The different twins:

A multilevel analysis of the positions of the Northern League and the Five Star Movement on the integration-demarcation dimension

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Abstract

According to several scholars, the politicization of issues connected to immigration and the European Union (EU) has generated a demarcation-integration cleavage that now structures political competition in Western Europe. Italy is an interesting case for studying this process, as two 'different' populist-Eurosceptic parties, namely the Northern League (LN) and the Five Star Movement (M5S), have managed to form a governmental coalition (the so-called yellow-green coalition) by politicizing these two issues. This paper proposes a multifaceted conceptualisation of the EU and the immigration issues to investigate how LN and M5S position themselves across their multiple sub-dimensions. This empirical analysis is based on an original dataset of parliamentary speeches delivered by the two parties' representatives in two distinct institutional arenas: the Italian and the European parliaments. The results show that LN's positions are guided by cultural-identitarian and sovereignist arguments, while M5S mobilizes the two issues to boost its anti-elitist claims. More importantly, the paper shows how nuanced the two parties' positioning on the integration-demarcation dimension is, something that points to possible 'wedges' in the current governing coalition in Italy.

1. Introduction

Recent studies show that political conflicts over supranational issues have transformed the structure of political competition, giving birth to a new 'integration-demarcation' cleavage, opposing the 'winners' and the 'losers' of globalisation (Kriesi *et al.* 2012, 73). In particular, 'European integration and immigration correspond to the new political and cultural forms of competition linked with globalization' (Kriesi *et al.* 2006, 924). In this vein, Hooghe and Marks (2018) claim that the impact of immigration and European integration has been no less disruptive on European politics than the previous junctures identified by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) as cleavage politics. In their words:

> 'Just as the Bolshevik revolution was a critical juncture in the expression of the class cleavage, so the euro crisis and the migration crisis can be considered as critical for the emergence of a transnational cleavage' (p. 116)

According to several scholars, the politicization of this transnational cleavage is a key factor in explaining the electoral success of so-called Eurosceptic/populist parties,

generally excluded from the governmental arena (Akkerman *et al.* 2016; Wolinetz and Zalslove 2018).

Italy is a privileged case for observing these trends given that two different populist parties, namely the League (former Northern League – LN[1]) and the Five Star Movement (M5S), significantly increased their share of votes in the last round of general elections (March 2018) by mobilizing immigration and European affairs. The literature agrees that these two parties form a coalition that transcends the left-right ideological continuum. In fact, the demarcation-integration divide is a more suitable explanation for this type of coalition. Our work provides a multidimensional empirical assessment of LN and M5S positions along this divide by comparing their stances on issues relating to immigration and the European Union in two distinct political arenas: the national parliament and the European parliament (EP).

In so doing, it answers the following research questions: what arguments do LN and M5S use to talk about the EU and migration? Do they hold similar positions? Do they frame the two issues differently between the two arenas?

The paper starts by presenting a multidimensional (re-)conceptualisation of both the EU (Section 2) and immigration issues (Section 3). It then applies a computer-assisted discourse analysis (CADA) (Partington 2010) method to an original dataset of 533 speeches delivered in the national and the supranational parliamentary arenas. The paper compares the two issues from a multilevel perspective: 1) an inter-parties comparison within the national arena; 2) an inter-parties comparison within the supranational arena, and 3) an inter-arenas comparison, between the national and the supranational parliaments. A conclusive section summarizes the obtained findings.

2. The EU as a multi-dimensional issue

Academics in the field have generally regarded party positioning on the EU as a Manichean concept, distinguishing parties either as critical (Eurosceptic) or as supporters (Europeanist) of the European integration process. However, the distinction Euroscepticism/Europeanist is generally too limited to understand the variegated nature of the phenomenon.

Nonetheless, researchers widely rely on the dichotomous distinction elaborated by Taggart and Szczerbiak (2001), distinguishing parties either as 'hard' or as 'soft' Eurosceptics, the former rejecting the very idea of the EU and European integration, the latter proposing a softer criticism of both the policies and the architecture of the EU. Several categories have been formulated to disentangle and better define the phenomenon of Euroscepticism from both a popular and a party-based perspective (see Vasilopoulou 2013 for an extensive review). Although these efforts increase our knowledge of Euroscepticism, they 'differentiate between the degrees of the phenomenon without formulating satisfactory definitions' (Crespy and Verschueren 2009, 381).

Instead of proposing a new category, this chapter relies on the assumption that the EU is a political system (Kreppel 2002; Brack 2018) constituted by a set of *political objects* (Easton 1965, 436) that parties may support or oppose to define their overall positioning *vis-à-vis* the EU. In particular, we classify the targets of party positioning as the EU-elite;

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[1] The party changed its name in 2017. For simplicity we use its former denomination throughout the paper.

the EU-institutions; the EU-community and EU-policies. As emerges from Table 1 below, the EU issue is constituted by two broad dimensions: 'what the EU does' identifying the *output* of the EU-political system and 'what the EU is' referring to the components of the EU-political system.

Table 1. EU issue dimensions

'What the EU does'	'What the EU is'		
Policy dimension	*Elite dimension*	*Institutional dimension*	*Community dimension*
EU-policies: • Objectives • Instruments. • Financial endowments.	EU-elite: Performance and moral characteristics: • Bureaucrats. • Politicians. • Functionaries	EU-regime: Performance, values and norms: • European Commission (EC). • European Parliament (EP). • Council of Ministers (Council). • Other institutions.	EU-community: • EU values and norms (identity). • EU-competencies (deepening). • EU-enlargement (widening). Sub-dimensions of the EU-community: territorial areas of application of some specific EU-policies: • Euro-area: common monetary policy. • Schengen area: protection of both internal and external borders.

