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**The challenge to traditional party families in
Southern Europe:
the cases of Podemos, SYRIZA and the Five
Stars Movement**

Candidate:

Davide Vittori

Supervisor:

Professor Leonardo Morlino



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Abbreviation

(P)RRP – (Populist) Radical Right Party
15-M – 15 March Movement
ACE – Asamblea Ciudadana Estatal (State’s Citizens Assembly)
ALDE – Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
AN – Alleanza Nazionale (National Alliance)
ANEL – Anexartitoi Ellines (Independent Greeks)
AP – Alianza Popular (Popular Alliance)
C’s – Ciudadanos (Citizens)
CC – Central Committee
CC.AA. – Comunidades Autonomas (Autonomous Communities)
CCE – Consejo Ciudadano Estatal (State’s Citizens Council)
CQP – Claro Que Podemos (For Sure We Can)
DC – Democrazia Crisitiana (Christian Democracy)
DIMAR – Dimokratiki Aristera (Democratic Left)
DL – Democrazia e Libertà (Democracy and Freedom)
DRY – ¡Democracia Real Ya! (Real Democracy Now!)
DS – Democratici di Sinistra (Left Democrats)
EAR - Elleniki Aristera (Greek Left)
ECB – European Central Bank
EFDD – Europe of Freedom and Democracy
EMU – European Monetary Union
FI – Forza Italia (Go Italy)
FSM – Movimento 5 Stelle (Five Stars Movement)
GD – Laikós Sýndesmos – Chrysí Avgí (Popular Association – Golden Dawn) ND –
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
HMP – Horizontal Movement Party
IA – Izquierda Anticapitalista (Anticapitalist Left)
ICPs – Inciativas Ciudadanas Populares (Popular Citizen’s Initiative)
IdV – Italia dei Valori (Italy of Values)
IU – Izquierda Unida (United Left)
JSF – Joventud Sin Futuro (Youth without Future)
KKE - Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas (Greek Communist Party)
KKE-I - Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas (Greek Communist Party - Interior)
LAOS - Laikós Orthódoxos Synagermós (Popular Otrhodx Rally)
LSq – Index of Disproportionality
MEP – Member of the European Parliament
MoU – Memorandum of Understanding
MP – Member of the Parliament
NCD – Nuovo Centro Destra (New Centre Right)
PAH – Plataforma Afectados por la Hipoteca (Platform of people affected by Mortgages)
Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima (Panhellenic Socialist Movement)
PCE – Partido Comunista Español (Spanish Communist Party)
PCO – Party in Central Office
PD – Partido Democratico (Democratic Party)
PdL – Popolo delle Libertà (People of Freedom)
PEL – Party of the European Left
PM – Prime Minister
PoG – Party on the Ground
PP – Partido Popular (Popular Party)

PPM – Por un Podemos en Movimiento (For a Podemos in Movement)
PPO – Party in Public Office
PPT – Podemos Para Todas (Podemos for Everyone)
PSC – Partido Socialista Catalan (Catalan Socialist Party)
PSOE – Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Workers' Socialist Party)
PSOE-A – Partido Socialista Obrero Español-Andalusia (Spanish Workers' Socialist Party-Andalusia)
PwM – Party within the Movement (PwM)
RII – Recuperar la Ilusión (Bring Back the Illusion)
RLP – Radical Left Party
SEL – Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà (Left, Ecology and Freedom)
SP – Sumando Podemos (Connecting We Can)
SYN - Synaspismós tis Aristerás tōn Kinīmátōn kai tis Oikologías (Coalition of the Left, Movements and Ecology)
SYRIZA – Synapsimos tis Rizospastikis Aristeras (Coalition of the Radical Left)
UCD – Unión de Centro Democrático (Union of the Democratic Centre)
UKIP – UK Independence Party
UP – Unidos Podemos (United We Can)
VMP – Vertical Movement Party

Chapter 1 – Challenging the tradition(s)? An introduction

Introduction

In its well-known introduction of *Party Government*, Schattschneider (1942:1) claims that the main idea behind his book is that

political parties created democracy and that modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties. As a matter of fact, the condition of the parties is the best possible evidence of the nature of any regime. The most important distinction in modern political philosophy, the distinction between democracy and dictatorship, can be made best in terms of party politics.

The belief that there is an inextricable link between political parties and democracy is long-lasting. Democracy and democratization processes may be hardly conceived without organizations capable of aggregating different interests or at least competing freely in a pluralist environment (Dahl 1972 and 1989, Diamond and Morlino 2005, Morlino 1998 and 2011 and Sartori 1987). However, political parties' universe is variegated and often difficult to disentangle: in everyday politics, parties born and die, merge and split, maintain or innovate their role within the institutions and within the society. However, while it may seem easy to detect what a political party is starting from a minimal definition (Duverger 1954 and 1972, Epstein 1980, Sartori 1976, Schumpeter 1942, White 2006), it is by far more complicated to distinguish the nature of political parties, their competition strategies, their organizational structures and the changing nature of the systems in which they operate. The 2008 Great Recession represented in this respect a critical juncture (Capoccia and Kelemen, 2007 and Capoccia 2015) due the emergence and the growth of new parties in those regions heavily affected by the financial turmoil, such as the Southern Europe (Morlino and Raniolo 2017). Economic crises represented a challenge for the survival of free competition among political parties and, ultimately, for democracies' ability to deliver: during the Great Recession in Europe democracy did not collapse, although the trust in it declined. Rather, the protests against government were channelled by social movements and, mostly, by new political parties in Europe. Political parties were the cornerstone through which new political actors challenged institutionalized political systems. While scholars' attention has been devoted insofar to the rise of the (populist) radical right parties, still other relevant parties from other party families took the electoral stage in the last decade (see ch. 2).

During these crucial years, genuinely new political parties (Sikk 2005) and already existent parties electorally inconsistent became suddenly “relevant” (Sartori 1976 and Pedersen 1982), crossing in few years the executive power threshold both at the local and at the national level. In particular, SYRIZA in Greece, Podemos in Spain and the Five Stars Movement in Italy (FSM) overturned the existing political systems in their own countries, relegating to the margin of the political competition long-standing political organizations. All three seemed to have benefited from the economic and financial crisis of Southern Europe, advocating for an anti-establishment platform based on campaign against traditional parties. Still, while the literature on those three parties has grown considerably, less attention has been given to a comparative analysis of both the political systems and the anti-establishment parties’ strategies vis-à-vis traditional parties.

1.1 An introductory clarification: traditional or mainstream? Against whom do challengers compete?

Although the word mainstream has been employed to describe both centre-left and centre-right parties outside the Communist, Green and extreme nationalist party families (Adams et al. 2006 and Ezrow et al. 2010), the concept of “mainstream” is flawed. Firstly, the adjective “mainstream” varies in time and space: it may indicate whatever anti-establishment organizations oppose; however, this definition leads to the classical chicken-egg conundrum, i.e. what is anti-establishment? Is this concept a by-product of what is “mainstream” in a given time and space? For example, for decades social-democracy and social-democratic parties were the paradigm of what can be considered mainstream in Scandinavian countries, while conservative parties and the conservative ideology represented a minority. Thus, it is unsurprising that in Northern Europe the emergence of niche parties (such as the Progress Parties in Denmark and Norway) targeted the welfare-state consensus and the high public expenditure. On the contrary, in other European countries, other types of consensus dominated the public policies: in UK, where neoliberal policy-making has dominated the public-sphere debate since Thatcher premiership, the “new” anti-establishment is represented by a leftist leadership in the Labour Party, which rejected previous turn to neoliberalism adopted by the party during Tony Blair leadership, the so-called Third-Way.

As a consequence, what constitutes “mainstream” is in all respects time- and context-specific. Since the three countries under consideration had different (political) traditions with different predominant parties in different epochs – Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) in Spain, Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima (Panhellenic Socialist Movement, PASOK) in Greece and the Democrazia Crisitana (Christian Democracy, DC) in Italy – the term mainstream may be misleading, even when applying a distinction between mainstream opposition parties (MOPs) and mainstream government

parties (MGPs) (Van de Wardt 2015). In this case, the conceptualization is even more difficult to be disentangled, since each potentially governing party can switch from the two categories from one election to another. Another conceptualization of mainstream party relates to the issue-competition and the issue saliency. Meguid (2005 and 2008) argues that mainstream parties structure the pattern of competition among class-based conflicts, while niche parties reject this orientation, proposing new issues outside the existing line of political division. At the same time, mainstream parties propose all-encompassing policy platforms, whereas niche parties “eschew the comprehensive policy platforms common to their mainstream party peers, instead adopting positions only on a restricted set of issues” (Meguid 2005: 305). Similarly, according to Wagner (2011) niche parties compete primarily on a small number of non-economic issues. This framework is equally problematic. Since the so-called niche parties are increasingly becoming coalition partners (Akkerman 2012, De Lange 2008, 2012a, 2012b, Minkenberg 2001, Mudde 2014) the range of niche parties’ policy options have expanded, while centre-left and centre-right increasingly deal with the new issues raised by those parties (Abou-Chadi 2016, Bale et al. 2010, De Vires et al. 2012, Mudde 2007). One may also wonder if some new “issues” raised by those parties – for example, immigration – were so successfully implanted in today society to become a mainstream “pathological normalcy”, paraphrasing Mudde’s work on radical-right ascendancy in Western Europe (2010).

Rather than contraposing mainstream to anti-establishment, in this work I use two different terms: challenger and traditional party family (see ch. 3). The expression “traditional parties”, refers here to the oldest “party families” – a still useful concept for the political science (Mair and Mudde 2005) in Europe, namely Christian-Democratic, Social-Democratic, Liberal and, to a certain extent Communist, whose raise is related to old cleavages’ structures (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Other challenger families have grown in the last three decades (Greens, Radical-Right and Left-Libertarian): those parties competed outside the old cleavage-politics. In some regards, they are a by-product of the “silent revolution” (Inglehart, 1977 and 1990). The challenger families are frequently associated with the word niche (Adams et al. 2006) because in the definition proposed by Mayer and Miller (2015) they emphasize policy areas neglected by its competitors. As it will be shown, this is only partly true for the three parties under analysis, which nonetheless distinguish from all the other for their framing of old (economic) and new (non-economic) issues. As it will be explained in the chapter 3, rather than using “niche”, the three case studies will be defined as non-traditional challengers.

1.2 The research questions

Podemos, SYRIZA and FSM were described by a conservative newspaper in Spain as an “anti-system trident”, which came “dangerously close to power” (El Mundo 2015). From the one hand, their

electoral success seemed to be related with the dissatisfaction with traditional political parties and the austerity reforms implemented by both progressive and conservative parties when in government. From the other hand, the raise of the three parties is also associated with the spread of the protests against austerity (especially in the first two cases) and political corruption.

However, what my research is intended to show is that SYRIZA, Podemos and FSM have institutionalized in different contexts with different political opportunity structures (POSs). Mostly, they are all but similar in their ideological and organizational features, despite sharing one crucial feature, a vote-seeking strategy along with an anti-establishment ideology. SYRIZA, before its unification under this label, was an alliance among different parties and associations, whose aim was the creation of a new way toward socialism. Podemos emerged out of a social movement – the so-called *Indignados* – thanks to the entrepreneurship of a group of political-science scholars and left-wing activists. Five Stars Movement, on the contrary, is a unique organization, centred on the founders, Beppe Grillo, a former comedian and Gianroberto Casaleggio, a web-entrepreneur died in 2016.

In order to reach this goal, I frame my work with two broad research questions, which are further detailed in a set of hypotheses in Chapter 4.

The first research question I want to address is the following:

1. *In what ways, Podemos, SYRIZA and FSM may be considered different organizationally, ideologically and both in terms of the patterns of competitions and of the political opportunity structures?*

Using Key's distinction (1964) between party functions, namely party government, party in the electorate and party organization, my focus is on the latter and, partly, on the second, since from a sociological standpoint the ideological articulation of any party is aimed (at least in principle) at both giving voices to those issues raised in the society and to shaping electoral preferences. The study of parties-as-organization has a long history: Michels (1911 [1966]) and Ostrogorski (1912 [1991]) pioneering analyses were focused on those issues. More recently, Duverger (1954) was the first scholar to note in the first half of the XX Century a “contagion from the left” in the organizational features of the bourgeoisie parties; the cadre party – with a small membership and with a loose coalition among the elected members – should have adapted to the by-then emerging mass parties in order to be better equipped to compete in democracies with a universal suffrage. Epstein (1967), on the contrary, highlighted a contagion from the right, that is an Americanization of party politics in Western Europe. Without going into detail here, even the catch-all (Kirchheimer 1966) and the cartel parties (Katz and Mair 1995, 1996, 2009) in this perspective are a by-product of the analysis of parties

“as-organizations”.

Yet, the mere description of the differences is inadequate to provide an analytical framework that is aimed at disentangling the puzzle of the rise of those parties and their success in their own contexts. I am aware that finding a mono-causal explanation in the three national is a too ambitious task and, more important, epistemologically and methodologically wrong for a supply-side analysis. The political system, the electorate, the economic performance of each countries, the policy records of the parties in governments, the politicization of new issues, may be regarded as valid elements to explain the electoral success of political contenders.

More modestly, using a Most Different Similar Outcome (MDSO) framework of analysis I try to encapsulate the “supply” of these political parties, rather than the “demand”-side. With this premise in mind, my second research question is:

2. *Which supply-side condition(s) are better equipped to provide a partial explanation of the electoral success of SYRIZA, Podemos and FSM?*

1.3 The case for Small-N comparison

In small-N cases, one crucial task is to identify those variables, which are not crucial for the investigation and “controlling” them (Lijphart 1971 and 1975): this operation is arbitrary, and it is up to the researcher to explain the ration behind the choice. However, even when controlling for different variables, the inherent problem of “many (independent) variables, few cases” in a small-N comparison is still unresolved. Using Meckstroth words (1975: 134), it can be argued that “the basic problem is that the comparative method [...], provides no criteria to select among the limitless supply of attributes that might be introduced as controls or as explanations for any given phenomenon”. Rather than working on enlarging the number of cases, I focused on the two solutions identified by Lijphart (1975) to nuance the inferential problem: (a) focusing only on comparable cases and (b) using parsimonious theoretical framework. Thus, I constraint my analysis in four areas: the political opportunity structure, the pattern of competition, the organization and the ideological articulation in order to detect similarities and differences among them. Even though the reasons behind the electoral success of a political parties are numerous, related to both supply-side and demand-side factors and sometimes highly context-dependent, I try to isolate the supply-side factors in order to both focus on the agency of political parties and going beyond a pure demand-side analysis focused on voters’ realignments. I am aware also that under a Most-Different-System-Design Logic (Przeworski and Teune 1970, Della Porta 2008), the critical juncture of the economic and financial crisis can be seen as the most relevant cause, which can explain the emergence of these ‘new’ parties in each country,

all other factors (political system, electoral laws etc.) *being supposedly different*. However, contextual factors may explain why a political system went through major restructuring, but they provide no clues for mutation of a political context, i.e. who takes advantage from the changing contexts? Why them and not others? While voters are the ultimate responsible for the success and the failure of political organizations, still the agency of political parties should be taken into account as well, when inquiring the reasons behind an electoral success. Thus, this research relies on a case-oriented approach (Ragin, 1987 and 1998), in which I provide thick descriptions of the case-studies (Geertz, 1973). This because the flourishing literature on those parties has target only marginally all the factors under consideration here.

For that reasons, the three case-studies will be compared through a longitudinal examination from the genesis until their very recent transformations: despite being time-costly, this operation allows an in-depth analysis of their institutionalization process. Following Skocpol and Somers work on comparative history (1980: 176), this research may fall under a modified version – adapted to political science investigation – of a *parallel demonstration of theory*, which is aimed at persuading “the reader that a given, explicitly delineated hypothesis or theory can repeatedly demonstrate its fruitfulness-its ability convincingly to order the evidence-when applied to a series of relevant historical trajectories”. In this case, rather than starting from delineated set of hypotheses, I depart from the existing literature on political parties in order to create a useful framework of analysis for the three case-studies and, *then*, I go back to examine which factors provided by the literature are better equipped to describe with a reduced conceptual stretching (Sartori 1970) the success of three parties under analysis.

1.4 Research Motivation and the Case Selection: introducing the political actors

The ratio behind the case-selection is deductive. Being a small-N investigation, the case-selection is crucial and cannot be done randomly, as it would be the case for large-N comparison or with quantitative analysis. From the one hand, the selection was a choice that I made at the beginning of my research. From the other hand, however, the paucity of niche parties outside the radical-right party family narrowed down the available options. Since the end of the Cold War, there were very few cases in which radical-left or non-radical right anti-establishment parties were able to exert its blackmail potential in Western Europe. On the contrary, radical-right parties even before the Nineties became increasingly relevant and electorally successful, thus attracting the attention of numerous scholars: National Front in France, the Progress Party and the Danish People Party in Denmark, the True Finns in Finland, the Sweden Democrats, the Pim Fortuyn List and the Party for Freedom in Netherlands, Vlaams Belang in Belgium, the Northern League in Italy, the Austrian Freedom Party, the Swiss

People's Party and Law and Justice in Poland are probably the most known parties belonging to this (very broad) family. Although some radical-left parties had partial electoral successes, joining coalition governments as junior partners in the last decades (Dunphy and Bale 2011, Hough and Verge 2009, Olsen, Hough and Koss 2010), their relevance was comparatively limited (March and Keith 2016). For the first time in Greece, Spain and Italy challenger parties seriously threaten the electoral monopoly of traditional parties. None of them belong to radical-right party family; none of them can be associated to old-Communist radical-left traditional parties.

Thus, I focus on those cases which are characterized by a “negative” feature, i.e. the non-inclusion in the radical-right family¹ and a “positive” one, the electoral success under a comparable economic crisis. Firstly, I choose case-studies from a homogenous region, Southern Europe. Despite the Southern-European countries had a different path toward democratization (Morlino, 1995), there are still relevant empirical basis to consider the countries (and the party systems) under analysis in this region as comparable (Diamandouros and Gunther 2001). Starting from this perspective, I decided to focus on those parties, which were genuinely new (Podemos and FSM) or, at least, had undertaken an institutionalization process (funding congress) during the economic crisis (SYRIZA). This led to the exclusion of one possible relevant case, the Portuguese one, which nonetheless may have been of some interest for my analysis. Due to the different institutionalization path of the most relevant new radical-left parties in the country (Bloco de Esquerda – Left Bloc² and the Portuguese Communist Party), this country-case was not included in the analysis. The three parties – Podemos, SYRIZA and FSM – are frequently investigated through the framework of analysis of the movement parties (Kitschelt 2006). Thus, in all three cases grassroots participation is at the core of their political message. SYRIZA and Podemos had an extensive relationship – albeit different in its intensity – with the *indignados* movements emerged in the two countries in 2011; in the Spanish case, the first secretary of Podemos, Pablo Iglesias acknowledged that the link between the *indignados* movement, named 15-M from the starting date of the protest 15 March 2011, and Podemos is inextricable (Iglesias 2016). On the contrary, while the Italian case stood out in Southern Europe for a lower mobilization against austerity with respect to Greece, Spain and, partly, Portugal, the movement created by Grillo and Casaleggio, was in itself the expression of the dissatisfaction with party politics. Moreover, all three parties proved to be very successful in the electoral competitions in which they took part both nationally and at the European level. In a relatively short span of time the three parties

¹ The exclusion of FSM in this party family will be discussed in chapters 3 and 8.

² The Left Bloc was founded in 1999, when the União Democrática Popular (UDP), the Socialist Revolutionary Party (PSR) and a minority faction of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP), Política XXI merged together. It obtained its best electoral results in 2005 (6.8%, 8 deputies) and 2009 (9.8%, 16 deputies) legislative elections. In 2011 its consensus was almost halved (5.15%), while the party joined the left coalition, with the Portuguese Socialist Party (PSP) and PCP after a tremendous recovery in the 2015 legislative elections (10.22%, 19 deputies).

had to deal with two crucial issues, the executive power threshold and the institutionalization process of their organizations. As for the former, the three parties had to confront with the alliance with other parties – either as a main stakeholder of a coalition government or as a junior partner in minimal-size coalitions – in national and sub-national elections. As for the latter, in the three cases funding congresses, splits, expulsions and the changing balance of power within factions forced these parties to an inward-looking turn in order to tackle the organizational disputes arisen after the positive electoral performances.

Podemos is the first case under analysis. As one of the by-product of the protests that took place in Spain in 2011, Podemos presented itself as an ‘anti-caste’ movement, whose main goal was to open a breach in the Spanish bipartitism, represented by the Partido Popular (Popular Party, PP) and PSOE. As a result of the protracted economic and financial crises in the country, civic platforms and social movement emerged in different parts of Spain in order to protest against austerity measures; among the most active there were the Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (Platform of those affected by mortgages, PAH) and the already existing Plataforma por una Vivienda Digna (Platform for a decent salary, PVD). Together with other movements such as ¡Democracia Real YA! (Real Democracy Now!, DRY), they represented the heart of the protest that took place on 15th March 2011 (15-M) in Puerta del Sol (Madrid). From 2011 onwards, two main parties tried to capitalize electorally the success of the 15-M protests, namely the Partido X, Partido del Futuro (X Party, Party of the Future) and Podemos. While the former gained only 0,64% in the following European Election, the latter obtained an impressive 7,98%. Podemos’ origin is conventionally dated back in January 2014, when a manifesto titled ‘Mover ficha: convertir la indignación en cambio político’ was launched by some intellectuals in the newspaper Público. Among the authors, two figures emerged in the following years as crucial for the evolution of Podemos, Juan Carlos Monedero, a political science professor at the Complutense University in Madrid and Teresa Rodríguez, from the Izquierda Anticapitalista (IA – Anticapitalistic Left), a small party founded in 2008 and dissolved in 2015.

The first party under analysis is Synapsimos tis Rizospastikis Aristeras (Coalition of the Radical Left, SYRIZA). SYRIZA is a recently formed party. Its first congress dated back in 2013; nonetheless, this party existed as an electoral alliance since 2004, when several parties and political movements, decided to run for the legislative election. The main founding party was Synaspismós tis Aristerás tōn Kinīmátōn kai tis Oikologías (Coalition of the Left, Movements and Ecology, SYN), whose origins dated back to the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nighties, when the Greek Left and the Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas (Greek Communist Parties, KKE) formed an electoral coalition (the KKE, afterwards, split from the alliance). SYN was a heterogeneous alliance, whose influence in the Greek politics was almost irrelevant. Despite being at the margin of the socialist PASOK and the

conservative Nea Dimokratia (New Democracy, ND) bipartitism, when the financial crisis erupted in 2009, SYRIZA was perceived as a plausible alternative to the Greek political establishment. The literature presents SYRIZA as populist party (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis, 2014 and Katsambekis, 2016) with a radical-left economic platform. At the same time, the movements within SYRIZA were active supporter of the social protests against the austerity plans voted in Greek Parliament by centre-left and centre-right coalitions.

Its electoral success combined with the radical-left platform and the attempts to connect with the protests drew the attention of the media to this ‘new’ coalition. Nonetheless, after its resounding success in the 2012 legislative elections – held in May and in June – SYRIZA proved to be a potential governing party: SYRIZA (16,79% in May 2012 elections) overcame the PASOK as the main representative of the left in Greek, while the star of the socialist party was abruptly eclipsed (from 43,92% in 2009 to 13,84% in May 2012). When in January 2015 elections SYRIZA became the first party in the Parliament, The Economist blogger Charlemagne interpret the its victory as victory of unexperienced populists: “The euro zone has only just begun to grapple with the tensions of a monetary union not backed by a political one. And Mr Tsipras looks more likely to fall back on socialist shibboleths than to tackle Greece’s pernicious clientelism and corruption. [...] or their part, Europeans might consider themselves lucky that their first serious joust with populism has a chance of avoiding disaster”.

The third case is the Italian Five Star Movement. The origins of the M5S are intertwined with the figure of Giuseppe (Beppe) Grillo, a former television and theatre comedian very successful during the eighties. The growth of the movement is linked with Beppe Grillo website (www.beppegrillo.it), which was launched in 2005 and in few years became one of the most influential blogs in the world. The first public manifestation of the blogger and its movement occurred in 2007 with the first V-Day, that is “Vaffanculo-Day” (Fuck-off Day) or V-Day, an acronym that echoes both the D-Day and the movie V for Vendetta (a dystopian political thriller directed by James McTeigue): the main purpose of the mobilization was to promote three popular initiatives, aimed at forbidding the candidacy of convicted people for the elected office, limiting the elections of Parliamentarians to two mandates and the reintroduction of the preferences in the electoral law. The next years the V2-Day – held in Turin – had a similar purpose, i.e. proposing three abrogative referenda concerning the public funding to newspapers, the abolition of the law on the telecommunication, passed during the second Berlusconi government (2001-2006), and abolishing the journalists’ official association. In 2008, the Amici di Beppe Grillo list (Friends of Beppe Grillo) participated in the Sicilian regional elections and in few local ballots. After successfully endorsing two Italia dei Valori (Italy of Values) candidates at the 2009 European elections, the M5S was officially founded (14th October 2009), with the

endorsement of the Swedish Piratpartiet. After the relatively unexpected success in some mayoral and regional elections, M5S became in the 2013 legislative election the most voted party in Italy. It was its first participation to a nationwide election. Five years later (March 2018), FSM won the relative majority in the Parliament.

1.5 The structure of the paper

The first two chapters of the research are devoted to a literature review on political parties and, secondly, to a classification of political parties according to the categorization proposed by the political parties' scholars. As the comparative research deal with non-traditional parties, I will focus on older non-traditional sub-groups: the radical right, the radical-left and the green parties. While it may be self-evident that two out of three cases cannot fall within the radical-right or green categories (SYRIZA and Podemos), the third case (FSM) is much more difficult to be encapsulated in one of these categories. Before moving to the empirical analysis of the case-studies, the fourth chapter describes the whole research design of my work providing (a) a detailed focus on how the analysis is conducted and (b) a methodological premise for the following chapters. The point (b) targets the different methodologies applied for each area of investigation. Moreover, it explores the qualitative methodology used to inquire the ideology of the parties under analysis. In the fifth chapter, I contextualize the genesis and the electoral growth of those parties taking into consideration the economic, financial as well as political crisis which hit the countries of origin of SYRIZA, Podemos and FSM.

The chapters from 6 to 8 represent the core of the paper and are focused on the empirical analysis of the organizational features, the patten of competition and the ideologies of SYRIZA, Podemos and FSM.

The meaningful comparative analysis is left to ninth and last chapter: after a revision of the whole investigation, I propose some interpretations on the similarities and the differences among SYRIZA, Podemos and FSM. I go back to the features found for each political party's type in order to disentangle the puzzle of the classification and to identify whether and in what ways the three parties may be considered as deviant cases.

Chapter 2 – The transformative essence of the political parties

2.1 Defining a party: between the minimal and the operational definitions

When a political science scholar approaches political parties the first question he/she has to face is: what is a political party? Despite one could be tempted to take for granted the presence of political parties and to consider them as the ‘legitimate’ intermediary structures between the society and the Parliament, the picture is much more complicated. Not only the European citizens lost much of their trust in the parties (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000, Dalton 2004, Dalton and Weldon 2005, Kim 2007) and – in Southern Countries – in the élites (Morlino 1998: 162), but their role and their patterns of competition (Green-Pedersen 2007) changed radically since the end of the World War I (Katz and Mair 1995, Klingemann 2005). In one of the three cases under analysis – the Five Stars Movement – the rejection of the label ‘party’ is clear-cut: the FSM include a proviso in its first version of Statute, that should forbid the leadership to transform the movement into a political party. It is not only anti-party sentiment (Poguntke 1996): it is a pre-emptive refusal of this form of political intermediation. However, as Sartori argued forty years ago, “citizens in Western democracies are represented *through and by* parties. This is inevitable” (1968: 471, italics in original). This argument has several advocates: from Schattschneider (1942) to more recent contributions (Morlino 2011 and 2012), there seems to be a consensus on the assertion that parties can be considered as “endemic to democracy, an unavoidable part of democracy” (Stokes 1999: 263). As it will be shown in the following paragraphs, the different genesis, organizations, ideologies, electoral campaign resources, patterns of competition induce political science scholars to elaborate different labels and definition across time. Thus, identifying what a political party is through a minimal definition, which includes also those organizations which refuses this label, is a crucial task for this investigation. Knowing what a party *is* and what a party *is not* allows a first essential discrimination for a comparative theory, especially when dealing with hybrid organizations, such as movement parties (Kitschelt 2006). Before assigning to different political systems a meaningful label (Blondel 1968, Duverger 1954, Downs 1957, Dahl 1972, Mair 1997, Sartori 1968 and 2005[1976]), one should wonder how to define these essential objects behind all established poliarchies.

A minimal definition – or denotative definition in Sartori’s terminology (2009: 107) – should set boundaries of a concept “sorting out the membership of any given denotatum and [...] deciding the cut-off point vis-à-vis marginal entities”. In this regard, there should be a balance between the intention and the extension of the concept. The definition should avoid both over-intension and over-discrimination, maintaining at the same time its consistency in space and time (Sartori 2009: 112): if

too many features are required for an organization to be considered as a party than a fruitful and extensive comparison among case-studies would be almost impossible; such a definition is meaningless in the social science. That is why it is crucial to distinguish between essential features, which have to be included in a minimal definition, and accompanying features, which help deepening the understanding of the types of political parties, albeit being not crucial for their identification. Thus, when a minimal definition is designed, the next step is identifying the semantic field and the set of the neighbouring words that can be accompanied with the political concept of “party”. In Sartori’s theorization, the operational definition is aimed at further explaining a political concept, adding other accompanying characteristics, which account for the variates of the political concept under analysis, namely the political party. Operational definitions, according to Sartori (2009: 109) should not be intended “loosely [...] but narrowly, that is as definitions that restrict themselves to possible *measurement operations* and thus to the properties that lend themselves to actual measurement”. If we rest on the etymology of the name, the word ‘party’ comes from the Latin *pars* (part); thus, political parties represent one part of the multiple parts, which compose a society. This should not be confused with the figure speech, *pars pro toto* (a type of synecdoche), in which a part or the sum of the parts comes to represent the whole object (the society): this may be true in non-polyarchic environment and, mostly, in single-party States: in this case, however, a part ceases to be as such, and becomes the whole, i.e. the unique representation of the society.

Still, claiming that a party is a part of a whole tells us nothing about what these parts do in their daily life. One of the first definitions is the one provided by Hume in 1742 (in Scarrow 2002: 34):

Factions may be divided into personal and real; that is, into factions, founded on personal friendship or animosity among such as compose the contending parties, and into those founded on some real difference of sentiment or interest. The reason of this distinction is obvious; though I must acknowledge, that parties are seldom found pure and unmixed, either of the one kind or the other.

In the *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents* (1770), Edmund Burke defined a party as a “body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed”: despite the Burkean normative stance this definition implies two important aspects. Firstly, political parties are organizations composed by persons; secondly, parties have specific goals they want to pursue. Few centuries later, political science scholars and sociologists relied on these two features to describe political parties. Still, while maintaining the focus of the definition on a functionalist perspective, the attention is now shifted from

the promotion of the national interest to a different concept, analysed in detail by Max Weber, i.e. that of power. According to Weber (1978: 938), “their [of parties] action is oriented toward the acquisition of social power, that is to say, toward influencing social action no matter what its content may be”. The intimate relationship between participating in the elections and having access to ‘power’ is long-established in party politics. Following the precursory work of Max Weber, Roberto Michels argues that political parties have a dual teleology, (a) organizing the propaganda in order to (b) acquire power. In his view, “the general orientation of the political party, whether in its personal or impersonal aspect, is that of *Machtstreben* (striving to power)” (1927: 753, italics in the text). In a similar vein, Duverger (1954) believes that the conquest of power or a share in its exercise is the primary goal of a political party. Accordingly, Schumpeter (1942: 283, italics is mine) defines a political party

a group whose members propose to act in concert in the *competitive struggle for political power*. [...] Party and machine politicians are simply the response to the fact that the electoral mass is incapable of action other than a stampede, and they constitute an attempt to regulate political competition exactly similar to the corresponding practices of a trade association.

For Schattschneider too (1942: 35) parties are an “organized attempt to get power”, that is the control of the government. Here, government and power are regarded as synonym.

However, the two terms should not be confused, especially when facing with the multi-dimensional sources of power, which modern polyarchies have to confront with: power has a much broader meaning, which comprises hard and soft leverages handed by different and variegated institutions, while the term government refer to the most likely outcome of any elections.

Following Janda, “to qualify as a party, an organization must have as one of its goals that of placing its avowed representatives in government positions” (1993: 166). Epstein (1980) adds to this interpretation the necessity to identify a political party with a specific label that allows its recognition among the electorate.

On the contrary, Eldersveld (1964:1) cuts the Gordian knot between parties and power, conceiving a party as “a set of individuals populating specific roles and behaving as member-actors of a bounded and identifiable social unit. Goals are perceived by these actors, tasks are assigned for and by them, and communication channels are maintained”. The party is thus a social organism, with specific norms of behaviours and goals. Lawson (1980: 2), in this regard argues that “parties are seen both by the members and by others as agencies for forging links between citizens and policy-makers. Their *raison d’etre* is to create a substantive connection between rulers and ruled”.

This last interpretation, however, is problematic. Even when accepting the possibility for individuals to frame the short-term and long-term objectives, structural conditions, such as the formal or the material constitutions of each countries, constrain the activities of the party: for example, in order to gain public financial resources or to participate to the elections these organizations must be usually inscribed in public registers. Other organizations may pursue and frame their own political goals – interest groups, lobbies, trade unions etc. – without concurring to the elections. Moreover, the connections between the rulers and the ruled may be pursued also by public officers, elected members not enrolled in a party or by other mediating figures. Unless those organizations are not considered as parties, there must be a clear-cut distinction between them: this minimal distinction I propose is the participation to the elections as structured organization.

Through a functionalist-minimalist perspective, which will be adopted here, a political party has been defined in three different epochs as

a team of men seeking to control the governing apparatus by gaining office in a duly constituted election (Downs, 1957, 25)

or, emphasising the candidate-selection function, rather than the conquest of governmental office, as

any political group identified by an official label that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections (free or nonfree), candidates for public office (Sartori 2005[1976]: 56),

or, finally, as Sjöblom (1986: 21) puts is a party is defined

simply as an organization that appoints candidates at general elections to the system's representative assembly.

These minimal definitions comprise two crucial elements: firstly, they envisage the necessity for a party to be at least a *rassemblement* of people, regardless of their ideological affinity. A political party, then, may comprise disparate ideological tendency, but it cannot be defined as such if it has only one member³ and its supporting staff (i.e. the case of the independents in Ireland). Secondly, all can be

³ The exception in this case is the Partij voor de Vrijheid (Party for Freedom, PVV), which has only one member, its founder Geert Wilders. Yet, despite this peculiarity, it functions as a political party, since it places candidates for the elections under a specific and recognizable label.

applied in both polyarchic and non-polyarchic contexts (Dahl 1970), since the only feature required to be considered as a party is to place candidates in public office.

2.2 The operational definition: what we must know about parties beyond their ultimate role

Nonetheless, while the minimal definition is a useful tool to frame the object of the analysis, other accompanying features which are common to *most* of the parties help disentangling the puzzle of an in-depth comparison.

As White highlighted (2006: 5), not all parties “compete” in the strict meaning of this word to appoint some candidates in public offices. Rather than trying to gain access to the government or to Parliamentary Assemblies, some political parties display other functions, such as give voice to a peculiar identity or standing claims. In some cases, their function is to say that they are “there”, i.e. the voters and the elected representative exist, even though they represent a tiny minority of the electorate. In this regard, the operational definitions may be of some help.

For example, Aldrich (1995, in White, 2006) studies political parties as institutionalized coalitions with norms, rules and procedure, rather than a mere coalition of elites. This interpretation should allow a better understating of those organizations at the margins of the political spectrum, which provide political identities as well as thick ideologies to the militants (and the voters). Moreover, when political parties institutionalize, the survival of the organization becomes a (common) good for the members that needs to be protected. In a nutshell, the “organization” in an institutionalized party can be more important than the short-term electoral performance (Panebianco 1982).

Still, even when niche parties or parties representing ethnical minorities have very few chances to get a representation in the Parliament, the function that distinguishes them from other types of organizations or movements is the participation in the local or national elections to get their candidates elected. Otherwise, they should be analysed through different theoretical frameworks. The latter function is the common denominator to all political parties, despite one can question the effectiveness of such function with the introduction of open primaries for the candidates’ selection. La Palombara and Weiner (1966: 6) provide a broader definition of party, which can be defined as an operational definition; in their words

[w]hen we speak of political parties, we do not mean a loosely knit of group of notables with limited and intermittent relationships to local counterparts. Our definition requires instead:

(I) continuity in organization, i.e., an organization whose expected life span is not

dependent on the life of current leaders; (II) manifest and presumably permanent organization at local level, with regularized communication and other relationship between locals and national units, (III) self-conscious determination of leader, at both national and local levels to capture and to hold decision making power alone or in coalition with other, not simply to influence of exercise of power; and (IV) a concern on the part of the organization for seeking followers at the polls or in some manner striving for popular support.

Their definition takes in consideration four aspects, which comprise the minimal and several operational factors of the political party: the institutionalization of the organization and its stratification in the local and national context (I and II), the necessity to compete with other parties for the decision-making power (III) and the propaganda (IV).

Following Schmitter (2001: 72-74), political parties perform four functions: (a) electoral structuration, that is structuring the electoral process by selecting candidates for office, as to offer a choice between alternative sets of leaders; (b) providing a symbolic integration through a stable and distinctive set of ideas and goals (symbols); (c) governing function, that is parties must be able to form a government and of providing an internal structure to the legislative process and (d) aggregating the interests and passions of a significant proportion of the citizenry (aggregative functions).

Von Beyme (1985 and 1996) enlists too four main functions which parties fulfil: 1) the programmatic and ideological articulation; 2) the aggregation of social interests; 3) the mobilization and socialization of the society through the elections and 4) the elite recruitment and government formation.

Gunther and Diamond (2001: 7-8) enumerate seven main functions: (a) candidate nomination, (b) electoral mobilization, (c) issue structuring, (d) societal representation, (e) interest aggregation, (f) forming and sustaining government, (g) social integration.

When combined and refined, these three perspectives prove to be useful to provide a personal operational definition of political parties with five main features.

In particular, (1) the first (minimal) function is the candidate selection or elite recruitment; Bartolini and Mair (2001) refers to this function as the procedural role of political parties. Secondly, (2) one crucial aspect of political parties is the creation of an institutionalized organization, capable of granting both the continuity of the organization itself. Thirdly, (3) the participation to electoral competitions, which is regarded by Pedersen (1982) as “authorization threshold”. Fourthly, (4) the formulation of a more or less articulated political program (or, issue structuring), through which (5) they aspire to gain a political legitimacy within a portion of the society. Following Mair and Bartolini

(2001) the fourth and the fifth elements can be defined as the representative function (or aggregative function) of the political parties. The representative function indicates the ongoing socialization process that takes place between the society and the party themselves (Pizzorno 1996): from the one hand, parties are influenced by the society and the disparate demands arising from the electorate; from the other hand, parties can shape electorate's preferences through their ideological elaboration and the use of communication tools. An ideal-typic party, thus, is a transmission belt between the demands stemming from and the society and the delegates selected by the parties (Pizzorno 1996). One may argue that aggregating interest for political parties may be an historical *unicum*, which can be identified in the golden-age of mass parties. According to Panebianco (1982), the function of aggregating interests is a sociological prejudice because parties do not represent *per se* the divisions inherent in plural society, since they are first of all organizations, whose internal balance of power may vary, once their constituency changes.

With respect to Gunther and Diamond typologization, I merge the societal representation and the social integration into one function. Two aspects of the definitions by Gunther and Diamond, Schimtter and La Palombara and Weiner are left aside here: the presence of a permanent local organization and the formation and the sustain to government. The literature on party's organization (Alvarez et al. 2014, Bardi et al. 2014b, Bolleyer 2009, 2011 and 2013, Carty 2004, Duverger 1954, Epstein 1967, Gunther and Diamond 2002, Harmel et al. 1995, Harmel and Tan 2003, Janda 1980, Katz 2014, Katz and Mair 1992, 1994 and 2009, Kitschelt 1988 and 2006, Lawson and Merkl 1988, Neumann 1956, Panebianco 1982, Poguntke 2014, Rose and Mackie 1988) shows how differently can a party be structured and, mostly, how unconstrained party officers in cases of stratarchical organizations can be with respect to other party levels.

This is not to say that there is not communication among the party's levels; rather, here the stress is on the unneeded feature of this peculiar organizational structure, which comprises a disciplined relationship between the different party's levels. As for the formation of a government, it is questionable whether all parties may perform these functions: despite in Parliamentary system those political parties, which gain a representation may or may not give confidence to the government, comparatively few parties gained momentum in government, compared to the ones participating in the elections. This is a function performed by the few, not by the many.

2.3 The genesis and the evolution of political parties in Western Europe

Without exploring the theory and the nature of the political representation (Andeweg 2003, Mair 1998a, Manin 1997, Mansbridge 2003, Müller 2000, Ornaghi 1998 and Pitkin 1967), political parties born out the necessity to organize candidates for the electoral rallies: as acknowledged by Manin

(1997: 202), “the successful candidates were individuals who inspired the trust of their constituents as a result of their network of local connections, their social prominence, or by the deference they provoked”. In the Burkean concept of representation, elected congressmen were trustee, i.e. delegates, freed – once elected – from the short-term interests of the constituency. In the United Kingdom, during the XVIII and XIX centuries, those men in the Parliament – women were excluded from political activities until the end of the XIX Century – started to form factions, i.e. loosened organizations of elected members without any ramification in the constituencies, where the single candidate held an almost absolute autonomy. As it is known, the Whigs and the Tories were the first embryonic forms of political groups, acting with a moderate coherence in the Parliament. Before the substantial expansion of the suffrage, it would be difficult to define these factions as parties, since the minimum requirements envisaged in the minimal definition were not respected. According to Duverger (1954) the very first form of parties can be tracked down to the evolution of the clubs born in the UK Parliament; these were the “classical” elite-based cadre-parties with an internal origin and narrow constituency. Within a *régime censitaire* “with its restrictive suffrage requirements and other limitations on the political activity of the propertyless” (Mair 1997: 97), the very weak structure of the “parties” went unchallenged until the irruption of the masses in the electoral competition. The end of the XIX century witnessed the growth of mass-based political parties with an external origin, namely the social-democratic parties in countries such as United Kingdom (Labour Party), Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei – SPD), Italy (Partito Socialista Italiano – PSI), France (Section française de l’Internationale ouvrière - SFIO), Austria (Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs) etc. In the very first period of their existence, these new political parties came under a fierce criticism: Italian elitist scholars, such as Mosca (1966 [1896]) and Pareto – albeit conceiving the role of the elites in the society differently – were both sceptical about political parties’ capabilities to represent a broad electorate and to select the most adequate political personnel. The same sceptic view of political parties can be found in Ostrogorski in the two volumes of *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties*; according to the Russian scholar, “[t]he development of organized or caucus politics in England and the United States was partly due to the fact that, in their different ways, the citizens of the two countries were unready intellectually and morally for democracy” (quoted in Barker and Howard-Johnston 1975: 424). Roberto Michels (1966 [1911]), cautioned the political community against the oligarchizing tendency within political parties, namely within the SPD, which was the case-study of his work; even liberals debated about the possibility that political parties could have undermined the democratic institutions (Pombeni 1994). From a different perspective, Carl Schmitt (1922 [2005]) targeted the *parteiitenstraat* as a liberal pathology that should be eradicated in order to restore an unmediated relation between the political will of the people and the power.

Despite these criticisms, mass parties soon took the stage in the political arena at the beginning of the XX Century both as parties of democratic integration (socialist or mass-based Christian-Democratic) and as parties of total integration (communist and fascist parties) (Neumann 1956).

In the former case, rather than one national interest, these parties claimed to represent a segment of the society. The outstanding success of their organizations in democratic contexts provoked, as Durveger explained (1954), a contagion from the left; the cadre parties (or party of individual representation, in Neumann terminology), which were expression of the growing bourgeois class, had to adapt to them, slowly adopting the mass-based structure to compete in the elections. While cadre-parties performed their roles “in the intersection of the state and the civil society” (Katz and Mair, 1995: 9), the mass parties acted as a bridge between civil society and the state.

Bartolini (2000) defines mass-parties as cleavage-parties since their formation and, mostly, their structuration in post-World War II context, reflect the classic cleavages, envisaged by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) and Rokkan (1970) in their works on party systems and voter alignments. In Lipset and Rokkan words (1967: 50),

the party systems of the 1960s reflect, with few but significant exceptions, the cleavage structures of the 1920s. This is a crucial characteristic of Western competitive politics in the age of 'high mass consumption': the party alternatives, and in remarkably many cases the party organizations, are older than the majorities of the national electorates.

The freezing hypothesis, which postulates a weak electoral volatility due to the resistance of the cleavages in many European countries, helped the resilience of mass/cleavage parties, especially in the left political spectrum. Although Franklin et al. (1992) dispute the persistence of the freezing cleavages in the European electorate, Bartolini and Mair (1990) and Mair (1993) argued in the same years that patterns of electoral stability in terms of centre-left and centre-right blocs could be found in many European countries. As Mair (1998b: 3) puts it “the freezing hypothesis remains largely valid, at least up to now, with the evidence of long-term continuities in party systems far outweighing the ostensibly more striking and more immediate evidence of change”. The post-World War II European settlement creates the perfect environment for parties to emerge: Bardi et al. (2014b: 240) describe this epoch (1940-1970) as the period of party hegemony in which political élites had “an exceptional and perhaps historically unique, degree of freedom in steering national economies and directing social policies. Political parties became the key actor in the political stabilisation mechanisms of societies characterised by great social change”. As Mair (1997: 36) puts it, “the mass party, which has been the creature of the mass democracy, acted [...] to ensure the stabilization of

mass democracy". The hegemony of parties was not uncontested, though; a new form of anti-party criticism – different from both the liberal scepticism of the XIX Century and anti-democratic denigration of post-World War I liberalism – emerged in these decades as a criticism toward the growing power of parties in the public administration, the so-called partitocracy (Poguntke and Scarrow 1996). This anti-party sentiment grew together with the professionalization of political parties and its alleged retrenchment from civil society; still, this criticism was not anti-systemic in the sense that it did not threaten the stability of the poliarchic institutions.

Despite the persistence of party systems divided along the lines of different cleavages, political parties did experience significant changes. Kirchheimer (1966: 184-185) in its anticipatory work on political parties' transformations noted that mass-parties were slowly abandoning the attempts to integrate segments of the society in the political scene

turning more fully to the electoral scene, trying to exchange effectiveness in depth for a wider audience and more immediate electoral success. The narrower political task and the immediate electoral goal differ sharply from the former all-embracing concerns; today the latter are seen as counterproductive since they deter segments of a potential nationwide clientele.

Thus, (some) mass parties transformed into catch-all parties both from an ideological and organizational standpoint. Catch-all parties fostered the reduction of the ideological baggage of the mass-parties and the de-emphasis on the role of party members (Mair 1997). Kirchheimer focused mainly in four countries: United Kingdom, West Germany, France and Italy. The catch-all terminology is frequently confused with the naïve possibility for those parties to appeal to *all* voters. Kirchheimer, on the contrary, emphasizes the reasonable expectations for major parties to catch the voters *only* in those segments of society, which do not *openly* conflict with their ideologies. No catch-all turn, on the contrary, was envisaged for single-issue parties, regional parties, overly ossified parties (such as the Italian Communist Party or the French Communist Party) or large parties in small democracies (such as the Social-Democratic parties in Scandinavian countries). Despite being questioned by Wolinetz (1979), the catch-all thesis had a large success among political science scholars, since it condensed many political phenomena, which were occurring in the 70s and in the 80s, namely the gradual adaptation of political parties to the growth of post-materialist values (Inglehart 1990), the decrease in the party membership (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000) and the acceptance by social-democratic parties of a capitalist society.

Without going into the details of the societal transformations that favoured the emersion of new catch-

all parties (see Mair 1997: 39-41), those parties, rather than focusing solely on the cleavages, dilute their ideological commitments as a way to widen their appeal and maintain the control over the public-offices. From an organizational standpoint, a catch-all party recruits “members on the basis of policy agreement rather than social identity” (Katz and Mair 1995: 13). Catch-all parties, thus, departed from the society acting as “brokers” between the civil society. More recently, Katz and Mair (1995, 1996 and 2009) proposed another major transformation for political parties; according to the two scholars, catch-all parties were absorbed by the State, becoming cartel parties. As explained by Katz and Mair (2009) in the restatement of their theorization, several demand-side variables pressured this change: the transformation of the supranational institutional framework (such as the creation of the European Union), the role of the new media, the homogenization of experiences and expectations of the citizens and the increasing difficulties for parties to provide public good in the light of a greater fiscal responsibility (required by the stock market and the supranational institutions).

Rather than competing among each other, cartel parties prefer to collude, reducing the ideological distance among them and de-emphasizing the different policy option in favour of the efficiency and effectiveness in government business. This does not imply the absence of electoral turnover; “governing” parties, which are within the cartel, may be pro-tempore ousted from the decision-making. However, winners are equally “cartelized” so that the consequence of the loss between contenders is minimized. In a nutshell, cartel parties tend to move “toward maximizing the reasonably anticipated minimum pay-off (*maximin*)” (Katz and Mair, 2009: 758, italics in the text). The cartel thesis, however, has been disputed by several authors.

In his comment on the notion of cartel party, Ruud Koole (1996) argues that the systemic property of the theory (cartelization) should not be used to describe individual parties; however, as Katz and Mair replied (1996 and 2009), there are features that can be ascribed not only to the party systems, but also to the cartelized parties as well, namely the reliance on public funding, the predominant stratarchical organization and the increasingly irrelevance of the role of the membership.

Moreover, Koole contends that the systemic changes described by Katz and Mair, i.e. the transformation of parties in state’s agents and the disengaging of parties from society, are at least controversial because, on the one hand, parties are still anchored in the society - while the society herself moved toward the state – and, on the other hand, because the “loci of political power have been multiplied, in and outside the state” (Koole, 1996: 514). According to Koole, there is nothing new in the orientation of the parties toward the state, a fact that is acknowledged by Katz and Mair who, nonetheless, stress the magnitude of this orientation in the last decades. Furthermore, while agreeing on the possibility that state subventions create a comparative advantage toward the outsider, Koole underlines that this does not “necessarily lead to petrification of the party system” (1996: 517).

Finally, Koole states that stratarchical organization as well as the pacification of national and local elites because of a supposed mutual interest is at least contentious, albeit elements of direct democracy have been introduced even in more hierarchical parties.

Moving from a different level of analysis, Kitschelt (2000) targets the problem of micro-foundations of Katz and Mair's theory; in particular, Kitschelt stresses the relationship between party leaders and militants, between party leaders of different parties and between parties.

Following Mair (1997), if state subventions allow parties to become independent from membership fees, then public schemes boost alienation of the leaders from the society. Consequently, political professionals should acquire a sort of class consciousness that make them divorce from the society and, particularly, from militants. Yet, Kitschelt contends that the divorce of leaders from party members is all but automatic: firstly, members may be satisfied with the leadership; secondly, members may exert the option of the "exit", funding a new party and, thirdly, party systems and societal polarization may favour or discourage leader-activist disparity (Kitschelt 2000: 158). In addition, Kitschelt emphasizes the impossibility of a strict hierarchical control of the leadership on the militants since the "voice" and the "exit" option may force leaders to be more accountable to the party on the ground. Lastly, Kitschelt considers the prisoner dilemma as a strong argument against the cooperation within the cartel. The possibility to defect and the high costs for the cartel's maintenance may encourage defections.

Based on the comparison of four cases – two of them considered "positive cases" of cartelization, Germany and Denmark, one "negative", the United Kingdom, and one used as a control case, (Switzerland) – Detterbeck's work (2005) is focused on a three-dimensional analysis: the organizational structures of the parties, their political role in the relation with the society and party members, and the intra-party competition (cartelization). His conclusion is that "cartel party is overloaded with assumptions" (2005: 188). Favourable to the cartel-like system is the proportional electoral system in contrast with Westminster model.

In its large-N analysis, Krouwel (2012) argue that political parties in Europe did not evolve into cartels, since they are still able to offer a clear choice in terms of policies. Moreover, they were not able to block the entrance of new populist parties in the electoral competition.

Finally, Scarrow (2006) argues that party subsidies do not alter the dynamic of the electoral completion, mainly because bigger (and cartelized) parties tend to be the biggest subsidies' recipient, while "new challengers always have been unlikely to make a breakthrough unless established parties implode of their own accord, or unless new issues come to the fore which established parties are unable to integrate into their own platforms" (Scarrow 2006: 636). Before moving to the typologization of political parties, two considerations deserve a careful attention: firstly, cadre, mass,

catch-all and cartel parties are not mutually exclusive; they coexisted for a long-time and they survive the organizational “contagion” of the most successful parties. Koole (1994), for example theorizes the presence of new-cadre parties, similar in some respects to the old predecessor. Even when accepting the presence of “catch-all” and “cartel” parties in Western Europe, the so-called contagion from the right of the European political parties (Epstein 1980) –was gradual and did not provoke the immediate disappearance of mass parties.

Secondly, regardless of the impact of the electoral laws, the fragmentation rates in the post-World War II scenario indicates that many other parties regularly competed with the major parties (Wolinetz 1979).

2.5 A Typologization of political parties: between traditional and challenger families

Gunther and Diamond (2001 and 2003) propose typologization political parties based on three main criteria: the formal organization of the parties, the programmatic commitments and, thirdly, the behavioural norms of the party, i.e. whether the party is tolerant and pluralistic or proto-hegemonic. What the authors find are 15 ideal-types, divided in five genera: elite-based parties, mass-based parties, ethnicity-based parties, electoralist parties and movement parties (the cartel-parties are not taken in consideration). Elite-based, electoralist, movement and, partly, ethnicity-based parties tend to display a thin organization, while mass-based and, within mass-based parties, Leninist and class-mass parties have a thicker structure compared to the others (Figure 3.1).

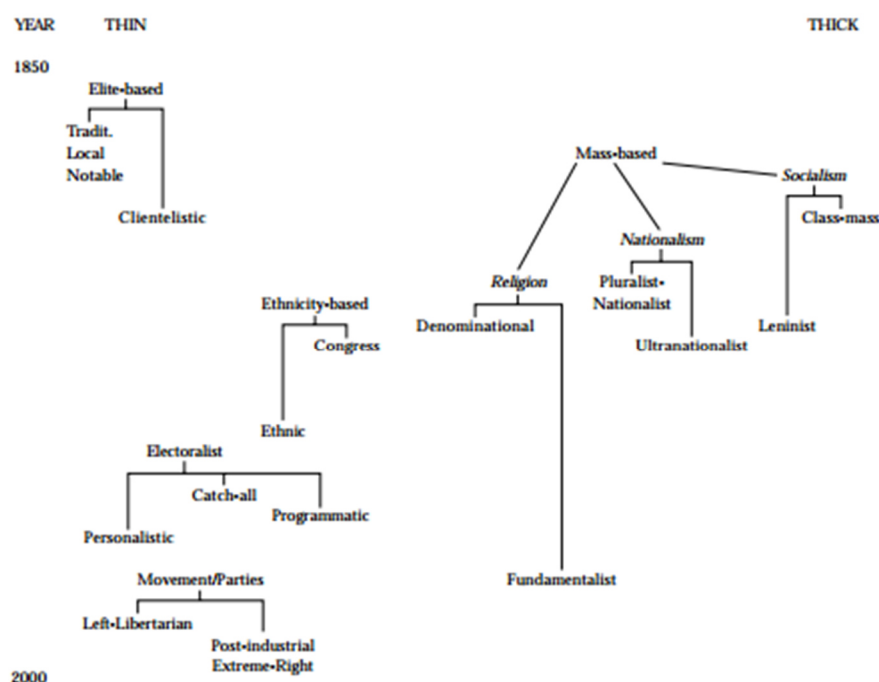


Figure 2.1 - Party families according to Gunther and Diamond (2003)

Elite-based parties are divided into (1) traditional local notable party and the (2) clientelistic party. The latter emerged once the notables faced the challenge of newly enfranchised segments of the society, due to urbanization and industrialization phenomena. In both cases, there is not a proper organization nor a programmatic articulation: the electoral campaign in the clientelistic party is based on a quasi-feudal relationship between the elected and the electorate, while notable parties rely mostly on the prestige of the candidates at the local level. The notables, then, are free to coalesce with other notables in the Parliament, according to programmatic or personal affinities. Elite-based parties are not vanished; according to Koole (1994), modern cadre parties are still capable of surviving in the electoral market. These parties were mass-based parties, which lost their mobilizing capability and its wide membership: they display a low member/voter ratio and a strong orientation towards voters. The maintenance of the structure of a mass party serves to guarantee a certain degree of internal democracy; however, the predominance of the leadership both within the organization and for the articulation of the ideology of the party is clear-cut. Hence, modern cadre-parties are a hybrid structure, whose mass-based organization is just a vestige of the past and whose transition to an electoralist structure (see below) is still incomplete.

Mass-based parties are further divided following two criteria, the programmatic commitments and the behavioural norms. The three programmatic subsets – religion, nationalism, socialism – are split to inquire the adherence to the liberal-democratic values of the parties. The result are six species of parties: (3) denominational and (4) fundamentalist religion parties, (5) pluralist-nationalist and (6) ultranationalist parties and, finally, (7) class-mass and (8) Leninist parties. Fundamentalist, ultranationalist and Leninist are regarded as proto-hegemonic parties. In general, mass-parties have a wide membership, which is often linked with other organizations (such as trade unions) and other institutions (the Church): the programmatic articulation is strongly interrelated with the interests of the membership. As explained in the previous paragraph, the development of those parties is associated to the structuring of the cleavages in Europe and the freezing of the electorate.

Contrary to the elite-based parties, ethnicity-based parties do have a programmatic articulation, but its appeal is limited to sectional constituency. Their goal is “to secure material, cultural and political benefits (and protections) for the ethnic group in its competition with other groups” (Gunther and Diamond 2003: 183). The (9) congress party differentiates from the (10) ethnic party, firstly for its organization – the congress can be either a coalition, an alliance or federation of ethnic parties or political machines – and, secondly, for its wider appeal to the unity of a nation and to the national integration, rather than to a specific ethnicity.

Electoralist parties are characterized by a weak organization and, mostly, by their focus on electoral

campaigns. Electoralist parties resemble the electoral-professional party envisaged by Panebianco (1982). Electoral-professional parties make an extended use of different kinds of professionals (communication experts, spin-doctors, pollsters etc.) and have a voter-oriented approach. Rather than using labour-intensive organizations, typical of the mass-parties, electoral-professional parties prefer capital-intensive campaigns, in which the class-gardée bureaucracy is excluded from the key decisions within the party. Their organizations – and the electoral success they had from its appearance in the Western European scene in the late 70s – influenced the older mass-based parties – the so-called “contagion from the right” hypothesis (Epstein 1980).

The use of mass and new media, the appeal to the widest possible constituency and a vague ideological commitment are the main features of the three electoralist species, (11) catch-all parties, (12) programmatic parties and (13) the personalistic parties. Catch-all parties were already described in the previous paragraph, the other two species deserve a brief explanation. While programmatic parties may resemble mass-based parties, since their ideological commitment is more specific than the vagueness that may be found in a catch-all party, the social base is more diffuse than mass-based parties. Personalistic parties, on the contrary, relies on the charismatic figure(s) of the political entrepreneur(s). The leadership appeals usually has not an ideological base. Personalistic parties (Calise 2000) use the presidentialization of politics (Passarelli 2015, Poguntke and Webb 2005) and the personalization of electoral campaign (Campus 2010) to link the leadership figure with the (electoral) faith of the party as to acquire a constant presence in the media.

Personalistic parties tend to display a business-firm organization, in which technical tasks are “often ‘contracted out’ to external experts with no ties to the party. Grassroots membership is also limited, with a high proportion of party members being officeholders who see the party as a vehicle for acquiring political positions, rather than an end in itself” (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999: 333). In a similar vein, electoralist parties – and personalistic parties in particular – are more prone to adopt a stratarchical organization and a franchise system. In a franchise system, the party in the centre allows local notables to use the recognizable brand of the party, while maintaining a high degree of autonomy with regards to their local strategies. In exchange, the party in the centre develops a form of loyalty to its brand, expanding at the same time its loosely institutionalized organization. Franchise systems develop a stratarchical organization, in the same way as cartel parties need a stratarchy to reduce the impact of the old class-gardée bureaucracy.

Finally – and more recently in time – movement parties are divided along the programmatic line. Despite this genus is more difficult to disentangle from an organizational standpoint, movement parties have usually a weak organizational structure with a common denominator, based on a negative consensus against the existing order. The weak organization that they tend to display is due to a lack

of resources and to a more “spontaneous” genesis, compared to the previous genus – the electoralist parties – in which the loose institutionalization is a matter of rational calculation of costs and benefits derived from a business-like organization, rather than a necessity derived from the lack of material resources. Movement parties are characterized by a porous membership, thank to which when the 'voice' strategy is unsatisfactory, members can exert an almost costless exit. They tend to display a weak system of interest aggregation in fixed and representative organs. The central bureaucracy is thus almost absent, and it is deficient vis-à-vis more structured parties: however, and contrary to electoralist parties, they empower – at least in principle – the membership, giving to members the right-to-decide over the future of the party both through direct democracy and plebiscitarian decision-making tools.

(14) Left-libertarian and (15) post-industrial extreme/radical right parties are the species identified by Gunther and Diamond among movement party category. The next chapter will detail what this typologization has (partially) left aside, i.e. the party family aspect, which is crucial to distinguish between traditional and challenger families.

Chapter 3 - Traditional parties and the rising electoral challenger

3.1 The traditional party families

Although the three cases selected can reasonably be inserted in the electoralist and/or in the movement party genus, still the typologization proposed by Diamond and Gunther is less indicative with regard to a crucial factor in party politics analysis, the party family. Moreover, the small-N ratio of this work, should suggest the division into more comprehensive categories. In this paragraph, after a brief historical review of the formation of the party families in Western Europe, I offer a conceptualization of what I intend for the adjective “traditional” and “challenger” related to the different parties’ families.

Classifying political parties into families is a hard task (Mair and Mudde 1998): still, identifying party families is one main instrument to start a comparison among similar parties. Political parties are heavily influenced by the environment in which they operate; for example, while common goals may be identified in parties belonging, to the same transnational federation, other relevant discrepancies may suggest not to include two parties in the same family. One very brief example: while the Hungarian Fidesz and the German CDU/CSU belong to the European Popular Party, doubts can be casted on both the organizational and the ideological compatibility between the two parties. Mair and Mudde (1998) propose two criteria, the genesis and the ideological profile, to classify party families. Gallagher et al. (1995: 81) moves from a different perspective, using as classifying criterion the origin, the transnational federations and the policies’ congruence. Without questioning the different approaches – all of which have merits and shortcomings (see Mair and Mudde 1998) – here the institutional perspective will be preferred not only for its simplicity and clarity, but above all because in line with the aim of this chapter, i.e. identifying the traditional and non-traditional party families in Western Europe.

The institutional perspective used by Von Beyme (1985) to classify what he calls *les familles spirituelles* (or *famille politique*, using Seiler (1980) terminology) owes much to the work of Lipset and Rokkan (1967). Although the ideological coherence of those families may differ from one country to another, Von Beyme (1985: 3) classifies parties according to the label of the party, voter’s perception of parties’ programs and their ideological articulation. While doubts can be rightfully casted on the possibility to adopt the name as a classificatory criterion (Mair and Mudde 1998: 220-221), its use combined with the ideological articulation provides, at least, an approximation of the most relevant party families in Western Europe.

The nine families he identifies are: (1) liberal and radical parties; (2) conservative parties; (3) socialist

and Social-democratic parties; (4) Christian- democratic parties; (5) communist parties; (6) agrarian parties; (7) regional and ethnic parties; (8) radical-right parties; and (9) the ecology movement. Not all of them should be considered as “traditional”; I refer here to “traditional” parties as the political groups grew out of the four cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan (1967): centre-periphery cleavage, religious cleavage, class cleavage, sectoral (urban-rural) cleavage.

The result would be a line of division between the first seven families and the radical right and green families. When Von Beyme wrote his book, the anticipatory work of Kitschelt (1988) on left-libertarian parties was not published yet. Left-libertarians

are critical of the logic of societal development and the institutions that underlie the postwar compromise between capital and labor in industrial societies. They oppose the priority that economic growth has on the political agenda, the patterns of policy making that restrict democratic participation to elite bargaining among centralized interest groups and party leaders, and the bureaucratic welfare state (Kitschelt 1988: 195).

In this view, non-communist radical-left parties and greens should be merge in one family. Nonetheless, the fall of the Soviet Union jeopardized the communist families and its ideological unity; some parties ceased to exist as such (the Italian Communist Party), other maintained their name, but reformed their ideology and their internal organization (the French Communist Party and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany in East Germany), some emerged from the scissions of old communist parties (Communist Refoundation in Italy and, partly, SYN) and some merged or formed an alliance with radical-left groups (the Spanish Communist Party), while other despite some tactical and strategical changes maintained the legacy with its past (the Greek and the Portuguese Communist Parties and some Communist Parties in the Central-Eastern Europe). The communist family ceased to exist as such: the old-communist are different both ideologically and organizationally from post-communist parties, which founded the Party of the European Left (PEL).

Thus, an updated classification of the non-traditional families should comprise: the radical right, the green/ left libertarian parties, the radical-left and a fourth, very recent born, family, the e-party family (see below), whose issue entrepreneurship on the freedom of the web, gives to some parties in this family a discrete electoral success (Germany, Sweden, Iceland, Czech Republic and Italy). The third category includes both a plethora of other forms of radical-leftism, i.e. Reform Communist, Democratic Socialist, Populist Socialist and, to some extent the Social Populists (March 2011 and March and Keith 2016). I will not further inquire the nature of this categorization. Rather, I maintain a distinction between the conservative communists (March 2011) and other radical-left parties. Thus,

I place the conservative communist parties in the communist category envisaged by Von Beyme, while the others are included in the tenth category of the radical-left.

In conclusion, the Table 1 distinguishes between the traditional and non-traditional parties. The next question is that, thus, whether it is correct to define non-traditional party families as *challenger parties*.

Traditional Party Families	Challenger Families
1. Radical and Liberal Parties	9. Radical Right-Wing Parties
2. Conservative Parties	10. Green Parties/Left Libertarian Parties
3. Socialist and Social-Democratic Parties	11. Post-Cold War Radical-Left Parties
4. 4. Christian-Democratic Parties	12. E-Parties
5. 5. Old Communist Parties	
6. Agrarian Parties	
7. Regional and Ethnic Parties	
8. Extreme-right/Fascist parties	

Table 3.1 – Traditional and non-traditional party families. Source: Own adaptation from Von Beyme (1985)

3.2 The *non-traditional families: challenger parties?*

The first question to be addressed here is the simplest one: what is a challenger party? The academic literature has tried to answer to this question, starting from a different label, niche parties.

Meguid (2005 and 2008) finds that niche parties differ from mainstream parties in three aspects. Firstly, niche parties reject the traditional class-based orientation of politics, focusing on new issues previously ignored by other parties. Secondly, the issues raised by the niche parties “do not coincide with existing lines of political division. Niche parties appeal to groups of voters that may cross-cut traditional partisan alignments” (Meguid 2005: 348). Thirdly, niche parties focus only on a limit set of issues, avoiding comprehensive policy platforms.

This definition looks at the nicheness as a fluid concept: whenever single-issue parties find new unexplored issues, they can be defined as niche. This implies also that what was a “new” cross-cutting issue few decades ago may be not “new” now: to what extent issues such as immigration, civil rights and environment are “new”? For sure, all these issues can be considered – at least, partially – as cross-cutting in older political contexts. However, Meguid does not resolve this puzzle leaving unsettled the question of what is “new” and what is not “new” in the issue structuring.

Wagner (2011: 847) tries to resolve this puzzle defining niche parties as “parties that compete primarily on a small number of non-economic issues”. Mayer and Miller (2013: 261) proposes the following minimal definition: “a niche party emphasizes policy areas neglected by its competitors”. Despite parties outside the traditional parties’ families tend to compete on non-economic issue – i.e.

the greens on the environment, radical-right parties and left libertarian parties on post-materialist values (Ignazi 1992 and 1994a, Kitschelt 1988, McGann and Kitschelt 1995) – it is disputable that now this presupposition is still valid: radical-right parties with their protectionist stance (Mudde 2007, Oesch 2008) and anti-austerity radical-left and movement parties, even when rejecting left-right positioning, compete precisely on a crucial economic issue, i.e. the fiscal adjustments required by the European and international institutions. This is not to say that niche parties cannot be issue entrepreneurs; still, a definition based on the saliency theory neglects that niche parties may also (or exclusively) compete on widely-known issues. SYRIZA in Greece, Podemos in Spain and, partly the Five Stars Movement in Italy programmatically emphasize issues that other parties tried to address in the previous years (austerity, corruption, clientelism). They were not the first in their countries; they probably will not be the last.

Adams et al. (2006), Ezrow (2008) and Ezrow et al. (2010) in their work on policy shift in Western European countries, defines niche parties as those parties, which articulate an extremist or non-centrist ideology, namely communists, nationalists and greens. Leaving aside the conceptualization of “extremism”, the main issue at stake here is the reference to “non-centrism”; what characterizes a non-centrist ideology? Are Labour, Socialist, Social Democratic, Liberal, Conservative and Christian-Democratic parties “centrist”, as the authors presume? Again, even when accepting the catch-all label for all these parties, the question is unresolved: it should not be presupposed a priori that mainstream parties are centrist. Rather, the catch-all label needs to be explained before attaching the niche label to other parties.

It even more complicated to simply define niche parties as anti-EU, far right, regional and green parties (Jensen and Spoon 2010), since the anti-EU and regional dimensions may be intertwined with other ideological dimensions. Thus, the concept of nicheness does not offer a useful guide to inquire these non-traditional families.

Hobolt and Tilley (2014: 7) offer a new conceptualization, using the term challenger parties (see also De Vries and Hobolt 2012). They distinguish between mainstream and challenger parties at the national level; the formers – which De Vries and Hobolt (2012) distinguish between mainstream government parties and mainstream opposition parties – are “those parties that frequently alternate between government and opposition”, while the latter “are untarnished by office. While these parties are not necessarily new, they have not formed part of government”.

This distinction, however, may lead to counterintuitive findings: in political systems with predominant parties, all but one party are challengers, while only one party can be considered as mainstream. Moreover, those parties permanently excluded by the government should be inserted in the challenger framework: as a consequence, “third parties” in two-party systems are challengers,

even when they belong to traditional families (such as the Liberals or the Communist Parties). Also, in federal states, those regional parties which had a long-lasting history in sub-national governments fall into the challenger category, even though their genus is closer to the traditional categories. In order to provide a more comprehensive definition, which includes both opposition parties and parties with experience in government, I go back to the cleavages politics as the discriminating factor between traditional and challenger parties.

Thus, I define (European) challenger parties as the parties emerged outside the four traditional cleavage politics. Here, any reference to the policy competition is discarded: whether these parties focus on non-economic issues is irrelevant; the same occurs with its governmental experience. What matters is that genetically and programmatically they place outside the *first* seven traditional parties' families envisaged by Von Beyme. To the families outside the "tradition", I have added the post-cold war radical-left parties as to indicate those parties, which experienced a programmatic, organizational and ideological reforms after the end of the Cold War. Secondly, I insert a new party family, very recently formed and, whose academic literature is still underdeveloped, the e-parties. Within the e-party I consider those parties, such as the Pirates, which mobilize around the freedom of internet, the overriding of the copyright laws and the grassroots participation of the membership through web-activism (Beyer 2013, Fredriksson 2015, Hartleb 2013, Jääsaari and Hildén 2015 and Niedermayer 2013): to what extent FSM (Biorcio and Natale 2013, Biorcio 2015, Bordignon and Ceccarini 2013, Gualmini and Corbetta 2013, Mosca 2014, Tronconi 2015, Salvati 2016 and Vittori 2017a) can be included in this family will be a matter of discussion in the last chapter.

3.3 Are challenger parties anti-systemic?

As it is well known, Sartori (2005[1976]) analysis of party system includes a counting method for political parties. Sartori takes into consideration only relevant parties— being the concept of relevance based either on the coalition potential or the blackmailing power – displayed by each party in each election. In his word, a political party qualifies "for relevance whenever its existence, or appearance, affects the tactics of party competition and particularly when it alters the direction of the competition – by determining a switch from centripetal to centrifugal competition either leftward, rightward, or in both directions – of the governing oriented parties" (2005[1976]: 108). This counting method allows for a categorization of political systems, according to which Sartori distinguishes among: one party, hegemonic party, predominant party, two-party, limited pluralism (three to five parties), extreme pluralism (six to eight parties) and atomised (where the counting method does not apply since it would make little difference). Sartori, then, constructs its own typology adding a second criterion, i.e. the ideological spectrum of each polity, to settle the issues of the segmentation of the polities.

When there is fragmentation but not polarisation, the systems are attributed to the type of moderate pluralism. Otherwise, in the cases of fragmented and polarised systems, the type is defined polarised pluralism. The latter case is of a particular interest for my analysis, since one of the main features of polarised pluralist systems⁴ is the presence of anti-system parties. Despite recognizing that there is a difference in kind, rather than a mere difference in degree, between a refusal or an alienation to the system and the protest against the system, Sartori (2005[1976]: 117) conceives *anti-systemeness* very broadly, including all the parties which either reject the system in which they compete or protest against the system, since all of them have *delegitimising impact* on the system. This definition, albeit useful in post-Cold War systems, loses part of its explanatory power (Capoccia 2002). In this perspective, both fascist and green parties should be placed equally outside the system, since they criticize, despite in radically different ways, representative democracy. Thus, I define as anti-system those parties which display a principled rejection of the representative democracy and poliarchic institution as such. On the contrary, those parties which challenge poliarchic institution, without questioning its intrinsic legitimacy, are defined here as (pro-system) challenger. Within the challenger families, the concept of populism is frequently used in the academic literature to describe the tendency of some of those parties to become anti-system.

Without going into a detail description, it is my contention that the great majority of parties within challenger families (with few notable exception, such as Jobbik and Golden Dawn in radical-right party family) are pro-systemic, since the challenger parties of the three out four families participated in coalition government (see below) both as junior partners or as the main stakeholder in a coalition, without questioning the legitimacy of the representative institutions nor refuting their ‘exit’ from the government. Even when parties belonging to the (European) radical right family have impacted on the quality of the democracy, their participation in coalition government have not undermined the stability of the poliarchies. Mudde (2014) pushes his analysis a step forward claiming that (populist) radical right parties have not impacted significantly in the party system change in Europe. Accordingly, Damiani (2016) in his comparative work on radical-left parties shows how these parties adapt to a pro-system posture toward poliarchic institutions.

Nonetheless, it becomes “common sense” equating populism with a threat to democratic institutions; to what extent populism is anti-systemic with respect to representative democracy is debated among scholars. While some authors consider populism as opposing to democratic systems (Abts and Rummens 2007, Rosanvallon 2008, Urbinati 2011), others highlight how populism can be conceived

⁴ Sartori enlists eight features, which characterize polarised pluralist systems: anti-system parties, the presence of a bilateral opposition, the occupation of the political centre, the relevant ideological distance and the presence of centrifugal drives, ideological patterning, the presence of irresponsible oppositions and the politics of outbidding, or of over-promising.

a purest form of democracy (Lacalu 2005a and 2005b, Panizza 2005). Finally, other scholars, while acknowledging the positive side of fostering inclusiveness, emphasize the *potential* delegitimising impact that populist parties may have in political systems in long-run (Arditi 2004 and 2007, Kaltwasser 2012). In a similar vein, Canovan (1999) shows that populism emerges when democracies fail to address its basic functions, such as giving voice to the people, thus allowing populists to take the stage as the “true” representative of the people. In the tension between a pragmatic and a redemptive face of the democracy, populism is critical toward the former, while it focuses its mobilization power on the latter (Canovan 1999). It seems that the last interpretation is the most promising in a comparative perspective: in their edited book, Mudde and Kaltwasser (2012) show how populism in Europe and the Americas frames liberal-democratic values, reaching the conclusion that this polyform phenomenon is not anti-democratic per se, despite the controversial judgments about liberal-democratic values of the so-called “populist” parties. This does not mean that populism, despite being identifiable with a cross-regional minimal definition, has the same accompanying features: following Mudde and Kaltwasser (2011:24, see also Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013), “there are good reasons to think that we are actually dealing with two “types” or “families” of populism: while Latin American populism can be labelled as predominantly inclusionary, European populism can be conceived of as primarily [but not entirely] exclusionary”.

