RESEARCH ARTICLE

POPULISM AND EUROSCEPTICISM IN PODEMOS AND IN THE FIVE STAR MOVEMENT
Faraway, so close?

Marco Damiani
University of Perugia

Lorenzo Viviani
University of Pisa

Abstract. Since the Nineties the crisis of traditional political families has become particularly intense in the democracies of Southern Europe, with an increase in electoral volatility, the contraction of party member-ship, and crises of confidence as well as of electoral consensus. In these democracies, alongside the tradi-tional parties of the twentieth century, a generation of new political parties was born that reject the right/left division, politicizing a new cleavage between the low and the high of society, or – better – be-tween the people and the elite. In Spain and Italy, the anti-political-establishment supply side is provided expecially by two new movement-parties, Podemos and the Five Star Movement. This article focuses on the comparison between these two new political parties, highlighting differences and analogies in terms of policy, identity, and organization. The research hypothesis developed in this paper refers to the different form and identity in which populism is expressed in the two national cases. From the methodological point of view, the comparison between the two parties will be conducted through the analysis of the text of the electoral programs of the two different political organizations in the European elections in the period run-ning from 2014 to 2017.

Keywords: Podemos, Movimento 5 stelle, New Parties, Civic Populism, Left Populism

Corresponding Authors: Marco Damiani, email: marco.damiani@unipg.it; Lorenzo Viviani, email: Loren-zo.viviani@unipi.it

1. Introduction

Populism is a chameleonic phenomenon capable of hybridising itself with existing models of political organisation and of setting itself up as the basis for new parties' politicisation processes (Taggart 2000; Mudde 2007; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017). While considering the different shapes that populism can take, we must consider the possible components that constitute the phenomenon and the different structures of political and institutional opportunities in which populist parties arise (Aslanidis 2017). In addition, when referring to a vision of populism as a strategy of politicisation of the resentment towards the establishment, the different modes used by political entrepreneurs to politically activate the cleavage between the people and the élite must be assessed (Moffitt 2016; Moffitt and Tormey 2013; Pappas 2014). As a result, it is hence crucial to identify the phases that build and trigger the politicisation of the cleavage between the people and the establishment and how this cleavage is activated in specific national contexts in relationship to the rapport between "new parties" and the mainstream political actors (Pappas 2012). After the failure of traditional politics to represent comes a construction and a narration of the recession from the populist political entrepreneurs that link that failure to the contrast between people and élite, exploiting the media to foster a continuous representation of the state of crisis (Moffitt and Tormey 2013; Moffitt 2016; Rooduijn, van der Brug and de Lange 2016). Hence, the problem is not the comparison of an ideal-typical populism paradigm to assess if and how much the different parties fit into that pattern, nor is it to establish a scale of grades of populism. The aim of this work is to identify the nature of the two parties of recent origin, Podemos and Movimento 5 stelle (M5S) (in English: Five Star Movement) (M5S). Both were founded after the *Great recession* began in 2008, and although different from the new right-wing populist parties, they represent two different modes of politicisation of the resentment towards the traditional political class in the evolution of southern European democracies (Morlino 1998; Kriesi and Pappas 2015; Morlino and Raniolo 2017). In the context of a growing interest of the literature to consider diverging aspects and possible similarities between these two parties, it is crucial to assess whether the theme of populism for these two parties actually represents a rhetorical tool, a political strategy, or if it is just the cornerstone of their ideology. In this sense, this analysis will focus on the assessment of the contents of the electoral programmes of both parties from the moment of their birth until 2017. To achieve this goal, we use a specific software, T-LAB, designed for analysing and processing text data. In the following pages, we will explain in detail the operations carried out. The objective of this work is to study which kind of "representation" emerges from the bottom-up participatory processes that form the basis of the programmes of Podemos and the M5S. The hypothesis proposed in this paper is that notwithstanding common references to participatory and deliberative democratic practices, the use of online platforms for building programmes, an anti-establishment profile, an initial aversion to