EU-policies are conceived as the EU political system's *output*: parties can either support or criticise a specific policy, its objectives, the implied instruments and its financial endowment. The EU-elite dimension refers to the complex of 'public officials and institutional actors that exercise EU governance' (Serricchio, Tsakatica and Quaglia 2013). The EU-regime is constituted by the institutions composing the EU (the EP, the European Commission, the Council of Ministers and so on). Parties can evaluate both the performance (Krouwel and Abts 2007) and the values and norms underpinning the EU institutions (e.g., rule of law, representativeness, democracy). The EU-community dimension is intended as the physical community composed of member states. When taking a stance on the EU community, parties refer to its competencies (along the national-supranational axis), to its potential enlargement to new member states (widening), or to their country's membership in the community on the basis of identitarian or cost-benefit arguments. The EU community entails two further sub-dimensions identifying the two main territorial areas of application of some specific EU-policies: the Euro-area and the Schengen area (Carlotti 2017).

3. Immigration as a multidimensional issue

Immigration has also been widely regarded as a multi-dimensional concept (e.g. Givens and Luedtke 2005). The widely accepted conceptualization by Hammar (1985) distinguishes between 'immigration control policies' and 'immigrant policies' (Table 2 below).

Table 2. The immigration issue's dimensions.

***Control* dimension**	***Integration* dimension**
Measures regulating immigrants:	Measures regulating immigrants' integration:
• Admission and entrance. • Residence status. • Expulsion.	• Civic rights. • Socio-economic rights. • Cultural and religious rights. • Political rights.

Immigration control policies refer to the normative framework regulating the selection, admission, settlement and deportation of foreign citizens, defining the degree to which a nation opens its borders to the entry and residence of foreign citizens. On the contrary, immigrant policies regulate third-country nationals' socio-economic, cultural-religious and political integration in the host society and define the degree of membership in the host society. In particular, integration is composed of three elements (Marshall & Bottomore, 1992): the civic element includes individual freedoms, e.g. freedom of the person, freedom of speech, freedom of expression, right to justice. The social element encompasses the right to share the welfare of the receiving society, namely access to social services, healthcare, housing, labour market, education, etc. Finally, the political element refers to the right to vote and to citizenship.

4. LN and M5S: Eurosceptic, Populist, or Anti-Immigration?

This work is a comparative case study of the currently Italian governing parties (LN and M5S). Although LN and M5S differ in terms of both their origins and ideological orientations and belong to different EP Party Groups (EPPGs), they are widely regarded as Eurosceptic and populist parties (Bulli and Soare 2018).

LN was first founded as an alliance of regionalist leagues in the north of Italy[2] in 1989, merging into the Northern League in 1991 (Tarchi 2002). LN's history can be summarized along three main phases: during the first two decades of its evolution, the party advocated the secession of so-called Padania (a 'mythological region' in the north of Italy) from the rest of the country. From the '90s onwards, due to the growth of immigration flows from Eastern European countries, immigration became LN's main concern. In addition, after the 9/11 terrorist attack, anti-immigration claims assumed a strong Islamophobic character, connected to an appeal to security and the defence of Italian Christianity (Ignazi 2005). During this second phase, LN strengthened its already critical position *vis-à-vis* the European integration process and the adoption of the Euro, perceived as a threat to national customs and values (Pirro and Van Kessel 2018). Finally, under the leadership of Matteo Salvini (from 2013 onwards), the party completed a process of nationalization: the reference community has been strategically broadened to include all native Italians, and the economic, cultural and political immigration threat has been linked to the collusion of the Roman elite with EU technocrats and criminal networks, which penalise native Italians (Bulli and Soare 2018, 141). In line

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[2] The alliance was composed of: Lega Lombarda, Lega Veneta, PiemontAutonomista, Unione Ligure, Lega Emiliano Romagnola and Alleanza Toscana.

with this nativist turn, since June 2015 the LN has been allied with the French Front National (FN) in the Europe of the Nations and Freedom EPPG. As this brief overview shows, LN can be classified as belonging to the populist family particularly within the sub-group of radical-right populists combining nativism, authoritarianism, and populism (Mudde 2007).

Differently, the M5S grew as a response to a general dissatisfaction with national politics. It mainly advocates for direct democracy (under the mantra of 'everyone is worth one')[3], overcoming the mechanism of representation through the use of the Internet. Even if the party is identified under several labels– 'anti-party' (Diamanti and Natale 2013), 'anti-establishment party' (Mosca 2014), 'strange animal' or 'web-populist' (Corbetta and Gualmini 2015) – scholars agree on its populist features, i.e. anti-elitism, emphasis on direct democracy, Manichean visions, charismatic leadership, etc. (Taggart 1995, Mosca 2014). After the last EP election, the party became a member of the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy EPPG (EFDD), together with the Eurosceptic United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP).

M5S's position on immigration is not clear: while some empirical analyses suggest a discrepancy between the more conservative party leadership and the more liberal party activists (Bulli and Soare 2018, 147; Ivaldi, Lanzone and Sozzi 2016), the party's official message does not contain any expressions of xenophobia or socio-cultural discrimination (Lanzone 2014, 61) but rather endorses an instrumental approach to immigration. In other words, opposition to immigration is not based on xenophobic, welfare-chauvinist or nationalistic arguments, as in LN's case, but rather denounces the political mismanagement of the *res publica* and the elite's alleged collusion with organized crime (Bulli and Soare 2018, 148).

Even if the major targets of M5S criticism have always been the banks and big economic and political elites, since 2011 the party has directed its criticism toward Italy's membership in the Eurozone and the legitimacy of EU institutions in general. By the end of 2011, M5S had held an internal referendum concerning withdrawal from the Eurozone (Pirro and Van Kessel 2018).

