Instituto de Ciencia Política

A ‘LATINAMERICANIZATION’ OF SOUTHERN EUROPE? ANTI-NEOLIBERAL POPULISMS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

por

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[Please, let me use, in this opening section, different languages (my poor English, my slightly better Spanish, and my hopefully decent Italian). I just want to speak to different people through the language (the 'code') that we are used to employ to talk to each other. I am aware that perhaps this is not a proper decision, and I apologize for that. I just want to thank all of you as clearly as possible].

Scorrendo i ringraziamenti di diverse tesi di dottorato, magari poi divenute libri, ho letto svariate volte la frase 'this was not a solitary enterprise'. Questa tesi, al contrario, è davvero frutto di una *solitary enterprise*. Ovviamente, non nel senso che quanto scritto in queste pagine sia esclusivamente farina del mio sacco, quando invece (e lo specificherò fra non molto) è frutto di un lunghissimo processo di confronto e di dibattito con moltissimi docenti, colleghi ed amici, i quali mi hanno aiutato a migliorarne il contenuto (ovviamente, valga il *caveat* "gli errori e le mancanze sono miei"). Si è trattata però di una *solitary enterprise* nel senso che la ricerca, l'elaborazione, la riflessione e la scrittura sono avvenute in gran parte *in solitudine*, in primo luogo fisica; a volte, negli inevitabili momenti critici, persino morale, benché sempre prontamente superata grazie al sostegno di tutti voi. Un'esperienza a tratti alienante, che ha reso spesso più faticosa quest'impresa, ma che mi ha sicuramente fortificato. Si è trattato di una navigazione in solitaria che si è rivelata persino piacevole, considerata l'enorme libertà di organizzazione del lavoro di cui ho potuto godere, e che mi ha regalato innumerevoli giornate in cui, per molte, molte ore, il computer con cui sto scrivendo è stato il mio unico compagno di viaggio. Una tesi di dottorato significa anche questo.

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15-M *Indignados* Movement (Spain)

AD *Acción Democrática* – Democratic Action (Venezuela)

ADEDY *Anotati Diikisi Enoseon Dimosion Ypallilon* – Confederation of Civil Servants' Unions (Greece)

ADN *Acción Democrática Nacional* – National Democratic Action (Bolivia)

AGE *Alternativa Gallega de Izquierda* – Galician Leftist Alternative (Spain)

AM *Ahora Madrid* – Madrid Now! (Spain)

ANEL *Anexartitoi Ellines* – Independent Greeks (Greece)

AP *Alianza Popular* – Popular Alliance (Spain)

APRA *Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana* – American Popular Revolutionnary Alliance (Peru)

ARI *Afirmación para una República Igualitaria* – Initiative for an Egalitarian Republic (Argentina)

ASP *Asamblea para la Soberanía de los Pueblos* – Assembly for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (Bolivia)

ATE *Asociación de los Trabajadores del Estado* – State Workers' Association (Argentina)

AU *Asamblea Uruguay* – Uruguayan Assembly (Uruguay)

AUH *Asignación Universal por Hijo* – Universal Allowance per Child (Argentina)

BE *Bloco de Esquerda* – Leftist Bloc (Portugal)

BeC *Barcelona en Comú* – Barcelona in Common (Spain)

BONOSOL *Bono Solidario* – Solidarian Cash-Transfer (Bolivia)

CABA *Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires* – Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (Argentina)

CC.OO *Comisiones Obreras* – Workers' Commissions (Spain)

CCC *Corriente Clasista y Combativa* – Combative Classist Current (Argentina)

CCZ *Centro Comunal de Zona* – Local Municipal Centre (Uruguay)

CDS-PP *Partido do Centro Democrático Social–Partido Popular* – Centrist Social Democratic Party-Popular Party (Portugal)

CEPS *Centro de Estudios Políticos y Sociales* – Centre of Political and Social Studies (Spain)

CGIL *Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro* – Italian General Confederation of Work (Italy)

CGT *Confederación General del Trabajo* – General Confederation of the Work (Argentina)

CGT *Confederación General del Trabajo* – General Confederation of the Work (Spain)

CGT *Confédération Générale du Travail* – General Confederation of the Work (France)

CGTP *Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores Portugueses* – General Confederation of the Portuguese Workers (Portugal)

CIDOB *Confederación Indígena del Oriente Boliviano* - Indigenous Confederation of the Bolivian Orient (Bolivia)

CISL *Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori* – Workers' Unions' Italian Confederation (Italy)

CLPP *Consejos Locales de Planificación Pública* - Local Public Planning Councils (Venezuela)

CMS *Coordinadora de Movimientos Sociales* – Coordinator of the Social Movements (Ecuador)

COB *Central Obrera de Bolivia* – Bolivian Workers' Union (Bolivia)

CO.BAS *Comitati di Base* – Bases' Committees (Italy)

COMIBOL *Corporación Minera de Bolivia* – Bolivian Mining Corporation (Bolivia)

CONACRE *Concertación Nacional para el Crecimiento* - National Coordination for the Growth (Uruguay)

CONAIE *Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador* – Confederation of Ecuadorean Indigenous Nations (Ecuador)

CONAMAQ *Confederación Nacional de las Markas y Ayllus del Qulla'suyu* – National Confederation of Markas and Ayllus of Qulla'suyu (Bolivia)

CONAPRO *Concertación Nacional Programática* – National Programmatic Coordination (Uruguay)

CONDEPA *Conciencia de Patria* – Fatherland Consciousness (Bolivia)

COPEI *Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente* – Committee of Independent Political-Electoral Organization (Venezuela)

COR *Central Obrera Regional* – Regional Workers' Union (Bolivia)

CP *Círculo Patriótico* – Patriotic Circle (Venezuela)

CPE *Constitución Política del Estado* – State Political Constitution (Bolivia)

CSCB *Confederación Sindical de los Colonizadores de Bolivia* – Bolivian Settlers Unions' Confederation (Bolivia)

CSCIOB *Confederación Sindical de las Comunidades Interculturales Originarias de Bolivia* – Confederation of the Bolivian Intercultural Communities (Bolivia)

CSI *Corriente Sindical de Izquierda* – Leftist Unionist Faction (Spain)

CSQP *Catalunya Sí que es Pot* – Catalonia is Possible (Spain)

CSUTCB *Confederación Sindical Única de los Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* – Confederation of Bolivian Peasants' Unions (Bolivia)

CTA *Central de los Trabajadores Argentinos* – Argentine Workers' Central (Argentina)

CTD *Coordinadoras de Trabajadores Desocupados* – Unemployed Workers' Coordinators (Argentina)

CTEP *Confederación de los Trabajadores de la Economía Popular* – Popular Economy's Workers' Confederation (Argentina)

CTERA *Confederación de los Trabajadores de la Educación de la República Argentina* - Argentina's Education Workers Confederation (Argentina)

CTN *Comando Táctico Nacional* – Tactical Nacional Command (Venezuela)

CTV *Confederación de los Trabajadores Venezolanos* – Venezuelan Workers' Confederation (Venezuela)

CUT *Central Única dos Trabalhadores* – Workers' Peak Union (Brazil)

DAKE Democratic Independent Employees' Movement (Greece)

DC *Democrazia Cristiana* – Christian Democracy (Italy)

DEN *Dirección Estratégica Nacional* – National Strategic Direction (Venezuela)

DRY *¡Democracia Real YA!* – Real Democracy Now! (Spain)

DS *Democratici di Sinistra* – Leftist Democrats (Italy)

DSV Double Simultaneous Vote (Uruguay)

DTZ *Direcciones Estratégicas de Zona* – Zone's Strategic Direction (Venezuela)

ECB European Central Bank

EFDD Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EU Parliamentary Group)

EMS European Monetary System

ESK *Ezker Sindikalaren Konbergentzia* – Leftist Unionist Convergence (Spain)

EU European Union

FA *Frente Amplio* – Broad Front (Uruguay)

FADI *Frente Amplio de Izquierda* – Leftist Broad Front (Ecuador)

FBT *Fuerza Bolivariana de los Trabajadores* – Workers' Bolivarian Force (Venezuela)

FdG *Front de Gauche* – Front of the Left (France)

FDS *Federazione della Sinistra* – Federation of the Left (Italy)

FEDECAMARAS *Federación de Cámaras y Asociaciones de Comercio y Producción de Venezuela* – Venezuelan Federation of Chambers of Commerce (Venezuela)

FEDECOR *Federación Departamental Cochabambina de Regantes* – Cochabamba's Federation of the Water Suppliers (Bolivia)

FEJUVE *Federación de Juntas Vecinales* – Neighbourhood Assembles' Federation (Bolivia)

FENCOMIN *Federación Nacional de los Cooperativistas Mineros de Bolivia* – National Federation of Bolivian Cooperativist Mineworkers (Bolivia)

FER *Frente de Esquerda Revolucionária* – Front of Revolutionary Left (Portugal)

FERVE *Fartas/os d'Estes Recibos Verdes* - Fed Up with False Green Receipts (Portugal)

FETCTC *Federación Especial de los Trabajadores Campesinos del Trópico de Cochabamba* - Special Federation of the Peasant Workers of the Cochabamba Tropic (Bolivia)

FHRC *Fondo de Reparación Histórica del Conurbano* – Conurbano's Historic Reparation Fund (Argentina)

FIOM *Federazione Impiegati Operai Metallurgici* – Steelworkers' Federation (Italy)

FPOe *Freiheitliche Partei Oesterreichs* – Austrian Freedom Party (Austria)

FpV *Frente para la Victoria* – Victory Front (Argentina)

FRENAPO *Frente Nacional contra la Pobreza* – National Front Against Poverty (Argentina)

FREPASO *Frente para un País Solidario* - Front for a Solidary Country (Argentina)

FSTMB *Federación Sindical de los Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia* – Union Federation of Bolivian Mineworkers (Bolivia)

FSTPB *Federación Sindical de los Trabajadores Petroleros de Bolivia* – Union Federation of Bolivian Oilworkers (Bolivia)

FTV *Federación Tierra, Vivienda y Hábitat* – Habitat, Land and Housing Federation (Argentina)

FUCVAM *Federación Uruguaya de Cooperativas de Vivienda por Ayuda Mutua* – Uruguayan Federation of Housing Cooperatives (Uruguay)

FUT *Frente Unitario de Trabajadores* – Workers' Unitarian Front (Ecuador)

GC *Giovani Comunisti* – Communist Youth (Italy)

GJM Global Justice Movement

GSEE *Geniki Synomospondia Ergaton Ellados* – General Confederation of Greek Workers (Greece)

IDV *Italia dei Valori* – Italy of Values (Italy)

IMF International Monetary Fund

INRA *Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria* – National Institute of the Agrarian Reform (Bolivia)

ISI Import Substitution Industrialization

IU *Izquierda Unida* – United Left (Bolivia)

IU *Izquierda Unida* – United Left (Spain)

KKE *Kommounistiko Komma Elladas* – Greek Communist Party (Greece)

LAE *Laiki Enotita* – Popular Unity (Greece)

LAOS *Laikos Orthodoxos Synagermos* – Orthodox Popular Group (Greece)

LCC *Liste CiViche Certificate* – Certified Civic Slates (Italy)

LCR *La Causa Radical* – The Radical Cause (Venezuela)

LFI *La France Insoumise* – Unsubmissive France (France)

LIPU *Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli* – Italian League for Birds' Protection (Italy)

LN *Lega Nord* – Northern League (Italy)

LPP *Ley de Participación Popular* – Law of Popular Participation (Bolivia)

M5S *MoVimento Cinque Stelle* – Five Stars Movement (Italy)

MAS *Movimiento Al Socialismo* – Movement Towards Socialism (Venezuela)

MAS-U *Movimiento al Socialismo-Unzaguista* – Movement Towards Socialism-'Unzaguist' (Bolivia)

MAS-IPSP *Movimiento al Socialismo-Instrumento Político para la Soberanía de los Pueblos* – Movement Towards Socialism-Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (Bolivia)

MBL *Movimiento Bolivia Libre* – Free Bolivia Movement (Bolivia)

MBR-200 *Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario* – Revolutionary Bolivarian Movement (Venezuela)

MEP *Movimiento Electoral del Pueblo* – Electoral Movement of the People (Venezuela)

MGP *Movimiento por el Gobierno del Pueblo* – Movement for People's Government (Uruguay)

MIDES *Ministerio de Desarrollo Social* – Ministry of Social Development (Uruguay)

MIP *Movimiento Indígena Pachakutik* – Indigenous Movement Pachakutik (Bolivia)

MIR *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* – Revolutionary Left Movement (Bolivia)

MITKA *Movimiento Indio Túpac Katari* – Indian Movement Tupac Katari (Bolivia)

MLN-Tupamaros *Movimiento de Liberación Nacional* – Tupamaros (Uruguay)

MNR *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* – Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (Bolivia)

MNRI *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario de Izquierda* – Leftist Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (Bolivia)

MPP *Movimiento de Participación Popular* – Popular Participation Movement (Uruguay)

MRTKL *Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Katari de Liberación* – Tupac Katari Revolutionary Movement of Liberation (Bolivia)

MST *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* – Landless Rural Workers' Movement (Brazil)

MTA *Movimiento de Trabajadores Argentinos* – Argentine Workers' Movement (Argentina)

MTD *Movimientos de Trabajadores Desocupados* – Unemployed Workers' Movement (Argentina)

MTL *Movimiento Tierra y Libertad* – Land and Freedom Movement (Argentina)

MVR *Movimiento Quinta República* – Fifth Republic Movement (Venezuela)

ND *Nea Dimokratia* – New Democracy (Greece)

NEP New Economic Policy (Bolivia)

NIDIL *Nuove Identità di Lavoro* – New Identities of Work (Italy)

No MUOS Movement Against the Mobile User Objective System (Italy)

No TAV Movement Against High Speed Railway (Italy)

PAH *Plataforma de Afectados por las Hipotécas* – Platform of Victims of Banks' Evictions (Spain)

PAIS *Patria Altiva i Soberana* – Proud and Sovereign Fatherland (Ecuador)

PANES *Plan de Asistencia Nacional a la Emergencia Social* – Plan of National Assistence for Social Emergency (Uruguay)

PASKE PanHellenic Struggling Unionist Employees' Movement (Greece)

PASOK *Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima* – Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Greece)

PBA *Provincia de Buenos Aires* – Buenos Aires' Province (Argentina)

PC *Partido Colorado* (Uruguay)

PCE *Partido Comunista de España* - Spanish Communist Party (Spain)

PCF *Parti Communiste Français* – French Communist Party (France)

PCI *Partito Comunista Italiano* – Italian Communist Party (Italy)

PCP *Partido Comunista Português* – Portuguese Communist Party (Portugal)

PCR *Partido Comunista Revolucionario* – Revolutionary Communist Party (Argentina)

PCU *Partido Comunista de Uruguay* – Communist Party of Uruguay (Uruguay)

PCV *Partido Comunista de Venezuela* – Communist Party of Venezuela (Venezuela)

PD *Partito Democratico* – Democratic Party (Italy)

PdCI *Partito dei Comunisti Italiani* – Party of the Italian Communists (Italy)

PdG *Parti de Gauche* – Party of the Left (France)

PDL *Popolo delle Libertà* – People of the Freedom (Italy)

PDS *Partito Democratico della Sinistra* – Democratic Party of the Left (Italy)

PDVSA *Petróleos de Venezuela Sociedad Anónima* – Venezuelan Oil Ltd. (Venezuela)

PER *Programa de Empleo Rural* – Rural Work Program (Spain)

PI *Precários Inflexíveis* – The Inflexible Precarious (Portugal)

PIT-CNT *Plenario Intersindical de los Trabajadores–Convención Nacional de los Trabajadores – Workers' Intersyndicalist Group-Workers' National Convention* (Uruguay)

PJ *Partido Justicialista* – Justicialist Party (Argentina)

PJJHD *Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogar Desocupados* – Unemployed Households' Plan (Argentina)

PN *Partido Nacional* – National Party (Uruguay)

PP *Partido Popular* – Popular Party (Spain)

PPT *Patria Para Todos* – Fatherland for All (Venezuela)

PRC *Partito della Rifondazione Comunista* – Communist Refoundation Party (Italy)

PRIST *Programa Ingreso Social con Trabajo* – 'Social Income with Job' Program (Argentina)

PRO *Propuesta Republicana* – Republican Proposal (Argentina)

PS *Partido Socialista* – Socialist Party (Portugal)

PS *Partido Socialista* – Socialist Party (Uruguay)

PSD *Partido Social Democrata* – Social Democratic Party (Portugal)

PSE *Partido Socialista Ecuatoriano* – Ecuadorean Socialist Party (Ecuador)

PSOE *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* - Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (Spain)

PSR *Partido Socialista Revolucionário* – Socialist Revolutionary Party (Portugal)

PT *Partido dos Trabalhadores* – Workers' Party (Brazil)

PU *Pacto de Unidad* – Unity Pact (Bolivia)

PVV *Partij voor de Vrijheid* – Party for Freedom (Netherlands)

QLT *Que se Lixe a Troika* – Fuck the Troika! (Portugal)

SA *Sinistra Arcobaleno* – Rainbow Left (Italy)

SAT *Sindicato Andaluz de los Trabajadores* – Andalusian Workers' Union (Spain)

SEL *Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà* – Left, Ecology and Freedom (Italy)

SERPAJ *Servicio Paz y Justicia* – Service for Peace and Freedom (Uruguay)

SYN *Synaspismos tis Aristeras ton Kinimaton kai tis Oikologias* – Coalition of the Left, of the Movements and of Ecology (Greece)

SYRIZA *Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras* – Coalition of the Radical Left (Greece)

TCO *Tierras Comunitarias de Orígen* – Originary Communitarian Land (Bolivia)

TIPNIS *Territorio Indígena Parque Nacional Isiboro-Sécure* – Indigenous Territory of the Isiboro-Sécure National Park (Bolivia)

UCD *Unión de Centro Democrático* (Spain)

UCeDe *Unión de Centro Democrático* – Democratic Centre Union (Argentina)

UCR *Unión Cívica Radical* – Radical Civic Union (Argentina)

UCS *Unión Cívica de Solidaridad* – Civic Union of Solidarity (Bolivia)

UDC *Unione Democratica di Centro* – Centrist Democratic Union (Italy)

UDC *Unione Democratica di Centro* – Centrist Democratic Union (Switzerland)

UDP *União Democrática Popular* – Popular Democratic Union (Portugal)

UDP *Unión Democrática Popular* - Democratic Popular Union (Bolivia)

UDU *Unione degli Universitari* – University Students' Union (Italy)

UGT *União Geral de Trabalhadores* – Workers' General Union (Portugal)

UGT *Unión General de los Trabajadores* – Workers' General Union (Spain)

UIL *Unione Italiana del Lavoro* – Italian Union of the Work (Italy)

UKIP United Kingdom Independence Party (United Kingdom)

UNT *Unión Nacional de los Trabajadores* – Workers' National Union (Venezuela)

URD *Unión Republicana Democrática* – Democratic Republican Union (Venezuela)

USB *Unione Sindacale di Base* – Bases' Unionist Union (Italy)

VA *Vertiente Artiguista* – Artiguist Strand (Uruguay)

YPFB *Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos* -. Bolivian state-owned oil company (Bolivia)

Summary

The dissertation is a comparative analysis of the evolution of the electoral Left in Latin America and Southern Europe, in the aftermath of economic crises due to the shortcomings of the neoliberal model. The geographical focus is motivated by the existence, in the eight countries selected (Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia, Venezuela, Portugal, Greece, Spain and Italy) of common factors that are causally relevant for my argument. Such factors are: the adoption of extensive market-friendly economic and labour policies in the pre-crisis era; a dualised welfare regime; and a union system with strong links with political referents at the partisan level.

The main goal is to give an account of why in some countries, but not in others, the left side of the party spectrum has been shaped by the irruption of new 'populist' parties, and to provide a better categorization of these populist phenomena, by focusing on their party organization, on their relationship with the unions and on the sociological characteristics of their electoral bases. The concept of populism is discussed by relying on the vast existing literature, in order to provide a new conceptualization stressing its 'sovereigntist' characteristics, the 'populist rediscovery' of nation-State institutions, its 'movementist' and participative organizational features and its different social bases, if compared with the 'old Left'.

The research shows that two macro-factors can explain the (dis)continuity within the political-electoral Left, and the different forms assumed by the populist projects that emerged. The first factor is the eventual credibility enjoyed by the pre-existing structures of socio-political intermediations (unions and political parties) to defend a socioeconomic alternative to neoliberalism (as it occurred in Uruguay and Portugal). The second factor consists in the specific forms assumed by the anti-austerity social mobilizations (either 'unified' or 'fragmented'). It is thus possible to build a causal typology of the different 'populist outcomes' that I observed: *movement(based) populism* (in Bolivia and Spain); *leader-initiated populism* (in Venezuela and Italy); and *party-rooted populism* (in Argentina and Greece). Each of these categories presents very different relationship with the unions; very different party organizations and processes of candidates' selection and programmatic elaboration; and quite different electoral constituencies.

The research well inserts into the historical-comparative tradition. It relies on in-depth interviews with social and political key actors and with country experts (N=120 interviews in Bolivia, Argentina, Spain and Italy), and on survey data analyses in order to describe the electoral bases of the populist parties analysed. A vast secondary literature integrates the data collected through primary sources.

Resumen

Esta tesis es un análisis comparativo de la evolución de las izquierdas políticas en América Latina y Europa del Sur, tras crisis económicas debidas a las limitaciones del modelo socioeconómico neoliberal. El alcance geográfico se motiva por la existencia, en los ocho países seleccionados (Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia, Venezuela, Portugal, Grecia, España e Italia), de factores causalmente relevantes para mi argumento. Dichos factores son: la adopción de políticas económicas y laborales neoliberals en la fase previa a la crisis; un sistema de bienestar dual; un movimiento sindical con fuertes lazos con partidos políticos.

El objetivo principal es proveer una explicación del por qué en algunos países, pero no en otros, la izquierda política ha sido transformada por la irrupción de partidos 'populistas', y proveer una mejor categorización de estos fenómenos populistas, focalizándose en sus organizaciones partidarias, sus relaciones con los sindicatos y las características sociológicas de sus electorados. Se discute el concepto de populismo a partir de la amplia literatura existente, para proponer una nueva conceptualización que subraye sus características 'soberanistas', el 'redescubrimiento populista' de las instituciones del Estado-nación, su caracter 'movimientista', sus diferentes formas de organizacionales y las características de su electorado, en comparación a la 'vieja izquierda'.

La investigación muestra que dos macro-factores pueden explicar la (dis)continuidad de la izquierda político-electoral, y los diferentes tipos de proyectos populistas que emergieron. El primer factor es la eventual credibilidad de las pre-existentes estructuras de intermediación socio-políticas (sindicatos y partidos políticos) en defender un modelo socioeconómico alternativo al neoliberalismo, tal como ocurrió en Uruguay y Portugal. El segundo factor consiste en las características asumidas (que se dividen en 'unificadas' o 'fragmentadas') por las movilizaciones sociales anti-austeridad. Es posibile por ende desglosar una tipología causal de los diferentes 'caminos populistas' que se identifican: 'populismos basados en movimientos' (Bolivia y España); 'populismos iniciados por un líder' (Venezuela e Italia); 'populismos basados en un partido' (Argentina y Grecia). Cada categoría se caracteriza por: diferentes relaciones con los sindicatos existentes; diferentes tipos de organización partidaria, en términos de elaboración programática y de selección de los candidatos; diferentes *core-constituencies* electorales.

La investigación se basa en 120 entrevistas en profundidad a actores políticos y sociales claves y a expertos en Bolivia, Argentina, España e Italia, y en datos de sondeo

para describir las bases sociales de los partidos populistas analizados. Una amplia literatura secundaria integra las fuentes primarias.

Chapter 1. Introduction.

1.1 Research Questions and Scientific Relevance of the Dissertation

The crises caused by the shortcomings of the neoliberal economic model and the austerity measures adopted with it have harshened the living condition of the most unprotected and poorest strata of the population of the countries involved and have also increased socioeconomic inequality. The crises and the austerity measures – often implying huge cuts in public social spending – have everywhere led to social and political discontent, visible in social mobilizations taking quite different forms. In the political-electoral arena, some political projects, often labelled 'populist', were born or able to increase dramatically their electoral supports, whereas other kinds of projects were not. In particular, the left side of the political spectrum has been reshaped in the early aftermath of the crises, producing major electoral realignments.

Several, very substantive questions arise from this brief statement. For instance, how can we compare the different protest cycles that stemmed from the widespread discontent against austerity? What were the impacts of the protest cycles on the political arena? How did these movements relate to more traditional, 'institutional' actors, such as the existing leftist parties and the organised labour movement? Why in some countries did we observe a substantial continuity of the left side of the political spectrum, while in most cases we witnessed the emergence of new major political parties? Is it possible to offer a comprehensive and comparative account of the political realignments in the aftermath of a crisis due to the shortcomings of neoliberalism? How

can we compare left-wing (or, more specifically, anti-austerity) populisms across different countries *and regions*? Is left-wing populism ‘monolithical’? And, last but not least, *what is* populism? Why did it become so widespread? Why does it clearly differentiate itself from the ‘old Left’?

The goal of this dissertation is to provide a theoretical framework to account for the variety of political realignments within the national Lefts, in a delimited set of countries (Latin American and Southern Europe 'dualized' societies), in the aftermath of a crisis (the decisive 'critical juncture', according to my argument: see Chapter 2) of the neoliberal model. The goal is admittedly ambitious, because the dissertation aims at building bridges between different strands of literature, while advancing an argument that intends to ‘travel’ across two regions obviously quite different in many aspects. The argument that I propose focuses on the *complex interplay between the political-electoral arena, the social mobilizations against austerity, and the union movements, to explain the different paths followed by the national Lefts in the countries analysed and the different kinds of antineoliberal populisms that emerged.*

This dissertation offers several scientific contributions. First, it constitutes a comprehensive study of antineoliberal populism(s) in the regions where they became major political phenomena (Latin America and Southern Europe). The dissertation provides a theoretical chapter assessing why this populist subtype has achieved such a relevance in the set of countries analysed. In particular, I rely on the vast theoretical literature on populism to stress the strategic, ideological-programmatic, and organizational resources that made populism so common in the aftermath of the crisis of the neoliberal model. At the same time, the argument accounts for the *variation within the antineoliberal populist category*, by focusing on the internal party organizations, the different relations with the social movements and the unions, and the sociological profiles of the electorates of the different populist political projects. Last but not least, the research treats topics of enormous normative relevance, as populism (whatever the definition adopted) seems today a ubiquitous phenomenon whose multiple

consequences, particularly in terms of quality of democracy, are continuously discussed and debated. This dissertation, focusing on *antineoliberal populisms*, intends to contribute to this discussion by 'unpacking' the 'populist category' and by stressing the different consequences brought by different 'populist' experiences.

Second, the dissertation relies on the literatures on welfare regimes for both delimiting the 'scope conditions' of the argument and generating several hypotheses that have driven the research. I chose to focus on 'dualised societies' experiencing a crisis during the neoliberal model, drawing from the literature on *welfare regime dualization* (see section 1.4). The relevance of this scope condition lies in at least two general hypotheses that could be advanced to explain the realignments within the national Lefts, and that animated since the beginning this dissertation and led me to the definition of the main argument.

The first hypothesis derives from the central tenet of this literature: there are conditional (i.e., depending on the characteristics of the national welfare regimes) effects of the labour-market status on policy and partisan preferences that follows from the divide between *insiders* (i.e., salaried workers with open-ended, full-time contracts) and *outsiders*. We can define as *outsiders* the *'unemployed, involuntary part-time and/or fixed-term employed workers, as well as the vast (particularly in Latin America) masses of workers occupied in the informal sectors, often in condition of self-employment'*. Even the less well-to-do strata of the European 'petty bourgeoisie' can be included in the category.

According to the literature on welfare regime dualization, there are path-dependent, self-reinforcing causal mechanisms at work in dualised societies, leading to an extension of the gap, in terms of social protection, between the two segments. In particular, as the *core-constituency*[1] (Gibson, 1996) of the left-of-centre parties – as well

[1] According to Gibson, the concept of *core-constituency* can be defined as "*those sectors of society that are most important to [the party's] political agenda and resources. The importance of the core-constituency relation for the path/trajectory of representation a party/movement can take, lies not*

as the majority of the unionised workers – is composed of the *insiders*, this would generate fewer incentives to make social protections (in terms of labour rights and of social policies) more universalist and less segmented.

Therefore, a first hypothesis revolves around the poor attention paid by the *union-party hubs* (Handlin and Collier, 2008) towards the outsiders' interests, thus boosting the political discontent amongst this sector, whose size dramatically increased due to the crisis, towards the 'existing Left'. This, in turn, has fostered either an electoral realignment of the outsiders towards parties advancing platforms closer to their interests, and/or the creation of alternative popular organizations at the societal and electoral level that politicised the divide and presented themselves as the representative of the interests of the outsiders (in this sense, Rueda, 2012). Following this reasoning, anti-neoliberal populisms would be a functionalist response to the political exclusion of the outsiders, thus providing their 'political incorporation' (e.g., Collier and Collier, 1991; Rossi, 2015), defined by Castillo and Barrenechea (2016: 5) as 'a process through which a previously excluded actor acquires policy benefits and (new forms of) representation in the state'. Such representation, according to Castillo and Barrenechea, can occur through corporatist arrangements, or through a personalistic/charismatic figure, or through a political party.

A different source of grievances towards the 'old leftist structures of political intermediation' (the *'Old Left'*) may be hypothesized, though. This second hypothesis has more to do with the way the union movement historically acceded to the polity domain. In the set of countries selected (Latin American former ISI countries – Bolivia, Argentina, Uruguay and Venezuela - and Mediterranean ones – Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece), even during the neoliberal period, the national union movements, despite their declining membership, were still major players in the civil society. Moreover, they kept resilient links with leftist or labour-based (Levitsky, 2003) political parties, with the partial exception of the Bolivian case. As unions lost much of their organizational and

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necessarily in the number of votes they represent, but in their influence on the party's agenda and capacities for political action" (Gibson 1996: 7).

structural powers (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013; Rigby and García Calavia, 2017), due to trade and financial international integration and the changes in the productive system, the importance of defending these partisan links in order to have a stronger voice in the polity domain increased, particularly in Southern Europe and South America, where labour market issues are regulated more by law than through corporatist arrangements.

However, left-of-centre and labour-based parties often opted for a centripetal strategy that put in perils many of the historical gains of the labour movement. Therefore, the unions faced a trade-off (Hyman, 2001) between ideological 'purity' and concrete political influence (from a subaltern position). The strategic choices made by the 'mainstream' unions during the pre-crisis period play a key role in my argument. It can be hypothesized that the 'rebellion' against the 'old union-party hubs' had to do more with *their acceptance of the 'neoliberal discourse'* (and practices) than with the poor attention paid to the outsiders' interests or with the 'over-protection' of their insiders' constituencies. From this second hypothesis, it derives that the discontent against neoliberal political parties *and* 'collaborative' unions grew *among both the insiders and the outsiders*, thus paving the way for an alliance *across* the insider-outsider divide.

Third, the dissertation intends to contribute to the literature regarding the effects of social movements on electoral politics, at least in terms of formation or emergence of various kinds of populisms. The literatures on social movements and on party politics and party organizations have not talked to each other for a long time, although during the last years various attempts of integrating them have been made (e.g., MacAdam and Tarrow, 2010; Della Porta et al., 2017b). This dissertation offers a perspective about the relationship between non-institutional and political-electoral politics in times of crisis, as a part of a broader framework.

Fourth, this dissertation falls within the old comparative-historical analysis tradition. In methodological terms, the research design allows the testing of a middle-

range theory that goes beyond the usual delimitations based on geography. Through a cautious definition of the 'scope conditions' assuring some causal homogeneity, I advance an argument that holds for different world regions at different times. Moreover, as the argument strongly relies on the concept of 'critical juncture', the research offers a theoretical refinement of this concept, following the insights of Falleti and Lynch (2008) and of Slater and Simmons (2010). I depart from purely agential definitions of the concept (e.g., Mahoney, 2003a; Capoccia and Kelemen, 2007) and stress the importance of the relevant 'critical antecedents' to be taken into account in order to understand the constrained (but not fully determined) decisions taken by the actors considered.

Fifth, the extensive fieldwork (consisting in more than one hundred in-depth, semi-structured interviews with political leaders, social movements activists, union leaders and country experts) that I conducted in four different countries (Bolivia, Argentina, Italy and Spain) provides fresh qualitative data that can be used by the academic community for a better understanding of the political projects here analysed. This is particularly true for the cases of the Bolivian MAS-IPSP and for the most recent experiences of the Spanish Podemos and of the Italian Five Star Movement. Although a good amount of research has already analysed these experiences, the dissertation provides an extensive quantity of fresh data for those two European parties and for a broad overview on the evolution of the Bolivian MAS-IPSP. Moreover, this comparative research allows easier identification of some common features of these phenomena (such as ideological – anti-corruption and anti-establishment rhetoric, and their call for a 'restoration of popular sovereignty' – and organizational – their use of original participatory linkages – characteristics) and of the similar causal mechanisms leading to their emergence, without discarding the relevance of idiosyncratic factors that are always at work.

In this introductory chapter, I do not present my argument, which is the topic of Chapter 2. Chapter 1 is devoted to the literature review, to the discussion of the main conceptual tools that are required to follow the argument, including the concept of

populism (which will be extensively treated in Chapter 3), and to raise methodological issues. In Section 1.2, I provide a summary of the main contributions of the literature aiming to explain the emergence of left-wing populisms in Latin America and Southern Europe, the social mobilizations against austerity, and the reciprocal influences between movements and parties during the crisis. At the same time, I underscore some limitations of these contributions for a comprehensive understanding of the factors leading to different political-electoral outcomes in the countries analysed in this research. Section 1.3 is a prosecution of the literature review, and it exclusively focuses on some concepts playing a central role in my argument, such as the concepts of 'movement party' and of 'party-society linkages'. In Section 1.4, I provide a theoretical defence of the 'scope conditions' of the middle-range theory that I propose, by sketching the causal relevance of the multiple consequences of welfare regime dualization for my argument. In Section 1.5, I illustrate the categorization of the dependent variable, i.e. the kind of 'most successful political project' that emerged in the countries selected in the aftermath of the crisis and that decisively shaped the left sides of the national party systems. Section 1.6 focuses on the methodology that I adopted to defend my argument. Section 1.7 concludes the chapter by presenting the plan of the dissertation.

1.2 Explaining the Changes within the (political) National Lefts during a Neoliberal Crisis in Comparative Perspective. The State of the Art

One of the major gap that this dissertation aims at filling is the lack of a comprehensive analysis of the causes of the emergence of left-wing populist parties *in both Latin America and Southern Europe*. Several scholars, in turn, have provided valuable insights through regional comparative or single case studies of the changes within the political Left at the national level, as a by-product of deep social and economic crises caused by evident shortcomings of the neoliberal model. As Hernández

and Kriesi (2015) argue, the electoral effects of the Great Recession in Europe cannot be fully understood by relying almost exclusively on short-term explanations (like the 'punishment of the incumbents' argument) from the literature on economic voting. According to these authors, short-term explanations are particularly accurate during 'normal times'. Instead, the Great Recession, as well as the neoliberal crises that have shaped Latin America since the nineties, do not simply represent 'negative economic conjunctures'. They inaugurated an 'extraordinary' phase, in which social tensions that were accumulating finally erupted, thus fostering popular reactions advancing new demands and assuming new organizational forms, while favouring major realignments at the political-electoral level.

The lack of comprehensive researches about the rise of anti-austerity, progressive populisms in the two regions is surprising, since many similarities between the Latin American and Southern European social and economic crises have already been noticed (Zanotti and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2016; Roberts, 2017). Actually, both crises, apart from provoking enormous social costs – in terms of rise in poverty, unemployment rates, and social exclusion – have been addressed from a policy standpoint through 'orthodox', pro-cyclical measures involving cuts in public social spending and – particularly but not exclusively in Southern Europe – tax increases that often affected the less well-to-do sectors. In both regions, pressures from international (such as the IMF) and supranational institutions (in the case of Southern Europe) were decisive for the implementation of pro-cyclical economic policies (Farthing and Kohl, 2005; Streeck, 2011).

Both crises, moreover, came after a period marked by 'neoliberal hegemony', which, in Latin America, was known as the period of the *Washington Consensus*. The Washington Consensus was characterised by the abandonment of the old, 'state-centric matrix' (Filgueira et al., 2012) and the implementation of market-friendly measures such as privatization of strategic public firms and of social protection systems, trade and financial openness, administrative decentralization and reduction of the size of the

public sectors, and reforms of the labour markets, among others. In turn, young Southern European democracies rapidly adopted the structural adjustments required to join the EU and to adapt to the EU legislation, while the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty further fostered the acceptance of tight macroeconomic criteria reducing budgetary autonomy at the national level (e.g., Gunther et al., 2006: 357).

However, some important works directly or indirectly provide important insights for the central topic of this dissertation (Table 1.1). A few recent works comparatively analysed the protest cycles triggered by the two crises (Della Porta, 2015; Della Porta et al., 2017a), the impact of the social movements on specific anti-austerity populist parties (Della Porta et al., 2017b) and the similar evolutions of the national party systems in the two regions (Roberts, 2017). The aim of Della Porta's book (2015) is to 'bring capitalism in' social movements studies, for a long time too skewed towards the identification of short-term factors and mechanisms (e.g., McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001) explaining the emergence of extra-institutional mobilizations. She then takes into account long-term social transformations (product of postindustrial economy and neoliberalism), such as the emergence of new, penalised classes (such as the 'precariat': Standing, 2009; 2011), and the crisis of expectations suffered by well-educated young people often excluded from the labour market. The book does provide a brief discussion of the Latin American mobilizations during the nineties (albeit overlooking the relevant – and, for my purposes, illuminating - Argentine case), by underlining the 'Polanyian' reaction against the social commodification provoked by neoliberalism, highly drawing from Silva's analysis (2009; see below).

Table 1.1 Literature Review of some Major Contributions about Anti-Austerity Mobilizations and Parties.

	INSIGHTS PROVIDED	FEATURES OVERLOOKED
Della Porta (2015)	Links between Structural Tranformations brought by Neoliberalism, Crisis of Neoliberalism, and Anti-Austerity protest cycles. Focus on 'crisis of responsiveness' of political parties and on increase in social exclusion.	Differences between Latin American and Southern European social movements against austerity not analysed. Relationship between movements and unions not analysed. Populism almost discarded as useful analytical tool.
Della Porta et al. (2017b)	Focus on the relationship between anti-austerity movements and parties. Comparison with Latin American experiences (Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela). The book highlights the 'neoliberal turn of the centre-left' and the 'politicization of new cleavages' as explaining factors for the rise of new 'movement parties'.	The book relies on the concept of 'movement party', which is insufficient to capture the variation between different experiences and risks to put all the movements 'in the same box'. It thus tends to overlook the different goals and sociological profiles of the movements. Populism almost discarded as useful analytical tool.
Roberts (2014)	Comparative historical analysis that highlights the legacy of social and political institutions shaped by the ISI economic phase. Recognition of the different organizational features within the 'populist family'.	Populism as a top-down project; social movements seen as 'ancillary organizations' of the party. This overlooks populism 's bottom-up and articulating components. Critical juncture identified in the implementation of neoliberalism, instead of its crisis.
Morgan (2011)	Weakness of party-society linkages and socio-political exclusion of the outsiders as main causes for rise of populism (also Van Cott, 2006, focusing on the rise of indigenist parties).	No analysis of the impact of social mobilizations on the party system. No analysis of the aftermath of eventual party system's breakdowns.
Silva (2009)	Attention payed to the socio-structural bases of the contentious movements in Latin America and on their ability for alliance-building (also Yashar, 2005). Protesters' goals identified as 'political incorporation' and 'decommodification'.	Unfocused on the political-electoral sphere.

Source: Author's Elaboration.

However, Della Porta's analysis is mainly focused on the anti-austerity movements in Southern Europe, and offers a detailed comparison with the Global Justice Movement (GJM) of the 2000s. She stresses the heterogeneous social bases attracted and the 'populist' frames adopted by anti-austerity movements, much less 'ideologically sophisticated' than the GJM. Della Porta identifies two main sources of grievances fuelling the vast social mobilizations against austerity.

The first one was a 'crisis of responsiveness' (of the mainstream political parties and of the national public institutions) that provoked a sense of 'political exclusion' among the majority of the citizens. This, in turn, motivated the call for a 'responsibility assumption' of the People, self-evident in the so-called 'square democracy' (the *acampadas* in Puerta del Sol and Syntagma Square: see also Gerbaudo, 2017) that represented the most visible repertoire of these movements. The second one was the weakening of social protection, which deepened the perception of social precariousness, due to the extreme commodification of people's lives, and fuelled the ambition of going back to a social-democratic (or, in Latin America, populist) golden age. Nevertheless, Della Porta does not focus on the very different sociological profiles and the different immediate goals of the protesters in Latin America and in Southern Europe, differences that warrant a closer investigation. Nor does she analyse the relationships between the anti-austerity movements and the labour unions, i.e. the most important structures of intermediation during the pre-crisis (both industrial and post-industrial) period and important allies of 'mainstream' parties in both regions.

Della Porta, neither in her book (2015) or in her collective volume (2017b), extensively discusses the concept of 'populism', when analysing the protest cycles against austerity and their impact on the new anti-austerity parties that emerged. Della Porta et al. (2017b) explicitly treat populism as a 'frame' whose almost sole function is to forge new collective and inclusive identities among the protesters, in opposition to a common enemy (see also Aslanidis, 2016). They consider parties such as the Greek Syriza, the Spanish Podemos and the Italian M5S (as well as the Bolivian MAS-IPSP, or

the Chavist experience) as all different instances of ‘movement parties’, although they do not provide a clear definition of the concept, arguably relying on Kitschelt’s conceptualization (2006; see below). Della Porta et al.’s book (2017b) presents a very well-documented analysis of the genesis of these parties, as well as of their relationship with the anti-austerity social movements and of the organizational impacts of the latters. They argue that these ‘movement parties’ developed mixed organizational features, as they, while sharing some characteristics of the 'neoliberal populist party type' (marked by an unmediated relationship between a leader and the base), also included several participatory and deliberative features, typical of anti-austerity movements (Gerbaudo, 2017).

However, as I will argue, populism is *much more* than a 'frame', or than an ‘unmediated relationship between the leader and the followers’ (Weyland, 2001; see Chapter 3). Populism is indeed a multidimensional, complex concept. Populism is better understood as a kind of *political project* that, if conceptualized properly, can explain why it proved in so many cases the *winning strategy* in the electoral arena, and why it showed a great adaptive capacity in a social environment shaped by strong popular mobilizations.

Della Porta et al. (2017b) provide a useful framework to understand the genesis of movement parties. They highly rely on Van Cott’s work (2006: see below), pointing at the ‘weakness of the traditional Left’, the ‘neoliberal turn of the main centre-left parties’ and the ‘politicization of new interests or cleavages’ (Kitschelt, 2006; Kriesi et al., 2008) by the movements as necessary preconditions. While my framework identifies the second and third factors as crucial for explaining the rise of anti-austerity populism, it makes a further step by providing a causal (or *explanatory*) typology (Bennett and Elman, 2006; Collier et al., 2012) to account for the *variety of antineoliberal populisms* that emerged in the countries selected. My framework provides a better specification and categorization of the ‘critical antecedents’ pre-dating the *critical juncture* (represented by the crisis), and a deeper discussion of the different types of social mobilizations

observed. It also specifies what the 'weakness of the traditional Left' consisted of, an ill-defined factor in the work of Della Porta et al.

With the notable exception of Della Porta et al. (2017b), there are no other works, to my knowledge, aiming at comparing systematically the changes that occurred within the Lefts in the Southern European region, although single-case studies abound. In contrast, there are several *comparative studies* focused on the political changes triggered by the neoliberal crisis *in Latin America*. Roberts (2017) tentatively extended to Southern Europe his argument accounting for Latin American party system changes due to the implementation of structural adjustments. Roberts, using party system stability as its dependent variable, has offered an original interpretation of the Latin American 'turn to the Left' during the past decade (Roberts, 2014). He showed that left-wing populisms have emerged only in those countries coming from an ISI (*Import Substitution Industrialization*) tradition and where the neoliberal reforms were implemented by left-of-centre or 'labour-based' (Levitsky, 2003) parties. According to this interpretation, the party systems proved to be resilient where conservative forces drove the transition towards neoliberalism.

The main merit of the Roberts' work is to stress the differences between Latin American countries having experienced an ISI period, from those that did have not, thus offering a broader interpretation of the political changes by taking into account long-term, sociological transformations. The ISI socioeconomic matrix left long-lasting heritages at the social, economic and political levels, such as a greater role of the state in the economy, a more institutionalised and ideological party system, stronger union movements with a 'preferential access' to the polity domain, and more advanced (albeit highly segmented) welfare regimes (Barrientos, 2004). The rise of bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes (O'Donnell, 1973) in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay was not enough to end with the 'state-centric matrix'. However, the effects of the Debt Crisis in the Eighties, as well as the economic failures of the progressive governments that emerged from dictatorships, paved the way for draconian market-friendly measures,

often imposed by presidents having 'switched' (Stokes, 2001) from their promises during electoral campaigns. Roberts demonstrated that former-ISI countries transition to neoliberalism was much more contentious than in the rest of the continent, and that left-of-centre or labour-based parties leading the transition were everywhere electorally punished for their 'betrayal'.

Albeit very insightful, Roberts' analysis still leaves several unanswered questions for the purposes of this dissertation. Roberts does not account well for the Argentine exception, where the Peronists led both the transition to neoliberalism and the post-crisis, progressive period. Nor does he provide an explanation for the varieties of populist experiences that emerged in the late nineties, while observing in other works (e.g., Roberts, 2006) the internal heterogeneity of the populist category and the relevance of party-society organizational linkages for a useful sub-categorization.

Moreover, Roberts' analysis considers the *neoliberal turn*, and *not* the *neoliberal crisis*, as the 'critical juncture' of his argument. This seems criticisable, because it is doubtful that it was the implementation of market-friendly measures *per se* that generated strong popular reactions and fuelled changes at the political level. Instead, wide social resistances were triggered by the *shortcomings* of the neoliberal model over time. In fact, several pro-market measures found strong supports even among the popular sectors (Baker, 2009). As Weyland (2004) convincingly argued, the implementation of neoliberalism proved to be quite well accepted, at least initially, when the populations clearly perceived the nefarious effects of the previous socioeconomic matrix, such as hyperinflationary crises[2]. The time lapse between the beginning of the neoliberal turn and the apex of popular protests is also quite revealing: 14 years in

[2] Actually, the only countries in which a vast protest cycle against the pro-market turn immediately arose were Venezuela, which never had to cope with hyperinflation, and Uruguay, where, nevertheless, the degree of contentiousness was much lower and fears of hyperinflationary phenomena were concrete (Uggla, 2000). In Bolivia the organised labour, which dominated Bolivian civil society at the time, lost much of its legitimacy due to the failures of the leftist coalition it supported, while also suffering governmental repression during the first neoliberal government (1985-1989). In Argentina, the union-led mobilizations against the reforms implemented by President Alfonsín had evident partisan motivations, and they dramatically decreased when Peronist President Menem, who concretely led the 'neoliberal turn', reached the government.

Bolivia (1986-2000), at least 10 years in Argentina (1989-1999). One could argue that the same happened in Southern Europe: although protests against friendly-market measures were common (as for instance in Spain during the González's government, or in Italy – thanks to the GJM and the organised working-class), they never achieved the intensity, duration and popular support of the demonstrations triggered by the Great Recession. It was not the Maastricht Treaty – one of the 'symbols' of the neoliberal hegemony in Europe – nor the Lisbon Treaty that animated widespread contentious activities in Southern Europe.

A vast amount of literature has dealt with the Latin American Left turn (the so-called 'pink tide'), offering valuable comparative studies about the variation among the national Lefts, mainly focusing on their governmental records (e.g., Weyland, De La Madrid and Hunter 2010; Cameron and Hershberg 2010; Levitsky and Roberts 2011). All of these studies tried to escape from the dichotomous and normative categorization between a 'good' and a 'bad' Left (the former less radical and democratic than the latter: see Castañeda, 2006). However, they did underline the moderation and the internal pluralism of the 'institutionalised', 'social-democratic' Left (Chile, Uruguay and Brazil) when compared with the 'populist' (Venezuela and Ecuador) or 'movement' (Bolivia) ones. Some authors, such as Weyland or Pribble (2013), also stressed the long-term unsustainability of the social policies implemented by the latter group.

When looking for the factors leading to the emergence of populist parties instead of the continuity of the traditional Left, this literature often stresses, on the one hand, the weak institutionalization of the party systems shaped by populist experiences and, on the other hand, the 'moderating' effects of bureaucratic-authoritarian dictatorships, which forced former radical parties to fully embrace liberal democracy and delegitimised radicalism. These explanations are only partially convincing, however. For instance, Venezuelan party system was considered, even in the early nineties, a 'highly institutionalized' one (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995). In more general terms, the relationship between the emergence of populist projects and the 'weak

institutionalization' of the party system seems tautological. For instance, we can consider the Bolivian party system during the 1985-2002 period quite stable: it was precisely the (gradual, more than sudden) rise of the MAS-IPSP that increased electoral volatility, one of the main indicator of 'party system institutionalization'. Nor was the Brazilian party system particularly 'institutionalised', in terms of both volatility and parties' rootedness, during the nineties, when the PT became a major electoral player.

On the other hand, the moderating effects of the bureaucratic-authoritarian period over the 'centripetal' positioning of left-of-centre parties in Chile, Brazil and Uruguay are undeniable and well documented. Nonetheless, the Uruguayan *Frente Amplio* was (and is) clearly more leftist than the Chilean *Concertación*, and even than the Brazilian PT under Lula's governments. Moreover, this argument does not account for the political behaviour of the Argentine Justicialist Party, which assumed a more combative position precisely at the beginning of the democratic period.

Morgan (2011), as Roberts, focuses on party system stability, by analysing the causal factors leading to party system collapse, relying very much on the case of the collapse of the Venezuelan 'partyarchy' (*partidocracia*) during the nineties (see Chapter 8). Venezuela was a 'crucial case' because of the supposed institutionalization of its previous party system (1958-1998). Morgan's analysis has the merit of combining political and sociological factors. The implementation of austerity measures by *both* Venezuelan major parties led the people to identify the *entire political class* as the 'culprits' for the negative economic conjunctures. Another central factor was, according to Morgan, the weakening of the party-society *linkages* (Kitschelt, 2000; Luna, 2014) and, in particular, the *social and political* exclusion suffered by outsider sectors (excluded from union representation), who disproportionally supported the rise (and the governments) of Hugo Chávez. However, Morgan does not focus on the political opportunities generated by party system collapses: she does not envision or perceive the different possible subsequent social and political scenarios. She simply worries of the perils brought by a 'populist turn' led by some 'political maverick' able to take

advantage of the situation. Nor does she analyse the impact of the social organizations that opened the way for the rise of new political projects.

The changes brought by the neoliberal era in the interest aggregation structures was actually the topic of different works such as those by Handlin and Collier (2008), Silva (2009) and Yashar (2005). Handlin and Collier focus on the diffusion of new 'associational networks' in Latin America, complementing (and even substituting) the older structures of socialization and intermediation linked to the *union-party hubs* (such as CGT-PJ in Argentina, or CTV-AD in Venezuela). They observed a switch from 'corporatist' to *territorially-based organizations* or, more generally, towards *organizations based on issues more related with the sphere of consumption than with the sphere of production*, mainly due to the process of deindustrialization and to the 'informalization' of the economy during the neoliberal period. Thus, they observed a greater role played by neighbourhood associations or self-help networks to cope with the daily necessities of the popular sectors. As I will show more in detail in the chapters devoted to the case studies, some of these local organizations were major actors during the protest cycles in Bolivia, Argentina and Venezuela. These and other kinds of popular organizations stemming from non-salaried workers (such as unemployed workers' organizations or peasant unions) did not appear, at least with comparable strength, in Southern Europe, where very different movements, in terms of demands and memberships' profiles, led the protest cycles.

Silva (2009) also underlines the importance of the popular organizations animating the 'Polanyian' (1944) resistance to neoliberalism, by observing that new actors – representing social sectors not incorporated in the 'union-party hubs' – led the protest cycles at the regional and national levels. Silva (and also Yashar [2005], focusing on indigenous movements) stresses that a necessary condition for a successful, in terms of public resonance and sustainability over time, protest cycle is the ability, by the different movements, of building strong alliances amongst them. Silva also argues that citizens from the popular sectors aimed for a new 'incorporation' (Rossi, 2015) in the

State, thus extending the achievements of a (somewhat mythologised) 'ISI Golden Age' in terms of social rights and of access to the polity domain. This author interestingly highlights the claim for a restoration of *popular sovereignty* through popular control of the state, after the long era characterised by state retrenchment. Finally, Silva provides important insights for understanding the sociological profiles of the activists, identifying the indigenous peoples, the unemployed, and public sector workers – i.e., those sectors *directly and mostly affected* by neoliberal and austerity measures – as the social bases of the protests in Latin America.

Differently from Silva and from Yashar, Van Cott (2006) deeply focused on the reasons that fostered the transition of the movements from the social to the electoral arena. She studied the emergence of Latin American ethnic (indigenous) parties, relying on the Kitschelt's theoretical work on the concept of 'movement party' (2006: see below for a deeper discussion). Van Cott identified several institutional and organizational factors facilitating this 'jump' and explaining the eventual electoral successes: among others, she identified the degree of organizational rootedness and the crisis of the old Leftist parties as two necessary conditions for the electoral viability of ethnic parties. Like Morgan, Van Cott argued that the 'crisis of the Left' could be due both to a centripetal strategy by the left-of-centre parties or to the weakening of the linkages with the popular sectors due to the decline of the old structures of intermediation, such as the trade unions.

1.3 The Relationship between Anti-Austerity Social Movements and Political Parties. A Closer Look

According to Kitschelt (2006: 280), movement parties are '*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*'. Kitschelt also

identified the factors favouring the emergence of these parties, such as the belief that there are some constituencies ready to be 'stolen' from existing parties, low institutional barriers to electoral politics, and the politicization of *new cleavages* that the existing parties are not able to absorb. According to the author, '*existing parties may refrain from trying to win (or hold) voters motivated by hitherto unrepresented, but salient, issue positions simply because they figure that such appeals would alienate significant other elements of their electoral constituency whose loss would equal or outweigh the support of the newly mobilized constituency'* (2006: 282).

Kitschelt clearly separates the concepts of *social movement* and of *interest group*. Interest groups '*band together to influence and bargain with politicians in legislative and executive institutions through the provision of information, persuasion, financial contributions to parties within the bounds of legality, or the credible threat of withdrawing electoral support from electoral office-holders*' (Kitschelt, 2006: 279). Social movements '*resort to 'street politics' of protest and disruption in pursuit of a collective purpose outside or against the institutionalized channels of political communication and politicians inserted in them – whether in a non-violent or a violent fashion'* (Ibidem). In sum, the *repertoire of actions* would be the main discriminant between the two concepts. Kitschelt also argues that interest groups invest more energies in dealing with collective action problems, thus institutionalizing themselves to a greater extent than social movements. Both social movements and interest groups, however, would not worry about the eventual aggregation of other demands in a coherent platform, which would be the task of political parties.

Kitschelt's analysis starts from the *tacit* assumption that the social movements politicize issues potentially attractive to broad constituencies (see also Kriesi et al., 1995), and then eventually decide to enter electoral politics by adopting loose membership barriers and participatory and horizontal organizational forms. Nevertheless, many anti-neoliberal 'social movements' made use of contentious repertoires and still develop quite stable organizational forms. Most importantly, most of

them were born around particularistic demands (focused on local concerns, such as many 'NIMBY' committees or neighbourhood assemblies and associations) or specific issues (such as, for example, reduction in public health spending). In my opinion, it is analytically more useful, in order to analyse the relationship between the social and the political arenas, to focus on the *kinds of demands* advanced by either the 'social movements' or some 'interest groups' than to establish clear boundaries between the two concepts.

In fact, Kitschelt himself seems to recognise that the most important factor in analysing the relationship between a 'non-institutional group' (regardless of the repertoire used or of its organizational stability) and the political sphere is precisely the characteristics of their demands[3]. While Kitschelt (2006: 281) argues that a *social movement* can reasonably aspire to be represented in the electoral arena through either a 'movement party' or a 'charismatic/populist party or leader', the author states that an *interest group* finds its political representation either in a *special interest party* or in a *clientelist party*. It can thus be hypothesized that a) the bigger the constituency potentially attracted by the movement's demands, b) the more salient the issue(s), c) the broader the platform of the movement (in terms of number of policy areas related to the movement's goals), the higher the opportunities and the incentives for a movement to create its own electoral platform.

From these considerations, it derives that the irruption of a 'movement party', as defined by Kitschelt, can occur only when the mobilization obtains the three characteristics mentioned above. Therefore, the birth of a 'movement party', as defined by Kitschelt, is only one *possible outcome* of strong protest cycles, such as the anti-austerity ones. Actually, MacAdam and Tarrow (2010: 534) identify five other possible

[3] Also Goldstone's seminal work (2003: 8) called for a deeper focus on the different kinds of demands advanced by the movements: *'Protest and associational actions can focus on particular issues, giving greater specificity to actions; indeed, protests can shape party behavior in this respect […]. This is not always the case; anticommunist [here the Author refers to the Czechoslovakian case] or prodemocratic movements have very broad goals, while conventional referendum campaigns or lawsuits are often very issue-specific. However, in general, protest actions allow a degree of focus that is often difficult for ordinary citizens to attain in routine voting and political party participation'*.

mechanisms of reciprocal relationship between social movements and the electoral arena, some of them (as the introduction of new organizational forms, or the engagement in election campaigns by the movements) are quite relevant for the topic of this dissertation. For these reasons, in order to have a better analytical tool for studying the relationship between the social mobilizations and the political sphere, to focus only on 'movement parties' can be misleading. To analyse party-society *linkages* seems much more useful and exhaustive.

The concept of 'linkage', to be sure, is multifaceted. On the one side, 'organizational linkages' define the relationship between a party and *organised groups in the civil society* ('environmental linkage') and the relationship between the party leadership and party members and sympathisers ('participatory linkage': see Tsakatika and Lisi, 2013). On the other side, 'electoral linkages' refer to the relationship between the party and the *electorate* (Kitschelt, 2000, 2006; Luna, 2014). According to these authors, 'electoral' linkages can be *programmatic* (the representation of policy and preferences of specific constituencies), *identitarian* (the importance of party identification or political identities) or *charismatic* (the emotional identification with a leader or politician).

In this sense, 'organizational linkages' can be seen as one of the tools for reinforcing electoral linkages. Organizational linkages reduce the cost of information for the voters, thus strengthening programmatic linkages: for instance, voters argue that a party closer to the union movement is likely to pursue pro-labour policies. A member of an organization close to a specific party is more likely to vote for it, because of the pressures of the organization's cadres, because of an individual rational calculus or because of the willingness to express her loyalty to the organization. Moreover, close linkages between a party and an organization increase, at least indirectly, the 'militancy' of the party, as even activists not directly affiliated to the party are likely to invite other citizens to vote for it. Finally, a charismatic leader can appeal to a constituency, whether organised or not, by credibly promising to offer a solution for its grievances; the leader

can also foster the creation of an organised base in order to 'objectify' her/his support, thus making it more stable and sustainable over time.

Because of neoliberal crises, popular discontent mounted and new forms of contentious collective actions, built around *different kinds of demands*, flourished in the countries selected. As I will argue in Chapter 2, the neoliberal period and the post-crisis phase put in perils the party-society linkages that the existing parties had established, both at the organizational and at the electoral level. New grievances emerged in the public sphere, thanks to the organizational capacity of new social movements shaping the socio-political scenario and introducing new ways of framing the crisis (Aslanidis, 2017). At the electoral level, a growing number of social sectors did not receive any convincing solutions (either 'programmatic' or 'particularistic') to their demands. The political parties, and particularly the parties belonging to the left side of the spectrum, had to deal with effervescent societies. As I will argue, their capacity of adaptation to the new contentious scenario was crucial to determine their electoral resilience and prevent the rise of new, fitter competitors.

1.4 The posited 'Scope Condition'. Why labour market Insider-Outsider divide is relevant to explain the changes in South American and Southern European Lefts

A major source of theoretical inspiration and hypothesis-building for this project has been the literature on welfare regimes dualization. This literature demonstrates the conditional (i.e., depending on the characteristics of the national welfare regimes) effects of labour-market status on policy and partisan preferences (e.g., Hausermann and Schwander, 2010; Rovny and Rovny, 2017), focusing on the divide between welfare regime *insiders* (i.e., salaried workers with open-ended, full-time contracts) and

outsiders. Path-breaking Rueda's works (2005; 2007), looking at the process of interest aggregation, argued that in highly dualized regimes left-of-centre parties and trade unions have historically represented the interests of the *insiders*, to the partial detriment of the *outsiders*.

The literature on dualization is part of the large body of research on welfare regimes in advanced economies, having its roots in the well-known works of Esping-Andersen (1990; 1999) and his 'three worlds of welfare regimes' typology. Ferrera (1996) authoritatively added a fourth category, the so-called 'Mediterranean' regime, characterised by higher degrees of segmentation (according to job status) in social rights' provision; by weak (or inexistent) universalist safety-net schemes; and by weak state institutions, which are much more clientelism-prone than in the other Continental European countries. Nonetheless, the stratifying effects of welfare regimes have been widely analysed for Latin America as well (e.g., Filgueira et al., 2012), sometimes with the aim of adapting the Esping-Andersen's typology to the Latin American context (e.g., Barba, 2003; Gough et al., 2004).

Recently, Rueda et al. (2015) have stressed the similarities with regard to segmentation of the social provisions and to the comparatively higher permanent employment protection existing in those welfare regimes shaped by the ISI (*Industrialization through the Substitution of Importations*) era, both in several Latin American countries and in the Southern European region. These authors also empirically show the positive relationship between permanent employment protection, on the one hand, and the size of informal economy and job precariousness, on the other. They also underscore the strong resilience of the protective labour legislation, even in the 1980-2000 period, when we would have expected, in both regions, a stronger flexibilization of the labour markets, particularly in those economies facing more difficulties in adapting to the integrated financial and commercial markets. Consequently, these authors call for a cross-regional integration of the discussion of the electoral consequences of dualizing regimes.

I will precisely use the ‘lens’ of the insider-outsider divide to provide a novel interpretation of the rise of antineoliberal populist projects. Nevertheless, my argument departs from the ‘methodological individualism’ implicit in most of the literature on welfare regime dualization. Instead, I argue that the insider-outsider divide is bound to provoke consequences at two different levels, micro and macro, interrelated, but analytically quite different.

The micro level is about the individual policy and partisan preferences of the insider and outsider groups. This is the special focus of the literature on dualization (e.g., Hausermann and Schwander, 2010; Hausermann and Kriesi, 2015) and social risks (e.g., Cusack et al., 2005; Rehm et al., 2012). While starting from different theories and assumptions, and even from different definitions of the insider and outsider categories (for a review, see Rovny and Rovny, 2017), they aim to show the impact of labour-market status on the individual preferences of the voters. One corollary is that dualization can eventually lead to the politicization of such a divide, for example by looking for the support of different constituencies in order to 'recalibrate’ (e.g., Picot and Tassinari, 2014) dualised welfare regimes through the introduction of ‘flexicurity’ models (e.g., Thelen, 2014; Beramendi et al., 2015) extending the coverage of universal social assistance, while diminishing the labour protections enjoyed by insider workers.

The translation of policy preferences into partisan preferences and electoral choices is not an automatic process. We well know that the act of voting is influenced by many factors, and that, in turn, personal preferences over specific policies are, partially at least, shaped also by partisan considerations. Neither policy nor partisan preferences automatically derive from belonging to some class or social category. A vast literature (e.g., Knutsen, 2006; Best, 2011) has underscored the decline of class voting in postindustrial, advanced economies. Nonetheless, sociodemographic factors, such as class, job occupation, education and gender, still are important predictor of voting behaviour, shaping the interests that the political parties represent. As consistently shown by Oesch (2012) and Hausermann and Kriesi (2015), in Western Europe, socio-

cultural professionals are strongly overrepresented among Social Democrat and Radical Leftist electorates. Blue collar and lower-skilled service workers stay slightly left-of-centre in the economic, 'materialist' axis, while displaying 'authoritarian-conservative' cultural attitudes, whereas the petty bourgeoisie tends to occupy the 'pro-market' and 'conservative' quadrant.

Could the insider-outsider divide be an additional dimension that must be taken into account for predicting policy and partisan preferences of the voters? The findings of the literature, almost completely focused on advanced economies, are mixed. Rueda (2005) found a strong difference between insiders and outsiders on their preferences on employment protection and active labour market policies spending. Instead, Emmenegger (2009) and Brito Vieira and Carreira da Silva (2017, focusing on the Portuguese case) found, in contrast, poor or any variations. Guillaud and Marx (2014), analysing the French case, seemed to confirm Rueda's findings, while adding that also insider workers occupied in sectors with higher unemployment rates are likely to support higher unemployment benefits. Marx (2013), focusing on fixed-term workers in Western Europe, found that they disproportionately favour redistributive policies and higher unemployment benefits. Recently, Rovny and Rovny (2017) found that unemployed and fixed-term workers in Western Europe tend to be overrepresented within Radical Left's electorates, while insider workers occupied in sectors that are highly affected by unemployment rates tend to support far-right parties. In contrast, Corbetta and Colloca (2013) highlighted that Italian unemployed workers tend to support right-of-centre parties (see also Chapter 7 of this dissertation). A partial explanation for this finding is provided by Fernández-Albertos and Manzano (2015), who found that in Mediterranean countries the outsiders tend to oppose tax increases in order to finance the welfare state, while, at the same time, favouring more progressive wealth redistribution. According to Fernández-Albertos and Manzano, Southern European outsiders have thus become aware of the regressive effects of their national welfare regimes in terms of wealth redistribution.

However, the empirical analyses showing the divergent (partisan and policy) preferences between the two groups overwhelmingly refer to the pre-crisis period. On the one hand, one could argue that higher employment protection and stronger organizational capacity could have insulated the insiders from the harshest effects of the crisis, thus widening the gap between insiders and outsiders and extending the differences between the two groups in terms of policy and partisan preferences. At the same time, the size of the outsider category, particularly in Southern Europe, enormously increased, due to the negative economic conjuncture. In this sense, to argue that the outsiders 'are not a powerful electoral group in contemporary capitalist democracies' (Beramendi et al., 2014: 29) seem outdated. In Latin America, labour informality and job precariousness further increased, mainly due to the demise of the statist model. All of these considerations may suggest that the crisis made the politicization of the insider-outsider divide more likely, thus opening a window of opportunity for the emergence of political projects claiming for a 'political incorporation' (Castillo and Barrenechea, 2016) of the outsiders. Such incorporation could occur through programmatic (for instance, expansionary fiscal policies in order to promote growth and lower indirect taxes, or universalist social schemes), charismatic or partisan linkages, while advancing an anti-unionist (and even anti-insider) political discourse attacking the 'privileges' enjoyed by 'over-protected' workers.

On the other hand, austerity and market-friendly measures – often *also* implying strong reductions of permanent employment protection – could well have provoked a certain *convergence* of the preferences held by individuals in the two segments, as the supposed ‘over-protection’ enjoyed by the insiders was menaced by the ‘orthodox’ economic inspiration of the governments (which tended to favour wage controls) and by the extensive dismissals triggered by the crisis. This does not necessarily lead to the cancellation of the differences in terms of policy preferences between individuals in the two segments, but it could have pushed many insiders to oppose the neoliberal *status quo* and those parties implementing market-friendly reforms. Actually, one of the few analyses of the effects of the insider-outsider divide on individual redistributive

preferences in Latin America (Berens, 2015), using data from 2008 and 2010 LAPOP surveys, found that there were no significant differences between the two groups. According to Berens, this could be in part due to the diminishing protection reserved to the insiders after the Washington Consensus' era, and in part due to the extreme internal heterogeneity of the outsider category. In fact, the latter category includes, in Latin America, both informal self-employed workers and irregular salaried workers; in Southern Europe, low and high-skilled unemployed, self-employed and fixed-term salaried workers, with very different needs and expectations.

Brito Vieira and Carreira da Silva (2017), to explain the converging preferences, in terms of permanent employment protection, that they found between the two groups for the Portuguese case, proposed a two-fold argument. On the one side, the outsiders would prefer to wait for their eventual access to a well-protected labour market, instead of pushing for making labour markets more flexible. On the other hand, the high familization of Southern European welfare regimes would discourage unemployed workers (disproportionately distributed amongst penalised categories such as women and youth) from claiming for diminishing the job protection of the breadwinner, as this would imply an (at least in the short-term) increase in precariousness.

In sum, the literature offers quite contrasting evidences over the effects of welfare regime dualization on individual preferences, and suggests very different hypotheses about the impact of the crisis: either a further differentiation of individual preferences across the divide, or the opportunity of 'building a bridge' between the outsiders and those insiders particularly exposed to the risk of losing their status, or particularly enraged by austerity measures affecting their incomes. For each of the eight case studies selected (see Chapters 4-8), by using national survey datasets, I will provide an analysis of the sociological composition of the electorates of the anti-neoliberal populist parties emerged, in order to highlight the relevance of the insider-outsider divide for a better understanding of these phenomena.

However, I argue that the differences between the social compositions of the electorates of such parties mainly depend on the *consequences of the second level of analysis, the macro one*, to which this dissertation pays much more attention, and which is strongly underdeveloped in the literature on welfare regime dualization.

In the second, substantive part of the dissertation, I focus on the *organizations involved in the process of interest aggregation that come from both the insider and outsider camps*. Said differently, I use the analytical lens of the 'insider-outsider divide' to analyse the protest cycles against neoliberalism and austerity. As I already mentioned, the crises of the neoliberal model have triggered vast cycles of protests both in Latin America (during the Nineties and in the early 2000s) and in Southern Europe (since 2008). In all of the countries that I selected (former ISI Latin American countries and Southern European countries facing a deep economic crisis following a neoliberal phase: see Chapter 1.6), the unions, representing *par excellence* the insider sectors, historically played a central, mediating role between left-of-centre or labour-based political parties and the (weak) civil society (e.g., Morlino, 1998; Handlin and Collier, 2008). However, when the crisis erupted, we witnessed, together with trade unions reacting against public spending cuts and extensive attacks on labour rights, the emergence of new kinds of protests and protestors, with different goals, concerns, repertoires, organizational forms and membership profiles from the 'mainstream' unions.

These social mobilizations brought to the public debate several concerns which, albeit not necessarily contrasting with the unions' goals, included different issues, sometimes more specific (in terms of their sectorial or geographical scope) and sometimes much more general (such as strong critiques against representative democracy and the current structures of political intermediation, including parties and unions). In some cases, and particularly in Latin America, these movements 'belonged' fully to the outsider camp, in terms of demands and even membership profiles. In other cases, they have tended to represent geographical, territorial constituencies or to advance much broader democratic demands, crosscutting the insider-outsider divide but focusing

on issues that only partially overlapped with job-related grievances, typically channelled through the unions.

