Mapping Parties' Positions on Foreign and Security Issues in the EU, 2009–2014

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This article offers a comparative analysis of parties' position on foreign and security issues in the EU28 across the EP elections of 2009 and 2014. First, we map the position of the parties on selected foreign policy and security issues in both 2009 and 2014. Second, we measure the extent to which party positions on such issues remained stable across these five years. Third, we offer an explanatory analysis of the competing factors potentially affecting changes in parties' position. By means of multivariate regression models, we test the effect of party ideology, overall attitude toward EU integration, and structural factors at the party level in view of answering the following question: *Do parties hold "genuine" positions over EU foreign and security policy, or are they rather due to their relatively more encompassing attitude toward EU integration?* The data come from two transnational voting advice applications developed during the 2009 and 2014 European elections campaigns, respectively.

Introduction

How do political parties in Europe position themselves on (EU) foreign policy and security issues? Comparative studies on the positions of political parties in various foreign policy questions, especially those related to EU foreign policy, are still scarce. In general, foreign policy has been studied as something defined by

international and structural elements (Waltz 1979; Grieco 1988) or dominated by the executive (Wagner and Raunio 2017) with an abundance of studies focusing on the US case (Raunio 2014) and less on European countries. Concerning EU integration, existing literature has shown that there is an "inverted U curve" describing pro-integration centrist parties and anti-integration peripheral parties (Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002; Marks et al. 2006; van Elsas and van der Brug 2015). But how does this relate to EU foreign policy? In this article, we map the position of all parties in the EU on selected foreign policy and security issues, as measured during the last two EP elections of 2009 and 2014, respectively. This allows us to shed additional light on the main questions that underpin this special issue: Do parties differ on foreign policy? If they do, what does explain this difference? And in particular, do parties hold "genuine" positions over EU foreign and security policy, or are they rather due to their relatively more encompassing attitude toward EU integration? Our study takes its starting point exactly from this: explaining how European political parties, and therefore how the EU-wide political space, is shaped by (European) foreign policy and security issues, and how these positions are related transnationally to the main axes of contestation.

Our empirical contribution addresses two hypotheses regarding the underlying ideological differences between left-wing and right-wing parties, namely, their diverging positions regarding foreign aid and international agreements. We openly address structural differences across the East/West divide, the respective patterns of change across time, and how this change is consistent to previously established policy change theories. Our findings show that a general, EU-wide shift in foreign and security issues is taking place. Yet, some political families are more affected than others (Budge 1994; Laver 2005; Fowler and Laver 2008). We advance a number of explanations for these diverging patterns, focusing in particular on the worsening of the economic situation (Adams, Haupt, and Stoll 2009) as exacerbated by political parties' governing status (Meyer 2013; Schumacher, De Vries, and Vis 2013). Our analyses rely on an original longitudinal dataset based on two EU-wide Voting Advice Applications (VAAs)—*EU Profiler* and **eu**and**i**—developed in occasion of the European Parliament elections of 2009 and 2014, respectively.

This article proceeds as follows. In the next paragraph, we review the existing literature on political parties and foreign policy, focusing in particular on security issues and on how party positions on European integration issues are linked to the underlying ideological conflicts of party competition. Then, we move on to discuss how the existing literature has theorized party change, identifying those hypotheses that can be tested by means of the data at our disposal. In the section that follows, we provide a brief introductory overview of the evolution of VAAs and party positioning techniques. Next, we describe our original longitudinal dataset and offer a descriptive analysis of our key variables, which allows us to shed some light on how parties from the main European political families positioned themselves in 2009 and 2014 on the crucial foreign policy issues that we identified. We also discuss the magnitude of change between these two elections. Afterward, we provide an explanatory analysis of the factors potentially driving changes in parties over time. By means of first-difference estimation, we test the competing effect of a series of variables (i.e., party ideology, overall attitude toward EU integration, and structural factors). Finally, we conclude by summarizing the main results and pointing out avenues for further research.

Party Positioning on EU Integration, Foreign Policy, and Security Issues: A Review

Foreign policy studies have generally paid scarce attention to political parties. Yet, political parties are key political actors within contemporary representative democracies. They organize legislatures (Cox and McCubbins 1993), articulate choices, aggregate preferences, and "supply labels under which candidates run for

public office" (Epstein 1967, 9). At the same time, parties mobilize and educate voters, form governments, and pursue policy-making goals (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000). Given this centrality, political parties have been studied from a wide variety of point of views and methodological approaches. Until recently, however, very little attention has been paid to the connection between parties and their positions on foreign and security policy. It is only in the last decade that political science scholarship has begun to fill this gap (Schuster and Maier 2006) and comparative empirical evidence is still scarce (Thérien and Noel 2000).