As Mudde and Kaltwasser (2017: 18) in a more recent work succinctly state, the relationship between populism and poliarchic systems is complex since “populism is both a friend and a foe of (liberal) democracy, depending on the stage of the process of democratization”. As for the Western European cases, the process of democratization was positively concluded with the Southern European transition to democracy (Morlino 1998, 2003 and 2012, O’Donnell et al. 1986) thus, populism in Europe cannot be considered as synonym of anti-systemness per se.

3.4 Are challenger parties inherently populist?

Another controversial and debated topic in the political science in the last three decades is populism in non-traditional parties. The literature that deals with this issue is vast and a comprehensive review is almost impossible to draw, not only for the past publications, but above all for the endless rhythm of new releases on this topic in the very last years. Little doubts can be casted on the conceptual stretching that populism suffered in the last years. After all, during the economic and the financial crises, the word populism was used by mass media, politicians, think tanks, journalist and opinion-makers to describe almost any of the threats to the stability of the polities within the European Union and to the European Union itself. At the same time, insightful works – from different perspective – have recently provide an all-encompassing picture of the relation between populism and the economic

crisis (Kriesi and Pappas 2015), of the populist attitudes among the electorate (Akkerman et al. 2014) and of the relationship between the distribution of populism along the political spectrum (Rooduijn and Akkerman 2015).

Rather than identifying which of the party family is most suited to be labelled as populist and to what extent specific parties can be defined as populist, I will answer here to a specific question: are challenger parties inherently populist? Or, is there a binomial relationship between populism and the challenger status? Starting from a comprehensive definition of populism and analysing its specific attributes, the (partial) conclusion I reach here is that, even though the concept of populism is of some help in describing challenger parties, the binomial relationship is not automatic and then, only a comparative analysis that deals with specific “populist” features of each party would be of some help. Populism has been associated with political systems, political parties, party leaders, ideology, communication campaigns, social movements and its definition is still controversial (Vittori 2017d). For example, in its seminal work on populism, Margaret Canovan (1981) finds seven populist sub-categories, four of which contains the label of populist: (1) farmers’ radicalism, (2) peasant movements, (3) intellectual agrarian socialism, (4) populist dictatorship, (5) populist democracy, (6) reactionary populism and (7) politicians’ populism.

Populist parties were also defined as a new party type (Taggart 1995, Zaslove 2008) and the internal organizations of “populist parties” were recently analysed in a book edited by Heinisch and Mazzoleni (2016). The subtitle of the book by Heinisch and Mazzoleni is “The Radical Right in Western Europe”. Still, anchoring this discussion only to political parties, populism has been associated to a great variety of families: radical-right parties (Mudde 2007), left-wing parties (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014, Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013), neoliberal (Weyland 1999 and Roberts 1995), liberal parties (Zaslove 2008) and green parties (Müller-Rommel 1998).

Hence, finding a definition of populism is a puzzling task. Many fruitful attempts in sociology and political science have been proposed in the last decades. Still, when the concept was firstly analysed by political science scholars, what emerged was its elusive character. In Ionescu and Gellner (1969: 4) words, populism “[a]s a doctrine or as a movement, it is elusive and protean. It bobs up everywhere, but in many and contradictory shapes”. More recently one of the most cited work on populism by Meny and Surel (2004) highlights the constitutive ambiguity of populism; along the same line, Taggart (2000) describes the populist phenomenon as inherently chameleonic. For the sake of simplicity, five different approaches can be identified among the literature: populism as democratic illiberalism (Pappas 2014), populism as a political mobilization tool (Di Tella 1965 and Jansen 2011), populism as a leader-led movement (Roberts 2006 and Weyland 2001), populism as a communication tool (Canovan 1984, De la Torre 2010, Jagers and Walgrave 2007, Laclau 2005a) and populism an

ideology (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008, Canovan 2002) or a thin-centred ideology (Mudde 2004). Here, I propose an adapted version of Mudde's definition of populism (2004) – which I elsewhere operationalized (Vittori 2017d) – based on the concept of thin-centred ideology (Freeden 1998). Populism is

a thin-centred ideology whose core is represented by (a) anti-elite(s) vs. the “people” attitude, (b) by an anti-political status quo inclination and (c) by the mobilization of the “community”/people through instruments of direct participation to political decision-making.

This minimal definition needs further specification in order to detect the accompanying factors that constitute populism as political phenomenon. According to Taggart (2000) populism is characterized by (1) hostility to representative politics; (2) idealization of the “heartland” populists belong to; (3) ideological nature lacking core values; (4) reaction to the crisis; (5) populism as containing fundamental dilemmas that makes it self-limiting; (6) context-dependent phenomenon. Rooduijn (2014: 573) extracts four crucial features out of twelve, which are commonly associated to populism: (1) the emphasis on the central position of the people; (2) criticism against the elite; (3) conception of the people as a homogeneous entity and (4) the conviction of living in a period of serious crisis. Combining both, it is possible to find seven basic features: (I) populism as emerging out of a sense of perceived crisis; (II) context dependency; (III) a self-limiting phenomenon (IV) anti-elitism; (V) homogeneity of the people; (VI) hostility to representative politics; (VII) populism as an ideology lacking core value.

To what extent, then minimal (homogeneity of the people, anti-elitism, hostility to representative politics and ideology) and accompanying features (emergence out of a perceived crisis, the context-dependency and the self-limiting phenomenon) are inherently incorporated by the challenger family? There are relevant distinctions among the challenger family: for example, while the homogeneity of the in-group is a defining feature of populist radical right parties (Mudde 2007) and their exclusionary and protectionist view of the society, this homogeneity is framed in a radically different way in the radical-left, green and left-libertarian cases. A similar analysis seems to be valid for the anti-elite attitude: while the academic literature on radical-right parties and some radical-left parties (the Left in Germany, the Socialist Party in Netherlands, Podemos in Spain, the Left Front in France and SYRIZA in Greece) has emphasized the incorporation of a strong anti-elitist attitudes (see 3.5), with a corresponding decline of an anti-capitalist ideology in the latter case, other challenger parties – Green Parties and other radical-left parties (Izquierda Unida in Spain, Rifondazione Comunista in

Italy, the French Communist Parity) have only partially assimilated this attitude. The sense of perceived crisis that populist parties share seems to be a mobilizing factor to all emerging political parties, rather than a feature of populist or challenger parties. Without going into details here, some of the newest liberal parties, whose thick ideological articulation can be defined as (neo)liberal – among the most successful in electoral terms, Ciudadanos in Spain, the Civic List in Italy, the En Marche! in France – emphasize in their political discourse the sense of the crisis of the representation of both centre-left and centre-right parties. Even the some new social-democratic leaders that arouse in Europe during the economic and financial crisis (among others, Renzi in Italy, Sánchez in Spain, Valls in France) gained consensus out of the sense of the perceived crisis of values of the left. The context-dependency feature is less relevant for the analysis of the challenger families: following Taggart (2000), the chameleonic essence of populism contributes to its electoral and ideological success in very different political contexts; hence, it is plausible that the thin-centred populist ideology is incorporated in distinct parties with different thick ideologies. Finally, the self-limiting nature of populism should be associated with the limited lifespan of populist parties due to their “problematic” relationship with the institutions and the power (Taggart 2000). Whether electorally successful or not, challenger parties prove to be resilient and consistent in the Western electoral arena. In conclusion, challenger parties – as the following literature review will attest – are not inherently populist, albeit some of them in all families fall within this category.

3.5 Beyond the definitions. The challenger families: a review

The first and most successful challenger party family is the radical-right party family. The literature on radical-right party (RRP) family is exterminate. Arzheimer (2013) has collected 453 titles on this subject, but it is more than plausible that in the recent years – due to the electoral success of those parties – the literature has grown consistently.

As previously highlighted, RRP emerged out of the post-materialist silent revolution (Inglehart 1990). Several supply-side and demand-side factors may explain their rise in Europe: still, as Norris (2005) notes, how radical right parties craft their values and build their organizations in the electoral systems is more important than, for example, the levels of unemployment, the immigration quotas or the social risks associated with the globalization.

Part of the academic literature agrees on the fact the changing values in Europe in the 60s and the 70s opened a unique political opportunity window for those parties (Iganzi 1994 and McGann and Kitschelt 1995): the growing relevance of cultural issues, such as immigration and security, and other non-economic issues such as anti-elitism and a strong anti-European Union attitude (Zaslove 2004), were crucial for their success. The electoral success of those parties can be also explained through

cross-national diffusion processes (Rydgren 2005 and 2007). RRPs were able to re-invent ethno-nationalism, anti-establishment and anti-globalization attitudes in the different national contexts, using the decreasing relevance of the socio-economic cleavage as a leverage to legitimate new issues. RRPs are different from the post-World War II neofascist parties; albeit anti-liberal, these parties generally tend to accept the democratic competition. In this regard, Betz and Johnson (2004: 323) argue that their ideology is “a response to the erosion of the system of ‘ethno-national dominance’, which characterized much of the history of modern nation states. [...] The strategic goal is to reverse this development and reinstall ethno-national dominance”. Moreover, RRPs link the need for the ethno-dominance, with a strong anti-partyism (Ignazi 1996). Ivarsflaten (2008), for example, show that immigration is the main binding-factor in radical-right party family. Cochrane adds to this interpretation an interesting finding: the common anti-immigration stance explains the socially-conservative ideology and not vice-versa. In his words, “[t]here appears to be little about social conservatism that generates opposition to immigration, but something about opposition to immigration that generates social conservatism. There is an unrequited relationship, it seems, between the anti-immigrant right and the socially conservative right” (Cochrane 2013: 211-212). Contrary to the precursory works on RRPs (Betz 1994 and McGann Kitschelt 1995), these parties are not neoliberal (anymore) in the economy, nor the economic program is crucial for RRPs electorate (Mudde 2007). From an ideological standpoint, RRPs propose the securitization of the borders and an “exclusionary” welfare state (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013).

RRPs were so successful in promoting non-economic issues that some of them were normalized in the European public debate (Berezin 2009 and 2011), becoming part of the mainstream in Europe. Not only this; RRPs contributed significantly to the rise of the right-wing bloc in many Western European countries, contributing to the rapprochement with traditional centre-right parties in policy areas, such as immigration, integration and security (De Lange 2012).

As Mudde (2010: 1181) puts it,

[t]he key features of the populist radical right ideology – nativism, authoritarianism, and populism – are not unrelated to mainstream ideologies and mass attitudes. In fact, they are best seen as a radicalisation of mainstream values. Hence, the populist radical right should be considered a pathological normalcy, not a normal pathology.

In the last decades, RRPs frequently participated in coalition governments as junior partners or as support party in minority government (Zaslave 2011). The main cases are: Northern League (LN) in Italy, the Pim Fortuijn List (LPF) in The Netherlands, the Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP) in

Switzerland, the Progress Party in Norway, the Dansk Folkeparti (DF) in Denmark, the Bündnis Zukunft Österreich (BZÖ) and the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ) in Austria. As Minkenberg (2001) and Akkerman and De Lange (2012) show, there are important policy effects when these parties hold executive offices in cultural-related issues, while their impact in other areas, such as economy, is subordinated to the traditional centre-right parties.

RRPs' electorate is able to recognize the issue-ownership of these parties. For example, exclusive-nationalist individuals tend to prefer RRP parties (Dunn 2015); RRP voters – lower educated people, unemployed people and manual workers – are less satisfied with politicians, politics in general (Arzheimer 2009) and with the European Union (Werts et al. 2012).

The other “old” challenger party family is the one of the greens. The literature on greens flourished during the 80s and the 90s (Müller-Rommel 1989, 1990 and 1998, O'Neill 1997, Poguntke 1989 and 1993 and Richardson and Roots 1995), when those parties obtained a relevant electoral success, especially in Germany, Finland, Belgium and, partly, France. However, more recent works shed a light on this family (Burchell 2014, Frankland et al. 2008, Müller-Rommel and Poguntke 2002, Poguntke 2002 and Van Haute 2016). It is relatively easy to disentangle the puzzle of the ideological priorities of those parties and, thus, the issue ownership of a non(purely)-economic issue: ecologism, the environmental protection, the so-called “green” policies, the fight against the global warming and the suspicious toward growth-oriented (and then, heavily polluting) economies are the cornerstone of the greens.

As it will be explained in the next chapter, the other innovation brought by the green movements and the green parties is the organization. Green parties along with other left-libertarian parties challenged traditional parties, promoting a grassroots democracy with more decentralized and more open organizations (Kitschelt 1990 and Müller-Rommel 1990).

As for the RRP, Greens in Europe faced the conundrum of the participation in coalition government; their result was mixed, since they seemed ill placed to wield much blackmailing power in coalition governments (Poguntke 2002). Moreover, the fracture between moderates and fundamentalists (or *realos* and *fundis*) in several European countries created problems for their internal cohesion: the formers are focused on a more pragmatic tactics toward their participation in the government; the latter prioritize on a more ideologically-oriented strategy, less inclined to compromise with centre-left parties. *Realos* seemed to have prevailed in this debate: the anchorage to the centre-left bloc, albeit refused in the first years of their existence, has been widely accepted by the greens (Burchell 2014: 166 and Von Haute 2016). The participation in coalition government cost major electoral setbacks to the greens (Müller-Rommel and Poguntke 2002); however, as Van Haute (2016: 319) notes, they “have, with few exceptions, recovered electorally from their postincumbency major

setbacks. Their participation in government is becoming more of a standard feature, just as their representation in parliament did in earlier years”.

In the last decades, environmentalism has become a top priority for several institutions, such as the European Union. Climate change, despite being a divisive issue in US, is widely recognized and accepted in the European constituency; whether this issue became part of the mainstream narratives (Kalinowski 2016) is hard to explain; still words, such as greenwashing are now part of the contemporary vocabulary. Ecologism, thus, is nothing new in the party policy platforms of many centre-left and centre-right parties.

The radical-left party (RLP) family in the post-Cold War sera faced a completely different scenario compared to the greens and RRP. While the latter effectively challenged the establish party systems in Europe, the main preoccupation for RLPs was the recovery from the shock of the fall of the Soviet Union. It was not simply an ideological U-turn, what RLPs were looking for, but a deeper transformation in the organizations of the parties and the contentious politics. The disappearance of the most relevant communist party in Western Europe, the PCI, the electoral setbacks of many communist parties (French, Spanish, Greek among others) left this party family quite unexplored, at least until recently. The fact that RLPs cover a wide range of labels (March 2011 and Ducange et al. 2013) generates further confusion in a family where reformed communists represent nowadays only an electoral minority.

The first comparative analyses of post-Cold War RLPs were mainly focused on the reformed communist parties in the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). In the book edited by Bozóki and Ishiyama (2002), the authors focused on the successor parties of CEE drawing the attention on the evolution of the political environment and on the organizational changing of the communist parties in the new democratic contexts. The case-studies in the book edited by Curry and Urban (2003) are fewer than the former, but in some way similar: even here the focus is on the transformation of former communist parties in CEE and the legacy of the communist organization in the new parties. Hudson (2000) focused on the evolution of former Eastern and Central communist parties, highlighting the transformation from communist to democratic-socialist ideology. Gryzmała-Busse (2002) compared the transition of communist parties in Eastern Europe (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary). The conclusion that “[t]hese parties thus ‘redeemed the communist past’ both by making amends for the most disgraceful elements of their history and by cashing in on their elite resources to remake themselves into successful democratic competitors and governors” (Gryzmała-Busse 2002: 265). Backes and Moureau (2008), on the other side, focused on both Western and Central/Eastern Europe communist parties after the collapse of the Soviet Union, adding the analysis of Southern Europe communist parties in Portugal, Greece, Italy and Cyprus. Hildebrandt and Daiber (2010)

provide 22 cases of RLPs parties in Europe, focusing on the economic, political and social situation in each country. March (2011) has improved the existing literature with a study on the ideology, the success (or lack thereof) and the impact of RLPs in the European politics, adding a classification of different RLPs. March, indeed, finds four subgroups within the European RLPs: communist parties (which he further splits in reform communists and conservative communists), democratic socialist, populist socialist and social populist. Sozzi (2011) and Hudson (2012) investigate the nature of the new radical left supranational party, the European Left and its relationship with the radical left group in the European Parliament – the GUE/NGL – and with the national parties.

Despite the importance of several monographies and single-case studies on the story of (Western) European Communist Parties (see among others Courtois and Lazar [2000] for the French Communist Party, Galli [2011] for the Italian Communist Parties, Morán [1986], Kousoulas [1965], for the Greek Communist Party), comparative analyses on radical-left parties in Europe after 1990 are infrequent. Still, single-case studies for several Western European RLPs helped to formation of growing literature on this party family (for example, Arter 2002, Bertolino 2005, Charalambous and Ioannu, 2015, Dunphy 2007, Freire et al. 2010, Hough et al. 2007, Lisi 2013, Marcković 2013, Patton 2006, Ramiro 2000, 2004a, 2004b, Ramiro and Verge 2013, Spourdalakis 2014). Nonetheless, few notable exceptions tried to shed a light on the left-to-the-socialdemocratic hemisphere. Bosco (2000) in her three case-studies work on Italian, Spanish and Portuguese Communist parties shows how the changing political environment in the three countries and the end of the Cold War have transformed the parties ideologically and from an organizational standpoint. Along the same line, the books edited by Botella and Ramiro (2003) expand the comparative analysis on the evolution of communist parties and post-communist parties in Western Europe.

In terms of ideological articulation, these parties refer frequently to socialism as a utopian goal to be reached in an unspecified future. Pragmatically, the majority of the radical-left parties accept the liberal-democratic rules of the game, in terms of participation to both electoral competition and to coalition governments. A comparative analysis of the most recent development of radical-left parties has been pursued by Damiani (2015), with its work on the Italian, Spanish, French and German cases: the conclusion reached by the author is that all have accepted the parliamentary rules. As explained by March and Mudde (2005: 34), “democratic socialists see themselves as to the ‘left’ of social democracy, accept parliamentary democracy, but retain a radical commitment to systemic transformation, usually through a commitment to grass-roots democracy and (especially) through a rejection of capitalism”. Still, the differences with the centre-left parties, namely the social-democrats, is more theoretical than real, since the two political traditions do not appear irreconcilable (Ducange et al. 2013). Even at risk of over-generalizing national tendencies (March 2011), it is

possible to find three minimum common denominators among this family: a) the rejection of capitalism, particularly its actual financial articulation (neo-liberalism), b) a greater economic redistribution against economic inequalities and in favour of expanded social-rights and c) internationalism. As for the relationship with the European Union, Charalambous (2013) compares the cases of KKE in Greece, AKEL in Cyprus and Communist Refoundation in Italy in view of the European integration. The conclusions reached by the author is that the issue of the European Integration (as well as its implications in terms of ideological reshuffling) is mainly due to the political circumstances in which each party operates, rather than to other supranational factors.

One crucial aspect in any RLP in Europe is the linkage with social-movements: soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the relationship was weak. RLPs needed to re-organize and re-frame their ideology in an introspective search for its place in the post-Cold War Europe. However, the alter-globalization movement(s) at the beginning of the new millennium offered a unique occasion for many RLPs. The social-forum platforms, the anti-G8 marches and the protests against supranational institutions of the Washington Consensus – the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade/World Trade Organization (GATT/WTO) – reinvigorated the relationship between social movements and RLPs (Della Porta 2007 and 2009, Della Porta and Diani 2006). Once the political mobilization of the alter/anti-globalization movements decreased, RLPs seemed to be unable to maintain a strong linkage with those movements. However, recent contributions highlighted how in Southern European countries – Spain, Greece, Portugal – political parties in a context of new mobilization tried to re-connect with the civil society, through social movements and trade unions (Lisi 2013, Tsakatika and Lisi 2013, Tsakatika and Eleftheriou 2013). From an electoral standpoint, RLPs and the communist families have not fully recovered from the pre-1989 scenario, albeit some relevant exceptions contributed to the recovery in the last years. As Ciocchetti shows (2017: 37-42) the electoral and the parliamentary strength of (Western) RLPs grew in the period 2000-2015, while the previous decades (1980-1988 and 1989-2000) displayed a decreasing trend. Most of the RLPs analysed in March and Keith volume (2016) were only “moderately successful” in the EU-crisis scenario. A relevant finding in this regard is that demand-side factors cannot fully grasp the variation in the RLPs electoral performance; rather, external and internal supply-side factors (March and Keith 2016: 366) help explain the poor results of many RLPs. However, March and Rommerskirchen (2015: 48) show a different picture, in which “RLP success is strongly rooted in demand-side factors such as poor economic conditions, high societal Euroscepticism and, above all, a legacy of past RLP success”. More important, only the combination of a political and an economic crisis accounts for the success of those parties. However, the policy-seeking strategy did not help its recovery. March and Keith (2016: 374) consider RLPs as “ill-

prepared to benefit from the crisis”.

Despite the relative strength of RLPs, many of them participated in the previous decades in coalition governments both at the national and local levels (Bale and Dunphy 2011, Hildebrandt 2010, Katsourides 2015 and Olsen et al. 2010). The main argument used by RLPs to be part of a pro-capitalist institution in alliance with pro-capitalist parties is that this should be a necessary step in the process of transforming the society and overcoming capitalism. However, “the danger in this strategy is that the Left could become reduced to pursuing humanizing capitalism as the ultimate goal. This would make the governing Left responsible for integrating itself into a capitalist and liberal democratic model” (Katsourides 2015: 40).

Although the ideological distance between RLPs and the social-democratic or centre-left parties cannot predict the possibility for those parties to form an alliance nor “there seems to be no set proportion of the vote at which left parties and social democrats co-operate” (Olsen et al. 2010: 178), still the partnership with other social-democratic parties is crucial for RLPs, since the alliance between the two families is the most common solution for RLPs (if we except the SYRIZA-ANEL [Anexartitoi Ellines, Independent Greeks] government). Yet, the radical-left electorate have punished this choice. As noted by Olsen et al. (2010: 182), “where they [RLPs] have participated in government, left parties on average have lost about 25 per cent of their vote, declining from an average of 8.7 per cent before entering government to 6.8 per cent after participation in government”. RLPs seem to be more acquiescent than the past to capitalism and the Parliament rule; their road to mainstream politics, however, is still full of electoral obstacle.

Finally, the e-party family is the most recent among the challenger families. E-parties (or Digital Parties) born after the penetration of the Web in all strata of the society in Western society. The literature on these parties is still underdeveloped: even though they can be associated to a single-issue party, such as the Greens, since their main focus is on freedom of internet (see 3.4), they propose another way of organizing interests, i.e. through on-line agora whose aim is to overcome representative democracy, as it is conceived in the trustee model of representation. In that sense, albeit being not revolutionary, they may be considered as critical toward the system in the narrow sense of opposing representative democracy, even though the literature on those parties has not highlighted any relevant revolutionary stance vis-à-vis poliarchic institutions. Despite this, their growth and their organizational institutionalization is inextricably linked to the development of new media, which seem to have pushed the concept of horizontal participation a step further. From the one hand, they gradually became a crucial instrument for the activism and the participation in some relevant political parties. From the other hand, for some parties, such as Pirate parties, internet-based democracy is not just the main participation tool, but a *political end* in itself. For those parties, internet is destined to

replace traditional forms of activism and, consequently, on-line participation through new platform such as Liquid Feedback, Commo, Parelou are gradually becoming the party's *agoras*, where discussions among activists take place, where the programmatic lines of the parties are drawn and, mostly, where potential candidates may arise. The on-line activism within on-line platforms are frequently accompanied by direct-democracy tools, such as the on-line votes for the candidates' selection, for the ratification of political alliances etc (Deseriis 2017, Mosca 2018, Vittori 2018b). The chapters on the three case-studies will show why Podemos, SYRIZA and FSM can be considered "challengers" and which of the challenger families fits best the three cases.

Chapter 4 - How does *challenger* parties compete, organize and articulate their ideologies? A framework for the analysis of new challenger parties.

4.1 Introduction

Following a case-oriented approach (Ragin 1987 and 1998) I single out what can be defined as the dependent and the independent variables within a framework of case-studies' "thick descriptions" (Geertz 1973). This because the flourishing literature on Podemos, SYRIZA and FSM targeted only some of the variables under analysis (see below). Rather than starting from a delineated set of hypotheses, which will be provided in the end of the chapter following the broad research question envisaged in the Introduction, I create a theoretical framework of analysis for the three case-studies, trying at the same time to reduce the conceptual stretching (Sartori 1970) associated with the labels frequently attached to those parties.

The aim here is to produce limited generalizations concerning the supply-side related causes of the electoral success of challenger parties in Southern Europe. The starting point is the electoral success and the rapid electoral institutionalization of Podemos, M5S and SYRIZA (dependent variable), while the movement parties' framework, which has been frequently associated to those parties, is the basis for the analysis of the independent variables, namely the organization of the parties, their ideological articulation, their pattern of competition and the political opportunity structure of the political systems in which they operate.

The methodological framework for my analysis is the Most Different Similar Outcome (MDSO). MDSO – similarly to Most Similar System Design introduced by Mill (2008[1843]) – is a comparative method of differentiation in which a comparable outcome in few different case-studies is derived from one independent variable similar in all the cases under analysis. Despite the possibility of very weak causal inferences, MDSO allows for an in-depth analysis of the political parties' evolution. MDSO is essentially aimed at narrowing down the condition of occurrence of a phenomenon in order to identify those factors which may be responsible for the respective outcomes (Berg-Schlosser and De Meur, 2009: 22-23). As Przeworski and Teune (1970: 35) highlight "the 'most different systems design' centres on eliminating irrelevant system factors". However, this method needs to be used *cum grano salis*: theoretically, the Mill's logic of differentiation leads to a mono-causal explanation of a social phenomenon. Needless to say, even when considering the sole supply-side factors, the naivety of such a statement would overestimate not only the complexity of political organizations, but above all the countless intervening factors that influence the electoral results of a political party. Moreover, the inductiveness of my approach pre-determines the theoretically relevant similarities and differences in the empirical cases, thus limiting the potential variables.

As Meckstroth (1975: 154) puts it for quantitative analysis

the comparative method, whether conceived as the most similar or the most different systems design, requires the formation of concepts, hypotheses, and theories which encompass any and all variables whose explanatory importance is to be evaluated. And in the special case of the most different systems design, theoretical analysis must justify assumptions about ordering among system-level and within-system attributes before inferences about explanatory inconsequence can be sustained.

Fully aware of this problem, I stress here the necessity to interpret this research design as a guidance for the case-oriented work I propose here. As a matter of fact, the reasons behind the electoral success of political parties are numerous, related to both supply-side and demand-side factors and sometimes highly context-dependent. More importantly, under a MDSO logic, it is still difficult to isolate only one factor (be it in the supply side or in the demand side) as the cause for the success of a party *all other factors being supposedly different*.

Rather than working on enlarging the number of cases – the solution envisaged in Collier (1993) as a possible strategy to reinforce the still inherently weak causality – I focus on the two solutions identified by Lijphart (1975) to nuance the inferential problem: (a) focusing only on comparable cases and (b) using a more parsimonious theory. I target four supply-side areas, which can be regarded as independent variables – the political opportunity structure, the pattern of competition, the organization and the ideological articulation of the case-studies – in order to detect which of them is better suited to explain the success of those parties.

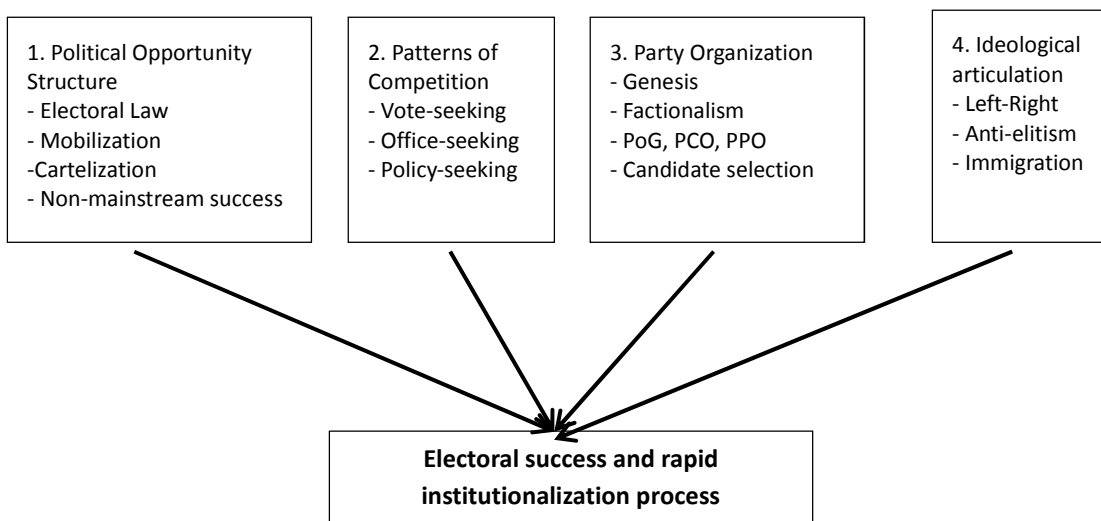


Figure 4.1 – Supply-side factors in the analysis of the electoral success and of the institutionalization process of challenger political parties.

4.2 The dependent variable: the political success of challenger parties

Identifying what constitutes a political success is a challenging task. The rise of issue entrepreneurs or challengers since the nineties and particularly in the aftermath of the Euro crisis (De Vries and Hobolt 2012, Hobolt and Tilley 2015, Meguid 2005 and 2008, Meyer and Wagner 2013) is framed in the literature as the electoral benefits of such parties in their political context in an election at the time $t+1$ compared to t_0 . Still, electoral results can be a useful term of comparison only in large-N analysis where it would be very hard to *frame* the electoral campaigns and their results for each case. When thick descriptions of electoral campaigns and electoral results are needed – as in the small-N analysis – a more in-depth interpretation of the concept of electoral success is required.

Three example of challenger parties not related with this work are cases in point for my argument: in the 2012 French legislative election, the French National Front (FN) under Marine Le Pen leadership obtained two seats in the National Assembly, improving its share of votes in the first round (from 4.3% in 2007 to 13.6% in 2012). Although, one is tempted to frame this improvement as a FN victory, the result was partly unsatisfactory for the radical-right party since the pools before the elections indicated FN share of votes oscillating between 15.5 and 18%. Was Marine Le Pen's electoral campaign successful? It is hard to tell. Still, the mere electoral improvement is not a sign of a "rise". The same happened in 2017 in the Dutch elections; the radical-right Party for Freedom (PVV) was the second most-voted party (13% compared to the 10.1% in 2012), obtaining five more seats (20) with respect to the previous elections. What at first sight is a victory, in the European public debate was framed as a "defeat".

Quite to the contrary, in the 2015 general elections in United Kingdom, the United Kingdom Independent Party (UKIP) was credited by the pools with 3 or 4 seats; it gained only one seat and using Sartori terminology the party was not "relevant" in the Parliament, but it was the third most-voted party (12.7%). The growth of UKIP, however, was one of the responsible to the shift of Conservative agenda on European affairs, which led eventually to the Brexit referendum. Since I provide thick descriptions of the three case-studies, I frame the political successfulness of a challenger party not just in terms of electoral outcomes. Rather I focus both on the electoral results and on the consequences of those results for the party systems. As for the electoral results, the success is operationalized through two indicators, i.e. the *relevance* criteria envisaged by Sartori (1976[2005]). A political party is, thus, relevant a) when it is needed for any feasible coalition majority (coalition potential). Otherwise, the second criterion for relevance is b) the blackmail potential, according to which a party is able to affect the tactics of other parties, altering the direction of the competition. When a party exhibits one of the two criteria can be counted as relevant in any

political system.

However, successful electoral results in a peculiar election may be extemporaneous. Nothing prevents the political system to re-align in the previous party competition schema, once the novelty represented by the new challenger party vanishes. For that reason, I use the concept of “political consequences” of the electoral results as a second indicator to evaluate challenger party success. Its operationalization goes back to the concept of “critical elections” (Key 1955).

Following Key (1955: 4), critical elections are elections in which the results of the voting reveal a sharp alteration of the pre-existing political system and in which “the realignment made manifest in the voting in such elections seem to persist for several succeeding elections”. In these critical elections, a high level of total and net volatility and a change in the balance of power of the centre-left and centre-right poles and within the two poles are to be expected. Thus, the political consequences of an electoral success derive from the extent to which a challenger party is “responsible” for the critical elections. However, being responsible a critical election is not enough; the consequences of a success must be resilient over the time. i.e. in the following elections. In a nutshell, the political consequences in this operationalization cannot be temporary. In order to detect the electoral institutionalization of a challenger party I use the minor party lifespan cycle provided by Pedersen (1982). Borrowing and adapting this conceptualization from Rokkan (1970), Pedersen (1982) identifies four thresholds for the institutionalization of a minor party: *declaration* – when a party declares its intention to participate in the elections, *authorization* – when a party meets all requirements set by the national laws to participate to the elections, *representation* – when a party elects at least one member in a legislature and *relevance* – when a minor party becomes relevant in the definition provided by Sartori (2005[1976]). Albeit not included in Pedersen scheme, the threshold of the executive power is relevant even for those parties, even when they may have less chance to overcome it (Figure 2). The degree of the institutionalization of a challenger party is not merely through the ability to overcome the four thresholds, but through its capacity to remain above the relevance threshold in the following elections.

The political success of a challenger party, thus, has a three-fold faces: (a) its ability to grow electorally from a t0 election to t1 election and to become relevant in a political system; (b) the extent to which a critical election is proportionally linked to the electoral rise of the challenger party under analysis and (c) the capability of the party to overcome the relevance threshold and to be electorally resilient over the time.

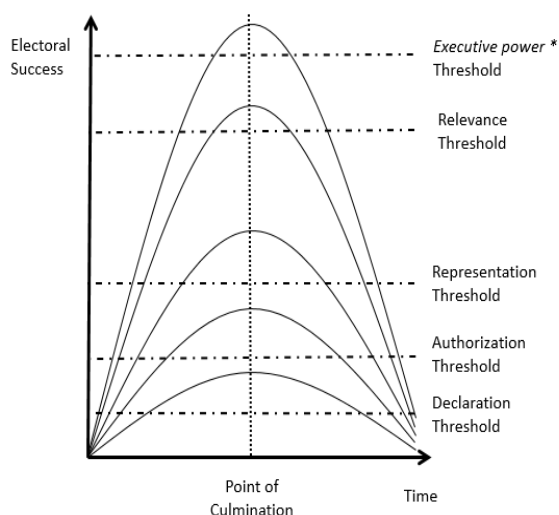


Figure 4.2 – Party Lifespan Cycle. Adaptation from Pedersen (1982).
 * The executive power threshold was absent in Pedersen formulation

4.3 The independent variables: the political opportunity structure, the pattern of competition, the organization and the ideology

The next step is the framework of analysis for the independent variables: the political opportunity structure, the pattern of competition, the organization and the ideology. The first variable is labelled political opportunity structure and it refers to four main factors that either fostered or hindered the success of the three parties: the electoral law, the policy and ideological convergence of traditional parties, the mobilization of social-movement and the success of other non-traditional parties in the three countries. The second variable is the pattern of competition, i.e. to what extent those parties adopted a vote-seeking, an office-seeking or a policy-seeking strategy. The third variable is the party organization. The last variable is the ideology; four criteria are inquired in this case, (a) the left-right orientations and the position of the party in the non-economic issues, i.e. (b) immigration (multiculturalism), (c) anti-elitism and (d) the attitude vis-à-vis EU.

4.3.1 The political opportunity structure

Introduced more than forty years ago by Eisinger (1973) in his seminal work on the condition for the protest in the American cities, the term political opportunity structure (POS), is frequently related to social movements and the (un)favourable conditions for them to emerge in a given context (among others see Della Porta 1995, Kitschelt 1986, Kriesi 2004, Tarrow 1996, Tilly and Tarrow 2015). In particular, Tarrow (1996: 54) defines the political opportunity structure as “consistent but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national signals to social and political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements”. In this work, following

partly Kriesi et al. (1995) and Kitschelt (1986), POS is analysed from an institutional perspective, taking into consideration the political system factors that may encourage the emergence of movement parties. The institutional variables are crucial to constrain and shape the supply-side in the political competition; as Della Porta and Diani (2006: 19) explain, POS is relevant also for political parties since they “face the problem of adapting their strategies and tactics to changing environments, as the context in which they operate may become more or less favourable”. Arzheimer and Carter (2006), for example, apply the POS framework on radical-right parties success in Western Europe focusing on three long-term institutional variables (the electoral system and the degree of centralism in each country), three medium-term party system variables (the ideological position of other competitors in the party system, the degree of convergence between the mainstream parties and the coalition format in the respective party systems) and short-term contextual variables (the salience of new issues and economic indicators, such as the level of unemployment). For reason of parsimony, I restrict the analysis to four enabling factors – one at the systemic level, one at the societal level and two at the party competition level – that may affect the electoral environment. The aim is contextualizing the political environment in which new parties operate, distinguishing in an ideal-type continuum between a *highly favourable environment*, where all the enabling factors are present, when it has a major electoral breakthrough and a *highly hostile environment* where none of the above conditions are met.

The first and the most relevant factor I identify as the main systemic factor is the electoral law. As Lijphart (1999) shows proportional electoral laws favour the formation of multiparty systems, while majoritarian laws are structurally inclined toward the formation of two or two-and-a-half party systems, the so-called Duverger law (see also, Duverger 1954). As the literature shows (Rae 1971, Riker 1982, Sartori 1986, Singer 2013, Taagepera and Shugart 1989), this relation is not straightforward; however, the presence of a proportional law, especially with a low threshold and high-magnitude district, favours multi-party systems (Taagepera and Grofman 1985) and, in principle, it should encourage the political entrepreneurs to enter in the electoral market. Majoritarian electoral laws and proportional laws with high thresholds and/or small districts, on the contrary, discourage – without preventing *per se* – the emergence of new challenger parties, since the possibility for a party to become relevant are lower and the resources needed higher. As Blais and Carty (1987) and Taagepera and Shugart (1989) show, in proportional formulas larger districts yield more relevant parties, while plurality formulas in ample districts bring high disproportionality. As Bolleyer (2013: 9) acknowledges, while the parliamentary threshold is not relevant for the long-term success of new parties, the permissiveness of the electoral system is crucial for their entry.

Large districts⁵ (more than 6 seats) in a proportional electoral law with a low threshold (0-3%) is considered as an enabling factor, while proportional laws with small or medium-sized districts (from 2 to 5) and/or medium-high thresholds or plurality electoral law are considered an obstacle for challenger parties.

The second factor is the political mobilization. The presence of a strong social movement with nationwide mass protest against the traditional parties or, more broadly, against the policy-making of governing parties should allow challenger parties to “capitalize” electorally the mobilization joining the protest or internalizing the issues advocated by the protesters.

The third and the fourth conditions concern the party system level. The third is the ideological and policy-making convergence between the most voted parties in each country; conscious of the criticism to the cartel theory (see Ch. 2), I propose a simplified operationalization. The participation of centre-left and centre-right parties in the same coalition, the economic positions of mainstream parties while in government and the joint vote on a new-cleavages issue (for a discussion see 4.2.4), such as the EU-related budget issues should in principle leave the possibility for challenger parties to present as the only alternative to the “cartel” of traditional parties. On the contrary, a marked polarization in the political system allows traditional parties in opposition to credibly present itself as the alternative to the governing parties.

Fourthly, the absence of other anti-establishment relevant parties with either a blackmail or coalition potential is a conducive factor for a challenger party. On the contrary, the presence of other anti-establishment parties, even with different political platforms, reduce the possibility for a “new” challenger to emerge.

In my heuristic ideal-typical model (Table 4.1) the electoral law has a crucial importance in determining the possibility for a challenger party to enter relevantly in the electoral arena, while the other three factors have an equal relevance. In one pole, a *highly favourable environment* is characterized by a proportional law, a marked convergence between traditional parties, a strong political mobilization and the absence of a relevant anti-establishment political party. In the other pole, in the *highly hostile environment* none of the conditions are met. In between, the environment is considered *favourable* when a proportional law is accompanied by two out of the other three factors. The environment is considered *moderately favourable* when a proportional law is accompanied by only one factor. It is *hostile* when a disproportional law is accompanied by the presence of one

⁵ The discretion on the concept of “large” and “small” is evident; however, it is possible to make sense of this selection. Nonetheless, Carey and Hix (2011) divide 81 countries in 6 categories according to the median district magnitude (DM): DM=1, from 2 to 3, from 4 to 6, from 7 to 10, from 11 to 20, higher than 20. Their results show that moving from a single district to a multi-member district with 4-6 seats available reduces the disproportionality of about three-quarters of the total expected reduction possible by raising district magnitude. In larger districts the disproportionality remains stable. Thus, I use 6 seats as a discretionary point to distinguish large and small districts.

enabling factor. It is *moderately hostile* when a disproportional law is accompanied by two out of the other three enabling factors. The environment is *ambivalent* when a proportional law is not accompanied by any of the other three factors or when a disproportional law is accompanied by the presence of the other three factors.

		Electoral Law	
		<i>Proportional</i>	<i>Disproportional</i>
Presence of other enabling factors	<i>Three Factors</i>	Highly Favourable	Ambivalent
	<i>Two Factors</i>	Favourable	Moderately Hostile
	<i>One Factor</i>	Moderately Favourable	Hostile
	<i>None of the factors</i>	Ambivalent	Highly Hostile

Table 4.1 - Institutional Political Opportunity Structure: a framework of analysis

4.3.2 The pattern of competition

The starting which I will adapt to the supply-side analysis, is the seminal work by Strøm (1990) and by its theoretical evolution by Strøm and Müller (1999). In their book, the two authors, while acknowledging the difficulties in identifying the ultimate purposes of party choices, construct three party's ideal types:

- I. the office-seeking party,
- II. the policy-seeking party,
- III. and the vote-seeking party.

In the first case, the party maximizes the control over political office benefits, even at the detriment of policy objectives or future prospects in the following elections. Following Riker (1962), Laver and Schofield (1990) and Budge and Laver (1986), Strøm and Müller (1999: 5) argue that “what parties fundamentally seek is to win, and in parliamentary democracies, winning means controlling the executive branch, or as much of that branch as possible. Office-seeking behaviour aims at such goods”. In a nutshell, the question to be asked when inquiring an office-seeking behaviour should be reduced to: "Is this behaviour aimed at increasing the party's control of executive office benefits, for whatever reason, even if it means sacrificing policy objectives or our prospects in the next election?" (Strøm and Müller 1999: 6). According to Strøm (1990: 574), party leaders seek office benefits to

convert them into private goods. An internal office-related strategy may be pursued by the leaders, creating an impermeable recruiting channel, thank to which the internal career prospects are linked to the leadership and his/her office-seeking strategy.

Opening up the recruitment and, especially, widening the selectorate for the recruitment discourage office-seeking strategies, since leader can only partially control the promotion of ranks into the PPO or the PCO. According to Strøm (1990: 578-579), leaders' accountability is a last resort that leader uses to attract new members; in labour-intensive parties, the leaders are forced to make concession to members, thus preferring office (and policy) strategies over votes. However, even when using a rational-choice approach, this line of reasoning has one main shortcoming: constrained leaders, especially in democratic context, may consider accountability as value to attract members and to overcome vociferous militants. Moreover, despite intra-party democracy may lessen the possibility to gain office (Back 2008), the promotion of intra-party democracy may serve to attract voters (vote-seeking strategy), since it favours the perception of transparent and non-corrupted party, which cares about electorate' needs.

What holds Strøm's in the theorization is that parties which pursue an office-seeking strategy in multiparty systems tend to de-emphasize policy-disagreement with *coalitionable* partners in order to be perceived as a valuable ally and to be included in a minimal connected winning coalition (MCWC) (Axelrod 1970) or minimum range coalition (see also Laver and Schofield 1990). In Wolinetz formulation (2002: 152), an "office-seeking party should avoid policy commitments which might make it undesirable as a coalition partner and eschew electoral strategies, such as attacking prospective partners too fiercely, which would make coalitions impossible".

The second model comprises those parties, "which seeks to maximize its impact on public policy" (Strøm and Müller 1999: 7). In Wolinetz's words (2002: 150), "[p]olicy-seeking parties run the gamut from former parties of mass integration (as long as these had clearly defined ideological or policy goals) and some of their modern descendants to parties articulating green or environmental issues". Rather than treating parties' choices as policy-blind, policy-seeking parties place greater importance on how and under which political programs government coalitions are arranged. As for the previous model, the policy-seeking strategy owes much to the coalition theory (Giannetti and Benoit 2008). Ideologically cohesiveness is a prerequisite for those parties to arrange a coalition: this is not to say that policy-seeking parties exclude a priori an office-seeking strategy to pursue instrumentally its goal. Rather, those parties place greater importance in ideological proximity, since voters are expected to "punish" the policy outcomes which are inconsistent with the programs pursued by parties in the electoral campaign. That is to say, parties give to leaders a narrower margin of discretion than office-seeking parties. A policy-seeking model assume "that party leaders can identify and differentiate

between these options” (Strøm and Müller 1999: 7), opting for what they expect is the best-case scenario in terms of policy outcomes and possibility to gain more votes in the next elections. A policy-seeking behaviour is more typical among activists, even if “policy compensation is unlikely to suffice for demanding organizational tasks and professional services. Hence, activists who perform such services, or many services, are at least compensated in private benefits” (Strøm 1990: 575-576). Moreover, in Strøm theorization the greater the decentralization, the greater the orientation of the party toward policy at the expense of office- and vote-seeking. Thus, a decentralized party, in which activists play a relevant role in shaping party agenda is expected to pursue a policy-seeking strategy and, complementarily, an office-seeking strategy, rather than a pure vote-seeking strategy. In terms of coalition potential, policy-seeking parties are less flexible to bargain on their core policy orientations: not only leaders are less likely to be unaccountable to party members, but their bargains for a coalition government cannot be policy-blind.

A vote-seeking party is, as the label suggest, a vote maximiser and it is supposed to be found mainly in single-district electoral system, i.e. in two party systems. In its rational-choice framework, Downs (1957) considers political parties only as vote-seekers: to gain the elections in a two-party competition is the only rational strategy for a political party, since its choices are based on voters and other parties’ positions in the relevant ideological or issue space. According to Wolinetz (2002: 151), “the primary emphasis is on winning elections: policies and positions are not locked in. Instead, they are regularly manipulated in order to maximize support. [...] In a multi-party system, the equivalent would be a catch-all or electoral-professional party, trying to maximize support from a broad, though not necessarily all-inclusive portion of the electorate”. Vote-seeking parties need to be, from a theoretical standpoint, free from policy considerations and from the pressure toward offices. Thus, organizationally, those parties “rely on private or government funds to finance capital-intensive campaigns run by campaign professionals and marketing agencies. An organized membership, if there was one, would be kept at arm's length: although members might have voice on the selection of candidates, they would have little say on party policy” (Wolinetz 2002: 151). For that reason, there should be a recognizable and strong leadership capable of directing the choice of the party, without the pressures of party’s veto players.

The focus for a vote-seeking party is the de-emphasis of the classic left-right cleavage and, for challenger parties, on criticism toward minorities/out-groups or some specific élite. A vote-seeker rejects alliances and even MCWCs, if the leaders predict that this rejection will provide more votes in the following elections; for example, a vote-seeker may consciously decide to be a party in opposition – even if it lessens the probability to share public resources within the party – to impose a “responsible” (Mair 2009) oversized coalitions (OSCs), or grand-coalitions between traditional

parties in order to coagulate dissatisfied voters of the coalition's parties among a common platform based on the rejection of the government of the "establishment". However, this behaviour does not preclude that a vote-seeker promote a coalition, especially when it can be the coalition *formateur*. Vote-seeking strategies are influenced by institutional factors (Strøm 1990: 589): the greater the competitiveness the more parties will value votes. Parties and voters' views in this perspective are perfectly informed on each other preferences and able to change their positions accordingly. However, from the one side, the sociological and psychosocial models of voting behaviour question the very essence of the rational-choice model, focusing on different micro and macro aspects, such as the role of historical, institutional, societal factors (Lipset and Rokkan 1967 and Bartolini and Mair 1990), the role of proximal factors, such as the partisanship, electoral campaigns, the role of the leadership, or the role of personality traits (Caprara et al. 2008). From the other hand, even when adopting a rational-theory perspective, the Downsian perspective fails to account for the why-question: why parties should maximize their votes?

As Strøm and Müller (1999:9) acknowledge "it makes little sense to assume that parties value votes for their own sake. Contrary to office or policy, votes can only plausibly be instrumental goals. Parties only seek votes to obtain either policy influence, the spoils of office, or both". Nevertheless, vote-seeking model has an important heuristic value, since it describes how the patterns of competition are set up by political parties and how these pattern impact on crucial aspects of political parties such as the organization, the ideology and the electoral campaign. These ideal-types can hardly be a faithful representation of the real world: "pure vote seekers, office seekers, or policy seekers are unlikely to exist" (Strøm and Müller: 11); still, this framework provides a useful toolbox to explain the trade-offs parties have to face when dealing with electoral competition: if a Party X wants votes it probably needs to dilute hard ideological commitments which are badly perceived by a more or less a consistent part of the electorate; along the same line, if the same Party X instrumentally looks for office at any cost, it has to compromise with the hardliners within the party, who prefer to preserve the ideological purity. On the contrary, accepting only those coalition partners which are ideologically close to the party would reduce the possibility to be influential in the government, thus relegating the party to the opposition role.

Theoretically speaking, a compromise between these possibilities is all but easy to reach. In practice, it is even harder for those parties with a strong anti-establishment habit, especially when they have to face the conundrum of a cooperation with those parties they have claimed to oppose during the electoral campaign. In the last decades, this dilemma has anguished both radical-left and radical-parties.

Table 4.2 sums up five differentiating aspects – (a) Prominence of policy and determinants of the

strategy, (b) Electoral campaign (c) Alliances, (d) Élite and Membership, (e) Use of new electoral and participatory techniques – through which the pattern of competition of the three case-studies will be analysed.

		Office-seeking	Policy-seeking	Vote-seeking
<i>A</i>	<i>Prominence of policy and determinants of the strategy</i>	Not crucial for the party; policies are subordinated to the government role. Preference for a low-risk strategy.	Central focus within the party; dedicated policy committees; the policies “dictate” the strategy.	Irrelevant or deemphasized within the party. Policies are developed to fit the strategy and maximize the votes.
<i>B</i>	<i>Electoral campaign</i>	Capital-intensive campaign. De-emphasis of the differences with <i>coalitionable</i> allies. Non-polarizing electoral campaign.	Labour-intensive (mainly). Focus on the high-valence issues for the party. Polarizing attitudes toward these issues when crucial in the electoral campaign.	Capital-intensive campaign (mainly). Use of rallies and assemblies to mobilize the membership. Polarizing attitudes. Emphasis on the differences with other parties, especially those non- <i>coalitionable</i> .
<i>C</i>	<i>Alliances</i>	Participation in any possible ways to coalition government.	Policy-related alliances. MCWCs possible, but only when bargains with allies comprise high-salience policies for the party.	Instrumental use of the alliances: in opposition, if leaders can force unpopular OCs. MWC or MCWCs are possible. Preferences for coalition <i>formateur</i> role.
<i>D</i>	<i>Élite and Membership</i>	Leadership and party elite are unconstrained by PoG. Membership rather marginal.	Membership is the backbone of the organization; the party elite is constrained by members.	Leadership is crucial: unbalanced power for the ideological articulation and the alliances vis-à-vis PoG and PCO. Plebiscitary tools to involve members.
<i>E</i>	<i>Use of new electoral and participatory techniques</i>	Low in both cases.	High direct-democracy tools; new internet based electoral techniques depending on the resources.	High in both cases; participatory techniques in the party may assume a plebiscitarian connotation.
Table 4.2 – Office-seeking, policy-seeking, vote-seeking organizational, ideological and mobilizing “structure”. Revised and adapted from Wolinetz (2002).				

4.3.3 Party organization: a multi-faceted variable

Podemos, SYRIZA and FSM are often described as movement parties (Della Porta et al. 2017). Nonetheless, few if any works focus on how to analyse this hybrid organization; more often this “label” is associated with organizations which is somehow related with a social movement. In this paragraph, I provide a framework for analysis, beyond the mere relationship with a social movement. There are not many definitions of movement parties (Goldstone 2003, Hanagan 1998 and Kitschelt 2006). From the one hand, this may be surprising since social movements and political parties are inextricably linked: many extra-parliamentary parties in the XIX Century, such as the social-democratic parties, have derived from political movements. There is a long-established relationship between social movement and political parties with the latter having a potential impact in the political systems (Kriesi 2014). From the other hand, however, this hybrid structure is not common in the

European landscapes. For example, social-democratic parties' genesis is related to trade unions, workers' cooperative and associations (Pombeni 1994), which decided to enter in the political market to represent the demands of sectors of the society excluded by the parliamentary representation; these parties soon conformed to a type of rigid and hierarchical organization, which had its own internal life, (partly) separated from the founders' organization (Esping-Andersen 1985, Przeworski 1985, Kitschelt 1994) and its own ideological evolution (Fagerholm 2013 and Bale et al. 2010).

Movement parties in the post-World War II scenario emerged firstly out of left political spectrum as an innovative way to organize consensus and to represent the new issues dismissed by other traditional parties (environment, civil rights, anti-war). Nonetheless, radical-right parties too tried to capitalize on political mobilization on specific issues, such as anti-immigration platform coupled with a harsh criticism toward globalization and the liberal elites.

Following Kitschelt (2006: 280), movement parties are defined as "coalitions of political activists who emanate from social movements and try to apply the organizational and strategic practices of social movements in the arena of party competition".

This definition implies that three features are crucial to identify a movement party: (1) firstly, their organizational structure is weak and the membership is porous: the barriers to enter (and to exert a 'exit' strategy) are low and the professional staff is almost absent. (2) Secondly, movement parties "lack an institutionalized system of aggregating interests through designated organs" (ibidem): as a consequence, a formal procedure for the decision-making may vary widely, ideally from the grassroots democratic assembly to the charismatic leadership. The absence of designated organs refers to the weak Party in Central Office (PCO) that one is expected to find in these parties. Thirdly, (3) movement parties are '*di lotta e di governo*' *par excellence*: one day their elected members may be in a political manifestation and the day after it is possible to find them discussing a bill in the Parliament (Kitschelt, 2006). However, not all movement parties are the same or display similar features.

While it is uncontroversial that movement parties' genesis should derive from a social movement, other *already existent parties* may have strong relationship with social movements and may be influenced by them in their internal organization.

The starting point to understand the institutionalization and the organizational development of a political party is the study of its genesis.

Following Panebianco seminal work (1982: 54-55), once the institutionalization process is completed, an organization changes its morphology from a system of solidarity to a system of interest, where the survival of the organization prevails over the ideological goals of the party. During the genetic phase, the political élites have a greater room of manoeuvre compared to post-

institutionalization phase; thus, the leader can shape the organization and the allocation of the material and immaterial resources. The genetic phase corresponds to the period in which a new party is more permeable to the external environment, while in Panebianco perspective (1982: 110-121) the institutionalization process made the organization more impenetrable to external shocks. The aftermath of the genesis is important as well, especially once a political party experiences an electoral breakthrough because there will emerge tensions between “the self-interest of party founders to protect their own position of influence in the party and the need to invest in a viable party infrastructure autonomous of its current leadership” (Bolleyer 2013: 2). From a purely speculative perspective, contrary to traditional parties, whose institutionalization is supposed to be completed and whose “scalability” and permeability from outside is more difficult, successful new challenger parties coming from or influenced by social movements should be more prone to the social movement’s practices, be them either bottom-up or top-down; more important, the pressure for the organizational institutionalization may entail pressure from within and from outside the party to keep alive the pre-electoral success organization.

The key to understand the direction of these pressures and the role played by (different) élites within a party is analysing its balance of power. One may argue that these new challengers, albeit sharing the basic features of other political parties, organize differently from traditional parties, due to the influence of the social movements. If this is the case, then, the traditional three-faces (Party on the Ground, Party in Central Office and Party in Public Office) analysed introduced by Katz and Mair (1994) should be considered as outdated. However, since this theoretical framework is the norm in the study of political parties, its eventual unfitness should be the explanandum, rather than the explanans. Thus, my framework will rely on Katz and Mair conceptualization.

To what extent challenger parties differ organizationally from traditional parties is related to the balance of power within the three faces of political parties, PoG, PCO and PPO. The PoG is composed by the membership of the party. The PCO, on the contrary, is the representative body of the PoG and it is constituted by the national leadership, which is different in principle from the PPO. The PPO is composed by elected of the party in parliament/government. Irrespective of their geneses, challenger parties should be more prone to reverse the traditional hierarchization thanks to which the PCO and, mostly, the PPO have acquired more power vis-à-vis the PoG (Katz and Mair 1994). As Van Biezen highlights (2000: 397), the PPO in newly created (traditional) parties in post-authoritarian Southern and Eastern Europe countries “is this face of the party that is likely to have initiated and controlled subsequent organizational development”. In this regard, challenger parties coming from social movements – being in principle sceptical of the traditional form of purely Parliamentary representation – should reverse this balance of power in favour either of the PoG or the PCO.

Admittedly, there is nothing new in the attempt to empower ordinary members, allowing them to take crucial decisions within the party, such as the selection of the candidates: almost twenty-five years ago Katz and Mair (1994) in their seminal edited book on party organization noted the tendency of many former mass-parties to widen membership participation to decision-making through direct democracy tools. To what extent this openness led to plebiscitary forms of decision-making within the party is still open to debate (Katz 2001, Mair 1997: 134). However, movement parties and especially those in which activists have participated to grassroots mobilization in social movements are expected to perceive bottom-up direct democracy not merely as a tool among other, but as the backbone of the whole party organization.

One crucial aspect for the organization of any political party is the presence of factions among political parties. As Bolleyer (2014: 3) highlights, “the capacity to maintain internal coherence is considered to be an important performance indicator, especially for parties that are still relatively new and have not yet proved themselves in higher office”. Although factionalism can be studied both as a dependent and independent variable (Verge and Gómez 2011), here the focus is on the latter and on the various forms that factionalism can have within a party (Koelner and Basedau 2005, Boucek 2009 and 2012). As Koelner and Basedau (2005: 12) highlight,

not only material gain and the allocation of posts can be at the center of factional activities. Factions can also serve to articulate and mediate particular or sectional interests (e.g. those of a religious, ethnic, social or vocational group) and/or can be aimed at influencing the party’s strategy or promoting certain values. [...] Beyond these basic functions, factions can also help to satisfy emotional and social needs of their members by means of reciprocal support and respect, intensive contacts, and by providing a sense of belonging.

Factions can impact – even when external shocks are absent (Harmel et al. 1995 and Harmel and Tan 2003) – on the internal stability of the party, on the coalition government, on government reshuffles and, finally, in the stability of the party system as a whole (among others, Boucek 2003, Giannetti and Benoit 2008, Janda 1993, Sartori 2005[1976] and Zariski 1960); thus, its importance in the analysis of challenger parties needs to be acknowledged.

Factionalism is defined by Beller and Belloni (1978: 419) as “any relatively organized group that exists within the context of some other group and which (as a political faction) competes with rivals for power advantages within the larger group of which it is a part”. Accordingly, Sartori (1976) emphasizes the role power groups whose aim is to gain power within the party; on the contrary, Rose

(1964) highlights the role of the ideology in shaping “tendencies”, which are constituted by a stable set of attitudes rather than a stable group of politicians. Boucek (2009: 468)’s definition avoids mentioning power and ideology stressing the fact that factions are “the partitioning of a political party (or other organization and group) into subunits which are more or less institutionalized and who engage in collective action in order to achieve their members’ particular objectives”. Factions can be divided, following different partitioning properties such as the composition, the organization, the autonomous linkage with voters and collateral extra-party structures, the autonomous access to resources, the aims (ideology, clientelism, leader support), the cohesiveness and the duration (for a review see Ceron 2011).

In this work, I use the three *degrees* of factionalism (Boucek 2009) – cooperative, competitive and degenerative – to describe what kind of factionalism prevailed in the case studies and how the interaction with social movement may affect factionalism. The first case is the cooperative factionalism, thanks to which a party can diversify its appeal and accelerate party integration, providing a structure of cooperation between separate intra-party groups (Boucek 2009: 469). This kind of factionalism is created in genuinely new parties, after “a primordial sorting-out process when a democracy or a party becomes established” (Boucek 2009: 469). Competitive factionalism derives from different preferences among sub-groups: “splitting pressures and loosen intra-party ties as factions become opposed rather than simply separate” (Boucek 2009: 473). Competitive factionalism, however, can also a silver lining: it can sharpen the policy-options for a party and widen its appeal to the electorate, bringing also intra-party democratic procedure and facilitating the coalition-bargaining (Boucek 2009: 476). Finally, in the case of degenerative factionalism, factions can bring excessive fragmentation and become veto-players able to exploit public resources without being accountable to the party (privatized incentives and faction embeddedness, in Boucek terminology). From a theoretical perspective, internal (cooperative) factionalism should prevail within challenger parties before their institutionalization. This because the imprinting of social movements may encourage internal pluralism.

The last aspect under analysis is the candidate and leadership selection’ procedures, which are the main function a party handles in the electoral competition. Although social-movements are in principle sceptical over representative democracy, the functional imperative for a political party impose the selection of the candidates for the election; thus, direct-democracy tools can be very helpful for those movement parties, which want to combine representativeness and grassroots democracy in the intra-party democratic procedures (Cross and Katz 2013) both for the selection of the leader and, mostly, of the candidates.

The growing literature in Europe follows the seminal work in U.S., where primaries are an

institutionalized procedure. In the last years, many comparative analyses have focused on Europe, North and South America, Australia and New Zealand (for a review see Cross and Katz 2013, Cross and Blais 2012, Pilet and Cross 2015, Hazan and Rahat 2010 and Sandri et al. 2015). Political parties, while suffering a legitimacy problem and a cross-cut distrust over their role in the society (see Chapter 2) have tried to adapt to the changes in the society, namely a growing role of media (among others Bennet 2012, Campus 2010, Mazzoleni and Schultz 1999 and Wattenberg 1991), the alleged presidentialization of politics (Poguntke and Webb 2005, Passarelli 2015), and the growing importance of leadership in the party politics (Blondel and Thiébault 2009, Caprara 2007, Caprara et al. 2008, Grazia 2011 and 2013, Rahat and Shaefer 2007). This adaptation has taken the form of the enlargement of the selectorate for leadership and candidate selection. In their work on Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and the United Kingdom (Cross and Blais 2012: 145) find that in most of the cases political parties expanded the selectorate and that “after an electoral defeat the balance of power shifts away from the parliamentary party in favour of grassroots activists wanting a greater say in party decision-making”. The pressure to broaden the selectorate, the so-called contagion effect (Sandri et al. 2015: 186) should in principle concern also movement parties, for whom openness and transparency are two organizational backbones.

Rather than looking at the pressure for the reform at the systemic, party and intra-party levels (Barnea and Rahat 2007), my analysis is grounded on the four research questions identified by Rahat and Hazan (2011) in their analytic framework on candidate selection, namely:

- Who can be selected and with which restrictions? Here the range varies from a maximum of inclusiveness (all citizens) to a maximum of exclusiveness (only party members with restrictions).
- Who selects candidates and with which restrictions? In this case, at one extreme, the selectorate is the most inclusive – the electorate that has the right to vote in the general elections. On the other extreme, the selectorate is the most exclusive, a nomination decided by one leader.
- Where are the candidates selected? Are candidates selected by a national or a sub-national selectorate? The two poles both in terms of territorial and functional representation are the centralization (i.e. “candidates are selected exclusively by a national party selectorate with no procedure that allows for territorial and/or functional representation” [Rahat and Hazan 2011: 305]) and the decentralization (i.e. “candidates are selected exclusively by party local selectorates and/or intra-party social groups and/or sectarian groups” [Rahat and Hazan 2011: 305]).

- How are candidates nominated? Is candidacy determined by a voting procedure or are candidates simply appointed? The distinction here is between a voting system and an appointment system, with a mixed method, which ideally falls between the two poles.

The last aspect under analysis is the party finance, whose importance is of a primary concern for party scholars (Kob, 2010, Nassmacher, 2006, Scarrow 2007). As highlighted by Katz and Mair (1995, 2009), political parties (and cartel parties in particular) rely consistently on public funding for their existence. Their shift toward the State and their withdrawal from the society caused a consistent drop in the relevance of membership fee in their finances. The introduction of public funding schemes in Europe goes precisely in that direction (Katz and Mair 1992 and Van Biezen and Kopecký 2014). Nonetheless, public funding schemes, contrary to the seminal arguments proposed by Katz and Mair do not freeze party competition (Scarrow 2006). Since my analysis covers a limited time-span during a peculiar financial crossroad for the countries under analysis, my expectation is that during this specific time new challenger parties tend to privilege bottom-up crowdfunding campaign from small donors, rather than relying on public funding. Along these lines, new challengers should target public funding as a source of moral and political corruption, even when in those case in which public funding schemes are strictly regulated. Since regulation seems to have no positive effect on citizens' trust on political parties (Casal Bertoa et al. 2014), the challenger parties rather than reforming public funding may decide to criticize public funding *per se*, while traditional parties should privilege public funding even during a financial recession.

Table 4.3 sums up the theoretical framework through which new challenger parties will be analysed and the differences between the latter and the traditional parties.

	New Challenger parties from social movements	Traditional Parties
Genesis	Crucial relationship with new social movements; social movements practices influence party decision-making and institutionalization processes	Even though traditional parties may have been created by social movements, they are now autonomous organizations.
Party on the Ground	Backbone of the party; bottom-up democratic practices to include members and sympathiser	Ancillary role; the importance of members is more than ever relegated to a cheerleading role.
Party in Public Office	Less relevant than either PoG or PCO.	Predominance of the PPO vis-à-vis other parties.
Party in Central Office (PCO)	Only partially institutionalized; it is dependent on the cohesiveness of the PoG and the elite.	It overlaps with PPO, whose role is preminent in the party balance of power.
Factionalism	Pluralism encouraged, even though it may cause problems within the party.	Depending on each party institutionalization of faction

Candidate/Leadership Selection	Open to the Party on the Ground, which is the party face entitled to elect the representatives and the leaders.	Depending on each party openness.
Party Finance	Public funding represents one of the sources of party finance. These parties privilege bottom-up crowdfunding campaigns.	Relying almost exclusively on public funding
Table 4.3 – Differences between Challenger parties related with social movements and traditional parties.		

4.3.3.1 Methodology: the organization of the party

The sources for the analysis of such different aspects of a political party are multifaceted. The genesis of a party will be inquired following both secondary sources – the burgeoning literature on the three cases – and the primary sources – political party websites, party documents, book and articles written by members of the party and journalistic investigations. For the analysis of the three faces of the party, the role of factions and the candidate-selection procedures the main official source is the party statute. All three cases under analysis have a more (Podemos and Syriza) or less (FSM) detailed statute that discipline the internal life of the party. However, party’s statutes draw a picture that may not correspond to the *real* daily life within the party: as we know, formal rules provide a general framework, which may be overthrown in few days when the routine within an organization is broken by an internal or external shock (Allison 1971). For that reason, I decide to interview the party élites in order to explore how the statute frame *in the real world* the behaviour of party members and how the rules constrained the party when members have faced exogenous or endogenous shocks. I am conscious that for political opportunism or simply because of the lack of in-depth knowledge, the picture one obtains from interviews may be distant from reality. However, the interviews with the addition of other primary sources and secondary sources may approximate the reality of the parties’ functioning.

The second problem related to the interviews is establishing the subjects of the interviews. From one side, interviewing members during national conventions or meeting would have been the simplest option: PoG members tend to be more open to talk with a “stranger” and, normally, have more free time during these events. However, in my experience, PoG members have a limited view of the organization, in particular of the relationship between party different élites. Thus, while I have interviewed with several PoG members, I preferred focusing my attention on reaching the party top-élite – the so-called privileged witnesses – both at the national and sub-national (regional) level. The top-level official included members of the national PCO, members of the PPO and, in few cases, the highest top figures at the national level. I tried also to select party-elites with a diversified cultural, political and geographical backgrounds, the latter feature being crucial especially for the Spanish and the Italian cases. Most of the interviews were recorded (yet, sometimes the place where some

interviews were taken did not allow a recording), while others were written-interviews. These interviews – fifty in total – gave me the opportunity to monitor parties’ activities both on the ground and at the parliamentary level. In the Appendix I have listed all the interviews I quoted in the text. Part of the materials is not included in this research.

When I had a face-to-face interview, rather than focusing on a pre-determined sample of questions, I decide to use a semi-structured sample similar to all the cases, through which I try to frame the topics I choose to analyse. However, the questions were just a stimulus for me and the interviewees to explore other context-dependent issues, especially those related to the peculiar internal life of the party. I had also the possibility to participate to two congresses – in Spain and Greece and two national rallies in Italy – thanks to which I was also able to listen to and, occasionally, interview, members of different factions talking about party reforms.

4.3.4 The ideological articulation

The last variable is the ideological articulation. One of the main functions of the political parties, leaving aside the minimal ones, is to provide a more or less coherent and formalized political program to be proposed to the electorate and to frame through their lens what’s wrong and what needs to be fixed in the society as a whole.

An ideology, following Jost et al. (2009: 310), “reflect[s] both genuine (and even highly accurate) attempts to understand, interpret, and organize information about the political world as well as conscious or unconscious tendencies to rationalize the way things are or, alternatively, the desire for them to be different”. Since parties are composed by militants, bureaucrats and elected members from different social and cultural backgrounds, it may be hazardous to disentangle their ideologies. Nonetheless, political parties do create its rationalization of the political world in order to describe “how it looks like” and “how it should be changed or preserved”. This rationalization is not stable during time; the external environment as well as internal transformations can bring relevant changes to the articulation of parties’ ideology. Nonetheless, thick and thin (Frieden, 1998) ideologies are resilient to change since they are bargained and formally accepted within the parties: changes in the ideologies are difficult to accomplish, since they are accompanied by internal debates, changes in the leadership or even splits from the party.

Thus, political ideologies are meaningful indicators to describe and classify political parties, not only for political science scholars, but also for voters.

‘Left’ and ‘Right’ – the most common terms used to describe the ideological collocation of a party – indicated the place of political groups in the French Assembly; in the centuries these two concepts were used to describe visions of the world, which are in principle different from one another (Bobbio,

1994). Nonetheless, according some authors (Crouch 2005, Mair 2009 and 2013) the differences among traditional political parties are diminishing to due to the preeminence of responsibility of political parties toward external constraints vis-à-vis responsiveness toward the electorate. Still, differences within left and right poles exist as well: radical left, social democratic left, libertarian left or radical right, conservative right, libertarian right ideologies refer to different set of principles, which political parties want to exemplify. The heuristic value of the Left and Right as proxies of thick ideologies, even when grand-ideology have declined, is still important, despite voters tend to be less and less prone to adhere to a particular ideology and to be more volatile in their votes' intentions. As Sani and Sartori (1983: 314) explain when dealing with the left-right dimension “we are not claiming that the variety of the conflict dimensions relevant in the various countries can be squeezed into a single dimension without loss. [...] What we are asserting is that left-right yardstick mirrors fairly well the voters' stands of some of the major conflict domains and echoes much of the feeling toward significant objects”. Left-right orientations and the ideological bases associated to the concepts of left and right (Inglehart and Klingemann 1976; Mair 2007) still matter and influence party strategic and competing choices. In a recent paper, Dalton and McCallister (2014) conclude that

about 90% of the total variance in parties' Left–Right position in one election can be explained by their position in the previous election. So, only 10% of the variance is potentially explainable by all other factors (including measurement error). [...]. Parties are embedded in a political history and support network that limits their opportunities and motivations to dramatically change their broad orientation between elections.

In this analysis, Left and Right will be defined deductively (Jahn 2011; for the inductive approach see Budge 2013 and Franzmann 2015). However, rather than relying on multidimensional scaling technique, which would be of scarce interest due to the small N cases and the almost absence of longitudinality – the party under analysis are relatively new – I opt for an in-depth analysis of the ideological evolutions of the three parties.

Without taking into consideration the persistence of those concepts in political parties and their actual internalization in the electorate (among a vast literature, Budge et al. 2001 Cochrane 2011, Dalton 2006, Gabel and Huber 2000, Lachat 2015 and Laver and Budge 1992), I partly follow Bobbio's conceptualization of Left and Right (1994), which is based on inequality (see below). While the most used datasets, the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) for parties' programs, the Chapel Hill Expert Surveys (CHES) for experts' surveys and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), rely on an inductive spatial conceptualization of Left and Right, I focus on a

deductive conceptualization, which targets the main dimension of the Left-Right orientation, the economic dimension. As Mair (1997: 24) argues, the left-right dimension has a clear policy connotation, linked to the economic policy-conflicts since “all parties, of whatever party system type and whatever genesis are obliged to formulate policies – whether more to the left or more to the right – on the welfare state, on taxation, employment policy, on farming, on the environment and so on”. The basic difference behind this distinction is the concept of inequality.

Bobbio (1994) defines left and right through the equality criterion, which he divides in three main areas: (a) those who participate to the redistribution of resources, (b) the resources that should be shared and (c) the sharing criteria. In a radical-left perspective, the equality and, as a consequence, the redistribution of resources has to be more accentuated, levelling as much as possible the differences. In centre-left parties this inclination is more “moderate”. However, when it comes to the centre-right and the radical-right, this interpretation shows its weaknesses, since many radical-right parties have shown a preference for redistributive policies, albeit declining with a national preference for the in-group, i.e. welfare chauvinism, while conservative parties and Christian-Democratic, in principle are more prone to tone down redistributive instances. As Cochrane (2011) has shown the left/right disagreement can be considered asymmetrical: leftists and rightists structure the policy options from different sources. His analysis reveals that socio-economic and immigration dimensions are linked together for parties on the left. For rightist parties, economic ideology is a dividing issue, while attitudes toward immigration are common among them.

Thus, in order to disentangle the puzzle of the ideological articulation of the parties under analysis a spatial positioning based on a left-right scale, such as the RILE indicator in CMP, may be insufficient; for this reason, I focus on the redistributive preferences of those parties and their position over economic interventionism: their rise during the economic and financial crisis and the participation in at least two cases of the party élites (Spain and Greece) should presuppose a radical rejection of austerity programs and the insistence on marked redistributive policies. Nonetheless, despite the relevance of the concept of left and right, a unidimensional analysis neglects the increasing salience of new potential cleavages in Europe. The works of Kriesi (2010 and 2016), Kriesi et al. (2008, 2012 and 2016 with different authors), Ares et al. (2017) and Hutter and Grande (2014) highlights how the emergence of a potential new cleavages (integration vs. demarcation) brings new issues, such as immigration and the European Union, in the political competition. For example, radical-right parties in Western Europe mobilize globalization losers, thus acting as the issue entrepreneurs (Adams et al. 2006, De Vries and Hobolt 2009, Meguid 2005 and 2008) of this new cleavage. Thus, I introduce a specific focus on three further dimensions, which were central in the public debates of Spain, Italy and Greece during the economic and financial crisis, namely immigration, European Union and anti-

elitism.

Being a mobilizing factor for several challenger parties in the radical right spectrum (Akkerman and de Lange 2012, Betz 1994, Kitschelt and McGann 1995, Ignazi 1994a, Mudde 2007 and 2010, Norris 2005, Rydgren 2005 and 2007, Zaslove 2004), immigration, which was defined a new cultural dimension by Van der Brug and Van Spanje (2009), is the first issue under analysis. Being non-radical right parties, Podemos, FSM and SYRIZA should downplay this feature avoiding emphasising this issue in their programs. Secondly, the European Union became a crucial politicized issue not only in Southern Europe: traditional parties favoured de-politicization of European Union integration, starting from either an identity Europeanism (unconditional support of EU integration) or functional Europeanism (selective support related to the achievement of other party goals or domestic interests). New challenger parties are expected to re-politicize this issue, focusing on the criticism of this process (Hutter et al. 2016, Kriesi 2016), thus displaying either a Eurocritical (support of the integration process, while advancing extensive criticism on the actual EU framework) or Eurosceptic (rejects the EU integration as such, proposing a reduction of EU role within the national polity) attitudes. The politicization of anti-elitism is declined here not just as an anti-political establishment (Abedi 2004) or anti-party attitudes (Poguntke 1996), but as a rejection of the whole mainstream national and European élites. This issue is a crucial mobilizing factor for so-called populist parties on the right and the left spectrum (among others Canovan 1984, Mudde 2004, Jansen 2011, Kaltwasser and Taggart 2016, Luther 2011, Taggart 2000).

If these four faces of the ideological articulation – emphasis on the redistribution, similar position on immigration and anti-elitism – are similar, then the expectation in a MSDO framework is that ideologies can be considered a crucial factor for the electoral success of those parties.