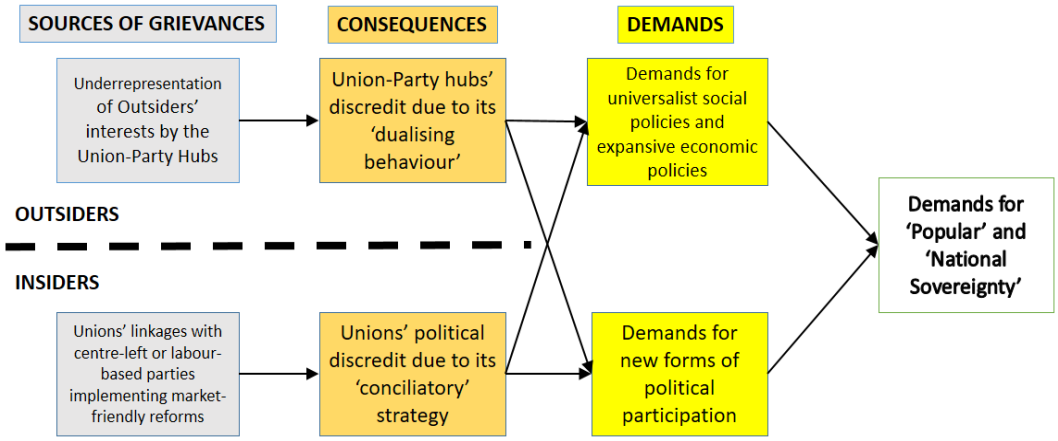
The neoliberal period often loosened the tightness of party-union linkages, particularly when left-of-centre or labour-based parties fully embraced the hegemonic discourse. Nevertheless, since the unions still needed to keep some influence on the polity domain (Murillo, 2003; Rigby and García Calavia, 2017) in countries where labour market is regulated much more through the state than through corporatist arrangements, these linkages did not disappear completely. When the crisis came, the traditional union-party hubs faced the risk of losing their legitimacy as credible socio-political actors advancing an alternative model, for at least two sets of reasons.

First, union-party hubs' legitimacy was harmed not only by their centripetal political move, but also by their gradual detachment from society, conducing to a crisis of representation. Left-of-centre and labour-based parties in the countries selected often went through processes of 'genetic mutation' involving several aspects. Some of these processes were part of broader, well-known phenomena, such as party 'cartelization' (Katz and Mair, 1995) and the full transition to the 'electoral-professional party' model (Panebianco, 1988). In addition, since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the deepening of the EU integration process in Southern Europe, and during the *Washington Consensus*, in South America, the existing major leftist or labour-based parties experienced, with some exception, dramatic changes. In Southern Europe, their electorates often acquired a more middle-class profile. In both regions, the linkages between the unions and the parties became looser, and the influence of the formers over the latters partially declined. In several countries, the involvement of almost all the 'mainstream' political parties in the crisis management through austerity measures, deepened the feelings of political exclusion in vast sectors of the population. Austerity measures triggered widespread popular demonstrations calling for restoring 'popular and national sovereignty', through new forms of political participation moreover, against the *diktats* (passively implemented by the mainstream parties) of the supranational institutions and the

‘market’, and aimed to (re)introduce meaningful social protections for the most affected sectors (see Figure 1.1). This first set of *political* factors, concerning the sphere of political representation, was a powerful driver for increasing the popular discontent amongst *both the sides* of the insider-outsider divide.

Second, the crisis made electoral linkages between union-party hubs and the *outsiders* even more ineffective than before. Despite the poor or non-existent social policy tools oriented to the needs of the outsiders, this group was the object of different electoral (programmatic, identitarian and/or clientelistic) linkages during the neoliberal era. Nonetheless, the economic crises and the orthodox responses to them put in perils the effectiveness of these linkages. The ‘incorporation of the popular sectors through the market’ (Filgueira et al., 2012) loss its discursive legitimacy, while state retrenchment and stronger fiscal discipline limited both the ‘programmatic’ support and the parties’ room of manoeuvre for reviving old clientelistic practices (Luna, 2014; Afonso et al., 2015). The crisis of party-outsiders linkages, and the unions’ poor capacity of representing the outsiders’ interests, paved the way for new political projects more able to create strong and credible organizational linkages with emerging contentious actors, and programmatic electoral linkages with different segments of the electorate. It must be stressed that a successful organizational linkage strategy is, by itself, functional to increase the electoral appeal of the party, as the protest cycles during the crisis are likely to achieve very high resonance and support in the public sphere. In contrast, those union-party hubs having kept an antagonistic stance towards the ‘neoliberal turns’ could legitimately play a stronger role during the protest cycles against austerity and neoliberal policies, and credibly aiming to incorporate *both the segments* in a renewed social alliance.

Figure 1.1 The Insider-Outsider Divide and the Crisis of the Old Structures of Socio-Political Intermediation.



Source: Author's elaboration.

1.5 The Dependent Variable: Rises and Varieties of Anti-Neoliberal Populisms in Latin America and Southern Europe

The theoretical discussion of the concept of 'populism' is the topic of Chapter 3. I define populism as a *'"political project" aiming at occupying the public institutions through electoral means in order to allow 'The people' to recuperate its sovereignty, while relying on an antagonistic, polarizing political discourse to generate new collective identities and on varying organizational resources to overcome the problems*

of collective action that could arise among dispersed and/or heterogeneous constituencies'. I argue that populism became in most of the countries analysed here the 'antineoliberal winning strategy' for achieving major positive electoral results, decisively and probably irreversibly shaping the leftist political scenarios. I claim that an analysis of the concept of populism based on five of what I consider to be its main features can clarify why populism became a widespread phenomenon in South America and Southern Europe in the aftermath of a crisis of the neoliberal model and of major cycles of contentions.

In particular, I will focus on: a) the process by which the populisms articulate the demands of 'the People'; b) the relationship between *populism* and *the search for power*; c) the *populist interpretation* of the notions of *representation, accountability and sovereignty*; d) the empirical relationship between *populism* and *participation* and e) the *organizational characteristics of the populist parties.* A discussion of these topics will contribute to understand the surprising adaptability of populist political projects to the complex post-crisis social and political scenarios.

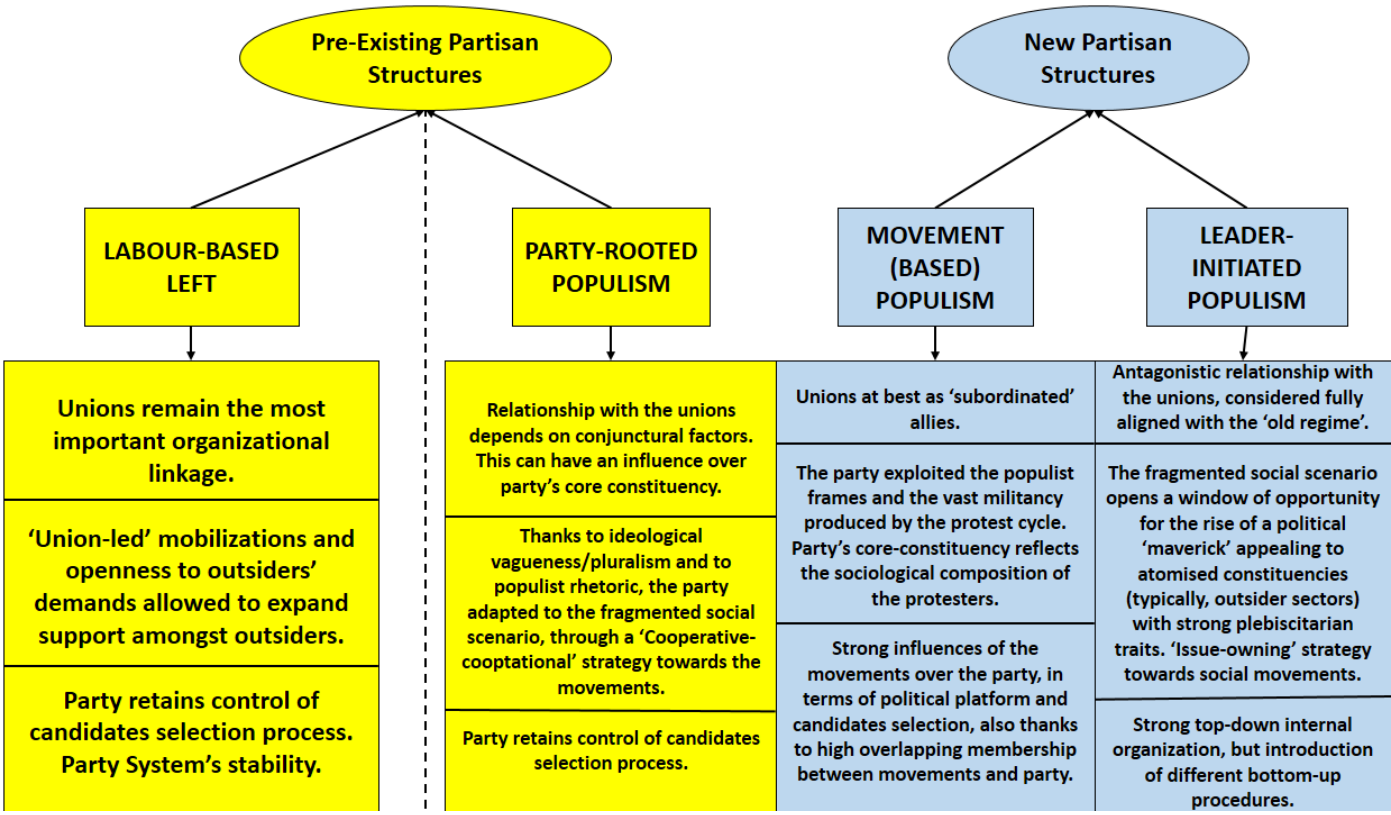
However, not all the Lefts were shaped by the emergence of successful populist political projects. Moreover, antineoliberal populisms also assumed very different characteristics. I opted for creating a typology of possible 'outcomes': i.e. the different kinds of anti-austerity political projects that achieved a dominant – or, at least, electorally relevant – position within the Lefts in the aftermath of the crisis. I recognise that the adjectives 'dominant' or 'relevant' are imprecise, but I argue that this does not represent a real problem. While establishing a minimum electoral threshold (in terms of votes or seats) would be easy enough, it would also be arbitrary.

In fact, these 'successful political projects' are quite easily identifiable in all of the countries selected. In Latin America, I refer to political projects that have reached the presidency and obtained the re-election for at least three times in a row, such as the Bolivian MAS-IPSP, Venezuelan *Chavism*, Argentine *Kirchnerism* or the Uruguayan *Frente* Amplio. In Southern Europe, I refer to two newly born populist parties that have

definitely changed the composition of the national party systems: the Spanish *Podemos* and the Italian *MoVimento 5 Stelle*. And I refer to a former fringe party, the Greek *Syriza*, which was able to dramatically increase its electoral support and to elect and re-elect its leader as Prime Minister. I refer, finally, to the Portuguese far-Left, composed by two parties (the Portuguese Communist Party and the Leftist Bloc), which were able to prevent the eventual rise of populist competitors and to increase their electoral support until reaching nearly 20% of the votes (jointly), thus becoming crucial allies of the Socialist government in power since 2015.

While I focus on all these experiences by describing them and explaining why these forces were able to adapt to the post-crisis period, I also show why *other* parties were not, following the causal argument that I will present in Chapter 2. The main factors are related to the adaptive capacity of the successful political projects and actors through efficient linkage strategies, both at the organizational and electoral levels. In this section, however, I enumerate the features *differentiating* the different political outcomes observable in the countries analysed. I claim that it is possible to relevantly categorize the different 'winning projects' according to three, branching variables, namely: the previous existence, or not, of the political party and/or of partisan structures; their relationship with the national unions; and the degree of influence of the social movements in crucial internal activities of the parties, such as candidates selection, policy-making process and elaboration of party manifestos. This leads to the typology illustrated by Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2 The Dependent Variable. A Typology of the 'Successful Political Projects' shaping the National Lefts in the Aftermath of a Crisis of Neoliberalism



Source: Author's Elaboration.

Before introducing and much clarifying the features of each outcome, which at this point are less clear than the differentiating variables, I want to stress that such features are the close products of the combination of several factors that I mentioned in the previous paragraphs and that I will better specify in the following chapter.

The first outcome is quite self-evident. It illustrates a pattern of ‘political stability’. The ‘existing Left’, strongly linked to the organised working-class, is not only able to ‘resist’, but even to take electoral advantage of the crisis. Labour-based Left keeps strong linkages with the unions and is able to expand their appeals through electoral linkages to the outsiders and through organizational linkages to the movements. In sum, the first outcome implies the resilience of the ‘old Left’, perceived as a credible alternative to ‘neoliberalism’, and able to play a crucial role in the protests and achieve important electoral results.

The other three outcomes represent ‘populist paths’ to realignments within (and beyond) the national Lefts. In contrast to Labour-based leftist parties, which keep strong linkages to the unions, rely on class-based political discourse and retain mass-party organizational features, all the anti-neoliberal populist political projects share quite different characteristics. In terms of internal organization, they tend to approximate the 'charismatic party' model described by Panebianco (1988; see Chapter 3), in which a strong leadership coexist with organizational decentralization, low autonomy from the environment (i.e., organizational linkages and overlapping membership between the 'party' and the 'civil society', including contentious social movements) and/or the introduction of original forms of participatory linkages. This latter characteristic marks a strong difference between anti-neoliberal populist projects and Panebianco's charismatic parties.

The role played by the leader in the early phase of populist rise can vary, depending on the specific anti-neoliberal populist sub-type; however, the autonomy of the leadership is (again, with some variation) very high. Several scholars have stressed that the centrality of the leadership is a constitutive attribute of populist phenomena (e.g., Weyland, 2001; Laclau, 2005; Ostiguy, 2017), while some scholars dissent (e.g., Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2014). My own definition does not include any reference to a 'strong leader', but I fully recognise the centrality of the role played by the leader in all the populist phenomena. However, as I extensively discuss in Chapter 3, I argue that

the function of the leader is quite different in electoral-delegative populisms in comparison to participative-mobilising populist category, which anti-neoliberal populisms are likely to belong to (see also Padoan, 2017, and Chapter 3 of this dissertation).

I anticipate here that the function of the leader in anti-neoliberal populisms is not just to 'symbolize the unification' of 'The people' (Laclau, 2005: 100) and, in a successive phase, to 'fill' with more precise meanings the 'empty signifiers' linking different unsatisfied demands. I also depart from Weyland's strict conceptualization of populism as an 'unmediate relationship' between a leader and his followers, which is too skewed towards the 'electoral-delegative' populist phenomena. Instead, I argue that, at least in anti-neoliberal populisms, the leader, apart from carrying on a communicative, even 'theatrical' function – quite necessary in our era of mediatised politics – is mainly an arbitrator between different interests, either organized or not, that are pursued by those heterogeneous social sectors that are discontent with the previous neoliberal order and are potentially part of the 'populist alliance'. In Ostiguy's works, we can find, in nuce, the centrality of such function fulfilled by the leader, when the author notices that the kind of relationship established by the leader and his followers is not based on well-established procedures, but on informal arrangements (e.g., Ostiguy, 2017: 80). However, I do not stress the 'personalist' and 'emotional' characteristic of such relationship (which surely exists and allows to create and develop strong charismatic linkages). Instead, I highlight the strong room of manoeuvre enjoyed by the anti-neoliberal populist leader, implicitly or explicitly respected by voters, sympathisers, militants and cadres, to solve the internal tensions arising from highly mobilised bases, and to have the final word over the strategic decisions of the party.

In contrast to the Labour-based Left, anti-neoliberal populist projects do not retain or seek any 'special relationship' with the unions. In terms of political discourse, anti-neoliberal populisms do not identify with encompassing and coherent ideologies and typically advance inter-classist appeals by pretending to represent 'The people',

exploited by rapacious political and economic elites. Anti-neoliberal populisms focus on the goal of restoring popular and national sovereignty, through People's re-occupation and strengthening of state institutions illegitimately occupied by unresponsive politicians and controlled by international markets and supranational institutions (see Chapter 3 for a broad discussion of the concept).

Although traditional leftist actors can eventually develop some of the characteristics typical of populist phenomena, they tend to have a much less strong and autonomous leadership, to pay much more attention to ideological 'integrity' and to defend their 'privilege relationship' with the organised labour. Nevertheless, the categorization that I propose must not be understood as a rigid taxonomy. My goal is to identify a few 'ideal-typical' outcomes, easily explainable by the combinations produced by the different possible interactions of the independent variables included in my argument (see Chapter 2). Each of the parties analysed in this dissertation is particularly close to one of these ideal types, but this does not exclude the possibility of observing 'hybrid' empirical phenomena and of noticing interesting similarities between political phenomena closer to different ideal types.

In the lighter boxes of Figure 1.2, we find the two, theoretically and empirically, possible ‘winning political projects’ relying on *existing political parties*: the labour-based Left described above, and party-rooted populism. In the latter case, an existing party is able, thanks to its ideological and organizational resources, to establish strong electoral linkages with multiple social sectors (and *particularly* with the outsiders, whose size dramatically increased) and efficacious organizational linkages with the protesters, by assuming an inclusive and antagonistic populist discourse.

This path does not assure ‘stability’, like the previous one, for at least two general reasons. First, the political party able to link with the protests is not necessarily a ‘mainstream’ party during the pre-crisis period. Second, as I will better specify in Chapter 2, organised labour does not act as the most important articulator of popular discontent, as it occurred in the first ‘path’. Instead, existing parties leading a populist

project typically own specific ideological or organizational characteristics that allow them to play a brokerage role between the movements, and thus to articulate a common 'popular front' and to (a certain extent) co-opt the movements. Ideologically, such parties tolerate internal differences and avoids sectarianism; organizationally, they present some forms of power decentralization. Both characteristics are obviously functional to the brokerage role played by the parties within the 'contentious camp'. The relationship between the ‘successful winning project’ and the unions will vary, therefore, depending mainly on the existence – or absence – of strong organizational linkages remounting to the pre-crisis period – eventually tightened (or loosened) during the contentious phase following the socioeconomic crash. In party-rooted populism, old partisan structures retain a strong influence within the candidate selection process; nevertheless, the room of manoeuvre for party leadership is much stronger than in the Labour-based Left. The leader retains and strengthens a firm control over strategic choices; relaunches an antagonistic populist political discourse (and downplays class-based rhetoric) to strengthen electoral linkages with different sectors and to further unify the 'contentious camp'; and eventually coordinates the distribution of particularistic incentives (either programmatic or clientelistic) to keep the loyalty of different organised actors.

The last two outcomes entail the rise of a *new* anti-neoliberal populist party taking electoral advantage of the crisis. Nevertheless, these outcomes also highly differ in terms of their relationship with the union movement and – particularly – their internal organization, which responds to different adaptive necessities, as I will clarify in Chapter 2. In the path labelled *leader-initiated populism*, the new party is fully centred, since the beginning, around its founder's and leader's figure, a typical political 'maverick' exploiting the window of opportunity generated by the crisis. The party presents an extremely loose and weak internal organization, in which a strong control from above coexists with very low barriers to entry and with a strong autonomy of the grassroots at the periphery, in terms of political platform and candidates selection. As the leader presents himself as a 'radical Other' against the old socio-political system, and he does not initially control any mass movement or organisation, he is much more likely than the

other cases to appeal to quite dispersed constituencies – *particularly* to the outsiders – through both *programmatic and charismatic linkages*. Among these linkages, we can find the promise for 'democratic regeneration' through the implementation of new, participatory tools, as well as the promise of universalist social policies to deal with the social emergency provoked by the crisis.

At the same time, also thanks to its loose, decentralised organization and ideological vagueness, leader-initiated populism establishes important *organizational* linkages with different, extra-institutional organizations, although these do not generally consist in 'organic' relationships, as in the other two populist paths. Instead, *leader-initiated* populisms mainly practise a strategy of 'issue-owning', consisting in the ability of collecting and connecting different (and even disparate) unsatisfied popular demands, while aspiring to be the only 'true supporter' of all of these 'micro-publics' (Spanakos, 2011) who felt excluded by the previous political order. Such 'alterity' in relation to all the different representatives of the 'old regime' explains its difficult, and even antagonistic, stance towards the union organizations and, more generally, to the 'union-party hubs' that have dominated the left side of the political spectrum in the pre-crisis period.

Finally, I identify the emergence of a *movement (based) populism* as a possible outcome of the transformations of the left after a crisis of the neoliberal model. As the label indicates, the influence of the social movements having animated the protest cycles over the party is higher than in the other three types. Nevertheless, this fourth outcome must be split into two subtypes. We can conceive the possibility that the main social movements leading the protests decide to enter electoral competition by themselves, or the possibility that some social activists put into motion a political project aiming at advancing the main demands emerging from the protest cycle.

In the first case, we observe the creation of a *movement-based party*, i.e. an 'externally legitimised party' (Panebianco, 1988), which would act as the 'instrument' of the movements participating in its foundation. In this case, due to its purely bottom-up

foundational process, the influence of the movements is at its highest, particularly in the candidates' selection process. In the second case, we almost perfectly fall into the *movement parties* theorised by Kitschelt. As the new party is *not* a *direct emanation* of the movements' decisions, it is likely that the party's structures are more 'autonomous from the social environment' than the movement-based parties, as I will detail in Chapter 2. This does not necessarily mean, of course, that the 'movement party' does not open itself to the influence of the movements converging into the 'sociopolitical space' created by the party. Particularly in terms of partisan agenda and of militancy, the movements have a 'special relationship' to the party, and they provide political energy to the common political project.

In movement (based) populist cases, the relationship with the unions are not necessarily smooth, as the political and sociological, i.e., in terms of *core-constituencies, milieu* that gave the birth to the party is different from the *loci* of socio-political activity of the unions. We should expect either a conflictive or a 'suspicious' relationship between the party and the unions, particularly when the latter enjoyed strong links with the 'old parties' or when the interests of the partisan *core-constituencies* are quite different from those of the salaried sectors traditionally overrepresented in the union membership.

While power centralization and delegation allow to limit internal disputes, at least at the apical level, and to strengthen electoral charismatic linkages, the porous frontiers between 'partisan structures' and 'social environment' facilitates the organizational linkages towards different movements involved in the protest cycles. The *movement (based) populisms* develop an 'organic' relationship with the movements (i.e., more respectful of their autonomy, but also open to 'official' adhesions to the party by the movements), instead of a strategy of 'issue owning' or of building 'ancillary' organizations (as it occurs in the *leader-initiated populisms*), or of co-optation (as it can occur in the *party-rooted populisms*).

1.6 Research Design, Methods and Data

Methods: Comparative Historical Analysis. As Mahoney and Rueschemeyer (2003: 6) claim, '*contemporary researchers who choose to ask 'big' questions – that is, questions about large-scale outcomes that are regarded as substantively and normatively important by both specialists and non-specialists – are often […] drawn to comparative historical research*'. I believe that this research tries to answer 'big questions', such as the changes at the party system level in Latin America and Southern Europe following major economic crises, the reasons accounting for the rise of left-wing populisms; and the internal variation within the latter category.

Mahoney and Rueschemeyer also defends the particular use of comparative historical analysis in relation to scope and research design, in a way that fits perfectly with this dissertation:

> '*comparative historical researchers ask questions and formulate puzzles about* specific sets of cases *that exhibits sufficient similarity to be meaningfully compared with one another. […] 'Sufficient similarity' is, of course,* defined by the theoretical framework. *It may thus encompass cases that* from a different point of view may appear to be quite dissimilar. *In this sense, a focus on sufficiently similar cases in no way excludes comparisons of* highly diverse contexts, including diverse contexts in which similar processes and outcomes take place' (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, 2003: 8; emphasis is mine).

According to the same authors (2003: 11-13), the 'distinctive features' of the comparative historical research are: its concern with 'explanation and the identification

of causal configurations'; its analysis of 'historical sequences' by taking 'seriously the unfolding of processes over time'; and its 'systematic and contextualized comparisons of similar and contrasting cases'. In sum, all of these features account for the belonging of this work to this methodological tradition.

The method is 'structured *in that the researcher writes general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection*'. It is 'focused *in that it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined*' (George and Bennett, 2005: 67). Historical comparative researchers sacrifice the ambition of looking for 'ahistorical', 'lawlike statements' (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, 2003: 20), while carefully identifying the scope conditions (i.e., the conditions of applicability of their theories) in their researches. These analyses typically aim at building middle-range theories that are 'context-based' (Falleti and Lynch, 2008), in the sense that the hypothesized causal mechanisms only can occur when interacting with 'relevant contextual factors'.

Therefore, following Slater and Simmons (2010), this research starts by identifying which are the relevant contextual factors, and separates them between 'background similarities' and 'critical antecedents': while the formers represent control variables, the latters are explanatory variables having an influence – through the interaction with other causal forces intervening *during or in reaction to* the 'critical juncture' - over the dependent variable. The main 'background similarities' are the existence of dualising welfare regimes, partially but not decisively shaped by the neoliberal era – mainly through labour market reforms aiming at loosening permanent employment protection – together with the existence of an important, albeit not encompassing, union movement with historical linkages with a left-of-centre or labour-based party.

The 'background similarities' allow for a structured comparison between the cases selected, which obviously are very different in terms of other important features that are not considered relevant for the topic analysed here or for the theory to be tested.

The in-depth analysis of the cases selected allows us to identify idiosyncratic features (which, of course, always play an important role) and to discard the relevance of additional, hypothetical variables or factors (such as, for instance, diffusion effects: see Bennett and Elman, 2006). In turn, systematic comparisons of the cases also help to discard alternative explanations – for example by recurring to the well-known Mill's methods.

The main 'critical antecedent' is the political positioning of these union-party hubs *during* the neoliberal era (see Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2). Also the organizational resources of the parties and their organizational and electoral linkages during the pre-crisis period, as well as the composition of their electorates, contributed to set the 'starting conditions' influencing their opportunities to adapt in the post-crisis scenario.

Comparative historical analysis is often accused of relying on a 'deterministic' understanding of causation (for a discussion, see Mahoney, 2003b: 341-344). This would reduce the impact of 'contingency' and would not permit any notion of measurement error. Rather, I argue that my model, while 'deterministic' in its precise identification of the different paths leading to each category of my typology (i.e., the kind of 'successful antineoliberal political project'), does assign very high relevance to the agency of the *political actors* involved.

For instance, the eventual availability of an existing political party able to establish a successful linkage strategy was not assured, and depended in part on party leadership's strategies and practices. Although ideological and organizational resources are relevant 'critical antecedents', they were aspects that party leaderships still had the opportunity to modify in order to adapt the partisan structures and discourses to 'contentious times'. Similarly, political parties that seemed better positioned to take electoral advantage of the crisis, failed to exploit their resources due to significance strategic mistakes (see, e.g., the analysis of: Argentine FREPASO – Chapter 5; Italian PRC – Chapter 7; Venezuelan LCR – Chapter 8). The adaptation of new parties to the socio-political environment always occurred through idiosyncratic strategies, despite the

fact that these strategies can be conceptualised in broad general analytical categories. Most of the qualitative data collected in this work precisely allows a better description of the adaptive strategies used by old and new successful parties, and of the limitations of other political projects that failed in taking electoral advantage of the post-crisis scenario. The successes or failures of the social movements in forming a 'unified' pattern of mobilization also depended on 'agential' factors, although it is certainly possible to isolate and categorize some features (the kinds of demands advanced, organizational and ideological resistances) that facilitated or made more difficult the tasks of alliance-building and the creation of new, inclusive collective identities.

Each case under examination (i.e., the evolution of the left side of the political spectrum in dualised countries when a 'neoliberal crisis' occurs) assumes different values in the causal factors of my argument and in the dependent variable. The 'dependent variable' consists in the 'successful political projects'. Nevertheless, the comparison of such 'successful political projects' with other left-of-centre or labour-based political projects unable to achieve consistent electoral gains (and sometimes condemned to electoral decline) allows to partially overcome the 'degree of freedom problem' that would allegedly prevent 'small N research' from drawing valid causal inference (King et al., 1994).

Research Design and Case Selection. I deliberately took inspiration from Collier and Collier's path-breaking work *Shaping the Political Arena* for developing the research design of this dissertation. In *Shaping the Political Arena*, the authors identified in the way that the organised working-class was incorporated into the polity domain the 'critical juncture' that shaped subsequent regime dynamics and party systems in the eight Latin American countries with the longest history of urban commercial and industrial development. Collier and Collier identified four different 'pairs' of countries: each 'pair' followed a specific 'path' of political incorporation of the working-class, leading to similar outcomes.

The *cases* that I compare in this dissertation are the evolution of the left side of the national party systems of eight countries for which the scope conditions hold. These countries are Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia, Venezuela, Portugal, Greece, Spain and Italy. I will argue that, within both Latin American and Southern European 'subsets', each national party system followed different evolutions leading to one of the different outcomes that I graphically put in Figure 1.2. This leads to the identification of four 'pairs', each of one composed by a country per each region, and thus to the definition of an argument that works systematically well *cross-regionally* (see Figure 1.3).

Table 1.2 Hypothesized Distribution of the Dependent Variable.

Dependent Variable: Most Successful Anti-Neoliberal Political Project	**Latin American Case**	**Southern European Case**
Labour-Based Left	**Uruguay**	**Portugal**
	(Frente Amplio)	(PCP-Leftist Bloc)
Party-Rooted Populism	**Argentina**	**Greece**
	(Kirchnerism)	(Syriza)
Movement (Based) Populism	**Bolivia**	**Spain**
	(MAS-IPSP)	(Podemos)
Leader-Initiated Populism	**Venezuela**	**Italy**
	(Chavism)	(Five Star Movement)

Source: Author's Elaboration.

All of the four Latin American countries selected came out of an ISI era that decisively influenced state-society relationships and fostered the consolidation of strong union movements linked to labour-based political parties (Collier and Collier, 1991; Roberts, 2014). All of these Latin American countries experienced a 'neoliberal turn' during the nineties, mainly motivated by the economic shortcomings of the old 'state-

centric matrix'. In the four Latin American countries that I selected, this neoliberal turn made evident its limitations within a few years.

The centrality in my argument of the existence of strong unions automatically excludes from the case selection other Latin American countries such as Colombia, Ecuador[4], Peru, Chile and Paraguay. Some of these countries did share a previous ISI era (namely, Peru and Chile). In Chile, the bureaucratic-authoritarian regime (1973-1989) was the most effective amongst the Southern Cone dictatorships in disarticulating the old state-centric matrix and the labour movement, which is still highly fragmented along sectorial lines and almost lost its political role (Drake, 2003). At the same time, as Silva (2009) rightly argued, Chile did not experience during its recent democratic history a comparable socio-economic crisis. In Peru, the weakness of the once powerful union movement, due to structural and political factors linked with the rise of Fujimori, and the absence of a deep crisis of neoliberalism since its implementation under Fujimori's authoritarian regime (Silva, 2009; Cameron, 2011), together with idiosyncratic factors[5], motivate the exclusion of the Peruvian case from this research. Some brief considerations about the rise and the characteristics of the Brazilian PT will be advanced in the concluding chapter, which highlights some parallels between the stabilising function carried on by the PT during the Nineties and the Uruguayan *Frente Amplio*'s experience and thus provides a tentative confirmation of the external validity of my argument.

The reasons for the specific case selection in Europe are quite self-evident. The four Southern European countries have been the most affected by the Great Recession,

[4] Selecting on the dependent variable is notoriously criticised. In Ecuador, we did witness the rise of an antineoliberal populist experience. Nevertheless, Rafael Correa's experience emerged from a quite different socio-political scenario, with a poorly institutionalised party system, weak unions, and declining social mobilizations after the infamous alliance between the indigenous social movements and Gutiérrez's governments (Van Cott, 2005; Becker, 2013; Collins, 2014). These circumstances and conditions make a comparison with other national political evolutions quite problematic. However, some considerations over the Ecuadorean case will be provided in the concluding chapter.

[5] I refer, here, to the political (and even 'emotional') legacy of the leftist guerrilla during the Eighties – a legacy that made politically unviable the reconstitution of the Peruvian Left for a long time. A similar argument could be made for Colombia.

and their welfare regimes share very important similarities. Other countries particularly hit by the Great Recession, such as Iceland or Ireland, clearly do not share the same 'background similarities'. France is sometimes included within the Southern European welfare regime family (e.g., Hausermann and Kriesi, 2015), but the crisis did not hit this country as hard as the rest of Southern Europe[6] and its welfare regime is much more developed than that of the countries selected for this research. However, the relevance of my argument for assessing the recent evolutions of the French political Left will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

This dissertation also selected a subset of cases, for an in-depth analysis. I focused on four 'antineoliberal political projects': the MAS-IPSP (Bolivia), Kirchnerism (Argentina), *Podemos* (Spain) and the Five Star Movement (Italy). Time and financial resources are – as all researchers know - limited, and they made unrealistic the possibility of conducting an in-depth analysis through qualitative data (mainly consisting in elite interviews) for all eight cases selected.

I finally opted for selecting two cases per region (South America and Southern Europe). The case studies focus on the different kinds of *populist* projects that I identified: party-rooted populism (Kirchnerism), leader-initiated populism (Five Star Movement) and movement (based) populisms. I deeply analysed both the MAS-IPSP and Podemos to highlight the organizational differences between a *movement-based populism* such as the MAS-IPSP and a *movement populism* such as Podemos. Although an in-depth analysis of a case (either Uruguay or Portugal) with a 'non-populist' outcome would have provided even stronger evidences for defending the argument, time and financial limitations, as well as considerations about the dissertation's length, dissuaded me from undertaking an additional fieldwork. The Portuguese, Uruguayan,

[6] Nor France did experience a serious public debt crisis motivating a direct (in the Greek, Portuguese and Spanish cases) or indirect (in the Italian case) intervention by the Troika.

Venezuelan and Greek cases thus will be briefly treated in the eighth chapter of this dissertation, as 'shadow cases' of my comparative research[7].

Data Collection. Most of this research relies on qualitative data. In particular, approximately one hundred in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducting during fieldwork research in Bolivia (March-April 2016, 35 interviews), Argentina (May-June 2016, 17 interviews), Spain (October 2016-February 2017, 24 interviews) and Italy (October 2016-March 2017, 22 interviews). The dissertation also relied, of course, on an extensive use of secondary literature, together with other primary sources, such as the consultation of party statutes and manifestos or biographies of partisan leaders, for each of the eight cases included in the research. Moreover, I relied on post-electoral survey data, for seven[8] out of the eight cases, to describe, through descriptive statistics and multivariate analyses, the sociological characteristics of the electorates of the 'most successful political projects'.

Semi-structured interviews are commonly used in social science for elite interviews, as they '*can provide detail, depth, and an insider's perspective, while at the same time allowing hypothesis testing*' (Leech, 2002: 665). Lynch (2013: 32) argues that interviews can be undertaken as '*a preliminary to the main study, as the main source of data for a study, or as one component in a multi-method research'*, as well as a 'window dressing', i.e. as vignettes and quotations that make the research more readable. When making up 'the main source of data', interviews are often used for process tracing, a methodology that '*involves the examination of ''diagnostic'' pieces of evidence within a case that contribute to supporting or overturning alternative explanatory hypotheses*'

[7] My own linguistic limitations convinced me to rely on secondary literature for the Portuguese and Greek cases. The current problematic conjuncture discouraged me to conduct a fieldwork in Venezuela. As I am much more interested in the rise and early consolidation of the Chavist project, I considered that eventual interviews with politicians and social activists about events remounting to fifteen or more years ago would have been poorly reliable, particularly in a polarised and changing context, which would have increased the risk of *a posteriori* opinions.

[8] The exception is Venezuela, because of the extensive literature available over the sociological composition of *Chavista* electorate.

(Bennett, 2010: 208) and that can (and should) be used in conjunction with comparative methods.

The semi-structured interviews that I conducted served the purpose of clarifying the adaptive strategies of the 'successful political projects' in the different socio-political post-crisis scenario. The interviews to party officials, social movements' and unions' leaders offered crucial information about the genesis of the new political parties analysed here and their concrete internal functioning beyond the provisions of their formal statutes. I focused on important indicators such as candidates selection[9] and the internal elaboration of manifestos and policies, the latter providing important insights about the eventual existence of 'core-constituencies' to which party representatives feel to be particularly responsive. The interviews helped clarify the internal divisions, the political ideologies and discourses underlining the partisan activity, and the relationships between the parties and other social actors, namely, movements and unions. Together with the secondary literature available, interviews helped me achieve a better understanding of the relevant critical antecedent considered in my argument *and* to improve the precision of my categorization of the different patterns of mobilizations observed in each country selected, by recurring to the opinions of several protagonists of the anti-austerity protest cycles. The interviews also contributed to clarify how the social movements and the characteristics of the mobilizations influenced the genesis and/or the adaptive strategies of the political projects analysed.

Relying on non-randomised samples for the collection of in-depth interviews could create significant biases in the research. To minimize this pitfall, I proceeded to draw 'purposive sampling' designs in order to select the potential interviewees. Purposive sampling '*is a form of non-random sampling that involves selecting elements of a population according to specific characteristics deemed relevant to the analysis*' (Lynch, 2003: 41). This form of sampling, of course, requires '*knowing enough about*

[9] As Schattschneider (1942: 64) noticed, candidate selection process is 'one of the best points at which to observe the distribution of power within the party', thus extremely useful for the purposes of this research. For a review of the literature stressing the relevance of candidate selection process for understanding intra-party power relations, see Anría (2015).

the characteristics of the population to know what characteristics are likely to be relevant for the research project' (Lynch, 2003: 41). To do that, several months were spent deepening my understanding of the cases (mainly through secondary literature), before starting the fieldwork and contacting the potential interviewees.

In addition, and particularly at the beginning of the fieldworks, I also relied to some extent on snowball sampling (or 'respondent driven sampling'), as the first interviews always ended with a standardised question ('Who do you think would be interesting to interview for my research?'). Snowball sampling technique is useful because it concretely facilitates the collection of interviews and helps to identify new relevant actors that were 'missed' at the preliminary and preparatory stage. However, this technique is also likely to bias the process of interview collection, as the respondent usually suggests to contact other actors that would support her views (Bleich and Pekkanen, 2013). Put otherwise, the researcher risks to be trapped into a network of actors sharing the same positions about a particular topic. The strategy that I adopted minimized this risk because I relied from the beginning on different 'chains of respondents'.

In Bolivia and in Argentina, I contacted several country experts before the beginning of fieldwork to have a direct preliminary overview of the topics under investigation. Once I arrived in each country, I proceeded to contact social organizations and political actors particularly relevant for my research. The interviews for the Bolivian case study have been collected in the four major cities (La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz), part of all of Bolivia's main regions. In Bolivia, time and economic resources forced me to limit the research to urban areas; however, I was able to collect interviews from the national leaders of peasant and mineworkers' organizations (all of them having their headquarters in La Paz), NGOs involved in rural issues, and experts on indigenous questions. The period in which I conducted my fieldwork there was not particularly promising, as it came soon after Morales' defeat in the February 2016 referendum for modifying the Constitution and allowing his third consecutive

presidential mandate. The ruling coalition was experiencing a difficult moment, and the risk of finding a sort of 'reticence' by MAS-IPSP's representatives was real. Nonetheless, I was able to accede to apical personnel of nearly all the social movements, such as the main peasant *sindicatos*, and unions, such as the miners' and oilworkers' federations, or the El Alto's peak union confederation, which played a central role in the Bolivian 'Gas War' (see Chapter 4). Moreover, it was possible to have access to important MPs of the MAS-IPSP and governmental figures, activists and experts of the Bolivian anti-neoliberal protest cycle. In Bolivia, social and political leaders generally proved to be easily accessible. The interviews were often truly 'in-depth', as they lasted on average more than an hour and, in some cases, two or three hours (even more than I sometimes *desired*). I was able to collect opinions over the evolution, over the last two decades, of the MAS-IPSP, in terms of its genesis, internal organization, most emblematic policy decisions and its relationship with the movements and the unions, from very different points of view, ranging from MAS-IPSP's insiders to representatives of the social and political opposition.

In Argentina, the same strategy was followed, although with somewhat less satisfactory results. The fieldwork was entirely carried out in the City of Buenos Aires (CABA), although most of the interviewees belonged to different social and political groups operating in the Buenos Aires Province (by far the most populated Argentine province and the most politically and electorally relevant one). It was possible to allocate fewer resources to the collection of primary sources there, as so much secondary literature is available for the topics of my interest. I interviewed important representatives of different contentious groups and unions (both aligned with, and external to, Kirchnerism) that animated the long Argentine anti-neoliberal protest cycle, together with representatives of different factions within Kirchnerism (at the governmental and legislative levels). Both in Bolivia and in Argentina, I occasionally attended partisan rallies and meetings[10], which represented an important source of

[10] For example, I attended a conference in La Paz held by several MAS-IPSP's national figures on occasion of the presentation of a book about the history of the party. During that conference, a lively

contacts and provided some further pieces of information over the relationship between partisan leaders and cadres and the rank-of-file. I view the most severe limitation of my fieldwork in Argentina as the lack of interviews with leading figure of the CGT (the most encompassing Argentine union), because of the dense political conjuncture[11] at the time of my fieldwork. Nevertheless, I interviewed representatives from other political, social and union organizations, and country experts, to integrate the vast secondary literature regarding the CGT's internal conflicts as well as its political strategies during both the contentious cycle and the Kirchnerist governments.

In Europe, I proceeded in similar ways to investigate the genesis of Spanish Podemos and of the Italian M5S, their adaptive strategies, and their relationships with social movements and unions. I contacted several party representatives in commissions on labour and social issues at the municipal, regional and national levels, aiming at diversifying the sample by covering different regions[12]. These interviews, together with those collected from high union officials from the most relevant peak union confederations (the Spanish UGT and CC.OO., and the Italian CGIL, all of them with

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debate arose between numerous discontent militants and important partisan leaders. In Santa Cruz, I participated in a meeting between the local MAS-IPSP's representative and social movements' members (a sort of cyclical 'report' of the activities carried on by the MP elected from the district). In Moreno, a popular-sector municipality in the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, I attended a party rally organised by several Kirchnerist mayors and the main organizations forming part of the so-called 'Kirchnerist national and popular movement'. In Buenos Aires' *Plaza de la Constitución*, I attended a meeting organised by the social leader Luís D'Elía, with the presence of important national figures of Kirchnerism and left-wing Peronism. This meeting was particularly important for my purposes, as it gave me a better clarification of the complex political alignments within Argentine Peronist Left, during the last fifteen years.

[11] Despite several attempts, to interview CGT high union officials proved to be unfeasible during my relatively brief fieldwork. Most of CGT's officials reported to me that they had a very dense agenda at the time, because of the negotiations between the right-wing government currently ruling Argentina and the unions over wage increases and over a legislative bill aiming at making layoffs more difficult (proposed by Kirchnerist opposition). President Macri vetoed this *Ley Antidespidos* one month after my departure.

[12] In total, I conducted interviews with Podemos and M5S' representatives from eight *Comunidades Autónomas* (including six of the seven most populated ones: Madrid, Catalonia, Galicia, Asturias, Basque Country, Valencian Community, Extremadura and Andalusia) and ten *Regioni* (including seven of the eight most populated ones: Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy, Veneto, Friuli Venezia-Giulia, Umbria, Lazio, Apulia, Campania and Sicily). The majority of the interviewees held public posts at the provincial and regional level, thus providing important opinions – *focused on their respective territorial levels* - over the topics of my interest. This permitted the drawing of a complex portrait of the parties and to take into account local idiosyncrasies.

strong links with specific left-of-centre parties), provided valuable primary data on the relationships (at the local and national levels) between the parties analysed and the union movements, as well as on the partisan platforms regarding social and labour issues. I also obtained original opinions from activists (whether affiliated or not to the M5S and to Podemos) of several[13] anti-austerity and anti-neoliberal movements, which contributed to improve my understanding of the strategies pursued by both the parties for 'adapting' to the complex post-crisis socio-political scenario. Often relying on snowball sampling, I also was able to contact regional and even national important[14] figures occupying posts of responsibility in the respective parties, to obtain highly informed opinions over the evolution of the organizations of both parties and their ideological roots.

Most of the interviews for the Italian case were conducted via Skype, while, for the Spanish case, I conducted via Skype the interviews with party representatives in six peripheric *Comunidades Autónomas*. I also conducted a brief fieldwork (lasting one month and a half [February-March 2017]) in Catalonia and in Madrid Community to obtain face-to-face interviews with local partisan officers (working in Podemos' Secretaries for Citizen Participation), militants and high union officials.

In particular, I interviewed UGT and CC.OO.'s high officials, as well as CGT's[15] leader in Catalonia, to collect different opinions about the relationship between the union organizations and Podemos and about the role played by the unions in the Spanish anti-austerity protest cycles. I interviewed some leaders of Podemos' local circles in popular

[13] In particular, I interviewed militants of two well known Italian local movements (NO MUOS in Sicily and NO TAV in Piedmont), as well as Vittorio Agnoletto (the former speaker of the Genoa Social Forum) and some Catalonian militants of the Spanish PAHs (*Platform Against the Victims of Banks' Eviction*). Moreover, most of Podemos' interviewees were (and often still are) active in several, different antineoliberal grassroots movements, while most of the M5S' interviewees joined the party during its 'movementist' (i.e., non electoral) phase, participating into civic campaigns against corruption, water resources' privatization or over other local issues.

[14] For instance, I obtained strong insights from politicians such as Roberto Fico (one of M5S' most popular public referents at the national level), Alice Salvatore and Giancarlo Cancelleri (arguably the most popular M5S' politicians in two important regions such as Liguria and Sicily), and Luís Alegre (one of Podemos' founders and former Podemos' leader in Madrid Community), among others.

[15] The CGT (*Confederación General del Trabajo*) is the third biggest Spanish union, and the most important radical one, with historical anarcho-syndicalist roots.

(and populous) working-class areas, such as L'Hospitalet de Llobregat (Barcelona) and Vallecas (Madrid). This gave me some interesting views of the sociological characteristics of Podemos' electorate and militancy in two traditional Leftist strongholds, where union density is still higher than the rest of Spain and where Podemos displays a certain electoral strength.

I also spent a week in Madrid, in September 2016, to attend the Podemos Summer School, held in the Complutense University, where I got acquainted with the political discourse advanced by Podemos and contacted some of my first interviewees. Most importantly, I attended the Second Podemos Citizen Congress (*Vistalegre II*, the second Podemos national congress) in March 2017, which was a useful occasion to exchange informal political views with party members, further improving my understanding of the party evolution and of its lively internal debate. I also attended to the M5S' national meeting *Italia a 5 Stelle*, organised in Rimini in October 2017, when Luigi Di Maio was appointed as political leader in view of the 2018 general elections. During *Italia a 5 Stelle*, I had the possibility of attending several workshops, which were organised by M5S' MPs to carry on informative communications about the institutional activity of the party.

1.7 Plan of the Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into two parts, consisting in total of nine chapters. The first part is mainly theoretical, though with a significant inductive component, and includes the first three chapters, including this one. In the second chapter, I present my argument and also raise methodological issues, defending the research design, the case selection and the data collection. In the third chapter, I provide an extensive analysis of the concept and category of populism, which is obviously central, for my argument. I

discuss there the different conceptualizations of the concept and, after advancing an operational definition, I will show why populism (in its *participative-mobilising* variant) became so widespread in the countries analysed.

The second part includes five chapters, all empirical, showcasing the application of the framework explained in Chapter 2 to the eight countries constituting the scope of the dissertation. Bolivia (Chapter 5), Argentina (Chapter 6), Spain (Chapter 7) and Italy (Chapter 8) are treated extensively, while the remaining ones (Uruguay, Venezuela, Greece and Portugal) are 'shadow cases' analysed more briefly through secondary literature, in Chapter 9. The concluding chapter summarizes the findings and discusses their scientific and normative relevance, while proposing new research agenda related to the topics treated in this dissertation.

Chapter 2. The Argument

2.1 Explaining Different Paths

In the causal argument of the dissertation, neoliberal crises and the implementation of austerity measures are the critical juncture that decisively shape the leftist segmented of the spectrum of the party systems analysed (see Figure 2.1). The concept of critical juncture seems to have assumed quite different meanings in the literature. I adopt the definition of Slater and Simmons (2010: 889), who define critical juncture as '*periods in history when the presence or absence of a specified causal force pushes multiple cases onto divergent long-term pathways'*. The relevant 'causal forces' can act *before* or *during* the critical juncture, and their combination produce divergent outcomes. This definition, together with the definitions proposed by Pierson (2004) or by Brady and Collier (2004), depart from Capoccia and Kelemen's (2007) conceptualization of critical junctures. The latter restrict the application of the concept to those periods in which political actors' *choices, indeterminable ex ante*, produce long-lasting consequences. In contrast, I defend that '*the relative importance of structure and agency during critical junctures should be treated as an empirical rather than a definitional question*' (Slater and Simmons, 2010: 913-914).

There are two 'sets' of causal forces that, according to my argument, produce divergent outcomes. One of these sets (the 'critical antecedents') operate mainly *before* the critical period; the other one, *during* (and in reaction to) the crisis and the austerity measures. The argument is a 'middle-range theory' whose 'scope conditions' are the existence of a dualised welfare regime and of a union movement playing a central role as civil society actor and mainly representing the insider sectors, and the occurrence of a

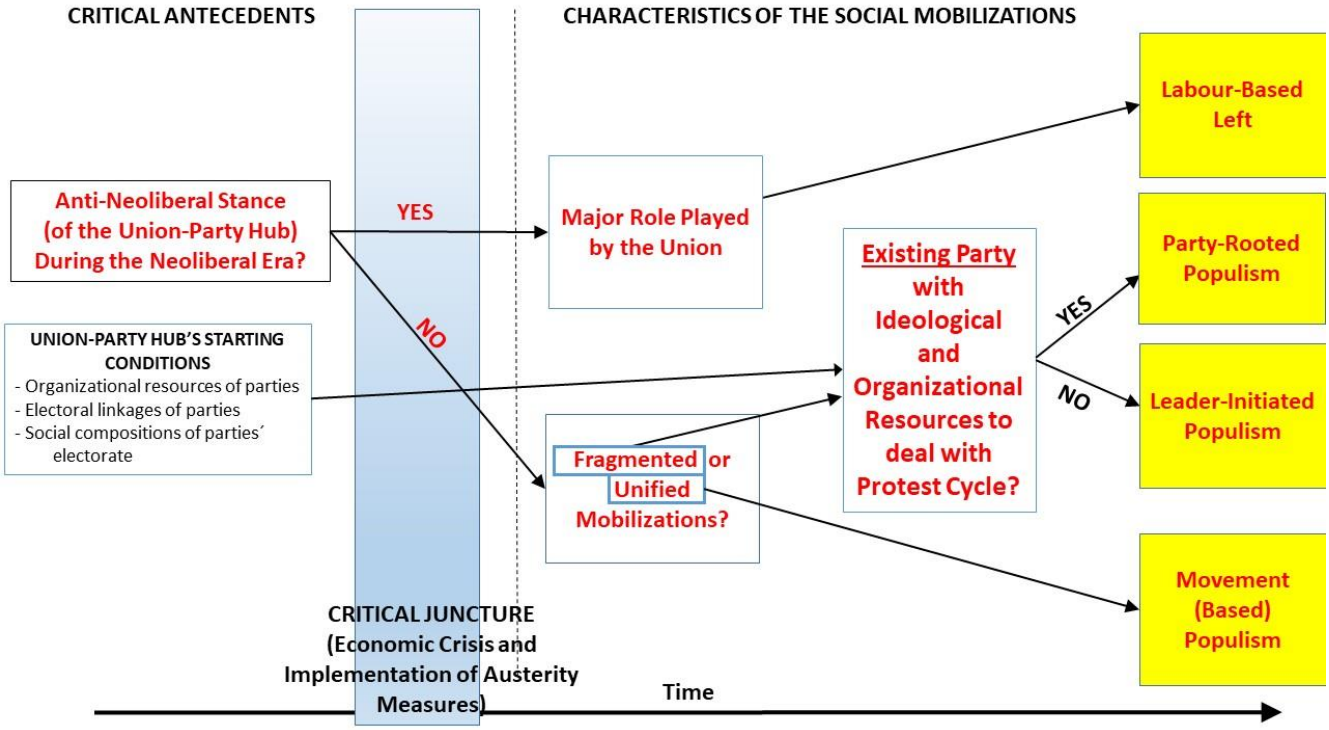
socioeconomic crisis due to the shortcomings of the neoliberal model after an era of neoliberal hegemony.

The *critical antecedents* are a) *the degree of 'entrenchment'* between the unions and left-of-centre and labour-based political parties, and b) the *political positioning of the union-party hubs* in the pre-crisis scenario and *of the leftist parties both before and during the crisis and the 'phase of adjustment'*. These antecedents help to understand the subsequent evolution of the national political scenarios as they affect the *credibility* of the unions and of the parties as 'antineoliberal' actors. In addition, the linkages used by the parties in appealing to the voters, and the social composition of their constituencies, are variables to take into account for a complete analysis of the 'starting conditions' of the left-of-centre or labour-based parties when the crisis came.

The characteristics of the main social mobilizations against the neoliberal model, jointly with the critical antecedents, create the political opportunities for the (eventual) emerging and consolidation of different varieties of *Antineoliberal Populist Parties* (APPs). The relevant 'characteristics' of the mobilizations are: a) the *role played by the unions* b) the *kinds of demands advanced* (often related with the sociological profile of the protesters) and c) the *ability of the movements to forge alliances amongst themselves*.

Different kinds of mobilization produce divergent outcomes at the electoral level. As Slater and Simmons highlight (2010: 914), *divergence* is not a synonymous of *change*. Actually, when the labour-based Left kept an oppositional position during the neoliberal era, thus defending its credibility as a leading actor during the contentious phase, the left side of party system remains stable. However, in the other instances, a populist project emerges. A protest cycle in which the different movements are able to tie close-knit alliances, typically through the adoption of populist frames targeting a 'common enemy' (see Aslanidis, 2016; 2017) and downplaying the differences between them in terms of ideology and demands, paves the way for the emergence of a *movement (based) populism*. Such a broad mobilization

Figure 2.1 The Argument



Source: Author's Elaboration.

is likely to produce several 'public goods' (Aslanidis, 2017) such as inclusive frames and a numerous and motivated militancy, while its ideological heterogeneity and its antagonism against the entire party system make unlikely its co-optation by a party. However, according to my definition of 'populism', social movements must have the goal of *taking power* to be fully 'populist': to use populist frames is not a sufficient condition for being populist[16]. If the movements are unwilling to run electorally for 'occupying public institutions', or if they lack the necessary strength, then the militancy has to wait for a political project willing to (and successful in) taking advantage of the 'common goods' produced by the impacting 'unified' protest cycle (*movement*

[16] In this sense, my understanding of 'populism' contrasts with the one of Aslanidis (2016; 2017), who relies on the ideological definition of Mudde (see Chapter 3).

populism). Otherwise, the movements can build their own ‘political instrument’, channelling popular discontent through institutional avenues (*movement-based populism*). In movement (based) populisms, thus, the 'function' of the protests is to a) generate new powerful frames, politicize new cleavages and create a window of opportunity for the emergence of a new electoral project; b) aggregate motivated militancy for such a new political project. The influence of the movements over the new political project, in terms of definition of the programmatic agenda and candidates' selection will be higher than in the other outcomes that I identified.

The absence of a unified cycle of protest, jointly with the incapacity of the unions to fulfil a brokerage function and to build an inclusive social alliance, lead to either the *party-rooted populist* or the *leader-initiated populist* electoral outcomes. In the first case, an existing left-of-centre or labour-based party is able to take electoral advantage of the crisis by establishing strong organizational linkages with the movements, thanks to organizational resources such as a decentralized organization and/or ideological pluralism.

In the second case, the absence of such an existing party left a political opportunity for a new political project to emerge, in a social scenario marked by dispersed protests further feeding popular discontent without providing a relying way to channel it. Such a scenario is the perfect *humus* for the emergence of a political maverick advancing a populist discourse aiming to a) offer a single political answer to the particularistic demands emerging from the protests, and b) identify a broad category of 'excluded citizens' (typically, labour market outsiders) and promise to incorporate them through programmatic, clientelistic or organizational linkages.

Populism. To assume a ‘populist rhetoric’ is not a sufficient condition to be ‘successful’: ‘populism’ is not intended here simply as an ‘ideology’ or a ‘frame’, although they are surely important dimensions of the concept. I argue that five features

of populist experiences, unsystematically emerging from the literature[17], are crucial to understand why 'antineoliberal populist political projects' – instead of more traditional leftist parties occupying the political space once controlled by left-of-centre or labour-based parties - became so successful in the countries selected. These features typical of populisms are, as will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Three:

1. Their capacity for aggregating, around 'empty signifiers' (Laclau, 2005), several, diverging and unsatisfied 'popular demands';

2. The intrinsic populist aspiration to 'reach power' (Weyland, 2001);

3. The 'populist interpretation' of the concepts of *representation*, *accountability* and *popular sovereignty*;

4. Populism as a form of *mobilising and participative process* (Jansen, 2011; Collins, 2014)

5. The *organizational resources* of 'participative-mobilising' populisms (Padoan, 2017).

The first point refers to the 'comparative advantage' enjoyed by populist projects to aggregate quite different constituencies, socially and territorially heterogeneous, by '*emphasizing their similarities and downplaying their differences*' (Jansen, 2011). Through such an emphasis of the commonalities, the populist discourse differentiates itself from more traditional interest or class-based appeals and casts a wide net to attract different social strata in highly fragmented and stratified societies. The notion of *People* includes different meanings, as it can be intended as the *ethnos*, the *plebs* or the *demos*, thus emphasizing the common sharing of a same ethnicity, social positioning or entitlement to civil and political rights. The enemy of 'The people' is usually identified by antineoliberal populisms, unsurprisingly, as a neoliberal (and even neo-colonial: see

[17] For a broader discussion, see Chapter 3.

Filc, 2015) *elite* and as those sectors enjoying allegedly illegitimate *privileges* due to their ties with the 'establishment'. Such elite is the supposed ultimate cause of all the different grievances emerging in the country, according to populist discourse.

The second point stresses how populisms present themselves as disruptive and anti-*status quo* phenomena. In line with these understandings of the concept as 'the redemptive side of politics' (Canovan, 1999) and as 'democratic illiberalism' (Pappas, 2012), far from equating populism with pure demagoguery (Vasilopolou et al., 2014), populist leaders, parties and movements pretend to speak in behalf of the totality of (their) People in order to, and this is our second point, *occupy the public institutions* and bring a political change, challenging the existing rules and the institutional (and often constitutional) constraints. Differently from other political projects aiming to represent the interests of specific interest groups and classes or specific ideological 'niches', or to influence policy-making process, populists present themselves from the beginning as a 'natural majority' and make clear their willingness to *govern*, and not just to *represent*. In contrast to other leftist forces, often critical towards 'bourgeois' institutions, the populist projects underscore the centrality of nation-state structures to implement concrete changes.

Populism is particularly interested to *who* should govern and, this is our third point, to the *decision-making process* better suited to make the 'Will of the People' effective. Populisms are surely concerned with the *outputs* of democracy, but they are also (and even more) concerned with its *input side*, offering very different (and even contradictory) responses (Padoan, 2017). Populisms usually start from a strong critique of 'politicians', pointing at their unresponsiveness towards 'The people' and at their closeness and/or belonging to the demonized elite. They radically reject a *formalistic* (Pitkin, 1967) interpretation of representative democracy, while advancing new and diverging solutions to assure the 'true representation' of 'The people' and to restore *national and popular* sovereignty.

Solutions span from a full delegation to someone who claims to personify and 'really understand' the People, to a full control of their representatives, through proposing a sort of 'imperative mandate' for the MPs. New mechanisms of direct and participative democracy and of candidate selection are also commonly suggested. Anti-populist thinkers and politicians rightly underscore the potential perils of these tools, which are intended to strengthen the *vertical accountability* of those elected in the public offices, often to the detriment of the institutions devoted to *horizontal* accountability (O'Donnell, 1994). Populist leaders and followers, in turn, argue that they are fighting for shortening the distance between the citizenry and the elected representatives, thus offering the concrete realization of the principle of *popular sovereignty*.

It can seem paradoxical that populist movements and parties, which pretend to restore popular sovereignty and to allow 'The people' to make its voice heard, often show an extremely high degree of concentration of power around their leaders. This is surely true, but reducing populism to authoritarianism or to an absolute delegation of the power to a 'strong leader', through the popular vote, would be a big mistake. This way to understand the concept of 'representation' is quite true for what I call *electoral-delegative populisms* (Padoan, 2017; see Chapter 3). Nonetheless, other populist political projects argue that the poor record of liberal democracies is the direct consequence of the scarce involvement of 'The people' in the decision-making process. Therefore, the solution would lie, and this is our fourth point, in the mobilization and the *active political participation* of the citizens, and particularly of the popular sectors.

This entails, in varying degree, a greater influence of the organized bases on the leader, who, in any case, has strong resources at her/his disposal to defend her/his autonomy. In the *participative-mobilising populisms* (Padoan, 2017; see Chapter 3), the relationship between the leader and the followers is much more complex. The former carries on a unifying function, particularly necessary due to the enormous heterogeneity of the populist constituencies, and can rely on the active mobilization of the followers for different political purposes.

Our fifth point refers to the specific organizations of anti-neoliberal populist projects, which are generally closer to the 'participative-mobilising' subtype (which will be analysed broadly in Chapter 3 and more deeply through case studies [Chapters 4-8]). A decentralised party organization, along with 'ideological flexibility', is particularly important for dealing with *fragmented mobilizations*. The absence of ideological sectarianism, and a certain autonomy of the partisan periphery in terms of agenda setting and membership recruitment, makes the (either existing or newly born) populist party fitter to dialogue with different, particularistic movements and to be perceived by such movements as a 'loyal institutional ally', thus easing the creation of a 'broad popular network' in which the political party plays a nodal role. Low barriers for joining the party, in addition, favours party diffusion in the territory, while a strong overlapping between party's and movements' membership contributed to booster the 'credibility' of the party among the protesters and to reinforce organizational linkages.

Nevertheless, in participative-mobilising populist projects, decentralization is typically accompanied by a strong cohesion at the top of the party's pyramid, to avoid the formation of partisan factions (along either ideological or personalistic lines) struggling for the leadership. Other aims of the process of 'leaderization' is to provide the party with a single voice to be exploited for communication purposes, and to reserve a great 'room of manoeuvre' for tactical adjustments in a fluid context. Even movement (based) populist projects do not escape from the necessity of recurring to a strong leadership, due to the very different rhythms imposed by electoral politics: assemblearian forms of democracy are usually considered worth being sacrificed to limit political inefficacy and, in the case of *movements based populism*, to solve eventual internal contrasts between different factions.

In the following sections, I first discuss more deeply how the critical antecedents that I identified above shape the 'starting conditions' of the left-of-centre parties and thus their probability of keeping or achieving a dominant position within the Left in the aftermath of the crisis. Later, I then better specify my categorization of the causal forces

operating *during and in reaction to* the crisis - the different kinds of popular anti-austerity mobilizations – and I further clarify why this categorization is relevant for my argument and for the divergent outcomes.

2.2 The Critical Antecedents. The 'Starting Conditions' of Unions and Left-of-Centre Parties.

In this section, I discuss how the different strategies of the main leftist parties and unions during the 'neoliberal era' affected their probability of becoming 'electoral winners' (or losers) in the post-crisis scenario. Their eventual ideological moderation, their different degree of focus on their traditional core-constituencies (the insider sectors) in greater or lesser detriment of the outsiders, and a certain detachment from the social environment, created greater or lesser liabilities for the post-crisis scenario. Nevertheless, some parties were able to escape, at least partially, from these evolutions, thus positioning themselves as *potentially credible actors* to lead an 'anti-neoliberal turn' in the aftermath of the crisis; while parties with looser ideological and organizational constrains displayed a higher *ability to adapt* in the post-crisis scenario, as I argued in the previous section.

Historical Roots of the Union-Party Hubs in Dualized Welfare Regimes. During the 'Golden Age' of Western European capitalism, we observed long periods characterised by full employment and the expansion of the social rights provisions, thanks to the electoral and/or organizational strength of the working-class (e.g., Huber, Ragin and Stephens, 1993). In the post-war period, almost every Western European countries hosted important union organizations linked either with Social-Democratic or Communist parties. The consolidation of the class cleavage, consisting of social, cultural

and organizational dimensions (Bartolini, 2000), contributed to the ‘freezing’ of the Western European party systems (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967).

Different cross-class coalitions backed the expansion of the welfare regimes throughout Western Europe (Esping-Andersen, 1990; 1999). In Continental Europe, in which Coordinated Market Economies (CMEs) prevail (e.g., Hall and Soskice, 2001), we witnessed the consolidation of so-called ‘Bismarckian’ regimes, characterised by high segmentation – in terms of social rights and provisions – between different socio-economic sectors, the prevalence of contributory schemes – particularly for old-age and unemployment risks insurance – and strong permanent employment protection. With the end of the Golden Age and the deepening of financial and commercial integration, the Bismarckian regimes gradually appeared unable to protect from new social risks. With the diffusion of atypical forms of job contract, fixed-term or unemployed workers composing the growing *outsider* category found themselves deprived of both the labour and social rights enjoyed by the *insiders*, on the base of which the Bismarckian regime had been built. A welfare regime designed for a different socioeconomic context (full employment and Fordist mode of production) proved to be unfit for dealing with extensive labour flexibility, particularly during times of crisis (Thelen, 2014).

This situation has been particularly true for Southern European countries. Several scholars (e.g., Ferrera, 1996, 2005; Matsaganis et al., 2003) have identified a fourth welfare regime ‘world’ (in reference to Esping-Andersen, 1990), the ‘Mediterranean’ one, including Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece. They notice specific features that distinguish this regime from the other Continental countries composing the 'Bismarckian' cluster. In particular, these scholars underscore the weakness (or complete absence) of safety-net policies, even if compared to the Continental countries, and the skewness of the contributory schemes towards a few, over-protected sectors; an extreme fragmentation along corporatist lines of the social protection schemes; a particularistic-clientelistic state (which reinforces the fragmentation referred to above and makes difficult the implementation of universalist – instead of contributory or discretionary –

social programs); a high degree of 'familization', i.e. the high relevance of the self-help networks based on kinship, which further contributes to the dependence of family members on a (typically male) breadwinner belonging in some way to one of the over-protected sectors.

It is precisely by analysing the discriminatory consequences of the Bismarckian (and particularly of the Mediterranean) welfare regimes that the literature on welfare regimes develop the concept of *dualization*. In his seminal works, Rueda (2007) posited that, in Southern Europe, the insider-outsider divide is crucial to analyse both the electoral politics and the policy-making in welfare regime issues. Rueda stated that against the common wisdom deriving from the old formulation of the 'power resource theory' (e.g., Huber and Stephens, 2001), the core-constituency of the Social Democratic parties in Southern Europe *and* the major beneficiaries of the Mediterranean welfare regimes are *not* the working class *in its entirety*. Instead, the core-constituency is represented by the *insider sectors*, who are the main beneficiaries of strong permanent employment protection, pension contributory schemes and unemployment benefits, in partial detriment of the *outsiders*, made up of unemployed and fixed-term workers, often young people and women, who find high barriers to enter the 'labour-market fortress' and are penalised by the contributory schemes.

Although union density in Southern Europe is historically lower than in Continental Europe, Southern European unions were an important political and organizational resource for the main left-of-centre parties[18]. Also due to low union density, which makes these countries unfit for the development of forms of 'societal corporatism' (Schmitter, 1974), these linkages were particularly important for the unions

[18] In Italy, the three main parties during the 'First Republic' (1946-1992) enjoyed strong linkages with the peak union confederations (the Communist CGIL, the Socialist UIL and the Christian-Democrat CISL), although since the Seventies the unions shared a strategy of 'unity of action'. Even in the three late Southern European late democracies, the union organizations, particularly in Spain and Portugal, represented important *loci* of political resistance against dictatorships, and after the transition to democracy they kept strong linkages with specific political parties (see Chapter 6 and Chapter 8).

in order to keep a strong influence on labour market and on social issues in countries where state regulation prevails (Rigby and García Calavia, 2017).

In Latin America, the countries that followed an ISI (*Import Substitution Industrialization*) economic model also developed a kind of 'Bismarckian' welfare state[19], albeit with much lower levels of coverage and adequacy than in Continental Europe (Filgueira et al., 2012). Barrientos (2004) defined the regime that is typical of the former ISI countries as a 'corporatist-informal' welfare regime, because workers in the informal sectors, despite being a sizeable (often majoritarian) segment of popular strata, enjoyed much less improvements in the protection from social risks than industrial and middle class sectors. Because of state weakness, wide gaps in social protection, social fragmentation and quite low union density (conducing to *state* instead of *social* regulation of labour market), among other things, Latin American 'corporatist-informal' regimes share more characteristics with the 'Mediterranean' model than with the 'Bismarckian' one.

In Latin America, in the ISI period, the main working-class organizations experienced a huge increase of membership and of political influence, often providing an 'encapsulated' core-constituency to the *labour-based parties* (Levitsky, 2003) linked (programmatically and even organizationally) with the unions. One could argue that the Latin American labour-based parties, which represented the legacy at the party level of the populist regimes that incorporated the organized working class into the polity domain (Collier and Collier, 1991), were the functional substitutes of the European Social Democracies, in terms both of their core-constituencies and of their organizational linkages to the unions, albeit with a much less clearly defined ideology and a more heterogeneous sociological composition of their electorates (Dix, 1989).

[19] It must be noticed that, particularly in early industrializing countries such as Argentina, Uruguay or Chile, such a 'Bismarckian' path was already set *before* the proper ISI phase, thanks to the organizational power achieved by the unions, mostly rooted in public and extractive sectors or in the first big industrial plants (Segura-Ubiergo, 2007; Haggard and Kaufmann, 2008).

The Evolution of Party Linkages. The Resilience of Loose Linkages with the Unions. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the triumph of free market ideology, as well as the structural changes following the end of the Fordist era and also the EU integration process, all put the European *union-party hubs* (Handlin and Collier, 2008) in a very difficult situation. In particular, the unions faced a much more atomized labour market, where collective action became increasingly more difficult to sustain and where the defence of labour rights clashed with the necessity to cope with a deregulated international financial market. According to Przeworski and Sprague (1986) and Kitschelt (1996), the 'winning strategy' for the European left-of-centre parties was to 'free' themselves from the union influence, to embrace economic liberalism and to differentiate themselves from the Right by emphasizing a second socio-political dimension emerging at that time: the 'materialist/postmaterialist' (Inglehart, 1977) or 'authoritarian/libertarian' axis.

This strategy was effectively pursued by mostly all of the European Social-Democratic parties. This, in some cases, meant the gradual 'abandonment' of the 'conservative' (in terms of values) blue-collar constituencies, destined to a quantitative reduction in size in the post-industrial era, and a 'constituency switch' towards the middle, well-educated classes with post-materialist attitudes. In fact, one could argue that this constituency switch entailed more of a switch from a blue to a white-collar electorate, than a 'deunionization' of the left-of-centre constituencies, typically employed in salaried, medium-to-high-skilled jobs in medium and large enterprises and/or in the public sector, where collective action is easier. The trade unions shared with the left-of-centre parties this growing white-collar constituency, but remained the only major actor defending the interests of a blue-collar sector put in a defensive position. Moreover, they faced huge difficulties in order to expand their membership amongst the increasing outsider sectors, which were much more difficult to organize due to self-evident structural constrains.

Political parties committed to neoliberalism typically argue that flexibilization of the labour markets represents the solution to deal with the rise of unemployment. Left-of-centre parties and unions have sometimes favoured, or accepted, some kind of labour market deregulation, although they remained attentive to defend (with some exceptions) the labour rights of the *insiders,* 'charging' the burden of the adaptation to neoliberalism to those temporarily outside the labour market 'fortress'. Meanwhile, Southern European left-of-centre parties and unions did not abandon their 'laborist' ideology (Lynch, 2006), which links the entitlement of social rights to the status of worker, instead of rather making social rights more universalist. Even radical leftist parties often defended classist, 'workerist' ideologies, which seems increasingly poorly suited to deal with post-industrial society and the immediate necessities of the heterogeneous outsider groups. Particularly since the beginning of the Great Recession, not even the *insiders'* protection has been truly efficacious. The economic dismissals following the crisis, and the labour market reforms imposed by the international financial and political institutions, put the insiders in an increasingly risky condition.