Wagner and Raunio (2017) argue that if foreign policy is still very much dominated by the executive (with parliaments wielding limited influence), the role of party-political contestation is more and more structuring parliamentary debates, and votes in this issue area are increasingly politicized. Several country-specific or small-*n* case studies have been conducted to analyze political parties' position on foreign policy (Joenniemi 1978; Paterson 1981; Kaarbo 1996; Onuki, Ribeiro, and Oliveira 2009; Martin 2013; Verbeek and Zaslove 2015). If we limit to comparative studies that investigate transnationally political parties' policy positions, there seems to be a general consensus in considering ideology, more than national affiliation, as the key element to define political parties' policy positions (Wagner et al. 2017). However, it is not clear whether the same dimensions useful to define political parties' policy preferences in the domestic arena also apply to foreign policy preferences. We do know that they apply to European integration issues, with the latter dimension being a more powerful predictor than the former (Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002), but less is known concerning foreign policy and international security issues. This is especially the case with EU-related policy issues (Calossi and Coticchia 2013). EU foreign policy is indeed a specific topic and at the fringes of foreign policy analysis, because the politics of EU foreign policy is heavily influenced by the unique context of the EU.

Existing research shows that a party's stance on EU integration is influenced by two main dimensions of political conflict: a socioeconomic dimension and a sociocultural, or "GAL–TAN" (i.e., Green–Alternative–Libertarian versus Traditional–Authoritarian–Nationalist) dimension (Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002; Marks et al. 2006; Prosser 2016). Moreover, there is strong evidence that while the economic conflict dimension has been a stronger predictor of parties' EU positions at the beginning of the European unification process, it is now rather the cultural dimension that determines a party's stance on European integration (van Elsas and van der Brug 2015; Prosser 2016). In general, extreme left parties and extreme right parties sharing Euroscepticism can be considered "an uncontested fact" (Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002, 968). Parties closer to the center of the political spectrum, including most social democratic, Christian democratic, liberal, and conservative parties, are generally more supportive of European integration. If one combines the positions of party families on a left/right dimension with an orthogonal dimension indicating level of support for European integration, the result is an "inverted U" (Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002). Apart from left and right extreme parties, Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson (2002) also describe three different models that describe the relationship between left/right and pro-/anti-EU position. The "Hix–Lord model" views European integration and the left/right cleavage as independent dimensions (Hix and Lord 1997; Hix 1999). The so-called regulation model considers the European dimension as embedded in the left/right continuum: political parties' positions on left/right and European integration, therefore, tend to coincide (Tsebelis and Garrett 2000). Finally, in the "Hooghe–Marks model," the left/right dimension influences party positions only on a limited number of European issues that concern regulation and redistribution policies (Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002).

While the majority of existing explanatory models look at the overreaching relationship between party positions and EU integration, our focus narrows down to

their positions on foreign and security policy in the EU. Our main research questions thus unfold as follows: *Do parties hold "genuine" positions over EU foreign and security policy, or are they rather due to their relatively more encompassing attitudes toward EU integration? And what are the drivers of positional change over time?*

To this end, we build upon Harmel and Janda's (1994) integrated theory of party position change. They claim that change simply does not "happen" but it is rather a discontinuous outcome strictly linked to *party goals*, considering both inward factors (that they limit to leadership or dominant faction change) and outward factors (broadly referred to as "external stimuli"). We similarly partition our literature review into two camps, focusing our attention, in turn, on those studies looking at internal factors (linked mainly to intra-party politics) and those looking at external dynamics (outside the party). Within the former, Boucek (2009) looks at *factions* of intra-party politics leading to a substantive change in policy positions and ultimately to fission, identifying three types of factionalism (cooperative, competitive, and degenerative) as the main drivers of change. Others highlight that parties' ability to change is affected, most of all, by their inner *structure* (Schumacher, De Vries, and Vis 2013). In this sense, Meyer (2013, 170–76) argue that parties with higher organizational strength, greater resources, and a more coherent decision-making structure are more likely to change their policy positions. Instead, Ceron (2015a, 2015b, 2016) looks at intra-party dynamics, in particular at ideological heterogeneity, as the driver for party change in different aspects. He finds that office, policy, and electoral motives influence factions' decisions that lead to *party fissions*; that when the party leader is autonomous and can rely on powerful whipping resources to impose discipline, the party will credibly stick to the *government-formation* coalition agreement; and finally, that factional heterogeneity negatively affects party unity in *roll-call behavior*. It is also worth mentioning Bräuninger and Debus (2009), who look at legislative agenda-setting. Moving beyond the assumption that the party is a unitary actor, they conclude that opposition and, in particular, bipartisan agenda-setting is rare. Yet, when present, it relates to the allocation of power and the intensity of ideological conflict within both the (coalition) government and the parliament, as well as between these two actors.