4.3.4.1 Methodology: evaluating the ideology of the party

As for the ideological articulation, I start looking at the CMP dataset to establish the operationalization of the variables “left” and “right”, immigration, European Union and anti-elitism. Although my approach differs from CMP, the theoretical interpretation of the categorization proposed by CMP is helpful to disentangle, how the different issues are framed on a large-N comparative scale. In brief, CMP is based on coding of parties' manifestos, which are decomposed into ‘quasi-sentences’. The quasi-sentences are inserted into one of the CMP’s 56 issue categories (Budge 2013); “[t]he results of this laborious process are presented in terms of percentage frequencies, which intend to measure each party’s ‘relative emphasis’ on each of these 56 issues of the coding scheme” (Gemenis 2013: 3). The ratio behind CMP is the salience theory, according to which parties emphasise those issues which make them different from the other parties: however, this choice faces methodological

and coding biases (for a discussion Dinas and Gemenis 2010, Franzmann and Kaiser 2006, Gemenis 2013, Laver 2001). Thus, rather than focusing on statistical methods, which will be of little help for the few cases under analysis I focus on a qualitative in-depth interpretative analysis of a series of documents and discourses produced by the political parties and the party élite.

As explained before, rather than using RILE index to place those parties in the left-right spectrum, I focus on Bobbio's definition of left and right looking at to what extent this is a crucial issue in the programs of those parties in absolute terms and comparative terms (with other parties of the same country in a given election). I use the categories within *markeco* and *welfare* indexes provided by the CMP to inquire the position of the parties on redistributive policies, which are crucial to identify left and right positioning. *Markeco* is composed by two categories, *per401* (Free Market Economy) and *per414* (Economic Orthodoxy). The first refers to the favourable mentions of the free market and free market capitalism as an economic model, while the latter focuses on the need for economically healthy government policy-making (such as reduction of budget deficits, retrenchment in crisis, thrift and savings in the face of economic hardship, support for traditional economic institutions such as stock market and banking system, support for strong currency). The welfare index is based on the sum of two categories, *per503* (Equality Positive) and *per504* (Welfare State Expansion). The former is based on the mentions of issues related to the concept of social justice and the need for fair treatment of all people, while *per504* comprises favourable mentions of need to introduce, maintain or expand any public social service or social security scheme. Since the CMP categorizes negative stance toward immigration within the broad category of *per608* (Multiculturalism: Negative) and with specific category *per608_2* (Multiculturalism: Immigrants Assimilation), I use these two categories to inquire the position of the parties on this issue: namely, I will enquire to what extent immigration and multiculturalism are framed as negative by the parties. As for the European Union, the category *per110* (European Community/Union: Negative), focuses on the negative references to the European Union, which include the opposition to specific European policies and the opposition to the net-contribution of the manifesto country to the EU budget. Nonetheless, the opposite category *per108* (European Community/Union: Positive) is broader in its scope, since it includes the desirability of expanding the European Community/Union, of increasing the ECs/EUs competences and of expanding the competences of the European Parliament. In *per106* the negative assessment of EU is conceived as a criticism related to the policies rather than to the formation and the expansion of a European polity⁶. In *per108*, the positive assessment is evaluated both as the expansion of the polity

⁶ Unless the opposition to the net contribution to EU is conceived as a preference for the retrenchment of EU competences and scopes as a whole. In this case, however, one should wonder if the assessment of the EU budget is the correct issue to be evaluated, especially when considering the EU budget is discussed on a four-years basis.

and the favourable judgement to the policies.

Rather than focusing on the debate over the alleged Euroscepticism of the challenger parties, the aim is to analyse how those parties framed the role EU institution in managing the economic and financial crisis at the national level, favourable or critical and in what ways, (*policies*) and the EU as a consolidated project of shared sovereignty among equal countries (*polity*).

Anti-elitism is only partially analysed by the CMP: one approximation would be looking at *per304* (Corruption), which comprises mentions related to the need to eliminate political corruption and associated abuses of political and/or bureaucratic power. However, anti-elitism can be fruitfully framed only when inquired as a rejection of economic, political, cultural and media-related elites as well as a criticism of the vested interested controlling the policy-making both at national and supranational level.

Since the sources are relatively few, my methodological framework is the qualitative content analysis (QCA). The quasi-sentences of the CMP are useful to frame the ideology of the parties, but they cannot provide an in-depth analysis of the political programs of those parties, especially when contextualizing factors are taken into consideration, as I did for this analysis.

Hsieh & Shannon (2005: 1278) define content analysis as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding”. As Mayring (2014: 39) argues, content analysis is not “a standardized instrument that always remains the same; it must be fitted to suit the particular objector material in question and constructed especially for the issue at hand”. The choice of the sources and the coding procedure(s) are deliberately non-standardized, since qualitative content analysis must “places relations with the individual object above all else” (Mayring 2014: 41). Following Bryman (2004: 542), this approach “emphasizes the role of the investigator in the construction of the meaning of and in texts. There is an emphasis [...] on recognizing the significance for understanding the meaning of the context in which an item being analysed”. The sources of this analysis will be national and regional manifestos of the political parties, the discourses of the party leaders and the documents written or edited by top-rank party members. To enrich the analysis I add also the book written by the party leadership, even though these sources were not fully coded (see below).

Each of the document is “coded” dividing full periods and assigning each period to a specific category: economic issues (focus: equality), immigration, European Union. anti-elitism, others. The category “others” include all the parts of the documents outside the four areas. Then, the four relevant categories are further inquired looking at the evaluation of the periods, i.e. positive, negative or neutral. Positive/negative paragraphs refer to positive/negative evaluation of equality, immigration/multiculturalism, European Union and the elites. In neutral paragraphs, I could not

retrieve the direction of the paragraph or any judgment on the issues was absent. The periods included for each party in the four relevant categories (economic issues, immigration, European Union, anti-elitism) will form the political discourse of the party on one issue. I will, then, discuss the findings for each party in the three categories in order to contextualize the political discourses and place them in its proper “political” environment.

4.4 Suggested Hypothesis

As explained in the Introduction two broad research questions frame this work. The first is related to the differences among the parties in terms of organization, ideology and patterns of competition. The research design sketched here helps disentangling this puzzle, providing a detailed framework of analysis through which the three parties will be firstly analysed in three different chapters (ch. 6-8) and then compared in a separate chapter (ch.9).

The second research question deals with the supply-side factors that contribute to the explanation of the rise of the challenger parties in Southern Europe. Since the methodological framework is based on a nuanced version of the MSDO, it should be expected that one of the four areas of investigation – organization, ideology, patterns of competition, political opportunity structure – is the most relevant common denominator that helps explaining the similar outcome.

Four contrasting hypotheses serve as a brief *resumé* of this chapter, providing at the same time, the guidelines for the analysis in the following chapters:

- H1: the political opportunity structure within the three national contexts is supposed to similar; in particular, it is to be expected a highly favourable or a favourable environment through which these parties were able to successfully compete in the elections.
- H2: challenger parties display a similar prevailing pattern of competition (either office, vote or policy). In particular, the hypothesis here is that those parties privileged votes on offices and policies.
- H3: within the framework of the movement party, the challenger parties display the same organizational traits. These traits are distinct from the ones displayed by traditional parties.
- H4: the ideological articulation of the challenger parties in countries with a similar impact of the Great Recession is similar both in terms of left-right orientation and in terms of new cultural issues. It is to be expected that these parties while possessing different thick ideologies, have a similar posture toward new cultural issues and on anti-elitism.

As underlined at the beginning of this chapter, the MSDO method and, consequently, the four

hypotheses cannot be tested in the strict sense of the meaning; rather, they help to restrict the investigation field, allowing for a limited generalization for the Southern European context.

Chapter 5 - Explaining the dependent variable. A political success in turbulent times

5.1 Introduction

The economic and financial crises coming from the U.S. had a massive impact both economically and politically on Europe and, particularly, on Southern Europe. However, the impact of the Great Recession and its political consequences varied considerably among European countries. Thus, tracing back the development of the economic and financial crises and their political consequences, I will tackle two questions in this chapter.

- To what extent these three countries are comparable?
- and, following the operationalization provided in the previous chapter, how successful Podemos, SYRIZA and FSM were in their national contexts?

To answer properly to these questions, I divide this chapter in three parts. The first part is devoted to the analysis of the pre- and within-crisis economic performances of those countries. The second part focuses on the three national political crises that accompanied the crises: I will inquire here which aspects of the demand side favoured the political success of the three parties. These contextualizing parts are aimed at explaining why – despite some important differences – their political and economic crises were comparable in many respects. The third part tries to answer to the second question, examining the political success of SYRIZA, Podemos and Five Stars Movement.

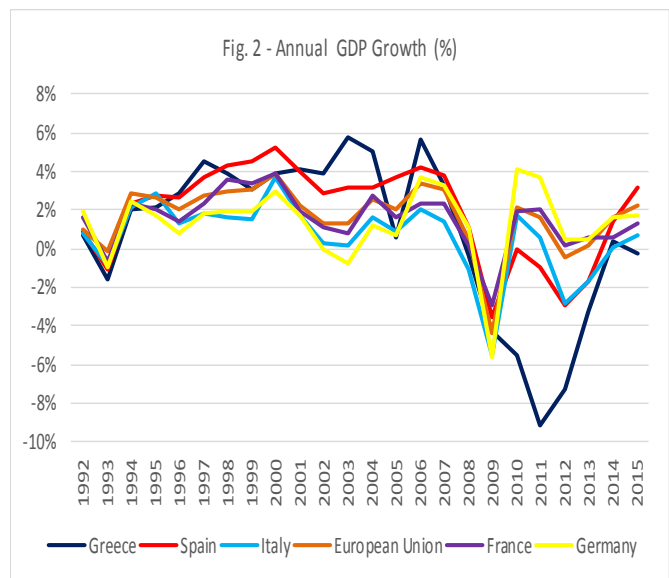
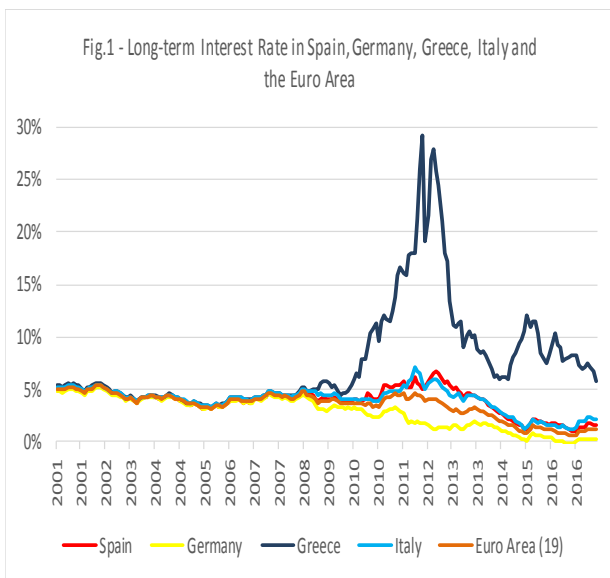
5.2 The economic crisis in Southern Europe: a financial turmoil in a low-growth region?

5.2.1 The Euro-Crisis and its consequences for Greece, Spain and Italy

Two decades after the Maastricht Treaty (1992) and few years after the introduction of the common currency, the EU experienced one of the worst economic financial crises in its history. Although there are differences in the overall analysis of cyclical crises within capitalist markets, both mainstream and critical scholars agreed that there are consistent similarities between the post-1929 financial crisis and the sub-prime mortgage financial crisis erupted in U.S. in 2007 (Kotz 2008, Reinhart and Rogoff 2008). Started in U.S. as a mortgage and banking bubble, the crisis propagated in Europe transforming into a public debt crisis in Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Cyprus and, partially, Italy. The critical juncture for both sides of the Atlantic was the Lehman Brother's bankruptcy (15 September 2008); this symbolic date was the beginning of unprecedented collapse in the European Union economies. Scholars disagree on the origin of the crisis in Europe (see Caporaso and Rhodes 2016: 1-3): fiscal

misbehaviour of EU Members States (MSs), inherent imbalances in the economic construction of the EU, growing and unsustainable inequalities both in Europe and in the most developed countries (Piketty 2014, Piketty and Saez 2013), the ECB role in fostering high interest rates in the aftermath of the financial crisis and so on. The goal of this paragraph is not evaluating the correctness of those analyses; more modestly, the aim here is to evaluate the impact of the financial turmoil in Southern Europe and the reactions of the national governments and of the European institution to it. Despite the dichotomization between the “austerians” in the Northern Europe and a neo-Keynesian periphery is somewhat simplistic (Hallberg 2016), the intra-regional varieties of capitalism in Europe account for the institutional imbalances among Member States (Hassel 2014). In this regard, what the literature on political institutions have acknowledged is that the magnitude of the crisis led to a delegitimization of the previous political arrangements within the EU (Vittori 2017c). The annual GDP growth – along with the long-term interest rates trend (Figure 1) – provides a clear-cut picture of what happened in the Euro-Area when the crisis erupted: although negative in the whole EU, the trend of the GDP was particularly calamitous for the Southern Europe (and Ireland) (Figure 2).

The data on GDP per capita corroborates this picture; while the interest-rate bonanza and the consistent GDP growth helped “peripheral” countries, such as Spain and Greece, to catch-up with the European Union before 2008, the financial crisis widened the gap between the Southern peripheral countries and affluent countries, such as Germany.

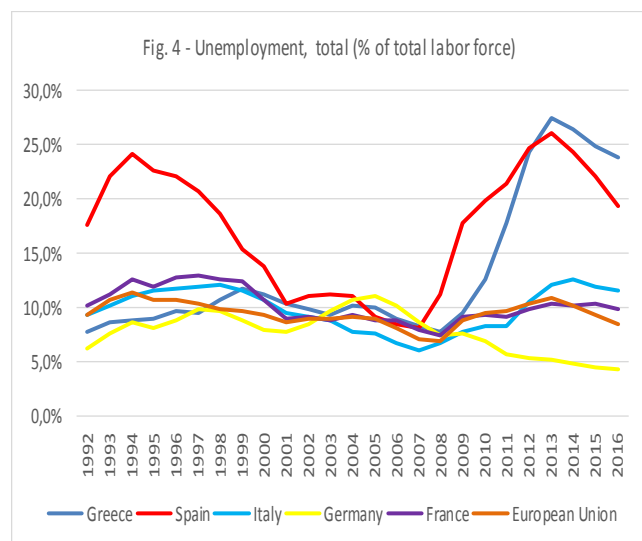
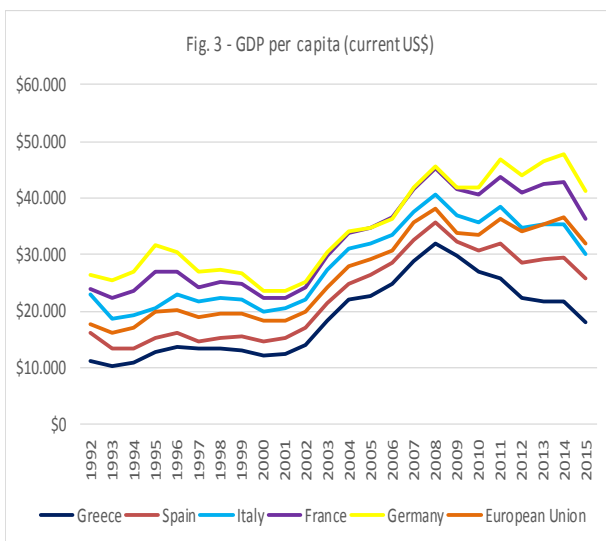


Figures 5.1 and 5.2 – Source: World Bank.

Compared to 1992, the difference in the GDP per capita between Germany and the other countries has conspicuously increased in all three cases, mainly due to the financial crisis. The introduction of

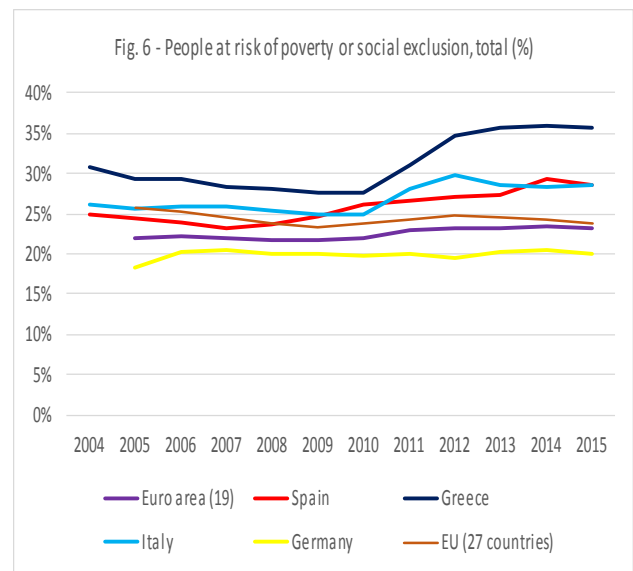
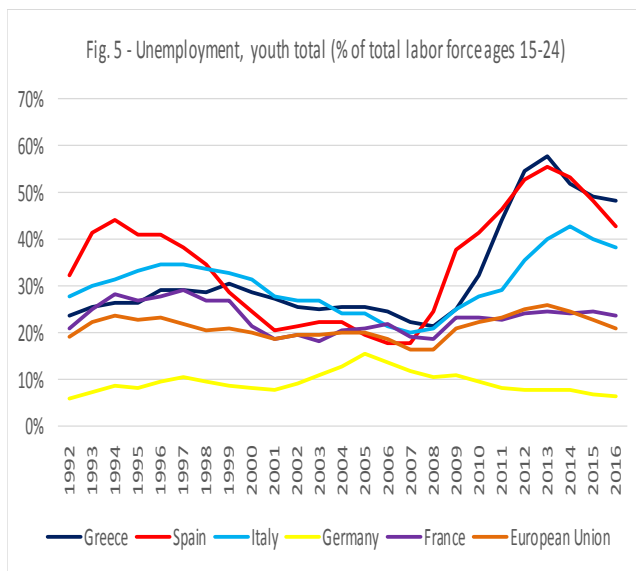
the Euro helped peripheral countries to improve their economic performance in real terms; however, this growth hid a competitiveness problem.

As Barkbu et al. (2016: 64) put it “although interest rates converged, competitiveness did not. Unit labor costs rose rapidly in Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Spain in the first decade of the euro, leading to a loss of competitiveness with respect to the Eurozone average and Germany”. In 2015 Germany fully recovered from the crisis, since its GDP per capita reached the pre-crisis level (2007); the GDP per capita in Italy, Greece and Spain in 2015 was stuck at 2003-2004 level. In eight years (2008-2015), a Greek citizen lost more than 13.000 \$, a Spaniard almost 10.000 \$ and an Italian more than 11.000 \$ (Figure 3). Another telling indicator is the unemployment; as a percentage of the total labour force, the World Bank data (Figure 4) highlight a worse situation for Italy, Greece and Spain compared to the EU and, Germany. In Greece and Spain, the total unemployment reached their peaks in 2013 – 27.5% and 26.1% respectively. In Italy, the unemployment growth was less pronounced; however, the years 2013 and 2014 (12.1% and 12.7%) marked the highest level since 1992. For the first time since 2003, in 2012 the Italian unemployment rate was higher than the European Union mean. For the three countries, the situation was even worse with regards to the youth unemployment. Although their level was higher than the EU average since 1992, the gap with the EU grew exponentially since 2009 onwards. In Greece and Spain, the youth unemployment reached the alarming level of +50% between 2012 and 2014, while in Italy between 2013 and 2015 the mean was 41.1%. In the same years (2012-2015) the EU mean was 24.6%. Finally, one of most debated issue in the public opinion during the crisis was the disproportionate growth of the long-term interest rates: in Europe, the narrative over the yield of the spread, i.e. difference between the quoted rates of the 10-year German government-issued bond (*Bundesanleihe*) and other 10-year national bonds,



Figures 5.3 and 5.4 – Source: World Bank.

captured the attention of news and media, feeding the fears on financial stability of PIIGS countries. As Figure 1 shows, long-term interest rates at the beginning of the Euro era were almost similar for countries, despite the varieties of capitalism in EU. Germany, for example, was only slightly below the Euro Area and EU means. This trend continued until the outburst of the crisis: in 2007 the paths of Italy, Greece and Spain started diverging from the Euro Area and from the benchmark case of Germany. Although, Spain and Italy did not negotiate a debt haircut – as in the Greek case (see 5.2) – the financial stability of the two countries faced an enormous pressure. In November 2011, when the 10-year *Bundesanleihe* yielded 1,87%, the return on the Italian *BTP* and the Spanish *Bono* was 7,06% and 6,2% respectively; the mean of the Euro Area was 4,66%. The divergent path continued for more than three years; it was only in 2014 that Spain and Italy 10-year bonds approximated the level of the Euro Area.



Figures 5.5 and 5.6 – Source: World Bank (ILO) Estimates

5.2.2 The Greek abysm: a never-ending crisis

Greece is the European country where the global economic and financial turmoil had the heaviest impact. The four Greek governments in charge from 2009 to September 2015 signed three Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the European Commission, ECB and IMF – the so-called Troika – through which the country agreed on implementing heavy fiscal adjustments to receive financial assistance. All MoUs has a conditionality-clause to be respected by Greece in order to be eligible for the institutions’ loans.

In 4 October 2009, the former Greek PM, George Papandreou, announced that the annual deficit of the State would have been 12,7%, instead of 6.7%. In few months, the Greek economy collapsed and

its bonds were degraded to the “junk” level; the first IMF loan (€110 billion) proved to be ineffective to counter the scepticism over Greek’s financial stability. In 2010, the EU Commission released a report on Greek debt, emphasizing its harsh criticism over Greek institutional shortcomings. In this report, the EU Commission (2010:4) drew the attention to the “inappropriate governance [...], diffuse personal responsibilities, ambiguous empowerment of officials, absence of written instruction and documentation, which leave the quality of fiscal statistics subject to political pressures and electoral cycles”.

The austerity measures imposed with the bailout programs did not restore the confidence over Greek solvency both in the short and in the long run; the consequence was a private lenders’ debt haircut (50%) in 2011. Moreover, the debt relief did not prevent the markets to mistrust the whole European governance on the Greek crisis. As Blanchard and Leigh acknowledged in an IMF Working Paper (2013), the fiscal austerity measures implemented by 2011 have deferred the recovery. Doubts on the possibility to reduce the debt burden, under a prolonged austerity programme were casted also by Eyraud and Weber in a later IMF Working Paper (2013). Under these economic outputs, there is a broad consensus among scholars the EU and Greek crisis management (Baltas 2013, Featherstone 2011 and 2015, Tsebelis 2015) was largely ineffective. As Wisbrot et al. (2015:6) show in their work, “six years of recession and the resultant huge declines in nominal wages have failed to bring about the recovery through ‘internal devaluation’ on which Greece’s return to growth [...] is supposed to be based”.

Furthermore, as Figure 6 shows, the percentage of people at risk of poverty or social-exclusion skyrocketed in the last eight years: from 2011 onwards, more than one third of Greek citizens has lived in this economic situation. It is thus unsurprising that the level of political mobilization grew exponentially; three waves of protest can be detected in the Greek case (see Chapter 7). The first is related to the 2008 Greek riots, culminated with the assassination of Alexandros Grigoropoulos – a 15-years old protester – by two policemen in Exarchia Square (Athens). The second is the 2010 anti-austerity protests led by radical-left political parties (SYRIZA and KKE) and trade unions (GGCL and ADEDY) (Psimitis 2011) in Athens and in other Greek cities. Finally, the third is the *Aganaktismeni* movement, also known as the Greek *Indignados* movement (Vogiatzoglou 2017).

5.2.3 The Spanish bubble: from a sustained growth to the financial bailout

The most symbolic achievement of the Spanish economy during its economic expansion (2000-2008) was probably the overtake over Italian GDP in 2008. Since the introduction of the Euro, Spain was one of the best performing countries in the EU in terms of GDP annual growth: its growth ranged from +2.7% to +4.7%. As Royo underlines (2009: 21), “membership [in the EU] has [...] been very

positive for the country: it has contributed to macroeconomic stability, imposed fiscal discipline and central bank independence, and dramatically lowered the cost of capital”. The stagnating Italian economy – the third largest in Euro area – seemed to be unable to profit from the favourable economic conditions and the low interest rates. This picture changed radically after the U.S. financial crisis: the GDP collapsed and the Spanish housing bubble (*burbuja inmobiliaria*) caused severe troubles to the banking system. Spain ended up being the biggest economy to accede to the EU stability mechanism: €42 out of the €150 billion needed to recapitalize the banking system came from the ESM (Iglesias-Otero et al.: 2016). *Bankia*, the Spanish largest real-estate lender, was nationalised in 2011 and its name – linked to corruption scandals – was a symbol of the *indignados* protest (see Chapter 6). Spanish economic growth, which was based on the construction boom, “masked the low rates of productivity growth during the late 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century” (Caporaso and Kim 2016: 33).

In 2009, the negative growth (-3.6%) reached the lowest level in the past twenty years. At the same time, the housing sector, which sustained the Spanish economic growth in the previous years, collapsed: in real terms, the housing price doubled from 2000 to 2007, before returning to the level of 2002 in the following six years (The Economist, 2016). Consequently, the total unemployment and the youth unemployment skyrocketed: the former went from 8.2% in 2007 to 26.1% in 2013, while the latter from 18.1% to 55.6%. Furthermore, the crisis produced a huge fiscal imbalance: the general government debt was 41.7% of the GDP in 2007, while in 2013 it reached its peak (117.9%). The general government deficit had a similar trajectory; the +2% surplus in 2007 was followed by a mean of -10.1% from 2009 to 2013 (OECD, 2016).

In the midst of the negotiations between Spain and EU institutions on the bailout program, the conservative PM Mariano Rajoy (in)famously declared that “Spain is not Uganda”; beyond any consideration on the political correctness of this statement, the public opinion perception in Spain was that the political “status” of the fourth-largest economy seemed to be degraded again. As for the Irish Celtic Tiger, Spain financial crisis had pervasive political consequences.

5.2.4 Crisis in a highly-indebted country: the Italian case

Italy, as a founding European Economic Community (ECC) member had a relevant role in the construction of the EU. Despite its government debt above the Maastricht criteria, Italy acceded to the Euro area, after several years of fiscal adjustment in the nineties. Since 2002, its stagnating growth was counterbalanced by good performances on the export of goods and services: in the period 2002-2008, Italy doubled its export in absolute terms. Moreover, as Jones (2016: 92) notes, Italy increases employment by eleven percent since the introduction of the Euro, while maintaining almost 5 million

manufacturing jobs. Still, “Italy experiences a deterioration of performance in real unit labor costs and therefore also an increasing appreciation in the real effective exchange rate” (Jones 2016: 91). In the first three years of the crisis (2008-2011), the macroeconomic indicators revealed a huge competitiveness gap with the other large European economies. The intensification of the crisis and the doubts casted by the European institutions, as well as by heads of states of European countries, namely France and Germany, over Berlusconi’s government capabilities to pursue a fiscal adjustment, generated a large-scale panic in the markets. Once the spread between the Italian BTP and the German *Bundesanleihe* reached 574 basis-point, the fear of the European institutions was not merely related to an unfeasible bailout, but above all to the entire EU crisis-management. In the summer of 2011, Mario Draghi, the actual ECB President and the by-then ECB President in charge Jean-Claude Trichet, sent a private letter to the Finance Minister Giulio Tremonti and to PM Silvio Berlusconi, asking for further fiscal consolidation measures: these measures included the liberalization of professions and of the job market, the privatization of local public services and the reform of the collective wage bargaining system. The culmination of the crisis was reached with Berlusconi’s resignation and the nominee of Senator Mario Monti as the new PM. In the meantime, the already huge public debt (103.3% in 2007) skyrocketed to an unprecedented 132.6% in 2011. However, other financial and economic indicators were stable and, in some case, better than the European average: from one side, Italy experienced a primary surplus in the last twenty years (with the exception of 2009) and, from the other side, the export-led industries recovered fairly well from the crisis. Although Italy avoided entering in any European bailout program, the chronically weak economic growth and the rise of total and youth unemployment casted doubts over Italian recovery. Despite Italian economy had less structural weaknesses compared to Spain and Greece, its performance was far below the EU average.

In all three Southern European countries, the national economic system was in jeopardy; the unemployment was far beyond the EU average and the international institutions intervened directly or indirectly (Italy) to counter the effect of the crisis. As it will be shown in the following chapters, the economic turmoil was accompanied by a high political instability, since in the three cases the crisis led to snap elections and/or the appointment of technocratic governments.

5.3 The political crisis during the financial turmoil: it is not just about anti-establishment

During the 2014 European elections, it seemed the populism was the spectre haunting Europe. Populist was one of the most abused adjectives used to describe challenger parties belonging both to radical-right and radical-left parties’ family. The warning on possible “populist” breakthrough was

launched by Martin Schultz former President of the European Parliament (2013). In the midst of the crisis, many non-traditional parties gained an electoral momentum in several elections held between 2008 and 2013: National Front in France, SYRIZA in Greece, the Left Bloc in Portugal, the Five Stars Movement in Italy, the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, the Freedom Party of Austria, Alternative for Germany, Fidesz and Jobbik in Hungary etc. Barroso, the former President of the European Commission, soon after the European election results stated that “[t]he perception of the common person in the street is that they can no longer control what is going on. The man in the street believes those guys are there, and they don’t care about us” (quoted in Higgins 2014). In a nutshell, according to Barroso, the success of “populist” parties was related to the demand over the control of the policy-making. However, to what extent the political conditions under which those parties operate were similar? In order to answer to this question and to place the “political success” of Podemos, SYRIZA and FSM in their proper context, I will show how the demand-side in Spain, Greece and Italy, albeit with some national peculiarities, was similar and, more importantly, comparable. This comparison is extended to the European Union⁷ and to the two largest economies in the Euro Area – Germany and France – which can be considered in many respects the main political and economic points of reference in the Euro Area.

I use the Eurobarometer data to inquire the perception of the public opinion on sensitive issues. My diachronic analysis starts after the sign of Maastricht Treaty in 1992 and ends in 2015; this twenty-four-years span includes three different periods – a) the post-Maastricht era (1992-2000), b) the seven years that preceded the crisis (2000/2001-2007) and c) the eight-years crisis (2008-2015). This periodization, such any similar operation, suffers from a high degree of discretionarily; the ratio behind my choice is to highlight the changes in the pre-crisis (2000-2008) and post-crisis (2008-2015) and compare the result to the post-Maastricht consensus (1992-2000). This division, thus, is inextricably linked to European and supranational external “shocks” (the creation of the European Union, the introduction of the Euro and the crisis), irrespective of the national contextual factors. Although national factors can be regarded as valid explanatory variables in some of the issues under analysis, the goal here is to check the comparability among the three countries. Then, “supranational” events are more useful for my periodization.

I analyse five issues: a) the perception of the economic situation, b) the public opinion’s perception of the Euro, c) the image of the European Union, d) the satisfaction with democracy and e) the perception of political parties. The first two issues are particularly sensitive for all public opinions:

⁷ The European Union in the three different periods changed radically its composition. In the following paragraphs, the European Union results must be considered as an average of the results of all members belonging to the EU in a given time.

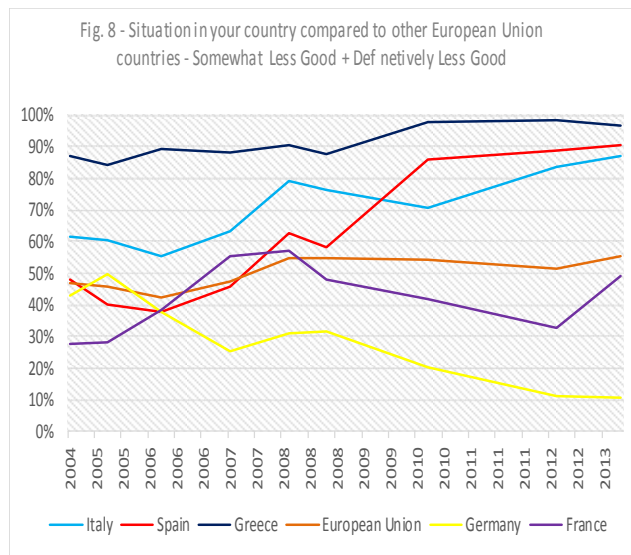
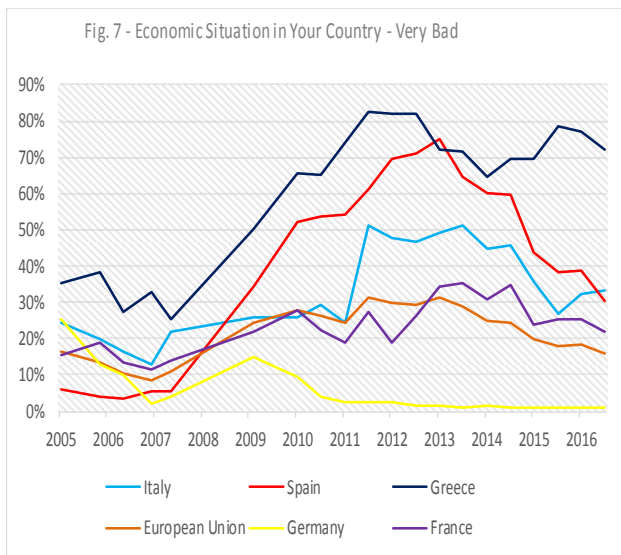
the economic situation is a critical indicator for incumbent government and any other challenger; it is thus unsurprising that the economic voting is one of the most scrutinized and debated topic in the voting behaviour literature (for a review see Linn et al. 2010). Moreover, the single currency has been heavily criticized by several challenger parties during the crisis: FSM for example launched a campaign for the European Election to leave the Euro-Area, while remaining in the European Union. The distinction between the criticism toward the Euro and the EU is crucial to identify to what extent the image of the European institutions changed since the outburst of the crisis. Public opinion in Spain, Greece and Italy have always showed a strong support for the EU and for the introduction of the single currency. The fourth issue satisfaction with democracy) is much more general, but it helps framing the nature of citizens' dissatisfaction not just economically, but also politically. The fifth is aimed at explaining parties' perception in the public opinion. Although the negative perception on political parties has been very high since for several decades in Europe – as shown in Chapter 2 – a further increase in the last eight years, would imply a growing dissatisfaction with the party systems. The aim of this part is to highlight the magnitude of the perceived changes in the national economy, the European institutions and the political regime without advancing any hypothesis on the correlation between these changes and the crisis; nor the following paragraphs inquire the link between the rise of so-called populist parties and the economic crisis (Kriesi and Pappas 2015). Furthermore, no implications can be found in this analysis both on the distinction between political and instrumental euro-scepticism (Lubbers and Scheepers 2005) and on the euro-sceptic attitudes in European Union (Halikiopoulou et al. 2012, Hobolt and Tilley 2014, Hobolt and de Vries, 2016, Hutter et al. 2016, Hooghe et al. 2017). Similar to what Mudde (2010) did for the study of the radical-right ideologies in Europe, my goal is to show that in the three countries new opinions on crucial issues, radically different from the past, were emerging since the 2008 crisis, creating analogous new demands for both traditional and non-traditional political actors.

5.3.1 The economic situation

While the first part of this chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the macroeconomic indicators, this paragraph deals with the perception that national public opinion had of the economic and financial crisis. In particular, I choose to focus on two questions from the Standard Eurobarometer: a) “How would you judge the current situation in each of the following? The situation of the (NATIONALITY) economy”⁸ and b) “For each of the following domains, would you say that the situation in (YOUR

⁸ The possible answers are: Very good; Rather good; Rather bad; Very bad; DK - Don't know

COUNTRY) is better or less good than the average of the European Union countries?”⁹. The first question asks to respondents to judge the economic performance of the country; the Figure 7 shows the share of “very bad” response. While it may be self-evident that in a poorly-performing country, the public opinion judges as unsatisfactory the economic performances, a comparative question between European countries may induce the respondents to judge less negatively its own country.



Figures 5.7 and 5.8 – Source: Eurobarometer

Thus, the choice of this second question is aimed at widening the analysis on the public opinion perception of the crisis. In this case, the Figure 8 shows the sum of “Somewhat Less Good” and “Definitively Less Good”.

As for the first question (Figure 7), the percentage of “Very Bad” responses were different in the pre-crisis period (2005-2007): compared to Greece and Italy public opinions, whose responses were higher than the EU average, Spain situation was evaluated positively by the respondents (5.51% of Very Bad response at the eve of the crisis, September 2007). While in 2010, both in Spain (53.85%) and Greece (65.20%) more than a half of respondents considered the situation as “Very Bad”, in Italy less than one third (29.41%) shared this view. The picture radically changed between 2011 and 2014. In the three countries, the perception of a very bad economic situation was deeply rooted in public opinion. Despite in the Italian case the trend was less marked with respect to Spain (mean for 2011-2014, 64.38%) and Greece (mean for 2011-2014, 74.77%), Figure 7 clearly shows the gap between the EU average and the three countries. With the exception of Greece, it was only in 2014 that the share of “very bad” answers started decreasing in Italy and Spain. As for the second question (Figure

⁹ The possible answers are: Much better; Somewhat better; Identical; Somewhat less good; Definitely less good; DK - Don't know.

8), the public opinion perception in the three countries was similar during the peak of the crisis (the data after 2013 are not available). Still, in the Greek case the perception of a problematic situation was much higher than the EU average; the difference between 2004 and 2013 is “just” +10%, while France (+21.47%) Italy (+25.27%) and Spain (+42.35%) show a significant increase, compared to the European Union (+8.51%) and Germany (-32.43%). Thus, in the midst of the crisis German public opinion evaluated positively its country performance with respect to other European countries. While the difference between Italy and France in 2004-2013 period is similar, the share of “Somewhat Less Good” and “Definitively Less Good” answers are significantly different: Italy, Spain and Greece citizens overwhelmingly considered the economic situation of their countries worse than the other European countries.

5.3.2 The single currency

Both Greece and Italy have parties within their political systems, which the literature defines as Eurosceptic, both among radical-left and radical-right families. In Spain as well, Izquierda Unida – similar to the SYRIZA in Greece, Rifondazione Comunista and Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà in Italy – holds a critical view on European economic integration. Although with relevant differences between party families, the single currency was a highly debated topic among any relevant political party. Challenger parties’ positions in the three countries on the issue are articulated and it would be unfeasible to account for all of them in details. Nonetheless, despite the variegated criticisms to the single currency, the three public opinions showed a high level of support to Euro (Figure 9)¹⁰. In the first period (1992-2001) Italy, Greece and Spain showed a support for the Euro higher than the EU average and, quite significantly, higher than both Germany and France. While from 2001 onwards the support decreased in Greece (below the EU average) and in Italy (still, above the EU average), in Spain the support was stable. Unsurprisingly, Germany was the most supportive countries of the single currency in the third period (2008-2016); despite the deficient economic performance during the whole Hollande presidency (2012-2017), the trend in France was counterintuitive (73.11% of French citizens support the Euro), compared to EU average (55.7%) and the other countries compared here.

As the paragraph 5.2 shows, the financial and economic situation in both Greece and Spain was critical, despite some signs of timid economic recovery; still, the support for the single currency went almost undisputed in the two countries, even when the crisis reached its peak. In Spain, the mean for

¹⁰ The Eurobarometer question is: What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell me for each statement, whether you are for it or against it. A European economic and monetary union with one single currency, the euro. Possible answers: For, Against, DK-Don't Know.

the period 2008-2016 is 62,66%, while in Greece is (65.44%), five points less (70.31%) than the first period, but ten points ahead than the second one (55.3%). Only in Italy, the three periods showed a marked decline in support to the Euro; the difference between the first period (78.20%) and the third period (57.76%) is more than twenty points and, most notably, in the biennium 2015-2016, this support is below the EU average, for the first time since 1992.

The data on the support for the Euro showed how in Greece and Spain the blame for the economic and financial crisis is not linked with the criticism to the single-currency. The same seemed to have occurred for France. Only in Italy, a country that from a financial standpoint performed comparatively better than the other two countries, this support is declining, in line with the electoral growth of political parties, critical toward the single currency (Five Stars Movement and The League). The tale of several crises in Southern Europe, however, is a tale of success in Germany; the country, which was the least supportive in 1992, completely reversed this trend, ending up being the most pro-Euro country in the countries compared here.

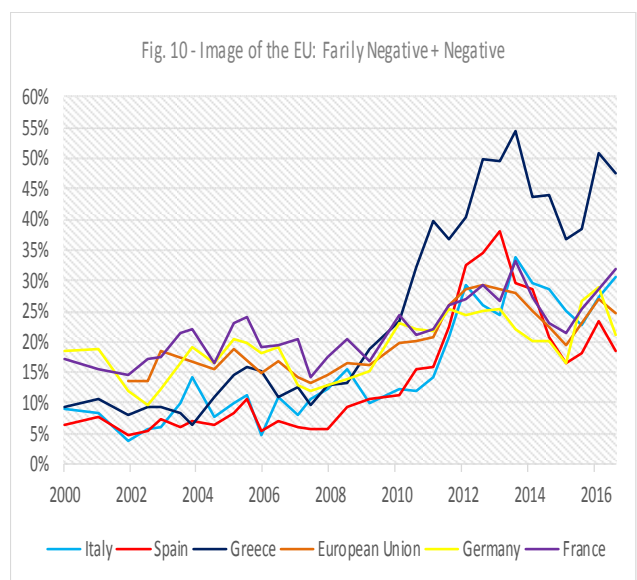
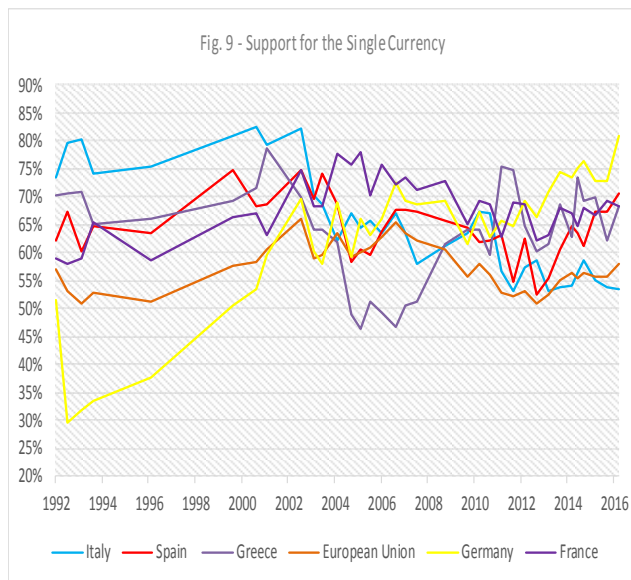
5.3.3 The image of the European Union

Although one may be tempted to relate the Euro with the European Union, the Eurobarometer data¹¹ shows a different picture in Italy, Spain and Greece. The two periods in which the image of the European Union is scrutinized (2000-2008 and 2008-2016) show a remarkable growth of the fairly negative and negative answers in Italy, Spain and Greece, while in Germany and France this growth was less marked (Figure 5.10).

In the Italian case, the shift was particularly evident from 2011 onwards, when the demand for fiscal adjustments became more compelling and when the pension reform, demanded by the two ECB president, was implemented by the Monti government, with the support of both centre-left and centre-right parties: for the first time since 2000, from 2013 onwards, the share of “fairly negative” and “negative” responses was higher than the EU average. The pre-crisis period highlights a very positive image of the European Union, since the mean of negative and fairly negative answer is only 8.64%; conversely, in the last period (2008-2016), the mean is 22.06%. The growth of negative judgments is even more marked in Spain and Greece, where the share goes from 6.76% in the first period to 20,65% in the second period (Spain) and from 10.77% to 37.2% in Greece. It is during the peak of the crisis that the image of the EU is more negative.

¹¹ The question of the Eurobarometer is: “In general, does the European Union conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?”. Possible answers are: Fairly positive; Very positive; Fairly negative; Very negative; DK - Don't know; Neutral. The Figure refers to the sum of Fairly negative and Very negative answers.

During the negotiations with the Troika, almost a half of the Greek judged negatively the EU: despite soon after SYRIZA breakthrough in 2015 elections the share went down to the level of 2011, it increased again in the last years (2015-2016), arguably due to the harsh conditionality of the very last bailout tranches. In the Spanish case, the crisis impacts significantly on the image of the EU; again, it was during the period of greater financial instability (2011-2014) that Spanish citizens perceived the EU more negatively. Compared to the EU average (22.91%), Germany (21.47%) and France (24.82%), the image of the EU in the last period (2008-2016), at least in Italy and in Spain is in line with the other countries. However, in the other three cases the mean of negative responses in the previous period – 15.41% in the EU, 16.14% in Germany and 18.73% in France – was much higher than Spain and Italy.



Figures 5.9 and 5.10 – Source: Eurobarometer

5.3.4 Satisfaction with Democracy

Beyond economics, the question on the satisfaction with democracy¹² helps understanding the political dissatisfaction in different public opinions. Although democracy is a highly disputed concept, which entails several aspects of a given political system and whose measurement still generates controversies among scholars (see among others Dahl 1989, Diamond 1989, Morlino 1997 and 2012) and although the answer to a question related to the satisfaction with democracy

¹² The question of the Eurobarometer is: "On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in (your country)?" Possible answers are: Very satisfied; Fairly satisfied; Not very satisfied; Not at all satisfied; DK - Don't know. The Figure refers to the sum of Not very satisfied and Not at all satisfied answers.

underestimate what democracy *is* in the perception of the respondents, the growth of negative answers indicates that respondents are at least unenthusiastic on how their political systems work. The causes of a growing dissatisfaction are multifaceted and can be imputed to different factors, be them cultural, socio-economic, political etc. Thus, the aim here is not establishing a connection with the economic crisis; rather, I want to highlight the increase demand for a change in the system – more plausibly within the system itself. The Figure 11 shows an increasing trend in the negative perception of democracy during the crisis period (2008-2016) in all cases under analysis, with exception of Germany (30.2%), where the dissatisfaction with democracy significantly decreased with respect the other two periods (41.48% during 1992-2000 and 40.33% during 2001-2007). In both the Italian and the Spanish cases, albeit with different magnitude, the first period (1992-2000) shows a higher dissatisfaction with democracy. To what extent this trend can be linked to the corruption and political scandals in the two countries – *Tangentopoli* (bribe cities) in Italy and the GAL case in Spain – is not a matter of discussion here. Be as it may, what matters for the analysis is that, in Italy, the declining dissatisfaction from the first (75.11%) to the second period (55,77%) was countered by the growth of the negative answers in the third period (65.99%). In Spain, the trend follows the same pattern: 44,28% of negative response in the first period, 28.09% in the second and 64.01% in the third. In Greece, the first two periods have a similar trend (41.53% and 43.51% respectively), while the last highlights a marled growth (79,76%). The EU countries and France have similar trend in the first and in the third period; in both cases, less than a half of the respondents have a negative opinion on how democracy works. Although in France and the EU countries the dissatisfaction grew from the second period to the third (from 39.96% to 45.27% in France and from 40.36% to 47.33% in the EU countries), this negative tendency is far less pronounced than in Italy, Spain and Greece.

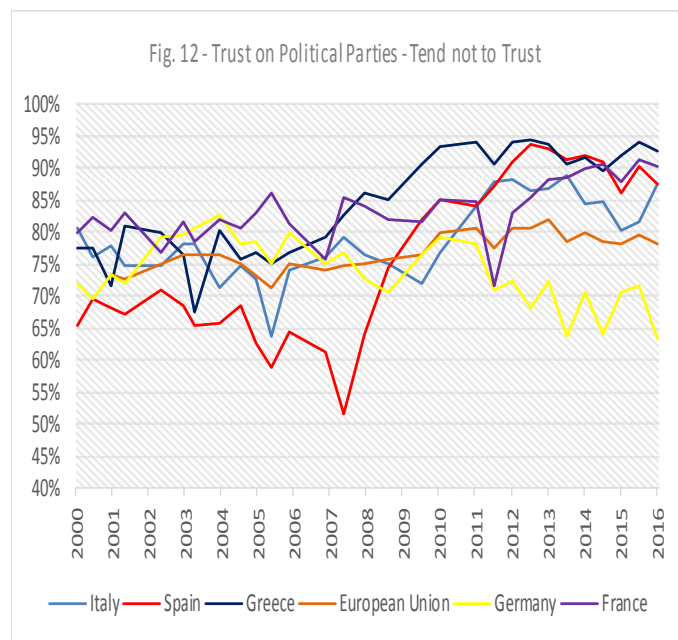
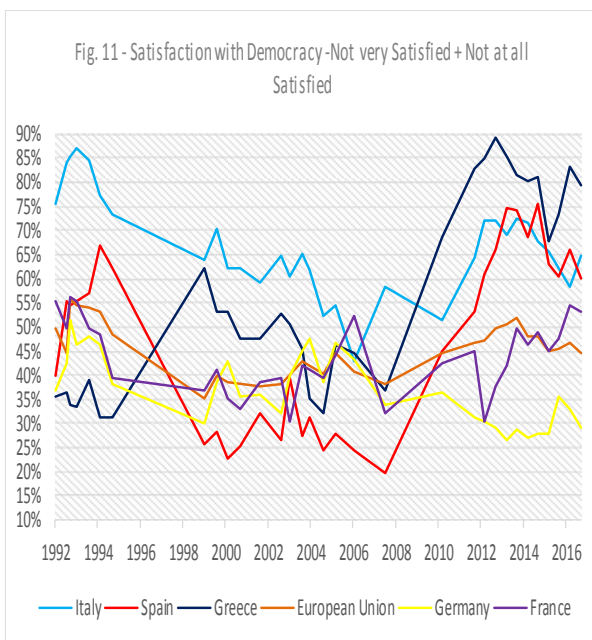
5.3.5 The trust on political parties

Despite being in the Western countries, still a change in the mistrust of political parties can corroborate the perception of a favourable environment for challenger parties (Figure 12). The Eurobarometer¹³ provide the data only for the last two periods (2000-2007 and 2008-2016). The diffuse mistrust on political parties is consistent in the five cases and it grows in the second period (again the exception is Germany, where it decreases from 76.66% to 71.39%).

However, in the cases of Italy (+7.71%), Spain (+ 18.11%) and Greece (+14.37%) the difference compared to France (+4.76%), Germany (-5.26%) and the EU countries (+4.22%) is higher. In Italy,

¹³ The question of the Eurobarometer is: "I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it? Political parties". Possible answers are: Tend to trust; Tend not to trust; DK - Don't know.

the diffuse suspicion on political parties has always been clear-cut and the crisis – along with other corruption scandals – seemed to have exacerbated this feeling. In 2010, 76.92% respondent tended not to trust parties; a year later, in the days that preceded Berlusconi’s resignation as PM the share went up to 84.19%. The same trend, albeit with a less visible growth, can be found in the French case. Similarly, in Greece between 2011 and 2013, more than nine out ten respondents mistrusted political parties; although this was an unprecedented share, the diffuse suspicion on political parties is similar to Italy. In Spain, on the contrary, the growth was much more impressive: only a half of respondents (51.79%) mistrusted political parties in 2008; two years later, in 2010, the share was 82.11%, while in 2013 it reached its peak (92.98%). Although mistrust in political parties seems a mainstream attitude in different public opinions in Europe, the three Southern European countries show a much deeper suspicion.



Figures 5.11 and 5.12 – Source: Eurobarometer

5.4 Defining and apprising a political success

As explained in the previous chapter, the concept of political success will be analysed following three criteria: 1) the relevance of the challenger party, 2) the role of challenger parties in the critical elections and 3) their institutionalization in the party system.

In the first case, relevance is inquired following Sartori (1976[2005]) operationalization. A political party is, thus, 1) relevant when exhibits a) a coalition potential or b) a blackmail potential. In order to trace back the relevance of challenger parties I will enquire not only their election results, but also how did they “use” either their coalition or blackmail potential in the aftermath of the elections.

Secondly, during critical elections the previous political system suffers from a major shock in terms of political alignment of their electorates. Then, 2a) the political parties responsible for the shocks are those who successfully challenged the old-alignment. However, a political success would be incomplete looking only at the the *pars destruens* only materializes; 2b) the *pars construens* in this case is the ability of those parties to provoke at least a partial re-alignment in the electorate. After the critical elections volatility is expected to decrease due to the institutionalization of challenger parties in the political system. Using Pedersen’s scheme (1982) as a point of reference, it is to be expected that 3) challenger parties institutionalized after they reach the relevance threshold.

Table 5.1 - Challenger Electoral Results during the Great Recession			
	Regional level	National	European
SYRIZA	4,1% (2010) *†	5% (2007)	4,7% (2009)
	17,7% (2014)	4,6% (2009)	26,57% (2014)
		16,8% (M 2012)	
		26,9% (Ju. 2012)	
		36,3% (Ja. 2015)	
		35,5% (S 2015)	
Pod.	13,7% (2015) *	12,69% (2015)	7,98% (2014)
		21,15% (2016) *	
FSM	3,4% (2010) **	25,56% (2013)	21,16% (2014)
	16,2(2014) ***	32,7% (2018)	
	15,7% (2015) ***		
* % with allies; †% of Total Vote; ** % vote list obtained in 5 regions in which FSM participated to the elections; *** % of List Vote.			
Table 5.1. Source: Own Estimation, from Ministry of Interior Affairs (Italy, Spain, Greece)			

5.4.1 Beyond relevance: the electoral ascendancy of Podemos, SYRIZA and FSM

In Podemos case, the first participation to a nationwide election occurred in 2014 for the European Parliament elections. Without going into detail (see Chapter 6), Podemos elite consciously used the almost pure proportional electoral law and the popularity matured by the leader *in pectore* Pablo Iglesias in the previous years to propose a political option alternative to the PSOE and, to some extent, to the other challenger in the radical-left field, Izquierda Unida (and its allies). Apprising the relevance for European elections would be pointless, due to the type of competition – a second-order election, following the literature on this topic (Marsh 1998, Schmitt 2005 and Hobolt and Wittrock 2011) – and due to the political structure of the EU. Still, despite the novelty of the *spitzenkandidat* introduced

in 2014, the president of the Commission is chosen by the European Council and approved by the European Parliament. However, Podemos electoral breakthrough is clear-cut (Table 1): it resulted as the fourth most-voted party (7.98%), behind the Partido Popular (PP) (26.09%), the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) (23.01%) and Izquierda Unida (IU) and its allies (the label used in this election was La Izquierda Plural – IU-LV) (10.03%). Up until then, this election represented the lowest point reached by the *bipartitismo* since the advent of democracy in Spain (and the most volatile election in the history of Spain). Although strictly speaking Podemos has not a coalition nor a blackmailing potential in this election, this result guaranteed to Podemos the electoral “legitimacy” to compete in the following sub-national elections in Andalusia (22 March 2015) and in the other *Comunidades Autonomas* (24 May 2015; in Catalunya 27 September 2015). Podemos Andalusia was the third most-voted party (14.8%), behind PSOE-A (35.28%) and PP (26.65%), becoming a crucial actor for the formation of a coalition government in Andalusia. The bargain over a bipartite coalition with PSOE and Ciudadanos (C’s) lasted almost three months. The previous alliance with the radical-left – albeit possible through a minimal-winning coalition agreement – was discarded by both parties; the uncompromising stance of Teresa Rodríguez – one of the leading figure of the third faction in Podemos, the so-called “anti-capitalists” (see Chapter 6) – forced PSOE-A to find an agreement on the *investidura* with C’s in a minimal connected winning coalition (MCWC). Albeit not participating directly in the government, in the following regional elections, Podemos allowed for the formation of PSOE-led governments (alone or in coalition with other partners) in Extremadura, Castilla-La Mancha, Aragón, Asturias, the Balearic Islands, the Valencian Community and Cantabria through abstention or favourable votes in vote of confidence sessions. In Extremadura and Castilla-La Mancha, Aragón and Balearic Islands, four internal referenda among Podemos members ratified the support to PSOE candidates. Moreover, Podemos abstention was decisive for the nominee of a regionalist candidate in Cantabria and the PSOE candidate in the Asturias. In the Valencian Community, the so-called *Acuerdo del Bótanico* (The Agreement of the Botanic Garden), between PSOE, Compromís and Podemos allowed the election of the socialist candidate: in this case five of thirteen Parliamentarians decided to abstain in the confidence-vote session. This coalition pact was renewed in 2016. Furthermore, Podemos’ coalition potential was crucial for the election held in Barcelona and Madrid. In the first case, En Comú Podem-Guanyem el Canvi elected Ada Colau as mayor. In the second case, the coalition Ahora Madrid was the second most-voted list, behind the PP. The PSOE sustained the Ahora Madrid candidate, Manuela Carmena as mayor of the capital. The first legislative election (20 December 2015) was an electoral breakthrough for Podemos (see Table 1); it was also the legislative election with the lowest share for the *bipartidismo*. The relative majority obtained by the PP (28.71%) and the narrow margin between PSOE (22%) and Podemos

and its allies (20.68%) forced all political parties to find “coalitionable” partners. The refusal of the C’s leader, Albert Rivera, to sustain a PP-led government, allowed Podemos to propose other possible majorities. However, while Podemos’ preference was for a coalition between PSOE, Podemos, IU and other sub-national parties, which would have guaranteed a narrow majority in the Parliament, PSOE and C’s advocated for a three-parties’ majority with Podemos. The majority of the Podemos elite was reluctant to this hypothesis (Vittori 2017a) and the two internal referenda among the membership ratified the former option. PSOE and C’s signed a shared program, which nonetheless had not the majority in the Parliament. The impossibility to reach an agreement led to a second legislative election in June 2016. Podemos main goal was the *sorpasso* – the overtaking, recalling a famous Italian movie – of PSOE; the coalition Unidos Podemos (UP) with IU and other regional allies missed the target. The PSOE (22.6%) held its position, while the PP (33% of the votes, 39.14% of the seats) approximated to the absolute majority. UP (21.2%) lost 3,3% with the respect to the sum reached by the parties in the 2015 elections. Still, its blackmail potential impacted on PSOE leadership. The coalition *formateur* – Mariano Rajoy (PP) – agreed with C’s a coalition pact; nonetheless, this coalition fell short of the absolute majority. Thus, PSOE was forced to choose between the *responsiveness* to the membership, who voted few months before for a “reformist” government in the internal referendum and the *responsibility* to avoid a third election. The PSOE secretary, Pedro Sánchez, more eager to be uncompromising with PP, preferred a more responsive stance, while the majority of the Party in Central Office (PCO) – the so called *barones* – opted for a responsible stance. Sánchez was dismissed in a meeting of the *Ejecutiva Federal* and the party – led by an ad-interim secretary – abstained in the confidence-vote session, allowing the formation of a PP government. More recently (2018), Podemos favoured the ascendancy of Sánchez as PM: Podemos proposed a vote of no-confidence to Rajoy government in 2017, which eventually failed. However, once PSOE (May-June 2018) proposed the same procedure in the Parliament, Podemos endorsed the “No”, thus allowing the formation of a new socialist-led government¹⁴. The new PM was Pedro Sánchez, who had previously regained the leadership of the socialist party. It was the first time since the transition to democracy that a motion of no-confidence had the majority in the Parliament. After being nominated PM, Sánchez agreed with Podemos on the annual-budget bill, thus making Podemos for the first time since its founding close to the executive power threshold.

¹⁴ Contrary to Italy, the votes of no-confidence in Spain are constructive: to succeed, opposition parties need to find an alternative PM to oust the government in charge. In 2017, the vote of no-confidence was proposed by Podemos and Pablo Iglesias was the prospective PM: the motion received the support of Unidos Podemos and Compromís groups, while Catalan and Basque minorities conditioned their support to a pro-“right-to-decide” posture of the new government. PSOE, PP and C’s voted against. In 2018 the motion proposed by PSOE was supported by Unidos Podemos, the Catalan European Democratic Party (PDeCAT), Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC) and New Canaries (NCa), while C’s and PP voted against.

Contrary to Podemos, SYRIZA's ascendancy to relevancy occurred firstly in the legislative election. However, its electoral breakthrough occurred four years after the outburst of the crisis. In the meantime, three elections have taken place: one legislative (2009), one at the European level (2009) and the first elections in the thirteen administrative regions created by PASOK government (2010). Since the split within the radical-left alliance labelled Synaspismos (SYN) between the KKE, the Party of Democratic Left and the Greek Left (one of the successor of the KKE-Interior), SYN and, from 2004, SYRIZA (see Chapter 7) has never reached the relevance threshold: despite its non-majoritarian electoral law, Greece after 1992 was an example of quasi-bipartitism, in which the two traditional parties PASOK (centre-left) and ND (centre-right) alternate in power. In the 2009 legislative election (October 2009), PASOK obtained the absolute majority in the Parliament (53.3% of the seats, 43.92% of votes) and SYRIZA 4,60% (13 seats). PASOK's using the infamous motto "Money is There" promised a stimulus package for the years to come to sustain the declining GDP. Before, in the European elections (June 2009), SYRIZA had a similar share of votes (4.7%, one MEP elected). Despite the financial problem, the beginning of the anti-austerity protests and the agreement reached on the first bailout program (PASOK and the Popular Orthodox Rally [LAOS] voted in favour, SYRIZA, KKE and ND against), the regional elections held in 2010 guaranteed to PASOK the control over seven regions, while ND won in five; in the remaining region – Peloponnese – the governor had the support of PASOK and LAOS. SYRIZA result was unsatisfactory. As Gemenis puts it (2012: 113), while the share of votes for whole radical-left was the largest since 1981 legislative elections, "SYRIZA [...] fared worse than expected which is probably not surprising considering the fierce competition it faced since the left of the political spectrum was overcrowded by parties trying to take advantage of the rather low effective threshold for representation".

The intensification of the financial crisis and the failure of Socialist PM George Papandreou to call for a referendum for the Greek permanence in the Euro-zone radically changed the scenario. Papandreou resigned in November 2011, due to several criticisms coming from inside and outside the party for the referendum. The call for the national unity government was refused both by KKE and SYRIZA, which refused to participate in the following government led by the former Governor of the Bank of Greece, Lucas Papademos. The provisional government received the support of PASOK, ND and LAOS and lasted about six months. SYRIZA electoral performance was expected to significantly advance in the polls.

In the May 2012 elections (Table 1), SYRIZA (16.79%) was the second-most voted party, behind ND (18.85%). This critical election, along with the following in June, marked the end of the bipartitism in Greece and one of the highest volatility rates in Europe, since the World-War II. The three parties, which participated to the last government were severely punished by the electorate. LAOS (2,.74%),

did not reach the 3% electoral threshold and PASOK (13.18%), saw its Parliamentary group went from 160 to 41 deputies. ND share of votes significantly decreased (from 33.47% to 18.18%). Under the leadership of Alexis Tsipras, SYRIZA used its relevance to force new elections in June 2012; any national unity government without the involvement of SYRIZA was excluded *a priori* by both PASOK and ND, whose total seats in the Parliament could not guarantee the absolute majority. KKE and GD were out of the table. Panos Kammenos, the leader of the newly formed ANEL (10.62%) and Fotis Kouvelis, leader of the Dimokratiki Aristera (Democratic Left, DIMAR) were contrary to any agreement with ND. The possibility of PASOK-led government with DIMAR, ANEL and SYRIZA was discarded by both SYRIZA and ANEL. Tsipras refused to participate in any alleged pro-austerity government and the other anti-austerity parties (KKE, DIMAR on the left and ANEL on the right spectrum) had not the majority. In June, the second legislative elections allowed SYRIZA to increase its share of votes (26,89%) along with ND (29.66%). Thanks to the support of PASOK, led at the time by the Minister of Finance Evangelos Venizelos, and of DIMAR¹⁵, the ND leader Samaras formed an oversized majority government. It was SYRIZA along with other anti-austerity parties that used its blackmail potential to force a grand-coalition; the only other alternative would have been a multi-party coalition with KKE, ANEL, DIMAR and PASOK. Nor SYRIZA or KKE nor ANEL would have joined a coalition with PASOK.

The following regional elections (18 May 2014) were problematic for SYRIZA, probably due to its lack of experienced political personnel at the grassroots level (see ch. 7). SYRIZA had good results in the Ionian Islands and in Attica, where its candidates resulted elected, and in the municipality of Athens, in which its candidate was defeated by a narrow margin by a centre-left coalition. However, SYRIZA lost about 9% (17.7%) with respect to the last legislative elections. Still SYRIZA became in the 13 regions and in the main municipalities the main centre-left party. As shown by Tsirbas (2015: 149), the difference between SYRIZA results at the regional (17.7%) and municipal level (15.2%) compared to the European elections (26.57%), held the week after the other two elections is staggering: “there was a ratio of almost 1:2 between its municipal and European election influence, suggesting a complete reversal of the pattern of the past, when the left in Greece had almost double the influence in municipal elections that it had at the national level”. In a nutshell, “SYRIZA did not succeed in giving the local elections a truly national character and failed to translate its national-level influence to the local level” (Tsirbas 2015: 152). The 2014 European elections were the prologue of Tsipras ascendancy to power: SYRIZA was the most voted party (26.57%), while the traditional parties, ND and PASOK, got 22,72% and 8.02% respectively. The approval of a further bailout

¹⁵ DIMAR withdrew the support to Samaras government in 2013, following the closure of the state-owned television as part of the austerity measures implemented to respect the Memorandum agreement.

program in 2014 increased the distance between pro-austerity and anti-austerity parties; this line of division was crucial in the coalition formation in the first SYRIZA government. The first legislative election in January 2015, gave to SYRIZA (36.34%) the relative majority, very closed to the absolute majority in the Parliament (149 seats). KKE refused to enter in a possible coalition or to give confidence to a SYRIZA government; thus, of the only two anti-memorandum parties in the Parliament, ANEL and XA, only ANEL was a “coalitionable” partner under a shared anti-austerity program. Once in charge, the long-lasting bargain with the Troika wrecked. Tsipras, whose aim was the approval of a debt-relief program without a Grexit (the Greek exit from the European Union) tried to gain a greater political leverage through a referendum (5 July 2015) on the bailout agreement. The overwhelming majority (61.31%) voted against the plan proposed by EU and IMF. Tsipras called for new elections in September to capitalize the victory, soon after the sign of a further bailout program. Again, SYRIZA (35,46%, 145 seats) ended up in a coalition with ANEL (3,69%, 10 seats), missing the absolute majority threshold. Despite the harsh criticism from within its party for the austerity measures included in the bailout program (see Chapter 7), Tsipras maintained SYRIZA beyond the executive power threshold.

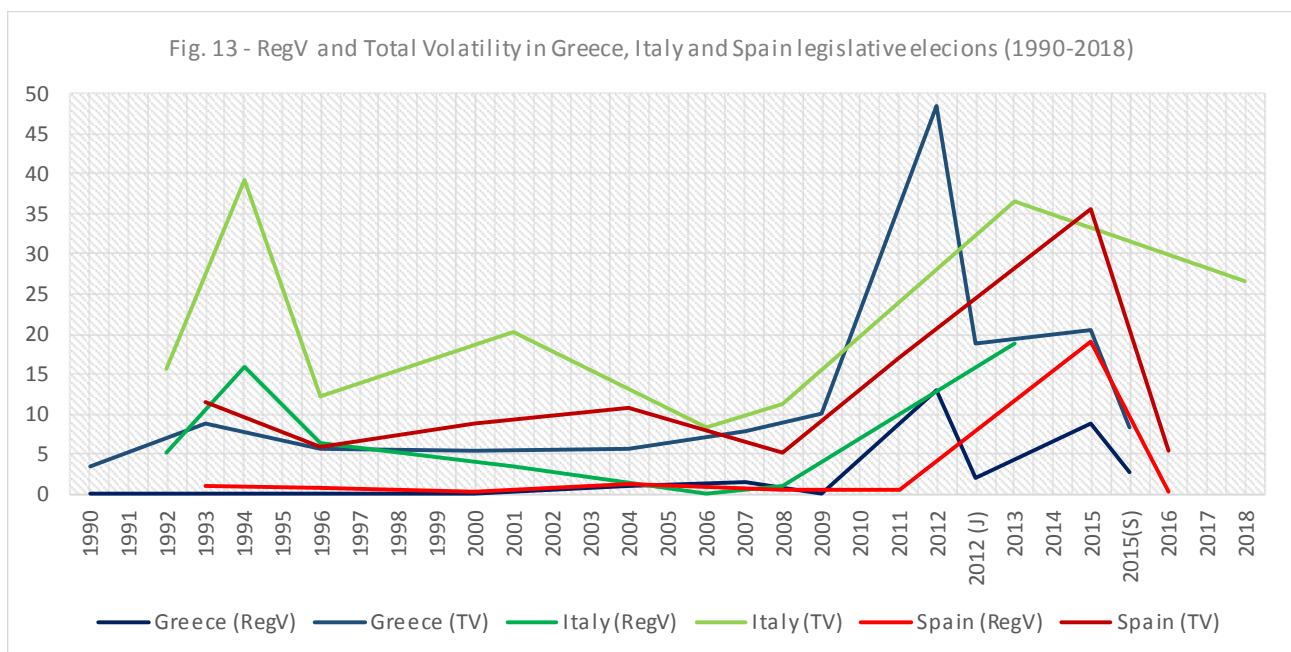
FSM became relevant only in 2013, four years after its genesis (2009). When the last Berlusconi government (2008-2011) was replaced by the technocratic Monti government (2011-2013) there was no election. Without taking into consideration the early – somewhat successful – attempts to participate in local elections with civic lists associated to Beppe Grillo symbol (see Chapter 8), the very first significant sub-national elections for FSM were the regional ballots in 2010. It would be meaningless to judge FSM overall performance (1.74%), since the party participated in only five of thirteen regions. The most encouraging results for FSM were in Piedmont (3.67¹⁶%, sixth most-voted list, 2 seats) and Emilia-Romagna (6%, fifth most-voted list, 2 seats); in Campania (1,33%), Lombardy (2.33%) and Veneto (2.58%), FSM had no representation. Two years after, FSM became for the first time relevant at the regional level, after the result in the Sicilian elections. FMS was the most voted party (18.17%), but the centre-left coalition obtained the relative majority (30.47 %) and formed a minority government led by Rosario Crocetta. Despite avoiding a direct support of Crocetta presidency, FSM opted for a conditioned support of the centre-left government. This strategy was labelled the “Sicilian model” and it was approved by Grillo himself (Messina, 2013). However, the Sicilian model soon failed: FSM opted for a confrontational posture vis-à-vis Crocetta government proposing several votes of no-confidence to his government. FSM, thus, was able to pragmatically use its coalition potential when it had the possibility to use it.

¹⁶ The percentage refers to the votes to the list.

The 2013 legislative elections (Table 1) – along with three regional elections (Lombardy, Lazio and Molise) – marked a breakthrough for FSM. FSM (25.56%) was the second-most voted party – the most voted excluding the votes of the Italians living abroad – behind the Partito Democratico (PD) and its centre-left coalition (29.55%). Due to the electoral law, this centre-left coalition obtained 55% of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies, while only the relative majority in the senate, where the electoral bonus was regionally-based. Not only FSM became suddenly relevant, but it was also in a position to use strategically its coalition/blackmail potential. The centre-left PM candidate, Pierluigi Bersani tried to avoid the resurgence of the grand coalition that sustained former PM, Mario Monti. Then, the only option available in the Senate was to obtain FSM's vote of confidence. In a famous meeting – broadcasted in streaming – Bersani and the two FSM spokesman/woman discussed this possibility, which however never materialized. Grillo advocated the “Sicilian model” without granting FSM's confidence vote, which was necessary for the legislature to start. When Bersani stepped down, Enrico Letta reached an agreement with centre-right parties for a new grand coalition. As in the case of Podemos and SYRIZA, FSM coalition potential was used to force traditional parties to form an oversized coalition government. From this bargain onward, FSM made even clearer to the electorate that the party was unwilling to pursue a political agreement with the other traditional and non-traditional parties. FSM changed its posture after 2018 elections. Although in the Spanish case, it was Podemos that proposed a coalition government, whose feasibility it would be difficult to assess, in the Italian case an alliance with PD was never a concrete possibility. Rather, the similarity between FSM and Podemos lays in the ability to force a cooperation between traditional parties and other moderate challengers (C's in Spain and Scelta Civica, the party of former PM Mario Monti), which allowed them to present as the main challenger in their political system.

FSM's performance in the following elections – European and local, which were held in the same day, 25 May 2014 – was unsatisfactory. While FSM succeeded in electing Filippo Nogarin in a centre-left stronghold, Livorno, its motto for the European elections – Vinciamo Noi! (We will win!) – proved to be beyond the possibility of the party. PD reached the best result (40.81%) in his history. FSM performed worse than the legislative elections (21.16%). Still, in both the European and the local elections, confirmed its role in the reconfiguration of the political system, being the second (and in some cases the third) most-voted party. Similar to SYRIZA, FSM could not count on a grassroots ramification at the local level (see ch.8); thus, their deficient results came as no surprise. This tendency was confirmed in the new round of regional elections in 2015 (Campania, Liguria, Marche, Apulia, Tuscany, Umbria and Veneto), in which FSM (15.7%) fall behind both centre-left and centre-right coalitions. The victory in Rome and Turin in the simultaneous local elections partially reversed this trend, allowing FSM to present itself as a competitive force at the sub-national level. FSM

obtained its best result in the following legislative elections (March 2018): while local and regional elections between 2015 and 2017 were unsatisfactory from an electoral standpoint for FSM (Emanuele, Maggini and Paparo 2016 and Paparo 2017), FSM resulted the first party (32.7%¹⁷) in 2018, even though the centre-right coalition had the relative majority (37%). Since the new electoral law has not any majority bonus, the centre-right coalition had not the absolute majority in the Parliament. After few months of consultations between parties on the coalition options available, FSM and The League (17.3%) coalesced after agreeing on a five-years governing contract.



Figures 5.13 – Source: Own Elaboration from Emanuele (2015).

5.4.2 The critical elections, the de-alignment and the realignment of the three political systems

The literature on party institutionalization provides in-depth analysis of party systems’ transformation (Chiaramonte and Emanuele 2015, Casal-Bértoa 2016a and 2016b). Rather than focusing on a diachronic and systemic analysis, I focus on the traumatic events, which I define critical elections, that have reconfigured some political systems in Europe.

Critical elections are rare events in stable political systems (Table 5.2): these elections, as explained in the previous chapter, caused a sharp alteration of the political system. Operationalizing the reconfiguration in terms of volatility is a difficult task, since any threshold would be discretionary: however, I define as critical any election, in which the Total Volatility (TV) is more than 30, i.e. more

¹⁷ The result refers to the Chamber of Deputies

than 1/3 of the electorate change its preference from a t0 election to a t1 election. This election must be followed by a t2 election in which the realignment is at least one-third of the previous volatility, i.e. volatility decreases of 30% compared to the previous elections. Otherwise, realignment is considered only partial. Since it is disputable whether the most adequate threshold is 30, I extend this brief analysis to the elections, in which TV is higher than 20 and the TV in t2 election is 30% lower than t1. For the sake of parsimony, I do not include this analysis in Table 5.2. Being conscious of the risk linked to such discriminative selection, which cannot account for slower and less traumatic changes, I would like to remark here that the aim of such analysis is illustrative, i.e. describing the impact of critical elections in Greece, Italy and Spain and the role of challenger parties in these elections.

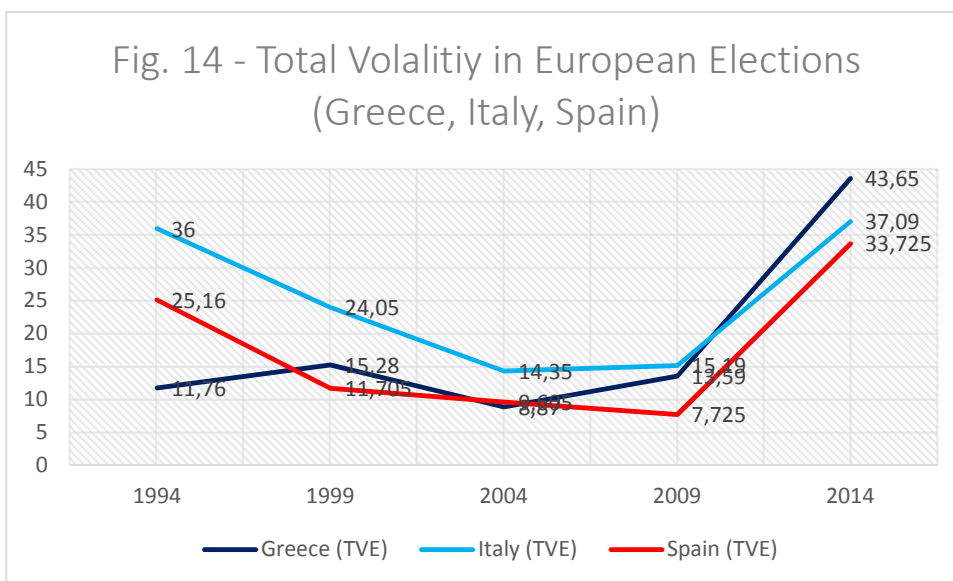
In Western Europe from 1945 to 2016 – 353 elections (see Emanuele 2015) – there were 8 elections in which the volatility was higher than 30¹⁸ (2.31% of the cases); in 27 cases, the volatility was higher than 20 (7.82%). Among the 8 elections where TV >30, five involved Spain (1982, 2015), Greece (2012) and Italy (1994, 2013): all t2 elections respected the second criterion of a lower volatility. In one case – Iceland (2013) – the second criterion is not respected; in the last case (Iceland 2016) there is not a t2 election to be compared. Expanding the analysis to the 28 cases in which TV>20, 18 cases respect the second criterion, i.e. in t1 election TV decreases of more than 30%. In two of the ten cases where the second criterion is not respected, t1 elections has not taken placed yet.

