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Divided We Fall: Eurosceptics in the European Parliament

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Divided We Fall: Eurosceptics in the European Parliament

An Honors Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Political Science
Bates College
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts

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Abstract

Following the 2014 European Parliament elections, the media focused on the strong showing of populist, often Eurosceptic, parties across Europe. Despite most Eurosceptic parties employing shared rhetoric and seemingly shared goals, Eurosceptic parties have failed to act cohesively together in the European Parliament. Rather than form a large bloc in Parliament, Eurosceptic parties have fractured into several political groups, which have among the lowest cohesion scores on Roll Call Votes in Parliament. In this paper, I aim to get a more complete picture of the pressures and incentives at play which keep Eurosceptic parties from cooperating. I specifically ask what guides their political group formation and level of coordination within the European Parliament, and what factors are responsible for the fragmented coordination of Eurosceptic national parties that currently exists. I find that the degree of Euroscepticism of Eurosceptic parties poses the clearest challenge to unity out of variables I examine, and is exacerbated by poor structure and leadership in Eurosceptic political groups. The nature and dimensions of these disagreements suggest that Eurosceptic unity in the near future is likely to continue to be elusive.

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Introduction

The early Twenty-First Century has seen Eurosceptic parties make several gains and inroads into European governments. One of the victories that attracted substantial media attention was the 2014 European Parliament election. Across Europe, national parties ran in the member states of the European Union in order to get Members of the European Parliament elected. Many news sources noted that Eurosceptic parties (parties opposed to EU integration) had in multiple countries substantially increased their representation. Following the election, *The Economist* ran an article labelled, “The Eurosceptic Union,” and a *BBC News* story proclaimed, “Eurosceptic ‘earthquake’ rocks EU elections”.¹ *The Telegraph* declared the election “a stunning defeat for the European political establishment”.²

Some observers of EU politics had more measured reactions to the elections. Cas Mudde argued that while Eurosceptic parties made gains, the increase in the number of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) was almost entirely due to the advances of the National Front (though he also noted that Eurosceptic parties were more Eurosceptic than the past, possibly due to the Eurozone crisis).³ Many scholars who have done research on the Parliament also argue that it is a “second-order” election, of minimal importance to the citizens of member states. This might mean constituents vote in order to punish ruling parties or vote without strategic considerations. Because of this, the Parliamentary election might not accurately measure

¹ “The Eurosceptic Union,” *The Economist*.

“Eurosceptic ‘earthquake’ rocks EU Elections,” *BBC News*.

² Waterfield et al. “European elections 2014: EU citizens vote against immigrants, austerity and establishment.” *The Telegraph*.

³ Mudde, *On Extremism and Democracy in Europe*, 32.

Eurosceptic support. However, many took the strong showing of Eurosceptics as a sign that their power was growing, and that they might continue to rise further.

While news and academics differed slightly in their calculations of the anti-system vote depending on their definitions, many found that roughly a quarter of seats in the European Parliament went to Eurosceptic parties. Performing especially well electorally were France's National Front, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), and Italy's Five Star Movement. Following the election, leaders of Eurosceptic parties frequently offered opinions close to that of *The Telegraph*, suggesting that the election might be the beginning of a new order. Some authors suggested that it might not be far in the future until Eurosceptics constituted a legitimate political opposition within the Parliament.

Euroscepticism is frequently defined as opposition to further European integration and deepening. While left-wing Eurosceptics exist, right-wing Eurosceptics have more representation in the Parliament, and are the main focus of this paper (in this paper, Eurosceptic refers to right-wing Euroscepticism unless otherwise indicated). Eurosceptic parties, regardless of country of origin, frequently speak of the importance of retaining national sovereignty and not ceding power to bureaucrats in Brussels. Despite most Eurosceptic parties employing shared rhetoric and seemingly shared goals, Eurosceptic parties have failed to act cohesively together in the European Parliament. Since the 2014 election, which was widely considered a relative success for Eurosceptic parties, they have failed to act cohesively on multiple fronts.

Generally, parties entering the European Parliament join political groups, transnational groups made up of the national parties of member states that share an agenda. Eurosceptic parties within the Parliament have not formed one political group, which would give them more finances from the European Parliament budget and allow them greater speaking time and

favorable committee positions. Instead, UKIP and the National Front competed to attract Eurosceptic parties. The result was Eurosceptic parties joining three political groups, two small enough to be constantly on the brink of dissolution. This is inefficient if you expect Eurosceptic parties to have generally shared values and agendas.

Eurosceptics have also displayed lack of cohesion in their votes on EU legislation. Most political groups have high voting cohesion: the national parties that make up the group adhere to an agreed upon line and frequently vote the same way. This allows the political group to have greater sway in the Parliament, and a system of compromise and consultation initiated by political group leaders is meant to ensure national parties feel like the group is acting in their interest. The Eurosceptic political groups, in contrast, have relatively low cohesion overall. In Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD), it is often unclear what the 'line' of the political group is, and the other two political groups with significant Eurosceptic makeup also share low cohesion rates. Lastly, several Eurosceptic parties within the Parliament have had several members desert their national party, or had public rifts that split the party violently (such as Alternative for Germany (AfD)). This suggests that Eurosceptic parties may even have difficult cooperating or remaining stable on an intra-party level.

In this context, the cause of this dysfunction is not immediately clear. The lack of cooperation could be due to a lack of experience in the Parliament, an adjustment period that might disappear over time. However, it may be more to do with deeper-rooted ideological differences or rigid sets of priorities that do not accommodate for compromise with other Eurosceptic parties. If it is the former, Eurosceptics organization and agreement in the Parliament might be just a matter of time, assuming their support among voters remains steady.

If the second explanation is more accurate, more time would not change cooperation substantially.

In this paper, I aim to create a more complete picture of the pressures and incentives which keep Eurosceptic parties from cooperating. As a whole, my thesis will explore the options and strategies available to Eurosceptic national parties within the European Parliament (EP). I specifically ask what guides their political group formation and level of coordination within the European Parliament, and what factors are responsible for the fragmented coordination of Eurosceptic national parties that currently exists. In the following chapters, I examine strategic considerations of Eurosceptic parties, their ideological attributes, and their institutionalization and structure within the Parliament among other explanations to help explain their relatively disunity. To explore and test these theories, I look at negotiations over political group formation and voting patterns and cohesion for Eurosceptic parties.

An in-depth examination of the disagreements and fault lines between Eurosceptic national parties has several uses and impacts. First, an examination of the reasons for disunity among Eurosceptic parties should offer insight into how likely the parties are to coordinate in the future. If the instability of political groups is something that should decrease with time (such as Eurosceptic parties just being new to Parliament, or not fully institutionalized) the relative lack of cohesion may be a short-lived phenomenon, and Eurosceptic parties might be expected to work together more consistently in the future. This may have secondary effects on their level of actual power in the Parliament. However, results pointing to ideological differences among Eurosceptic parties or irreconcilable priorities in government may point to a more long-term problem for the rising Eurosceptic right, even if the number of Eurosceptic MEPs continues to rise.

The conclusions of this paper also inform discussions of Eurosceptic and populist coordination outside of the Parliament. There have been multiple attempts by far-right parties in Europe to create a network of populist or Eurosceptic parties. In 1997, Le Pen attempted to popularize a European National Union, a pan-European confederation of right-wing parties, which had little real impact. The Austrian Freedom Party also has tried to facilitate far-right coordination, and while there have been moments of success, like a meeting in 2005, there has been little forward momentum.⁴ While several of these attempts have been to gather far-right parties rather than Eurosceptic ones, these characteristics do tend to correlate, with many far-right parties espousing rhetoric that is hostile to the European Union or openly antagonistic towards it. Testing the causes of disunity I identify in the Parliament to see if they apply to Eurosceptic coordination outside of that body could explain Eurosceptic coordination (or lack thereof) on a larger scale. It would also help corroborate the extent to which causes of disunity are artificially created or fostered by the Parliament's rules or environment, rather than being endemic to Eurosceptic and far-right parties.

Organization of Thesis

The first chapter provides relevant background about the European Parliament and Eurosceptic parties in the EU. It also defines terms and creates classification systems for these parties.

Chapter 2 examines the pertinent background literature on the cooperation and political group structure in the Parliament, as well as Eurosceptic strategy. This is meant to gather information on how political groups usually act, and what the general incentives are for political groups to form and cooperate. The review also covers the state of literature on Eurosceptic

⁴ Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties*, 173-177.

parties, which also helps us extract reasons they may be uncooperative for later examination. Drawing on the major argument and conclusions of the literature, Chapter 2 also outlines the hypotheses examined through the rest of the thesis that explore different drivers of Eurosceptic disunity.

Chapter 3 mainly explores why Eurosceptic political groups form the way they do. While the general incentives of resource maximization and ideological proximity undoubtedly influence group formation, this chapter looks more at how strategic considerations shape who Eurosceptic parties accept as coalition partners. Specifically, it argues that concerns over respectability substantially shape the array of parties a Eurosceptic party will be willing to join a political group with.

The fourth chapter begins to explore why Eurosceptic parties frequently vote against the political group line, even in dominantly Eurosceptic groups. I briefly explore whether Eurosceptic voting cooperation is worse than other niche party families in the Parliament. I then explore three different ideological reasons for disagreement between Eurosceptic parties: presence or absence of populism, placement on the left-right ideological spectrum, and degree of Euroscepticism.

Chapter 5 continues to explore voting cohesion among Eurosceptic parties. Rather than looking into ideological explanations, it looks at lack of institutionalization for both the political group and Eurosceptic parties as causing disunity. Most political groups within the Parliament have formalized structures that incentivize national parties to vote with them, and many national parties have long tenures within their political groups. This chapter argues that the relative newness and dysfunction of Eurosceptic political groups themselves play a major role in lack of voting cohesion.

The conclusion offers additional analysis on the results of the rest of the thesis, and clarifies which hypotheses appear the most significant. It also explores what these results tell us about the future of Eurosceptic coordination, in and out of the Parliament.

A Note on Data Usage

Much of the quantitative data used in this thesis comes from two main sources. Since each data set has potential issues, I use them in conjunction with each other with the aim of double-checking the validity of the results.

The first measure of cooperation I use is from VoteWatch Europe, a site which includes aggregations of roll call votes (RCVs) for the most recent Parliament. VoteWatch Europe provides measures of national parties' voting loyalty to political group. I use their collection of roll call votes from the beginning of the eighth Parliamentary term until November 2017. In their methodology, VoteWatch clarifies, "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.... An MEP is considered 'loyal' to his/her European political group or national party delegation if his/her voting option is identical to the political line of the political group or party delegation, respectively".⁵

Essentially, if a plurality of the voting national party MEPs votes the same way as the plurality of the political group, the national party is considered loyal on that vote. While this seems like it would generally be an accurate mechanism to measure loyalty to political group, it does not come without issues. First, large national parties that dominate political groups will very likely always be coded as agreeing with their political group, since they make up a plurality of members. The only requirement then to be seen as loyal to the political group then is to vote

⁵ "Methodology," VoteWatch Europe.

together as a party. The National Front, for example, is calculated as having over a 99% loyalty rating, since it has so many MEPs in the political group. Additionally, when loyalty to political group for smaller parties is calculated, VoteWatch may be mainly just considering how these smaller parties vote with the large, dominant national party in the political group, not necessarily whether it agrees with smaller parties in the coalition. While many political groups do not have as clear a 'central party' as the National Front in the ENF, the definition of cohesion does present problems in these cases.

My other set of data is meant to correct for this issue. The second resource is a record of 2,535 roll call votes, from the beginning of the Eighth Parliament to March 1 2017.⁶ While the set was initially fragmented to record the votes of individual MEPs, I aggregated it to instead track votes on a national party level. Rather than see how the national parties voted in comparison to political group, I instead tracked their rate of agreement with each individual national party in the political group with them. If a majority of the members of a national party voted the same way as a majority of the members of another national party, the two parties were seen as being in agreement on that vote. The total agreement of two parties would be percent of total votes that they voted in the same direction. The mean national party agreement for a political group would measure the mean of the total agreement of two parties for every combination of two parties that could exist within that political group.

While this helps ameliorate problems that the size of parties present to measuring cooperation (which exist in the first database) there are some issues. Because I wanted to record the amount of time that parties are actively voting together, I included MEPs absent in voting in the analysis. So if a majority of MEPs in one party voted one way, and all the MEPs for another

⁶ Cherepnalkoski et al., "Dataset of European Parliament roll-call votes."

party were absent from the vote, the parties were recorded as being in disagreement on this vote. This leads to much lower rates of cooperation than the VoteWatch database. While the parties may not actually be in disagreement (it is impossible to know how the absentee party would have voted if they had attended), I coded the dataset this way because I only wanted parties to be considered in cooperation if they could actually convince a majority of their members to vote the same way as each other. This does mean that some parties are given extremely low rates of cooperation with all other parties since they so rarely voted.

While both datasets have issues that could potentially lead to misleading results, the flaws between them are not the same. This means that when they both produce relatively similar results the results are likely significant, and when they differ I should be able to delve deeper and determine the reason for that difference.

Since the data to measure cooperation in this thesis is frequently based on roll call votes, it is worth making a note on the strengths and drawbacks of roll call vote data. In the past, critics have argued that roll call votes tend to hide certain aspects of EP voting behavior, and therefore are not a fair representation of MEP votes and interests. Committee votes are not considered in databases of roll call votes. Under certain conditions Parliamentary matters may be decided based on a vote of hands or electronic voting, where the total number is recorded but the identities of voters are not, or there may be a secret ballot.⁷ A roll call vote is only required for a final vote on a legislative act, and when either forty MEPs or a political group request it.

However, changes in recent EU treaties including Lisbon have helped make RCVs a more reliable source of data, which is perhaps why they are so frequently utilized. Legislative

⁷ Kaniok and Mocek, "Roll Call Votes," 77.

items are now frequently given RCV status. While perhaps not a perfect representation of MEP or party interests, many scholars argue that they can certainly approximate them.⁸

⁸ Ibid., 87.

Chapter 1

This chapter includes much of the background information necessary to understand this thesis. First I provide a profile of the European Parliament, including its general powers, make-up, elections and operations. I then give a working definition of Euroscepticism and the Eurosceptic party, differentiating the concepts from related ideas such as populism. I introduce the classification system to define parties currently in the Parliament as Eurosceptic, and profile the major Eurosceptic parties and political groups. Lastly I restate the central question of this thesis which will hopefully be clearer to readers in the context of the background information.

The European Parliament: General Powers

The European Parliament was initially assembled in 1958 as a body of the European Union that had little formal power. The European Commission, a body with staff appointed by national governments, could propose legislation. Legislation could be approved by the Council of the European Union, which was made up of ministers of national governments. The Parliament was only consulted on some legislative proposals and was given the power to dismiss the Commission with a two-thirds majority.⁹

Largely due to the efforts of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) the powers of the Parliament have grown over time. Budget treaties in the 1970s gave the Parliament joint budgetary authority with the Council, letting Parliament have a say in tweaking or amending the budget and requiring a final vote on the budget's adoption. The Single European Act in 1987 dramatically increased the Parliament's power by requiring Parliamentary assent for certain agreements. For accession treaties and associations agreements to pass, the approval of both the

⁹ Corbett et al., *The European Parliament*, 3.

Council and the Parliament was required. Subsequent treaties, notably Maastricht and Lisbon, continued to incrementally increase the Parliament's power.¹⁰

Today, "co-decision" between the Council and Parliament is the law for almost all areas of EU competence. Most legislative proposals are still drafted by the Commission. However, a majority of MEPs and qualified majority of ministers in the Council must normally approve of legislation for it to be enacted. Generally the Parliament and Council work concurrently on their versions of legislation, and the Parliament will send the Council its finished version to approve. If the Council votes against the Parliament legislation it will return the legislation to Parliament giving the reasons for its rejection. The Parliament also votes to approve the nominated Commissioners every five years after European elections, and elects the President of the Commission as well.

While the involvement in almost all legislative affairs may make it sound like the European Parliament is one of the strongest EU institutions, many still characterize it as weak and secondary. Many of the affairs of the EU, especially regarding external relationships, are dealt with more by the Commission or Council. Members of a committee in the Parliament were only recently given access to confidential documents related to European Common Defense and Security Policy, and after an internal conflict.¹¹ While the Parliament must consent to accession treaties (for new countries to enter the EU) and trade agreements, they get minimal role in the process of carrying out negotiations or discussion in the formation of these agreements. While the Parliament theoretically can leverage its power to vote down these agreements, this rarely occurs and would likely be taken badly by the other EU institutions.

¹⁰ Ibid., 2.

¹¹ Rosen, "EU Confidential."

The schedule and organization of the European Parliament is meant to allow for a coherent and thorough consideration of legislation. Legislative proposals are referred to the relevant committee for consideration and drafting. Committees are set up at the beginning of each EP session with two and a half year terms, and the number of both committees and members on committees generally change at the start of and half-way through each session. Following the 2014 elections, there were twenty committees in the EP, all with twenty-five or more members. Many MEPs are full members of one committee and a substitute member on another (a substitute is allowed to attend and speak at meetings, but only vote under specific circumstances). There is no “seniority rule” for committees.¹²

Plenaries are the meetings of all of the Parliament to raise and debate recent issues and consider the passage of reports and legislation. When legislation that received an overwhelming majority in committee is introduced it is often passed without debate and with one single vote, unless there are clear signs of dissent. Controversial legislation features lengthier debates with speaking time given to the Commission, Council, author of the legislation, and MEPs. Proposals to add amendments to reports must be backed by a political group, a relevant committee, or more than forty MEPs.

Roll call votes, where individual member’s votes are recorded, are required for final votes. Following a final vote, individual members or groups are allotted time to explain the reasons behind their voting choice. After each day of plenary the daily minutes, a record of texts adopted, and a verbatim report is released.¹³

Within this complex system, individual MEPs always are assured some basic options. Among other rights, individual MEPs may “put questions to the Commission or Council, table a

¹² Corbett et al., *The European Parliament*, 169-170.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 241.

motion for resolution or a written declaration, table and move amendments to any text in committee... make explanations of vote, ask questions related to the work of Parliament's leadership... raise points of order or move the inadmissibility of a matter".¹⁴

European Union Elections

The European Parliament became an elected body in 1979, and it remains the only directly elected institution of the European Union. Elections to the Parliament occur every five years; the most recent elections were in 1979. Elections occur in each individual member state of the EU simultaneously. The EU allows member states to have some control over the election process: some states use open rather than closed lists, and there are different minimum thresholds of vote shares necessary for a party to enter the Parliament depending on the member state. However, since the United Kingdom stopped using a first past the post system for European Parliament elections, all member states have used a proportional representative system where citizens will frequently vote for the national party they want to represent them in the European Parliament.¹⁵ The allocation of seats is not, strictly speaking, directly proportional, rather a slightly greater share of seats in the Parliament are given to smaller states. This "degressive proportionality" is meant to give smaller states in the Parliament substantive representation. Under the last electoral rules, 751 MEPs were elected for the 2014 session.

Elections for the European Parliament are generally considered "second-order elections", a term coined by Karlheinz Reif and Hermann Schmitt. According to this, voters view EP elections as less important than national elections just for their country. This first would explain the low turnout across Europe for EP elections. But scholars like Hix and Marsh also believe that since they view these elections as unimportant, voters will frequently vote against the parties in

¹⁴ Ibid., 67.

¹⁵ Ibid, 18.

power in their national legislature to “punish” them.¹⁶ Under this view, ruling parties will usually have lost support since their last election, and there may be widespread discontent among most of the voter base, either with the ruling party or the “mainstream” political establishment. Because of this, voters will use EP elections to manifest their displeasure, turning to opposition or fringe parties. Other scholars contend that EP elections are truly about European issues, and voters are more likely to turn to parties whose goals meet their vision of what Europe should actually look like. Rather than voting strategically for one or two major parties, voters can turn to parties that most closely align with their ideal preferences.¹⁷ If this is the case, Eurosceptics do well in the Parliament because their platforms on Europe resemble what a decent segment of the population really desires.