On the other hand, previous empirical research identifies a number of main external reasons that lead to change, in particular, in political parties' policy position—the specific focus of this article. Parties can shift their positions because of previous change by *competing parties*: according to the "marker party model" (Budge 1994), political parties adapt in relation to shifts in policy positions of rival parties (also Laver 2005; Fowler and Laver 2008). The governmental status of political parties can be considered a crucial element influencing their policy positions. According to Meyer (2013), governing parties are more prone to change. Interestingly, changes by parties in government are shown to be more evident because of the greater attention paid to their actions by the media. This partly contradicts Walgrave and Nuytemans (2009), who showed that opposition parties adapt their programmes more smoothly. Schumacher, De Vries, and Vis (2013), further elaborating on this, come to the conclusion that opposition parties are less likely to shift position than government parties, but only if they have strong (policy-seeking) organizations. Regardless of their governing status, political parties tend to react to shifts in public opinion (Adams et al. 2004; Fagerholm 2016). Also, the party's past electoral performance may induce a change in party positioning (Budge 1994). However, electoral defeat in itself seems unlikely to be a sufficient explanation for such change. From a broader perspective, global economic shifts can be drivers of change. Adams, Haupt, and Stoll (2009) claim that parties tend to systematically modify their policy positions as a reaction to global economic changes, and that in particular Western European left-wing parties are less responsive than parties from other parts of the political spectrum (Adams, Haupt, and Stoll 2009, 626–27).

In parallel to these two camps, it is also worth mentioning those studies addressing how parties reach out to new or different issues under particular contexts. Wagner and Meyer (2014) argue that parties that have more resources will be able to better exploit current concerns while parties with fewer resources are more likely to focus on their best issues. Hobolt and de Vries (2015), extending the literature originally limited to the American context to the European one, find that parties will choose which issue to promote on the basis of their internal cohesion and proximity to the mean voter on that same issue. van Heck (2018) argues that non-governing parties aim at changing the political status quo by focusing on a few issues only, whereas mainstream parties reinforce existing patterns of competition by distributing their attention across a wide range of issues. Similarly, Grande, Schwarzbözl, and Fatke (2018), looking specifically at the politicization of the immigration issue, find that issue entrepreneurship of radical right populist parties plays a crucial role in explaining variation on this issue.

Given the dataset at our disposal, we cannot test how all these potential elements, identified by the literature as the main drivers for policy position change, may affect our variables of interest. First of all, we are not interested in the organizational internal dynamics of political parties, and there is no available comparative/longitudinal source of data on party structures and internal dynamics. Therefore, we cannot test the effect of mass organizational strength and changes in dominant factions. Our data, albeit longitudinal, also do not allow us to address the effect of policy shifts by rival parties either, as the two data points that we possess are not sufficient for tracing this effect. Moreover, we do not take into consideration the reciprocal interaction between changes in party positions and changes in public opinion, as our data are limited to political parties. We test, however, how three factors impact party positional change in respect to EU foreign and security policy at large: political parties' electoral success (Budge 1994; Harmel and Janda 1994), their governing status (Walgrave and Nuytemans 2009; Meyer 2013), and the differences between left and right in reacting to global economic change (Adams, Haupt, and Stoll 2009). Finally, we contribute to the debate on politicization and polarization of one of the key issues underlying EU foreign and security policy, namely immigration (Kriesi 2016; Grande, Schwarzbözl, and Fatke 2018).

Voting Advice Applications and Party Positioning: Our Longitudinal Dataset

Over the last decades, political science research has developed a number of methodologies to place parties in the policy space (for an overview, see Marks 2007). Among this variety of techniques, two would seem to stand out when it comes to their prolonged impact: expert surveys (Castles and Mair 1984; Ray 1999; Benoit and Laver 2006; Steenbergen and Marks 2007; Hooghe et al. 2010) and manifesto coding (Budge 2001; Klingemann et al. 2006). Both methodologies move from the idea that party positions can be established without the involvement of political parties themselves. As a matter of fact, qualified researchers provide the necessary information at the core of both expert surveys and manifesto studies. Yet, neither methodology comes in as free of drawbacks (Benoit and Laver 2007). With respect to the expert surveys, the study participants are asked to position parties in light of their demonstrable knowledge, but they are *not* asked to justify their placings based on demonstrable empirical evidence in support of their placings. It is also an established finding that consensus among experts is more easily achieved in the case of large, established, and moderate parties as compared to smaller, newer, and more extreme parties (Marks et al. 2007). While the literature has acknowledged variance in measurement quality, less attention has been paid to the problematic issue of uncertainty connected to the aggregation of expert responses (Lindstädt, Proksch, and Slapin 2020). Manifesto coding appears to be more transparent, because the codes employed come from official documents, publicly accessible, from the

parties themselves—rather than from perception-based expert assessment. Numerous studies of party preferences on foreign policy have thus relied on this methodology (Whitten and Williams 2011; Greene and Licht 2018). However, even manifesto coding has shortcomings. For instance, the decision of a coder to use a certain coding category for a textual item is not always unambiguous and sometimes not even possible (for an extensive review, see Gemenis 2013).