The three challenger parties are the protagonists of very rare events in the history of the Western European political systems: a substantial shift in party preferences followed by another realignment in the electorate (Figure 5.13). All three parties became relevant during a critical election – SYRIZA in 2012, FSM in 2013 and Podemos in 2015 – when the TVs marked three of the highest level in Western Europe since 1945. In Greece, the volatility in the May 2012 election (TV=48.5) provoked a massive realignment in the following election in June (TV=18.7). The first election in 2015 was highly volatile (TV=20.5) as well due to the further growth of SYRIZA (+8,3% with respect to 2012) and the entrance of a new challenger, To Potami (The River) (6.1%). The following realignment in the second election in 2015 (TV=8.4) confirmed that, even adopting a more comprehensive definition of critical election, SYRIZA is the main responsible for the de-alignment in Greece in the last years. Accordingly, it was the rise of Podemos at both European elections (2014) and legislative election (2015) that caused a massive alteration of the political system, comparable to the one occurred in 1982 elections (TV=43.8), when the PSOE won the absolute majority for the first time. In the Italian case, FSM impact in the 2013 election (TV= 36.65) is comparable to the post-Tangetopoli earthquake

¹⁸ Nine, including the 2011 legislative elections in Ireland, in which the TV was 29,60.

in 1994 (TV=39.25): at the time, the rise of Forza Italia radically changed the political system for the following twenty years (Table 5.2). However, in this case the following realignment occurred only partially: the Total Volatility decrease of only 10 points (26.7), due to the growth of FSM and The League. Albeit formally respecting the second criterion – taking t1 as a point of reference, the difference between t1 and t2 is 37.2% – this case is borderline, since TV in t2 is still persistent. In this case, however when considering the centre-right coalition (Forza Italia, The League and Fratelli d’Italia) as one unit in both elections, the TV decreases consistently. Moreover, the % obtained by new parties in this last election is residual (2.2%) compared to what happened in 2013 (35%) (Chiaramonte and Emanuele).

Furthermore, this trend is confirmed also when comparing the European elections: in the 2014 elections 2014, when all three parties had their electoral breakthrough, with the partial exception of FSM, the TVs in the three countries are comparable to the critical election at the national level.



Figures 5.14– Source: Own elaboration on European Elections

5.4.3 The challenger parties’ institutionalization

Albeit it would be premature to evaluate the long-term resilience and the degree of institutionalization of those parties, some preliminary considerations are possible. In detail, the Table 5.3 indicates the Pedersen thresholds plus the sub-national executive power threshold, which shows when a party won the elections either in a regional election or in a relevant municipality (the capital of the country).

Only Podemos reached the relevance threshold in less than two years. In January 2014, some intellectuals and social movements’ activists launched an appeal titled *Mover Ficha* (see Chapter 6)

for the forthcoming European elections. It was the prologue of Podemos first participation in a national election, in which it reached the authorization and representation thresholds. The relevance threshold was reached in the 2015 legislative elections; in May 2015, Podemos won the municipal elections in Madrid (sub-national executive power threshold) and in 2018 it almost reached the executive-power threshold, grating its external support to a PSOE-led government. In SYRIZA case, it took eight years to move from the representation to the relevant threshold: once created in 2004 as a coalition of parties and movements led by SYN (see Chapter 7), SYRIZA relied mostly on SYN organizational structure and it proved capable of reaching the representation threshold in the 2004 election.

Finally, FSM’s origin has its formal genesis dated back at October 2009 (declaration threshold); however, since it indirectly participated to previous elections, supporting local civic lists and candidates (see Chapter 8) I indicate also the year of the creation of *beppegrillo.it* website (January 2005). Using as a point of reference the formal creation of the party, it took four years – until the first national electoral available (February 2013) – to reach the relevance threshold at the national level. Three years after (June 2016), FSM gained the municipal election in Rome (sub-national executive power threshold), while in 2018 (nine years since the foundation) it reached the executive-power threshold.

Country	Election Year	TV(t1)	TV(t2)
Greece	2012	48,50	18,7
Iceland	2013	34,65	31,10
Iceland	2016	31,10	—
Italy	1994	39,25	12,30
Italy	2013	36,65	26,7
Netherlands	2002	31,30	16,55
Spain	1982	43,80	13,20
Spain	2015	35,50	5,5

Table 5.2. Source: Emanuele (2015)

In all three cases, after becoming relevant for the first time, the three parties kept above the relevance thresholds in the following elections. In all three cases, the three parties reached or went very close to the executive-power threshold. Following Pedersen scheme on party electoral lifespan, they can be considered as institutionalized parties.

In conclusion, Podemos, SYRIZA and FSM had a full-fledged “political success”: 1) they are (still) relevant in their national political systems and they used their coalition/blackmail potential to force

“unnatural” alliances between traditional parties; 2) they had a crucial role in “causing” a critical elections, and “forcing” a realignment in the electorate in the following elections and 3) they can be considered until now fully institutionalized, at least from an electoral standpoint.

Table 5.3 - Institutionalization of Challenger Parties							
	Declaration	Authorization (national Level)	Representation (national Level)	Relevance	Below Relevance Threshold	Ex. Power (sub-national)	Ex. Power (national)
<i>Podemos</i>	Jan. 2014	June 2014	June 2014	Dec. 2015	—	May 2015	—
<i>SYRIZA</i>	Jan. 2004	Mar. 2004	March 2004	May 2012	—	May 2014	Jan. 2015
<i>FSM</i>	Jan. 2005/ Oct. 2009	Feb. 2013	Feb. 2013	Feb. 2013	—	June 2016	March 2018
Source: Own elaborations.							

Chapter 6 – Podemos

6.1 Introduction

As highlighted in the previous chapter, the economic and financial crises hit vehemently Spain. The economic growth boosted by housing bubble abruptly stopped in 2008 as a reflection of the US subprime crisis; at the same time, the endemic problem of unemployment became even more pressing for the newly re-elected Zapatero's government (2008-2011). For a country in which the two-party system dominated the political system for more than thirty-five years, what happened in the aftermath of the crisis was totally unusual. While the 2011 elections marked the continuity, albeit weakened, of the bipolar system – the PP obtained the absolute majority and PSOE consensus dropped substantially (-15,1%) – the “new” social actor represented by the *Indignados* movement challenged the status-quo in a country with a traditional civil-society deficit (Encarnación 2001, Gunther 2007, Morlino 1998). Although the critical elections in Spain occurred only 2015, the roots for the realignment of the political system can be dated back to the beginning of the crisis, both in sub-national (Barreiro and Sánchez-Cuenca 2012) and national elections. Following the guidelines delineated in Chapter 4, my point of the departure is the analysis of the political opportunity structure; secondly, I shift my attention of the pattern of competition adopted by Podemos in four consecutive elections (the European elections in 2014, the CC.AA. elections in 2015 and the two legislative elections in 2015 and in 2016); thirdly, I inquire the party organization and its change since the first congress (2014); finally, I analyse the ideologies of the party.

6.2 The political Opportunity Structure

A) The electoral law

The first aspect of utmost importance is the electoral law; since the transition to democracy, Spain has maintained the same electoral law with few cosmetic adjustments: it is a proportional system (Colomer 2004) with 52 multi-member districts. The mean of the districts' magnitude is 6.7, thus, following the operationalization in chapter 4, Spain should be inserted among proportional cases. However, it should be noted that the median of the district is 5; this because there are 28 districts with less than six seats and 45 smaller than ten. Only Murcia (10), Alicante (12), Sevilla (12), Valencia (15), Barcelona (31) and Madrid (36) elect more than 10 deputies. This system has been defined as proportional with majoritarian outcome (Hopkin 2005) since it favoured the aggregation of the consensus among the most relevant nationwide parties (PP and PSOE), while penalizing the third nationwide party (PCE and, then, IU). At the same time the distribution of multi-member districts guaranteed the territorial representation for the several regionalist or nationalist parties at the sub-

national level. In Spain the Index of Disproportionality (LSq) constantly decreased from 1977 onwards, going from 10.05 to 6.93 in 2011: this indicates a trend toward proportionality in the last elections. Nonetheless, the reduction of the disproportionality may be imputed to the growth of the “effective” threshold in small districts, in which overcoming the legal threshold of 3% at the district level is not a sufficient condition to gain a seat. Moreover, in repeated elections, the strategic vote of the electorate, who prefers “electable” parties in small districts rather than dispersing the voters (see for a discussion García-Viñuela et al. 2015), decreases the number of relevant parties, thus reducing also LSq index. In effect, the number of effective parties constantly decreased since 1977 (4.30) reaching its lowest point in 2008 (2.79) (Figure 6.1). The majoritarian outcomes of the electoral law are exemplified by the almost perfect alternation in power of the two main parties. In 38,5% of the elections one of the two parties has more than 50% of the seats, while in 77,9% of the cases one of the two parties had more than 45% of the seats. In 41,6% of the cases, the major party, while governing alone relied on other sub-national parties to have the absolute majority in first confidence vote session (absolute majority required). In one election (2008), the government received the confidence in the second session, when the simple majority is required. In Spain, there were not coalition governments from 1979 onwards, while minor parties and regionalist parties bargained ad hoc in the Parliament with major parties. Thus, bipartitism became an institutionalized feature of Spanish party system, at least until 2015 elections. PP and PSOE were the only relevant parties with a national projection, while PCE (Spanish Communist Party)/IU despite the attempts to challenge to bipartitism, remained at the margin of the competition, penalized both by the electoral law and by its internal fractionalization (Ramiro 2004).

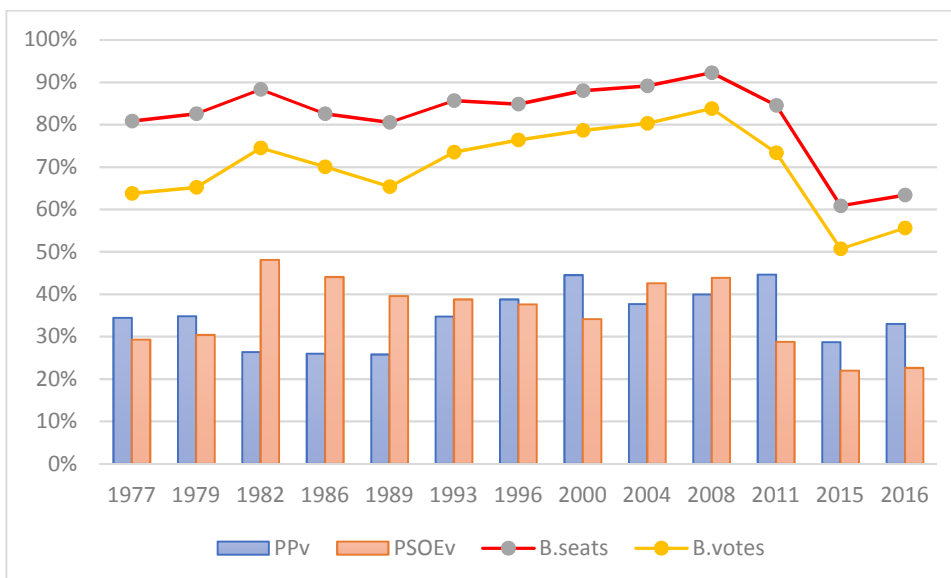


Figure 6.1 – Bipartitism in Spain. PPv: Partido Popular share of votes. PSOEv: Partido Socialista Obrero Español share of votes. B. seats: % seats obtained by Spanish bipartitism (PP+PSOE). B. votes: % votes obtained by Spanish bipartitism (PP+PSOE). Source: Spanish Minister of Interior

B) Social Movement

In Spain citizen's participation to political activities has been low since the transition to democracy society (Teorell et al. 2007). Nonetheless, in the nineties the demonstrations and the protest in Spain steadily grew (Morlino 1998). Spain experienced various forms of political activities in the alter-global movement (Flesher Fominaya 2007) and in the spontaneous demonstrations after terrorist attack in Atocha (Flesher Fominaya 2011). Thus, the so-called *Indignados* was not a novelty in Spanish panorama both in terms of a leaderless mobilization and of the absence of a clear-cut program (Flesher Fominaya 2015). Nonetheless, in many respects, 15-M Movement was the precursor of the following "occupy" movement in Europe, MENA Region and North America, particularly for the background of the protesters, who were not traditional left-wing militants (Roos and Oikonomakis 2014). However, the dimension of the protests around Spain, the heterogeneity of the association that promoted the mobilization – among others, *Joventud Sin Futuro* (Youth without Future, JSF), *¡Democracia Real Ya!* (Real Democracy Now!, DRY) and *Plataforma Afectados por la Hipoteca* (Platform of people affected by Mortgages, PAH) – and their impact on Spanish society represented a novelty: the 15-M movement challenged both the Spanish bipartitism and their alleged commitment to the implementation of neoliberal-driven policies (Romanos 2017). Although the media coverage of the events was short-lived and interested more in the violent demonstrations, rather than on the contents expressed by 15-M movements (Castillo Esparcia et al. 2013), the impact on public opinion was relevant (CIS 2011). Moreover, the demobilization of 15-M, not only allowed the formation of three parties - Partido X, Ganemos and Podemos (Romanos and Sádaba 2015) – but also provided to the most relevant of the three (Podemos) several activists and allies: Pablo Iglesias, Iñigo Errejón, Juan Carlos Monedero, Ada Colau and others participated actively in the protests. The 15-M movement was characterized by a more "reformist" approach to democracy and the capitalist production: according to Gerbaudo (2016:12), notwithstanding the presence of more radical and anarchist fringes, the core platform of 15-M movement includes a "radical reformist demands of a democratisation of the state from below, that do not fit with the tradition of autonomous movements": 15-M movement was not anti-systemic in the sense that rejected the actual democratic and economic system. Rather, it expressed severe criticism to the conformation of the representative politics, the commodification of the society as well as the neoliberal turn of social-democracy (Velasco 2011). More important, the 15-M movement "remains firmly within the framework of national citizenship [...] many of the demands for new citizenship rights are actually claims about restoring national sovereignty" (Gerbaudo 2016: 13). Thus, while the 15-M movement did not participate directly in

the following elections in November 2011 nor it endorsed any of the political parties, its demands can be placed within the anti-establishment, but pro-systemic framework.

C) Bipartitism and convergence

As previously highlighted, the majoritarian outcome of the electoral law, fostered the formation of a two-party system, in which PP and PSOE alternate in government. Although between 1982 and 1996 Spanish political system resembled more the dominant-party framework (Sartori 1976), in which one party PSOE had a stable and unchallenged majority, the following PP governments (1996-2004) and the subsequent alternations in power with PSOE (2004-2011) established a bipartite competition. The fragile balance emerged out the democratic transition was favoured by the conscious élite choice to depolarize all potential social conflicts (Gunther et al. 1986). This depolarization was firstly permitted through the legalization of the Spanish Communist Party (1977) and the sign of the famous multi-party Moncloa Pacts (1977). Secondly, after the 1977 and 1979 elections and the failed coup by Lieutenant Tejero (13 February 1981), the alternation in power between Unión de Centro Democrático (Union of the Democratic Centre, UCD) and PSOE contribute to the normalization of Spanish democracy. After the 1979 elections, PSOE underwent a period of marked de-ideologization, which at first was hardly accepted by the membership. The PSOE secretary Felipe González in the XXVIII Congress (May 1979) proposed the abandonment of Marxist theses: the rejection of his proposal led to his resignation; it took another extraordinary congress (September 1979) for the PSOE to finally depart from its more radical stances. PSOE's first years in government were marked by austerity reforms, which culminated with a famous rupture with the main centre-left union, CGT. In 1988 the CGT promoted a general strike against the austerity measures adopted by González government. Nonetheless, the process of ideological normalization concerned also the conservatives. The heir of the PP was Alianza Popular (Popular Alliance, AP), led by the long-standing MP Manuel Fraga, a former minister during the Franco dictatorship. The troublesome past of the party was abandoned during the transformation of the party from AP to PP in 1989 during the IX congress; the new general secretary was Francisco Álvarez-Cascos, while the first PP candidate as Prime Minister was the President of Castilla y León, José María Aznar. It was under Aznar that PP prepared its ideological transition toward the acceptance of the principle of (neo)liberalism, isolating the most traditionalist post-Franco right-wings. Although the PP governments (1996-2004) were marked by the rupture in the consensual foreign-policy as testified by the re-rapprochement with US, a less pro-European stance and, mostly, by Spanish participation in the Iraq war, which the PSOE extensively opposed, the PP economic policies were not markedly different from the late-González governments

(Royo 2009). This substantial continuity was not reversed by the so-called Citizens' Socialism initiated by Zapatero. Albeit marking a discontinuity from the two main factions at the time, the more moderate felipistas (followers of González) and the labourist faction of the guerristas (followers of Alfonso Guerra, a former powerful minister under González, with whom he broke in the nineties) (Méndez Lago 1998), the PSOE under Zapatero was unable to reform the so-called “Third-way conservatism” (Hamann 2005) of PP, during its first government (2004-2008): as Royo (2009: 448) aptly states “[i]f Aznar was criticised for his government’s obsession with a zero deficit and its insufficient reforms to address the imbalances of the growth model, the same could be said about Zapatero’s first term”. In both cases, moreover, the Spanish growth was sustained by a bricklaying mania, sustained by the decreasing trend in the interest rates and the growth of foreign investments in the housing sectors (Jiménez 2009). As for the European integration issue, the voting behaviour of the two parties is in line with the convergence observed in the economic fields: since 2000 both parties voted together in the Parliament for ratification of the Treaty of Nice and the Treaty of Lisbon. Moreover, both parties campaigned for YES in the EU Constitution referendum in 2005 (Table 6.1). More recently and in the midst of the crisis, both parties voted for the European Stability Mechanism and the so-called Fiscal Compact. Although PSOE criticized the conservatives for their mismanagement of the crisis both at European and national level (Tarditi and Vittori 2019), there was a widespread consensus and a degree of continuity in the implementation of austerity measures from Zapatero (2008-2011) to Rajoy (2011-2015) governments. One of the most contested measure voted by both parties at the end of Zapatero legislature (September 2011) was the reform of the article 135 of the Spanish constitution, which introduced the balance budget rule, as required by the so-called Fiscal Compact. As explained elsewhere (Vittori 2018a), Spain can be regarded, at least partially, as a case of cartelization among the traditional parties.

Treaty	<i>Spain</i>		<i>Greece</i>		<i>Italy</i>	
	PSOE	PP	PASOK	ND	DS/Ulivo/PD	FI/PDL
Treaty of Nice (2001)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
EU Constitution (2005)	Yes Campaign	Yes Campaign	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Treaty of Lisobn (2008)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ESM (2011)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fiscal Compact Treaty (2012)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 6.1 - EU Treaties: positions of the cartelized political parties in Spain, Greece Italy. Source: own elaboration

D) The presence of anti-establishment parties

Spain represents an exception in the European panorama with regard to the presence of a pure anti-political establishment (Abedi 2004), populist (Mudde 2007) or anti-party (Poguntke 1996) radical-right parties. Thus, it is not accidental that scholars of radical-right parties have excluded Spain from the European case studies (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008, Kitschelt and McGann 1995, Mudde 2007, Kriesi and Pappas 2015). Indeed, there are few anti-systemic extreme right parties: still, none of them reached the electoral representation threshold, having barely reached 1% of the votes since 1980 (Alonso and Kaltwasser 2015). The causes of this absence should not be inquired in the demand-side factors, according to Alonso and Kaltwasser (2015): before the Great Recession, the Spanish electorate showed similar patterns with regard to both anti-establishment and law-and-order issue (immigration) vis-à-vis other European countries in which populist radical right parties were present. However, in the supply-side factors both the electoral law and a structured centre-periphery cleavage, particularly prominent for most nationalist parties in the various CC.AA. and for the centralist PP, contributed to limit the impact of PRRPs on Spanish political system (Alonso and Kaltwasser 2015). However, the absence of a relevant PRRP during the Great Recession was partially countered by the electoral growth of IU. IU is the heir of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) and other radical-left parties and associations, which decided to form an electoral alliance in 1986 and, then, to federate their organs within a stable organization. The first fifteen years (1986-2000) of IU existence were marked by the figure of IU leader Julio Anguita (1986-2000) and by Anguita's two-shores theory. Anguita was not only the gluing factor able to unite, albeit with several difficulties and tensions (Paniagua and Ramiro 2000 and Ramiro 2004), the different souls of IU, but above all he adopted a confrontational posture vis-à-vis the traditional parties, PP and PSOE, which were accused to belong to the same neoliberal "shore", while IU was the only alternative to this ideological convergence. Although from 2000 onwards several pacts at both sub-national and national level were agreed between IU and PSOE, still the two parties run separately at the national-level. After Anguita leadership and before the Great Recession, IU was a weakened party both internally (with several deceptions of founding members) and electorally, with the poor performance in the 2008 general election (3.77%) and in the European election the following year (3.71%). Nonetheless, before the advent of Podemos this trend was partly reversed with the beginning of a re-foundation phase within the party (2008). Albeit with several limitations (Ramiro and Verge 2013), this re-foundation was rewarded electorally. In the local elections (May 2011), IU doubled the share of vote (6,4%) with respect to 2008 (Barriero and Sánchez-Cuenca 2012), while it increased of about +0,5% in the following 2011 general elections (6.92%), in coalitions with other parties under the label *La Izquierda Plural* (The Plural Left). Finally, in the 2014 European elections – the first elections for Podemos –

it reached its third best results of its history (10.03%), two points above of Podemos (7.98%). Thus, IU at the eve of the 2015 critical elections was recovering from its long-lasting poor electoral performance, presenting itself as a leftist alternative to Podemos. It was the 2015 general election that marked the predominance of Podemos on IU as the anti-establishment left alternative to PSOE. Compared to Podemos, IU was perceived by the left electorate as the establishment: thus, it is not surprising that while placing almost identically in the left-right scale, Podemos electorate differs from IU for its pro anti-establishment attitude (Ramiro and Gomez 2017). In both cases, the two parties have a dispersed electorate. Podemos have had a non-traditional competitor, when looking at the supply-side: IU was the only nationwide party, which could have countered the Spanish bipartitism. However, when bipartitism fell apart, the novelty represented by the new anti-establishment left (Podemos) supplanted the “old” left, which was perceived as part of the status-quo by most of the progressive electorate. Beyond IU, which represented the main competitor for Podemos in 2014-2015, the other anti-establishment party in Spain is Ciudadanos (C’s): C’s is a centrist, pro-European party, with a strong position against Catalan nationalism: the party born in Catalunya in the mid-2000s from a group of Catalan intellectuals, formerly close to PSC and ICV (Rodríguez-Teruel & Barrio 2015) and acquired national relevance in the 2014 European elections. Its moderate economic profile was coupled by an anti-corruption and pro-transparency message, which targeted mainly PP’s corruption scandals (Orriols and Cordero 2016). While Podemos’ electorate from the beginning was mainly left-leaning, C’s voters are more inclined to the centre; Podemos and C’s had in 2014-2015 (and still maintain) different positions regarding the Catalan-issue: Podemos favours a pacted referendum, while C’s supports national integrity. In what ways, thus, C’s is defined as a competitor for Podemos? Mainly, for non-economic and non-institutional issues: both parties’ electorates are dissatisfied with bipartitism and corruption (Cordero and Montero 2015). More important, the two parties share the same positive inclination toward the young electorate.

6.2.1 Summary

According to the theorization in 4.1, Podemos emerged a successful challenger parties in a *moderately hostile* environment. Firstly, the electoral law behind the proportional surface is disproportional in its outcome, favouring the two major nationwide parties and penalizing the others. Albeit the disproportionalities has decreased in the last decades, its non-proportional distribution of seats and the D’Hondt method used for the seats’ allocation allow for the inclusion of the Spanish case among the disproportional electoral laws. Moreover, since the beginning of the Great Recession, the electoral growth of IU, albeit its internal tensions and diminishing linkage’s capacity with social movements, coupled with the rising star of Ciudadanos granted to the electorate other anti-establishment choices

beyond bipartitism.

Despite these factors, however, the presence of a strong nationwide mobilization – the Indignados – with strong anti-establishment, anti-corruption and anti-austerity messages and the convergence of the two main parties lessen the overall “hostility” of the political environment.

6.3 The Pattern of Competition

A-B) Emphasis on policies and electoral campaign

Podemos electorate belong to the left and radical-left spectrum of Spanish society (Ramiro and Gomez 2017, Fernández-Albertos 2015, Orriols and Cordero 2016). However, during its genesis the articulation of the party ideology was focused on other relevant aspects: the fight against political corruption, which according to the party, affected both PP and PSOE, the end of the political parties’ privileges and, thirdly, the fight against austerity measures implemented both by Zapatero and Rajoy governments. As it will be shown in the paragraph on the ideology, in the very first years of existence Podemos’ targets were the national and international political and the financial élite, who were equally responsible for the economic crisis in Spain (Iglesias and Mondero 2011: 85-114, Iglesias 2014, Mondero 2012 and 2013, Errejon and Mouffe 2015: 122-123). The intertwining interests of both élites was epitomized by one peculiar aspect, which the leadership frequently emphasized, i.e. the so-called revolving doors (*puertas giratorias*) through which several politicians, once retired from active politics, find remunerative jobs in the boards of multinationals (Vittori 2017b). The emphasis of valence issues was a conscious choice for Podemos’ élite; in particular, the main aim of Podemos strategy was to build a new concept of people (Errejón 2016), through which the party would have been able to overcome the dichotomization left-right, presenting itself as the party of the masses (*los de abajo*) against the élite (*los de arriba*). Relying on Laclau (2005) and Laclau and Mouffe (1985) reflections on the construction “people”, Podemos consciously tried to articulate a “populist” option in which the “people” counter the economic and financial élite of the country. This was the ideological backbone of what Podemos elite has defined the “electoral war-machine”: in order to gain the elections as soon as possible, the party focused on the de-emphasis of specific policies, the appeal to the Spanish people, the focus on valence issues and the contraposition with other parties. As Kioupkiolis (2016: 108) highlights, “Podemos refuses to define itself on the basis of a particular ideology, and its activists cast themselves as ‘ordinary people like you’, ‘who understand the needs of ordinary citizens and are open to taking their lead from them through the participatory process’.” Its attempt seemed to work in the European elections: while ideology was an important variable to determine the propensity to vote in all parties, Podemos was an exception to this trend (Cordero and

Montero 2015). Despite the de-emphasis of the left-right axis, Podemos was perceived as a non-responsible party due to the radicalism in some proposals (such as the referendum on NATO membership), especially soon after the results in the European elections (2014). Podemos tried to counter these allegations detailing the political program of the party in the following elections: in the campaign for the 2015 CC.AA. elections, Podemos presented 215 proposals covering all policy fields (Podemos 2015b); moreover, the party decided to work with two economists – Vicenç Navarro and Juan Torres López – in the draft a new economic program (2014); finally, in the 2015 legislative elections (Podemos 2015a) the party decided to follow the same detailed guidelines of the previous CC.AA. elections, providing a detailed program – more than 300 pages and 394 proposals – to present itself both as a responsive and a responsible political actor. Despite these attempts, however, the media coverage for Podemos’ electoral pledges in the 2015 elections went almost unnoticed compared to other parties (Medina and Correa 2016). On the other hand, the electoral campaign of Podemos was based on the distinction between the “old politics” represented by PP and PSOE and the novelty of Podemos (Medina and Correa 2016). The other anti-establishment party, Ciudadanos, was regarded by Podemos as an elitist party, which represented the new face of the old business élite. Finally, the irruption of the corruption scandals on the electoral campaigns (Orriols and Cordero 2016) – among others, the so-called Bárcenas papers, a follow-up of an older investigation named Gürtel affair – facilitated the shift of Podemos campaign to less divisive valence issues, such as transparency and corruption. Thus, it came with no surprise the results in Orriols and Cordero’s work (2016: 16): “the emergence of Podemos is better explained by the political crisis than by the economic. Certainly, neither economic grievances nor perceiving a bad economic situation were behind Podemos’ (or Ciudadanos’) success”. In the construction of the party organization as well as during the electoral campaign Podemos combined a widespread use of different types of social networks and more classic media, such as television. The communication strategy at the very beginning was centred on the role of Pablo Iglesias as the leading and recognizable figure of Podemos in the mainstream *infotainment* programs in national TV channels. Iglesias was also the anchor-man in two TV programs called *La Tuerka* (The Screw) and *Fort Apache* (Hispan TV). Iglesias begun to work for these two TV programs before Podemos foundation and continued after the first electoral successes. He acknowledges that his experience was crucial to understand how media worked in Spain (Iglesias 2015b). At the same time, Podemos between 2014 and 2016 developed social-media campaigns based on the criticism of la casta (the caste) (Rodríguez Teruel and Barberá 2017) and on the political corruption. The use of social media was effective in creating a vast community of “followers” and “friends”; as Casero-Ripollés et al. (2016: 387) show, “[d]ata regarding Podemos’ growth on SNS [social network sites] reveal a noticeably superior mobilisation capacity in this setting relative to that of conventional

parties”. The communication campaign of Podemos, thus, had three level: a) the constant participation of the leader in TV program; b) the broadcasting of Iglesias’ programs in niche TV channels and c) the extensive use of social-network to make their political messages known in a different public (Casero-Ripollés et al. 2016: 391).

C) The role of the alliances

Insofar Podemos has strategically used the alliances with other political parties: there are at least three postures that the party adopted. Firstly, it has tried to form several pre-electoral coalitions at the sub-national and national level in order to maximize the votes and increasing the likelihood to gain electoral representation in all electoral districts. The most relevant local coalitions in 2015 were: a) in Catalunya, En Comú Podem-Guanyem el Canvi with Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds, Esquerra Unida i Alternativa, Equo and Barcelona en Comú; in the Valencian Community, Compromís¹⁹-Podemos-És el moment and in Galicia En Marea, with Anova-Irmandade Nacionalista and Esquerda Unida (the IU’s Galician federation). These alliances were also used at the sub-national level with both pre-electoral (Catalunya and Galicia) and post-electoral agreements (Valencian Community). Secondly, it has competitive posture vis-à-vis the other nationwide left-wing party, IU: Podemos and IU leadership met before the European elections and eventually the two parties agreed to run separately. The same occurred during CC.AA. and the general elections in 2015, when Podemos outperformed IU by a great margin. Only once the balance of power favoured Podemos, part of Podemos’ elite decided to pursue an electoral alliance in view of the following elections (2016): the on-line consultations among Podemos and IU membership confirmed the alliance, despite the minorities of the two parties preferred to stand alone (see below). The alliance called Unidos Podemos (United We Can, UP) included Podemos, IU and other nine minor parties. In the case of Podemos, Errejón-led minority saw in the alliance a worryingly identification among Podemos and the established left (Vittori 2017a); in the case of IU, the minorities – led by the former secretaries Cayo Lara and Gaspar Llamazares – considered Podemos a too moderate option, whose leftist identity was unclear, both leaders preconized the risk of an electoral cannibalization of IU by Podemos. Podemos was in this case the main stakeholder of the alliance, whose aim was the “sorpasso” (overtaking) against PSOE. Winning the electoral competition in the left field would have meant for Podemos presenting the party as the leading-force of the non-conservative front, while promoting Podemos as the coalition *formateur* with other leftist forces. After the general election in 2015, this role belonged to the PSOE, which nonetheless failed to find a compromise with Podemos and Ciudadanos.

¹⁹ Compromís is an alliance comprising several Valencian-based parties: Bloc Nacionalista Valencià, Iniciativa del Poble Valencià, Verds-Equo del País Valencià y Gent de Compromís.

Thirdly, Podemos had a confrontational posture vis-à-vis traditional and centrist parties at the national level, while promoting a more accommodating attitude at the sub-national level. As for its accommodative stance, Podemos allowed the formation of PSOE-led governments (alone or in coalition with other partners) in several CC.AA. through the abstention or favourable vote in the confidence-vote sessions. More recently, in 2018 Podemos provided an external support to newly formed PSOE government. In details, Podemos abstained in Cantabria, where PSC-PSOE is the junior partner of the Regional Party of Cantabria, and Asturias and voted in favour in Castilla-La Mancha, Aragón, Extremadura and the Balearic Island. In the Valencian community 8 out of 15 elected members voted in favour, five abstained. The final decisions on the external support of coalition governments were left to the militants through the on-line votes in the *Consultas de Investidura*. There was a favourable inclination among the activists for the formation of coalition governments in local and regional institutions: with the partial exception of Extremadura, Podemos militants overwhelmingly approved the confidence votes proposed by the élite of the party. In the case of Andalusia, a long-standing socialist stronghold, in which the former president, José Antonio Griñán, and vice-president, Manuel Chaves, were involved in a corruption scandal, PSOE-A (the socialists in Andalucía) refused the conditions requested by Podemos for the appointment of Socialist candidate, Susana Díaz, who opted for a coalition with Ciudadanos (C's). A more confrontational stance was adopted by Podemos in the 2015 and 2016 post-electoral bargains: after the 20-D election in 2015, the first long-lasting bargain with PSOE collapsed, not only for the different positions within the socialist party, but also for a more rigid stance of the élite of Podemos, who refused any compromise with C's for a grand coalition government with PSOE, C's and Podemos: the two internal consultations held in April 2016 a) rejected (88.23%) the pact previously signed by PSOE and C's and b) supported (91.79%) the formation of a coalition with PSOE, IU and other smaller parties, which would have granted a very narrow majority in the Parliament. Thus, the simultaneous refusal of a Podemos-PSOE-Ciudadanos majority and the pre-emptive refusal of C's to support PP, forced new elections in 2016. UP, despite the failed "sorpaso" against PSOE, was still decisive for the formation of a red-red coalition with PSOE. While PSOE secretary, Pedro Sánchez, did not dismiss this possibility *a priori*, the party in central office forced his withdrawal pushing the party in public office to abstain in the confidence-vote session for a PP-led government. The support of C's to the PP, the party with the relative majority, granted the appointment of Mariano Rajoy (PP) as PM. In a vote of no-confidence session, Rajoy was ousted of the government and a new minority government led by PSOE secretary Pedro Sánchez was formed.

D-E) Elite, membership and participatory techniques.²⁰

As I will explain in greater details in the following section, Podemos presents a hybrid structure (Chironi and Fittipaldi 2017), with a bottom-up or assembly-based structure coupled with a mediatized and resourceful leadership, personified by Pablo Iglesias. Between these two poles, the Party in Central Office, as constructed after the first congress in 2014 (Vistalegre I) is also important to determine the balance of power within the party and the control of financial, organizational and communication resources. This peculiar structure is the outcome of a difficult bargain among different tendencies within the party: from the one hand, the bottom-up pressures coming from both the radical-left sectors, with a long tradition in the assembly-based organization, and the activists involved in the 15-M mobilization; from the other hand, the “institutionalist” elite of the party, which conceived Podemos as a classical mass-based organization, with a hierarchical structure and a leading figure known by a wider public (Vittori 2017a). The hierarchization and the focus on the electoral campaign was the main outcome of the first Congress (Interview 6.4). Despite this tendency prevailed in 2014, the party elite granted significant margins for the membership participation: in a nutshell, the attempt was to combine contradictory tendencies, i.e. plebiscitarian and deliberative process of decision-making (Interview 6.4). Membership in Podemos is free and there are no barriers to the entrance: an on-line procedure is the only requirement to be enrolled in Podemos. This easy procedure guaranteed to the party in the first years an ever-growing formal membership but at the same time, produced a low turnout in all internal consultations launched by the party: more than a half of the membership is formally enrolled in the party, but do not participate actively in Podemos’ decision-making. Grassroot activism exists within Podemos, but its importance is concentrated more in the participatory local assemblies, thus creating a peculiar multi-speed membership, which, as Chironi and Fittipaldi aptly note (2017: 294) “responded to an internal need, i.e. to keep a high degree of centralization of power, again ranking efficiency above the achievement of a fully horizontal model”. Despite the centripetal genesis of the party, i.e. from the centre to the periphery, the federative structure and the relevant decision-making prerogatives left to the assemblies in the CC.AA. counterbalance the predominance of the centre and the leadership. The most relevant examples in this regard are the on-line primaries for the candidate-selections at the sub-national levels and the on-line consultations on the alliances to be pursued by the party at the local level. In this case too, the membership is entitled to decide whether form an alliance or support a coalition government. Even more significantly, the national leadership has guaranteed freedom of action to the local leadership, when the party in the CC.AA. has decided

²⁰ This section sums up the most relevant organizational features of the party related to the two aspects under consideration (elite/membership and participatory techniques). A detailed analysis can be found in the following paragraph, which is dedicated solely to the party organization.

to brake coalition agreements (Interview 6.1). However, the literature on Podemos organization (Rodríguez-Teruel, Barrio, Barberá 2016) – and the most recent development in Catalunya seems to suggest a different trend, i.e. the crucial relevance of centralization and Iglesias leadership for Podemos (see below).

6.3.1 Summary

The overall patter of competition of Podemos can be considered vote-seeking. Although the party had an anti-austerity platform through which it framed its criticism toward the political establishment (PP and PSOE) and the new anti-establishment (Ciudadanos), the emphasis of the party on catch-all issues such as corruption, political corruption and transparency is more similar to a vote-seeker, rather than an office- or policy-seeking party. The same goes for the electoral campaign style, which was based on the clear-cut contraposition between “us”, the common citizens, and the “others”, the political and economic élite and the vested interest ruling the country, without being accountable to the people. Podemos uses strategically the alliances vis-à-vis other parties. It rejected – as its left-wing ideological profile suggest – any agreement at all levels with centre-right parties (PP and Ciudadanos), while it showed a more accommodating stance vis-à-vis PSOE at CC.AA. level. The main exception in this case is Andalusia. On the other hand, Podemos consciously rejected alliances at the national level where its status of junior partner with other parties (PSOE and Ciudadanos) would have raised doubts among (part of) its electorate. In this sense, its posture in the aftermath of 2015-2016 elections contributed to form an OWC in Parliament, where PP and Ciudadanos gave a confidence vote to Rajoy government and PSOE abstained. Moreover, the electoral cartel with IU and other minor parties indicated its willingness to become as the main party on the left and to lead a centre-left alliance with PSOE as a *formateur*, rather than a junior partner. This stance partially changed in 2018. The role of the leadership is crucial within Podemos both for its electoral rise and for its internal cohesion; nonetheless, the leadership is not as unbalanced as in typically leadership-led parties, such as Front National (Ivaldi and Lanzone 2016), Forza Italia (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999), Five Stars Movement or Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà (Bordandini 2013). The use of highly-regulated direct-democracy tools and the presence of an institutionalized Party in Central Office partly limited the influence of the leadership on the party.

6.3 The party organization

6.4.1 Genesis

Once 15-M became the main political event at the eve of the 2011 elections, more than one

commentator wondered when and how a 15-M would become an organized party. Although there is not an institutionalized transition from the 15-M movement to Podemos, there are few doubts that the latter is (only symbolically) the by-product of the previous mobilizations. The civic platforms engaged in different parts of Spain to counter the effect of the crisis provided to Podemos and its allies their future political élite. For example, one of the main figures of JSF was Pablo Padilla and one the spokesperson of DRY was Jon Aguirre Such: both are now Podemos MPs. While in the 2011 elections there were not parties directly linked with 15-M Movement, in the following European elections, at least two parties tried to capitalize on the success of the 15-M protests, namely the Partido X, Partido del Futuro (X Party, Party of the Future) and Podemos. Podemos obtained 7.98% of the vote, the Partido X gained only 0.64%. The origins of Podemos is conventionally dated back to January 2014, when a manifesto titled “*Mover ficha: convertir la indignación en cambio político*” (Making a move; turning outrage into political change) was launched by some intellectuals in the Spanish news website Público: Juan Carlos Mondero, a political science professor at the Complutense University in Madrid, was the first signature at the end of the document, followed by an actor, a philosopher, two editors, a trade-unionist, a poet/ecologist and a professor. The authors of the manifesto advocated a candidate who was outside the two traditional parties (PP and PSOE) in the following European elections, while at the same time demanding the restoration of the sovereignty of the people (99%) vis-à-vis the 1%. The manifesto is similar to a previous internal bulletin by Izquierda Anticapitalista (Anticapitalistic Left, IA) (2013) in which the main points of “Mover Ficha” were outlined. In this bulletin, after criticizing IU for its incapacity to open up its list for the forthcoming European elections, IA highlights few points for their own candidacy: the necessity to include mediatized candidates, who are not perceived as divisive by the different groups of the radical left; the re-establishment of new contacts with the sovereigntist left (called izquierda rupturista); the alliance with other civic sectors, which are not part of IA organization and the introduction of a new political discourse based on the rejection of the label left and right. In the strategic and programmatic point enlisted afterwards, IA delineates the future program of Podemos. The party was officially registered in March 2014: the Podemos’ founders collected 50.000 on-line signatures to support their project. This was the threshold that the founders self-imposed to proceed in the structuration of the party.

Although Podemos and IU delegates met before the 2014 elections, a political agreement between IU and Podemos was not reached. Iglesias criticized IU and other radical-left groups firstly for their failure to understand 15-M mobilization (Iglesias 2015a: 34) and, secondly, for the lack of support to Podemos project; in his words (2015b: 15), “[t]he stubborn conservatism of the IU leaders, incapable of taking on other styles or perspectives, and the disdain of some of the activist groups, forced us to

start putting our hypothesis into practice in virtual solitude”. Although Podemos has never claimed to be *the* party of 15-M, almost all interviewees, except one (Interview 6.6) have had an experience in 15-M assemblies, in Madrid and in other towns across Spain: some of them were directly involved in the *acampadas* mobilizations (Interviews 6.8 and 6.12), while others participated in the mobilizations within social movements such as ¡Democracia Real Ya! (Interview 6.5). Soon after the resounding success in the European elections, Podemos designed its “own electoral was machine” for the 2015 elections and created its own federal structure. Its institutionalization occurred through “territorial penetration”, rather than “territorial diffusion” (see Panebianco 1982). According to Rodriguez-Teruel et al. (2016), “Podemos’ formal party structure resembles the model adopted by traditional Spanish political forces [...]: the party is organised in several territorial layers with its central office enjoying a high degree of power over the territorial branches”. The party replicates at the regional and local level a structure based on the centrality of the membership (Asamblea Ciudadana Estatal [State Citizens’ Assembly], ACE), which elects the party secretaries, the party in central office, called Consejo Ciudadano Estatal (Citizens’ State Council, CCE) and the candidates for the elections.

6.4.2 Party on the Ground (PoG)

According to Público (2014), few weeks after the European elections Podemos could count on about 100.000 members, while the Reddit page of the party, Plaza Podemos (Podemos Square), had 3.761 users (at the time of writing the users are 12.510). Reddit was used along with *Appgree* and *AgoraVoting* and *Loomio* as on-line tools to organize the party and disseminate its roots in the country before and soon after the first congress of the party (Ardanuy Pizarro and Labuske 2015 and Borge and Santamarina 2015). Only when the party reached a higher structuration after the first congress, all decision-making processes were internalized, through a new on-line platform called Plaza Podemos 2.0 (<https://plaza.podemos.info/>). At the eve of the founding Congress (Vistalegre I) Podemos had 251.998 members, the third largest party in Spain. The documents presented during the first Congress related to the organization of the party place the membership in the highest regard. The first document – titled Claro Que Podemos (For Sure We Can, CQP) (2014) – was supported among other by Iglesias, Íñigo Errejón, Juan Carlos Monedero, Carolina Bescansa and Luis Alegre. The second – titled Sumando Podemos (Connecting We Can, SP) (2014) – was proposed by the so-called anti-capitalists (Miguel Urbán, Teresa Rodríguez and Tania González) and by Pablo Echenique an Argentine-born physicist. The document titled Sumando Podemos (2014) enlists several principles, which should have guided the organization of the party. It describes Podemos as “an instrument for the citizens to effectively restore the democratic control of our institutions” (Sumando Podemos 2014:

4). Accordingly, the organizational principles delineated by SP highlight the “inclusive” nature of the party and the centrality of two kinds of participation, on-line and *de visu* (Principle 2). In particular, the *Circulos* (Circles) – the basic unit of the part (art. 2.1) – are described as the tolls to channel the willingness of the people (Principle 5); however, all the decisions related to the high-politics must be voted and discussed by all members. Similar principles are delineated in the CQP document (principles 7-11). The two documents differ in other respects. SP presented a less-leadership-centred project, while in CQP’s document prevails a hierarchal structure (see par. Factionalism). The results of the first congress gave to CQP an outstanding majority (80.71%) (Table 6.2), thus fostering a more hierarchical structure. Nonetheless, the Statutes of the Party (2014c and 2017) remarks the centrality of the PoG for Podemos (Figure 6.7): the ACE is the highest political body of the party at both national and sub-national level and it is composed by the whole membership, which is entitled to select their representative in the party (CCE) and in the institution (Party in Public Office), the program and the alliances (art. 2.2, letter A, B, E, F, G, art. 12 in the 2014 Statute).

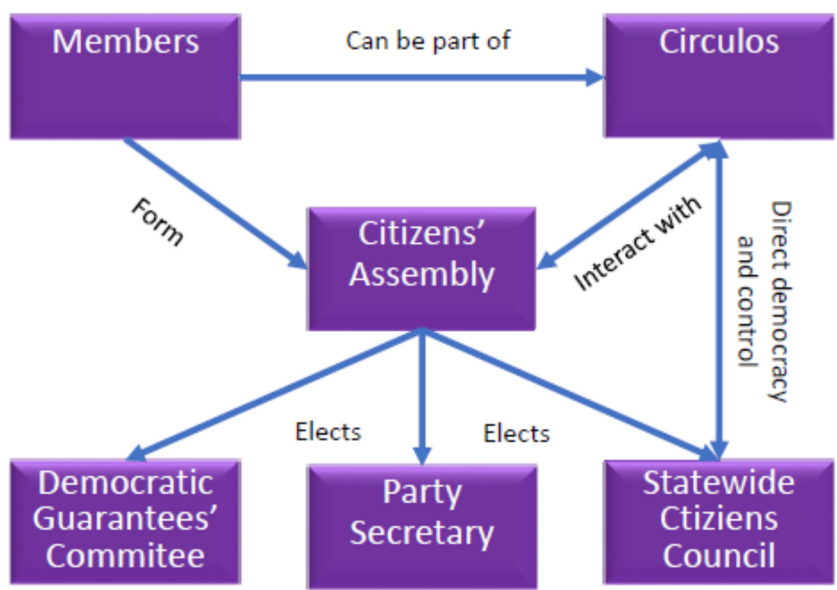


Figure 6.7 – Podemos Organization. Own Elaboration from Podemos official documents

The enrolment in the party is done through a relatively easy on-line procedure, while any member is entitled – if she/he wants to – to be enrolled also in a circle of the party (art. 7.2). Circles are in the 2017 version of the Statue the basic unit of the party along with the *Espacio Municipal Unificado* (Unified Municipal Space, EMU) and other forms of coordination bodies at the local level. The duality between the on-line member and the off-line militants, active in the Circles, was a point of discussion in the second Congress. The goal of this discussion was to give voice and resources to members in the Circles (Interview 6.2). In 2017, Podemos decided to filter the membership, asking

members to provide an ID document or the passport to improve the quality of the voting procedure. In the document drafted by the organization secretary (Podemos 2017b), Podemos introduced the figure of the militant, who is thought to be more involved in the party's activities: still, despite their status, militants have no any special rights within the party. Despite this distinction, it is difficult to establish what characterizes the militancy in the Circles and the on-line voting procedure.

According to one PPO member (Interview 6.3), the Circles determine the politics, since they can shape Podemos political positions on a daily basis, while the on-line votes is aimed at giving voice also to non-militants. While signalling a descending trend in the frequency of Circles meeting since 2014 (Interview 6.8 and 6.11), PPO members indicate that Podemos circles throughout Spain organize monthly or bi-monthly meetings (Interviews 6.6, 6.7, 6.9 and 6.11). In the Organizational Principles (2017c:6) document, the party highlight the role of Plaza Podemos 2.0, as “a place for debate and deliberation”, which complement the role of the circles (Figure 6.7).

<i>Congress</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Main Factions</i>	<i>Secretary</i>
Vistalegre I (2014)	112070 (42,66%*)	Claro que Podemos (80,71%)	Iglesias (88,6%)
		Sumando Podemos (12,37%)	Monge (0,92%)
Vistalegre II (2017)	155190 (33,95%*)	Podemos Para Todas (50,78%)	Iglesias (89,09%)
		Recuperar la Ilusión (33,68%)	Yagüe (10,91%)
		Por un Podemos en Movimiento (13,11%)	

Table 6.2 – Podemos Congresses' results for party secretary and party lists.

The membership of the party increased each year since the genesis of the party (Figure 6.2); in the very first internal consultation Podemos had more than 205.000 members, while in 2017 there were more than 450.000 (+122%). Nonetheless, since 2015 Podemos started to release new data on the active membership, i.e. those members whose account was used at least once in the preceding year. In 2015 there were almost 170.000 active members, while the total membership was more than 370.000: this means that 54% of Podemos membership was inactive. The interviewees on this topic presented different opinion: according to some PPO members, Podemos should strive to attract new members, since it would help the party transforming itself into a tool for the people (Interviews 6.14 and 6.16); others, on the contrary believes that Podemos should focus in increasing the number of sympathisers (Interviews 6.8). Other interviewees believe that this is not a priority for the party (Interviews 6.10 and 6.12), since other organizational issues should be resolved first, such as the discrepancy between members and voters in the internal consultation (Interview 6.7).

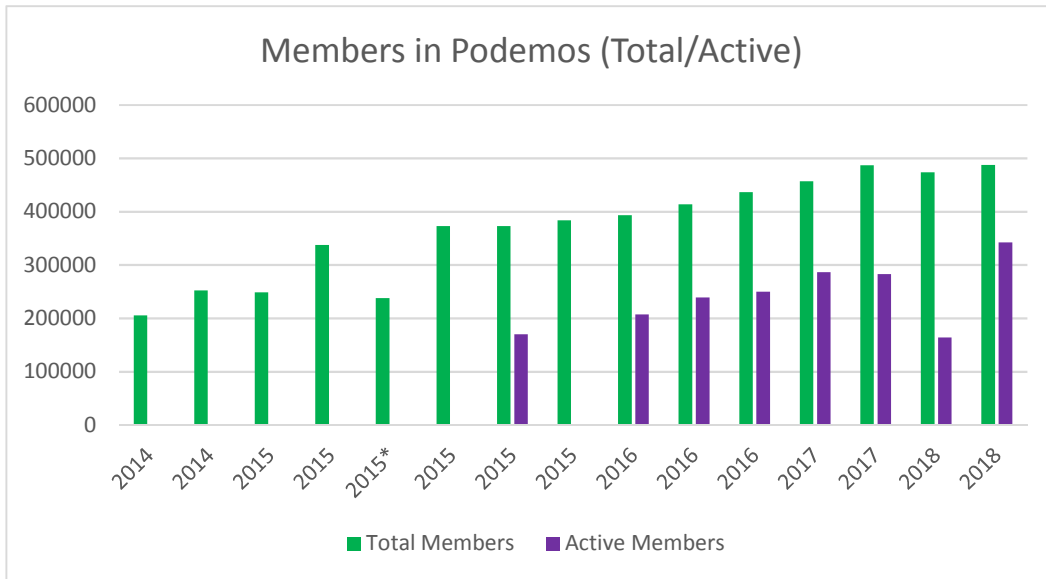


Figure 6.2 - Podemos Membership: own elaboration, from Podemos official data.

The ACE both at the national and sub-national level has insofar voted on different issues, such as the election of the party secretary (2014 and 2017), the election of the CCE (2014 and 2017), the MPs and CC.AA. candidates, the election of local and regional bodies of the party, i.e. the regional party in central office and the regional secretary (2015), the formation of a coalition government (2016), the pre-electoral alliances with other parties (2016 and 2018) and the vote of no-confidence to the conservative government (2017), vote of no-confidence to party leader and party spokeswoman in the Congress (2018). Moreover, members were entitled to participate in the formulation of the electoral program and vote for every single proposal, which had previously reached a certain support (Plaza Podemos 2.0). The participation in the internal consultation for the party program (2015) reached the lowest peak: only 15264 members voted (4% of the membership). Previously, a less structured procedure was used for the 2014 program: in this case “[t]he program for the European elections was made collaboratively through an online debate and individual contributions, the collective amendments from the Circles and an online referendum on the amendments” (Borge and Santamarina 2015). Aside from the vote for the party program, members can propose also *Iniciativas Ciudadanas Populares* (Popular Citizen’s Initiative, ICP). ICPs are proposal made by members on a given issue; those proposals, which are supported by 0.2% of the members are transferred to the other on-line platform of the party, participa.podemos.info, where at least 10% of the members or 20% of the circles must support the proposal. If this threshold is reached, the proponents - helped by the party structure – propose a final draft. The final draft is then voted in a binding consultation in the *AgoraVoting* platform. Up until the time of writing, there were no ICPs, which reached the second threshold since the Plaza Podemos 2.0 was activated. No ICP has passed insofar the threshold and

now this section of the platform seems marginalized (Vittori and Deseriis, forthcoming) The trend of the participation to the internal consultations is markedly decreasing for the first years (2014 and 2015), while more recently (2016, 2017 and 2018) the trend is partially reversed. The rate of participation in the very first consultation (54% of the whole membership) was the highest in the brief history of the party; since then, the participation dropped reaching its lowest levels for the party program (4%), for 2015 primaries for the selection of the MPs (16%) and for the formation of a coalition government with PSOE and C's (12%). More recently, however, the participation increased, with the exception of consultations about the vote of no-confidence to PP government (19%). 34% of the members voted in the second congress of the party (2017). When taking into account only active members, the participation is above 40% in six out of ten consultations. Interestingly, Podemos seemed to be able to remobilize its members at the beginning of 2018 (Figure 6.3). The turnout in the consultations on the vote of no-confidence to the Popular Party government was 47%. More recently, Iglesias and his partner Irene Montero the party's parliamentary spokeswoman were criticized for a villa that the couple bought outside Madrid. 55% of the active members took part in the internal consultation, called by Iglesias and Montero called. This last consultation had, in absolute term, the highest number of voters (188.176). One interviewee expresses his concern on the (ab)use of direct-democracy tools especially for the manipulations of the questions and the top-down control of the consultations (Interview 6.5); others, on the contrary, believes that direct-democracy tools are used properly (Interviews 6.6, 6.8, 6.9), even though the relationship between direct and representative democracy is not always straightforward. As Interviewee 6.11 sums up,

I think we cannot be simplistic about this issue, I mean, it is not possible to answer YES or NO in relations to direct-democracy tools. From the one hand, we cannot impose to the population, or to Podemos members, to be constantly informed and politically mobilized, when it comes to participate, but we cannot restrict the growingly political interest of the population. With the genesis of Podemos [...] it has been shown that representative democracy as we know it in our country is completely outdated and we need new social participatory tools, other than voting every four years.

6.4.3 Party in Public Office (PPO)

The two versions of the Statute of Podemos (2014c, 2017a) barely mention the party in public office: art. 3.5 (Podemos 2017a) states that the candidates for the elections must comply with the Ethic Code and with the rules established by the Statute. Nor there are formal rules in both versions about the participation of elected representatives in the Citizen's Council: in principle, thus, PPO and PCO may

overlap. After the 2016 elections, 49% of PPO members are either in a political or executive body of the party at the national level; 27% are appointed in the CC.AA. bodies and 22% belongs to local councils. As far as I am aware of, only one member of the national PPO (2016) has no position within the party at both national or local level. In the first electoral manifestos at both national and sub-national level, Podemos advocated for the introduction of the recall mechanism through which an elected member can be removed via referendum. Podemos introduced in its Statute a recall mechanism for the secretary, Citizen Councils (at state, regional and local levels) and the Council of Coordination, an executive body elected by CCE, whose aim is to support the activities of the secretary and of the CCE. The Statute imposes a gender quota (at least 40/60) in the composition of the list for nationwide and regional elections: Podemos parliamentary group is composed by 47% men and 53% women, while the mean for the age is about 40 years old. The interviewees (6.1,6.2 and 6.3) I had with PPO members highlight how candidates were not willing to pursue a political career nor they planned to be candidate right before the elections.

Contrary to the cartel-party theory (Katz and Mair 1995, 1996 and 2009), the role of PPO seems to be subordinated in Podemos. Firstly, several crucial competences such as the formation of alliances within the Parliament and the vote of confidence are left to the PoG and to PCO, which is responsible for the organization of the consultation, including the question to be asked. According to the Organizational Principles (2014b: 8) “political representatives [...] sign a contract with their electorate and the citizenship in order to work for their well-being. Since they acquire more power than those who are represented” they must be controlled by the citizenship, especially when it comes to their salary and expenses. Still, PPO members – both at the regional and national level – find difficult to relate constantly with circles and local branches (Interview 6.1 and 6.2) since the parliamentary work occupies most of the time for other political activities.

Podemos has insofar avoided entering in a coalition government at the national level, thus it is impossible to evaluate the impact of PPO in shaping the policy-making. In the relationship between the national PPO and regional PPO, the latter has a margin of manoeuvre in shaping the alliances with other parties and the policy programs. In Castilla-La Mancha, the agreement between Podemos and PSOE was debated, voted and then broken (September 2016) without the intervention of the national leadership (Interview 6.1). The new agreement signed in 2017 and the entrance of Podemos for the first time in a regional government was voted by the members of Castilla-La Mancha (77.9% in favour); however, I could not retrace the influence of the national leadership in this case. What is of a particular importance is that alliances with other parties and, in particular, with IU at the regional depended much on the previous relationship between Podemos and IU local élite (Interviews 6.1 and 6.3). Although the interviews 6.1,6.2 and 6.4 highlight a less concentrated power in the hand of the

national PPO and PCO, the recent events in Catalunya – the regional secretary Albano Dante Fachin was forced to resign by national leadership for its pro-independence position – show that national leadership can prevail over regional interests when sensitive issues, such as the Catalan independence, are at stake.

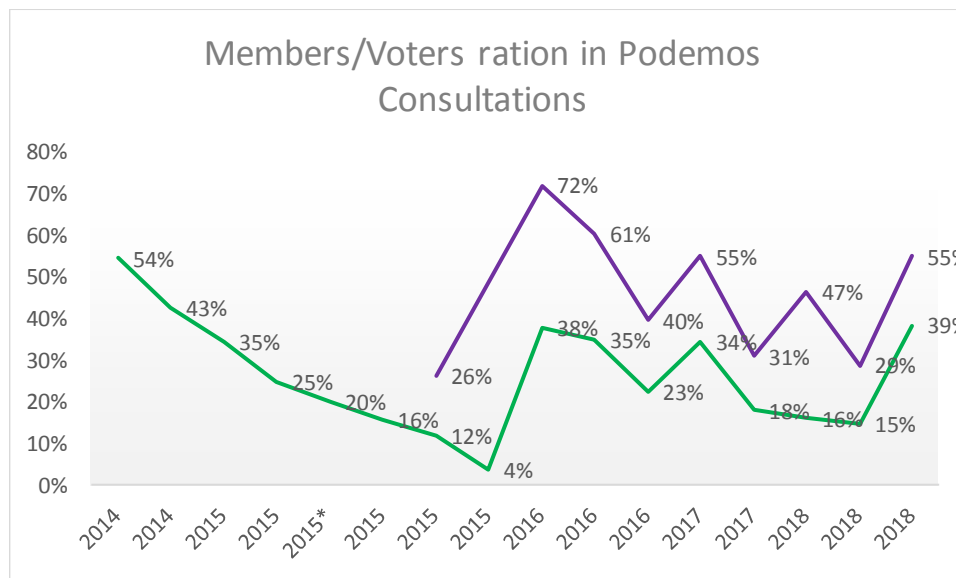


Figure 6.3 – Participation in Podemos’ internal consultations: own elaboration, from Podemos official data.

6.4.4 Party in Central Office (PCO) and Party Leadership

Within Podemos, the secretary and, in the second place, the CCE have the most relevant role. At the state level the PCO is represented by the party secretary, the Democratic Guarantees’ Committee, the Coordination Council and the CCE. The CCE is composed by the party secretary, 17 CC.AA. secretaries, two representatives from Ceuta and Melilla, one representative designated by the members who live abroad, 62 members elected by the AC and 4 representatives of the circles. Within the CCE, there are 12 “thematic” secretaries plus the general secretaries. As Rodriguez-Teruel et al. put it (2016: 11): “despite its genuinely democratic nature, the Council acts mostly as an advisory body and forum in which the main party figures and factions may express their concerns. Meanwhile, the party leader and the executive committee (Consejo de Coordinación) make the day-to-day decisions”. Still, formally the CCE displays, a crucial role for the control of the party.

Among several functions (art. 20 of the 2017 Statute, art. 8 CCE Statute), the CCE is responsible for the convocation of the CA, the nomination of Coordination Council members, the elaboration of the party guidelines and, mostly, for the coordination between the party and the parliamentary groups. The control of the CCE guarantees to the party leadership the possibility to oversee the convocation of the AC and the organization of the internal consultations. Furthermore, the CCE elaborates the guidelines for the election of the spokespersons within the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. Yet,

its pre-eminence over PPO is not only formal. The forced replacement of the first secretary of the organization, Sergi Pascual, who is closed to Errejón position, operated by Pablo Iglesias in 2016 indicates that key roles within the PCO are crucial for the leadership. Moreover, the divisions emerged during the second congress (Vistalegre II, 2017) were related to the control of the PCO by the newly emerged factions (see below). Some interviewees lament the hierarchization attempt that the party secretary pursued (Interview 6.5, 6.7, 6.8 and 6.17), in particular, the bureaucratization of the party and the retreat from social movements (Interview 6.5). On the opposite pole, one interviewee points out that the margin of manoeuvre of the party secretary and its supporting body is reducing (Interview 6.15). In between, the majority of the interviewees state that the General Secretary body is not acquiring more power than the past (Interviews 6.2, 6.3, 6.9, 6.11, 6.13, 6.14)

The 2014 PCO was composed by 50,8% men and 49,2% women, while at the time of the elections the mean age was about 38 years old; more than 80% of the PCO members had at least a university degree. More important, only 50,8% of members belonged to the PPO, in this case as members of the Parliament, Senate and CC.AA. congresses after the 2015 electoral cycle. In the 2017 PCO, there are some significant changes: men are less than a half (47,8%), the mean age increases of about four years (42), while the members with at least a university degree decreases to about 71%²¹. In the new PCO only 33,3% members were re-elected – a symptom of high turnover within the PCO figures after the second congress – while 63,5% are member of the PPO (+12,7% compared to 2014). To what extent the growth of PPO members within PCO at sub-national is shifting the balance of the party toward PPO is difficult to detect. However, the number of PPO participating in regional PCO bodies may vary: in some cases, the majority of the PCO is composed by non-elected Podemos members (Interview 6.9, 6.13 and 6.15) and in some others either the proportion is balanced (Interview 6.14) or there are “enough” members in the PCO, who are not PPO members (Interview 6.11).

6.4.5 Factionalism

At the beginning of Podemos existence, there were not recognizable factions; rather, it would be more appropriate to define them as tendencies. During the first congress the leadership of Pablo Iglesias was unquestioned, and no other candidates stood against him. Still, two alternative organizational documents were presented by two embryonic factions, Claro Que Podemos (For Sure We Can, CQP 2014) and Sumando Podemos (Connecting We Can, SP 2014). Despite the absence of a unitary document, this embryonic factionalism was more “cooperative” than “competitive”. SP advocated for a greater horizontality and a less-leadership-centred organization with three spokespersons (see article

²¹ I could not find data for few of PCO members. Although other scholars may find different data, I want to stress here the fact the overwhelming majority of PCO members are highly educated.

3,4,5,6 in SP 2014); in CQP's document the secretary has more room of manoeuvre, especially in the selection of the secretary's supporting bodies, such as the Coordinative Council. Despite these differences, the electoral successfulness and the importance of following elections both at the municipal/regional (2015) and national levels (2015) seemed to have toned down any possible friction between the two factions. However, in March 2016, the secretary of the organization, Sergi Pascual, was dismissed due to incongruences with Iglesias (Público 2016). Albeit Pascual dismissal did not cause any party split, tensions within the party were registered by several newspapers. Those tensions were certified during the debate on Podemos alliance with IU and other local partners. After an internal consultation (May 2016), Podemos officially formed UP to compete in the June elections. This time Iglesias and Errejón opinion openly diverged (Manetto 2016), while the anti-capitalists, who were contrasting Iglesias in the first Congress, decided to back Iglesias position. The cooperative non-institutionalized factionalism started changing into a competitive and more structured factionalism. Another sign of a new competitiveness within Podemos appeared at the eve of the second congress – Vistalegre II – during the vote for the AC's voting procedure. The group led by Errejón and the so-called "anti-capitalist" criticized the low proportionality of this election system, a modified version of the Borda system²², which would have favoured the most relevant list (led by Pablo Iglesias).

None of the three main proposals had the absolute majority: the list Podemos Para Todas, (Podemos for everyone, PPT) presented by Pablo Echenique and supported by Iglesias had 41.57% of the votes; the list Recuperar la Ilusión (Bring back the illusion, RII), led by Errejón 39.12% and Por un Podemos en Movimiento (For a Podemos in Movement, PPM). The participation was low (22.7%, 99.077 valid votes) and, thus, the rising conflict among the élite was not transferred to the membership. While Iglesias leadership was not questioned during Vistalegre II: none of the three main factions presented a challenger and the other candidate, Moreno Yagüe, was perceived as non-competitive candidacy. However, the renewal of the CCE highlighted a greater competitiveness among the main factions (Table 6.2). The participation was lower than the previous congress: 34% of the whole membership and 55% of the active membership. Podemos Para Todas (50.78%) gained the absolute majority in the CCE (60% of the seats), ahead of Recuperar la Ilusión (33.68% and 37% of the seats) and Por un Podemos en Movimiento (13.11% and 3% of the seats). In the political, ethical, organizational and gender documents, Podemos Para Todas had the absolute majority. The main differences among the documents were linked to organizational issues, social-linkages and party strategies. Podemos Para

²² The DesBorda proposal is a modified version of the Borda count method, a ranked voting system. In the DesBorda proposal the main (ethic, political, and organizational) documents under the scrutiny of the Citizen Assembly are linked to the secretary candidate and to the lists, which can sustained one candidate.

Todas advocated a clear-cut distinction among the rest of the party system and a rooted structure of the party with a close link with social movements (Podemos Para Todas 2017: 29); the leadership of Recuperar la Ilusión (2017: 30) was more eager to present a more institutionalized party, independent from other political forces and whose aim could not be reduced to a left-left alliance. A PPO member told me that the main preoccupation for the majority (Podemos Para Todas) was that Recuperar la Ilusión and its leader, Iñigo Errejón, were trying to institutionalize a party within the party with the aim to take control of the party's organizational structure (Interview 6.3; see also Palomera 2017). Another Interviewee (Interview 6.4) highlights that this new factionalism was the symptom of a cockfight among personalities, rather than a confrontation among two-three alternative political projects.

6.4.6 Candidate/Leadership Selection

Following the framework of analysis delineated in chapter 4, the point of departure is represented by the requirements in order to participate to candidates²³ and leadership selection. The Statute of the Podemos (2017a, art. 3.2 and art. 7.2) allows all members to participate in the party primaries for the selections of MPs and the leadership. The respect of the Ethic Code (art. 3.2), gender equality (art. 3.3) and the compliance with internal rules are the only general criteria adopted before the primaries to be respected to participate (art. 3.5). At the same time, Podemos explicitly recognizes direct democracy as the main decision-making process in the most relevant decisions to be taken by the party (art. 3.8).

The first internal rules concerning primaries for the selection of MPs and prime minister candidates was drafted in in the mid-2015. The internal rules impose the gender equality and the territorial non-discrimination as the main principles. Thus, albeit being a centralized process, the internal rules foresee a compensatory scheme at the sub-national level. According to the Statute (2014b and 2017a), both members and non-members can join a list of candidates or concur alone (art. 11). All candidates must obtain the support of a circle or an elected organ within Podemos (secretaries and citizen councils at all institutional level). In the case of MPs, Podemos adopted a national contest, which ends up in a list of 350 candidates, who represent the top-list candidates in each Spanish district. According to the rules adopted in 2015, the order of the lists in the district may change according to the alliances stipulated with other parties. The whole process for the participation is overall inclusive, being the requirements to participate relatively easy to be accomplished, i.e. there are no signatures

²³ This discussion is limited to national and regional leadership selection and candidate-selection in the CC.AA. and the national Congress. Candidate-selection for the members of the Senate – an institution with limited power in Spain – will not be part of the analysis.

to be collected among members and the support of a circle does not imply that the members circle automatically vote for the candidate they support. Nonetheless, several local members complaint about the timing of the primaries (only one month from the ratification of the rules and the deadline for the presentation of the candidates' lists), which would have left to all critical sector a narrow margin for alternative candidates (Manetto 2015). The rules for the candidate-selection for the CC.AA. elections (2015) followed almost the same patterns, in particular with regards to territorial representation of the provinces and gender equality.

The selectorate is limited to the members of the Citizen's Assembly at the national level for the Prime Minister candidate and MPs, while for CC.AA.'s candidate-selection only the members of the CC.AA where elections are held can vote. The Prime Minister candidate is selected through a First-Past-the-Post system with one national district (art. 7.1): the most voted candidate is automatically the candidate Prime Minister for Podemos. The voting system in the 2015 primaries for MPs was similar to the Borda count, through which the voters rank candidates from the most preferred candidate receiving the highest rank (1) to the least preferred receiving a rank of 350. Voters can cast preferences "cherry-picking" their candidates from all the lists without any restriction (art 7.2) or mark the preference for the whole list (thus, automatically assigning the rank of preferences according to the list). The name of the lists cannot be used afterward, nor the list can be named using elected organs of the party, e.g. "List of the circle etc.". This method was criticized by a consistent minority of the party elite, for whom the possibility to vote either for candidates or the whole list – called Lista Plancha – would have favoured the main list, relegating other candidature at the margin of the competition (Gil 2015). More than 500 members signed a petition advocating an internal consultation on this method: the signers' failed attempt was to replace the Lista Placha with a more proportional and less centralized system. The Lista Plancha procedure was eliminated in 2016 (Riviero 2016). The participation in the primaries was low: 16% of the membership casted a vote for MPs and Prime Minister Candidate. Pablo Iglesias won with a landslide (81.8%), while the most voted candidates as MPs represented the elite of the party (Table 6.3).

Vistalegre I (2014) - Citizen Council Results					Vistalegre II (2017) - Citizen Council Results					2015 Primaries - Results			
Rank	Candidate	Points	% Points	List	Rank	Candidate	Points	% points	List	Rank	Candidate	Points	% points
1	Íñigo Errejón	91.085	89.26	CQP	1	Pablo Iglesias	8.008.823	64,51	PPT	1	Íñigo Errejón	45.122	76.12
2	Carolina Bescansa	86.575	84.84	CQP	2	Pablo Echenique	6.007.929	48,39	PPT	2	Carolina Bescansa	42.901	72.37
3	Juan Carlos Monedero	85.660	83.94	CQP	3	Íñigo Errejón	5.875.181	47,32	RLI	3	Irene Montero	42.345	71.43
4	Tania González	84.269	82.58	CQP	4	Irene Montero	5.371.995	43,27	PPT	4	Rafael Mayoral	41.444	69.91
5	Luis Alegre	83.807	82.13	CQP	5	Vicenç Navarro	5.222.021	42,06	PPT	5	Sergio Pascual	41.013	69.19
[...]	Xoxé Rodríguez	75.628	74.11	CQP	[...]	Daniel Iraberri	1.535.136	12,36	RLI	[...]	Marc Grau	36.272	61.19

59	Juan María Expósito	75.565	74.05	CQP	59	Pedro Honrubia	1.523.014	12,27	PPT	57	Antonio Rodríguez	36.248	61.15
60	Luis Montero	75.420	73.91	CQP	60	Marta Domínguez	1.484.396	11,96	RLI	58	María Marín	36.187	61.04
61	Marcos Martínez	75.167	73.66	CQP	61	Margarita Quetglas	1.482.827	11,94	PPT	59	Carmelo Romero	36.199	61.06
62	Rubén López	75.131	73.62	CQP	62	María Serrano	1.464.962	11,80	RLI	60	Carmela Docampo	36.184	61.04
Table 6.3 Results of CCE elections (2014 and 2017) and nationwide primaries (2015). Own elaboration from Podemos official data.													

The two methods for the selection of Prime Minister and MPs candidates were used respectively for the A) selection of party general and regional secretaries and B) for the selection of the Citizens Councils at national and sub-national levels.

A) In the case of regional Citizen Councils and regional party secretaries the selectorate is restricted to the members belonging to each CC.AA. in which elections are held. The same procedures were maintained in the extraordinary elections held at the regional and municipal level in 2016 (see in this regard the rules approved by Podemos [2016b]).

B) As previously highlighted, the Des-Borda method was used in the 2017 Congress. In 2014, a similar system produced a Citizen Council formed only by members of one-list. The candidates pertain to different lists, among which the voters can pick their preferred candidate: the most preferred candidate receives 80 points, the second 79, the third 78 and so on. Two corrections to the results may derive if one list gets 5% of the total points and only one seat (in this case the system provide to the list a second seat) or 15% of total points and less than four seats (in this case the system provide to the list the remaining seats up until four). Every list presented in the congress is associated to several documents (ethic, organization, political), which are not be voted separately as *Recuper la Ilusión* group proposed.

A new document labelled “Rules for the Internal processes” (Podemos 2017d) approved in April 2017 extended the Des-Borda method with few modifications to all institutional levels. The final aspect worth analysing with regard to the party primaries is the degree of contestability of the primaries, especially for the monocratic elections (Prime Minister candidate and party secretaries). Were all of them beauty contest?

The answer is affirmative in the three cases concerning the top figures of the party, i.e. the party secretary in 2014 and 2017 and the Prime Minister candidate (2015). In all three cases, Iglesias won by an overwhelming majority. In the first congress, the alternative candidate, Álvaro Monge, got less one percent (Iglesias 88.6%); in the second, the alternative candidate, Moreno Yagüe, got 10.9% (Iglesias 89.1%). As indicated previously in the 2015 primaries Iglesias got 81.8%, while the Maria Teresa Calvo Chivite – the second most voted candidate – 3.1%.

The answer is partly negative in the primaries held in the CC.AA. and in the leadership-selection for CC.AA. secretaries for the 2015 elections: in the former case, the mean of the margin between the

first and second candidate is 28.2% with some relevant differences (standard deviation 20.3). Adding the new secretaries elected after 2015, the result does not change: the mean distance between the most voted candidates remain 28.2%) In Andalusia, Teresa Rodriguez won with 84,9% of votes (margin with the second candidate 74.3%); Pablo Echanique got 71.9% in Argon (margin 44.6%) and Gemma Ubasart González won in Catalunya with 77% (margin 60.6%). In other CC.AA., the battle for the first place was closer: in Madrid Community, Basque Countries and Cantabria the margin was in all cases less than 5,5%. When the CC.AA. secretaries in Madrid Community and The Basque Country were renewed the battle remained closed (7% in Madrid, 5.5% in The Basque Country). The overall penetration of the party in the CC.AA. is nonetheless not significant, especially in the largest CC.AA., where the ratio between the votes in the party primaries and the votes received by the party in the elections is irrelevant. It is even less relevant when looking at electorate in each CC.AA. rather than the votes received by the party. To make the table more “readable”, I multiple these two ratios for 100 (Figure 6.3).

The primaries were a close competition among candidates: Table 6.3 shows the results for the first five candidate and the candidates from the 56th to the 60th position. Less than 9000 points – not votes, according to the modified version of Borda count – divide the first and the 60th positions and less than 2300 the first and the second. Still, it would be misleading to treat these primaries as a competition among factions, as it is the case for the second congress; rather, these results show that the line dividing an “electable” position in a given district and an insecure one was narrow. The answer is partly negative and party positive for the election of the Citizen Councils in two Congresses. In 2014 the list led by Iglesias obtained an overwhelming majority: although the preferences among candidates were fairly distributed (Table 6.2), only one list (Claro Que Podemos) had representative elected in the Citizen Council. On the contrary, in the second the first list (Podemos para Todas) obtained 60% of the seats available, Recuperar la Ilusión (37%) and Podemos en Movimiento (2%). Although the difference between Iglesias (Podemos para Todas) and Íñigo Errejón (the most voted candidate for Recuperar la Ilusión list) was 17.2% the competition with the second-ranked of Podemos para Todas Pablo Echenique (48.39%) and Errejón (47.32%) was close and, symbolically marked the predominance of Iglesias faction over the so-called *Errejónistas*. In sum, the results of the candidate selection within the party and for the Chamber of Deputies show a higher degree of competitiveness compared to the leadership-selection, which was undisputed within Podemos, with a clear-cut predominance of Iglesias.