In this article, we hypothesise a relation between the ideological natures of LN and M5S and their positions on immigration and the EU. Being a populist radical right party, the LN is expected to talk about issues relating to immigration, mainly using cultural-identitarian, law and order and securitarian arguments (*H1*). Similarly, we expect this party to reject the project of European integration in the name of sovereignist claims (*H2*). On the contrary, since M5S is a purely populist party, we expect it to mobilize issues relating to immigration and the EU to boost its anti-elitist claims, highlighting corruption and mismanagement of the national elite as well as the lack of legitimacy and democratic accountability of the EU-elite (*H3*). The last formulated hypothesis (*H4*) aims at assessing whether there is homogeneity in the two parties' framing strategies between the national and the supranational arena. In line with previous research in the field (e.g. McElory and Benoit 2011), we expect LN and M5S delegations in the EP to hold positions similar to their national counterparts with regard to the EU and the immigration issues.

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[3] This mantra is also the title of the M5S anthem as reported in the movement's official blog http://www.beppegrillo.it/movimento/2010/07/ognuno-vale-uno.html

5. Research Design and Method

Parliament is chosen as a privileged viewpoint, as the institution *par excellence* where political conflicts on legislation and governmental policies unfold. Both the Italian and the European parliaments function as decision-making institutions at the heart of democratic representation: directly elected arenas where parties' representatives work together on the same topic at the same time, having access to a public profile that is of great importance when there is media attention on some specific issues (Usherwood 2017).

Previous literature concerning parties' position-taking in parliaments usually relies on patterns of voting behaviour as an empirical data-source. However, Roll Call Votes (RCVs) are not free from problems (see Carrubba et al. 2006 for an exhaustive review). Therefore, we believe that parliamentary speeches are a fine-grained and less-biased source of data to assess parties' positions (Wendler 2014). Even if, differently from RCVs, speeches do not result in tangible conclusions, participating in plenary debates is an opportunity for parliamentarians to provide a public justification for the entirety of the legislative process (e.g. Lord 2013, 253).

LN and M5S representatives' speeches delivered between May 2014 and December 2016[4] are analysed in both the Italian and the European parliaments (MPs and MEPs respectively). During this period, two specific events took place: the peak of the migration crisis in mid-2015and the Brexit referendum in June 2016. Analysing LN's and M5S's speeches in this time frame allows us to provide an in-depth description of their stances towardsthe two issuesstudied. We used a list of keywords related to both the EU and the immigration issue to select and retrieve the speeches from the official webpages of both the EP and the Italian parliament[5]. The collected speeches are organised in four corpora[6]: one for each issue and level of observation (see Table 1in the Appendix presenting the four corpora's descriptive statistics).

A total of 533 speeches were collected for both parties in both parliamentary arenas. Speeches are divided into natural sentences and manually codified using MaxQDA[7] on the basis of a codebook that assigns to each dimension, detailed in Sections 2 and 3, three categories expressing the 'direction' of the positioning: positive, negative or neutral for the EU issue and permissive, restrictive or neutral for the immigration issue (see Table 2in the Appendix for more details about the coding procedure[8]).

The coding procedure recognizes the character of the expressed positioning either as principled or as pragmatic. Sentences coded as pragmatic refer to '[m]eans-ends type of rationality where actors are considered to take decisions made on calculations of utility based on a given set of interests' (Sjursen 2002, 494). On the contrary, sentences expressing a principled positioning refer to normative arguments based on claims about values or moral standards of justice and legitimacy (Wendler 2016). The

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[4] This period corresponds to the first two years of the VIII EP legislature, which is also the first legislature of the M5S.

[5] Detailed information about speech selection and analysis (codebook and coding criteria) are available upon request.

[6] A corpus is a collection of texts in machine-readable format.

[7] Further information at https://www.maxqda.com/

[8] A detailed version of the applied codebook is available upon request.

pragmatic/principled distinction is made by assigning to each sentence a value of 1 in the case of principled character and of 0 otherwise.

The analysis assumes that the more a specific dimension of the two issues is important to the parties, the more they emphasise it. In the same way, a lack of reference towards one of the specific dimensions signals a lack of saliency to the party of that specific dimension (Budge 1994; Lowe et al. 2011).

The frequencies of coded sentences are then used to build an additive index of party positioning on each of the theorised issues' targets that sum both the direction (opposition or support) and the character (principled or pragmatic) of party position.

To construct the index we firstly considered the frequency of coded sentences to assess the direction of party positioning as:

$$Q = \frac{\log CX + 1}{\log N + 1} - \frac{\log CY + 1}{\log N + 1} (1)$$

Where CX represents the total number of sentences coded negatively/restrictively for each of the analysed categories, CY is the total number of coded positively/permissively sentences in each of the analysed categories, and N is the total number of coded sentences (including neutral sentences). The proposed formula is an adaptation of Prosser's re-elaboration of Lowe et al.'s 'logit scale of position' (Lowe et al. 2011; Prosser 2014) which is, in turn, an improvement of the Comparative Manifesto Project's left-right scale (the so-called RILE index)[9]. The value of 1 is added to each index component to keep them consistently 0, since $log_{(1)} = 0$ (Prosser 2014). The result is a continuous variable ranging between 1 and -1 indicating the highest opposition or the highest support for the considered targets respectively. Whenever the variable takes the value of 0, it indicates either a lack of salience to the party of the specific target or that the same proportion of coded negative/positive or coded restrictive/permissive sentences is present.

Secondly, to complete the positioning index we included a value indicating the character: principled or pragmatic. To assign this we look at the resulting direction: if a party displays a positive direction (denoting opposition) and if the majority of the coded-negative/restrictive sentences are principled in character (value of 1), then the party is exercising a principled opposition and vice-versa:

$$(Q \pm q) * 100 (2)$$

Where Q represents the continuous variable mentioned above and q refers to the character of the expressed positioning. The formula presents the $\pm$ operator to obtain a symmetric scale of positioning: if Q is positive the value of q is added whereas, if Q is negative, the value of q is subtracted. The index ranges between +200 and -200 indicating the maximum degrees of principled opposition and principled support respectively, whereas a value of +100 or -100 indicates the maximum degree of pragmatic opposition or pragmatic support respectively. If the index takes the value of 0 it indicates a neutral position of the parties.