Most recently, a novel method of placing political parties has appeared in connection with the spread of VAAs in Europe and beyond (Garzia et al. 2017). Early VAAs have primarily resorted to elite surveys and, in some cases, to large-*n* surveys submitted to scholars in order to identify parties' position on policy statements (Garzia and Marschall 2019). At first, however, these different methods have been used independently from each other; as a consequence, in some cases political parties have managed to "shape" their positioning toward what they perceived as the desired outcome, without an objective and unbiased control by experts (van Praag 2007; Walgrave, Van Aelst, and Nuytemans 2008; Ramonaite 2010). To overcome this inadequacy, an *iterative* method, combining together expert judgment self-placement by political parties, has been pioneered by the Dutch VAA *Kieskompas* (Krouwel, Vitiello, and Wall 2012). The iterative method has been subsequently exported in numerous countries in Europe and beyond (Krouwel, Vitiello, and Wall 2014), and it has eventually been applied to the European Parliament elections by the *EU Profiler* in 2009 (Sudulich et al. 2014). The aim of this iterative method is to maximize the respective strengths of elite surveys and expert surveys while at the same time counterbalancing the corresponding weaknesses. Expert coding and self-placement by parties take place independently and the respective results are then compared, so as to create a mechanism of reciprocal check. Based on the figures made available by the *EU Profiler* project, parties and experts agreed on over 70 percent of the placements already at the first round. The possibility for the coding teams to interact with the parties during the "calibration" stage led the percentage of agreement to about 95 percent (Trechsel and Mair 2011). The coding process itself encompasses a hierarchy of sources in order to increase the likelihood for parties to be placed on as many policy statements as possible. All textual material taken into account by the expert coders is made publicly available so that all coding choices can remain verifiable. Moreover, the inclusion of parties in the process reduces the above-mentioned shortcomings inherent to expert coding when it comes to placing small and new parties, which are likely to know more about themselves than expert coders usually do. Admittedly, this does not fully solve the thorny issue of party positions' contextual dependence (e.g., candidates' positions are distinct from the party leader or the parliamentary party's position or even a party's activists). If anything, the reliance on publicly available documentation commonly attributable to the *party as a whole* can be assumed to at least alleviate this issue. The data employed in this article come from the party datasets generated by both the *EU Profiler* (2009) and *euandi* (2014) VAAs. The 2009 dataset comprises 249 political parties from all twenty-eight EU member states, while the 2014 dataset is composed of 242 political parties. The novelty of the data used for this research comes from the integration between the two existing datasets. While previous research has been conducted with a cross-sectional approach, only very few studies have taken into consideration the potential changes of party positions over time. One exception is the study by Dalton (2016) that, however, investigates the whole spectrum of more general policy dimensions (e.g., economy, EU, welfare, etc.), whereas here we concentrate on a rather more fine-grained analysis of specific foreign policy and security issues. The cumulative dataset at our disposal provides us with one of the largest datasets available to test both the dimensionality and the explanatory factors of party positions on foreign and security issues across the European Union. In total, our dataset is composed of 327 political parties from EU28. As already mentioned, the number of political parties in 2009 and 2014 is similar (242 and 249, respectively). The number

of political parties that participated in both elections, for which we can trace their positional change over a series of policy issues, is 164. This also gives us a rather accurate depiction of the high degree of fluidity on the electoral offer in EU elections: in fact, in 2014 only roughly half of the political parties that run five years before entered the electoral arena in the same formation.[1]

For the empirical part of our work, we have taken into consideration a series of variables that capture political parties' policy positions on some key dimensions. Among the policy issues included in our dataset, we can rely on four items (considering both 2009 and 2014) that refer to crucial themes in foreign policy and security issues, including their pro- or anti-EU integration stance. These positions are coded as statements toward which the political party can be more or less in agreement, using the classical five-point scale ("Completely agree," "Tend to agree," "Neutral," "Tend todisagree," and "Completely disagree," plus a "No opinion" option). The following statements can be found, phrased in identical form, in both 2009 and 2014:

EU Integration	EU integration is a good thing
Immigration	Immigration into [country] should be made more restrictive
EU One Voice	On foreign policy issues the EU should speak with one voice
EU Defense	The EU should strengthen its security and defense policy

Second, we have pooled together all EU28 political parties according to their political families. As our datasets were developed for the European Parliament elections, the most reliable indicator available for each political party has been identified as their membership in the European Parliament political groups (EPGs). In this sense, we have identified six main political families: Left and Communists, Greens, Social Democrats, Liberals, Christian Democrats and Conservatives, Extreme Right and Eurosceptics, plus a residual "other" category, including those political parties that do not belong to any EPG and whose MEPs are registered in the European Parliament as "Non Inscrits."[2] Finally, we included two additional variables that are relevant for the explanatory analysis of the competing factors potentially affecting parties' position on foreign policy issues. These are the number of seats received in the European Parliament's election (a proxy for party size) and their presence or absence in the government coalition in their country.

Descriptive Analysis

In this paragraph, we provide some preliminary information on how parties from the main European political families positioned themselves in 2009 and 2014 on the crucial foreign policy issues that we identified in the previous paragraph. Then, we measure the extent to which party positions on such issues remained stable across these five years. Table 1 summarizes all these elements: for each policy issue, political families are ordered from the most in disagreement to the most in agreement in 2009, together with the average value for all parties. The table presents also scores from 2014 and the mean difference (Δ) between 2014 and 2009.

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[1] It has to be noted that we considered those political parties that simply changed their name between 2009 and 2014 as the same party. In case of mergers and split, however, we considered those parties as different parties, even if there is a relatively high political continuity between them.

[2] Therefore, we have grouped together as part of the same political family those parties belonging to the European People's Party and the European Conservatives and Reformists on the one hand (for both 2009 and 2014), and those belonging to Europe of Freedom and (Direct) Democracy and Movement for a Europe of Freedom and Democracy (for 2014 alone, since this group was formed only in the last EP legislature). For all other political parties, their political family matches their EPG membership.

Table 1. Mean party positions on selected EU foreign and security issues, by party family

	2009		2014		Δ (2014 − 2009)	
Immigration into [country] should be made more restrictive						
Left/Communists (*N* = 16)	1.69	(1.25)	1.75	(1.06)	0.06	(0.28)
Greens (*N* = 20)	1.90	(1.16)	1.80	(1.00)	−0.10	(0.25)
Social Democrats (*N* = 26)	2.46	(1.06)	2.31	(1.08)	−0.15	(0.27)
Liberals (*N* = 18)	2.67	(1.28)	2.28	(1.36)	−0.39	(0.20)[*]
All parties (*N* = 138)	**2.80**	**(1.45)**	**2.66**	**(1.39)**	**−0.14**	**(0.09)**
Christian/Conservatives (*N* = 30)	3.23	(1.38)	3.10	(1.12)	−0.13	(0.21)
Extreme Right/Eurosceptics (*N* = 8)	4.50	(0.53)	4.38	(1.06)	−0.12	(0.29)
On foreign policy issues the EU should speak with one voice						
Left/Communists (*N* = 17)	2.41	(1.58)	2.06	(1.19)	−0.35	(0.34)
Extreme Right/Eurosceptics (*N* = 9)	3.00	(1.73)	2.44	(1.74)	−0.56	(0.60)
All parties (*N* = 142)	**3.84**	**(1.46)**	**3.71**	**(1.49)**	**−0.13**	**(0.09)**
Greens (*N* = 18)	3.89	(1.45)	4.00	(1.37)	0.11	(0.21)
Christian/Conservatives (*N* = 34)	4.44	(0.70)	4.12	(1.20)	−0.32	(0.20)
Liberals (*N* = 20)	4.50	(0.76)	4.45	(0.75)	−0.05	(0.13)
Social Democrats (*N* = 25)	4.68	(0.85)	4.60	(0.86)	−0.08	(0.11)
The EU should strengthen its security and defense policy						
Left/Communists (*N* = 18)	1.50	(1.04)	1.50	(0.98)	0.00	(0.18)
Extreme Right/Eurosceptics (*N* = 9)	3.44	(1.66)	2.89	(1.53)	−0.55	(0.37)
Greens (N = 19)	3.47	(1.30)	3.47	(1.21)	0.00	(0.21)
All parties (*N* = 140)	**3.64**	**(1.50)**	**3.56**	**(1.50)**	**−0.08**	**(0.08)**
Christian/Conservatives (*N* = 33)	4.12	(1.21)	4.27	(1.18)	0.15	(0.15)
Social Democrats (*N* = 26)	4.54	(0.58)	4.12	(1.14)	−0.42	(0.21)[*]
Liberals (*N* = 18)	4.67	(0.48)	4.61	(0.50)	−0.06	(0.12)
EU integration is a good thing						
Extreme Right/Eurosceptics (*N* = 9)	3.00	(1.50)	2.78	(1.30)	−0.22	(0.14)
Left/Communists (*N* = 18)	3.00	(1.28)	2.72	(1.12)	−0.28	(0.24)
All parties (*N* = 158)	**4.12**	**(1.24)**	**4.02**	**(1.25)**	**−0.10**	**(0.07)**
Greens (*N* = 21)	4.14	(1.23)	4.43	(0.81)	0.29	(0.19)
Christian/Conservatives (*N* = 37)	4.59	(0.76)	4.62	(0.72)	0.03	(0.13)
Liberals (*N* = 20)	4.65	(0.58)	4.50	(0.68)	−0.15	(0.16)
Social Democrats (*N* = 29)	4.79	(0.62)	4.72	(0.64)	−0.07	(0.08)