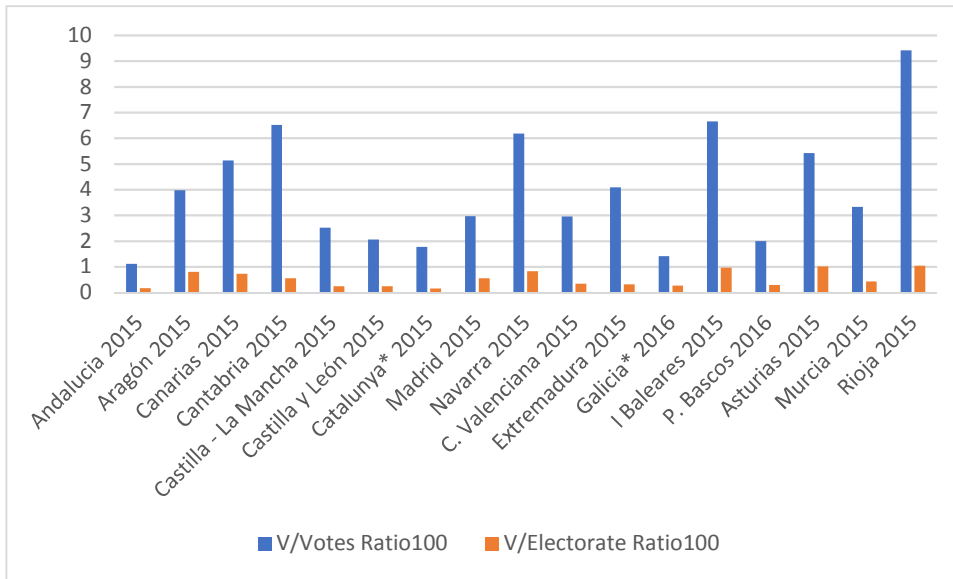


Figure 6.4 – Podemos' Voters/Votes Ratio*100 and Voters/Electorate Ratio for CC.AA. leadership-selection. Own elaboration: from podemos.info

6.4.7 Party Finance

As previously shown, Podemos since its genesis campaigned against political corruption and the vested interests behind political parties. One of the targets of Podemos is the role of the banks in lending money to parties. In order to present as different from other parties, Podemos claims to reject any loan from banks. Similar to SYRIZA, and contrary to FSM, Podemos use public funding to finance its activity. Podemos' revenues (Figure 6.5) grow substantially from 2015 to 2016 (from €4 million to 17). The data available for the year 2017 are partial (8 million in July 2017), thus it has to be expected that the party may maintain the funding obtained in 2016. More interesting, the composition of the revenues changes substantially (Figure 6.6); in 2015, 57.2% of the revenues came from donations, while in 2016 donations covered only 39.3% of the total revenues.

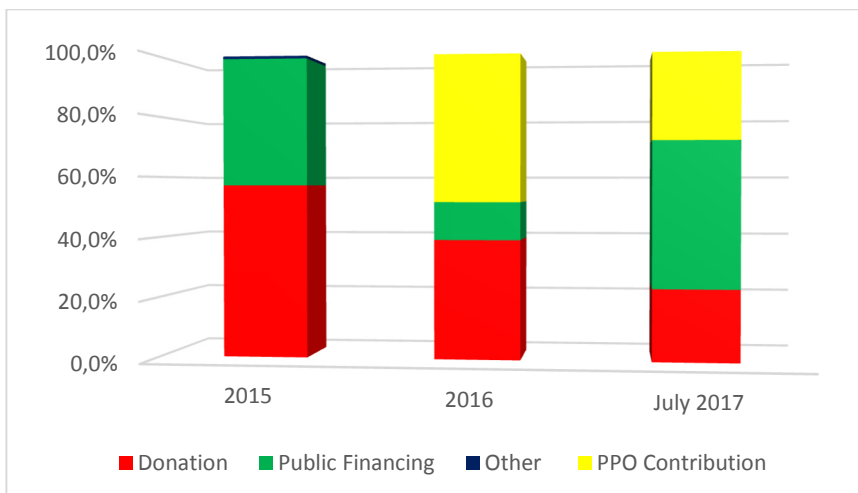


Figure 6.5 – Podemos' sources of income (2015-2017). Source: podemos.info

Up until July 2017, the percentage decreased to 23.8%. Accordingly, PPO contributions skyrocketed in 2016, covering almost half of the revenues (48.3%), while public funding decreased markedly (from 41.9% in 2015 to 12,4% in 2016, albeit in the first seven months of 2017 it covered 48% of the total revenues). Similar to FSM, through the *Impulsa* project, Podemos collects “private” donations from PPO members to finance activities promoted by ordinary citizens. In three editions (2015, 2016, 2017) *Impulsa* collected proposals (art, sport, culture, health, environment etc.), committing the Podemos to cover part of the costs. In 2015 the fund was 52.000€; it grew conspicuously in 2016 (300.000€) and in 2017 (500.000€). The projects are screened and selected by a commission and then voted by members of the party. In 2017, within the *Impulsa* project, Podemos through the project *Hacemos* (we do) allowed party circles to participate in another “call for action”, which was aimed at promoting local activities of Podemos members. As we shall see in the conclusions, the re-use of public funding to promote not-for-profit (Podemos) and for-profit (FSM) “start-ups” constitutes a novelty in the European panorama. The main difference with FSM is that FSM’ fund is run by the Italian ministry for the Economic Development and it promotes for-profit projects. In the case of Podemos the fund is run internally, but it finances non-for-profit projects.

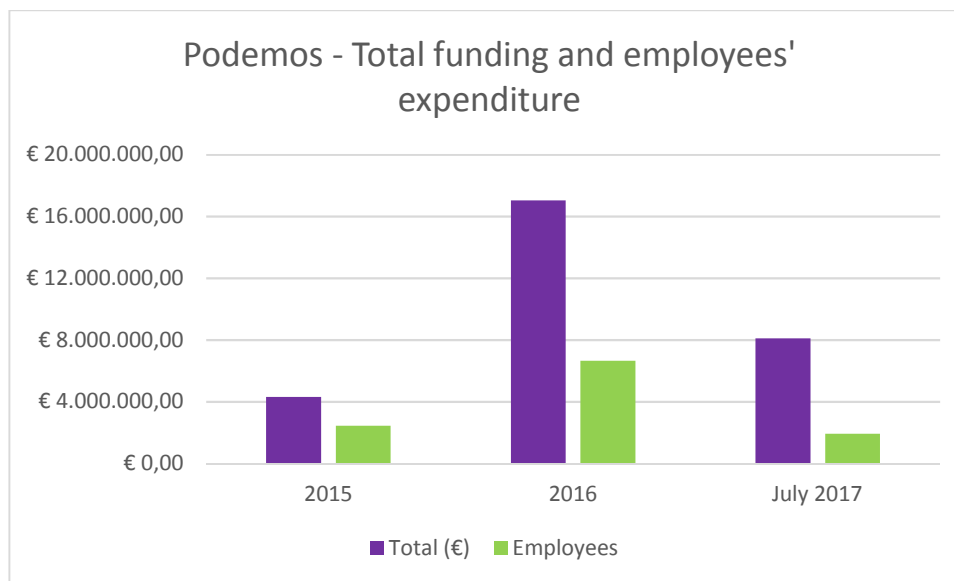


Figure 6.6 – Podemos' total funding (2015-2017) and employee’s expenditure. Source: podemos.info

6.5 The ideology of Podemos

6.5.1 Economic dimension: left-right

The analysis of the documents produced by Podemos as well as the discourses of the leadership indicate a clear-cut preponderance for the issues related to the welfare-state expansion and the equality. The categories to which Podemos refers the most are post-Fordism’s workers, blue-collar

worker, civil servants and autonomous worker. Nonetheless, in all manifestos under analysis Podemos propose several plans to help small and medium-sized enterprises. Albeit not rejecting its basic mechanism, Podemos proposes correction to the free-market through the state intervention in strategic sectors in order to guarantee a universal access to those public services, which were commodified (e.g. energy) by previous governments. Podemos' posture on the Spanish and European crisis emerged since the very first manifesto and party's rallies: from the one hand, Podemos accuses the European Union to have imposed heavy fiscal adjustments to the periphery of Europe (Iglesias 2014a, 2014b, 2015b, Podemos 2014 and 2015a); from the other hand, Podemos rejects the neoliberal turn of traditional forces in Spain, namely PP and PSOE. Finally, Podemos criticizes the "financialization" of the economy, championing a greater control on financial transactions through the so-called Tobin-tax (Podemos 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016), the end of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) imposed to sovereign countries by European institution, a European conference on the public debt and a European fiscal policy (Podemos 2016).

In the manifesto for the European elections (Podemos 2014a), the main concern for the party is the redistribution of the State's resources in order to reduce inequalities, the introduction of a basic income scheme, the reduction of weekly working-hours and the protection of all public services. The protection of the "social rights" and of the public services against the austerity policies is the main goal of the manifesto presented in the CC.AA. election (Podemos 2015b: 12). In addition to the redistributive measures in the previous manifesto, Podemos proposed a capital tax to propel equality in the taxation. Before the 2015 general election another manifesto (Podemos 2015c) named *Plan de Rescate Ciudadano* (Plan of Citizenship's rescue) delineated the guidelines for the following elections: here again, the emphasis is on the protection of social rights (Podemos 2015c: 5-12) and on the introduction of a basic income scheme (Podemos 2015c: 17-18).

Similar concerns are expressed in several bullets points in the manifesto for the general elections (Podemos 2015a): the law on market labour, the introduction a basic income scheme and the growth of the minimum-wage (points 90-107), the reform of pension scheme (points 108-113), public health (point 114), the end of indiscriminate evictions and the free access of basic services are the most telling examples in this regard.

In other two documents – the program agreed by Podemos and its allies in the 2016 elections and the programmatic agenda signed by Podemos, Compromís and the Partido Socialista del País Valenciano (PSPV-PSOE) – I have analysed to what extent Podemos position has shifted when the party had to deal with national and sub-national alliances: although the documents are shorter, more generic and less elaborated, the overall position of Podemos on welfare state expansion and economic equality remained stable.

Overall, Podemos position on economic dimension pertains to the left: there are almost none positive references to fiscal retrenchment policies nor deficit containment is framed as positive for the country. Podemos presented itself as pro-Welfare party, whose core argument is the protection of labour security and the universal access to public services (health, energy, transportations, housing, education). Still, the manifestos only remotely mention the overthrown of capitalism as the ultimate end for Podemos: rather, the party proposes a within-system adjustment of the productive structure. The economic program written by Vicens Navarro and Juan Torres López for Podemos recognizes the deficiencies in the European Union construction, especially with regard to the single-currency and the role of the European Central Bank (ECB), but it does not endorse the exit of the country from the EU. Despite even other radical-left parties in Europe abandoned the construction of a socialist society, prioritizing an anti-neoliberal strategy (March and Keith 2017). Overall the economic position of Podemos is closer to the a leftist socialdemocratic party rather than to a typical radical-left party.

6.5.2 Non-economic dimensions: immigration, multiculturalism, European Union and anti-elitism

The position of Podemos on the issues of immigration and multiculturalism is close to the left-libertarian parties. Podemos proposes the extension of civil-rights to all people regardless of gender, race and sex. While Iglesias recognizes that the Zapatero government had a progressive stance on civil-rights issues (Iglesias 2015b and 2017), Podemos propose a further advancement in civil rights' recognition (Podemos 2014a, 2015a, 2015b). More important, Podemos advocates a radical change in the migration policy of both EU and Spain (Podemos 2014a and 2015a), proposing human-rights respectful policies for migrants and asylum-seeker. The criticism is focused on the EU fortress and the previous government lack of commitment in dealing with migration crisis and in grating to them basic rights (such as health) (Podemos 2015b, points 160-168, Podemos 2015a, points 304-305, Podemos 2016). There are no negative references related to the immigration "issue" nor this phenomenon is framed as an invasion to the Spanish borders; rather, several proposals in the manifestos of the party advocate the extension of social-rights to immigrant people. Iglesias maintained a similar non-discriminative stance (2017).

Podemos' position on the European Union (EU) can be defined as ambivalent: the first program for the European elections was markedly critical toward the supranational institutions and the loss of sovereignty of the country in many crucial fields, such as economy and defence policy. In particular, the party calls for a democratic re-founding of EU. In this regard, the 2014 manifesto advocates for one of the most controversial issue for the party, i.e. a binding referendum on the withdrawal of the

country from the NATO.²⁴ Podemos changed its position in the following elections, proposing a greater autonomy for Spain within NATO and a pan-European defence in which Russia should be included (Podemos 2015a: 223-224).

In all manifestos Podemos maintains a critical stance toward both austerity measures implemented by European institutions and the trade agreement between EU and other partners (TTIP and TISA): accordingly, Podemos proposes the reform of the stability and growth pact and the introduction of a Tobin Tax at the supranational level. Still, despite the critical assessments of the EU economic policy (Iglesias 2015, 2016 and 2017), Podemos highlights in the draft agreement with other political forces for the 2016 elections, that a European fiscal policy can provide the necessary public investment “to implement an energetic transition and to create sustainable jobs” (Podemos 2016: 21). Podemos proposes a European conference on the debt for the countries within the Eurozone: the main goal should be bringing the nominal debt of the most indebted countries within a sustainable level through the European Central Bank, which should function as a lender of last resort and whose Statute should comprise the goal of full-employment, rather than price stability (Navarro and Torres López 2014). The democratization of the economy proposed by Vicenç Navarro and Juan Torres López for Podemos (2014: 11) goes beyond these reforms, since it explicitly states that the ECB should be accountable directly to the European Parliament. The Euro-framework is explicitly criticized: according to the two authors, it is designed to favour Germany, while other non-export led countries are handicapped by the impossibility to use the monetary policy to counter competitiveness pressure in the global market. However, in this document and in the party manifestos, there is no mention of a referendum for the permanence of Spain in the EU nor Podemos advocates the withdrawal of the country from the Eurozone. Rather, the EU framework is legitimized in Podemos ideology, since the party proposes the creation of a Social Eurogroup, which comprises the Ministries of Labour and Social Policy of the Eurozone countries and whose main aim should be to supervise the unbalances among countries in this field (Podemos 2015a: 61). Moreover, Podemos supports the democratization process of the Eurogroup, through the creation of a Parliament formed by members of Eurozone’s national Parliaments. In the economic program by Navarro and López (2014:16), the two authors propose a European minimum-wage and the harmonization of the fiscal policies between members. The so-called “casta” (the casta) was one of the main target of Podemos anti-elite political campaigns. Pablo Iglesias focused in various speeches (2014b, 2015c, 2017), interviews and books (2014a) on the privileges and the corruption of the caste, represented by traditional political parties – PP and

²⁴ Spain had a referendum on this issue in 1986. It was the socialist Prime Minister Felipe González, who promised during the electoral campaign. Eventually, 53,2% of the voters opted for staying within the NATO (however, the abstention reached 40%).

PSOE – and by bankers and the financial élites (Vittori 2017b). One of the most used argument against the caste was the relation between parties’ elite and multinational through the mechanism of the revolving doors. Podemos insisted in its electoral campaign also on the corruption scandals that affected the Popular Party (Orriols and Cordero 2016); when the Catalan crisis erupted and the PP government in Madrid applied the article 155 of the Constitution, which empowers the government to take control of the region in case of a crisis, Podemos accused PM Rajoy to be politically not legitimated to apply direct rule over Catalonia due to the corruption scandals, in which he and PP élite were directly or indirectly involved.

Podemos tried to apply the 15-M “¡No nos representan!” (They do not represent us!) to the whole political system, presenting itself as the real novelty in the Spanish panorama. Podemos calls its manifestos as “contracts” with the people (Podemos 2015b) stipulated by other common people (Podemos candidates), who are not part of the political class. This discourse is also used in the governing pact signed with other political forces. The *Acuerdo del Botanic* (2015) explicitly states that Valencian people do not want to be treated as second-hand citizens from Brussels and from Madrid.

Although the anti-elite discourse decreased in the last national election (2016), anti-elitism is present both in all Iglesias speeches (2014b, 2015c, 2016, 2017) and books (2014a) and in all Podemos manifestos. Iglesias’ discourse dichotomizes the society between *los de arriba* (those who are on the top) and *los de abajo* (those who are at the bottom), recalling the distinction 1% vs. 99% of the Occupy movement. The élites that Iglesias criticizes are economic (multinational and the IBEX 35), political (the corrupt politicians) and cultural (mainly the Prisa Group²⁵). In the vote of no-confidence against Mariano Rajoy in 2017, Iglesias (2017) draw a picture of “*who is Spain*”; the list includes all type of workers, autonomous workers and small and medium entrepreneurs, while politicians of the PP do not represent Spain. The following part of the discourse is based on the relationship between politicians and entrepreneurs related with PP, whose relationship according to Iglesias is similar compared to the past relationship between oligarchs and non-democratic politicians.

The fight against the economic lobbies’ influence in electoral campaign is a crucial element in several Podemos manifestos (2014a and 2015a, 2015b). Podemos adopted typical anti-elitist measures to improve transparency and austerity within the political parties, i.e. avoiding loans from banks, diminishing the salary of Parliamentarians to three times the minimum wage in Spain (655,20 €) and making primaries elections mandatory for executive organs within the party and in national and regional Spanish institutions. Moreover, Podemos (2014a and 2015a) proposes the introduction of

²⁵ The Prisa group is a media conglomerate which owns El País, the main newspaper in Spain, and El Huffington Post, the Spanish version of the Huffington Post.

binding recall mechanism for MPs and even for the Government when it fails to comply with the program. To foster citizens' participation in the institution, the party advocates the introduction of a Citizen Seat within the Parliament, which should function as a further representation of the civil society.

Finally, Podemos wants to expand direct-democracy not only for its own organization, but above all for the decision-making process in all institutional level. The proposal to hold a referendum in Catalunya for the secession from Spain is contained in the program for the European elections (2014a: 9). This proposal was reiterated in the 2015 program (Podemos 2015a), under the label *derecho a decidir* (right to decide). The proposals to facilitate Popular Legislative Initiatives, the Initiative for Popular Deliberative Process and Initiative for a Popular Veto (Podemos 2015a: 158) can be inserted in this the direct-democratic framework.

In conclusion, Podemos can be regarded as a moderately radical in its economic proposal, especially from 2015 onward; it displays a left-libertarian ideology with regard to multiculturalism and immigration, while its critical assessment of the EU is counterbalance by the willingness to expand EU scope in different fields. Finally, Podemos still uses an anti-elitist discourse focused on the criticism of the corruption and its difference from the old politicians.

6.6 A partial conclusion

The first electoral success of Podemos was unexpected; its appeal to the Spanish people seemed just another voice among others anti-establishment parties that 15-M propelled. Nonetheless, Podemos was able, along with Ciudadanos in 2016, to jeopardize the national (and the regional) political system(s) in Spain. It supported PSOE-led governments at the regional and national levels, while at the same time, criticizing the (Andalusian) élite of the party for its conservatism and its corruption. Albeit being a new party, Podemos in few years took advantage of the weaknesses of PSOE and PP at the beginning of 2014 and in 2015. Its vote-seeking strategy was aimed at polarizing the electorate, dividing the party system between 'them' – the old-establishment supported by media, economic, financial and, sometimes, vested interests – and 'us', the Spanish people affected by the crisis. Even though it had to confront with a moderately hostile political environment, Podemos was able to use communication and participatory tools, to mobilize a dissatisfied electorate, mainly coming from old left-wing parties (PSOE and IU). Despite FSM proved to be more effective in sustaining a non-coalition policy (see ch. 8), Podemos was much more 'realistic' about the possibility of being in government: at the regional level, it 'coalesced' with PSOE to oust PP from government, with notable exceptions, such as Andalusia; at the State level, it proposed in 2015 the so-called "gobierno del cambio" (government for change) to PSOE and other minor allies in order to relegate Ciudadanos, its

main anti-establishment competitor, in the opposition along with PP. When PSOE refuted the conditions imposed by Podemos, the electoral war-machine, which tried to combine a top-down control of the campaign and top-down participation, showed some rifts at the élite level; the pact with IU and other minor leftist parties in the following elections (2016) failed to reach its main goal, the overtaking of PSOE. Factionalism grew, especially in the second congress (2017), but Iglesias was able to get a landslide majority in the CCE: this, however, did not eliminate tensions within the party related to the excessive hierarchization and to the decreasing appeal of direct-democracy tools to the membership. More recently, Podemos supported PSOE in a vote of no-confidence session that ousted Rajoy from the government, thus permitting the formation of minority government led by PSOE. Whether Podemos will be able to fulfil the promise of a radical change in the Spanish political system, it is hard to predict: up until now, it seemed that, once the élite ‘switch-off’ its electoral war-machine, the party has accommodated to the uncomfortable position of appearing the left of PSOE, something that, despite their divergences, both Iglesias and Errejón have always tried to avoid.

Chapter 7 – SYRIZA

7.1 Introduction

As a governing party, SYRIZA and its leader Alexis Tsipras will be probably judged only for two events: the victory in the referendum for the rejection of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and, few days later, its “capitulation” – as its adversaries call it – toward the EU demands. Still, it would be misleading to begin with the main political outcome of SYRIZA’s five years in government without considering the trajectory that brought SYRIZA to power and the reason behind both choices (the referendum and the acceptance of the Memorandum). The Greek case was the epitome of a financial crisis that hit Europe vehemently in 2008. However, Greece was also the country that entered in Eurozone without fully comply with the requirements needed and, mostly, whose (conservative) governments falsified national balance sheets to mask a growing deficit. The tragic dimension of these political, economic and social crises is still evident: the figures in chapter 5 in this regard show how deeply ordinary people were affected by the crisis and the austerity measures implemented in the last ten years. Moreover, Greece was the country in which the social unrest and the protests against austerity in the main cities of the country provoked a harsh confrontation between protesters and the police.

Finally, Greece was the country in which a ruling party, PASOK, which won the election in 2009, six years after almost disappeared from the political system. As in the case of Podemos, I firstly analyse the political opportunity structure and, then, I focus on the pattern of competition adopted by SYRIZA from 2004 until 2015; thirdly, I investigate the party organization and its change from the federative phase (2004-2012) to the last congress (2016); finally, I inquire the ideology of the party.

7.2 The political Opportunity Structure

A) The electoral law

Greece has changed several aspects of the first electoral law (1974). In the first version, the Greek governments opted for a reinforced version of a proportional representation with a complex four-tier system for the allocation of the seats: the first tier has 56 smaller electoral districts, the second-tier 9 and the third tier is a single nationwide district. The first three-tiers elect 288 deputies. A fourth tier, which is reserved to parties with a representation in the second tier, elects the remaining 12 deputies. The seats in the second tier are allocated to parties with a share of votes equal to or greater than 17%, coalitions of two parties with a total vote share equal to or greater of 25% or coalitions of more than two parties with a total vote share equal to or greater than 30%: “If only one party or coalition of

parties reaches the threshold(s) defined above then the coalitions of parties are excluded and the single party with the second largest share of the popular vote participates in the second distribution.” (Lamprinakou 2012:12). In the following decades, the number of tiers and the thresholds were substantially reduced: the actual threshold is 3% of the votes at the national level, while the tiers are now only two, which correspond to the first and the fourth-tier in the 1974 electoral law. The electoral law for the 2007 and 2009 elections comprised a majority bonus of 40 seats (50 from 2012 to 2015). Still, it would be incorrect to define the Greek electoral law(s) as disproportional. Despite the growth of the disproportionality in the recent decades – LSq in 2000 was 6.78, while in May 2012 with the introduction of higher majority bonus reached 12.88, decreasing to 9.69 in September 2015 – the low national threshold (3%) puts the Greek case among the reinforced proportional cases. The mean of the district magnitude is 5.05, while the median is 4. Following the operationalization in chapter 4, Greece falls within the proportional systems. However, this definition has to be managed carefully: as in the Spanish case, there are only 9 districts with 8 or more seats and 45 with 7 or less (the state-wide district in the second tier is excluded from the count). Nonetheless, these 9 large districts elect 44.7% of the 288 MPs. The peculiarity of the Greek territory – with more than one-hundred of inhabited islands and about a half of the population concentrated in three urban areas (Athen, Thessaloniki and the Pireaus) – renders the disproportionality in the district magnitude almost unavoidable. Despite the overall proportionality of this system, the outcome of the elections was majoritarian from 1990 to 2012. The two-party system was (almost) undisputed for more than twenty years: New Democracy (ND) (centre-right) dominated the political system from the advent of the democratic regime (1974) until the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)’s takeover (1977-1989). After the 1989-1990 turmoil (three elections in two years), from 1990 to 2004 PASOK had the absolute majority in the Parliament, being ousted from power by ND in two consecutive elections (2004 and 2007). In 2009, PASOK was the last party to obtain the absolute majority in the Greek parliament. In this period the two main parties obtained at least 74% of the votes and 88% of the seats (Figure 7.1). In the next four elections ND and PASOK combined less than 42% of the total votes. In the two 2012 elections, bipartitism resisted, albeit severely weakened, due to the majority bonus assigned to ND. In the 2015 elections, SYRIZA obtained the bonus, thus relegating traditional bipartitism to about 30% of the share of seats.

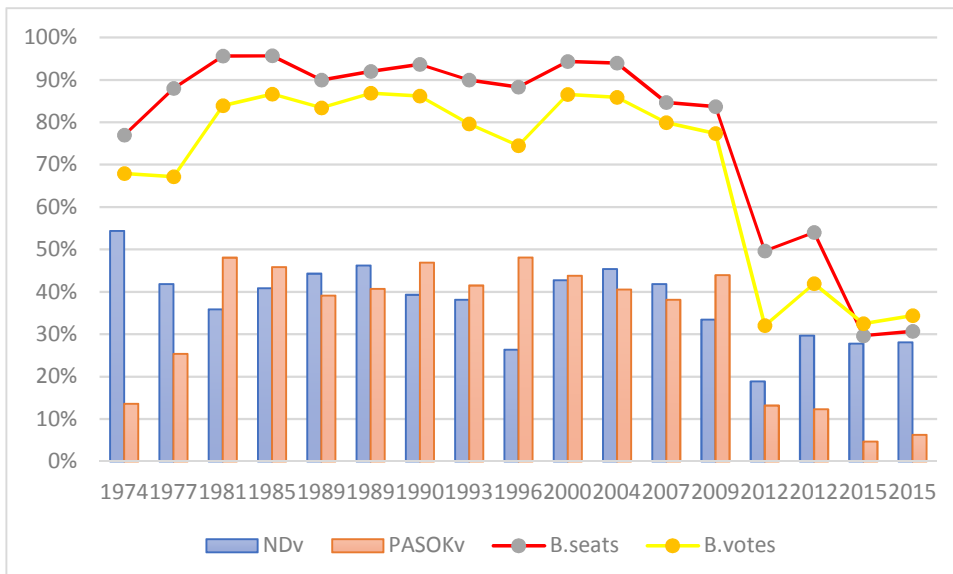


Figure 7.1 – Bipartitism in Greece - Votes and Seats obtained by PASOK and ND. Source: Greek Ministry of Interior.

B) Social Movement

As Vogiatzoglou (2017: 100) points out, anti-austerity mobilization in Greece was a "laboratory of experimentation and development for social movement practices and organizational forms". In this laboratory, SYRIZA emerged as the most prominent radical-left party in Europe. The protest cycle before the 2012 critical elections lasted for three years (2008-2011), despite with a wavering trend. The most known movement – the Greek Indignados, *aganaktismenoi* – appeared in the Greek political panorama more than a year after (May 2011) the ratification of the Memorandum of Understanding (2009) by the Greek Parliament. Following the mobilization of the Spanish Indignados, the protesters took the street firstly in Thessaloniki and then in other main cities of the country, such as the capital Athens, where the Syntagma Square (Constitution Square) soon became the symbol of the protest. However, the *aganaktismenoi* movement was the second main wave of protests in Greece. Three years before (December 2008), at the very beginning of the crisis, riots all over Greece started after the *casus-belli* of the murder of the 15-years-old student Alexandros Grigoropoulos by two policemen. The protests arouse in all main cities and lasted about one month: Syntagma Square was the symbol of the rage for both police abuses and the worsening living conditions in Greece. Then, a series of strikes organized by several trade unions in 2010 had a significant impact in mobilizing people with a heterogeneous background from all over Greece (Psimitis 2011). Moreover, less institutionalized movements with a different repertoire of contention, such as the "Can't Pay? Don't pay" movement, emerged during this mobilization wave (Tsakiris and Aranitou 2010). The general framework that hold together the contradictory nature of the claims advanced by demonstrators was that of the political corruption of the established politicians (Psimitis 2011). Interestingly, Rüdiger and

Karyotis (2013: 506) note that “mass protest against the austerity measures in 2010 was not the preserve of the young but involves people of all ages, particularly the middle-aged.” While 2008 riots were more politically oriented and hegemonized in some parts of the countries by anarchic movements, the *aganaktismenoi* movement had a mixed participation. Both long-lasting activists and ordinary citizens took the streets, the latter “initially very reluctant to allow trade unions into the squares, since their leaders were also seen as representatives of ‘the establishment’” (Aslanidis and Marantzidis 2016: 131). The protests lasted until the end of July 2011, reaching its mobilization’s zenith with a two-days general strike called by mainstream trade unions²⁶. The Greek Indignados targeted both the economic hardship that the country was facing at the time and the ruling élite, represented by PASOK and ND. In the words of Aslanidis and Marantzidis (2016: 138) “the movement of the squares was crucial in bringing about this shift from a merely economic debate to a sociocultural one, as it provided a venue to bring together a diverse range of people to discuss various issues against a backdrop of indignation against ruling elites”. One of the main consequences of this movement was, firstly, its decisive contribution in upsetting the political system (Kousis and Kanellopoulos 2014), i.e. transforming the left-right alignment to a pro- anti-bailout cleavage, which characterized the electoral campaign of the 2012 critical elections. Secondly, it revitalized radical-left party linkages: while Kanellopoulos et al. (2017) aptly show that KKE and SYRIZA developed different networks with other minor parties, trade unions and movement, in both cases the two parties were able to re-connect with their own constituency (Tsakatika and Eleftheriou 2013). However, as in the case of Spanish indignados, political parties and trade unions did not hegemonize the mobilization. Nonetheless, many SYRIZA activists, especially coming from the youth of the party actively participated in the protests (Interview 7.1 and 7.2) since their beginning. SYRIZA’s members have acknowledged the crucial importance of these mobilizations (Bournous and Karatsioubanis 2014) for the revitalization of the radical-left parties: SYRIZA’s secretary, Alexis Tsipras was the only leftist leader who publicly sustained the protesters and their revindications. Among right-wing parties, Panos Kammenos, leader of ANEL, anchored the party roots to the patriotic side of *aganaktismenoi* movement. This is unsurprising given the nature of the protests in Athens. Syntagma Square was divided in two sides: Upper Syntagma protesters used a patriotic framework to protest austerity (and capitalism) (Vogiatzoglou 2017: 114 and Sotirakopoulos and Sotiropoulos 2013: 447), accusing all politicians of treason; Lower Syntagma demonstrations targeted capitalism, inequalities and austerity and police violence while avoiding any nationalistic revindications. Its closeness to the Spanish

²⁶ The Communist-led trade union PAME choose to demonstrate separately from other trade unions, while Synaspismos and the SYRIZA network of trade unionists supported the general strikes (Tsakatika and Eleftheriou 2013).

Indignados was reflected in the bottom-up deliberative assemblies and in the emphasis on direct-democracy (Vogiatzoglou 2017: 124).

C) Bipartitism and convergence

The electoral history of the democratic Greece is an history of bipartitism until 2012: New Democracy (ND) was in government from 1974 to 1981; then PASOK dominated the political scene for a decade (1981-1989). After a brief interlude (1989), ND ousted PASOK from government in two non-consecutive periods: firstly from 1990 to 1993, then in 2004 (until 2009). In almost forty years (1974-2012), the bipolar structure was broken only few times: firstly, during the first election in 1974 (and only partially in 1977), in which ND, the dominant party, confronted with two oppositions, Union of the Democratic Centre (EDIK) and PASOK, and then during the brief parenthesis of the “compromesso storico” in 1989 (Verney 1989), in which the radical left coalition Synaspismos (SYN)²⁷ entered for the first time in government with ND. What characterized the Greek case is the polarization between PASOK and ND, at least from when PASOK under the leadership of Andreas Papandreou took power in 1981. Papandreou populism has its centre of gravity in the concept of the “people” (Pappas and Aslanidis 2015): the community imagined by Papandreou was not class-based; he targeted the imperialist foreign enemy as well as the previous Greek political and economic establishment as the main “Other”. Although PASOK did not withdraw Greece neither from the European Economic Community nor from the NATO as it promised during its opposition period (1974-1981), still Papandreou continued to use the rhetoric of serving the people against its enemies. Nonetheless, this polarising attitude was toned down by Papandreou himself: his unconstrained leadership within PASOK gave him an almost absolute power in the candidate-selection. For example, in 1977, rather than rewarding partisan, he consciously preferred office-seeker long-lasting politicians: “[i]n several cases, he personally tried to attract centrist patrons into PASOK and, whenever he succeeded, it yielded significant electoral results” (Pappas 2009: 322). From 1981 onwards, “Greece’s political system [...] reached a comfortable balance, during which PASOK and ND would alternate in power [...]” (Pappas and Aslanidis 2015: 186, see also Pappas 2003). In this period both PASOK and ND underwent profound changes. Particularly since the new century, both parties started a period of “de-representationalisation” that culminated with “with the establishment-

²⁷ At the time, SYN was a coalition between the Greek Communist Party (KKE), the Greek Left (EAR), a recently formed radical-left party and other minor parties, such as the Party of Democratic Socialism (KODISO) and the Democratic Union. The coalition lasted for three consecutive elections, two in 1989 and one in 1990. In 1993 SYN run as an autonomous party, because KKE decided to stand alone rejecting its own revisionist phase and the alliance with pro-bourgeois party, such as SYN/SYRIZA (Interview 4).

institutionalisation in the ruling parties (PASOK-ND) of the direct election of the President²⁸ from the ‘society’” (Vernardakis 2012: 6): both parties became part of a Greek cartel due to their reliance on public (and bank) funding, their interconnection with the State and their professionalized organization (Vernardakis 2012: 18-19). As far the economic ideology is concerned, both parties have converged to the centre. The late leadership of A. Papandreou and the new one represented by Costas Simitis (1996 - 2004) were characterized by PASOK turn to a pro-European stance (Verney 1996) and to the Blairian third-way: as an example, in 1993 PASOK campaign was focused on controlling the inflation and on reducing the huge fiscal deficit of the country (Featherstone 1994). In the nineties PASOK and ND set (similar) convergence programmes in line with the Maastricht criteria to allow Greece to enter in the European Monetary Union (EMU) in 2001: although Greece was firstly rejected in 1999, it finally joined the EMU in 2001 with the full support of both parties. In line with the pro-European attitude of the electorate (see Chapter 5), both parties had a shared commitment in the European integration, as testified by their voting behaviour in the Parliament when EU affairs were at the stake (Table 7.2). Although PASOK and ND preferred a confrontational style when the economic and financial crisis hit Greece, both parties revealed their shared to commitment to European Union and international institutions. During the 2009 electoral campaign, PASOK under the leadership of George Papandereou, son of A. Papandreou, choose the motto “There is Money” to counter the ND budget retrenchments. On the other hand, when in opposition, ND choose not to vote for the first Memorandum of Understanding signed by PASOK government in April 2010. When G. Papandreou resigned after attempting to call for a referendum on the implementation of a second MoU between Greece and the so-called Troika in November 2011, PASOK, ND and LAOS eventually supported a grand-coalition government led by Lucas Papademos, a former ECB vice president. Under this government, the Parliament ratified the second MoU between Greece and the Troika (March 2012). After the disastrous results of the May 2012 elections, PASOK (-30.7% with respect to the 2009 elections) bargained with ND the formation of another grand-coalition government, which eventually failed, leading to new elections in June. This time ND and PASOK combined 153 seats (absolute majority, 150) and formed the second pro-bailout grand-coalition government, this time led by a politician, ND leader Antonis Samaras. Despite the confrontational tone in 2009-2010, both parties converged to a pro-European and pro-bailout position.

D) The presence of anti-establishment parties

Takis S. Pappas (2014: 8) considers “populism as the most important chapter in the autobiography of

²⁸ Before the President of the Greek Republic was elected by the party conference.

Greece's *metapolitefsi* [regime change, italics in the text]". No matter how much one agrees with this view, the Greek liberal-democratic system has survived in these decades, despite the presence of anti-establishment and anti-system parties both in the centre and in the so-called extremes. PASOK under A. Papandreou is commonly regarded as populist (*see Bipartitism and Convergence*); even ND during the leadership of Miliades Evert (1993-1997) has been defined as populist (Pappas and Aslanidis 2015). However, anti-establishment and anti-system parties have thrived insofar in radical left and radical right wings. From an historical viewpoint, KKE is probably the long-lasting anti-system party in Western Europe. It confronted with several splits – the most important being the KKE-Interior (KKE-Es), which created a constellation of minor radical-left parties, some of which allied with KKE in the SYN alliance. Although the party did participate in a coalition government in 1989, its U-turn after the failure of this experience led to its self-isolation from the Greek political system. Its *anti-systemness* is now acknowledged by most of radical-left parties' scholars (March 2011 and March and Keith 2017); its pre-emptive refusal to enter into a bargain for the formation of a red-red government with SYRIZA in 2015 due to bourgeoisie nature of the latter (Interview 7.3) indicates straightforwardly the attitude of KKE in this regard. Its electorate seems to be stable, albeit with a decreasing trend: it has ranged in the last two decades from 4,5% (June 2012) to 8,5% (May 2012), thus limiting the offer of challenger parties in the radical left fields. The presence of a populist left, represented by PASOK and KKE narrowed down any anti-establishment attempt in the eighties and partially in the nineties. Even when PASOK became a "responsible" party, abandoning its patronage-led responsiveness and KKE results were stagnating in the early 2000, SYN and SYRIZA had difficulties in presenting as a real alternative to both traditional and anti-system left.

The radical-right spectrum presents a similar pattern. The anti-systemic side is represented by *Laikós Síndesmos – Chrysí Avgí* (Popular Association – Golden Dawn, GD), a proto-national socialist party headed by Nikolaos Michaloliakos, jailed for criminal allegation in 2013. Although the party was founded in 1983, it has a resounding success only after May 2012 elections (6.97%), when it became a relevant party in the Greek political system (Ellinas 2013). It had its best results in the European elections (2014) with 9.39% of the votes and it is at the time of writing the third most represented group in the Greek Parliament. The (populist) radical right pro-systemic parties from 2000 onwards are ANEL and LAOS. The latter, after succeeding in 2009 European elections and participating in grand coalition government in 2011 with ND and PASOK, lost its parliamentary representation halving its total votes in the 2012 elections. ANEL, on the other hand, grew electorally when LAOS lost its parliamentary representation. ANEL presents as a national-conservative party with an anti-bailout program. Despite the decreasing trend of its electoral trajectory (from 10.6% in May 2012 to 3.7% in September 2015 elections), it participated in the two SYRIZA-led government, with five

deputy ministers and one minister (Panos Kammenos, ANEL president and Minister of National Defence).

7.2.1 Summary

Following the operationalization in Chapter 4, SYRIZA operated in a *favourable* political environment (proportional electoral law with two enabling factors, see Table 4.1). Although the electoral law presents majoritarian traits, such as the majority bonus for the most voted party, the overall electoral system can be defined as proportional. Other two factors eased the path toward SYRIZA's electoral growth: a) the mobilization of the Indignados movement, which was explicitly supported by SYRIZA's secretary and by the part of the membership, who was actively involved in the protests; b) the convergence between the two traditional parties. Albeit polarized in the past, PASOK and ND have narrowed down their political differences, participating along with LAOS in a grand coalition government led by the technocrat Lucas Papademos. What could have prevented SYRIZA growth, was the presence of several anti-system and/or establishment parties, both at left and the right of the political spectrum. Still, in the anti-establishment competition SYRIZA proved to be better equipped to attract the dissatisfaction of the electorate toward traditional parties.

7.3 The Pattern of Competition

A-B) Emphasis on policies and electoral campaign

From 2009 onwards, one main topic monopolized the six national and supranational elections, i.e. the bailout of Greece. The three MoUs signed by Greek governments (2009, 2011, 2015) were at the heart of all electoral campaigns. In the two campaigns in 2012, the one in 2014 and the last two in 2015, the main issue at stake was whether and under what conditions the political parties should accept bailout programs. SYRIZA in all but one electoral campaign (the last in September 2015) was capable to present a anti-austerity platform without advocating Greece withdrawal from the Eurozone (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014). Although the party in the previous decades used a policy-seeking campaign, emphasizing the road to socialism as the core of the party proposals, during the worst period of the economic crisis (2009-2012) the party re-shaped its priorities adapting its platform to the mutated context. As I will show in 7.5, SYRIZA in 2012 was able to present a non-static and open program (Spourdakis 2014: 359), capable of including, within an anti-bailout framework, different social-democratic and radical-left stances. In the pro-/anti-bailout campaigns, the previous ideological plurality within SYRIZA helped the party, rather than weakening its unity. This is not to say that classical left-wing redistributive policies were irrelevant for SYRIZA; rather, all policies

were included in two catch-all words “anti-bailout”/ “anti-austerity” and, mostly, “people”. The latter word, in the Laclauian analysis of SYRIZA discourse by Stavrakakis and Katsambekis (2014: 128) became a point of reference for SYRIZA and Tsipras in the 2012 campaigns, while in the previous campaigns it was barely mentioned: “the signifier ‘the people’ does not repeatedly appear in Tsipras and SYRIZA’s discourse as a ‘colourless’ cliché [...] it clearly assumes the role of a privileged reference [...]” While adopting an inclusionary definition of people, SYRIZA and Tsipras identify their “others” in both national and supra-national political establishments and, from an ideological standpoint, in neoliberalism. Overall SYRIZA presented an anti-bailout framework with an inclusionary people-centred view; however, in these cases, SYRIZA tried to appear also a ‘responsible’ party, providing both detailed programs of the policies to be implemented to stop austerity and overall explanations on where to take the money to implement them (SYN 2012 and SYRIZA 2014).

Although I was not able to obtain the data of SYRIZA’s electoral campaign expenditures, the data on SYRIZA financing provided by Vernardakis (2014) leave few doubts about the absence of a capital-intensive electoral campaign by SYRIZA, especially when compared with PASOK (before 2012) and ND. Rather, the linkage with social movements, the construction of a solidarity network (*Solidarity4All*) and the presence of the membership in most of the mobilizations that took place during the crisis represent a case of a labour-intensive campaign. Although SYRIZA low membership (Tarditi and Vittori forthcoming) could not grant to the party élite a labour-intensive campaign either, the latter has prevailed in all recent electoral campaigns.

In order to balance the absence of labour and capitals, SYRIZA adopted a vote-seeking strategy. The vote-seeking strategy adopted by SYRIZA is evident when looking at its polarizing attitudes toward traditional parties. As Gemenis (2010: 353) highlights, during the first protest cycle in 2008, SYN popularity grew constantly draining part of the PASOK voters; still, “when it became clear that Tsipras remained completely uninterested in this prospect [an alliance with PASOK], the support for his party quickly fell back to the pre-2007 estimates [...]”. Although this non-accommodating strategy caused a loss in Tsipras and SYN/SYRIZA popularity in the short-term, it paid in the long-run since it spotlighted the alternative represented by SYRIZA vis-à-vis other traditional parties when the calamity of the economic crisis became patent in the following years. This confrontational attitude toward PASOK was reinforced in the 2010 local elections. After the split of the more moderate faction, which created a new party and the *rupture* between SYRIZA’s former leader Alekos Alavanos, who ran (unsuccessfully) as an independent in the Attica region, SYRIZA refused to coalesce with PASOK in anti-ND cartel, preferring local alliances with Eco-greens anti-bailout parties (Verney 2012). As in 2009, this strategy was not a success-story in electoral terms for SYRIZA: albeit

presenting itself as the third pole of the left against the centre-left coalition (PASOK and DIMAR) and KKE, SYRIZA was not able to turn its anti-bailout strategy into a confrontation between “us” (the anti-bailout forces) and “them” (pro-bailout forces). The long electoral campaign in the two elections held in 2012 (May and June), which followed the failed attempt by PM G. Papandreou to call for a referendum on the bailout agreement and his resignation in November 2011, was characterized by a clear-cut distinction between the pro-bailout and the anti-bailout fronts (Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2013 and Tsakatika 2016: 528): while the pro-bailout camp was hegemonized by ND, which in 2010 criticized the MoU signed by PASOK-led government, the left anti-bailout front was hegemonized by SYRIZA, whose anti-bailout and anti-Grexit campaign became now much more effective in attracting cross-party anti-bailout constituency (Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2013: 536). In a nutshell, after its long-lasting trajectory against memorandum and against any centre-left alliance with pro-memorandum parties (PASOK), SYRIZA became the issue owner of the anti-memorandum issue. Once ND joined and hegemonized the pro-bailout front, Tsipras started to refer to it as the old politics (‘them’) (Tsakatika 2016: 536), thus emphasizing the novelty (‘new politics’) represented by SYRIZA (‘we’). In the June 2012 electoral campaign, after its success in the May elections, SYRIZA "ran a professional campaign, with frequent rallies throughout the country, numerous advertisements, clear messages and an intensive presence in the traditional and social media" (Dinas and Rori 2013: 279), thus enhancing its vote-seeking strategy. In the following elections, SYRIZA maintained its confrontational approach. In the local and local, regional and European elections held in 2014,

SYRIZA’s strategy was epitomised by its slogan, ‘three polls, one vote’, urging voters to use national political criteria and vote for the party’s candidates across all three elections, regardless of the particularities of different contests. The party gave a clear anti-governmental and anti-austerity character to its discourse and another of its central slogans was ‘on the 25th we vote, on the 26th they leave’ (Tsirbas 2015: 138)

Moreover, SYRIZA focused on a relatively new aspect, already mentioned in the analysis of Podemos electoral campaign, i.e. the reference in its political discourse on the popular and national sovereignty. To this, and in order to de-radicalize its discourse, SYRIZA introduced the slogan “Hope is coming. Greece moves on – Europe is changing” (Tsirbas 2016). Simultaneously, SYRIZA started a parallel campaign aimed at highlighting a) the credibility of its pro-Eurozone/anti-austerity commitments (Koliastasis 2015), such as the presentation in 2014 of a new political manifesto called Thessaloniki program, and b) the honesty of its cadres (Tsakatika 2016: 530) and their preparation. This aspect,

however, was not entirely new for SYRIZA: after June 2012, the prospect of a left government hegemonized by SYRIZA was a realistic option, thus SYRIZA “had been training the electorate for the prospect of a left-wing government for almost three years” (Tsirbas 2016: 414).

The referendum held in July 2015, which repealed the third version of the MoU, was focused on the anti-austerity and the pro-democracy issues; SYRIZA, which conducted the campaign as the forerunner of the anti-Memorandum agreement, was able to mark a clear-cut distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’, albeit signing a new agreement few days after the victory in the Referendum. Finally, in September 2015,

SYRIZA’s campaign, for obvious reasons, abandoned [...] the critique of the bailout deals and the austerity policies that came with them. Instead, the central slogan of the campaign (‘we do away with the old – we win tomorrow’ [...]) intended to respond to the widespread demand for political renewal and to capitalise on the lingering resentment towards the old parties of government (i.e. PASOK and ND). (Tsatsanis and Teperoglou (2016: 438).

C) The role of the alliances

I have briefly mentioned in the previous paragraphs the potential alliances in which SYRIZA was involved both at the regional and national level. In this part, I will discuss the strategic choices made by SYRIZA since 2008 onwards. After the resignation of G. Papandreou, SYRIZA rejected the invitation by Lucas Papademos, former Vice President of the ECB and former governor of the Greek Central Bank, to join the grand coalition with PASOK, ND and LAOS. Despite the prevalence of the hard-line vis-à-vis traditional parties, SYRIZA had different positions on its potential participation in coalition government. Although the ideological pluralism has always been a trademark for the party, the economic crisis and the possibility for the party to cooperate with PASOK led to a first split in 2010. During the sixth congress of SYN, several members withdrew from SYN and SYRIZA in order to form DIMAR, which run as an autonomous party for the first time in the 2010 regional elections (Gemenis 2012)²⁹. Among them, Fotsis Kouvelis was elected in March 2011 as the leader of the new party. As Spourdalakis (2014: 356) puts it, “[t]he key element was its [DIMAR] participation in governing institutions at all costs. Being very close to the idea of PASOK’s modernizers, this faction

²⁹ In the 2010 regional elections, SYRIZA former president, Alekos Alavanos, run independently in Attica against SYRIZA candidate, Alexios Mitropoulos, who at the time belong to the National Council of PASOK. Moreover, in the Ionian Islands and in the municipality of Heraklion, SYRIZA coalesced with the Ecologist Greens, while in the Piraeus municipality it formed a coalition with the Ecologist Greens and DIMAR.

saw itself as the ‘responsible Left’, a claim which became self-fulfilling with their participation in Samaras’ coalition government with ND and PASOK after the 2012 elections”. At the time of the split, any cooperation with PASOK was discarded by SYRIZA leadership, since PASOK was considered the forefront of neoliberalism in Greece; when SYRIZA was asked to coalesce with pro-austerity forces in May 2012 and, after the outcome of the following elections (June 2012) to participate in a Grand Coalition, the party refused to join the government leaving the burden of a potential third election in the hand of the traditional parties. ND, PASOK and DIMAR, however, preferred “responsibility” over “responsiveness”, opting for a Grand Coalition led by ND leader Antonis Samaras. Once SYRIZA had the relative majority in the Parliament (after the January and September 2015 elections), it followed the same coalitional strategy of the previous years, i.e. refusing the cooperation with traditional parties and grand-coalition supporters. Although SYRIZA tried to approach KKE to form a left front (Interview 7.4), KKE discarded the possibility due to the pro-capitalist nature of SYRIZA (Interview 7.3): excluding GD, which has never been an option for SYRIZA (Interview 7.5), the only party available was ANEL, with which SYRIZA built an “anti-bailout” front. Overall, the strategy of SYRIZA was centred on forcing the formation of a “pro-austerity” coalition (ND, PASOK and LAOS in 2011 and ND, PASOK and DIMAR in 2012), thus appearing the only viable leftist alternative in place to counter the effects of the bailouts.

D-E) Elite, membership and participatory techniques³⁰

SYRIZA was officially founded in 2004 when several social movements and parties decided to form an “umbrella organization” (Katsourides 2016: 53) or a “network-party” (Vernadakis 2012: 19) with the aim to overcome the 3% electoral threshold. Before its foundation, SYN, the main party within SYRIZA had its third congress (2004), which marked the so-called Left Turn, with the election of Alekos Alavanos as party secretary: in 2008 Alavanos stepped down as SYN secretary in the 5th congress (2008), favouring the ascendance of Alexis Tsipras, both within SYN and SYRIZA. After the resounding success in the 2012 elections, the most relevant components within SYRIZA decided to go a step further and to form a unitary party. Although SYRIZA as a unitary party has almost tripled the membership (Spourdalakis 2014: 362), its main organizational aim, i.e. becoming a “mass connective party” (Spourdalakis 2012: 103) has not been fulfilled yet due to both organizational shortcomings and the electoral campaigns, which forced the party to focus mainly on electoral outcomes rather than party institutionalization (Interview 7.5). SYRIZA structure before 2013 has

³⁰ This section sums up the most relevant organizational features of the party related to the two aspects under consideration (elite/membership and participatory techniques). A detailed analysis can be found in the following paragraph, which is dedicated solely to the party organization.

been open to new contributions from social movements: it had a light structure with coordinating body at its top, in which parties and movements had equal representation (Interview 7.4)³¹, rather than an old-fashioned party in central office. Katsourides (2016: 58) has defined SYN as “many parties in one”: the same was true for SYRIZA, at least until 2013. Both when it was an umbrella organization and when it became a unitary party, direct-democracy decision-making tools were not used by SYRIZA. The Congress, the highest body in SYRIZA structure, is comprised by delegates, elected at the local and regional level; all delegates elect the party leadership. Although the Statute allows the call for referenda on certain issues, after having collected a certain amount of signature from the membership, as far as I know this instrument has not been used insofar. Accordingly, and with the only exception of on-line forum (Spyridou and Veglis 2011), no on-line platforms to implement direct-democracy procedure were developed by SYRIZA, nor social media presence in these years has been pervasive as in the case of Podemos and FSM. In an analysis on the use of twitter by ND and SYRIZA, Polakidakos and Veneti (2016: 128) find “a rather limited dissemination of the political messages of the tweets of the two contemporary biggest parties [...] in Greece”. Albeit being comparatively more active than other parties in experimenting new forms of communication (Spyridou and Veglis 2011), Lappas et al. (2010: 9) highlight that “[a]ny potential benefit gained from better online campaigning by SYRIZA against other small parties, has been counterbalanced by leadership and coordination problems inflicting the party which is made up of various factions representing various ideological positions.” Albeit Tsipras has acquired a higher margin of manoeuvre since his election as party secretary, the leadership within SYRIZA until 2015 was not as unbalanced as in the case of Podemos and, mostly, FSM. Tsipras leadership played a relevant role in the electoral growth of SYRIZA: his leadership, along with the toleration of ideological pluralism within SYRIZA, “guaranteed a peaceful and creative coexistence among SYRIZA's factions” (Spourdalakis 2014: 359). Nonetheless, Tsipras needed the majority both in the Party in Central Office and in the Party in Public Office, during the most critical phases of SYRIZA, i.e. after the signing of the third memorandum (July 2015), in order to control the party.

7.3.1 Summary

The analysis shows that SYRIZA’s pattern of competition is predominantly vote-seeking. The predominance of the policy-seeking behaviour typical of the radical-left policy has been partially replaced by a more confrontational attitude with traditional parties focused on a generic anti-austerity platform. Only when SYRIZA chances to obtain the relative majority increased substantially (May

³¹ However, as the Interviewer acknowledges, the overwhelming strength (in terms of economic resources and political personnel) of SYN within SYRIZA was recognized by other actors.

2012 onwards), the party outlined a more detailed analysis of its platform. Nonetheless, the polarizing political discourse characterized by a) the clear-cut distinction between “them” (pro-memorandum parties) and “us” (anti-memorandum left party), b) anti-elitism and c) the insistence on the protection of social rights through the protection of the national sovereignty testify the greater importance of the vote-seeking strategy vis-à-vis the policy-seeking one. SYRIZA lacked a proper capital-intensive electoral campaign, due to the scarce (economic) resources, rather it focused (until 2012) on a labour-intensive campaign, through its linkage with social movements, despite its overall low labour-capital among its ranks. Moreover, the decision of SYRIZA not to coalesce with traditional centre-left parties (PASOK) and the split of DIMAR permitted to SYRIZA to present the party as the only viable alternative to pro-austerity parties. In 2011 and in 2012, SYRIZA preferred responsiveness – anti-austerity platform – over responsibility, i.e. granting a national-unity government with all pro-systemic parties. Moreover, SYRIZA relied on the leadership of Alexis Tsipras both to renew the image of the party in the electorate and to appease internal factionalism: the importance of the leadership grew substantially, when SYRIZA became a unitary party. Against this vote-seeking framework, SYRIZA presents a different decision-making procedure, compared with Podemos. In particular, it lacks all direct-democracy instruments, being its structure more similar to a traditional party. Nonetheless, before 2013 it has a more assembly-based organization: albeit members were not involved in the decision-making process, still the élite of all founding parties and movements were represented in the highest political bodies of the party.

7.4 The party organization

7.4.1 Genesis

The history of the Greek left is the history of splits and fractures, mergers and unifications. In 1968, the KKE splits into two factions, one faithful to the Soviet Union and one, more “reformist” (KKE-Interior, KKE-I). The fracture has characterized the communist movement ever since, especially during two critical junctures, the restoration of democracy (1974) and the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) (Kalyvas and Marantzidis 2002: 668). Since then, several other fractures characterized the Greek radical-left. SYRIZA is not an exception to this path: its ideological roots are closed to KKE-I, which embraced in the eighties the Eurocommunist proposals stemming from the Italian and the Spanish Communist Party (Charalambous 2013: 59-64). In 1987, KKE-I founded a new party called *Elleniki Aristera* (Greek Left, EAR), which renounced to Marxism-Leninism. Only in 1989, EAR and KKE reunited in the coalition called *Synaspismós tis Aristerás tōn Kinīmátōn kai tis Oikologías* (Coalition of the Left, of Movements and Ecology, SYN). Its electoral results from 1989 to 1991 were

far below the expectation of the elites of the two parties. In 1991 KKE Central Committee replaced its “reformist” secretary Grigoris Farakos³², electing Aleka Pappariga, a long-standing prominent member of the “hard-line” faction: the new hard-line majority broke up the alliance with EAR, causing a major split within KKE; it is estimated that 40% of the cadres left the parties (Kalyvas and Marantzidis 2002: 676). In its founding congress (1992), SYN decided to maintain its label and to create a new structure, which was the organizational backbone of SYRIZA: what is more important for this analysis, is that this congress was marked by one principle, which became crucial for SYRIZA evolution, i.e. “unity in diversity” (Eleftheriou 2009). Factions and tendencies were allowed within SYN, in contrast to the democratic centralism of KKE. During the short-lived experience of Maria Damanaki as party secretary (1992-1993), SYN became “a typical centre-left party with the reformists dominating [...]; it accepted the Maastricht Treaty and presented the early version of a ‘progressive modernization’ programme for Greece as a basis for a coalition government with PASOK” (Katsourides 2016: 52). In 1993, SYN elected as party leader Nikos Konstantopoulos (1993-2004), former member of the PASOK, from which he was expelled in 1975: the phase was characterized by the growth of the leftist factions and by the gradual rejection of “reformist” attitude of the party. From 1993 to 2004, SYN had wavering electoral results and suffered from internal splits, caused by the ambiguous relationship of the party with PASOK and KKE (Mpalafas 2012): the more moderate part was willing to coalesce with PASOK, while the more radical oppose this solution. In 2000, the moderate faction, about 20% of the Central Committee (Kalyvas and Marantzidis 2002: 680), left the party leaving to the radical faction the majority within the party. The disappointing electoral results in the 2000-2004 electoral cycles, the factionalism within the party and the contemporary growth of the alter-globalization movement contributed to the so-called “left-turn” of the party (Eleftheriou 2009), which culminated with the election of former KKE member Alekos Alavanos. Alavanos, the most prominent member of the faction called Left Current was elected with 58.5% of delegates’ votes in the 4th Congress of SYN (2004), displacing the by-then dominant Renewal Wing. At the same time, SYN created a new alliance with other groups, associations and parties, called *Synaspismós Rizospastikís Aristerás* (Coalition of the Radical Left, SYRIZA) (Table 7.1).

Name	Abbreviation	Year of Accession	Year of dissolution	Withdrawal
Active Citizens		2004		2015
Anti-Capitalist Political Group	APO	2011		2015
Citizens Association RIGAS	RIGAS	2012	2014	

³² Farakos replaced Charilaos Florakis, who served as party secretary from 1972 to 1989.

Coalition of Left, Movements and Ecology	SYN	2004	2013	
Communist Organization of Greece	KOE	2007		2015
Democratic Social Movement	DIKKI	2007		2015
Greek Ecosocialists		2008	2013	
Internationalist Workers' Left	DEA	2004	2014	2015
Movement for the Unity of Action of the Left	KEDA	2004		
New Fighter		2012		2015
Radical Left Group ROZA		2008	2013	
Radicals		2011		2015
RED	RED	2004	2014	2015
Renewing Communist Ecological Left	AKOA	2004	2013	
Union of Democratic Center	EDHK	2012		2015
United Front	EKM*	2012	2013	
Xekinima		2008		2011
*It was an electoral ally in the 2012 elections, created to assist PASOK member and cadres to enter to SYRIZA. Source: Vittori and Tarditi (forthcoming) and Katsourides (2016: 56-57).				

According to Panayiotakis (2015) at least seven tendencies can be found within SYRIZA: former KKE and KKE-I members, Trotskyists, Post-Maoists, Libertarian communists, Ecosocialists, Socialist groupuscules and several unaffiliated leftists. Four years later, Alavanos stood down as SYN leader, promoting the young leader, Alexis Tsipras as the new party secretary. In the 5th Congress, Tsipras was elected with 70.6% of the votes. His main opponents, Fotsis Kouvelis, leader of the more moderate faction got 28.7%. From 2004 to 2013, SYN, which was the largest and most organized party within SYRIZA, functioned as autonomous party, while SYRIZA was the “umbrella organization” under which all of them compete at the elections. In 2009, Alavanos along with other leftist cadres broke with Tsipras, creating a new group within SYRIZA (Gemenis 2012). The unexpected good results in the two legislative election rounds in 2012 accelerated the path toward the unification of SYRIZA as a unitary party (Interview 7.5). In 2013 SYRIZA celebrated its founding congress: the Tsipras-led motion received 67.6% of the votes, while the most relevant faction (Left Platform) 30.5%; Tsipras was elected with 74.1% of the votes. Up until this year, SYRIZA was “an organisational locus that could easily include new groups, movements, activists and individual supporters that approached the coalition before and after the 2012 elections, mostly after abandoning PASOK” (Tsakatika and Eleftheriou 2013: 14). Thus, it is unsurprising that Della Porta et al. (2017) include SYRIZA among the “movement parties” in Southern Europe.

7.4.2 Party on the Ground (PoG)

SYN membership figure has always behind the main Greek political parties, ND, PASOK and KKE (Vernardakis 2012): in 2004, at the eve of SYRIZA genesis, SYN had about 16.000 members. In 2013, SYRIZA doubled its total membership; although SYRIZA in its founding congress emphasized the need to transform the party into a mass-membership party, in the second congress (2016), the problem of membership recruitment was still present (Interview 7.6). There are not official data on SYRIZA membership: until the time of writing (2017), the total membership is stable around 30.000 members. As Tsakatika and Eleftheriou (2013: 10-11) put it

[s]etting up the SYRIZA coalition raised expectations that local party branches would open up to activists and non-members who are nonetheless ‘active citizens’ and that this would renew inter-party democracy and boost participation, particularly in the period between 2004 and 2008 under the leadership of Alekos Alavanos. However, these expectations were not fulfilled, mostly because SYRIZA by and large remained an alliance at the leadership level and did not evolve into a political unit with greater political cohesion or proceed to a merging of organisations at the local level.

The enrolment procedure is more difficult than Podemos and FSM: members have to pay an annual fee and the membership must be approved in the following general assembly (art. 4, Statute of SYRIZA), although this procedure is just a formality (Interview 7.7). SYRIZA enlists all the cases of membership loss or suspension in the Art. 7: very few cases have occurred until now (Interview 7.7). After the first congress it was still possible to be enrolled in the founding parties and association, since the first Statute of the party allowed for a transition phase that would have eventually led to the dissolution of the founding members within SYRIZA. Then, SYRIZA developed its own enrolment procedure both within the party and within *Neolaia SYRIZA* (Youth of SYRIZA). According to the Statute of the Party (SYRIZA 2015), SYRIZA is a party of its members (Art. 2): as previously highlighted for SYN, pluralism is the cornerstone of the organization on the ground of the party. Different sensibilities and left-wing ideologies are tolerated within the party, since SYRIZA from the beginning tried to overcome the long-standing division among the Greek left (Interview 7.4) providing an all-encompassing anti-capitalist soul with a mass-party-like organization: in a nutshell, SYRIZA was a “party of political and not ideological unity” (Spourdalakis 2014: 359). The attempt to open up the party to civil society was epitomized by the rejection of the Leninist organization. From an organizational standpoint, SYRIZA presents a different PoG compared to Podemos and FSM; there is not an on-line platform through which the whole membership can take part in the decision-making; rather, participation is mediated through the basic unit of the party, the local cells.

Members are entitled to elect the delegate at the prefectural, regional and national levels for Party Congresses, which are the highest assembly bodies; however, unless they collect signature to call a referendum (Art. 17, Statute of SYRIZA), they are not involved in the decision-making of the party at the national level. More important, contrary to Podemos and FSM SYRIZA's referenda have a 50%+1 turnout threshold to be binding for the party (Art. 17, Statute of SYRIZA). Party members, however, can be consulted (Art. 18, Statute of SYRIZA) when important issues for the party are at stake: the Central Committee of the party is entitled to establish under what conditions a consultation can be called. Otherwise, a consultation can be called by delegates representing one quarter of SYRIZA members or by 15% of the whole membership. Beyond formality, what Spourdalakis (2016) highlights in his recount on SYRIZA evolution from 2015 onwards is that “[t]he limited educational and informational work done within the party led to further problems. The membership was left uninformed and unsupported and thus frequently fell into the hands of propagandists both within and outside the party”. Despite this relative marginalization of the membership in the decision-making, SYRIZA encouraged the participation of its members in the Greek social movements: while acknowledging that not all members favoured the direct participation of SYRIZA members within the Greek Indignados movement, still the official position of the party supported the choice of SYRIZA members to participate in political mobilizations, starting from the very first “Won’t Pay” protest (Tsakatika and Eleftheriou 2013 and Tsakatika 2016). Albeit unable to capitalize the mobilization in terms of new membership, still SYRIZA tried to develop a linkage strategy in order to reconnect the party with the most active sectors of the society. In this regard, SYRIZA mobilized its resources for the Solidarity4All project (2015), a movement born to resist against the economic and financial crisis and to provide basic services for those affected by the crisis. Moreover, SYRIZA has its own newspaper (AVGI, The Down), which it inherited from SYN, and its own trade union (from 2014) called META.

7.4.3 Party in Public Office (PPO)

The PPO in SYRIZA is formally under a strict control of the party PCO. Contrary to the government (Figure 7.2), whose role is considered “separate” from that of the party (Interview 7.6), the PPO – both at the national and in the most populated cities – should act in accordance with the guidelines of the Central Committee (Art. 26, par. 2-4); what is even more relevant, Central Committee monitors on a yearly basis the activities of the PPO (Art. 26, par. 5) and it cooperates with party's lower bodies at the municipal and prefectural levels in order to coordinate the electoral strategy (Art. 25). The relation with the Party in the Government is disciplined by Art. 27: although Central Committee may discipline the ethical and programmatic guidelines for Party in Government and PPO members (Art.

27, par. 2-4), the party maintains its independence from the Government. Still, no proviso forbids in principle that the President of the Party can be appointed as PM, as it is the case for Alexis Tsipras, who is president of the party and the Greek PM. Overall, the Statue allows the PCO to supervise PPO: beyond formality, however, the PPO became the crucial face of the party. As argued elsewhere (Tarditi and Vittori, forthcoming), the PPO (and the Party in Government) was the most relevant faces of SYRIZA since it became a unified party. The PPO before the electoral breakthrough in 2012 was marginal, but its expansion changed the power relation within SYRIZA. SYRIZA PPO was the second biggest group in the Parliament from 2012 to 2015 and from January 2015 onwards it has the relative majority and thus carried the burn of voting each step of the Third MoU since September 2015. The PPO was the main battlefield in which the minority faction of SYRIZA (Left Platform) tried to oppose the decision of the SYRIZA-led government to impose the new MoU: Left Platform had a consistent presence in the PPO, but its weight within the Central Committee was not crucial to determine any policy outcome. On the contrary, once 38 MPs voted against the new MoU signed by the government and the Troika, the SYRIZA-ANEL coalition was left with a tiny majority and the third MoU was eventually voted with the support of the opposition parties. Tsipras, then, decided to call for snap elections (September 2015) in order to strengthen its majority. The SYRIZA-ANEL coalition obtained again the absolute majority, this time without the contribution of the Left Platform, which founded a new party *Laiki Enótita* (Popular Unity, LAE) and whose disappointing electoral results (2,9%) were below the electoral law’s national threshold (3%). While Tsipras government counted on a more stable majority, other critical sectors – the so-called group of 53+ – stressed the necessity of relaunching the left platform of SYRIZA against the “tactical retreat” of the MoU. After the second congress (October 2016), despite some critical voices coming from the 53+ group, Tsipras managed to retain a higher control of the party.

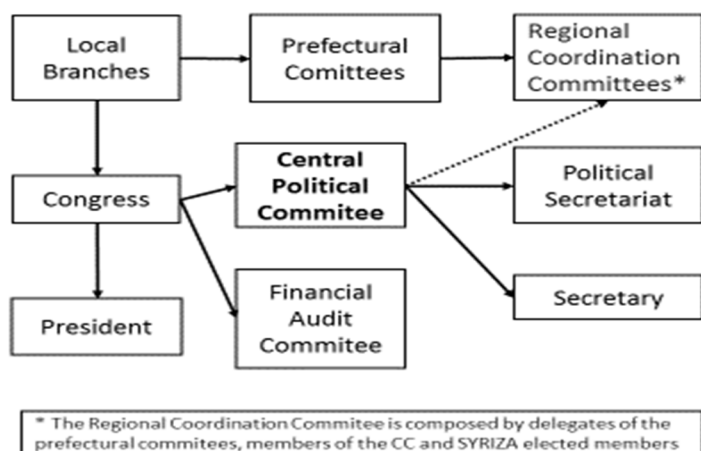


Figure 7.2 – SYRIZA Organization. Source: Own elaboration from SYRIZA Statute.

7.4.4 Party in Central Office (PCO) and Party Leadership

The Central Committee is the PCO of SYRIZA (Figure 7.2): according to the Statute (Art. 13), it is the highest political body of the party and it is responsible for elaborating the programmatic platform of the party and electing the political secretariat and the other bodies, which it considers necessary for party functioning. It is elected by the Congress, which is held every two years and it is composed by party's delegate. Each delegate represents 10 members (4 members for the Youth of SYRIZA (Interview 7.7)). Before the creation of SYRIZA as a unified political party, the constituent parts of SYRIZA were included *ex-officio* in the PCO. The PCO composition has to balance gender representation, following the guideline in Art. 2 of the Statute. In both congresses, the party has elected about 30% of women (Figure 7.4). In 2013, it was decided that the CC would become an autonomous body from the constituent parts; this was a matter of contention within SYRIZA since some internal minorities preferred to maintain their own organizational autonomy. In the first congress a transitional article within the Statute was voted in order to leave a reasonable amount of time to the constituent parts to dissolve their organs within SYRIZA. While factions' battlefield from 2013 onwards was the PPO, from 2004 to 2013 factional contrasts emerged mainly within the PCO, especially when Fotsis Kouvelis and Alekos Alavanos left the party. However, the role of PCO was marginalized from 2013 onwards. In a very critical assessment of SYRIZA evolution, Kouvelakis (2016: 51) notes that Tsipras leadership was autonomous from the party, even during the bargain with the Troika. Albeit several interviewees (Interview 7.8, 7.9 and 7.10) highlight the cooperation that takes place on a daily basis within Parliamentary committees between MPs and Ministers, the negotiations with the creditors were conducted at the Ministerial level and the party was excluded from this process.

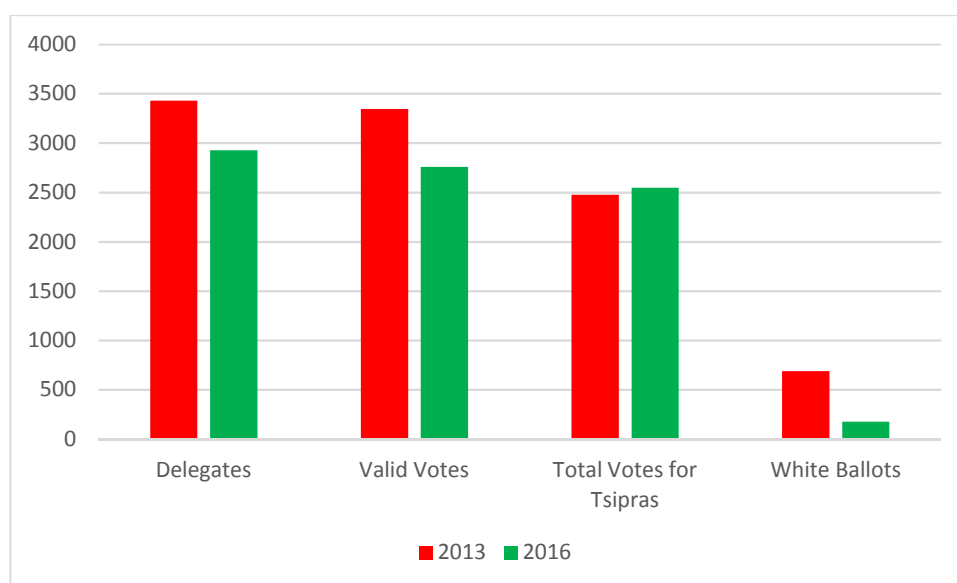


Figure 7.3 – SYRIZA's congresses in numbers. Source: Own elaboration.

The interviews (Interview 7.8, 7.10 and 7.11) are not concordant, however, on the role of PCO in the call for referendum: while there was not any official vote on the issue, nor the referendum among members was never an option (mainly because of the limited amount of time to let the members vote), it is not clear whether MPs had a real “voice” on this decision or they were forced to accept the Government decision. Although 109 of the 201 members of the Central Committee and the Youth of SYRIZA (2015) explicitly criticized this decision, the power of the leadership was not contested: the PCO approved the government position only at the end of July (17 CC members belonging to the Maoist current KOE resigned after this decision), defeating the Left Platform. Tsipras linked the CC decision on the MoU to the government survival, proposing a referendum among members in case the CC would have discarded the government proposal. In the thesis for the second congresses, SYRIZA (2016:11) acknowledges that PCO function a confirmation body for the government action, rather than a body aimed at processing and making decisions. What Sotiris (2015) notes in this respect is that some prominent members of the PPO and PCO were vocal opponents of the referendum and, thus, Tsipras decision to call for a referendum was not unanimous within the party. Tsipras prevailed both in the July referendum and, then, after signing the MoU. After the second congress, Tsipras was elected with a landslide majority (93.5%), being the only candidate for the party leadership. Compared to the first congress, what has changed is the CC composition: in 2013 the two main motions combined more than 97% of the seat in the CC (67.5% the Tsipras-led motion and 30% the Left Platform); in the last congress the Tsipras-led motion has only 36% of the seats, while the second most relevant (53+ Group) obtained 30% and the third (Platform 2010) 23%. Still, none of the last two can be considered “factions”, following the definition provided in Chapter 4, nor they opposed Tsipras leadership. The number of CC members were reduced to 151. The gender quotas were stable.

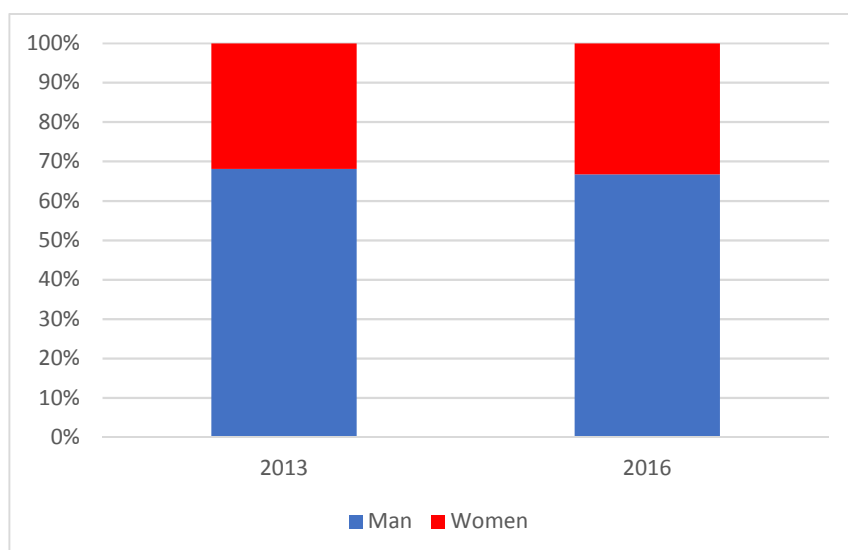


Figure 7.4 – Central Committee Gender Ratio - 2013, 2016. Source: Own elaboration.

7.4.5 Factionalism

As anticipated in the previous paragraphs, factionalism is one of the most salient traits in SYRIZA organization; a very detailed article in the SYRIZA Statute (Art. 21) disciplines the formations, the rights and the duties of factions within SYRIZA. Factions cannot function as a party-within-the-party, but they are allowed to present their positions to the membership and contribute to the strategic decisions within the party. SYRIZA tried to unify the different sensibilities and ideologies in one party (Spourdalakis 2014), thus transforming traditional separation among left souls (Kalyvas and Marantzidis 2002) within the broad Greek left into the party's main strength. Despite the positive attitude of the party toward a multi-tendency organization, both SYN and SYRIZA in their congresses criticized the constant degeneration of factionalism into a specious fight for the leadership (SYN 2008 and 2010, SYRIZA 2013 and 2016). The pluralistic nature of the coalition before 2013 is at the core of this choice; the trade-off was between allowing autonomy to the founding members while diminishing the role of factions and allowing factions with the obligation for founding parties to merge into the new organization. SYRIZA opted for the latter option, regardless of the criticism of the minority factions (Chatzinikolaou, 2013, quoted in Nikolakakis 2016). Despite the first phase after the "left turn" (2004-2009) was characterized by a cooperative factionalism, from 2009 onwards this factionalism became more competitive. As already mentioned, SYRIZA suffered its first relevant split in 2009 when Alavanos and several cadres left the party. The following year, Kouvelis and other "moderate" cadres abandoned the party. After the founding congress, one main faction – the Left Platform – contended the leadership of the party obtaining 30% of the delegate votes; in the previous congress (2012) it had 25.6% (Nikolakakis 2016). The Left Platform was a vocal opponent of the MoU within SYRIZA, which it was defined as a "blackmail" (The Left Platform of SYRIZA, 2015): when the government signed it after the Referendum, the faction split from the party founding LAE. Between July and September 2015, LAE counted on 25 MPs (plus some other "independents") and 53 members of the Central Committee (Kouvelakis 2015 and Panayiotakis 2015). In the second congress, the Group 53+ (along with the Platform 2010) emerged as the most critical voice within the party, but it did not challenge directly the Tsipras leadership; rather it advocated a left turn of the government, without threatening the stability of the government.

