

# Introduction

The 2014 European elections resulted in a clear surge of many Eurosceptic parties from all Europe's member states. Lately, many questions and hypotheses have been raised on how the Eurosceptic parties have been communicating on Europe at present and, specifically, how they communicated on it during the latest European elections. For the purpose of this dissertation, we have chosen to focus on two Eurosceptic parties: the Five Star Movement and UKIP for their innovative communicative approach and for their ideology, which seems fairly different from each other. Soon after the elections, the two parties set up an alliance group at the European Parliament, a choice that casts many doubts with regards to their compatibility at ideological level. Therefore, the main aim of this work will attempt to investigate and show whether their alliance at European level was based on a strategic objective and not on a similar ideology. This has been answered by focusing on how the two Eurosceptic parties communicated on Europe before, during and after the 2014 European elections.

We have conducted a comparative analysis, which has been mainly carried out with a discourse analysis approach. However, before analysing in detail the two parties' discourse, the introductory part will consist of a chapter describing the background and context in which the 2014 European elections were held and a second chapter outlining the two parties' history, ideology and communicative approach. This will help draw a clearer picture of the overall context on which the core of this work is based. We will then go into the body of this work and carry out a thorough analysis of the two parties' speeches and/or written posts and both online and offline communication campaigns in order to understand and compare their views on Europe before, during, and after the elections, as well as the arguments they used to justify to their electors their European alliance. A final part will aim to analyse how the two parties' national members and the public opinion received their alliance in the European Parliament as well as the impact on their electorate with regards to the ideological views the two parties have always had on Europe.

The methodology adopted is discourse analysis: a method described by Van Dijk (1995), that analyses written, vocal or any communicative event through various levels or dimensions of discourse in order to explore the relation between discourse (choice of lexicon, syntax etc.) and the ideological message that is transmitted to the audience. Giving more importance to an in-depth and thorough analysis and given

that discourse analysis is by definition a qualitative methodology, we have only gathered a small number of speeches and blog posts and analysed them in depth by emphasizing and highlighting all the ideological, linguistic and emotive features of the two parties' discourses. Specifically, the data analysed have been selected among different speeches and online posts of the two parties following the selection criteria relevant to our research question and specifically from different phases (such as before, during and after the 2014 European Parliament elections). This division of the overall analysis in three different periods has helped obtain a detailed and clear picture of the evolution of the ideological discourse on Europe of the two parties and their strategic alliance at European level: through this in-depth investigation, we have been presented with a clearer evolution of the two parties' discourses on Europe by having an understanding of how far their ideologies go and, thus, draw our conclusions.

By applying a qualitative method, we have focused on an investigation that makes use of an in-depth linguistic analysis of the two parties' political discourse; however, due to the limited scope of this work, we were not able to collect and analyse a larger number of speeches and/or written posts, which would have strengthened the answers to our research question and, thus, the patterns found through this analysis. This work has, in fact, relied on an analysis of a number of speeches that go from two to four per phase (one to two speeches per party for each period) and, therefore, the results obtained cannot be considered generalizable. Given that this work has been conducted as part of an MA dissertation, it had to comply with various limitations, one of which being word count. Had we not been subjected to such constraints, we would have enriched and enhanced our investigation by collecting a larger number of speeches and written posts so as to use both qualitative and quantitative methods and, thus, have stronger and more reliable evidence in response to the research question. What is more, as for the final part dedicated to the reaction of the two parties' members and electorate towards the sealing of the two parties' alliance, it would have been interesting, if more time had been granted for the scope of this work, to conduct interviews with a small number of voters in order to explore and describe in more detail the tangible and real reactions they might have had to this unexpected coalition.