[*]*t*-test of paired comparisons is significant at the .10 level (two-tailed).

We move from the idea that the left–right cleavage continues to be in most countries the main axis of contestation, with the sociocultural or GAL–TAN dimension constituting the second cleavage. According to the existing literature, parties that are leftist and more liberal on the sociocultural dimension tend to be on average more prudent in foreign policy issues as well. Right-wing parties in turn tend to be more interventionist in foreign policy issues. This seems to be confirmed by part of our analysis. In fact, some issues seem to overlap with the traditional left/right dimension: that is, the statement "Immigration into [country] should be made more restrictive." Here, the left and liberal parties are on one side of the spectrum while the center-right and extreme right parties are on the other.

Moving from general attitudes toward immigration to more specific dimensions of EU foreign policy, however, we find strikingly different patterns. In both the statements "On foreign policy issues the EU should speak with one voice" and "The EU should strengthen its security and defense policy," we find the extremes (extreme left and extreme right) together on the "against" side. This dynamic seems to resonate more with the GAL–TAN cleavage and with their more general attitude toward EU integration. As a matter of fact, the two party families consistently against

EU Integration are exactly the extreme left and the extreme right. This looks like a first hint that attitudes toward specific EU policies might actually link with parties' more encompassing overall attitude toward EU integration.[3] This is consistent with the finding of Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson (2002), who conclude that that the classical left/right cleavage is the main element that defines European integration; however, parties at the extreme left and right extreme are substantially more Eurosceptical than centrist political parties. In other words, we can interpret our results as a confirmation that the GAL–TAN cleavage heavily influences how European political parties are positioned on these EU-related policy issues.

Interesting insights also come from the analysis of the direction of change across time. In general terms, we witness a wide degree of stability across time. For instance, we can see that on the immigration statement parties remained aligned, while polarization decreased, slightly. Extreme left parties became a bit more restrictive, while all others became a bit less restrictive. With the exception of the liberals, however, no change appears significant at the party family level. Overall, the value for all parties shows that, on average, parties in EU are for more restrictive immigration policies. This is not surprising, yet it supports—albeit indirectly—those theories that attribute party policy change to a series of factors, ranging from the rise of anti-immigration parties according to Budge's (1994) "marker party theory" to shifts in public opinion (Adams et al. 2004).

On the issue of the EU speaking with one voice, mainstream parties remain strongly anchored toward the agreement side. Yet, with the sole exception of the Greens, all party families seem to converge toward a more critical position over time. It seems that the increasing complexity of contemporary challenges, such as the migration crisis, and in the face of an EU slow to respond to such challenges, pushes parties to ask for more room for maneuver in the domain of EU common foreign policy. The issue of common EU defense policy shows a peculiar trend that does not allow for a clear-cut explanation. The general trend is toward an increasing disagreement with this statement, but the trend is guided by Social Democrats (who remain in favor of a common EU defense policy nonetheless) and the Extreme Right. This result should be addressed by further analysis.

When it comes to the general dimension of EU integration, we find a very small (and statistically insignificant) decrease in the support for further EU integration. Interestingly, the parties turning more strongly toward Euroscepticism are those already in strong disagreement: extreme right and extreme left parties. This, again, is consistent with Hooghe et al.'s view according to which "[the GAL–TAN cleavage] powerfully structures variation on issues arising from European integration" (2002, 985). In any case, on overall, the statement on which political parties change position the most is that about immigration. This was already in 2009 the item with the lowest absolute value; in 2014, it is the only one that lies on the "disagree" side (i.e., values lower than 3). This gives a further indication on how the immigration topic has become so crucial for the EU political landscape, and not only on anti-immigration parties: "this contagion effect involves entire party systems rather than the mainstream right only" (van Spanje 2010, 563). Table 2 confirms this by showing the correlation value between the same item in the two moments. There is indeed a strong correlation (i.e., continuity) in all of the statements. However, if the belief that the EU should have a stronger defense policy tends to remain relatively more stable (0.79), the other positions show weaker correlation. In particular, the statement according to which immigration needs to be restricted is the item whose correlation between 2009 and 2014 is lower (0.70). Not surprisingly, considering