In Latin America, the 'neoliberal switch' on the part of some labour-based or left-of-centre parties (such as the Bolivian MNR and MIR or the Argentine PJ) has been much more drastic, whereas in other cases they kept a leftist profile (as in Brazil and Uruguay), taking advantage of their prolonged oppositional status. Some kind of programmatic (such as economic stabilization, the promise of a growth recovery, an 'incorporation through the market' of the poorest strata [Baker, 2009; Filgueira et al., 2012] or the implementation of means-tested cash transfers), identitarian, clientelistic linkages (Kitschelt, 2000) were exploited by the old labour-based parties to address the poorest sectors, with mixed results. At the same time, the resilient (but declining) organizational linkages with the unions partially helped those parties to retain their core-constituencies, although the rise of job informality during the neoliberal era further reduced the size of formal and salaried sectors. Moreover, differently from Europe, the size of the middle-class was too small to compensate the eventual electoral losses among the popular sectors. Everywhere, during the nineties - the apex of the so-called

Washington Consensus - the once powerful Latin American union movements weakened, both in terms of membership and of political influence.

One could ask why many 'mainstream' unions, both in South America and in Southern Europe, did not break with left-of-centre or labour-based parties that opted for a neoliberal renewal. Most unions became the targets of accusations such as a gradual loss of autonomy, a 'benevolent stance' towards market friendly measures when implemented by 'closer' governments, and a disregard to outsiders' interests. To be fair, the political, economic and ideological context in which the union organizations had to operate during the 'neoliberal hegemony' was extremely difficult. To use the terminology of Hyman (2001), it was the classic choice between a role by the unions as *economic*, as *classist* or as *social* actors. In its economic role, unions must pursue the interests of their memberships, acting as a particularistic interest group. A classist union plays a more contentious role, aiming at forging working-class unity with advanced political and potentially anti-capitalist goals. The role of unions as a 'civil society actor' implies that, apart from representing sectorial or classist interests, the unions must take part in different kind of campaigns and negotiations (in the cultural, social and political realms) in order to contribute to the national 'common good' through both pluralistic and corporatist arrangements. Rightly, Hyman stressed the impossibility of approximating *exclusively* one of these ideal-types, as well as the tensions existing between the three different interpretations of what unionism should be.

The unions that chose a 'classist' strategy ran the risk of being excluded from any form of 'social partnerships' (when existing), condemned to irrelevance, and potentially unable to deliver concrete, if limited, benefits to their constituencies. This is particularly so if we take into account that the legislative and executive powers are responsible of most of the labour regulations in the set of countries analysed here. Nonetheless, the unions with a 'classist' strategy could position themselves in a better position towards the working class and civil society in the early aftermath of the crisis than the more 'conciliatory' ones, as social dialogue *'had come to mean sharing*

responsibility for the dismantling of many of the previous gains – acting as "mediators of transnational economic pressures"' (Hyman, 2001: 52). Moreover, the unions mostly involved in forms of tripartite bargaining ran the risks of being identified as 'collaborators' of the parties that embraced the neoliberal project, of being accused of focusing only on sectorial gains and of abdicating a more encompassing defence of the workers excluded from the labour market.

The retrenchment of the state during the neoliberal era, as well as the economic constraints brought by the crisis and tightened by the implementation of austerity measures, diminished the 'room of manoeuvre' for the parties to provide targeted and particularistic answers to the demands of the outsiders (Luna, 2014; Afonso et al., 2015). Several Latin American and Southern European left-of-centre or labour-based parties have a long clientelistic tradition, although through very different means, such as party-patronage, 'flexible' use of social programs, and even the delivering of material goods and services. In some cases, these clientelistic exchanges strongly contributed to the consolidation of partisan identities and the strengthening of the electoral appeals of left-of-centre or labour-based parties among the popular strata in its entirety, thus *across* the insider-outsider divide, making these parties a type of 'party of the poors'.

In times of crisis, clientelist linkages are for obvious reason put in peril. Recurring to such linkages can even become counterproductive for political parties in terms of 'reputation': as it has been often noticed in the literature (e.g., Morgan, 2011; Erlingsson et al., 2016), clientelism and corruption become salient issues particularly when the economic conjuncture is negative. At the same time, party identification, also due to the effects of several macro-phenomena ('cartelization'; weakening of the social, cultural and organizational dimension of the main political cleavages; and a greater incidence of opinion voting due to higher educational levels), tended to weaken the capacity of 'voters' retention', particularly amongst young adult voters.

Apart from the eventual crisis of the old linkages to different sectors, I highlight another – albeit interrelated - source of discontent towards political parties, both in

South America and Southern Europe. I refer to the progressive 'detachment' of the parties from society. The process of cartelization (Katz and Mair, 1995) favoured the transformation of leftist parties into electoral-professional parties (Panebianco, 1988), with declining memberships. Other well-known macro-phenomena had been at work, such as the processes of de-ideologization, the progressive disappearance of the old political subcultures and of those civil society organizations that once acted as powerful, party-based structures of political socialization (Rokkan, 1977).

Cartelization increased the degree of autonomy of the partisan elites, while changing the *locus* of the power from the *central offices* to the *party in the public office*. The common perception of the political parties as self-referential organizations, scarcely open to the civil society, as well as the resilience of a poorly democratic pyramidal structure, contributed to their declining legitimacy. In many cases, even the unions have experienced a kind of cartelization, both in Southern Europe and in Latin America, in the sense that they exploited their linkages with their political referents in order to exchange a more flexible labour market for the defence of their organizational (Etchemendy, 2011) and institutional (Rigby and García Calavia, 2017) power.

All of these processes affected the political legitimacy of the *union-party hub*, as they contributed to the perception of parties and unions as entities detached from society, with poor incentives to broaden their memberships and inclusiveness, since their funding stability was increasingly depending on their access to public resources. Their political legitimacy was also harmed by their poor capacity to deal with the crisis, or by their involvement in governments that implemented neoliberal reforms. Many centre-leftist parties were not able to differentiate their economic proposals from the rightist ones, because of ideological convergence and the strong economic constraints they faced when in government. The 'liberal' turn of the Southern European left-of-centre parties potentially prevented them from re-attracting those strata most affected by the crisis when economic, 'materialist' issues became particularly salient again.

Configuration of the Critical Antecedents. Once discussed the main factors influencing (negatively) the 'starting positions' of the different leftist or labour-based parties when the crisis occurred, it is possible to arrange them graphically and to hypothesize the different strategies at the disposal of the parties to take electoral advantage of (or, at best, to survive to) the 'critical juncture' (Table 2.1). I chose to chart these 'starting positions' according to three variables: the eventual 'neoliberal strategy' pursued by the party; the degree of 'entrenchment' with some union organizations, and the strength and 'combativeness' (against neoliberalism) of the specific union(s) tied to each party. It would certainly be possible that some leftist parties did not have any organizational linkages with the unions, possibly because it emerged from the 'post-materialistic' dimension or because they represented a 'fringe party' with poor electoral relevance and social roots. Moreover, particularly in countries where organised labour is highly fragmented, we may observe the existence of 'exclusive linkages' between a party and a radical, albeit minoritarian, union. As Murillo (2001) argued, these different configurations could have important effects in shaping the behaviour of the unions during a contentious phase, for example by pushing some union confederations or factions to assume more radical stances, in order to retain the control of the movement.

Table 2.1 The ‘Critical Antecedent’: Party-Union Alignments at the Threshold of the Critical Juncture, and the Risk and Opportunities for Left-of-Center Parties in Leading Opposition to Austerity.

FOR EXISTING LEFT-OF-CENTER PARTIES		PARTY "COMPROMISED" WITH NEOLIBERALISM	
		NO	YES
TIGHTNESS OF THE UNION-PARTY RELATIONSHIP	UNION TYPE		
MEDIUM TO HIGH	MAINSTREAM AND DIALOGUIST	**Leftist Party allied with Mainstream Union**. **RISK:** being perceived as an 'insider party'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking during the mobilizations.	**Labour-Based Mainstream Party**. **RISK:** 'encapsulation' around its core-constituency; loss of working-class trust; being targeted as representative of 'old politics'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** resilience of identitarian or clientelist linkages; size of its core-constituency; moving towards more Leftist positions.
	MAINSTREAM AND OPPOSITIONAL	**Oppositional Union-Party Hub.** **RISK**: 'workerist' ideology and inability of expanding towards outsiders. **OPPORTUNITIES:** union movement is a credible anti-austerity actor, well-positioned for dialoguing with the movements.	Unlikely empirical combination.
	MINORITARIAN AND OPPOSITIONAL	**Leftist party with solid links with a radicalized fraction of the labor movement**. **RISKS:** 'workerist' ideology; sectarianism; inability of expanding towards outsiders. **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking with social mobilizations; not associable with conciliatory unions.	Unlikely empirical combination.
WEAK		**'Post-Materialist Leftist Party.** **RISK**: poor credibility in labour issues . **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking with mobilizations; not associable with 'conciliatory' unions.	**Center-Left party with a Plural Constituency**. **RISK:** competition both from the Left and from the Right; being targeted as representative of 'old politics'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** moving towards more Leftist positions.

Source: Author’s elaboration.

In order to sketch the different strategies available to left-of-centre parties, it is also necessary to take into account the composition of their main constituencies, particularly in the case of Southern Europe. A transition of their constituencies towards a ‘middle-class’ profile can have occurred to different degrees, while party identification may have acted as a factor of continuity. The composition of their constituencies – mainly in terms of the insider-outsider divide - is crucial because it has a direct effect on the programmatic linkages at the disposition of the parties and on the sociological characteristics of the 'excluded sectors' potentially looking for a new political project for their incorporation. Once the sociological characteristics of left-of-centre electorates are taken into account, it is possible to fully understand the strategic alternatives faced by left-of-centre parties and the structural conditions forming the background of the emergence of new political projects.

One could hypothesize that left-of-centre parties with strong links to unions are generally more suited to retain the *insiders*: the salaried workers enjoying higher protection during the crisis. These are, moreover, the most unionized constituencies: for them, union organization is easier, and they have a ‘protected’ position to defend. They form a ‘shared’ constituency for both the left-of-centre parties and the unions; and partisan identification is likely to be stronger, particularly among older people. However, austerity measures (such as wage freezing, labour market flexibilization and/or tax increases) could also harm these constituencies and provoke their ‘rebellion’ against left-of-centre parties sharing governmental responsibilities during harsh times.

Thus, left-of-centre parties involved in the implementation of austerity measures and/or having formed part of the ‘neoliberal consensus’, and ‘encapsulated’ in their ‘protected’ core-constituencies, are likely to suffer the deepest electoral losses. Their capacity to retain broader sectors, as well as the electoral size of their core-constituencies, is crucial for explaining their electoral fortunes. They can even choose to assume a ‘responsible’, centrist position, while being confident about their capacity of retention.

To appeal *programmatically* to the *outsiders* is not an easy task. The outsider category is extremely heterogeneous in terms of socioeconomic position and educational attainment. In Southern Europe, it comprises many young people, often highly skilled and with an education above the average, as well as precarious or unemployed low-skilled workers, and even many self-employed workers, as a sort of 'poor petty bourgeoisie'. In Latin America, unemployed or employed workers in the informal sector, as well as self-employed urban workers, form most of the vast outsider category. Apart from their common precarious condition, these sectors are likely to be particularly hit by tax or fare increases and public spending cuts, thus developing stronger anti-tax stances, as they take reduced benefits from welfare regimes skewed towards insider sectors (Fernández-Albertos and Manzano, 2015). They look for a rapid improvement in terms of social protection and net incomes: the latter goal is not necessarily addressed by the defence of permanent employment protection and by wage increases through collective bargaining; but universal social protection *and* a stimulus for economic recovery could represent a satisfactory platform for the entire *outsider* category (Oxhorn, 1998).

Nevertheless, in times of scarce resources, universalist welfare measures could be seen as alternative to (and not a complement to) the protections and benefits reserved to the insiders. In turn, expansionary economic proposals could potentially harm the interests of the middle-class, particularly when these proposals could imply an erosion of their incomes or their patrimonies, through inflation or currency devaluation. In sum, the *insider-outsider* divide, during harsh times and when the mobility across the divide is almost exclusively downward, could become a divide between those having something to lose and those trapped in the 'loss domain'[20]. A progressive political project may exploit the possibility of 'building a bridge' between the outsiders and those insiders increasingly discontents against the 'union-party hubs' because of the eventual losses (in

[20] This could explain the conservative (or overtly xenophobic) stances assumed by many *insiders* in Western Europe against immigrants and towards forms of *welfare chauvinism* (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013).

terms of income or social protection) imposed by austerity, and because of their dissatisfaction with crisis mismanagement.

A labour-based party that coherently opposed market-friendly measures enjoys more opportunities for growth in the post-crisis scenario, but it still needs to broaden its appeal towards the outsiders. A labour-based party compromised with the 'neoliberal era' is likely to suffer high losses: its survival depends on its ability to successfully defend the interests of the insiders as well as on the electoral size of the insider sectors and of the resilience of other (identitarian or clientelistic) linkages. If the entrenchment between the party and the unions is weaker, the party faces a more fluid scenario. In particular, if the party kept an 'antagonist' stance during the neoliberal era, its position is more promising, although it needs to build its own credibility as an actor involved in 'materialist' issues and have an appeal within the organised working-class.

Table 2.1 constantly refers to the necessity of 'networking' with the movements animating the protests. This is an important topic addressed in the next Chapter (and already anticipated above). I argue that *ideological and organizational* partisan resources are particularly crucial for adapting to the scenario shaped by anti-austerity protest cycles. Apart from the analysis of the different interests and preferences held by insiders and outsiders (an analysis that helps to understand the different *programmatic* linkages available), it is also necessary to take into account the *ability* and *credibility* of the existing parties in dealing with the protesters. While *credibility* is directly affected by the pre-crisis political positioning, the *ability in dealing with the protesters* also depends on parties' ideological and organizational resources for approximating the *participative-mobilising populist* subtype.

2.3 Social Mobilizations Against Neoliberal Model and Austerity

The popular reactions against austerity measures, and against neoliberalism, took very different forms in the countries composing the 'geographical scope' of the middle-range theory that I propose here. I argue that the specific forms assumed by these mobilizations, jointly with the critical antecedents analysed in the previous section, shaped decisively and differentially the socio-political environment to which the existing parties had to adapt, and the political opportunities for the emergence of new parties on the left.

One must differentiate between 'social movements' and 'social mobilizations'. I define social mobilization as a '*campaign aiming at raising awareness and motivating people to demand change or to achieve a particular goal, typically by bringing together members of institutions, civic organizations, community networks and others in a coordinated way'.* Specific social movements can animate a social mobilization; however, the latter can originate also from more or less 'spontaneous' protests that soon appeared as 'critical protest events' triggering an enduring cycle of protest. New social movements can flourish from the *milieu* generated by a social mobilization, in order to sustain it over time. All of the countries that I analysed in this dissertation experienced different forms of social mobilizations against austerity measures and other issues discursively linked to neoliberal order. Such mobilizations denounced problems such as the increase in social exclusion, the loss of social rights and the deterioration of the quality of the democratic process. The mobilizations advanced both political and socioeconomic demands. Sometimes, they erupted even *before* the full display of the economic effects of the crisis, and eventually strengthened themselves and/or contributed to sustain anti-austerity protests.

The line of reasoning stems from a very simple axiom: different kinds of mobilizations shape the 'political environment' in different ways. The task of the (old and new) antineoliberal political parties is to adapt to these new, different environments. For instance, while Italy and Venezuela hosted 'scattered anti-austerity' mobilizations (Hellinger, 1998; Mosca, 2015; Zamponi and Fernández, 2017), a unifying mobilization emerged in Spain thanks to the *Indignados* and the following *Mareas*. Some social movements were territorially or community-based, and sometimes achieved a considerable organizational strength, as in Bolivia and – partially – in Argentina. Only in Bolivia, however, were such movements able to expand and organize at higher geographical levels. The different socioeconomic profiles of the activists must be also taken into account, ranging from the poorer strata in many Latin American movements, to the 'youth without future' in the Spanish *Indignados*, to the 'usual suspects' ('already activated' leftist citizens) animating non-institutionalized protests in Italy (Quaranta, 2013) and the first protest wave against austerity in Greece (Rudig and Karyotis, 2013). Some movements revolved around local issues or were born as 'self-help networks' at the neighbourhood level, without any necessary coordination with other groups focused on different issues. In other cases, the movements focused on contentious actions defending some national common goods (such as public education or health, or the national control of natural resources). In several cases, the movements directly targeted the 'core' of the neoliberal model, thus advancing a broad agenda including political, social and economic demands, as with the '*populist' social movements* such as the Spanish and Greek *Indignados* described by Aslanidis (2016).

An important body of literature on social movements has stressed the importance of the 'political opportunity structure' (POS) in order to explain their emergence, arguing that the existence of a favourable public opinion climate or of potential 'institutional allies' increase the perceived probability of victory for social movements struggling for specific issues, thus favouring their emergence (Kriesi et al., 1995). In contrast, Della Porta (2015), looking at more long-term factors, has stressed the ability

of social movements to shape the POS by themselves, contributing to open important 'spaces' in the party system and to achieve strong resonance among public opinion. For instance, Aslanidis, in his recent contribution (2016: 304-305) on what he chose to call '*populist' social movements*, defines them as '*non-institutional collective mobilization which attributes currently suffered grievances to a society ultimately separated in two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, the overwhelming majority of 'pure People' versus the 'corrupt elite', and claims to speak on behalf of the former in demanding the restoration of political authority into their hands, as rightful sovereigns*'. The *very absence* of 'institutional allies' was an important factor favouring not only the emergence of these movements, but also their eventual decision either to build their own 'political instrument' in order to take power, or to create new parties aiming at advancing their demands at the institutional level. Nevertheless, the presence of strong anti-party feelings and rhetoric within the movements did not deterministically lead to the emergence of *new* strong parties 'representing' the movements, as the Argentine, Portuguese and Greek cases clearly demonstrate (see Chapters 5 and 8).

Moreover, such 'populist social movements' were definitely not the only kind of social movements that emerged. Protesters were animated by different concerns, most of them directly or indirectly discursively connected to the 'overarching crisis' of neoliberal hegemony[21]. In the Latin American context of the end of the Nineties, the supranational dimension of the crisis was associated to the Washington Consensus and to 'imperialism', thus fuelling an anti-imperialist (and anti-colonialist) narrative. In both Latin American and Western European progressive protests, 'neoliberalism' was increasingly associated with the major cause of the failures of the political regime at the social, economic and political levels. This identification was sometimes advanced by the protesters themselves, whereas in other cases it was provided by social and political

[21] Zamponi and Bosi (2015: 421), for example, identify four different 'crises' in the Southern European context: *'the global financial crisis, the public debt and austerity crisis, the industrial productive crisis, and the political legitimacy crisis'*. Della Porta (2015) also underscores the entrenched but distinct sources of grievances fuelling contentious activities throughout the world in the last years.

leaders and brokers, looking for a powerful and effective frame to link the different struggles.

There were anti-austerity movements against cuts in public spending, such as the *Onda Anomala* movement in Italy, or the different *Mareas* in Spain. These kinds of protests were not absent in Latin America. Nonetheless, the very first strong social responses to the austerity took the forms, in Argentina, of *local* protests struggling against the closing of public industrial plants and the reduction of public employment. In Venezuela, they took the form of generalized *riots* against the increases in public tariffs implemented by the government, and they triggered a long and fragmented cycle of contention. In Bolivia, the most contentious phase began with coca-growers' resistances against the eradication's policies imposed by the US government and violently implemented by the Bolivian forces, and with a popular revolt in Cochabamba against the privatization of the local water public company.

Varieties of Social Demands during Austerity and the Question of Inter-Movements Alliances. To recognise the variety of demands advanced is a crucial step for understanding how the movements influenced the social and political arena. I first propose a rough distinction between *universalist*, *sectorial* and *local* demands. *Universalist issues*, such as levels of social spending, the struggle against corruption, or for gender equality, or for a more participative democracy, or for a radical rejection of the current political class, address a broad public and typically target national and supranational institutions in order to influence the law-making process and/or to claim for broad political change. I define them as *universalist* because they refer to broad constituencies, even the totality of the population, as they often refer to the defence of public goods (such as socioeconomic equality, public education and health, and democracy). The *populist social movements* that I mentioned above clearly led *universalist mobilizations*, generally focusing on a harsh critique of the political class, whereas the Spanish *Mareas* – or the Argentine *Frente Nacional contra la Pobreza* [2001] –concentrated on the defence of social rights.

In turn, campaigns around *local* issues aim at provoking concrete and immediate changes or 'answers' to some grievances emerging in a specific territory. Many such movements do frame their struggles as a form of resistance against the neoliberal socioeconomic model, and their targets are often public (even national and supranational) institutions, but their activists pretend to speak on behalf of a geographically concentrated constituency. These movements can flourish around very different issues, such as contested public infrastructures, privatization of local public companies, common goods or natural resources, inadequate responses to local unemployment rates or dismissals, etc.

Finally, *sectorial* demands are advanced by activists claiming to defend a constituency defined on a basis other than a geographic one. These conflicts could refer either to the production (such as a conflict about wage increases for a specific job sector) or the consumption sphere, such as a campaign against tariff or rents' increases. Both local and sectorial demands are usually more disaggregated, thus potentially more suitable for *ad hoc* solutions. I argue that those movements advancing *local* and *sectorial* demands are even more interested than the *universalist* ones in finding institutional allies to give an immediate solution to their concerns (although this does not imply that they will assume less confrontational repertoires).

I recognize that the border between *universalist*, *sectorial* and *local* demands and mobilizations is blurred. For instance, a strong social movement such as the Spanish PAHs (*Plataformas de Afectados por las Hipotecas*, Platform of Victims of Banks' Evictions: see Chapter 6) conduced a *universalist* struggle for effective changes in the national legislation on housing issues, while forging the creation of *local* solidarity's ties among the victims to prevent public authority from notifying new eviction orders. At the same time, despite its universalist frame, the struggle could be interpreted as the defence of a specific constituency, against the interests of the homeowners. The Bolivian peasant social movements (see Chapter 4) have strong territorial control and legitimacy in order to settle *local* disputes among the affiliates, while acting as defenders of sectorial

interests. At the same time, they displayed a great capacity for consolidating alliances with other social movements involved in broader issues, such as the struggle for a new Constitution. The distinction, albeit more analytical than empirical, is useful to understand the different strategies available to political parties in order to respond to the movements' demands, as well as the different motivations leading the activists to join the movements.

In order to have greater possibilities of reaching its goal, a mobilization must be able to sustain itself over time and to expand the number of its activists. The movements must be able to build alliances with other actors, both institutional and non-institutional, in order to improve the resources available for the struggle. Among other factors, I argue that the *organization* and the *ideologization* of the movements are critical for explaining their ability (or lack thereof) to forge vast alliance networks, particularly for those movements involved in *universalist* struggles. A certain degree of 'stability' in the internal organization of a movement increases its sustainability over time and favours identification amongst its members. However, a structured organization could also limit the ability of consolidating alliances with other actors and dampen the initial 'enthusiasm'. When social movements achieve strong identity *and* ideological elaboration, it can lead to 'sectarianism', which in turn brings a lesser capacity or willingness to build 'broader fronts' with other movements and organizations. Strong external demarcations could make difficult to substitute past identities with new, more inclusive collective identities emerging potentially from the mobilizations (Zamponi, 2012), thus limiting the concrete impact of such 'tighter' social movements on the political domain. In terms of direct influence on the public sphere, the most promising movements are those combining a structured organization (conducing to a greater sustainability of the protests) *with* the ability – thanks to the adoption of pragmatic stances and inclusive frames - to develop some kind of 'networking' with available (not necessarily institutional) allies.

The kind of organization assumed by movements, and the demands they advance, are also likely to affect the profile and the extension of their membership. For example, a horizontal or assembly-based decision-making process, after a brief *momentum* of collective effervescence, is likely to retain mainly 'biographically available' segments (Giugni and Grasso, 2016) such as younger people, or more ideologically motivated activists, particularly when their claims are universalist and less related with local (and urgent) demands. Said otherwise, these kinds of horizontal movements are more easily understood through the resource mobilization theory (McCarthy and Zald, 1973; 1977; Tilly, 1978), since only (relatively) resources-rich activists are likely to help sustain the mobilization over time.

In contrast, local issues can attract heterogeneous (albeit geographically concentrated) constituencies. A process of organization and coordination helps lowering the costs of sustaining the movements over time, thus contributing to the expansion of the number of activists (unless they fall in the 'sectarian trap' mentioned above). Local and sectorial issues are likely to be easier to sustain, as they are likely to last until a solution of the problem is provided. In this sense, the 'grievance' or 'deprivation theory' (e.g., Gamson, 1968; Wilkes, 2004; Kern et al., 2014) could show a stronger explanatory capacity than normally assumed by the literature.

It is important to recall that anti-austerity and anti-neoliberal social movements have not taken the streets alone. The union movement, empirically, has been an important participant almost everywhere (one way or the other) in the protests (Ancelovici, 2014). Nonetheless, the relationship between social movements and trade unions has often been difficult and full of suspicions. The unions have often been depicted as 'discredited' or 'bureaucratised' actors, by several movements, which criticised not only the 'conciliatory' stances at times assumed by the unions towards 'closer' parties and governments, but also the poor attention they paid to the demands of the outsider sectors that many social movements pretended to represent.

However, the unions often proved to be important institutional allies in order to sustain several protests over time, and remained the main representatives of an impoverished and insecure working-class. Unions' organizational resources often allowed them to sustain a less intermittent contentious action than the movements, sometimes accused of lacking 'political conscience' (see Chapters 4, 6 and 8). The crisis gave to the union movement a possibility of 're-gaining' a prominent role in the public sphere.

Once more, the distinction between *universalist*, *local* and *sectorial* demands becomes crucial. The campaigns over sectorial demands, particularly when they concerned specific occupational categories, obviously were more likely to be led by unions. However, the relevance of the union movement in both *local* and *universalist* struggles strongly varied. Particularly in the case of *universalist* struggles, the credibility of the unions as 'reliable contentious actors' highly depended on the stance they assumed during the pre-crisis era. A union prone to compromises with 'neoliberal' parties in order to defend its organizational and institutional power can easily considered as 'part of the system' that contentious actors aim to reverse. On the other hand, the unions had the possibility of taking advantage of the 'opportunities' offered by the crisis, namely, the possibility of 'renewing' themselves and taking a clearer and more confrontational stance, because economic dismissals, wage freezing and political attacks against labour rights opened a window of opportunity for 'building a bridge' between outraged outsider and insider workers.

Patterns of Mobilizations Against Austerity. Once having briefly analysed the different kinds of demands that emerged and the main characteristics of the movements, one should broaden the view in order to describe the *macro-characteristics* of the social mobilizations against neoliberalism and austerity. I identify three macro-types of 'patterns of mobilization' observable (see Table 2.2): *union-led*, *unified* and *fragmented protests* (see also Figure 2.1).

The ‘union-led pattern’ emerged where those peak unions less compromised with the previous ‘neoliberal regime’ exploited their resources to credibly support sectorial and universalist claims against austerity. Their strength, and their combative and coherent political stance, allowed them to play a brokerage role with the movements and to defend their 'primacy' in the streets. Their character of 'classist' actors (Hyman, 2001), ideologically and concretely committed to the improvement of working-class conditions, contributed to defend their credibility as reliable defenders of different segments of the labour market, even amongst the outsider categories.

In contrast, when labour unions were particularly weak, compromised with the ‘neoliberal caste’ and/or perceived as ‘purely insiderist’ organizations, they represented at best a ‘suspicious ally’

Table 2.2 Patterns of Antineoliberal Popular Protests.

PATTERN OF THE ANTINEOLIBERAL SOCIAL MOBILIZATIONS	UNION-LED	UNIFIED	FRAGMENTED
CHARACTERISTICS AND CONSEQUENCES ON THE SOCIO-POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT	The unions position themselves as the most important actors during the protests. The prolonged oppositional status of the union-party hubs during the neoliberal era did not affect their organizational strength, instead providing them with a strong legitimacy as an antagonistic actor. In this pattern, the union-party hubs show not only their centrality in the campaigns for sectorial demands, but they are also able to channel universalist demands, thanks to their credibility as sociopolitical, antineoliberal actors.	The social movements, albeit involved in different struggles, are able to build a close-knit alliance network advancing broad social, political and economic changes and supporting each others. This vast alliance is typically cemented by 'populist frames' that can become highly resonant 'common goods' ready to be exploited in the public sphere. A strong alliance network, if well organised and rooted, can opt for entering into the electoral arena by itself. Otherwise, the movements still leave a political opportunity and motivated militants for a political project aiming to bring the mobilizations 'into the institutions'.	The social movements remain highly fragmented along ideological or sectorial lines, and/or their demands mainly relate to local-territorial issues. Even universalist campaigns fail to aggregate durable alliances, due to ideological divisions between the movements. In the absence of a 'common front', sectorial and local movements, aiming at solving concrete and urgent problems, separately look for institutional allies in order to be satisfied. In this pattern, those political projects having organizational and ideological resources to deal with this fragmentation are well-suited to adapt to this scenario.

Source: Author's Elaboration.

and, in some cases, even an explicit 'enemy' of the movements. Thus, I identify two different, additional, alternative patterns, which I call 'unified' and 'fragmented'. The 'unified pattern' can be described as a broad cycle of protests where different social movements were able to build a close-knit alliance network advancing broad economic, social and political claims. Despite their different demands, the different sociological profiles of their activists, their different organizations and ideological inspirations, the social movements were able to support each other through a successful strategy of alliance building, typically around inclusive, 'populist' frames (Aslanidis, 2016; 2017). These common frames unified the main struggles against a (multi-faceted) enemy and help their agendas to converge. The 'common frame' can be either the starting point or a

by-product of the mobilizations: in this second case, a critical protest event contributes to alliance-building process, facilitates a shared analysis of the political and social problems, and fosters the creation of new collective identities. In such pattern, even movements built around sectorial or local demands have the possibility of becoming part of a broader cycle of protest, by exploiting the resonant frames generated by the mobilizations.

The 'unified pattern of mobilizations' is the perfect ground for the emergence of *movement (based) populisms*. It generates resonant, antagonistic frames that help the protesters to interpret and give a political meaning to the crisis. Such frames produce strong collective identities and identify the boundaries between the victims and the culprits of the crisis, between 'Us' and 'Them', thus preparing the terrain for 'upscaling' the polarization from the social to the political-electoral sphere through a populist discourse. The mobilizations also create a vast militancy, potentially ready to be involved in electoral politics if a proper political project emerges or if the social movements are sufficiently motivated, strong and organised to opt for autonomously entering electoral competition.

How can we hypothesize the evolution of the relationship between the social movements and 'old Left' social actors such as the unions? First, it depends on the factors accounting for why the unions were not sufficiently strong or credible to 'lead' the protests. The tighter the links between the unions and the 'neoliberal parties', the more difficult the relationship between the unions and the movements. The lower the attention paid by the unions to the interests of the outsiders, the more likely that the outsiders will channel their demands through extra-institutional means, thus fostering potential redistributive conflicts *between* insiders and outsiders. Second, but quite interrelated, the relationship between the movements and the unions depends on the specific demands of the movements, on the kind of frames that achieved higher resonance during the mobilizations, and on the sociological profile of the protesters. For instance, universalist economic demands (e.g., defence of public health system) are more

likely to produce a certain convergence between different actors. Mobilizations against job precariousness can similarly contribute to foster a dialogue between different actors, or to radicalise 'excessively conciliatory' unions. Conversely, strong calls for new inclusive forms of political participation can target the unions as 'part of the caste'. Movements advancing purely 'pro-outsider demands', as well as frames tending to divide the society into 'privileged' and 'exploited' workers, can even lead to redistributive conflicts between insiders (represented by the unions) and outsiders (represented by the movements). In general, it is important to distinguish two potential sources of critiques used by the social movements against the unions. The first is more related with the political position of the unions, attacked for their entrenchment with a delegitimised system, which in turn led to an insufficient protection of the *entire* popular sectors. The second one is more related to the eventual under-representation of outsiders' interests within the unions: in this case, the critiques are potentially conducive to a politicization of the insider-outsider divide and to the emergence of redistributive conflicts between the two sectors.

The last pattern of anti-neoliberal mobilizations that I identify is the 'fragmented' one. It occurs when the different movements and organizations do not experience a process of convergence. They mainly focus either on local or sectorial issues, without coordinating their demands at a broader level (and even competing for scarce resources), or they find themselves divided along ideological lines, which makes difficult even the convergence around universalist campaigns. Even the use of ‘populist *frames’* proves to be insufficient to create stable alliances. In the absence of a ‘common front’, the movements can be more attracted by ‘particularistic’ solutions to their grievances, and are likely to look for institutional allies. In the absence of *mediating parties* that can fulfil the task of brokering, thanks to their organizational resources, and articulate the different demands by recurring to the use of populist frames *(party-rooted* populism), such a fragmented protest cycle creates the perfect political opportunity for the emergence of a political outsider occupying a vacuum in the political space and

positioning himself as a radical alternative to the party system. *Leader-initiated* populism is thus the outcome (see Figure 2.1).

Chapter 3. The Populist Potential.

This chapter aims at offering a detailed analysis of the concept of populism, which plays a central role in the main argument of this dissertation, particularly on the dependent variable side. In Chapter 2, I argued that in those countries where a 'union-led pattern of mobilization' did *not* emerge, the left side of the political spectrum was shaped by the rise of an 'antineoliberal populist project'. In this chapter, I will further discuss *why* the populist strategy proved to be so widespread and successful, for anti-neoliberal projects.

I begin providing a literature review over the concept of populism by presenting some of the main theoretical approaches and definitions. Then, I propose an 'operational definition' of populism. This definition highlights five central features of populism that are crucial to understand why populist projects emerged in the cases selected here. The following five sections (from second to sixth) of this chapter discuss analytically each of these features. In the last section, I put anti-neoliberal populisms in historical perspective, differentiating the 'anti-neoliberal populist wave' from previous 'populist waves', which consisted of quite different political phenomena, in terms of historical context, social bases, and party organization, among other things. The last section thus highlights the specific characteristics of the 'anti-neoliberal populist' category, and does so without overlooking the differences *within* this category that I extensively discussed in Chapter 1 and 2.

3.1 The Eternal Debate: What is Populism? An Operational Definition

Even a brief, and inevitably partial, literature review reveals the depth and the complexity of the debate over the 'true' or 'best' definition of populism, and to what genus populism belongs. Populism has been alternatively defined as an *ideology* (Taggart, 2000; Mudde, 2004; Stanley, 2008; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013), a *discourse* (De La Torre, 2010; Hawkins, 2009, 2010; Aslanidis, 2015), a *logic* (Laclau, 2005a; Panizza, 2005; in a different sense, Canovan, 1999), a *frame* (Caiani and Della Porta, 2011; Aslanidis, 2017), a *style* (Hofstadter, 1964; Barr, 2009; Moffitt and Tormey, 2013; Moffitt, 2016), a *strategy* (Weyland, 2001), a *form of political incorporation* (Collier and Collier, 1991; Rossi, 2015) or *integration* (Germani, 1965). More complex definitions portray it as a *discursive and mobilizational project* (Jansen, 2011), or as a *'form of political relationship* (articulated through socio-cultural appeals) *between political leaders and a social basis'* (Ostiguy, 2014; 2017). Such a list is bound to strengthen the position of those scholars who plainly discard the analytical validity of the concept, because of its vagueness, its semantic 'overloading', and the absence of a consensual definition.

Part of the reason for this polyphony relies on the fact that the adjective 'populist' has been employed in researching and writing on very different units of analysis, such as political regimes, political parties, political leaders, economic policies, voters and social movements (see Pappas, 2012; Gidron and Bonikowski, 2013, for valuable reviews). Nonetheless, there are a few positive aspects for those interested in the debate and who are willing to clarify the concept and to use it for scientific purposes. First, some of these approaches sometimes hardly differ from one another substantively, apart from specific though important nuances. Moreover, these different approaches have undoubtedly enriched the theoretical and methodological debate. Many insights of

each of the approaches have been accepted and developed by the others, allowing for the creation of a lively academic community.

I would add that the different approaches – at least the most widespread ones - only rarely imply real differences in the *denotation* of the concept, whatever its *connotation*, to use Sartori's terminology (1985); or, more precisely, that the differences in denotation occur at the margins. Considering populism as an 'ideology' or as a 'discourse' has very similar analytical implications, as some scholars openly recognize (Taggart and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015). The interpretation of populism as a 'logic' conducive to the 'building of 'the people'', in opposition to the existing institutions (Laclau, 2005a), surely captures the process leading to the emergence of populist phenomena. However, the definition of populism as '*an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite''* (Mudde, 2004) would not lead to an entirely different categorization. As the definitions of populism are typically elaborated in an *inductive* way, some of them may be too context-based, thus more suitable for analysing specific 'populist subtypes' or 'waves' (see Table 3.1). Because of the complexity of the concept and its application for different research questions and units of analysis, when scholars enter the debate, they often focus on specific populist features, downplaying (or even discarding) other dimensions[22].

To use a quantitative and positivist terminology, I would argue that all the approaches stress different, but *highly correlated*, dimensions of the concept. For instance, the politically incorrect style often 'flaunted' by populist leaders (Ostiguy, 2014; 2017) is functional to the creation (and, crucially, the reproduction) of the antagonism between 'The people' and its 'Enemy', constitutive of the populist

[22] The most widespread approach, the 'ideological' one, is completely agnostic about, for instance, the organizational dynamics of the populist parties or movements, the centrality of the leadership, or the repertoires used. In turn, the first and the second of these aspects are constitutive of the definition by Weyland, whereas the second and the third represent central populist features for 'cultural', 'performative' or 'stylistic' approaches (e.g., Ostiguy, 2009, 2017; Moffitt and Torney, 2013).

phenomena. Through this 'flaunting', the leader can be recognized by the followers as 'one of the [true] People', and thus legitimated to express its 'will' (Mudde, 2004); this also contributes to explain why populism is often highly personalistic (Weyland, 2001). In turn, the creation and reproduction of this antagonism inevitably 'emphasizes similarities and downplay differences' (Jansen, 2011) among 'The people', thus portraying it as a homogeneous entity, as Mudde stresses. As the leader's pretension to represent a homogeneous 'People' and its 'will' can generate tensions with the institutional checks and balances (considered, alternatively, 'unnecessary brakes' or even 'enclaves' occupied by the 'People's enemy' that boycott the populist project), it is not surprising that populism has been equated with 'democratic illiberalism' (Pappas, 2012)[23].

Despite such strong theoretical and empirical overlaps between many of the most widespread definitions of the concept of populism, it is necessary, for the sake of clarity, to adopt a precise definition for the purposes of this dissertation. I finally chose to provide an original definition of the concept. The purpose of such novel definition is *not* to add an additional conceptualization of such a disputed term in the academic literature. Instead, the aim is to set an 'operational definition', that is the result of a deep analysis of the existing literature and that intends to highlight some attributes of populism, unsystematically emerging from the literature, which explain why antineoliberal populist projects found such a fertile terrain in the countries forming the scope of this dissertation.

[23] Nonetheless, the use of a specific definition has strong implication for the *measurement* issue, i.e. for establishing the 'degree of populism' of a political phenomena, as this depends on the dimension that each approach highlights. For example, Hawkins' *ideological-discursive* definition found, by analysing politicians' speeches, that George W. Bush and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad were much more populist than the Argentine Carlos Menem and Néstor Kirchner (2010: 76-77). For sure, an analysis grounded on the 'cultural' approach *à la* Ostiguy (2014) would lead to very different conclusions.

For the purposes of this research, I thus define *populism* as a

'political project' aiming at occupying the public institutions through electoral means in order to allow 'The people' to recuperate or achieve its sovereignty, while relying on an antagonistic, polarizing political discourse to generate new collective identities and on varying organizational resources to overcome the problems of collective action that could arise among dispersed and/or heterogeneous constituencies.

This definition intends to include, or at least to introduce, five 'attributes' of populism that made it particularly well suited to the post-crisis socio-political scenarios. These 'attributes' are:

1. a particular process of articulation of the demands of 'The people';
2. a primary focus on *the search for power*;
3. the peculiar *interpretations* of the concepts of *representation, accountability and sovereignty*;
4. a specific understanding of the concept of *participation* which is present in *some* populist phenomena;
5. the *organizational traits of some of the parties* labelled *populist*.

The first point refers to the populist ability of articulating heterogeneous demands through well-known discursive mechanisms such as the identification of a common Enemy, a polarizing political discourse with a certain ideological vagueness – or, at least, a kind of 'agnosticism' towards 'thicker' ideologies. These mechanisms are

functional to ‘emphasize similarities and downplay differences’ (Jansen, 2011) amongst atomised (as the outsider sectors often are) or fragmented constituencies usually appealed to through class or interest-based rhetoric. This unifying and polarising function proved to be particularly fit in particular for the contentious (and often chaotic) phase triggered by the shortcomings of the neoliberal model.

The second point is about the centrality, in the populist phenomena, of the goal of *occupying public institutions* as a necessary step for providing a solution to the demands of the Peoples. This has three immediate implications. First, populisms aim at *governing*, not simply at *influencing the policy-making process*. Second, the ‘battlefield’ of populist projects is at the nation-State level, whose structures populisms try to revive, often in contrast to supranational and international institutions. Third, populism has a strong *anti-status quo* potential, which can potentially provoke tensions with liberal democratic institutions.

The third and four points are linked to the previous one: populism is about the restoration or achievement of the *sovereignty* of one’s ‘People’, of its ‘right to decide’. This claim has very different implications, though. Sovereignty can be *national* and/or *popular*, depending on the necessary ‘requirements’ to be part of ‘The people’ (ethnicity, citizenship, or low socio-economic status – *ethnos*, *demos*, or *plebs*). Moreover, as I will argue in the fifth section, populisms vary according to the specific solution provided for making ‘sovereignty’ effective. In some cases, a strong leader *represents* (and *embodies*) her/his People and enacts its supposed will: what I call *electoral-delegative populisms*. Alternatively, ‘The people’ *directly occupies* the public institutions, and populism becomes a political project calling for *popular participation and mobilization*, while the leader still holds a (crucial) unifying and mediating function: what I call *participative-mobilising populisms*. I argue that the latter variety is well-suited for the socio-political context considered here, including the loss of national sovereignty – due to foreign pressures for implementing austerity measures – *and* the

loss of legitimacy of the old structures of political intermediation, accompanied by different kinds of anti-austerity protest cycles (see Chapters 1 and 2).

The fifth point complements the previous ones, as it focuses on the typical organizational characteristics of the populist projects. Although scholars generally agree on the impossibility of defining populism according to its organizational features, I argue that there are important similarities between what I call 'participative-mobilising populisms' and the organization of the 'charismatic parties' – particularly in their 'genetic phase' - theorised by Angelo Panebianco (1988). Both are characterised by the coexistence of *centralising and decentralising tendencies*: a strong leadership coexists with a decentralised structure, in which the periphery enjoys high autonomy and the barriers between the party and its 'environment' are porous. This autonomy, along with the ideological vagueness mentioned above, makes populist projects well suited to adapt to a contentious and effervescent socio-political scenario.

This is not to say that the existing literature have not addressed these issues. Nonetheless, each of the main theoretical approaches is much better suited for an analysis of some of these features, while partially or completely neglecting others. I will underscore the limits of the 'ideological-discursive' approaches, which, if highly valuable, generally fail to capture the eventual *participative* inspiration of certain populisms. Considering populism as a purely top-down and personalistic political project, as Weyland (2001) does, similarly obscures important characteristics of these phenomena. In turn, theoretical approaches much closer to political sociology and emphasizing the mobilizing potential of populisms, such as Jansen (2011), Collins (2014) and Ostiguy (2014), along with Laclau's understanding of populism as an articulating 'logic', are better able to explain why left-wing populism has proved to be a 'winning strategy' in the countries analysed.

In Table 3.1, I summarise what I consider to be the four main theoretical approaches (see also Padoan, 2017) to the concept of populism. I stress the main

strengths and weaknesses of each of them by highlighting the constitutive attributes of populism listed above. Each of these attributes represent the topic of the next five sections of this chapter.

Table 3.1 Summary of Four Main Theoretical Approaches to Populism

THEORETICAL APPROACH TO POPULISM	FOUNDING SCHOLARS	MAIN STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
IDEOLOGICAL	Mudde	Focus on the 'will of "The people"'. It stresses the populist ability to unify atomised and/or dispersed constituencies. Well- suited for describing electoral-delegative populisms	Undertheorised relationship between 'populism' and 'pluralism'. It overlooks the articulating ability of populisms. It fails to capture participative-mobilising populisms
ORGANIZATIONAL (Populism as Unmediated Relationship)	Weyland	Focus on populist 'search for power' and on its anti-status quo potential	Entirely skewed towards the electoral-delegative pole.
POPULISM AS A LOGIC	Laclau	Focus on the ability to articulate different (unexpressed or expressed) demands. It captures populism's potential regenerative role for democracy.	It overstates the 'politicising' role of populisms. It overlooks (and even discards) sociological-structural explanations for the rise of populisms
CULTURAL-STYLISTIC and RELATIONAL	Ostiguy	Focus on the populist creation of collective identities and discuss the 'populist way' of understanding 'representation'. It captures the informality proper of populisms and helps to understand its 'movementist' side.	Too much skewed towards an electoral-delegative understanding of the role of the leadership

Source: Author's Elaboration.

3.2 Populism as the articulation and the empowerment of 'The people'

Probably, Cas Mudde elaborated what is today the most widespread definition of populism: '*an* ideology *that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the* volonté générale *(general will) of the people*' (Mudde 2004: 543). Usually, the scholars adopting the 'ideological approach' consider populism as a 'thin ideology' (e.g. Canovan, 2002; Stanley, 2008), in contrast to more encompassing and traditional ones (such as socialism or liberalism), because the 'core concepts' employed in the Mudde's definition ('people', 'elite' and 'general will') are sufficiently vague to be considered as 'empty vessels' (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013) to be filled by very different contents, thus accounting for the 'chameleonic' character of populism (Taggart, 2000).

Other scholars (e.g., De La Torre, 2010; Caiani and Della Porta, 2011; Aslanidis, 2016) prefer considering populism as a 'rhetoric', a 'discourse' or a 'frame', i.e. a '*'schemata of interpretation' that allow their users 'to locate, perceive, identify, and label' complex events taking place in daily life'* (Goffman, 1974: 21). A 'frame' provides '*a* diagnosis *by identifying 'some event or aspect of social life as problematic and in need of alteration', then proceed to suggest a* prognosis […] *and conclude by circulating a* motivational *urgency to take corrective action*' (Snow and Benford, 1988: 199). Nonetheless, in practice, this second approach is quite similar to the ideological one, as they share not only several definitional features, but also methodological strategies[24].

[24] In fact, a considerable amount of literature have analysed, both theoretically and (increasingly) empirically, the 'degree' of populist rhetoric and/or ideologies in populist parties or leaders (e.g., Hawkins, 2009; 2010; Pauwels, 2011), and the main 'determinants' of the 'populist vote' in both advanced

Mudde complements his definition also identifying the 'negative pole' of the concept of populism: that is, *elitism* and *pluralism*. Elitism '*believe that the people are dishonest and vulgar, while the elite are superior in cultural, intellectual and moral terms*'. Pluralism 'assumes that societies are composed of several social groups with different ideas and interests' and *'takes for granted that it is impossible to generate something like a 'general will' of the people'*, as '*the term ''pluralism'' has increasingly been used to refer . . . to ethnic, cultural, or religious groups, usually in a fashion that advocates wide latitude for such minorities to be able to pursue their own specific traditions and ways of life*' (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013).

In my opinion, Mudde conflates 'populism' with 'holism' or 'organicism'. He states that '*whereas pluralism appreciates societal divisions and sees politics as 'the art of compromise,' populism (and elitism) discards societal divisions, denounces social groups as 'special interests,' and rejects compromise as defeat. By considering the main struggle of politics in moral terms, any compromise with the elite will corrupt the people, making them less or even impure*' (Mudde, 2013: 9-10). In my view the author here goes too far. There is a *potential* incompatibility between populism and specific groups defending their rights or interests. This situation, which is by definition according to Mudde, occurs only when the 'special interests' are depicted as 'privileges' or, said otherwise, when these 'social groups' are considered as part of the 'elite' (which is, of course, delimited in a political and arbitrary way). The dissolution of the organizations (and identities) of the different social or cultural sectors that form the 'people' to which populist projects appeal, either discursively or in practice, is absolutely not obvious and should be not taken for granted.

For example, Jansen (2011: 84) recognizes that '*In characterizing such a broad swath of 'popular' society, leaders downplay differences and emphasize similarities (or at least unity through functional interdependence). In this respect, populist rhetoric*

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and developing countries, implicitly or explicitly using the 'ideological' or 'discursive' approach (see, e.g., Akkerman et al., 2014; Stanley, 2016).

differs from class-based, interest group, or issue-specific rhetoric'. However, this author also adds that '*Suggesting that populist politics is about leaders mobilizing supporters undermines organicist assumptions that populist movements embody some natural confluence of the interests of — or symbiotic relationships between — prepolitical social groups* (Jansen, 2011: 85). This means that the process of 'constructing a people' surely implies a rearticulation of the main demands advanced by different social categories. However, this cannot imply that these demands (and the eventual related collective identities) will disappear during this process[25]. Nor does it imply that the internal relations *within* the 'populist coalition' are exempt of tensions and completely solved by the leader's interpretation of the 'general will'.

On the other hand, Mudde has the merit of stressing that a central point of all populisms is the claim that 'politics should be the expression of the "*will*" of the people'. By discarding as 'privileges' the special interests of particular groups, populism could represent an effective strategy for empowering those social categories that lack their own collective, shared identities and an organization advancing their interests. A vast literature (e.g., Verba et al., 1995; Stolle and Hooghe, 2011) has stressed the importance of factors such as age, education and gender as determinants of political participation, while theorists on social movements elaborated the 'resource mobilization' theory (McCarthy and Zald, 1973; 1977; Tilly, 1978) to explain the disproportionate engagement of well-educated citizens in collective actions. The literature inspired by

[25] This 'holistic' conceptualization of populism occurs because the 'ideological approach' is highly context-based, as it initially mainly looked at the emergence of populist right-wing parties in Western Europe. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013), to reinforce the application of the ideological approach to other political realities, elaborated the distinction between 'inclusionary' and 'exclusionary populism', and identified the Bolivian MAS-IPSP as a *prototypical* example of 'inclusionary populism'. If *''pluralism" has increasingly been used to refer . . . to ethnic, cultural, or religious groups, usually in a fashion that advocates wide latitude for such minorities to be able to pursue their own specific traditions and ways of life*' (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013), it is very difficult to apply the Mudde's definition to a party like the MAS-IPSP, which claims to defend the rights of indigenous peoples. Even more striking is the contrast between Mudde's definition and a Podemos, which has made of plurinationalism and the respects of ethnic minorities (including Roma people and migrants) two important 'flags', while, at the same time, explicitly referring to itself as a 'populist party' and claiming to represent the 99% of the people against a 'corrupt elite'. In sum, the relationship between 'populism' and 'pluralism' is highly undertheorized.

rational-choice theory (Olson, 1965) helps to explain why collective action is easier among small and cohesive groups. These considerations are barely new in political sociology, as Schattschneider (1960) already noticed that '*The flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a* strong upper-class accent*'*: apart from being 'upper-class', the 'pluralist accent' also has inflexions of small and well-organized groups. Populism can effectively aggregate atomized constituencies, thus modifying the 'accent' of the polity domain. In this sense, populisms intend to act as a 'corrective' for the real or perceived 'discriminations' created by the different abilities of the different social groups to achieve an influence in the polity domain. The specific form assumed by this 'corrective' can vary, depending on what populist voters, parties and leaders consider being a 'right' or a 'privilege'.

However, the ideological approach tells us very little about the *processes* leading to the emergence and consolidation of populist phenomena. It tends to focus on 'silent' constituencies, on social groups lacking an own organization and whose demands are still unexpressed. Thus, it mainly focuses on electoral linkages to dispersed constituencies. By doing so, the ideological approach overlooks the populist ability of *articulating* and *unifying* different *expressed* demands around a single political project. The 'unsatisfied constituencies' can be, in fact, quite 'noisy': this 'noise', expressed in contentious forms, is likely to increase during difficult and deteriorating economic contexts, when collective action becomes more likely according to 'deprivation theories' (Gamson, 1968; Opp, 1988; Wilkes, 2004; Kern et al., 2014).

Some authors holding post-structuralist views, such as Laclau (2005a) or Panizza (2005), offer a dynamic interpretation of the concept, conceiving it as a political *logic* challenging the existing institutions, through the articulation of different 'unsatisfied' [and *sometimes* unexpressed] demands around 'empty signifiers' able to signify a 'chain of equivalence' between these demands. For Laclau, *'a movement is not populist because in its politics or ideology it presents actual contents identifiable as populistic, but because it shows a particular logic of articulation of those contents – whatever those*

contents are' (Laclau, 2005b, p. 33). These approaches, as Aslanidis (2017) recognizes, are better suited to understand how a populist political-electoral project relate to movements and interest groups that do not find acceptable solutions[26] for their problems through the existing institutional channels. However, Laclau's approach, highly formalistic, does not offer at all a discussion of the *organizational* aspects of this process of articulation.

3.3 Populism and its 'search for power'

Another influential 'minimal definition' of populism has been authoritatively advanced by Kurt Weyland (2001: 14), who argues that '*populism is best defined as a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers*'. In my view, considering populism as a 'leadership strategy' exaggeratedly stresses a kind of 'opportunism' of the leader. Said otherwise, the impression left by this definition is that populism is almost all about manipulation of an 'undistinguished mob'. Weyland portrays a top-down relationship, leaving no space for a more complex understanding of this relationship, and particularly of the 'tools' that 'the people' have available to influence the leader's actions (see also Ostiguy, 2017). This weakness emerges because the Weyland's 'strategic' approach is also highly context driven, as this scholar had in mind some 'neoliberal populisms' that emerged throughout Latin America during the Nineties.

[26] Arditi (2010) convincingly argues that Laclau's post-structuralism is contradictory when the author highlights the relevance of an 'anomic crisis' as a necessary political opportunity for the construction of a populist, anti-institutional discourse.

Nonetheless, Weyland points at a crucial, and often overlooked, issue, i.e. the eternal search for *state power* by populist leaders and movements. It is common to consider populism as a form of 'demagoguery', which promises something that is not possible to deliver. The essence of populism has been portrayed as the 'Politics of Blame' and, thus, as the identification – for electoral purposes – of an ill-defined 'elite' as the culprits for social and economic problems, thus finding a justification for governmental failures (Vasilopolou et al., 2014). These considerations are, in my view, quite superficial, and are often advanced by both liberal-democrats and leftist thinkers. The first criticizes the Manichean and overtly simplistic populist *weltanschauung*, while the second consider populists as unable to address the structural causes of socioeconomic problems. Their superficiality is, at least, two-fold. First, the 'blame-shifting' strategy is by no means a prerogative of populists (Weaver, 1986), and it acts as an obvious mechanism for building strong collective identities based on the antagonism against a 'blamed elite'. Second, the 'counter-hegemonic populist potential' displays all of its strength precisely by broadening the 'horizon of the possibilities' existing in a political system, allowing for a wider discussion of the policy options available.

In fact, Weyland's main concern is particularly (and rightfully) the ability displayed by the populist leaders to weaken the mechanism of horizontal accountability and to implement a 'delegative democracy' (O'Donnell, 1994), with harmful effects on liberal democracy, the rule-of-law and policy design, implementation and predictability. The real danger of populism, thus, would be not only its tendency to 'deliver too much' to its people, to implement unsustainable social and economic policies (Pribble, 2013), but also to weaken institutional controls and steer democracy towards unpredictable – and potentially plebiscitarian or authoritarian – directions. Weyland, thus, is fully conscious of the *anti-status quo* potential of populist phenomena.

Mouffe (2000), among others, took the debate a step further, arguing that populism should be read as the result of the irreconcilable tension between democracy and liberalism (see also Pappas, 2012). Populism is clearly skewed towards the former,

possibly contributing to the construction of an 'agonist' democracy in which there is little space left for pacted and/or technocratic solutions, seen as intrinsically undemocratic. The 'agonist democracy' is a 'regime' that not only recognizes social conflict and argues about the impossibility of a 'best' or 'optimal' solution, but also considers conflict as the precondition for a true democracy: conflict is politics, and politics is necessary for democracy. The *populist logic*, articulating society into two camps, would even become a *constitutive* attribute of *politics*.

Neoliberalism can easily be read as a project aiming at 'depoliticizing' society, claiming the free market as the most efficient solution to social conflicts (something that represents, of course, a very *political* operation) and praising a 'technocratic' way to govern. In a context marked by a neoliberal crisis, not only the possibilities of populism to emerge, but also the benign potential of populism for the consolidation of democracy becomes clear[27].

One could argue that, while populists contribute to widen the 'horizon of political possibilities', even dangerously bypassing the institutional (and constitutional) constraints, their 'obsession' for *power* should not be considered as a 'characterising' feature. They could simply be considered vote and office seekers. What I intend to stress, here, on the contrary, is that the *all* populisms conceive the 'conquest' of governmental offices as the *conditio sine qua non* to pursue their goals. Despite the processes of global integration – and, in fact, in reaction to them – the populists assign a central role to the nation-State structures. For them, it is unconceivable to implement real changes without directly assuming, through democratic means, governmental responsibilities, which represent the main strategy for giving the sovereignty back to the People. Relying on the classic distinction of Jean Blondel (1978) between 'mobilising'

[27] Nonetheless, the 'neoliberal populisms' of the Nineties, advancing a neoliberal policy agenda, constitute a challenge for the Laclau and Mouffe theories. According to the definition that I propose here, neoliberal populisms consisted in political projects led by some 'mavericks' promising to rapidly 'fix' the problems and to re-establish the *popular sovereignty* (stolen by some 'rent-seeking groups') *of the silent majority* of the society.

and ‘representing’ parties, the populist parties fully belong to the first category. They do not limit themselves to ‘representing’ the popular demands and/or aiming at influencing the government in its decision – such as, for instance, most of the Green parties. Instead, they *articulate and organize* these demands, aiming to *conquer* power in order to satisfy them.

This does not imply necessarily strategies of alliance building with other political forces. Such strategies depend on many contextual factors. We empirically observed significantly different political behaviours on the part of political parties categorised by the literature as ‘populist’. In some cases, they consistently refused any kind of political pact with other forces, in order to preserve their ‘purity’; while in other cases, they accepted to enter into governmental coalitions to ‘concretely do something’ to improve the living conditions of their People. But, in any case, populisms *always* identify the occupation of the nation-State structures as a necessary intermediate goal to implement concrete changes, and the national level as the true ‘battlefield’ where the struggle between ‘The people’ and the elite takes place.

One, only apparent, populist paradox is that populisms, while opening the spectrum of the concrete political options available, also tend to show a ‘pragmatic’ attitude in pursuing their goals, in order to demonstrate their ‘concreteness’ and the real possibility to achieve them. Instead of simply ‘talk’, they ‘do’, often in an immediate and spectacular (and short-sighted) form. In my view, the widely noticed connection (e.g., Barr, 2009; Ostiguy, 2014) between several populisms and a kind of ‘affective clientelism’ (Auyero, 2001, 2004; Pereyra and Svampa, 2003) lies here, in the necessity of demonstrating that populist leaders really ‘take care’ of their ‘people’, further contributing to the weakening of the rule-of-law. However, as Levitsky (2003) correctly argued, clientelism is neither an ‘exclusive’ feature of, nor a necessary condition for, populist phenomena.

The centrality of the nation-State for populist projects, as well as the populist pretension to represent a huge majority of the people, differentiate them from other 'millenarian', 'sectarian' or highly-ideologized movements that also display Manichean visions and look for a radical social and political change, but that tend to consider themselves as a 'vanguard' (or an 'illuminated minority') of the people (or of a specific class), and not 'The people' itself (in this sense, see also Pappas, 2012). Populism is also at odds with those movements and parties inspired by Marxist autonomism (Negri and Hardt, 2000; Holloway, 2002) and, in general, with all the 'counter-power' theories (see also Gerbaudo, 2017).

The fact that the populisms try to revive the nation-State does not imply that they necessarily are *nationalist* or *chauvinist.* For sure, the populist politicians often display 'nativist' traits, by using 'culturally bounded' (Ostiguy, 2009; 2017) signifiers, in order to demonstrate their 'belonging to The people', and foster such localist pride, as the 'stylistic' approach emphasizes (see the next section). Nonetheless, as the same author highlights, *'cultural nativism […] is about localist traits and cultural practices; it does not necessarily and per se entail specific policies, such as anti-immigration policies, nationalization of foreign-owned industries, anti-imperialist measures, and so forth'* (Ostiguy, 2013: 11-12). In fact, the presence of chauvinist traits depends on what 'People' means. For sure, if People is mainly understood as *ethnos*, chauvinist aspects will surely be present: however, chauvinism is neither a necessary or a sufficient condition for qualifying a political phenomenon as 'populist'. Instead, populisms put a strong emphasis on the concept of *sovereignty*, to which more specific adjectives (such as *national*, but also *popular*) can be added.

3.4 The Populist Understanding of the Concept of 'Representation': Accountability and Popular Sovereignty

Mudde's, Weyland's and Laclau's approaches discussed in the previous sections barely mention other features of the populist phenomena that are, in turn, arguably the most 'visible' ones. I am referring to the 'picturesque', expressive forms that populist leaders and supporters assume to highlight their antagonism to the 'élite' and the *status quo* (Canovan, 1999). In contrast, several scholars, considering such features much more than mere 'epiphenomena', understand populism as a 'political style' (Knight, 1998), i.e. the '*repertoires of performance that are used to create political relations*' (Moffitt and Tormey, 2013: 7). According to the Moffitt and Tormey, the populist style is characterized by three main features: the 'appeal to The people', the 'perception of a crisis, breakdown or a threat' to the very People (see also Taggart, 2000), and the use of 'bad manners' (first stressed by, and taken from, Ostiguy, 2009; 2017), a '*disregard for appropriate ways of acting in the political realm*' (Moffitt and Tormey, 2013: 12).

In my view, this approach has the merit of stressing the *performative* elements of the populist phenomena, by analysing how the repertoires used have a performative function for both the leader and his followers, thus contributing to build strong collective identities[28]. Moreover, the 'stylistic' approach problematizes the *relationship* between the leader and the 'people', stressing how the 'performances' of the former are not addressed to a 'passive' audience: instead, there is a 'feedback loop' between the leader and the followers, which keep a crucial influence on the former's actions (Moffitt and

[28] This approach is highly influenced by 'mediatisation' theories, and by considerations about the growing role that the mass media hold on the political reality, particularly in Moffitt's elaboration. By claiming that the political performances (and the media in general) are *constitutive* of this reality, this approach perhaps runs the risk of excessively downplaying the structural and institutional factors operating in the social, economic and political spheres.

Tormey, 2013: 9)[29]. According to Ostiguy (2017), populism is better understood as a '*form of relationship between the 'people' and a leader',* along two related axes or sub-dimensions. Populism is here defined and characterised by a socio-cultural dimension, referring to the 'plebeian' and often vulgar or 'culturally popular' expressive forms, functional to reinforce a frontier with the 'elites' and the 'privileged sectors', and a political-cultural one, which tends to reject the 'formalisms' of the procedural, institutional forms of managing the state, which would prevent 'normal' people from being effectively heard by the legitimate authority (Padoan, 2016).

The 'cultural-stylistic' approach triggers interesting reflexions about the *populist understanding* of the concept of *representation*. As emphasized by Pitkin (1967), this concept is semantically complex. 'Representation' can be intended a) in a *formalistic* way (someone is *authorized* to act for somebody else); b) in a *descriptive* way (the representatives must be *similar* to the represented); c) in a *symbolic* way (the representatives *symbolize* the represented, by 'subsuming' the main characteristics of the latters); d) in the sense of 'acting in behalf of', by pursuing through an explicit mandate the concrete interests of the represented. The complexity increases due to additional divisions between theories that stress alternatively the concepts of 'authority' or of 'accountability' as the proper terrain of 'representation'. 'Representing' someone implies to have the authority to do that; however, for the 'accountability' theorists, in the absence of some (meaningful) mechanism of accountability, there is no possible kind of representation.

As Ostiguy (2017: 82) argues, populism is *'a way to shorten the distances between the legitimate authority and the people'*. This goal may be pursued through very different strategies. It is not always true that populism simply suggests 'a correction [of democracy] based on enhanced accountability rather than increased participation' (Barr,

[29] For instance, the active and autonomous mobilization of the 'bases' is an important 'tool' to shape the decisions of the leader, even in competition against other 'factions' of the vast coalition supporting him, as it happened, for example, in the Argentine Peronist movement during Perón's exile (Laclau, 2005a).

2009): several populist projects pursue precisely the direct participation of their People in order to diminish the gap between the representatives and the represented. Nor it is always true that 'contemporary populism focuses primarily on the *out*put and not on the *in*put of democracy' (Mudde, 2004: 558): if it were so, some new, more 'traditional' politicians advancing different political proposals could exploit the discontent, without recurring to the 'populist toolkit'.

As the 'stylistic' approach stresses, an important feature of some populisms, and *particularly* of the 'neoliberal populisms' of the Nineties, is the *re-presentational* leader's function, in the sense that he 'presented again' (Arditi, 2007) 'The people' in the government, through presenting himself as 'one of them'. Berlusconi's rhetoric centred on his economic success (the 'self-made man'); the 'colourful' aspect and behaviour of leaders such as Menem and Bucaram are just a few examples of the *symbolic and descriptive representation* enacted by populist leaders.

The *descriptive representation* is also central in those populisms highlighting the presence, in their electoral lists, of 'common, ordinary people', in contraposition of the career politicians. Through these elements of both symbolic and descriptive representation, populisms can claim that they are better placed to 'pursue the interests of the people', by sharing a common feeling and belonging with the represented. Moreover, populists often enact several mechanisms of direct and/or participative democracy, and thus come closer to the introduction of an 'imperative mandate' and 'revocatory tools', therefore 'institutionalizing' the 'feedback loop' between the leader(s) and the people. Of course, it would be ingenuous to overlook the 'manipulative' and opportunistic features of these practices, as well as the plebiscitarian direction that populisms can and often do take. Nonetheless, populisms are not necessarily against 'representative democracy': they are however completely at odds with a *formalistic understanding of representation*. For populist leaders, parties, movements or voters, representative democracy must not be equated with the simple elections of their MPs every two, three

or more years, waiting for the next elections to express a judgement on their behaviours and eventually to punish them through the ballots.

By strictly equating *popular sovereignty* with *accountability*, populisms are likely to attack those governments perceived as 'distant' and 'technocratic' (as the EU institutions), often portraying them as 'servants' of some obscure economic elites or forces. Supranational institutions are also criticised for their poor electoral legitimacy and attacks on sovereignty. The populist focus on *vertical accountability* (O'Donnell, 1994) often leads to question the 'impartiality' of institutional checks and balances. Here, the plebiscitarian potential of populisms is fully displayed (Coppedge, 2005). Nonetheless, depending on the political context, it is also possible to observe populist movements *defending* these institutions, when the target of the populists is a 'corrupted political and economic elite' *unaccountable* to the Law.

3.5 Populism as a Participative Project: Electoral-Delegative versus Participative-Mobilising Populisms

The interpretation of populism I advance is therefore broader than these understandings of populism as 'more concerned with the *output* of democracy' (as Mudde [2004] does) or as 'a correction [of democracy] based on enhanced accountability rather than increased participation' (Barr, 2009). These understandings focus on the *outputs* promised or delivered by the populist phenomena. While this is not a problem *per se*, it is only indirectly related to the debate on *populism*, since it is more centred on the features of the policies implemented – and the consequences (usually assumed as dangerous) on the quality of democracy.

For sure, the poor delivery of concrete, material results on the part of liberal democratic regimes, for example concerning poverty reduction, has been often (and

rightly so) highlighted as leading to the emergence of populist occurences in Latin American countries (Bejarano et al., 2006). However, populisms do not just promise an 'easy solution' for these 'ills'. They also provide, first, a *diagnosis*, always centred on the way the 'elites' manage politics and on the insufficient influence of 'The people', thus calling for restoring *popular sovereignty* against privileged sectors.

Populisms, therefore, are highly attentive to improve the *input* side of the democratic processes as a necessary condition for changing the outputs. An alternative way of categorizing populism is to classify it according to the *prognoses* provided, i.e. to the specific way used for '*shortening the distances between the legitimate authority and the people'* (Ostiguy, 2017: 82).

To pursue this goal, various populisms advance different and often contradictory solutions. The legitimate authorities may be distant from the People because of the 'privileges' they enjoy thanks to their socioeconomic condition; because of their closeness to economic elites which have a disproportionate influence on the policy-making process; because they belong to a 'caste' more interested in the defence of their own 'privileges' than to offer solutions; or because the government has its hands tied by the multiple institutional 'checks and balances' (often 'occupied' by some, obscure 'elites') preventing it from performing an efficacious activity.

One 'solution' could lie in *delegating* to a leader the management of the State and in limiting (and attacking) the influence of the institutional 'checks and balances'. This leader, consequently, would be in a position to embody the 'popular', 'general will', against the multiple 'inertial' points of resistance of the sectors favouring the *status quo*. Typically, the leader will establish direct, charismatic linkages with her/his People, and will feel legitimized to exert authority by the 'power of numbers' and by his/her claims to be 'one of the People'.

In contrast to a purely authoritarian solution, the *electoral-delegative populisms* tend to multiply the instances of electoral legitimacy of its power, for example through

calling popular referenda to ‘give the Voice to the People’ (and, admittedly, to ‘avoid the blame’ for taking unpopular measures). At the same time, because of her/his pretension to ‘embody the popular will’, the leader will flaunt a ‘decisionist’ style to deal with the problems s/he is supposed to fix, dismissing the institutions devoted to ‘horizontal accountability’.

This *electoral and delegative populism* is well described by scholars such as Mudde, Weyland (as ‘direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from unorganized numbers’) and Pappas (which goes further by calling it ‘democratic illiberalism’). Several historical political phenomena can be included in this typology, such as the ‘neopopulisms’ of the Nineties in Latin America, the Western European populist right, and the ongoing presidency of Donald Trump. In all of these political experiences, the leader *embodies*, more than represents, her/his People, who belong to a socially constructed ‘heartland’ (Taggart, 2000), whether typically oppressed by high taxation, menaced by immigrant people – who supposedly put in perils the People’ rights – and which is not represented by other structures of interest representation, such as the unions, the alleged defenders of corporatist rights in detriment of the regular ‘working People’. In this sense, I prefer identifying the ‘privileged sectors’, and not just the ‘elites’, as the enemies used as contrast by the populists. According to the storytelling of leaders such as Berlusconi or Menem, the problems of the country relied on the ‘overprotection’ enjoyed by some sectors, which led to excessive public expenditure, high unemployment or recurrent hyperinflations. According to the radical right rhetoric, the cosmopolitan elites ‘overprotect’ the migrant people, who enjoy a ‘privileged’ access to the welfare resources in detriment of the natives (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013).