building alliances with other political actors, the emerging euro-sceptical directions in a pro-sovereignty framework, and a continuous appeal to the people against the élite, the two parties display very different identity characteristics and political agendas. To verify this statement, in this work, we analyse both parties' "election manifestos" presented in the 2014 European elections and all those having been presented in the national elections from the foundation dates of Podemos and M5S until 2018 (for Italy: 2013 and 2018, respectively; for Spain: 2015 and 2016). In addition to underlining the importance of some subjects and the way they are dealt with in terms of public representation (Budge *et al.* 2012; Volkens *et al.* 2013; Harmel *et al.* 2018), this material allows us to identify if a populist nature defines the political agendas built from the bottom through (diverse) forms of participation and deliberation and in what terms it is possible to compare such populist variations in the two political organisations. Their recent foundation and the short timeframe in which their programmes were drafted, in combination with the programme-building modes they used, allow us to understand the importance of different topics and their connection and profiles in a context of *statu nascenti* that has therefore a much more marked "self-representation" character than the programmatic documents typical of the mainstream parties. In this sense, we will propose two specific interpretations of populism (left populism and civic populism) that will allow us to differentiate between them. This distinction will be directly connected to the ways that these two parties address in their programmes the issues of the economy and of sovereignty regarding the European Union.

2. A theoretical framework for the analysis of populism in Europe

Research on populism in European democracies arose in connection with the emergence new radical right parties and in the framework of a "silent counter-revolution" in relation to the modernisation processes in Western countries (Betz 1994; Eatwell 2003; Ignazi 2003; Mudde 2016). With the progressive rise of a new social cleavage relative to the effects of the process of globalisation of the 2000s (Kriesi *et al.* 2006, 2008, 2012), the populist parties' scenario becomes broader and more controversial. Following the perspective proposed by Mény and Surel (2002), the development of populism requires the presence of a structure of political opportunities linked to the crisis of the political intermediation structures, to the personalisation of power and the growing role of the media in political life. In general, the presence of an economic, political, social, and cultural "crisis" forms the foundation of populism as a contemporary phenomenon (Taggart 2002). Although there are different perspectives on the possibility that populism is also activated without a crisis, it is nevertheless possible to rebuild the present phase as a change in the shapes and actors of politics following the post-materialist revolution of the 1960s and 1970s and the silent counter-revolution of the

1980s and 1990s (Morlino and Raniolo 2017; Bornschier 2010). In particular, the conditions for radical political change in Western democracies present a series of variables that constitute the social, political and the systemic conditions, such as the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the shift from mass democracies to audience democracies, mistrust in the traditional forms of mediation, mobilisation and political participation, and cases of corruption. In addition to these processes that progressively mark the crisis of the political representation in European liberal democracies, we find an economic and financial crisis on a global scale beginning in 2008 together with a transformation in the traditional social basis of nineteenth-century democracies.

If in the case of radical right populism, the recovery of sovereignty happens in the name of a participation mainly associated with the relationship with a leader who delegates choices through a disintermediation placed in the groove of plebiscitary democracy, then in the Podemos and M5S cases, the participation took on a characterising role compared to the shape taken on by the party itself (Biorcio 2015; Tronconi 2015; Tormey and Feenstra 2015). In the framework of a strong personalisation of the top leadership, both in the particular case of the M5S leadership (Di Maio, the political leader; Grillo the founder and spokesperson; Casaleggio, the founder and ideologue) and in the case of Iglesias in Podemos, both parties emphasised the perspective of participatory democracy and deliberative democracy, using tools offered by the internet to present their main proposals regarding the internal life of the political organisations, their elaboration of the agenda and their choice of candidates, as well as concerning the democratisation of the institutions with the involvement of citizens in relevant decisions, through referenda, town meetings and online *meet-ups*.

With the economic and financial crisis of 2008 and after the progressive decay of European social democracies, populism developed also with a different connotation compared to that of traditional right parties, in particular due to the emergence of the "winners *vs* losers" cleavage of globalisation (Kriesi *et al.* 2012) that contributed to redefining the social geography of traditional constituencies. Populism not only combines with the recall to sovereignism of an imagined national community that assumes the nature of a heartland; it is also activated regarding a perceived decay of the middle class in the form of anxiety over the loss of status due to crisis in the welfare systems. Populism becomes a political landscape also in the area of the new left, with the emergence of populist socialist parties, a subtype of socialist parties with a marked opposition to the establishment, and of social populist parties, "anti-party parties", with a scarce ideological coherence in which elements of the extreme left and extreme right can coexist, with organisations weakly institutionalised and with recourse to personalised leaderships (March and Mudde 2005; Mudd 2007; March,n2011; Damiani 2016; Viviani 2017).