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[3]Regardless of the year under analysis, we notice a strong correlation between parties' general attitudes toward EU integration and—respectively—our "EU One Voice" ($r_{2009} = 0.79$) ($r_{2014} = 0.77$) and "EU Defense" ($r_{2009} = 0.72$) ($r_{2014} = 0.65$) items. Such strong pattern of covariance is somehow magnified by the much weaker (and negative) relationship between parties attitudes toward EU integration and their position on immigration ($r_{2009} = -0.19$) ($r_{2014} = -0.35$).

Table 2. Correlation between 2009 and 2014 key policy positions

Immigration	EU Integration	EU One Voice	EU Defense
0.70	0.72	0.73	0.79

Table 3. Governing status and policy position change, 2009–2014

	Immigration	EU Integration	EU One Voice	EU Defense
Government	−0.15	−0.07	−0.02	−0.04
(N)	(53)	(60)	(53)	(52)
Opposition	−0.13	−0.12	−0.19	−0.09
(N)	(85)	(98)	(89)	(88)

the deflagration of the refugee crisis between the two EP elections, this is the issue where political parties have actually changed their stance the most.

One final element that gives significant result in our analysis is the presence in government or not of the political party (see table 3). As said, there seems to be a generalized trend toward increasing disagreement with open immigration policies and pro-EU integration items. Government and opposition parties do not differ, overall, in the sign of the delta coefficient, but they do differ when it comes to the magnitude of change: parties in government remain overall more pro-EU, but have moved faster than opposition parties when it comes to turning restrictive on immigration. Government parties, in other words, seem more likely to change their position on a visible and heated issue such as immigration, which may be linked to the fact that shifts by government parties receive higher media attention and therefore are more visible to the electorate (Meyer 2013).

Changes in Party Positions on Foreign Policy and Security Issues: A Multivariate Analysis

In this final empirical section, we offer an explanatory analysis of the competing factors potentially affecting parties' position change across time. By means of first-difference estimation, we are able to test the competing effect of party ideology, overall attitude toward EU integration, and structural factors (party size and governing status, East/West divide) in driving across-time change. Based on the initial results from the analyses performed above, we expect changes in specific foreign and security policy items (e.g., EU Defense and EU One Voice) to be driven by concurrent changes in overall attitudes toward EU integration. With regard to the more general item on immigration, we rather expect long-term ideological factors to play a role.

We have estimated three first-difference models, with each dependent variable measuring in turn the delta (2014 *minus* 2009) of a given party's position on Immigration, EU One Voice, and EU Defense. We opted for a parsimonious model specification in order to avoid high degrees of collinearity that are likely to intertwine general measures of ideological positioning, party characteristics, and their position over the policy issues under analysis (see footnote 3). Our first-difference models attempt to explain changes in party positions as a function of changes in the party's position on European integration between 2009 and 2014, party size (measured as the increase/decrease in the share of seats in the European Parliament between 2009 and 2014), governing status in the respective country, long-term ideological affiliation with a party group in the EP, plus a dummy tapping the East/West

Table 4. The determinants of changes in party positions: first-difference estimation

	Immigration		EU One Voice		EU Defense	
	B	Significance	B	Significance	B	Significance
EU Integration good (Δ)	−0.09	.34	0.22^{*}	.01	0.31^{**}	.00
Party Size (Δ)	−0.03	.76	0.01	.91	0.02	.78
Governing Status	0.06	.58	0.07	.50	0.02	.90
West/East	0.07	.45	−0.11	.23	−0.14	.10
Party Family						
Communist/Extreme Left	0.04	.71	−0.20	.08	−0.07	.53
Greens	0.03	.81	−0.11	.35	−0.12	.29
Social Democrats	−0.03	.81	−0.16	.20	−0.26	.06
Christian Democrats/Conservatives	−0.03	.83	-0.28^{*}	.03	−0.03	.82
Liberals	−0.10	.40	−0.13	.27	−0.12	.32
Extreme Right	−0.03	.80	−0.12	.22	−0.14	.16
Constant	—	.46	—	.15	—	.20
R-squared		0.03		0.10		0.16
N		134		139		138

Note: Cell entries are standardized OLS coefficients (beta). $^{**}p < .01$, $^{*}p < .05$.

divide.[4] The key independent variable in the model is parties' overall position toward EU integration. The results of our models are presented in Table 4.