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[9] The Comparative Manifesto Project provides researchers with party positioning on several issues deriving from the content analysis of their electoral manifestos. Further information at https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/

The obtained index is used to graphically represent M5S's and LN's positioning on the two issues studied (see spider-plots in section 5). Furthermore, using WMatrix[10] we perform keywords-analysis allowing the identification of keywords[11] for each corpus avoiding potential biases in their selections since WMatrix objectively establishes the keywords according to their statistical significance or 'keyness'[12]. The identified keywords are used to report quotes from the analysed speeches in an objective way, providing the reader with a qualitative hint of party positioning.

6. Results

This section compares the indexes of positioning obtained for LN and M5S, relying on spider plots (Fig. 1-4). To each plot's vertex corresponds one target of positioning while the coloured lines report – in green for LN and in yellow for M5S – the party positioning towards the observed targets. On the black continuous line (the 0 line), the index takes the value of 0. Whenever opposition to the target is present, the coloured lines are drawn on the positive side of each graph. The black patterned lines highlight the distinction between the principled and pragmatic character of party positioning (principled positioning above ± 100).

Starting from M5S's and LN's positions on the EU (Fig. 1 and 2 below), the two parties behave similarly in the national arena. They are both principally opposed to the EU-community, the EU-regime and the EU-elite. However, M5S's opposition towards the EU-elite target is higher (+ 132). Interestingly, both parties use populist arguments to oppose EU polity: they both criticize the technocratic nature and lack of democratic accountability of the EU (see the presence of *cittadini* – citizens and *popolo* – people, among the keywords in Table 5 below).

> 'According to the LN, there is a genetic bias in this *Europe*: it has been founded on flexibility but without the *people*, without democracy' (Giancarlo Giorgetti, LN's MP, 16/09/2014)[13]

> '[...] it is enough to observe what is happening nowadays. The *EU* is strictly tied to finance, *banks*, big powers, to this absolute technocracy. Everything is possible under the guide of this European government ruled by *banks* [...]' (Daniele Pesco, M5S's MP, 30/06/2015)

Nevertheless, while M5S endorses a pragmatic opposition towards EU-policies (+ 45), LN opposes this target in a principled way (+ 138). Moreover, M5S focuses its attention on two targets, namely the Euro area (+145) and the Schengen area (+106), which are not salient for the LN.

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[10] WMatrix is an open-source software for corpus analysis and comparison. See http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/wmatrix/
[11] A keyword is 'a word which occurs with unusual frequency in a given text. This does not mean high frequency but unusual frequency, by comparison with a reference corpus of some kind' (Scott 1997: 236).
[12] A high value of 'keyness' indicates a prototypical word in a given corpus. We consider as statistically significant only those items with a 'keyness' value over 7, since 6.63 is the cut-off point for 99% confidence of significance (Rayson 2012).
[13] From now on, keywords are in italics.

'We want a Government that strongly advocates against the Fiscal Compact, against the budgetary equilibrium, in order to give to *Italy* the possibility to regain its *monetary* sovereignty, because this is the key of our future: sovereignty!' (Luca Frusone, M5S's MP, 14/10/2015)

Table 3. Top 10 keywords by Arena (EU-issue)

	National Arena		**EP**	
	Keywords	*Keyness*	*Keywords*	*Keyness*
M5S	*unione*	21.751	*austerità*	31.934
	piano	20.657	*europeo*	17.195
	Dublino	20.463	*sociale*	17.195
	cittadini	19.616	*crisi*	16.299
	europea	19.571	*istituzioni*	14.739
	euro	19.267	*greca*	12.282
	Europa	18.761	*mafia*	12.282
	banche	18.729	*rubato*	12.282
	Italia	18.329	*misure*	11.86
	moneta	15.493	*politica*	11.86
LN	*problema*	32.82	*Europa*	46.867
	Europa	24.998	*qualcuno*	21.757
	popolo	22.49	*zero*	19.581
	consenso	21.62	*europea*	17.101
	immigrazione	19.727	*immigrazione*	15.877
	parte	19.258	*Isis*	15.23
	fenomeno	17.018	*commissione*	13.902
	risposte	17.018	*palazzo*	13.054
	priorità	16.239	*Turchia*	13.054
	modo	15.524	*difesa*	10.879

Note: keywords are ordered according to 'keyness'. Only items with log likelihood (LL) value ≥ 7 are reported.