The problem, therefore, is not to compare an ideal typical paradigm of populism and verify if and how much the different parties conform to it, nor is the issue to operate a grading of populism; rather, the problem is to identify the nature of these parties re-

garding the whole complex of their political identity in relation to the agendas that they offer. It will then be possible to verify whether the theme of populism is actually a rhetorical instrument, a political strategy or instead constitutes the core business of the parties. In this sense, one of the main analytical strategies for a comparison between populist parties and leaders started from the assessment of the contents of the political documents of each party, from the Statutes to the election manifestos and press releases, in addition to the written papers and leaders' speeches (Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011; Pauwels 2011). One must consider – without reducing populism to a merely communicative phenomenon and considering it as an "umbrella concept", the expression of a mere rhetorical policy – the key role played by the people's power in the political offer of the different parties when challenging the legitimisation of the mainstream political class in various national contexts (Abt and Rummens 2007, 407).

2.1. Podemos and M5S: left populism and civic populism in Southern democracies

In the Podemos and M5S cases, we face a new phase in the development of populism in the particular context of the societies and democracies of southern European countries. For these two parties, if on the one hand they differentiate themselves from the radical right populism, then on the other hand, they do not make up a homogeneous political family, beginning with the different social constituencies that compose their electorate (Segatti and Capuzzi 2016). The populism of these two political subjects can be linked to the effects of the 2008 crisis, to the process of transformation of political representation and to the formation of transversal social cleavages compared to traditional class affiliations, in particular regarding the cleavage of the younger generations (Kriesi and Pappas 2015; Revelli 2017; Morlino and Raniolo 2017). However, there are relevant differences between the anti-establishment political groups born in Spain and Italy following the Great Recession, which are ascribable to the evolving political cultures and political systems in these two countries.

Italian populism has two different phases. The first followed the collapse of the traditional party system in 1992-1993 and witnessed the birth of parties with a strongly personalised leadership, such as Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia and Umberto Bossi's Lega Nord, as well as l'Italia dei valori founded by the former magistrate Antonio Di Pietro (Tarchi 2015). The second phase is the one that we consider to be the most recent form of European populism: the birth of M5S. Notwithstanding its recent establishment, the M5S records important transformations in its programmatic profile and organisational model. The M5S was not born from a void left by a specific traditional party, but from a dissatisfaction with the whole political class; it grew in the context of Monti's technical government of 2011, the great coalition between the mainstream parties, the electoral failure of the centre-right and the internal uncertainties and ten-

sions of the Partito Democratico. M5S became the pre-eminent party in the 2013 elections, with 25.6% of the vote. The M5S was formally established in 2009, although its genesis derives from the activism of some civic lists close to the blog of Beppe Grillo, in particular following the initiatives of the V-Day of 2007 and 2008, until its participation in some municipal elections, including those of the municipality of Parma with the victory of Mayor Pizzarotti in 2012. Since the *statu nascenti* phase of the civic movement, the populist characterisation of M5S derives mainly from its anti-casta appeal, the mobilisations against the cost of politics, and the corruption and the squandering that characterised the Italian political system, in addition to requests for direct democracy through referenda, participatory and deliberative democracy instruments and the claim to recovering the average citizen's sovereignty ("one is worth one") compared to the politics of the "Palace" (Biorcio and Natale 2013; Tarchi 2014; Bordignon and Caccarini 2015; Tronconi 2015). If the M5S appears among all the populist parties as the one with the highest "purity" (Tarchi 2014, 2015), there are also some assessments that underscore its distinctive characteristics in connection to its emphasis on participatory and deliberative democratic mechanisms and on very specific programmatic issues (Biorcio and Natale 2013; Conti and Memoli 2015). In the original profile of the M5S, there was an environmentalist position, the "happy degrowth", the defence of "common goods" and a political programmatic identity that referred to the Florence Charter of 2009, from which originated the five stars that give the movement its name: public water, sustainable mobility, sustainable development, connectivity, and environmentalism. The movement was born in the field of environmentalism and around local civic experiences, shaping itself as a party linked to an evolution of the post-materialistic left, and its subsequent development connotes its "catch all anti-party party" and "post-modern and post ideological (non)party" nature (Bordignon and Ceccarini 2015, 30; Ceccarini and Bordignon 2016). The M5S assumes a double reality confirmed by the heterogeneity of its electorate, where electors from right, centre and left merge, united by a common distrust of traditional parties and including some of the losers to globalisation: the youngsters. It is an electorate that through time mutates its capability to attract electoral flows from other parties, at the beginning from the centre-left and later from the centre-right, in addition to abstentions (Corbetta and Gualmini 2013; Segatti and Capuzzi 2016; Passarelli and Tuorto 2016): a double-faced party that allows it to maintain the ability to attract different constituencies. On the one hand, there is the militant component of the meet-ups and of the local base that characterises the party as a movement-party, with continuous assembly participation possible owing to the "net" and in particular with the elaboration of its agenda through the Rousseau internet platform. On the other hand, there is the populist party of the boss, which controls the parliamentary group and the elected members in the administrations, holds the trademark of the symbol and renders the cleavage with the political establishment politically active. In this sense, it is Grillo's leadership that functions as a unifier through the populist discourse, in order not to scatter the "catch all" poten-

tial and prevent tensions in the programmatic choices divided within a weakly institutionalised party with a lack of leadership on the party on the ground.