Political Groups in the European Parliament

Political groups are coalitions of national parties in parliament that coordinate and frequently work together in order to achieve shared goals. Evans and Vink define political groups in parliament as post-electoral coalitions between national party delegations and individuals who broadly identify with a set of programmatic principles.¹⁸ After elections to the European Parliament, national parties coordinate and negotiate over joining political groups. While individual MEPs leaving their national party’s political group to join another political group is rare, this occasionally occurs. To keep political groups from essentially being large national parties, EP rules mandate that a political group must have twenty-five or more MEPs from at least seven member states. Furthermore, a political group must have a shared political agenda or shared political values. This is following a precedent set in 1999 where the European

¹⁶ Hix and Marsh, “Punishment or Protest?”

¹⁷ Hobolt and de Vries, “Turning Against the Union?”

¹⁸ Evans and Vink, “Measuring Group Switching,” 95.

Court of Justice broke up a political group that included France's National Front on the grounds that the national parties making it up had no shared political value. Individual MEPs or national parties may choose not to join a political group at all, in which case they are Non-Inscrits (NI).

Political groups in the European Parliament can help facilitate smooth functioning, and act as networks that help guide and inform the actions and votes of individual MEPs. In this sense, it is fair to think of political groups in the EP as a supranational version of the national parties that make up the parliaments of many democracies. Political groups agree on policy positions through negotiations and discussion among their members and national parties. This is made easier by an EP schedule that sets aside a "group week" after committees meet for political groups to plan and whip votes. During this week political groups may negotiate between national parties with different perspectives on upcoming legislation, plan amendments to try to attach to legislation introduced in plenary and contact other political groups to arrange coalitions or compromises, among other activities.¹⁹ Group chairs (or co-chairs) elected by the MEPs of the political group lead most of these external negotiations. By allowing political groups to plan and reach inter-party understandings at earlier stages, there is potentially less conflict and confusion at the plenary stage.²⁰

Ideally, a political group will have a shared political ideology or framework, so disagreement among members will be minimal. In many cases MEPs will rely on political group recommendations or advice on voting issues, especially when they are unfamiliar with the policy area or do not have time or inclination to delve into the specifics of the issue. However, disagreements on voting issues are frequent, especially among certain political groups. National parties within the political groups are an important point of cleavage, and are a substantial threat

¹⁹ Corbett et al., *The European Parliament*, 136.

²⁰ Roger and Winzen, "Party Groups and Committee Negotiations."

to political group unity; if the leader of a national party tells their MEPs to vote against the political group the political group would be divided.

To try to bring dissident or reluctant MEPs into line, political groups have several tools at their disposal. Political groups assign members to committees, and dissident delegates may be punished halfway through a term by being removed from a favorable position.²¹ A political group also has some control over the allocation of speaking time in debate between its members, so in certain circumstances in plenary it could keep dissident members from speaking.

The actual ability of political group leaders to curb or deter dissidents is contested, and many believe the options they have to effectively “whip” votes are minimal. If a major national party within the political group goes against the political group line the rest of the political group realistically may not have many options- the national party could be embedded in leadership and deter retribution, or could threaten to leave the political group, weakening or dissolving the group. Even if the political group does vote to expel an MEP, which happens rarely, MEPs that switch parties do not automatically lose positions like committee chair. If several parties defect from the original political group line, it is difficult to call the original recommendation a common or agreed-upon line to begin with.

Moreover, national parties have their own techniques to “whip” votes and keep their MEPs for voting against national party interest. Faas points out that MEPs may be willing to buck their political group and vote for their national party if they believe that the national party has means to control their re-election or political future.²² Because of this, several scholars have found that national parties that closely monitor their MEPs and deploy credible threats to not re-nominate MEPs in the future will more frequently vote against the political group on contested

²¹ Faas, “To Defect or Not to Defect,” 846-847.

²² *Ibid.*, 860.

issues. Additionally, while political groups may “decide” committee assignments this is done based off of the nominations of national parties. So while a national party may happily censure a troublemaker within their party, they are unlikely to discipline an individual member of the national party when that individual went along with the national party line.

Inclusion in a political group may sometimes mean that a national party is pressured to deviate from what it sees as its core principles, in the name of cohesion or unity with the larger group. But there are numerous advantages involved with political group inclusion. First, political groups are directly funded by the Parliament for their operations. Each political group is given a small set share of the budget, and then a larger share proportioned to their number of MEPs. When the Europe of Nations and Freedoms (ENF) group had 48 seats in 2015, they received 1.5 million Euros for the first six months of their operations (this would be around 62,500 Euros per member per year). By contrast, non-attached members without a political group are generally given 48,000 Euros per member annually.²³ The Parliament also provides office space and meeting rooms for political groups, and professional staff in proportion to the size of the political group as well.

Secondly, political groups are accorded more speaking time and visibility in the public sphere. During a plenary debate, every political group is given a base number of minutes of speaking time, and a greater number of minutes proportional to their number of minutes. Political groups may divide this between some members, or let a political group leader use all of it. Non-Inscrits are given next to no speaking time in these debates. Leaders of political groups can expect a certain amount of courtesy when they send delegations to national parties.

²³ Corbett et al., *The European Parliament*, 131.

Thirdly, political groups are given more rights and representation in EP negotiation and policy. A political group can call a roll call vote in plenary, which is used to put their group vote on record, make sure members vote as ordered, or embarrass another group. The reconciliation process between the Council and Parliament has representatives of the political groups, as does the Conference of Presidents. A request by a political group to table (or withdraw) an amendment is easier than trying to find forty members throughout the Parliament to agree to this. Lastly, inclusion in a political group is generally necessary to get premier committee assignment, including chairmanships and vice-chairmanships.

Some of the aforementioned benefits are clearly only benefits to a national party if the political group they join generally shares their agenda. It is not advantageous for a national party to be in a political group with more speaking time if the political group uses that time to advance goals that the national party disagrees with. Other political group benefits are advantageous even if the agenda of the political group is divergent, such as access to a greater amount of Parliamentary funding. This mix has led to some debate about whether national parties generally join political groups because of the structural incentives related to that group, vs the ideological proximity of the political group's agenda to the national party's. However, if a political group accurately articulates the goals or agenda of a national party, and their agendas are not in tension, joining a political group can help air the national party's views for a longer time and to a larger audience, as well as provide greater sway in getting their ideal policies passed.

There are currently eight political groups in the European Parliament, not including the small number of Non-Inscrpts. The largest political group is the European People's Party (EPP), a center-right party with 214 MEPs, the second largest is the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and

Democrats (S&D), which is made up of center-left parties. The largest political group in Parliament has historically switched between two groups along these ideological lines.

Table 1: Political Groups in the Eighth Parliament (as of early 2018)

Political Group name	Number of MEPs in group
European People's Party (EPP)	217
Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D)	189
European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)	74
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)	68
European United Left–Nordic Green Left (GUE–NGL)	52
The Greens–European Free Alliance (Greens–EFA)	51
Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD)	45
Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF)	37
Non-Inscrits (NI)	18

Euroscepticism and Populism

Populism and Euroscepticism are frequently mentioned simultaneously and sometimes interchangeably, and as such it is necessary to define and differentiate them. Mudde defines populism as, “an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people”.²⁴ In his 2016 work Jan-Werner Müller supports the basic tenets of this definition. Müller sees being anti-elitist as a necessary condition for an entity to qualify as populist, but points out that many parties of all stripes sometimes use anti-elitist or antisystem rhetoric. The other necessary component for a party to meet to qualify as populist is an antipluralist rhetoric or

²⁴ Mudde, “The Popular Zeitgeist,” 543.

ideology that portrays competitors and other parties as illegitimate enemies of the people rather than other kindred organizations also working for a viable political system.²⁵

It should be noted that as used here the term populism is issue-neutral, that is to say it does not necessitate one set view on a given social or governmental issue. While commentators who speak of rising populism in Europe generally refer to parties that are based around a fairly conservative ideology, populism may refer to a far-left party or candidate as well.

Euroscepticism is not a value-neutral term. Rather it describes a specific set of beliefs regarding the European Union. While some of the literature surrounding the populist movement will be used in the paper given the degree of overlap between populist and Eurosceptic parties, the terms will not be used interchangeably.

There is greater variability in the definition of Euroscepticism. Hobolt defines Euroscepticism as a sentiment of disapproval towards European integration.²⁶ Mudde, in contrast, states that Eurosceptics believe in the basic tenets of European integration, but are skeptical about the current direction of the European Union.²⁷ Szczerbiak and Taggart divide Euroscepticism into two more specific categories; they define hard Euroscepticism as “outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration, and opposition to one’s country joining or remaining a member of the EU” and soft Euroscepticism as “contingent or qualified opposition to integration”.²⁸

For this paper, I define a Eurosceptic party as one which makes advocacy against further European integration or against the EU a central and constant component of their message or agenda. While this is a more narrow definition of Euroscepticism than that used by most

²⁵ Müller, *What is Populism?*, 3.

²⁶ Hobolt, “Divided in Unity?” 12.

²⁷ Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties*, 164.

²⁸ Szczerbiak and Taggart, “Contemporary Euroscepticism,” 3-4.

scholars, it is meant to eliminate from consideration parties that employ Eurosceptic rhetoric on very specific occasions, and those whose manifestoes or rhetoric indicate a degree of Euroscepticism but do not highlight positions on EU integration as important to the party. While it may be unclear on whether some European parties meet this definition, this paper will largely focus on national parties that clearly fall within the definition.

Additionally, references to Eurosceptic unity or cohesion will refer to voting or group cohesion among Eurosceptic parties with a conservative or right-wing ideology. The European Parliament also has parties that are classified as “left-wing Eurosceptic,” many are found in the GUE-NGL political group. These groups are not principally opposed to the European Union or closer integration, rather they often oppose the EU because they are strongly against its use of austerity and other programs they see as oppressive. These groups are not included in the following analysis because it seems clear that a far different position on the left-right political spectrum would generally keep them from permanent coalition or coordination with far-right groups, even if they do somewhat share their distrust of the EU.

Classification of Current Parliament

While there are three political groups which sometimes use Eurosceptic rhetoric, only two of these mark Euroscepticism as a clear priority. The European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group is the third largest group in the Parliament. Its website describes the group as “Eurorealist” and in favor of decentralizing EU powers. The main page also makes clear that the group is not in favor of EU break-up, but that the EU “should do less but do it better”.²⁹ ECR was set up in 2009 by the British Conservatives, who wanted to leave the EPP. In the current legislative session the ECR has seventy-four MEPs, with the two largest national

²⁹ European Conservatives and Reformists, ecrgroup.eu.

parties being the British Conservatives and the Law and Justice (PiS) party of Poland. Its chairman is Syed Kamall of the British Conservatives. While the ECR contains multiple Eurosceptic parties, many of its parties are believed to only criticize the EU because it is strategically advantageous. Because of this, the ECR is considered the least Eurosceptic political group.

The seventh largest political group in the Parliament is the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD). EFDD was organized predominantly by UKIP after the 2014 elections. The other party with a large number of MEPs is Italy's Five Star Movement, though it has considered leaving the group during the most recent term. EFDD currently has forty-one MEPs, and is co-chaired by Nigel Farage of UKIP and (until recently) David Borrelli of the Five Star Movement. Both major parties (and many smaller coalition partners) have frequently used Eurosceptic rhetoric and emphasized the importance of EU integration as an issue.

The smallest political group in the EP is the Europe of Nations and Freedoms group. This group was not officially established until 2015, since the National Front was not able to immediately find enough coalition partners to satisfy the EP criteria for a valid political group. Eventually the National Front was able to find enough interested MEPs to put together the group, notably from the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV), the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) and Italy's Northern League. Language on the ENF website is extremely Eurosceptic, and also frequently references sovereign nations being under attack and the need for European countries to protect their borders. The ENF currently has forty MEPs and is co-chaired by Marcel de Graaf (PVV) and Nicholas Bay (FN), and National Front MEPs make up a majority of the group.

To designate the Eurosceptic parties in the Parliament I used the 2014 Chapel Hill expert survey (CHES). The survey is given to political scientists who assign values to parties running in

the 2014 EP elections on multiple issues, including their position on EU integration and their position on the left-right spectrum. Among these measures are “EU position”, ranking a party’s feelings on integration on a 1 to 7 scale (1=very against, 7=very for) and “EU salience”, ranking the importance of integration as an issue to the party on a 1 to 10 scale (1=very unimportant, 10=very important).³⁰

As this study seeks to examine Eurosceptic cooperation, I tried to avoid classifying parties as Eurosceptic that might indicate some disapproval of the EU or EU integration but do not make it a large part of their platform or goals. Because of this, I filtered the CHES dataset to only consider national parties that scored a 3 or lower on European Integration and a 5 or greater on EU salience. The top ten parties, in number of seats won in the 2014 election are shown below, as they include the most powerful Eurosceptic parties in Parliament. A complete table of all parties meeting the above qualifications is included in Table 1 of the appendix.

Table 2: Largest (right-wing) Eurosceptic parties in the Eighth Parliament

Country	Party	Seats won by party (2014)	Seats retained by party (2017)	EU Position	EU Salience
UK	UKIP	24	22	1.14	9.14
France	FN	23	20	1.21	8.46
Italy	M5S	17	17	1.43	8.86
Hungary	Fidesz	12	11	2.71	6.36
Germany	AfD	7	2	1.61	9.54
Italy	LN	5	5	1.14	8.86
Denmark	DPP	4	3	1.91	7.27
Netherlands	PVV	4	4	1.09	8.36
Austria	FPO	4	4	1.9	6.7

³⁰ Polk et al. “Chapel Hill Electoral Survey.”

Poland	KNP	4	3	1.06	8
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Opposition to the EU by these parties can be corroborated in statements to the press by party members and leaders, analysis of academics and party web sites, and manifestos. The 2014 Euromanifesto Study, for example, does content analysis of party programs for the 2014 EP elections. It notes positive and negative mentions of EU integration, with a negative score signaling hostile mentions of Europe, and a rejection of a more integrated Europe. Nine of the top ten parties mentioned above have negative scores on this measure (the exception being the Five Star Movement) as did many of their coalition partners in the ENF and EFDD.³¹ A 2015 list by Hobolt also includes all of the major parties listed above in its table of Eurosceptic parties.³²

To illustrate the landscape in terms of characteristics of Eurosceptic parties, I also include a table below with the attributes of the top ten Eurosceptic parties. The placement on a left-right spectrum is gathered from the CHES dataset, while the classification as populist or hard/soft Eurosceptic is determined by academic classifications corroborated by party documents.

Table 3: Characteristics of the Top Ten Eurosceptic parties in the Parliament

Country	Party	Original Political Group	Populist	Degree of Euroscepticism	Left-right spectrum (0-10)
UK	UKIP	EFDD	No	Hard	9.14
France	FN	ENF	Yes	Hard	9.64
Italy	M5S	EFDD	Yes	Soft	4.67
Hungary	Fidesz	EPP	Yes	Soft	7.93
Germany	AfD	ECR	Yes	Hard	8.92
Italy	LN	ENF	Yes	Hard	8.86
Denmark	DF	ECR	Yes	Hard	6.90

³¹ Schmitt et al., “Euromanifesto Study.”

³² Hobolt, “Divided in Unity,” 12.

Netherlands	PVV	ENF	Yes	Hard	9.25
Austria	FPO	ENF	Yes	Hard	8.70
Poland	KNP	NI	Yes	Hard	9.53

Scope of Thesis

Rather than forming one political group in the Parliament, Eurosceptic parties are gathered in three smaller political groups, and a large number of Eurosceptic MEPs are not in any political group at all. This is problematic since smaller political groups are more vulnerable to dissolution; they may struggle to meet the required number of members and nationalities.

A second dimension of disunity between Eurosceptic groups is their cohesion as a political group. In a 2003 analysis, Faas found that MEPs from Eurosceptic national parties are more likely to defect from political group lines.³³ Since the 2014 elections, the Eurosceptic political groups remain the lowest cohesion on roll-call votes in many policy areas. In other words, even among the Eurosceptic parties that form coalitions meant to support their overlapping goals and ideologies, Eurosceptic parties frequently vote differently on Parliamentary matters.

Thirdly, Eurosceptic parties have had internal divisions during the 2014 Parliamentary term. Several Eurosceptic parties have had their MEPs split into two parties, or seen their MEPs renounce the party they were elected into the Parliament on, and move to different parties or political groups. Both the Alternative for Deutschland (Germany) and the Congress for the New Right (Poland) have seen their representation drop because of internal clashes. UKIP has seen several MEPs void themselves of allegiance to the party and declare themselves Independent or Conservative.

³³ Faas, "To Defect or Not to Defect?"

In the following chapters, I examine the causes and explanations for this disunity among Eurosceptic parties in the European Parliament. Given that the values and goals espoused by many Eurosceptic parties are similar in nature I ask what factors prevent greater coordination and cooperation between them. While there are multiple causes of Eurosceptic disunity, this work seeks to not only identify these causes but to contextualize them and weigh their salience and importance in the European Parliament today.

Chapter 2

In this chapter, I cover and evaluate the literature on group formation and voting in the European Parliament. To understand whether Eurosceptic cooperation is ‘deviant’ in the European Parliament, and the modes of cooperation that are typically expected from political groups, it is important to look at current theories on how cooperation in the Parliament functions. This literature covers conclusions and observations on national party cooperation within the Parliament and how Eurosceptic parties conceive of their role. But besides helping uncover possible motivations for Eurosceptic disunity, this review can also reveal current gaps. I pay particular attention to what the literature points to as reasons that groups with similar agendas may disagree.

I also integrate the hypotheses tested in the rest of this thesis into the literature review. The hypotheses are generally based around possible reasons for (or dimensions of) Eurosceptic disunity and are extracted from the current literature.

Literature

Scholars focusing on the European Parliament have written extensively on what shapes the formation of political groups as well as pressures that influence voting behavior. Some of the relevant literature also focuses on the barriers and obstacles preventing unity among populist parties in general, and a relatively small field focuses on populist unity within the European Parliament specifically.

Political Group Formation

Why don’t Eurosceptic parties join with each other in a single group, where they would have more power? This section reviews literature of arguments about why parties join groups generally, and then looks specifically at arguments about Eurosceptic incentives.

Many debates on what guides national party choice revolve around the extent to which parties choose based on ideological proximity, as opposed to structural incentives (such as greater funds or better committee positions). Among those who argue ideological proximity, there is a general consensus that while agreement on every issue is not essential, general attitudes are. A 2011 work by Benoit and McElroy advances their theory of “political congruence” as the determinant of political group placement. When parties were placed on a simpler two-dimensional spectrum (left-right and pro-anti EU) many national parties’ placement was similar to the central values of the political group itself. While they found that some factors seem to matter less to placement, such as their placement on environmental issues, the authors conclude “groups in the European Parliament tend to consist of parties with similar, but by no means identical, policy positions on the dimensions that matter to them most”.³⁴ Edoardo Bressanelli, agrees that ideology is the central motivating factor. When looking at party manifestos in 2009, he found that the ideological positions of national parties matched most closely with their political group roughly two-thirds of the time. From this he concludes that the political group formation process is unlikely to either “change” national parties ideals, or force them to join with other parties with vastly different ideals.³⁵

In another work, Benoit and McElroy use the British Conservatives as an example of how ideology is centrally important to political group coexistence. Despite receiving political group resources, the Conservatives constantly threatened to leave the group, clashing with leadership, and eventually did create a new political group. The authors use several expert surveys to place national parties on spectrums in four substantive areas. They then build a conditional logit model on the basis that it is prohibitively difficult for parties to put together new political groups, and

³⁴ McElroy and Benoit, “Policy Positioning in the European Parliament,” 165.

³⁵ Bressanelli, “Ideology or Pragmatism?”

try to predict which political groups individual parties should be in if ideology is central. While the model incorrectly placed some British parties relative to where they are in reality, a substantial portion of party placement was correct.³⁶

Another point of view suggests structural issues are generally the cause. Rose and Borz see large European parties as “catchall groups” that are happy to broaden or change their central positions in order to maximize their positions in Parliament. The study uses the EU Profiler (a database of National Party Programs) to compare national party ideals to the ideals of the political group they end up joining. Rose and Borz argue that a noticeable gap in some cases between national parties expressed ideology and the core of the political group shows that structural incentives must play the larger role in shaping coalitions.³⁷ Their analysis, however, does not offer a compelling reason for why political group cohesion is so high for so many parties, if national parties are attracted by structural incentives.