Looking at the spider-plot concerning the EU issue at supranational level (Fig. 2 below), it is noteworthy that LN's stance does not change much. The party's Euroscepticism remains almost unchanged between the two levels with principled criticism toward EU-policies (+168); the EU-community (+167), and the EU-regime (+130). LN opposes the EU-regime and the EU-community using sovereignist arguments related both to the EU power-grab *vis-à-vis* member states and the lack of democracy at the EU level and heavily criticising the lack of electoral accountability of the EU-regime *vis-à-vis* democratically elected national authorities.
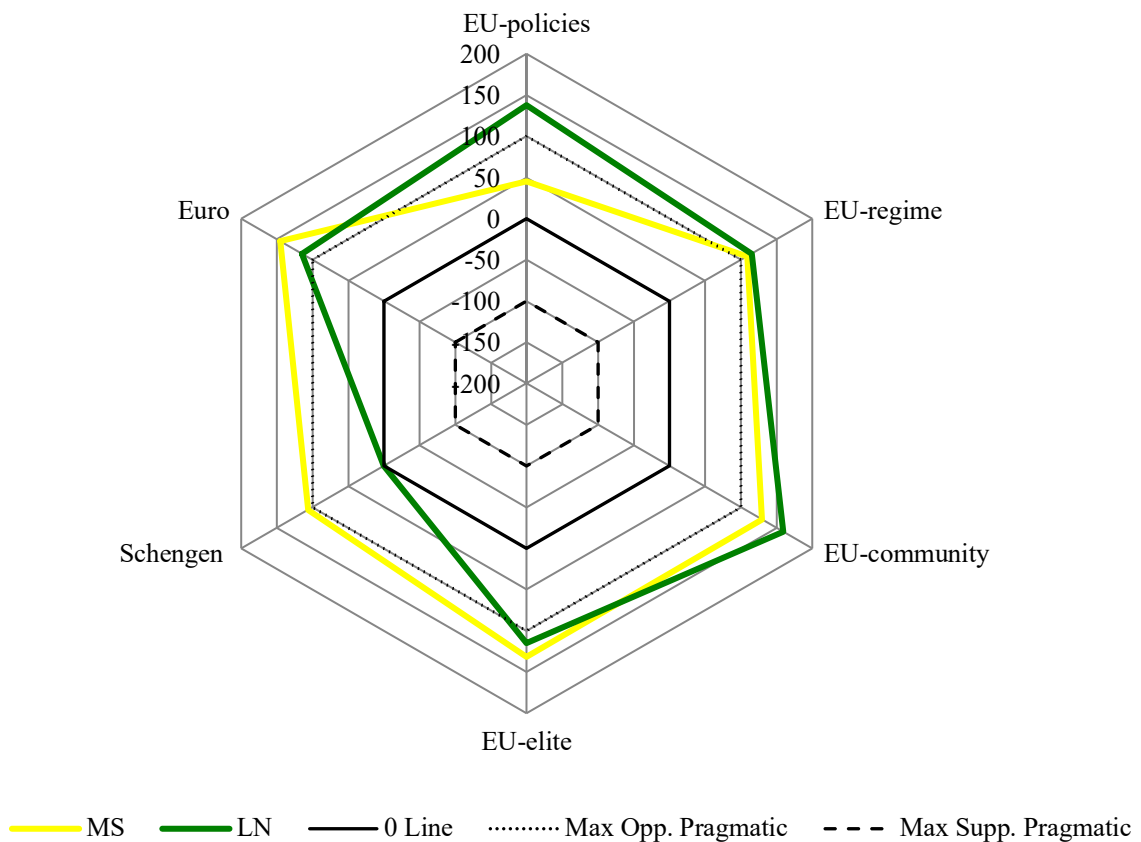
'This surreal debate confirms that those who govern this *Europe* – the European *Commission* – are strong powers and a few dangerous subjects' (Matteo Salvini, LN's leader)

While M5S and LN are similar in their critique of the EU in the national arena, M5S's position is different in the EP. Its criticism is, in fact, pragmatic and focused on EU-policy (+49) using reformist arguments to criticize both the EU-community (+65) and the EU-regime (+29). M5S stresses the need to inject democracy at the supranational level but does not reject the existence of the Union. On the contrary, it proposes

alternatives to reform the EU-community starting from its core values (e.g., solidarity) expressed in the Treaties (see the presence of *sociale* – social – among the keywords in Table 5 below):

> 'We want to change: we want a different Europe, firstly and foremost in terms of treaties, agreements, and policies. We have fervently talked about treaties such as the Fiscal Compact, but we have never heard a speech on the *Social* Compact or on some *social* measure of rebalancing, a subject that you obviously do not care about' (Ignazio Corrao, M5S' MEP)

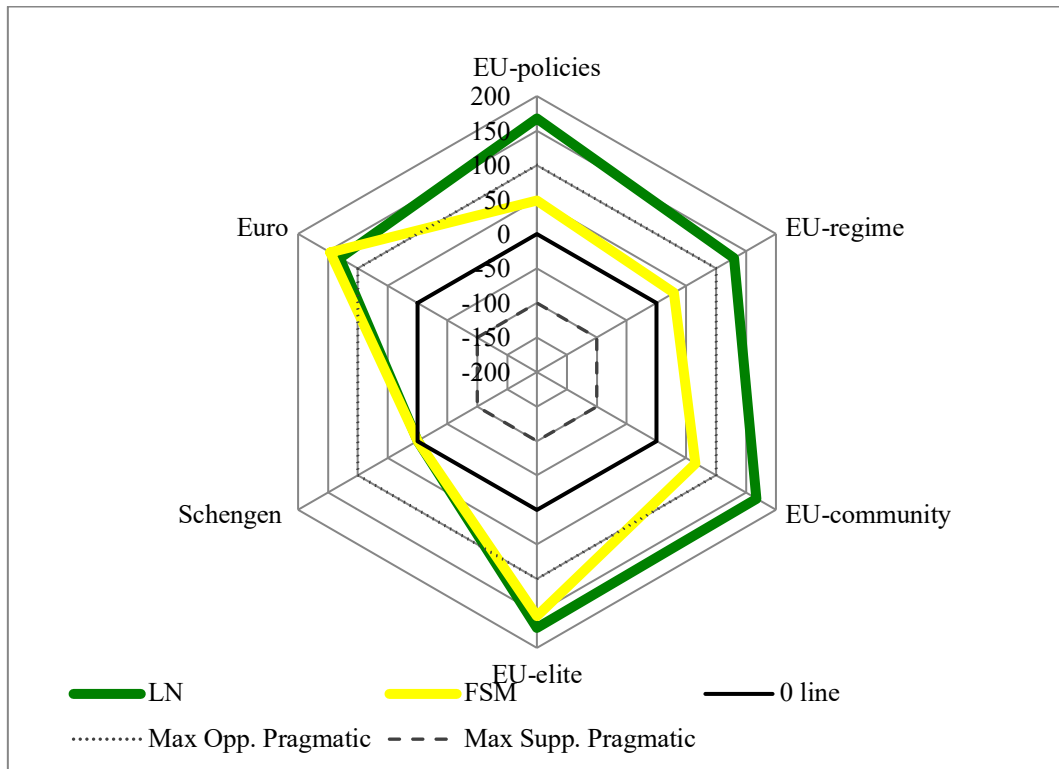**Figure 1.** Spider-plot of LN's and M5S' positions on the EU-issue. National arena.