It would be a mistake to equate the *electoral-delegative* populisms with the exclusionary, right-wing ones. Latin America saw the rise of clearly electoral-delegative left-wing leaders such as Chávez and his *Bolivarian Revolution* and of Correa and his *Citizen Revolution*. The technocratic features of Correa’s governments have been widely

noticed (Becker, 2013; Collins, 2014), as well as the difficult relationship between Correa and the lively Ecuadorean indigenous social movements. The case of Chavism is more complex. One would be hard-pressed to consider the *emergence* of Chavism as a 'participative' experience (see Chapter 8). As Roberts (2007) noticed, the strong popular mobilization and organization fostered by Chávez came in a second moment, and responded to the necessity of building a 'popular power' to counterbalance the economic and institutional resources of the Venezuelan 'old order' aiming at stopping the Bolivarian project. Nevertheless, even since the very beginning of his first electoral campaign, Chávez flaunted a strongly 'participative' rhetoric, which soon was reflected in the new Constitution that he promulgated once in power and in the spread of Bolivarian Circles (see Chapter 8).

Instead of delegating political decisions to a 'strong leader', many populisms, in contrast, advance quite different proposals to correct the inadequacies of existing representative democracies. These populisms complain about the lack of control by 'The people' of their representatives/delegates in public offices. The solution consists in direct occupation of public institutions by 'The people', thus leading to its mobilization ('put into motion', as defined by Roberts [2006]) and furthering its direct involvement in political decisions. I define this populist subtype as *participative-mobilising populism.*

Such diagnosis and prognosis often lead participative-mobilising populisms to articulate and foster a certain dissatisfaction against 'political parties'. In that sub-type, 'mainstream' political parties are viewed as self-referential organizations that do not provide a satisfactory channel for the participation of the citizens in the political realm because of their gradual 'cartelization', leading to the abandonment of the old mass party model (Duverger, 1954) and of their function of promoting the political socialization of the masses. The participative-mobilising populist projects, as I will detail in the next section, call for a so-called 'genuine popular participation' in politics, while struggling for the re-appropriation of the public institutions. They claim the necessity of a strong popular mobilization to oppose the 'elites'. Far from exhausting

their battle in the electoral arena, participative-mobilising populisms call for a 'popular resurrection' to 'decide from below' and to 'control the institutions'.

This is not to deny the function carried on by the leaders of populist movements and parties. Nonetheless, the same leader's actions can be 'shaped from below', thanks to the mobilization of the followers or of particular sectors forming part of the heterogeneous coalition built by her/him. The leader, thus, acts in this sub-category as a 'decider of last resort' between the different factions within the movement: her/his most important function is to prevent the internal divisions and struggles that would translate into fatal internal conflicts. The very 'mediating' function assigns considerable power to the leader.

At the same time, the *participative-mobilizing populist subtype* often shows top-down, even 'militarised' forms of popular mobilizations, requiring discipline and dedication to the Cause and leading towards potentially totalitarian directions. The Bolivarian Circles and their involvement in the anti-poverty programs known as *Missions* in *Chavista* populism represent a well-known example (Hawkins, 2009). Nonetheless, in several other populisms (and even in Chavism), certain (and sometimes very strong) forms of spontaneous consolidation of grass-roots movements emerge. These grassroots can display poor horizontal and vertical coordination, particularly during the inception phase of a populist movement, and, in fact, this 'institutional disorder' is functional to a rapid diffusion of the movement. The usually lesser costs to join the movement can also attract more militants than the 'traditional' political parties, where the barriers to entry and the internal stratifications and hierarchies are stronger[30].

[30] The *participative-mobilising populist subtype* must not be confused with Weyland's definition of *basism* (1995; see also Sereni, 2014). According to Weyland, 'basism' is a *political model* identifying in the *autonomous mobilization of excluded sectors* the best way to guarantee them the incorporation in the polity domain. The author differentiates *basism* from *populism*, where such incorporation occurs through the initiative of a leader, who establishes an *unmediated* and 'manipulative' connection with his 'People'. In participative-mobilising populisms, we observe the *coexistence* (which Weyland tends to deny) of a strong and unquestionable leadership with highly organised and mobilised bases. Such mobilization is often *simultaneously* 'from above' and 'from below': while the bases are capable of displaying strong

The dichotomy between what I define *electoral-delegative* and *participative-mobilising* populisms must be understood as a continuum. While each phenomenon is closer to one of these poles, it is possible to observe some *electoral-delegative populisms* relying on the mobilising tools typical of the other populist subtype; and, *vice versa*, to observe *participative-mobilising populisms* developing a certain centralization of the power, allowing the leader to 'do the right things' in order to pursue the People's interests. The *electoral-delegative* populisms mainly focus on *concretely delivering* to the People what it 'deserves', relying on its *mobilization* as a mere *tactic*, to be used when necessary. In contrast, the *participative-mobilising* populisms put a strong emphasis on the *direct occupation* of the public institution by the People, and tend to conceive strong leadership as a *tactical resource*, necessary to pursue the goals of the movement.

3.6 Dealing with the Protesters: The Organizational Characteristics of Antineoliberal Populist Parties

The task, now, is to understand *how concretely* an 'antineoliberal populist project' works, that is, *how concretely* it adapts to the socio-political environment shaped by the neoliberal crisis and to the social mobilizations (in their different forms) in reaction to the crisis. In the 'populist tool kit', we can find several characteristics that are clearly well suited to become highly relevant and spread in the contexts on which this dissertation focuses. Some of these characteristics are 'programmatic' (the centrality of the national dimension and of the nation-State structures, and the promise of incorporating 'excluded sectors' through expansive economic platforms and/or

autonomy, at the same time they recognise a quite high autonomy to the leadership, which guarantees a certain coherence and cohesiveness to the project and can lead to a certain 'manipulation' of the bases (see Section 3.6).

universalist social policies) and 'ideological-discursive' (the polarizing *and* unifying frontier between a 'People' and the 'privileged sectors'). Nonetheless, in a socio-political scenario marked by popular discontent and mobilizations, a 'political project' to be successful must also develop strong *environmental linkages* with the protesters and adapts its political platform to the demands of social change and participation that the movements advanced (Tsakatika and Lisi, 2013). The internal organization of a populist project represents an important asset to deal with the 'environment'.

According to the classic Panebianco's organizational analysis (1982), every political party develops its own strategy for 'dominating' *or* 'adapting' to the socio-political 'environment'. This 'environment' is a '*metaphor standing for a plurality of 'environments', of 'arenas' in which each organization simultaneously acts; such arenas are distinct but interdependent*' (Panebianco, 1982: 48, my translation). The same author adds that '*in political science, there is a tendency of considering only the electoral arena as the 'relevant arena' for the parties. [However], the electoral arena is just one of the 'environments' that are relevant for a party*' (*Ibidem*, my translation). Of course, in a context marked by an economic crisis that fuelled social reactions influencing the public debate, these 'reactions' decisively shape the 'political environment' that the parties must 'dominate' or 'adapt to'. As Goldstone (2003: 2) argued, the boundary between institutionalized and non-institutionalised politics has become 'fuzzy and permeable', particularly during a political phase characterised by high social mobilization.

The choice between a 'dominating' and 'adaptive' strategy is one of the classic dilemmas faced by a political organization, along with the dilemma between relying mainly on *collective* or *selective* incentives for expanding and retaining membership[31], or the dilemma between granting a bigger or smaller *room of manoeuvre* to its leadership (Panebianco, 1982: 23-56). A political organization must deal with these dilemmas from its origins; the choices it makes during its genesis decisively shapes the

[31] This latter dilemma resembles the choice between establishing mainly *programmatic* or *clientelistic/particularistic* linkages with the party's constituencies (Kitschelt, 2000).

following process of partisan *institutionalization* (Panebianco, 1982: 104). Going back to my framework, in some cases an existing party was able to adapt to the socio-political environment triggered by the popular mobilizations, while in other cases a new organization was created to lead a populist project. To translate this in Panebianco's terminology, the antineoliberal populist projects showed their ability to both *dominate* and *adapt to* the environment through the actual coexistence of *centralising (top-down) and decentralising (participative)* features in the populist phenomena, and specifically in the *participative-mobilising* ones.

The relationship between populism and party organization is an underresearched topic. Weyland (2001) makes the *lack of organization and institutionalization* of the populist parties and movements two definitional features of his concept of populism. Nonetheless, this definition clashes with the historical experience of Latin American 'classic populisms' (see section 3.7.1; Collier and Collier, 1991; Ostiguy, 2014)[32]. Roberts (2006) elaborated a typology of Latin American populisms according to their organization, through two dimensions: the (high or low) strength of the previously existing 'civil society organizations' and of the 'partisan structure' devoted to mobilizing the People. We thus obtain a two by two typology of: 'organic' populism (relying on both strong partisan and civil society organizations, in order to mobilize the People); 'labour populism' (mainly relying on civil society organizations, and, in particular, the union movement, in the case of the 'classic populisms'); 'partisan populism' (relying on a typical mass-party structure); and 'electoral populism', which would correspond to Weyland's definition.

Roberts argued that a strong organizational density of the populist parties becomes necessary – and thus favoured – when the populist project aims to challenge

[32] Nearly all the most important, strongly organized, and long-lasting mass political parties in the region – such as the Peruvian APRA, the Bolivian MNR, the Argentine Peronism or the Mexican PRI - represent the partisan legacy of the 'classic populism' era.

the structural inequalities of the society. In this sense, political organization is seen as the main 'weapon of the weak': *a 'means of collective empowerment, particularly for working and lower class groups. It is only through organization that the many with few resources can leverage their weight in numbers as a countervailing power to the concentrated economic or institutional resources of elite groups'* (Roberts, 2006: 136). With this typology, Roberts can account for the weak organizational density of the neoliberal populist parties of the Nineties in Latin America – as well as of older populist experiences such as the Ecuadorean *velasquismo* – and for the *later* consolidation of the highly organised *Chavistas* grass-roots organizations, conceived as a 'counter-power' to the Venezuelan elites.

Nonetheless, this typology focuses on the incorporation potential of populist projects by portraying different top-down linkage strategies, thus overlooking the capacity of populisms to *adapt* to the environments by subsuming or allying with *existing* movements (in this sense, also Aslanidis, 2017). Roberts has the merit of analysing the interplay between the social organizations and the partisan structures, although he conceived the formers as mere ancillary organizations. While useful to capture the *mobilising* features of some populist phenomena, the typology tends to overlook their *participative* aspects and their *adaptive* and *articulating* capacity.

Although Weyland did not include in his definition the controversial concept of *charisma*, his conceptualization of populist projects shares several features with the *charismatic parties* described by Panebianco (1982: ch .8). Panebianco retook the classic definition of charisma by Weber (1968), thus understanding it as a source of legitimacy alternative to the 'legalistic' and 'traditional' ones. An organization based on *charismatic power* relies on a personalistic relationship between the 'leader' and the 'followers' (Panebianco, 1982: 264), escaping from the 'predictability' and the 'stability' typical of the organizations based on the other sources of legitimacy identified by Weber. The 'extraordinary' origins of a charismatic party would complicate (and even make impossible) the partisan *institutionalization*, i.e. 'the process by which the

organization incorporates the goals and the values of the founders' (Panebianco, 1982: 111).

Panebianco identified further common traits of *charismatic parties*. The first is the existence of a *cohesive elite* channelling the unquestionable *volonté* of the leader. The competition within the party elite for higher offices does not involve the highest position; the most important criteria for achieving positions of higher responsibility is the degree of 'loyalty' and 'devotion' to the leader, who holds the final decision on practically all internal matters. The charismatic party is thus a *centralised and anti-bureaucratic organization*, in which the internal rules – if existing – are always subjected to the interpretation of the leader. A crucial difference between Weyland's populist parties and Panebianco's charismatic parties is that, according to the latter, the charismatic party is often located *'in the middle of a galaxy formed by groups and organizations, whose boundaries are ill-defined, and which surrounds the party and the leader. Thus, the conflicts below the leaders are often inter-organizational struggles between the leaders of the formally autonomous organizations that form the 'movement''* (1982: 269, my translation). Ostiguy's theory of populism (2014; 2017) also highlights the anti-bureaucratic, exception-prone and personalistic decision-making process of populist parties, as well as the *movimientista* functioning of the populist experiences.

In fact, the insights of Panebianco about the *inter-organizational struggles* that often occur within the 'populist camp' are easily extendible to many Latin American populisms, such as the Bolivian MAS-IPSP (Chapter 4) and Peronism since its very origins. It must be noticed that the 'ill-defined boundaries' between the party and the 'surrounding' organizations, as well as the autonomy enjoyed by the latters, are functional to a rapid and strong expansion and rootedness of the 'populist project', particularly in its early phase, as they reduce the barriers for joining the movement. At the same time, these features complicate the task of reducing the 'organizational disorder' so typical of those populist projects that relies, since their inception, on the

mobilization of 'The people'. When Panebianco stressed the 'movementist' feature of the charismatic parties, he had in mind the plethora of organizations – highly autonomous during the Twenties - surrounding the Nazi party. *In organizational terms*, there are evident formal similarities between the internal composition of the Nazi movement and many participative-mobilising populisms. In both cases, the boundaries between the organizations belonging to the movement and the 'electoral instrument' (i.e., the party) are blurred. We can also often observe a process that leads to the introduction of a sort of 'discipline', in order to centralise power, improve 'efficiency' and reduce 'organizational disorder'. Moreover, also in the participative-mobilising populisms we can also often notice a kind of internal careerism based on the 'devotion' to the leader and/or on the ability of some faction to move the leader towards its own political line, thus gaining relevance in the internal organogram.

Nonetheless, there is a *key difference*: in the participative-mobilising populisms, the *disorganization*, particularly at the periphery, becomes an *asset*, while in Panebianco's charismatic parties, that disorganization at the periphery is something to be reduced and, at the end, suppressed. While in the latters the main collective incentive for joining the movement is a common 'faith in the leader', in the formers it is represented by the possibility of 'contributing and taking part to the movement itself', by 'forming part of a collective history' in which everyone can participate. Thus, populisms are often *organized and disorganized*, particularly at the peripheral levels, thus easing the process of affiliation and expansion, as well as the adaptation of the movement to the environment, since many concrete internal decisions are taken at the local level. The ideological vagueness that characterise the populist projects furthermore allows the members to have their own, idiosyncratic opinion about the movement's goals and values, and even about what the movement really *is*.

In turn, there are some affinities between the institutionalization process of Panebianco's charismatic parties and some *electoral-delegative populisms*. Panebianco, in his seminal study, hypothesized that a charismatic party is generally unlikely to

survive its leader: if it occurs, the party will likely become a *strongly institutionalised party*, in terms both of *centralization and internal coherence*[33]. This is precisely what Heinisch and Mazzoleni (2016) find in their analysis of European populist radical right parties: such parties '*converge on a highly articulated organization close to the mass party legacy*' (Heinisch and Mazzoleni, 2016: 241); '*it is often precisely the organizational dimension through which the leadership is able to exercise control over the party*.' (Heinisch and Mazzoleni, 2016: 228). Nonetheless, the centrality of the leadership and the relative absence, in this kind of populisms, of a 'participative ideology', precludes the development of both meaningful bottom-up influences and a certain partisan decentralization. In contrast to the participative-mobilising populisms, there is '*no evidence that [the populist right-wing] parties engage in radically new forms of organization or seek fundamentally novel means of connecting with their membership*' (Heinisch and Mazzoleni, 2016: 238).

[33] Panebianco added that the evolution of a charismatic party into a poorly institutionalized party is highly unlikely, with a possible exception, i.e. if the party soon achieved, during its 'genetic' phase, governmental posts. In such a case, it would be possible to have a certain autonomy of the periphery, due to the need of relying on a co-optative strategy of local leaders to 'fill' the public offices and to increase the electoral strength of the party in sub-national elections, also through the selective distribution of the available public resources. In my opinion, this evolution perfectly applies to the case of Forza Italia, Berlusconi's personal party, since 1998 (Ignazi, 2008).

3.7 The Peoples of Populisms. Anti-Neoliberal Populisms in Historical Perspective

The last section of this chapter puts the rise of anti-neoliberal populisms in historical perspective. The aim is to differentiate the 'anti-neoliberal populist wave' in both continents from other forms of populisms that responded to very different social, political and historical context. A goal of this dissertation is to stress the differences *within* the anti-neoliberal populist category. However, it is also necessary to separate and define this category from other populist experiences. A, necessarily brief, historical overview of the different populist orientations is useful for analytical purposes, as it contributes to a better understanding of the peculiarities, in terms of organization and social bases, that led to the emergence of the sub-type of populism analysed in this research.

Populist phenomena are about different kinds of 'People'. Scholars have repeatedly attempted to describe and explain the 'populist social bases'. Due to the 'chameleonic' (Taggart, 2000) character of populism, it is not surprising that both theoretical and empirical studies provide mixed results. Recently, Rooduijn (2017), comparing contemporaneous different (both right and left-wing) populist parties and their electorates across Western Europe, has concluded that *''the' populist voter does not exist'*, although the social compositions of the voters of populist parties belonging to the same 'subtype' (in this case, left-wing or right-wing populisms) show some similarities. As I summarise in Table 3.2, I argue that it is necessary to differentiate between several populist subtypes (and populist 'waves') to shed light on this topic, in an historical overview covering both Western Europe and Latin America.

Table 3.2 Varieties of 'Populist Waves' in Latin America and Western Europe (1930-onward).

POPULIST WAVE	EXAMPLES	HISTORICAL CONTEXT	TYPICAL SOCIAL BASES	MOST LIKELY ORGANIZATION	POPULIST SUBTYPE
Classic Populism	Perón's Peronism, Cárdenas' PRI (Mexico), APRA (Peru), MNR (Bolivia [1952]), AD (Venezuela), Papandreou's PASOK (Greece)	Developing Countries breaking away from oligarchic (at times liberal) regimes	Organised Working-Class, sometimes Peasants. Unorganized support of the poor.	Labour-Based, Mass Party	Electoral-Delegative. Organised constituencies mobilised from above, but with active unions and corporative sectorial organizations.
Neoliberal Populism	50s: Uomo Qualunque (Italy), Poujadisme (France). 70s: Progress Party (Denmark, Norway); 90s: Menemism (Argentina), Collor (Brazil), Fujimorism (Peru), Berlusconism (Italy)	Countries affected by high public debt, hyperinflation or high levels of taxation	Popular sectors suffering from hyperinflation, petty-bourgeoisie attracted by anti-taxes reforms	Personalist or Clientelistic Electoral Machine	Electoral-Delegative
Radical Right-Wing Populism	Haider's FPOe (Austria), Vlaams Belang (belgium), PVV (Dutch), National Front (France), contemporary Northern League (Italy), UDC (Switzerland), UKIP (UK)	Generally affluent societies experiencing large immigration process	"National" working-class and petty bourgeoisie attracted by welfare chauvinism and cultural conservativism	Mass Party	Electoral-Delegative. Individual members mobilised from above
Anti-Neoliberal Populism	Chavism (Venezuela), Kirchnerism (Argentina), MAS-IPSP (Bolivia), Correism (Ecuador), Podemos (Spain), Syriza (Greece), Five Star Movement (Italy)	Societies experiencing social costs of drastic neo-liberal / austerity measures (in a structural context of dualized	Sectors excluded from welfare regimes (unemployed, precarious workers) and affected by privatizations, austerity and cuts in social spending, civil society mobilised against the above. Varying relationship with organised labour	Charismatic Party (Panebianco). Social movements organizations.	The more organised its constituencies, the closer to Participative-Mobilising Populism

Source: Author's Elaboration.

3.7.1 The 'Classic Populisms'

Scholars following the 'dependency' theories, such as Cardoso and Faletto (1969) and O'Donnell (1973), saw in the populist regimes that emerged throughout Latin America – and particularly in Mexico, Argentina and Brazil – the 'historical agents' for a 'dependent development' through an ISI model, benefitting both the national bourgeoisie and the blue-collar workers, in detriment of the rural oligarchies that ruled for decades through exclusionary regimes: thus, these Latin American populist regimes represented the vehicle for incorporating the industrial working-class into the political regimes (Collier and Collier, 1991). The 'classic populisms' were inspired by a nationalist ideology and implemented protectionist policies. They also developed the 'corporatist' and segmented welfare states typical of the region, through the strengthening and co-optation of the *trade union movements*, which represented the *organizational and electoral 'backbone'* of those populisms in countries as diverse as Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Venezuela and (to a lesser degree) Peru.

In contrast to Marxist tendencies on the Left, the 'populist-ISI' model contributed to build a 'national capitalism', a sort of 'Latin American social pact'. The 'classic populisms', in this sense, represented the functional substitutes of the Social-Democratic parties and governments during the Golden Age of Western European capitalism. The populist strategy was much more effective than the Europeanist class-based rhetoric mainly because of the smaller size of the industrial sectors and of the enormous social heterogeneity and anomie among the urban *lumpenproletariat*,

composed by politically unsocialized rural migrants in search of *social and political integration and identity*. Thus, the 'classic populisms' were also understood as a by-product of the dramatic social changes faced by the mass of workers experiencing the transition from traditional to industrial society (Germani, 1965; Di Tella, 1965).

3.7.2 The Neoliberal Populisms

In Latin America, the 'neopopulists' (i.e., neoliberal populists) promised the final solution to the macroeconomic disequilibria inherited by the 'lost decade' of the Eighties, looking for an absolute, delegative (O'Donnell, 1994) mandate to 'fix' their countries and bypass the resistance of rent-seeking groups that allegedly were slowing the economic recovery[34]. New populist leaders, often political 'mavericks', attracted huge support among the popular sectors through a mixture of programmatic (Baker, 2009), charismatic and clientelistic linkages. Differently from the 'classic populists', in organizational terms they relied on personalist parties (Weyland, 2001) or on clientelistic machines (Levitsky, 2003), bypassing or weakening the unions.

In Europe, the 'quintessence' of neopopulism was embodied by Silvio Berlusconi, who made of the Italian petty bourgeoisie his core constituency, although the electorate of his personalist party (Calise, 2000) *Forza Italia* was quite heterogeneous. The petty bourgeoisie also formed the core-constituency of the earlier, main populist experiences in Western Europe after the end of the Second World War: the Italian *qualunquismo* and the French *poujadisme* (whose official name was *Union*

[34] Failed attempts to solve the public debt crisis – itself a product of the trade and financial openness pursued by the bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes – through the defence of the old ISI model or through 'heterodox' measures were made in Bolivia (1982-1985), in Peru, during the first Alan García's term (1985-1990), or in Argentina, during Alfonsín's presidency (1983-1989). All these attempts ended in dramatic hyperinflationary crises.

for the Defense of Tradesmen and Artisans) in the Fifties, and of the 'New Right' that emerged in Denmark and Norway during the Seventies. In all of these cases, anti-tax stances represented their main claims (Mastropaolo, 2005). Mudde, in his valuable study on the European populist radical rights (2008) also included the Dutch Pim Fortujin List among the neoliberal populisms.

3.7.3 Radical Right-Wing Populisms

The party family that, for a long time, has been associated (and even equated) with the concept of populism in Europe has been the radical right. Its main representatives have been the Austrian FPOE, the Italian Northern League, the Belgian Vlaams Blok and Vlaams Belang, and the French Front National, among others. According to Mudde (2008), European populist radical right is characterised by 'core attributes' such as *nationalism, xenophobia,* and *authoritarianism*. 'The people' built and represented by the Latin American classical (and also neoliberal) populisms was the *plebs* (i.e. the poorest strata), while the European 'neopopulisms' pretended to be the voice of a 'silent majority' oppressed by high taxation. The populist radical right parties and leaders, in turn, pretend to be the 'true defenders' of the *ethnos*, flaunting a nativist, xenophobic stance against ethnic minorities and new immigrants. The parties belonging to this latter family have their electoral strongholds in the petty bourgeoisie and the blue-collar workers fearing the social and economic consequences of the globalization processes (Norris, 2005: 140). According to several scholars (e.g., Betz, 1994; Kitschelt and McGann, 1995), Social Democratic and Leftist parties were not able or willing to reassure and attend these strata, preferring to consolidate their support among the middle-class salariat and professional workers and focusing on the libertarian-

authoritarian dimension to differentiate themselves from generally right-wing parties, as a way to increase their electorate.

The economic agenda advanced by the populist radical right parties is characterised, in contrast to neopopulisms, by an (at best) 'opportunistic' embracement of neoliberalism. Surely, they propose lowering taxes – particularly for small and medium enterprises and the petty bourgeoisie in general - and they sometimes advance an anti-statist agenda, but the true core of their economic platforms is *welfare chauvinism*[35]. Nevertheless, Mudde argues that economics is *not* the main issue characterising the platforms of these parties, which mainly focus on 'cultural' issues (see also Hausermann and Kriesi, 2015). Populist radical right parties seem more able to attract those *insiders* fearful of losing the protection provided by their generous welfare states, *and* by those well-to-do sectors most concerned with high tax burdens.

3.7.4 Anti-Neoliberal Populisms

It is clear that the antineoliberal populisms analysed in this dissertation markedly depart from the xenophobic stances so evident in the European populist radical right. The 'Peoples' are articulated by mobilising very different cleavages than the 'native'-'non-native' one. As I argued in the previous chapters, when the union-party hubs (Handlin and Collier, 2008) lose their legitimacy as 'leading actors' capable of articulating the demands of the popular sectors, the 'contentious cycle' triggered by a socioeconomic crisis became dominated by social movements and organizations advancing quite different demands. While in some cases these movements were able to

[35] This consists in the defence of the generous welfare provisions existing in the European continent and, at the same time, the exclusion of the non-natives from their benefits (Mudde, 2008: 130-132). Populist radical right parties thus consider the struggle for welfare provisions as a zero-sum game, in a situation of limited resources, between the *ethnos* and the foreigners.

autonomously unify these demands under a common struggle and to establish strong alliances (or ‘meganetworks’: Goldstone, 2011) between themselves, in other cases the popular mobilizations remained much more fragmented. In both cases, the enormous heterogeneity of the demands and of the social sectors mobilised required new political responses, able to bring the demands into the institutions and coordinate the heterogeneous (in organizational and sociological terms) protests. Anti-neoliberal populist projects were able to offer to protesters and to 'unheard' constituencies a unifying political platform; alternative economic narratives; new and concrete solutions to deal with the crisis of neoliberalism; and new channels of political *representation and participation*, with the specific aim of *taking power at the nation-State level*.

Because austerity measures were implemented at the national level, but under evident foreign pressures, usually from international financial and/or supranational institutions, framing the protests as a form of 'anti-colonial' or anti-imperialist resistance (Filc, 2015) proved to be quite resonant amongst the protesters. This fact led to the rescue of a (sometimes *ethnic*) *nationalistic* discourse by several anti-neoliberal populisms (the Bolivian MAS, Venezuelan Chavism, Argentine Kirchnerism, the Greek Syriza and even the Spanish Podemos), but with quite different meanings from the xenophobic appeals of right-wing populisms. As it has been stressed recently (Filc, 2015; Stavrakakis and Siomos, 2016), the Latin American Andean ethno-populisms (De La Madrid, 2008) and Podemos and Syriza rescued a nationalistic (or, in the case of Podemos, 'patriotic') discourse in order to attack the ‘colonial relationship’ between their countries and the US or the EU (and Germany in particular). In the Bolivian case, the struggle against ‘colonialism’ was two-fold, as it was addressed against the Bolivian white (*q’aras*) political and economic elites *and* against the US imperialism, although the latter clearly prevailed, allowing to build broader alliances. In the Spanish case, Podemos has rescued the concept of ‘plurinationalism’ to appeal to the nationalistic regional identities, calling for their democratic self-determination. The old Latin American leftist critic of imperialism *and colonialism* – quite self-evident in Chavist and

Kirchnerist political discourses – has been able to adapt and expand among the new Southern European populisms.

Crucially, in both regions, the representational failures of the 'union-party hubs', the segmented characteristics of their welfare regimes, and the increase in the size of *outsider* sectors, offered to antineoliberal populist projects the conditions for presenting themselves as the most appropriate political representative of those sectors, thus favouring their over-representation within the populist electorate. As the case studies will show, this occurred particularly in *leader-initiated* populisms, which since the beginning developed an antagonistic relationship with the union-party hubs and which more clearly politicised the insider-outsider divide. Such populisms practised an 'issue-owning' strategy towards the demands of the fragmented organised 'micro-publics' (Spanakos, 2011), and at the same time appealed to unorganised outsiders through either programmatic and charismatic linkages to incorporate them. From such a centrality of *unmediated* forms to appeal to the outsiders, comes the tendency of leader-initiated populisms to display more 'electoral-delegative', plebiscitarian characteristics than in the other subtypes. In general, the greater the autonomous organizational capacity of the movements, the closer the antineoliberal populist party to the participative-mobilising pole and the stronger is the influence of the movements within the party.

At least at the discursive level, the antineoliberal populist projects are usually more skewed towards a socioeconomic specification of their Peoples. While in Latin America these Peoples flaunted their ‘plebeian’ character and struggled for a new political incorporation of the poorest strata (Rossi, 2015), in Southern Europe they claimed to represent ‘the 99% against the 1%’, stressing its majoritarian and deprived condition (Gerbaudo, 2017). However, it must be reminded that the reaction against the inadequate old structures of political intermediation have made widespread – particularly in Italy and Spain - an idea of ‘The people’ closer to the concept of *demos*, i.e. of an ‘informed citizenship’ aiming at taking possession of the public institutions and at actively being involved in political activities. In Latin America, the incorporation of

‘The people’ into the polity domain was achieved more through the intermediation of the popular social movements and organizations, than on an individual basis. The ideas of *plebs*, sometimes linked to *ethnos*, two collective concepts intended in a communitarian and anti-imperialist way, clearly prevailed. In a sociological perspective, Southern European *citizenism* seems more able to attract those disillusioned middle-class sectors ‘rediscovering’ the political sphere than the Latin American (*plebeian*) *populism*, politically sustained by the poorest sectors. The case-studies chapters will provide empirical confirmation for these more ‘sociological’ claims.

Chapter 4. Bolivia: Movement-Based Populism in Power

4.1 Introduction

In December 2005, Evo Morales, a former *cocalero* (coca leaf grower) from the tropical region of Chapare, obtained the 54% of the popular votes in the general elections and became the first indigenous President of Bolivia. For the first time since the transition back to democracy in 1982, a presidential candidate reached the absolute majority of the votes. Morales and his Vicepresident, the former *guerrillero* Álvaro García Linera, ran as candidates of the MAS-IPSP (*Movimiento al Socialismo – Instrumento Político para la Soberanía de los Pueblos;* 'Movement Towards Socialism – Political Instrument for the Peoples' Sovereignty'). MAS-IPSP's origins remounted to 1995, when several peasant and indigenous organizations founded the ASP (*Asamblea por la Soberanía de los Pueblos* - 'Assembly for the Sovereignty of the Peoples'). Nobody could expect that this new and peculiar political 'party', a clear instance of *movement-based populist political project*, would have been able ten years later to become the Bolivian hegemonic party.

This chapter analyses the rise, the consolidation and the internal functioning of the MAS-IPSP through the lens provided by the theoretical framework described in Chapter 2. In section 4.2, I focus on the causally relevant 'critical antecedents'. I stress the adoption of a neoliberal discourse by all the Bolivian mainstream parties, which limited their credibility as eventual proponents of an alternative model. At the same time, I highlight the factors explaining the inability of the COB (the Bolivian peak union confederation) to act as a leading actor in the long and violent protest cycle triggered by the crisis and popular discontent. In particular, I put in evidence: a) the loss of structural power suffered by the COB as a consequence of the deep changes occurred in Bolivia

during the neoliberal era; b) the resilient links between some *cobistas* leaders and the older parties c) the unwillingness of the salaried sectors dominating the COB to give more influence to powerful *outsider*, peasant organizations, which finally built 'their own Political Instrument' and relegated the COB into a secondary position.

In section 4.3, I focus on the impressive capacity of alliance building by the social movements animating the protests against neoliberal governments. I describe the powerful, inclusive frames aggregating the different movements and social sectors in their struggles. The main frame undoubtedly was the 'restoration of the Sovereignty of the People', albeit interpreted in very different forms by different movements. The unity of the movements was assured until *universalist demands* (such as the recuperation of the control over natural resources and the demand for a Constituent Assembly) prevented the *fragmentation* of the mobilizations along more *particularistic* claims.

Restoring the 'Sovereignty of the People' was since the beginning the 'mission' of the MAS-IPSP, whose origins, organization and early strategies form the topic of section 4.4. I describe the social and ideological roots of this party, whose birth predated the 'critical juncture' (i.e., the economic and political crisis of the Bolivian neoliberal era) and facilitated the task of alliance building that brought the antineoliberal struggle to its victory. I stress how the MAS-IPSP, despite its inclusive indigenous rhetoric, cannot be considered an *indigenist* party. Instead, it represents a mixture of a 'charismatic' and a (*peasant*) 'movement-based' party, in which since the beginning, a *populist* discourse (according to the definition I proposed in Chapter 3) clearly emerged: the 'restoration of the Sovereignty' was not separable from the immediate goal of 'conquering the State'. Nevertheless, the task of alliance building, together with electoral reasons, convinced the peasant movements to expand the coalition towards other social actors and sectors, whose sectorial interests proved often to be mutually incompatible.

Section 4.5 focuses on the governmental experience of the MAS-IPSP. This section is central for at least two reasons. First, it further shows the importance of the inclusive coalitional strategy of the MAS-IPSP, not only for facilitating its first electoral victory, but also for defending its government from the attacks of the political and economic Right during the first Morales' term. Second, once the MAS-IPSP consolidated its control, the underground tensions *within* the coalition finally emerged, thus triggering several 'inter-organizational struggles', typical of *participative-mobilising populisms*. The analysis discloses the instrumental support of some social actors to the governmental coalition and the selective incentives used by the government to prevent further divisions; the increasing autonomy of the partisan elite and the role of Morales as 'decider of last resort'; the rupture between the ruling party and some indigenous movements; and the subordinated position assumed by the main 'insider' organization, the COB.

In the sixth section, a quantitative analysis based on LAPOP survey data describes the sociological characteristics of the *masistas* voters and highlights the 'plebeian' features of the core-constituencies of the MAS-IPSP. A brief concluding section summarizes the findings.

4.2 The Critical Antecedents

4.2.1 Party-Union Entrenchment: The Social and Political Isolation of the Bolivian Labour Movement.

It is not possible to understand the emergence of the Bolivian indigenous and peasant movements, and their relationship with the union movement, without briefly analysing the evolution of the different socioeconomic and political phases that Bolivia experienced at least since the National Revolution of 1952. In April 1952, a brief revolution led by urban middle-classes and the mineworkers' movement put the MNR (*Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* – Nationalist Revolutionary Movement) and its leader, Victor Paz Estenssoro, at the head of the Bolivian state. The coalition between the MNR (a nationalist-statist party) and the COB (*Central Obrera Boliviana* – Bolivian Workers' Central[36]) had been cemented by a shared goal: the nationalization of the most important Bolivian mines (Klein, 2011).

The Revolution was the starting point of the construction of the so-called *Estado del '52* (State of 1952): a statist, developmentalist and corporatist socioeconomic model that marked a long phase of the Bolivian history. The MNR enjoyed the conditional US support to prevent a Communist revolution led by the Marxist COB (Klein, 2011). Its revolutionary ideology notwithstanding, the COB kept its 'co-governmental' position, in alliance with the MNR, until 1962. The COB's leader, the miner Juan Lechín (himself a MNR militant), was appointed as Vicepresident in 1960, and exerted an enormous influence on Bolivian politics during decades. The organised working-class assumed a

[36] The COB was founded one month after the Revolution. Its backbone and vanguard was (and still is) represented by the salaried miners' federation (FSTMB - *Federación Sindical de los Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia* - Syndicalist Federation of the Bolivian Mineworkers, founded in 1944).

major political role in Bolivia. The achievement of strong labour protections provided the necessary 'stability' to struggle for further social and political improvements of their labour's (especially miners') conditions, and reinforce their class and ideological identities (García Linera et al., 2004). The creation of COMIBOL, a semi-public mining company whose management was highly influenced by the workers, was emblematic of that phase.

The COB, despite its governmental position, kept its autonomy from the MNR: internal and external political pressures for limiting the labour unions' power led to the final rupture between Paz Estenssoro and Lechín, the former moving steadily towards the right (Klein, 2011). After two years of social unrest and economic distress, a coup d'état (1964) put General Barrientos at the presidency, inaugurating a long phase of alternation between different military dictatorships (1964-1982) and brief democratic interludes.

Right-wing dictatorships were not able to decisively weaken the Bolivian mineworkers' movement. During the chaotic phase characterized by the alternation of civilian and highly repressive military dictatorships (1978-1982), the COB played a crucial advocatory role for democratic transition (BO8; BO15). It provided the social support for the first democratic (and left-wing) government led by Hernán Siles Zuazo (1982-1985), backed by the UDP[37], a coalition between the MNRI (a leftist split from MNR) and the MIR[38] (BO8; Klein, 2011).

UDP's governmental experience unwillingly led the 'State of 1952' to its final collapse. Siles Zuazo's term was destabilised by a cycle of labour protests and social unrests. The government, lacking a parliamentary majority, failed to correct the difficult macroeconomic condition inherited by Bánzer's and García Meza's dictatorships. UDP's government was not able to restrain wage demands from the COB, and pursued a

[37] *Unión Democrática Popular* (Democratic Popular Union).
[38] *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (Movement of the Revolutionary Left), led by Jaime Paz Zamora, then a leftist party that would move towards the center during the neoliberal phase.

disastrous expansionary monetary policy that led the country to a five-digit hyperinflationary crisis and fully discredited the political Left (BO8; BO13; Klein, 2011). Siles Zuazo's resignation opened the way to early elections, won by MNR's eternal leader Paz Estenssoro. The same figure that built the Bolivian corporatist and ISI state then took the responsibility to dismantle it and to lead the country towards neoliberalism (Farthing and Kohl, 2006).

The 21060 Presidential Decree, elaborated with the advice of IMF officials, marked a turning point in Bolivian history: it put into motion a draconian adjustment program that, while successfully eradicating hyperinflation, imposed high social costs to the population. The so-called New Economic Policy (NEP) intended to attract private investments and transform Bolivia into an export-oriented, liberalized economy (Farthing and Kohl, 2006; Silva, 2009)[39].

COMIBOL was reduced from 30,000 to 7,000 workers (Farthing and Kohl, 2006; Crabtree and Chaplin, 2013), a measure that was as much economic as political, as it purposely decimated the once powerful mineworkers' movement (BO8; BO13; Farthing and Kohl, 2006). Its leaders were sent to internal exile and many workers were 'redistributed' in remote areas of the country. Low agricultural prices gave them no chance of surviving as traditional farmers.

The COB, affected by internal struggles and on-going attempts of co-optation by political parties, suffered a deep structural debilitation. The privatization of several mines once belonging to COMIBOL, the closing of several 'unproductive' mining areas, the dismissals of the 75% of its workers, and the anti-labour measures facilitating further dismissals in the once well-protected Bolivian industrial sectors had disastrous

[39] The NEP consisted of an orthodox macroeconomic policy that dollarized the economy, freezed the wages and reduced public spending through massive dismissals of workers in mining and the educational sectors, among others. The implementation of these and other measures suggested by IMF and the World Bank, favoured a 'benevolent' attitude on the part of these institutions, which, in turn, allowed for an important reduction of the foreign debt, although Bolivia remained dependent on IMF's interventions.

consequences for the COB. Labour unions' leaders initially tried to resist the dismissals, but in the end they were forced to accept them in exchange of monetary compensations for the workers. This, in turn, provoked negative reactions of many affiliates (Silva, 2009; BO3).

During the nineties, political divisions and allegations of corruption uninterruptedly contributed to weaken the once powerful COB (García Linera et al., 2004). The recovery of the employment rate was limited to the informal sector or to small proto-industrial enterprises, where workers' unionization is weaker. Structural reforms reduced the size of public sector, including former state-owned enterprises such as COMIBOL or YPFB (the oil and gas public company), which were the strongholds of the COB (García Linera et al., 2004; Farthing and Kohl, 2006; Silva, 2009).

Neoliberal measures implemented through the 21060 Law also favoured 'flexibilization' of the labour market. However, the gap, in terms of income, between formal and informal workers was, even during the neoliberal period, impressive, as well as the differences between urban and rural areas (Soraya, 2011; Muriel and Machicado, 2012). The Bolivian labour market remained quite rigid, as the costs of dismissals and of social protection still were well above the Latin American average (Soraya, 2011). Restricted access to education helped to keep the 'formal labour market' quite small, thus partially favouring the bargaining power of the most skilled workers. The COB was more rooted precisely among the 'luckiest' sectors. Meanwhile, other kinds of associational structures stemmed from more numerous other segments of the Bolivian economically active population (García Linera et al., 2004).

In summary, the COB, weakened by partisan co-optation and (mostly) by the structural changes produced by the neoliberal governments, had lost much of its legitimacy as the main articulator of the demands of the heterogeneous Bolivian popular sectors. In addition, as section 4.2.3 will clarify, the *insider* sectors dominating the COB kept dominating it and limited its representativeness, by keeping in a secondary position

within the peak union confederation precisely those sectors that were showing a very high capacity of organization and that represented much broader (*outsider*) constituencies.

4.2.2 Party Linkages to Outsider Sectors (1). Clientelism, Co-optation and Ineffective Universalism

If neoliberalism was the economic component of the post-ISI era, the so-called 'Pacted Democracy' was its political one (Farthing and Kohl, 2006; Zegada, 2013). The Bolivian party system became pluralised and centripetal, as all three of the 'mainstream parties' (MNR, MIR and ADN[40]) embraced neoliberalism and alternated in coalition governments to find some kind of 'governability'[41] and the continuity of the economic model. The election of MIR's historic leader Paz Zamora to the presidency in 1989 was emblematic of the 'unnatural' coalitions that were crafted by the Bolivian parties in order to govern: the once leftist MIR, which suffered from military repression and was a major player within the Siles Zuazo's left-wing coalition, then accepted the support of ADN, led by the former dictator Hugo Bánzer. The alliance between the MIR and ADN popularised the expression 'crossing bloody rivers', which retook a public statement by Paz Zamora, who had previously argued that such alliance would be impossible, since 'bloody rivers separate Bánzer and me'.

These arrangements opened a political space for new 'neopopulist' parties such as CONDEPA[42] or UCS[43], both serving as electoral machines supporting charismatic,

[40] *Acción Democrática Nacional* was a right-wing party founded and led by the former dictator Bánzer.
[41] No party was able to reach the absolute majority in the Congress between 1985 and 2006, and no presidential candidate was elected with the absolute majority of the popular votes during the period (Romero Ballivián, 2010).

[42] CONDEPA stands for *Conciencia de la Patria* (Fatherland's Consciousness).

popular figures (an actor and an entrepreneur, respectively). Bolivian neopopulisms, without questioning neoliberalism, brought strong attacks against the 'traditional parties' and achieved non-negligible electoral strength (Ibáñez Rojo, 1999; Alenda, 2003; Mayorga, 2003)[44]. Nonetheless, both parties soon became involved in the governmental 'mega-coalitions' and in the same clientelistic and spoil-system practices of the 'traditional parties'; most importantly, they did not survive to the death of their founders, occurred in 1997.

In 1993, the American-Bolivian entrepreneur Sánchez de Losada (MNR) won the elections and gave a further boost to the neoliberal project, through the so-called *Plan for All*, whose unintended consequences proved to be detrimental for the Bolivian 'Pacted Democracy' (Farthing and Kohl, 2006). Sánchez de Losada's government found legislative support in the MNR, the MRTKL[45] (a small indigenist party: see below), MBL[46] (a middle-class, center-left party, close to the NGOs' *milieu*) and UCS, using the traditional spoil-system strategies to reinforce the coalition. The *Plan for All* consisted in several reforms that shaped the economic, judicial, educational and representative Bolivian systems (Farthing and Kohl, 2006).

The Law 1544 ('Law of Capitalization') steadily accelerated the pace of the privatization process of the biggest state-owned enterprises (which accounted for 60% of the national revenues: Farthing and Kohl, 2006: 97), sold to multinationals that immediately reduced the workforce. The pension system was redesigned, heavily drawing on the 'Chilean (private) model'. Sánchez de Losada also launched BONOSOL, an annual payment of $US 250 directed to all the citizens older than sixty-five. BONOSOL was financed by the privatization revenues and by the dividends of the

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[43] *Unión Cívica de Solidaridad* (Civic Union of Solidarity).

[44] CONDEPA discursively rescated the 'indigenous dignity' and enjoyed strong electoral support in the La Paz region, whereas UCS' strongholds were located in the departments of Cochabamba and Santa Cruz.

[45] *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Katari de Liberación* (Tupac Katari Revolutionary Movement of Liberation).

[46] *Movimiento Bolivia Libre* (Free Bolivia Movement).

stocks of the former state-owned enterprises still retained by the state. Despite its high popularity, BONOSOL soon proved to be unsustainable, due to the poor performance of the privatized companies. The following Bánzer's government (1997-2001) suspended it, and the second Sánchez de Losada's term (2002-03) briefly reintroduced it in a reduced form. BONOSOL was the most emblematic 'programmatic linkage' ideated by the neoliberal parties to target the Bolivian popular sectors.

The Law 1551 ('Law of Popular Participation', LPP) represented the most important political institutional reform of the neoliberal era. The LPP reformed the electoral law for the Congress through the introduction of both uninominal and plurinominal districts. It also introduced the popular election of the mayors and of the communal councils for all the 337 Bolivian municipalities (Mayorga, 2003; Zuazo, 2008). The LPP also favoured the inclusion of civil society and neighbourhoods' organizations (*juntas vecinales*) in budgetary decisions and allocation. Such decentralising reform aimed to 'make the State smaller' and closer to local communities: in the short term, it made patent the poor rootedness of the 'traditional' national parties. The LPP offered an important point of access of the polity domain to local élites, and fostered new attempts of co-optation of the *juntas vecinales* by the national parties through clientelistic exchanges. However, and crucially, it also provided new political opportunities for new challengers and grassroots movements (Zuazo, 2008).

The successful eradication of hyperinflation, the timid economic recovery experienced by the country during the nineties, and clientelistic and programmatic linkages provided some legitimacy to the 'neoliberal parties' and insured political stability for a decade. The end of the expansionary phase and the lack of social and political inclusion of the peasantry (see section 4.2.3) triggered anger reactions from the population, while political reforms contributed to lower the institutional barriers for anti-system political projects.

4.2.3 Party Linkages to Outsider Sectors (II). The Rise of Indigenous and Peasant Social Movements

Apart from implementing decentralising reforms and launching ineffective universalist social policies, *de facto* neoliberal parties pursued a vast disarticulating and cooptative strategy for dealing with Bolivian indigenous and peasant movements, representing – particularly the latters - most of Bolivian population. It is necessary to briefly describe the evolution of these movements and their relationships to the Bolivian state to understand the actual political alignments that paved the way for the emergence of the MAS-IPSP.

A major consequence of the 1952 National Revolution was the social and political enfranchisement of the peasantry, the great majority of Bolivian population. One of the first acts of the first Paz Estenssoro's government was the concession of universal suffrage. Meanwhile, in the Cochabamba Valley and in the Highlands, the peasants led violent uprisings and land occupations against their landlords, in a country where the 95% of the land then belonged to the 8% of the population (Rivera, 2010; Klein, 2011). The MNR government promulgated the National Agrarian Reform (1953), which gradually reassigned one-third of Bolivian land - almost exclusively in the Highlands and Cochabamba's regions - to former *colonos* through individual or collective titles (Colque et al., 2015). The MNR favoured the creation of agrarian 'unions' in the Western Highlands, partly to control and co-opt the peasantry through clientelist and corporatist arrangements. *Latifundios* kept dominating the Eastern agrarian structure, where an export-oriented 'agro-business' developed (Yashar, 2005; Klein, 2011).

The *sindicatos rurales* were probably the most important organizational legacy of the State of 1952. Rural unions in the Aymara Highlands (and particularly in the La

Paz's region) often overlapped with the traditional indigenous communities (*ayllus*), from which they borrowed several organizational features. While in Quechua-speaking tropical regions, that were more ethnically mixed, they became the only, undisputed kind of popular organization of the rural tenants that took possession of the lands (Rivera, 2010).

Despite their hierarchical structure, consisting of *sindicatos*, *subcentrales*, *centrales*, and *federaciones* (from the lower to the upper level), rural unions were very different from labour unions (García Linera et al., 2004). The *Sindicatos* enjoyed, since their inception, strong legitimacy within their communities. They are formed by peasants owning, individually or collectively, their small (or very small) parcels. Their functions include the administration of justice, the solution of disputes between their affiliates and the management of communitarian works (including infrastructural ones). They act both as functional substitute of the State and as intermediaries between the community-level and the State (García Linera et al., 2004; García Yapur et al., 2014). The (partial) implementation of the Agrarian Reform, and the control that the MNR was able to exert on *sindicatos*' leaders, assured the support of the peasantry to the central government for a long time (Rivera, 2010).

Barrientos' dictatorship (1964-67) strengthened the alliance between the State and the peasantry, through the so-called Military-Peasantry Pact (*Pacto Militar Campesino*). It provided further corporatist benefits to the rural unions aligned with the government (particularly in the Quechua-speaking regions) in exchange of social support to the junta's Anti-Communist goals (Yashar, 2005; Rivera, 2010)[47]. Such conservative alliance broke in 1974, under Bánzer's dictatorship, when the army violently repressed peaceful peasant protests in Cochabamba's region. This event strengthened the appeal of radical and autonomous Aymaras peasant unions in the Highlands (Van Cott, 2005; Rivera, 2010).

[47] Such alliance widely explained the failure of *Che* Guevara's guerrilla in South-Eastern Bolivia (1967).

Since the late Sixties, *Katarism*, a new cultural and syndicalist heterogeneous movement, had grown in the Highlands. It was founded in La Paz by Aymara migrants with university education, and was able to attract the most combative rural union leaders of La Paz region (Yashar, 2005; Van Cott, 2005). Katarism was a loose and highly diversified ideology that produced a novel understanding of the social and political exclusions suffered by indigenous and peasant people in the Highlands. In the *Manifiesto de Tiwanaku* (1973), Katarists stressed the need for a recuperation of the Indian identity and for the merging of ethnic (as Aymaras) and classist (as peasants) struggles (Rivera, 2010). Therefore, Katarism rejected both the nationalistic MNR project, which aimed at 'Bolivianizing' the peasantry, and the attitude of the Marxist Left (and particularly of the COB), which persistently showed a diffident and paternalistic stance towards the uncivilized and de-ideologized 'rural petty bourgeoisie' (Rivera, 2010; BO7).

While Katarism was not able to expand in urban areas, its rural factions soon became a major force within the peasant union movement. Rural Katarism was gradually able to defeat both pro-MNR and leftist factions and to form the CSUTCB[48], which became a major national organization (García Linera et al., 2004; Burgoa Moya, 2016). The CSUTCB formally joined the COB, but kept an autonomous position and, for some years, it was able to dispute to the miners the leadership of the Bolivian peak union (García Linera et al., 2004; Silva, 2009). Allegations of 'paternalism' (and even 'racism') against the COB were common, as the miners considered (and still tend to consider) themselves the 'vanguard' of the popular sectors and the only truly revolutionary actors (García Linera et al., 2004; Rivera, 2010; BO3; BO7; BO12).

During the neoliberal era, the CSUTCB suffered from recurrent attempts of the political parties to control the organization, thus debilitating the 'autonomist' direction of the Katarist faction (Van Cott, 2005; BO7; BO20). However, a Katarist strategic

[48] *Confederación Sindical Única de los Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (Peak Union Central of the Bolivian Peasant Workers).

legacy survived: that is, the idea of creating indigenous and peasant political parties to compete in the national elections and to challenge the political power of the *q'aras* (i.e. the White people, in Aymara), without relying on the intermediation of 'colonialist' parties.

In fact, several political parties were founded during the Eighties. Some of them (as the Indian Party, or the MITKA[49]) were inspired by 'Indianist' ideology (which refused class-based analyses and predicated the politicization of the ethnic cleavage). Other parties, relatively more successful and rooted, mixed ethnic claims with 'classist' analyses (Van Cott, 2005), as the MRTKL[50], a small but quite structured party, with linkages to some sectors of the CSUTCB and appealing to urban indigenous immigrants. However, when the CSUTCB approached the MRTKL's leader Cárdenas to run as presidential candidate in the 1993 elections, Cárdenas preferred to 'betray' (Burgoa Moya, 2016) the unionised peasantry and ally with the MNR.

Cárdenas' 'betrayal' was one of the many factors that definitively convinced the indigenous and peasant movements from the Highlands and from Cochabamba region to opt for the creation of their own 'political instrument'. Despite political 'infiltrations' and the reduction of public subsidies following the end of the corporatist era (Van Cott, 2005), the CSUTCB still was the most numerous social organization in the country. The contrasts between the miners and the peasant movements persisted. The CSUTCB's leader Juan de la Cruz Villca ('*Juandela*') was one of the main figures that sponsored the idea of creating a National Assembly of Originary Peoples, in order to represent indigenous and peasant populations, without recurring to the 'intermediation' of existing parties (García Yapur et al., 2014; BO7; BO14).

[49] Indian Movement Tupac Katari.
[50] Revolutionary Movement of Liberation "Tupac Katari".

Finally, a new actor appeared in 1990 on the political scene, with a quite high impact on politics. The CIDOB[51], which represents the indigenous peoples from the Lowlands (i.e., thirty-three of the thirty-six Bolivian ethnicities), organized a thirty-four day long and peaceful 'March for Territory and Dignity' from Trinidad to La Paz. Lowlands indigenous peoples claimed for cultural rights' recognition, environmental protection of their territories from the exploitation by multinationals and extractive firms, and for concrete guarantee of their educational rights. The March aimed at 'demonstrating their existence in the eyes of the Bolivian élites' (García Linera et al., 2004; Yashar, 2005). This march marked a turning point for the indigenous movements throughout the country, and was well received by La Paz's urban population. The March achieved important concrete results, such as the recognition of eight 'originary communitarian territories' (TCOs) from the president Paz Zamora (Yashar, 2005; Farthing and Kohl, 2006; Colque et al., 2015); more importantly, it brought the 'indigenous question' in the political debate.

However, the Bolivian dominant parties owned both organizational and ideological resources to successfully deal with indigenous movements. First, they began including in their electoral lists several leaders of indigenous organizations. Moreover, the constitutional reforms implemented by Sánchez de Losada (1993-1997) were partially inspired by a liberal and multicultural vision, which however did not point at the structural problems impeding a real improvement of concrete life conditions of the peasantry and of indigenous peoples (Farthing and Kohl, 2006). These reforms, as Rivera (2010) argues, framed the indigenous question as a matter of defending the rights of ethnic minorities. This frame about 'minorities' was not considered acceptable by the radical organizations from the Highlands, in a country where 60% of the population self-consider 'indigenous'. The protection of the 'minorities' seemed a satisfactory strategy for Eastern indigenous peoples, quantitatively small, but surely not for Aymaras and Quechuas, who demographically dominate the Highlands (see also Garcés, 2010).

[51] *Confederación Indígena del Oriente Boliviano* (Indigenous Confederation of the Bolivian Orient).

In 1996, the indigenous and peasant movements jointly mobilised against the Law INRA (National Institute of the Agrarian Reform), a governmental attempt to reform and relaunch the historic 1953 Agrarian Reform, which had lost all its progressive inspiration after several decades of corruption and consolidation of *latifundios* (in the Lowlands) and *minifundios* (unproductive small lands, particularly in the Highlands). Important divisions emerged between the different organizations leading the march. These divisions are telling of the different political projects envisioned by the 'contentious actors' that would sustain Evo Morales' *process of change*. The INRA Law, sponsored by Vicepresident Cárdenas, was inspired by a sort of 'neoliberalism with social justice' (Colque et al., 2015). While Eastern *latifundistas* managed to limit the *anti-status quo* potential of the reform, the CIDOB obtained specific gains such as the recognition of the TCOs conceded by Paz Zamora and the assignation of additional communitarian territories. The CIDOB took advantage of its 'conciliatory' attitude (García Linera et al., 2004; BO9; BO13), in contrast to the 'antagonistic' organizations of the Highlands and the Tropic Valleys. Although the 1996 March was convoked jointly by the CIDOB, the CSUTCB and the *cocaleros* (see the next section), the CIDOB interrupted its participation and negotiated separately with the government.

Both the CSUTCB and the CSCB (the confederation of the 'settlers' unions': see the next section) tended to represent the demands of the small and medium peasantry, much more interested in the economic consequences of the agrarian reform than in the defence of 'cultural' rights or in the concession of 'collective titles' to the communities. In the Highlands, collective practices coexist with individual possession. In the Lowlands (outside of the indigenous territories and of the *latifundios*), or in 'colonized' areas, CSUTCB and CSCB's immediate goals were the recognition of the possession of the land occupied by individual (but collectively organised) peasants and the assignation of new lands. These goals potentially clashed with the creation of the TCOs, where indigenous peoples do not practice any kind of intensive agriculture: peasants and immigrant settlers began accusing the indigenous communities of 'misusing' their lands.

This contrast between the 'communitarian cosmovision' of the indigenous peoples and the economic and pragmatic motivations proper of the CSUTCB and the CSCB is crucial to understand the agrarian policy of Evo Morales' governments and, more generally, the deeper goals of the MAS-IPSP political project.

4.2.4 Unintended Consequences of the Neoliberal Era: The Rise of the Cocaleros' Movement

Among the several developmental plans implemented by the governments that followed the National Revolution, the colonization program was one of the most important. The national governments promoted the colonization of some remote areas of the country by peasants lacking sufficient land in the Highlands. Some provinces in Santa Cruz, Beni and Cochabamba departments were the main destinations of the new settlers, who began organising through *sindicatos*, despite the official prohibition (García Linera et al., 2004). These unions later coordinated themselves through the CSCB (*Confederación Sindical de los Colonizadores de Bolivia*, now CSCIOB – *Confederación Sindical de las Comunidades Interculturales Originarias de Bolivia*), which is one of the most important social movements 'organic' to the MAS-IPSP, and the only one strongly rooted in Eastern Bolivia.

The Chapare region, located in the Cochabamba department, was one of the colonised areas where the cultivation of the coca leaf was practiced. The cultivation of the coca leaf in the Yungas (a tropical region across the departments of La Paz and Cochabamba) has a millenarian history. Chapare also was a traditional area of coca leaf cultivation, but it meagrely contributed to the national production until the fifties. Since the seventies, the Chaparean coca leaf production skyrocketed, mainly due to the diffusion of cocaine in the most developed countries: in contrast to the Yungas, the

Chaparean coca leaf was particularly suited for being processed for drug production (Klein, 2011: 247). Coca leaf is a highly productive crop, and its prices experienced a huge increase due to its growing demand for illicit processing. In fact, during the Seventies, even the Bolivian governments (particularly those of Bánzer and García Meza) got involved in drug trafficking, thus further favouring coca leaf production (Farthing and Kohl, 2006).

Because of the worsening of Bolivian economic condition and the effects of the 21060 Law, many dismissed miners opted for joining Chaparean colonies and coca economy. However, US aid for the liberalization and recovery of Bolivian economy was conditioned on the reduction (and the progressive dismantlement) of the cultivation of coca leaf. Paz Estenssoro's government thus reinvigorated the fight against the *cocaleros* and promulgated the Law 1008, which divided Bolivian territories into three areas: one in which coca leaf cultivation was permitted; one in which it was partially admitted until its progressive suppression and substitution with other crops; and one in which it was prohibited *tout court*. The Chapare belonged to the 'transitionary' regime (Farthing and Kohl, 2006; Consultora Sistemática, 2009). Law 1008 represented the turning point of the Bolivian coca policy and inaugurated a period of violent confrontations between the national government (with the political and military support of US agencies) and the *cocaleros*. The peak of the violence was reached during Bánzer's democratic government (1997-2001), whose *Dignity Plan* was summarized by the slogan '*Coca Zero*' and aimed at the total eradication of coca leaf cultivation (Silva, 2009; BO23).

The national government began a dramatic confrontation against the most organised communities of the entire Bolivian territory. Indeed, the history of Chaparean *cocaleros* unions had begun in 1971, when the FETCTC[52] was founded (Consultora Sistemática, 2009). The huge increase in the number of local unions led to the creation

[52] *Federación Especial de los Trabajadores Campesinos del Trópico de Cochabamba* (Special Federation of the Peasant Workers of the Cochabamba Tropic).

of five other federations in the Tropic of Cochabamba. By 1988, the Six Federations created a Coordinator Committee, led (still nowadays) by Evo Morales, a *cocalero* immigrant from the Quechua-speaking Oruro department.

Cocaleros unions resemble the *sindicatos campesinos* and the *sindicatos de colonizadores*. *Cocaleros* unions were created to assign the occupied lands to their affiliates and to manage the bureaucratic tasks, to solve litigations among members, to organize marches[53], demonstrations, road-blockages and provide self-defence, and to build public infrastructures (García Linera et al., 2004). Each of the over 1.000 unions in the Tropic of Cochabamba is affiliated to a *Central*, each *Central* to one of the six Federations, and the Federations to the Coordinator Committee (Consultora Sistemática, 2009).

This kind of structure is common to all the Bolivian peasant unions. However, the *cocaleros*, because of the very adverse conditions they faced and their geographical concentration, built a very effective and coordinated organization, and they soon achieved a prominent, national role within the CSUTCB and the CSCB[54]. Another important factor explaining their strength had to do with the organizational experience brought by numerous former miners that came to populate Chapare (Calderón Gutiérrez, 2002; BO30). The cohesion of the *cocalero* movement then became the result of several years of armed resistance against the eradication policies implemented by the neoliberal governments, which, along with their US allies, became their archenemies and fortified the collective identity of the movement.

[53] For instance, in 1994, an important march was organized by the *cocaleros*, demanding the abrogation of Law 1008 and the defense of coca leaf production. The *cocaleros* showed in that occasion all their unity and organization. The march was supported by the CSUTCB and the COB, and it ended with military repression and arrests (Silva, 2009). *Cocaleros* and peasants framed the defense of the coca economy by making it a symbol of indigenous culture and way of life. They also denounced the unfairness of Bolivian economic structure, which forced popular sectors to rely on coca leaf cultivation to survive (García Linera et al., 2004; Burgoa Moya, 2016).

[54] Four of the Six Federations are directly affiliated to the CSCB, the other two to the CSUTCB. However, *cocalero* unions strongly defended their autonomy.

4.3 The Critical Juncture: The Neoliberal Crisis and the Unified Popular Mobilizations (2000-2003)

After the disastrous leftist Siles Zuazo's government and the harsh austerity plans implemented by Paz Estenssoro, Bolivia's economy partially recovered in the Nineties. However, the effects of the Brazilian crisis (1997) provoked a sudden economic deterioration, which triggered the spread of protests against the government (Farthing and Kohl, 2006; Molina, 2010).

Economic deterioration had a direct effect on the capacity of various governments, Bánzer (1997-2001), Quiroga (2001-02) and Sánchez de Losada (2002-03), to sustain the pro-poor policies (such as BONOSOL) financed by the share revenues of the privatised enterprises. The participation of all the mainstream political parties in one or the other of these unpopular governments, the irreversible decline of the short-lived 'neopopulist' parties, and the lack of any alternative project represented factors that favoured the rise of radical and well-rooted political challengers.

The new protest cycle stemmed from both urban and rural sectors. Neither the CIDOB nor the COB assumed a leading role in these protests. However, the CIDOB decisively contributed to the inclusion of an 'indigenous lexicon' into the political debate, thus favouring its appropriation by Tropic Valleys' and Highlands' organizations.

The most combative sectors within the COB actively supported the struggles during the 2000-2003 period, but they did not lead them politically. Local industrial workers' federation actively participated in the Cochabamba Water War, while the mineworkers – together with other radical actors - played an important role during the

so-called Gas War in El Alto (see below). However, the COB, torn by internal struggles, weakened by structural transformations, subjected to the influence of the 'mainstream parties' and unwilling to recognise a central role to the rural movements, lost its traditional position as *the* most important social actor within the Bolivian Left. As García Linera noticed,

> *'during these social struggles, which triggered an era of re-emergence of social mobilizations and popular leaderships, the COB played a secondary role in the mobilising capacity and in the construction of an antagonist discourse. Since then, and until these days, indigenous discourses and leaders have strengthened, substituting the old, leftist analyses that prevailed for a long time inside the COB. The socio-political victories of organizations formally belonging to the COB, but, in fact, articulating mobilising demands and social alliances very different from those of the COB, have created a social scenario in which the COB only represents the educational and health public sector, the pensioners, and the weakened industrial and mining sectors. It has become just a social organization amongst others, such as the CSUTCB, the cocaleros or the Water Coordinator, which are much stronger. […] The relationship between the COB and these organizations [varied] between subordination, mutual support and competition.'* (García Linera et al., 2004: 80, my translation).

The 2000-2003 period represented a 'revolutionary epoch' (Webber, 2008) that favoured the electoral rise of anti-neoliberal parties taking advantage of such a socio-political climate. The leaders of the MAS-IPSP (Evo Morales) and of the Indigenous Movement Pachakutik (Felipe Quispe) were important actors during the protests. While previous indigenous or Katarist parties never reached double-digit percentages of the national vote, in the 2002 general elections the MAS obtained an astonishing 20%, and the MIP a respectable 6%, concentrated in the Aymara region and in El Alto. The 'anti-system vote' surpassed the percentage (22%) reached by the winner Sánchez de Losada.

The 2002 elections represented a turning point and marked the last transitional phase towards the final victory of the MAS.

A brief, somewhat more detailed analysis of this 'revolutionary' phase is useful to shed light on the social sectors that animated the struggles and on the 'plebeian' constituencies that would give the victory to the MAS in the following decade (Do Alto and Stefanoni, 2010). As we shall see, it appeared that the different revolts shared similar frames, such as the recuperation of 'sovereignty' and of the 'national and popular' control of Bolivian natural resources. The following analysis also stresses the impressive alliance networks that the movements were able to build to sustain the protests over time and throughout the entire country.

4.3.1 The Cochabamba Water War

Water scarcity is an old concern for the inhabitants of Cochabamba. In 2000, only half of the Cochabamba's citizens, concentrated in the middle and upper-class neighbourhoods, enjoyed access to public water. The rest of the city relied on a network of cooperatives and individuals who managed private wells, family-owned cisterns, and water trucks (Silva, 2009: 124). In the rural periphery, water wells were managed and exploited by local peasants, through communitarian organizations governing the access and care of the wells, administering this fundamental resource according to customary laws (*usos y costumbres*) that are the result of decades of syndicalism (Linsalata, 2015).

The national government and the municipality of Cochabamba negotiated the concession of a monopoly licence for the exploitation and the distribution of water resources to the newly-constituted company *Agua del Tunari*, controlled by the multinational Bechtel (Farthing and Kohl, 2006). This development represented a

menace to the customary management of the water sources and the network of urban associations that distributed the water in the poor neighbourhoods. In November 1999, the new consortium *Agua del Tunari* immediately appled draconian tariff increases: 35% on average, with a peak of 300% (Linsalata, 2015).

During the negotiations between the government and the private consortium, a network of environmental activists, urban social leaders, and the FEDECOR (the Federation of the Water Suppliers), in alliance with rural union leaders, started a campaign for informing the citizenry about the privatization of the public company. When the tariff increases were made public, even the middle classes joined the protests. The protesters founded the Coordinator Committee for the Defense of the Water (*Coordinadora*), which worked as an 'organization of organizations', providing a common platform for sustaining the rebellion, which started with road-blockages organised by the peasants surrounding Cochabamba (Silva, 2009; Linsalata, 2015).

A period of social effervescence began, well visible in the numerous assemblies and reunions throughout the rural villages and the city, particularly – but not exclusively – in the poorer neighbourhoods of Cochabamba. There was a reactivation of the already existing network of neighbourhood associations (*juntas vecinales*), which – along with several civil society organizations – joined the Coordinadora and provided the associational structure to build and sustain the resistance.

The *juntas* played a crucial role in the Cochabamba Water War and, later in 2003, in the El Alto Gas War. In both cases, the grassroots proved to be much more radical than the *junta*'s leaders (Lazar, 2013; Linsalata, 2015). In Cochabamba, the *juntas* made patent the poor legitimacy of other, more institutionalized (and 'collaborationist') forms of association, such as the Civic Committee (*Comité Cívico*), which, at the beginning, was the only social counterpart recognised by the municipality and the government for the negotiations with the 'citizenry' (Silva, 2009; Linsalata, 2015).

The *juntas* formed the backbone of the Coordinadora, whose 'speakers' were not elected, but 'emerged' among the most militant activists. The most important figure was Oscar Olivera, the leader of the local industrial worker union. During the years preceding the Water War, Olivera autonomously engaged in the organization of precarious industrial workers, outside of the umbrella of the COB. The official labour union did not actively support the Coordinadora (Silva, 2009; Linsalata, 2015), because of its unwillingness to be 'outbid' by 'de-politicized' associations, thus showing once more its inability to 'read' the effervescent Bolivian social context.

The Coordinadora facilitated the transmission of the information and the coordination of the protests, whose repertoire consisted in road-blockages, indefinite strikes, and marches throughout the city. The most illustrative forms of protest were the *cabildos*, urban assemblies in the main plaza of Cochabamba, which in two occasions hosted more than 50,000 citizens (in a city populated by 500,000). Road-blockages and strikes literally paralysed the entire country (mainly thanks to the CSUTCB's support) until April, when the government finally cancelled the contract with Bechtel (Farthing and Kohl, 2006).

Evo Morales led the column of *cocaleros* that helped the protestors in Cochabamba to resist the military repression. Morales did not play an active role in the Coordinadora, but his support during the protests was considered crucial (BO6; BO13). The *cocaleros* followed a strategy inaugurated since the mid-nineties: a strategy consisting of supporting every kind of antineoliberal struggles, of building alliances and escaping from their 'pariah' condition due to media and governmental campaigns against 'Chaparean drug traffickers' (BO6; BO19).

4.3.2 The El Alto Gas War

The governmental project to build a pipeline to transport Bolivian gas towards the Chilean port of Antofagasta, and from there to California, came to symbolise, to the eyes of the popular sectors, all the negative characteristics of the ruling class: 'antinationalist', 'sellers of their fatherland' (*vendepatria*), corrupt, and inattentive to the interests of 'The people'.

The worsening of economic conditions also convinced the newly elected government to implement new, IMF-backed austerity plans, which received an angry reception from most of the popular sectors. The year 2003 started with another march of the *cocaleros*, asking for the reversal of coca leaf eradication policies, while police officers and firefighters in February violently protested in La Paz against wage freezing and tax increases. Violent riots ended in widespread lootings in all the major Bolivian cities. Labour unions took a harsher attitude against the government; the MAS-IPSP and the MIP, from the Congress, acted as a megaphone of the protests (Silva, 2009).

Despite the protests, Sánchez de Losada continued with his 'autonomous' political platform and further isolated himself. A new Coordinator Committee for the Defence of Gas (*Coordinadora por el Gas*) provided a common platform for *cocaleros*, Highland peasants and the Water Coordinator (García Linera et al., 2004; Silva, 2009). However, such Coordinadora, differently from the *Coordinadora del Agua*, acted more as a 'political committee' than as a 'vanguard' or 'participant' in the protests that exploded in El Alto[55] during September and October 2003.