Evans and Vink also suggest that resource-based considerations affect national parties’ choice of political group. They define political groups as “post-electoral coalitions between national party delegations and individuals who broadly identify with a set of programmatic principles”.³⁸ However, they also note that there are low transition costs for jumping from one political group to another, and no sign that voters will register or be disturbed by a political group switch, or even initially joining a political group poorly aligned with the national party ideology. Because of this, non-extreme parties have incentives to join the larger centrist political groups, because of the resources and greater institutional support they provide. Evans and Vink point to Conservatives and even populists joining the Christian Democrats in the past because of

³⁶ McElroy and Benoit, “Party Policy and Group Affiliation.”

³⁷ Rose and Borz, “Aggregation and Representation.”

³⁸ Evans and Vink, “Measuring Group Switching,” 95.

these incentives, as well as Socialists receiving support from parties with other leftist ideologies.³⁹ According to those who advocate for strategic incentives as a meaningful decider of political group choice, national parties may join a political group with different core values just to avoid being Non-Inscrits; they will also join a group with less ideological proximity because it gives *more* resources and support than their old one.

Other authors take a middle ground in the discussion of whether national parties use policy congruence or resources to determine political group. Maurer et al. point out that if maximizing Parliamentary resources was all national parties cared about there would just be one or two massive political groups, and argue that a likely more logical process is that national parties seek the largest political group that broadly shares their policy preferences. Additionally, however, they reject the assumption they feel is implicit in most analyses: that national parties and political groups make these decisions based only on their interest in office, votes and policy.⁴⁰ Rather they think individual member and party leader interests, such as career and reelection, may shape political group switching. The British Conservative party in the EPP is presented as an example of this pressure affecting events. After promising in a campaign to take the Tories out of the EPP, and dealing with a vocal and Eurosceptic Conservative right, Cameron seriously considered taking the Tories out of the EPP, balking at the time mostly because of the lack of other suitable options and coalition partners. Cameron was prompted to consider switching due to internal fissures, (which neither side above discusses) and prevented from it largely because of strategic and electoral considerations.

Authors who examine Eurosceptic political groups specifically engage in both sides of this debate. Startin argues that there are three main categories of reasons why Eurosceptics

³⁹ Ibid., 107.

⁴⁰ Maurer et al., "Explaining Group Membership," 247.

would want to join together in a political group. These are shared ideological conviction (such as pro-sovereignty beliefs), respectability concerns (gaining legitimacy in the Parliament) and practical survival considerations (speaking time and finances).⁴¹ However, using interviews and archival evidence surrounding the ITS, a past far-right political group in the Parliament, he notes that in many situations these shared incentives may begin to fall apart, and are not necessarily sufficient for continual cooperation. Shared ideological conviction may be difficult to actually achieve because the far right is a ‘broad church’ with diversity of beliefs and an eagerness to preference their own country. In the ITS, some members did not present themselves as Eurosceptic and wanted an “EU identity”, and different factions of MEPs complained of having different “political cultures”.⁴²

Under the second umbrella incentive, respectability, Startin hypothesizes that membership in a political group may provide a much-needed example of legitimacy or respectability, especially for parties often considered fringe or extremist.⁴³ By joining a group, Eurosceptic parties may demonstrate that they are capable of international cooperation and full participation in the institution. However, many other authors believe that concerns over respectability often actually hinder coalitions between Eurosceptic parties. Whitaker notes that after political groups were formed in 2014, voices in the United Kingdom’s media registered dismay with the new parties that the British Conservatives were consorting with.⁴⁴ In *On Extremism and Democracy in Europe* Mudde briefly mentions that the strategic divide between nationally accepted and ostracized parties and the ideological divide between extreme and less

⁴¹ Startin, “Where to for the Radical Right,” 436.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 440.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 432.

⁴⁴ Whitaker and Lynch, “Pragmatism, Principles and Publicity,” 240.

extreme parties have caused problems for the far right in the European Parliament.⁴⁵ Corbett et al. support this hypothesis, pointing out that the ENF, even as it struggled to find political group partners, considered Greece's Golden Dawn and Hungary's Jobbik unacceptable due to their lack of respectability.⁴⁶

Some authors suggest that other, non-Eurosceptic parties have managed to actually divide Eurosceptic parties. Grabbe and Groot attribute at least some of the lack of Eurosceptic power to the machinations of other political groups, pointing out that political groups conspired to block EFDD nominees to Chairmanships.⁴⁷ Mudde seems to at least implicitly agree that some of the Eurosceptic difficulties in assembling political groups are due to other more mainstream national parties: he argues that the ECR deliberately courted groups that might normally coalesce with UKIP in an attempt to rob them of a political group.⁴⁸ Corbett also notes that after Nigel Farage of UKIP said he would use committee positions to sabotage the Parliament, an EFDD candidate for the Petitions Committee chair was challenged and defeated, a similar process occurred with AfD MEPs.⁴⁹ Mainstream disruption of the benefits of political group membership may diminish the incentive to join.

Unfortunately, the argument that Eurosceptic unity is purposefully foiled by other political actors is difficult to test, and there is no serious engagement of this theory in the rest of this thesis. However, upon reviewing the literature, it seems that respectability is a key variable for Eurosceptic political group formation. Given this, I present my first hypothesis, focused on in Chapter 3, below.

⁴⁵ Mudde, *On Extremism and Democracy in Europe*, 35.

⁴⁶ Corbett et al., *The European Parliament*, 126.

⁴⁷ Grabbe and Groot, "Populism in the European Parliament," 41.

⁴⁸ Mudde, *On Extremism and Democracy in Europe*, 95.

⁴⁹ Corbett et al., *The European Parliament*, 173.

Hypothesis 1: If a Eurosceptic party is seen as disreputable or politically toxic, then other Eurosceptic parties will be less willing to work with them in a political group.

Strategic considerations of Eurosceptic parties may drive their decisions on who to enter political groups with. Strategic considerations include a party worrying about its reputation or the impression it makes on national constituencies by joining forces with a disreputable party. It should be noted that in itself strategic considerations should not affect the extent to which different national parties vote together (though if the purposeful lack of coordination is due to an ideological difference that might be expected). However, strategic considerations may affect who national parties are willing to accept as coalition partners in political groups.

There are few sources of quantitative data regarding political group formation, both because it cannot be recorded in the same way that roll call votes can and because negotiations regarding inclusion in a political group happen far less frequently. Because of this, I examine specific case studies of coalition negotiations to see if it is a driver of disunity. Included as relevant examples of strategic decision-making guiding formation include a study of the ENF's quest to put together a political group and the mutual antagonism between UKIP and the National Front which prevented a substantial alliance. As a sub-hypothesis in this area, I also look at several Eurosceptic parties, including Fidesz, who seem to use political group formation as an avenue to actively increase their resources or respectability.

Voting Behavior

What explains the cohesion ratings of Eurosceptic parties within their political groups? Similar to above, I start with a review of the factors in political groups largely that scholars believe elevate or lower cohesion to the political group line. This section then looks at past authors attempts to describe how Euroscepticism affects voting cohesion rates.

To understand when national parties or individual MEPs defect from their political groups, it is beneficial first to understand why they so frequently vote as a unit. Roger and Winzen point out that political groups are given substantial time during Parliament meetings to negotiate and reconcile positions, and agree on voting positions. They also note Ringe's argument that MEPs outside of a committee will often not invest time into issues themselves, and just follow the recommendation of party-members on the committee, lowering the odds of individual rogue votes.⁵⁰ Hix et al. credit the internal "whipping" mechanisms of political groups with at least some influence in MEP and national party votes, noting "they control the allocation of committee positions, finances, speaking time, and the space on the legislative agenda. The leadership of each European political group also controls the allocation of committee positions and resources between the national party delegations within the European party group".⁵¹

Another author argues that cohesion is not so much about resources as much as whether or not voting with the group is socialized or institutionalized in the Parliament. Coman performs a different cohesion test: only looking at roll call votes where European groups and national governments differed in their recommendations to MEPs on how to vote. In this scenario, the MEP is an actor responding to demands from two different sources. However, he found that while certain characteristics of MEPs correlated with higher deviation (Western countries during his period of analysis voted with their political group rather than country more often in times of tension) political group cohesion was relatively high across the board, this "intrinsic unity of the party group is a function of ideological homogeneity and learned norms of collective behavior".⁵² By linking political group cohesion to learning the norms of Parliament and fitting

⁵⁰ Roger and Winzen, "Party Group and Committee Negotiations," 392.

⁵¹ Hix et al., "Dimensions of Politics," 496.

⁵² Coman, "Reassessing the Influence of Party Groups," 1104.

ideologically into one's political group, Coman implies that newer parties, as well as ones who are ideological outliers in their political group, should more frequently be tempted to vote against the political group.

Another argument, by Faas, locates MEPs loyalty to political groups in the political group's ability to help the MEP in their three central goals: re-election, office (election to committee in the EP) and legislative results for their constituents. Political groups cannot make credible threats not to re-elect MEPs, but they do have sway in committee assignments and positions. Given that the national party often has more proximate control of a MEP's future, Faas argues that the tension between national party and political group can lead MEPs to abandon their political group. Looking at a database of roll call votes from the European Parliament, Faas finds that national parties which are Eurosceptic, monitor their MEPs closely, are in national government, or have centralized methods of candidate selection are more likely to defect from political group, though he gives only brief causal explanation as to why these factors lower cohesion.⁵³

Other authors have found or emphasized different characteristics of defectors from political groups. Lindstaedt et al. peg defection levels in roll call votes to "newness" in the Parliament. Like Coman, they argue that a new political group will be less experienced in "whipping" members into voting with them, and therefore lose members inclined to vote along national party lines. Unlike Coman, however, their data (roll call votes from MEPs in the 2004-2009 session) also indicates that new MEPs from countries that have more recently joined the EU are more likely to defect, perhaps because they have not yet realized the collective benefits from effective political groups.⁵⁴ Looking at roll call votes from 2004-2005, Coman, in sharp

⁵³ Faas, "To Defect or Not to Defect," 860.

⁵⁴ Lindstaedt et al., "Adaptive Behavior in the European Parliament."

contrast, argues that MEPs from Central and Eastern countries were more likely to stay with their political group, positing that this is likely because they have not yet managed the dual pressures between national and political group.⁵⁵

Jensen and Spoon argue that most studies of voting patterns of the Parliament are misleading since they treat parties as an aggregate or monolithic entity, without failing to highlight how different types of parties have vastly different voting patterns. They look at niche parties specifically, and compare the roll call votes of four party families (including the “anti-EU family”) to a study by Hix that looks at voting patterns of all parties. They argue that niche parties (non mainstream) respond to institutional stimuli differently than mainstream parties, but also that there is more variation in voting within these niche party families than in more mainstream ones. For example, the regionalist party family switched to more anti-EU voting because of a Parliamentary rule change which they saw as destabilizing, while mainstream parties did not react in such a way to the rule change. In other words, an institutional change to EP Parliament rules made niche parties change voting strategies in a way that mainstream parties did not. They also claim niche parties in government tend to be more pro-EU than those not in national government. They also point out that niche parties tend to switch political group more, and also find anti-EU voting patterns from MEPs in pro-EU niche parties.⁵⁶

Several authors have examined whether different ideological beliefs have been an obstacle to more meaningful cooperation for Eurosceptic parties specifically. Taggart and Szczerbiak, for example, distinguish between “Hard” and “Soft” Euroscepticism. Hard Eurosceptics largely reject the entire Eurosceptic project and oppose their country remaining in the EU. Soft Eurosceptics have a more qualified opposition to European integration. The authors

⁵⁵ Coman, “Reassessing the Influence of Party Groups.”

⁵⁶ Jensen and Spoon, “Thinking Locally, Acting Supranationally,” 179.

bases these distinctions on the idea that political outsiders will use Eurosceptic rhetoric to further place themselves outside the political system, but may not actually believe in or want Eurosceptic actions passed.⁵⁷ The difference in commitment to opposing integration could be a partial explanation for why Eurosceptic parties vote against each other. Whitaker and Lynch also point to different levels of Euroscepticism as influencing participation and voting patterns in the Parliament. They first note that the EFDD even in rhetoric is diverse on views towards integration, and that the ECR also contains a mix of hard and soft Eurosceptics. They hypothesize that hard Eurosceptics will care less about legislative activity (participating and attending less) because they will not be able to leverage votes to leave the EU anyway. Soft Eurosceptics may be more likely to care about legislative affairs.⁵⁸ Other authors believe that Eurosceptic and populist parties' ideological differences have led to problems.

Another categorical reason for lack of unity pointed to in the literature is lack of institutionalization of populist and Eurosceptic parties. Mudde notes that many populist parties have low levels of institutionalization: they have leaders with cults of personality, who tend to clash with the leaders of other nation's populists.⁵⁹

Rather than trying to examine the behavior of entire Eurosceptic parties, Brack examines behavior on an individual MEP level. She first notes that the Parliament environment is structured around compromise between factions: its rules do not make it particularly conducive for principled opposition to the EU. These rules also fit Eurosceptic MEPs into one of three molds. They can choose to be an absentee MEP, who rarely involves themselves in Parliamentary business and spends most of their time campaigning at home. They could also be a

⁵⁷ Szczerbiak and Taggart, "Contemporary Euroscepticism".

⁵⁸ Whitaker and Lynch, "Pragmatism, Principles and Publicity," 237.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 183.

‘public orator’ who mainly uses the EP space for publicity, using speaking time to highlight the nonconformity and policy positions without making any serious attempts to pass legislation. Lastly, they could act as ‘the pragmatist’, making use of their MEP status to actually get involved in Parliamentary affairs and involve themselves in many legislative activities.⁶⁰ Brack’s different models for how Eurosceptic MEPs may conceive of their roles may help provide a causal explanation for why there is internal differences within parties, as well as why parties vote differently. However, she does not link this analysis to a larger explanation of why certain parties may contain more of one ‘type’ of MEP than another.

There is a general consensus among scholars that Eurosceptic parties tend to be a heterogeneous group. Because of these, Startin declares that classifying Eurosceptic parties has been a “definitional minefield”.⁶¹ These difficulties have perhaps contributed to a relative lack of analysis on Eurosceptics in the European Parliament, but there have been some attempts to characterize their existence and decision-making there.

The literature on voting cohesion provides several explanations for why Eurosceptic parties may diverge from their political group and the other national parties within it. First, however, it is important to establish that this is not just a feature of niche party families. This leads to hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 2: Eurosceptic niche parties will cooperate the same amount as other niche party families.

Jensen and Spoon suggest that niche parties in the Parliament act differently as a category than mainstream parties.⁶² While this would not explain why Eurosceptic parties choose not to

⁶⁰ Brack, “The Case of the ‘Untidy Right’.”

⁶¹ Startin, “Where to for the Radical Right,” 430.

⁶² Jensen and Spoon, “Thinking Locally, Acting Supranationally.”

consolidate into one Parliamentary group, it suggests that niche party status could meaningfully affect voting behavior, perhaps by making them less likely to cooperate. Under this hypothesis, lack of Eurosceptic voting cooperation could be entirely (or partly) a function of their status as a niche party, rather than relating to their members or ideological beliefs. In order to check whether this hypothesis is true I measure whether Eurosceptic parties generally cooperate less (during votes on legislation) than other niche parties.

The fourth chapter of this thesis also goes on to evaluate the role of ideology in difference in voting patterns of Eurosceptic parties. The three hypotheses look at how ideological differences discussed in the literature above may lower voting cohesion.

Hypothesis 3: If a Eurosceptic party in the Parliament is populist then it will cooperate less frequently with non-populist Eurosceptic parties.

Divisions between Eurosceptic parties that are populist and those that are not could also affect national parties' choices regarding voting strategy. A populist party may be less willing to coordinate votes with other parties, or make concessions or compromises when it differs with coalition partners. Also, since a component of populism is an antipluralism that frequently labels those who disagree as the enemy, or see disagreement as a threat, populists may for strategic or ideological reasons be unable to compromise. Because of this, populism is examined as a cause of disunity among Eurosceptic parties, both to see if populist parties appear less willing to coordinate with all partners and to see if populists work better with other populist parties.

To classify current parties as populist, I relied on Müller's definition described earlier. I then use categorizations of other academics, corroborated with stories and statements from the press and party documents to identify current populist parties in the European Parliament. By using a database of EP roll call votes, I can track the number of votes where two parties voted the

same way during the most recent Parliament. Using this database, I compare the cooperation rate of populist Eurosceptic parties to Eurosceptic parties that are not populist. I provide a secondary measure of cooperation using data from VoteWatch Europe, which provides measures of individual national party loyalty to political group. Lastly, I examine whether populists tend to agree with each other more in the Eurosceptic political groups in order to see if there is a clear division on votes between populist and non-populist parties.

Hypothesis 4: If a Eurosceptic party holds a position on the left-right ideological spectrum, then the party will vote less frequently with Eurosceptic parties that differ significantly from this position.

Another variable worth considering is the positioning of Eurosceptic parties on a left-right spectrum. Most of this paper looks at Eurosceptic parties who are centrist to far-right, since the lack of cohesion and political group formation with far-left Eurosceptics seems easily explained. However, policy and ideological differences caused by smaller deviations in Eurosceptic parties' placement on a liberal-conservative scale could be a significant driver of disunity. For example, differences on national party position on immigration could drive national parties to vote different ways on immigration-related legislation. I use placement on the Chapel Hill Electoral Survey to measure the placement of parties on the left-right ideological spectrum. I then use the Clarin database and VoteWatch Europe database of European Parliament RCVs to track the number of votes where two Eurosceptic parties voted the same way during the most recent Parliament.

Hypothesis 5: If a Eurosceptic party has a "soft" stance on Euroscepticism, then it will cooperate

less frequently with Eurosceptic parties with a “hard” stance.

As pointed to in the literature, even Eurosceptic parties may be against European integration to different extents, or prioritize it as an issue to greater and lesser extents. This is a dimension which should be considered distinct from parties positions on a left-right spectrum. Applying Taggart and Szczerbiak’s analysis, a “soft” Eurosceptic party might be willing to vote for policies that extend European integration, or help the EU, since its anti-EU stance may have been largely a tool to win anti-system voters or capture the protest vote. A “hard” Eurosceptic could be expected to vote differently since these parties have an ideological rather than rhetorical campaign against the EU. Because of this, Eurosceptic parties may have different voting patterns depending on the extent to which they prioritize EU integration as a central issue. It is conceivable that a “Eurosceptic” party may vote in a pro-EU direction if it also endorses or supports some other aspect of their platform or priorities.

Hard and soft Eurosceptics can be classified by looking at the Chapel Hill Electoral Survey “EU Position” and “EU Salience” scores, and checking the validity of these scores with accounts from the press and analysis of other academics. My verification of the validity of the CHES classifications sometimes results in changes to expected classification: for example while the Five Star Movement has scores on EU Position and EU Salience that might make classification as a Hard Eurosceptic party expected, Franzosi et al. make a compelling argument that the party likely has strategic rather than ideological interests in maligning the EU.⁶³ Similar to the last two hypotheses, I use the Clarin and VoteWatch Europe database to measure differences in voting between Eurosceptic parties.

⁶³ Franzosi et al., et al., “The Italian Five Star Movement,” 110.

I also look at cohesion rates on specific voting issues that are frequently important to soft Eurosceptic parties, such as development, to see if a divide is heightened. Lastly, I examine the relationship between the Five Star Movement and UKIP in the EFDD to illustrate divisions that are probably due to degree of anti-EU sentiment.

The last factor that explains voting cohesion that I test is institutionalization, which I explore in Chapter 5. This is flagged as a potential motivator of disunity within political groups by multiple authors.

Hypothesis 6: If the political group or national party make-up of Eurosceptic structures in the Parliament is uninstitutionalized, then it will have great difficulty coordinating votes.