Both parties are equated by a similarly strong and principled criticism of the EU-elite, contesting its moral values and its alleged connections with lobbies and big financial/economic powers to the detriment of EU citizens. Furthermore, both parties reject on a principled basis the Euro area geometry (scoring +130 and +146 respectively), considered to be the cardinal mistake of the EU causing macro-economic divergences between member states, and propose an exit from it.

> 'One single road is left to rebuild a Europe of peoples from its foundations: abandoning the crazy project of the euro that has accelerated its disintegration instead of reducing divergences among member states [...]. Markets have blackmailed and dismantled the *European* project that can now be rebuilt only by

betting on democracy, common goods, real economy, labour and *social* welfare'
(Marco Valli, M5S's MEP)

Similarly to the national arena, LN does not consider the Schengen area geometry a salient target. On the contrary, M5S's principled opposition to the Schengen area in the national parliament is transformed into a lack of salience of this target within the supranational arena.

Figure 2. Spider-plot of LN and M5S' positions on the EU-issue. EP Arena.

Moving our attention to the immigration issue, Figure 3 below shows that LN and M5S frame migration in two substantially different ways in the national context. LN advocates stronger border control (-157) and expresses a principled opposition towards the socio-economic (+149), cultural-religious (+140), and civic integration (+135) of migrants. It frames the 'immigration fluxes' as an 'invasion' threatening the national and cultural unity of the country. Indeed, words such as 'illegal immigrants' ('clandestini' in Italian), 'invasion', 'deportation' are among the top 10 keywords used by LN MPs to talk about migration (Table 6 below).

'The victims of immigration are a collateral effect of an emergency created by those who did not want to manage the immigration flows which have now become a true invasion' (Marco Rondini, LN's MP, 12/04/2014)

Table 4. Top 10 keywords by Arena (immigration-issue)

		National Arena		EP	
		Keywords	*Keyness*	*Keywords*	*Keyness*
M5S		*minori*	212.373	*membri*	31.934
		migranti	113.222	*stati*	17.195
		accompagnati	107.244	*solidarietà*	17.195
		accoglienza	89.848	*ricollocazione*	16.299
		stranieri	79.253	*equa*	14.739
		Italia	48.934	*responsabilità*	12.282
		età	48.193	*ripartizione*	12.282
		prima	43.036	*meccanismo*	12.282
		sistema	41.081	*permanente*	11.86
		bambini	40.696	*ricollocare*	11.86
LN		*clandestini*	150.191	*Europa*	46.867
		immigrazione	115.117	*immigrazione*	21.757
		immigrati	105.343	*clandestini*	19.581
		clandestina	77.066	*milioni*	17.101
		paese	72.277	*persone*	15.877
		cittadini	71.375	*politica*	15.23
		invasione	63.234	*immigrati*	13.902
		cento	59.455	*mare*	13.054
		CIE	59.119	*guerra*	13.054
		espulsione	52.413	*confini*	10.879

Note: keywords are ordered according to 'keyness'. Only items with log likelihood (LL) value ≥ 7 are reported.

Differently from the LN, the M5S holds a more ambiguous position towards migration, scoring values close to 0 on all the targets with the sole exception of humanitarian migration, which is endorsed on a principled basis (-119). Indeed, Table 6 above shows that M5S MPs often refer to 'minors' and 'children'.

> 'Let's start from a basic concept: in this parliament we all agree that human rights and, as a consequence, *migrants*' lives must be protected' (Manlio Di Stefano, M5S's MP, 16/10/2014)
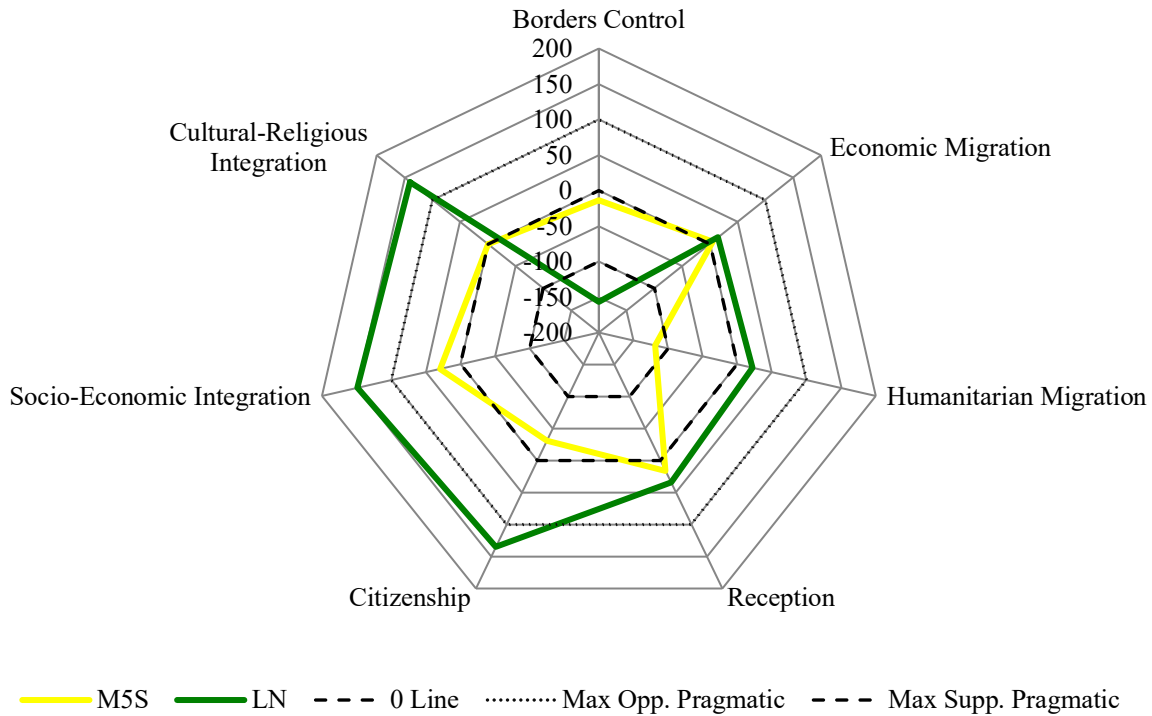
In particular, with reference to the socio-economic dimension of migrants' integration, LN is concerned with the redistribution of national services perceived to be unfairly allocated in favour of irregular migrants, at the expense of Italians.