The *sindicatos urbanos* of El Alto represent a form of self-organization of the workers employed in the informal sectors[56], particularly among street vendors. The local branch of the COB, i.e. the COR (*Central Obrera Regional – El Alto*), even now, is

[55] El Alto is a relatively young city built in the plateau above La Paz. Its inhabitants are overwhelmingly indigenous, coming from the Aymara regions surrounding La Paz. During the Eighties, many dismissed miners also migrated to El Alto. Despite its recent foundation, El Alto's citizens have developed close-knit associational networks, based on *juntas vecinales* and *sindicatos urbanos* (Lazar, 2013).
[56] The informal sector is a galaxy of very small economic (usually commercial), family-based activities, outside of any formal labour regulation.

dominated by street vendors and workers in the transportation sector; it is well known for is very high mobilising power, despite the strong economic competition existing between its members (Lazar, 2013; Tassi et al., 2012).

Most of the Aymara population in El Alto works in the informal sector, while often spending different periods of the year in a small *minifundio* to cultivate it and to sell (or consume) their crops in the city. El Alto's citizens have thus developed a peculiar two-fold identity, both as Aymara peasants and as urban citizen *neighbours* (*vecinos*). The inability of the Bolivian state to meet with many of the practical necessities of the new settlers favoured the consolidation of *juntas'* system (Lazar, 2013)[57]. The indigenous identity of the *alteños* surely facilitated the alliance between urban and rural sectors against 'neoliberalism' and against the exclusion of the popular sectors from the institutional sphere. However, the framing of the 'gas issue' as a matter of 'national resource' proved to be very effective: it not only resonated well with the defence of the water or of the 'ancestral' coca leaf, but also contributed to revive the old, statist ideology that represented the backbone of the 'State of 1952' (Mayorga, 2010).

This is crucial to understand the different preferences over the socioeconomic model to implement amongst the different constituencies that backed the *masista* project since its early phase. The powerful indigenous rhetoric and symbolism exploited since the Nineties hid very different visions that later inevitably clashed, once the common 'neoliberal enemies' were defeated: the Aymara nationalism and independentism of Felipe Quispe, the 'autonomist', participative project inspiring the Water War in Cochabamba (Oikonomakis and Espinoza, 2014; Linsalata, 2015), and the struggles of

[57] The *juntas* and the *sindicatos*, in a way very similar to their rural counterparts, thus act as functional substitute for the State. Like the *sindicatos rurales*, they organize in a very participative and deliberative way and enjoy a strong legitimacy among the neighbours (BO18; BO27). *Juntas'* leaders can achieve considerable power thanks to their mediatory role between their community and the State (see Lazar, 2013).

For such reasons, the *juntas* are traditionally very prone to co-optation from political parties in search of votes (Lazar, 2013; Anría, 2014; BO5), although very high popular participation in *juntas* and *sindicatos* limit (but by no means erase) such risk.

the Lowlands indigenous movements were potentially at odds with the 'search for state power' that always represented the aim of the *cocaleros*, the CSCB and the majoritarian factions within the CSUTCB, which saw in the State the fundamental tool for pursuing their interests.

Popular urban organizations and peasant social movements share a complex evaluation of the 'Bolivian colonial State' and of what it is expected to do. The state must guarantee basic services such as urban regulation and management, water, electricity, gas, education and health, and, more generally, decent life standards. Quite in line with the statist ideology well rooted in Bolivia – the long neoliberal parenthesis notwithstanding – it is also expected to favour the economic and industrial development of the country, and land and credit access for the peasantry (BO4; BO12; BO18; BO22). The state is also expected to guarantee that the national, natural resources are used and exploited for the 'interest of the people'. This could imply that natural resources must be controlled by the people living in resources-rich territories (as many indigenous communities argue), but, in a dramatically different view, it can also imply that the State can and must dispose of these resources for the economic development of the country and to increase social and infrastructural spending.

This being said, the State is simultaneously expected to be 'smaller', in the sense that it cannot violate the right of the people in their self-organization and in their autonomy. This does not only concern the indigenous and rural unions and communities, their cultural rights and their forms of social and economic organization and (re)production. This second set of expectations also concerns the protection of the 'freedom' enjoyed by the informal, commercial sectors, which stem from the (legal or illegal) 'interstices' left by weak public institutions (Tassi et al., 2012). Many sectors in Bolivia, most of them truly 'popular', survive within such 'interstices': *cocaleros*, *gremiales* (i.e., the street vendors), rural settlers, but also car sellers, transportation workers, miners, all of them often linked to informal (or illegal) markets and

representing important constituencies (both in electoral and organizational terms) for the MAS.

In this sense, it was not a coincidence that the direct antecedents of the 'black October' (*Octubre Negro*) of 2003 consisted of popular protests around very specific issues, strongly related to the defence of 'autonomy' and 'sovereignty' by both rural and urban communities: the gas issue simply acted as the ultimate articulator of the protests. In September 2003, peasants from the Highlands, led by Quispe's sectors within the CSUTCB, protested (through extensive roadblocks) against the arrest of a union leader accused of murder: according to the peasants, the execution he had carried out was an instance of the application of 'communitarian justice' (García Linera et al., 2004). A group of peasants thus kidnapped some tourists in Warisata, on Lake Titicaca, provoking the immediate reaction of the army, which killed several protesters during the action for liberating the tourists (Silva, 2009). Meanwhile, in El Alto, the *juntas*, fearing new tax burdens, were already mobilised against a municipal campaign for housing registration. The *juntas* and the *sindicatos* of El Alto, as well as all the popular social movements, immediately expressed their solidarity with the Aymara protests in Warisata, and decisively contributed with imponent roadblocks that completely isolated La Paz.

In a context of protests and roadblocks throughout the country, the army bloodily repressed El Alto's protesters, who tried to attack a supply convoy directed to La Paz (12th October 2003). Thirty *alteños* died, and twenty more were killed the following day, during the march organized to occupy La Paz's streets (Farthing and Kohl, 2006; Silva, 2009). The situation was out of control, and protesters asked for the resignation of Sánchez de Losada, who lost the support of several ministers and MPs. Concessions were made, but from October 15th on, columns of armed miners from Oruro and Potosí, Chaparean *cocaleros*, Aymara peasants, and *alteños* neighbours converged to La Paz. Even vast middle-class sectors and intellectuals overtly contested the government and joined the protests. At the end, Sánchez de Losada resigned and fled the country on October 17th, while the Vicepresident Carlos Mesa assumed the presidency.

4.3.3 The Agenda de Octubre and the demand for a Constituent Assembly

The Gas War unified not only the peasantry and urban informal workers, but also the miners, teachers and middle-class sectors in a common struggle against the discredited Sánchez de Losada's government and the entire 'neoliberal political class'. The movements pushed forward an informal and unifying political agenda – 'October Agenda', *Agenda de Octubre* – which included: the resignation of Sánchez de Losada, his prosecution and that of the ministries and military officers who ordered the repression; the call for a Constituent Assembly; and the nationalization of the hydrocarbon sector (Mayorga, 2007; 2010). The latter point was backed by all the sectors that actively participated in the Gas War. In contrast, the call for a Constituent Assembly was, at the beginning, a demand coming from the indigenous movements, and particularly from those of the Lowlands, which had already organized a march in this sense in the early 2002. Although the peasant movements initially offered little support, the CIDOB successfully imposed the issue in the political debate. Eastern indigenous peoples were motivated by the necessity of defending the TCOs ('originary communitarian territories') from exploitation by the agro-industrial, export-oriented sectors (Marca Marca et al., 2013; BO9).

In the early aftermath of the Gas War, the main indigenous and peasant organizations (CIDOB, CSUTCB, CSCB, CONAMAQ[58] and the 'Bartolinas' [the

[58] CONAMAQ (*Confederación Nacional de las Markas y Ayllus del Qulla'suyu*) is the organization that represent the *ayllus* of the Highlands. Thus, it is an *indigenous* organization, acting in some sense as the counterpart of CIDOB for the Highlands. Its constituencies clearly overlap with those represented by the CSUTCB, thus provoking some kind of 'competition' among them (BO4; BO7). However, CONAMAQ is much more recent (it was created in 1997), less radical and less powerful than the CSUTCB, which is considered, in turn, less devoted to the defense of cultural rights and of socioeconomic communitarian Aymara 'cosmovision' (García Linera et al., 2004).

Women Peasant Federation]) decided to formalise a stable alliance, the 'Unity Pact' (*Pacto de Unidad*, PU), to have a permanent forum and to prepare a common platform for a new Constitution (*Constitución Política del Estado*, CPE). The PU would achieve an enormous importance during the first MAS' government (2006-2009), when it served as a mobilising organization against the counter-reaction of the Bolivian Right. It also played a central, propulsive role in the draft of the new CPE.

President Carlos Mesa (2003-2005), who replaced Sánchez de Losada, tried to answer to the popular demands that had erupted during the 'revolutionary period', but his efforts would not prove sufficient. In the midst of continuous protests[59], and the manifestations for a Constituent Assembly and for an effective nationalization of the gas, Mesa opted to resign (Silva, 2009). Again, the social movements took the streets to force the stepping down of the legal successors for the interim presidency (Vaca Díez and Cossío, both identified with neoliberal parties). In 2005, the President of the Supreme Court, Rodríguez Veltzé, was finally appointed as President and immediately convoked early general elections (Burgoa Moya, 2016).

The landslide victory of Evo Morales and the MAS-IPSP in the 2005 general elections triggered a critical phase of social and political polarization, which lasted at least until 2009. Not only the indigenous and peasant organizations defending the 'process of change' (*proceso de cambio*) returned to the streets. Vast sectors of the political Right, and particularly the economic élites that controlled, socially, politically and economically (Marca Marca et al., 2013), the four Eastern departments of the country, the so-called *Media Luna*[60], resorted to contentious (and often illegal) activities to reverse the *proceso*.

The following section focuses specifically on the rise and consolidation of the MAS-IPSP. It shows why the MAS-IPSP can be categorised as a *populist* political

[59] New riots occurred in El Alto for reversing the privatization of the local water company.
[60] The so-called 'Half Moon', formed by the departments of Santa Cruz, Tarija, Beni and Pando, and partially by those of Chuquisaca and Cochabamba.

project, emanating from specific movements with a (*sui generis*) statist ideology that achieved strong resonance among majoritarian sectors.

4.4 Rise and Consolidation of a Movement-Based Populism

4.4.1 From the ASP to the MAS-IPSP: the consolidation of Evo Morales' leadership

The decision of creating a 'Political Instrument' was the result of a long debate amongst union leaders over the best strategy to end the political exclusion of rural and indigenous sectors. They finally agreed on building something different from the 'classic' political parties: an 'electoral tool' of the rural social movements. The union leaders that founded the Political Instrument recognized that the political organizations that they often led or represented were additional sources of divisions within the social movements (and particularly the CSUTCB: BO7; García Yapur et al., 2015; Burgoa Moya, 2016).

Instead of looking for the support of political parties prone to 'betray' the movements, the time to '*vote for ourselves*' (*votar para nosotros mismos*) had come (BO7; BO23; García Yapur et al., 2014; 2015). The supposed *autonomy* of the movements from political parties, and the bottom-up, *democratic* source of legitimacy coming from the peculiar organizational characteristics of the peasant social movements, are still central features of MAS-IPSP's discourse: '*we could talk about Juan Lechín Oquendo* [the historical leader of the COB] *who co-governed* [with the MNR]… *instead we, as CSUTCB, we always defended our autonomy, without organizing by way of "democratic centralism"'* (BO4).

In March 1995, the ASP (Assembly for the Sovereignty of the Peoples) was founded, reuniting the peasant CSUTCB, the CSCB (representing the settlers' unions),

the Six Federations of the Tropic of Cochabamba, and the CIDOB (representing the Lowland indigenous communities). The ASP then stemmed from very different sectors than the salaried workers (BO7).

Since the eighties, the *cocaleros* had reached a prominent position within the CSUTCB. The political goals of the *cocaleros* and those of Aymara union leaders were initially very different, however (García Yapur et al., 2014, 2015; BO1; BO7; BO14). The Aymara group of Juandela aimed at building a sort of an 'autonomous Aymara state', 'like the Palestine PLO' (BO7), by relying on the social and territorial control exerted by the rural unions in the Highlands, in view of a progressive 'displacement' of the 'colonial' state structures from their territories. The *cocaleros*, in turn, saw the necessity (and political opportunity) of 'conquering' the Bolivian state through electoral means. Therefore, the *cocaleros* had since the beginning a much more pragmatic (and *populist*, according to my own definition) project, looking for the conquest of political power deriving from the control of the state (BO14). They considered public institutions as a powerful tool, as they learnt during their struggles against the Bolivian army: a 'tool' that had to be used for the movements' purposes. In the 1995 founding congress, the *cocalero* thesis won. Alejo Véliz, a peasant union leader from Cochabamba, became the first President of the ASP (Van Cott, 2005; Burgoa Moya, 2016).

The Electoral National Court repeatedly refused to legally register the ASP, due to formal irregularities in the signatures required[61]. Therefore, ASP's candidates ran in the 1995 municipal elections under the banner of IU (United Left), a coalition composed by small leftist parties. IU obtained eleven mayorships and forty-nine municipal counsellors, coming third in the department of Cochabamba, due to its good results in Chapare (Van Cott, 2005; Atlas Electoral de Bolivia, 2010; Burgoa Moya, 2016). This promising small debut was confirmed in 1997 general elections, when for the first time half the MPs were elected in uninominal districts, thus favouring geographically

[61] A common problem was represented by the fact that many ASP's militants did not own any identity card (Burgoa Moya, 2016), which is paradigmatic of the poor state capacity in rural areas.

concentrated constituencies. The *cocaleros* ran again under IU banner and elected four MPs, all of them from the Cochabamba department. Evo Morales obtained the highest percentage of personal preferences in the entire country: more than 60% of the valid votes in his district (Van Cott, 2005: 86).

Several sources and personal interviews (Van Cott, 2006; BO6; BO14; BO19) highlight the tactic used by Evo Morales to weaken his internal rival at the time: ASP's president Alejo Véliz. Véliz had designed Morales as IU's candidate for the Vicepresidency, but Morales refused – preferring to run for a congressional seat – while his unions informally campaigned in Chapare for the presidential candidate of the MIR, in order to show off his own political capital. The struggle between Véliz and Morales soon transferred into the CSUTCB. In 1998, after two chaotic congresses in which several factions aligned with either Morales or Véliz competed for the leadership, Morales and Véliz temporarily agreed on the election of the former Aymara *guerrillero* Felipe 'Mallku' Quispe, a radical Aymara nationalist (somewhat closer to the 'autonomist' theses defeated in the first ASP's Congress), who enjoyed a strong support in the department of La Paz (Silva, 2009; Burgoa Moya, 2016).

The final rupture between Morales and Véliz occurred in 1999, when Véliz expelled Morales, Loayza and Sánchez (two *cocalero* union leaders) from the ASP (Burgoa Moya, 2016). Morales, in search for a registered party label to run autonomously, accepted the 'offer' of David Añez Pedraza, the legal owner of the moribund *Movimiento al Socialismo – Unzaguista* (Movement Towards Socialism – 'Unzaguist', MAS-U). In the MAS-U Congress held in Cochabamba (22-24th January, 1999), Añez Pedraza transferred the legal use of the brand to the Morales' Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (IPSP), and acquired the (purely) honorific presidency of the party (Burgoa Moya, 2016).

In the first MAS-IPSP Congress, the highest officials of the settlers' CSCB, of the 'Bartolinas', and of the CSUTCB, at that time led by Felipe Quispe, were present.

However, Quispe, arguing that the presidency of the party should have been reserved to his peasant federation, immediately abandoned the party. This in turn provoked a split within the CSUTCB between pro-Quispe (particularly strong in the Highlands) and pro-Morales factions (mainly located in the Tropic Valley and in the Oruro and Potosí departments). In summary: important sectors of the CSUTCB, together with the CSCB and the 'Bartolinas', were the founding organizations of the MAS-IPSP and soon became known as the *trillizas* (the 'Triplets') because of their tight alliance. In turn, the *cocaleros'* unions were the true 'core' of such a *movement-based party*.

Since the foundation of the MAS-IPSP, thus, and even since the first promising electoral victories in Chapare, Evo Morales built his own unquestionable leadership. This was due mainly to his enormous, personal political capital. His mediatory skills were initially forged by the necessity to 'govern' the different *federaciones cocaleras.* Morales provided them a political direction and contributed to give it cohesion, effectiveness and combativeness (BO6; BO10; BO19; BO23). All of these factors favoured the first local electoral victories, and facilitated the 'brokerage' strategy put into motion by the *cocaleros* and the other founder organizations with many, and often very different, contentious actors, which gradually understood the importance of a strategy of 'unity of action' to effectively challenge Bolivian neoliberal governments.

4.4.2 The MAS-IPSP in its origins: Internal Organization of a Movement-Based Party

The centrality of Morales' leadership notwithstanding, describing the MAS-IPSP as a purely 'charismatic party' would be quite erroneous. The MAS-IPSP and the *trillizas* work in a perennial, complex, but – usually – stable equilibrium between the 'leadership' and the 'organic bases'. The *trillizas* (the CSUTCB, the CSCB and the

‘Bartolinas’) consider the *instrumento politico* as *their* instrument, their ‘political arm’, often referring to it as their *son*. As a recent book was entitled, a common statement is that ‘we are not *masistas*, the MAS is our’ (*No somos del MAS, el MAS es nuestro*: García Yapur et al., 2015). This metaphor explains very clearly what the MAS is (and what it *is intended to be*), and how it organizes internally.

According to the statute of the MAS-IPSP approved in 1999, all the candidates for public elections as well as all the internal charges must be elected by the members of the ‘organic movements’, which, in practice, are the *trillizas* and the *cocaleros* (who maintained a high degree of autonomy, despite their formal affiliation to both the CSUTCB and the CSCB). This means that the MAS-IPSP works similarly to the Bolivian movements, i.e. through different democratic, participative and deliberative decisions at each territorial level (from lower to upper levels: *sindicato*, *subcentral*, *central*, *federaciones…*). In fact, partisan structures are completely non-existent in the Bolivian regions where the *trillizas* are particularly rooted (Anría, 2014), as the MAS-IPSP *consists of them*. MAS-IPSP’s candidates, like unions’ leaders, are expected to be simply ‘speaker’ of the bases and to deliver ‘concrete’ returns to their bases, without being co-opted by ‘*la política*’.

In the political culture of the MAS-IPSP, the centrality of the bottom-up and consensual process of candidate selection based on the unions’ organizational structures is difficult to overstate. Both formal and informal rules impose a long militancy in the unions as the *conditio sine qua non* to be MAS-IPSP’s candidates. For each electoral district or elective charge (mayors, municipal and regional councillors, MPs…), each *trilliza* (sometimes together with other ‘allied’ movements: see next section) proceeds to nominate its candidate, and then they converge on a single name, through informal arrangements that are generally based on a complex system involving *quotas* and rotations. When consensus is not reached, the upper levels (and often Morales himself) impose a solution (BO2; BO15; BO26). Several interviewees (such as the current MP Martiriano Mamani, or the speaker of the party in the Low Chamber, Juana Quispe; see

also Zuazo, 2008; García Yapur et al., 2015) flaunted their syndicalist origins and their 'careers' within their union. All of them motivated (even 'justified') their 'jump' to *políticS* (something inherently 'dirty' and 'bad') because the MAS-IPSP, differently from other parties, represents a mere 'political instrument' controlled by, and accountable to, the organized bases.

According to the Statute, MAS-IPSP's sub-national levels overlaps with those of the Bolivian state (municipality, province and departments), thus making clear its *raison d'être*: running for public elections. Formally, the highest organ of the MAS is the National Congress, which selects the National Directorate, which, in turn, elects the President of the party. Seven high charges (among them, the President and the Vicepresident) form the Executive Committee. The *Ampliados* – official meetings at the national, regional or provincial level including IPSP's delegates from lower territorial levels – represent another deliberative organ, which is common to all the Bolivian movements. However, the party statute is a poor guide to understand how MAS-IPSP concretely works. Their hierarchical structures notwithstanding, the Bolivian movements that founded *and form* the MAS-IPSP are built over the community level. This is the primary locus of identification and political life for their members, who are extremely jealous of their *sovereignty* (García Linera et al., 2004; García Yapur et al., 2014). When the higher levels agree on some political actions or decisions, these are approved by consensus, after a deliberative process, in which the delegates of each territory constantly inform their bases about the issues at stake and persuade them over the opportunity of the decision taken. For a local leader, delivering 'concrete' results to their constituencies, or proving their personal commitment to the *sindicato*, are the most efficient way to keep the power and to defend his prestige (BO4; BO17).

The primary identification of the members to their local *sindicato* explains why the mobilising capacity of the *trillizas* relies on the lowest (community) levels, although the latters are required to obey to the 'organic' decisions of the upper ones, whose legitimacy precisely derives from the 'imperative mandate' obtained by the lower levels.

This contributes to explain why the real *locus* of the political power within the MAS-IPSP laid, at least in its origins, in the *trillizas*, and not in the 'political structure' of the instrument, as an analysis of the statute could suggest (BO5; BO29). Party bureaucracy is extremely weak or even inexistent, and, as key advisor to the National Directorate Ximena Centellas commented:

> '*The formal party organs at the local, departmental, and national levels are 'political' bodies, and for the most part they do not have the strength or the experience to propose anything, really. Their work focuses more on dealing with intraparty conflicts, and with the conflicts that arise within allied social organizations over power struggles*' (quoted from Anría, 2014: 182).

The 'ASP' and the 'MAS', thus, were conceived as little more than an electoral brand (BO21) controlled by the *trillizas* to *conquer the State*, and, literally, as an 'instrument' of the social movements.

4.4.3. The Transition from a Movement-Based Party to a Participative-Mobilising Populism: Strengthened Leadership and Inclusion of Other Sectors

The MAS-IPSP progressively abandoned its pure 'movement-based' functioning towards more 'impure', *populist* directions. Two factors account for this evolution. First, the necessity of expanding its electorate beyond the 'core-constituencies' of the Political Instrument. Second, and partially related with the first point, the consolidation of an 'autonomous', 'white' and intellectual faction, firstly within MAS-IPSP's congressional bench and then, decisively, in the government.

The MAS-IPSP achieved its first electoral victories exactly where the *trillizas* and the *cocaleros* are most rooted: Chapare – of course – but also vast territories in the Highlands and some 'colonised' areas in the Bolivian Orient. These zones are still the political bastions of the MAS-IPSP. However, it soon appeared necessary to expand the partisan appeal towards other rural zones and, crucially, in the urban centres. While maintaining strong and firm roots through the peasant social movements, the MAS-IPSP thus began including new social actors and sectors; meanwhile, the leadership strengthened its autonomy to articulate (through 'sovereigntist', statist and anti-neoliberal frames) and mediate the demands coming from its highly heterogeneous bases.

Although the MAS-IPSP is the political instrument of the *trillizas* and of the *cocaleros,* its explicit aim, since the beginning, was to represent 'all the exploited popular sectors', like workers, urban poors, miners, teachers, and even 'middle-class intellectuals' (Burgoa Moya, 2016). From the *cocalero* zone, the MAS-IPSP first expanded in those areas of the Highlands controlled by the pro-Morales CSUTCB's faction, that is, the Oruro and Potosí departments. In 2002 general elections, the MAS-IPSP was the party most voted in 76% of the municipalities of Oruro and in 58% of the municipalities of Potosí (García Yapur et al., 2014). The 'political instrument' also strengthened its control in Cochabamba (89% of the municipalities won), whereas in La Paz (where it suffered from the competition of the MIP, the Aymara nationalist party led by the peasant union leader Felipe Quispe), Chuquisaca and Santa Cruz' departments, it won the 35%, 32% and 12% of the municipalities, respectively. Interestingly, in the territories populated by Lowland indigenous peoples, the MAS-IPSP did not obtain significant results, also due to CIDOB's alliance with other parties (Van Cott, 2005).

Oruro and Potosí: the roots of the alliance between the MAS-IPSP and the *cooperativistas mineros*. Oruro and Potosí departments, in the Southern Highlands, are

extremely poor. The *ayllu* communitarian organization is still widespread. The primary sector, and particularly the mining sector and the cultivation of quinoa, contributes to most of the GDP of both departments. Surely, the fact that Evo Morales was born in Oruro's department and that Quechua-speaking peasants are majoritarian (in contrast to the department of La Paz) were important factor to explain MAS' early popularity there and the alignment of CSUTCB's local federation to the MAS-IPSP instead of the Aymara MIP. There were, however, deeper structural factors at play.

Despite the privatization of the mining sector and the political disarticulation of the COB, the Bolivian mining sector remained an important source of jobs and incomes, there. Together with private companies, since the eighties there was a dramatic increase in the number of 'mining cooperatives' (*cooperativas mineras*), which attracted many miners dismissed from COMIBOL (Gandarillas, 2011; Crabtree and Chaplin, 2013). The evolution of the Bolivian mining sector since the beginning of the neoliberal era has assumed clearly dual traits. On the one side, there is the private sector, which is more productive but poorly contributes to job creation. On the other side, there is a galaxy of mining cooperatives (nationally organized through the FENCOMIN[62]) flourished. These cooperatives are associations of individual 'producers', eventually exploiting salaried workers lacking any social right, and working in conditions 'similar to those existing in the 16th century', with rudimentary technologies and very low productivity (Crabtree and Chaplin, 2013).

The miners employed in cooperatives are, currently, more than 100.000. This means that, if we include also their family members, nearly 500.000 citizens depend on this sector, i.e. the 5% of the Bolivian population (BO21). They are concentrated in the departments of Oruro, Potosí and La Paz. Since 2007, due to the increases in commodity prices, their number has hugely grown. They are an extremely well organized and electorally relevant constituency, also thanks to their geographic concentration, and they

[62] *Federación Nacional de los Cooperativistas Mineros* (Mining Cooperatives' Federation).

were able to obtain important fiscal privileges and a ‘permissive’ enforcement of labour laws (interviews with BO11; BO12, Marco Gandarillas).

Only a tiny minority of the *cooperativistas* achieve a high economic status, whereas the majority (and, of course, the ‘salaried’, informally employed mineworkers) live and work in dramatic poor conditions (Crabtree and Chaplin, 2013). During the neoliberal era, the cooperatives exploited the least productive and most exhausted mines. With the ‘commodity boom’, the *cooperativistas* began contending with the salaried miners of private and public enterprises for the exploitation of more rentable mines, provoking violent clashes that often caused several victims, as in the case of Huanuni, in October 2006.

Since the privatization of COMIBOL, the number of formal salaried miners, once the ‘vanguard’ of the entire Bolivian popular sectors, diminished drastically. During the neoliberal era, some of them kept working for private, foreign companies (Gandarillas, 2011; Crabtree and Chaplin, 2013). Their federation (FSTMB) defended their prominent role within the COB and, together with other radical federations, began approaching the MAS since the early 2000s, and played a central role in the draft of the *Agenda de Octubre*. However, despite the inclusion of several former COB leaders within the MAS’ electoral lists, the salaried miners and the *cobistas* never achieved an effective primary role within the MAS-IPSP, its nationalist, statist and inclusive project notwithstanding.

In contrast, the organizational and numerical strength of the *cooperativistas* (the *outsiders* of the mining sector) opened a great political opportunity for the MAS to increase its electoral power in those departments. The alliance between the *trillizas* and the FENCOMIN was (and still is) tactical and instrumental, as the privileges accorded to the latter in exchange of its support have high economic and political costs, particularly since the beginning of MAS-IPSP's governmental phase. Nevertheless, the *cooperativistas mineros* have become progressively ‘organic’ to the MAS-IPSP, thus

achieving a higher status within the 'political instrument', at least at the local level, in competition with the *trillizas* (BO13; BO31). Many *cooperativistas* are also small landholders: it is not unusual that some FENCOMIN leaders also act as representatives of the local CSUTCB, and vice versa (Zuazo, 2008).

The MAS-IPSP in the Cities. Co-optation of Popular Organizations and the Role of the Intellectuals. The MAS-IPSP never won any departmental capital, neither in municipal or general elections, before 2005. In the 2002 general elections, the 'political instrument' was the most voted party in only one big city, El Alto, thanks to the peculiar indigenous identity of that city and to the final decline of the neopopulist party CONDEPA (Lazar, 2013; BO30). The MAS-IPSP strengthened its organizational linkages to the *juntas vecinales* and the *sindicatos urbanos* during the 2003-2005 period, when El Alto hosted the Gas War and several revolts against the privatisation of the local water company. This strategy culminated in 2006 with the appointment as Minister of Water and Environment of a FEJUVE (*Federación de Juntas Vecinales*) leader, Abel Mamani (Zegada et al., 2007; Anría, 2014).

However, the relationships between the MAS-IPSP and the *alteñas* (and, in general, urban) organizations were and are very different from those between the 'political instrument' and the *trillizas*. The MAS-IPSP employed the same prebendal and clientelistic strategy of co-optation traditionally used by the 'traditional parties' towards urban organizations (Anría, 2014). The network of urban organizations effectively began having an important influence over the candidate selection of the MAS-IPSP in the urban districts. However, in practice, the nominations have progressively come from organizations' leaders that are, in fact, militants of the very MAS, fully responding to

party's directives. *Juntas* and *sindicatos* have been progressively weakened by internal divisions along partisan lines (BO5)[63].

The MAS-IPSP was not able, in its early years, to successfully appeal to the urban middle classes, which tended to consider the *cocaleros* (and, more broadly, the peasant movements) as a danger for the stability of the country. To broaden the attractiveness in the urban centres (BO4; BO15; BO21), the MAS-IPSP opted for 'inviting' middle-class intellectuals and other 'urban' figures in the electoral lists. This practice was since the beginning quite extended, as more than a half of the MPs elected by the MAS-IPSP in 2002 were not 'organic' candidates (Van Cott, 2005). The *invitados* were and still are seen suspiciously by the *trillizas*, which argue that they lack the 'commitment' to the goals and the 'spirit' of the Political Instrument (BO17; BO23; García Yapur et al., 2015). The influence of the *invitados* within the party persistently grew, as the MAS-IPSP, once consolidated its control of the rural areas, further deepened its 'urban strategy' in 2005 and in 2009, when it achieved the absolute majority of the national votes (54% and 64%, respectively).

The very appointment of the candidate to the Vicepresidency is telling of the 'urban strategy' of the MAS. In 2002, Morales opted for Antonio Peredo, the brother of Inti and Coco, two soldiers of the Guevarist guerrilla in 1967 (Burgoa Moya, 2016). It was a clear attempt to build a 'worker-peasant' alliance, a strategy partially reversed in the following years, when the 'number two' of the political instrument became Álvaro García Linera, an influential sociologist, who had spent some years in prison due to his participation in the Aymara guerrilla led by Felipe Quispe during the early Nineties. García Linera, a prominent intellectual born in Cochabamba in an upper middle-class family, was expected to represent the 'respectable face' of the MAS to the eyes in the

[63] It seems to me that the use of the term *masista*, in urban environments (and particularly in El Alto, where I could interview some representatives of local urban associations), has a somewhat pejorative connotation, indicating those social leaders that 'sold' themselves or were 'captured' by the MAS-IPSP to obtain personal, political returns. In this sense, *masismo* is not so different from *condepismo*, *mirismo* or *emenerrismo*.

urban middle classes, in order to build a government in which 'the *ponchos* and the *ties* would share the power' (Zegada et al., 2007: 43). He soon became the main strategist of Morales' governments, with an enormous influence on the MAS-IPSP's economic and political choices.

MAS-IPSP's weakness in the East. Another weakness of the MAS-IPSP in its early phase was its poor support in the Eastern departments, the richest in terms of economic structures and natural resources.

Figure 4.1 Bolivian Departments (in Red: 'Half Moon' Departments)

Table 4.1 MAS' percentages of the votes in general elections (2002-2014)

	2002	2005	2009	2014
CHUQUISACA	17	54	56	61
LA PAZ	22	67	80	67
COCHABAMBA	38	65	69	65
ORURO	29	63	79	67
POTOSI	27	58	78	65
TARIJA	6	32	51	48
SANTA CRUZ	10	33	41	50
BENI	3	16	38	44
PANDO	3	21	45	54
TOT	21	54	64	51

Source: Author's elaboration, using data from Atlas Electoral de Bolivia (2010) and the website of the National Electoral Court.

As Table 4.1 shows, the electoral results of the MAS in the four Eastern departments, also known as *Media Luna* ('Half Moon': Tarija, Santa Cruz, Beni and Pando), have always been well below the national average, particularly until 2005. In 2002, the 'political instrument' was a negligible force there: it was the most voted party only in six Eastern municipalities located in 'colonized' areas, thanks to the local presence of the CSCB, the only *trilliza* effectively rooted in all nine Bolivia departments. The departments of Santa Cruz, Beni and Pando were (and, with the partial exception of Pando, still are) characterized by a socioeconomic structure based on *latifundios*[64]. The Agrarian Reform was never enacted there, because of the political influence of the Eastern economic oligarchy (Colque et al., 2015).

In brief, *Media Luna*'s departments lack both the agricultural structure of the Highlands, entirely based on *minifundios*, nor the Aymara or Quechua ethnic identity that favoured the early expansion of the MAS. Eastern elites maintained an enormous political influence through linkages with political parties and civil organisations like the 'Civic Committee pro Santa Cruz' (*Comité Cívico pro Santa Cruz*), a 'non-political' association dominated by *cruceño* agro-business (Marca Marca et al., 2013). When the crisis of the neoliberal state appeared evident, these sectors, fearing the increasing strength of Highlands indigenous people and social movements, reacted through an autonomist discourse against the 'centralist' Bolivian state and for the defence of an Eastern *'camba'* identity.

The construction and consolidation of the *camba* identity – supposedly characterized by an 'entrepreneurial' work ethic, economically liberal but impregnated by Catholic values – well resonated among Eastern populations, at odds with Aymara nationalism and attracted by the possibility of controlling the hydrocarbon resources

[64] Beni and Pando are the least populated departments of the country. In Beni, cattle industry and wood extractivism are widespread, while in Pando, at least until 2006, a feudal agriculture was still in use. In both departments, due to their geographic location, smuggling still furnishes an important source of revenues (Tassi et al., 2012; Crabtree and Chaplin, 2013). Tarija's department is largely based on gas and oil extractive activities.

located in their territories (Marca Marca et al., 2013; Arce Catacora, 2015). Moreover, the defence of the *camba* identity in the name of Bolivian multiculturalism and pluralism against the attacks of the 'centralist' *collas* inserted well in the multiethnic and multicultural discourse in vogue during the Nineties. Such a 'counter-hegemonic' (and 'counter-revolutionary') reaction dramatically marked the first Morales' presidential term.

4.5 The MAS-IPSP in Power

4.5.1 The first Government of the MAS: New, Unified Mobilizations against 'the Right'

Historical Context. A Polarising Phase. The triumph of Evo Morales, Álvaro García Linera and of the MAS-IPSP in the 2005 general elections assumed unexpected proportions: Morales obtained the 53,7% of the valid votes, and the MAS-IPSP's congressional seats increased from 8 senators and 27 deputies (2002) to 13 senators and 72 deputies. In the Lower Chamber, the MAS obtained the absolute majority of the seats, but not in the Senate, due to the overrepresentation of *antimasistas* small departments such as Beni and Pando. In the departmental elections, however, the opposition won six of the nine departments: those forming the *Media Luna*, for sure, but also Cochabamba and La Paz, with the electoral support from the urban areas. Before the official appointment by the Congress, Morales was proclaimed President of the State and *Apu Mallku* ('Supreme Leader') in an evocative ceremony in the indigenous archaeological site of Tiwanaku.

The implementation of the ambitious governmental program of the MAS, summarized in the so-called 'Ten Commandments'[65] (Zegada et al., 2007: 42), triggered as expected harsh reactions from the opposition. The first economic decisions of the new government, together with the call for the Constituent Assembly, inaugurated a long, chaotic and violent polarizing phase of the Bolivian history. It only ended in 2009, when Morales obtained a landslide victory over his opponents.

Fight against corruption and cuts to the 'redundant' state bureaucracy were central in the 2005 electoral campaign. However, the MAS-IPSP crucially pushed for a new direction and change in the Bolivian socioeconomic model, calling for the complete nationalization and industrialization of the hydrocarbons resources; a new Agrarian Reform; the complete reversal of the Law 21060; a stronger intervention of the state in the economy; and a new educational reform. Even more importantly, the MAS-IPSP fully supported the call for a Constituent Assembly. To appease the opposition from East Bolivia, the MAS-IPSP also backed an institutional reform for the 'Autonomy of the Regions and of the Peoples' (Zegada et al., 2007: 42).

From its first year in office, the new government showed great dynamism. Following the spirit of the *Agenda de Octubre*, Morales promulgated in May 2006 the Law Decree 28701 that 'nationalized'[66] the hydrocarbon sector. In March 2006, Morales called for the election of the Constituent Assembly and for a referendum on a 'regional-autonomist' reform to be included in the new Constitution. The MAS won the elections for the Constituent Assembly, but it did not reach two thirds of the seats, thus giving a 'veto power' to the opposition in the Assembly. In the 'autonomist' referendum, the

[65] The 'Ten Commandments' were an 'expansion' of the *Agenda de Octubre* (see the 2005 electoral manifesto). The fourth commandment was quite telling of MAS-IPSP's populist inspiration: '[…] *We will transform* [public] *institutions in an instrument of the pueblo, under the control of the society, to allow the latter to censure and substitute the powers*'.

[66] Technically, the Decree consisted in an increase of the state royalties, from 50% to 82%, along with the gradual buying of 50% + 1 of the shares of the private companies in the gas and oil sectors and the redefinition of the state license for the exploitation of the resources (Mayorga, 2010; Arce Catacora, 2015).

government finally chose to reverse its previous stance and successfully called for rejecting the reform (Zegada et al., 2007). Such strategic change deepened the Highlands-Lowlands cleavage, as all the *Media Luna* departments voted in favour of a federal reform.

This work is not the place to provide a detailed account of the political events marking the first Morales' term. Certainly, that phase was the most actively polarised period of recent Bolivian history. The country broke into two social and ideological camps, while the impact of extra-institutional politics (both pro and anti-government) was enormous. The process leading to the draft of the new Constitution (*Constitución Política del Estado*, CPE) was marked by severe tensions between the *masista* socio-political coalition and the opposition, exacerbated by the governmental decision to cut the transfers of the hydrocarbon revenues to the departments, in order to finance a new universal pension (*Renta Dignidad*) and thus provoking pro-autonomist reactions from *Media Luna*'s governors (Zegada et al., 2007; Mayorga, 2010). Political tensions paralysed for several months the work of the Constituent Assembly, which was initially located in Sucre (Romero et al., 2009). The opposition overtly sabotaged the Assembly; meanwhile, popular riots provoked by opposition militants repeatedly menaced the physical integrity of the *masistas* delegates. Morales opted for moving the Assembly's meetings inside a military barrack, despite the protests of the opposition. The *masistas* delegates converged on a draft of the CPE and then moved towards the city of Oruro (a pro-government city), where the draft was approved on 10th December 2007. All this first period was marked by several violent protests and multitudinous manifestations by each camp[67].

The approval of the CPE triggered the most violent period of the first Morales' term. Both Morales and the opposition convoked separate referendums that the National

[67] Two emblematic demonstrations were the '*Cabildo del Millón*' (One million's Assembly) organized in Santa Cruz to back the autonomist struggle, and the pro-governmental manifestation in El Alto, attended by two million people (Marca Marca et al., 2013).

Court declared illegal. Morales called for the popular approval of the CPE voted in Oruro; but he decided to accept the verdict of the Court, which prohibited the referendum arguing that a previous vote of the Congress was required (Romero et al., 2009: 140). Each of the four *Media Luna* governors, in turn, proceeded to convoke unofficial referendums – boycotted by the *masistas* – to approve their 'Autonomist Statutes' (Marca Marca et al., 2013). The solution to this *impasse* (the 'catastrophic gridlock', to use the words of García Linera, 2011) came from an old proposal of the opposition that was surprisingly retaken by Morales: the call for popular recall referendums (an instrument that was not present in the former CPE) against the very President and the governors of each department. Morales understood that many citizens, not necessarily *masistas*, were tired of the sabotage practices of the opposition (Romero et al., 2009; Mayorga, 2010; Marca Marca et al., 2013). The gamble paid off: Morales, in the recall referendum that was organised (10th August, 2008), obtained 67% of the popular votes and achieved the revocation of two governors of the opposition (José Luís Paredes of La Paz and Manfred Reyes Villa of Cochabamba). Popular support for the MAS-IPSP increased even in the *Media Luna*.

Table 4.2 Presidential Revocatory Referendum, Percentage of the votes for Evo Morales per department (August 2008).

	%
CHUQUISACA	54
LA PAZ	83
COCHABAMBA	71
ORURO	83
POTOSI	85
TARIJA	50
SANTA CRUZ	41
BENI	44
PANDO	53
BOLIVIA	67

Source: Author's elaboration, using data from Atlas Electoral de Bolivia (2010)

The defeat angered the most radical sectors of the opposition. In the last months of 2008, several violent episodes occurred in Santa Cruz (also provoked by *masistas* militants, whose number had consistently grown[68]), in Tarija and, particularly, in Pando, where sixteen pro-MAS peasants were killed in September 2008 by paramilitary forces close to Governor Leopoldo Fernández (Romero et al., 2009). The arrest of Fernández and the 'change in power relations' (García Linera, 2011) between the government and the opposition forced the moderate *antimasistas* factions to negotiate. The government agreed on negotiating with the parliamentary opposition relevant modifications, concerning over 100 articles, of the CPE approved in Oruro. The amended CPE was approved through a popular referendum (January 2009) by the 61% of the voters.

[68] This was a novel fact, because the most radical and violent antagonist groups, such as the *Unión Juvenil Cruceñista*, had dominated 'street politics' in Santa Cruz, until then.

The Zenith of the Communitarian Discourse: the new Constitution and the *Ley de Reconducción Comunitaria*. It is impossible to overstate the relevance assumed by the organized bases of the MAS-IPSP for the defence of the 'process of change' and of their government during the first Morales' term: the *participative-mobilising* features of the *movement-based populist project* of the MAS-IPSP emerged in their entirety during the 2006-2009 period. However, the role of the social movements began to change. The *trillizas* had then *their* political instrument governing, while the indigenous movements, as parts of the Unity Pact, identified their primary political goal in the construction of a new CPE, i.e. a new Country. Both the government and the *masista* congressional bench included figures coming from the *trillizas,* but also from different social sectors – miners, salaried and self-employed workers, middle-class intellectuals -, each of them with particular demands and sometimes different 'country projects'. Different demands had to be satisfied, while political unity preserved. The MAS-IPSP's populist project proved to be perfectly fit for achieving such potentially contrasting goals, at least until the 'anti-neoliberal enemy' was well alive.

To increase its electoral strength in the urban centres, Morales continued with the strategy of 'inviting' candidates to run in the MAS-IPSP's lists, instead of entirely relying on the multilevel and 'organic' process of candidate selection[69]. Despite the partial loss of control suffered by the *trillizas* over their 'instrument', in 2006 the Bolivian Congress experienced a true 'revolution': indigenous people, peasants and settlers dramatically altered its sociological composition, thus making of it a much closer 'mirror' of the multicultural, multiethnic and complex Bolivian society (Zegada and Komadina, 2011).

Because of their expertise, the *invitados* soon achieved a strong influence in the legislative debates. Several intellectuals (such as the Minister of the Rural Development,

[69] It has to be noted that sometimes the very social movements chose in their internal selection process to vote for external figures (such as legal or political consultants of the organizations, or people 'trusted' by the movements because of their personal trajectories: Zuazo, 2008; BO2; BO4; BO15).

Carlos Romero, or the Minister of the Economy, Luís Arce Catacora, and the Vicepresident García Linera) occupied key roles in the government, which since the beginning assumed the political initiative within the *proceso de cambio*. This inner circle shared statist economic views and was less familiar with the indigenist vocabulary; it led the negotiations with the opposition during the last months of the Constituent Assembly.

Nevertheless, the 2006-2009 period was characterised by a very strong influence of the indigenist discourses and movements. This was reflected both in the process that led to the draft of the CPE and in the elaboration of the *Ley de Reconducción Comunitaria,* a sort of 'Second Agrarian Reform' (see below). During the first term of Morales, the situation of political polarization insured a central role to the social movements and cemented the Unity Pact between the *trillizas* and the indigenist organizations (CIDOB and CONAMAQ), thus reviving the 'unified mobilizations' of the pre-governmental phase.

The Pact prepared a comprehensive CPE's draft, which served as the base of discussion in the Constituent Assembly in Sucre and Oruro (Zegada et al., 2007; Garcés, 2010). The drafting process probably represented the most creative, deliberative and participatory moment in the recent Bolivian history (BO9; BO13). Long discussions took place in the plenary Assemblies of the Pact – or in the different commission – with continuous consultations of the rank-and-files of each movement to evaluate the proposals coming from the other organizations and to choose the strategies to follow (BO9). Social movements coming from very different *milieus* socialized and sometimes modified their proposals, even their *identities*[70], through performative and deliberative processes.

[70] For instance, the 'colonizers' federation (CSCB) changed its name in 'Federation of the Intercultural Communities of Bolivia' (CSCIOB, or *'interculturales'*), and the Women Peasant Federation in 'Women Indigenous Peasant National Confederation of Bolivia – Bartolina Sisa' (CNMCIOB – BS, or '*Bartolinas*'), to stress their ethnic identities.

This did not mean that the contrasts between the different movements were absent. First, the organizations had different projects in mind. The (Aymara) statist and nationalist project of the *trillizas* was radically different from the 'multicultural' vision of the indigenist organizations, which were clearly interested in the protection of ethnic and cultural minorities from an omnipotent State, and in defending their ancestral rights over their lands (BO1; BO9; BO25). In contrast, the *trillizas* considered themselves an 'oppressed *majority*', and finally glimpsed the opportunity of 'conquering' the State for rural development, for the access to lands and credit, and for the reappropriation of *national and natural* resources (Garcés, 2010). The new CPE, for instance, included the right for peoples living in the TCOs to achieve high degrees of autonomy, and be consulted in case the State wanted to exploit local natural resources. As a leader of the CSUTCB commented: "*so, is this the famous Plurinational State? So, we have fought for so long time to conquer the power, and now we have to share it…"* (BO9; my translation).

For the CIDOB and the CONAMAQ (the indigenous organizations from the Lowlands and from the Highlands), the Unity Pact represented the only instrument with which they could exert influence on the polity domain, while the *trillizas* disposed of their 'electoral instrument'. In contrast to the indigenous movements, MAS' representatives, and even the government, were not particularly interested in 'multicultural' issues (Zegada et al., 2007; Garcés, 2010). They had different priorities (for example, social and economic policies), and left to the Unity Pact the task of elaborating the ideological underpinnings of the new 'Plurinational State' (BO13; Garcés, 2010). The approval of the CPE in Oruro represented the peak of the revolutionary moment in Bolivia; but it also marked the beginning of a process of centralization and 'institutionalization' of the 'process of change'. The changes introduced by the Congress (with the participation of the opposition) to the draft of the CPE voted in Oruro limited the achievements of the 'indigenist' wing of the Unity Pact, although in no way affected the 'spirit' of the Constituent process (Romero et al., 2009).

The CPE proclaimed the coexistence of 'representative', 'direct-participative' and 'communitarian' democracy in the Bolivian Plurinational State[71].

Indigenous organizations had also a great influence on the draft of the *Ley de Reconducción Comunitaria,* a sort of 'Second Agrarian Reform' (Colque et al., 2015). Its main architect was Alejandro Almaraz, a prominent sociologist and an early member of the 'intellectual wing' of the MAS-IPSP. His respected status among the indigenist movements and the *trillizas'* bases allowed him to design and implement a reform much more inspired by a 'communitarian' vision than the 'individualist' and 'productivist' expectations of the CSUTCB and of the CSCB (BO1; BO9).

The *Ley de Reconducción Comunitaria* triggered a quite radical process of land redistribution, particularly during the first term of Morales[72]. The Law guaranteed legal entitlement of the land (a central goal of the CSUTCB and the CSCIOB) and was particularly successful in the redistribution of publicly owned land (*tierras fiscales*) to the small and median peasantry, and to the indigenous communities both in the Highlands and (especially) in the Lowlands. However, in the *Media Luna,* except for the Pando department, the reform did not dramatically change the agrarian structure based on *latifundios*. The most 'communitarian' provision, which Almaraz was able to defend against pressures coming from the *trillizas* and the government, was the prohibition of individual assignments of *tierras fiscales*, for which only collective title was admitted.

Therefore, both the CPE and the *Ley de Reconducción Comunitaria* were clearly inspired by an 'indigenist', 'communitarian' vision mainly coming from CONAMAQ

[71] Both the 'participative' and 'communitarian' views were made compatible with representative democracy. The 'participative' democratic features practically consist in the introduction of the possibility of calling recall referendums against elected public charges. Communitarian democracy has been 'recognized' by the new CPE merely as a form of local organization still compatible with representative democracy. National political parties were allowed to compete for seats in seven 'indigenous districts'. For a broad discussion, see Zegada et al., 2007: 141-198.

[72] While in the 1996-2006 period (i.e., since the promulgation of the INRA Law up to the end of the 'neoliberal era') 12,4 millions of hectares were distributed, in the 2007-2009 11,7 million were distributed (over 16 million in the 2010-2014 period: see Colque et al., 2015).

and CIDOB. In contrast, the government and the *trillizas* were much more determined to design the general features of the socioeconomic model to implement. The economic program prepared for the 2005 elections, under the decisive influence of the Minister of the Economy Arce Catacora, posited three quite general goals to achieve: 'dignity, sovereignty and productivity'. This implied that the control of the national resources (*sovereignty*) meant statist intervention in the economy to foster industrialization and welfare (*productivity*, in order to '*vivir bien*') and to eradicate extreme poverty (*dignity*)[73].

Such a statist project assigned a strong control of the policy-making process to the governmental wing of the MAS. The economic bonanza boosted public revenues, which financed extensive social policies and investments in public infrastructures, particularly in the rural areas. The political initiative steadily moved towards the government, while the movements – and, particularly, the *trillizas* – rapidly changed their function, becoming a sort of 'intermediaries' between their communities and the government to capture public spending in developmental projects and infrastructural works. Such evolution became clear during the second term of Morales (2010-2014). After the winning in 2009 general elections, the 'organic' movements firmly expected that 'their turn' for 'receiving dividends' had come (BO5; BO13; BO20; BO21). Morales and his government thus began acting as a 'chamber of compensation' for the different popular demands coming from the organizations forming part of the *masista* coalition: a sort of 'populist-corporatist' system of interest aggregation.

Such evolution was symbolised by the creation in 2008 of the CONALCAM (*Comisión Nacional por el Cambio* – National Commission for the Change), an informal

[73] The mixture, in MAS-IPSP's ideology, of 'nationalist' and 'indigenist' appeals, and the statist and *desarrollista* direction that the *process of change* has taken, is exemplified by the *Patriotic Agenda* (or *Agenda 2025*) drafted in 2013. The *Agenda* consists in thirteen points, which include the achievement of a complete sovereignty on 'scientific, financial, productive, alimentary, environmental and maritime issues and on natural resources', the universalization of basic services, and the eradication of extreme poverty. '2025' refers to the Bicentenary of the Bolivian State, marking a difference with the early *masista* symbology, full of references to pre-independence heroes like Túpac Katari and Bartolina Sisa (Mayorga, 2014: 68).

umbrella made up of the government and the leaders of the social movements sustaining the ‘process of change’: the *trillizas*, the CIDOB, the CONAMAQ, but also the most important *juntas vecinales* and several other unions (street vendors, transportation workers, cooperativist miners and, some years later, also the COB; Mayorga, 2010). The CONALCAM was created to mobilize and coordinate the different ‘popular sectors’ during the struggle for the CPE and, later, for electoral campaigning (BO5; BO29). Its creation reflected the growing institutionalization of the ‘process of change’, and the diminished autonomy of the social movements in relation to the government.

4.5.2 The Second Government of the MAS. Winners and Losers of the Proceso de Cambio

The MAS-IPSP, since the beginning, aimed to build a social alliance encompassing all the ‘exploited’ and ‘excluded’ Bolivian social sectors. In fact, particularly since 2005, the MAS-IPSP opened its lists to candidates coming from 'non-core' organizations, such as the FENCOMIN, the COB, the transportation workers' and street vendors' unions, or the *juntas vecinales*. In some cases, the *masistas* élites recurred to the ‘invitation’ of representatives from these organizations, which soon began acting as powerful ‘veto blocks’ (BO5; BO29) within the parliament (and in the streets). In other cases, these organizations began taking part of the ‘organic’ candidate selection process, like the *cooperativistas* in Oruro and Potosí (BO13; Hernán Montero). It must not be forgotten that many representatives of the *trillizas* respond also to specific interest groups, as their rank-and-files are often occupied in non-rural economic activities.

Several scholars (e.g., Zegada et al., 2007; Do Alto and Stefanoni, 2010; Mayorga, 2014) alerted about the potential problems created by the extreme social heterogeneity of the *masista* alliance and prefigured a certain hierarchization of the

MAS-IPSP. In fact, the 'presidential decisionism' (Mayorga, 2014) has undoubtedly increased. Nevertheless, the empowerment of the Bolivian popular, 'marginal' (Zegada et al., 2007) sectors and the improvement of their living conditions are also unquestionable.

The governmental 'room for manoeuvre' has become greater but is certainly not unconstrained. The decision-making process within the MAS-IPSP – and, in fact, within the government – can be conceived as the result of negotiations between each actors within the ruling coalition, and in which Morales' role as 'aggregator of the social demands' is central. His respected status, his enormous autonomous political capital (mainly due to his 'epic' struggles against 'imperialism' and his 'symbolic representation' of the Bolivian indigenous peoples), together with his mediating skills, make of him the 'decider of last resort' over either general or particular (often particularistic) issues. Morales has the last word on the solution to 'creative tensions' (García Linera, 2011) erupting amongst the different sectors participating in the *proceso de cambio*. The figure of 'Evo' is almost never criticised by *masistas* grassroots, who eventually tend to blame his 'intellectual entourage' for having weakened the links between the government and the movements (BO16; BO17).

The heterogeneous movements and interest groups participating in the *proceso de cambio* occupy very different positions within the *galaxia oficialista*. A central feature of the *participative-mobilising populisms*, as defined in Chapter 3, is the existence of inter-organizational conflicts between the different movements or organizations, and the MAS-IPSP is a paradigmatic case in this sense. Particularly since the triumph in the 2011 elections, which temporarily weakened the 'common enemy' (the political Right) and made unlikely a reverse of the *proceso*, strong contrasts around distributive issues have emerged. Some organizations, each of them representing precise social sectors of the complex and lively Bolivian society, have been more able than others to have their demands better satisfied. The direction taken by the *proceso de cambio* in socioeconomic issues represents a reliable indicator of the 'power relations'

within *masismo*, because the *masista* socioeconomic model provoked unequal gains amongst the social sectors represented by different organizations.

The *Masista* Socioeconomic Model. An Overview. Economic development and redistributive social policies were, since the beginning, the true priorities of the *masistas* governments. As Tables 4.3 and 4.4 shows, Bolivia experienced a long economic bonanza, also thanks to the rise of the international prices of its commodities, mainly hydrocarbons, minerals and soybean. The choice of 'nationalizing' (i.e., to increase the public participation in hydrocarbon and extractive activities) Bolivian non-renewable resources allowed for a huge increase in social spending and in public investments, whose results were immediately visible.

Table 4.3 Bolivian socioeconomic indicators (1999-2014).

	2000	2002	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2014
GDP Per Capita (US$)	998	905	1037	1384	1769	2369	2939	3116
Extreme Poverty (%)	45,2	39,5	38,2	37,7	26,1	20,9	18,8	17,8
Gini Index	0,63	0,61	0,6	0,56	0,5	0,47	n.a.	n.a.
Urban Unemployment	7,5	8,7	8,1	7,7	4,9	3,8	4	3,5
Minimum Wage (Bs.)	355	430	440	525	647	815	1200	1440
Scholar Abandon	6,5	6,2	5,8	5,1	3,4	2,2	2,9	2,9
Int. Financial Reserves (US$ Billions)	n.a.	854	1714	5319	8580	12019	14430	15123
Public Companies' Utilities (US$ Millions)	n.a.	n.a.	69	818	2186	4541	6627	7412

Source: Arce Catacora (2015), using data from Instituto Nacional de Estadística.

Table 4.4 Bolivian GDP Variation % (1999-2014)

Year	GDP Variation
1999	0.4
2000	2.5
2001	1.7
2002	2.5
2003	2.7
2004	4.2
2005	4.4
(Average 1999-2005)	2.6
2006	4.8
2007	4.6
2008	6.1
2009	3.4
2010	4.1
2011	5.2
2012	5.1
2013	6.8
2014	5.5
(Average 2006-2014)	5.1

Source: Arce Catacora (2015), using data from Instituto Nacional de Estadística.

According to the 'socio-comunitarian and productive economic program' of the MAS-IPSP, mostly elaborated by the Minister of Economy Arce Catacora, the recuperation of *sovereignty* in the exploitation of the natural resources would have brought *dignity* and *productivity* for all the Bolivians, through rural and industrial developmental projects and higher social spending. The basic idea, thus, was to take advantage of the resources produced by sectors that poorly contribute to the employment rate but are characterised by high productivity, and to reinvest the revenues in labour-intensive agricultural and industrial sectors. Economic sovereignty has also been pursued through the nationalization of several utility companies (water, electricity, air

transports and telecommunications), while allowing for tariffs' control through public subsidies.

Public investments have effectively increased (see Table 4.5). However, the modification of the economic structure has been, at best, very limited. The Bolivian popular sectors have benefitted from important subsidies in the prices of basic goods and from quite extensive social policies, as well as in terms of public infrastructures. However, the project of 'industrializing Bolivia' seems to have failed, while agro-industrial and tertiary (mainly commercial) sectors have experienced an impressive growth. In fact, during the 2001-2011 period, the contribution of the industrial sector (from 20,4% to 19,6%) and the agricultural sector (from 15,8 to 14,9%) to the GDP slightly decreased, whereas the contribution of the extractive sectors increased from 25,9% to 28,7%. Nearly half of the Bolivian GDP is currently produced by the commercial and transportation sectors, which have experienced a spectacular bonanza in the last years (Tassi et al., 2012: 64). Most of these activities consist in small and very small economic units, usually active in the so-called 'informal' economy, which employ two-thirds of the Bolivians. Because such proportion has continued to grow during the *masistas* governments, the project of 'formalizing' Bolivian economy and its labour market has substantially failed (BO12; BO18; BO22).

Table 4.5 Public Investments in Agricultural and Industrial Sectors (1996-2014; $US billions).

Year	Agriculture	Industry
1996	19	0.5
1997	24	6
1998	53	4
1999	42	4
2000	53	6
2001	59	6
2002	54	7
2003	41	5
2004	49	4
2005	57	7
2006	76	11
2007	83	20
2008	82	18
2009	90	15
2010	84	12
2011	135	19
2012	180	70
2013	223	101
2014	275	119
2015	447	271

Source: elaborated from Arce Catacora (2015). Agricultural sector includes livestock. Industrial sector includes tourism.

Safety-net social programs financed through oil and gas revenues – such as the minimum pension scheme *Renta Dignidad*, or the monthly allowance to prevent school abandon (*Bono Juancito Pinto*) or child malnutrition (*Bono Juana Azurduy*), soon became extremely popular. Despite the fact that the monthly amount of such cash-

transfer schemes is quite limited[74], it is not insignificant by Bolivian standards. Another popular measure, negotiated with the COB, has been the nationalization (2010) of the pension system, which reverted the 'Chilean' reform implemented by Sánchez de Losada. A very popular program, *Evo Cumple* ('Evo Accomplishes'), delivers infrastructural works at the community level, in educational, wealth or sport areas, among others. In addition, 35% of the oil revenues is directly destined to the municipalities, and further fostered the development of local infrastructural programs. As a consultant of an NGO reported,

> *'About the social programs, here, in the Highlands, they have been decisive... […] when you go to a reunion, people perceive them clearly… […] comrades come and tell you, 'you know that until ten years ago we were SO poor'… they can't believe it. […] when you go to a community, people notice that a road was built, they have… new stuffs, which can't seem very important, such as… a football pitch… more possibilities to go to the city… even the very possibility to can go to a city!'* (BO25).

After the dramatic events in the 2006-2009 period, Morales' governments were also able to find a *modus vivendi* with their old 'archenemies', the agro-industrial élites of Santa Cruz (BO1; BO21; Saavedra, 2015). Morales acknowledged the importance of this sector for food provision for the growing urban population, the revenues coming from the exportation of soybean and for the 'trickle-down' effects for the small and medium peasantry (organized into the CSUTCB and – mostly – the CSCIOB) in the Lowlands (Colque et al., 2015).

[74] The highest allowance is the *Renta Dignidad*, which reaches a maximum of US$35 per month.

<u>The "*trillizas'* Government" in Power.</u> The *masista* rhetoric usually refers to Morales' executive as the 'government of the social movements' (*el gobierno de los movimientos sociales*). Like many slogans, this one contains a grain of truth, but is also far from fully describing the reality (Zuazo, 2010; Grisaffi, 2013). Not even the *trillizas* dispose directly of their 'instrument'. This is mainly due to the process of 'autonomization' of the government from the 'social bases', and to its 'technocratization'[75]. Obviously, governmental tasks necessarily gave the executive a greater autonomy. Moreover, as most of the leaders of the social movements moved to occupy political positions, it provoked a difficult renewal of the leaderships of the movements (BO13). The concentration of power produced stronger top-down influences on the selection of the movements' leaders (BO6; BO17; BO29), further restraining the autonomy of the social movements, limiting the 'bottom-up' features of the MAS-IPSP and distorting the own concept of 'political instrument'[76].

As Anría stressed (2014: 168-177), and several interviewees confirmed, the political direction of the *proceso* is fully controlled by the government. The draft of

[75] In the first Morales' cabinet, Ministries with a "social movement background" were 69% (10 of 16). Two years later, this percentage fell to 44%, and, nine years later, to 15% (Oikonomakis and Espinoza, 2014: 19).

[76] My interviews with CSCIOB's and peasant unions' leaders (Leonardo Loza and Juana Quispe) over the *Gasolinazo* are revealing of this 'hierarchization' and the loss of autonomy suffered by the *trillizas*. The *Gasolinazo* was a wave of protests that occurred in December 2009, led by important sectors *within* the governmental coalition (such as rural settlers and *cocaleros*), against a Vicepresidential decree that dramatically cut the subsidies on combustibles' costs to reduce smuggling activities. The decree was promulgated a few weeks after the large victory of Morales in the presidential elections, when he obtained the 64% of the votes, and during the Christmas' holidays, when the government believed a popular mobilization would be unlikely. The opposite was true, and the government was forced to withdraw the decree. This represented a clear example of what 'ruling by obeying' (*mandar obedeciendo*, one of the famous slogan of the MAS-IPSP) could mean, and also demonstrated the immense political influence of the *cocaleros* over *their* government. However, the leaders I interviewed in 2016 tended, in their stories, to justify the initial promulgation and to underscore the 'necessity' of that Decree (although, as Loza argued, '*it was not the moment to do that*').

policy proposals relies on sectorial experts directly dialoguing with the Ministries, while the contribution of the MAS-IPSP's congressional bench is often negligible (BO21; Zegada and Komadina, 2011). However, this does not imply that the *trillizas* are fully excluded from the policy-making process. They actually lost their 'creative' function, typical of the Constituent phase (BO21), but they remain highly influential in the negotiations regarding the concrete distribution of public transfers for social and economic spending. Such political exchanges tend to occur outside the parliamentary arena; the detailed legislation is continuously discussed during informal reunions between Morales and his ministries and the representatives of the social organizations. Therefore, multiple points of access to the polity domain are still at disposal of the movements. As CSCIOB's leader reported,

> *'In the past, who cared about us? To approve a bill, a project, a decree, who dialogued with us? Nobody. When they implemented coca zero policies, who dialogued with us? [...] The government now goes to hear even the furthest Bolivian community; it receives many proposals. For instance, yesterday, I had a meeting with the President. I specified all of our claims: 'organic', political, productive claims. And I am sure that all the social organizations do this. Through these reunions, these* ampliados*, the 'Patriotic Agenda' was drafted. It is not true that the 'Patriotic Agenda' comes from the government. This is the rhetoric of the Right. They want to divide the government from us'* (BO15).

The obvious consequence is that the role of MAS-IPSP's legislators, and *particularly* of those 'organically' elected and belonging to the *trillizas*, is strongly circumscribed and subjected to contrasting tensions. On the one side, MAS-IPSP's MPs are expected to obey to governmental directives and the *leader*, whose authority is unquestionable and whose legitimacy derives from being the highest expression of the 'government of the social movements'. As García Linera famously stated, '*the MAS is*

not a party formed by free thinkers' (quoted in Zegada and Komadina, 2011): its representatives simply represent a 'speaker' of the movements and, indirectly, of 'their' government.

On the other side, 'organic' legislators have been selected by their own territorial constituencies, which wait for concrete returns. Therefore, the 'party in the public office' has to respect two potentially contrasting imperative mandates: 'from the bottom' (the *territories*) and 'from the top' (the government and the *trillizas'* apical officials). Although MAS-IPSP's representatives claim to be, first of all, accountable to their own constituencies (BO17; Zegada and Komadina, 2011), the 'orders from above' tend to be most compelling, because the *trillizas* are highly conscious of their priority: backing 'their government' in power and defending their institutional power.

The *trillizas* thus assumed two main roles. First, they became the 'intermediaries' between their communities and the State. The border at the municipal level between the union and the public administration is extremely porous, due to the complete hegemony achieved by the MAS-IPSP in rural areas (Oikonomakis and Espinoza, 2014; BO9). Second, they tend to represent the most dynamic and 'productivist' peasantry, benefitting from the boom of soybean (in the East), quinoa (in the Highlands) and coca[77] (in the departments of Cochabamba, Beni and Santa Cruz) crops (BO1). The spread of the cultivation of transgenic[78] soybean, fostered by the government and by the same *trillizas* (BO4), in the name of productivity[79], has been widely documented; though

[77] Coca leaf cultivation has been fully legalized, with some limitations to the maximum extension of cultivable land per peasant. The *cocaleros* unions have the task of assuring the compliance of such limitations: such system has brought quite positive results, confirming the moderate tendencies assumed by *cocalero* unions under *their* government. Nevertheless, the official goal *coca sí, cocaina no* does not seem close to be achieved (BO24; Grisaffi, 2015).

[78] As different sources state, the 98% of the soybean cultivated in Bolivia is transgenic (Tassi et al., 2012; Crabtree and Chaplin, 2013).

[79] The 'developmentalism' embraced by the MAS-IPSP have had several interesting consequences for the Bolivian economy. The low agricultural prices, due to the increasing production, obviously favoured the urban population and consolidated the rural-urban migratory trend, discouraging the traditional cultivation. Thus, despite of the rhetoric of the aim of 'alimentary sovereignty', Bolivia is importing

standing in sharp contrast with communitarian and traditionalist rhetoric. To quote the words of the current CSUTCB's leader,

> *'Our goals are freedom and social justice; thus we do not fight for small things. The CSUTCB go much beyond these small things, these 'sops'* [tajaditas] *that we could obtain. We do not care about* doble aguinaldo [the compulsory 'second bonus' introduced by Morales for formal, salaried workers], *we don't care about the salary, because the salary could end, a job could end, a mine could end, but our work will never end. Therefore, our claims, as peasants, have more to do with productive issues, something that we were not allowed to discuss with the neoliberal governments. Now we can talk about* a lot, a lot, a lot *of projects and programs related with production, irrigation, roads, genetic improvements that we are discussing now…'* (BO4).

An important effect of the MAS-IPSP's rural policies is the aggressive expansion of monocultures (particularly coca leaf and soybean), and other rural activities such as wood extraction. This has provoked growing tensions between peasant and the 'indigenous' organizations once forming the Unity Pact, as it has been symbolised by the TIPNIS issue.

The TIPNIS (*Territorio Indígena Parque Nacional Isiboro-Sécure*) is an indigenous territory located between the Cochabamba and Beni departments. The governmental project of building a road crossing the core of this territory to connect this area with Peru and Brazil has triggered since 2011 wide protests among the indigenous movements (CIDOB and CONAMAQ). The *trillizas* backed the project for the economic benefits it would bring for (both legal and illegal) coca economy. The national government repeatedly stated that 'the road will be built', despite the opposition from

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traditional crops and exporting monocultures such as soybean and quinoa. Nonetheless, the peasantry is still benefitted by social policies and infrastructural works.

indigenous organizations and intellectuals (Paz, 2012; BO13). Without entering into the details, some facts must be mentioned. First, the government organized a popular consultation with some (but not all) the indigenous communities involved, although the opposition accused it of having recurred to a 'blackmail' strategy by linking the approval of the project to the realisation of several infrastructural works in the area (BO13; BO20). Second, the consequences for the indigenous movements have been severe, as they were weakened by different splits between 'autonomist' and pro-governmental factions (the only recognised by the government as entitled interlocutors). Third, the contrast between the *trillizas* and the indigenous organizations expanded to other issues. For instance, the *trillizas* have aimed to further expand the cultivable lands in detriment of the indigenous communities, by arguing that many TCOs did not fulfil any 'socioeconomic function' because of the lack of intensive agriculture. This, according to the *trillizas*, would represent a 'waste' of Bolivian resources and a loss of potential economic productivity (Colque et al., 2015).

Non-Core Organizations. The MAS-IPSP as the 'Political Instrument' of Non-Salaried Sectors?

> *'We coordinate [with the COB] about some policies, such as the universal health system, […], the education system, we have to coordinate, it is necessary… because teachers depend on the COB, but also depend on the peasantry, because, if there are no peasants, there are no children, and the teacher will lose his job'* (BO4).

> *The COB depends on salaried workers… but we, as peasants, are also affiliated to it! Now, the COB has realized it. […] the COB cannot still say that it represents only the salaried workers, it represents also peasants, merchants, street vendors…the COB is the Father of all of us!* (BO23).

The relations between the organizations representing the Bolivian insiders (the salaried workers employed in the formal sectors) and MAS-IPSP's governments has not been exempt of tensions. Surely, the COB acknowledges that its political condition has dramatically improved, when compared with the neoliberal era (BO11; BO12). The COB backed the *proceso de cambio* since the beginning, although it did not represent the main 'core-constituencies' of such *proceso*. The policy results of the Morales' governments were often less than satisfactory for the unions, such as, for example, in the case of the negotiations for the Pension Law reform, in which salaried workers were forced to dramatically lower their demands (BO22). During the last years, the COB has been able to obtain relevant increases of the minimum wage, together with the legal obligation for the entrepreneurs to recognise a 'second bonus' (*doble aguinaldo*) for all the salaried workers. Morales' governments (partially) increased legal labour protections (Zegada et al., 2007; Mayorga, 2008), although such reforms, according to some studies, made labour market 'formalization' even more difficult (Soraya, 2011; Muriel and

Machicado, 2012; Bernal et al., 2015). Despite the inclusion of several *cobistas* within the electoral lists of the MAS-IPSP, the union officials complain that the COB is highly underrepresented at the governmental and parliamentary levels (BO12).

The grievances expressed by the unions are numerous. Despite the increase in public investments in the industrial sectors (see Table 4.5), there is a strong dissatisfaction regarding the poor results achieved in terms of 'industrialization' and 'formalization' of the economy (BO18; BO22), which, among other things, would boost the bargaining power of the COB. However, an effective governmental intervention to 'industrialise' and 'formalise' the economy would affect several interest groups that are important MAS-IPSP's core-constituencies (Tassi et al., 2012) – for example those involved in commercial activities related with smuggling, which directly damages Bolivian small artisan industries. This and other kinds of illegal traffics, also linked with the coca economy, are very difficult to eradicate. The illegal importation of basic consumer goods has fostered the emergence of a well-to-do 'indigenous bourgeoisie' (*burguesía chola*) playing a leading role within the *sindicatos urbanos*. Such activities, through the reinvestment of their profits, have produced large benefits for construction and financial sectors, among others (Tassi et al., 2012). In the same vein, the Congress has passed several '*perdonazos*' bills legalizing the selling of cars and trucks illegally imported from Chile, to appease the powerful transportation unions (Crabtree and Chaplin, 2013).