There are two dimensions of institutionalization that the literature seems to suggest may factor into Eurosceptic voting cooperation. The first is an examination of how well-structured the political group itself is. This possibility is raised by from the work of authors like Lindstaedt et al., who peg voting loyalty to the “newness” of the political group, and the effectiveness of disciplinary measures like whipping within it. If political leadership is lacking and typical mechanisms to coordinate votes are not developed that could be a larger contributor to disunity than actual ideological disputes.

It is also worth considering whether Eurosceptic parties tend to be unstable and vote less often together within the Parliament largely because the parties themselves are uninstitutionalized. Lack of structure or leadership for a party could mean a higher likelihood of incoherent policy or ideology, internal political fissures, or lack of experience in how to maximize utility in institutions like the European Parliament. Political groups like S&D, by contrast, include many parties that have been around for some time, but also have decades of experience in the European Parliament. Lack of institutionalization as a cause for *populist*

disunity is hinted at by Mudde when he talks about the low levels of infrastructure and coordination between parties. The same could be true for Eurosceptic parties as a category.

Chapter 3

This chapter discusses how concerns about the reputation of parties affect the national parties' decision-making process when choosing coalition partners in the European Parliament. Specifically it addresses hypothesis 1, which suggests that if a Eurosceptic party is seen as disreputable or politically toxic, then other Eurosceptic parties will be less willing to work in a political group with them. There may also be incentives that reward Eurosceptic parties for allying with less Eurosceptic parties, removing them from dominantly Eurosceptic political groups. If there is support for this hypothesis, then concerns about allying with certain parties may make some alliances between Eurosceptic parties impossible and contribute to the fractured state of Eurosceptic parties in the Parliament. I suggest that both of these dynamics affect the group choices of Eurosceptic parties more than mainstream ones.

The research in this chapter only pertains to how Eurosceptic parties form political groups in the Parliament- formalized coalitions which give all included parties time to plan and conference together. The analysis does not concern whether Eurosceptic parties will vote together on legislative issues. While it seems plausible that national parties might be concerned about working with a disreputable group, and thus being associated with that group, it does not seem a realistic fear that because they vote in the same direction on many issues they will be substantively linked together in constituents' minds. In short, this chapter only deals with dimensions of cooperation relating to political group formation, not cooperation or unity relating to voting.

I first set out a basic theory of how political group formation is affected by reputational considerations of other parties. I offer an explanation about how such associations could lead to negative responses from voters, and why national parties may weigh this more heavily than the

financial and legislative advantages of a larger political group. I then look at examples of these strategic considerations affecting political group formation, providing insight into how the landscape for Eurosceptics has been dominantly shaped by such considerations. Using the case studies, I provide further analysis about when Eurosceptic parties may “risk” a controversial coalition, and examine to what extent their fears of constituent backlash may be justified.

Following that section, I look at the opposite situation: when a national party may be enticed into a political group that does not fit their agenda because they hope to receive benefits to their reputation or outsized ability to thrive in the Parliament. I examine the cases of Fidesz and the Danish People’s Party, who remain in the ECR despite being more Eurosceptic than the majority of parties in the group. I argue that the respectability afforded parties by joining parties that are mainstream across Europe also disrupts Eurosceptic coalition.

Strategic Avoidance

It is apparent that despite the incentives which push political groups towards greater membership, they are not willing to take on any member or party just for the sake of size. This is made clear through how political groups occasionally turn down a national party when it bids for inclusion, as well as through their willingness to expel members who have been implicated in financial malfeasance, domestic abuse, and other indecencies. Political groups clearly have standards, perhaps to varying extents, which call for them to exclude those they see as unfavorable, even if it is a financial blow.

I argue that this is at least partly because, not least in the case of Eurosceptic parties, national parties do not see the rewards of such a union as worth the potential embarrassment.

First, for many parties, business in the European Parliament is entirely unimportant compared to national governance and national elections. As discussed in Chapter 1, the powers

of the European Parliament, while they have expanded, are still relatively limited. Many parties will likely calculate that having a slightly larger political group will not be the difference that allows them to pass meaningful legislation (or block legislation that they oppose). However, even while the public is generally believed to pay little attention to Parliamentary events, Parliamentary events and proceedings may still affect a party's national fortunes in elections. Most parties will likely want to avoid controversial action in an ultimately "unimportant" arena that they think will lower their chances of success in more important national elections.

Additionally, at least in some countries, the inclusion of a controversial party in a political group may not fly under the radar of voters in the way that the normal legislative business of Parliament does. In many countries following the Parliamentary elections, multiple media sources reported on the emerging political groups, oftentimes drawing attention to the histories or polarizing comments of more controversial parties. In the United Kingdom, for example, *The Daily Mail*, *The Spectator*, *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*, as well as multiple smaller papers all published pieces following the negotiations around political group formation, many paying particular attention to UKIP, whose status in the new Parliament was the least set.⁶⁴

While all Eurosceptic parties may, to some extent, be perceived as "disreputable" by media, concerns over association certainly apply to them. For one thing, many of these parties have actively strived to move from being seen as a protest vote or "outsider" party to one that can be taken seriously by the mainstream. However, in many cases they still battle stigma, dogged by borderline fascist histories, individual members who make extreme statements and fear from the public that the parties are racist or would deeply destabilize their nations. For

⁶⁴ Alexander, "EU election 2014," *The Telegraph*.
Farrell, "If Nigel Farage is worried," *The Spectator*.
Negrine, "A Europeanized media agenda?"

example, Marine Le Pen has led a push to detoxify the National Front in France, through actions like cutting ties with the elder Le Pen after his anti-Semitic comments.⁶⁵

An alliance or coalition with a controversial party could reverse forward progress on this goal. Mudde, among other scholars, argues that parties which have escaped complete isolation or mistrust in their own countries especially avoid ‘pariah’ parties in the European Parliament, and are more likely to seek relations with countries that have achieved at least some level of acceptance in their own country.⁶⁶

An agreement to include the Golden Dawn party of Greece in the ENF would, at least on one level be stabilizing. With more members and another nation state in the political group, the ENF would be meaningfully further away from the brink of dissolving. However, the National Front’s consistent lack of interest in any alliance with Golden Dawn indicates that they did not see these benefits as weighable in comparison to harms of being linked to such an extreme party.⁶⁷ Golden Dawn’s association with neo-Nazism and physical violence in the press seems like something Le Pen would be especially eager to avoid, in an effort to make her party more broadly appealing.

Golden Dawn, admittedly, is perceptually toxic enough that no political groups seem willing to work with them; they are Non-Inscrits. However, more subtle strategic decisions between Eurosceptic parties have helped shape their incorporation in the European Parliament, and damaged the chance of creating a unified Eurosceptic group.

Strategic Avoidance: Case Studies

⁶⁵ Vinocur, “Le Pen feud,” *Reuters*.

⁶⁶ Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, 181.

⁶⁷ Rubin, “Far-Right Parties Form Coalition,” *New York Times*.

Likely the most central divide between Eurosceptic parties in the Parliament, which has implications for other divisions, is the tension between the United Kingdom's UKIP and France's National Front. With the exception of M5S in Italy, these two parties are by far the largest Eurosceptic groups in Parliament. While the struggle between them around the 2014 Parliamentary elections may have created genuine enmity or bitterness, I argue that fears over associating with the National Front by UKIP spurred their original competition.

Leading up to the elections, Le Pen was clear that she saw a coalition with UKIP as possible and desirable. In January 2014, Le Pen stated in an interview that FN and UKIP were "closer than they would like to admit".⁶⁸ She echoed this sentiment in April of that year, noting that her party had different views on the economy than UKIP, but in most areas their views were the same. Le Pen specifically highlighted the similarity between the parties regarding their views on the European Union, saying, "if Farage appreciated how serious the EU's situation is, he would support the collaboration of all patriotic movements".⁶⁹

The comments were widely viewed as a sign that Le Pen hoped to form a partnership with UKIP, specifically in the Parliament which was in the process of forming political groups. Geert Wilders, who had agreed to sit with Le Pen in the Parliament expressed admiration for Farage in an interview and openly said he hoped UKIP would join them in the Parliament.⁷⁰

The reaction of UKIP leadership, however, made clear they saw joining the National Front as impossible; there were no indicators to the contrary even when it looked like UKIP might be locked out of a political group. In an interview in late 2013, Farage stated, "The French National Front and us come from completely different political traditions and backgrounds. Our

⁶⁸ Samuel et al., "Marine Le Pen says Front National," *The Telegraph*.

⁶⁹ Le Pen, Marine. "France's Front National party leader 'opens arms' to UKIP," BBC News, April 17, 2014.

⁷⁰ Waterfield, "Geert Wilders: I respect Ukip's Nigel Farage a lot," *The Telegraph*.

view is that whatever Marine Le Pen is trying to do with the Front National, anti-Semitism is still embedded deeply in that party... we are not going to work with them now or at any point in the future”.⁷¹

In conjunction with pointed comments that he wanted to join parties consistent with classic liberal democracy, Farage not only communicated a lack of interest in the National Front, but also a renunciation of them as a party. His comments set up a clear divide between the values of the National Front and UKIP.

In the same interview, Farage added, “there are going to be Eurosceptics on the far right, Eurosceptics where we are, Eurosceptics in the Communist Parties that go to the European Parliament next year, and we don’t intend to get in bed with any of them”.⁷² The message of the statement is that UKIP will not sacrifice any level of its integrity or purity in order to form a larger or stronger political group. The clear subtext of Farage’s quote is that he prioritizes adherence to UKIP’s values (which supposedly includes tolerance and equality) over even temporary or limited alliances with distasteful actors. Rhetoric like this seems likely to actually reflect UKIP’s strategy regarding who it will form coalitions with, and also sends a message to Eurosceptics with more “extremist” views to not even try or seriously consider approaching UKIP.

Ideological divides between the parties do not seem to account for UKIP’s failure to cooperate with the National Front. UKIP would go on to court Italy’s Five Star Movement, a party which shared UKIP’s Eurosceptic rhetoric but is significantly farther to the left and sees many issues, including immigration, differently. Using the Clarin dataset, I also found that UKIP and the National Front ended up having a majority of their MEPs in agreement on 53.57 percent

⁷¹ Farage, “Nigel Farage: Ukip will not 'get into bed' with Le Pen,” *The Telegraph*.

⁷² *Ibid.*

of total votes for the time period specified. This was a higher rate of agreement than UKIP achieved with three of the parties within its political group during that same period, including the Five Star Movement, notable since this was achieved without formal collaboration or conference of any sort. While this is still a fairly low rate of cohesion, it demonstrates that shared voting preferences between UKIP and FN are at least comparable to rates between many Eurosceptic parties that have agreed to join together.

Personal divides or clashes of personality between party leaders also do not adequately explain UKIP's antipathy. In one interview Farage spoke approving of Le Pen, saying she was bringing her party to new highs.⁷³ There is also no evidence of ad hominem attacks by either side, and even two years later Le Pen emphasized the common ground between the two.⁷⁴ Such a comparison seems unlikely if there was genuine dislike between them.

The most likely explanation of UKIP's failure to cooperate is that it believed that being connected in British minds with the National Front (and potentially other coalition partners, such as Wilders' PVV) would be damaging to its continued electoral prospects. It is accurate to say that UKIP's international associations were being watched by media. It also seems plausible that a connection between FN and UKIP would be commented on by the press, and that the anti-Semitic comments of the FN would be linked to UKIP in the public's mind. As an example of the dangers of such a coalition, Mason of *The Guardian* notes that UKIP has sought to project itself as a party friendly to Muslims. An association with the PVV, which has a reputation for sometimes virulent Islamophobia could wipe out the credibility of such a stance- indeed Mason

⁷³ Mason, "Nigel Farage rejects offer," *The Guardian*.

⁷⁴ Press Association, "Marine Le Pen: 'Not a hair's breadth' separates Front National and Ukip," *The Guardian*.

suspects that Lega Norda's decision to leave UKIP's pre-2014 political group was because of tensions between the two parties on Islam.⁷⁵

UKIP's decision to distance itself from the National Front essentially eliminated any opportunity to form a sizable group based around a hard Eurosceptic ideology. Both parties struggled to attract enough support to meet the requirements for a political group, oftentimes competing for the same coalition partners. In other words, UKIP's unwillingness to associate created "sides" for parties with generally Eurosceptic outlooks to divide along. Since National Front quickly reached agreements with several farther right parties including the PVV and Lega Norda, and UKIP ended up enticing the sizable Five Star Movement, neither political group ended up significantly larger, or emerged with a large amount of sway in the Eighth Parliament.

Politics relating to lack of respectability contributed to multiple smaller decisions regarding the exclusion of national parties from political groups. Despite its willingness to take in far-right parties such as Austria's FPÖ, the ENF balked at allowing in Jobbik, perhaps because it has been accused of anti-Semitism, an accusation the National Front itself is trying to shake.⁷⁶

The AfD has vocally disassociated with FN; Frauke Petry interviewed with a German paper declaring that the AfD has nothing in common with the National Front.⁷⁷ This may be because concerns over anti-Semitism are especially powerful in Germany. A member of the German Council on Foreign Relations argues that the FN is seen as far right in Germany, and anti-Semitism "is something you can't score points with in Germany".⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Mason, "Ukip faces questions," *The Guardian*.

⁷⁶ Rubin, "Far-Right Parties Form Coalition," *New York Times*.

⁷⁷ Petry, Frauke, interviewed by Tilman Steffen, "Nothing in common with the Front National", *Zeit Online*.

⁷⁸ Hasselbach, Christopher, "National Front and AfD: Sisters, cousins, or strangers?" *DW*.

No set hierarchy of most to least respectable immediately presents itself, rather adjudications about who is a palatable coalition partner seem variable depending on the calculations of individual parties or political groups.

Notes on Strategic Avoidance

While I argue above that strategic avoidance of disreputable parties has had large-scale effects on Eurosceptics' ability to form a powerful coalition, it is important to note that while national parties may care foremost about domestic election results, that does not prevent them from joining with disreputable parties in all circumstances. Many Eurosceptic parties are, to some degree, maligned in their national press or considered extreme by segments of the public. While the decision-making processes of when to cooperate may be nuanced, it is difficult to say whether the majority of Eurosceptic parties make decisions using the same framework, or whether the decisions they come to are highly variable depending on the ideology of the party and impulses of the party leadership.

As an example, Poland's KNP was initially seen as too extremist to join a political group. Even though the ENF was looking for partners to strengthen their nascent coalition, Wilders eventually declared that the KNP leader's comments regarding women's intelligence and the Holocaust were not something his party could tolerate.⁷⁹ However, one member of KNP joined the EFDD (generally perceived as more moderate than the ENF). Adding this one member rather than the entire party was generally believed to be a quiet agreement that allowed the EFDD to meet the requirements surrounding diversity of member states, but not be associated with all of the "baggage" of the KNP. While there was some negative press coverage surrounding this, the addition did not trigger public outrage on a large scale.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Vinocur, "Le Pen feud deepens," *Reuters*.

⁸⁰ Graham-Harrison, "Nigel Farage's new friend in Europe," *The Guardian*.

The EFDD's decision to add a member of the KNP to their coalition, despite the fact that neither they nor the ENF wanted the entire KNP to join suggests that Eurosceptic parties sometimes do take at least marginal risks in order to strengthen or complete a political group. Decisions to cooperate with disreputable parties may rely on the Eurosceptic party's adjudication of the salience of that party within their country. In other words, the decision-making relies on the pariah party's name recognition and reputation among constituents rather than entirely the content of that party's views.

So Nigel Farage publicly labelling the National Front as anti-Semitic while tolerating the presence of a KNP member may be because the National Front is familiar to British voters and has specific connotations in their mind, while the KNP (a new, small party) likely does not. While the vehemence of Nigel Farage's rejection of the National Front suggests he believes disassociation is important, it is difficult to say whether such a disavowal is actually necessary to preserve UKIP's reputation, or whether the coalition of parties would go largely unnoticed by voters anyway.

Coalitions for Secondary Benefits

In certain circumstances, Eurosceptic parties will move to join political groups that may not entirely meet their ideology because they expect the association to bolster their international reputation and support their legitimacy. While this may initially sound like an inverse of the argument above, there is a distinction. In the Strategic Avoidance section above, I discuss Eurosceptic parties deliberately acting to avoid parties that have a pariah status or bad reputation. In this section, I discuss when Eurosceptic parties deliberately seek out coalition with parties or political groups they expect to have an actively legitimizing effect on how they are perceived. In the case of Fidesz, this association offers not only perceptual benefits but potentially legal and

rhetorical defense by “legitimate” parties from accusers. This analysis differs from the above in the types of actions and tactics parties pursuing coalitions will take. I argue that it has also had substantial effect on a unified Eurosceptic front within the Parliament because multiple parties have pursued these coalitions with more moderate political groups.

The question returns to debates between academics regarding whether national parties will join political groups because of ideological proximity or expectation of material benefits. While authors who argue for material benefits as a motivator for joining political groups present compelling evidence, they frequently consider benefits such as speaking time and funding rather than secondary benefits such as increased legitimacy as a motivator to join one political group over another. It may be true that ideological proximity may play a role in some of these cases, perhaps for parties that use Eurosceptic rhetoric but internally do not care deeply about European integration. However, I seek to show that at least in some circumstances this is an insufficient explanation for these parties’ decision to join more mainstream political groups. If nothing else legitimacy concerns add a second incentive to join these groups.

This analysis also builds on Startin, who claims that Eurosceptic parties may have incentives to join political groups to show they are capable of international cooperation and serious politics.⁸¹ In several circumstances Eurosceptic parties deliberately seek out institutionalized or well-known political groups in order to escape the perception that they are an “outsider” party that is incapable of effective governance.

Coalitions for Secondary Benefits: Case Studies

The Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), in its bid to enter the ECR political group, appears to have the motivation described above. Formed only in 2013, the EP elections were the

⁸¹ Startin, “Where to for the Radical Right,” 436.

first success for the AfD. The AfD argued that current European Union economic policy was unsustainable, and frequently included generally Eurosceptic rhetoric. While in its first years the AfD was generally not classified as a populist or far-right party (the rupture of the AfD, which left the party significantly more populist and far right, would not occur until mid-2015), there was some concern about far-right tendencies of the party from early on, especially on issues surrounding immigration.⁸² Overall, the AfD was a fledgling party that had almost no institutional experience in government, and at that point had little time or chance to earn the trust of German voters or larger Europe.

In this context, attempts to gain legitimacy rather than ideological proximity more convincingly explain the AfD's bid to join the ECR. While the AfD did not oppose German membership in the EU, they generally opposed many aspects of European integration, including the general functioning of the Eurozone. This platform placed them as significantly farther to the right than many parties in the ECR. The Chapel Hill Electoral Survey includes measures for political parties on both their attitudes towards European integration and their placement on a left-right spectrum. I aggregated scores for all political parties in the EFDD and ENF political group, as well as all parties except for the AfD in the ECR (meaning the table is unweighted in relation to number of MEPs of each group). The placement of the AfD on both dimensions is notably closer to the ENF and the EFDD (the more Eurosceptic political groups) than the ECR.

Table 1: AfD Expert Placement in Comparison to Eurosceptic Political Groups

Group	EU Position (1-7)	Left-Right Position (0-10)
AfD	1.61	8.92
ECR (aggregate)	3.82	6.59
ENF (aggregate)	1.50	9.19

⁸² Meiritz and Weiland. "Anti-Euro Party Surges Before Election," *Der Spiegel*.

EFDD (aggregate)	1.57	7.74
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While one faction of AfD MEPs (the faction that would split from the AfD in 2015) ended up frequently voting with the political group, with a cohesion rate of 90.61%, the more populist wing of AfD parliamentarians would vote with the political group at a rate of 69.45%, one of the lowest cohesion rates of the group.

Lastly, the ECR's dilemma on whether to let the AfD in at all should indicate that there were significant differences in agenda or perspective between the AfD and large segments of the ECR. While members of the ECR used a secret ballot to vote on whether to include the AfD, reports indicate that the Germany party was allowed in on a 29-26 margin, against the wishes of David Cameron and most of the Conservative party.⁸³ The close vote implies there was divided opinion among the ECR about whether the AfD embodied the values and ethos of the political group.