> 'You exercise a form of reverse racism: who cares about the old retired man of Lecco, who after having been evicted from his house has killed himself? Your priority is to recognize the victims of *immigration*' (Polo Grimoldi, LN's MP, 15/04/2015)

Another category that plays a central role in the national debate is the reception of migrants. Both parties endorse a restrictive pragmatic stance toward this category, associating the mismanagement of the reception system to the corruption of the national political elite (Gianfreda 2018).

Mineo[14] is the centre of illicit interests. It is the most relevant example of how the migration phenomenon can be exploited by those who want to earn from emergencies. Mineo represents the complete failure of the *reception* system, both from an economic and from a human rights perspective. (Marialucia L'Orefice, M5S MP, 10/03/2016)

Figure 3. Spider-plot of LN and M5S positions on the migration-issue. National Arena.

Looking at both parties' positions in the EP (see Fig. 4 above), we observe a substantial confirmation of LN's positioning with a strong principled endorsement of border control (-177) and a strong principled opposition to the cultural/religious (+136) and socio-economic (+140) integration of migrants. However, LN is opposed in principle to the reception of migrants in the EU territory, differently from the national level where the party endorses a more moderate approach.
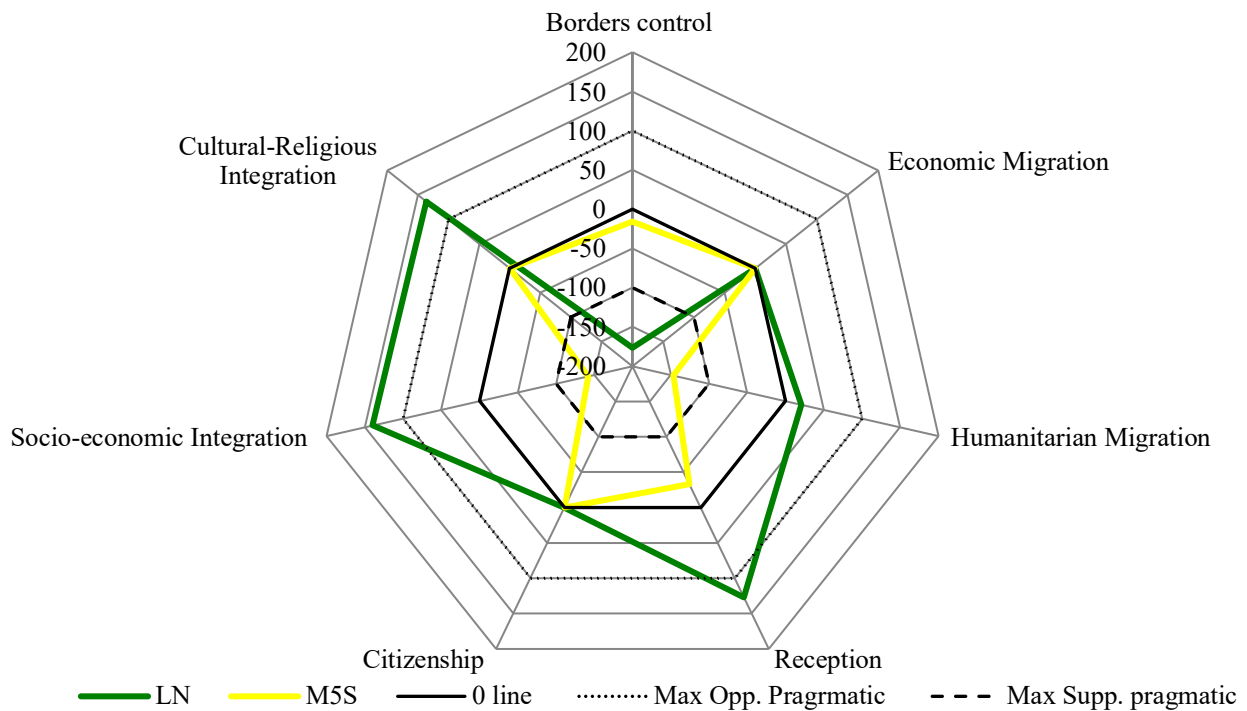
'Years and years of foolish reception, without the necessary checks, have allowed thousands of illegal migrants (*clandestini*) to enter Europe, without leaving any record. [...] *Illegal migrants* and *Islamic terrorists* wander around unhindered' (Mara Bizzotto, LN MEP)

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[14] Mineo is the name of a reception centre in the province of Catania (Sicily), which has been in the spotlight for corruption and human rights violations. For further details: https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/feb/01/migrants-more-profitable-than-drugs-how-mafia-infiltrated-italy-asylum-system.

Differently from the national arena, the M5S position on the migration issue is more delineated in the EP. The M5S delegation places little emphasis on immigration control (+16), while it holds a positive and principled stance towards humanitarian migration (-147) and socio-economic integration of migrants (-142). Indeed, as already noticed, in the national arena M5S often stresses the need to address the root causes of migration – namely wars and weapons trade – and enforce human rights protection across the EU.

> 'The socio-economic integration of *refugees* is a complex process that needs to be based on the principles of *solidarity* and *fair* distribution of *responsibilities* among Member States. [...]. Refugees' access to the *labour* market [...] can reduce the costs of reception [...] and contribute to the economy of host societies' (Laura Ferrera M5S MEP)

Figure 4. Spider-plot of LN and M5S positions on the migration issue. EP Arena.