The COB portrays itself as a 'critical friend' of the MAS-IPSP (BO12). I would not define its support as 'conditional', because in fact the MAS-IPSP still represents the *only* political option available for the Bolivian peak union confederation to advance the interests of the working class[80]. However, some unions representing specific salaried sectors (like the urban teachers) are overtly opposing the MAS-IPSP: the latter reacts by pointing at their so-called 'selfishness', 'laziness' and their supposed links with right-

[80] However, COB officials often stress the necessity of creating *their own political instrument*, which seems a quite difficult task, due to the reduced size of its likely 'core-constituencies'.

wing parties (BO23; BO26). In the last years, the COB assumed a more critical stance, partially in response to the growing dissatisfaction of its rank-and-files. The numerous corruption scandals that recently involved rural unions increased working-class discontent. While the statist, *desarrollista* inspiration of Morales' inner circle within the government does have some points in common with *cobistas* ideologies and interests, other features of the governmental project are much more akin to the interests of rural and urban self-employed workers (Do Alto and Stefanoni, 2010) and are clearly at odds with the expectations of the COB.

Another source of tensions between salaried and non-salaried sectors included in the broad *masista* social coalition has been the long conflict opposing salaried miners and *cooperativistas*. In 2006 seventeen miners died in violent confrontations following the *cooperativistas'* attempt to exploit a public-owned mine in Huanuni. Morales then dismissed the Minister of Mining (a *cooperativista*) and hired the majority of Huanuni's *cooperativistas* in the COMIBOL. However, other confrontations followed: the most violent occurred in 2016, when some *cooperativistas* killed a Viceminister sent as a mediator from La Paz. The FSTMB (the salaried mineworkers federation) dubs the *cooperativistas* as 'bloodsuckers' taking advantage of a favourable fiscal regime. The FENCOMIN replies that the FSTMB is simply defending the 'privileges' of the salaried miners, whose wages are well above the Bolivian average (BO3; BO12; BO31). All attempts of MAS-IPSP's governments to limit the privileges of the *cooperativistas* have been unsuccessful, because of their high mobilising capacity and their ability to act as a legislative (and social) bloc (BO32). The FENCOMIN has even acquired the status of 'organic' member of the MAS-IPSP in its strongholds (the departments of La Paz, Oruro and Potosí), thus increasing its presence in the institutions.

Other organizations representing *outsider* sectors, such as transportation unions and other *sindicatos urbanos* representing informal workers, also work as effective 'veto

blocs' within the *masista* coalition. However, the process of union leaders' cooptation has provoked important tensions with the unions' rank-and-files. Several *masistas* union leaders have been strongly criticized for cronyism and other clientelistic practices, thus contributing to unions' discredit and to the declining effectiveness of MAS-IPSP's organisational linkages (BO16; BO18)[81].

4.6 Who votes for the MAS-IPSP? Sociological determinants of the masista vote

The qualitative evidences presented above described the inter-organizational struggles between the Bolivian popular organizations forming part of the *proceso de cambio* led by the MAS. In order to assess to which extent the Bolivian structures of representation effectively mirror social cleavages having a repercussion on voting choices, I offer here a quantitative analysis, using survey data from LAPOP (Latin American Public Opinion Project). I used three different waves of the questionnaire: namely, these waves following the general elections in 2002, 2005 and 2009 (i.e., the 2004, 2006 and 2010 questionnaires). Each of these elections marked crucial achievements of the MAS-IPSP: its appearance as a powerful, national level force (2002), its first electoral victory (2005), and the consolidation of an hegemony (2009). It would have been helpful to have data concerning the composition of Morales' electorate

[81] The political evolution observed in El Alto is revealing. In 2009 general elections, the MAS-IPSP obtained the 82% of the valid votes there. However, after the inefficient and corrupt municipal government of the *masista* Edgar Patana, the *indigenous city* in 2014 elected the rightist candidate Soledad Chapetón for the mayorship, and mostly voted for Félix Patzi (the main *antimasista* candidate) for the governorship of the department of La Paz. At the same time, the *juntas* and several important unions suffered from splits along partisan lines, thus losing both power and social legitimacy (BO18).

after his second term: unfortunately, the last LAPOP questionnaire available for Bolivia has been collected in 2014, thus *before* 2015 general elections.

For each election, I first present some cross tabulations showing MAS' voting preferences according to several sociological categories: employment, education, income, age and self-declared ethnicity. Later, I present the results of basic multivariate analyses through probit regression models. The regressors, apart from the categories mentioned above, include ideology (in a 1-10 scale: 1=Left, 10=Right); gender; a dichotomous variable called 'Half Moon', indicating if the respondent lives in the *Media Luna;* and a 'Participation Index' (whose range is from 0 to 4, measuring the participation of the respondents, in the past 12 months, in some neighbourhood committee, *junta vecinal*, *asociación de padres de familia* or *sindicatos*). For 2009 elections, I included also a dichotomous variable called *Bono*, which indicates if the respondent, of some family member, is a recipient of a social policy program, such as *Renta Dignidad*, *Bono Juancito Pinto* or *Bono Juana Azurduy*. The 'Participation Index' aims to capture how much the participation in communitarian or sectorial unions influences the decision to vote for the MAS-IPSP (or if *masistas* voters are really more likely to participate in some kind of popular association). The *Bono* variable tries to assess to which extent the universalist social policy programs were effective for consolidating and expanding the *masista* electorate.

Education has been classified as 'low' if years of schooling are less than seven, and 'high' if more than twelve. Respondents have been classified in four quartiles according to the declared total income of their families, and in three tertiles according to their age. Self-reported ethnicity varies according to the wave used. The recurrent categories available in the questionnaires were: 'white'; 'indigenous'; 'black'; and *mestizo* and/or *cholo*[82] (mixed-race)[83].

[82] *Cholo* is an ethnocultural category, highly politicized and very difficult to translate. It can be used in a pejorative way, or just to identify indigenous people that migrated to the cities. For women, usually the category *mujer de pollera* (referring to the typical Aymara long skirts) is a more polite way to refer to

One could argue that the relationships between the vote for Evo Morales and both the self-placement in the left-right axis and the self-declared ethnicity are endogenous. This seems highly likely, as the politicization of the 'indigenous question', and the strong anti-imperialist and anti-neoliberal rhetoric of the MAS-IPSP, could have pushed the *masista* electorate towards the Left, and towards a greater 'proudness' about their ethnic origins. This is the main reason for proposing, for each election, a second model that does not include ethnicity and ideology among the regressors. I also report, for 2005 and 2009 elections, a third model, which further reduces the number of the regressors, to reduce multicollinearity.

Unfortunately, the questions included in the 2004 and 2006 questionnaires for classifying the employment category are different from those included in the 2010 one. In the 2004 and 2006 questionnaires, the respondents were asked to report their job, with fifteen different options available. In 2010 questionnaire, a further question was added, asking to specify if the interviewed was salaried (in the public or private sectors) or self-employed. Data quality is not high, in any case. Many respondents for example identified themselves as 'blue-collars' or 'employees' and at the same time reported to be 'self-employed workers'. This leads to suspicions about the reliability of the categorization used in 2004 and 2006 questionnaires, when such additional question was not asked. In addition, in the 2010 questionnaire, I noticed that many respondents identified themselves as peasants and, at the same time, claimed to be 'entrepreneurs', instead of 'self-employed workers', thus making me doubt about the exact interpretation assigned to the 'entrepreneur' category in 2004 and 2006 questionnaires. In sum, job

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them (for a discussion of the term *cholo*, see Lazar, 2013: 27-29).The *cholos* are typically occupied in the informal, commercial economy. In the 2002 and 2005 questionnaires, the *cholo* option was included, but not in the 2009 questionnaires.

[83] A question about the specific indigenous ethnicity (i.e., 'Aymara', 'Quechua', 'no ethnicity', 'Guaraní', 'Mojeño'…) was also included in each questionnaire: unfortunately, this second question did not include the 'white' option. I opted for using the less specific question, to underscore the importance of the 'white' option, which was not included in the most specific question.

categories used for analysing the 2002 and 2005 general elections are probably less precise and do show some anomaly.

The use of survey data is quite unusual in the study of Bolivian politics, as many electoral studies on the MAS-IPSP mainly or completely relied on data at the municipal or provincial level (e.g., García Yapur et al., 2014). Causal inferences from aggregate data are notoriously subjected to potential ecological fallacies, although they do can show interesting patterns, particularly if applied to the Bolivian case, as the cross-regional differences in the vote for the MAS-IPSP are huge. In many municipalities, the MAS-IPSP even reached the totality (!) of the votes in 2005 and 2009. This means that 'contextual effects', and *organizational*, much more than electoral, linkages, are often much more decisive in influencing voting choices than sociological characteristics or individual attitudes of the voters. However, my choice to explore disaggregated data is due to the specific interests animating this project, i.e. to see how (other things being equal) job sectors and 'outsiderness' affect electoral choices.

2002 General Elections

Table 4.6 Percentages of the votes for candidate Evo Morales in 2002 presidential elections, according to region, job, education, income, age, ethnicity and participation.

	Bolivia		Highlands	Half Moon
Votes for MAS in the sample	9,85		14,63	3,41
Job				
Peasant	14,01	*	21,84	4,29
White Collar	9,09		14,04	0,00
Blue Collar	10,74		20,83	4,11
Salaried Peasant	15,79		27,27	0,00
Merchant	11,63		18,03	5,88
Salaried Worker	10,70		14,12	4,76
Housewife	6,06	**	12,65	0,51
Student	5,10	**	3,67	8,33
Entrepreneur	0,00		0,00	0,00
Irregular Worker	9,62		17,54	0,00
Retired	6,25		9,09	0,00
Small Economic Activity	13,80	**	18,32	5,66
Education				
Low_Edu	9,80	**		
Mid_Edu	12,38	**		
High_Edu	7,15	**		
Income				
q1	11,85			
q2	10,19			
q3	11,19			
q4	6,50			
Age				
q1	9,82	**		
q2	13,87	**		
q3	7,33	**		
Ethnicity				
White	5,69	**		
Cholo	32,61	**		
Mestizo	9,39			
Indigenous	19,59	**		
Black	5,26			
Originario	10,49			
Participation Index				
0	6,71	**		
1	8,33	**		
2	11,65	**		
3	13,01	**		
4	14,38	**		

Source: author's elaboration, using data from LAPOP (2004). Pearson's chi-square test reported (*=p<0.10; **=p<0.05). For income, age and participation, the Pearson's test refers to the entire table. Highlands: La Paz, Oruro, Potosí, Chuquisaca and Cochabamba departments. Half Moon: Tarija, Beni, Pando and Santa Cruz departments.

Table 4.7 Determinants of the votes for MAS-IPSP (2002 elections, probit models).

	Model 1			Model 2		
	Coef.	Std. Err.		Coef.	Std. Err.	
Ideology	-0,12	0,04	**			
White	-0,29	0,17	*			
Cholo	0,61	0,33	*			
Indigenous	0,03	0,18				
Black	0,60	0,70				
Woman	-0,14	0,16		-0,09	0,13	
Age - First Tertile	-0,09	0,16		-0,08	0,15	
Age- Third Tertile	-0,60	0,18	**	-0,63	0,16	**
Low Education	0,08	0,18		0,14	0,15	
High Education	-0,56	0,17	**	-0,46	0,15	**
Urban	0,16	0,15		0,19	0,14	
Peasant	0,88	0,41	**	0,65	0,35	*
Small Economic Activity	0,84	0,33	**	0,73	0,27	**
White Collar	0,47	0,37		0,69	0,35	**
Salaried Worker	0,72	0,31	**	0,57	0,25	**
Blue Collar	0,54	0,37		0,53	0,32	
Salaried Peasant	0,34	0,57		0,22	0,51	
Merchant	0,34	0,38		0,45	0,31	
Housewife	0,46	0,35		0,35	0,30	
Retired	0,63	0,40		0,42	0,37	
Irregular Worker	0,71	0,39	*	0,56	0,33	*
Income - First Quartile	-0,17	0,21		0,05	0,19	
Income - Second Quartile	-0,28	0,20		0,01	0,19	
Income - Fourth Quartile	0,05	0,19		0,22	0,18	
Participation Index	0,05	0,06		0,09	0,06	
Half Moon	-0,76	0,15	**	-0,82	0,14	**
Constant	-0,71	0,46		-1,51	0,36	**
N	1469			1742		
Log-likelihood	-453,6383			-564,38		
Pseudo R2	0,17			0,13		

Source: author's elaboration, using data from LAPOP (2004). *=p<0.10; **=p<0.05. Baseline categories: Mixed-race; Age – Second Quartile; Education – 7 to 12 years of schooling; Student; Income – Third Quartile. All models robust to heteroskedasticity.

The electorate of the MAS-IPSP is strongly underrepresented in the sample of the 2002 general elections, as Morales surpassed the 20% of the valid votes. Data presented here reflect huge regional differences in the vote for Morales. As Table 4.6 shows, the 'rural' and 'plebeian' (Do Alto and Stefanoni, 2010) composition of MAS' electorate is reflected in its overrepresentation among peasants and owners of small economic activities. Old people, unpaid domestic workers and students were quite absent from the MAS' electorate. A possible explanation could rely on the 'voting traditionalism' of the first two categories, and on the negative relationship between years of schooling and the support of the MAS, as nearly all the students in the sample are included in the 'middle-education' category. There is an inverse relationship between income and vote for Morales, although it is not statistically significant, and it refers exclusively to the upper income quartile.

As expected, self-declared ethnicity seems to have a strong explanatory capacity. Participation in civic or corporatist associations seems also to have a strong relationship with *masista* vote, although the indicator fails to reach statistical significance in the model, also due to multicollinearity with income (the richer the voter, the less likely he is to participate in some associations, as I found in an unreported cross tabulation)[84].

In Table 4.7, there is a general confirmation of the patterns that emerge from Table 4.6. Two brief comments deserve to be made. First, among the 'salaried workers', who hold an important and significant effect, many people involved in informal economy are included, as I found in the 2010 questionnaires. Second, the coefficients of the 'white collar' regressor are strongly positive and statistically significant, which is an unexpected result, which has not been confirmed by the analyses of the 2005 and 2009 elections.

[84] In an unreported model, the 'participation index' does reach statistical significance and a quite strong effect, if income indicators are excluded.

2005 general elections

Table 4.8 Percentages of the votes for candidate Evo Morales in 2005 presidential elections, according to region, job, education, income, age, ethnicity and participation.

	Bolivia		Highlands	Half Moon
Votes for MAS in the sample	50,11		65,90	27,81
Job				
Peasant	68,72	**	84,75	37,70
White Collar	47,06		62,00	25,71
Blue Collar	52,50		74,70	28,57
Salaried Peasant	37,14		75,00	25,93
Merchant	59,05	*	76,81	25,00
Salaried Worker	49,17		56,91	36,28
Housewife	43,08	**	69,06	22,91
Student	38,50	**	51,47	15,58
Entrepreneur	69,23		88,89	25,00
Irregular Worker	43,84		66,67	12,90
Retired	44,78		51,22	34,62
Small Economic Activity	55,17	*	65,10	35,71
Education				
Low_Edu	58,17	**		
Mid_Edu	48,76			
High_Edu	44,21	**		
Income				
q1	60,09	**		
q2	50,79	**		
q3	47,83	**		
q4	38,28	**		
Age				
q1	45,68	**		
q2	53,27	**		
q3	50,65	**		
Ethnicity				
Blanco	30,65	**		
Cholo	77,78	*		
Mestizo	48,52	*		
Indìgena	79,53	**		
Negro	36,84			
Originario	53,46			
Participation Index				
0	38,27	**		
1	50,12	**		
2	57,61	**		
3	58,53	**		
4	64,71	**		

Source: author's elaboration, using data from LAPOP (2006). Pearson's chi-square test reported (*=p<0.10; **=p<0.05). For income, age and participation, the Pearson's test refers to the entire table. Highlands: La Paz, Oruro, Potosí, Chuquisaca and Cochabamba departments. Half Moon: Tarija, Beni, Pando and Santa Cruz departments.

Table 4.9 Determinants of the votes for MAS-IPSP (2005 elections, probit models).

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Coef.	Std. Err.		Coef.	Std. Err.		Coef.	Std. Err.	
Ideology	-0,15	0,02	**						
White	-0,45	0,15	**						
Indigenous	0,23	0,13	*						
Woman	-0,02	0,11		-0,19	0,10	*	-0,16	0,09	*
Age - First Tertile	-0,12	0,14		0,00	0,11		0,02	0,11	
Age- Third Tertile	-0,05	0,12		-0,15	0,10		-0,09	0,09	
Low Education	0,20	0,14		0,23	0,11	**			
High Education	-0,04	0,12		-0,05	0,11				
Urban	0,05	0,11		0,12	0,09		0,01	0,08	
Peasant	-0,05	0,26		0,38	0,22	*	0,69	0,20	**
Entrepreneur	0,91	0,46	**	1,14	0,42	**	1,01	0,42	**
Small Economic Activity	0,07	0,20		0,27	0,18		0,35	0,16	**
White Collar	0,35	0,25		0,51	0,23	**	0,26	0,22	
Salaried Worker	-0,04	0,18		0,15	0,17		0,09	0,16	
Blue Collar	0,32	0,24		0,39	0,20	**	0,49	0,18	**
Salaried Peasant	-0,49	0,40		0,08	0,32		0,14	0,32	
Merchant	0,38	0,25		0,58	0,21	**	0,61	0,19	**
Housewife	0,02	0,22		0,39	0,19	**	0,52	0,17	**
Retired	-0,11	0,28		0,19	0,27		0,27	0,26	
Irregular Worker	0,27	0,28		0,33	0,23		0,34	0,22	
Income - First Quartile	0,20	0,14		0,25	0,12	**			
Income - Second Quartile	0,04	0,13		0,06	0,11				
Income - Fourth Quartile	-0,24	0,14	*	-0,26	0,13	**			
Participation Index	0,07	0,04	*	0,12	0,03	**	0,14	0,03	**
Half Moon	-0,99	0,11	**	-1,08	0,09	**	-1,10	0,09	**
Constant	0,99	0,27	**	-0,03	0,20		-0,01	0,17	
N	1216			1611			1839		
Log-likelihood	-688,47			-937,55			-1089,47		
Pseudo R2	0,21			0,16			0,15		

Source: author's elaboration, using data from LAPOP (2006). *=p<0.10; **=p<0.05. Baseline categories: Mixed-race; Age – Second Quartile; Education – 7 to 12 years of schooling; Student; Income – Third Quartile. All models robust to heteroskedasticity.

The 2006 LAPOP survey seems more representative of the electorate of the MAS-IPSP, with the 50,11% of the sample (including the null or blank votes) reported to have voted for Evo Morales in 2005[85]. In general, the data confirm expectations. Table 4.8 shows that education and income are clearly negatively correlated with the vote for the MAS-IPSP, and that ethnicity is an important factor, although, interestingly, self-declared *mestizos* are slightly underrepresented in the *masista* electorate, while very few people identified themselves as *cholos*, preferring the *indigenous* label. Peasants, but also merchants and owners of small economic activities, disproportionately casted their vote for the MAS. Indigenous, self-employed, poor people, occupied in the urban informal economy or owners of small and medium-sized parcels in rural areas are confirmed to be the core-constituencies of the MAS. In contrast, students, but also unpaid domestic workers, are underrepresented in the MAS-IPSP's electorate. Gender has a small effect on the dependent variable[86].

Model 1 shows that the main effects on the dependent variable come from ideology, ethnicity, but also, although with a lesser degree of significance and strength, from income and participation. The polarization of the country along ideological and regional divides is self-evident: in fact, when the questionnaire was collected (2006), Bolivia was torn by social and political turmoils concerning federalist issues in the process for a new Constitution. No job category reaches statistical significance, with the exception of the 'entrepreneurs' category. Nevertheless, poor data quality affects the reliability of this finding. Moreover, very few respondents identified themselves as 'entrepreneurs'.

[85] Morales won with the 53,7% of the valid votes.

[86] MAS-IPSP's attitudes on gender equality issues is quite ambivalent. On the one side, the 'Bartolinas' concretely contributed to the empowerment of female peasants, while numerous egalitarian bills (including the provision of gender quotas for public charges) had been advanced and implemented by the 'political instrument' when in government (Zegada et al., 2007; Garcés, 2010). On the other side, a sexist culture is notoriously quite diffused among the Bolivian popular sectors, and among the own organizations supporting the 'process of change' (Lazar, 2013; García Yapur et al., 2015).

Once ideology and ethnicity are excluded from the model, many job categories reach statistical significance and display very important effects on the dependent variable, while pseudo R^2 does not dramatically diminish, thus confirming the high multicollinearity between employment and ethnicity (or ideology). Peasants, merchants, but also blue-collar and white-collar workers are overrepresented within the heterogeneous *masista* electorate. Very interestingly, middle class category reaches statistical significance in model 2, but not in model 3: thus, once income is controlled for, the analysis suggests that MAS-IPSP's 'urban strategy' achieved some returns.

2009 general elections

Table 4.10 Percentages of the votes for candidate Evo Morales in 2009 presidential elections, according to region, job, education, income, age, ethnicity and participation.

		Bolivia		Highlands	Half Moon
Votes for MAS in the Sample		64.41		76.84	43.04
Job					
Peasant		78.26	**	92.52	58.44
White Collar		48.50	**	61.42	33.02
Blue Collar		65.22		91.67	36.36
Salaried Peasant		100.00		100.00	100.00
Merchant		75.33	**	82.24	58.14
Salaried Worker		62.50		68.42	55.32
Housewife		67.01		82.26	40.74
Student		50.43	**	59.87	32.93
Unemployed		58.43		75.81	18.52
Self-Employed		65.22		77.78	40.59
Retired		68.54		79.03	44.44
Education					
Low_Edu		80.12	**		
Mid_Edu		63.75			
High_Edu		49.70	**		
Income					
q1		79.38	**		
q2		65.01	**		
q3		60.95	**		
q4		51.91	**		
Age					
q1		57.96	**		
q2		62.90	**		
q3		71.82	**		
Ethnicity					
White		40.95	**		
Mestizo		60.33	**		
Indigenous		88.67	**		
Afro-Bolivian		69.64			
Mulato		69.81			
Participation Index					
0		57.52	**		
1		64.66	**		
2		68.35	**		
3		64.01	**		
4		69.67	**		

Source: author's elaboration, using data from LAPOP (2010). Pearson's chi-square test reported (*=p<0.10; **=p<0.05). For income, age and participation, the Pearson's test refers to the entire table. Highlands: La Paz, Oruro, Potosí, Chuquisaca and Cochabamba departments. Half Moon: Tarija, Beni, Pando and Santa Cruz departments.

Table 4.11 Determinants of the votes for MAS-IPSP (2009 elections, probit models).

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Coef.	Std. Err.		Coef.	Std. Err.		Coef.	Std. Err.	
Ideology	-0.21	0.02	**						
White	-0.65	0.20	**						
Indigenous	0.49	0.15	**						
Woman	-0.01	0.11		-0.07	0.09				
Age - First Tercile	-0.01	0.14		0.05	0.11				
Age- Third Tercile	-0.01	0.12		0.00	0.10				
Low Education	0.22	0.13	*	0.27	0.11	**			
High Education	-0.19	0.12		-0.22	0.11	**			
Urban	-0.05	0.11		-0.06	0.09				
Peasant	0.19	0.22		0.48	0.21	**	0.78	0.19	**
Unemployed	-0.13	0.22		-0.12	0.20		0.02	0.19	
Self-Employed Worker	0.15	0.19		0.22	0.17		0.40	0.15	**
Retired Worker	-0.15	0.27		-0.06	0.24		0.18	0.21	
Blue Collar	0.08	0.22		0.29	0.21		0.48	0.19	*
Salaried Worker	0.22	0.26		0.11	0.22		0.23	0.21	
Merchant	0.21	0.18		0.37	0.17	**	0.55	0.15	**
Housewife	0.03	0.21		0.13	0.18		0.30	0.16	*
Student	-0.19	0.20		-0.26	0.18		-0.18	0.16	
Income - First Quartile	0.14	0.13		0.29	0.11	**			
Income - Second Quartile	-0.05	0.13		0.01	0.11				
Income - Fourth Quartile	-0.07	0.12		-0.13	0.11				
Participation Index	-0.01	0.04		0.03	0.03		0.06	0.02	**
Half Moon	-0.83	0.10	**	-1.02	0.09	**	-0.98	0.07	**
Bono (Renta Dignidad/J. Pinto/J. Azurduy)	0.22	0.10	**	0.14	0.08	*	0.29	0.06	**
Constant	1.69	0.25	**	0.56	0.20		0.31	0.16	**
N	1389			1697			1698		
Log-likelihood	-644.74			-885.84			-894.58		
Pseudo R2	0.25			0.18			0.17		

Source: author's elaboration, using data from LAPOP (2010). *=p<0.10; **=p<0.05. Baseline categories: Mixed-race; Age – Second Quartile; Education – 7 to 12 years of schooling; White Collar; Income – Third Quartile. Salaried Peasants and Entrepreneurs were dropped from the sample due to very low number of observations. All models robust to heteroskedasticity.

In 2010 LAPOP questionnaire, the sample is, again, quite representative of the real distribution of the votes. As I explained above, data over occupational categories are more precise in this questionnaire. Some interesting patterns clearly emerge even in the first probit model (Table 4.10), which includes ethnicity and ideology among the regressors. Peasants and merchants (part of the 'plebeian' social bases of the MAS-IPSP) are the only occupational categories that reach statistical significance and have relevant and positive effects on the dependent variable in both model 2 and model 3[87]. However, no occupational category reaches statistical significance when ideology and ethnicity are included: this finding highlights the high ideological and ethic polarization that Bolivia experienced during the first term of Evo Morales.

Education had a clear, negative and nearly linear effect. Even controlling for income, the reception of some kind of direct social transfers from the government had a quite important positive effect on the dependent variable, thus confirming the electoral effects of the social policies implemented by Morales' government. ‘Participation index’ reaches statistical significance and a quite important effect, too, but only in model 3. The high degree of socio-political participation of the social base of the MAS-IPSP still finds some support from the data, although a certain ‘normalization’ is observable, if compared with the year 2005.

4.7 Conclusions

The MAS-IPSP is a *movement-based populist project* and a clear instance of *participative-mobilising populism*. It is *movement-based* almost by definition, because it

[87] In model 3, also ‘blue-collar’ regressor achieves statistical significance, with a strong, positive sign; however, it must be noticed that blue-collars are strongly overrepresented within the MAS-IPSP's electorate only in the Highlands (see Table 4.10). This suggests that the support of the ‘working class’ to the government is quite linked to ‘contextual' effects.

was conceived as the 'Political Instrument' of the founding movements, which showed an extremely high capacity of alliance building (even with other actors that did never play a central role within the 'Instrument') and dominated the Bolivian *unified anti-neoliberal mobilizations*. Even today, the party on the ground largely overlaps with the *trillizas*. It shows clear organizational *participative* features, quite visible in its peculiar candidate selection process and in the very organizational characteristics of the *trillizas*, whose formal hierarchy relies on the community level. Such a strong social rootedness provided the real *mobilising capacity* to articulate, lead and sustain the long Bolivian contentious cycle (1990-2009), particularly during its most difficult phases (2000-2003 and 2006-2009). Despite increasing top-down forms of control, the MAS-IPSP still is considered a participative enterprise by its rank-and-files because of the multiple points of access to the policy making process assured to the movements by the *masistas* governments, in stark contrast with the old 'neoliberal parties'.

The MAS-IPSP is clearly also a *populist project*. It is populist because, since the beginning, it aims at articulating the demands of very heterogeneous sectors around inclusive (ethno-nationalistic *and* socio-economic) frames, in contrast to the radical ethno-nationalism of Quispe's MIP (Madrid, 2008), and to the classist appeals of the orthodox Marxist Bolivian Left, uncapable of appealing and providing representation to the peasantry. The MAS-IPSP is populist because both the leaders and the rank-and-files of the *trillizas* always had the following clear goals in mind: to conquer the Bolivian State; to control the Bolivian natural resources; and to promote social policies and financial investments to foster economic productivity. The *trillizas* gave to the concept of 'Sovereignty' two complementary meanings: the Bolivian People, through its 'political instrument', should achieve and retain the control of the State; the rural communities should control and expand their lands, and autonomously govern themselves, while the State should simply provide financial support to foster economic growth.

Such an interpretation of the concept of ‘Sovereignty’ was, for some years, a fertile terrain for a political convergence with indigenous movements which were mainly interested in the protection of their ancestral forms of cultural and economic (re)production. Such convergence facilitated, for a quite long time, a substantial *unity of action* between the different movements animating the Bolivian anti-neoliberal contentious cycle. Nevertheless, while the CIDOB and the CONAMAQ tended either to *fear* the ‘central State’ or to *oppose* it (because of its ‘colonial’ character), the *trillizas* have always seen in it a powerful instrument to be controlled and exploited to their own advantage. The peasant movements led the popular reaction against the racist and unequal Bolivian regime with the aim of ending the long socioeconomic exclusion of the rural sectors. Their anti-racist struggle was (and is) functional to achieve full citizenship: to fully become *Bolivian citizens*. Once the anti-neoliberal forces reached the government, the contrasts between ‘productivity’ and the protection of ancestral forms of social reproduction emerged, and the *trillizas* unhesitatingly backed the former principle.

Such understanding of ‘Sovereignty’ as something to be guaranteed by a strong State explains why the MAS-IPSP has been often attacked ‘from the Left’ and ‘from below’. Many leaders of the *Coordinadora por la Defensa del Agua* (including the most prominent one, Oscar Olivera) harshly contested the decision of creating a local public company – controlled by the municipality of Cochabamba - for the administration and the distribution of water, instead of assigning these tasks to citizens’ committees (Linsalata, 2015). The point is that the MAS-IPSP, while displaying several participative traits, is surely not ‘horizontal’. The *sindicatos* affiliated to the *trillizas* are jealous of their local autonomy; however, they fully recognise the right (and the duty) of 'their government' (and of *Hermano Evo*) to dispose of its discretional power, for the ‘common good’ of all the Bolivians.

The interest aggregation system created by the MAS-IPSP is a complex system of political exchanges, in which organizational strength and electoral influence are the

main assets that the different interest groups have at their disposal to make their demands satisfied, often in reciprocal competition. The government, increasingly controlled by intellectuals and experts external to the movements, keeps the political initiative and designs the main political strategies, while assuring the socioeconomic stability of the country. While the support of the *trillizas* for the *proceso de cambio* is crucial and irreplaceable, they lost much of their autonomy in exchange of particularistic benefits.

A heterogeneous galaxy of territorially-based organizations and interest groups *surrounds* the 'core' of the MAS-IPSP. Their commitment to the *proceso de cambio* is much more *instrumental* and is conditioned by the selective incentives concretely offered by the government. Those actors, like the *cooperativistas*, transportation workers, *auto-chuteros* (car sellers linked to smuggling), and some *sindicatos urbanos*, enjoying high mobilising capacity and the ability of electorally 'controlling' vast constituencies, acquired a strong bargaining power and became powerful veto blocs within MAS-IPSP's coalition.

In contrast, other actors have been pushed into the opposition, like important fractions of the indigenous movement, or, at best, to a secondary role, like the COB. There still is an evident hiatus between the discourse of the Bolivian salaried workers, centred on the defence and the extension of their *rights*, and the expectations of self-employed workers (both in urban and rural areas), to enjoy more *opportunities*. Neoliberalism forced hundreds of thousands of Bolivian to reinvent themselves as 'entrepreneurs' in the 'interstices' of the weak Bolivian state. Differently from Argentina (see Chapter 5), in Bolivia the 'salaried society' (*sociedad salarial*) was limited to specific sectors, which were completely disarticulated by neoliberal governments. The Bolivian *plebs* was forced into precarious self-employment in the cities, in the rural communities, in the *cooperativas* mineras, and did not find in the COB a vehicle for their demands.

Nevertheless, the popular sectors in Bolivia were also forced by the State's retrenchment (and weakness) to *organize themselves* and to build an impressive constellation of popular organizations in order to negotiate with public institutions and cope with daily basic necessities. All of these sectors became the true 'core-constituencies' of the MAS-IPSP, which, when in government, did not however exclusively (or mainly) target them through the creation of formal (often public) jobs. Instead, the 'Political Instrument' provided them with universalist social policies, infrastructural improvements, tax exemptions, access to credit and developmental projects, while a sustained economic growth made their *negocios* more profitable.

To deal with this complex, 'jumbled' (*abigarrada*) and hyper-organised society, the populist strategy was extraordinarily effective, and the role of Evo Morales cannot be overstated. His charisma is a by-product of the 'epic' battles led by him and his *cocaleros* during the Nineties. His mediatory and political skills are undeniable. Morales has surrounded himself with 'technocratic' figures and high officials who, while not particularly popular among the bases, decisively influence the strategic choices of the *proceso de cambio* and manage the particularistic political exchanges and selective incentives necessary to solve the 'creative tensions' (García Linera, 2011) stemming from the heterogeneous *masista* coalition.

Surely, much of the early enthusiasm has been lost. Corruption scandals have affected the popularity of the movements, the government, and, partially, Morales himself. In February 2016, a constitutional referendum convoked to allow Morales to run for a fourth presidential election was rejected by the 51% of the Bolivians, marking the first Morales' important electoral defeat since 2005. This does not necessarily imply the end of the *masista* era, as presidential support is still high, and the political opposition looks very fragmented and lacks a unifying figure. The results achieved by the *proceso de cambio*, in terms of economic growth, reduction of social exclusion and empowerment of the Bolivian popular and indigenous strata are undeniable. However, the succession of Morales is a big problem for the supporters of the *process of change*.

The economic development itself, and the crisis of legitimacy suffered by popular sectors' *masistas* organizations – deeply involved in the spoil-system and many corrupt practices – have now made the Bolivian society more 'autonomous' and less prone to be 'enrolled' and 'controlled' through the old associational networks, particularly in the urban centres (BO5; BO21). In Bolivia, *evismo* seems still majoritarian, but *masismo* probably is not.

Chapter 5. Argentina's Kirchnerism: A Party-Rooted Populist Project Incorporating New Social Actors

5.1 Introduction

In April 2003, Néstor Kirchner assumed the Presidency of Argentina, with just the 22% of the valid votes, more or less the same as the unemployment rate that Argentina was experiencing at the time. Kirchner was elected in the office thanks to the decisive support of his predecessor, the Peronist leader Eduardo Duhalde, who also served as Vicepresident of the former President Carlos Menem. Both Duhalde and Menem represented the symbols of the corrupt and clientelist practices of the main Peronist party (*Partido Justicialista* – PJ) and of the implementation of draconian neoliberal reforms during Menem's terms (1991-1999).

Seventeen months before, the country had experienced the default of its public debt and its economic collapse. Streets were continuously blocked by poor protesters, called *piqueteros*, who violently asked for subsidies and social programs. In 2002, more than a half of the population lived below the poverty line (CEPAL, 2002). Anti-Peronist political opposition was in complete disarray, after the inefficient government led by UCR's (*Unión Cívica Radical*) President De La Rúa (1999-2001), who had brought the country to economic collapse in 2001. Thus, the entire political class was targeted as responsible for that situation, as the popular claim '*¡Que se vayan todos!*' summarized.

In this unpromising scenario, Kirchner began a polarizing, *nacional y popular* discourse, attacking the 'old political class', the 'international financial institutions', 'neoliberalism' and the 'Fatherlands' enemies', thus putting in the same bag the

neoliberal governments of Menem and De La Rúa and the reactionary and repressive military dictatorship of the 1976-1983 period. He retook the classic, Peronist flags, by calling for the old Peronist goals ('*Economic Independency, Political Sovereignty* and *Social Justice*'). Kirchner declared aiming at restoring a 'National Capitalism', while dialoguing with the bulk of the *piquetero* movement and with both the 'mainstream' and 'dissident' Argentine labour organizations. At the same time, Kirchner did not definitively break with the Peronist old guard, and he was able to gradually bring the majority of the PJ to his side, increasingly constraining Duhalde in an isolated position. The weakest President of the Argentine democracy soon was able to inaugurate the most stable governmental 'era' in Argentina's modern times. His successor and wife, Cristina Fernández, led the country for two more consecutive terms, through a quite different, and in many senses more radical and aggressive, political strategy.

This chapter provides an interpretation of the rise and consolidation of Kirchnerism very much in line with the framework proposed in Chapter 2. Section 5.2 is devoted to the analysis of the relevant *critical antecedents.* I summary some of the main Argentine social and political events of the Nineties, and the reasons underlying the resilient alliance between the PJ and the CGT (the peak union confederation) under neoliberalism and the consequent emergence of alternative unions. I also show how the PJ kept its linkages with the *outsiders*, whose number dramatically increased precisely due to the policies implemented by President Menem, while other political projects clearly failed to take away the popular sectors from the Peronists. I particularly focus on identitarian and organizational factors explaining this apparent paradox. Then, I analyse the origins of the *piqueteros* movements, purely *outsiderist* organizations focused on *territorial* demands well suited for *ad hoc* solutions.

Section 5.3 and Section 5.4 analyse the 2001 collapse and the peak of the Argentine protest cycle. I underline the extreme *fragmentation* that characterised the mobilizations, due to the particularistic demands advanced and the ideological and tactical divisions *within* the anti-neoliberal contentious camp. Then, in section 5.5, I

analyse the reasons for the success achieved by the *party-rooted populist political project* led by Néstor Kirchner. The latter patiently built a vast governmental coalition cemented by his antagonist political discourse and by his recuperation of the statist ideology of pre-Menemist Peronism. Kirchner was able to retain most of the PJ's apparatus, which furnished decisive electoral support to him. Crucially, Kirchner attracted, through programmatic linkages, the support of the unions, both the majoritarian CGT (which rapidly recuperated its hegemony) and the antagonist CTA. At the same time, in order to 'normalize' a country still rocked by vast mobilizations, he included in his coalition some 'moderate' social movements, by satisfying most of their particularistic demands and offering them an unprecedented political centrality.

In Section 5.6, I analyse the evolution of Kirchnerism under the two Cristina Fernández' terms. This section helps to understand why the *party-rooted* features of Kirchnerism were so important to assure its unpredictable success. Cristina's leadership departed from Néstor's; the power relations *within* Kirchnerism gradually changed, as Cristina tried to 'free' herself from PJ's influences by rewarding, and even building *ex novo,* new social movements loyal to her. However, Cristina's strategy decisively contributed to the final rupture of the broad and heterogeneous coalition patiently built by her husband and predecessor. A brief concluding section summarises the findings.

5.2 Critical Antecedents

5.2.1 Party-Union Entrenchment: The resilience of CGT's loyalty to Neoliberal Peronism and the Birth of Antagonistic Unions

As in Bolivia, a hyperinflationary crisis opened the 'policy window' to implement draconian market-friendly measures that decisively change the Argentinean socioeconomic model. The government led by Raúl Alfonsín (1983-1989), leader of the UCR[88], ended in the middle of a hyperinflationary crisis. In 1989 elections, Carlos Menem won the presidency. Menem was the candidate of the PJ, the electoral expression of Peronist movement and a typical (until then) 'labour-based party' (Levitsky, 2003). Despite the statist economic ideology traditionally associated with Peronism, Menem immediately imposed a cycle of neoliberal reforms that in a few years succeeded in stabilizing the country, while later provoking huge social costs.

Menem, through two 'emergency' laws, the State Reform Law (*Ley de Reforma del Estado*) and the Emergency Economy Law (*Ley de Emergencia Económica*), imposed an impressive privatization agenda and opened Argentine economy to international markets. However, the recovery of the macroeconomic indicators and – decisively – the end of the hyperinflationary spiral were not achieved until 1991, when the new Ministry of Economy Domingo Cavallo introduced the 'Convertibility Plan' (*Plan Convertibilidad*), which pegged the Argentine peso to the US dollar and thus purposely renounced to an autonomous monetary policy.

The immediate effects of the Convertibility Plan were an impressive economic recovery and the drastic reduction of inflation (which dropped from an astonishing

[88] *Unión Cívica Radical* (Radical Civic Union).

13,439% in 1990 to 84% in 1991 and 3.9% in 1994: Beccaría and Maurizio, 2005: 54). At the same time, the Plan provoked a progressive increase in the unemployment rate, due to the privatization process, the flexibilization of labour and increasing competition in tradable sectors. The Mexican *Tequila Crisis* (1994) triggered the first recessionary period under Menem: the GDP dropped 4.4% and the unemployment rate reached an unprecedented 18%.

How did Argentine unions react to Menem's reforms, which dramatically changed the old Argentine socioeconomic model? It should be said that the main features of the Argentine unionism remounted to the earlier corporatist period, decisively shaped by Juán Domingo Perón's regime (1946-1955) and by its long-lasting legacies in social, economic and political spheres. Since 1946, Argentine syndicalism (organized through a monopolistic peak union, the CGT – *Confederación General del Trabajo*) was one of the three key organizations of the heterogeneous Peronist movement, together with the Women Peronist Federation (the so-called *rama femenina*, which practically disappeared with Evita Perón's death) and the Justicialist Party (*Partido Justicialista* - PJ), the Peronist political arm. During the 1955-1973 period (when political Peronism was proscribed and Perón sent in exile), and during the last, highly repressive military dictatorship (1976-1983), the unions represented the main and most combative structure of the Peronist movement. The CGT clearly dominated the PJ in the first years after the transition to democracy (with Perón dead since 1974), at least until the mid-Eighties, when a new internal faction (the so-called *Renovación Peronista* – 'Peronist Renovation') took the lead of the party, calling for its 'democratization'. The *Renovadores* (whose main figures were Antonio Cafiero, Carlos Grosso and Carlos Menem) put aside the 'orthodox Peronists' (i.e., the unionist faction that led the PJ to a surprising defeat in 1983 presidential elections, when for the first time Peronism was defeated in democratic elections). The victory of the *Renovadores* provoked the progressive loss of influence of the unions over the party. If in 1985, the 27.7% of the PJ bloc in the Chamber of Deputies belonged to some union, in 1991 this percentage

dropped to 15%, and in 2001 to 2.5% (Levitsky, 2003: 135). The CGT irreversibly lost much of its influence on the party[89].

Later, in the Nineties, the neoliberal measures implemented by Menem empowered the Argentine industrial and entrepreneurial class and weakened the bargaining power of the unions (Armelino, 2004). However, despite such evolution, the CGT did not abandon the Peronist movement, nor did they strongly oppose the Menemist government. The CGT had organized thirteen general strikes against the moderate reforms attempted by Alfonsín, but only one against Menem, who was much more effective and purposive than his Radical predecessor to implement draconian friendly-market measures (Etchemendy, 2011).

The reasons for the resilience of this alliance – *a crucial factor in the framework proposed here* - are multiple. Surely, identitarian factors played a central role: Peronism and unionism were too much tied to be separated, even by a government that departed so dramatically from the Peronist economic tradition. However, the main point to underscore is Menem's ability to appease the CGT through political exchanges that made possible his reforms and that preserved most of the organizational strength of the unions. This strategy provoked important divisions within the CGT, triggering the birth and consolidation of new, contentious actors that opposed the direction taken by the 'official' CGT and tried to represent the 'losers' of the neoliberal process. When Menem promulgated the two 'emergency laws', the CGT split into two, competing peak unions: the CGT-San Martín, aligned with the government and officially recognised, and the CGT-Azopardo (Murillo, 2001). The latter, led by Saúl Ubaldini, vehemently opposed

[89] However, the 'control' of the unions over the Peronist party must not be overstated. The project to build a pure 'labour-based Peronist party' was attempted, basically, twice, and in both cases, Perón stopped them. The first attempts occurred in the inception of Peronism, when the union leader Cipriano Reyes built the Laborist Party, which was immediately subsumed by Perón in the *Partido Único de la Revolución Nacional*, in which several Peronist parties merged. A new initiative, led by Luís Gay, followed, and again Perón reassured its control over the CGT (1946-1947). The second attempt was led by the union leader Augusto Vandor, during Perón's exile, in the first half of the Sixties. Again, Perón blocked the project, which decisively aborted after an electoral defeat (1966) of the *vandoristas* against the pro-Perón faction (Rock, 1985; Levitsky, 2003).

the first reforms of Menem's government. The CGT-San Martín supported the 'Convertibility Plan' and the privatization process in exchange for the creation of equity funds ran by the unions and administrating the workers-owned stocks of the former public enterprises. In addition, the CGT-San Martín negotiated quite generous packages of voluntary retirement for the workers (Murillo, 2001: 142; Etchemendy, 2011).

However, the two factions unified in 1992 when Menem attempted to reform the Argentine social security system, based, since 1944, on sectorial welfare funds (*obras sociales*) administered by the unions, through the payroll contributions of the workers. The administration of the *obras sociales* was (and still is) the milestone of the immense power enjoyed by the sectorial branches affiliated to the CGT, as it guarantees important financial resources and autonomy. The reform bill introduced the possibility, for private health insurances, to compete with the *obras sociales*. Faced with this risk, the two CGT's factions converged, organizing the only general strike against Menem, who was forced to introduce important modifications to the bill (Murillo, 2001; Etchemendy, 2011). The CGT was also quite successful in stopping the most liberalizing reforms of the labour market – thanks to the opposition of the PJ's unionist bloc in the Congress - although several bills aiming at its 'flexibilization' did pass, without putting in peril the labour rights of the already employed workers (Murillo, 2001).

Thus, the CGT actively participated in the policy-making processes that led to the reforms over privatizations, labour-market 'flexibilization' and the pension system. In exchange for some gains, it assured 'social peace' to Menem, who was able to advance in his ambitious agenda. CGT's leaders chose to focus on the (successful) defence of their *organizational power*, in detriment of the interests of the laid-off workers (due to the 'restructuration' of the privatized firms), of the younger generations (exposed to new, precarious forms of job contracts) and, in general, of the *outsiders*, who were not provided any pro-poor governmental policies until the end of the Nineties (Etchemendy, 2011: 170). Due to these 'critical antecedents' (see Figure 2.1), the Argentine union-party hub (consisting in the PJ and the Menemist CGT) lost any

possibility to play a leading role in the 'anti-neoliberal contentious camp' that had emerged since the mid-nineties.

The maintenance by the CGT of the monopolistic representation of workers was crucial for assuring the effectiveness of the reforms. This monopoly is a legacy of the ISI era and the corporatist model implemented by Perón. Along with the control of the *obras sociales*, this guaranteed the ability, of the sectorial union leaders, to control from above their shop-floor bodies during the negotiations over the liberalization process, and of preventing rebellions against decisions that affected thousands of workers (Etchemendy, 2011). Menem's government did try to modify the syndicalist representational model, but the Congress blocked the attempts. Thus, the executive accepted to proceed with multiple negotiation rounds with the CGT, to make the reform process smoother and to retain union leaders as important allies. Even the significant reforms that allowed for wage negotiations at the firm level (Marticorena, 2014) did not affect seriously the power of CGT's branches, as these negotiations were directly carried on by national or regional leaders, instead of the union delegates of the workers at the shop-floor level (Etchemendy, 2011: 162).

This did not mean that the power of the CGT remained unchallenged during the Menemist phase. Two main factors contributed to the weakening of the power of the big service and industrial unions (the so-called *gordos*, 'fat unions') within the CGT *and* within the syndicalist system: the structural changes provoked by the very neoliberal measures, and the emergence of new competitors for the representation of the workers. First, the number of the salaried workers enrolled with the *gordos* was decreasing: unemployment rose, and the jobs created by economic recovery in the 1991-1994 period were mostly precarious and concentrated in small economic activities, often unregistered[90], where unionism is notoriously more difficult (Palomino, 2000; Beccaria

[90] According to Marticorena (2014: 35), the sum of the unemployed and involuntarily sub-employed workers rose from 15.2% in 1990 to 30.9% in 1996 and 37.7% in 2002. Moreover, unregistered salaried workers in the *Gran Buenos Aires* rose from 25.6% in 1990 to 36.7% in 1996 and 43% in 2002 (Marticorena, 2014: 37).

and Maurizio, 2005; Marticorena, 2014). In addition, the *gordos'* control over the Argentine union system was challenged by new organizations. Two actors must be mentioned: the MTA (*Movimiento de Trabajadores Argentinos* – Argentine Workers' Movement) and the CTA (*Central de los Trabajadores Argentinos* – Argentine Workers' Central). The former challenged CGT's leadership 'from within', and the latter 'from without'. Both organised actors played an important role in the Argentine antineoliberal mobilizations, and a central role in the Kirchner's populist project, when the Menemist factions of the CGT lost their control of Argentine unionism.

The MTA was an internal faction of the CGT, and never opted to exit from the Peronist peak union. Its founder and its main figure, the truck drivers' union leader Hugo Moyano, took advantage of the structural changes provoked by railroads privatizations and the Argentine transformation into a more export-oriented economy, which increased the *structural power* of his union *vis à vis* the industrial ones[91] (Benes and Milmanda, 2012; AR8). The MTA was founded in 1994 and was joined by other sectors particularly critical against CGT's leadership. Although the MTA lightly tried to articulate and express the grievances of the unemployed workers, it substantially kept a traditional, *insiderist* position, without putting in question the Argentine syndicalist model. Instead, the MTA attempted to 'conquer' the CGT and to regain a stricter control over the PJ (Armelino, 2004; Ferrer, 2005; Retamozo, 2011).

The ideological challenges brought by the CTA were far more radical. CTA's origins remounted to 1991, at the beginning of the neoliberal turn, with the so-called 'Burzaco's scream' (*Grito de Burzaco*). In this document, some union leaders, mainly belonging to the public sector (such as Víctor de Gennaro, from ATE[92], and Martha

[91] For example, although the percentage of salaried workers over the total of the occupied people increased from 61.7% in 1992 to 71.1% in 1996 and 72% in 2002, the percentage of industrial workers over the total of salaried workers dropped from 24.9% in 1992 to 18.2% in 1996 and 13-1% in 2002 (Marticorena, 2014: 66), a clear indicator of the de-industrialization of the Argentine economy due to trade openness and to labour-market flexibilization.

[92] *Asociación de los Trabajadores del Estado* (State Workers Association).

Maffei, from CTERA[93]), some of the most affected sectors during the Menemist era, protested against the governmental policies and the acquiescent stance taken by the CGT. The CTA was founded in 1992, as a peak union *alternative* and rival to the CGT; and since its birth, it attacked the monopolistic syndicalist model based on the indirect affiliation of the workers to the CGT. Instead, the CTA allowed for the direct affiliation of individual workers (thus, without any intermediation at the shop-floor and sectorial levels) in order to 'democratize' Argentine unionism. Moreover, the CTA laid huge criticisms against the 'union bureaucracy' governing the CGT (Palomino, 2000; Armelino, 2004; Retamozo and Morris, 2015). The most important consequences of the CTA's organizational structure was its capacity to reach labour-market *outsiders*, such as informal and unemployed workers, thus pursuing a sort of 'new unionism', similar to the Brazilian CUT (Garay, 2007; 2010).

Within the CTA there were leaders and organizations with Marxist, Peronist or Catholic influences. For instance, the important *Federación Tierra, Vivienda y Hábitat* (FTV – Land and Housing Federation), an organization based in the poorest neighbourhoods of La Matanza (a municipality of the Gran Buenos Aires), had strong Catholic roots. The FTV's origins remounted to the Eighties, when local groups, helped by Catholic communities, began occupying uncultivated lands and demanding the satisfaction of their housing rights (AR13). The FTV, led by the activist Luís D'Elía, joined the CTA in 1998 and represented its main 'territorial arm', albeit defending a strongly autonomous position (Boyanovsky, 2010; Retamozo, 2011).

The MTA and the CTA, along with other 'dissident' antagonist unions, tried to mobilize their workers against Menemism and without the *imprimatur* of the CGT, as in the Federal March organized in 1994 (Armelino, 2004; Ferrer, 2005). Another 'union' that would play an important role in the following years, was the CCC (*Corriente Clasista y Combativa*, Combative and Classist Current), born around public sector

[93] *Confederación de los Trabajadores de la Educación de la República Argentina* (Argentina's Education Workers Confederation).

workers in the remote north-western province of Jujuy. CCC's leader was Carlos 'Perro' Santillán, a militant of the small PCR ('Communist Revolutionary Party': Oviedo, 2003; Battezzati, 2012). The CCC, while also gradually developing its 'territorial arm' in La Matanza (Pereyra and Svampa, 2003), led one major uprising (the *Jujeñazo*, in 1994) in its bastion of Jujuy. The *Jujeñazo* represented one of the two major local contentious moments in the first half of the Nineties (the other being the *Santiagueñazo*, in Santiago del Estero, in 1993; see Oviedo, 2003; Silva, 2009; Retamozo, 2011; Gibson, 2013) and it strengthened the CCC's visibility.

People in the hinterland provinces began manifesting their discontent against the governmental policies: the privatizations of the public-owned enterprises and the cuts in public spending provoked extensive dismissals in remote municipalities lacking any other sources of job creation. At the same time, the overvaluation of the peso very much affected the competitiveness of the export-oriented agricultural sector of those rural provinces. However, these mobilizations remained circumscribed to the local level, at least during the 1991-1994 period, when Menem's government still enjoyed high approval ratings (Palermo and Novaro, 1999; Murillo, 2001).

5.2.2 Party Linkages to the Outsider Sectors. Between Clientelism and Identitarian Factors: the PJ as a 'neoliberal party of the poors'

The CGT's loyalty is clearly not sufficient to understand why most of the lower class voters in Argentina kept their Peronist loyalty and supported a neoliberal government and a political party linked with acquiescent unions in times of massive unemployment. Levitsky (2003) authoritatively argued that the ideological vagueness and the informal rules governing the PJ favoured its transition from a 'labour-based

party' to a 'clientelistic machine' (Levitsky, 2003) during Menem's era, a transition that was decisive for the reproduction of the partisan (and, more broadly, *Peronist*) support.

Equating the PJ with Peronism, however, would be a big mistake. As an interviewee told me, '*Peronism is a space: either you stay here or you don't*' (AR7). In fact, the best way to understand Argentine politics is to have in mind a 'double political spectrum' (Ostiguy, 2009), or more abstractly a bidimensional political space whose axis are the 'traditional' left-right axis and the 'idiosyncratic' *Peronism-Antiperonism* one. This concretely means that in Argentina, two Lefts, two Centres and two Rights coexist (Ostiguy, 2005). We have both a 'non-Peronist' Left (synthetically, the Marxist and socialist one, in all its variants) and a Peronist Left (which, in the Seventies, found its expression in the Peronist Youth and in the Montoneros guerrilla). Similarly, we have an anti-Peronist Right (the 'neoliberal', technocratic one, directly linked to the agribusiness and the entrepreneurial sectors) and a Peronist Right (nationalist, authoritarian and conservative). Since the return to democracy in 1983, the PJ historically moved, *within* the Peronist space, between the entire left-right spectrum (as perhaps in 1983, when the 'Orthodox' controlled the party with the support of 'bread-and-butter' unionism), the centre-left, under Cafiero, and then the centre-right (under Menem). The same can be said about the other Argentine mass-party, the UCR, which clearly moved from the centre-left (under Alfonsín's leadership) to the centre-right (first under Angeloz in 1989 and later in the 1999-2001 government of Fernando De La Rúa), clearly remaining on the Anti-Peronist side and the main adversaries of Peronism.

The Peronist-Antiperonist *cleavage* is central in Argentine politics, and probably the more stable one (Ostiguy, 2009). Following the classic definition of Bartolini and Mair (1990), it is appropriate here to use the concept of 'cleavage' because, since the mid-Forties, the two camps have been clearly separated along sociological, cultural, political and partisan lines. According to Ostiguy (2009; 2014), two main subdimensions can account for the differences between Peronists and Anti-Peronists (and, in his view, between *populism*, or 'low', on the one hand, and 'high' politics, on the other): the

socio-cultural and the *political-cultural* ones. Peronist voters are strongly overrepresented among lower classes, and, more specifically, both among blue-collars and urban and rural poors; whereas Anti-Peronists (who have been politically represented until recently mainly by the UCR, the Radicals) are majoritarian among middle and upper classes. The *sociocultural* dimension also refers to the 'flaunting' (Ostiguy, 2014), by Peronist leaders and voters, of their popular-sectors origins and manners, of their belonging to so-called 'true Argentinity' (and also to the *Argentine heartland*, to use Taggart's conceptualization: 2000), and of their 'plebeian' roots. All these features contrast with the 'politeness', 'civicness' and 'Republicanism' that identify the Radicals.

Other features, here related to what Ostiguy calls the politico-cultural dimension (in contrast to the socio-cultural one), accompany the exaltation of these *nacional-popular* traits. Instead of an 'institutionally-mediated' and more checks-and-balances vision of politics, the role of the *leader* (*jefe* o *jefa*) is crucial among Peronists. The *conductor* (literally, the 'driver', the *leader* – i.e., who *leads*) emerges from the internal struggles of the different factions of Peronism, usually solved through informal rules and 'power games' – the most important one probably being the amount of popular votes and militants that each faction is able to attract – and has the main task of conducing Peronism to victory. In fact, the search for power, more than ideological attachment to particular policy goals, is the main 'obsession' that animates the PJ (and Peronists in general). As Santiago Cafiero (the nephew of Antonio Cafiero, the leader of the *Renovadores* faction) reported, '*the PJ is not a 'testimonial' party. It always looks for power, as our main goals – economic independence, political sovereignty and social justice – need the control of the State in order to be accomplished*' (AR3).

Peronism can be understood as a *movement*, in the sense that '*followers identify* not only with leaders, but with one another', with different kind of organizations joining it (Ostiguy, 2009: 36; author's emphasis). Peronists are part of a composite space, and they share an identity that goes beyond the ideological (i.e., on the left-right axis)

differences, which still remain very important and can provoke intense struggles within the movement. Saying that 'Peronism is not just the PJ' means that the PJ is one relevant organization within Peronism and (in fact, the main) *electoral expression* of Peronism. This also means that the PJ does not 'own' 'Peronist orthodoxy', nor does it pretend to. Nor has it the capacity to act as the 'official expression' of Peronism, since the PJ is a highly decentralized party, in which the leader's authority must also be recognized by the local *caudillos* (and 'respect' a degree of autonomy of the latters). On the other hand, this autonomy is guaranteed if and only if the *caudillos* are electorally successful. Obviously, when in power, the *conductor* has much more 'arguments' (more financial resources and more discretionary power, among other things) to make his directives more 'persuasive', whereas when in opposition, the PJ is typically characterized by internal struggles, led by the different factions in order to 'survive' and redefine the 'power relations' *within* the party[94]. The 'political-cultural dimension' identified by Ostiguy is mirrored in the internal life of the PJ, with its informal rules, the role of the leadership and the 'opaque' ways to solve the tensions and appease the rebels.

The importance of the Peronist-Antiperonist cleavage does not imply a secondary, minor relevance of the left-right axis in Argentine politics. Quite the contrary is true. In fact, Menem's 'neoliberal turn' provoked a schism in the congressional PJ. The amnesties given to former convincted military officers of the 1976-1983 dictatorship and the alliance with an Anti-Peronist neoliberal center-right party (the *Unión de Centro Democrático*), convinced eight Peronist MPs to leave the PJ. The *Grupo de los Ocho* formed the *Frente Grande*, which, its poor electoral debut notwithstanding, gradually increased its electoral strength throughout the nineties, broadening its alliances. The *Frente Grande* merged with Anti-Peronist political forces

[94] As the very Perón famously said, '*Peronists are like cats. When we are screaming, it seems that we are fighting each other, but actually we are reproducing*' (quoted in Rocca Rivarola, 2006).

located in the centre-left and left of the political space, to form the FREPASO[95]. The heterogeneous *frepasista* group included several Peronists critical of the 'neoliberal turn' of the PJ, together with important figures coming from the CTA (Boyanovsky, 2010; AR4). Even the FTV backed this political project.

Therefore, in the 1995-1999 period, it seemed that a new political actor could have represented the grievances of those Peronist sectors and/or popular sectors uncomfortable with the PJ *menemista* and the 'collaborationist' CGT. Some commentators wrote about a 'normalization' of Argentine politics, towards a more traditional unidimensional, left-right axis (e.g., Palermo and Novaro, 1999) with the PJ as the right, the UCR as the centre and the FREPASO as the left. Nonetheless, events went in another direction. First, the FREPASO steadily assumed a 'non-Peronist' direction, by mainly pointing at the corruption of Menem's governments and at human rights' issues, instead of proposing a radical change of the neoliberal socioeconomic model and strengthening its territorial presence. As Juan Pablo Cafiero (quoted in Garay, 2007: 58) stated, *'FREPASO ended up being a middle-class, university-related political construction of the City of Buenos Aires...with little presence in the neighbourhoods. It did not live up to its Peronist origins, its Peronist base. In some way it became anti-Peronist* [se gorilizó]. *Frepaso became a force that forgot its origins'.*

The direction taken by the FREPASO was confirmed by the alliance it created with the Radicals in 1996, when they form the 'Alliance for Work, Justice and Education' (known as *Alianza*). In what is quite a paradox, in a primary, the *Alianza* ended up electing the (right-wing) Radical Ferdinando De La Rúa as candidate for the presidency (with the former Peronist *Chacho* Álvarez for theVice-Presidency, a position with little power). It was a fragile coalition. Nonetheless, it was able to defeat in the 1999 national presidential elections PJ's candidate Duhalde, whose campaign was overtly sabotaged by Menem himself. The *Alianza* under De La Rúa progressively moved towards the centre-right. Instead of working for a reform of the economic model

[95] *Frente para un País Solidario* (Front for a Solidary Country).

implemented by Menem, the *Alianza* simply claimed for a more 'transparent' management of the *República*, while the potential 'alterity' of the more progressive FREPASO steadily eclipsed.

The *gorilización* of the FREPASO left the PJ paradoxically without serious long-term challengers for the popular sectors votes. In fact, the PJ during the Nineties certainly changed its policies, but not its *core-constituencies*: the lower classes, in its entirety. As Levitsky (2003) argued, the description of the pre-Menemist PJ as a 'labour-based' party is somewhat incomplete. Surely, the unions were for a long time the main organizational linkage between the party and its voters. However, Peronism is a movement that, since its origin, incorporated huge mass of shantytown dwellers, often occupied in the informal sector and lacking political, social and civil rights (Germani, 1968). The PJ can be better described as a 'party of the poors', which, during the ISI phase, coincided in part with the working class, its most organized component. The blue-collar identity is central in the Peronist movement, but at least as important is the 'plebeian' one, historically inspired by the figure of *Evita* Perón and her pro-poor policies (see Arzadún, 2008, 2013, for a critique of the description of the PJ as a 'labour-based party', and Ostiguy, 2009).

It has been widely noticed (e.g., Ostiguy, 2009; Etchemendy, 2011) that the PJ retained most of its electorate during the Nineties, despite its neoliberal turn and the rise in unemployment. Apart from identitarian factors – which played a strong role – the consolidation of an extended clientelistic machine was also crucial (e.g., Levitsky, 2003; Brusco, Nazareno and Stokes, 2004). Whereas the CGT kept representing the bulk of the formal workers (the *insiders*) capable of defending their jobs, the partisan structure of the PJ took the responsibility of providing some (very particularistic, and surely partial and highly discretionary) concrete helps for the *outsiders* damaged precisely by the policies implemented by the leader Menem. The PJ retained its strength among popular

sectors thanks to: its control of most of the local governments; the clientelistic and opaque use of public funds; and – last, but not least – to its extensive presence in the territory.

This presence consists of an impressive network of disconnected and loosely structured sections, the 'Basic Unities' (*Unidades Básicas*), led by local 'political intermediaries', the *punteros*. Most *punteros* are affiliated to *agrupaciones* (Levitsky, 2003), informal groups that respond to some local PJ's 'strong man', usually the mayor of the municipality, or some 'challenger' who attempts to dispute the power of the local *caudillo*[96]. During the Nineties, when unions gradually lost their influence over the party and their representational capacity, the number of *punteros* skyrocketed, particularly in the Gran Buenos Aires, thus becoming the main linkages between the party and the territory.

The *punteros* represent the backbone of the extended clientelistic machine built by the PJ throughout most of the country. The PJ's control over the local administrations represented both the cause and the consequence of its patronage and clientelistic practices. Such practices, along with identitarian factors, explain the resilience of a mass-party that, during the Menemist era, practically abandoned its 'classic Peronist' goals (*Independencia Económica, Soberanía Política y Justicia Social*[97]). The strength of the *punteros'* network (*red punteril*) relies on a kind of 'affective clientelism' (Pereyra and Svampa, 2003) that has been extensively studied (e.g., Auyero, 2001; 2004; 2007; Levitsky, 2003; Zarazaga, 2015). The *punteros* typically 'take care' of multiple, concrete necessities of the neighbours (which can range from 'easy access' to some social programs or to the delivery of food and basic goods, to even the organization of

[96] The political trajectory of Alberto Pierri is emblematic. Pierri was a rich entrepreneur of humble origins who used his own financial resources to create a vast clientelistic network and to 'steal' the popular district of La Matanza, in the Gran Buenos Aires, to the previous Peronist local leader. He served as National Deputy, while the accountant of his firms, Héctor Cozzi, served as La Matanza's mayor from 1991 to 1999 (López Echagüe, 1995).
[97] Economic Independency, Political Sovereignty and Social Justice.

birthday's parties for poor, elderly people), making the presence of the party visible in the daily aspects of their lives.

Obviously, that 'help' is not disinterested. However, it is not purely a matter of votes. The *punteros*, by a mix of coercion and of persuasion through selective incentives, 'convince their people' to participate to party's rallies (*actos peronistas*), a typical way in Peronism to 'show the strength' of the different *agrupaciones*. The forms assumed by this 'mix of coercion and persuasion' are multiple: it is not unusual that the *punteros* take note of the neighbours who received the 'helps' but failed to take part to these activities without a convincing justification, in order to punish them by denying additional 'helps' in the future. However, the '*puntero*'s logic' (*lógica punteril*) often assumes less devious forms. Nor is the relationship between the *punteros* and their neighbours purely instrumental[98].

In the Province of Buenos Aires (PBA - the most populous Argentine province, and a traditional PJ's bastion), such 'affective' and paternalistic clientelistic machine were controlled during the Nineties by the Peronist governor Eduardo Duhalde. Duhalde was able to build a vast coalition of several 'Barons of the *Conurbano*'[99], mainly through the discretionary use of the *Fondo de Reparación Histórica del Conurbano* (FRHC), a special fund that Menem conceded to Duhalde in order to convince him to leave the Vicepresidency in 1992 and to run for PBA's governorship (López Echagüe,

[98] Obviously, this dimension cannot be overlooked. For an 'instrumental' depiction of the Peronist clientelistic machine, see Brusco, Nazareno and Stokes (2004).

[99] The *Conurbano* consists of the nineteen municipalities surrounding the Federal Capital (the *Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires*, CABA). Whereas the CABA has a more middle-class profile (although it also includes several popular neighbourhoods – *villas*), the *Conurbano* is overwhelmingly populated by poor sectors, particularly in its southern and western zones. The *Conurbano*, since the Perón's era, developed as an industrial area where unions represented the most important organizations, along with several recreational and cultural clubs, most of which form part of the Peronist movement.
The term *Barones del Conurbano* refer to the Peronist *caudillos* who politically dominate several populated and poor municipalities in the Gran Buenos Aires, enjoying a strong territorial control through different (legal and illegal) means. Manolo Quindimil in Lanús, Alberto Pierri and Alberto Balestrini in La Matanza, Raúl Othacehé in Merlo were some examples. They are the counterpart of the provincial Peronist *caudillos* that sometimes found true 'political dynasties', such as the Juárez in Santiago del Estero, the Saadi in Catamarca or the Rodríguez Saá in San Luís.

1995; Danani et al., 1997; Svampa, 2007). The FRHC's budget consisted of 10% of the income tax, and then represented an immense power resource in the hand of the PBA's governor. It allowed for the creation of pro-poor clientelistic programs, the most famous one being the *Plan Vida*, administrated by Hilda *Chiche* Duhalde (the governor's wife). The *Plan Vida* consisted of food distribution in the poorest neighbourhoods of the Gran Buenos Aires, and relied on the work of thousands of Peronist female militants (the *manzaneras*[100]), who collected data about their blocks' necessities and distributed the respective amounts of food.

Such practices did not isolate the PJ from harsh critiques, particularly during the second of Menem's terms and even more when the country later literally collapsed in 2001, under the *Alianza*'s government. Nor did it prevented the emergence of other, more contentious actors, which directly challenged the clientelistic Peronist networks and their authoritarian and paternalistic practices, while promoting the direct organization of the unemployed workers. However, such practices did help the PJ to retain and expand its presence – in terms of militants and influence – in the poorest Argentine areas, and to keep itself in contact with vast segments of impoverished voters lacking any other alternative helps than that provided by the same party that introduced neoliberal reforms from the institutions. In summary, the PJ's 'starting conditions' (see Figure 2.1) were quite ambivalent. The linkages with the CGT favoured the electoral resilience of the PJ among the blue-collar *insiders*, and the partisan clientelistic networks allowed the PJ to defend its hegemony amongst the *outsiders*, thus limiting (albeit not erasing) the negative effects of the PJ's 'neoliberal phase' in terms of popular legitimacy.

[100] *Manzanera* derives from *manzana* ('city block', in the popular neighbourhoods).

5.2.3 The Origins of the Argentine Fragmented Protest Cycle: the Piquetero movement

Broad mobilizations fuelled by popular discontent began flourishing during the second of Menem's terms (1995-1999), when unemployment sharply grew. Social and economic conditions worsened after 1995, when Argentina fell into recession, partly due to the effects of the Mexican crisis, the increasing negative effects of the over-valued peso, and resulting debt. Even in the following years, unemployment and sub-employment rates remained impressive[101]. In the Argentine provinces of the hinterland, the effects of the privatization of public-owned enterprises, of the labour-market reforms, of the worsening terms of trade due to trade openness and peso overvaluation, and the cuts in public spending had devastating effects. In the poorest areas, where the public sector employed most of the population, or where industrial plants were closed, unemployment reached impressive levels, often above the 60% of the economically active population (Pereyra and Svampa, 2003). In the Argentine corporatist welfare regime, where access to health was linked to the job status of the 'breadwinner' (in absence of serious safety-net policies), the living conditions of entire cities, towns and villages soon became dramatic.

In this scenario, the mounting of protests in those cities or towns particularly affected by these phenomena is easily understandable. The very first episodes of popular road blockages (*piquetes*) occurred in 1997, precisely in some of the towns affected by the closure of industrial plants of the former public oil company YPF, in the remote provinces of Neuquén (in Plaza Huincul and in Cutral-Có) and of Salta (in Tartagal and General Mosconi). In the previous years, several local protests mounted, usually organized by dissident unions (often affiliated to the CTA, in which public – in many

[101] For example, unemployment rate never fell below 12,4% in that period (Marticorena, 2014: 35).

cases dismissed – workers played a central role: Natalucci, 2007; Battezzati, 2012), and the first unemployed workers organizations (*Coordinadoras de Trabajadores Desocupados*, CTDs – or *Movimientos de Trabajadores Desocupados,* MTDs) were created. However, these contentious episodes did not scale up to the national level, and then typically targeted the local governments to provide jobs and avoid a 'ghost city' fate. According to a local syndicalist leader (AR11), who was affiliated to the CGT at that time, the 'mainstream' unions were not (euphemistically) well-received during those protests, due to the 'complicity' of their national and regional leaders with the government.