While some of the resources provided by a larger political group, such as potentially greater visibility and funding may have been useful for the AfD, sources suggest that the AfD bid for the ECR because of the legitimacy and respectability conveyed by being part of an established political group. An article by *Euractiv* notes that the AfD was aware of its perception as a far-right party, and prioritized joining the ECR to try to lose this reputation. AfD founder Bernd Lucke said that he would "only work together with parties who belong to the moderate political spectrum".⁸⁴ He also framed the victory as a win against those who did not want the AfD to be "recognized".⁸⁵ Since the AfD would have no problem entering the EFDD or ENF,

⁸³ Nicolaou and Baker, "Anti-euro German AfD," *Reuters*.

⁸⁴ Timmann, "Germany's Eurosceptic AfD seeks allies," *Euractiv*.

⁸⁵ Nicolaou and Baker, "Anti-euro German AfD," *Reuters*.

which were at the time competing to get enough support to form a political group (an avenue some of the more populist AfD MEPs reportedly wanted to pursue), the AfD's choice of coalition partner is best understood as a choice to discount ideology in the name of international, and potentially domestic, legitimacy.

A similar situation presents itself in the case of the Danish People's Party. Admittedly, the DPP is ideologically much closer to the ECR than the AfD. While its stance on EU integration most closely matched the ENF and EFDD, its measure on the left-right spectrum was closest to the ECR (see table below). However, the VoteWatch Europe database reveals that through the end of 2017 the DPP voted with the political group 80.36% of the time- in the bottom fifth of party cohesion rates for the ECR. This tension makes it slightly difficult to gauge how close the DPP is to the dominant beliefs of the ECR. Borre and Meret note that while the DPP was extremely Eurosceptic in the 1990s (running the slogan "nothing above, nothing beside the Danish Parliament") they have moderated some in the years since.⁸⁶ The DPP does not advocate complete withdrawal from the European Union.

Table 2: DPP Expert Placement in Comparison to Eurosceptic Political Groups

Group	EU Position (1-7)	Left-Right Position (0-10)
DPP	1.91	6.90
ECR	3.81	6.71
ENF	1.50	9.19
EFDD	1.57	7.74

But while it is difficult to ascertain whether hard Euroscepticism is an ideological stance or a rhetorical one, details of the party's pursuit of ECR membership suggest that the DPP sees perceptual benefits to the group. One DPP candidate spoke of the National Front's success as

⁸⁶ Borre and Meret, "Boosted by electoral success."

deplorable- characterizing them as an opportunist party. The implication was that the DPP ought not be lumped in with other anti-establishment parties, and that it was categorically more responsible and sophisticated.⁸⁷ As a party seeking to become more normalized to the Danish voter, the DPP moved not only to avoid certain “problem” parties but to symbolically join forces with institutionalized parties to the best it could. Borre and Meret argue convincingly that the DPP’s strategy since entering Parliament shows that they are using pragmatic, not ideological, methods.

The last party worth independent consideration is Fidesz of Hungary, which has long been a part of the EPP, a fairly centrist political group. While Fidesz is frequently labelled a soft Eurosceptic party, rare for the EPP, by many indicators it seems like its agenda for the Parliament is compatible with the political group. The CHES shows that Fidesz is more opposed to European integration and farther right than most of the political group (though not as opposed to EU integration as most Eurosceptic parties examined here), but Fidesz votes with the majority of the political group in 95.38% of Roll Call Votes. This voting record, along with Fidesz’s long tenure in the EPP and several other factors have led many to conclude that the party quietly favors many aspects of the EU even while it publicly rails against it.

But while ideological proximity may be an entirely sufficient explanation for Fidesz’s presence in the EPP, they are brought up to illustrate another set of benefits potentially available to populist or Eurosceptic parties who join more moderate groups. Despite the presence of Fidesz in the EPP, neither its members or the Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán have given any indication they want to become more mainstream or internationally respected than they already are- indeed they are in power in Hungary and often use rhetoric that suggests the rest of Europe

⁸⁷ Alexander, “EU election 2014,” *The Telegraph*.

is prejudiced against Hungary and treats the party unfairly. Instead, the benefit to Fidesz is leveraging its coalition with a large group of moderate national parties to help ameliorate severe criticism and administrative action by the European Union.

At several points in recent years, Orbán has suggested Hungarian action that is antithetical to the values and laws of the European Union. In 2015, Orbán put forth the idea that Hungary should reinstate the death penalty, a direct violation of EU law. 2017 saw Orbán advocate to punitively regulate or close the Central European University in Hungary, an institution he associated with George Soros and foreign manipulation in Hungary in general.

Many believe that the EPP's coalition with Fidesz has incentivized them to act in support of the nationalist party under circumstances they normally would not. Tim King of *Politico* notes that elections for the Presidency of the European Commission turned out in favor of Jean-Claude Juncker, the center-right candidate.⁸⁸ If the center-right (EPP) had fewer MEPs the result could be different; Fidesz provided 12 MEPs to the EPP. As a very loyal coalition partner, Fidesz has meaningfully supported the EPP.

The EPP's reluctance to directly criticize Fidesz is visible both in the death penalty affair and the controversy surrounding the Central European University in Budapest. While the EPP put out a statement standing behind the abolition of the death penalty as transnational law, it made fairly oblique references to Hungary's stance on the issue, and stated that it expected Hungary to act reasonably and stay within the law.⁸⁹ When asked about unrest in the European Parliament caused by Orbán's statements regarding the death penalty, EPP President Joseph Daul argued that there were other leaders of European nations, such as Ponta of Romania who arguably caused more unrest. Daul also noted that Orbán had not successfully undercut European

⁸⁸ King, "Ties that bind Hungary's Fidesz and European Parliament," *Politico*.

⁸⁹ "Hungary: EPP Group firmly opposed to death penalty," The EPP Group.

law, and said “his party, Fidesz, has always voted in line with the EPP in the European Parliament. Since I have been President of the group, I have always been able to count on Berlusconi’s Italians and Orbán’s Hungarians to support our position”.⁹⁰ The equivalency between Orbán and other European leaders amounts to a statement that the Hungarian Prime Minister is not meaningfully different than other European countries. In the context of Fidesz supporting a reversal of EU law, it seems hard to believe the EPP would be so quick to leap to the defense of Fidesz if they were not in coalition together. Daul’s characterization of Fidesz as valuable to the EPP seems to confirm this.

So while most of Orbán’s declarations about reversing or undercutting EU law have been rolled back, he still gets rhetorical power and attention for raising these issues (as well as the potential of actually achieving them) while getting some level of support from a large and generally respected political group.

It is true that Fidesz is not a clear-cut example of a Eurosceptic party joining a political group in order to be shielded: there is little evidence to suggest that was their original motivation back in 2000. However, political ties to EPP figures do seem to have benefitted Fidesz by giving them institutional allies. The protection and political support enabled by membership in a dominant political group may create incentives for other Eurosceptic groups to mimic this tactic in the future.

Coalitions for Secondary Benefits: Notes

Other parties with soft Eurosceptic views have also joined political groups with minimally Eurosceptic views, such as the populist Perussuomalaiset (True Finns) party. Eurosceptic parties’ decision to operate in such a way has substantial effect on the options of

⁹⁰ Barbière, “Daul: ‘Orbán is the ‘enfant terrible’”,” *Euractiv*.

Eurosceptic parties who choose not to join moderate political groups, or are refused entry. There are certainly potential benefits to the “moderating” Eurosceptic party; besides the potential positive effects regarding legitimacy, they also are eligible for more speaker time, potentially valued committee positions, and Parliamentary funding. If they are in a political group that is heavily institutionalized, and votes in set and coordinated ways, they may face significant pressure to vote with the political group. However, the party does retain the right to vote against the party line as it sees fit (which the AfD and DPP utilized).

However, flight into more moderate political groups does hamper Eurosceptic cooperation. On the obvious level, the parties that move there in many cases will be outvoted and have little chance to convince their coalition partners to always vote in the “Eurosceptic” direction. But their flight also leaves fewer Eurosceptic parties available to form a Eurosceptic political group. With stringent rules regarding the number of Member States and MEPs required for a group, and an almost zero-sum competition between the National Front and UKIP to attract Eurosceptic parties, this departure is a meaningful one. The political groups that eventually formed are smaller and less powerful than they would be if more Eurosceptic parties deprioritized party standing and legitimacy and instead moved to the political group that was the most ideologically proximate.

Chapter 4

The previous chapter examined the process by which Eurosceptic parties, once elected, form political groups. It focused on the strategic decisions parties must make when deciding who to accept as a coalition partner, and the possible domestic ramifications of these decisions. This chapter examines a different aspect of cooperation in the Parliament: voting cohesion. Most of the chapter focuses on national parties' willingness to vote with the line or agenda of the larger political group. This involves a different set of factors than the previous chapter- there is no reputational harm in voting the same way as a maligned party. But examinations of party cohesion help understand when and under what circumstances Eurosceptics parties may be willing to sacrifice or compromise in order to vote with their political group.

The first hypothesis of this chapter looks at Eurosceptic voting rates in relation to other niche party families, in order to see if Eurosceptic cooperation is actually lower than other non-mainstream or marginalized ideologies. The next three hypotheses test what ideological party attributes seem to affect voting cooperation.

Hypothesis 2: Eurosceptic niche parties will cooperate the same amount as other niche party families.

This hypothesis functions as something of a null hypothesis to the overall premise of this paper. Most of my framework relies on the argument that right-wing Eurosceptic parties, despite presumably having a largely shared agenda, are unable to cooperate together in Parliament. However, this would be the wrong question if this was not a feature especially true of this political group. Jensen and Spoon, as mentioned in Chapter 2, argue that different niche party families may act in similar ways in the European Parliament. While the ways niche party

families act may be different than mainstream party families, there are patterns of behavior between these niche party families regardless of ideology or values: they respond to “institutional stimuli” in the same way. Jensen and Spoon do not particularly focus on niche party cooperation with political groups, and it is also possible their original analysis is no longer applicable to parties in the Parliament today (their work focuses on parties within the Parliament from 1979 to 2004). But if the results they found were accurate for today’s Parliament with regards to loyalty to political group, that would offer significant problems for the idea that Eurosceptics have lower rates of cooperation than other coalitions within Parliament.

Multiple aggregations of political group cohesion show that the most Eurosceptic political groups have the lowest total cohesion scores (Table 1, from VoteWatch Europe, is one such aggregation). However, this does not necessarily imply that Eurosceptics are less loyal or cooperative than other niche party families: national parties from other niche party families could just be fewer in number or distributed across multiple political groups, so their lack of cooperation is less noticeable in aggregate.

Table 1: Overall Political Group Cohesion

Political Group	Overall Group Cohesion
GUE-NGL	82.76%
Greens-EFA	95.46%
S&D	92.28%
ALDE	88.62%
EPP	93.33%
ECR	78.51%
EFDD	48.51%
ENF	74.05%

To try to see if niche party families within the Parliament have systematically low cooperation with political group, I selected four niche party families for examination. Altering Jensen and Spoon's selection somewhat, I pick the Eurosceptic right, Eurosceptic left, Regionalist and Green parties as niche party families within the Parliament.

The selection process for what constitutes a Eurosceptic right party has already been extensively discussed in Chapter 2. To select Eurosceptic left parties, I rely on a list of left-wing Eurosceptic parties running for election in the 2014 EP Parliament provided by Hobolt.⁹¹ All of these parties fall within the GUE-NGL. It should be noted that Hobolt may be using a more permissive structure for what qualifies as a "Eurosceptic left" party. However, if anything this is likely to allow for a more ideologically diverse group to fall in this party family, making it more likely that their cohesion rates will be lower.

To classify parties as regionalist, I used a synthesis of several sources to create a list.⁹² Regionalist parties were the most dispersed, falling in five different political groups. In order to mark national parties as Green and belonging to the Green party family, I used a list of parties that are in the European Green Party (EGP). The EGP is a larger political party that operates and supports a collection of green parties across Europe. All of the current EGP national parties that are currently in the European Parliament are in the Greens-EFA political group.

The four tables below show cooperation rates for each of these four niche party families. The middle column labelled "mean loyalty" shows the cooperation rate calculated from the Clarin data set, where each national party's rate of agreement with other parties in its political group is taken and aggregated. The right column "PG loyalty" is taken from VoteWatch Europe, where the party is considered loyal in a vote if it votes with the plurality of the rest of the

⁹¹ Hobolt, "The 2014 European Parliament Elections: Divided in Unity?" 12.

⁹² Jolly, "The Europhile Fringe?" and Jensen and Spoon, "Thinking Locally Acting Supranationally".

political group. I include the rates of cooperation for all the political groups for each party family (if there is more than one political group) and a “total” row where the mean from each individual party’s cooperation rate is taken (bolded). I also include a column that drops the highest and lowest national party cooperation scores, to ensure that the results are not due to one highly coordinated (or uncoordinated) outlier.

Table 2: Eurosceptic Party Family Loyalty

Grouping	Mean Loyalty	PG Loyalty
ECR	0.85	0.63
EFDD	0.61	0.43
ENF	0.63	0.52
EPP	0.81	0.93
Total mean	0.56	0.72
Total high/low mean dropped	0.56	0.72

Table 3: Eurosceptic Left Party Family Loyalty (GUE-NGL)

	Mean Loyalty	PG Loyalty
GUE-NGL Mean	0.73	0.88
GUE-NGL high/low mean dropped	0.73	0.89

Table 4: Regionalist Party Family Loyalty

Grouping	Mean Loyalty	PG Loyalty
Greens-EFA total	0.81	0.96
EPP total	0.86	0.96
ALDE total	0.75	0.90
GUE-NGL total	0.74	0.89
ENF total	0.53	0.53
ECR total	0.55	0.89
Total mean	0.76	0.91

Total high/low mean dropped	0.772814756	0.931625
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Table 5: Green Party Family Loyalty (Greens-EFA)

Grouping	Mean Loyalty	PG Loyalty
Greens-EFA Mean	0.83	0.97
Greens-EFA high/low mean dropped	0.83	0.97

In comparison to the other party families, the Eurosceptic party family has notably lower scores. Using the mean loyalty cooperation metric, mean agreement with other parties is fifteen percent lower for Eurosceptic parties than for any other niche party family. Using the “PG Loyalty” metric, loyalty among Eurosceptic political groups is sixteen percent lower. In both instances, the next lowest cooperation rates for party families are on the Eurosceptic left. The data seems to support a theory that conservative Eurosceptics in particular have trouble cooperating with their political group, beyond the extent that other niche parties do.

There are two other interesting results from testing this hypothesis. First, the data suggests that dispersion of a party family across multiple political groups is not the full story behind low Eurosceptic cooperation with involved political groups. Regionalist national parties are also spread out over multiple political groups as well, and these political groups might be more or less devoted to regionalist issues. But with the exception of Lietuvos Lenku Rinkimu Akcija in the ECR and Lega Nord (also a Eurosceptic party) in the ENF, the level of cooperation with political group is relatively high. So while dispersion across multiple political groups may be a factor involved in Eurosceptic disunity, it is clearly not a sufficient factor for extremely low cooperation. Both “mean loyalty” and “PG loyalty” are higher for regionalists than the Eurosceptic left, despite the fact that the Eurosceptic left is clustered in one political group and could conceivably have more control of the agenda or direction of the political group.

Secondly, cooperation levels for party families vary by group. For example, the mean loyalty score for Eurosceptics in the ECR is the highest for political groups of any niche party family. Additionally, the mean loyalty and PG loyalty scores for Eurosceptics in the EPP are also quite high. This is not enough to significantly affect the total means, since there are only two parties in the EPP. However, it does suggest that placement within a political group may affect or predict level of cooperation more than any other factors. The role of political group in determining loyalty is returned to later.

Overall, it seems likely that while there may be impacts of being a niche party family in the European Parliament which shape behavior in certain ways, this does not mean that all niche parties have exactly the same pressures or modes of behavior. The Eurosceptic right very clearly does not vote with their political groups as much. Because of this, it is appropriate to continue with the rest of the hypotheses which break down this low cohesion further. These hypotheses, while not always offering verifiable causal mechanisms that lead to low Eurosceptic cohesion, delve into fault lines within the Eurosceptic right and begin to offer reasons and explanations for why these cleavages occur.

Hypothesis 3: If a Eurosceptic party in the Parliament is populist then it will cooperate less frequently with non-populist Eurosceptic parties.

Parties with a Eurosceptic outlook in the European Parliament frequently are considered populist as well. The tension between these two attributes is worthy of scrutiny. It seems plausible that populists as a whole might have lower voting cooperation in the Parliament. Since by Müller's definition populism requires antipluralist rhetoric which labels opposition figures as the enemy of the people, populist parties might rely on the same strategy or belief while in the

Parliament: frequently voting against their political group and justifying it by saying their national party alone works to help the people of their country. However, the individualism usually associated with populism has potential to clash with Euroscepticism: for many of these Eurosceptic parties they are surrounded by other parties with a purportedly similar goal of slowing or stopping EU integration. If that is really their goal, populists may be as in favor as non-populists to vote with their political group.

Due to this uncertainty, I examine presence or absence of populism within Eurosceptic parties specifically to see if populism is a driver of disunity among Eurosceptic parties. I test both whether populist parties appear less willing to coordinate with all partners in their political group, but also whether populist parties tend to vote more frequently with other populist parties. To be clear, all quantitative data refers only to parties that are Eurosceptic, not populist parties that do not share this ideology.

As described in the previous chapter, I use Müller’s definition of populism. A classification scheme showing which Eurosceptic parties are classified as populist is available in Table 2 of the Appendix, Table 2 also classifies these parties on a left to right spectrum and as “hard” or “soft” Eurosceptics (relevant for the next two hypotheses).

To calculate cooperation, I again used the mean loyalty and PG loyalty measures from hypothesis 2. Using the PG loyalty metric, for example, I took the mean of all means of populist parties’ cohesion rates to their political group. I then took the mean of all means for non-populist parties’ cohesion rates.

Table 6: Overall Populist and Non-Populist Loyalty to Political Group

	Mean Loyalty	PG Loyalty
Populist	0.56	0.75
Non-populist	0.62	0.81

When aggregated, the hypothesis appears to be strongly supported. Both measures of cooperation show that rates for non-populist Eurosceptics on roll call votes are much higher. By each measure, the cohesion rate for non-populists is about seven percent higher than populist parties. This suggests that populist parties have cooperated less on roll call votes than non-populist parties, and that the presence of this attribute may help answer the question of why Eurosceptic cooperation is low.

However, when these figures are divided by political group, the situation becomes more complicated. The tables below show how populist and non-populist parties compare in each political group on the two measures of cooperation.

Table 7: Loyalty to Political Group by Populism (VoteWatch)

Grouping	Populist	Non-populist
ENF	0.58	N/A
EFDD	0.61	0.73
ECR	0.88	0.83
EPP	0.95	0.91
Total PG loyalty	0.75	0.81

Table 8: Mean Loyalty by Populism (Clarín database)

Grouping	Populist	Non-populist
ENF	0.52	N/A
EFDD	0.41	0.50
ECR	0.68	0.66
EPP	0.90	0.72
Total mean loyalty	0.56	0.62

While populist parties as a whole have a lower mean, this is true of only half the political groups. By either measure, the cooperation level of populists is actually higher than non-populists in the ECR and EPP. Additionally, loyalty is much greater in these two political groups for both populists and non-populists than either group in the EFDD or ENF.

These results are partially explained by the number of each type of party. The EPP has only two Eurosceptic parties, so that score is a one to one comparison. There are also only two populist parties in the ECR. The EFDD only has two non-populist parties, and the ENF has none. This helps explain why the total mean has populists cooperating so much less: though they cooperate more often in half the relevant political groups, there are many more uncooperative ones in the EFDD and ENF.

However, this breakdown offers challenges to the hypothesis. While the cooperative populist parties in the EPP and ECR are not a large number in total, at a minimum they show that presence of populism is not a sufficient factor for a party to have low cooperation. Within these political groups, the national parties appear to vote with the majority to a greater extent than the non-populist Eurosceptic ones.