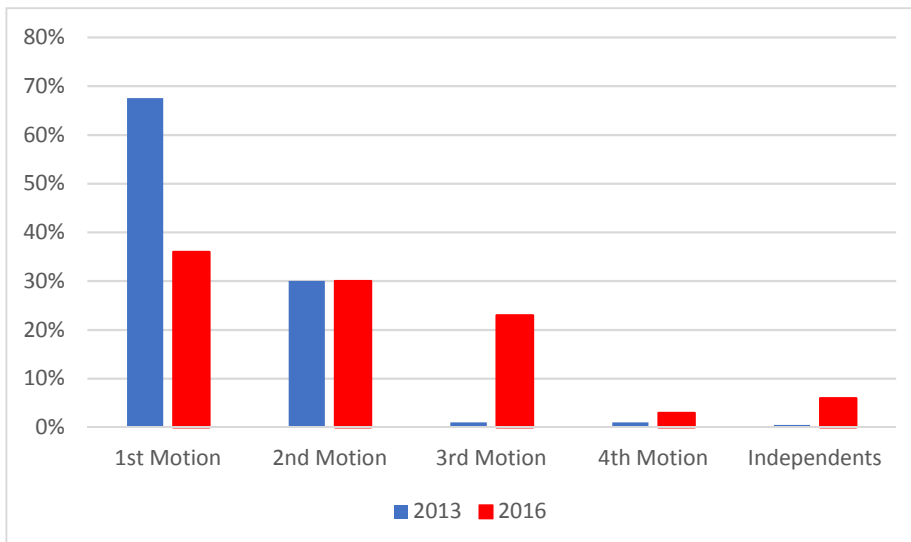


Figure 7.5 – Seat obtained by Congresses' Motions (%). Source: Own elaboration.

7.4.6 Candidate/Leadership Selection

During SYN first congress, the Central Committee elected the President of the party. Starting from the 1993 extraordinary congress, and despite the criticism of the leftist faction, the delegates elected directly the president: Tsipras was elected for the first time in 5th Congress (February 2008) with this procedure, obtaining 70,6% of the votes (Eleftheriou 2009). As explained in the previous paragraph, Tsipras was elected as the first president of SYRIZA in 2013 and again in 2016. Contrary to Podemos and FSM, in which the whole membership is entitled to vote for the leadership selection, the selectorate in SYRIZA's case is restricted to the congress' delegates. SYRIZA opted to avoid primary elections, again in contrast with Podemos and FSM: the candidate-selection procedure tries to balance bottom-up and top-down tendencies, with the latter eventually prevailing. According to the Statute local cells and prefectural coordinating bodies are entitled to select the candidates corresponding to their institutional level; Prefectural committees can propose MPs candidate, but the Central Committee can amend their list (the majority required for the amendment to be valid is 70%). The Statute of the Party forbids the election of the same person in more than one institutional level (Art. 23). The interviewees confirm that, from one side, in most of the cases their candidacies were agreed with the local cells and the prefectural committees (Interview 7.11, 7.12 and 7.13); however, others emphasize the role of the Central Committee in deciding the position in the list (following Art. 23 of the Statute), especially in the two 2015 elections (Interview 7.8, 7.9 and 7.10).

7.4.7 Party Finance

SYN and SYRIZA have always relied on public funding for their financial survival. Contrary to the position expressed by FSM, SYRIZA supports public funding to political parties: according to a

prominent member of SYRIZA government, public funding serves the purpose to guarantee the independence of political parties (Left.gr 2014). In line with the general trends of other main parties (PASOK, ND and, partly, KKE), SYN revenues from 1997 to 2010 were predominantly public: about 77% of the total revenues of the party came from state financing, while contributions from membership fee is almost non-existent (Vernadakis 2014). What is more important is that, contrary to Podemos and FSM, SYN has relied on banking loans to increase their revenues: however, both in absolute and relative terms, these loans were far lower than PASOK and ND (Vernardakis 2014). In a recent document issued by the Greek government, it is stated that SYRIZA is consistent in the loan repayment. As Vernardakis (2014: 17) puts it for pre-crisis scenario, “the parties of the Left are located at the margin of the political scene and, having minimal chances to affect political decisions, are incapable of maintaining or activating powerful human resources and are thereby forced to resort to state funding”. Still, in the post-crisis scenario, the paradigm was reversed: party funding was drastically reduced and now SYRIZA is the party which receives the highest funding. Still, what the Figure 7.2 shows is that in absolute terms, SYRIZA public finance has not substantially changed; the party has lost about 2 million € since 2013, reaching only in 2016 the pre-crisis level of funding. The economic crisis has impacted enormously on party finance – Georgiopoulos and Grey (2012) reported that ND and PASOK combined 232 million loans from Greek banks in the midst of the recession with limited capabilities to repay all the loans – and the total share of the state funding was reduced substantially in the last years. SYRIZA has also introduced reforms related to the private donations to political parties, limiting the total amount which can be donated by each person. State funding, bank loans and members donations are not the only revenues for the party. Party representative contribute to party revenues in two ways: a) allowing their assistants to work for them and the party structure and b) with part of their salary. According to two interviewees (Interview 7.8 and 7.9), the MPs have their own assistants (and up to two civil servants, paid by the State, who can be moved from their positions to work for the MPs), but it may happen that these assistants work also for the party. Part of their monthly salaries is given to the party for its financial needs and another part is devoted to finance solidarity project (Interview 7.7 and 7.14).

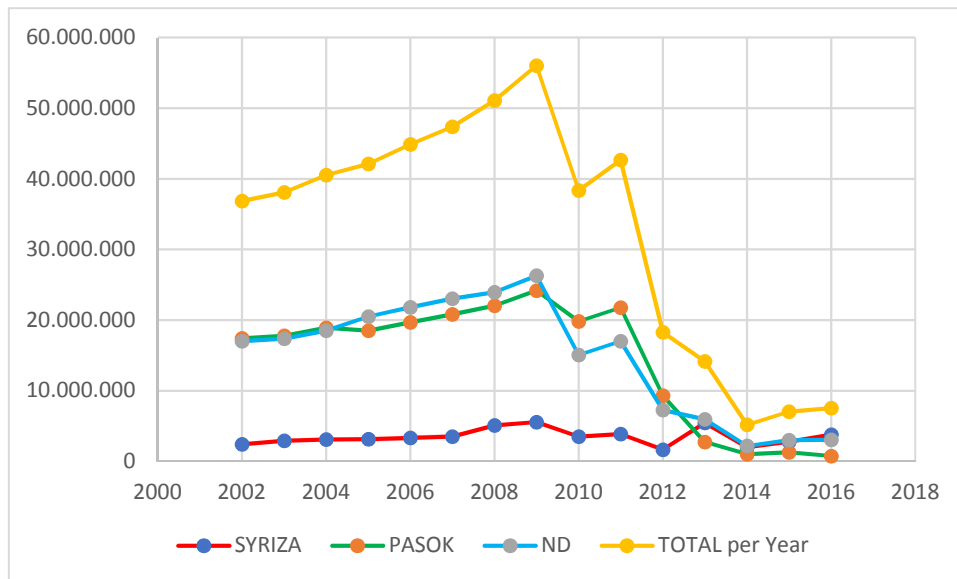


Figure 7.6 – State Funding to Political Parties in Greece 2002-2016 (Data in €). Own elaboration from: Government report on political parties’ funding (2017).

7.5 The ideology of SYRIZA

7.5.1 Economic dimension: left-right

There can be no doubts about how to classify SYRIZA in the Greek political context. At least until 2012, SYRIZA can be considered a radical left party with a strong preference for left-wing economic policies. The analysis of the sources (the congresses’ resolutions of SYN and SYRIZA, the manifestos as well as the leaders’ speeches) are self-evident of the political collocation of SYRIZA. What is more interesting is the level of “radicalness” expressed by the party in this decade and its evolution. In its first post-crisis congress (2009a), SYN elaborates a very ambitious all-around program, which has framed the stances that SYN and SYRIZA has taken during the electoral campaign. The program (SYN 2009a) highlight a “non-utopian” goal for the party, i.e. the construction of socialism with democracy and freedom. This commitment is nothing new in SYN: older congresses (IV and V) clearly indicate the respect of basic democratic freedoms as well as a different economic model as the guiding principle for SYN (SYN 2004 and 2006). What this statement means for SYN is the reversal of the neoliberal system and the re-unification of the working class. The document is much more ambiguous on the criticism of capitalism: SYN aims at overturning capitalism into a green and not-profit driven society, but at the same time, it does not explicitly reject the private ownership of the means of production. SYN appears more anti-neoliberal than anti-capitalist as such. In line with other radical-left parties, SYN explicitly rejects the retreat of the government intervention in the economy: in the 2009 manifesto SYN proposes to place under public control (or protect from the privatization) several sectors of the economy (banking, communication, energy, water, basic

infrastructures, transports). In particular, according to SYN and SYRIZA the financial and the banking sector should serve the needs of the people, rather than speculative activities (SYN 2004, 2006, 2009a, SYRIZA 2012). This position was changed for the election in January 2015: rather than placing the banking system under the public control, SYRIZA (2014 and 2015a) advocates for a greater control over the overall system, especially with regards to their recapitalization. The September 2015 program (SYRIZA 2015b), on the other hand, recounts the actions taken by SYRIZA to save the banking system from bankruptcy. The focus of SYRIZA changes after 2013: the main preoccupation for the party is the fight against austerity, which became the backbone of the party's program. Austerity is associated to the failure of neoliberalism and the Troika prescription applied to the Greek economy (SYRIZA 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2016): what the party stresses in its manifestos is the transformation of the country into a "social laboratory" for the neo-liberal experiment. In the most detailed program – called Thessaloniki Program (2014) – the party aim was to fight "and secure a socially viable solution to Greece's debt problem so that our country is able to pay off the remaining debt from the creation of new wealth and not from primary surpluses, which deprive society of income". Alongside these typical radical left commitments, SYN dedicates one chapter to the small and the medium enterprises; as other manifestos show (SYN 2012, SYRIZA 2013, 2015), SYN/SYRIZA is committed in promoting their development and in protecting them against international competition: more surprisingly, SYN/SYRIZA advocates a reduction of the taxes and overwhelming bureaucracy (SYN 2009a, SYRIZA 2013 and 2016). The programs of SYN/SYRIZA places equal importance to the strengthening of the Greek welfare system: against what the party calls the neo-liberal path of the two traditional parties (PASOK and ND), SYN (2004, 2006, 2009a and 2010) and SYRIZA (2013, 2015a, 2016) propose the expansion of the social security system. As in the case of Podemos and FSM, SYN/SYRIZA advocates for a basic-income scheme; contrary to the other two parties, this measure is not the most relevant welfare-related policy for the party. Full-employment and the collective bargain are the goals on which SYN and SYRIZA centre their program, at least until 2012. The crisis changes the scenario: the manifestos (SYRIZA 2014, 2015a and 2015b) and the resolution of the two congresses (SYRIZA 2013 and 2016) pinpoint the fight against the "humanitarian crisis" as the main concern for the party. It is indicative that, beyond the criticism of the austerity-driven reforms imposed by the Troika to the country, the party advocates a "new deal" both at the national and European level, which should be aimed at boosting public and European investments and to protect the social rights of the popular strata. During its march toward the government, SYRIZA program turns to more Keynesianism-driven proposals: this attempt is probably linked to the necessity to appear as a credible governing party. The abovementioned Thessaloniki program, which details both the expenditures and the revenues of the economic and

financial proposals of the party has to be read under this light.

7.5.2 Non-economic dimensions: immigration, multiculturalism, European Union and anti-elitism

SYN/SYRIZA has a clear-cut libertarian left program: since 2004, SYN places the fight against the discrimination of the immigrant people among its non-economic priorities. SYN has denounced the “Europe fortress” and the treatment of immigrant people by police: in the 2009 program SYN (Goal n. 9) contraposes the European neoliberal policies and the freedom of movement for the capitals and the restrictions imposed to the immigrants. The FRONTEX agency and the patrolling in the Mediterranean Sea are two sides of the same coin, i.e. the inhuman treatment of undocumented immigrants (SYN 2009a). SYN contraposes the nationalism and the xenophobic attitudes of radical-right parties (LAOS and Golden Dawn in particular) and its human-right respectful proposals, such as the inclusion of working immigrants into the Greek social security system, their right to the health care, education, housing and work and, finally, a less strict access to the citizenship. In its first congress, SYRIZA (2013, par. 13.23) highlights that “it is necessary to humanize the institutional framework for legalization, for asylum granting, and for giving travel documents to immigrants and refugees. [...] It is essential that there is a new legalization process for immigrants with “no papers” who have been working in Greece for years [...] and Greek citizenship should be immediately given to children who are born in Greece”.

Albeit SYN/SYRIZA places less emphasis on multicultural issues compared to Podemos, SYN/SYRIZA has a similar left-libertarian position; in its statute the party tries to balance the gender disparity in the CC. Although the theses of 2016 Congress recognize that the party has a long-way ahead to reach the parity in the gender representation (SYRIZA 2016: 20), in the sources under analysis, the party emphasizes not only its feminist stance (SYN 2009a, SYRIZA 2015a, SYRIZA 2016), but also its support for equal rights for all minorities and non-heterosexual couple. SYRIZA revendicates its action in government for the extension of partnerships to same-sex couples (SYRIZA 2015b). One crucial aspect for SYRIZA, much more emphasized than in the case of Podemos and FSM, is the separation between State and Church: the Orthodox church yields considerable power in the Greek state and SYN (2004, 2006, 2009a) and SYRIZA (2013, 2016) advocates the redistribution of the non-arable land belonging to the Church, the taxation of its properties and a clear-cut separation between the Church and the State.

Despite its Eurocommunist background, SYN has been frequently portrayed as a soft-Euro-sceptic party (Verney 2011: 69) for its critical position toward the approval of European treaties (except for the Maastricht Treaty, which the party has supported) and the neo-liberal ideology behind the

European policy-making. In the 4th and 5th Congresses SYN (2004 and 2006) made a very critical assessment of the European Union neoliberal ideology and, in particular, of the single-currency economic and financial framework. During the crisis, EU is seen in some of its traits as “anti-democratic” for the imposition of austerity measures on the Greek people (SYN 2009b), the destruction of the welfare and social-rights on which conservative and social-democratic parties fundamentally agreed (SYN 2009a). Despite the overall negative assessment, evaluating the SYRIZA position as Eurosceptic is not entirely appropriate. SYRIZA was always committed to the EU project, probably even more than its electorate (Katsourides 2016: 64). As the party highlights in its second congress, there should be a distinction between the criticism to the policies and the criticism of the European project as a whole:

[t]he Left is not seeking the disintegration of the Union – quite the opposite actually. It is, though, an obligation of the Left, of all the progressive forces in Europe, to prepare – both at a national and a European level - for any event that might stem from the policies of the current EU leadership and of the social forces it represents (SYRIZA 2016: 88).

This position is similar to the one adopted by SYN in 2009: the battleground for the reversal of the correlation of forces and the affirmation of social rights is not merely the Nation-State, but Europe as a whole. SYRIZA, despite severely criticizing the Eurogroup and Germany’s behaviour, in imposing the memoranda, has never proclaimed or planned the Greek exit from the Eurozone or European Union: rather, the party has proposed a European New-Deal in which the European Investment Bank (EIB) promotes large-scale public investments to boost the demand (SYRIZA 2014, 2015a). In this sense, then, the referendum on the Memorandum should be interpreted as an attempt promoted by Tsipras to conquer a margin of manoeuvre in the bargaining with the creditors, rather than the certification of its ideological Euroscepticism. As Nikolakakis (2016:17) puts it “[f]or the majority of SYRIZA that could be argued to represent the mainstream version of Eurocommunism, the EU seen as the most important field of class struggle cannot be negated, as a return to national isolation is seen as a step towards the wrong direction.”

The analysis of SYN’s congress resolutions (2004, 2006, 2009a, 2010) shows that the party focuses much more on class consciousness and the construction of democratic and socialist society than on a pure anti-elitist society. Nonetheless, being outside the cartel ND-PASOK, SYN identifies the bipartitism as the main cause of the blockade of the Greek political system. While the issue of corruption is marginal in the overall SYN discourse, what the party

emphasizes is the convergence toward neoliberalism and the stance of SYN/SYRIZA as the only left opposition to the cartel and to the vested interests that support them: in the 2009 manifesto (SYN 2009b), SYN claims that a vote for SYRIZA is a vote against the establishment. The main anti-elitist issue is the proposal to create self-governing bodies at the local level, as well as referenda to allow citizens to participate directly in the decision making (SYN 2009a). In the economic crisis scenario, however, SYRIZA adopts a different stance: although the party refers to the bipartitism as the main responsible for Greece crisis, the politicization of the memoranda allowed SYRIZA to propose a clear-cut distinction between pro-Memorandum forces (ND, PASOK, LAOS and, partially, DIMAR) and the anti-memorandum forces (SYRIZA 2012, 2013, 2015a). Anti-memorandum forces reject obeying to economic powers, to the Troika diktat and to the representative of international interests in Greece (ND-PASOK) (SYRIZA 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015a). Three issues indicate the transformation of SYRIZA's discourse into a more anti-elitist party than ever before.

A) Firstly, SYRIZA (2013) stresses the necessity to give a new significance to the word "patriotism", which is linked to democratic renewal of the country against the troika and, particularly, German ministers. It is not by accident that SYRIZA restored the rhetoric of the resistance of the Greek people against Nazism and those who collaborate with Nazism in Greece (the so-called *Germanotsoliades*). According to Tsipras (2015a), Greece was an austerity laboratory in which the austerity experiment failed: SYRIZA victory, according to Tsipras (2015b) cancelled five years of humiliation and the vicious cycle of austerity. According to Cas Mudde (2017: 22-23), this is one of the main failed promises of SYRIZA populism.

B) SYRIZA (2013, 2016) emphasizes the necessity to build a multi-class alliance against the austerity: SYRIZA appeals explicitly not just to the "proletariat", but above all to "the people", i.e. all workers, small and medium-size entrepreneurs, precarious workers, civil servants, unemployed and all the popular strata that suffered from the crisis. Markou (2017) highlights how in Tsipras discourses the reference to "the people" grew exponentially from 2009 onwards (see also Stravakakis and Katsambekis 2014). This particularly true not only when Tsipras (2015c) appeal to the Greek people and their democratic spirit during the referendum, but also in more institutional arena. In the discourse held in the second congress of the party, Tsipras (2016) emphasizes the contraposition the forces of social cohesion and the forces of neoliberalism. More emphatically, in the first congress, Tsipras (2013) appeals to the people of the left, to the people that place national sovereignty before self-interest and even to those conservatives dissatisfied who want to get rid of the memoranda. His distinction is between the old-party system and "we", i.e. those who want to repeal the memoranda. This concept is

restated even after the sign of the third memorandum: Tsipras (2018) argues that the first left government serves the interest of the people, not the rich elite of the country. SYRIZA (2009a, 2015a) in order to give voice to the people proposes the introduction of direct-democracy tools, such as the popular legislative initiative or the referenda at the local level.

C) SYRIZA (2014, 2015a) increasingly focuses on the necessity of a radical change in the political system: not only bipartitism (Markou 2017, Katsambekis 2015), but also other issues acquire relevance, namely the corruption of the economic interests and the traditional political parties (Tsipras 2015a). SYRIZA claims to reject the so-called “*diaploki*” (interwoven interests), between media, economy and the traditional political system, which are accused to marginalize intentionally SYRIZA, while promoting other parties. All these issues are part of the changing discourse of SYRIZA toward a more left-wing populist approach (Stravakakis and Katsambekis 2014, Katsambekis 2015, Markou 2017).

7.6 A partial conclusion

The first “government of the left” is more than anything else the story of the melting down of the Greek political system and the bipartitism that has shaped the country in the last decades. The economic and financial crises hit Greece in an unprecedented way and its consequences on the political system were evident. The historical defeat of the PASOK coincided with the growth of the “new” radical left actor that refuted the first two MoU. However, SYRIZA was an agent and not just a passive party that profited from the socialist catastrophe. SYRIZA was not the only anti-memorandum party, but it was the only party which was perceived as anti-establishment among other anti-establishment parties; it participated to and supported the *Indignados* mobilization, while extending its linkage with a solidarity movement to provide a first-help to the people hit by crisis. More important, its rejection to participate into grand coalition government with “pro-Memorandum” parties made its anti-austerity commitment credible among the electorate: its voting-seeking and polarizing pattern of competition were coupled by a newly introduced anti-elitist thin-ideology. Its anti-elitism, the new appeal to the “people”, and its promise to fight against corruption and clientelism contribute to this perception of otherness with the respect to the other parties. While some authors described the parties as a Eurosceptic party in a pro-European society, its long-standing “critical” support to the European integration may have increased its “pro-European” credibility vis-à-vis other anti-memorandum parties, such as their brother-enemies, the KKE. Moreover, SYRIZA after its ground-breaking electoral results in 2012 started a process of unification of all its souls in order to give a coherent voice to all leftist movement, parties and associations that contributed to its foundation. Despite the centralization process, SYRIZA élite was very careful in managing its internal

pluralism in order not to appear sectarian: in this light one should evaluate the emphasis on internal pluralism during the critical unification phase. Factionalism was tolerated and somehow encouraged up to the point it threatened the internal stability of the organization: only when SYRIZA faced the lose-lose situation after the 2015 Referendum factionalism became degenerative and threatened the stability of the government. Moreover, through the Referendum SYRIZA was able to convert the failing bargain with the Troika into an internal new societal cleavage, pro-Memorandum and anti-Memorandum, hegemonizing the latter and forcing traditional parties to stand for the former. Again, SYRIZA was able to capitalize the victory in the Referendum and the “tactical retreat” of the MoU to win the election and to marginalize LAE. While the 2015 referendum represented an absolute novelty in the Greek panorama, especially after the similar (failed) attempt of PASOK former PM, G. Papandreou, it must be acknowledged that SYN and SYRIZA have invoked direct-democracy as a decision-making tool before 2015. This is not to say that Tsipras wanted to be coherent with its program, since tactical and strategical reasons played a much more relevant role in his move. However, Tsipras has not contradicted the party credo in calling for a referendum. Rather, it was the sign of the MoU that created major tensions among the party. Tsipras will be remembered as the traitor of the left – as his leftist critics say? Or, paraphrasing famous hard-left theorist Toni Negri, as the man who resisted the Troika? Or, finally, as an incapable PM, as the centre-right and right parties claim? This is a matter of personal opinion. What the analysis has shown is that SYRIZA’s electoral growth is linked to the economic and political crisis of the country. However, without SYRIZA’s role this success would have been different. Although structural explanation may seem fascinating in their simplicity, agency played a significant role too. If SYRIZA factionalism had took over soon after 2009, if the party refuted to support *Indignados* movement and appealed to a clear-cut Grexit in contrast with its previous stance, there would have hardly been the “first government of the Left” in Greece in 2015.

Chapter 8 - Five Stars Movement

8.1 Introduction

The Five Stars Movement (FSM) is one of the most successful genuinely new parties in Europe since the WWII. In its first participation to a general election (2013), it was the most voted party in Italy, receiving almost 9 million votes, more than Emmanuel Macron in the French Presidential election in 2017. Five years after, FSM reached 10 million votes: in the aftermath of the election, its PM candidate, Luigi Di Maio, emphatically stated that FSM victory coincided with the end of the beginning of “Republic of the Citizens”. Regardless of the rhetoric of this statement, it is undeniable that FSM was able to jeopardize the Italian political system, after the failed attempt made by the Partito Democratico (Democratic Party, PD) and Popolo della Libertà (People of Freedom, PdL) to structure a bipolar competition. Many reasons lay behind the FSM success are difficult to be disentangled: its rise (almost) coincided with the worst peak of the Great Recession and the formation of a Grand Coalition between centre-left and centre-right parties, which supported an unpopular technocratic government led by Prof. Mario Monti (2011-2013). FSM took also advantage of a triple party crisis: within the Democratic Party, in which the leadership of the former secretary Pierluigi Bersani was contested by a strong internal new faction, the so-called “scrapers” (*rottamatori*), led by the former mayor of Florence Matteo Renzi; within Forza Italia, whose leader, Silvio Berlusconi, after a sexual scandal, was forced to resign in November 2011 in the midst of the financial crisis; within the main anti-establishment parties – Italia dei Valori (Italy of Values, IDV) and Lega Nord (Northern League, LN) – whose leaders were involved in public funding misuse. Particularly in the LN’s case, the charismatic leadership of Umberto Bossi was weakened when in 2012 the party treasurer was arrested for money laundering and illegal investments and misuse of public funding. However, these triple crises were a long time coming when FSM was founded in 2009.

8.2 The political Opportunity Structure

A) The electoral law

Since 1992, Italy had four different electoral laws; in 1994 the long-standing proportional law was changed into a mixed electoral law, which introduced the plurality vote for the election of 75% MPs (the remaining 25% was elected on a proportional basis). This law lasted for three consecutive elections (1994, 1996, 2001): the disproportionality grew substantially compared to the previous electoral laws (2.51 in 1992, 10.22 in 2001), while the effective number of political parties in terms of both votes and seats remained stable. The ratio behind this change was to superimpose a bipolar competition, in which traditional parties (in alliance with other minor parties) would have been able

to gain a safe majority in the Parliament. While the electoral law increased the concentration of the votes among the two poles, it has not decreased the fragmentation of the political system (D’Alimonte 2007). Before the 2006 elections, the right-wing majority in the Parliament passed a new electoral law which, according to its critics, was designed to impede the expected victory of the left-wing pole. The Calderoli law, re-named *Porcellum*³³ by Giovanni Sartori, is a reinforced proportional law, with closed lists and a strong majoritarian outcome. For the Chamber of Deputies, the national threshold is 4% for a party and 10% for a coalition (plus a second-level threshold of 2% for the parties which run in coalition³⁴), while in the Senate is 8% for the party and 20% for a coalition. It has nationwide majority bonus for the most voted party in the Chamber of the Deputies, while a regionally-based bonus for the Senate. The most voted party obtains 55% of the seats available in the Chamber, while the most voted party in each region has 55% of the regionally-allocated seats. This two-tiers bonus potentially allows for two different majority in the two branches of the Parliament: in 2014, the Constitutional law outlawed several parts of the law for the violation of principle of “free” and “equal” vote (art. 48 of the Italian Constitution). As D’Alimonte (2007: 49) highlights, this electoral law reinforces the majoritarian component compared to the previous law. The Calderoli law reduced the disproportionality (forcing small parties to coalesce in order to overcome the two thresholds), but it was designed for a bipolar competition in which the centre-left and centre-right parties should have competed as unitary poles.

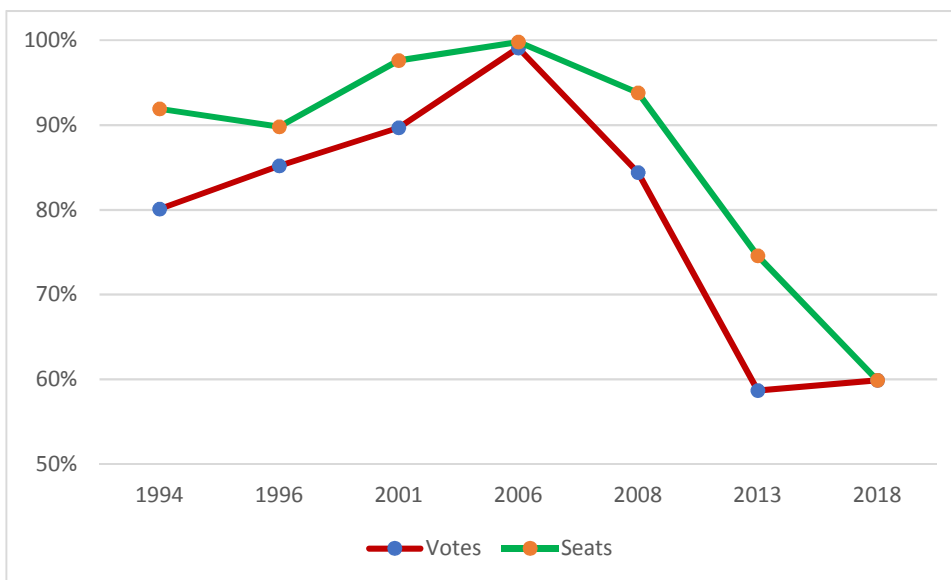


Figure 8.1 - Share of Votes of Left and Right poles combined (1994-2018). Source: Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs. The % refers to the results of the Chamber of Deputies.

³³ *Porcellum* is the Latinization of the word Pig (*Porcus* in Latin). Calderoli, a prominent Northern League MP, admitted that the law was a “dirty trick” (*porcata*), approved to avoid the formation of a clear-cut majority in the Parliament.

³⁴ Despite this 2% threshold, the best loser in the coalition (with less than 2% of the votes) is included in the distribution of the seats.

Once a non-aligned third pole (FSM) enter the competition, the disproportionality grew dramatically going from 5.73 in 2008 to 17.34 in 2013. Contrary to the Spanish and the Greek case, the Calderoli law has only one nationwide district for the Chambers of the Deputies and 26 for the Senate. Albeit being formally a reinforced proportional law, it should be included among the majoritarian electoral law, along with the Spanish case, since it discourages third-parties to emerge in the competition, while favouring pre-electoral coalitions. As occurred in 2008 for the radical-left pole, which run alone and failed to reach the electoral threshold, the strategic vote played a significant role in shaping voters' attitude. As the Figure 8.1 and 8.2 show, the two poles attracted a growing consensus from 1994 onwards; two months before the 2013 elections, the polls estimated FSM votes around 10-14%, while the centre-left and the centre-right pole, plus the centrist coalition led by Mario Monti around 84% (Scenaripolitici 2013), as the two poles combined in the 2008 elections. The 2013 elections, thus, came as an electoral earthquake: this critical election can be compared only to what happened in 1994 with Forza Italia in terms of volatility and restructuration of a political system (see Chapter 5).

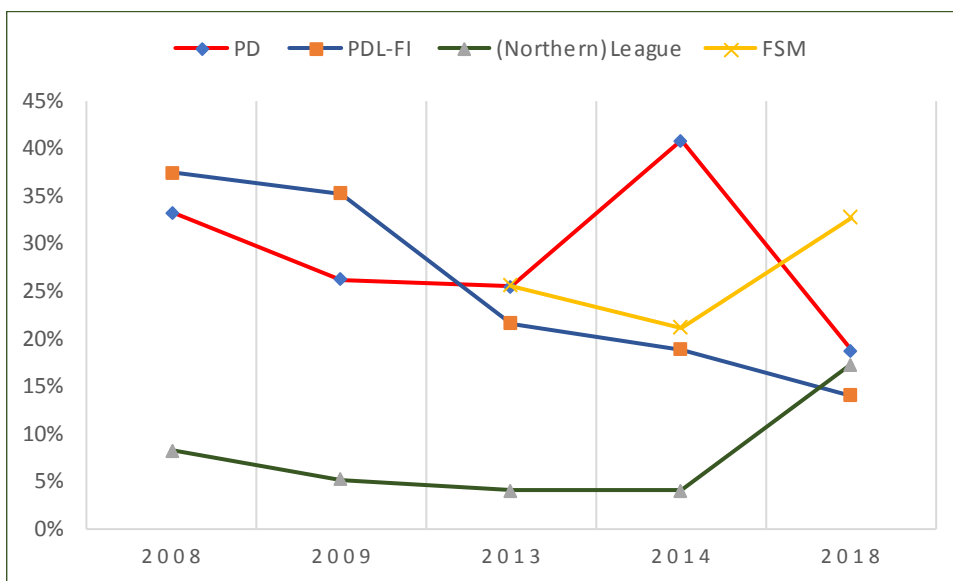


Figure 8.2 – Election Trend for the four main parties in Italy. Source: Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs. The % refers to the results of the Chamber of Deputies.

B) Social Movement

In Italy the anti-austerity mobilizations began before Spain and Greece, but their scope as well as their influence was limited (Andretta 2017, Pianta and Gerbaudo 2014). From 2008 to 2010 the most relevant social movement was the *Onda Anomala* (Anomalous Wave) (Caruso et al. 2010), which was led by high-school and university students and whose main motto was “we won’t pay your crisis”. Along with the *Onda Anomala*, the other influential social movement was the *Popolo Viola* (Purple People): while the former has both an anti-austerity and anti-neoliberal agenda, the latter focused on

the defence of the Constitution against Berlusconi government. In December 2009 the Purple People organized through social-media a nationwide rally, in which politicians were not allowed to speak from the stage. The Purple Movement demanded Berlusconi resignation. More than 250.000 people took the street (Coretti 2014). While FSM founder, Beppe Grillo, had a similar platform in the very beginning of his activity as a professional blogger, FSM and the Purple People had a very tense relationship: Grillo (2011a) criticized the movement for its alleged closeness to political parties. FSM and the Purple People held two different protests in the same day and in the same city (Rome) against Berlusconi government in September 2011. The most successful mobilization supported by FSM and other social movements, as well as anti-establishment parties such as IdV and other radical-left parties was the promotion of the Referenda (12-13 June 2011) on the repeal of the privatisation of water services, against the nuclear energy and the so-called *Legittimo Impedimento* (Official Impediment), a law that would have permitted to the PM (Berlusconi) to not to appear in the court while under investigation. The 2011 mobilizations were focused on diverse issues: labour, environment, the economic crisis, gender and the defence of democracy and the Constitution (Della Porta, Mosca and Parks 2015). The last short-lived mobilization, with the exclusion of the general strikes called by trade unions (Andretta 2017), occurred on 15th October 2011, when several social and political groups organized an anti-austerity march. The clash with the police and the riots in the street did not allowed an *indignados*-style mobilization (della Porta and Zamponi 2013). As Zamponi (2012: 420) puts it “the different interpretations of the riots by different political groups active in the mobilisation [as well as] the riots in Piazza San Giovanni made it impossible for people to camp there”. The protests in Italy were focused on two main targets: austerity and Berlusconi government. The actors that promoted the October 2011 mobilizations were unions and traditional organizations (trade unions, squatted social centres, local committees, student organizations) (Andretta 2017). Yet, they were unable to prolong their mobilizations and to appeal to a wide public, as it was the case of the support received by the Spanish and Greek Indignados. After the first mobilizations, the media coverage of the Italian Indigandos quickly decreased, while the division among the participants contextually grew (Zamponi 2012: 421). Once Berlusconi resigned in November 2011 and the new technocratic government was installed, one of the two *raison d’etre* of the protest disappeared, thus limiting the opportunity structure for new mobilizations. Moreover, the new government was supported by a grand-coalition, which included the Democratic Party: as Andretta puts it (2017: 233) “the most intense anti-austerity mobilization [...] was produced under the last Berlusconi government, when the main centre-left party (the PD), with its traditional links with the biggest trade union (CGIL), supported the protest”. Once, PD was part of the government, it could no longer provide support for mobilizations. FSM was much more involved in the anti-Berlusconi campaign rather than in the anti-

austerity protests. While supporting the Indignados movements around the globe (Grillo and Casaleggio 2011), the FSM leadership did not directly promote the protests, with the notable exception of the Referendum mobilization, in which the FSM Meet-Ups circles were actively involved. The FSM Meet-Ups were supportive of locally-based green and anti-organized crime movements (Interviews 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.5, 8.15 Corbetta and Gualmini 2013). As Mosca (2015: 159) found out in the analysis of the first FSM manifestos, “although there is an evident thematic closeness to movements’ campaigns and claims in the M5S’s manifestos for local and general elections, references to specific issues are scarce. Such references are instead more frequent in manifestos prepared for local elections.” Moreover, one-third of the first FSM candidates declared either to have participated in social movement campaigns and demonstrations or to have an overlapping membership (Mosca 2015), thus making the relationship between social movements and FSM even closer, at least in the institutionalization phase of the party. More important, before the acute phase of the Great Recession, FSM was itself a *sui generis* social movement, which mobilized thousands of people in two nationwide rallies, labelled Vaffanculo-Day or V-Day, an acronym that echoes both D-Day and the movie V for Vendetta. In the midst of a legitimacy crisis of the political class – soon after the publication of a best seller (1.2 million copies, 22 editions) titled *The Caste. Why Italian politicians are still untouchable* (2007) – Grillo mounted the resentment against the political class. The first V-Day was held in Bologna in 2007, the second in Turin in 2008. Both rallies were centred on the criticism of the political establishment and the corruption of the political class (labelled The Caste). They had also an agenda setting purpose: the first was aimed at collecting signature to propose popular initiatives, (forbidding the candidacy of people with previous criminal convictions, limiting the terms of parliamentarians to two mandates, and reintroducing the preference system in electoral law), while the second was focused on collecting signatures for the abolition the public funding to newspapers, of the telecommunications law passed during the second Berlusconi government (2001–2006), and the journalists’ official association (Vittori 2017b). The last V-Day was celebrated in 2013 after the FSM’s electoral breakthrough.

C) Bipartitism and convergence

Since the aftermath of the Mani Pulite (*Clean Hands*) scandal, centre-right and centre-left parties traditional parties have alternated in power, with a very brief interlude in 1995-1996 (Dini Government), when a technocratic government was elected by the Parliament. Forza Italia and his leader, Silvio Berlusconi, were in power for three non-consecutive times (1994-1996, 2001-2006 and 2008-2011), while the centre-left multiparty alliance had the parliamentary majority from 1996 to 2001 and from 2006 to 2008. This alternation in power was accompanied by a polarization of the

political system: the controversial figure of Silvio Berlusconi, the corruption scandals in which he and his entourage were involved, as well as his media power, the attempt to presidentialize the Italian constitution and, among others, the failed attempt to liberalize the labour market created two opposite fronts, i.e. the supporters of Berlusconi and his opponents (the so-called anti-Berlusconiani) (Ignazi 2014a). As the literature has shown (De Sio 2011, Bellucci and Petrarca 2007), polarization in the Italian political system during Berlusconi era (1994-2013) was significantly high, but it decreased both in 2008 and 2013. Following Ignazi (2017: 272), “up to 2013, the ideological distance [between the two poles] remained high and the party system faced a process of re-radicalisation in our view consciously introduced since 1994”. Still, the distance between the poles is not the distance between the two main parties, which started to cooperate from 2011 onwards. After Berlusconi resignation in November 2011, two grand-coalitions composed by PD, FI and some of their allies supported in first place a technocratic government led by Prof. Mario Monti (2011-2013) and, after the election (February 2013) a multiparty government led by Enrico Letta (PD) (2013-2014). When Letta resigned and the new PD Secretary, Matteo Renzi, became the new PM, the grand-coalition was partly broken due to the withdrawal of part of Forza Italia from the majority. Yet, Forza Italia’s split called Nuovo Centro Destra (New Centre-Right, NCD) continued to support Renzi government. The second part of the operationalization, the policy-making convergence, will be analysed following two different aspects. As argued elsewhere (Vittori 2018a) the two traditional parties had divergent economic positions: albeit embracing market liberalism, while alienating its social-democratic background (Pasquino 2009), PD under Bersani (2009-2013) and Epifani (2013) leaderships had strong ties with the main left trade union (CGIL) and its positions on labour market and economic modernization. Moreover, the delegates of the PD founders – Democrazia e Libertà (Democracy and Freedom, DL) and DS had similar positions vis-à-vis state interventionism and welfare state (Bordandini et al. 2008). FI before (1994-2009) and PDL after (2009-2013) on the contrary had a much more neoliberal and market-oriented platform. Despite these differences, both under Velotrni (2008-2009) and Renzi (2013-2018) leaderships, PD narrowed down the differences with the centre-right counterpart, moving away from a state-centred conception of politics. Especially under Renzi leadership (Bordignon 2014), PD passed highly controversial – at least for the left minority within the party – neoliberal oriented labour-market reform (Jobs Act). The agreement on Constitutional changes that Renzi signed with Berlusconi – the so-called Nazareno Pact³⁵ – made even more explicit the rapprochement between the two poles. Finally, the positions of two parties vis-à-vis the European Union are more complicated than expected *prime facie* (Table 6.1). DS/DL-PD and FI-PDL had the

³⁵ Eventually Berlusconi withdrew from the agreement. In the 2016 Referendum the Constitutional reform proposed by Renzi failed to reach the absolute majority (40,9%).

same positions in all Parliamentary votes related to the European Treaties, Fiscal Compact included. Both parties agreed in 2012 on the Constitutional changes (art. 81, 97, 117 and 119) related to the balanced budget “golden rule”. However, this voting behaviour must be balanced by the different posture of the traditional parties vis-à-vis the European project. FI-PDL had an ambiguous relationship with EU project (Quaglia 2005 and 2011), which ranged from open criticism to the integration project to a strenuous defence of the European project, especially during the 2018 electoral campaign. On the contrary, PD had always considered the European Union, one of the pillars of its identity (Tarditi and Vittori 2019). Bipolarism, rather than bipartitism was a founding feature of the so-called Second Republic; rather than converging to the centre, the two poles were polarized from an ideological standpoint. Nonetheless, once FSM entered in the political arena, the two traditional parties inaugurated a period of (forced) cooperation with two grand-coalition governments and the approval of the Fiscal Compact. The convergence between PD and FI was halted only at the eve of the 2013 electoral campaign, when FI showed a sceptical attitude toward Monti government, while PD in alliance with Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà (Left, Ecology and Freedom, SEL) coalesce into a left-wing front. All things considered, contrary to the Spanish and Greek case, Italy had only a partial convergence between traditional parties. However, this partial convergence was enough for Grillo to describe the two parties as identical and equally responsible for the crisis.

D) The presence of anti-establishment parties

After the short-lived experience of the Fronte dell’Uomo Qualunque (Common Man Front) (1946-1949), from which the Italians derived the synonym of populism “qualunquista”, the political system was frozen (Sartori 1976); while two anti-system parties were at the forefront of the electoral competition – the Italian Communist Party and the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement – no anti-establishment parties (with the partial exception of The Radicals) appeared as relevant challengers until the success of the Northern League in the late eighties. With the demise of the so-called First Republic (Morlino 1996, Bartolini et al. 2004), Italy became a promised land for anti-establishment parties (Tarchi 2015, Biorcio 2015a, Verbeek and Zaslove 2016). The centre-right coalition (1994-1996 and 2001-2006), comprised the post-fascist Alleanza Nazionale (National Alliance, AN) (Ignazi 1994b) and two anti-establishment and anti-party parties FI and NL (Ruzza and Fella 2011, Taguieff 1995). FI leader, Silvio Berlusconi is probably the most known example of a media tycoon in government: his figure is inextricably linked to his “personal” party (Calise 2000); he has depicted himself as the hardworking self-made man (Zaslove 2008), who was forced to enter the electoral competition to fight against communism, the Italian *parteiensstaat* and the bureaucracy. As Tarchi (2008: 93) puts it, “paternalistic and reassuring, Berlusconi never misses an opportunity to proclaim

himself as the interpreter and defender of the popular will". The long-lasting voters' dissatisfaction (Morlino and Tarchi 1996), found in Berlusconi the most important interpreter. On the other hand, NL relied for his success for more than twenty years on the histrionic figure of Umberto Bossi (1989-2012). NL born as regionalist party (Zaslove 2011) with a Manichean view of the Italian system, in which the hardworking small entrepreneurs and small craftsmen living in the productive Northern Italy have to confront the lazy Southerners and the bureaucracy of Ministers in Rome (Biorcio 1997, Tarchi 2008 and 2013). Gradually, NL became a more radical-right-like political party with a protectionist, anti-immigrant, Eurosceptic and Islamophobic platform (Ruzza and Fella 2013). Even when excluding FI from the anti-establishment family, other parties emerged as either anti-establishment or non-traditional challengers: the short-lived appearance of The Segni Pact and La Rete (The Net), the resurgence of left split of the PCI, Communist Refoundation and the good results obtained by Green Federation were all examples of the strength of non-traditional parties. In the late nineties, Italia dei Valori (Italy of Values, IDV), a new personal party, led by the well-known Clean Hand prosecutor, Antonio Di Pietro was founded as the anti-corruption alternative to Berlusconi's FI. From 2000s onwards IDV and the Northern League were the main anti-establishment parties in Italy. IDV had its best result in the 2009 European elections (8%), when Beppe Grillo endorsed from its blog two independent IDV candidates, Sonia Alfano, daughter of Beppe Alfano, a journalist killed by the Italian Mafia and Luigi De Magistris, a well-known prosecutor magistrate. On the other hand, NL had its best results in the 2010 regional elections. The FSM was officially founded as a political movement in October 2009, when the two main anti-establishment parties were performing comparatively very well: despite the Italian long-standing anti-establishment tradition, FSM close connection with IDV – Gianroberto Casaleggio, the FSM founder, was the web consultant for IDV – and the success of NL could have limited the electoral potential of any new challenger movement. However, since 2011 onwards both IDV and NL suffered a substantial legitimacy crisis. IDV façade as anti-corruption party was damaged by alleged mismanagement of party funding and clientelistic practices, related to Di Pietro's family (Cerno and Turco 2012). Moreover, two IDV MPs in 2010 abandoned the party and the centre-left coalition to join in the following years Berlusconi coalition, thus delegitimizing IDV anti-Berlusconi credentials, on which the party built its anti-establishment appeal. In the same years (2010-2012), NL leadership was accused of public funding mismanagement: the credibility of the party, which has always accused the central government of excessive expenditures, clientelistic practices and corruption, especially in the Southern Italy, was heavily compromised. The party's treasurer allegedly invested public funding in diamonds, gold bars and Tanzanian, Cypriot and Norwegian Government Bonds with the complicity of Umberto Bossi and his son, Renzo Bossi. In both cases, the 2013 general elections represented a wholesale defeat:

IDV and their radical-left allies (2.25%) did not reach the threshold to enter in the Parliament, while NL had its second-worst result since 1992. However, under the leadership of Matteo Salvini, NL soon recovered: Salvini purged the old-leadership and projected the party also in the South under the label *Noi Con Salvini* (We, with Salvini); moreover, he removed the adjective “Northern” from the symbol of the party and the political platform became decidedly right-wing (Valbruzzi 2018). In the last elections (March 2018), the party had its best result (17.3%) surpassing FI as the most voted party in the centre-right coalition. IDV, on the contrary, plunged and it now irrelevant in the political system.

8.2.1 Summary

Following the operationalization in the Chapter 4, the political opportunity structure in which FSM competed is double-faced: from 2009 until 2011, it was (highly) *hostile*, while from 2011 to 2013 ranged between *hostile* and *moderately hostile*. In the two periods the electoral law, despite proportional in principle, had a clear majoritarian distortion. In the first period, the mobilization of social movements was not as effective as in Greece or Spain, even though Grillo before the creation of the party (2009) was able to mobilize hundred thousand people in two rallies in 2007 and 2008. Secondly, the Italian political system was highly polarized because of the divisiveness of Berlusconi figure. Thirdly, the anti-establishment family was over-crowded: left-wing, right-wing and liberal populist/anti-establishment parties successfully challenged traditional parties. From 2011 onwards, the political opportunity structure changed substantially: while the social movements’ mobilization decreased after the October 15 protests, the other hostile factors were partially removed. The polarization, albeit not disappearing, was substantially reduced after Berlusconi resignation and the formation of a grand-coalition government, in which FI and PD were the main shareholders. Accordingly, the most relevant anti-establishment parties suffered from several scandals, in which their leaders were involved. The political opportunity structure, thus, in less than two years became less hostile. In 2013, the political opportunity structure favoured the emergence of new anti-establishment parties: FSM was ready to seize power against both the left and the right traditional parties.

8.3 The Pattern of Competition

A-B) Emphasis on policies and electoral campaign

As it will be shown in the last paragraph, the ideological trajectory of FSM has been contradictory. Before the official launch of the party, its heir, called *Amici of Beppe Grillo* (Friends of Beppe Grillo) was an online network of policy-oriented groups, coordinated by Grillo through the Meetup platform. The “five stars” Grillo referred to when Casaleggio and him founded the party, were connected to

five main topics public water, transportation, connectivity, development and environment. During his shows and through its blog, Grillo launched several campaigns: most of them focused on environmental problems related to the five abovementioned issues in the local communities, but the most known had nationwide targets. Among others, the resignation of the former Governor of the Italian Central Bank, a class action against Telecom, the withdrawal of the Italian troops from Iraq through a mail booming to the President of Republic, the denunciation of Parmalat financial fraud and the battle for a new law on the conflict of interest against Berlusconi media oligopoly, the precarization of the work conditions, government pardon for specific crimes, the incestuous relationship between politicians, banks and capitalists (Grillo 2007b, Grillo and Casaleggio 2011, Vignati 2015). However, the main focuses of Grillo (and Casaleggio)'s campaigns, which by-then characterized FSM thin-ideological flagships were a) the transformation of both politics and the media system, thanks to the power world-wide-web and its democratizing and dis-intermediating essence (Grillo and Casaleggio 2011), b) the criticism of both centre-left and centre-right parties (Grillo invented the acronym PD-L, literally, PD minus L, to describe the sameness of the traditional parties and, consequently, the disappearance of the left-right cleavage); c) the corruption and the privileges of (all) politicians and (some) entrepreneurs and bankers. In the three nationwide campaigns, in which FSM participated (2013, 2014, 2018), the emphasis of the party was mainly concentrated on the novelty represented by FSM, its honesty vis-à-vis the corrupted "others" and the "common sense" of the party positions vis-à-vis outdated left and right ideology (Vittori 2017b). Among these "common-sense", policies FSM leaders included the introduction a basic-income scheme, which was the most relevant economic policy proposed by FSM during 2013 and 2018 electoral campaigns. As Grillo (2013a) puts it, "The era of the ideologies is over. FSM is not fascist, [it is] not rightist nor leftists. It's above all attempts to [...] deceive its words". Accordingly, "citizens crowd the squares to listen to ideas, not ideologies" (Grillo 2010a). This does not mean that FSM had not a program; in fact, it had detailed programs for local, regional, European and general elections, which were elaborated and discussed by policy experts, and voted by on-line members (only in the 2018 campaign). However, FSM insisted more on valence issues, such as corruption and political privileges, cherry-picking other issues which appeal either to a right-wing or a left-wing electorate. As Newell (2013: 12-13) puts it

Grillo was able to animate the popular discontent to which he gave voice by exploiting all the communication strategies successfully employed by Umberto Bossi and by Berlusconi before him, in order to emphasise his distance from the political establishment and his closeness to the «man in the street» – and in so doing, to take up themes that

would enable him to appeal to both right and left.

The growing mistrust of the electorate toward the politics in general, politicians and the system of communication (Biorcio 2014) found in FSM, the catalyst of a new “cleavage” old-new politics, which was self-sustained more by the long-standing suspicion of the establishment politics, more than a real difference between the policy-options.

FSM communication strategy from 2009 can be summarized with a relatively new concept in political science: the never-ending campaign. Thus, it would be difficult to distinguish ordinary political activities from electoral campaign in this case; this attitude was reinforced by the several elections and referenda that were held in Italy from 2013 to 2018. Each year had relevant elections either at national (2013, 2014 and 2018) or regional/level (2015, 2017) and a crucial referendum (2016) on the reform of the Italian constitution. Before the (partial) marginalization from the party leadership (2017), Grillo was not just the “megaphone” or the “guarantor” of the party, as he depicted himself when asked about his role within FSM, but mostly the catalyst of the mediatic attention for FSM. His and FSM electoral campaign were *sui generis* both labour and capital intensive. The campaigns were labour intensive, because all the rallies relied on the local Meet-Ups for the logistic, the propaganda and the overall organization: since no public funding were available, candidates self-funded their campaigns (Interviews 8.6, 8.7). Nonetheless, as it will be shown below, Meet-Ups are not part of the FSM organization, but they self-financed FSM local rallies. During the 2012 regional elections in Sicily – one of the first FSM electoral breakthrough in a regional election – Grillo crossed swimming the Messina strait, rallying all over the region supporting the FSM candidate: local Meet-ups were involved in the regional tour (Interview 8.5). In 2013, he toured the country with the so-called Tsunami Tour; even though he was not an official candidate of the party, he – as the head of the party – was the main protagonist of all FSM rallies in Italy: in the final act of the long electoral campaign he cried to all politicians: ‘Surrender! Give yourselves up! You are surrounded!’ (Baldini 2013). The same coordination between the leadership and the Meet-ups occurred during the 2016 Referendum campaign; this time, it was Alessandro Di Battista – a prominent FSM MP – that launched a motorbike tour across Italy labelled #iodicono (I Say No), to counter the Constitutional reform. Again, the Meet-ups were involved in the organization of the tour (Interview 8.16). In 2018, the tour – labelled Rally for Italy – was headed by Luigi Di Maio, who was the PM candidate and the newly elected head of the FSM. The campaign was also capital intensive, despite FSM could not count on public funding nor on MPs mandatory donations to the party until 2013. FSM relies on Casaleggio Associati – a new media company founded by Gianroberto Casaleggio for its on-line communication. Both Casaleggio and Grillo considered that the time of mainstream media was over and web-related media would have

replaced traditional form of communication as well as the way politics was conducted until then (Vittori 2018b). Until 2014, Grillo rejected TV interviews and forbade FSM to participate in TV *infotainment* programs; however, through the Casaleggio Associati, the on-line communication was particularly effective: Grillo's account in Twitter was the most followed among Italian political leader, even though part of his follower were likely to be machine-generated (Vaccari and Valeriani 2015). As Bobba et al. highlight (2013: 374), Grillo "ran his campaign more among people than in the (mainstream) media, travelling all around the country and directly meeting citizens in the squares, with an echo-effect that – at least in some moments – was very relevant in the digital environment". Grillo was also particularly active in Facebook, in YouTube though a very popular channel called 'La Cosa' (The Thing) and news websites, which were linked to Grillo and Casaleggio Associati. This on-line activism required high-skilled professionals, who were initially provided by the Casaleggio Associati and then partially included in the FSM staff. The success in the social media created an echo chamber that allow Grillo and FSM to be covered by TV news programs (Barisione et al. 2014). After 2014, FSM communication campaign started relying more intensively on MPs presence on traditional media.

Finally, FSM campaigns were all centred on the emphasis of the differences between "them", i.e. the other parties and the novelty represented by FSM. According to Grillo (2011b), political parties are "dead", and they are kept alive by the incestuous relationship between them and the media; that's why FSM rejected in principle all potential coalition with other parties, even those which were considered close to FSM principles, such as IDV (Grillo 2012a). The same idea was reiterated before 2018 elections (Movimento 5 Stelle 2018b): "we are going to stand with our symbol, our program and our faces in the next elections. The coalitions [...] cannot do anything to stop the free vote. The power is in your hands. Use it." The meeting was broadcasted on-line, between two FSMs MPs and PD Prime Minister candidate, Pierluigi Bersani, in the aftermath of the 2013 elections, showed that beyond the polarizing tones FSM was unwilling to legitimize traditional parties. The same occurred when another PM candidate, Matteo Renzi, met with Beppe Grillo (2014), to discuss a possible convergence between the two parties. The meeting lasted only few minutes, as Beppe Grillo walked away from the meeting room.

The rejection of coalitions with other parties was only the iceberg of a polarizing attitude that Grillo and FSM had in the electoral campaign. FSM was the main responsible for both the emergence of a new "cleavage" – the democratic renewal (Hutter et al. 2017), centred on the renovation of old party-system –and a new political style which reinforced reciprocal delegitimizing attitudes between political parties. Grillo invented mocking nicknames for all political leaders ('Psyhco-dwarf' for Berlusconi, 'Fonzie' for Matteo Renzi and so on), while accusing politicians to prosper on the

shoulder of the citizens through the public funding mechanism (Movimento 5 Stelle 2013b, Grillo 2015). More explicitly, FSM stated that political parties as for-profit association before asking sacrifices to the citizens should renounce to their public funding. The same polarizing attitudes were followed by other FSM leaders – Alessandro Di Battista and Luigi Di Maio – during post-2013 electoral campaigns.

C) The role of the alliances

The FSM polarizing attitude is reflected in the way the party dealt with the alliances with other parties. While at the local level and in most of the Italian regions, the electoral laws allow the formation of a single-party government, at the national level (and in some regions), the electoral outcome may not grant the absolute majority to a party or a coalition. The first sub-national potential convergence between FSM and a traditional party was on the formation of centre-left-FSM coalition government in 2012. Although FSM won the most votes (18.17%), the centre-left coalition had a relative majority (30.47%). FSM did not join the centre-left coalition but, at the beginning of the legislature, decided to selectively support some policies promoted by the regional government, while the centre-left coalition formed a minority government. This strategy lasted only few months. In 2013, a similar outcome occurred in the aftermath of the elections. The centre-left candidate, Pier Luigi Bersani had to embark on a difficult bargain with other political parties in order to obtain the vote of confidence in the Senate. Bersani met with the FSM spokespersons in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate, but the bargain eventually failed. Rejecting the possibility of an external support to a PD-led government, Grillo and Casaleggio forced Bersani to step back and the PD to find a new candidate and a new coalition with centre-right parties. The formation of a second consecutive grand coalition government allowed FSM to present itself as the only alternative to the centre-left and centre-right parties. FSM had a slightly more accommodating posture in the election of the President of the Republic, but the agreement with PD failed again. FSM membership voted a list of potential candidates, among which Stefano Rodotà – a left-wing constitutionalist – was the first to accept the candidacy (see below). PD proposed another candidate – the former PM Romano Prodi, who was among the FSM shortlisted candidates – but his election eventually failed. FSM proposed an agreement with PD on Rodotà candidacy with the promise of a possible support to a PD-led government (La Repubblica 2013). This time the PD rejected the proposal, preferring the convergence with centre-right parties on Giorgio Napolitano, who was elected for a second term. After the European elections, FSM had to confront with MEPs participation in political groups at the European Parliament. During the electoral campaign, there was no a clear-cut indication of the FSM preferences. Standing alone would have been a loss of rights (and money) in the European Parliament;

thus, Grillo and Casaleggio decided to let the members vote on MEPs participation on a European political group. After a meeting with UK Independence Party (UKIP) leader Nigel Farage, Grillo and Davide Casaleggio endorsed the participation in the Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFDD) group. In January 2017, Grillo and D. Casaleggio with the intermediation of some FSM MEPs bargained the withdrawal from the EFDD group and the entrance in the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) group. The membership endorsed this solution, yet ALDE eventually rejected to accept FSM in its group in exchange of FSM's MEPs support of Guy Verhofstadt candidacy as President of the European Parliament. In 2015, FSM rejected the proposal made by former Rome mayor – Ignazio Marino (PD) – and by Apulia governor – Michele Emiliano (PD) – to participate in their governments, despite FSM defeat in the elections. With the exclusion of few local cases – Montegridolfo (Emilia-Romagna) and Laives (Trentino Alto Adige) – FSM has always rejected the participation as a junior partner in other parties' coalition. In the aftermath of the 2018 elections, FSM became the main actor in the bargain for the formation of a coalition government, being the party with the largest share of vote. This time, without FSM, the only possible coalition would have been between centre-right coalition and PD. The League pre-emptively rejected this possibility. After rejecting a coalition with centre-right coalition, FSM started a separate negotiation with PD, which rejected the FSM-PD coalition and then with The League, with which elaborated a joint political program. The strategy on the alliance used by FSM, as in the case of Podemos and SYRIZA, that the party used its blackmailing power to force a grand coalition at least twice. However, since its genesis FSM was much less prone than Podemos and SYRIZA to coalesce with other traditional parties; its attitude changed when it had the possibility to use a traditional party (PD) as a junior partner in a FSM-led coalition.

D-E) Elite, membership and participatory techniques³⁶

The literature on FSM agrees on the fact that the role of the leadership of Grillo and G. Casaleggio was crucial for the party genesis and its organization (Ceccarini and Bordignon 2013 and 2015, Corbetta and Gualmini 2013, Corbetta 2017, Vignati 2015). The aforementioned issues that Grillo raised in his shows before the advent of FSM became the backbone of the first FSM program, the Firenze Chart (2009), even though FSM has lately elaborated a more detailed program with the help of several policy experts (Interviews 8.6 and 8.10). Grillo and Casaleggio leadership was decidedly unbalanced when alliances with other parties were at stake. FSM leadership conducted the bargains

³⁶ This section sums up the most relevant organizational features of the party related to the two aspects under consideration (elite/membership and participatory techniques). A detailed analysis can be found in the following paragraph, which is dedicated solely to the party organization.

with European parties without any *a priori* consultation with MEPs (Interview 8.4), excluding some families, which accepting others. The FSM MEP that conducted the negotiation with ALDE between 2016 and 2017 was very close to the leadership. Not surprisingly, when the bargain eventually failed, he left the party. Moreover, whoever publicly expressed different views on the alliance policy and FSM internal organization was expelled or forced to resign (see Factionalism). MPs, MEPs and other elected members of the party has not a representation within the party organization, since there is not a *real* organism of “representation” within FSM; thus, the leadership is the only *sui generis* PCO, since it controls the party machine, through the (on-line) membership. FSM has always portrayed itself as a movement of “common” citizens, in which web-based direct-democracy is the cornerstone of the internal decision-making. However, contrary to Podemos, the rules for the internal consultations were mainly informal, since nor in the first Statutes of the Party (2009) nor in the other internal rules there were specific norms related to this topic. Only afterwards FSM detailed some general rules on the candidate-selection. Another main difference with Podemos is the role of off-line members. Off-line activism, which constituted the backbone of the early Grillo’s attempts to shape the movement at the local level (2006-2009), was marginalized in the decision-making at the national level (Veltri and Ceri 2017). FSM Meet-ups still function as a transmission belt between elected representatives at all institutional levels and party members and sympathisers, but their role is relegated to the mobilization during the electoral campaign. Meet-ups are coordinating bodies at the district or city level. As a matter of fact, FSM Meet-ups are outside the party organization and there are no either provincial or regional structures, which supervise their activities. For their coordination informality – WhatsApp groups for example – is the rule (Interview 8.1, 8.13, 8.9, 8.15). They are not controlled by national leadership in their internal organization – the first Meet-ups elaborated their internal code of conducts (Interviews 8.12, 8.13) – or in their locally-based campaigns. However, they need the certification of their list in the local elections from the leadership. The certification is all but automatic (Vittori 2017a).

Summary Among the three parties under analysis, FSM pattern of competition is the closest to a pure vote-seeking strategy. Although it tried to elaborate detailed programs on several occasion, its competition during the electoral campaign was almost entirely based on the cleavage establishment – anti-establishment and on the Manichean distinction between the “pure” people and the corrupt élite. According to FSM, the main battlefield was between the privileges of the political “class” and their inherent corruption against the honest citizens. Its anti-traditional parties’ attitude was reinforced by the choice – disowned after 2014 – to stay outside mainstream media, which were accused of collusion with the economic and the political system. The choice not to coalesce with other parties, forced grand coalitions between traditional parties. As in the case of SYRIZA, FSM started the

negotiations with other parties, once the electoral results gave to the leadership a powerful bargain position. The organization of the party granted to the dyarchy an unconstrained control over the most important party resources; its web-based direct democracy is strictly controlled by the leadership, even though the party let members decide on several issues. The only aspect which does not conform the operationalization is the capital-intensive electoral campaign; before its first electoral exploit (2013), the web granted a low-cost possibility to reach a wider audience, without the intermediation of traditional media (newspapers and television); in this phase along with web-marketing experts, FSM relied on a labour-intensive mobilization. This aspect was not entirely marginalized after 2013: members at the local level are still considered a crucial asset for campaigns' organization (Interview 8.1); however, even though the literature on FSM has not elaborated further on this aspect, the role of communication professionals seems to have acquired a greater importance within the party since 2013.

8.4 The party organization

8.4.1 Genesis

Officially founded on October 4th 2009, it took only eight years for FSM to become the largest party in Italy and the most successful anti-establishment party in Europe. Still, the FSM organizational structure was drafted by Grillo and G. Casaleggio few years before, thanks to blog Grillo's blog, whose platform was managed by the Casaleggio Associati and to the on-line platform www.meetup.com, which allowed the formation of informal Grillo's supporters at the local level. Grillo is a successful Italian comedian, who was marginalized by the mainstream media for its satire on Italian Socialist Party during the most famous Italian music contest (*Festival di Sanremo*) in 1989. Grillo's figure has some similarities with another (French) comedian – Colouche – who was involved in politics with a very limited success in the eighties. According to Biorcio (2014: 39), “through recourse to satire, impersonation and political caricatures, [they] communicate arguments that could not otherwise be expressed – arguments that can easily overcome barriers created by social conventions [...]”. The tours he initiated in several theatres around Italy (2005-2006), granted a wide audience to Grillo, whose anti-establishment message grew rapidly outside the mainstream channels. His precursory activity in the world-wide-web allowed him to become one of the most successful bloggers in Italy: during his performances, Grillo frequently showed the audience a world ranking drafted by Time, in which his website was listed as being in the top 25 most influential sites. Its core message coupled environmental issues and the extensive criticism of corruption in politics. In 2005 he launched the ‘Clean up Parliament’ campaign; through an on-line crowdfunding campaign he bought an advertisement in the International Herald Tribune asking to the 23 parliamentarians

“already convicted of crimes by the Italian Judicial System” to put themselves “in a state of suspension, so as to give a real signal that our country is changing” (Grillo 2008a). Moreover, he magnified the democratizing power of the Web: he prophesized that the Web was going to change telecommunication – during his show he invited people to call via Skype people to prove how cheap communication could be – the economy and, mostly, politics. The popularity of Grillo grew outside mainstream media and the network created through Meetup platform allowed people with different background to create the first nucleus of Grillo’s supporters. These supporters at the local level were frequently single-issue civic associations, outside political parties: the interviewees who joined Meet-ups before 2009 confirm that their “political” experiences were mainly linked to the participation in local and national-based movements, such as the anti-mafia Red Agendas Movement, pro-environment (such as No Ponte, No TAV), pacifist (No Dal Molin, Emergency, No Muos) and alter-globalization associations (see par. *Social Movement*). Before 2013, with the partially self-imposed marginalization from the mainstream media the credibility of Grillo as a true entrepreneurial outsider grew considerably, especially after the success of the V-Day rallies, in Bologna (2007) and Turin (2008). In the meantime, Casaleggio Associati, which run Grillo’s blog, headed the on-line communication strategy of IdV, with which Grillo and FSM started to cooperate. IdV inserted in the list for the 2009 European Elections two “independent” candidates supported by Grillo (FSM was officially founded after the elections). Along with the on-line presence, Grillo (2007a) promoted the participation to local elections, with the explicit prohibition for candidates to be associated with other parties and for “his” list to coalesce with other parties. In January 2008, he officially launched local lists for the elections (Grillo 2008b) under the label *Amici di Beppe Grillo*. Despite the relatively small electoral success (1.72% in the Sicilian regional elections), the FSM started its ramification process in all country. Grillo tried also to engage in the PD primaries in 2009: Grillo’s attempt was rejected because the Statute of the PD prohibited the candidacy to those who ran in opposition to PD principles. Thus, when FSM was launched in 2009, Grillo and Casaleggio could count on good anti-establishment credentials and, mostly, on 178 meet-ups all over Italy (Lanzone and Tronconi 2015). From 2009 to 2012, FSM electoral results at the regional and local level were not impressive: FSM had good performances in some regional elections, such as in Piemonte (3.7%) and Emilia-Romagna (6%), where the local groups were more cohesive (Montestanti and Veltri 2015). In the South, where FSM was much less organized, the results were disappointing, at least until the aforementioned breakthrough in the 2012 regional elections in Sicily (14.9%). It is, thus, unsurprising that Parma (Emilia-Romagna) was the first city with a FSM mayor (Federico Pizzarotti) in 2012. As testified in some interviews (Interviews 8.11, 8.12), Emilia-Romagna was a political laboratory for FSM, in which several activists believed in a more decentralised organization of the party. Several activists in

2012 called for a meeting in Rimini (Emilia-Romagna) in order to better structure the party without the consent of the leadership: one of the promoters, the city councillor of Ferrara (Emilia-Romagna) Valentino Tavolazzi, was the first expelled from FSM due to its perceived rivalry with the “centre” (Grillo and Casaleggio) (Interview 8.12). After Tavolazzi, other local and regional councillors were expelled from FSM (see Factionalism). In this phase, the “centre” worked in coordination with supporting staff, who comprised the employees working within Casaleggio Associati: the PPO, as well as the PCO – as intended by Katz and Mair (1994) – was absent. The staff which worked for FSM was employed and paid by Casaleggio Associati and the most relevant activities were managed outside party organs (Biondo and Canestrari 2018). Although the structure of FSM was not developed yet, the main focus for FSM was the direct-democracy as envisaged by article 1 and 5 of the first version of the Statute of the Party (Movimento 5 Stelle, 2009b). Despite the polls underestimated its success, the breakthrough in the 2013 elections, was accompanied by less impressive results in the regional elections (2013) and in the European elections (2014). In the European Election the aim of the party was overcoming the PD as the most voted party, as the FSM slogan #vinciamonoi (we will win) indicated: PD achieved the highest result in its history (40.8%), FSM only (about) half of the PD votes (21.2%). Comparing the results of the national elections in each region and the results of the regional elections, on average, FSM lost 12.8% of the votes, showing a limited rootedness of the party at the sub-national levels. However, despite the good results in the 2015 local elections, when FSM candidates won 19 second rounds out of 20³⁷ included Rome and Turin, the 2016 and 2017 elections (Emanuele, Maggini, Paparo 2016 and Paparo 2017), as well as the regional elections in 2018 (Molise and Friuli-Venzia Giulia) confirmed this trend: FSM is much more appealing in general elections. From 2013 onwards, FSM tried to complete its institutionalization process from an organizational standpoint: Grillo’s website was removed from party symbol in order to de-personalize the party (2016); a new on-line platform called Rousseau, replaced the older one (Lex); two new statutes (2016 and 2017), which followed legal disputes with former members, were voted; a new short-lived organ called *Direttorio* (Directorate) was created (2016) and a new party leader (Luigi Di Maio) replaced, albeit not entirely, Beppe Grillo (2017). Di Maio’s nomination, opened a dispute within the party about the role of Di Maio. Roberto Fico, who is considered the representative of the left-wing area within the party, contested the double role of party leader and PM candidate. Be as it may, after Di Maio victory, Grillo (partially) partially stepped back from FSM; he is still the “Guarantor” of the party (art. 8, Movimento 5 Stelle 2017a), but his blog is no more affiliated to FSM and all on-line communication resources do not include Beppe Grillo in their names

³⁷ The electoral law at the local level for municipalities with more than 15.000 inhabitants is a two-round system, in which the two most voted candidates in the first round participate to the second round.

(www.ilblogdellestelle.it, www.movimento5stelle.it). Yet, as the following sections will show, from the one hand the balance of power among party faces remains asymmetrical toward the party leadership and, from the other hand, the process of institutionalization is continuously evolving, since formal rules seemed to be still subdued to the leadership decisions.

8.4.2 Party on the Ground (PoG)

According to Grillo (2009a), representative democracy is going to be transformed into a participatory democracy through the Web. Accordingly, G. Casaleggio (2013) foresaw that direct democracy would have replaced the classical concept of representative democracy: transparency, participation and leaderless organization would have been the cornerstones of a “direct-democracy movement”. In principle, FSM privileges the delegate model of representation, rather than the traditional trustee model: members of the PPO are subjected to the PoG, which is the backbone of the party in FSM conception (Vittori 2018b). FSM claimed to have translated these principles into practice through its Statute (Movimento 5 Stelle 2009a). In the Statute (art. 4, Movimento 5 Stelle 2009a), it is stated that FSM is not a party, nor it will become as such. Moreover,

FSM wants to show the possibility to achieve an efficient and effective exchange of opinion and a democratic dialogue outside associational and party bonds and without the mediation of managerial or representative organs, *granting to the whole users of the Web*, the governing and directive role, which are normally assigned to few people [translation and italics are mine].

The on-line direct-democracy, as only partly happened in Podemos from 2015 onwards, is nonetheless highly centralized; Casaleggio Associati, through an association (*Associazione Rousseau*) founded by Davide Casaleggio, Massimo Bugani and MEP David Borrelli, who has resigned as FMS’ MEP in 2017, controls *Rousseau*, which is the platform where the direct-democracy is implemented³⁸. *Rousseau* supplanted the old platform (Lex) and other open source platforms, which were implemented by FSM activists (Interview 8.3). *Rousseau* is also used for all internal consultations, primaries and leadership selection of FSM. From 2017 onwards, members are also part of the *Assemblea* (Assembly) of the party (art. 6, Movimento 5 Stelle 2017a). The data on FSM membership are only partially available. The Casaleggio Associati was not willing to release updated data and the people interviewed were not able to provide official figures. Figure 8.1 indicates the members entitled

³⁸ At the time of writing (November 2018), the association is headed by Davide Casaleggio, Massimo Bugani, Pietro Dettori and Enrica Sabatini.

to vote in five different internal consultations from December 2012 to October 2016; after that date, FSM released only the effective participation to internal consultation. Casaleggio (2017) has stated that in 2017 there were 140.000 registered users in the Rousseau platform and 170.000 activists. Nonetheless, from the data available it is possible to draw some summary conclusions. Becoming a FSM's member is free of cost: members are asked to log in in the Rousseau platform and to provide a scanned copy of their documents. In order to participate to FSM on-line activities, members have to wait for their certification. Since the ratification of the 2017 Statute, FSM members became officially “members” of FSM: before, they were considered supporter of the *Associazione Movimento 5 Stelle* (Five Stars Movement Association). This association was composed by Grillo and few of trusted people. Five Stars Movement Association has no relation with FSM, except for the (crucial) fact that this association owns the symbol of FSM. Membership has increased conspicuously after the 2013 electoral breakthrough (Figure 8.3): in two years, the overall membership almost tripled (+86731 members). From a comparative perspective, this figure is far less from PD, the Italian party with the largest membership (Vittori 2018a), which was almost 500.000, albeit it steadily declined from 2008 onwards. FSM has never claimed to be a party of its members, i.e. a mass party, as in the case of SYRIZA. Rather, members are claimed to represent the “will” of the party, no matter how participated the internal consultations were.

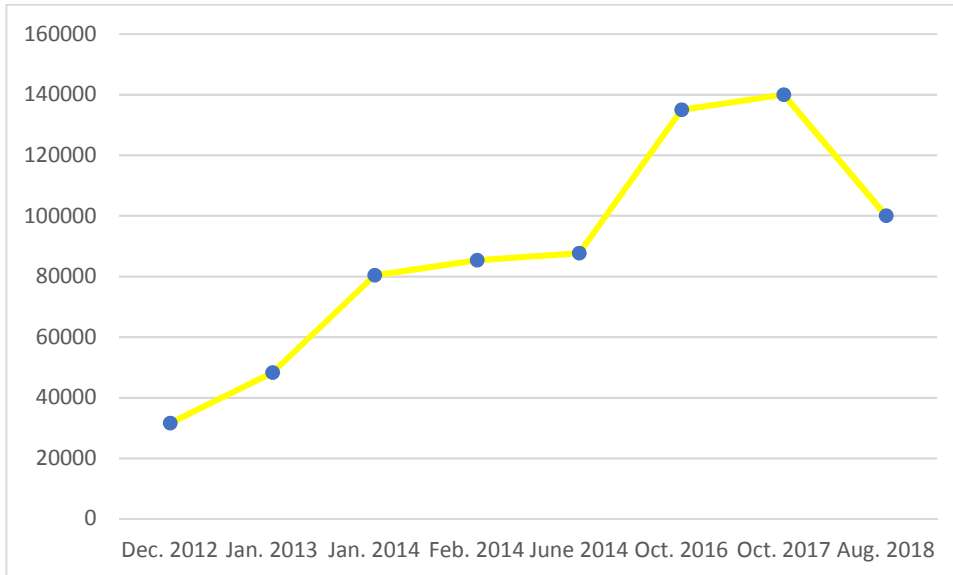


Figure 8.3 - FSM Membership (estimation) - 2012-2018. Source: beppegrillo.it, I consider only the members entitled to vote in five different time-spans.

Still, it must be acknowledged that the boundaries between members and non-members are blurred. Anyone can potentially participate in FSM Meet-ups and acquire voting rights in the local assemblies, even though he/she cannot be a candidate: Meet-ups and even MPs do not know who the members in the local constituencies are, since the data are managed by the Rousseau platform (Interview 8.6).