Garay (2007) provides a convincing argument explaining the timing and some of the organizational features of the cycle of protests that began in 1997. She links the increase in the number of protests and the growing organizational capacity, at the local level, of unemployed workers, with the *Plan Trabajar*: a specific pro-poor policy inaugurated in mid-1996 by the Peronist national government. This policy program consisted in temporary monthly assignments (whose amounts were modest: US$ 50) to unemployed and poor people in exchange of their participation in communitarian projects submitted by NGOs or by the municipalities. Such projects were selected by the national and provincial governments and administrated by the latters (Weitz-Shapiro, 2006; Giraudy, 2007; Garay, 2007)[102]. As Zarazaga (2012) points out, these kinds of plans can be used in a clientelistic way, particularly when they are not universal and/or when some conditionality is added to have access to the program. These were precisely the features of the *Plan Trabajar*, whose coverage was quite limited (20% of the Argentine unemployed workers) and whose conditions (to be enrolled in communitarian projects approved by the municipal governments) were particularly suited to a discretionary distribution of *planes*.

[102] The *Plan Trabajar* can be considered the direct antecedent of the *Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogar Desempleados* (PJJHD, Unemployed Households' Plan), implemented by the Peronist President Duhalde in 2002 and whose coverage was much more extended. I detail below the importance of this plan.

The *punteros* immediately got involved in the distribution of the *Planes Trabajar*, taking advantage of their local rootedness and of their linkages to the municipalities, which, in the Gran Buenos Aires, were overwhelmingly administrated by Peronist mayors. However, they soon had to face the competition of social militants, often belonging to small, radical groups. These protesters soon received the name of *piqueteros*, due to their repertoire of protest, which crucially includes road blockages (*piquetes*), a very effective strategy to achieve visibility.

Garay (2007) states that it was precisely the *Plan Trabajar* that decisively triggered the process of self-organization and radicalization of several protesters' groups in many highly impoverished areas, in order to obtain concrete responses: the distribution of a scarce resource like the *planes*. It has been demonstrated (Weitz-Shapiro, 2006; Giraudy, 2007) that the distribution of the *planes* was highly skewed towards the small provinces governed by Peronists, in order to retain the control of constituencies that were overrepresented in the legislative chambers. However, as both quantitative (Weitz-Shapiro, 2006; Giraudy, 2007) and qualitative (Pereyra and Svampa, 2003) studies have shown, the distribution of the *planes* was also targeted towards the most contentious zones, in order to avoid the diffusion of the protests and to appease the most violent protesters.

The *piqueteros* groups worked through popular assemblies, which 'institutionalised' themselves through the CTDs. The *piquetes* were sustained by dozens, hundreds and sometimes thousands of unemployed workers. As the capacity of the existing intermediate associations (mainly parties and unions) to represent and satisfy their demands had vanished, they could only rely on self-help networks to deal with daily necessities. The *piquetero* logic was clearly different from that of the *punteros*: the former aimed at empowering unemployed workers, making the delivery of the *planes* the outcome of a 'revolutionary', 'popular' struggle, instead of the paternalistic concession of some *punteros* (AR12).

Piqueteros' needs were urgent and concrete. The *planes* represented the first available substitute of their demands for jobs, and the protesters soon realised that it was possible to force the government to deliver them. The first governmental concessions then triggered the diffusion of the *piquetes*, as they soon proved to be an effective source of bargaining power *vis à vis* the State (Pereyra and Svampa, 2003). When this tactic began to also be adopted by *piqueteros* groups in the *Conurbano*, the task of the government became even more complicated.

The *piquetero* galaxy was highly fragmented. According to Pereyra and Svampa (2003), at least three main variants existed. There were more *territorially based* organizations, having a longer trajectory, as they were created around historical demands such as housing and land issues. The FTV led by Luís D'Elía and the CCC-La Matanza, led by Juan Carlos Alderete, were the two main PBA's *piquetero* organizations. Both of them had their strongholds in La Matanza; and since their origins, they developed a complex relationship with the municipal and provincial governments. They represented strong challengers to the *punteros* for the distribution of the *planes*, thanks to their effectiveness in organizing the demands and answering the concrete needs of the '*pueblo*'.

The La Matanza's organizations soon became massive, their *piquetes* were very effective, and they developed a great ability to 'negotiate' with the State. They were, in sum, the most 'institutionalized' groups, not only in terms of their internal structure, but also because the municipalities understood that negotiating with them had become necessary for governing. As D'Elía, in an interview quoted in Auyero (2007: 193), said, '*when politicians talk about "governability"... [...] they refer to the ability [to avoid] the eruption of chaotic riots* [generar un gran quilombo] *in the Conurbano*'. Particularly in the case of the FTV, its mission (to respond to 'concrete needs'), its Catholic-Peronist ideological inspiration, its organizational and numerical strength (visible in the effectiveness of its *piquetes*) were factors that contributed to its ability for attracting public funds. Peronist mayors were very aware of the FTV's strength, and they also

knew that the huge majority of FTV's rank of files belonged to the traditional PJ's constituencies (AR7; Rocca Rivarola, 2006). Thus, their growth was by no means dysfunctional to the electoral strength of the PJ in those areas.

After 1996, the number of MTDs began to flourish. These new MTDs were usually founded by social and political activists able to 'read' the new sociological scenario. As the CTA had stated since the early Nineties, 'the new factory is the neighbourhood' (*La nueva fábrica es el barrio*). The locus in which the popular classes could organise themselves moved from the industrial plants to the neighbourhoods, which social heterogeneity was higher. The old Peronist rallies organized by the unions had disappeared; and *punteros'* activities fostered social atomization while offering targeted, clientelistic solutions. In contrast, *piquetero* leaders politicized the unemployment issue and fuelled new forms of contentious and collective actions to obtain some concrete responses from the State, instead of waiting for some *punteros* to distribute food. As Martuccelli and Svampa put it (1997), in Argentina there were 'crowded roads and empty squares' (*La ruta llena, la plaza vacía*).

Many small radical parties understood that, among those impoverished masses, there was a big potential for revolutionary activities, and they started creating their '*piquetero'*s arms' in the popular neighbourhoods. This was the case of the *Movimiento Popular Revolucionario Quebracho*, a far-left Peronist party, which dramatically changed its 'militant sociology': once a party mainly composed by progressive university students (AR7), *Quebracho* began organising hundreds of unemployed workers from the Southern municipalities of the *Conurbano* through its ancillary *Coordinadora de Trabajadores Desocupados "Aníbal Verón"* (CTD-Aníbal Verón). *Patria Libre*, a 'more left than Peronist' party, created *Barrios de Pie* ('Stand Up, Neighbourhoods!'), which had a slightly less popular profile, and tended to criticize the 'vertical' internal organization and the 'dialoguist' tactic of other organizations such as the FTV (Boyanovsky, 2010; AR12). Tellingly, Marxist parties such as the Communist Party and the Worker Party (*Partido Obrero*) waited a long time before creating their

‘territorial arms’ (the *Movimiento Territorial de Liberación* and *Polo Obrero*), as they were pessimistic about the ‘revolutionary potential’ of the *lumpenproletariat* created by neoliberal and austerity measures (Pereyra and Svampa, 2003; Boyanovsky, 2010; AR6).

Together with the ‘territorial organizations’ that were born mainly around housing issues – such as the FTV and the CCC-La Matanza – and the ‘*piquetero* arms’ of political parties, other, smaller but important, ‘autonomist’ organizations mushroomed, such as, for instance, the MTD-Solano, the smaller MTD-La Juanita or, much later, the *Frente Darío Santillán*. These organizations more genuinely applied an ‘assembleary logic’ (Natalucci, 2012a), and in some cases even tended to refuse the distribution of *planes*, considering it a ‘distortion’ of the true goals that a revolutionary movement had to pursue. These organizations were ideologically closer to the ‘counter-power’ theories of Negri, Hardt and Holloway, thus maintaining a harsh critique towards State structures (Pereyra and Svampa, 2003; AR7). Surely, these organizations were the ‘least Peronist’ ones, and the least inclined to negotiate with Peronist mayors.

5.3 The Critical Juncture: the collapse of the neoliberal model under De La Rùa's government

De La Rúa inherited in 1999 a recessionary economy, affected by the Brazilian crisis and by monetary distress due to the overvaluation of the Argentine peso. The resulting increase of public debt forced the government to implement new austerity measures in order to defend the monetary model based on convertibility. Pro-market labour policies were defended (and even deepened). The weak governmental coalition soon faced internal struggles, which became irreversible in 2000, when the Vicepresident Álvarez (FREPASO) resigned, after a scandal involving several MPs that

were corrupted in order to approve a new labour reform. The scandal also provoked the definitive scission of the MTA (the CGT's faction led by Moyano), which formed a 'dissident' CGT against the 'official' CGT (Palomino, 2000).

The Alianza's policies contributed to increase unemployment and further fuelled social unrest. The national government used a three-fold strategy to contain massive *piqueteros* protests. First, the government tried to 'institutionalize' the movements, by requiring their formal registration as 'social organizations' in order to obtain *planes*. This strategy unintendedly provoked the diffusion and the strengthening of the *piqueteros'* organizations: many small groups began growing and organizing in a more structured way. Second, De La Rúa refused to follow the previous Peronist tactic of negotiating *planes* in exchange for the end of protests, because such *ad hoc* tactic had fostered the diffusion of the *piquetes*. A mix of 'resistance' (against *piquetero*'s blackmailing tactics) and repression was employed (Pereyra and Svampa, 2003; Boyanovsky, 2010). Third, the government hugely cut the number of the *planes* to weaken both *piqueteros* and *punteros*. The unintended consequence was the formation of a 'tactical' and tacit alliance between Peronist governors, PJ's leaders and some *piquetero* groups. Concretely, this meant that, in the Gran Buenos Aires, the governor and several Peronist mayors began relaxing the repression of those *piqueteros* groups that were more willing to negotiate (Boyanovsky, 2010). At the same time, many *punteros*, due to the diminishing resources coming from their municipalities, began 'switching' to the *piquetero* front, thus fuelling the increase of contentious activities (while applying the coercive and paternalistic *lógica punteril* to the *piqueteros* organizations: AR7). The governmental strategy proved to be, at the end, completely unsuccessful, as a massive *piquete* organised by the FTV and the CCC forced the government to concede additional *planes*, thus showing the ineffectiveness of the 'hawkish strategy' (Boyanovsky, 2010).

Without entering into the details of the economic deterioration, it is sufficient to say that the worrying situation (decrease of international reserves, recession and

unemployment) convinced De La Rúa, in 2001, to appoint Domingo Cavallo (the architect of the Convertibility Plan under Menem) as the new Minister of Economy. New austerity measures implemented by Cavallo to repay the public external debt were not sufficient to avoid capital flight, as investors feared a huge devaluation of the peso. The government imposed a *corralito*, i.e. the prohibition of money withdrawal – over strict and small limits –, which enraged the middle-classes, the *core-constituencies* of the *aliancista* coalition (Panizza, 2014). These sectors immediately and spontaneously took the streets, banging their pots (*cacerolazo*) and showing all their fury against the government (and the politicians, *tout court*). In Buenos Aires several 'popular' and 'neighbourhood assemblies' took form (Mauro and Rossi, 2015). In the popular *villas* of the Gran Buenos Aires, desperation reached its peak on 19 and 20 December, when violent lootings occurred in several areas (the so-called *Argentinazo*).

The out-of-control situation convinced De La Rúa to resign and flee the *Casa Rosada* (the presidential palace), inaugurating a chaotic political conjuncture. In the midst of social unrests, Argentina had five Presidents in fifteen days: two *interim* presidents (the speakers of the two Chambers), the San Luís Peronist governor Rodríguez Saá and, finally, PBA's former governor Eduardo Duhalde.

The popular and violent lootings of December 2001 came partially as something unexpected, for many anti-neoliberal groups and organizations. A few days before the lootings, an initiative led by the CTA, and backed by several political parties (such as the centre-left, Anti-Peronist ARI; the FREPASO; and several Peronist figures), collected three millions signatures to demand concrete answers to the social emergency. This initiative, called 'National Front against Poverty' (*Frente Nacional contra la Pobreza*, FRENAPO), asked for the creation of a vast job-formation program in order to fight unemployment; for a minimum, universal pension; and for a universal assignment for unemployed householders (Pereyra and Svampa, 2003; Boyanovsky, 2010; AR6; AR7; AR9). All of these proposals were significant anticipations of several policies later implemented by Kirchnerist governments. It was probably the main attempt to

universalize the Argentine protests, highly fragmented along ideological fractures and often territorially delimited. However, the impact of the initiative was clearly downplayed by the *Argentinazo*. According to the leader of Quebracho, Fernando Esteche, '*nobody remember what FRENAPO was, maybe just those who signed the initiative. They were looking for a "citizen-style protest"* [ciudadanización de la protesta], *while that was the moment of the people* [lo popular]' (my interview).

The 'neighbourhood' assemblies that were created in the days after the 19 and 20 December eventually lost their centrality, after the initial *momentum*. The assemblies, which were often led by far-left activists (Mauro and Rossi, 2015; AR2), did function in a more horizontal and participative way (if compared with many *piquetero* organizations), although they usually included a lower number of participants, with a somewhat more middle-class profile (AR10). They became involved in 'alternative economy' projects (such as the 'fair trade' networks and the recuperation of abandoned industrial plants by the workers). Their number, however, dramatically decreased once the economic recovery began (approximately, since 2003). They did build some ties with a few *piquetero* organizations, mainly those belonging to the 'autonomist', 'counter-power' wing (such as the MTD-La Juanita and the MTD-Solano: see Mauro and Rossi, 2015).

The relationship between the *red punteril* and the lootings in the PBA remains unclear. Several hypotheses have been advanced: some commentators argued the lootings were 'spontaneous', while others observed the active involvement of *punteros* in collusion with PJ's leaders willing to destabilise the national government (Boyanovsky, 2010). Auyero (2007) convincingly argued that the truth is somewhere in the middle. The 'complot' hypothesis is difficult to sustain, due to the extension of the lootings and to the clearly spontaneous participation in the events of unorganized, desperate neighbours forced by necessity. Still, it is possible, and likely, that several *punteros* had contributed to the lootings by 'blowing on the fire', provoking the very

first episodes and directing people towards those areas left unprotected by the police, which was accountable to the (Peronist) provincial authorities.

5.4 Fragmented Mobilizations under Duhalde's government: the division between 'institutionalized' and 'antagonist' *piqueteros* and within the union movement

The congressional election of Duhalde represented the last chance for the old political class. Its null legitimacy was already evident in October 2001, two months *before* the *Argentinazo,* when in the mid-term legislative elections, won by the PJ, nearly 20% of the votes were left blank or null.

The first economic policies of Duhalde's government was to put an end to the 'convertibility paradigm' (Panizza, 2014), thus marking a strong discontinuity with the neoliberal era. Duhalde also confirmed the decision taken by Rodríguez Saá's short-lived presidency to declare the country in default. Shortly after, Duhalde declared the end of the convertibility. The latter triggered a huge devaluation of the peso (from the parity to the dollar to a four to one ratio). This caused a further temporary increase in social inequality: but it also made possible a rapid recovery of the Argentine economy, particularly in tradable sectors, and from there of the fiscal revenues. Nonetheless, after the first devaluation, the government decided to introduce exchange controls to stabilize the currency. The macroeconomic decisions taken by Duhalde and his Ministries of Economics (Remer Lenicov and, later, Roberto Lavagna) went against the 'suggestions' of the IMF, and proved to be highly successful, as the economy grew back at impressive rates (between 9% and 11%) in the 2003-2007 period (Marticorena, 2014: 37; Frenkel, 2012).

However, the entire 2002 year was a dramatic year for Argentine population, and particularly for its poorest sectors. The combined effects of devaluation and severe recession were reflected in the percentage of the population living below the poverty line (more than 50%). The null legitimacy of the Duhalde government and the on-going popular protests required a strong response by Duhalde, who implemented the most extended social program in Argentine history: the *Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogar Desempleados* (PJJHD, Unemployed Households' Plan). The PJJHD was financed through an increase in taxes over primary goods' exportations, fostered by the currency devaluation. The program signified a strong public response to the social emergency. However, it also was affected by a design favouring discretionary and arbitrary uses (Zarazaga, 2012; Pribble, 2013), similarly to the Menemist *Plan Trabajar*. The 'discretionary' design of the PJJHD was functional to more goals than simply struggle against poverty: it gave some 'oxygen' to PJ's networks – as the administration of the funds was assigned to the municipalities – and it allowed for re-establishing a dialogue with the most 'institutionalized' *piqueteros* organizations.

In fact, in order to monitor the correct allocation of the PJJHD, Duhalde instituted an Advisory Council including both the FTV and the CCC (Pereyra and Svampa, 2003; Boyanovsky, 2010). This inclusion (or co-optation, in the opinion of non-dialoguist *piquetero* organizations) strengthened the FTV and the CCC, which further tied their links to several Peronist mayors of the *Conurbano*. Nonetheless, the distribution of the funds tended to benefit the *punteros*. According to several sources (AR7; AR8; AR13; Boyanovsky, 2010), the percentage of *planes* administrated by the movements never surpassed 10-20% of the total amount (although in La Matanza, this percentage reached 50%: Cheresky and Pousadela, 2004).

The divisions *within* the *piquetero* camp became evident after 2001, when two *Piquetero* National Assemblies were organized in La Matanza. In those assemblies, the tensions between the biggest organizations (the FTV and the CCC) and the other groups arouse, mainly around tactical issues: the 'institutionalised' organizations tended to

condemn the most violent acts by radical, leftist groups in search of visibility (Pereyra and Svampa, 2003; AR13). The divisions led to the creation of an electoral alliance, the *Bloque Piquetero Nacional* (National *Piquetero* Bloc), hegemonized by leftist political parties. The biggest groups, unwilling to see their autonomous power 'diluted' in an overarching organization, refused to enter into the *Bloque Piquetero* (Pereyra and Svampa, 2003). Carlos Sánchez, a FTV's leader, reported to me that the 'Trotzkist' *piqueteros* tended to respond to the directives of their partisan leaders and to impose a 'hard line' that impeded any kind of alliance strategy with stronger actors, such as the MTA[103].

The *Bloque Piquetero*, soon identified as the 'radical wing' of the *piqueteros* movement, whose support among public opinion was steadily declining, never achieved relevant electoral results. Another partisan coalition that had disputed the 2001 legislative elections (three months before the *Argentinazo*) was the Social Pole (*Polo Social*), aiming to attract those left-of-centre voters disappointed by both the Alianza and the PJ. Nonetheless, it was not able to convince the CTA to back its project, because the latter was putting all its efforts in the FRENAPO initiative. It was the very Duhalde that helped Social Pole's leader Farinello (a leftist priest, well known for his social activism in the *Conurbano*) to complete its lists with PJ's local figures, because he estimated that this project was worth promoting because it was much more likely to attract *aliancistas* (instead of *justicialistas*) constituencies (Boyanovsky, 2010: 102-103). Duhalde's calculus proved to be exact: the Social Pole achieved a disappointing 9% in the PBA, where the PJ comfortably won.

The radicalization of some *piquetero* groups reached its peak on 26th June 2002, when the *Bloque Piquetero* and the CTD-Aníbal Verón blocked the Pueyrredón Bridge in Avellaneda (located just South of the Capital). The police repression left two activists killed. That event was a turning point in Duhalde's administration. The event showed that the country was far from being 'normalized', and convinced the President to

[103] Similar accounts can be found in Pereyra and Svampa (2003) and Boyanovsky (2010).

conclude his mandate early and call for early elections in April 2003. Moreover, it provoked the final eruption of internal divisions within the *piquetero* front, as the more 'institutionalized' organizations (albeit condemning the repression) took some distance from the violent actions of the groups involved in the *piquete* of the Pueyrredón Bridge, attracting harsh critiques from the latters (AR7).

During the year and a half that followed the *Argentinazo*, the political and social situation was thus fluid. The PJ was able to recuperate some support, thanks to policy initiatives, both in the realm of economics (the end of convertibility, the partial suspension of the public debt payments and a – still partial – economic recovery) and in the social sphere (the PJJHD). However, it was weakened by its ineffectiveness in reducing popular protests and by internal struggles: Menem still enjoyed the support of important Peronist *caudillos*, while Duhalde had promised to renounce running for elections. The PJ was clearly much identified with the 'old, corrupt politics' and with the neoliberal reforms of the Nineties, while the Anti-Peronist camp was divided and much damaged by its disastrous governmental experience.

However, the 'contentious camp' appeared even more fragmented. The *piquetero* organizations were not able to build a 'political instrument', and found itself tactically, ideologically and strategically divided. Their focus on solving concrete demands at the territorial level actually furthered their fragmentation, as these movements were competing with each other for scarce resources (the *planes*). The 'institutionalised' groups, while attacking the government, still kept the dialogue open in order to sustain their communitarian projects; their 'privileged' and 'dialoguist' stance was at odds with the irreducible position of the revolutionary *piqueteros* and the 'autonomist' ones.

Even the CGT suffered from a major split. On one side, there was the 'official' CGT, highly criticized for its former support towards Menemism, and further divided between the *gordos*, the Menemist faction and the 'independents' (Natalucci, 2015). On the other side, there was the 'dissident' CGT (*CGT-Rebelde*), led by Moyano and

composed of unions that enjoyed strong growth during the previous years (Benes and Milmanda, 2012). Despite its 'rebel' position, the CGT-Rebelde was never willing to dialogue with the *outsiderist* groups (the *piqueteros*) and never escaped from a logic of *sectorial* demands, while the radical *piqueteros* groups opposed any alliance with Moyano.

The CTA, in turn, had a stronger legitimacy among the antineoliberal contentious actors, and it had built durable bridges between formal sectors (almost exclusively among public workers) and the *outsiders*, mainly through its 'territorial arm' (the FTV). The CTA was probably the antagonistic organization with the most encompassing 'alternative project' for Argentine society. Nonetheless, the CTA firmly rejected entering electoral politics, and remained loyal to its 'autonomist' roots. Even most importantly, the CTA was never able to extend its appeals among private sector workers, and did never challenge the CGT's dominancy within the union system. Meanwhile, many *outsiderist* organizations had already developed complex, difficult but gradually stronger ties with the State, and (thus) with the Peronist machine, well suited for *ad hoc* solutions. Moreover, many *piquetero* leaders came from a Peronist, *nacional-popular milieu*. The 'solution' for socially 'normalizing' the country and, at the same time, giving concrete responses to social inequalities, had to be found in the Peronist camp.

5.5 Unexpectedly in Power, and Unexpectedly Strong: Kirchner's Party-Rooted Populism

5.5.1 Elected by Chance: Néstor Kirchner's Victory in the 2003 Presidential Elections

The multiple candidacies for the presidential elections held in April 2003 mirrored the Argentine political fragmentation, after the *annus horribilis* (2002) of the country. Five major candidates ran, occupying all the quadrants of the Argentine two-dimensional space (Ostiguy, 2009; Ostiguy and Schneider, 2018).

In the centre-left Anti-Peronist camp, the candidate was Elisa Carrió, with her ARI (*Afirmación para una República Igualitaria*), a litigious coalition formed by former *frepasistas* and social-democrats that left the Alianza before its final collapse. Ricardo López-Murphy, a former Minister of Economy during the De La Rúa government, ran with his *Recrear*, a right-wing, anti-Peronist political party, somewhat inspired by Cavallo's economic ideas. Both ARI and *Recrear* were personalist, 'public opinion' parties without any environmental linkages. The only anti-Peronist mass party, the UCR, was then basically destroyed by De La Rúa's disastrous governmental experience. Its candidate, Leopoldo Moreau, ran autonomously and obtained the poorest result in the century-old party's history (2,4%). However, the UCR still kept a considerable power and territorial presence in several provinces of the Argentine *Interior* (Ostiguy, 2005; Arzadún, 2008).

Peronism was even more fragmented. The internal struggles between Menem and Duhalde led to an 'extraordinary' (and quite out-of-rule) decision by PJ's National Committee (Calvo, 2005; Ostiguy and Schneider, 2018), that suspended the internal primary elections and opted for allowing three different candidates to run with Peronist symbols (but without the PJ acronym) for the presidency. Menem was still backed by many Peronist *caudillos* in the poor, northwestern Argentine provinces and by Peronist conservative voters; however, he also attracted the hostility from the rest of the

electorate. In a second round, he had clearly no chance of victory. Rodríguez Saá ran representing the 'Federal Peronists': a group of Peronist *caudillos* in central Argentina. He also had poor possibilities of winning the elections.

Duhalde had promised to renounce his re-election, but he was the unchallenged leader of the PJ in the *Conurbano*, and he was determined to preclude a Menem's victory. He began searching for a possible candidate, in order to 'offer' him his *Conurbano*'s votes. Santa Fé's governor Reutemann mysteriously renounced (Boyanovsky, 2010), while Córdoba's governor De La Sota did not rank well in the polls. Both of them were clearly right-of-centre (Ostiguy and Schneider, 2018). Finally, Duhalde endorsed the poorly known governor of Santa Cruz (a scarcely populated Southern province), Néstor Kirchner, probably considering him a 'manipulable' president. At the time, Kirchner's wife, Cristina Fernández, was probably more known than he was at the national level, thanks to her progressive, incendiary speeches in the Lower Chamber (Boyanovsky, 2010). Néstor was somewhat close to the leftist Peronist *milieu*, thanks to his activity as law consultant for local unions, but, practically, he ran the campaign enjoying little more than the clientelistic machine offered to him by his sponsor Duhalde and the timid political support of the CGT-Azopardo (the so-called *gordos*), one of the three factions that were disputing CGT's leadership[104].

The 'antagonist' *piqueteros* groups considered all the candidates as 'servants of the Empire' (AR7); whereas some leaders from the 'institutionalized' *piqueteros*, as well as from the CTA, ran with small leftist parties or joined the ARI. The election results did not show any 'antineoliberal' or 'leftist' turn: in contrast, they confirmed the Peronist eternal ability of retaining its traditional core-constituencies. Menem and Kirchner (with his *Frente para la Victoria* – Victory Front, FpV) acceded to the second round, with the 24% and 22% of the valid votes, respectively. López Murphy obtained 18%; Carrió and Rodríguez Saá, both 14%. As Ostiguy and Schneider (2018) highlight, the left-of-centre

[104] Moyano's faction chose to endorse Rodríguez Saá. Luís Barrionuevo led the CGT Menemist faction (Natalucci, 2015).

candidates (Kirchner and Carrió) obtained 36% of the votes, against 41% of the two main rightist candidates. However, from the perspective of the other cleavage, Peronism retained more than 60% of the votes, while blank and null votes were a tiny minority. The electoral situation seemed to have come back to ‘normality’; but not the social one.

Facing the prospect of a major defeat in the second round, Menem decided to simply abandon the elections. Kirchner was declared the new Argentine president with a mere 22% of the votes, mainly coming from Duhalde’s machine. Meanwhile, the country was still torn by ongoing protests and mobilizations, as well as socially by unemployment and poverty; and the international financial institutions were waiting for debt reimbursement. Néstor Kirchner thus assumed in a weak and dangerous position. However, his ability to overcome these difficulties soon emerged.

5.5.2 Kirchner’s Transversalidad: 'incorporating populism' in action

Kirchner immediately showed unexpected activism in order to ‘emancipate’ himself from Duhalde's control. The new president searched for allies to build his own ‘social base’, and rapidly looked at the left of the political spectrum. He presented himself as the representative of a ‘new politics’, different from the old, corrupt practices, and from the ‘neoliberal era’. He explicitly discursively put the military dictatorship (1976-1983) and the Menemist phase in the very same box (Panizza, 2014). Kirchner provided a polarizing discourse, drawing a frontiere between the *Patria* and *el Imperio* (‘Fatherland and Empire’, the latter standing for the US and for international financial institutions: AR4), with the explicit aim of restoring the *economic (and political) sovereignty* jeopardised by the long neoliberal era. At the same time, he also promised the prosecution of army officers involved in human right violations during the dictatorship (AR6; Schuttenberg, 2015). Therefore, he approached organizations such as

the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, and flaunted his belonging to the Peronist Youth during the Seventies, when the *Juventudes* stood quite on the left of the Peronist political spectrum. Concrete acts, such as the destitution of several military officers and of some judges of the Supreme Court (filled with partisan figures by Menem), were some of the first moves of Kirchner's Presidency.

In an original way, Kirchner developed a strategy that was labelled '*Transversalidad*'. It referred to Kirchner's appeals towards the *entire left side of the spectrum*, both Peronist and non-Peronist. It aimed to counterbalance the PJ's power through a leftist and anti-corruption discourse that could attract both the Peronist Left and the Socialist, 'Republican' Left, at odds with PJ's practices (Torre, 2005). This latter sector arguably had its main expression in segments of the CTA, and in some political figures close to the ARI and with a *frepasista* trajectory. In fact, Kirchner appointed in his first government a CTA's leader as Minister of Education (Natalucci, 2015), and left open the possibility of recognising a status of 'peak union' for the CTA, thus defying CGT's will and monopoly (Boyanovsky, 2010).

The Peronist Left, at the time, was mainly composed by those *piquetero* 'institutionalized' groups competing against PJ's *punteros* for the distribution of the *planes*, secondary political figures with a Leftist-Peronist background, and some CTA's sectors. Kirchner understood that, in order to guarantee for himself the 'governability' of the country and build his own 'social base', those groups had a huge potential. Therefore, he convoked several social and political leaders (such as D'Elía, leader of the FTV; Pérsico, leader of the MTD-Evita[105]; Depetri, a CTA's leader who founded the *Frente Transversal Nacional y Popular,* and Tumini [*Patria Libre – Barrios de Pie*]) and invited them to join the project and build a common 'social movement front' supporting the new government. Such a common front of these four organizations never prospered, despite several attempts in this sense (such as the *Frente de Organizaciones Populares* in 2004, and the *Frente Patria para Todos* in 2005). Personal divisions

[105] The MTD-Evita was a small *piquetero* organization linked with left Peronist activists.

between the organization's leaders, as well as the high heterogeneity of their political tactics, ideologies and constituencies (see below), prevented the constitution of such a front (Boyanovsky, 2010; Natalucci, 2012c).

Kirchner also offered to these leaders and to their organizations the access to important political position, through public offices in several agencies of the national cabinet (Quiroga, 2006). At the same time, Kirchner formed the so-called *gabinete piquetero* ('*Piquetero Cabinet*'), linked to the Presidential Secretariat and to other functionaries belonging to other Ministries, to deal with *piquetero*'s claims in a conciliatory way (Boyanovsky, 2010; Natalucci, 2012a; AR7; AR10; AR13). All of these decisions were highly controversial, because of the bad reputation of the *piqueteros* amongst the broader public opinion. For the four organizations mentioned above, the Kirchner's strategy represented an unprecedented opportunity to have access to the administration of important public agencies and to have an important voice in the fund distribution for the communitarian projects financed by the PJJHD and by other, smaller programs created by Kirchner. Their inclusion represented the main 'participative' feature of Kirchner's *participative-mobilising populism.* Nonetheless, at least at the beginning, the amount of funds and *planes* directly administrated by these organizations was not particularly high, in order to do not irritate the *justicialista* machine (Boyanovsky, 2010; AR4; AR13). Kirchner intended to include the social movements in the governmental coalition, to share with them (some) responsibilities, and to incorporate them in the institutions in an 'organic' way. The movements, in turn, provided the government with the enthusiasm and militancy necessary to sustain the presidential inclusive political project, after decades of crisis of participation and atomization of the popular sectors.

Kirchner carefully selected the organizations to incorporate in the government. In fact, each of the four organizations mentioned above represented, in some way, very different social and political constituencies. The FTV was the main territorial group, which, despite its *piquetero* tactics, had a longer trajectory and an established capacity to

deal with PJ's machine. Moreover, it had a strong Peronist-Catholic popular identity, and was crucial to guarantee the 'governability' in a problematic large municipality such as La Matanza, one of the biggest municipality of the country.

Barrios de Pie, also a *piquetero* organization, came from a quite different and heterogeneous *milieu*. Geographically, it was rooted in the Southern *Conurbano* and it had a strong mobilizational capacity, often in competition with the FTV (Pérez and Armelino, 2003; Boyanovsky, 2010; Schuttemberg, 2015). *Barrios de Pie* was more 'politically mature' than the FTV, as it represented the 'territorial arm' of *Patria Libre*, a small leftist and nationalist political party, with a 'Bolivarian' (instead of Peronist) ideological inspiration (AR12; see also Rossi, 2015). Although *Barrios de Pie* was very active in organising soup kitchens and other territorial activities, its political leadership had a more middle-class, leftist profile, closer to the human rights movement.

The *Frente Transversal*, founded by Edgardo Depetri, was, in turn, the political *trait d'union* between Kirchner and the CTA. This did not mean that it constituted the 'political arm' of the CTA, as the union developed two different internal factions. The 'autonomist' line kept a more Marxist-Leftist profile, independent from any political party and pushing for radical change in the Argentine capitalist and union system. The Kirchnerist faction very actively supported the government almost since the first Kirchner's political acts (Pérez and Armelino, 2003; Natalucci, 2012a) and until the present day. Obviously, the *Frente Transversal* was tied to this second faction. But it was little more than a group of CTA's union leaders, without any autonomous organizational structure (Natalucci, 2011).

Finally, Emilio Pérsico, an old Peronist-left militant, was selected by Néstor Kirchner to aggregate several local Peronist figures (both in the PBA and in the *Interior*) closer to the *montonero* tradition, both inside and outside the PJ. Pérsico had built his own *piquetero* organization, the MTD-Evita, which was quite small before Kirchner's presidency, though. The *Movimiento Evita* was a construction 'from above'. It was able

to attract thousands of militants and became a major organization in the Kirchnerist galaxy. The *Evita* expanded thanks to the access to state resources and to the political networks of its leaders, usually politicians with a long trajectory inside Peronism and the PJ, from a 'critical' position (Boyanovsky, 2010; Natalucci, 2012a; Schuttemberg, 2015; Rossi, 2015). The *Evita* tied a solid alliance with the CGT – which in 2005 was unified under Moyano's leadership (Natalucci, 2015). The CGT and the *Evita* agreed on a peculiar strategy of 'cooperation' and 'division of roles' within Peronist Kirchnerism. The CGT represented the interests of the formal workers, whereas the *Evita* pretended to represent the 'humble', 'deprived'[106] sectors of the population (Natalucci, 2012b), that is, the *outsiders*, and became the most important organization administrating communitarian projects carried on by popular cooperatives. The *Evita* actively worked for the organization of the *outsider* sectors, by contributing to found the CTEP, *Confederación de los Trabajadores de la Economía Popular* (AR5). Emilio Pérsico finally joined the PJ, and his *Movimiento Evita* probably became the most numerous of all Kirchnerist popular organizations, at least before the appearance of *La Cámpora* (see below).

Kirchner's strategy deepened the divide between the 'Peronist' *piqueteros* groups and other organizations that, for political or strategic reasons, refused to join the governmental coalition and project. Both the FTV and the CCC continued to cultivate their relationships with public institutions, at the national and the municipal level. Nonetheless, while D'Elía's insertion in the Kirchnerist coalition was absolute, the CCC decided to exit from the 'pro-governmental' camp quite soon, mainly for political reasons[107]. Meanwhile, other organizations, aligned with Kirchnerism, although not

[106] The very name of the organization fully symbolised its inspiration and its 'plebeian' character (Pérez and Natalucci, 2010).

[107] First, the CCC-La Matanza, albeit quite autonomous, had strong ties with the small PCR, an electoral party that soon understood the dangerous effects of the growing Kirchner's popularity. In this sense, the PCR (and its *piquetero* arm) followed the fate of all the other *piquetero* organizations linked with leftist parties, such as *Polo Obrero*, the MTL or Quebracho, all of which decided to position themselves against the new government. Moreover, the CCC in Jujuy's province (its original stronghold) suffered from internal divisions that contributed to its radicalization (Battezzati, 2012).

necessarily with Peronism, began growing. This is the case of the *Organización Barrial Túpac Amaru*, which still operates in Jujuy, and is closely linked to the CTA. The Túpac Amaru is – similarly to the FTV, but much more on the left – a network of neighbourhoods' associations and informal worker unions led by former ATE's union leader Milagro Sala. Her decision to early join Kirchnerism contributed to the enormous strengthening of her organization, which fast became a very powerful one, almost rivalling with the very Jujuy's governorship in terms of financial resources (Battezzati, 2012). The Túpac Amaru, for its sociological composition, for the strength of its territorial control and representational monopoly, and for its indigenist identity, is surely the Argentine organization more similar to the Bolivian *juntas vecinales* and *sindicatos urbanos*. The Túpac Amaru 'disciplined' the galaxy of the pre-existing contentious movements and acted as the only territorial representative of the *jujeños* popular sectors, by establishing strong ties with the national government. The *Transversalidad*, however, excluded the antagonist *piquetero* groups and progressively isolated them, while allowed the '*piqueteros K*' (as the pro-governmental ex road-blockers organizations were called, in a slightly pejorative way) a further consolidation of their public role.

Meanwhile, the campaigns over human rights issues, and Kirchner's gradual emancipation from Duhalde's control, soon provoked enthusiastic reactions within leftist middle-class sectors, at odds with the PJ's opaque practices. The *Transversalidad* did not attract just those *piqueteros* expecting concrete answers from the State - identified as the most important 'space' to 'occupy', in order to satisfy the necessities of the *pueblo*, fully in line with the Peronist tradition. This strategy also appealed to the CTA, which had much more elaborate and progressive political goals (AR6). As a CTA's secretary member (belonging to the Kirchnerist faction) told me, '*Kirchner gradually stole our agenda from us*' (AR4).

However, Kirchner's socioeconomic views were also much in line with the old, ISI tradition, so rooted in Argentina (and in Peronism, despite the parenthesis under Menem). It identified in economic recovery through protectionism the key to reduce

unemployment and to ‘re-incorporate’ the *outsiders* in the system. Kirchner did not have in mind a real questioning of the existing Argentine capitalist model. Instead, he turned back to a statist management of the economy and to some tenets of the ISI model, including protectionism, stronger taxation of the export-oriented sectors and political support of unions' wage demands. The existence of stronger, *insider* unions was functional to these goals, in detriment of the CTA’s hopes for a democratization of the union representational system and for a more universalist welfare regime.

The presidential push for the ‘reconciliation’ between the CGT’s factions and his support for Moyano’s leadership (Natalucci, 2015) has to be read in this sense. The spectacular economic recuperation and growth that Argentina experienced during Néstor Kirchner’s term, thanks to the macroeconomic and exchange rate policies implemented earlier on by Minister Lavagna (Kulfas, 2016), favoured the recuperation of the industrial sectors and, consequently, the inclusion of many *outsiders* through access to the labour market. This fact, combined with the political support from the government, allowed for a strong empowerment of the CGT and for huge improvements of the formal workers conditions. In fact, during Kirchner’s term, a widely documented ‘revitalization’ of the union movement took place (Palomino y Trajtemberg, 2006; Etchemendy and Collier, 2007; Longo, 2012), in terms of number of successful negotiations (both at the shop-floor and at the branch level) and mobilizations, mainly for salary increases. The CGT thus recuperated a central role, backed by the government, which approved several minimum wage increases and actively supported the unions in their demands, also by partially modifying the labour-market legal provisions[108] inherited from the neoliberal era.

In addition, Kirchner provided the Minister of Labour with higher funding for labour inspections, along with laws that similarly favoured the formalization of the labour market and/or full employment. These measures gradually relegated to a

[108] Particularly, the Law 25.877 gave the primacy again to the branch-level negotiation over the shop-floor one (Palomino and Trajtemberg, 2006).

secondary position the relevance of the PJJHD, as the number of salaried, registered and formal workers hugely increased: between 2003 and 2008, almost two millions of formal jobs in the private sector had been created, while the number of informal workers decreased (Kulfas, 2016).

To separate social and 'political' goals, the Kirchners' governments gradually established a sort of 'division of social tasks'. They assigned the administration of unemployment subsidies and *planes* to the Ministry of Labour (occupied by Carlos Tomada, a former advisor of the CGT: see Etchemendy, 2011), while different communitarian projects, mainly related to housing and basic service issues, became responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development (*Ministerio de Desarrollo Social*), led by Néstor's sister, Alicia (Rossi, 2015). The *piqueteros K* had almost no voice in the former, but occupied important (albeit not primary) positions in the second, as well as in some Presidential Secretariats.

Thus, the *Transversalidad* tactic and the incorporation of contentious groups and the unions allowed Kirchner to build his own and vast social base. The victim of the *Transversalidad* was, certainly, the *duhaldista'*s faction, increasingly isolated politically. Néstor Kirchner kept alive his *Frente para la Victoria*, the electoral brand used in the 2003 campaign, and decided to run *against* the PJ for the 2005 legislative elections, when the main post in dispute was the Senatorial post for the Province of Buenos Aires. The national PJ, at the time, found itself lacking an official leadership and was put under a legal commissioner, as no *caudillo* could achieve the control of the party. It was the very Kirchner who contributed to the 'freezing' of the PJ, by ordering the resignation of all the members of the National Committee, including those closer to him (Arzadún, 2008). Although the PJ's *apparatus* in the PBA was still controlled by Duhalde, a gradual pro-Kirchner alignment of several Peronist *barons* had already began, following the 'adaptive' strategy so typical of Peronist *caudillos* (Levitsky, 2003). The 2005

legislative elections represented the 'final battle'[109] between Kirchner and Duhalde. The candidate of the *Frente para la Victoria* was Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, while 'Chiche' Duhalde ran under PJ's banner. The 'battle of the wives' was overwhelmingly won by Cristina, who obtained 45% of the votes in the PBA, against 16% obtained by 'Chiche'. Despite the 'nostalgic Peronist' campaign ran by 'Chiche', the bulk of the popular, Peronist electorate opted for Cristina (Ostiguy, 2009).

The overwhelming majority of FpV's candidates in 2005 consisted of Peronist politicians, with PJ or FREPASO's origins, together with some left-of-center figures. The presence of *piqueteros* or union leaders was reduced and almost completely relegated to local or provincial elections. The lists of candidates were filled under the direct supervision of Néstor Kirchner and his inner circle, following the Peronist informal rules and reflecting the high autonomy of the partisan elites in the candidate selection process. The electoral lists reflected, in practice, the outcome of Néstor's 'political weighting' of the multiple organizations and factions composing the governmental coalition at that time. As elections are a matter of votes, Kirchner privileged partisan figures (i.e., PJ's *agrupaciones* and *caudillos* loyal to him) and other politicians who were able to guarantee electoral support, over social movements' leaders. At least 47 out of 63 newly elected MPs for the FpV in 2005 legislative elections came from the PJ, particularly in the hinterland. Among them, there were politicians closely identified with Duhalde (such as Pampuro, Balestrini and Cigogna), a *Barón del Conurbano* such as Mariano West, and even politicians formerly associated with Menem (as the representative from the CABA, Marcó del Pont, and all the FpV's MPs from La Rioja). There were also a few former *frepasistas* or *aliancistas* (Bielsa from the CABA; Rosso and Conti from the PBA; Massei from Neuquén; Arriaga from Río Negro), whereas the only deputy elected with a social movement 'career' was Edgardo Depetri (*Frente Trasversal*). There were a few newly elected MPs from CGT's *milieu* (such as

[109] See Rodríguez (2006) for a detailed account of the internal divisions within *Conurbano*'s PJ during those elections.

Héctor Recalde, in the PBA). By far, the most effective 'social movement' in putting 'its' figures in the lists was the *Movimiento Evita*, i.e. the one closely linked with Peronism and created to a greater extent from above (and very close to be a 'PJ's leftist faction'). Several politicians approached by Pérsico during the 'genetic phase' of the *Evita* were elected, such as Juliana Di Tullio, Luís Ilarregui, Francisco Gutiérrez, Stella Maris Córdoba, among others.

The pattern that emerged, therefore, is the construction of an including political project that succsessfully challenged the factions of the PJ not comfortable with the Kirchnerist project. Néstor's main concern can be resumed in the goal of 'governability'. He looked at the left of the political space, where multiple expression existed: the *piqueteros*, the Peronist Left, the CTA, Moyano's CGT, the human rights movement, even some middle-class sectors at odds with Peronist practices (or *pejotismo*, 'PJism') and ideologically at the centre-left, disappointed with Alianza's experience. Kirchner drew a clear line, through a polarizing discourse, and began building his own social and political coalition, his own base (*los suyos*), in order to sustain his leadership.

Nevertheless, Néstor Kirchner *never* closed the doors to PJ's leaders, as he was well aware of their electoral potential and their traditional disposition to 'adapt' to different political conjunctures. Consequently, he articulated different linkage strategies with different constituencies and political actors. In the political-electoral sphere, Kirchner mainly relied on the *partisan apparatus*, thus excluding social activists and union leaders. He appeased some movements' leaders through public posts and their full 'organic' insertion in the governmental coalition, while isolating those unwillingly to enter in the *oficialismo* or considered 'too radical' (or not sufficiently Peronists) to be included. Kirchner also strongly favoured the constituencies represented by *insiderist* unions, through public policies and governmental support for unions' bargaining power in the negotiations with entrepreneurial representatives. The presidential mediatory skills, and the management of governmental resources, gave him a broad room of manoeuvre, much higher than expected when he assumed the presidency with the 22%

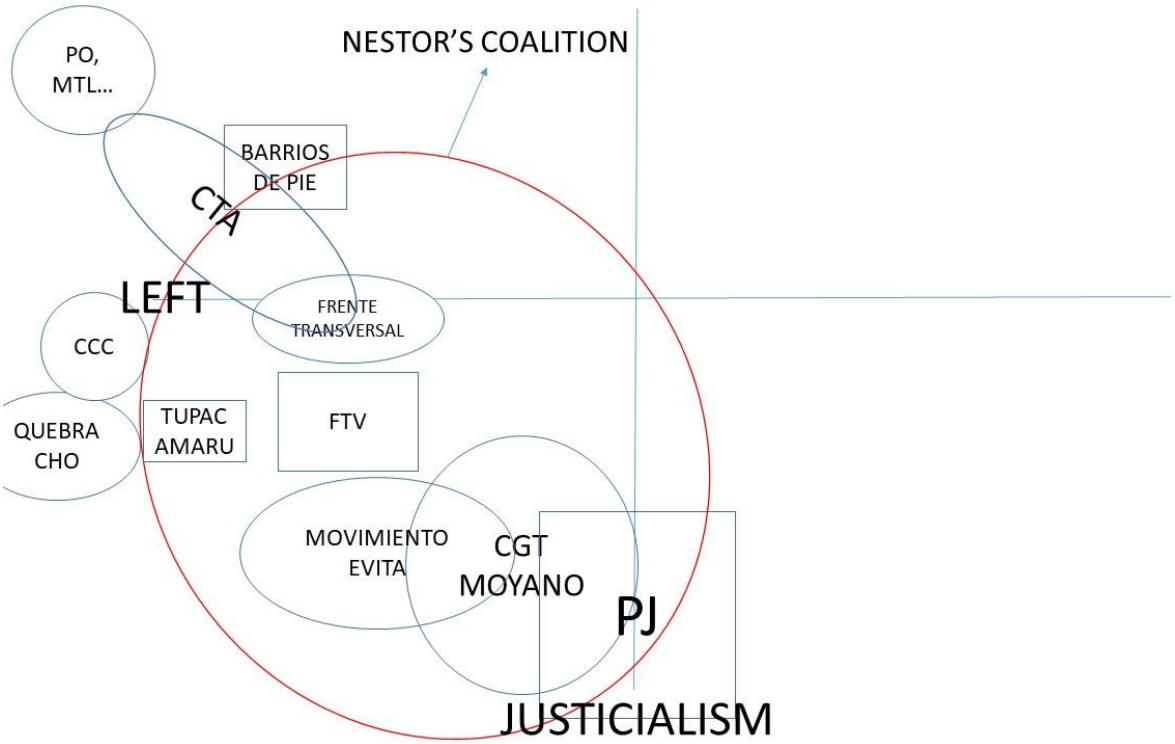
of the votes (when 'Kirchner's voters were less than unemployed workers', as it is usually remembered).

Figure 5.1 summarizes the position of different political and union organizations during the presidency of Néstor Kirchner, according to two axes: Left-Right and Justicialism-Antijusticialism. The 'Justicialism' axis measures the extent to which the organizations 'felt comfortable' with the particularistic political exchanges typical of Peronism (*pejotismo*)[110]. The graph is useful to understand the limits that Kirchner faced in building his broad coalition. It also graphically explains why some organizations (such as *Barrios de Pie / Libres del Sur*) finally decided to exit from the Kirchnerist space after Néstor's decions to assume the presidency of the PJ (see below) and why the CTA split, due to the irremediable division between the 'autonomist' and the 'Kirchnerist' factions.

The unwillingness of the Marxist Left (*Partido Obrero* and *Movimiento Territorial de Liberación* – linked to the Communist Party) to join Kirchnerism was due both to their 'ideological purism' and to their opposition to the Peronist tradition. The CCC of Alderete did develop an 'instrumental' relationship with the PJ under Duhalde, but ideological and electoral considerations of its political referent (the *Partido Comunista Revolucionario*, with a Maoist inspiration) finally forced it to break with Kirchner. The graph also reflects the ability of Néstor Kirchner, from his position as president, to attract most of the PJ's apparatus.

[110] In this sense, this dimension is slightly different than the one theorized by the works of Ostiguy (2005; 2009).

Figure 5.1 Spatial Political Position of the main Leftist and/or Peronist social and political organizations during the Néstor Kirchner's presidency (2003-2007).



5.6 From Néstor to Cristina. The ambitious transition from *party-rooted* to *leader-initiated populism*

The victory in the 2005 legislative elections represented the zenith of the *Transversalidad* strategy, but also the beginning of Kirchner's dialogue, now from a favourable dominant position, with other, more 'traditional' actors. Kirchner inaugurated

a new strategy, called 'Plural Concertation' (*Concertación Plural*), consisting in the inclusion, in his coalition, of some provincial governors external to the PJ, in order to reinforce 'governability'. Like the *Transversalidad*, the 'Plural Concertation' aimed to partially 'normalize' the Argentine political spectrum and, thus, to reinforce the left-right axis instead of the Peronist/Non-Peronist cleavage by attracting centre-left and left Non-Peronist forces towards Kirchnerism. However, the 'Plural Concertation' targeted much more moderate forces than the *Transversalidad*. The appointment of the Radical Julio Cobos as the Vicepresidential candidate of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner for the 2007 presidential elections symbolized this phase (Arzadún, 2013; Ostiguy and Schneider, 2018).

In 2007, the weight of the social movements in the legislative lists further diminished. In contrast, Moyano, taking advantage of the growing power of the CGT and of his relationship with Kirchner, was able to partially 're-unionise' the PJ (which joined Cristina's coalition), through the nomination of one third of the candidates (Boyanovsky, 2010; Natalucci, 2015). Cristina, now the presidential candidate, easily won the elections in the first round. Despite the appointment of Cobos, who supposedly would have strengthen the FpV's appeal among middle class sectors, the second position went to Elisa Carrió and her Civic Coalition, which included strongly Anti-Peronist political forces, both from the centre-left and now also the centre-right, mainly supported by urban middle classes. Cristina's efforts to give her candidacy a more 'leftist' and less 'Peronist' profile notwithstanding, the old, sociological and cultural Argentine cleavage resisted (Ostiguy and Schneider, 2018).

A succint quantitative analysis at the individual level, by using survey data from LAPOP (2008), supports this claim. As Table 5.1 shows, job-related categories almost had no relationship with the vote for Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in the 2007 presidential elections, except for the 'urban worker' category, which includes self-employed (often informal) workers (the traditional *outsider* Peronist constituencies). By far, the best predictors for voting for Cristina were party identification (either with the PJ

or the FpV), income and education. Cristina's electorate was the traditional Peronist one, composed of poor and poorly educated voters, highly identified with the Peronist tradition. Even more interestingly, the self-positioning on the left-right axis was definitely not a predictor. Her 'leftist profile' notwithstanding, Cristina was able to retain 'Peronist conservatives' and unable to attract Anti-Peronist leftist voters (Ostiguy, 2009). Dropping 'party identification' from the model dramatically diminishes the capacity to capture variance; at the same time, no significant change can be observed in the sociological variables, with the exception of the blue-collar category, where identification with the PJ is stronger.

Table 5.1 Determinants of the votes for Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007 elections, probit models).

	Model 1			Model 2		
DV: Vote for Cristina in 2007	**Coef.**	**Std. Err.**		**Coef.**	**Std. Err.**	
PID FpV	1,72	0,24	***			
PID PJ	1,67	0,20	***			
Female	-0,03	0,12		-0,17	0,11	
Union membership	0,01	0,19		0,21	0,17	
Health Insurance	-0,15	0,14		-0,07	0,14	
Ideology	0,01	0,03		0,01	0,03	
Low Education	0,53	0,22	**	0,61	0,20	**
Middle Education	0,18	0,15		0,16	0,14	
Unemployed	-0,59	0,39		-0,10	0,36	
Housewife	0,14	0,29		0,38	0,27	
Student	-0,10	0,30		0,08	0,28	
Retired	-0,02	0,37		0,29	0,31	
Peasant	0,20	0,40		0,33	0,39	
Urban Worker	0,51	0,26	*	0,43	0,25	*
Blue Collar	0,40	0,32		0,55	0,29	*
White Collar	-0,14	0,26		0,03	0,24	
Salaried Worker	0,19	0,24		0,37	0,23	
Age - First Tertile	-0,11	0,16		-0,11	0,15	
Age - Second Tertile	0,15	0,14		0,04	0,13	
Income - First Quartile	0,37	0,17	**	0,28	0,16	*
Income - Second Quartile	0,14	0,19		0,07	0,18	
Income - Third Quartile	-0,05	0,17		-0,02	0,15	
Constant	-1,04	0,33	**	-0,80	0,31	**
N	639			639		
Log-Likelihood	-331,08			-394,80		
Pseudo R2	0,21			0,06		

Source: author's elaboration, using data from LAPOP (2008). *=p<0.10; **=p<0.05; ***=p<0.01. Baseline categories: Age – Third Tercile; Education – more than 12 years of schooling; Merchant; Income – Fourth Quartile. All models robust to heteroskedasticity.

The resilience of Peronist identity convinced Néstor to directly assume the leadership of the PJ, thus 'reviving' it and ending its acephaly. Several social movements (AR12; AR13) contested this decision, with the exception of the *Evita*. This decision was the *casus belli* for the exit of *Patria Libre - Libres del Sur* from the governmental coalition, and provoked further divisions within the CTA. Even some MPs elected with FpV's lists decided to leave the coalition, uncomfortable with the full inclusion of the PJ into the government.

Some authors (e.g., Arzadún, 2008; 2013) consider Kirchner's decision to take the lead of the PJ as the natural conclusion of a 'big strategy': to win *outside* the PJ in order to conquer it. This interpretation would assign the *Transversalidad* a purely instrumental function. This was my own first hypothesis, but all my interviewees (both scholars and militants) reported that, in their opinion, it was an 'exaggerated' interpretation. Perhaps Néstor Kirchner did not intend to assign too central of a role to the social movements – and, in fact, he always acted carefully, in this sense – but the *Transversalidad* provided him with a very loyal organised social base that further influenced the leftist inspiration (and image) of his government, and that defended the own government in difficult times (see below). Once his populist project proved to be successful, it began 'living on its own', through performative mechanisms that kept Kirchnerism to the Left. The Kirchner's 'reconquest' of the PJ thus implied the inclusion of most of the Peronist electorate (thanks to the identitarian and clientelist linkages of the main Peronist party) in a quite leftist (populist) project, and a way to further electorally consolidate the project itself.

The exit of *Libres del Sur – Barrios de Pie* from Kirchnerism was somewhat delayed by the emergence of the so-called *conflicto del campo* (2008), when the political opposition backed the protests of the main agribusiness association (*Sociedad Rural Argentina*) against a governmental bill establishing huge increases in taxes (*retenciones*)

on soybean exportation (and other grains). For the first time since Néstor Kirchner's elections, the government had to deal with widespread mobilizations led by the political opposition, and Cristina's government very continuity was put in peril when the Vicepresident Cobos opted for expressing a decisive, contrary vote against the bill. In this political struggle, the Kirchnerist social movements and the CGT displayed impressive and decisive support for the government, contributing to avoid its collapse (Boyanovsky, 2010)[111].

Nonetheless, Kirchnerism found itself weakened, as the 2009 legislative elections demonstrated: Néstor, who put himself as simple deputy candidate for the FpV and the PJ in the Province of Buenos Aires for the national Low Chamber seat, saw his FpV's list lose the race (34% to 32%) against much less known Francisco De Narváez, a conservative business Peronist backed by a political alliance of dissident (right.wing) Peronists and the Anti-Peronist, right-wing party PRO, led by Mauricio Macri. Perhaps the votes attracted by the small left-of-centre party *Nuevo Encuentro*, led by the mayor of Morón (a *conurbano'*s municipality) Martín Sabbatella, famous for his anti-corruption administration (Annunziata, 2006), resulted decisive in Kirchner's defeat.

Cristina rapidly reacted to the difficulty moment. She implemented the now famous AUH (*Asignación Universal por Hijo* – Universal Allowance per Child), the very first universalist social policy program in Argentine history, extending to the *outsiders* the family allowances already guaranteed for workers in the formal sectors (Garay, 2010; Pribble, 2013). The AUH was an old demand of the CTA, at least back since the FRENAPO's initiative. Several (anonymous) interviewees reported to me that

[111] The *conflicto del campo* also provoked the final rupture of the CTA, which suffered the split of the 'CTA Autónoma' (CTA-A), not aligned with Kirchnerism (AR5; AR9). Among the CTA-A unions, there was the *Federación Agraria Argentina*, which represented the interests of the small and middle peasantry, and was strongly contrary to the *retenciones* (Boyanovsky, 2010). Nonetheless, the internal divisions within the CTA were already evident since the creation of the *Frente Transversal* and the clear alignment of CTA's leadership with Kirchnerism. The CTA-A considers itself as the 'true heir' of the 'autonomist' tradition of the CTA, and has a more Marxist profile. Both CTAs are strongly rooted in the public sector unions, and had a poor presence in the private sector. Both of them in 2015 obtained the recognition as 'peak unions' (*personería gremial*), an old claim of the CTA (and always resisted by the CGT).

the genesis of the program was highly 'conjunctural': a mere 'reaction' to the *conflicto del campo.* It neither responded to clientelistic exigencies (as the program has been implemented in a transparent form), nor to the specific demands of the social movements, which were more interested in the 'communitarian programs' administrated by the Ministry of Social Development. The AUH proved to be an extremely popular program, together with another measure mainly addressed to the *outsiders:* the nationalization of the private pension funds (again, implemented just after the defeat in the *conflicto del campo*). Both measures decisively boosted Cristina's probabilities of victory for the 2011 presidential re-election. In addition, to reaffirm her control over the PJ apparatus, the government designed the PRIST (usually known as *Argentina Trabaja*), a much more discretionary program distributing to the municipalities funds for communitarian projects, thus favouring the Peronist *redes punteriles* and – secondarily – loyal social movements like the *Evita* (Natalucci, 2012b; Zarazaga, 2012). At the same time, Cristina included Sabbatella in her coalition, to give a more 'transparent' profile to Kirchnerism.

Cristina Fernández de Kirchner triumphed in 2011 with an astonishing 54% of the votes. Certainly, in 2010, the commotion created by Néstor's sudden death triggered an expansion of Kirchnerist rank and files. Thousands of young people approached politics mainly through a – quite small, until then – grassroots organization, *La Cámpora* (AR2). *La Cámpora* identified itself as 'Kirchnerist', and developed as *the* 'Néstor and Cristina's' organization, aiming to build a 'Kirchnerist identity', quite distinct from the Peronist one. *La Cámpora* was born in a university *milieu*, but soon began working 'in the territory', building its own networks of soup kitchens and basic unities, and assuming a very relevant role in the pro-government organizations, rivalling the *Evita*. The President gradually assigned to it a stronger role in the government and in Parliament, filling FpV's lists with *La Cámpora*'s leaders, thus rewarding their 'ultra-Kirchnerism'. The sectarianism of the *camporistas*, their sudden growth and their

occupation of top public offices generated multiple tensions within Kirchnerism (AR2; AR4; AR15).

At the very same time, with her large victory, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner began ‘neglecting’ the 'old Peronist’ organizations, both at the union (CGT) and the partisan (PJ) level. Her ideological profile was clearly more ‘leftist’ and less ‘Peronist’ than that of her husband predecessor. *La Cámpora*'s expansion (favoured by her) suggested to her that the time had come for limiting the influence of the Peronist old guard. Cristina broke with the CGT in 2011, when Moyano began to claim for a more political role for himself and for the CGT, whereas the President was firmly contrary to increase the weight of the unions in the government and in the Parliament (Natalucci 2012b; AR1; AR8). During her second term, the *conductora* also reduced the weight of the PJ inside the FpV. At the end, this evolution provoked the exit of several Peronist leaders from the coalition. Tellingly, her former head of government, Sergio Massa, abandoned the PJ to found the *Frente Renovador* in alliance with Moyano’s faction of the CGT. Massa resulted decisive in the defeat of the Presidential candidate of the FpV (Daniel Scioli) against the right-wing candidate Mauricio Macri, in the 2015 Presidential elections.

To summarize, the electoral expressions of ‘pure Peronism’ always resulted decisive to govern the country. In Argentina, a *nacional-popular* movement cannot avoid including the PJ’s apparatus: a populist project must be *party-rooted*, at least as long as the PJ will display such a strong territorial presence. Néstor Kirchner was well aware of this, and more attentive to the construction of a broad coalition composed of heterogeneous organizations counterbalancing each other. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner built and displayed an impressive ‘of her own’ base, ‘exacerbating’ the progressive goals of her project (Svampa, 2013) through a polarizing and charismatic leadership, while assigning a stronger role to the movements loyal to her. Since the main movement belonging to the *cristinismo* was *La Cámpora*, which was to a large extent a construction ‘from above’, and since charismatic and programmatic linkages clearly

prevailed over the old organizational linkages that the CGT's and the PJ's apparatuses provided to Néstor's Kirchnerism, the Cristina's project can be categorised as a *leader-initiated populism*. At the same time, she conducted an expansionary economic policy (in the middle of the world financial crisis), thus avoiding recession but putting macroeconomic stability in peril (Kulfas, 2016). At the end, weakened by the difficult economic conjuncture, Cristina failed to build a political base sufficiently broad to replace the PJ, the Peronist *caudillos* and the Peronist conservative voters.

5.7 Conclusion: the Left Populist way to deal with Socio-Political Fragmentation

> *"Once, I asked to the Minister* [Carlos Tomada, Minister of Labour under Kirchnerism]*, 'who are our best friends'? Our stronger allies? He answered me immediately, 'the social movements'"*
>
> (Sebastián Etchemendy)

When Néstor Kirchner was elected, he was considered the 'man of Duhalde', of a political *caudillo* symbolizing the 'old politics', one of the targets of the *¡Que se vayan todos!* motto. The Justicialism enjoyed poor, if any, legitimacy, although it was able to keep electoral strength in relation to even more discredit forces. The political opposition was in disarray at the time of the critical juncture. The CGT was divided, and the CTA was neither able nor willing to build its own political arm. *Piquetero* organizations were also fragmented, although the strongest of them enjoyed great territorial control and a large influence, while the smallest and isolated ones showed (probably because of their isolation) a greater 'degree of contentiousness'. The bulk of population, among the

lower but also the middle classes, were still suffering from the economic disaster left by the *Alianza*'s government.

This was the unpromising scenario faced by Kirchner. Following the model I propose, Argentina was a typical dualized country at the critical juncture moment (the 2001-2002 period, marked by harsh austerity measures, the collapse of the *Alianza*'s government and the peak of widespread *and fragmented* social protests). Some of the 'critical antecedents' identified by my causal argument (see Figure 2.1) were not favourable for the fate of the Argentine *union-party hub*. Actually, the main union (the CGT) opted for defending its organizational power and kept its linkages with a (former) 'labour-based' party (the PJ) that had led the country towards neoliberal model and that was strongly discredited. Nonetheless, the PJ, thanks to its decentralised internal organization, also strengthened *sui generis* its electoral linkages with the *outsider* sectors, who lacked any alternative structure of socio-political intermediation. The loyalty of the popular sectors towards Peronism was also facilitated by the failures of the most promising political experience (that of the FREPASO), stemming from the anti-Menemist camp. The FREPASO soon proved to be too moderate to advance a clear alternative to neoliberalism, and it never pursued a strategy of territorial consolidation.

The linkages between the PJ and the outsiders were a mix of clientelism and identitarian factors. Such linkages did not avoid the emergence and rise of the *piquetero* movements, but they crucially contributed to the electoral viability of the PJ, together with the oppositional position occupied by the party during the country collapse (which the same Menemist policies had contributed to prepare).

In the union camp, the position of the CGT as a 'conciliatory' union was partially counterbalanced by the emergence of the MTA. CGT's 'collaborationism' under Menem did however facilitate the emergence of the CTA, a *classist and civil society* union that actively contributed to the organization of the *outsiders*. The CGT successfully defended its organizational power during the neoliberal phase, as well as its (weakened) linkages

with the PJ. In sum, the CGT was highly delegitimized, surely weakened, certainly unable to ‘lead’ social protests and to ‘dominate’ the ‘contentious camp’, but in no way condemned to irrelevance. Moyano's leadership there was major and gave back to the CGT most of the legitimacy lost during the Nineties.

The PJ’s and CGT’s eternal resilience explains the elements of continuity between the pre and post-Kirchner era. It explains why Kirchnerism, to be successful, had to be *party-rooted.* Nonetheless, Kirchner expanded his governmental coalition to counterbalance the forces representing ‘old politics’. Kirchner’s populist project included the CTA, many *piquetero* leaders, and Moyano's CGT.

The CTA acted as a ‘bridge’ between two social ‘worlds apart’: the public sector and the organised unemployed workers. The CTA pushed for initiatives, like the FRENAPO, which despite their poor immediate impacts anticipated many social policies implemented by Cristina's governments. The CTA represented the *universalist* face of Kirchnerism, while pushing for a radical change in the socioeconomic model through a sort of ‘idealization’ of community-level programs. The tension between its ‘autonomist’ faction and the Kirchnerist one, which saw in Kirchnerism a project that *concretely* worked for limited but relevant alternative experiences, finally provoked the split of the *Central*.

The *piqueteros K* were quite less interested than the CTA in pushing for a ‘new economic project’. Their trajectory confirms that the border between ‘social movement’ and ‘interest group’ categories is often blurred. They struggled for *sectorial and territorial* demands: to satisfy them, they never refused to ‘get their hands dirty’ and to negotiate with public institutions. Only a few *piquetero* radical groups refused any compromise, and they were condemned to political irrelevance. Such tactic and ideological divisions prevented the fragmented *piqueteros* galaxy from building something similar to a *piquetero* ‘political instrument’. Nor was the CTA willing to pursue such a strategy.

The reasoning of the *piqueteros K* was fully in line with the statist, Peronist Argentine tradition. They conceived the State as a 'battle field' to occupy, in order to obtain concrete results for them and their organizations. This was not a very different conception than that of Néstor Kirchner. Néstor Kirchner, since the beginning, conceived the incorporation of the *outsiders* more as a matter of an inclusion through the formal labour market, than as a matter of 'new universalist rights' to be assured to the population, or as a matter of 'building an alternative popular economy'. Universalist policies, such as the AUH, came in a secondary moment, as a 'reaction' to difficult times, and it was the more leftist Cristina who implemented them. In turn, the distribution of *planes* and of communitarian projects by Néstor and by Cristina responded more to political than 'ideological' exigencies: while Néstor used them to 'appease' and rewards the loyal movements, Cristina distributed them to strengthen her own organized 'social base'.

All the wings composing Kirchner's coalition were strongly *political*, in the sense of conceiving *politics as a continuous struggle*, against external enemies that, without pause, were trying to 'reconquer' the State, in order to dismantle it. The recuperation of *politics*, conceived as a matter of power, has been central in the Kirchnerist strategy: *politics* above everything, and particularly above 'economics' (as the latter is often equated with 'orthodoxy' – and 'neoliberalism'); *politics* as the struggle for power between 'us' and 'them'; in sum, *politics* as *populism*.

Populism is often considered a 'danger' for representative democracy. Surely, it can be, and often it is. Still, in the Argentine case, it is not exaggerated to say that populism has represented the *salvation* of representative democracy. In 2001, Argentines chanted *¡Que se vayan todos!*, and, few years later, the Kirchnerist '*pueblo*' organized and participated to mass rallies to support their *conductor*, while the opposition, in 2008, displayed an important capacity to call their supporters to the streets, backing the agrarian sector facing a 'despotic' government. Militancy was growing, and, after Néstor's death, thousands of young people, who had grown up in the middle of the

Argentina's long depression, decided to enter into politics. Nobody contested representative democracy as a regime: instead, people divided around the government, i.e., around *politics*.

This process was neither linear nor transparent and 'idyllic'. I have not detailed the numerous accusations of violence, corruption and inefficiency that also characterized Kirchnerist governments and social movements. Some features of 'delegative democracy' (O'Donnell, 1994) were much present in Kirchnerism, since his earlier phases, and even more so during the 'exacerbation of the *nacional-popular*' Cristina's second term, as Svampa (2013) defined it. Nonetheless, the Kircherist recuperation of *politics* deserves respect, after decades of technocracy and social atomization that contributed at the end to create the common opinion about the *uselessness* of *politics* and of *politicians*. If these are useless, *¡Que se vayan todos!*... Kirchnerism, at the very least, rescued them from uselessness.

Chapter 6. Podemos. The Left-Wing *Movement Populism* that Renewed the Spanish Left

6.1 Introduction

In contrast to Italy and Portugal, in Spain the Great Recession suddenly reversed a long expansionary cycle, the so-called 'Spanish miracle'. The real-estate bubble burst left a country with a defaulted banking system, an unemployment rate only comparable to the Greek one and hundreds of thousand people evicted from their houses. However, in 2011, just a week before the eruption of the *Indignados* movement, during his web talk show *La Tuerka*, Pablo Iglesias – who later became the leader of Podemos – complained about the lack of mobilization of the Spanish society. Even in 2013, in the middle of a vast and sustained cycle of protests led by different social movements, many commentators were stressing the resilience of the party system dominating Spain since the democratic transition (the so-called *Régimen del '78*).

In June 2014, the newly-born party Podemos, explicitly aiming at 'bringing the protesters into the institutions', suddenly became the fourth national party, obtaining 1,200,000 votes in the European elections and reaching 8% of the valid votes. A few weeks later, Podemos was ranking first in the opinion polls. In May 2015, Podemos was governing, jointly with other radical forces, the municipalities of Madrid, Barcelona, A Coruña, Zaragoza and Cádiz, among others. In December 2015, the party reached the third position in the parliamentary elections, attracting more than 5 million voters and 20% of the valid votes.

The history of Podemos is the history of a few political scientists that decided to form a party by starting from some 'hypotheses' based on precise theoretical roots. The

centrality of Laclau's populist theories and of the biographical experiences of the founders as scholars and political consultants in 'Bolivarian' Latin American countries (Ecuador, Bolivia and Venezuela) is difficult to overstate (Schavelzon and Webber, 2017). From a close reading of Laclau's works, the group led by Iglesias and Errejón studied and applied to the Spanish context a *political logic* based on the creation of a new political identity by articulating the *People* (understood, in poststructuralist terms, as 'something to be built') around different signifiers (which were emerged thanks to the *Indignados* movement) from those traditionally branded by the partisan Left, and in contrast to the political-economic establishment (the *Caste*). From their Latin American experiences, they imported – apart from several symbolisms – an even more central tenet: the necessity of *occupying the State institutions* and thus of playing in the electoral field to make the aspirations of the *Pueblo* really effective. *Popular* and *State sovereignty* thus merged into a coherent *populist project* created from above, but fuelled from below, by many social and political activists engaged in the impressive and *unified* cycle of social mobilizations erupted in Spain from 2011 to 2013.