The political, economic and cultural conditions of Spain differ from the Italian ones, in particular because the Spanish political system became democratic after the end of the Franco regime with the Constitution of 1978. Despite the presence of an unfavourable economic and social trend that is characterised, just as in other European societies and democracies, by unemployment, social inequalities, the effects of globalisation, immigration and terrorism, Spain represents an exception: with the partial exception of the recent birth of the small radical right (not Francoist) party Vox, it never developed a true, new right populism comparable to that of other European states. This fact is due both to the historical heritage of Francoism and the role of the different political actors and social movements that made the protest politically active (González-Enríquez 2017).

The birth and development of Podemos must be analysed in relation to the structure of the political opportunities, which are linked in particular to the 2008 Great Recession's effects in Spain, to the social crisis that began in the country and to the subsequent birth of the 15 M Movement (*Indignados*: the anti-austerity movement), starting in 2011, against the austerity adopted by Zapatero's and later Rajoy's governments. The framework within which Podemos was born was also linked to the crisis of Spanish democracy, following corruption phenomena in mainstream politics, the crisis of the social state and of the "politica cupular", that is, the formation of a caste of political professionals (Franzé 2017: 225; Rye 2016; Zarzalejos 2016). Generally, the emergence of new parties in Spain, from Ciudadanos to Podemos, was fostered by the end of the historical bipolar system between PP and PSOE, by the participative resources made available by the new media and by the limitations of a protest grounded only on the dimension of the movement external to the institutions (Feenstra, Tormey, Casero-Ripollés and Keane 2017). In particular, Podemos arose claiming its unrelatedness to the traditional logic of the political conflict, substituting the conflict between "top" and "bottom", élite and people, for the classical left/right cleavage. Podemos was born with the connotation of a post-ideological party with a policy of radical opposition to the cartel parties, the "casta's parties", to both the PSOE and the PP. Despite refusing the definition of radical left party, Podemos, similar to Syriza in Greece, is an anti-establishment party embodying the new form of populism of the new left (March 2011; 2017; March and Keith 2016). In this aspect, Podemos, like the M5S in its first phase, did not want to compete in the radical left area as a substitute for Izquierda Unida (IU); instead, it proposed the substitution of the whole political class, giving birth to a new "pact" of representation with the Spanish citizens. The perspective of the party is located in a process of transformation of the European new left, which is affected by the academic background of its leadership from Monedero to Errejon and Iglesias and by the acquaintance with Venezuelan chavism and Laclau's populism. In this sense,

populism is not conceived as a degenerative phenomenon of politics, but the building of a new hegemony in a context of crisis of the traditional forms of politics established as a post-Marxist construction of popular identities based on "chains of equivalently unfulfilled requests" (Laclau 2008: 169). The self-representation of the party aims at developing a political-electoral offer, an identity profile emerging in the form of *statu nascenti* in the post-2008 social movements, with particular attention to building a potentially majoritarian people where social groups struck by the crisis and disappointed by traditional politics are present (Rodríguez-Aguilera del Prat 2015; Ramiro 2016; Ramiro and Gomez 2017).

At the same time, the anti-establishment party nature of Podemos differs from that of the M5S in both the moment of its genesis and the type of political entrepreneurs at its basis, in addition to the political and programmatic strategies used. The M5S achieved a large electoral result in the 2013 elections in Italy and later in 2018 by gaining control of the government with 32% of the votes, being the most voted party; by contrast, Podemos, as much as it is politically and electorally relevant, did not surpass the voting levels of the PSOE either in the 2015 or 2016 elections. In this sense, the four different phases identified by Franzé (2017) from its birth in the European elections of 2014 (8%), to the two political competitions of 2015 (20.7%) and of 2016 (21.15%, together with Izquierda Unida IU in Unidos Podemos) and to the last congress in Vistalegre of 2017, show how an "antagonism policy" later transformed itself into an electoral "competition policy". In fact, unlike the M5S, the evolution of Podemos confirms a more marked social and new left characterisation in its policy programme, in addition to a strategic design that progressively accepted the possibility of alliances with other political groups (IU in the 2016 elections) and developed a focus towards the socialist area (Franzé 2017). In the case of Podemos, we thus face the perspective of a new party where the active and militant component of the civic assemblies introduced an element of horizontality to its politics in the programmatic production and in the selection of its leadership; however, at the same time, the party follows a centralised vision and exhibits strong personalisation of the leadership, both elements of Laclau's populist theory (2008). Hence, Podemos moves on the explicit indication of its leader Iglesias, in the field of creation of a new cultural and political hegemony capable of building a new identity and social reference (Iglesias 2015), refusing to be linked to any traditional political family (*idem*: 15-16*).* Moreover, Podemos keeps the anti-establishment cleavage politically active by entrusting its leader with the construction of a not pre-existing people in its dimension of social class, but one that he himself shapes, starting from conditions of distrust, disillusion or alienation of the individuals towards politics (Moffitt 2016; Viviani 2017).