Before the advent of Lex and Rousseau, Grillo and Casaleggio used “surveys” opened to Grillo’s blog users and visitors to ask questions regarding the abolition of the cash (2012), potential reforms to improve solidarity among people (2013), about who governs in Italy (EU, Germany, ECB were the three options), the solution to the overcrowded prisons (2014) and the resignation of the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Laura Boldrini (2014). These surveys were non-binding. On the other hand, members were involved in several decisions concerning the party: a) FSM policy positions (on repealing the crime of illegal immigration, civil rights, electoral law, euthanasia etc.) b) expulsion from FSM of several MPs, c) the party manifesto d) the new Statute of the party, the change of its name and the creation of a new structure (the so-called *Direttorio*) within FSM organization e) the FSM candidate as President of the Italian Republic, f) the law proposals discussed on Lex platform to be presented in the Parliament by FSM’s MPs, g) primaries at local (main cities), regional, national and European level, h) reversal/confirmation of primaries results at the local level i) the participation of the leadership to a meeting with PD’ PM candidate, j) changing European affiliation of the party k) PM candidate for the 2018 elections l) candidate-selections for technical offices (High Council of Judiciary, Italian public broadcaster board). In two cases, the position of the leadership was reversed. As in the case of Podemos, the party élite granted to the membership a voice on several aspects of party’s life. However, there are two main differences compared to the Spanish counterparts: firstly, FSM internal consultations were used by the leadership to silence internal oppositions and to expel reluctant MPs without an internal discussion among party organs; moreover, the leadership has used nation-wide internal consultation to reverse the outcome of the primaries, as it happened in Genova, where a “non-orthodox” candidate, Marika Cassimatis won the ballot. Grillo (and presumably D. Casaleggio) stated in his blog that the primaries were not valid, since Cassimatis (and some FSM members close to her) allegedly damaged the image of the party. The results of the primaries were invalidated and the best-loser in the primaries became FSM candidate. Secondly, the rules of the internal consultations are not discussed or voted in Congresses: the modification of Statutes in 2016 and 2017 and the internal rules were presented as a “take or leave” option and, more important, no specific rules codify a procedure for call for internal consultations. The leadership was free to set the timing of the election, the selectorate³⁹ and the active electorate, i.e. who can participate to the primaries. Despite the growth of the overall membership, the participation to on-line consultations has dropped both in relative (% of the turnout) and in absolute (overall participation) terms (Figure 8.4)⁴⁰. The participation peak was reached in 2016, when members were asked to vote on the new

³⁹ In order to participate to the internal consultations, members must be enrolled in the party before a pre-established date, which is decided time to time by the leadership.

⁴⁰ A first version of the data collected by Margherita De Candia and the author were presented in a LSE blog.

Statute of the party. This is unsurprising because a) the consultation remained open for a longer period of time compared to others and b) the pervasive campaign of FSM leadership to invite members to express their preferences. This campaign was initiated because Grillo and Casaleggio needed a turnout of at least 75% in order to comply with a judicial order; albeit the turnout was “only” 64,59% there were no practical consequence for the introduction of the new rules. During the on-line consultations for FSM 2018 manifesto participation drop as well, with the telling exception of the vote on immigration (Figure 8.5). The same trend can be found in the overall turnout from 2013 onwards (Figure 8.6). The primaries in 2018 and the vote on the governmental contract signed by Lega and FSM, partially reversed this trend; however, the overall participation was lower than the first consultations held in 2016. Even more telling is the descending trend of the turnout of the whole membership.

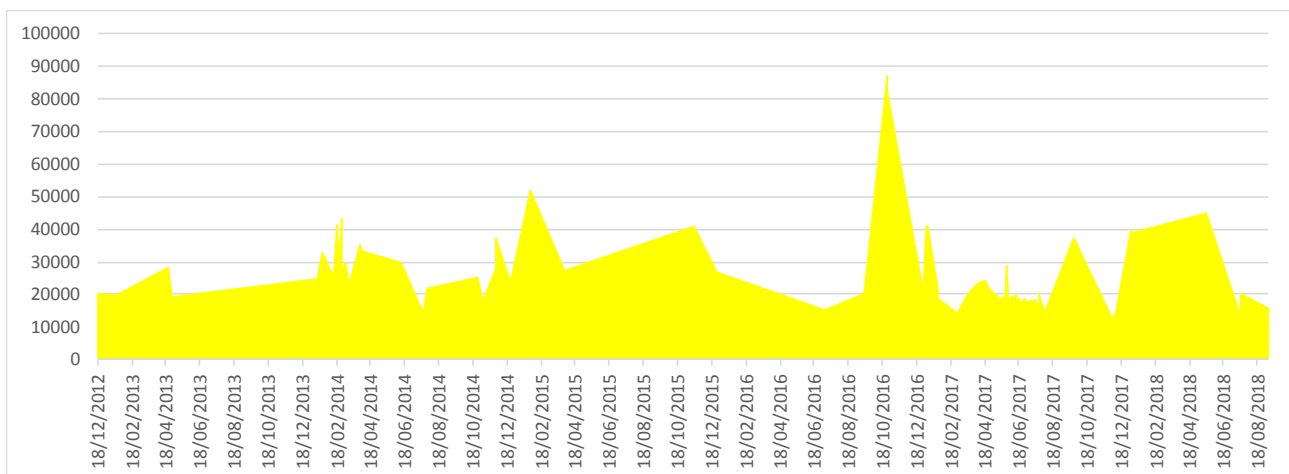


Figure 8.4 – Participation in FSM Internal Consultation (total). Source: beppegrillo.it, ilblogdellestelle.it, movimento5stelle.it.

The plebiscitarian part of FSM should in principle be counterbalanced by two more assembly-styled tools: the digital-platform tools for discussion and proposing laws and meet-ups. Rousseau consists of several areas, in which members can discuss laws with MPs and MEPs (Lex Parliament, Lex Europe, Lex Region), rising funds for the party, support local mobilization through two sections labelled *Call to Action* and *Activism* and a third called *Sharing*, which allows to local representative to upload acts and laws approved at the sub-national level in order to spread the best practices in FSM policy-making. Another section – *Lex Iscritti* – is aimed at allowing members to propose their own laws, following a detailed procedure (Movimento 5 Stelle 2016c). Lex Parliament, Lex Europe, Lex Region allow members to discuss with elected representatives the law proposals that MPs have uploaded in Lex sections: the system allows members to comment on representatives’ posts, but it does not allow members to comment on other members’ post. As Mosca (2018) has shown, however, the participation in Lex sections was rather limited: the number of the comments as well as the level

of the engagement of MPs in the discussion of the law proposals has decreased constantly. The average number of comments per law went to 446 in 2014 to only 63 in 2017. Lex Members is the direct-legislation branch of Rousseau. Members can upload their own law proposals. The laws proposed by members are voted by the whole membership and the most voted will be proposed by MPs and MEPs in the Parliament. Yet the whole procedure for a law to be proposed by MPs is quite complicated and only a very limited number of law proposals were eventually in the 2013-2018 legislature (Deseriis 2017). In Rousseau, there have been 12 sessions⁴¹(4 in 2016, 7 in 2017 and only one in 2018) and about 1202 law proposals were voted (a mean of 100.2 bills for each session). Each bill received a mean of 696 preferences, while the difference between the most voted bill and the first-loser, i.e. the third most-voted bill, is 1196.2 preferences and between the second and the first-loser is 399.2 preferences. When considering that – for the first 11 sessions for which the data are available – the mean of the preferences expressed by participants is 4.71, the mean difference between the most voted and the first loser is 254 voters and between the second and the first-loser is 85 voters. The participation has been stable: even though the data on the participation is missing in 7 of 12 sessions, it is possible to estimate the data looking at the overall preferences expressed by FSM members and the mean of the preferences expressed by each member in the session for which the data is available. Through this estimation, the overall participation goes from a minimum of about 7.700 estimated participants (session 3) to a maximum of 19.097 (session 4) (Table 8.1).

Session	Date	Participation	Preferences	Law proposals	Average votes for each proposal	Average Preferences
Session 1	05/07/2016	15290	72904	129	565,15	4,77
Session 2	23/09/2016	11080	52831	193	273,74	
Session 3	19/10/2016	7717	36795	97	379,33	
Session 4	28/12/2016	19097	89470	105	852,10	4,69
Session 5	25/01/2017	18677	86756	91	953,36	4,65
Session 6	01/03/2017	14392	68083	93	732,08	4,73
Session 7	22/03/2017	15952	75462	98	770,02	
Session 8	26/04/2017	18213	86158	89	968,07	
Session 9	24/05/2017	15760	74556	87	856,97	
Session 10	28/06/2017	16022	75792	95	797,81	
Session 11	06/12/2017	11258	53256	105	507,20	
Session 12	06/09/2018	14177	27625	20	1381,25	1,95

Source: rousseau.movimento5stelle.it. Numbers in bold are derived from the total preferences expressed and the mean of the preferences expressed in the previous session, for which the data were available.

Despite the centralization of the party at the national level, interviewees (and several local activists) agree on the fact that meet-ups are relatively free to propose and discuss local policy-making

⁴¹ As of November, 26 2018.

(Interviews 8.7, 8.14) even though some former members tend to downplay these freedom of action, emphasizing the centralizing nature of FSM, when local problem arouse (Interviews 8.11, 8.12) or when FSM was in the local government (Interview 8.13). Still, one interviewee acknowledges that, when the *Direttorio* was in place, it tried to exert a control on local activities (Interview 8.3).

8.4.3 Party in Public Office (PPO)

Since FSM has always refuted the concept of delegation, it is to be expected that PPO has only a limited role within the party. When looking at the balance of power within the party this is true. Firstly, candidates, even when they have been elected in the primaries, must be authorized by FSM staff to use the party symbol, which is formally owned by Grillo (and Casaleggio Associati). Primaries took place for national elections (2013 and 2018), several regional elections and in some cases for mayoral elections (see below). Despite being legitimized by internal elections, the PPO is under the control of the party leadership. MPs, MEPs and mayors signed a private contract with Casaleggio Associati in order to force FSM representative to stick with FSM decisions; otherwise, they are forced to pay a fine for the violation of the contract. In the contract signed for the 2014 European elections, MEPs committed themselves to respecting the FSM code of behaviour and to give Grillo and Casaleggio Associati the role of alliance-makers with other political parties in the European Parliament. Secondly, until 2018, when Di Maio became *Capo Politico*, the leadership of FSM – Grillo and D. Casaleggio – was outside the Parliament. From 2018, the head of the party has acquired a substantial role within the party (art. 7, Movimento 5 Stelle 2017a), but it shares this power with the Guarantor of the Party (Beppe Grillo), who has the non-negotiable last word on the interpretation of the Statute of the Party (art. 8 letter a, Movimento 5 Stelle 2017a). The Guarantor mandate has no end and, once elected, can be revoked only when the Guarantee's Committee vote against his/her mandate with an absolute majority: an internal consultation must ratify the decision (the turnout must be 50%+1 of the total membership). Thirdly, MPs expulsions from FSM were decided by Grillo and G. Casaleggio, who opened the internal consultation against several MPs without consulting the parliamentary group and without any internal trial. During the 2018 electoral campaign several former MPs faced allegation of funding mismanagement: they falsified documents that certified the donation of part of their salary to a public fund for start-ups development⁴². Di Maio and Casaleggio decided to preemptly deny the use of the symbol, thus expelling the candidates *de facto* from the party. No internal trials were held against these MPs. According to the new Statute approved in 2017, FSM members

⁴² MPs have to donate part of their salary to a public fund, aimed at helping small entrepreneurs. During the electoral campaign, several irregularities were discovered by a TV program. FSM announced the expulsion of almost all the candidates involved. However, since it was impossible for them to withdraw from the party, they contested the elections. Eight of them were elected.

under trial may appeal to the Ethical Committee (*Collegio dei Probiviri*). The Guarantor may repeal the expulsion (art 11, letter h, Movimento 5 Stelle 2017a). In the first 2013-2018 legislature 39 MPs and three MEPs either left the party or were expelled from the party; in the last elections, following the abovementioned scandal over the refunding of part of their salary, eight candidates who were expelled from FSM were nonetheless elected. When Grillo decided in 2015 to self-marginalized from the party, he and Casaleggio created the abovementioned Direttorio, which was composed by five members of the PPO. The Direttorio was not included in the different versions of the Statutes and its creation was voted by the membership in 2015. It should have functioned as a Party in Central Office, but it was composed only by five MPs (Alessandro Di Battista, Luigi Di Maio, Roberto Fico, Carla Ruocco and Carlo Sibilia). Two interviewees define the Direttorio as a “bridge” or a “filter” between PPO and the party Guarantor (Grillo) (Interview 8.10 and Interview 8.6). In the Direttorio, there was no voting procedure in place; it had the function to discuss issues and problems with Grillo and Casaleggio (Interview 8.15). However, the Direttorio had only a limited importance in managing the party daily routine (Interview 8.11): its members had not the same Grillo’s legitimacy, thus once contrasting views emerged within the party, their role was questioned by other important figures within the party. Federico Pizzarotti, after being marginalized by Grillo, questioned the role of Di Maio as the responsible for the local affairs within FSM.

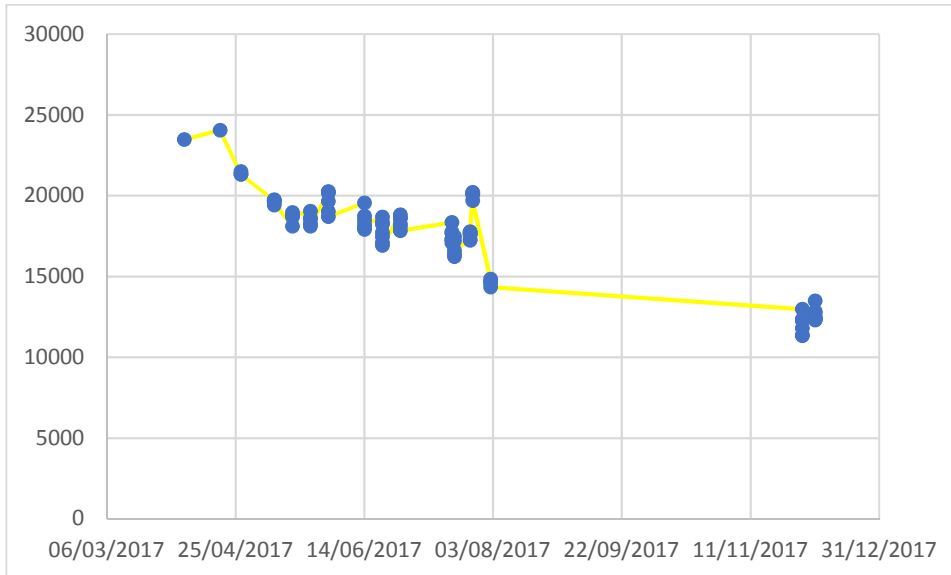


Figure 8.5 - FSM Program - Overall Participation in on-line consultation. Source: beppegrillo.it, ilblogdellestelle.it, movimento5stelle.it.

Grillo himself decided to intervene to stop all potential conflicts cancelling the entire organism: this time the expiry of the Direttorio was not voted by the membership. The PPO was again relegated to an ancillary role within the party. However, the PPO had a margin of manoeuvre in the Parliamentary work. According to several MPs (Interview 8.1, 8.6, 8,9), Grillo and G. Casaleggio had rarely

intervened in the debate with FSM assemblies in the Chamber of the Deputies and in the Senate. Moreover, when FSM started the elaboration of the program for the 2018 electoral campaigns, it created working groups in which stakeholders, experts and MPs were involved: Grillo and D. Casaleggio remained outside the whole process (Interview 8.17). A similar autonomy is envisaged by Regional councillors (Interviews 8.3, 8.14). The main tool of interaction between MPs and PoG is the platform on-line: the MPs interviewed attribute to LEX and Rousseau a crucial importance (Interviews 8.5, 8.6, 8.19). Only once Grillo did force MPs to change their position, i.e. on the immigration issue. Once two MPs proposed the repeal of the crime of illegal immigration (2013), which was introduced by center-right government, Grillo intervened to stop the initiative. In 2014, FSM members voted in an internal consultation the repealing of this crime.

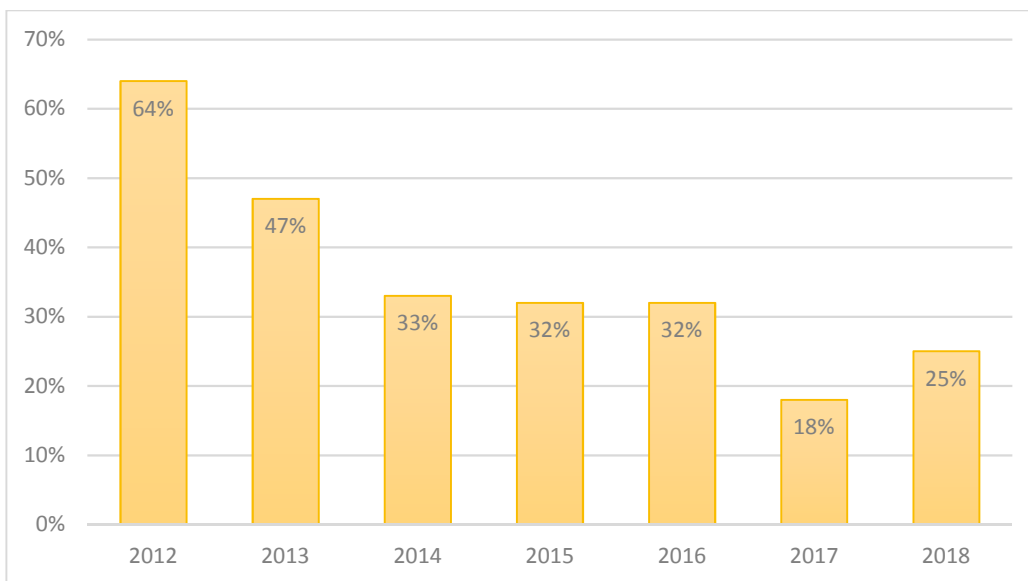


Figure 8.6 - Five Star Movement - Participation to on-line consultations by year. Source Source: beppegrillo.it, ilblogdellestelle.it, movimento5stelle.it.

8.4.4 Party in Central Office (PCO) and Party Leadership

As previously highlighted, FSM has rejected since its genesis a party-like organization. Grillo and Casaleggio promoted an organization based on the absence of the intermediation between members and the leadership. Despite the leaders frequently referred to FSM as a leaderless movement (Fo, Grillo and Casaleggio 2013) with a movement Guarantor and spokesman (Grillo), the political entrepreneur had the ultimate sovereignty in the party. Grillo became officially the party leader in 2013 (*Capo Politico*) against its will (Grillo 2012b), because the electoral law forced parties to indicate the head of the party. The staff, which supported FSM organization – the so-called *Gruppo Comunicazione* – was initially composed by Casaleggio Associati employees and its role was ancillary rather than “political”: the staff supported both Grillo’s blog and FSM activities, but it had

never participated in the decision-making within the party. It was G. Casaleggio through the Casaleggio Associati that controlled the on-line membership: PPO is unaware of how many members FSM have, nor MPs in their territory know exactly how many members FSM has at the sub-national level (Interviews 8.1, 8.9). According to one interviewee, this information is irrelevant since there is a clear-cut separation between Meet-ups at the local level and the on-line members (Interview 8.9); moreover, having access to this information “would be unfair since it can be used to campaign in the on-line elections (Interview 8.2). Even when the PPO grew exponentially after the 2013 elections and it had the possibility to hire its own parliamentary staff, a “real” PCO was not included in the party organization (Figure 9.1). The leadership was not *strictu sensu* the PCO since it was not delegated by the membership to represent the membership vis-à-vis the PPO. Thus, using Katz and Mair framework (1995), FSM does not include a PCO in its organization: in a nutshell, it overlaps with party leaders. This absence is claimed also by the party élite. As a MP puts it “[...] it is worth highlighting that FSM is not a party and there are not internal [party’s] organs. Everything is discussed in the meetings” (Interview 8.19). The only attempt to build this structure was the abovementioned *Direttorio*, which however failed to survive internal struggles. The creation of a new association that controls the on-line platform Rousseau plasticly shows the absence of a true PCO: the association is privately controlled by D. Casaleggio and it is not formally related with FSM, since no mentions of the role of the association is made in the Statue. When Grillo step down as FSM *Capo Politico* in 2017, Di Maio became the new party leader alongside D. Casaleggio, while Grillo became the guarantor of the party (Movimento 5 Stelle 2017a). This change did not lead to the creation of an intermediating bodies within FSM.

8.4.5 Factionalism

The power asymmetry between the leadership and the other faces of the parties prevented the formations of factions or currents within the party. Grillo and G. Casaleggio have always ruled out the possibility of a faction-like behaviour within the party: both leaders considered factions as a way to internally destroy the movements (Grillo 2016a). Nonetheless, FSM Statute and the internal rules do not impede the formations or organized groups within the party, unless FSM leadership decides that factions damage the image of the party (art. 1 letter E, internal rules of the party). In that case, the members may be sanctioned. Nonetheless, factions are formally permitted within FSM. Despite some newspapers have portrayed FSM as divided into groups – the so-called “orthodox”, which advocate the “purity” of the movement and the more “pragmatic” group, headed by Di Maio – factions as defined in the Chapter 4 do not exist within the party. However, not only some ideological differences can be noted between FSM sub-groups, but above all, personal rivalries lead to internal

disagreement in the local level. The tensions emerged between several elected members soon after the elections of Virginia Raggi as mayor of Rome as well as the rivalries between Massimo Bugani, local councillor in Bologna, and the former regional councillors Favia and Defranceschi, along with Piazzarotti (mayor of Parma) exemplify the extent to which local factionalism is relevant within FSM. Once the most active Meet-ups in Emilia-Romagna decided to call a national assembly in Rimini in order to discuss the organization and the future of Meet-Ups and FSM, the leadership blocked the event to avoid losing the control of the party (Interview 8.12). At the national level, the disagreement expressed by the “orthodox” group, led by MP Roberto Fico over the rules decided by the leadership for the nominee of FSM Prime Minister candidate in 2017 testifies that both material incentives and the organizational structure of the party are a matter of contention within the party.

Thus, from the one hand, several tensions have emerged both locally and nationally; from the other hand, however, the debate within the party on the future of the party is marginal. Moreover, on several occasions the party’s leadership has sanctioned not only MPs but also local exponents of the party, revoking their mandate and forbidding them to use the Movement’s symbol. Such cases have often been highlighted by the press. The most emblematic is that of Valentino Tavolazzi in Ferrara, an exponent of the Movement from the outset. Other notable cases have involved Giovanni Favia, Federica Salsi, Raffaella Pirini and other local militants. In Naples, local activists challenged the validity of changes made by FSM to the Statute, suing FSM for internal irregularities (Ceri and Veltri 2017). The activists were expelled from the party, but a judge forced their reintegration within the party and ruled against the validity of Statute changes forcing the leadership to call for an internal consultation to approve it. The case of Federico Pizzarotti, mayor of Parma, the first city won by M5S in May 2012, is emblematic. He was formally suspended because he did not notify Grillo that he had been issued with a warrant stating that he was under investigation, but tensions over his independence in running the city and in managing M5S in Emilia-Romagna may have been the real *casus belli*. Other expulsions in several cities (Bologna, Napoli, Torino, Palermo, Genova) stimulated a debate in the social and mass media over the alleged lack of internal democracy in the party. At the same time, in the 2013-2018 legislature the FSM parliamentary groups in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate have been severely reduced: 18 deputies and 19 senators either left the party or were expelled.

8.4.6 Candidate/Leadership Selection

In the FSM’s case, until recently the procedure of candidate selection was unstructured. No formal procedure is described in the 2009 version of the Non-Statute, allowing the leadership a relevant margin of manoeuvre. “The experience acquired over the years” (Movimento 5 Stelle 2009a, art. 7) was the only guide in this sense. Nationwide primaries were held for the selection of MP candidates

(the *Parlamentarie*) and for the MEP candidates, while local and regional primaries were decided on a case by case basis, according to art. 7 of the Non-Statute. Regardless of the primaries' results, candidate must obtain the authorization by M5S staff to use the party symbol. FSM leadership revoked the possibility to use the party symbol to candidates at all institutional level. The *Parlamentarie* are a system of closed online primaries in which only the members registered before a specific date—which is usually indicated in the call for the primaries in Grillo's blog—are entitled to vote. As for the 2013 primaries, only members who had participated in previous electoral competitions were able to present their candidacy. All candidates had to provide a CV and video, in which they were asked to give a brief presentation of themselves. Until 2018, only FSM members could stand in the primaries; more recently, though, FSM leadership allowed the presence of non-members. Those “civil society” candidates were nationwide FSM sympathisers known to the great public. Finally, an atypical primary election took place in 2013 and 2015 for the nomination of president of the republic —the *Quirinarie*. The participation rate in the nationwide primaries was 64.1% in 2013, 39% for the European elections' primaries. Following the estimation provided by D. Casaleggio on Rousseau registered users, it was only 28.5%⁴³ in 2018 (Figure 8.7). In the primaries, members can cast up to two preferences (one for each gender). As in the case of Podemos, FSM introduced primaries also at the regional and local level: the Primary Voters/Vote ratio (Figure 8.8) in FSM regional elections' primaries is lower than Podemos and, albeit taking into consideration different regions, it has constantly decreased. The Voters/Electorate ratio is infinitesimal: the highest Primary Voters/Vote value was registered in Emilia-Romagna in 2014 (0.003) and the lowest in Lombardy in 2017 (0.0007).

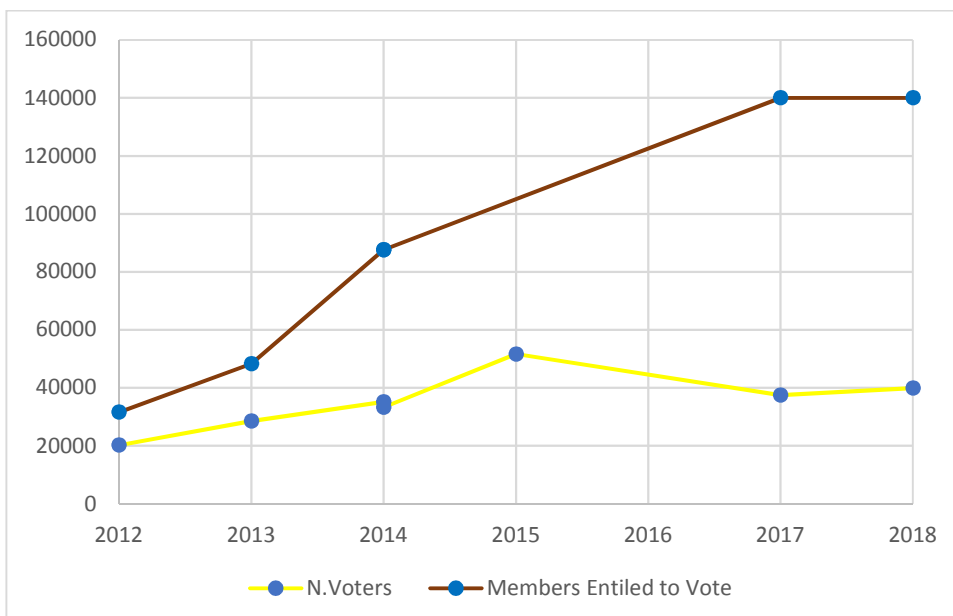


Figure 8.7 - FSM Candidate and Leadership Selection 2012-2018 (estimation). Source: beppegrillo.it, ilblogdellestelle.it, movimento5stelle.it. In 2017 and 2018 the members entitled to vote are estimated from personal

⁴³ The 2018 data refer to the FSM voters in the primaries for the Chamber of Deputies.

Another closed-primary-like procedure was the so-called *Graticola Day* (Grill Day); in the Graticola Day the candidates and the members of a constituency gathers in the same location; candidates have to provide a brief presentation of themselves, while members can cast a vote on their most preferred candidates. Graticola days were particularly important for middle-sized cities where there were no primary elections, but the Meet-ups were strong (Interview 8.10). There was not a leadership selection until 2017. The leader was Beppe Grillo who was the *Capo Politico* (the party leader) according to 2013 electoral law. The leadership within the party was shared with G. Casaleggio and, when he passed away, with D. Casaleggio. In 2017, FSM held the closed primaries for the selection of the PM Candidate; Luigi Di Maio contested with other almost unknown candidates, obtaining 82.6% of the total votes (37442). Although the primaries were open to all members, none of the most known MPs participated. The estimated turnout was 26.7%.

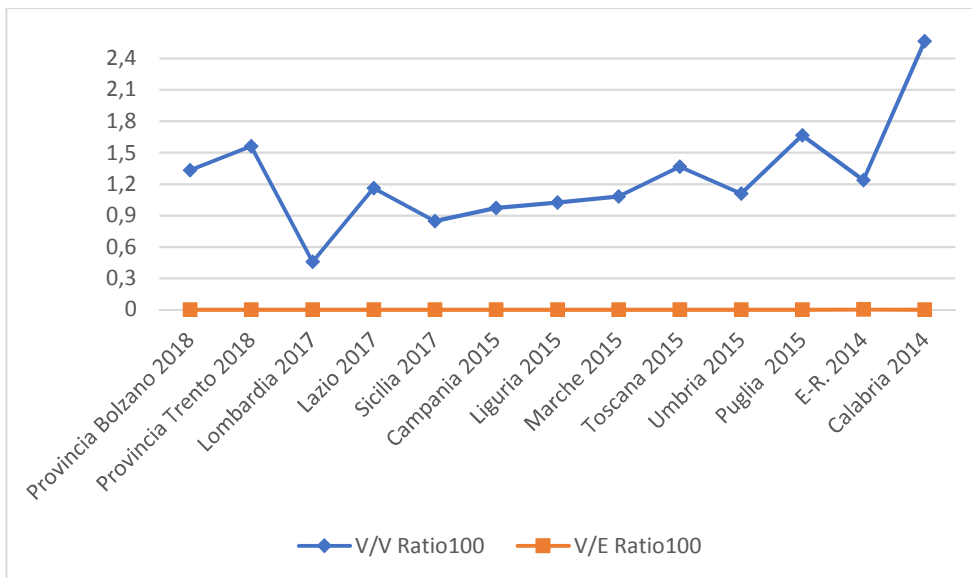


Figure 8.8 - FSM Voters/Votes Ratio*100 and Voters/Electorate Ratio*100 for Italian regions' candidate-selection. Source: beppegrillo.it, ilblogdellestelle.it, movimento5stelle.it.

8.4.7 Party Finance

Since the beginning of its political activities, FSM has criticized public funding to political parties. Beppe Grillo during his shows before the advent of FSM, targeted centre-left and centre-right politicians for their decision to re-introduce a different form of public funding, after its abolition in the 1993 referendum.

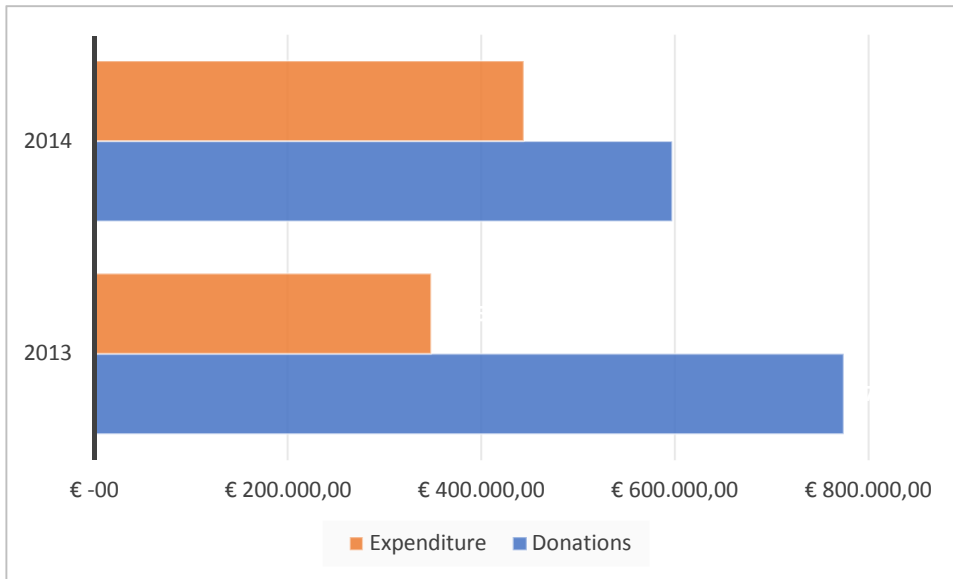


Figure 8.9 – FSM Fundraising – Electoral campaigns (2013-2014). Source: www.movimento5stelle.it

Since then, and especially after the first V-Day in Bologna (2007), this issue became of primary importance for FSM. The abolition of electoral reimbursement was the second point in FSM 2013 program. After 2013 elections, FSM stated that it would renounce to about €43 million it was entitled to receive⁴⁴.

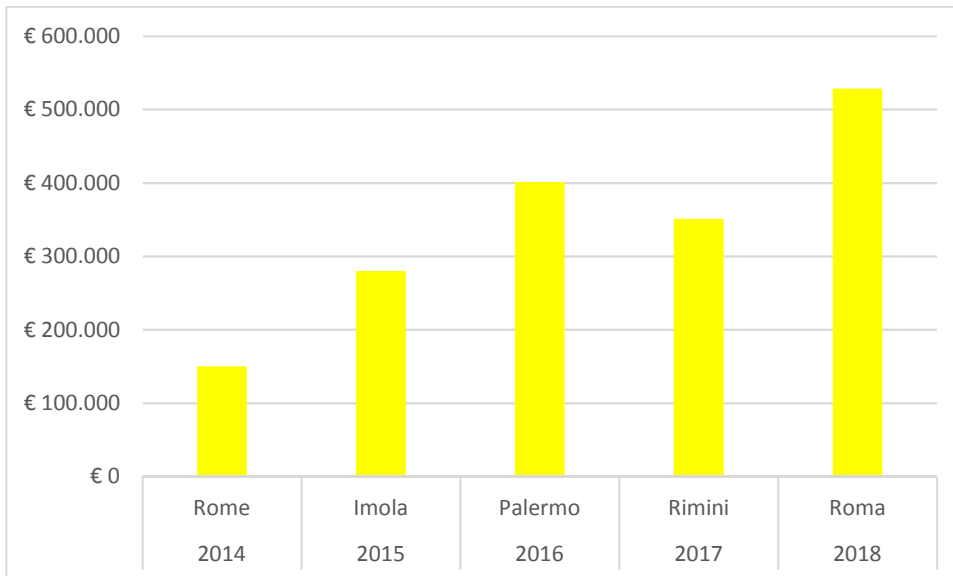


Figure 8.10 - Italia5Stelle fundraising (2014-2018). Source: www.movimento5stelle.it

In the 2018 electoral campaign, FSM asserted that the total amount of public funding to which it renounced was more than €90 million, while other parties allegedly took one billion in five years (Movimento 5 Stelle, 2018c). However, the analysis of FSM finance is problematic; FSM has used

⁴⁴ FSM refused to be included in the register of Italian political parties, which was compulsory to get the reimbursement. Then, it did not “renounce” to these reimbursements, because it was not entitled to have them.

multiple sources for its sustainment in the last 10 years, mainly through crowdfunding campaigns. For the 2013 and 2014 electoral campaigns, FSM has collected more than the total amount of the expenditure (Figure 8.9). After the 2013 elections, FSM claimed to have donated the remaining part to support the victims of Emilia-Romagna earthquake. Local councillors and MPs that I interviewed highlight that the first electoral campaigns were almost costless and relied mainly on materials provided by Casaleggio Associati or on small fundraising at the local level (Interviews 8.5, 8.6, 8.7). As explained before, the Five Stars Movement Association has no relation with FSM: from its balance sheets it functions as an empty box for the party (Table 8.2). The other source for FSM sustainment is the fundraising campaign for the annual FSM meeting (Figure 8.10): in this case, I was not able to establish whether the donations were entirely used to cover the organization costs. No data were available for the 2016 Referendum campaign. Finally, the Rousseau Association as its own balance sheet; in the first year it collected more than 360.000 € from private contributions, mainly coming from mandatory donations from MPs salary required by FSM, and almost 140.000 € from other associations. MPs and regional councillors are also required to transfer part of their salary to a public fund, managed by the Ministry of Economic Development, for the starting-up of small companies: at the time of writing, MPs renounced to about €25 million and regional councillors to about €13 million.

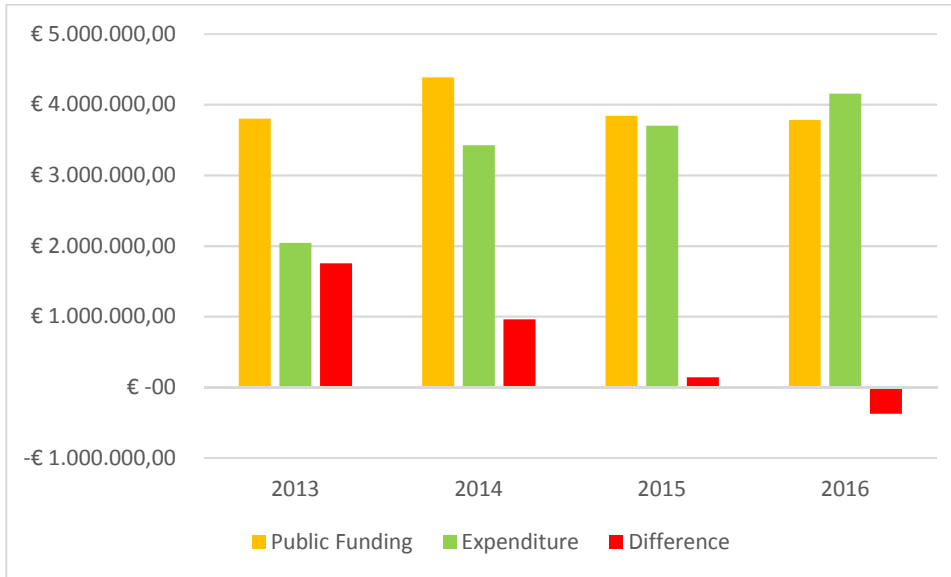


Figure 8.11 - FSM Parliamentary Group expenditures - (Chamber of Deputies) (2013-2016). Source: Italian Chamber of Deputies.

During the 2018 electoral campaign, a TV program showed that fifteen MPs and regional councillors have not fully complied with the transfer of part of their salary: some were expelled, other received an official warning from the party. Apart from refusing public funding, FSM seems to have avoided any bank loan, as in the case of Podemos. Nonetheless, FSM relies on public funding in order to sustain its Parliamentary activity: from the data available, it emerges that FSM has increased the total

expenditure from €2 million in 2013 to €4 million in 2014. One of the reason behind this rise is the growth of the supporting staff (from 32 in 2013 to 49 in 2016) (Figure 8.11). Compared to other Italian parties, which rely extensively on public funding (Pizzimenti and Ignazi 2011), and mostly, compared to Podemos and SYRIZA, FSM is much more parsimonious. This is unsurprising since FSM has always claimed to reject public funding for any political activity; as highlighted in the previous paragraphs, Podemos and SYRIZA, on the other hand, have never had this position, focusing instead on the total rejection of bank loans (Podemos) and on a more transparent and more parsimonious management of public funding (SYRIZA).

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	€	€	€	€	
Liquid Cash	600,00	800,00	1.000,00	3.000,00	€ 3.000,00
Campaign expenditure	€ -00	€ -00	€ -00	€ -00	€ -00
Private contribution	€ -00	€ -00	€ -00	€ -00	€ -00
Public Contribution	€ -00	€ -00	€ -00	€ -00	€ -00
				€	€
Debts	€ -00	€ -00	€ -00	5.407,00	11.026,00

Source: Associazione Movimento 5 Stelle

8.5 The ideology of FSM

8.5.1 Economic dimension: left-right

One of the most difficult task when dealing with FSM is placing the party in the left-right continuum. Several interpretations were provided by the literature: FSM has been described as a centrist, rightist and leftist party. In this case, our operationalization of the economic dimension, which takes into consideration FSM programs, Grillo’s discourses, Grillo and Casaleggio’s books, FSM and Grillo’s blogs and FSM manifestos, reveals that FSM has a more progressive position, albeit with a lower emphasis on redistributive justice vis-à-vis the Podemos and SYRIZA. However, overall FSM can be included among parties with an economic-leftist platform. As underlined by Corbetta and Gualimini (2013), FSM in its first program for the local election, presented a green-libertarian platform, with an emphasis on public wi-fi connection, green-energy, the public management of the water and the opposition to speculative construction (Movimento 5 Stelle 2009b). When FSM was founded (October 2009), it presented a program on economy, based on the introduction of a class-action law, the abolishment of the job-market law, the reform of several sector of stock market to make CEO accountable for bank losses, the development of the no-profit sector, the protection of the public healthcare system and prohibition to sustain private schools with public funding (Movimento 5 Stelle

2009c). In the 2009 program, FSM proposed also the extension of the unemployment benefits. Accordingly, Grillo (2009) targets the problem of inequality in the society using the same term of comparison used by Iglesias, i.e. the earning of CEOs:

The production of goods that destroy the environment is not economy. Nor is it the unequal distribution of goods. A CEO cannot earn one-hundred, two-hundreds time the earning of an employee of the same company. If nothing is created nor destroyed in the nature, so should it be for the wealth. [Wealth] cannot be invented as it happened for derivatives and the futures.

FSM presented a critical vision of capitalism and the imbalances that it produces in the society. In particular, in 2006 Grillo published a book without copyright to show the condition of unemployed and precarious workers in the contemporary society. The title of the book was *Schiavi Moderni* (Modern Slaves) and the preface was written by Nobel prize economist Joseph Stiglitz. The 2009 program was similar in all respect to the 2013 manifesto for the first nationwide elections in which FSM competed (Movimento 5 Stelle 2013a). The program for the European elections was extremely short – 7 bullet points – without any preamble. Nonetheless, Casaleggio Associati and Grillo’s blog published a more detailed analysis of the program written by Sergio di Cori Modigliani. The first point – the abolition of the Fiscal Compact – highlight a very critical stance against economic orthodoxy: according to FSM, the Fiscal Compact is based on the “liberist doctrine, according to which it is compelling to free the private market of financial capitals [...], reducing public expenditures” (beppegrillo.it, 2014a). The consequence of the fiscal compact would have been the liquidation of public-owned companies, Italian artworks, the right of occupation of public beaches to tourism-related multinationals. The document targets also UK, US and German financial vested interests as the main purchaser of the Italian wealth. Equally important is the proposal of introducing Eurobonds (beppegrillo.it, 2014b) and the creation of a two-speed Europe (ilblogdellestelle.it, 2014a) because “the motto ‘no-one will be left behind’ applies to all, for each Italian citizen, but applies also [...] for all European peoples”. In a book edited in 2017 (Libro a 5 Stelle 2017b) and in the 2018 program (Movimento 5 Stelle 2018a), FSM slightly changed this position, proposing a “radical change” of Fiscal Compact and the EU economic governance, toward less restrictive clauses. FSM proposed the abolition of the balanced-budget rule, which is an “obsession of the liberist doctrine” (beppegrillo.it, 2014b). It is much more difficult evaluating the proposal of a referendum on *Italexit* from the Eurozone: FSM is the only party among the three under analysis that proposed a non-binding

referendum.⁴⁵ In any case, the reason behind the referendum is that “either we stay in the Euro and we defend it or we break-up and exit, following the national interest” (beppegrillo.it. 2014c). The document accounts for the different position within party leadership: Grillo favoured the exit, while Casaleggio expressed doubts about this solution. FSM adopted a more cautious position in the 2018 program (Movimento 5 Stelle 2018a): FSM proposes to introduce permanent opt-out clauses, in case there is a clear popular mandate to do so. Be as it may, FSM and the new leader, Luigi Di Maio, reversed several times their position on the referendum; however, at the time of writing (June 2018), the official position of FSM on the issue is to keep Italy in the eurozone. As Podemos and SYRIZA, FSM wants to protect health first, but it highlights also the threat that these treaties represent for small entrepreneurs. In terms of welfare state, FSM early programs only mention unemployment benefit; however, Grillo (2012d and 2013c) has previously proposed a universal basic-income scheme. Between 2016 and 2018, due to a partnership with the sociologist Domenico De Masi, FSM elaborated a proposal for a means-tested version of a universal basic income (Movimento 5 Stelle 2018) to be extended also at the European level (Libro delle Stelle 2017b). In Grillo words (2013),

We want to create a world that speaks about solidarity, that speaks about "no-one should be left behind" [...] a world made by citizenship incomes because it is impossible to live in a Nation that has 8 million poor people [...].

This scheme – called *reddito di cittadinanza* (citizenship income) – was the cornerstone of the 2018 electoral campaign and it is now included in the governing contract signed by FSM and The League. Despite the emphasis on pro-welfare and economic unorthodox positions, FSM has had a critical position vis-à-vis trade-unions (Di Maio 2017a); moreover, in the 2018 electoral campaign its leader has frequently emphasized the role of small entrepreneurship and the role of technological development (4.0 industries). While, references to tax-deductions are infrequent in the 2013 FSM program, in the last program, tax cuts are proposed for families and free-lancers and, mostly, small and medium entrepreneurs (Movimento 5 Stelle 2018a, Di Maio 2018). In the 24 pages dedicated to the tax system, the main target is the reduction of the tax-burden and the simplification of the tax-system. According to Caruso (2015), the latter has always been the pro-market cornerstone of Casaleggio and Grillo ideology, which counterbalanced FSM less orthodox position on economics.

8.5.2 Non-economic dimensions: immigration, multiculturalism, European Union and anti-elitism.

⁴⁵ The Italian constitution (art. 75) forbids abrogative referenda on international treaties.

The first non-economic dimension under investigation, immigration (and multiculturalism) was particularly problematic for FSM. Before FSM genesis, Grillo (2007c) proposed an ambiguous vision of immigration: “immigration should be regulated. The first [rule] is that those who enter Italy should be welcomed as a human being: job, house, civil rights. The second is that those who enter illegally commit a crime and should be jailed”. Afterwards, Grillo (2010b) introduced a framing that was used in the following years: political parties speculate on immigrants, since their presence allows right-wing parties to speculate on citizens’ fears and left-winger on the good-feeling. In 2011, Grillo stated that

[t]he immigration taboo has both undesired and desired effects. Those undesired are [...] thousands of miserable people left alone and to the mob organizations. Those desired are a low-cost workforce [...] doomed to die while working for the profits of the bosses and of Confindustria. It's the triumph of the globalization of slavery. Refugees must be always welcomed, those escaping from war must be welcomed, the others are welcomed only when the hosting, housing and working conditions are favourable, otherwise it is electoral demagogy that benefits the League, rather than the good-felling and mouth-breather left (Grillo 2011c).

Afterwards Grillo (2013b) claimed that the reform of the law on Italian citizenship could have been reformed only through a nationwide referendum and, before, discussed with European partners. In 2014, his position on immigration became stricter. FSM members reversed Grillo position on the abolition of the illegal immigration crime. Grillo and G. Casaleggio endorsed its maintenance, while about 63% of the members voted for its abolition. The topic was not included in the 2013 program; thus, once two FSM senators proposed the abolition, Grillo and G. Casaleggio called for an internal consultation stating that FSM would have lost the elections, would FSM have campaigned for a repealing of the immigration law. In the 2014 program for the European elections immigration issue was not mentioned, while in 2017 when the *Ius Soli* reform was debated in the Parliament, FSM announced its contrary vote for the very same reasons that Grillo used in 2010; left and right political parties would have used the reform for their own electoral purposes, while “common sense, responsibility and intellectual honesty” (Movimento 5 Stelle 2017c) would have been crushed between these two poles. In the 2018 electoral campaign, the target of FSM criticism was both ONGs’ immigration business (Di Maio 2017b) and political parties’ speculation on immigration (Movimento 5 Stelle 2018c). FSM proposed the reform of the Dublin III Regulation, the full implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and more transparency in the management of the development aid fund. Contrary to Podemos and SYRIZA, thus, FSM has a much more law-and-order oriented position,

even though more prone to compromise than the ones promoted by radical-right parties (Mudde 2007). As far as civil rights are concerned FSM positions are ambivalent: in an internal consultation (2014), membership (84,5%) endorsed the introduction of a civil union law in Italy; however, no mentions on same-sex marriage-related issues and reproductive rights can be found in the 2013, 2014 and 2018 programs. This absence stands in sharp contrast with SYRIZA and, mostly, Podemos, which brought feminism at the forefront of its political program. Nonetheless, Grillo (2012c) endorsed the same-sex marriage. Along with this position, FSM endorsed the civil union law proposed by the Democratic Party (Movimento 5 Stelle 2016b), but it eventually abstained in the final vote in the Senate for tactical reasons; moreover, it also left free MPs to vote on a controversial topic of the law, the stepchild adoption.

As highlighted in the previous paragraph on the economic dimension, FSM position on European Union in its platforms has been to a large extent critical. The blog links aimed at explaining the 2014 7-point manifesto include an overwhelming number of negative references to the European Union, the EU unelected bureaucrats and the EU institutions, particularly the Commission. Still, in a book published by Di Cori Modigliani with a preface of Grillo and Casaleggio, on FSM's vision of the Europe, the author describes FSM as a "pro-European" party, even though the European Union has nothing to do with the idea of Europe that FSM wants to pursue (Di Cori Modigliani 2014). As Grillo highlights during a rally, either the European Union is inclusive, or it will be crashed (Grillo 2013). Along with this (contradictory) line, FSM campaigned for a referendum on the Italian permanence in the Eurozone as well as for the adoption of Eurobond. The idea of the referendum was partly abandoned in the 2018 program, in which FSM proposes the introduction of an opt-out option for the countries whose governments want to withdraw from the monetary union; FSM proposes also a referendum on the institutional reforms at the European level (Movimento 5 Stelle 2018a). Contrary to SYRIZA and Podemos, FSM does not reject a priori trade agreements (TTIP and CETA) with other partners, as long as they respect the precaution principle and they do not harm small and medium entrepreneurs (Movimento 5 Stelle 2018a). FSM criticizes the "useless" Junker Plan and the "non-productive" European agencies, while proposing the abolition for financing "EU propaganda (monetary union, propaganda against Russia, fake news etc.)" (Movimento 5 Stelle 2018a). According to the 2018 manifesto FSM wants to strengthen the role of the European Parliament, but at the same time, whenever it is not possible to reach an agreement among MSs for a whole reform of EU economic treaties, FSM argues that sovereignty must be left to MSs and that national Parliaments prerogatives should be strengthened (Movimento 5 Stelle 2018a).

On the contrary, there can be little doubt about FSM anti-elitism: political, economic and media elites have always been the target of Grillo denunciation. Firstly, the first two V-Days (2007-2008)

was centred on ousting from the Parliament convicted politicians and on the criticism of media system. Secondly, Italian multinationals' corruption was targeted by Grillo as one of the responsible of the disaster of Italian capitalism: as a declaration of FSM group in the Parliament highlights,

Grillo targeted the speculative management of both ENI and Sapiem, which is in line with the entrepreneurs' system in Italy. Parmalat, Telecom, Mps [Monte dei Paschi di Siena], Alitalia and now Saipem [scandals] mirror the ruling class, who is selling off the silverware of the Country, the rights of its citizens and is good name around the world (beppegrillo.it 2015).

Thirdly, Grillo denies that FSM can be categorized using the concept the "right" and the "left" (Grillo 2013a) and considers political parties as "dead" (Grillo 2011b). During the third V-Day he stated that FSM should "get rid of the ruins of the parties, which do not exist anymore parties to which we are going to give the last rites. Full stop" (Grillo 2013c). Accordingly, long-standing Italian politicians were accused of bringing Italy on the brink of a catastrophe (Grillo 2012d). All FSM manifestos address the issue of the privileges for politicians, the public funding to political parties and parties' occupation of the State. In order to disintermediate the relationship between the citizens and the State, FSM and Grillo have repeatedly proposed the introduction of quorum-less and "propositive" (Morel 2018) referenda (Movimento 5 Stelle 2013a and 2018a, Grillo 2012d). As Grillo (2016b) sums up "citizens start to understand a wonderful thing, i.e. Five Stars Movement and democracy: you are no more represented by anyone, but you represent yourself, if you have tools such as Rousseau. It's the most beautiful thing in the world."

8.6 A partial conclusion

It is hardly deniable that FSM ascendancy to power was both unexpected and formidable. In less than ten years, FSM elected several mayors across Italy and became the first party in Italy rejecting any cooperation with other parties and relying mainly on the leadership of Grillo (at least until 2017). Moreover, among the three parties under analysis, FSM competed in a comparatively more hostile political environment, in which political mobilizations were absent, the polarization was higher than Greece and Spain and anti-establishment parties strong. However, its electoral breakthrough was eased by the crisis of the anti-establishment parties as well as the forced cooperation between traditional parties during the worst period of the Italian crisis. FSM pursued a vote-seeking strategy, aimed at distancing itself from the other parties, which were described as inherently corrupt. The anti-elitism and its Manichean distinction between "them" and "us, the people" was functional to a vote-

seeking strategy. As the analysis of the ideology shows, among “them”, one should also include the European Union, a major source of scepticism for FSM, contrary to a less confrontational stance of Podemos and SYRIZA, and immigrants, despite in the latter case FSM has been always ambiguous. The “people”, on the other hand, are those left behind by the corruption of the party and by financial capitalism; in this regard, the universal basic-income proposed by Grillo and elaborated by FSM in its political program is a non-orthodox economic measure, close to the anti-austerity platform of Podemos and SYRIZA. Nonetheless, the “people” in FSM case include more explicitly small and medium entrepreneurs, to whom FSM constantly appealed in the 2018 elections. The vote-seeking strategy was successful, despite the failed institutionalization attempts of its organization: the diarchic leadership of FSM and the unbalanced power relationship between the leadership and the PCO/PPO created a tension between part of the élites and FSM inner circle headed by Grillo and Casaleggio. Critical sectors in Podemos and SYRIZA criticized the hierarchization of the party; however, the analysis of the three organizations show that in the FSM the leadership has a greater room for manoeuvre in the party management. Similar to Podemos, FSM presents a unique organization in its political system, which combined horizontal and top-down decision-making: since there was not a social movement, such as 15-M on which FSM could project its own imagined community, Grillo and Casaleggio relied on Grillo’s image as a non-political outsider and on a dispersed network of Grillo’s supporters, mainly active in civic associations. The network was connected through the on-line tools, such as the Grillo’s blog and his and Casaleggio’s media network. The dis-intermediating power of Web, which is the initiator of a political revolution in G. Casaleggio view, was translated in the FSM’s founding political principle, i.e. direct-democracy. Direct-democracy and a principled anti-elitism were the glue that held together a dispersed network of members and a strong political leadership. However, contrary to Podemos, FSM dis-intermediation experiment is not only a mean to increase political participation, but it is an end in itself, since it is the instrument through which citizens can get rid of traditional political parties. Within FSM, PCO overlaps with the leadership and membership is the main source of legitimation for PPO through on-line consultations and primaries. However, this move has implied the transformation of direct-democracy ideal-type into a more leadership-controlled direct democracy.

Chapter 9 – Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This last chapter summarizes the findings collected in the previous chapters, trying at the same time to answer to the research questions and the related hypotheses formulated in the Introduction and in the Chapter 4. However, this chapter is aimed also at moving ahead from the three case-studies, focusing on other general questions, which I address to broad the scope of the analysis. After all, the three countries' political systems were jeopardized in less than 10 years (Hutter, Kriesi and Vidal 2018) and the three case-studies of this work were the main responsible for these transformations. Before, it is important to ask another epistemological question, i.e. is it worth asking these broad general questions on party system after analysing just three political parties? That is, would it be possible in the first place to establish a connection between the changes in the three political systems, without looking at the demand-side (voting behaviour)? My answer is yes, for one main reason. Contrary to structural explanations, which nonetheless provide a useful framework of analysis, my starting point is that beyond structures, agency matters. This is not to say that other interpretations are less convincing: they all do have their merits and shortcoming. For example, demand-side analyses (among others, Barone et al. 2016, Hernández and Kriesi 2015, Marx and Schumacher 2018, Muro and Vidal 2017) shed a light on the impact of external-shocks – such as the Great Recession or immigration crisis – in the public opinion, the re-definition of priorities within the electorate and the (un)successful issue ownership attempts, which some parties pursued in the last years. Still, an offer-side explanation can complement these investigations, interpreting from other angles the systemic changes, which Southern Europe underwent in the last decade.

Few hypothetical examples can describe the ratio of the above statement: in Greece, after 2009 elections both right-wing and left-wing parties could have capitalized from the crisis of PASOK. If only LAOS would not agree on the MoU conditions, its rising stars the elections would have eased its credentials in the eyes of a growingly dissatisfied electorate. Apart from LAOS, in the left-field KKE, whose anti-capitalist credentials were strong, was (potentially) in a good position to replace PASOK or at least drain part of its electorate, if SYRIZA and its souls were divided on the response to the crisis. Again, this is not to say that PASOK electorate would have shifted its preference to KKE; however, if KKE changed its “isolationist” posture vis-à-vis other parties, the SYRIZA electoral success probably would have been lower. The same argument can be advanced for DIMAR, whose participation in grand-coalition was severely punished by its electorate. In Spain, an old-established non-traditional party (IU), during the crisis presented a clear-cut anti-austerity profile. Would it

embrace the protesters' claim, Podemos chances to challenge both social-democratic left (PSOE) and radical-left (IU) would have been probably lower than they actually were. IU had its best results during the very first appearance of Podemos in the Spanish political system (2014). It could have been the main alternative to the PSOE, whose electoral crisis was patent after 2011 defeat: it was not, nor the party started a cooperation with Podemos before 2014 elections, despite there were contacts among the elites of the two parties. In Italy, a sort of populist heartland during Berlusconi-era, the political system was populated by anti-establishment parties, which, albeit weakened by leaderships' scandals, could have replaced FSM as the main anti-establishment party. After his resignation as PM in November 2011, Berlusconi was only partially marginalized in the political system, while PD leadership – embodied by Pierluigi Bersani, was competitive vis-à-vis FSM, but it was not overly confrontational as the following events (the meeting with FSM spokespersons in the aftermath of the elections) testified. Had the PD and FSM agreed on the vote of confidence to a centre-left government, FSM credentials as anti-party party, above “left” and “right” political categories, would have been severely weakened. The same could have occurred once Grillo asked PD to elect FSM candidate Stefano Rodotà as President of the Republic. Not only this, FSM success would have probably been different if only its relationship with IdV would have consolidated after the elections of two FSM-sponsored MEP at the European elections.

All the conditions were potential plausible outcomes of the crises that the three countries were facing at the time; had some of these became reality, the outcomes, i.e. the systemic changes of the party system, would have been the same (or not), but the reasons behind these changes would have been markedly different.

Investigating these three parties means, among other things, inquiring three different political systems, their competitors and their agencies in making their success possible. Thus, it means also answering to general questions on the changes of political systems themselves, no matter how these external shocks impacted on the political behaviour of the electorates.

In the next paragraphs, I will systematize the comparison between the three-cases starting from the dependent variable, i.e. the political success of these parties. In ch. 5, I described the outcome of their entrance in the political system as successful in all cases: still, beyond comparability, was it the same success? with what limits in the three cases? Secondly, and following the MDSO framework of analysis, I review the “independent” variables (the political opportunity structure, the pattern of competition, the party organization and the ideology). Then, I answer to the research questions of this work, focusing on the heuristics hypotheses I have previously formulated. Finally, I go back to the general questions on the changes in the political systems.

9.2 Was it a success? The rise to power threshold of three “unknown” parties

The answer to the question in the subtitle is a clear-cut “YES” in all three cases. Following Key’s definition of critical elections, I define a political success in a critical election as 1) the acquisition of a “relevant” status in the political system; 2) the extent to which the parties were responsible for both the de-alignment in the critical elections and the new re-alignment in the following elections and 3) the institutionalization in the party system, i.e. the maintenance of the relevance status in the post-critical election. The result of the operationalization provides conclusive results in all three cases: SYRIZA, Podemos and FSM were successful in redefining the political systems, sometimes in unprecedented ways, namely in Greece and Spain. Although it would be pointless looking ahead to long-term re-alignment in Greece, Spain and Italy, it is true that the three countries underwent major changes in the critical elections under analysis and, more important, in all three cases the parties managed to either maintain or increase their share of votes in post-critical elections. Only in the Italian case the electorate’s realignment was partial: the 2018 elections had a high volatility, compared to post-critical elections in Spain and Greece; nonetheless, in this case the main adjustment occurred within the centre-right pole, where The League surpassed Forza Italia as the main party, rather than between the three poles emerged in 2013. In any case, SYRIZA, Podemos and FSM were “there to stay”: the three parties acquired their relevance status in the critical election (t_0) and, as I will discuss in the following paragraph, they used their blackmail potentials to force grand-coalition other parties in order to appear as the only relevant “other” in the political systems previously dominated by the traditional families. The main difference is that SYRIZA needed two elections (June 2012 and January 2015) after the critical election (May 2012) to raise to the threshold power, while FSM acceded to power in t_1 (March 2018). The case of Podemos is somewhat similar to SYRIZA the 2016 “realignment” elections (t_1) came very close to the critical election (December 2015); yet, the Spanish party performed comparatively worse than t_0 election, since the alliance with IU did not produce the expected results. The overthrow of PSOE failed, causing a loss of about 1 million of votes. Still, not only the party maintained its relevance status, but it was also able to use strategically its coalition potential to oust the PP minority to government and support a new PSOE-led government, with which it agreed on the 2018 government budget draft.

Beyond the operationalization of a political success, the three parties changed also the perception of the media and the public opinion about the “electability” of parties belonging to challenger families. Before May-June 2012, SYRIZA was an almost unknown party outside the European radical-left circles: it has no relevance in the Greek political system nor it had a significant rootedness among Greek society. Three years after, its leader, Alexis Tsipras, was probably the most known leader in Europe: SYRIZA was at heart of a long dispute between the Troika and Greek government on the

MoU; the bargain that took place in the months that preceded the 2015 Referendum was covered on a daily basis by European media: the supporters of the new Greek government hoped that the outcome would have halted EU austerity plans; the adversaries saw in the requests of Tsipras a threat to the overall financial consolidation of the Eurozone. In the days that preceded the Referendum, solidarity campaigns for the No arouse all around Europe, while EU representatives, such as the former President of the European Parliament, Martin Schultz, released unprecedented statements in favour of the agreement between Greece and the Troika. This very brief summary self-explains how successful this party was since when it overcame the relevance threshold. Compared to Podemos, SYRIZA success had much more resonance outside national borders: needless to say, Podemos' electoral results were resounding, but its impact on European public opinion was more limited. Still, Podemos along with C's reshaped the long-lasting duopoly of PSOE and PP. In 2015, a political system designed to favour two nationwide parties and regionally-based minor parties, found itself in an unprecedented stalemate: PSOE and PP collected 50% of the votes, two new parties (Podemos and C's) had a blackmail potential, which allowed them to veto on almost all coalitions with the exception of those including both PSOE and PP. More important, Podemos drained much of the radical-left voters to the "old" anti-establishment "third" party in Spain (IU). IU in one year (2014-2015) went from one of its best performance ever (10% in the European elections) to 3.7% in 2015 (a loss of about 760.00 voters). The same occurred with PSOE, which reached its lowest results since the transition in two consecutive elections (2015 and 2016): even though the convulsive phase of the leadership changes within the party (2015-2017) allowed PSOE to partially recover from its crisis, Podemos represented a new challenge for the socialist party. Despite PSOE was able to maintain the leadership of the centre-left and despite the agreement reached by PSOE and Podemos at both national and regional level, a "relevant" competitor for PSOE not only represented a threat to its long-lasting success, but it caused friction within the party. While the old-guard – the so-called *barones* - was less inclined to compromise with Podemos, the new leadership has a more accommodating stance vis-à-vis its leftist competitor to the extent that in 2018 it tried to reproduce, albeit in a different form, the so-called Portuguese model, i.e. a minority socialist-led government with the parliamentary support of two radical-left parties Partido Comunista Português (Portuguese Communist Party) and the Bloco de Esquerda (Left Bloc). Has the overtake of Podemos taken place, it would have been difficult think the PSOE accepting its minority position. In Italy, the debate on the government participation which took place within the main Italian centre-left party, PD, was similar to the one that PSOE had when Sánchez was forced to resign in 2016 (he regained the secretary position in 2017). During the negotiations for the formation of the government after March 2018 elections, however, the old-guard was much more willing to start debating on an alliance with FSM, while the "new" leadership, i.e.

former PD secretary and former PM, Matteo Renzi, maintained a hard non-cooperative stance. This is the main similarity between the Italian and the Spanish cases. Yet, the strategies of the two challenger parties radically departed soon after the breakthrough elections. FSM had always maintained a non-cooperative position with PD, which was considered in no respects different from the other traditional parties. FSM, as Podemos and SYRIZA, forced a grand-coalition in 2013 and even when Renzi emerged as the new party secretary and new PM, it stuck to its opposition posture, especially when Renzi and Berlusconi agreed on the modification of the Constitution (the so-called Nazareno Pact). As SYRIZA, FSM forced other parties to find a solution to the political stalemate in the aftermath of the elections, while Podemos has always presented itself as a reliable partner in a non-conservative government. The electoral payoff in the Italian case were tangible in t1 elections (2018): FSM drained the electoral support of PD especially in the South in 2018, in a stunning contradiction with the results that the party obtained in its genesis, when FSM was much more rooted in the North than in the South (the Sicilian elections in 2012 were an exception to the trend). Among the three cases, FSM electoral success was probably as outstanding as it was that of SYRIZA. As in the Greek case, a coalition which excluded all traditional parties raised doubts about the stability of the country in the Eurozone. In this case, however, there were not MoUs (nor a potential referendum on the so-called “ExIta”) involved. Again, beyond the criteria of the operationalization of the political success, the electoral earthquake in 2013 (De Sio and Chiaramonte 2014) can be compared only to what happened in 1994 elections, when Berlusconi entered for the first time in the electoral competition. Contrary to Greece, however, no polls predicted the electoral outcomes both in 2013 and 2018, nor the consequence of FSM electoral breakthroughs were fully understood by FSM competitors. In 2013, polls predicted a PD victory and its electoral campaign was much more focused resisting the consequence of a bank-scandal (Baldini 2013) than on potential coalitions with other partners; when FSM emerged as the second-voted party, Bersani has no leverage to convince FSM to join a coalition: no options were left to PD other than restoring another form of a Grand Coalition, which was maintained during the whole legislature with a minority-split from FI. In 2018, again, polls predicted a hung parliament, in which nor centre-left parties, nor the centre-right coalition or FSM would have the majority: the main option under discussion was another Grand Coalition between PD, centrist parties and FI. The outcome of the elections was destabilizing for the whole party system.

9.3 Different contexts: which of the parties strived the most to succeed?

Beyond the impact of the economic crisis, the political opportunity structure in the three countries was different: favourable in Greece, moderately hostile in Spain, ranging between highly hostile and

hostile in Italy. The Greek political environment was the most beneficial for new parties' growth. Albeit in the three countries the electoral laws in the breakthrough elections were formally proportional, the discussion in Ch. 6 and Ch. 8 has highlighted that in Spain and Italy, the distortion caused by districts' magnitude (Spain), electoral thresholds (Italy) and majority bonuses (Italy) make the electoral law highly "disproportional". In Greece, the electoral law grants a consistent majority bonus for the party of relative majority, but the electoral threshold is lower than the ones in the former Italian electoral law. Being the most important criterion for the analysis of the political opportunity structure, the difference between Greece and the other two countries is explained mainly by this factor. Greece and Spain were much more similar compared to Italy for the mobilization of social movements: during the Great Recession the Spanish and the Greek Indignados movements were a political reality in the two countries and their revindications became part of the public debate. While Greek Indignados have different souls – one more nationalist and one with a more left-leaning platform – in both countries the target of the protests were austerity and the corruption of politicians. Still, in Greece the protest cycle was more prolonged than in Spain, since the first protest had started before 2011. Yet, the first mobilizations were hegemonized (mainly) by anarchists. In Italy, while FSM entrepreneurship on political privileges and corruption granted to the party an issue ownership which no other movements could match, the anti-austerity mobilizations had a much lower impact. Not surprisingly, parties within SYRIZA took part to the protests of Lower Syntagma, i.e. the left-leaning part of the Indignados and (future) Podemos elites participated in the 15-M protests in Puerta de Sol; on the contrary, FSM did not join the protests against austerity, preferring its own mobilizations.

In the three countries, other anti-establishment parties were somewhat successful when the three parties entered in the competition; however, beyond the share of votes the situation was divergent. Greece and Italy (2009-2011) were much more similar compared to Spain: firstly, in both cases, "populism" found a fertile ground before SYRIZA and FSM advent. PASOK under A. Papandreou leadership and both Northern League and, afterwards, FI were successful parties, which the literature defined in different aspects as populists (Pappas 2014, Verbeek and Zaslove 2016); secondly and, more important, plenty anti-establishment parties crowded the political competition in the aftermath of the Great Recession. In Greece at least two parties were anti-system non-"coalitionable" parties (KKE and GD). Among others, ANEL replaced LAOS as the radical-right main party, after LAOS participation in Grand Coalition government, while To Potami came only afterwards (2014). As shown in Ch. 4 and Ch. 7, in 2012 elections KKE, ANEL and GD managed to increase substantially their share of votes. SYRIZA, thus, had to strive to stand out as *the* anti-austerity alternative to the traditional parties, not least because other parties took part in the anti-austerity protest waves: KKE

stood separately from social movements, and ANEL was identified as the party of the nationalist Upper Syntagma. In Italy, on the other hand, even when excluding FI from anti-establishment families during the Great Recession, other parties were in a good position to capitalize on the economic crisis; despite radical-left parties faced an unprecedented crisis after 2008 electoral debacle, IdV and Northern League were the main centre-left and radical-right anti-establishment options. In particular, IdV “hosted” in its list for the European elections (2009) two independent candidates supported by Grillo and its electoral trajectory was on the rise. Still, before 2013 elections, the two parties faced exceptional crises, linked to corruption scandals and alleged public fund mismanagement (2012). After championing anti-corruption (the leader of the party was Antonio Di Pietro, prosecutor magistrate in Milan during the Clean Hand scandal in 1992), IdV did not recover from this credibility breach. The League had to a) re-invent its core ideology from a regionalist to a more (nationalist) radical-right oriented platform (Albertazzi, Giovannini and Seddone 2018), b) change the leadership and c) marginalize the old-guard. Thus, while anti-establishment parties were present in both cases, in Italy before the breakthrough elections (2013) anti-establishment parties were in a deep crisis, while in Greece they participated in the protest waves and, mostly, they had previously good electoral records.

Contrary to Greece, Spain bipartitism was characterized by the presence of only one nationwide challenger party (IU), whose relevance in the political system decreased substantially in the 2000s (Ramiro and Paniagua 2004). Moreover, Spain contrary to Italy and Greece (and to most of the Western and Eastern European countries) have never had a successful radical-right party in its political system, due to its cleavage structure (peripheral and state nationalisms), to the ability of the PP to attract far-right voters and to the disproportional electoral law (Alfonso and Kaltwasser 2015). During the Great Recession, however, IU began its ascendancy up to one of its best result (2014 European elections). The challenger nature of IU, nonetheless, was more in the supply-side than in demand-side: the analysis of the difference between IU and Podemos electorates, showed how important the “populist” variable was to explain why a left-wing opted for the latter and not for the former (Ramiro and Gómez 2016). Accordingly, along with IU, C’s was emerging as the “Podemos of the Right” as it was defined in the media when the party emerged out from Catalonia as a potential liberal-oriented challenger to PP. While the party is in many respects distant to Podemos for its economic platform, for its (Catalan) anti-nationalist stance and for its law and order positions, yet equally to Podemos it championed the institutional renewal against bipartitism’s logic (Orriols and Cordero 2016).

Albeit with different nuances, the three countries experienced a similar convergence between traditional parties: centre-right (PP in Spain, ND in Greece and FI in Italy) and centre-left parties

(PSOE in Spain, PASOK in Greece and PD in Italy) showed an univocal support for all EU-related policies and for the European integration. The literature has highlighted the relationship between the Great Recession in Europe and the emergence of new parties (Hernández and Kriesi 2016). EU-related issues became of a primary concern for the three electorates both for the impact of these policies in the three polities, i.e. forcing grand coalition between traditional parties to support them, and for the mutating attitude of the electorate toward European Union as such (see ch. 5 on the growth of negative judgment of EU institutions in Spain, Greece and Italy).

Convergence went beyond shared voting behaviour in EU-related issues; in Greece and Italy, traditional parties had a “responsible” (Mair 2009) behaviour vis-à-vis European Union, forming grand coalitions, more or less silently endorsed by the European institutions. Papademos and Monti governments born with the precise goal to comply with EU requirements, the MoU in the Greek case and the (unprecedented) letter of Jean-Claude Trichet and Mario Draghi in the Italian case. In Greece, responsibility toward EU was much more recent for PASOK than for ND: PASOK old leadership personified by A. Papandreou had always been sceptical of EU integration as such and it took a leadership change (Costas Simitis) and an ideological shift to the so-called Third Way to make PASOK similar to the other socialist counterparts. The severe adjustment that Greek experienced from 2009 was supported by traditional parties and EU-led austerity represented the main cleavage at the time in the political system. Only once ND refused to vote positively to the Memorandum: still, it was much a tactical move against PASOK than a real disagreement on adjustment policies, since the party changed its stance once it gained momentum in government and coalesced with PASOK and other parties in a grand coalition. Italy was a deviant case in the pre-crisis environment: the main centre-right traditional party represents a deviant case of liberal populism (Zaslave 2008) in which an anti-establishment rhetoric merged with a wavering attitude toward EU institutions, while on the other hand PD has always championed a euro-enthusiastic position. The polarization of the political system (Ignazi 2017) was reflected also in Berlusconi’s approach to EU; FI never voted against EU treaties nor it vetoed any of steps toward EU integration, but it still approached Berlusconi’s resignation as PM in November 2011 as a coup d’état sponsored by the markets, France, Germany and the EU institutions. Despite this, FI coalesced with PD to support Mario Monti as a new PM. In Spain, PSOE and PP alternated in power in the pre-2015 political system. Similar to the Italian case, until 2004 the pro-European credential of the centre-right party were somehow undermined by the ambiguous stance of its leader José Maria Aznar toward EU institutions; still, PP has always endorsed supranational political integration, including the referendum on the European constitution. During the Great Recession, the Spanish traditional parties voted together the change of the article 135 of the Constitution on the balanced budget, as required by Fiscal Compact provisos, thus highlighting the

convergence on EU-related policies. In 2016, PSOE facilitated the genesis of Rajoy government with its abstention in the Parliament. To sum up this last paragraph, at the beginning of the Great Recession, the traditional parties had similar positions toward EU integration, while more or less openly Eurosceptic positions were marginal in the political system, the partial exception in this case being FI and Berlusconi ambiguous stance toward EU.

9.4 One thing in common: votes before anything else

As highlighted in the previous paragraph, Podemos, SYRIZA and FSM competed in different political systems which presented different political opportunity structures. Yet, what the analysis of the three case-studies has shown is the striking similarity in the pattern of competition before and after their breakthrough elections. Following the operationalization in Ch. 4 the three parties privileged a clear-cut vote-seeking strategy over office- and policy-seeking. The strategy worked for two cases – SYRIZA and FSM – while it was less effective for Podemos.

The de-emphasis of policy-specific contents is unsurprising in the case of FSM: the party is often regarded as an example of “pure” populism (Vittori 2017b), in which this thin-centred ideology prevails over other “core” ideologies. The liquidity of its web-populism (Corbetta and Gualmini 2012) was counterbalanced at the beginning by a strong environmentalism, which nonetheless was subordinated to classical anti-establishment topics such as the privileges of politicians, corruption, vested interests controlling the politics. As shown in the paragraph dedicated to the analysis of the ideology of FSM, the equal importance that the party gives in its manifestos to redistribution as well as on tax-cuts for small and medium entrepreneurs is indicative of party’s adaptation to its overall strategy, i.e. appealing to the widest possible electorate. Grillo’s mantra since the genesis of the blog was that “left” and “right” were outdated categories, which divided the country and whose relevance was less salient, since the parties which personified the ideologies were in no respect different. This attitude, albeit less marked, can be recorded also in the case of Podemos and, partially, in SYRIZA. The imprinting of Podemos’ genesis was the fight against political and economic corruption, as well as the de-emphasis of the left-right divide. Contrary to FSM, the marginalization of a core ideology was strategic: as Pablo Iglesias acknowledged, Podemos approach was instrumental to overcome left-isolationism; as being relegated to the left political spectrum would have alienated non-aligned voters as well as voters dissatisfied with PSOE, this move was primarily aimed at becoming “central”, rather than “centrist”, in the political competition. Still, once institutionalized in the political system, Podemos has shown its left-to-PSOE inclination through the electoral alliance with IU. This rapprochement with the radical-left caused a tense debate within the party, since one of the minority factions, headed by Iñigo Errejón, believed that this strategy would have isolated Podemos. The de-

emphasis of the left-wing credentials occurred also in SYRIZA, albeit less markedly than Podemos. SYRIZA during its rise to power constantly marginalized its emphasis on “the road to socialism”, preferring a broader anti-austerity appeal, in which few if any references were reserved to any radical transformation of the State and of the means of production. This was particularly true in the January 2015 electoral campaign: SYRIZA and its leader Alexis Tsipras proposed a political program aimed at fighting austerity, without questioning Greece’s permanence in the European Union. Rather the accent was on the restore of democracy and country’s dignity. As we have observed in the analysis of the ideology, Podemos and SYRIZA accentuated their left-sovereignism vis-à-vis supranational institutions, using the nation-state as a point of reference for the main policy reforms that both parties advocated.