Two further considerations are noteworthy: firstly, M5S's pragmatic opposition towards the reception system at the national level (+16) is turned into pragmatic support in the European arena (-33). Secondly, the 'citizenship' target is not salient either for M5S or for LN in the EP. This hints at the influence of institutional settings on parties' framing strategies. While LN's positioning across institutional arenas seems to be driven by its ideological characterization – a radical-right populist party with nativist and xenophobic claims – M5S's framing strategies appear to be influenced by the institutional settings in which the party operates. Indeed, if at the national level the party mainly frames immigration issues in terms of opposition to the government, in the EP normative arguments, such as respect for human rights, prevail. Similarly, the lack of salience of the citizenship target is strictly connected to the fact that naturalization is a typical issue dealt by sovereign states (Brubakar 2010).

7. Conclusions

The empirical analysis conducted in this paper has shown that LN and M5S hold different positions *vis-à-vis* the EU and immigration issues. In particular, as expected (H1), LN opposes immigration mainly relying on cultural identitarian, securitarian and law and order arguments in both the observed arenas, thus confirming itself as a populist radical-right party (Mudde 2007). Similarly, LN frames its opposition to the EU-community within sovereigntist arguments and accusing the EU of grabbing power *vis-à-vis* sovereign member states and authorities (H2 confirmed).

Conversely, the M5S mobilizes the issues studied to boost its anti-elitist claims (H3), focusing on the mismanagement of the immigration crisis (and in particular the reception system) by the national elite and on the technocratic nature of the European institutions that lack democratic accountability.

Interestingly, in the national parliament, both the M5S and the LN use populist rhetoric to attack mainstream governing parties, following a government vs. opposition dynamic. On the contrary, at the supranational level the two parties behave differently. While the M5S proposes a principled attack on the EU-elite but pragmatic and constructive opposition to EU-policies, the LN endorses principled criticism toward the EU-elite, the EU-regime and the EU-community, thus constituting a sort of anti-systemic opposition to the EU (Mair 2007). Consequently, H4 is confirmed only with reference to the LN that combines nativism, welfare chauvinism and principled opposition to the EU in both arenas. In other words, LN behaves as an opposition, anti-immigration and Eurosceptic party both at the national and at the supranational level. Conversely, M5S adapts itself to the institutional setting in which it operates.

Furthermore, the analysis shows marked differences between LN and M5S Euroscepticism. While the former sees the EU as a threat to national territorial/cultural unity, the latter mainly stresses the lack of democracy and democratic accountability of the EU-elite, highlighting the elite vs. people distinction typical of a populist party (Mudde 2007).

Given the substantial differences that exist between LN's and M5S's positions on the 'integration-demarcation' axis of the political competition, we suggest that this divergence might lead to the formation of possible 'wedges' in the current yellow-green Italian governmental coalition, something that might be consequential for its duration.

Appendix 1

Table A1. Corpora's descriptive statistics

Party name	EU-issue		Immigration issue	
	Total number of speeches	Average speech length in tokens (standard deviation in parenthesis)	Total number of speeches	Average speech length in tokens (standard deviation in parenthesis)
Corpora National Parliament				
M5S	44	878 (695)	112	820 (745)
LN	27	946 (1129)	137	458 (491)
Total	71		249	

Corpora EP				
M5S	47	285, 5 (145)	66	252 (103)
LN	19	282 (141)	81	192 (102)
Total	**66**		**147**	
Total overall	**137**	--	**396**	--

Table A2. Coding scheme (the full coding scheme can be obtained upon request)

Variable	Category	Definition	Example	Coding rules
EU Community	A1: Negative	Opposition to the EU community, which means: • to be against further European integration; • to be against the process of EU enlargement; • to be against the transfer of competences towards the EU; • to be against EU values and identity.	'We are tired of Europe imposing illogical rules on us' Paola Carinelli, M5S, 19/03/2014	All four aspects of the definition need to point to strong opposition. Otherwise A2: Neutral
	A2: Neutral	Neither opposition to nor support of the EU community, which means: • to affirm a matter of fact • to describe situations in an 'objective' manner • to report statements by other MPs/Ministers/journalists	'The economic crisis has affected the European Union as a whole' Sergio Battelli, M5S, 27/06/2016	If not all aspects of definition point to 'opposition' or 'support'
	A3: Positive	Support of the EU community, which means: • to be in favour of further EU integration; • to be in favour of the process of EU enlargement; • to be in favour of EU values and identity.	'The Europe we want is the citizens' Europe. We must build it together!' Sergio Battelli, M5S, 6/08/2015	All three aspects point to 'support', otherwise A1: opposition.
Immigration control	B1: Restrictive	Support for immigration control, which means: • to be in favour of stricter borders controls; • to advocate for stricter immigration rules and procedures; • to be in favour of administrative detention of migrants.	'A dignified reception must be reserved for those who have the right to stay and not forall foreign minors without any distinction' Marco Rondini, LN, 24/10/2016	All four aspects of the definition need to point to strong opposition. Otherwise B2: Neutral
	A2: Neutral	Neither opposition to nor support for the EU community, which means: • to affirm a matter of fact • to describe situations in an 'objective' manner • to report statements by other MPs/Ministers/journalists	'94% of unaccompanied minor refugees are men, while 5.7% are women'. Marco Rondini, LN, 26/10/2016	If not all aspects of definition point to 'opposition' or 'support'
	B3: Permissive	Against immigration control, which means: • to be in favour of save and rescue operations; • to stress the need to respect international law and conventions; • to advocate for the respect of migrants' rights.	'The Northern League speaks of closing the borders without having any idea of the international agreements that Italy has signed in the EU'. Maria Edera Spadoni, M5S, 21/05/2015	All three aspects point to 'support', otherwise B1: opposition.

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