Regarding the nature of Podemos and M5S from a party model point of view, they both use self-representation (and the name) of "movement" instead of "party", because within the factionalism of the term "party", there is a revolt against the intermediate bodies that partition the representation, called instead a representation of a

"whole" through the formulations "top against bottom" and "citizens against casta". At the end of the era of ideologies, the cartel and post-democratic collusion would lead the social constituencies of the mainstream parties to assume the feature of a "clientele", where the logic of exchange cannot attribute a foundation of legitimisation of the political decision, biased by a delegation intent on the pursuit of interests against the common good of the citizens. In this sense, both Podemos and M5S can be linked, on the one hand, to the theme of anti-political establishment parties and, on the other hand, to the type of movement parties. The characterisation of movement parties offers the perspective of a different institutionalisation in opposition to the traditional parties, in particular in the origin and the subsequent connection with social movements, as in the introduction of participatory and deliberative practices in a repertoire of action that alternates conventional and non-conventional forms of political action (Gunther and Diamond 2003; Kitschelt 2006; Schwartz 2016). In addition, there is a dimension of populist protest that differentiates them from the traditional anti-system parties (Sartori 1976; Capoccia 2002), since the radical component diverges from that of the extremist parties, starting from the absence of a critique of democracy as a political system and from the absence of strategies of violent action (Morlino and Raniolo 2017).

If Podemos exhibits traits of a populist party of the radical left that activates Laclau's perspective within the Spanish political system, at the same time, the M5S seems to be interpretable as the counter-democracy of Rosanvallon (2009 and 2012), conceived in its "pure" meaning where the pathological aspects attributed to democracy are exasperated, referring to the powers of surveillance and interdiction and to the capability to express judgement on the leadership's behaviour. In this case, a "civic populism" is shaped, meaning a particular vision of popular sovereignty in which the people do not express themselves through a delegate representation but exert their own power directly in the institutions, taking the role of "censor" of the institutions and making civicism an ideology of juxtaposition to the political brokerage and the conception of "people". If what makes a common core to all the manifestations of populism is the appeal to the people (Mudde 2004; Canovan 2005), it is however relevant to verify if and how much the reference is present in the parties' agendas, what meaning the concept of people takes on and what the correlations are that specify its political appeal. On the one hand, populism exalts the virtues of the people against the political (and not only) élite, accused of putting their self-reproduction before the common interests of the community. On the other hand, the people assume a functional connotation towards the type of reference constituency (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008). In light of what has been discussed so far, it should be assessed if the cleavage between people and élite exists in the parties' agendas and at the same time if it is able to confirm or reject the hypothesis that Podemos is a populist radical left party in opposition to the

neo-liberal European and national policies whilst the M5S is a populist party with an evident anti-establishment programme.

3. The election manifestos: The representation of the party by the militant membership

The M5S and Podemos' manifestos have been elaborated through a comparative procedure, which includes collaborative writing involving grassroots militants in decision-making. As a first step, we must take into account the work done by the body charged with providing a first draft of the programme, in each political organisation. At this stage, this body edits a first draft, divided into specific thematic areas (in this respect, while the thematic areas of M5S are predefined and not negotiable, in Podemos' case, these are open and may be amended, removed or added by those who join the on-line debate). Following this stage, the members of the on-line platform of the respective political group (rousseau.movimento5stelle.it and podemos.info) are responsible for fully participating in the review and development process of every single topic, through a virtual debate and an online voting system, based on the majority rule. In both cases, the final version of the programme is provided by the combined provisions of the internal and external workings of each political group.

Starting with the electoral manifestos, all the information in our possession was processed in T-Lab. As we show below, some expressions that make it possible to compare these two different case studies, as well as those marking their substantial differences.