Admittedly, it would be difficult to insert the three parties’ electoral campaigns in the capital-intensive pole, mainly because in all three cases the capitals that the party mobilized were relatively low. Still, their electoral campaigns were nor capital-intensive nor labour-intensive. FSM has never had mass-membership, nor it aspired to reach it, even though the leadership formally declared that FSM goal is to reach 1 million party members. Podemos among the three was the one with the widest membership; however, the strategy of the party was not centred on a labour-intensive campaign. On the other hand, SYRIZA aspired to create a mass-party, based on members’ mobilization; yet, its rootedness was much more limited, since it has never had more than (about) 30.000 members. Contrary to FSM and similarly Podemos, SYRIZA was much oriented toward linkage with civil society associations, in particular with those actors that tried to counter the effects of the economic crisis. Podemos and FSM electoral campaigns were oriented to capital-intensive electoral campaigns in the sense that both relied on both classical media tools and on-line social media to convey their messages. In the case of SYRIZA this attitude was much less developed. As for social-media activities, compared to other parties in their polities, Podemos and FSM were the most active in their own countries in Twitter, Facebook, YouTube: their accounts were the most followed among political parties and their on-line presence was reinforced by their digital platforms. The main difference between FSM and Podemos can be found in the ultimate goal that the two parties were trying to reach with their on-line presence: while for FSM, Internet has a liberating effect, which eventually would lead to the replacement of traditional forms of political representation, for Podemos, on-line presence it is mainly a tool for boosting participation and lowering down the costs of the electoral campaigns. SYRIZA too was very active compared to other Greek parties, but its rootedness and the use of social-media was limited. Despite these differences, the three parties share a vote-seeking strategy in the electoral campaign for their usage of the electoral campaign to draw a clear-cut line between “them”, i.e. traditional parties, and “us”, the new challengers. Their polarizing attitudes vis-à-vis traditional parties were particularly

intense before the acquisition of the “relevance” in the political systems. All three parties firmly stood against grand coalitions and criticize the cooperating attitude shown by social-democratic and conservative parties during the Great Recession.

The analysis of the pattern of competition shows that the area in which the three parties are closest is the one related to the alliances. In all three cases, the challenger parties, once acquired a blackmail potential used it to force traditional parties to form grand coalitions: it happened in Greece in 2012, when SYRIZA firstly refused to join PASOK and ND in an institutional government led by a technocrat and then forced PASOK to coalesce with ND to avoid a third election in one year. In 2013, it was FSM turn: the party rejected any cooperation with PD after the elections; in the first legislature, FSM proposed a cooperation to PD in only one case, i.e. during the election of the President of the Republic. Its non-cooperative stance caused a leadership change within PD and the formation of an oversized coalition with centre-right parties. Two years after Podemos had a similar attitude, even though the party showed a more cooperative stance at the sub-national level. After the 2015 elections, Podemos used its blackmail potential to force a choice within PSOE: either supporting the centre-right parties (C's and PP) or endorsing Podemos proposal (a coalition government with Podemos, IU and other “regionalist” parties). PSOE prioritized the relationship with C's, but it required to Podemos to support the agreement between PSOE and C's. Podemos launched an internal consultation on the coalition arrangement preferred by members: the coalition which included PSOE and other regionalist parties won with a landslide. The only options left for PSOE, then, were either a) forcing new elections denying the confidence to a PP-led government or b) supporting indirectly the PP through abstention in the vote of confidence session. The internal clash within PSOE leadership and regional leaders caused the resignation of the party leader and, more important, the abstention in the vote of confidence session in the Parliament. Among the three parties, Podemos is the only party that privileged a less-competitive stance vis-à-vis traditional parties (PSOE), once it had the possibility to oust conservative from the government. Indeed, the party supported a vote of no-confidence launched by PSOE. When SYRIZA and FSM had the possibility to cooperate with social-democratic parties, as a coalition *formateur*, preferred coalescing with non-traditional parties, ANEL and The League. In the latter case, however, social-democratic parties' leadership stood against the agreement with the challenger: while a SYRIZA-PASOK government was never in option in June 2015, FSM proposed a bargain with PD, which eventually failed before its start.

Podemos, SYRIZA and FSM share also another vote-seeking trait, i.e. the growing importance of the leadership vis-à-vis the Party in Central Office (and the Party on the Ground), albeit substantial differences have been detected in the analysis. In all three cases, the leaderships acquired more importance after the breakthrough elections and, despite the tensions within the parties, they

maintained the control on the party. In Podemos, leadership faced internal criticism over both the strategy of the party related to pre-electoral alliances and the hierarchization of organization. The leadership secured the majority during the second party congress, thus limiting the possibility of minorities within PCO and PPO to change party's structure. Yet, the Statute of the party "protects" the party from a complete takeover of the leadership. This possibility is much more unlikely within FSM, in which the organizational leadership (Casaleggio Associati), through the control of the on-line digital platform (Rousseau), cannot go under scrutiny. The party Statute grants substantial power to the political leadership, the so-called Capo Politico, but this figure is much more unstable than both the Party Guarantor, which is a for-life office, and Rousseau owner. Party Guarantor can go through a no-confidence procedure, but this procedure (and the Guarantor's control of the organs which should start this procedure) makes this possibility quite remote. In SYRIZA case, despite the leadership took control of the PCO and of the party in Government, the PCO is formally entitled to elect the leader and the political secretariat, the executive body of the PCO. However, leadership power is unbalanced in this case too: the party, in the tensest period since its existence, i.e. the approval of the new MoU after the victory in the referendum (July 2015), was marginalized by the party leadership and the party in Government, thus showing to what extent the leader was able to dictate party policies to other party faces. As for participatory techniques, FSM and Podemos present a vote-seeking pattern: in both cases, these consultations assumed a plebiscitarian connotation, even though within FSM this aspect is more marked, since no intermediate-bodies limit the control of the leadership on the direct-democracy tools. Contrary to SYRIZA, both parties made an extensive use of internal consultations on different aspects of party life. SYRIZA pattern is closer to the office-seeking: no participatory techniques were used since 2008, even though Alexis Tsipras threatened to use the internal referendum in July 2015 to prove that membership endorsed his position on the MoU. Despite this latter aspect, Podemos, SYRIZA and FSM privileged a vote-seeking strategy.

9.5 Divergent organizations, divergent evolutions?

9.5.1 The genesis: linking with social movements, in what ways

The three parties have had a close relationship with the mobilizations occurred in Spain, Greece and Italy during the Great Recession. Among the three, only SYRIZA was the one which was formally constituted before the crisis. In sharp contrast with FSM and only in partial similarity with Podemos, the political entrepreneurship of the SYRIZA project belongs to another political party, SYN. SYN pro-actively participated in alter-globalization movement in early 2000s and mobilized around this project other social actors, whose main aim was to re-collect non-KKE-aligned radical-left souls around a flexible alliance. SYRIZA participation in the social movements during the crisis enabled

the party to reconnect also with the civil society (Tsakatika and Eleftheriou 2013). SYRIZA, along with trade unions, was the most supportive political actor of the Syntagma mobilization in 2011. Podemos political entrepreneurship has a mixed origin: from one side, the radical-left Anticapitalist Left played a role in shaping Podemos project and, previously, in forging part of its elite. However, Podemos is also a by-product of the Indignados mobilization thanks to which part of its new elite took part in a collective political process that involved far more people than the members of the associations. What differentiates the two Indignados protests is the accent on democratic renovation and anti-corruption messages emerged in the Spanish movement: it was not just about the Recession, political institutions too (and, namely political parties) were to be transformed in the Indignados' perspective. Furthermore, the manifesto that launched the party for the European elections – *Mover Ficha* – was signed firstly by activists with heterogeneous political backgrounds with a common leftist denominator. While in country with a high level of centralization, such as Greece, the genesis through penetration is not surprising, in a highly decentralized country, such as Spain, the formation through penetration is more unexpected. Podemos entrepreneurship was centred in Madrid and then expanded outside the capital; however, Podemos smartly used local alliances with other movements in the CC.AA. elections to circumvent this potential problem. While Podemos and SYRIZA were connected, albeit in different ways, to bottom-up social movements, FSM leadership *headed* a top-down social movement, which was then transformed into a party. FSM did not take part into the mobilizations launched by other actors during the crisis and it had a (complicated) relationship with one of them (the Purple Movement). Still, through Grillo's blog and the 2007 and 2008 V-Days, G. Casaleggio and Grillo launched their own anti-corruption, anti-political privileges and anti-vested interests' movement: the mobilizations launched from Grillo's blog had less to do with the Great Recession and were much more related to corruption scandals erupted in Italy in those days. Corruption was one of the topics addressed by Greek and Spanish indignados, but the economic hardship of new generations was crucial too. In Italy, it was corruption the cornerstone of Grillo's mobilization; taking into consideration the importance of the genetic traits of the party in shaping party institutionalization and ideological consolidation (Panebianco 1988), it is unsurprising that, compared to Podemos and SYRIZA, FSM has given less attention to redistribution compared to Podemos and SYRIZA.

9.5.2 The party on the Ground: who participate? Different philosophies and different outcomes within SYRIZA, Podemos and FSM

Among the three cases, SYRIZA is the party where the Party on the Ground is closer to the traditional conception of this party face: members have to pay a fee and must be accepted by the Party in Central

Office, even though the interviewees highlight that is more a formality than a real check. On the contrary, in Podemos and FSM there are no annual fees; thus, those two parties have renounced to an important source of funding, preferring focusing on enrolling members through on-line procedures. This choice was intentional: as shown in ch. 7 and 8, both parties prioritized members' participation within the party through direct-democracy tools. Since members are believed to be the backbone of the parties, the parties preferred to lower down the barriers to enter in the party as much as possible. This choice had a drawback, i.e. the on-line membership expanded substantially in both cases, but on-line members were not certified off-line persons up until the two parties decided to review the enrolment procedure: on-line members were required to prove their off-line identity providing a valid ID. Only Podemos, among the three parties, was capable to attract a considerable number of members: in 2018, its total membership (about 500.000 members) outnumbered FSM membership of about 400.000 members, while SYRIZA lagged behind (about 30.000 members). SYRIZA claimed in this founding Statute to be a party of its members and, accordingly, the party tried to organize along a mass-party organization, but its effort had a limited impact, since the overall number of members, while not officially disclosed was stable since 2013. Off-line membership exists in all three cases and it is organized in local circles, which represent the basic unit of the parties; still, in FSM case these circles – the MeetUps – are officially outside the party organization and they have no rights within the party. On the other hand, in Podemos and SYRIZA, local circles do enjoy some important rights: within Podemos, circles among other functions, can sponsor candidates, force the Citizens' Assembly to convene, elect representatives in the Citizens' Assembly; within SYRIZA, beyond the daily political activities, local circles are mainly responsible for the elections of the delegates at the prefectural level for the Congress. Apart from the circles, these parties differ in the way members are involved in the decision-making. Within SYRIZA this function is underdeveloped compared to Podemos and FSM: the Greek party allows for the call of referenda among members, but insofar no referendum has been held within the party. On the other hand, Podemos and FSM are much more active; yet with important differences among the two cases.

These because in both cases the two parties started consulting the membership regularly on different issues related to the internal parties' matters: the main reason behind this choice was to avoid potential intruders voting in the consultations. In the FSM case, this meant resetting the previous membership and asking to members to re-enrol in the party. Moreover, both parties showed some concerns on consultations' turnout: since a low turnout would have risen criticisms on the overall participation within the party, Podemos and FSM opted for different strategies to adjust to a potential declining trend. In Podemos case, the party distinguished between active and inactive members, the latter being those who have not logged in the party's on-line platform in the previous year. In FSM, Casaleggio

Associati stopped releasing the number of the members entitled to vote, thus making impossible establishing the turnout.

FSM and Podemos have insofar shown a different conception of members' involvement. FSM tends to involve much more frequently the membership in online consultations compared to Podemos. In total, FSM members have voted in 75 ballots (as of October 2018), plus the regional primaries; Podemos in 16, including the party primaries and the leadership selection at the CC.AA. level. Moreover, FSM has insofar allowed the members to vote on much more issues (12) compared to Podemos (8). This is unsurprising in many respects: Podemos has a strong PCO and intermediate bodies at the regional levels, which have substantial room of manoeuvre according to the party statute. These bodies are absent in FSM, whose only official intermediate body created by Grillo and Casaleggio – the so-called Directorate – lasted only few months; thus, the leadership is unconstrained in the decision-making and can call for internal consultations at his/her wish. Secondly, through its on-line platform (Rousseau), FSM has developed a (quite complicated) system of bottom-up legislation – called Lex Iscritti through which members can propose and, then, vote laws proposed by other members – which insofar has been activated twelve times. Within Podemos on-line platform, the deliberative aspects are present, but they are marginal. When looking at the trend of the participation, in both cases it is possible to conclude that the participation as a wavering trend, since the parties were not able to constantly mobilize their own membership; rather the membership selectively choose to mobilize when issues related to party identity (such as the party statutes, the Congress, the alliances with other parties or the governing contract in the FSM case) are at stake. On the contrary, when members are asked to vote in time-consuming consultations, such as the party program, only the most active nucleus of the membership participates.

A tentative conclusion of this paragraph is that members, as Susan Scarrow (2015) has noted, are still an important part of political parties: challenger parties are not an exception. Since they emphasized the difference with traditional parties, all of them claimed to give centrality to the Party on Ground. In the case of SYRIZA, this is true, when looking at the linkage that the party created with social movements and grassroots actors. However, the party's capability to attract new members was limited, even because its enrolment procedure is not as innovative as in the cases of Podemos and FSM, where membership is free of cost and the on-line procedures make the enrolment quite intuitive. Podemos and FSM are similar also in their ability to create new types of membership and to give to one type – the on-line membership – a say on several decisions concerning the party. Still the structured organization of Podemos limits the usage of direct-democracy. On the other hand, FSM relies heavily on its on-line platform for both its decision-making (Internal consultations and Lex Iscritti) and legislation-making (Lex Parlamento, Lex Europa and Lex Regioni).

9.5.3 Less important than ever: The Party in Central Office loses ground vis-à-vis party leadership in the challenger parties

The Party in Central Office is the party face in which the three challengers differ the most. SYRIZA's PCO has had a crucial role in shaping the party before its unification into a single party: basically, it functioned as a chamber of representation for the different parties, associations and tendencies. When the founding actors merged within SYRIZA, it was expected that the PCO would have become the backbone of the party. As a party that encouraged tendencies and (cooperative) factionalism to overcome traditional leftist isolationism, the PCO was the most suitable party face to give representation to the different souls within the party, since the PPO was not as representative as the PCO. Nonetheless, when the SYRIZA formed the government in January 2015, the party face which took over was the PPO: this occurred because parties' factions had a blackmail potential. Not only was the party isolated during the bargain between the Troika and the SYRIZA-led government, as the interviewees have confirmed, but the PCO was marginalized both when the government decided to call for a referendum and to sign the MoU in the aftermath of the Referendum. In line with the tendency that Katz and Mair (1994) identified for European parties, it was, thus, the PPO and, then, the Party in Government that replaced the PCO as the most important party face within SYRIZA. The fact the party secretary – elected in the second congress without any contender – is also Greek PM increases the unbalanced relationship between the Party in Government and PCO. As for SYRIZA's Central Committee (CC), the State Citizens' Council (CCE) is the highest representative body of Podemos; however, contrary to SYRIZA in which the Central Committee is elected by party delegates during the Congress, the CEE is elected by the whole membership. Compared to SYRIZA, Podemos has been much more attentive both to gender quotas since almost 50% of the CEE's members are woman and to avoiding the overlap between the PPO and PCO. While in SYRIZA the number of CC members who holds an office at both the executive and legislative level has increased due to a modification of the party statute proposed in the second congress, Podemos has more members coming from the sub-national level (including four members elected by the party circles and 17 CC.AA. party leaders). More important, Podemos PCO proved to be the main field of confrontation between party factions/tendencies: even though Iglesias leadership was almost unchallenged in the two congresses, he and his majority faction tried hard to control also the PCO in order to exercise a control over the party. The removal of the CCE member responsible for party organization, who was close to Errejón-led faction, proved that PCO was a crucial party face within the party. FSM displays a divergent organization, since the PCO is identified with party leadership: FSM has always

emphasized its rejection of any form of intermediation between members and the leaders; more than that, the party since its genesis claimed that the PoG was the ultimate sovereign face in the party. The institutionalization attempt of a new PCO with the creation of the Directorate failed; nor the supporting staff of the party leader became a separate organ within the party. The common pattern highlighted in the three case studies is that the party leadership has progressively acquired more relevance after the electoral breakthroughs. Nonetheless, not only did these parties presented different kinds of leaderships, but above all their role within the organization was different. As for SYRIZA, the analysis shows that party secretary Alexis Tsipras grew up within party cadres as member of the left minority; its rise was possible when the former SYN party secretary Alekos Alavanos resigned (2008) as party secretary, after having gained the majority in the Left-Turn congress (2004). Tsipras was more a party leader, than mediatized figure, such as Pablo Iglesias or Beppe Grillo: Tsipras climbed the party hierarchy, starting from the communist youth and the student union. When he joined the alter-globalization movement, he was still incapsulated within SYN. When he succeeded in the elections as party leader (2012), he started a process of centralization of the party, founding SYRIZA as a unified party, and then maintained the control of the party, serving at the same time as PM and party secretary. Similar to Tsipras, Pablo Iglesias had a record of mobilization in the alter-globalization movement, but he was never a party figure: he served as external consultant for IU, but he was never integrated in IU. According to the bulletin of IA, Iglesias was the mediatized figure that was necessary for a new political project to be recognizable outside the small circuit of the political left. As head of the party in the list for the European elections (2014), Iglesias became the “face” of Podemos and, since October 2014, its undisputed leader. However, the collective political entrepreneurship of Podemos and the bottom-up deliberative experience acquired by other party founders, partially limited the personalization of the party. As in the case of SYRIZA and FSM, the institutionalization of the party in the political system, accelerated Iglesias consolidation within the party: he won the PM-selection (2015) and the party leadership (2017) with a landslide. The decentralization of the Spanish institutional system “constrained” the centralization of the party at the state level: the party structures at the CC.AA. level formally enjoy a relevant autonomy. In this sense, the national leadership of Podemos is more constrained than SYRIZA: yet, in the last the leadership was reinforced too within Podemos. The consolidation of Iglesias power was a by-product of a) the major disagreements between him and Iñigo Errejón about the party strategy and, allegedly, the party leadership and, probably, b) the Catalan issue. Errejón was the head of the political strategy section within the party and controlled key figures within Podemos. He controlled the party structure up until the fracture with Iglesias: the disputed was resolved in favour of Iglesias during the second Congress. The hierarchization within the party that some interviewees and the minority faction lamented became

more evident after the second Congress and the disagreements emerged within Podem Catalunya on the CC.AA. elections in 2017 and, related to this, on secession's issue: the CC.AA. party secretary was forced to resign, and Iglesias visited personally Catalunya to control centripetal forces within the party.

FSM leadership coincided until 2015-2017 with the political entrepreneurs of the party, Beppe Grillo and G. Casaleggio. Grillo represented the political leadership, not only because he embodied the head of the party in the 2013 elections, but mostly because, as Iglesias, he was the recognizable face of the party or the “megaphone” of the Movement, as he was called within the party. The diarchy was unconstrained due to both the absence of any intermediate body and the control of the leadership of key resources, such as the party symbol, through other associations created by Grillo and Casaleggio formally unrelated with the party. The PPO was subordinated to Casaleggio Associati and MPs, MEPs and FSM mayors were forced to sign a private contract with FSM on the code of conduct to be respected when in office. The short-lived Directorate was proposed and dissolved by Grillo and Casaleggio, so as the expulsions of MPs and regional/local councillors were proposed by Grillo and Casaleggio and ratified by the membership. Contrary to Podemos, decentralization was never an issue for the party: as Podemos, the party was created through penetration, rather than diffusion, but in the Italian case the centralization was maintained throughout the institutionalization process and any centripetal forces that threatened leadership monopoly of party crucial resources were isolated and sometimes forced to leave the party. The structure was maintained in the last party internal reforms, with only one relevant modification, i.e. the transformation of Beppe Grillo from head of the party to party Guarantor. The Guarantor has the back-end organizational leadership of the party, while D. Casaleggio controls the on-line platform, through the association that launched Rousseau. Luigi Di Maio, as Head of the Party, represents the political leadership of the party, as he controls the PPO. Contrary to Podemos and SYRIZA, in which the “political” leader is also the “organizational” leader, here the leadership is split and, paradoxically, the political leadership is the less stable compared to the two founders.

9.5.4 Can we control the party? It depends. The marginalization of the Party in Public Office

As recently institutionalized parties, it is difficult to evaluate the power of the PPO vis-à-vis other party faces: in all three cases, several PPO members elected in the breakthrough elections were unexperienced politicians, with little or no experience in Parliamentary daily routine. Since the “oldest” relevant group was the one of SYRIZA in 2012, it is unsurprising that PPO remained (partially) at the margin in all three cases. However, some tentative conclusions can be drawn from

the analysis of the previous chapters, the most important being that, despite being of secondary importance in the party organizational institutionalization, there are some relevant differences among the three cases: as highly structured party, it was to be expected that SYRIZA and Podemos gave pre-eminence to the Party in Central Office, while in FSM it was PPO that would take over vis-à-vis other party faces. In all three cases, it was the leadership that acquired relevance, even though PCO resisted as a crucial party face within Podemos and, partially, within SYRIZA. Within FSM, the absence of a structured PCO, on the other hand, led to the submission of the PPO to the party leadership. SYRIZA is the only case in which the PPO tried to overcome the pre-eminence of the political leadership (and, consequently, of the Party in the Government). After the left minority withdrew from SYRIZA, founding its own party, the PPO was stabilized and no major criticisms have emerged in the following legislature. The overlapping of the PM and the SYRIZA party secretary restricted the room of manoeuvre of the PPO. The fact that the Statute of the party guarantees a control of the PCO over the PPO has not prevented that the minority faction within PPO defected from the decision adopted in the Central Committee. In this sense, the subordination of the PPO to party leadership in SYRIZA after the Referendum is similar to what happened in FSM case, when several MPs and Senators protested against lack of internal democracy in the party. The difference being that FSM expelled reluctant representatives, while left minority faction left the party voluntarily. FSM's PPO has always been subordinated to the party leadership. Although the interviewees confirm that they are not influenced by Grillo and Casaleggio in the policy-making, the only constraint being the political manifesto, Grillo and Casaleggio intervened in sensitive issues, such as immigration, forcing MPs to review critical their positions. The fact that a formal PCO is absent within FSM make impossible to compare its potential role with that of the PPO. What is to be expected is that, once disagreements on party's strategies emerge, the lack of a PCO would shift the disagreement "outside" the party, i.e. in the PPO where MPs may use their blackmail potential to force the leadership to implement reforms. Up until now, the criticisms emerged within PPO were resolved through the marginalization of critical PPOs members.

Podemos PPO is rather marginal compared to the relevance of the PCO; as shown in ch. 6 the main disputes occurred within the PCO, whose control is crucial for party internal life. In the Spanish case, no significant fractures related to the policy-making and the strategy to be pursued in the Parliament emerged within the PPO. Since the votes of no-confidence to PP were pre-emptively approved by the membership in internal consultations and, accordingly, it is up the PCO or the party secretary to call for an internal consultation in a relatively short amount of time, it was not possible for the PPO deciding its own strategy. Its overlapping with the PCO is only partial: 49% of PPO members is either in a political or executive body of the party at the national level.

9.5.5 How to select leaders and party representatives: between inclusion and top-down implementation

Leaders and candidate selections are different in the three parties and, compared to other European and Non-European cases (Sandri et al. 2015), not dissimilar for both the procedure and the outcomes. SYRIZA is the only case where primaries for the candidate selection did not take place: candidates were proposed at both the prefectural and central levels and approved by the PCO, which indicates the party secretary as the PM candidate.

The leadership selection, on the other hand, took place, as in the case of Podemos, during the party Congress. However, contrary to Podemos' case, in which all (active) members can vote, only the party national delegates have the voting right. FSM case is deviant: since 2017, FSM introduced a leadership selection open to the membership with some restriction based on the enrolment date of the members, but the leader of the party (the so-called *Capo Politico*) is not elected during Congresses. In all three cases, the outcomes were plebiscitarian, as no real challengers run against the favourite candidates (Tsipras for SYRIZA, Iglesias for Podemos and Di Maio for FSM): this is line with what Sandri et al. (2015) findings on leadership selection. In the three parties, this selection is more "symbolic" than competitive. Plebiscitarianism is less evident in the sub-national leadership selection: in Podemos case, the selection in fifteen CC.AA. proved to be more competitive: although in some cases (Catalunya, Andalusia, Murcia, Asturias) the distance between the winner and the best loser was remarkable, in some other cases the competition was close (Basque Countries, Madrid, Cantabria). I could not access to the data of sub-national level leadership selection within SYRIZA. PCO selection is different in the three cases: as for SYRIZA's CC, Podemos' PCO is elected during the Congress, but in the Spanish case the selectorate is composed by the whole membership, while only delegates have the voting-right in SYRIZA. As shown in the Ch. 6 and 7, the two cases differ also in the modality of the election: Podemos uses a modified Borda's method, while SYRIZA has a proportional representation of the list voted in the Congress. FSM members voted for the creation of the Directorate (the Party PCO), but there are no organs similar to Podemos' CCE and SYRIZA's CC. Podemos and FSM elect also other party's organs, such as the Guarantee Committees (Podemos and FSM) and the Probiviri Committee (FSM): in both cases the selectorate is represented by the membership. Yet, Podemos candidates are voted during the CEE and are formally independent from the lists presented in the Congresses for the CEE election; in FSM case, it is up to the Guarantor to propose the candidates for the other party's organs, thus indicating that in the Italian case, the other party's organs, albeit elected by the members, are under the control of the party leadership. FSM and

SYRIZA has not party primaries for selecting the PM candidates: in FSM case, the Head of the Party is automatically the PM candidate, but this automatism is in place as far as the electoral laws force political parties and coalitions to indicate this figure for the election (art. 7a, Movimento 5 Stelle 2017). FSM and Podemos have an identical selectorate in all other representatives' selections, i.e. the membership of the institutional level involved in the election. The competition for the selection of a) sub-national candidates and b) the president of CC.AA./Italian regions is closer than the national level. In both FSM and Podemos, the participation to these sub-national consultations was particularly low. Party primaries for MPs selection have had a low turnout in two of the three cases under analysis, i.e. Podemos primaries in 2015 (16%) and FSM (28% for the Deputies); the very first primaries held by FSM in 2012 stood as an exception to this trend (64%). However, these primaries were the very first on-line voting experiment for FSM and for a political party in Italy and the selectorate was quite limited (about 31.000 members): the high turnout should be considered in this case an exception, rather than the norm, as testified by the low average turnout of other FSM internal consultations. Going back to the analytical framework designed in Ch. 4, some conclusions can be drawn: in all cases, participation to the leadership-selection is not inclusive: participation is restricted to either delegates or party members and in some cases, not all members can cast a vote, since in the FSM case restrictions apply for the registration date of the members. As for candidates' selections at national and sub-national levels, only FSM opened up the participation of non-members in the selection, even though this happened only for 2018 primaries and for a very limited number of cases. Nonetheless, SYRIZA inserted in their lists non-members, i.e. members of the civil society or long-standing activists not enrolled in the party, while Podemos combined its primary results with other parties' candidates for drawing its electoral lists. Party primaries (FSM and Podemos) and leadership-selection (Podemos) at sub-national level are "decentralized" in both Podemos and FSM since only members living in a given area (CC.AA. or Italian region) are entitled to vote. In contrast with leadership-selection at the national level, these primaries were much more competitive. This competitiveness strengthens the impression that the balance of power at the national level favour the leadership: challenging the majority of the party is costly, since the leadership has access to key resources, the most important being his/her visibility in the media. At the sub-national level, this asymmetry, albeit present, is reduced and members are given the possibility to select among more than one "eligible" candidate. Overall, albeit claiming to spark direct-democracy and inclusiveness, these challenger parties were reluctant to open up the selection processes outside party borders. Despite this partial lack of inclusiveness, in two cases, Podemos and FSM, members were entitled to vote for the selection of several party organs' and candidates, as in few (if any) other cases happened. As highlighted in the analysis of the turnout of the internal consultation, however, the participation

to these processes did not match the expectation of a massive involvement of the membership.

Table 9.1 – Leadership, candidates party’s organs selection within SYRIZA, Podemos and FSM. () indicates the selectorate.

	Leader selection (national level)	Leader selection (sub-national level)	PCO selection (highest political body)	Party internal organs’ selection	Party primaries (national level)	Party primaries (sub-national level)	Party primaries (MPs selection)	Party primaries (councillors’ selection)
Podemos	Yes (members)	Yes (members)	Yes (members)	Yes (members)	Yes (members)	Yes (members of each region)	Yes (members)	Yes (members of each region)
SYRIZA	Yes (delegates)	Yes (delegates)	Yes (delegates)	No	No	No	No	No
FSM	Yes (members)	No	No**	Yes (members)	No*	Yes (members of each region)	Yes (members)	Yes (members of each region)

* the leader becomes the “Capo Politico”, but there is not a primary selection in the formal meaning of the term. Members vote for the PM candidate. **There is not a proper PCO within FSM, with the partial exception of the Directorate.

9.5.6 How to deal with disagreement: three divergent cases of factionalism

SYRIZA and FSM represent two opposite poles when analysing factionalism. Within SYRIZA factionalism has been tolerated and somewhat encouraged; FSM leadership, on the other hand, prevented the formation of any faction and even tendencies within the party. Paradoxically, the different behaviour had similar goal, i.e. maintaining the party unity, which is regarded as crucial variable for party’s electoral performance (Bolleyer 2013). SYRIZA born with the aim to overcome traditional divisions between the radical-left souls that populated the left-to-PASOK political space; SYN’s effort to grant representation to all social actors that adhered to SYRIZA served this goal: an FSM-like behaviour would have alienated all those actors that cared about their independence and their autonomy in their internal decision-making. When SYRIZA became a unified party, it tried to preserve this tradition, allowing the formation of factions within the party, thus dropping the democratic centralism that characterized several communist parties in Europe: what SYRIZA tried to prevent, though, was the formation of factions with a party-within-the-party’s behaviour, i.e. factions with its own structure and organization. This openness to factionalism did not prevent the transformation of the cooperative factionalism that characterized the beginning of SYRIZA in competitive and degenerative factionalism. Indeed, two major splits – one from the moderate faction and one from the left faction – threatened the party solidity: the split from the moderate faction

occurred for the disagreement in the participation within a Grand Coalition government, that the majority of the party refused; the other on the Tsipras' agreement on the third MoU. Despite this, tendencies – rather than factions – still exist in SYRIZA: albeit the majority faction proved to be dominant, in the second Congress they got their representation in the Central Committee. Within FSM, the leadership preferred to pre-emptively avoid the debate about the party organization. As testified by several expulsions of non-orthodox party representatives at local and regional levels, Grillo and G. Casaleggio were always attentive in showing their rigidity on the alleged attempt to create factions and tendencies within the party. The interviewees have confirmed that in order to avoid the emergence of centripetal forces, the leadership preferred to “sacrifice” the debate within the party to preserve party unity. After 2013, the rigid control of the leadership toward internal fractionalization continued as before: Grillo was scared that the Parliamentarian group ended up being divided as the groups in both branches of the Parliament was unexperienced. It is, thus, unsurprising that Grillo soon after the elections anticipated that “bad apples” would have probably been elected within FSM, since it was impossible to control all MPs in advance: several MPs, MEPs and regional councillors left either voluntarily or not the party, criticizing the excessive centralization of the party. Contrary to SYRIZA, factionalism has been considered a threat to party unity, even though there are no provisos that forbid the formation of internal groups within the party. Between SYRIZA and FSM stands Podemos: the party has been accused of excessive hierarchization by several critical members and by minority factions. However, tendencies and factions do exist within Podemos. Since different political “souls” animated the party genesis, many of them coming from a leftist deliberative-oriented background, this was to be expected. Nonetheless, the party was characterized since its first congress by a rally-around-the-leader tendency. After a first cooperative period (2014-2015), factionalism turned into a competitive fight for the control of the party strategy. The first embryonic faction was the anti-capitalist faction that presented its own organizational, ethical and political documents in the first congress. The second born after the alliance with IU and the unsatisfactory electoral results in 2016. This faction – led by Iñigo Errejón – created its own informal structure within the party, but it failed to challenge the majority in the second congress. The tension produced by this division was particularly acute during the second congress: it threatened the party and highlighted the divergent strategies among factions: the anti-capitalist and the majority faction favoured a left-leaning Podemos, while Errejón faction advocated a “populist” option, beyond the traditional left and right poles.

The three parties presented different attitudes toward factionalism: these attitudes are related to the political background of the parties. For SYRIZA, the internal factionalism was a way to overcome democratic centralism and stimulate a debate among different left souls, while FSM albeit rejecting

the label of a leadership-led party and promoting at the same time bottom-up democracy, was the party that closely represented a new version of (democratic) centralism, in which the leadership stops any attempt to jeopardize party unity. Podemos, on the other hand, has tried to balance the bottom-up deliberative democracy with the control exercised by the leadership over factions. This has brought tensions within the party: however, since the leadership has been undisputed insofar, competitive factionalism has never transformed into a degenerative factionalism.

9.5.7 We don't want your money: are challengers "parsimonious" parties?

As the paragraph dedicated to the analysis of the ideologies will show, the fight against corruption and for transparency in party founding has been a common trait for those three parties. Have these principles been translated into practice? Yes, with differences related to the role that the State should have in promoting party democracy according to the three parties. All three parties decided to devote part of their MPs salary either for non-profit actions (SYRIZA and Podemos) or to support start-ups through a Ministerial fund (FSM); another party of the salary of the three parties' MPs is devoted to party activity; in the FSM case, this part of the salary goes to supporting Rousseau platform. For Podemos and FSM the reduction of the MPs salary was a qualifying point of their program, which was aimed at reducing alleged political privileges. SYRIZA relies conspicuously on public funding: as Greek public funding is distributed according the electoral results of the parties (as it is the case for Spain and it was before 2014 for Italy), SYRIZA is now the party that in the legislature 2015-2019 has received the highest share of money. Contrary to FSM and similarly to Podemos, SYRIZA has never claimed to renounce to public funding once it got entitled to receive them: similar to Podemos, public funding for SYRIZA are a way to reduce the influence of private donors. Rather, the party criticized the excessive debts contracted by traditional parties with private banks. The report on public funding status elaborated by the SYRIZA-ANEL government has highlighted that, contrary to Podemos and FSM, the party has had loans from banks, but the loans have been repaid and are considered as sustainable. Once in government, SYRIZA has adopted measures to limit private donation to political parties. Podemos, on the other hand, while sharing with SYRIZA the support for public funding, has always rejected banks' loans, as it would have meant creating a conflict of interest with powerful economic actors. Podemos is increasingly relying on public funding, since it had access to it: as there are no fees for members, the party has always relied on micro-donations for its sustainment. However, while the total amount of Podemos annual expenditures grew, the share of micro-donations decreased substantially from 2015 to 2017. FSM represents an exception not only among the three cases, but among political parties in general: FSM endorsed the abolition of public funding to political parties and criticized the intertwined interests between economic actors and

political parties. As for Podemos, the party cannot rely on members' fee, thus the party is founded only through donations (FSM launched several fundraising campaigns for funding annual FSM meeting), since MPs' salary devoted to party's support is used for platform Rousseau. The association which manages FSM symbol, on the other hand, is apparently an empty box. Still, FSM uses public funding for MPs activity and for corresponding a salary to MPs assistants: the number of assistants has grown markedly from 2013 to 2018.

9.5.8 How to interpret new movement parties' organizations? A conclusion and framework for analysis

In this concluding paragraph, I will address the issue of the party organization (Table 9.2): which are the most relevant features that characterize SYRIZA, Podemos and FSM? The literature (Della Porta et al. 2017, Chironi and Fittipaldi 2017, Ceccarini and Bordignon 2017) has defined these parties as movement parties, since they all have had link with social movements: however, the previous paragraphs have shown that their organizations differs markedly. I use the three case-studies as *types* of different movement parties' organizations and I provide a framework for analysis for other parties similar to these ones.

Podemos and FSM's origins are linked to social movement mobilizations, in which democratic renovation and anti-corruption messages were an important (Spain) or a crucial (Italy) element; SYRIZA on the other hand participated to the mobilizations as one actor among the others involved. FSM differentiates from Podemos for its clear-cut top-down and dual entrepreneurship: in Podemos top-down elements existed too, but they were less preponderant than FSM. Thus, it is unsurprising that Podemos and FSM were influenced by the political practices developed during the mobilizations (Podemos) and by the leadership's political principles (FSM) on political participation. These genetical traits coupled with the importance attributed to the web by FSM leadership and some sectors of Podemos elites distinguish the use of direct-democracy tools within these parties and the less membership-oriented organization of SYRIZA. Genetical traits influenced also the (crucial) role of the leadership and the absence of a PCO within FSM and the importance attributed to PCO by SYRIZA since its formation. A highly centralized organization is not in line with Podemos genesis due to both the multi-level Spanish institutional arrangements and the bottom-up participatory practices of Indignados movement. Still, in order to balance centralization, the party has developed a capillary organization with local circles and regional assemblies, in which both deliberative aspects of the decision-making and decentralization are developed. Rather, the overall centralization can be explained through the genesis by penetration, rather than diffusion, of the party. Factionalism is strictly related to party political cultures, strategies and leaderships of the three parties. It is thus to

be expected that a hierarchical movement, such as FSM, has less toleration for factions than SYRIZA, for which openness to debate is a strategic choice and a post-communist cultural trait. This is in line with the conception of democracy envisaged by FSM: the “people” as a unified actor – and the atomized members, who participate in the decision-making – cannot be separated or influenced by factions and by a central office. Within SYRIZA, factions are a sign of respect of different visions of the world within the party. A direct elections of party organs and representative is in line with empowerment of the members, which Podemos and FSM endorsed: an organization in which members are the ultimate sovereign of the party should elect not only the leader, but also all party’s organs. With one difference: one-third of FSM is not under-scrutiny (Casaleggio), one-third has substantial protection derived from the party statute (the Guarantor) and one-third is more likely to be removed by the leadership, than by the membership. In Podemos, albeit leadership has a significant margin of manoeuvre in mobilizing the membership, the PCO is crucial for the leadership to stay safely in power. Genetical traits and political cultures are crucial for public funding management: the two parties in which State intervention is praised the most, Podemos and SYRIZA, accept public funding for their financing. The parties whose success is also linked to fight against corruption, Podemos and FSM, are more inclined to show parsimony in using public funding and avoiding loan and funding from private actors.

Before moving to the analysis of these parties’ as movement parties’ ideal-types, it is now time to briefly go back to the Gunther and Diamond (2001 and 2003) work to draw some conclusions about the similarities between these movement parties (see also the following paragraph) and other “classical” parties’ structures. SYRIZA structure is more similar to a centralized cadre-party, i.e. a party with mass-party structure and a weak membership, less involvement of membership in decision-making outside the Congress and a structural reliance on public funding. Podemos, on the other hand, resembles a mass-party structure at least for its conspicuous (on-line) membership, the local and national configuration of the party faces and the structure of its public funding. Still, contrary to old-mass parties, Podemos introduced direct-democracy tools in its decision-making: in some regards, Podemos movement-like organization can be defined as a post-class mass-party. FSM, finally, resembles a personalistic party organization: despite the party was able to successfully manage the transition from the founding dual leadership (Grillo and G. Casaleggio) to another tripartite leadership (Grillo, Di Maio and D. Casaleggio), the party maintain its vertical structure, in which the balance of power favour the party leadership, rather than the PPO and PCO. Direct-democracy in this case seems more functional as a plebiscitarian tool in the hand of the leadership to grant to the leadership the control over potential conflicts coming from the PPO.

Table 9.2 – Challenger parties’ organizations. Own elaboration. * Most similar organization, other than movement party organization.

	<i>Most similar organization*</i>	<i>PoG</i>	<i>PPO</i>	<i>PCO</i>	<i>Factionalism</i>	<i>Candidate and leadership selection</i>	<i>Public Funding</i>
SYRIZA	Cadre-party	Ancillary role; the party has not invested in mass enrollment. Limited voting-right	Has had a crucial role when it had a blackmail potential.	Formally crucial the PCO; leadership took over after electoral breakthrough	Encouraged	Closed. Only delegates can select the leader.	Accepted; bank loans accepted; limitation to private funding introduced when in government
Podemos	Mass-party	Extensive voting-right through on-line platform. Mass (free) enrolment: limited mobilization	Subordinated to PCO and party leadership.	PCO crucial for party control. However, the party leadership has always been more relevant	Accepted	Candidates and national/ sub national leader(s) selected through closed primaries.	Accepted; bank loans refused; micro-donations decreased since the party genesis.
FSM	Personalistic party	Extensive voting-right through on-line platform. Weak enrolment and limited mobilization	Subordinated to party leadership	PCO absent. Dual leadership (until 2017) controls the party	Albeit not forbidden, it was pre-emptively stopped by the leadership	One of the three leaders, MPs, MEPs and regional councilors elected through closed primaries. Sub-national leaders absent.	Refused; Micro-donations used for funding rallies.

9.5.8.1 A framework for analysing different movement parties

As shown in the previous paragraphs, the organization of these parties, albeit genetically linked to social movement, differs in some relevant respect. Since movement-party-like organizations are now emerging across Europe (Pirate Parties in Czech Republic and Iceland, Alternativiet in Germany, Živi zid in Croatia), I construct a framework for the analysis of movement parties. Firstly, I build a dichotomy, which is to be interpreted as a heuristic tool to distinguish the genetic differences of movement parties. As party genesis is crucial to identify the institutionalization process and the overall party organization (Panebianco 1988), the *fundamentum divisionis* (Marradi 1990: 137) is the genetic model: genuinely new parties are the by-product of a political mobilization, while already existent party are part of the political system at the time of the mobilization. As acknowledged by

Kitschelt (2006), (genuinely new) movement parties may display different decision-making feature, mainly depending on the role played by the party élite, i.e. *political entrepreneur(s)*, in promoting, financing and mobilizing the activists. The second line of distinction, which applies to genuinely new parties only, since already existent party are supposed to have already undertaken its institutionalization process, is the role of the elites in the genetic phase: from the one hand, the political entrepreneurship may be diffused, i.e. leadership is not restricted to few entrepreneurs; from the other hand, the political entrepreneurship is concentrated in one or very few people. The result of the genetic dichotomy plus the further leadership dichotomization, is a three ideal-types table (Table 9.3): a) the horizontal movement party (HMP), which is a genuinely new party in which the balance of power in the élite is diffused; b) the vertical movement party (VMP), in which the political entrepreneurship is concentrated among very few people and thirdly, c) the party within the movement (PWM), in which members of an already existing party participate in the social movement.

Table 9.3 – Three movement parties’ ideal-types		
<i>Genetic model</i>		
Genuinely New Parties		Already Existent Parties
Diffuse élite	Concentrated élite	<i>Party within the Movement (PwM)</i>
<i>Horizontal Movement Party (HMP)</i>	<i>Vertical Movement Party (VMP)</i>	

The six categories identified in the research design delineate then the ideal-types of each organization (Table 9.4). I have already insisted on the importance of different geneses (1) in determining party institutionalization: in HMP and VMP, the difference lays in the collective or restricted entrepreneurship during or after the mobilization, while in PWM it precedes the mobilization. Whether or not politically and culturally homogenous, the (2) Party on the Ground in HMP is expected to be socialized in the “social movement’s practices” (Kriesi et al. 1995, Della Porta 2007, Della Porta and Diani 2006) and to display a well-grounded criticism toward traditional representative democracy (Della Porta 2001, 2012 and 2013, Kitschelt 1993). This was true for example for the most recent alter-globalization mobilizations (Kriesi and Della Porta 1998, Kriesi 2002, Della Porta and Mosca 2003, Della Porta 2007). Then, members in HMPs are the backbone of the party, since giving an overwhelming power to other faces is an obstacle to bottom-up deliberative or direct democracy. The same theorization can be applied to VMPs: however, in these cases, the power granted to party members depend on the hostility of the leadership to traditional form of intermediate representation. On the contrary, in PWM the role of the PoG is determined by the previous balance of power and by

the formal rules envisaged in the party statutes; yet, it is to be expected that the participation of a party in a social movement leads to the co-optation of part of the activists within the party. Similarly, in both HMP and VMP, the role of the (3) PPO is subordinated to the PCO; this because, despite the concentration of the entrepreneurship among the élite or among a restricted circle, the PPO, at least in its first years of activities, is dependent from the PCO, which has determined its election. In already existent parties, the most visible figures of the mobilization may be co-opted within the party as a way to testify the closeness between the social movement and the party. What changes in the genuinely new party when it comes to the concentration of power within the (4) PCO is the role of the élite entrepreneurship. In HMP, the PCO should be a reflection of the cohesiveness of the PoG: it should function as a non-institutionalized, open and comparatively wide organ, which is aimed at avoiding an unbalanced concentration of power. In VMP, the PCO has a greater autonomy vis-à-vis the other two faces, since the restricted entrepreneurial élite possesses the crucial mobilizing resources of the party, while in HMP the resources are shared among a higher number of members. On the other hand, the previous institutionalization is a decisive factor in establishing the role of the PCO and PPO in PWM; however, the pressures coming from the involvement of the members in the social movement is expected to lead to the opening-up of PCO toward new members and, possibly, to new decision-making procedures.

The distinction among HMP and VMP should be reflected also in the importance of (5) factionalism and (6) the candidate-selection procedure. HMP displays a diffuse power within the élite; thus, cooperative or competitive factionalism – depending on the cohesiveness of the élite – is crucial to establish checks and balances within the party and to provide to the different sensibilities within the élite an established channel of communication with the membership. In particular, factions and tendencies within HMP should be allowed and respected, as it is the case – in principle at least – in the democratic assemblies within a social movement (Della Porta 2013, Giugni 1998 and 1999, Tarrow 2011). In the VMP case, on the contrary, the emergence of (competitive) factions is a threat for the restricted élite and, for that reason, once factions emerge more or less openly, they display a degenerative character, which could lead to the ‘exit’ option or to the disintegration of the party. In PWM, the recognition and the acceptance of factionalism depends on previous arrangements: however, during the mobilization, once the decision to join or support a social movement is not shared by part of the élite, the likelihood of the emergence of competitive or even degenerative factionalism increases. The latter case is more likely if the participation to a social movement is seen by part of the élite as a threat to its role within the party. Finally, the candidate and the leadership selection in both HMP and VMP is open to the members and to the sympathiser in terms of both active and passive electorate. This because social movements tend to reject the Burkean concept of elected members as

trustee advocating the direct democracy procedures to take decisions selects candidates; elected members are delegates, who should be selected transparently and allowing the activists to decide over its representative. Thus, primary elections, open to the whole electorate or at least the whole membership are the main instrument which are supposed to be used by those parties. However, in VMP the risk of a plebiscitarian drift is more likely, since the restricted élite needs to control the candidates and the local leaders in order to maintain its favourable balance of power within the party. In the HMP, candidate and leadership selections may serve to factions as a way to legitimate their strength vis-à-vis the other components if the PCO is weakly institutionalized and unwilling to “measure” the strength of the factions. In PWM, it is to be expected and opening up of the selectorate – if it is not already open – in the candidate-selection procedure as well as the co-optation of social movement members as potential new candidates for the party.

Table 9.4 – Difference within movement parties in all the aspects their organization.			
	Horizontal Movement Party (HMP)	Vertical Movement Party (VMP)	Party within the Movement (PwM)
1. Genesis	Influenced by the future elite’s activism within the movement.	Influenced by political entrepreneurs and their conception of the movement and party	Depending on the previous institutionalization.
2. Party on the Ground (PoG)	Backbone of the party, due to the élite activism in the movement. Risk of plebiscitarian drift in the VMP		Involved in the social movement after party elite decision to join the movement.
3. Party in Public Office (PPO)	When present, its role is subordinated to PoG and PCO.		Depends on previous institutionalization.
4. Party in Central Office (PCO)	Only partially institutionalized; it is dependent on the cohesiveness of the PoG and the elite.	Crucial due to the role of the restricted elite in the party’s entrepreneurship.	Possible co-optation: its role depends on the previous institutionalization.
5. Factionalism	Recognition of different factions: cooperative or competitive depending on the institutionalization process	Low level of factionalism: if factionalism emerge is degenerative.	Depending on its previous role. Degenerative/Competitive if the party position vis-à-vis the social movement is divisive.
6. Candidate/Leadership Selection	Open to the participation of the PoG.	Controlled PCO, even when direct-democracy tools are used.	Toward more open procedures; co-optation as plausible outcome.

9.6 Core and thin ideologies in SYRIZA, Podemos and the FSM: redistributive anti-elitism?

9.6.1 The economic dimension: From socialism to social-democracy, to left-wing politics

The analysis of the core and thin ideologies of the three challenger parties show some unexpected similarities, the most important being the common anti-elite articulation of their policy proposal. Before moving to that aspect, it is worth noting that the three parties were all but radical in their economic proposals: Podemos and SYRIZA support state interventionism vis-à-vis tax cuts and, accordingly, both parties privileged welfare state expansion. During the crisis, both parties' ideologies, with some internal differences, mirror the anti-neoliberal left positions: they campaigned for anti-austerity proposals, aimed at countering negative economic cycles and none of them presented an anti-capitalist platform, since the references related to the overthrow of capitalism are scant and, in SYRIZA cases, decreased markedly over the time. FSM too emphasises in several of its manifestos its preference for state interventionism and welfare state expansion. Accordingly, the party claimed to oppose austerity measures imposed by supranational institutions. However, the focus in the Italian is more related to specific policies, such as the creation of a modified version of the universal basic income scheme, than to wholesale redefinition of austerity measures and of the welfare state as proposed by Podemos and SYRIZA. Moreover, in FSM case the criticism toward neo-liberalism, which were particularly acute during the 2014 electoral campaign, are counterbalanced by several references in the next manifesto (2018) to tax-reduction for small and medium entrepreneurs and for Italian families and the de-bureaucratization of the State. These proposals were presented by Podemos and SYRIZA too, but their role appears to be ancillary in the manifestos. FSM criticism toward capitalism is, on the other hand, directed toward political institutions, which favour neo-liberal principles (European Union), big-companies and multinationals rather than to neoliberalism in itself. Podemos and SYRIZA, on the other hand, criticized both: neoliberalism *and* the actors behind neoliberalism. Furthermore, FSM insists more on technological innovation as a way to overcome job inequalities and creating wealth: this message was crucial for Grillo even before FSM was founded and it continued to be relevant in FSM narrative: such an inclination is almost absent within Podemos and SYRIZA. Among the three parties, SYRIZA is the party in which ideological changes were more evident at least for what concerns the construction of a democratic version of socialism. One explanation is that this is the oldest party. However, age is only a partial explanation of this change, since the party maintained its radical vision of State's transformation after the Great Recession. It was only after the electoral breakthrough in 2012 that the party started reshaping its priorities: in the 2014 European electoral campaign and before January 2015, SYRIZA stressed anti-cyclical pro-Keynesian proposals to counter austerity, rather than its road to socialism. Podemos too, evolved toward a more moderate stance vis-à-vis economic interventionism from the first manifesto to its last under analysis (2016): the famous statement by Iglesias in 2016 "I am social-democratic", in this light, exemplified how the party tried to go beyond

classical left-radicalism to appeal to more moderate, but equally progressive, sectors of the society affected by the economic and financial crisis and dissatisfied by PSOE governing (2008-2011) and opposition (2011-2015) records.

None of the three parties, thus, has presented a radical criticism to capitalism in itself: they all expressed criticism to neo-liberal vision of capitalism. This criticism is more marked in Podemos and SYRIZA than FSM: overall if we were to reduce the discussion to a label, SYRIZA and Podemos proposed an economic platform closer to non-Third Way social-democracy than to socialist or communist parties. In FSM case, left-wing orientation decidedly prevails over fiscal conservatism: yet, the economic positions of the party proved to be partially contradictory when it comes to choose between state-interventionism and tax-cut. Here, the frame used by FSM is related to its clear-cut anti-elitism: tax-cut are possible once they favour the small vis-à-vis the big.

9.6.2 The non-economic dimensions: anti-elitism as challengers' flag?

As for the economic dimensions, in non-economic dimensions Podemos and SYRIZA look similar, while FSM differs in several aspects (multiculturalism, immigration and, partly, European Union). The three challenger parties, however, display a similar anti-elitist pattern, which is aimed at criticizing economic, cultural and political traditional elites in their countries. SYRIZA and Podemos are decidedly pro-multicultural parties, with a progressive position on the immigration issue: the two parties rejected the law-and-order approaches to immigration, while endorsing civil-right promotion. Podemos, in particular, has always been very attentive to feminism and women rights; both parties endorsed same-sex marriages. The position of FSM was more ambiguous: the party left the MPs free to vote according to their sensibilities on civil-right issues, such as stepchild adoption. For a party in which disobedience to party official positions meant in the most extreme cases the expulsion from the party, this testifies how ambiguous FSM's position is on this issue. Accordingly, immigration has always been a sensitive issue for the party: while not endorsing a full-fledged law and order approach, FSM has criticized the cosmopolitan left for its soft approach to immigration and for its attempt to introduce the *Ius soli*.

European Union represents a sensitive topic for the three parties: all criticize EU functioning, the imposition of austerity measures to the European peripheries and the unaccountability of EU officials vis-à-vis national electorates. Still, among the three the less critical toward the EU project was SYRIZA, whose Eurocommunist background has always counterbalanced the Euroscepticism of some of its factions. According to SYN/SYRIZA, the nation-state was not the only battleground; rather Europe Union as a whole was a crucial actor for the European radical left to expand social rights. The fact that SYN was among the founders of the Party of the European Left (PEL) and

SYRIZA leader, Alexis Tsipras, was the Spitzenkandidat for GUE/NGL group corroborate this interpretation. Even when Tsipras called for the Referendum on the MoU, he personally discarded the Grexit option, stating that the future of the country is inextricably linked with EU. Podemos toned down its criticism toward European Union since its first manifesto in 2014, which was critical toward EU institutions and EU crisis management: however, the party cannot be considered Eurosceptic per se. Its criticism and its insistence on national sovereignty is counterbalanced by the proposals a) to democratize EU institutions, such as the ECB, which the party wants to be accountable to the European Parliament, b) to create a Social Eurogroup and c) to call for a European conference of the debt. Podemos does not advocate a withdrawal of the country from the EU or the Eurozone. FSM, on the other hand, has discarded only in 2018 this option: before, the party had advocated for a referendum on Italian withdrawal from the Eurozone; its 2014 manifesto, was particularly critical toward EU; the following manifestos only partially mitigate the hostility toward EU. What the three parties share is a marked anti-elitism. The FSM anti-elitism is the most evident: since its genesis the party has rejected “right” and “left” labels, proposing a vision of the world in which the privileged (and corrupted) elites manipulate the people. This anti-elitism was not merely political: politicians’ privileges were the main target of FSM criticism, but other “castes”, such as journalists, were accused to be inherently corrupted. FSM anti-elitism is also evident for the abovementioned criticism to multinationals and managers, some of whom were accused of conflict of interests for their participation in multiple stock companies. Finally, anti-elitism is also present in the policy proposals: the focus on easing referendum procedures, as well as the addition of propositive referenda in the Italian constitution are a clear example of how FSM conceive the role of the “people” vis-à-vis the (political) elites. Podemos’ emphasis on the corruption among politicians, bankers and managers was a crucial message for the party: its anti-elitism was clear-cut before its institutionalization and it appears to be toned down since 2015 onwards. In 2014 and 2015, Podemos accused leftist and rightist economic and political elites to have worsen the living conditions of ordinary people, while enriching themselves through corruption and revolving door mechanism. While this stance was maintained by Podemos in the following years, the claim to be beyond the left and the right is marginalized in Podemos ideology after 2015: the alliance with IU certified in this respect that the party now considers itself as part of the progressive left. Along with FSM, Podemos advocates the introduction of direct-democracy tools in the Spanish constitution. SYRIZA anti-elitism was mainly political and related to its anti-austerity platform. The main focus of SYRIZA was the people redemption from the austerity blackmail proposed by EU and supported by Greek bipartitism. Still, the party has always revindicated its “radical-left” orientation. Much less attention has been given to the direct-democracy, albeit SYRIZA was the party in Europe that for the first time called for a referendum on EU crisis

management. Still, Tsipras multi-class appeal to the “people” during the crisis shows how the party stepped back from a class-based analysis for a “us” vs. “them” vision of the crisis. As challenger parties, thus, the three parties have tried to depict the elites as the enemy of their “we”, focusing on the importance of giving voice to the “people” and attacking different elites for their attitudes vis-à-vis the “people”. Anti-elitism within Podemos and SYRIZA serves the purpose to legitimize, beyond class-based politics, the criticism toward austerity and supranational institutions. For FSM was its ultimate constitutive ideological trait.

Table 9.5 – SYRIZA, Podemos and FSM in comparative perspective			
	SYRIZA	Podemos	FSM
<i>Political Opportunity</i>	Favourable	Moderately Hostile	Highly Hostile (until 2011) Hostile (2013)
<i>Structure</i>			
<i>Pattern of Competition</i>	Vote-seeking	Vote-seeking	Vote-seeking
<i>Party Organization</i>	Party within the Movement	Horizontal Movement Party	Vertical Movement Party
<i>Party Family</i>	Post-Cold War Radical Left	Post-Cold War Radical Left (Left libertarian)	E-party
<i>Core-ideology (economics)</i>	Radical-left (until 2011) Socialdemocratic left (2012-)	Old Social-democratic left	Left-leaning with some more market-oriented positions
<i>Thin-centred Ideology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiculturalism - Civil-right supporter - Supranational integration - Anti-elitist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiculturalism - Civil-right supporter - Moderate skepticism toward supranational integration - Anti-elitist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ambiguous Multiculturalism - Ambiguous Civil-right supporter - Skepticism toward supranational integration - Anti-elitist

9.6.3 New party families? Back to the basics of the theory

All three parties belong to the non-traditional party families; they are not challenger only for their opposition to traditional parties, but also for their ideological articulation. In the previous paragraph, I highlight that, from an organizational standpoint, Podemos, SYRIZA and FSM represent different movement parties; in this paragraph, I would like to address the other issue left aside insofar in the comparison, i.e. the party family. The third chapter analysed the traditional and non-traditional party families, the most relevant discriminating point between the two being the competition of the challenger parties outside traditional cleavage politics. I identified four challenger families, three of which can partially fit the ideological articulation of the three parties. Only radical-right party family cannot be associated to any of the three cases. The case of SYRIZA is probably the least controversial: the party self-identifies with the radical-left family and it is associated with other radical-left parties in the European Parliament and in the PEL. Albeit the party shares its pro-multicultural and pro-civil rights attitudes with the green/left-libertarian family, the focus on environment is secondary in this party’s articulation, while contrary to left-libertarians, SYRIZA’s focus is more on economic than

civil-rights. This is not to say that civil-rights are not a primary concern for SYRIZA (SYRIZA government approved same-sex marriages in Greece); rather, it means that civil-rights are framed as part of a bigger “picture”, the fight against capitalism (until 2011) and against neoliberalism (from 2012 onwards). Moreover, SYRIZA, while assuming an anti-elitist position similar in several respect to Podemos and FSM, has only recently acquired a more anti-establishment position; furthermore, the criticism of representative democracy, which is a trademark for left-libertarian parties for their assembly-based organization, has not been a crucial organizational point for SYRIZA. Although much of its economic radicalism has been mitigated during the Great Recession and, namely, after the electoral breakthrough, its ideological evolution followed the “mainstreaming” of the radical-left in several European countries (March and Keith 2015). The economic radicalism has been accompanied a pro-systemic attitude, i.e. the acceptance of liberal-democratic values; internally, the party has rejected democratic centralism, opening up its organization to new associations and actors, while promoting linkages with non-partisan movement, such as part of the Greek Indignados. The last points clearly differentiate the party from KKE: leaving aside ideological differences, KKE’s organization is strictly hierarchical and during the protest waves has promoted its own mobilizations with the communist trade union. Overall SYRIZA can be inserted among the post-Cold War radical-left parties.

The case of Podemos is much more ambiguous: from the one hand, it can be considered as an E-party, since along with FSM makes an extensive use of direct-democracy tools; from the other hand, it is similar to both post-Cold War radical-left (for its marked anti-austerity platform) and left-libertarian (for its focus on feminism and civil-rights) parties. It is my understanding, however, that Podemos cannot be considered an E-party: while Podemos has introduced direct-democracy tools in its organization, it lacks two basic characteristics for being inserted in the E-party. The first is ideological: freedom of internet is not the cornerstone of the party platform, as it is in the cases of Pirate Parties and, for a while, for FSM. The second is the organizational ideology: within Podemos, web direct-democracy is a mean to overcome the cost of political participation. For E-party, e-participation is an end in itself, since it allows people to connect avoiding classical channels of representation. Podemos has a complex and hierarchical structure, which works off-line at both national and sub-national levels, while the on-line digital platform is only one of the components of the organization. Compared to the centrality assumed by Rousseau for FSM organization, the difference is staggering. Podemos is more similar to post-Cold War radical-left party family than to left-libertarian, even though it has assumed position closer to left-libertarian parties since its genesis. From left-libertarian family, Podemos inherited the criticism to political representation, despite this criticism has been translated into an anti-bipartitism attitude and a strong opposition to any political

“privileges”, rather than political representation *per se*. The accent on direct-democracy and the participation of the whole membership to the party decision-making – as well as the insistence on civil-rights improvement and non-economic issue such as corruption and transparency – make the party similar to left-libertarians. However, Podemos partially re-direct its priorities soon after its transformation from an electoral war-machine to an institutionalized political party. The leadership of Iglesias and the anti-capitalist faction has shifted the party toward more left-leaning positions and the alliance with IU sanctioned this partial transformation of the party: as for SYRIZA, the party platform is all but radical when capitalism is at stake; Podemos criticizes neo-liberal capitalism, but the overthrow of capitalism has never been a clear-cut option for the party. Not only the party is pro-systemic, but it has toned down its criticism toward other potential allies, such as PSOE. Still, the focus on anti-austerity, economics is crucial for the party. “Governing for the People” as Podemos indicates in its 2015 manifesto means by and large reversing austerity. The party organization too with its hierarchy and its off-line structure resembles other radical-left structure.

FSM, on the other hand, is the only E-party among the three. FSM started from a blog launched by Beppe Grillo (and G. Casaleggio) to circumvent traditional media, from which Grillo was excluded since the nineties. Grillo and G. Casaleggio praised since the beginning the democratizing power of the Web: internet was the channel through which unheard issues could become manifest without the intermediation of political parties, according to Grillo. It is no coincidence that FSM’s off-line circles born as on-line groups, hosted by the meet-up.com platform. Grillo supporters, thus, connected through an on-line platform and the first Grillo’s lists were launched on-line. FSM symbols have always had a reference to the main website of the movement. More important, Rousseau, the digital platform is not one of the tools that the party has to discuss, vote and propose at national and sub-national levels party strategies, proposal etc.; it is the only recognized way for members, MPs, elected representative to interact. FSM born in the World Wide Web and keeps operating as if the on-line parties’ activities were more relevant than “off-line” ones. After the removal of Grillo’s veto on the participation of FSM representatives to TV political shows, FSM – as any other party – uses traditional media, but its core operating system is on-line. Its battles for reforming communication system and its anti-elitist message against media “caste” is all respects a by-product of its e-party background.

9.7 A vote-seeking strategy and an anti-elitist message: the keys to succeed

What are the overall conclusions from the above comparison? Following the MDSO heuristic framework of analysis, it is the vote-seeking pattern of competition that makes Podemos, SYRIZA and FSM similar (hypothesis three). Contrary to hypothesis one, albeit being the consequences of

Great Recession a common denominator in the three Southern European countries, the political opportunity structure differs in the three contexts, not only because electoral laws differ: anti-establishment parties and the protest mobilizations against austerity played a role in either favouring or limiting the electoral success of those parties. Though, what is worth noting here is that in all cases, albeit with a different level of intensity, the challenger parties benefitted the collusion between conservative and social-democratic parties, which in all three cases preferred a responsible behaviour in front of the supranational institution, rather than a responsive attitude. Hypothesis two should be rejected too: while the three parties organize around the movement party framework, the organizations are not similar: not only the genetical traits, but above all the relationship among party faces, the involvement of the membership in the decision-making, factionalism and the way they deal with party finance differ markedly. What they share, yet, it is the centralization of critical resources in the hand of the leadership, whatever conceived by the three parties: the use of these critical resources by the leadership, however, change according to the balance of power between the party faces. The hypothesis related to ideology is partially confirmed: Podemos and SYRIZA are quite similar with regards to the economic ideology (and to its evolution from more radical attitudes toward Non-Third Way social-democratic positions). FSM has a non-radical left-leaning position in the economic dimension. Despite being associated with other European Eurosceptic parties, the three parties have contrasting positions vis-à-vis European Union: much more sceptical the one by FSM, far more conciliatory the one of SYRIZA. Podemos and SYRIZA share a pro-multicultural and pro-civil rights positions, especially for what concerns the sensitive issue of immigration. FSM, on the other hand, has a more law-and-order oriented position. Yet, the three parties were able to articulate their different political positions with an anti-elitist framework. Anti-elitism is more marked in FSM and Podemos than SYRIZA: however, in all three cases the criticism toward traditional political parties, the economic (and the media) elites accompanied their electoral trajectory. What is striking in this case is that all three parties, albeit operating in different political contexts, lamented the collusion of all traditional parties against the “people”, as well as the greediness of economic elite in accumulating profits against ordinary citizens.

As argued in ch. 3, challenger parties are potentially anti-systemic and populist, even though this relationship is not linear. In these three cases, the criticism of elite and, in the case of Podemos and FSM, the criticism to representative democracy was not anti-systemic; rather, all three actors served as a catalyst for political discontent, but their polarizing attitudes, which Capoccia (2002) recognizes as an anti-system trait in those polities where anti-democratic ideologies became allegedly irrelevant, has “only” jeopardized the party system, rather than weakening polyarchic institutions. Taking into consideration that in the Greek case anti-system parties still perform comparatively well and that in

Italy, polarizing attitudes in the past came from parties which are considered pro-system (such as Forza Italia), SYRIZA and FSM do not qualify for this attribute. Despite FSM and Podemos did criticize representative democracy, their policy-proposals were oriented toward a partial systematization of laws on referendum, rather than the replacement of representative democracy as such. Nor it is sufficient qualify as “anti-system” those parties, which are more or less manifestly non-democratic in their organizing principles. As Sartori (1965: 24) aptly stated “democracy on a large scale is not the sum of many little democracies”. As hierarchical the three parties may be, the lack on internal democracy is not an indicator per se of their *anti-systemness*.

The three parties qualify for the anti-elitist label, but it is much more difficult to state they were *equally* populist; for sure, the literature quoted both in the three case-studies’ chapters and in Ch. 3 has shown to what extent these parties assumed populist postures, whichever the definition of populism may be. However, using the minimal definition of populism – a thin-centred ideology whose core is represented by (a) anti-elite(s) vs. the “people” attitude, (b) by an anti-political status quo inclination and (c) by the mobilization of the “community”/people through instruments of direct participation to political decision-making – it is safe stating that FSM and Podemos are populist parties, since the two possess the three necessary conditions for a party to be considered populist. SYRIZA may be considered populist too, since it showed anti-elitist and an anti-status-quo inclination. Yet, as for the latter its “people-centrism” is much less radical than Podemos and FSM, in which the anti-elitism was coupled by clear-cut and pervasive “us (the people) vs. them (the elites)” framework. Tsipras in his discourses increased substantially the reference to the people after 2012, but SYRIZA manifestos are less oriented toward people-centrism and more oriented toward anti-bipartitism than to political elites as such. SYRIZA proposes also the expansion of direct-democracy in its manifestos and, more important, has used a referendum to ratify the government position on a sensitive issue, such as the MoU. Yet, the focus on direct-democracy is much less present in SYRIZA organization than in Podemos and FSM.

9.7.1 Was it a revolution? Yes, it was. No, it was not. Different perspective on challengers’ electoral successes

The final comment of this work is devoted to the political system changes occurred once these three challenger parties entered the electoral competition. Ch. 5 has shown how successful the three were in both restructuring the political systems and in provoking major electoral shifts in the electorates. The electoral earthquakes in the three cases was followed by consolidation of the three challenger parties in the t1 elections (2015 in Greece, 2016 in Spain, 2018 in Italy) and in two cases (Greece and Italy) the electoral results paved the way for the first within-crisis experiment of two challenger

parties in government alone: ANEL and SYRIZA in Greece, FSM and The League – here considered as belonging to Radical-Right challenger family and not to the traditional regionalist family – in Italy. Podemos almost crossed the executive power threshold supporting a PSOE PM in the vote of no-confidence session that ousted PP from government. It was the first time that this procedure was successfully applied in Spain.

With the partial exception of PSOE in Spain, at the time of writing (November 2018), traditional parties in all three systems have to fully recover from the electoral loss suffered in the past years. The bipartitism and bipolarism rates are far away from the pre-crisis environment, where two parties (Spain and Greece) and two poles (Italy) had almost the monopoly of political representation. Among the traditional parties, social-democratic parties were those which suffer the most from challenger entrance in the political systems: in one case, this led to the almost disappearance of one of the protagonists of Greek politics in the last forty years (PASOK). PSOE had its lowest electoral shares in both 2015 and 2016 elections, while PD after apparently being able to recover from 2013 results in the 2014 European elections, had its worst result in 2018.

Were all these revolutions? In some respects, they were: few polls had forecasted the success of those parties and probably even fewer analysts would expect that their successes would have been long-lasting. The post-Great Recession electoral results created in the three political systems new “norms”, in which challenger were not the exception, but a consolidated reality. As it may sound naïve, it seems taken for granted in the public opinion that traditional parties, be them in government or in opposition, are unable to deal with these changes in the electorate: only challengers appear to be able to deal with the different sources of (economic, cultural, social) dissatisfaction in the electorates. Sure, these challenger parties will suffer defeats in the foreseeable future, especially those in government, and old traditional parties can seize power again: at least, governing implies making hard-choices for which part of its electorate would end up being disappointed. Yet, traditional parties appear to be reactive to challenger (in)successes rather than pro-active. The wait-and-see tactic may be rewarding, but it is also may be the case that the new “norm” will last too long for traditional parties to resist pressures for adaptation to new political systems, in which resources are more limited than before. However, when looked in historical perspective, these successes may be “something less” than a revolution. When social-democratic parties (slowly) entered the political competition in Western Europe between the end of XIX Century and the beginning of the XX Century, the electoral earthquakes in their first electoral appearances were less resounding: in general, it took decades for them to enter the competition and, then, crossing the executive power threshold. Yet, their impact was unprecedented in all political systems: social-democratic parties brought entire sectors of their society, i.e. the working-class, within the political systems and, in some cases, forced cadre parties

and notables to expand the suffrage to channel their success into a non-revolutionary environment. Social-democratic parties, moreover, with their mass-based organization influenced for decades to come both other party organizations – the so-called contagion from the left, according to Duverger – and political systems. Social-democracy became part of a new norm in the pre- and post-World War II era: it became mainstream, it had access to power, influenced the political agenda, initiating those welfare state reforms, which conservative and liberal parties have never had the power to radically change again (at least until the so-called neoconservative revolution in the eighties). In a nutshell, their impact was so pervasive that in front of their electoral crises, their legacy is going to survive. Social-democratic parties, thus, need to hope in this peculiar conjuncture, that these new challenger parties will not imitate what they were to do when they were “young”, “unexperienced” and allegedly anti-system parties. Right now, challengers’ successes, albeit revolutionary for the political systems, are not as profound as social-democratic ones were in the past century for party organization, policy-making and agenda-setting. Challengers’ government records are less thoroughgoing than promised: only time will say whether or not external constraints (namely, European Union) had played a decisive role in shaping challengers’ preferences in government and whether their achievements were more related to the electoral records than they were to their policy-making.

Annex - Interviews

Podemos

Interview 6.1 – Regional Councillor (Castilla y La Mancha), 13 February 2017

Interview 6.2 – Regional Councillor (Castilla y León), 12 February 2017

Interview 6.3 – Member of the Spanish Parliament, 11 February 2017

Interview 6.4 – Former PCO Member, 13 February 2017

Interview 6.5 – Regional Councillor (Extremadura), written interview, 11 May 2018

Interview 6.6 – Member of the Spanish Parliament, written interview, 27 April 2018

Interview 6.7 – Regional Councillor (Comunitat Valenciana), written interview, 18 April 2018

Interview 6.8 – Regional Councillor (Castilla y León), written interview, 25 April 2018

Interview 6.9 – Regional Councillor (Principado de Asturias), written interview, 20 April 2018

Interview 6.10 – Regional Councillor (Principado de Asturias), written interview, 18 April 2018

Interview 6.11 – Regional Councillor (Extremadura), written interview, 10 May 2018

Interview 6.12 – Regional Councillor (Comunitat Valenciana), written interview, 16 May 2018

Interview 6.13 – Regional Councillor (Comunitat Valenciana), written interview, 16 May 2018

Interview 6.14 – Regional Councillor (Castilla y León), written interview, 19 April 2018

Interview 6.15 – Regional Councillor (Murcia), written interview, 19 April 2018

Interview 6.16 – Regional Councillor (Principado de Asturias), written interview, 18 April 2018

Interview 6.17 – Regional Councillor (Catalunya), 30 April 2018

SYRIZA

Interview 7.1 – C, Member of Neolaia Syriza, 15 October 2016

Interview 7.2 – *, Member of Neolaia Syriza, 15 October 2016

Interview 7.3 – NS, Member of KKE Foreign Relation Office, 26 June 2016

Interview 7.4 – PT, SYRIZA’s Foreign relations Officer, 17 June 2016

Interview 7.5 – LS, SYRIZA Member of CC (since 2016), 23 June 2016

Interview 7.6 – C, SYRIZA Officer, 23 June 2017

Interview 7.7 – NF, Member of Neolaia SYRIZA Central Committee, 22 June 2016

Interview 7.8 – DR, SYRIZA MPs, written Interview, 17 January 2017

Interview 7.9 – AS, SYRIZA MPs, written Interview, 22 February 2017

Interview 7.10 – ES, SYRIZA MPs, written Interview, 28 February 2017

Interview 7.11 – AM, SYRIZA MPs, written Interview, 14 February 2017

Interview 7.12 – SF, SYRIZA MPs, written Interview, 28 February 2017

Interview 7.13 – EA, SYRIZA MPs, written Interview, 1 February 2017

Interview 7.14 – CS, SYRIZA MPs, written Interview, 15 February 2017

* Preferred not to report her name.

Five Stars Movement

Interview 8.1 - GS, Five Stars Movement MP, 25 November 2016

Interview 8.2 – FU, Five Stars Movement MP, written interview, 27 October 2016,

Interview 8.3 – DB, Five Stars Movement regional councillor, 23 November 2016

Interview 8.4 – MA, Five Stars Movement European MP, 11 November 2016

Interview 8.5 – MG, Five Stars Movement MP, 10 December 2016

Interview 8.6 – DT, Five Stars Movement MP, 10 December 2016

Interview 8.7 – GT, Five Stars Movement former-Local councillor, 29 December 2016

Interview 8.8 – PB, Five Stars Movement MP, 25 September 2017

Interview 8.9 – AT, Five Stars Movement MP, 8 November 2016

Interview 8.10 – MdS, Five Stars Movement MP, 19 December 2016

Interview 8.11 – FP, Five Stars Movement former mayor, 12 December 2018

Interview 8.12 – LC, Five Stars Movement former local councillor, 16 October 2016.

Interview 8.13 – GB, Five Stars Movement former local councillor, 23 December 2016

Interview 8.14 – RS, Five Stars Movement regional councillor, 13 November 2016

Interview 8.15 – RF, Five Stars Movement MP, 8 November 2016

Interview 8.16 – AA, Five Stars Movement MP, 18 June 2018

Interview 8.17 – AA, Five Stars Movement MP, 18 June 2018

Interview 8.18 – AA, Five Stars Movement MP, 18 June 2018

Interview 8.19 – MES, Five Stars Movement MP, written interview, 7 November 2018

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