Secondly, the tables seem to suggest that Eurosceptic parties will have varying rates of cooperation due to the political group they are in: this appears as a stronger correlation than the presence or absence of populism. The lowest “mean loyalty” score for a Eurosceptic party in the ECR is .60, the highest for the EFDD is .52. It is entirely possible that populists tend to *select* into the least coordinated political groups, and it is the presence of a large number of populists that makes these political groups so dysfunctional. However, while the data does not contradict this possibility, it does not verify it either. An in-depth look at all of the factors in play in the

Parliament, supported by regression analysis, might allow for the isolation of populism/non-populism as a factor. However, such an in-depth project is not attempted here.

I also tested whether presence or absence of populism was a point of cleavage within political groups. If populist parties frequently voted with populist parties, and non-populists with non-populists, that would suggest that an important point of division within these political groups was this attribute. For example, populists within a political group might be resisting the political group line in the same way.

For each national party, I calculated their mean rates of agreement with other national parties from their political group that shared their characteristic (presence or absence of populism). I then took the mean of these rates on both the political group and total level. Secondly, I calculated each party's mean rate of agreement with parties that were the opposite of their characteristic. This allowed me to see the rate at which populist parties were voting the same direction as non-populist ones. If populist parties tended to vote together and non-populist parties tended to vote together, or if the mixed rate of cooperation was low, the data would support the idea that voting in political groups was sometimes on populist vs non-populist lines.

Table 9: Populist Agreement with Other Populists

Grouping	Mean loyalty	Number of relevant parties
ENF	0.52	5
EFDD	0.34	3
ECR	0.74	2

Table 10: Non-populist Agreement with Other Non-populists

Grouping	Mean loyalty	Number of relevant parties
EFDD	0.78	2
ECR	0.70	4

Table 11: Mixed Populist/non-populist Cooperation Rates

Grouping	Mean loyalty	Number of relevant parties
EFDD	0.46	5
ECR	0.73	6
EPP	0.73	2

While for some political groups the number of relevant parties is disappointingly small, the data recorded does not indicate that there is a consistent cleavage between populist and non-populists within their political groups. The ECR has similar rates for all three categories, suggesting that if there are “populist issues” that populists tend to vote the same way on in opposition to non-populists, these make up a very small fraction of overall votes. The closest thing to confirmation of this idea is the EFDD, where non-populist Eurosceptics vote together at a very high rate for that political group. However since this result does not seem to be repeated, it does not seem appropriate to argue that a split between populists and non-populists clearly divides the parties in political groups.

Hypothesis 4: If a Eurosceptic party holds a position on the left-right ideological spectrum, then the party will vote less frequently with Eurosceptic parties that differ significantly from this position.

Many Eurosceptic parties generally are considered center or far right. However, there is some variation, even within political groups. Italy’s Five Star Movement, for example, is given a 4.66 on a 0 (left) to 10 (right) scale on the Chapel Hill Electoral Survey (though it is still generally classified as right-wing Eurosceptic). For this hypothesis, I focus less on whether certain points on the left-right ideological spectrum correlate with higher cooperation, this seems

likely to be fruitless since one's position on the spectrum could be an asset or a detriment depending on the composition and overall placement of the political group as a whole. Rather I seek to see whether lack of agreement between Eurosceptics on voting issues usually plays out along left-right lines, or whether they are generally able to put these issues aside to vote together as a Eurosceptic bloc.

Because breaking down party positions to individual left-right issues (like immigration or gay rights) would be a difficult task, I instead place national parties on the left-right spectrum using the Chapel Hill Electoral Survey (the variable is *lrgen*). Parties with a score of 8 or more are considered 'far right', a score of 5-8 is right, and a score of 5 or less should be considered center/center left.

Because the meaning and interpretation of *lrgen* scores is highly dependent on the specific political group, an aggregate for each of these categories is of limited use, however I provide an overview below to give readers an overall picture.

Table 12: Overall Left-Right Political Group Loyalty

	Mean Loyalty	PG Loyalty
<i>lrgen</i> 8+	0.56	0.74
<i>lrgen</i> 5-8	0.68	0.86
<i>lrgen</i> <5	0.52	0.72

The two tables below are separated by the measure of cooperation being used. Each table breaks cooperation rates down by political group, for 'far right' parties (8-10) and not far right parties (less than 8). The political groups are listed from the most (ENF) to least (EPP) right wing.

Table 13: Left-right Loyalty to Political Group (VoteWatch)

Grouping	Far right	Not far right

ENF	.69	N/A
EFDD	.73	.61
ECR	.81	.88
EPP	N/A	.93

Table 14: Left-right Mean Loyalty to Political Group (Clarín database)

Grouping	Far right	Not far right
ENF	.52	N/A
EFDD	.48	.40
ECR	.67	.66
EPP	N/A	.81

The most important sections of the table above are the EFDD and ENF. The EFDD, by either measure, has a relatively higher rate for far right parties. The ECR has higher rates of cooperation by either measure. According to the “PG Loyalty” metric, non far right parties vote with the political line much more of the time, while the “mean loyalty” metric puts the rates at about even. While the rates being the same by this metric is surprising, there is still some support to the idea that the more center right political group enables higher rates of cooperation among parties that are not far right. A possibility is that Eurosceptics must sometimes choose between political group and their preferred placement on the left-right spectrum. When a political group’s mean is close to that ideal point, they will be able to vote with the political group a greater amount of the time. Those whose position on the left-right spectrum differ from most of their coalition partners must either deal with the dissonance or vote against the political group. These results, particularly from the EFDD, suggest that they will sometimes choose the latter.

Looking at the cooperation rates for the EPP and ENF supports the idea that the political groups feature voting issues involving the left-right spectrum. While there are no far right

Eurosceptics in the EPP, the cooperation rate for ‘not far right’ parties is quite high, suggesting that the ideological consensus of the political group matches those of ‘not far right’ parties. The same is true for the ENF: especially for a political group with such low cohesion the rates of agreement are relatively high. Since the group has a higher make-up of far right parties, they more rarely have to choose between political group and left-right ideological positioning. They will more rarely defy the political group and other national parties.

Demonstrating that far right parties tend to vote with far right parties and center-right tend to vote with center-right would go further in demonstrating that some of the divisions between Eurosceptic parties are because they disagree on an ideological level on some issues. While obviously I do not go through each vote to track whether it is a left vs right voting issue, high rates on the tables below would suggest that parties do vote along left/right ideological lines on these issues.

The tables below, similar to those in hypothesis 3, provide the rates of cooperation that each group on the Irgen (left-right) spectrum has with other parties in that grouping on the spectrum from their political group. Center/center left is excluded since none of the political groups has more than one national party with a Irgen score less than five. However, the final table includes parties with these scores in its representation of far right parties’ cooperation rates with non far right parties.

Table 15: Far Right Parties Agreement with Other Far Right Parties (Irgen 8+)

Grouping	Mean NP loyalty	Number of Parties
ENF	0.52	5
EFDD	0.62	3
ECR	0.71	3

Total	0.53	11
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Table 16: Right Parties Agreement with Other Right Parties (Irgen 5-8)

Grouping	Mean NP loyalty	Number of Parties
EFDD	0.28	2
ECR	0.71	3
Total	0.54	5

Table 17: Mixed: Far-right/non Far-right Cooperation Rates

Grouping	Mean NP loyalty	Number of Parties
EFDD	0.45	5
ECR	0.72	6
Total	0.60	11

Interestingly, the tables do not offer much support for the idea that these political groups have consistent multi-party cleavages along the left-right ideological spectrum. For this to be proved conclusively, one would expect high rates of voting together in the first two tables above, and relatively lower rates for the third. While the low rate of agreement between the two ‘right’ parties in the EFDD can be discounted as an outlier, due to the low number of parties, none of the results particularly fit this prediction. The rate of agreement with other national parties is the highest for both the ECR and the total.

Despite the results, the tables from earlier in this hypothesis do suggest at least a strong possibility that voting in Eurosceptic political groups may be shaped by left-right concerns, rather than just opposition to European integration. Furthermore, this would hold true with both past theory and the logic of party decision-making as presented here. One possibility for the above results is that while parties at different points in the left-right spectrum do vote against the political group based on left-right concerns, each individual national party prioritizes different

issues that it will differ with the group on. For example, one party might only break with most of the other party lines because they hold to more liberal economic values, while another party might break with the other parties because of more liberal social values. This would mean that they do not have high rates of agreement between them, despite breaking with the political group line frequently, because they choose to go their own way on different votes.

Hypothesis 5: If a Eurosceptic party has a “soft” stance on Euroscepticism, then it will cooperate less frequently with Eurosceptic parties that have a harder stance.

As explained in the second chapter, there is a second dimension to politics in the European Parliament, specifically dealing with feelings towards the European Union. While Eurosceptics, as defined, have an oppositional view towards the EU, they can be separated into “hard” and “soft” Eurosceptics to differentiate their level of investment in exiting or completely opposing the EU and its institutions. Similar to how populism and left-right positionality are examined, I examine the hard/soft status of Eurosceptic national parties to determine whether the level of opposition to EU integration is a significant point of cleavage or disagreement for Eurosceptics in the Parliament.

The first table below shows the aggregate rates of political group cohesion and agreement with national parties for hard and soft Eurosceptics from all political groups.

Table 18: Overall Hard/Soft Cooperation to Political Group

	Mean loyalty	PG Loyalty
Hard Eurosceptic	0.52	0.71
Soft Eurosceptic	0.72	0.85

The table indicates that, on aggregate, soft Eurosceptic parties have better measures of cooperation with their political groups and coalitions parties than hard Eurosceptics. The tables below break each measure of loyalty down by political group.

Table 19: Hard/Soft Loyalty to PG (VoteWatch)

Grouping	Hard	Soft
ENF	0.69	N/A
EFDD	0.72	0.52
ECR	0.75	0.89
EPP	N/A	0.93
Total	0.71	0.85

Table 20: Hard/Soft Mean Loyalty (Clarín database)

Grouping	Hard	Soft
ENF	0.52	N/A
EFDD	0.48	0.31
ECR	0.62	0.69
EPP	N/A	0.81
Total	0.52	0.72

Similar to hypothesis 2, the totaled calculations of cooperation obscure a somewhat more complicated picture. Soft Eurosceptics have a lower rate of overall cooperation in the EFDD, where by each measure cooperation is over fifteen percent higher for hard Eurosceptics. However, the only soft Eurosceptic in the group is Italy's Five Star Movement. Soft Eurosceptics have much higher rates of cooperation in the ECR however, as well as in the EPP. Overall cooperation again appears more consistently connected with political group than hard or soft Euroscepticism.

However, the results above do not necessarily disprove the hypothesis. The EFDD (which is considered more extreme) could be a political group where soft Eurosceptics are out of place. The Five Star Movement might have such low rates because it is more pragmatic about voting and willing to strategically back the EU and even integration if it sees it as useful: this would put them at odds with the hard Eurosceptics in the group. Conversely, the less openly Eurosceptic ECR could have a political center closer to the ideals of soft Eurosceptics, allowing them to vote with the political group and other parties more of the time without fearing that they are betraying their ideals (although the fact that the rates of cooperation for hard Eurosceptics are relatively high here suggests that the political group itself somehow fosters more voting along political group lines than the EFDD for all).

To test whether the line of reasoning above makes sense, I divided hard and soft Eurosceptic votes up in a manner similar to the two hypotheses above. I calculated the percent of the time hard Eurosceptic parties voted with other hard Eurosceptics to see whether this attribute seemed to shape coalitions and larger voting patterns. I then repeated the calculations for soft Eurosceptics and for hard-soft pairings to see how high their rates of voting together were. The results are included below.

Table 21: Hard Eurosceptic Agreement with Other Hard Eurosceptics

Grouping	Mean loyalty	Number of Parties
ENF	0.52	5
EFDD	0.63	4
ECR	0.65	2
Total	0.58	11

Table 22: Soft Eurosceptic Agreement with Other Soft Eurosceptics

Grouping	Mean loyalty	Number of Parties
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ECR	0.76	4
EPP	0.73	2
Total	0.75	6

Table 23: Mixed: Hard/Soft Cooperation Rates

Grouping	Mean loyalty	Number of Parties
ECR	0.69	6
EFDD	0.28	4
Total	0.53	10

Table 24: Mixed: Soft/Non-Eurosceptic Cooperation Rates

Grouping	Mean loyalty	Number of “Soft” Parties
EFDD	0.44	6
ECR	0.67	4
EPP	0.53	10

When the parties from across political groups are totaled for the first three tables, Eurosceptic parties do appear to agree with a party sharing their “hardness” more often than a Eurosceptic party with the opposite attribute. The total hard/soft cooperation rate is the lowest; soft Eurosceptics and hard Eurosceptics more frequently vote with parties sharing their own level of hardness than the other.

Looking at each political group, this aggregate is not entirely repeated: the ECR has a higher rate of cooperation between hard and soft Eurosceptic parties than between hard Eurosceptics. And once again, interpreting the rates from the ENF and EPP is difficult since they only have one “type” of Eurosceptic party.

A plausible interpretation of the data is that while hard and soft Eurosceptic parties do not deliberately or consciously contest votes within political groups, their differing willingness to

compromise and possibly accept strengthening or condoning the power of EU institutions leads them to vote differently some of the time. The thresholds and issues salient to each hard Eurosceptic group may differ, meaning that they do not always buck the political group in the same way in the ECR. Similarly, soft Eurosceptic parties in the EPP (Det Konservative Folkeparti and Fidesz) may have different calculi about what they think is appropriate to capitulate to in a center-right party. However, the quantitative data does suggest that degree of Euroscepticism is a real point of divergence for Eurosceptic parties, which helps contribute to their lack of unity.

Table 24 is of limited use, since for two of the groups there are few soft Eurosceptics and only one non-Eurosceptic party in the group considered. However, while the Five Star Movement's rate of agreement is low, it is much higher than its rate of agreement with any other party in its political group. The other two groups have means over fifty percent, indicating that soft Eurosceptics frequently end up voting with non-Eurosceptic parties in their political group (in the EPP this rate is higher than the soft Eurosceptics vote together). This indicates that there are plenty of issues where soft Eurosceptics will agree or at least be willing to compromise with parties that do not focus on Euroscepticism.

Looking at scores broken down by topic of vote further adds to the impression that hard and soft Eurosceptics conceive of their opposition to EU integration in different ways. Using roll call vote data, Whitaker and Lynch classify roll call votes in areas relating to constitutional affairs, the budget, budgetary control and EP rules as the most related to European integration. In the table below, I look at group cohesion rates for each of these categories. The ENF's rates are slightly lower than they would be in reality, since VoteWatch counts votes from the entire first year in this measure (before the ENF had necessarily been formed).

Table 25: Political Group Cohesion by Issue

	Constitutional Affairs	Budget	Budgetary Control	EP Rules
EFDD	55.39%	60.70%	56.51%	73.14%
ENF	73.90%	72.98%	71.08%	69.85%

While the scores in most categories for both the EFDD and ENF are higher than their overall cohesion, the rates still do not reflect a high degree of agreement. This is counterintuitive because both groups are largely made up of national parties using Eurosceptic rhetoric and frequently advocating policy to slow EU integration. The contestation on these votes demonstrates that different parties have different definitions or standards for how they conceive of voting with this Eurosceptic agenda.

Looking at roll call votes on development provides further evidence of hard and soft Eurosceptics' differing agendas. The table below includes measures of loyalty to party line provided by VoteWatch for five major Eurosceptic parties.

Table 26: Eurosceptic Loyalty to PG by National Party

Party	UKIP	M5S	DPP	AfD	Fidesz
Hard/Soft	Hard	Soft	Hard	Hard	Soft
Development	76.56%	39.34%	76.39%	49.18%	94.59%
Regional Development	86.67%	41.33%	35.44%	55.00%	100.00%

In the EFDD, the soft Eurosceptic Five Star Movement (M5S) has a low rate of cohesion with the political group line. A reasonable interpretation of this is that hard Eurosceptic parties, such as UKIP, will oppose measures to offer financial benefits to countries through EU institutions. However, the Five Star Movement, as a soft Eurosceptic, is willing to accept funding and development if they believe it will benefit their country, regardless of whether it in this instance "furthers" EU integration. The same could be true for Fidesz, which votes frequently with the mainstream EPP on these issues, most likely to increase or improve development aid

and grants. The AfD and DPP, as hard Eurosceptics in the ECR, may have relatively low cohesion rates because they are surrounded by soft Eurosceptics and non-Eurosceptics who are more comfortable than them with the idea of using the EU as a tool to provide regional development aid and support.

Lastly, under this hypothesis, I look at the relationship between the Five Star Movement and UKIP specifically as an example of differing attitudes on legislation by soft and hard Eurosceptics. During its campaign for the European Parliament, the Five Star Movement frequently used Eurosceptic rhetoric, suggesting an Italian referendum on whether to leave the Eurozone among other things. However, many believe that it should be considered a soft Eurosceptic party, given its actual voting record on legislation, its attempts to join ALDE (a broadly Europhile group) and the fact that it toned down anti-EU advocacy in recent years. UKIP, in contrast, is considered a hard Eurosceptic party. It advocated for years for the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, and many argue that the 2016 referendum on British membership in the EU was indirectly organized because of pressure from UKIP.

While the two parties are the largest in the EFDD, and have shared its presidency for most of the Eighth Parliament, their actions on certain votes demonstrate their different attitudes toward the European Union. When UKIP proposed to cut the United Kingdom's contribution to the European budget in many areas, M5S voted against it.⁹³ Their negative vote implied a willingness to keep up funding of the EU at the expense of a member state, a stance that many would consider strange for a party against European integration. Franzosi also notes that the Five Star Movement voted with mainstream political groups on an "Employment and social aspects of the Europe 2020 strategy". This strategy advocated for the EU to be more involved in social

⁹³ Franzosi et al., "The Italian Five Star Movement," 119.

affairs, a prospect which would mean certain principled opposition from most hard Eurosceptics.⁹⁴

The Five Star Movement has also clashed with the rest of the EFDD on issues like immigration and border control, where hard Eurosceptics want greater controls, and solidarity funds for other EU countries following disasters.⁹⁵ The different stances on these votes illustrate the potential clash between hard and soft Eurosceptics, despite an agreement on opposition to EU integration. Soft Eurosceptics like M5S may be moved to vote for measures or policies that implicitly endorse EU control or power, if that is seen as a strategically advantageous move or advantages their country. This is less likely to be true for hard Eurosceptics who, rhetorically anyway, often declare an utter opposition to EU power and growth.

The potential division between hard and soft Eurosceptics was demonstrated again when the Five Star Movement attempted to leave the EFDD in January 2017. M5S attempted to join the ALDE mid-session, claiming that the imminent departure of British MEPs due to Brexit meant they did not see much of a future for their current political group. Admittedly, M5S was denied entry into ALDE, after MEPs of that political group expressed amazement that their leadership would even consider allowing such a Eurosceptic party into their generally pro-EU political group.⁹⁶ However, the fact that M5S came so close, and that their MEPs and party leadership would consider such a drastic realignment illustrates the difference between hard and soft Eurosceptics. A hard Eurosceptic party like UKIP would likely find such a reversal or values impossible, for a party that may quietly or pragmatically vote for the EU agenda a switch to a less Eurosceptic political group is imaginable. While M5S saw several of its MEPs move to other

⁹⁴ Ibid., 121.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 122.

⁹⁶ Rankin, "Ukip's EU funding at risk," *The Guardian*.

political groups, its party leader Beppe Grillo managed to stop the flow, leaving most M5S MEPs reluctantly in the EFDD.⁹⁷

Conclusions

Roll call votes from the Eighth European Parliament support the idea that Eurosceptic parties have particularly low cohesion. Even in comparison to other niche party families, the Eurosceptic far right exhibits particularly low coordination with other members of its political group. This suggests that at this point in time, there is something particular to right-wing Eurosceptic parties that hampers their overall voting loyalty and willingness to follow the political group line. Not only does this show a willingness to defy political group leadership, but since many of these Eurosceptic parties are clustered in political groups dominated by Eurosceptic parties, it shows there are frequent points of disagreement among the Eurosceptics themselves.