3.1. Euroscepticism and sovereignism

The European Union represents one of the most frequent topics in the election manifestos of the two parties, and even where explicit reference is not made to these words, the context within which proposals for *policies* are made takes into account the importance of the supranational dimension of governance (see Fig. 1 in the Appendix). The European Union distinguishes itself as an *ideological addendum* of populism (Szczerbiak and Taggart 2008; Hartleb 2015), but particularly in the case of Podemos, this arises not so much as a cultural claim for sovereignty typical of the new populist right, but as the people as a national community who claim social rights and opposition to the austerity policies in the name of a social alternative to the present European model (Harmsen 2010). In this sense, "sovereignism" and the constant call to the "nation" and to the "country" in the political discourse of Podemos recover from the left a topic that is foreign to the PSOE and at the same time to that of the new European right parties. It is precisely from the austerity policies following the *Great Recession* in 2008 that the development of an anti-European trend is born, a theme that was previ-

ously hardly made political by the mainstream parties (Gómez-Reino, Llamazares and Ramiro 2008). The relationship in Italy with the subject of the European Union is completely different as a political expression of Euroscepticism on behalf of the centre-right and right-wing parties that emerged at the very beginning of the millennium, starting with Lega Nord (Ruzza and Fella 2009).

Regarding the M5S, from the terms co-related to "European Union", a programme is upheld in which three arguments merge together that are transversal to the traditional left/right balance of politics: protest against the Euro monetary system; "sovereignism" as a means of safeguarding national interests; and the issue of democratising the EU. The main word returned by "European Union" is "moneta" (currency), the "euro", a central topic in the election manifestos as well as in the political discourse of M5S and its leader. Moneta, along with the word economy, in the programmes for both the national and European elections, emphasises the call for monetary and economic "sovereignism" regarding the ties imposed by the European Union. In particular, the restoration of national autonomy in political decision-making and the possibility of exiting the single European currency clearly emerge in the following manifestos' outlines: "It is a priority to engage in a public debate on an international level on the future of the European Union and on the costs of the imbalances caused by the introduction of the single currency as an economic commitment among the member States[1]"; "The Italian situation, and in general that of all the southern European countries within the Eurozone, is definitely unsustainable. We are victims of a single currency that merely represents the obligation of fixed exchange rates between economies that are too different from each other. After almost twenty years of the euro, we are very far from representing an optimal currency area[2]".

More generally, it is the system of the European Union as a supranational institution that appears subject to criticism, with its frequent association with the terms *Italia, paese* (country), and a return to the theme of recovering political sovereignty in order to protect the *cittadini* (citizens) and the single *Stati* (States). The European Union is one of the symbols of populist discourse because of its "questioning" nature and the presence of non-majoritarian institutions that avoid citizens' accountability. Regarding the recovery of sovereignty for the citizens of the single States, the European Union represents an obstacle, not only for its policies but for its representing the juxtaposition between the people defrauded of its power and the élite (bureaucratic, technocratic and political) that does not operate with citizens' interests in mind. In addition, if the critique of the European Union is oriented towards the single currency, recalling the word "economy" highlights an aspect of the party's euro-scepticism that recovers the initial party's social vocation of the environmentalist new left, joining programmatic claims

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[1] 2014 Political elections program.
[2] 2018 Political elections program.

directed to the revision of the treaties with the claim of policies linked to post-materialistic environmentalism: "We want clear aims: to fight against unemployment, poverty and inequality[3]"; "M5S will contrast all the treaties the European Union is negotiating in the world (such as the TTIP and CETA) which put at risk workers' rights, social rights the conservation of the environment, of biodiversity and territorial resources. We believe that the latter are superordinate with respect to commercial and financial relationships[4]".

Lastly, in the correlations between the European Union and other significant terms runs the central theme of populism, the call for *riduzione dei costi della politica* (reduction of the costs of politics), and with that, the presence – both in the national and European election manifestos – of themes regarding opposition to the caste of professional politicians and of the recovery of power for the citizens through a democratisation of the institutions. In this respect, a type of populism is confirmed in M5S that recalls the modalities of taking its own characteristics to the extreme in Rosanvallon's counter-democracy: "We need more transparency in the EU's decisional process, firstly regarding the Council, and a redistribution of power among the institutions: the European Parliament, the only EU institution to be democratically elected, is still too marginal in decisional procedures[5]"; "Democracy has become the object of treatise of financial organizations. If we become aware of the fact that the game is no longer played between the member States and European institutions, but between States and international financial organizations – ESM and IMF – it becomes clear that the approach of an alternative politics from a technical point of view must start from a greater awareness of the State's sovereignty[6]".

