSM to join EFDD group appears better a strategic decision and not a really ideological placement.

Our main hypothesis is that the key reason behind voting behaviour of Eurosceptic parties in the EP is ideological preferences (as suggested by Kreppel (2002)) and not party groups discipline (as suggested by Hix et al. (2007)).

In order to provide empirical evidences to our hypothesis we have to look at policy positions of national delegations. In this regard, figure 1 and 2 show party positions on four relevant dimensions: left-right, EU, immigration policy and nationalism. The charts confirm our hypothesis that policy distance shapes voting behaviour. UKIP, NL and FN have similar policy positions on immigration and nationalism issues and, consequently, they show a relative high level in the index of voting coincidence (IVC).

Figure 1. Party policy positions on nationalism and immigration policy.
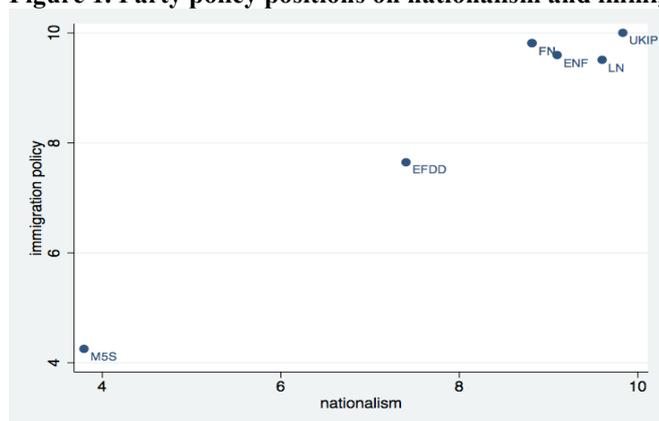
Notes: Immigration policy: 0 = Fully opposed to a restrictive policy on immigration; 10= Fully in favor of a restrictive policy on immigration. Nationalism: 0= Strongly promotes cosmopolitan rather than nationalist conceptions of society; 10=Strongly promotes nationalist rather than cosmopolitan conceptions of society.
Sources: CHES (2014).

Considering the dimensions of nationalism and immigration policy, FSM place itself in a position very close to "0" (fully opposed to a restrictive policy about immigration and strongly in favour of a cosmopolitan conceptions of society). However UKIP appears more in line with ENF group, compared to the placement of EFDD. Other parties remain strongly close to maximum value of the range (10). Graph 2 underlines a similar situation in party placement about other two dimensions (on left-right and EU dimension). In this instance, FSM place itself very distant to right

positions. At the contrary, French FN is the party located in strong-right area. In general, all these four party reflect an opposition to EU. In fact nobody declares its favour in EU-integration process but FSM maintain is different placement in the range, with a more moderate position towards EU.

Table 2. Party Policy Position on left-right and EU dimension.

EU: 1=Strongly opposed; 10= Strongly in favour

Finally, in order to have a full picture of our analysis, it is important to also understand the degree of cohesiveness of each national delegation. As we mentioned before, the party unity scores used in this paper are based on AI developed by Hix et al. (2007)[8]. Table 7 illustrates that FSM – considering these specific policy areas – is the more cohesive party with an index of 0.93; the less cohesive national delegations is that from UKIP with the AI equal to 0.82. In general, these four parties are quite cohesive within them.

Table 7. National delegations cohesion (AI).

NP Cohesion	AI
FSM	0.93
UKIP	0.82
NL	0.87
FN	0.90

Conclusions

As mentioned above, in literature, we can find two different explanation of voting cohesion. In this regard, Kreppel (2002) suggested that the EPGs vote following two dimensions: the traditional left-right dimension and the EU integration and that their cohesion in voting behaviour parallels their preference coherence. By contrast, Hix et al. (2007) argued that EPGs vote as a block despite their increasing ideological heterogeneity, and that this cohesion can be explained by party discipline within political groups. On this basis our paper is a first step to investigate voting behaviour of national delegations in different groups but with similar ideological preferences. So our main research question is that, despite their allocation in the EP, Eurosceptic parties vote together following their common ideological proximity, and not by party discipline within political groups. The four parties (FSM; UKIP; NL; FN) considered in our analysis represent crucial cases to understand EP legislative voting, specially considering influent policies such as those regarding immigrations.

In general, these parties present common traits in the field of EU-integration: they rest opposed on EU as supranational institution and in favour of national sovereignty. In particular, NL and FN maintain a high level of proximity confirmed by data concerning voting behaviour on migrations and immigration policies. This affinity – in the case of FN and NL – has resulted in the

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[8] The Index ranges from 0 to 1.

same decision of national delegations to join ENF group inside the EP. It is possible to underline a quite level of proximity also between these two parties (FN and NL) and national delegation of UKIP from Great Britain. Certainly the more ambiguous case rests the Italian FSM with their not clear ideological placement. However the ideological cohesion seems to be the basic element to understand voting behaviour of MEPs from these EPG. Our hypothesis is confirmed just by data concerning FSM national delegation. This special case drives us to conclude – at this stage – that certain MEPs with a strong relevance inside EP are able to vote despite their group affiliation and the instructions from their EPGs[9].

Finally, we have to ask ourselves how improving our paper in future researches. On this matter, we can underline again the draft aspect of this work. For the future, it is possible to retrace different paths to enlarge and reinforce our research. At first, we intend to improve our dataset regarding EU-directives, including other policy areas, too. In this way we can better verify our hypothesis about reasons of voting behaviour of Eurosceptic parties. Different attitudes are possible towards other issues (more or less divisive for each national delegations). Secondly, it is possible to compare MEPs' attitudes from these two EPGs with other EU-groups. For example, FSM present a quite strong distance from its EPG placement, but other similarities are maybe possible to retrace inside other group forming part of EP? A third path is that to extend our analysis to other countries and national delegations. From a theoretical point of view, concept of Euro-scepticism inside EP and national parties is an aspect to better elaborate and expand.

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[9] Scholars identify several reasons by party groups to request RCVs (Carrubba and Gabel 1999). Among these reasons, there is the intent to observe MEPs behaviour and enforce party discipline (Corbett, et. al. 1995, 2000). Taking into account these statements too, attitudes of MEPs from FSM appear even more relevant.

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