This chapter examines three possible reasons for such low cooperation: presence of populism in Eurosceptic parties, position on the left-right spectrum and degree of opposition to the European Union. Of the three, degree of opposition to the European Union appears from what I found to be the most probable. Presence of populism seems slightly correlated with lower voting loyalty, but there does not seem to be a policy-based division within these political groups based on presence or absence of populism. There is also some evidence that left-right concerns may shape voting, and lead centrist parties in dominantly right-wing groups to vote against the political group line. However, this seems like at best a very partial explanation. Most parties in the Eurosceptic political groups range from center to far right (a fairly narrow band), meaning there is probably a limited degree of disagreement on these issues in the first place. So while

⁹⁷ Barbière, “Grillo Blocks Further Five Star Defections,” *Euractiv*.

disagreement on this spectrum may result in some lack of cohesion, especially on certain issues, it seems unlikely to be the dominant source of friction for the Eurosceptic right.

The most compelling explanation among the hypotheses examined seems to be differing degrees of Euroscepticism among Eurosceptic parties. Especially in an EU institution where many pieces of legislation will be directly or indirectly related to EU power, there is ample opportunity for parties with different priorities relating to EU integration to clash. While soft and hard Eurosceptics may have some “baseline” of shared understanding, both the quantitative data and case study above demonstrate that there are significant avenues for disagreement.

In the following chapter, I move past explanations based largely around individual party ideology and belief, and examine the institutional factors that may limit Eurosceptic cooperation within the Parliament.

Chapter 5

The previous chapter examines whether cooperation for Eurosceptic parties is noticeably lower than for other niche parties. It also looks at reasons that Eurosceptic parties may disagree based around ideological lines. This chapter also mainly uses roll call vote data, and aspects of Eurosceptic disagreement on these votes. However, it builds on a trend noticed in several figures in the previous chapter. Cohesion on roll-call votes frequently seems highly based around the political group of Eurosceptic parties.

I examine here whether institutionalization of political groups, as well as the national parties themselves, may be responsible for lack of cohesion on roll call votes. I start by examining evidence that the Eurosceptic political groups themselves are poorly structured, which might make it difficult to coordinate votes or whip parties to vote along the party line. I then move on to national party institutionalization, to determine whether part of the problem is that national parties cannot control their own members. The results of this can help determine whether Eurosceptic disunity is purely a function of ideological disagreement, and to what extent it is related to the structures and regulations the parties find themselves cooperating in.

Political Group Cohesion Differences

When looking at general measures of cohesion, it is noticeable that cohesion rates are starkly different depending on political group. In the table below, cohesion scores from the VoteWatch site are in column two, and cohesion scores calculated for many political groups from the Clarin data set are in column three. Column four is not strictly related to cohesion, but tracks another measure of political group efficacy: the number of reports and opinions drafted by members of the political group. While the ECR is fairly successful by this measure, it has the

third lowest cohesion by either of the other two. The other two Eurosceptic political groups have low ratings across all three measures.

Table 1: Political Group Cohesion and Effectiveness

Political Group	PG Loyalty	Mean Loyalty	Reports and opinions drafted (as of 10/31/2017)
EPP	93.33%		
S&D	92.28%		>260
ECR	78.51%	63.28%	198
ALDE	88.62%		214
GUE-NGL	82.76%	71.57%	115
Green-EFA	95.46%	83.73%	158
EFDD	48.51%	43.26%	52
ENF	74.05%	51.65%	11

Additionally, even among Eurosceptic parties, there is a similar trend of mean cohesion increasing as the size and age of the political group does. This trend is odd if the expectation is for “attitude to EU integration” to be central to these parties, which would seem a reasonable supposition given their scores in relation to EU affairs on the CHES. Given this, one might predict that Eurosceptic parties in less Eurosceptic political groups (EPP and ECR) would more often vote against the political group line, since they are surrounded by parties that are less Eurosceptic. However, as table 2 demonstrates, Eurosceptic parties within these groups are more cohesive than Eurosceptic parties in the EFDD and ENF where Eurosceptics make up a bulk of the coalition.

Table 2: Eurosceptic Loyalty within Political Group

Group	PG loyalty	Mean Loyalty
EFDD	0.67	0.45
ENF	0.69	0.52

ECR	0.84	0.66
EPP	0.93	0.81

As noted in the previous chapter, many of the Eurosceptic parties, when broken along various cleavages (presence or absence of populism, left-right spectrum) seem to exhibit similar patterns. Regardless of the presence or absence of certain attributes, Eurosceptic parties in certain political groups have higher mean cohesion.

This raises a question of causality. It is perfectly plausible that this occurs because certain groups have many Eurosceptics, who disagree frequently with each other (and the few non-Eurosceptic parties in their groups) for ideological reasons. The fact that they are much more of the make-up of these groups could lead to the low cohesion.

However, there is another explanation, not mutually exclusive, unrelated to the ideology of individual national parties. It is possible that the rate of cohesion is related to the institutionalization of the political group or its parties. This includes how factors like leadership, tools of reward and sanction, and expectations are used to make people vote as a cohesive unit.

It seems almost self-evident that being a Eurosceptic party does not inherently make a party not get along with others in its coalition, or be inclined to vote one's own way. Fidesz and Det Konservative Folkeparti in the EPP, for example, have high cohesion rates (in a largely non-Eurosceptic political group), despite meeting my criteria for Euroscepticism and frequently emphasizing nationalism in their party platforms.

In light of this, I examine two different possibilities relating to institutionalization. The first is that the political group itself has not set up practices or rules conducive to compromise and cohesion on voting. The second is that national parties themselves are uninstitutionalized:

either dealing with internal fissures or divisions or struggling to develop a coherent or consistent strategy for how to act within a new Parliament or political group.

I start by building up the theory behind each of these possibilities, and evaluate their likelihood. I then look at national party cohesion and attendance to further back up my evidence.

Lack of Institutionalization of Political Group

Other authors have noticed similar trends of cohesion changing along group lines. But there is disagreement on what is pertinent to these differences: the size of the political group, the strength of sanctioning mechanisms, whether political groups think they will tip the balance in a vote.

Bailer et al. summarize the literature arguing that the size of political group affects cohesion. While having more MEPs may increase the cost and difficulty of coordinating votes, the size comes with advantages as well. Since more MEPs means more funding and staff from the EP budget, there is greater ability to effectively monitor MEPs. The sanctioning methods of large political groups, according to authors like Kaeding, are more developed, since they can monitor better, but also offer more substantial positions in committees and rapporteurships. Bailer et al. also say that, “the larger a party group, the higher the chances that it affects a policy outcome so that a group worries more about cohesion”.⁹⁸

Both elements of this theory of cohesion seem plausible. According to VoteWatch, the EFDD party line won only 30.47% of votes through late 2017, the ENF won only 29.68%. These political groups might not care enough to use whipping mechanisms if they see themselves as unlikely to change the tide in most votes. And the largest political groups do get better access to highly valued spots on committees.

⁹⁸ Bailer et al., "What Role for the Party Group Leader?" 362.

However, while increase in budget and staff may generally correlate with greater cohesion, I argue that this cannot be the complete picture. For these sanctioning mechanisms to be an advantage to political groups, they must have the coordination and know-how to use them effectively. Were they unfamiliar with Parliamentary norms and rules, an increase in funding or access to better committee positions seems unlikely to offset a large increase in MEPs. In other words, the benefits of a large political group seem likely to have a temporal dimension: a new political group unfamiliar with the best way to coordinate its national parties should not see an immediate increase in voting cohesion.

The ECR, despite being the third largest political group in Parliament, for example, has lower cohesion than the next three smaller parties. It was formed in 2009, and saw an influx of new coalition partners, many Eurosceptic in 2014. While size of political group may factor in to cohesion in the way Bailer et al. suggest, I argue that looking at how recently a political group was formed should be used as a complementary indicator of probably group coordination. This fits the cohesion patterns currently on display in the Parliament.

This also fits the pattern of group cohesion rising over time. Many observers of the Parliament have found that over the decades cohesion has increased for all political groups⁹⁹ (although other scholars contest that this is overstated or illusory).¹⁰⁰ While the increase is often attributed to an institutional clarification of the Parliament's powers and responsibilities, it seems logical that it has as much to do with institutionalization of the political groups. There may be a deepening of unity between coalition partners as they learn how to best coordinate with each other and maximize collective benefits.

⁹⁹ McElroy, "Committees and Party Cohesion in the European Parliament," 358.

¹⁰⁰ Bowler and McElroy, "Hurrah Voting in the European Parliament".

Not only have the recently formed (Eurosceptic) political groups had much less time than established parties to work out procedures and plans to try to curb ‘rebel’ voting, but they also have had less time to work out procedures and methods to best facilitate compromise and coordinated voting.

This matters for some of the reasons that Faas and Corbett, from Chapter 2, suggests. Admittedly, the whipping tools of all political groups are probably only effective in some instances. This means that established political groups frequently use internal policy compromises to decide the party line ahead of time. With information on the upcoming votes, and an entire week to meet and discuss priorities, a political group will often be able to unify on many roll call votes. Bressanelli et al. provide further evidence of this. Looking at roll call vote data from the early Twenty-First Century, they argue that informal and early agreements are of central importance especially to large centrist political groups. Even ideological diversity can be partially overcome by political group discipline in the form of carrots and sticks.¹⁰¹ They find that this is especially true for high stakes voting, which “change the perceived risks of defection in plenary; they, therefore, impact on the legislative behaviour of policy-seeking parties and MEPs; and this impact works through strengthening the organisational mechanisms behind cohesion”.¹⁰²

In the mind of Bressanelli et al., informal agreements are necessary for political group coordination, and are highly tied to systems of sanction for national parties. I present three reasons such informal agreements are likely difficult for Eurosceptic political groups.

First, as mentioned above, it is unclear that such small political groups even have the resources to offer or create systems of reward or compromise. Being the smallest political

¹⁰¹ Bressanelli et al., "The Impact of Informalisation," 96.

¹⁰² Ibid, 97.

groups, they are less likely than larger political groups to be given prestigious positions on committees. Furthermore, in several instances the far-right and Eurosceptic nature of the groups has prevented them from being given access to resources that other groups use to reward valued MEPs or national parties. After Nigel Farage of UKIP made a comment that he wanted to “sabotage” the Parliament, an EFDD candidate for the Petitions Committee was voted down. Several ECR candidates from the AfD, running for committee positions were also voted down due to antipathy over the party platform.¹⁰³ While it is traditional to allow political groups a certain proportion of committee spots, the Parliament has demonstrated a willingness to alter this for Eurosceptics.

Secondly, it is unclear that the current leadership of Eurosceptic political groups is able or interested in building up cohesive political groups in the Parliament. In an interview, Nigel Farage said, “we may be able to slow and stop some of the legislation, but in reality I gave up years ago in believing the EU could be reformed”.¹⁰⁴ This statement expresses the belief that little the EFDD does will actually change outcomes on votes, and hints that because of this Farage does not follow the outcome of votes closely. Coming from one of the leaders of the EFDD, it seems likely that such a philosophy, if genuine, would not move him to work hard to mobilize or whip votes. In early 2018, David Borrelli, the other co-president of the EFDD, left the political group entirely to become a Non-Inscrit, without clear explanation. The lack of caring of individual political leaders, in other words, manifests in weak political group structure. But secondly, many leaders of Eurosceptic political groups also have their own roles in domestic politics that make it unlikely they can spend a large amount of time trying to reform or structure a political group. Marine Le Pen and Nigel Farage both are leaders of their parties on a domestic

¹⁰³ Corbett et al., *The European Parliament*, 173.

¹⁰⁴ Farage, Nigel. “Nigel Farage: Ukip will not ‘get into bed’; with Le Pen,” *The Telegraph*, November 15, 2013.

level as well. During the Eighth Parliament, each country had substantial national issues: the Brexit vote and aftermath was clearly a central issue for UKIP, and Marine Le Pen ran for President in 2017. Heavy involvement in domestic affairs like these take up significant resources and attention of these leaders. And when these leaders are meant to coordinate cohesion, such lack of attention matters: Bailer et al. say that party leaders play a noticeable role in the variance of political group cohesion.¹⁰⁵

Lastly, two of the three Eurosceptic political groups operate on the brink of dissolving. With the loss of MEPs, they could fall below the thresholds required for a political group to exist. This gives leaders very limited credibility to whip national parties or individual MEPs in any way, since they depend on these same individuals for survival. But furthermore, to the extent that leadership and compromise in these groups exists it is probably focused on keeping the political group alive. Early 2017 saw the Five Star Movement consider leaving the EFDD entirely, which would have caused the end of the EFDD as well. Such constant threat limits the time political group leaders can focus on coordinating parties, and makes their larger goal to continue existing at all.

In summary, methods to control and coordinate voting behavior are likely to be more developed among non-Eurosceptic political groups. This is both because they have had more time to acclimate to these mechanisms, but also because the effectiveness of these mechanisms have more *consequence* both to political group leaders, who may believe their group's unity will affect the passage of a vote, and to MEPs in the group who are more likely to see substantial and meaningful promotion or relegation for voting behavior. Eurosceptic political groups' priority

¹⁰⁵ Bailer et al., "What Role for the Party Group Leader?"

has had to be avoiding collapse, rather than cajoling or bullying national parties who vote against the line.

Lack of National Party Institutionalization

I first examine whether Eurosceptic national parties are stable entities that can control their own members. If a national party has power struggles or ideological divisions within it, that may lead to frequently splitting the vote on Parliamentary procedures. Furthermore, if one faction of a national party retains leadership, putting it in line for committee positions and other perks of political group membership, the less favored faction may have no incentive to vote with the political group line. While it seems likely that all political groups have had parties who are fragmented or internally divided, I examine whether this is particularly true of Eurosceptic parties, and if so, whether this contributes to the low political group cohesion overall. Signs of lack of national party institutionalization include fissures within the party, MEPs leaving the party or political group, low internal cohesion within the party, and lack of agreement between party members about what their strategy within the Parliament should be, or what the norms of behavior they follow are.

There are several reasons to believe that lack of institutionalization may tend to affect Eurosceptic parties more than other party families within the European Parliament. Many Eurosceptic parties have been formed relatively recently, the Five Star Movement (Italy), KNP (Poland), SVOBDNI (Czechia) and SaS (Slovakia) were all formed 2009 or later. This not only means aspects of their platform may not be entirely ironed out, but they may also be undeveloped in areas including leadership, strategic calculation, and coordination. Additionally, multiple Eurosceptic parties have had public battles over control of the party, often between politicians with more or less radical views for the party's future. Since the elections for the 2014

Parliament, for example, the AfD has had two deep splits, the first prompting five of the AfD MEPs to disavow the party and declare themselves no longer part of it.¹⁰⁶

There are several other examples that show that Eurosceptic parties within Parliament have less than absolute control of their MEPs. UKIP and the National Front have both seen MEP defections, the first by MEPs who sought to join the British Conservatives, the second by MEPs who were disturbed by Marine Le Pen's public disavowal of her father to detoxify the National Front. Some MEPs have been accused of mismanagement or misuse of Parliamentary funds.

This certainly damages Eurosceptic political groups; having fewer members lowers their funding and may leave them dangerously close to dissolution. But it is less clear that in many instances these divisions have meaningfully affected voting cohesion. As discussed below, internal voting cohesion is actually fairly high for many Eurosceptic national parties. It is not the situation that these political groups have low cohesion because a faction of each party votes against the political group line, rather parties tend to vote against it (or not attend) as a whole.

The second dimension of national party institutionalization is to examine whether the national party has not developed practices or modes of behavior *specifically* for utility maximization within the European Parliament. Admittedly, this has some degree of overlap with political group institutionalization, since a well-structured political group could arguably still coerce or teach a new national party to behave in certain ways. However, it does seem necessary to consider parties that are new to a political group or the Parliament itself as separate from the Political Group Institutionalization hypothesis. According to this theory, new national parties may not have yet realized that norms of internal compromise and collective voting with the political group is in their interest, and so vote frequently along national party agenda.

¹⁰⁶ "Germany's Eurosceptics: A Bad Time to Break Up," *The Economist*.

Since many Eurosceptic parties joined the Parliament relatively recently, the low cohesion rates of Eurosceptic political groups could be an anomaly: an effect that will lower as national parties gain a greater understanding of the Parliament and develop strategies to maximize their interests within it. In other words, Eurosceptic parties have yet to be exposed to the socializing effect of political groups more than many other party families, but should adapt. With this understanding should come greater receptivity to sanctioning mechanisms and early agreements on voting issues.

There are several issues with this as an explanation of low cohesion. There does not seem to be much recorded precedent around new MEPs or new parties struggling to acclimate to the European Parliament in this way. Lindstaedt et al. find that in general new members of the Parliament tend to defect less than older members. Rather than trying to strike out on their own, they may follow the example of other MEPs and the political group to inform how they vote on issues.¹⁰⁷ Perhaps this is less true for a new political group with many parties new to the Parliament. But at that point, this seem indistinguishable from the claim that the political group itself lacks institutionalization.

Furthermore, even new Eurosceptic parties have fairly high cohesion in some circumstances. The Danish People's Party joined the ECR in 2014, and has fairly high cohesion (.64 using the Clarin database). Bolin points out that in their first year in the European Parliament, the Sweden Democrats voted frequently with the political group line of the EFDD. This is noteworthy since they were believed to be ideologically more similar to the Danish People's Party.¹⁰⁸ Additionally, they had not been exposed to any "socializing effect" of either Parliament or group yet. So while new parties may sometimes struggle to decide on a strategy for

¹⁰⁷ Lindstaedt et al., "Adaptive Behavior in the European Parliament," 465.

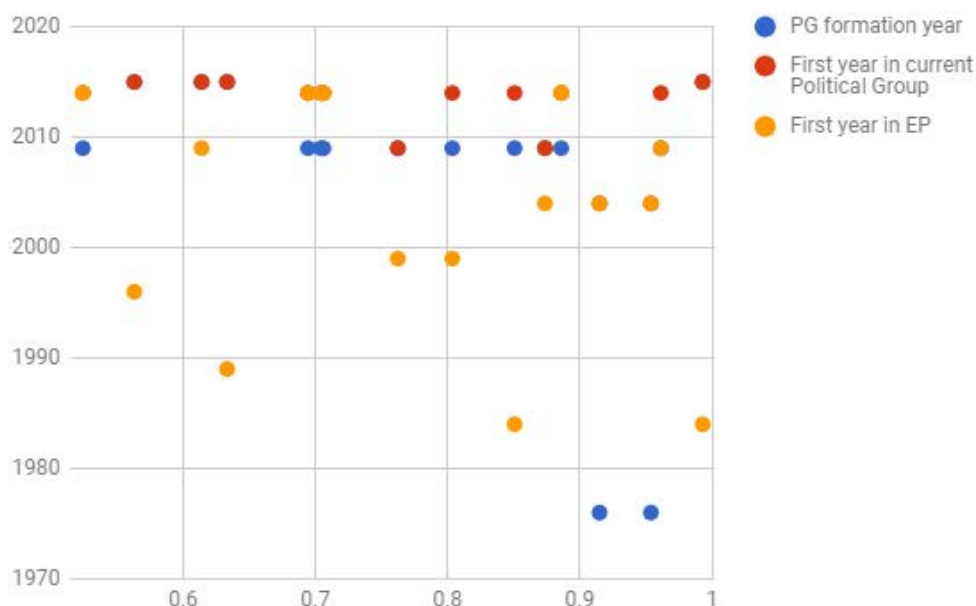
¹⁰⁸ Bolin, "A Loyal Rookie," 60.

the Parliament, and opt to always follow their own parties agenda, that is demonstrably not something they always do, Eurosceptic or not.

Data from Roll Call Votes

For each Eurosceptic party, I gathered the year it first entered Parliament, the year it first entered its current political group and the year its current political group was created. On the chart below, I mapped the strength of loyalty to political group against these, with each dot representing a party.