Regarding Podemos, the European Union loses its centrality in comparison with the currency as the main key to interpreting Eurosceptic politics, while the words that appear most directly associated with it are references to sovereignty as the recovery of political space and policies of the member countries. In this sense *pais, territorio, Estado* and *España* (country, territory, State and Spain) recur frequently, indicating the refusal of austerity policies and showing similarities with the mobilisation against European politics expressed by M5S. By observing the correlation among terms in the sections of the election manifestos where the European Union is at the centre of discussion, it is possible to note that it is in the programme for national elections that reference is made most directly to an alternative model of Europe.

With reference to the European elections Podemos proposes, however, the manifesto is based more on themes relative to *delito fiscal*, *ayudas pùblicas*, *economia* and *cobertura sanitaria* (fiscal crimes, public aid, economy and health coverage), with a

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[3] *Ibidem.*

[4] *Ibidem.*

[5] *Ibidem.*

[6] 2018 Political elections program.

wider series of policies than M5S. The European Union is therefore the basis of democracy and a protest against the present model of integration, but the key to interpretation appears to be that of radical European left, or "Altra Europa", a call for social policies in opposition to the neo-liberal perspective adopted by the European Union. This correlation does not distinguish itself from the particular form of "sovereignism" and the call to the *patria* adopted by Podemos but rather is a post-socialist and post-communist interpretation, which joins a radical socio-economic programme for the protection of citizens at the national level.

Finally, there is a similarity between Podemos and M5S regarding making the European Union more democratic, by recovering sovereignty of the States and their citizens regarding European institutions. In this case the reference emerges by looking at the correlation in election manifestos for the national and European elections with issues expressing territorial context, in particular paìs and Estado (country and State), and con with the word tratado (treaty), even although not directly to terms such as democracia or participaciónn (democracy or participation): "Promotion of a reform of the European institutions that democratizes political and economic decision-making in the eurozone[7]"; "We will promote a reform of the European institutions that democratizes political and economic decision-making in the eurozone. The economic government of the Eurozone - the Eurogroup - is an entity that is not obliged to report to any institution directly elected by citizens, not even to the European Parliament, so we will support the creation of a parliamentary chamber of the eurozone, formed by representatives of the different national parliaments according to population and territorial criteria and, unlike the European Parliament, with true legislative capacity and political control[8]".

4. Concluding remarks

Based on the results of our work, we may highlight a profound difference between the political groups examined and the different types of populism embraced by them. Indeed, according to the analysis of the respective election programmes, the M5S may be defined as a movement-party capable of promoting a specific form of "civic populism", one particularly focused on those issues that characterise its five stars (public water, sustainable transport, sustainable development, right to internet access, and environmentalism). Podemos, on the other hand, is a political force able to put in place a sort of "left-wing populism" which is very close to Laclau's theory, for the purpose of creating a baseline concept of people, different and more complex than the traditional social class as understood from a Marxist perspective.

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[7] 2016 Political elections program.
[8] *Ibidem.*

In the face of remarkable similarities, which allow us to compare certain key issues in the respective manifestos (first we may recall the issues relating to financial problems and the difficulties linked to the crisis of the *Great Recession*), the M5S and Podemos present certain divisive elements in their election manifestos. They are both identified as anti-establishment and anti-casta political parties, critical of those right-wing and left-wing governments that have ruled European countries in the second half of the 20th century. They both criticise the founding treaties of the EU, demanding a greater political content in the EU's founding contract. They both have a personalised leadership at the top and a high level of bottom-up political participation[9]. Nevertheless, the difference between these two political actors is considerable. Our work shows that Beppe Grillo's movement gives top priority to the civic values tied to its identity, while Podemos often deals with traditional leftist themes, especially issues connected to work. Both political actors have a lowest common denominator, determined by their natural populist features. Nevertheless, the two movement-parties are profoundly different from each other, since they represent different types of populism and different political sensibilities with regard to their manifestos.

In conclusion, we can argue that, when analysing populism from a political viewpoint, two different cases emerge, which are characterised not only by the national context variables but also by populism's ability to merge with different political cultural perspectives. Hence, once again, it seems that populism is a prism, whose faces have "different colours", both in relation to the people to which an appeal is made and to the politicisation strategies of the opposition to the elite.

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[9] While in the M5S the directism granted by online platforms prevails, in Podemos the participatory and deliberative dimension appeals to open civic communities.