The regression analyses by and large confirm the results stemming from the descriptive analyses performed above. Both "EU One Voice" and "EU Defense Policy" are significantly linked with parties' changing attitudes toward EU Integration. Parties' structural characteristics (size, governing status) and party system differences (East/West) do not play any significant role. Against this background, we are inclined to provide a negative answer to the core underlying research question of our article. Parties do *not* seem to hold a genuine attitude toward EU foreign and security policy issues. Rather, these positions are due to their relatively more encompassing attitude toward EU integration. Additionally, yet only in the case of "EU One Voice," we do witness a significant effect of the party family variables, which is in line with the hypothesis spelt out by Adams, Haupt, and Stoll (2009): Christian-democratic and conservative parties, in respect to left-wing parties, are indeed more likely to respond to economic changes in a globalized world, as testified by the significant decline in their agreement with the statement "On foreign policy issues the EU should speak with one voice."

When it comes to the drivers of change on the immigration issue, none of the variables included in our model was able to provide a statistically significant explanation for policy position change. Overall, we are inclined to interpret this result as a confirmation of the notion that attitudes toward immigration are distinct from overall attitudes toward EU integration; they can rather be conceived as a by-product of parties' long-term ideological profile, as measured by their adherence to party groups in the EP.

Conclusions

The findings presented above can be summarized as follows. First of all, the descriptive analysis of the main party families' policy positions shows that the immigration

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[4]This dummy variable is coded as follows. Parties in original EU15 member states are coded "0" whereas parties in CEE member states (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia) are coded "1."

issue loads onto the classical left/right cleavage, while others—"EU One Voice" and "EU Defense," more linked to the pro-/anti-EU dimensions—are consistent with the already acknowledged GAL–TAN sociocultural cleavage (Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002). This conclusion is further confirmed by our first-difference models, which show that changes in the latter can be almost entirely accounted for by parties' changing attitudes toward EU integration.

Second, in terms of absolute change between 2009 and 2014, all parties reduce their agreement on the four issues that we took into consideration. Overall, this contributes to describe a European political landscape that became more critical toward the EU, more restrictive toward immigration, and more skeptical toward an EU-wide defense policy. In particular, and in line with the public debate where this has become one of the most heated topics and the rise of anti-immigration parties (van Spanje 2010), the stance on which political parties negatively changed their position the most is the one about making immigration in their own country more restrictive.

Third, concerning the direction of the change between 2009 and 2014, we witness an increasing polarization on immigration, while conversely there is a decreasing overall agreement with EU common defense policy. The parties' position on EU integration also decreases in general, but here we also find a different polarization on the two extremes of the GAL–TAN continuum. The extreme left becomes less Eurosceptic over time, while the extreme right exacerbates its position even more.

Needless to say, this constitutes just a first and preliminary step in this as of now uncharted territory. A series of additional elements should be taken into consideration by future research in the field. First of all, the left–right versus GAL–TAN explanation of some of the policy issues needs to be further refined. In particular, a precise indicator of both dimensions should be included, integrating information from, e.g., the Chapel Hill Expert Survey series (Bakker et al. 2015). Second, the operationalization of political families, relying on political parties' EP parliamentary group membership, leaves a high number of relevant parties in the "other" category. A more precise classification of political families[5] (Mair and Mudde 1998; Newton and van Deth 2005; Bale 2008) could better disentangle the puzzle we have just approached.

The results presented in this article can be further substantiated in different directions. By means of factor analysis, one could measure the extent to which EU foreign policy and security issues load onto the same factor. Analyses of VAA-generated data found that EU-related issues load onto the same factor, while immigration loads onto a distinct factor together with related items such as the acceptance of country's values and expansion of welfare to immigrants (Michel et al. 2019). These results could also be put in relationship with voter opinions to compare whether dimensionality in individual-level data matches the one stemming from party-level data. As of today, representative data covering these issues across the EU28 are lacking, but future research projects might allow to tackle the multidimensional connection between parties, voters, and the respective perceived dimensionality of the EU issue space. Inclusion of individual-level data can also shed light on the congruence between parties and citizens on such issues. Finally, individual-level voter data could also illustrate the perceived salience of EU foreign policy and security issues on behalf of voters. Unfortunately, our party dataset does not measure the salience assigned by parties to such issues. In this respect, taking into account Comparative Manifesto Project data could represent a fruitful avenue for further research.

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[5] For instance, including more categories than the main seven considered so far, for instance, adding ethnic and regional parties or differentiating between communist, left, social, and social democratic parties where we only have two categories.

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