Figure 3: Eurosceptic Parties Cooperation by Dates of Entry



I hoped to find strong correlations between one of the measures and adherence to the party line. A strong negative correlation between loyalty and political group formation year would indicate that older political groups are correlated with greater loyalty from members, suggesting they have more entrenched cohesion mechanisms. A negative correlation on the other two measures would indicate that national parties with more experience in the Parliament or their political group tend to know to follow their line more. However, no note-worthy correlations

were apparent, possibly because all Eurosceptic parties are in political groups formed relatively recently with the exception of the EPP.

Looking at measures of cohesion and attendance was more useful for evaluating the institutionalization hypothesis. The second and third column of Table 4 below measure the mean internal cohesion of national parties. Because national parties with one member automatically have complete cohesion, they are not included in the chart, the mean for each political group is an aggregate of the internal cohesion of all national parties with more than one member. The second column measures cohesion among members who are actually there and participated (voted for, against, or to abstain). The third column includes in it members who did not attend or vote in any way. Measures of internal cohesion are derived from roll call vote data taken from the Clarin dataset. The fourth column shows rates of attendance for all MEPs in the political group. This includes parties with only one MEP, and was procured from VoteWatch in late 2017.

Table 4: Internal Cohesion and Attendance of National Parties within Political Groups

Political Group	Cohesion among Voters	Cohesion Among MEPs	Average Attendance
ENF	0.98	0.86	0.89
EFDD	0.98	0.86	0.83
GUE-NGL	0.97	0.83	0.90
Greens-EFA	0.98	0.84	0.90
ECR	0.96	0.80	0.87
EPP	0.97	0.84	0.90
Non-Inscrit			0.85

There are several noteworthy patterns. The cohesion among voters (excluding MEPs who did not attend) and the cohesion among all MEPs of a party is fairly high for Eurosceptic political groups, comparable to others. This suggests that Eurosceptic parties actually have

decent cohesion internally. When they vote on issues there is often little “spread,” not much more than in other political groups. This makes the theory that Eurosceptic political groups are disunified because of national party dysfunction seem unlikely. While this thesis does not look at how Eurosceptic dysfunction manifests on a domestic politics level, it seems to have limited effects for EP voting cohesion. What seems more likely is that national parties maintain discipline among themselves on which way to vote, and stick to it during the Plenary Session, even if it contradicts the group line.

Bringing in the average participation of the political group supports this conclusion further. It is true that the attendance rates of the more Eurosceptic parties are on the lower end. But since the cohesion rates of all political groups are more or less on par, the Eurosceptic parties may just as a party not turn out to vote on certain issues or on certain days. It is quite possible they still coordinate as a national party for votes they view as important.

The chart also suggests that some larger groups (such as the ECR) may not have much more success in “whipping” MEPs to attend votes than the most Eurosceptic parties do. However, it is still possible they are better at whipping attendance for votes important to party leadership.

While the national party institutionalization hypothesis does not seem to be supported from this data, it could still be true that national parties being “unused” to the Parliament or a new political group make them as a party vote against the line. However, this still means that political group leadership is incapable of structuring incentives in such a way as to force them to compromise and enter into Early Agreements on voting.

Conclusions

After advancing a theory on institutionalization, and examining both qualitative and quantitative dimensions of the current Parliament, there are several reasonable takeaways. Eurosceptic parties may have greater instability overall, which occasionally leads to significant issues within the Parliament, such as the divide of the AfD. However, there is limited evidence to demonstrate that internal divisions of a few parties creates or even significantly contributes to the frequent disunity of the entire political group. Additionally, it does not seem feasible to blame the disunity of these political groups on the “newcomer” status of many of their parties. One should not expect the cohesion of these political groups to rise in the next Parliament or two if more fundamental issues are not addressed.

What seems more plausible is that lack of leadership and structure within Eurosceptic political groups is a major barrier to cohesion. As many Eurosceptic political groups are newly formed, several led by parties that have limited experience heading political groups, there are signs that certain processes and mechanisms have not been normalized or used within them in the same way that they have in other groups. Leadership of the groups seems unattached, sanctioning mechanisms undeveloped. While perhaps time would allow for greater development of these cohesion mechanisms, they are also hampered by the lack of caring among the individuals who would develop them. If the EFDD cannot see itself as being the deciding factor in a vote, it has less incentive to make sure it can get everybody to back the group line. Because of this, it is questionable whether these mechanisms are likely to become more institutionalized in the future. This is especially true since it seems doubtful that the Eurosceptic political groups will remain the same in the next session. The British Conservatives and UKIP may leave the Parliament entirely with Brexit, and the Five Star Movement appears to have become less Eurosceptic in recent months. This may mean that new Eurosceptic political groups may be

different enough that any norms or rules of behavior previously established to compel cohesion or coordination are lost.

To be clear, lack of political group leadership and mechanisms to promote compromise and unity only matter at the point when there is disagreement on which way to vote. If that were not the case, no coordination would be necessary and all Eurosceptic parties could be expected to always vote in the “favorable” direction. So while this chapter argues that lack of political group institutionalization is a major factor in limiting Eurosceptic unity, it is clearly not the whole picture. To understand the reasons for disagreement on policy, Chapter 4 is most relevant. However, the lack of institutionalization in Eurosceptic parties exacerbates existing divides and makes it difficult for compromise and agreement within the Parliament. While other political groups may have as much ideological diversity, the tools of institutionalization they use have allowed them to overcome this diversity to a greater degree. Deprived of these tools, Eurosceptic parties lack a way to coordinate.

Conclusion

While the previous three chapters offer insights into Eurosceptic disunity, they examine different aspects of this disunity in a fairly isolated and compartmentalized way. In this conclusion, I seek to integrate my results to create a more complete picture of how Eurosceptic parties interact with each other in the European Parliament. I start off the Conclusion by summarizing the major conclusions of my analysis, and putting forth a theory to explain the order and importance of each component of disunity. I then explore the larger impacts and uses of my research. In the Introduction, I explain that an examination of current Eurosceptic cooperation within the Parliament is useful for predicting whether Eurosceptic parties in the future will be able to cooperate to a greater degree, and the likelihood of them becoming a more unified force. Additionally, looking at the issues that prevent cooperation within the Parliament could be useful also for assessing whether cooperation among right-wing Eurosceptics *outside* the Parliament will rise over the coming years. Since the last decade has seen Eurosceptics make significant gains in some political spheres, the ability of these parties to cooperate across borders and institutions could have substantial impacts on the European political system.

Results

The first dimension of Eurosceptic cooperation I examine is the process through which national parties form and join political groups. It is important to reiterate that outside of the hypotheses presented in Chapter 3, there are presumably other factors that shape the political group a national party is likely to join. Ideological proximity and resource maximization, for example, are discussed in the literature review. Most scholars seem to believe most parties' choices are likely to be most related to some mix of these two. However, this hypothesis examines concerns over reputation and respectability that are likely to be of far lesser importance

to more mainstream parties and groups. The central question under consideration is why Eurosceptic parties do not congregate in one unified political group, which would maximize EP resources and quite possibly allow for a greater shared agenda for the group.

I highlight two concerns that Eurosceptic national parties have that make such a large alliance impossible. First, many Eurosceptic parties worry that association with other parties will damage their own reputation. While there are certain Eurosceptic parties that most seem to balk at (such as Jobbik, which sits in the Non-Inscrits) there is variability in whether other parties are considered a liability. Decisions over whether a party is acceptable to sit with may depend on whether the party believes domestic voters will notice such an association and punish the party for it. Functionally, this has led to a Parliament where a Eurosceptic political group is all but impossible. It has also pitted the ENF and EFDD against each other; since UKIP refuses to associate with the National Front both have to compete for coalition partners.

The second factor for national parties looking to join political groups is the incentive of some to join political groups that actively enhance their respectability or credibility. As noted in Chapter 3, the statements of officials from several Eurosceptic parties indicate that they joined the ECR since they saw it as more legitimate and respectable than the farther right groups. For a party that may be ostracized by the mainstream parties in its own nation, or struggling to reassure voters that it is not extremist, such an association can be an advantage. The effect of this is to narrow the pickings for a majority Eurosceptic group further since viable candidates are instead admitted into more respectable political groups like the ECR and EPP.

The combination of these two incentives, paired with the still relatively small number of Eurosceptic MEPs in the Parliament, means that Eurosceptic parties are divided between groups. This lowers their speaking time and total allocation of EP funding. It also severely limits any

ability for all Eurosceptic to coordinate ahead of votes, since they are split into multiple coalitions.

Even after partnerships have been established, Eurosceptic parties frequently vote against the political group line, even when the group is overwhelmingly composed of Eurosceptic parties.

I examined whether presence or absence of populism, differences in left-right spectrum ideology, and difference in degree of antipathy to the EU were meaningful points of cleavage. For all three characteristics I examined, there was some level of difference between parties with different attributes. However, after looking at quantitative and qualitative evidence, the attribute that seemed the most important as a divider of Eurosceptic parties was degree of Euroscepticism. Position on the left-right spectrum and presence or absence of populism yielded more ambiguous results that led to less certainty whether they were important in understanding Eurosceptic disagreement. Looking at position on roll call votes, as well as clearly documented disagreement between parties like the Five Star Movement and UKIP shows that there are differences in voting preference based around how much national parties are opposed to EU integration and operations. Falling in different places on this spectrum may have heightened importance in the European Parliament in particular because it focuses so often on rules and legislation that directly or indirectly invoke EU integration and power.

This thesis does not examine whether there are similar ideological disagreements among other party families in the Parliament. However, it seems likely that whatever disagreement may exist is made significantly worse by lack of institutionalization of the Eurosceptic political groups. As outlined in Chapter 5, both the ENF and EFDD have leaders who are heavily involved in domestic politics. While this arguably may be a product of poor national party

institutionalization (the parties are small or disorganized enough that they cannot delegate effectively), this manifests primarily in underdeveloped group leadership. One of these leaders, Nigel Farage, has signaled that he does not see particular importance in voting, since he thinks it is unlikely he will be able to curb the larger political groups. Methods of reward and sanction used by other political groups seem underused (possibly because committee positions are occasionally untenable for these political groups, and possibly because political leaders have little leverage over national party members when their group is on the point of dissolution). I argue that ideological divides which might otherwise be overcome through compromise or coordination are less likely to be resolved because of the lack of discipline and structure in the Eurosceptic political groups themselves. In other words, hard vs soft Euroscepticism gives Eurosceptics something to disagree over, but this disagreement is exacerbated by uniquely poor institutionalization of political group. For the most part, the Eurosceptic parties themselves tend to agree on an intra-party level what is worth voting on and which way to vote on it.

The hypotheses and levels of support for them are summarized in the table below.

Table 1: Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Type of cooperation being measured	Conclusion
Strategic decision-making related to concerns over reputation limits coalition partners and lowers cooperation	Formalized alliance in political groups	Hypothesis supported, this concern has aided political group fragmentation
Niche party families, including Eurosceptics, have similarly low voting cooperation	Voting cohesion within political group	Not supported- Eurosceptics have lower cooperation
Presence or absence of populism leads to lack of Eurosceptic cooperation	Eurosceptic parties within their political groups	Low/inconclusive levels of support from evidence

Differences in ideology on the left-right spectrum lead to lack of Eurosceptic cooperation	Eurosceptic parties within their political groups	Low/inconclusive levels of support from evidence
Differences in level of opposition to the EU lead to lack of Eurosceptic cooperation	Eurosceptic parties within their political groups	Strongly supported from evidence
Lack of formalized structure within political groups leads to lack of Eurosceptic cooperation	Voting cohesion within political groups and national parties	Supported in the case of political groups, less supportive for individual national parties

Future Eurosceptic Unity in the Parliament

In this section, I ask what my examination of current disunity suggests about the future of Eurosceptics in the Parliament. Few scholars suggest that Eurosceptic parties are likely to see major downturns in coming years, many argue that support for populist and Eurosceptic parties is likely to remain at this level or increase. In this context, is unity in the European Parliament just a matter of time? If the current disagreement is due largely to minor ideological differences, or unfamiliarity with the system, one might expect Eurosceptics to be able to use and master the Parliament as they become more familiar with the system. With enough support in a future round of elections, it may even be possible for Euroscepticism to become the “opposition” in the European Parliament.

There are several plausible reasons why cooperation may increase among Eurosceptic parties. First, if more Eurosceptic parties or MEPs were elected, that might solve some of the problems current political group leaders face in terms of structure. More MEPs in the political group could mean more effective systems for promotion and punishment, since actually important committee seats would be more likely. Furthermore, if gains in the number of MEPs translated into larger political groups, the groups might no longer be on the brink of dissolution.

This could translate into greater ability by political group leaders to whip MEPs into voting along political group lines.

There are multiple divergences among Eurosceptic parties along ideological lines. However, it does seem plausible that parties may change positions during their time in Parliament that create more cohesive political groups, and facilitate greater compromise. Both the Northern League and Five Star Movement have softened their tone towards the EU since 2014. If the literature on “socialization” within Parliament is accurate, such an outcome is even likely.

Despite this, I argue that coordination within the Parliament is unlikely to rise significantly. One reason for this is that there are no signs that Eurosceptic leaders in these political groups are “mastering” whipping, or devoting significant attention to it. Early 2017 saw the EFDD almost break apart; it was salvaged not by political group leader action but because other political groups refused to take the Five Star Movement in. Even if Eurosceptic political group leaders have greater “means” to create enforcement of voting, it is deeply unclear that there is will to use this effectively.

Secondly, political groups in future sessions will not be identical to current configurations. They likely will not even be similar. The British Conservatives, which make up a large part of the ECR will leave the Parliament following Brexit, as will UKIP in the EFDD. While new parties, such as the Five Star Movement, may be doing well recently, their continued success is not a certainty. What this means is that even if political group leaders and national parties began to learn how to compromise and find balance in their political groups, the arrangements reached will likely not be particularly helpful after the next set of elections. With new parties, new leaders and new dynamics, lessons learned may not carry over. This is likely to

similarly disrupt any “socialization” process that MEPs may have gone through in their current political groups. If MEPs change views to fit their group, their new position may be out of sync with whatever political group they join in 2019. Because of this, it seems unlikely that future political groups will contain wiser or more able leadership, or noticeably more cooperative MEPs. Ideological differences over legislation will still lead to disloyalty to the political group line without more institutionalization.

Lastly, strategic decision-making to avoid certain national parties also seems unlikely to diminish. Eurosceptic parties’ attempt to make themselves respectable and mainstream to their domestic voters is not an easy task. For that reason there are likely to be Eurosceptic parties that are frequently avoided since less radical Eurosceptic parties want to avoid unfavorable comparisons to them. Others, like Fidesz and the DPP, seem likely to stay in more respectable and powerful political groups for protection and enhanced respectability. There is no reason to believe that Eurosceptic parties will stop taking into account reputation of partners when forming political groups.

Future Eurosceptic Unity in Europe at large

It is fairly clear that there is low cooperation among Eurosceptics in the European Parliament. But it is less immediately obvious if those attempting to set up Eurosceptic or populist networks outside the Parliament will fail due to the same root causes. If lack of cooperation in the Parliament was due purely to Parliamentary rules and requirements, Eurosceptic cooperation outside of the body might be more successful. Similarly, if the EP emphasizes certain issues that divide Eurosceptics more, perhaps Eurosceptics outside of the body could concentrate on other issues to unite them. Using the analysis of this paper, I offer several thoughts on the likelihood of this.

As hinted at above, conflict and cooperation outside the Parliament will in many ways be vastly different than the types of issues that come up within the institution. Because of this, looking at voting records from inside the Parliament is not a very good measure of the issue overlap that Eurosceptic parties may have outside of it. Eurosceptic parties may utilize major themes and platform issues to coordinate on that rarely come up in the Parliament. And issues that might be flashpoints for conflict in the Parliament (such as EU development policy) seem less likely to come up outside of it. Additionally, even soft Eurosceptics who may like some aspects of EU policy often criticize the EU and warn of it degrading sovereignty, so the soft-hard divide might not be an issue. Over the years there have been several attempts to create a far-right network with a broadly Eurosceptic outlook.

But while looking at voting records from Parliament may not predict Eurosceptic cooperation outside the Parliament, the process of them forming coalitions seems to suggest that there will be problems. When UKIP called the National Front anti-Semitic it was not just rejecting a possible partnership with them in the Parliament, but an association of any form. While the decline of UKIP in recent years may end this major feud, there are still plenty of parties likely to see the National Front's past as a major liability to normalize themselves to domestic voters. It seems likely that a similar dynamic to coalition formation in the EP would be present in any effort to form a transnational or international Eurosceptic movement. Any attempt to invite or include "radical" Eurosceptics would make the movement unacceptable to many others.

Additionally, the incentives to form groups within Parliament are arguably larger than outside it. But even with direct financial incentives to form political groups, and shared legislation to vote on, Eurosceptic national parties often have trouble cooperating. It is unclear

why they would be more likely to get along or push disagreements aside when they do not stand to gain much. If Eurosceptic parties continue to be wary of other parties' bad reputations, or think that their own sovereignty "trades off" with other countries, it is not encouraging for the prospect of a larger alliance.

As different parties "radicalize" and "de-radicalize" perhaps the prospects of a substantial international alliance could change. If enough Eurosceptic parties gained power in their countries, for example, they would perhaps be more interested in opening more formalized lines of communication with other ruling Eurosceptics. But the evidence from the European Parliament suggests that for now, even if Eurosceptic continue to make moderate gains, international cooperation will likely not be any less anemic.

Appendix

Table 1. All Parties Qualifying as Eurosceptic currently sitting in the European Parliament

(leftist parties excluded)

Country	Party	Seats	Current seats	EU Position	EU Salience
U.K.	UKIP	24	22	1.14	9.14
France	FN	23	20	1.21	8.46
Italy	M5S	17	17	1.43	8.86
Hungary	Fidesz	12	11	2.71	6.36
Germany	AfD	7	2	1.61	9.54
Italy	LN	5	5	1.14	8.86
Denmark	DPP	4	3	1.91	7.27
Netherlands	PVV	4	4	1.09	8.36
Austria	FPO	4	4	1.9	6.70
Poland	KNP	4	3	1.06	8
Hungary	JOBBIK	3	3	1.21	6.78
Finland	True Finns	2	2	1.6	8.20
Sweden	Sweden Democrats	2	2	1.27	6.14
Czechia	Civic Democratic Party	2	2	2.87	6.67
Denmark	Dansk Folkeparti	1	1	1.09	9.73
Germany	National Democratic Party	1	1	1.67	5.10
Czechia	Party of Free Citizens	1	1	1.33	7.67
Slovakia	Freedom and Solidarity	1	1	2.86	6.93
Netherlands	Political Reformed Party	1	1	2.55	5.27

Table 2. Additional attributes of Eurosceptic parties. Non-Inscrits excluded.

Party Name	Political Group	Hard/soft	Populist	Left(0)- Right(10)
UKIP	EFDD	Hard	No	9.14
FN	ENF	Hard	Yes	9.64
M5S	EFDD	Soft	Yes	4.67
Fidesz	EPP	Soft	Yes	7.93
AfD	ECR	Hard	No	8.92
LN	ENF	Hard	Yes	8.86
DF	ECR	Hard	Yes	6.90
PVV	ENF	Hard	Yes	9.25
FPO	ENF	Hard	Yes	8.70
KNP	ENF	Hard	Yes	9.53
PS	ECR	Soft	Yes	5.11
SD	EFDD	Hard	Yes	7.76
ODS	ECR	Soft	No	8
FolkB	EPP	Soft	No	2
SVOBODNI	EFDD	Hard	No	8.71
SaS	ECR	Soft	No	7.28
SGP	ECR	Soft	No	8.11

Glossary of Abbreviations

AfD	Alternative for Germany (Germany party)
DPP	Danish People's Party (Denmark party)
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists
EFDD	Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy
ENF	Europe of Nations and Freedoms
GUE-NGL	European United Left-Nordic Green Left
Greens-EFA	Greens-European Free Alliance
KNP	Congress of the New Right (Polish party)
LN	Lega Norda (Italian party)
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
M5S	Five Star Movement (Italian party)
PVV	Party for Freedom (Dutch party)
RCV	Roll call vote
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party

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