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Appendix

FIG. 1 Figure 1. Word association with the terms "*Unione europea*" and "*Unión europea*"

1.1.   Five Star Movement; 1.2. Podemos
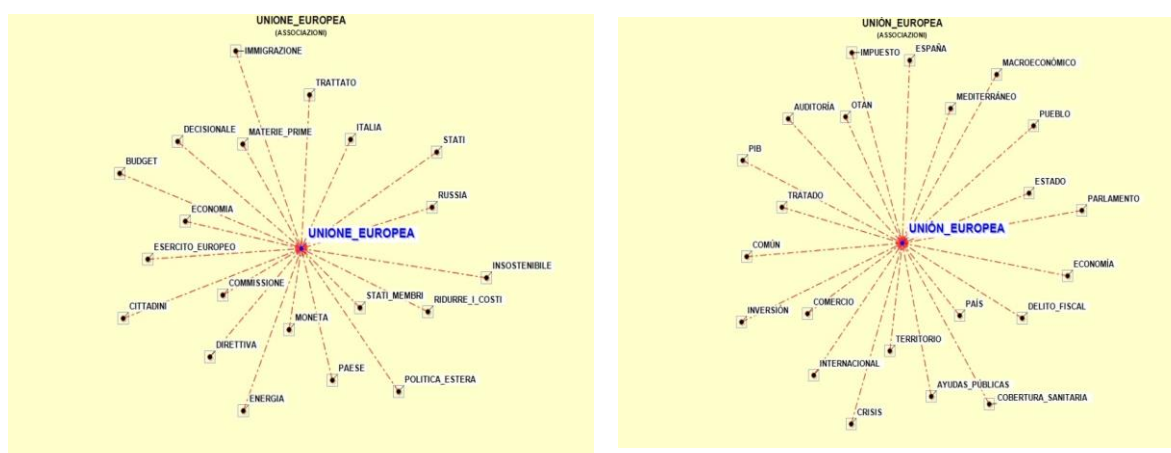
Source: our processing. Data processed with T-Lab

AUTHORS' INFORMATION:

Marco Damiani is Assistant Professor in Political Sociology at the Department of Political Science of the University of Perugia. He is currently studying the European political parties through a comparative approach. In particular, his research deals with the Left and the radical Left parties in Western Europe and the European populist parties. The most recent publications include: *The European Radical Left. Transformation and Political Changement*, in J. Ibrahim and J.M. Roberts (eds.), in *Contemporary Left-Wing Activism, Vol. I* (Routledge, 2019); *Radical Left-wing Populism and Democracy in Europe*, in C. de la Torre (eds.), *Global Populism* (Routledge, 2018); *La sinistra radicale in Europa. Italia, Spagna, Francia, Germania* (Donzelli, 2016). *From the Communist Party to the Front de gauche. The French radical left from 1989 to 2014* (with M. De Luca), in «Communist and Post-Communist studies» (2016); *New Left in the European Democracies: The case of German Radical Left* (with L. Viviani), in «Partecipazione e conflitto» (2015).

Lorenzo Viviani is an Associate Professor in Political Sociology at the Department of Political Science, University of Pisa, Italy. He is the Secretary of the Political Sociology Section of AIS (Italian Sociological Association). His research focusses on the sociology of political parties, political leadership, democracy and populism. Amongst his recent publications on the topic of populism are: *Sacralizzazione del popolo e politica della disintermediazione. La sfida populista alla liberal-democrazia,* in Quaderni di Teoria Sociale QTS, Morlacchi, n.2/2018; *Crisi della rappresentanza politica e trasformazioni della democrazia: la sfida del populismo*, in D'Alessandro L. e Montanari A. (a cura di), *Diseguaglianze e Crisi della Fiducia. Diritto, Politica e Democrazia nella Società Contemporanea*, Franco Angeli, Milano, Collana Sociologia Politica; *A Political Sociology of Populism and Leadership*, in SMP Società Mutamento Politica, vol. 8, n. 15/2017; *Populismo, partiti e qualità della politica*, in *Qualità della vita e trasformazioni sociali*, Carocci, Roma, 2017; *Dai partiti della New Politics ai partiti anti-establishment: le nuove forme della politica radicale in Europa*, in "Rivista di Politica", n. 2/2017; *New Cleavage in Old Europe: Toward a Political Sociology Populism,* in F. Saccà (ed), *Globalization and New Socio-Political Trends*, Roma, Eurilink, 2016; *Sociologia dei partiti. Leader e organizzazioni politiche nelle società contemporanee*, Roma, Carocci, 2015.