The rise of Podemos was not sufficient to form a Leftist government at the national level. Nevertheless, it irreversibly changed the composition of the partisan Left. Once the 'vertebral column' of the *Régimen del '78*, the PSOE (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español* - Spanish Socialist Workers' Party), still the second most voted party, has seen its electorate almost reduced to its territorial strongholds (the Southern Spain) and overrepresented amongst economically inactive sectors (the pensioners). The strong support enjoyed by Podemos amongst middle and working classes made clear the crisis of the old Spanish 'union-party hub', whose popular legitimacy was already challenged by the *Indignados* movement, in which the main Spanish unions were not only absent, but even explicitly targeted as parts of the 'old regime' culpable of the social, economic and political disaster.

In Section 6.2, I focus on the 'critical antecedents' of my argument: namely, the full insertion of the PSOE's led 'union-party hub' in the dominant economic and

political regime, in a context of high social dualization, while the Radical Left was constrained in an irrelevant position and unable to establish solid linkages with (quite weak and fragmented) anti-neoliberal social movements. In contrast to the Italian PD (see Section 7.2), the PSOE, through a mix of programmatic, clientelistic and (in particular) identitarian linkages, was able to maintain a working-class profile, while expanding amongst the middle classes during Zapatero's first government (2004-2008). When the Great Recession displayed its effects (Section 6.3), the PSOE was 'trapped' in the governmental management of the crisis, while the 'mainstream' unions assumed a moderate stance to (unsuccessfully) defend the party in government and their institutional access to the polity domain.

Section 6.4 analyses the organizational, sociological and discursive characteristics of the protest cycle began with the *Indignados*' demonstrations (15th May 2011). The section highlights the *democratic* (more than *social*) demands advanced by the demonstrators, who attracted overwhelming support (or, at least, sympathy) from the broad Spanish society. The *Indignado'*s democratic inspiration was internalized by other movements (such as the *Mareas* and the *PAH*s), which focused on more specific struggles inserted into a *universalist* frame. The movements were not only unable, but even *unwilling* to 'switch' to the electoral-institutional field, however. Because of the lack of concrete influence on the policy-making process, they physiologically lost their *momentum* and gradually became confined into a (vast) base of motivated activists.

Section 6.5 is entirely devoted to the description of Podemos' populist project. It stresses the ability by Podemos' leaders of 'owning' and re-launching the frames elaborated by the Spanish protest cycle and of directing them towards an 'electoral assault' to the public institutions. The analysis also shows the strong vertical control exerted by Podemos' founders over the party organization, while at the same time highlights the enormous attractiveness of the new populist project towards many social militants active during the protest cycle. The section, after having briefly described the

main reasons of the recent internal tensions within the party, also focuses on the complex relationships between Podemos and the unions.

Before some concluding remarks, Section 6.6 analyses the determinants of the vote for Podemos. In contrast to some early hypotheses depicting Podemos as the 'party of the excluded people', I argue that Podemos mostly remained the 'party of the *Indignados*'. Podemos' voters are predominantly young, middle-class and leftist. They share a *perceived* condition of economic exclusion and social disillusion, and a political sensibility for the loss of a genuine democratic control over the public institutions. Podemos' project, thus, was able to mobilize (in terms of both *militants* and *voters*) a urban and quite well-educated 'People', highly unsatisfied with the 'old parties' (and particularly the PSOE); its goal to be *politically and socially transversal* has still far to be really achieved, however.

6.2 Critical Antecedents: The Régimen del '78. The Institutionalization of the Spanish Leftist Parties and Unions in a Dualised and Demobilised Society

The Spanish transition to democracy, because of its 'pacted' features which guaranteed quite a peaceful process, soon became a 'model' for many political scientists, democratic activists and politicians in Latin America (O'Donnell et al., 1986; Bosco, 2005). Scholars generally agree on the long-lasting effects of the peculiar Spanish transition over the process of democratic consolidation, both at the party system and societal levels, and for the complex relationships between the two spheres (Morlino, 1998; Van Biezen, 2003). To understand why Podemos' discourse against the *Régimen del '78* became so resonant, it is necessary to provide a brief analysis of the effects that the elite-led transition and the economic liberalization had on Spanish parties and party system, on the role of the unions, on the (poor) strength of Spanish civil society and on

its highly dual welfare regime, all of them representing key variables of the theoretical framework presented in this dissertation.

Two major left-of-centre parties resisted clandestinely during the Francoist era: the PSOE and the PCE (*Partido Comunista de España* - Spanish Communist Party). As a consequence of the long authoritarian rule (Van Biezen, 2003; Bosco, 2005), party membership in democratic Spain was the lowest of Western Europe and remained consistently below Western European average. However, both the PSOE and the PCE had strong linkages to the organized labour. Two main unions emerged from the dictatorship: the UGT (*Unión General de los Trabajadores*) and *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO), the former linked to the PSOE, the latter close to the PCE. Still today, more than 70 percent of the *delegados en los comités de empresa* (the works councils at the firm level) are affiliated either to the UGT or CC.OO, which are the only unions enjoying the status of 'most representative workers' organization', thus being the only unions entitled to negotiate in the relevant roundtables (Rueda, 2007: 106).

In the confused phase following Franco's death, working-class mobilizations (in which CC.OO played a major role) and the intensification of terrorist activities by Basque separatists weakened the 'hawkish' factions within the Francoist movement and convinced King Juan Carlos to appoint as PM the moderate Adolfo Suárez, who drove Spain to democratic transition (Bosco, 2005). Suárez founded a heterogeneous and poorly rooted centre-right party (the UCD) and managed the transition through a close dialogue with the partisan leaders of the other major parties (PSOE, AP – *Alianza Popular*, the political heir of Francoism – and PCE). Both the draft of the new Constitution and the Moncloa Pacts (an inter-party agreement to obtain wage restrains to reduce inflation) were the result of negotiations at the partisan elite level, with the substantial exclusion of the social partners (both employers' and labour organizations). To achieve the legalization of the PCE and to facilitate a peaceful transition, the Communist leader Santiago Carrillo imposed a moderate political line to his party

(González and Bouza, 2009), hoping for an electoral triumph by taking advantage of the key role played by the Communists since the final phase of the dictatorship.

Carrillo's political calculus proved to be wrong. Despite the persistence of strike activities and an initial strong increase in union affiliation, the broad Spanish society opted for rewarding the more moderate options (the UCD and the PSOE) both in the 1977 and 1979 legislative elections (González and Bouza, 2009). Although in 1980 PCE's membership was still more than double of that of the PSOE (see Bosco, 2005), the latter party became the most important left-of-centre party, while the PCE experienced an irreversible decline in terms of both membership and votes.

The long leadership of Felipe González marked the history of the PSOE in the post-authoritarian period. After harsh internal struggles (1974-1979), the *Renovadores* faction led by González and Alfonso Guerra (the powerful Secretary of Organization) took the lead of the party. In 1979, the PSOE abandoned any Marxist reference. PSOE's own moderation matched with the preferences of the Spanish electorate: thanks to UCD's internal crises and the difficult economic conjuncture, the Socialists achieved the absolute majority of the seats in 1982 general elections, thus inaugurating the first of the four consecutive González's terms.

The economic policies of González's governments pursued wage restraints, trade openness and monetary stability to facilitate the EU integration process[112]. In 1984, the *Ley de Reconversión* (Etchemendy, 2011: 59) started a vast program of privatizations or sectorial re-structuration of the state-owned enterprises, conducing to extensive workers' dismissals (Smith, 1995): workforce employed in state-owned enterprises dropped by 39%, while unemployment rate rose to 24% (Etchemendy, 2011: 158). In contrast to Portugal, the post-authoritarian Spanish governments chose to sacrifice employment for productivity (Sapelli, 2011). To reduce unemployment, González extended, since 1984, the possibility to hire through fixed-term contracts. In addition to the *contratos*

[112] Spain joined the EU in 1986 and the EMS (European Monetary System) in 1989.

temporales, en práctica o en formación (already included in the 1980 Workers' Statute), his first government introduced the *contrato de fomento de empleo*, paving the way for a dramatic dualization of the Spanish labour market (Rueda, 2007: 127)[113].

Unions' behaviour under González's administrations was varying. The links between the UGT and the PSOE were extremely tight since their origins, and they further strengthened during the long authoritarian rule: '*so close was the party-union relationship historically that Spanish Socialists referred to the PSOE, UGT and Young Socialists as the 'Socialist Family'* (Gillespie, 1990: 48). Until 1985, the PSOE-UGT relationships remained generally smooth. UGT's loyalty was rewarded by the promulgation of the *Ley Orgánica de Libertad Sindical* (1985), reinforcing the duopoly in the workers' system of representation. Meanwhile, the workers consistently saw their purchase power decreasing during the 1977-1987 period (Smith, 1995; CC.OO, 2016). Nevertheless, the organised working-class rewarded UGT's moderation, as the UGT became the most voted union in the workplace elections for the *comités de empresa* from 1982 to 1995 (Gillespie, 1990; González and Bouza, 2009; Alós et al., 2015).

However, wage restraints and poor achievements in extending the coverage of unemployment benefits finally convinced the UGT to assume a more confrontational stance. The *Plan de Empleo Juvenil* (a labour market reform facilitating the use of fixed-term contracts for young workers) provoked the final rupture between the PSOE and the UGT, and inaugurated a long (and substantially ongoing) phase of unity of action with CC.OO (Etchemendy, 2011). On 14th December 1988, an impressively massive general strike was for the first time convoked jointly by the two unions, forcing the government to renounce to the Plan and to convoke early elections, in which the PSOE lost the absolute majority. The relationships between González's governments and the unions continued to be tense, and led to other two general strikes (1992 and 1994), the latter

[113] During the economic recovery in the second half of the Eighties, while total employment increased by 3 percent per year, the 98 percent of the new contracts registered were temporary ones (Dolado and Bentolilla, 1992: 12), with temporary employment contracts accounting for over 30 percent of total from the early 1990s on (Pérez, 2014: 6).

protesting against a new ‘flexibilising’ labour market reform (Rueda, 2007). Meanwhile, several corruption scandals (Bosco, 2005) damaged González’s popularity and led the PSOE to the electoral defeat in 1996, when Aznar (from the right-of-centre PP [*Partido Popular*]) became the new PM.

The long González’s era ended with the Spanish leftist parties in trouble. The PSOE, which reached 48% of the votes in 1982, fell to 34% in 2000. Although PSOE’s membership increased in absolute terms (from 100,000 members in 1980 to 350,000 members in 1994), the members/voters ratio remained comparatively very low. The party almost perfectly fitted the ‘electoral-professional’ model: according to Kitschelt (1994), PSOE’s leadership was the most ‘autonomous’ among all the major Western European Socialist parties. The dominance of the party in the central office assured a strong parliamentary discipline, despite quite intense internal divisions (Bosco, 2005; González and Bouza, 2009). Regional PSOE’s leaders (*barones*) – particularly when holding governmental responsibilities at the regional level and/or when leading important regional federations – also achieved strong autonomy and voice within the party.

As a cause and consequence of the process of internal power concentration, of the weakening of the links between the party and the union, and of the general demobilization of the Spanish society after the *Transición*, the Spanish parties (and particularly the PSOE) accentuated their ‘cartelization’ (Katz and Mair, 1995). Public party funding consistently increased until 2011, and in the 1988-2008 period, it grew from 160 to 240 billion of euros, accounting for more than 80% of the total revenues of the three main political parties, while members' contributions remained negligible (Van Biezen, 2003; Ramiro, 2004; Sánchez Muñoz, 2013; Casal Bertoa et al., 2014).

Union density rapidly fell from 43% to less than 20% (ICTWSS 2016 data), thus testifying the ‘demobilizing’ Spanish socio-political atmosphere. On the one side, this provoked a growing relevance (around 25% of the total revenues: Gillespie, 1990) of

public funding – through either direct subsidies or the administration of public training programs – for sustaining unions' activities. On the other side, this led to the overrepresentation of the workers in medium and big enterprises, because of legal provisions[114] and of the difficulty in organizing the outsider sectors. As their mobilizing power declined, the unions looked for strengthening their institutional power through the *diálogo social* (Molina and Rhodes, 2008; Pérez, 2014). This strategy put the main unions in a defensive position *vis à vis* the main political parties and increased the incentives to cultivate good relationship with the most important left-of-centre party, in order to defend some voice within the polity domain.

The PCE, in turn, was definitively constrained into a peripheral position. In 1982, it reached a tiny 4% of the national votes. The party suffered several internal splits and a dramatic reduction of its membership (from 200,000 in 1977 to 62,000 in 1987; Bosco, 2005: 75). The campaign for the anti-NATO referendum in 1986 allowed the PCE for networking with several social movements and minor leftist parties, and, in 1986 general elections, the PCE opted for creating and electoral coalition, IU (*Izquierda Unida*), which, in the following years, became 'something more than a coalition and less than a party'. IU self-defined as a 'political and social movement' and allowed for direct affiliation, although the PCE kept dominating it, in terms of both membership and leadership (Ramiro, 2004). Throughout all the nineties, IU followed an antagonistic strategy towards the PSOE, considered a 'right-wing' party fully committed to neoliberalism (Ramiro, 2004; Bosco, 2005). The social climate generated by the 1988 general strike and the scandals affecting the PSOE favoured a partial electoral strengthening of IU, which stabilised itself around 10% of the valid votes in 1989, 1993 and 1996 general elections. Nevertheless, the *sorpasso* over the PSOE remained an illusion.

[114] In Spain, the legal representation of the workers through the *comités de empresa* is compulsory only in enterprises with more than 50 workers.

IU also tried to reinforce environmental linkages through a strategy of internal democratic opening and external links with Spanish social movements and civil society organizations. However, this strategy fell short of being efficacious and was not consistently pursued. In terms of internal participation, the introduction of closed (i.e., reserved to party members) primary elections for the selection of the candidates for local, regional and general elections was an irregular and often contested practice, highly prone to legal controversies and to instrumental uses for weakening the rival factions (Ramiro and Verge, 2013). Similarly, the decision of creating *áreas* (party commissions focused on precise issues and opened, at least in theory, to the participation of civil society organizations and movements for the drafting of electoral manifestos) provoked poor – if any – concrete consequences. Soon, the *áreas* became little more than mere advisers for IU's public representatives, with scarce participation from other political or social associations (Ramiro and Verge, 2013: 50).

IU's attempts to reinforce its organizational linkages to social movements and unions were generally unsuccessful. The PCE inaugurated quite early its ideological renovation, if compared with the Italian PCI, and opted for joining in several campaigns and platforms during the Nineties, such as the Anti-Maastricht movement and the '0,7%' platform (struggling for increasing Spanish public contributions for international aid). However, this strategy proved to be completely insufficient to recuperate the social presence that the PCE once enjoyed within CC.OO and in the neighborhood associations (*asociaciones vecinales*, AA.VV)[115].

The relationship between PCE-IU and CC.OO dramatically changed since the mid-Eighties, when CC.OO realized that its autonomization from a declining party was an urgent task (CC.OO, 2016). The party-union relationship got even worse during the

[115] During the Seventies, the AA.VV. represented one of the main *loci* of resistance against Francoism. Since the Eighties, the AA.VV were reduced to formal advisory associations, gradually 'occupied' by 'mainstream' parties and often dependent on public funding (Alberich, 2012).

Nineties, when the conciliatory stance by CC.OO towards the PSOE clashed with the antagonistic position of IU (Ramiro, 2004).

Even the relationship between IU and the 'new' social movements of the Nineties – as well as with the alterglobalization movements of the following decade – were not exempt from tensions. The gate-keeping role of the 'institutional left' towards the movements (Morlino, 1998; Van Biezen, 2001) nurtured the tendency, by the latter, of developing an 'autonomist', 'counter-power' (and conducive to isolation: Alberich, 2012) discourse during the late nineties and the first decade of the 21st century, at odds with the pretension of 'representative monopoly' of the Spanish social Left (Flesher Fominaya, 2009). On the one hand, the general refusal by the alterglobalization movements to pursue 'institutional' strategies left IU quite isolated. On the other hand, the strategic moderate turn pursued by IU at the end of the decade – when the party suddenly opted for signing a pre-electoral pact with the PSOE to (unsuccessfully) avoid Aznar's re-election – further compromised the relationships (Ramiro, 2004; Bosco, 2005).

González's period had long-lasting effects for the sociological composition of the electorate of the PSOE. The party became overrepresented among the popular sectors, particularly among salaried workers in primary sectors (such as salaried farmers in the poor Southern regions – Andalusia and Extremadura – and miners in Asturias: see Boix, 1998; Hopkin, 2001). In general, despite PSOE's neoliberal turn, its electorate 'proletarize' itself, by assuming a clear blue-collar composition, while middle class sectors were gradually attracted (González and Bouza, 2009) by either the PP or (particularly among the public sector) IU. The reasons for this sociological alignment must be found in the peculiar mix of the PSOE's electoral linkages (programmatic, identitarian and clientelistic).

Despite the poor results in reducing social inequalities (Hopkin, 2001), the Socialists did implement important reforms aiming at making the Spanish welfare

regime more universalist. González's governments ended with the old insurance-based health system and designed a quasi-universalist national health service (Ferrera, 1996) and, pressured by the 1988 general strike, they introduced non-contributory minimum old-age pensions and universal disability pensions, substantially improving their adequacy (Matsaganis et al., 2003; Arriba and Moreno, 2005). Although social assistance was constitutionally assigned to the regions[116], the central government promoted, in 1987, the 'Concerted Plan for the Development of the Basic Provision of Social Services by the Local Authorities', which provided informational assistance and funding to the regions in the relevant areas (Arriba and Moreno, 2005). Moreover, since the mid-eighties, Spain did experience a quite long phase of economic growth, as its GDP grew by 4% yearly during the 1986-1991 period and its (still very high) unemployment rate fell to 16%.

The impact of 'particularistic' linkages, such as clientelist and patronage practices, on the consolidation of the electoral strength of the PSOE, is debatable. Spain is not usually ranked amongst the countries in which party patronage is a widespread practice (Di Mascio et al., 2011). The Spanish public sector dramatically expanded during the Eighties, but it was mainly due to the necessity of filling the newly-born bureaucracies at the regional level (Hopkin, 2001; Di Mascio et al., 2011). However, the PSOE did benefit from this vast cycle of public sector expansion, both in terms of partisan recruitment and of expertise in administrative issues: by 1990, 70 percent of PSOE's members and 67 percent of PSOE's national delegates were employed by the state or were public-office holders (Hopkin, 2001: 127).

If patronage was mainly used for strengthening PSOE's organization, clientelistic linkages have been often considered an important vehicle for the consolidation of the predominant position of the PSOE under González's governments (e.g., Ferrera, 1996).

[116] This led to a fragmented system: currently, more than half of the minimum income programs spending is concentrated in the well-to-do Basque Country and Navarre regions (Matsaganis et al., 2003; Malgesini Rey, 2013).

Hopkin (2001) argued that the importance of these linkages has been overstated, by showing that the slow electoral decline of the PSOE during the 1982-1996 period was more pronounced in the regions *governed by the PSOE*. However, the PSOE did create its own electoral stronghold in rural Southern Spain through a strategy of demobilization of the radical unions claiming for the agrarian reform, mainly through the implementation of the *Programa de Empleo Rural* (PER). The PER assigned a central role to the (mainly Socialist) rural mayors, who enjoyed a vast discretionary power over the enrolment of agrarian workers in training programs that allowed them for reaching the required amount of *peonadas* (working days) to receive the subsidy. It has been calculated that, in 2006, 48% of the national spending on unemployment assistance was concentrated into the rural areas of Andalusia and Extremadura (Watson, 2015), and that only 10 percent of PER's recipients effectively were agrarian workers (Ferrera, 1996). It must be stressed that Andalusia is the most populous Spanish *comunidad autónoma*, and that rural districts are overrepresented in the Spanish Parliament, thus making of PSOE's Andalusia clientelist networks a highly sensitive issue in national politics.

This mix of programmatic and clientelistic linkages partially contributed to limit the negative consequences of the 'break-up' of the Socialist family (Gillespie, 1990) after the 1988 general strike and of the huge increase in unemployment and temporary employment rates. Unions' declining mobilizing power made the party-union linkages less relevant for the electoral results of the PSOE, and forced both the UGT and CC.OO to keep open the dialogue with the major left-of-centre party in order to defend their voice in the polity domain and the rights and interests of the organised working class. Moreover, the tensions between the UGT and the PSOE did not bring a serious loss of votes amongst the unions' affiliates (Fundación Largo Caballero, 1990; González and Bouza, 2009), while the 'autonomist' course of CC.OO and its strategy of 'unity of action' with the UGT further favoured the consolidation of a 'union-party hub', with the PSOE in a clearly dominating position.

The collaborative stance of the unions, after the 'combative' 1988-1994 period, became evident in 1995, when the UGT and CC.OO signed the Toledo Pact with the government and the employers' association to make the pension system more financially sustainable (Pérez, 2014). During the first Aznar's term, when the PP lacked the absolute majority of the seats and pursued a centrist strategy, 'social dialogue' became a quasi-institutionalised practice (Rhodes, 2000). However, 'social dialogue' produced very poor results in terms of reduction of job precariousness: the temporary employment rate decreased from 35% to 32%, and it remained at very high levels until 2009, when non-renewals of temporary contracts represented the easier way to dismiss workers in times of crisis (Pérez, 2014; CC.OO, 2016).

Aznar's landslide victory in 2000 provoked a severe PSOE's internal crisis, which lasted until the election of the new secretary Zapatero (Bosco, 2005: 174). Zapatero implemented minor reforms to strengthen internal democracy and participation, and improved the external image of the PSOE through his 'useful opposition' (*oposición util*) strategy (Bosco, 2005: 175). Meanwhile, Aznar inaugurated a 'decisionist' political style, visible in the attempt of reforming unilaterally the labour market through the introduction of facilitations for workers' dismissals, while cutting unemployment subsidies and the PER. The unions reacted through a massive general strike that stopped the reforms. The poor management of the environmental crisis related to the sinking of the *Prestige* (2003), and the Spanish involvement in the Iraqi war reduced the electoral margin between the PP and the PSOE (Jiménez, 2007). The infamous governmental mismanagement of the terrorist attacks in Atocha decisively favoured Zapatero's triumph (Bosco, 2005).

'¡No nos falles!', 'don't disappoint us!', was the chorus of the socialist militants towards Zapatero outside PSOE's headquarter after the 2004 victory. Zapatero's government enjoyed broad popular consensus, thanks to an impressive economic growth and to its dynamism in civil right issues. Nevertheless, the 'Spanish miracle' was evidently sustained by a real-estate bubble that the government was not able or willing

to deflate. The contribution of the construction industry on the GDP increased from 6% to 11% during the 1997-2008 period (while in Germany it amounted to 4% and in Italy and France to 6%: CES, 2016) and the prices of the houses triplicated during the same period (Colau and Alemany, 2012), provoking a dramatic increase in the private debt of the Spanish families. This caused major social problems soon after the beginning of the crisis, whose signs were already evident in 2007. Zapatero initially denied the existence of an economic threat: this facilitated his re-election in 2008, but it made even more difficult the management of the crisis (González and Bouza, 2009).

Zapatero did advance in welfare regime issues towards universalist directions, through the very popular *Ley de Dependencia* (which provided new subsidies for families with old-age or vulnerable members) and the support for a new cycle of tripartite negotiations. The government also approved in 2006 a new labour market reform containing new measures for promoting indefinite contracts (Pérez Infante, 2007), while a new pension reform increasing the minimum levels (2007) was backed by the unions *'in return for their support for a stronger contributory element in the PAYG pensions system and for private complementary pensions. Such quid pro quos helped Spanish governments secure ongoing union commitment to wage moderation and facilitated agreement on changes in labor market reform'* (Pérez, 2014: 14). These and other measures effectively helped to reduce some of the dualising characteristics of the Spanish welfare regime[117].

Thus, blaming the unions for their 'insiderist' approach to labour market reforms (Rueda, 2007) could be possibly unfair. The reasons for unions' decreasing legitimacy outside (and even *within*) the insider 'fortress' must be probably found elsewhere.

[117] Some authors even theorized about a 'Nordic path' taken by the Spanish welfare regime, thanks to the quasi-institutionalization of the *diálogo social*, the reduction of permanent employment protection and the extension and consolidation of minimum income schemes at the regional level (Moreno, 2008; Guillén and León, 2011). As Pérez (2014: 6) reported, '*although overall coverage in 2008 was still on the low side (47 per cent, compared with 80-90 per cent in Denmark and Austria), this compared well with Italy's 17 per cent. Moreover, the gross earnings replacement rate during the first year of unemployment (though not thereafter) and the overall duration of benefits in Spain were relatively high by EU standards*'.

Several corruptions scandals involving union officials that received bribes to facilitate workers' dismissals, and the rightist offensive against the 'privileges' enjoyed by the *delegados*, surely played some role. Nevertheless, as my fresh qualitative data suggest (see Section 6.5), the involvement in the *diálogo social* and the unions' full inclusion within the 'social and political institutions of the *Régimen del '78*' represented the *main* source of criticisms when the crisis came. Their 'representative duopoly' (*bisindicalismo*), their legitimacy as 'civil actors' unions (Hyman, 2001) that actively promoted social peace during the long Spanish miracle, their re-invention (after the *Transición*) as social organizations dedicated to bureaucratic tasks (*sindicalismo de servicios*) and their collaboration with PSOE's governments brought some immediate and concrete progressive results. Nevertheless, all these features became serious sources of weakness in the early aftermath of the crisis.

Spanish leftist parties lacked solid linkages to the society when the Spanish miracle turned to be an economic and social disaster. IU was almost condemned to electoral irrelevance and was not able to impose itself as an alternative 'hub' of the Spanish social movements, which, in turn, suffered from sectarianism and fragmentation. The PSOE had fully become a vertical 'electoral-professional' party, which was able to attract a broad (and volatile) 'vote of opinion', while also relying on a resilient partisan identification – particularly amongst old-aged workers and pensioners. Nevertheless, its management of the crisis (particularly from 2010 onward) and the popular re-mobilization showed the fragility of the consensus attracted by Zapatero during his first governmental term.

6.3 The Critical Juncture. The Great Recession in Spain and the Moderate Unionist Strategy

A detailed history of the Spanish economic crisis is out of the scope of this chapter. However, it is crucial, for my argument, to understand how the social and political actors react to the Great Recession, and how this reaction affected their credibility as potential leading actors in the protests against the implementation of austerity reforms.

The first effects of the Great Recession, which in Spain coupled with the distress caused by the explosion of the real-estate bubble, was initially coped by the Socialist government with countercyclical policies (such as increase in public expenditure and rise and extension of unemployment subsidies: Pérez, 2014; Sánchez Mosquera, 2017). The unions reacted favorably to these measures. However, the dramatic increase in public deficit and the explosion of the real-estate bubble alarmed international investors and provoked a sudden deterioration of the country risk.

In 2009, fiscal deficit reached 11.2% of the GDP and unemployment rate jumped to 18% (it reached 27% in 2013). Under EU pressures, which were exemplified by a letter sent by the ECB in August 2011, Zapatero made a U-turn in his social and economic policies. In June 2010, a decree limited permanent employment protection, through cuts in severance payments and the relaxation of the legislation over 'fair' dismissals motivated by economic troubles (Campos Lima and Artiles, 2011; Pérez, 2014; Cristancho, 2015). One month before, the government was forced to impose pension and public salary freezes and to cut 15 billion of public spending (Pérez, 2014). As Pérez (2014: 39) argued, '*the social spending programs that were hardest hit (such as the elder and disabled care program stipulated in the Spanish dependency law of 2006 […], the youth emancipation rent […] and cuts in unemployment benefits after 6*

month precisely as the proportion of long-term unemployed rose) were all key features of the transformation of the Spanish welfare state in the two decades prior to the crisis which had moved its structure of social spending closer to that of the Northern European states' (see also Marchal et al., 2014). The PP and the PSOE agreed on inserting in the Spanish Constitution a new article imposing fiscal equilibrium, thus 'locking' monetarist orthodoxy in the institutions. In 2012, Rajoy's government signed a Memorandum of Understanding – the prelude of a new labour market reform - with the *Troika,* as a precondition for the rescue of the Spanish banking sector.

For the first time since 1994, the UGT and CC.OO organised a general strike in September 2010, against Zapatero's labour market reform: however, the strike was quite unsuccessful in terms of adhesion (Cristancho, 2015). The UGT and CC.OO pursued a confused strategy of 'dancing and boxing' (Campos Lima and Artiles, 2011): while opposing labour market reforms, they made patent their willingness to keep open 'social dialogue'. The unions and the peak employers' association signed a pact in early 2010, exchanging wage moderation with new measures for limiting temporary employment (a way to reward the *outsiders* through some 'sacrifices' for the *insiders*, which was renewed in 2012: see Campos Lima and Artiles, 2011; Pérez de Guzmán et al., 2016). However, pro-outsider measures brought poor or null concrete consequences, as temporary employment decreased mainly due to non-renewals of the contracts (Pérez, 2014). Against the arguments of the literature over welfare regime dualism and insiders' "over-protection", the unions exchanged immediate concessions from the insider sectors with pro-outsider measures, which proved to be completely ineffective, however.

Even more nefarious for unions' popular legitimacy was the signing of a tripartite pact in January 2011, when the UGT and CC.OO substantially accepted the pension reform designed by Zapatero's government, which raised the eligibility age to 67. A vast coalition of regional and radical unions called for a general strike against both the government and the 'mainstream' unions (Pérez, 2014; Cristancho, 2015). UGT and CC.OO's behaviour made patent their excessive relying on 'institutional power' to have

an influence over the polity domain (Rigby and García Calavia, 2017). According to Gago (2014), their substantial moderation was mainly due to the necessity of being perceived as 'responsible' unions in order to keep social dialogue open, and of avoiding to excessively weaken the PSOE in view of the following general elections.

PP's victory in the 2011 early general elections proved that their strategy was even *tactically* unsuccessful. As expected, the new government unilaterally implemented new labour market and pension reforms that deepened the pro-market direction of the Socialist reforms and further promoted wage bargaining at the firm level, thus weakening the big unions. According to Molina (2014), the UGT and CC.OO lost their opportunity to reinforce their organizational structure and to adapt to a fragmented labour market during the previous years, when their 'voice' was quite guaranteed by the presence of a Socialist government in a favourable economic context.

Romanos (2017) argues that the unions did play a major role in the anti-austerity protests, 'at least from a quantitative point of view' (Romanos, 2017: 156). However, as Portos (2016) clearly shows, the peak of the protest cycle was achieved only during and after the *Indignados* uprising, famously began with the square demonstration in Puerta del Sol (Madrid: 15th May 2011). Since then, the Spanish anti-austerity movement entered in a lively phase, in which vast networks of pre-existing and newly formed social movements, together with 'unaffiliated' citizens, strongly shaped the public sphere, completely bypassing the traditional intermediary institutions at the societal and partisan levels.

6.4 The Unified Spanish Protest Cycle

On 15th May 2011, 50,000 peoples in Madrid, 20,000 in Barcelona, 10,000 in Valencia and many more in 50 other Spanish cities joined the peaceful demonstrations convoked by an Internet-based network (*¡Democracia Real YA!* – DRY – Real Democracy Now) and triggered the most important protest-cycle since the *Transición* (Castells, 2015). Activists and attendants became immediately known as *Indignados*, referring to the influential pamphlet *Indignez-vous*, written by French philosopher Stephane Hessel. As Díez García (2015) stressed, the 15-M (referring to its 'date of birth'), more than a 'movement', was an *event* triggering a new political *climate* in Spain, with long lasting (albeit initially unnoticed) effects.

DRY was '*a conglomeration of blog supported by different organizations [such as the* No Les Votes *platform – 'Don't vote for them' –the collective* Juventud Sin Futuro – *Youth Without Future – and some groups against the Sinde Law*[118]*] and with no people behind it*' (Castells, 2015: 114). Some days before the demonstrations, DRY promulgated its manifesto:

> *We are normal people. We are like you: people who get up in the morning to study, to work or to look for a job, people with family and friends. People who work hard every day to live and get a better. . . Yet in this country most of the political class does not even listen to us. Its functions should be to bring our voice into the institutions, to facilitate citizen's political participation, to achieve the greatest benefit for the majority of society instead of just enriching themselves on our back, paying attention only to the instructions of the great economic powers,*

[118] The Sinde Law was a restrictive law for the defense of intellectual property on Internet. It took the name from its main proponent, the Culture Minister González-Sinde (PSOE). Its proposal triggered the creation of a vast movement against the bill.

> *and maintaining a* partidocrática *dictatorship . . . We are people, not merchandise. […]. For all these reasons, I am indignant. I believe I can change it. I believe I can contribute. I know together we can. Come with us. It is your right.* (quoted from Castells, 2015: 115).

After five days of intense debates in Puerta del Sol square, carried on in an emotional deliberative and horizontal way and through self-organized 'commissions', the demonstrators elaborated sixteen proposals approved by the 'Plenary Assembly' by consensus (Díez García, 2015: 60). Most of them focused on the political sphere[119]. Four of them advanced economic demands (fiscal reform and suppression of tax heavens; subordination of the banking system and of the *Troika* to the 'general interest', and the nationalization of the banks rescued; regularization of the working conditions; re-nationalization of strategic enterprises). The rest of the proposals referred to social rights[120], the abolition of specific laws[121] and pacifist and environmental issues[122]

15-M's activists clearly conceived the social and economic distress as the consequence of the lack of political participation, which was in turn a product of a closed political system much more accountable to bankers and obscure lobbyists than to the *citizens*. As famous slogans said: '*they don't represent us*' and *'we are not merchandises controlled by politicians and bankers*'. The 15-M, then, clearly represented an instance of Aslanidis' *populist social movement*, i.e. '*non-institutional collective mobilization expressing a catch-all political platform of grievances that divides society between an overwhelming majority of "pure people" and a "corrupt elite," demanding the restoration of popular sovereignty in the name of the former'*

[119] The change of the electoral law in a proportional sense; the abolishment of the 'privileges' of the political class (the *casta*); the fight against corruption; the development of direct and participative democracy; the separation of powers; the recuperation of the *Memoria Histórica* and of the funding principles of the Spanish democracy; and the complete transparency over the sources of funding of the political parties.
[120] Housing rights, right of free circulation of the people, public and secular education.
[121] The 'Plan Bolonia', the Citizenship Law and the *Sinde Law*.
[122] Closing of nuclear plants and promotion of sustainable energy production.

(Aslanidis, 2017). According to the same author, populist social movements pretend to represent the majority of the citizens and refuse to '*negotiat[e] narrow policy concessions from the state, as they seek a wholesale reform of the political regime that will purportedly restore the political sovereignty of the people*' (Aslanidis, 2017).

Flesher Fominaya (2015a) criticised the common wisdom about the supposed 'spontaneity' of the 15-M. This spontaneity is, according to this author, part of 15-M's narrative, aiming at stressing its 'rupturist' role and its capacity of attracting different people than those involved in the pre-existing Spanish social movements' *milieu*. In contrast, she stressed the strong legacies left by previous protest cycles – mainly by the GJM – such as the horizontal and deliberative practices, the critiques against the 'Institutional Left' and 15-M's supposed adherence to the 'autonomist' and counter-power political theories and practices.

I argue that this analysis overstates the 'continuist' features of the 15-M in relation with the pre-existing antagonistic Spanish social movements. According to a 15-M activist also involved in *pre-15-M social movements* (specifically, the Patio Maravillas, the most popular *centro social* in Madrid), '*the Patio Maravillas launched several economic and political experiments […] it was a space of a* community, *while the 15-M… we felt that it was* something different. […] *We were people coming with many posters, leaflets,* strong identities… [*and within the* acampadas] we tried to be unnoticed, *[…] I was afraid to put on the centre of the conversations my issues, my identity…*' (quoted in Díez García, 2015: 77; my emphasis). For sure, many 'old activists' participated and sustained the 15-M, and played a central role in the territorial assemblies that followed the early *acampadas*, as well as in the *Mareas Ciudadanas* ('Citizen Tides') or in the *March for Dignity* (see below). Nevertheless, the 15-M soon became 'another thing'. 15-M's demonstrators were on average less politicised and less identified with old political categories than the demonstrators engaged in more traditional contentious activities (such as the 2011 radical unions' strike: see Cristancho, 2015). However, they were more likely than average to participate in social

organizations – and less likely to be affiliated to the unions – while the presence of unemployed workers was outstanding: 13% of demonstrators with secondary education and 22% of those with less than secondary education reported to be unemployed (Díez García, 2015). As the membership profile of the 15-M clearly differed from the 'usual suspects' (the 'old militants/activists'), to draw strong links between the pre-existing movements and the 15-M by looking at the practices and the repertoires of the different mobilizations seems excessive.

Instead, I fully agree with Flesher Fominaya's analysis when she stresses the *refractivity* of the 15-M towards the 'Institutional Left' and the 'autonomist' and *antagonistic* position towards the political institutions. Both IU and the unions were targeted as 'part of the caste' ruling Spain, and, although most of the demonstrators in the *acampadas* self-declared IU's voters, it clearly represented a sort of 'least worst' option (Ramiro and Verge, 2013; ES23). In turn, both IU and the main unions poorly dissimulated their skepticism over the incipient mobilizations. As Alberto Garzón – the current IU's secretary – admitted, most of IU's 'old guard' ruling the party at that time labelled the 15-M as 'antipolitical' (Brieger, 2015). According to Pablo Iglesias, many IU's cadres expressed their disappointment towards the 15-M: '*we have been indignados for thirty years and these youngsters want to teach us what indignation means…*' (Rivero, 2014: 47). The union leaders that I interviewed recognise that the 15-M '*completely took us by surprise, […] it was like a shock*' (ES16): '*the* Indignados [were] *saying our same things, but the people listen[ed] to them and ignore[d] us*' (ES5). According to Eduardo Gutiérrez, a member of Podemos' National Citizens' Council with a long experience as consultant for CC.OO., '*at the beginning, the analyses made by CC.OO.'s leadership were really bad…they argued that the* Indignados *were an anti-unionist movement, some insane people who had suffered from delirium for nine weeks…'*.

The antagonistic features of the 15-M, together with its lack of 'programs, structures and leaders'[123] probably represented its sources of strength. However, these features soon turned to be sources of weakness, as 'visible' consequences were poor or null: no governmental pro-austerity measure was reverted; at the political level, the Popular Party won both the local elections in May and the general elections in November, with a landslide majority, while the PSOE reached its minimum electoral result since 1977 and IU took only partially advantage of PSOE's defeat. The new government also implemented a restrictive reform of the penal code, the infamous *Ley Mordaza* ('Gag Law'), which established fines up to 600,000 euros for refusing to dissolve a manifestation (Flesher Fominaya, 2017).

Despite the *Ley Mordaza*, the 15-M acted as a triggering point of a strong and *unifying* protest cycle. The 15-M produced, as Aslanidis (2017) nicely summarized, new resonating frames that immediately became 'common goods' ready to be exploited by new progressive political projects. However, in the short term, the exploitation of these 'common goods' remained confined to the social mobilizations' level. According to the protest event analysis presented by Portos (2016: 97), relying on the events covered by *El País*, the number of the protest events in Spain was, on average, roughly 10 per month during the 2007-early 2011 period. Since the 15-M, the protest events per months remained consistently above 20 per month until the first 2014 months, with a maximum of 45 covered events per month throughout 2012, when the *Mareas* were at their apex. Most of these protests were convoked against austerity measures (mainly cuts on public spending and labour market reforms) and advanced demands of political participation against a party system widely attacked for its lack of accountability.

The first phase of the 15-M, consisting in the *acampadas*, gradually and physiologically decreased in intensity. At the end of July, the 15-M had 'moved to the territory', through the creation of multiple local assemblies following the participative

[123] In this sense, see the analysis of Juan Carlos Monedero, one of the Podemos' founders (Guedán, 2016: 27).

and deliberative practices experimented in Madrid's *Puerta del Sol* and Barcelona's *Plaça de Catalunya*. However, such 'ramifications' remained quite restricted to the most motivated and 'biographically available' militants (Castells, 2015). Several interviewees recognized that the initial 15-M's enthusiasm was declining after the summer.

Nevertheless, new mobilizations took the form of different campaigns sustained by a close-knit galaxy of social movements. Between 2011 and 2012 the *Mareas* emerged, '*issue-specific platforms that represent the evolution of the 15-M into a struggle against austerity. They are self-managed and heterogeneous spaces, organised in open and inclusive assemblies, without political identities associated to traditional ideologies or political organizations and with a high use of information technology*' (Subirats, 2017: unpublished). The most widespread *Mareas* were the *Marea Blanca* and the *Marea Verde*, against the cuts on health and educational spending. Another campaign that had a vast resonance was the 'Dignity March', whose slogan said 'Bread, House and Job'. It was initially convoked by a local movement in the poor Extremadura region, claiming for the introduction of a basic income and for promoting new hiring in the public sector by the regional government. It then expanded and attracted different anti-austerity organizations and radical unions (such as the SAT – *Sindicato Andaluz de los Trabajadores*), and organized eight crowded marches converging to Madrid on 22nd May 2014.

Probably, the most important and popular social movement during that period was represented by the PAHs ('Platforms for the Victims of Mortgage Loans': see Flesher Fominaya, 2015b). The PAHs are much more than a network of experts in housing issues, as they directly call their activists for the defence of their rights and their direct involvement in concrete actions preventing evictions. The PAHs also pursued institutional tactics, such as the collection of signatures for an *iniciativa legislativa popular* (ILP) that PP's government boycotted. The most famous PAHs' repertoire is the

escrache[124], consisting in whistling and chanting against '*politicians in their homes or other places they frequent in their daily lives*' (Flesher Fominaya, 2015b: 473). The *escrache* tactic aims to make patent the inaccessibility and the impunity of the elites to the law, and it well inserted into the anti-establishment 15-M's 'spirit'.

Which was the role played by the political parties and the unions forming part of the *Régimen del '78* in this vast cycle of contention? Portos (2016) argued that the unions provided the organizational resources for its sustainability over time. Analogously, Ubasart (2015), referring to the anti-austerity protests in Catalonia, contended that the unions were not the main actors within the extra-institutional camp, but they still furnished important 'logistic resources' to the mobilizations. I found some confirmation of these analyses in my interviews, particularly when the mobilizations directly concerned labour issues (ES19). According to data from the Ministry of Work, union mobilizations increased, particularly in the 2012-2013 period, i.e. after the 15-M 'triggering' point and *after the electoral victory of the PP* (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Strikes in Spain during 2009-2016 period (Non-Worked Days)

Year	Non-Worked Days
2009	1,290,852
2010	671,498
2011	485,054
2012	1,290,114
2013	1,098,480
2014	620,568
2015	497,483
2016	388,912

Source: https://expinterweb.empleo.gob.es/series/

[124] In April 2013, *escrache* tactic was supported by 89% of the population, according to a survey (Flesher Fominaya, 2015b).

However, most of the interviewees agree on the poor mobilizing capacity by the unions ('*the official demonstrations organized by UGT and CC.OO. always were less attended than the "alternative" ones',* ES9; '*their contribution tended to zero*', ES18). According to Bruno Estrada[125],

> '*at the beginning, there was a mutual ignorance: we [the unions] did not understand them [the* Indignados*] and they did not understand us. […] Thus, we [CC.OO.] began meeting with some* Indignados*, there was a young Íñigo Errejón, and he started talking about a "citizens' strike". I explained him that calling for a strike is costless for the students, but not for a worker. It was not simple. Since those reunions, we decided to join in demonstrations that we did not convoke'.*

Several interviewees recognize the contribution of CC.OO. to the following *Mareas* (ES9, ES20), while a member of UGT's Catalonian Secretariat (ES5), while arguing that '*in Catalonia things went different*', admits that, at the national level, UGT's participation in the *Mareas* was negligible. However, the relationship between CC.OO. and the movements continued to be tense: '*it is true, many demonstrators did not recognize our efforts. Some of them even prohibited us to bring our banners and flags. We organized the event and we had to renounce to bring our flags! That was irrational'* (ES16). Subirats (2017) nicely captured the relationship between the movements leading the protest cycle and the unions:

> '*The specialization of the movement into issue-specific conflicts has resulted in the simultaneous incorporation of different sectors of society into* different but connected struggles*; this has led to the* creation of alliances between various sector-specific agents *and enabled the maintenance of focus on*

[125] Economic Consultant for Podemos and Deputy General Secretary of CC.OO.

> *concrete and clear goals. For instance, unions and other labour organizations have been active in some of the mobilizations, although the movement have neither relied on them nor delegated representation to them. Therefore, traditional civil society organizations have, to a degree, been incorporated in these new mobilization spaces, even if they cannot be considered as the drivers of mass protest. In general, the traditional intermediary institutions of representation had to adapt themselves to a new agenda and structure of mobilisation to survive*' (my emphasis).

The main political victim of the social climate produced by the 15-M was the PSOE, which paid for its poor management of the crisis and for its incapacity (or unwillingness) to offer an alternative project to the citizenry.

The 'discursive public goods' produced by the 15-M facilitated the unification of different, *sectorial* struggles under *universalist* frames. Social campaigns such as the *Mareas*, or grassroots movements such as the PAHs, produced a narrative centred on the defence of universal *rights* to health, housing and education. The governmental attacks against social rights were considered a consequence of an ongoing dismantlement of political (the lack of a 'real democracy') and civil (the Sinde Law and the *Ley Mordaza*) rights. Since the beginning of the protest cycle, the claim for giving the *citizens* back their 'voice' in the political sphere remained central, thus leading to a frontal contraposition between the *citizenry* and the (political and financial) *caste*.

According to ESS data, in 2006, 18% of the Spanish respondents took part in a lawful demonstration during the previous year; in 2012, the percentage was 26%. In 2006, the most represented job categories amongst the protesters were liberal professionals (32%), technicians (28%), white collars occupied in routine jobs (27%)

and unemployed workers (24%)[126]. In 2012, the same categories were even more overrepresented among the protesters: 48% of the liberal professionals, 42% of the technicians and 37% of the non-manual routine workers. Unemployed workers were only slightly overrepresented (28%), while 44% of the students participated in post-crisis demonstrations. The positive relationship between years of schooling and participation to demonstrations remained practically identical. However, in 2012, in comparison with 2006, people under 35 were most likely to demonstrate than middle-aged (35-54) people, thus confirming the strong popularity and support reached by the 15-M and by the following campaigns amongst the youth.

These data confirm the extreme sociological differences between the Latin American 'plebeian' demonstrations against neoliberalism and the Spanish protest cycle, in which the concepts of *ciudadanía* and *gente* were much more effective than the concept of *pueblo* for the process of self-identification against the *casta*[127]. In the Bolivian case, the mediation of the *sindicatos* was crucial, while the Spanish protests tended to be attended on an individual basis and, particularly in the 15-M, they allowed 'common citizens' to 'have their single voices heard'. In contrast to Latin American experiences, the social constituency forming the 'core' of the protesters is better described as *well-educated, young middle-class citizens* struggling against the dismantlement of their social and labour rights and/or experiencing a shared feeling of political exclusion and a sense of 'betrayal' of the expectations that the political system had fuelled during the pre-crisis era (Gerbaudo, 2017). As Pablo Iglesias argued (Rivero, 2014), the 15-M was born with 'conservative' goals, i.e. to defend the (albeit segmented and insufficient) Spanish welfare state under attack, while adding precise diagnoses over the reasons that led to the crisis and to austerity measures that 'imposed the costs of the crisis to its victims and not to its culprits'. Instead of people at the border of social exclusion, the constituencies that opted for taking the streets did generally benefit from

[126] See Section 6.6 for a better specification of these job categories.
[127] In this sense, see Errejón and Mouffe (2015: 123-126).

labour market protection and/or owned the necessary cultural and social resources to be motivated for extra-institutional action. Unsurprisingly, these constituencies will be the most overrepresented within Podemos' electorate (see Section 6.6).

The Spanish protest cycle begun with the 15-M attracted a huge number of citizens committed to the goal of political and social change. Nevertheless, some limits of the *unified social mobilizations around universalist issues* soon became evident. First, the single-issue campaigns did not leave stable *organizational* legacies at the territorial level, although they reinforced local and national alliance networks and nurtured a vast militancy potentially ready to engage with an electoral project. Second, the lack of strong institutional allies condemned the protests to the irrelevance *in terms of influence on the policy-making process*. As the participation in extra-institutional actions implies high costs, particularly when these activities are sustained over time, this lack of influence could have provoked a growing disillusion amongst less motivated militants, and a decline in contentious activities, as it appeared quite evident since mid-2013 (Portos, 2016). The rise of Podemos demonstrated that many activists were ready to be 're-mobilised' by a new political project aiming at bringing 15-M's grievances and 'spirit' into the institutions.

6.5 Podemos. The Assault to the Institutions by a 'Movement-Party from Above'

6.5.1 From the Complutense to the Media, from the Media to the Territories and to the Successful Electoral Debut (2010-2014)

Podemos has been alternatively labelled as an 'intellectual vanguard party' (Torreblanca, 2015), a 'movement-party' (Martín, 2015; Della Porta et al., 2017), even a 'neo-leninist party' (Torreblanca, 2015), and, obviously, a 'populist' party (Muller, 2015), in a quite pejorative way. All these definitions capture different features of Podemos, although all of them, taken alone, reveal serious analytical limitations.

The 'neo-leninist' origins of Podemos, and its 'intellectual vanguardism', are undeniable. The foundation of Podemos is the result of the intellectual trajectory of a few political scientists from the Universidad Complutense (such as Pablo Iglesias, Juan Carlos Monedero, Carolina Bescansa and Luís Alegre) and the CEPS (a think-tank located in Valencia). Iglesias and Monedero were amongst the founders of the *Promotora de Pensamiento Crítico*, a small group of Complutense's scholars that, in 2010, began producing audio and video material on political issues, with the collaboration of a left-wing student collective (*Contrapoder*, in which Íñigo Errejón was a prominent figure) and the CEPS. A small local television, Tele K, from Vallecas (a popular neighbourhood in Madrid, where Iglesias grew up), began broadcasting *La Tuerka* ('The Nut'), a political talk show conducted by Iglesias, whose popularity began growing in the social media. *La Tuerka* was later broadcasted by the web-TV of the national newspaper *El Público*. At the same time, another talk show, *Fort Apache*, was ideated and conducted by the own Iglesias, and initially transmitted by *HispanTV*, the channel financed by the Iranian government. After *HispanTV*'s closing, also *Fort*

Apache moved to *El Público*'s platform (Caruso, 2017). Since April 2013, Iglesias began participating in popular *tertulias* (political talk shows) in the national channels, rapidly attracting a growing public audience. Meanwhile, he has continued (up to now) to conduce *La Tuerka* and *Fort Apache*.

The interest, by the scholars who soon became the main Podemos' public figures, towards political communication, directly descended from their intellectual evolution and their professional experiences. Iglesias' doctoral dissertation focused on the Italian *Disobbedienti*, a left-wing radical group active in the GJM and inspired to Negri's counter-power theories, and on Mexican Zapatism. From there, he developed his theoretical thinking over the crisis of representative democracy under neoliberalism and the practices of anti-systemic resistance. However, Iglesias still lacked at the time a theoretical formation over Laclau's theories and the role of state institutions for promoting social change. Here, the influence of Juan Carlos Monedero, Íñigo Errejón and the scholars from the CEPS over the elaboration of the 'hypothesis Podemos' is difficult to overestimate. Several Spanish scholars from the CEPS worked as political consultant of the Bolivarian governments in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador. Errejón, in his doctoral dissertation (Errejón, 2012), focused on the counter-hegemonic narrative of the first Morales' term, by relying on a Gramscian theoretical framework. Latin American professional activities of Monedero, Errejón, the own Iglesias and other scholars convinced them to gradually abandon their 'autonomist' theories and to consider the 'occupation of the public institutions' as a necessary step for advancing a radical alternative to neoliberalism.

At the same time, this group – and, particularly, Errejón – began embracing post-structuralist theories, downplaying Marxist influences and individuating the opportunity, opened by the 15-M, to articulate a new 'people' through the adoption of Laclau's populist theory and the abandonment of the 'old left-right axis' as a central significant for a winning political project in Spain. Such discursive framework motivated a communicative strategy based on the mass-media: as the same Iglesias argues, the 'work

in the territory' and the 'construction of a social counter-power' is completely insufficient, in political terms, without a strong communicative strategy imposing a new 'lexicon' and new 'frames' in the public sphere (Rivero, 2014). The *Promotora* soon became aware, also thanks to public opinion surveys conducted by Carolina Bescansa's team, that the 15-M unveiled the obsolescence of the old political categories – including the left-right axis – once providing popular legitimacy to the *Régimen del '78*. A new discourse – based on the contraposition between *gente* and *casta* – was ready to be imposed in the public sphere. As Bescansa reported, '*40 percent of the respondents thought that Spain had to follow its own economic path, even against EU's diktats, something that nobody was saying from the institutional sphere. Half of the respondents agreed on the public control of the rescued banks. […] The Spanish national football team was by far the main source of positive identification'* (quoted in Guedán, 2016).

Both Iglesias and Errejón worked, in 2011, as electoral campaign consultants for IU. As they openly admitted, IU's leaders repeatedly refused to fuel a discursive antagonism between *pueblo* and *casta* (Muller, 2015). Iglesias and Errejón then realised that a political project assuming their theoretical insights had to be built outside (and even against) the 'old Left'. In July 2013, a few leftist intellectuals elaborated the manifesto *Mover Ficha: Convertir la Indignación en Cambio Político* ('Moving Ahead: Converting Indignation in Political Change'): although Pablo Iglesias did not formally sign it, his 'direction' appeared evident when he personally presented the manifesto at the *Teatro del Barrio* in Lavapiés (Madrid), on 14th January 2014. Iglesias' team was formed by some of his colleagues at the Complutense, some militants from *Juventud Sin Futuro* and the main cadres of the minuscule radical left party *Izquierda Anticapitalista*, whose leader Miguel Urbán was a close friend of Iglesias. Also because of the popularity reached by Iglesias, thanks to his regular participation in *tertulias*, the event unexpectedly attracted more than 2,000 people and marked the official launch of Podemos' experience.

Mover ficha consisted in a brief analysis over Spanish politics and its 'crisis of representation', and in a call for an 'electoral force representing the indignant tide' and 'giving voice to the majority of the enraged citizenry': an 'answer from below, from the citizenry'. The manifesto advanced ten general programmatic points for a new 'candidacy' for the imminent elections for the European Parliament, scheduled in May 2014. The first programmatic point was '*the restoration of the popular sovereignty: it is the citizenry that has to decide, not the selfish minority that brought us to this point*'. Other points referred to the struggle against austerity measures implemented by the PP and the PSOE, for decent salaries and pensions, for the re-nationalization of basic services, for the change of the productive model, for defending housing rights. The tenth point specified that this new candidacy had to be the outcome of a '*participative process open to the citizenry, which must be included in the manifesto's elaboration and the candidate selection, based on the presence of political, social and cultural activists, […] with a salary equal to the Spanish average income and […] independent from the private banks and the lobbies*'. During the presentation of *Mover Ficha* in Lavapiés, Iglesias put as a condition for his candidature to the European elections the collection of 50,000 signatures within two months to support him, a goal reached in forty-eight hours.

As it appears evident, this new political project was conceived from 'above', as the own Iglesias (Iglesias, 2015) and Errejón (Errejón and Mouffe, 2016) openly recognize. Although *Mover Ficha* was open to the participation of other leftist forces willing to join the project, IU rapidly declined the 'invitation' ('*just because the electoral surveys reported that IU was strengthening*', according to Monedero: Guedán, 2016). Errejón admits that *'if we had submitted this project in an assembly, the assembly would have discussed, discussed and discussed and then discarded it'* (Errejón and Mouffe, 2016). Errejón coordinated the electoral campaign for the elections: it was a campaign very active in the social networks and involving few dozens of activists from several anti-austerity social movements (mainly the PAHs and *Juventud Sin Futuro*),

financed through crowd funding (with a budget of just 150,000 euros) and exploiting the organizational support of *Izquierda Anticapitalista*.

Said this, Podemos is a project *filled and fuelled from below*. This became evident since the early days after the presentation of *Mover Ficha*, when Iglesias called for the creation of the *Círculos* ('Circles'). The *Círculos* are the 'basic unities' of Podemos. They are thought as local aggregation of social and political activists on an individual basis, open to all the citizens, and not just to the party affiliates[128]. The *Círculos* were created as 'voluntary, open and autonomous groups' and, in fact, their autonomy – in terms of internal organization and agenda - is still very high. Their first task was to connect those citizens interested in the Podemos' project and to begin collaborating for the electoral campaign: the *círculos* were explicitly told to refuse 'sectarian' jargon and ideological debates. They often began as simple Facebook pages opened by engaged citizens, calling for the organization of face-to-face reunions at the local level. Apart from the *Círculos Territoriales*, it was (and still is) possible to create *Círculos Sectoriales*, i.e. focused on specific issues (health, education, environment, housing…), which are more likely to attract area experts and generally present a more 'intellectual' profile (ES21).

At the end of February, there were already more than 200 *círculos* throughout the country, thus demonstrating the mobilising potential of the project. According to both secondary literature and to my own interviews, the *círculos* immediately attracted many social activists mobilised since (and often before) the 15-M, often at odds with the 'institutional Left', by taking advantage of the personal contacts tied during the long Spanish protest cycle. In addition, there was the contribution of the militants from *Izquierda Anticapitalista*: the importance of the *'anticapis*' varied depending on the region, as they were particularly active in Andalusia and Madrid but almost inexistent in other regions – such as Extremadura and Galicia. However, the *anticapis'* role was

[128] In fact, Podemos was registered as a political party only in March 2011, after the failure of the political negotiations for forming a common platform with IU, the Greens and other regional leftist parties.

crucial for collecting signatures and organising the campaign, exploiting their militant 'expertise', as several interviewees confirmed.

Podemos immediately displayed a lively activity in the social networks, and began using on-line tools (in particular, the free software *Agorá Voting*) for fostering the participation of the citizens in the elaboration of the party manifesto and in the candidate selection process in view of the elections. While communication on the social network was extremely centralised, also for the sake of efficiency (Guedán, 2016), the elaboration of the party manifesto and the candidate selection process followed innovative and bottom-up paths.

Each *Círculo* had the right to nominate up to three candidates for the electoral list, finally converging to 150 candidates to fill the 37 posts. The militants that inscribed themselves to the software finally opted for rewarding Iglesias as the most voted candidate. The on-line elaboration of the manifesto followed three stages: starting from a preliminary draft, the software collected proposals on an individual basis; these proposals were emended by the *Círculos* and then submitted to an on-line referendum (Programa Podemos, 2014).The program was divided into six sections: 'recuperating Economy', 'achieving Freedom', 'achieving Equality', 'recuperating Fraternity', 'conquering Sovereignty' and 'recuperating Land'. The programmatic points were quite vague, resembling more general principles than concrete proposals. Among the most influential points, there were the introduction of a *maximum* salary and of a universal basic income, the end of the practice of the Troika's *memoranda of understanding*, the recognition of the 'right to decide' for all the European peoples (a clear concession to Spanish regional nationalisms), the nationalization of the most important public services, the creation of a public investment bank and the democratic control of the ECB. Several points were devoted to anti-corruption and participatory tools.

These innovative and bottom features notwithstanding, the electoral campaign ended with a partisan leaders' decision that was quite telling of the *populist*

characteristics of Podemos' political project. Some days before the elections, the electoral staff, recognising that the figure of Pablo Iglesias was much more known amongst the voters than the party's name and brand, opted for substituting the brand of the party in the electoral ballot with Pablo Iglesias' face. This decision was highly criticised by many Podemos' supporters, but it proved to be highly successful. While all the main polls predicted a modest result, Podemos obtained the 8% of the national valid votes and elected five MPs in the European Parliament, thus becoming the fourth largest Spanish party in terms of votes. In the following weeks, the voting intention for Podemos exponentially grew: since mid-2014, Podemos consistently ranked either first or second, according to CIS data, even reaching 27% of the voting intentions.

Podemos' electorate in 2014 European Elections was predominantly urban, male, well informed in politics, with more schooling years than average, young, very active on the social networks and clearly positioned on the left side of the political spectrum (Politikon, 2014; Fernández-Albertos, 2015). 30% of the total votes for Podemos came from the PSOE, and 20% from IU. Podemos was particularly successful in mobilising voters that had abstained in the 2011 general elections, as they represented almost 30% of the party electorate in 2014 (Fernández-Albertos, 2015: 47). Podemos obtained the best results in Asturias (a region with a long leftist tradition) and in Madrid (from which the majority of the most visible leaders come from, and where 15-M originated). In contrast, it was initially weaker in Catalonia and Euskadi (where the competition from other leftist and nationalist forces is stronger), as well as in poor rural regions such as Castilla-La Mancha and Extremadura.

According to Fernández-Albertos (2015: 49), using data from CIS Post-Electoral Survey, the insider-outsider divide was not a predictor for the vote for Podemos in the 2014 elections at the *egotropic level*, but it played a relevant role at the *sociotropic level*. Put it plainly, this means that Podemos' voters in the 2014 European elections were not particularly overrepresented among the outsiders, but the voters living in municipalities having experienced strong increases in the local unemployment rate were more likely to

cast their votes for Iglesias' party. In addition, Criado and Pinta (2015) found that, according to voting intention polls during June 2014-January 2015 period, the electorate of Podemos became increasingly skewed towards unemployed and fixed-term workers, while the party became less attractive for the petty bourgeoisie. These data led Fernández-Albertos to suggest that Podemos was born as 'the party of the *Indignados*' and it was growing up as 'the party of the excluded citizens': as section 6.6 will show, data from CIS 2015 post-electoral survey will suggest a different interpretation.

Podemos' early success had immediate consequences on its organization. The number of *círculos* skyrocketed, reaching 1,000 after a few months from the promising electoral debut. Podemos, in June 2014, was little more than an electoral committee; the leaders immediately realised that the widespread enthusiasm among militants and voters had to be 'objectified' through the construction of a powerful partisan organization that supported the declared goal of Podemos: to win the next general elections and to govern Spain. Actually, the own Iglesias famously declared, after the proclamation of the 2014 electoral results: '*this is just the beginning, we are not satisfied with the 8%, because we are born to win'*.

6.5.2 The process of party-building: the elections for the internal charges and the strategic electoral decisions at the regional level (2014-2015)

The internal organization of the party came out of the first 'Citizen Assembly' (*Asamblea Ciudadana*), held in the *Palacio de Vistalegre*, Madrid, in November 2014. The *Asamblea Ciudadana* is formed by the entire membership of the party, which amounted to roughly 250,000 citizens at that time (currently, the total number of the

members is roughly 450,000[129]). It formally represents the maximum organ of the party, where the 'sovereignty' resides, and it has the right to directly elect the General Secretary and 62 of the 81 members[130] of the 'Citizen State Council' (*Consejo Ciudadano Estatal*), a sort of Podemos' Parliament. According to the Statute approved in Vistalegre, the same scheme is replied at the regional (*Secretario Autonómico* and *Consejo Ciudadano Autonómico*) and at the municipal level (*Secretario Municipal* and *Consejo Ciudadano Municipal*). The *Círculos* were purposely left with very few powers (actually, just the right to convoke – when requested by a sufficient number of *Círculos* - an *Asamblea Ciudadana* or *Consejo Ciudadano* at the state or territorial level), and no special voting rights were assigned to Podemos' members active in the *Círculos*. All the internal voting procedures are on-line and on individual basis, in order to avoid replying the mass-party scheme based on the militant rank-and-files, which would prevent 'normal citizens' from having a real voice in the party. The members have the right to nominate the candidates for the public offices, to elect all the internal charges, and to be consulted through on-line *referenda* over all the main strategic decisions of the party. In addition, they can advance policy proposals and then vote on the final drafts of the local, regional and national electoral manifestos. As I will describe below, the limits of these unmediated forms of on-line participation, and the power asymmetries allowing the party elites for 'addressing' the membership towards quite pre-established positions, became soon quite evident.

The preparatory works for *Vistalegre 2014* were managed by a special commission, elected by the party members and composed by militants close to Iglesias and Errejón. The commission established the voting rules for the election of the first *Consejo Ciudadano*: these rules provoked the first tensions within the party, as they were practically designed to facilitate the election of all the candidates from a single

[129] No fee is required to join in the party. This is one of the many Podemos' 'basic principles' in order to favour popular participation.
[130] The other members composing the *Consejo Ciudadano Estatal* are the 17 Regional Secretaries, the President of the *Comisión de Garantía* and the General Secretary.

slate close to the leadership (*listas planchas*' system). Podemos' leaders clearly aimed to build an 'electoral war machine' (*máquina de guerra electoral*), a smooth and vertical structure to prepare the party for the cycle of local, regional and general elections to be held in 2015. Iglesias and Errejón clearly privileged the 'electoral assault to the institutions' over the patient building of a territorially rooted party, as the poor attention to the *Círculos* proved. Such top-down tendency was highly criticised by important party figures, such as Echeñique and Rodríguez, who opted for not presenting their alternative slate (*Sumando Podemos*) in the elections of the *Consejo Ciudadano*: the slate drafted by Iglesias (*Claro que Podemos*, 'Obviously We Can') then occupied all the 62 elective posts in the *Consejo Ciudadano*. Of course, Iglesias easily won the elections for the General Secretariat, with 88% of the votes.

Podemos' centralist organization consolidated in the following months, when a vast cycle of internal elections for the charges at the lower territorial levels began. Iglesias' inner circle identified in each *Comunidad Autónoma* some 'right-hand men' to be 'pushed' in the internal campaigns, and again imposed the *listas planchas*' system to control the *Consejos Autonómicos*. The strategy proved to be very effective, as the *Secretarios Autonómicos* elected were almost everywhere the candidates endorsed by Iglesias. There were some exceptions, though. In Aragón, the winner was the charismatic European MP Pablo Echeñique. In Andalusia the new Secretary was Teresa Rodríguez, who took advantage of her own popularity as union activist and of the stronger rootedness of *Izquierda Anticapitalista* in that region. In Asturias, where the left was traditionally very strong, with a lively social movements' *milieu*, the new secretary – Emilio León – emerged quite autonomously from the grassroots, and no 'Iglesias' slate' was presented. The influences 'from above' were decisive where the party was still poorly rooted, such as in peripheral territories, or in Catalonia and Basque Country, where social movements and civil society organizations have a longer autonomous history and remain suspicious towards 'centralist', Madrid-centred political projects.

According to Luís Alegre (one of the Podemos' founders and, until 2016, the Podemos Secretary in the *Comunidad de Madrid*), this process of 'recruiting' of the local elites was '*extremely aleatory. Sometimes you went to a rally, had a beer with somebody and convinced yourself that she was the right person, because she was just a normal person and not a fanatic Trotskyist!*'. Alegre recognised that the process of party building was particularly difficult in those regions where *'we did not know anybody: it was precisely in those areas where the problems between the centre and the peripheries erupted'*, because many peoples joined in the party '*without the necessary political preparation'*. Alegre and Rodrigo Amírola (a close Errejón's collaborator) admitted an 'excess of centralism' that impeded the natural evolution of local leaderships, while arguing that a degree of centralism and control from above was required, as Podemos in that phase was '*basically a permanent electoral committee, which had to function as a military committee*' (ES15). In Emilio León's opinion, some tensions erupted at the regional level because in many places there were an excessive intrusion from 'Madrid', which sometimes imposed leaders with poor local support. Similar accounts had been reported for the case of Euskadi (ES7), where the first *Congreso Ciudadano Autonómico* – itself an expression of the *oficialista* slate (i.e., the closest to the national leadership) – was forced by Iglesias and Errejón to resign, due to the poor support of the bases. In the second Podemos Euskadi elections, a different – but still *oficialista* – slate won, thus confirming the relevance of the leaders' endorsements within the internal life of the party in the peripheries, particularly when the party was poorly rooted.

The tensions between the centre and the periphery continued during 2015, when Podemos had to deal with the first strategic electoral choices. Before the general elections, scheduled for December, the newly born party faced a vast cycle of local and regional elections. In May 2015, local elections were scheduled in the Spanish major cities, including Madrid and Barcelona. In 2015, all the *comunidades autónomas* (with the Euskadi and Galicia exceptions[131]) had to elect their regional parliaments. The party

[131] In Galicia and Euskadi the elections were scheduled for 2016.

leaders, aware of the precarious strength of the partisan territorial structures, renounced to run with Podemos' brand in the municipal elections and pushed the partisan peripheries for joining other local, leftist organizations in the 'candidatures of popular unity' (*candidaturas de unidad popular*). In the case of regional elections, Podemos opted for presenting their own lists, with the important exceptions of Catalonia and (in 2016) Galicia, where the party took part of the *confluencias* together with other leftist and regional-nationalist parties. The strategy of participating in the *candidaturas de unidad popular* proved to be highly successful, as these candidatures won in important cities such as Madrid, Barcelona, Zaragoza, A Coruña and Cádiz, among others.

A comparison between the municipal projects of *Ahora Madrid* ('Madrid Now', AM) and *Barcelona en Comú* ('Barcelona in Common', BeC), and of the relationship between Podemos and the other forces participating in these experiences, help to understand the differences between a 'populist movement-party' like Podemos and the 'citizen platforms', in which the 'organic' influences from (local) movements are higher. First in Barcelona (immediately after the 2014 European elections) and then in Madrid, it emerged the idea of building 'municipalist', 'citizen platforms', with no relationships with any political party, in order to aggregate the energies from the anti-austerity social movements, whose strength – particularly in Madrid – was declining. In Barcelona, the project was initiated by Ada Colau, the charismatic leader of the Barcelonan PAHs: she and other social activists founded the platform *Guanyem Barcelona* ('Let's Win Barcelona'), which convoked different neighbourhood assemblies for recollecting ideas and proposals for the elaboration of a manifesto for the 2015 municipal elections. The influence of different movements in *Guanyem* was evident not only in the biographies of the main leaders, but also in the central role played by the 'thematic axes' (*eixos temàtics*), similar to Podemos' *círculos sectoriales*, in which experts and social activists in specific issues collaborated for drafting the manifesto and later – when in government – acting as consultants for the implementation of public policies.

Guanyem's project grew precisely when the diffusion of Podemos' *círculos* was at its peak: thus, the two projects found somewhat 'competing' in Barcelona, although there was and is a vast overlapping membership. In any case, *Guanyem* soon became the most attractive project at the local level, being able to attract both intellectual figures (through the *eixos*) and many activists from the lively Barcelonan civil society. Podemos then opted for dialoguing with *Guanyem* and with other leftist forces to form BeC. BeC is *not* a coalition of different parties, as it functions as a party with individual direct affiliations and internal elections with no established quotas between the founding organizations. However, it is widely recognised by the own militants that, in the internal primaries, the different slates broadly correspond to the founding parties. Due to the poor rootedness of Podemos in Barcelona, its 'weight' inside BeC was quite reduced.

The control exerted by Podemos' elite on *Podem* (Podemos' Catalan branch) became evident during the negotiations with other parties to form a *confluencia* for the 2015 Catalan elections. Iglesias imposed the participation of *Podem* in the electoral coalition *Catalunya Sí que es Pot* (CSQP: 'Catalonia is Possible'), a decision that provoked severe tensions between Podemos and *Podem*'s directions. The tensions reached their peak in 2017, when *Podem* first refused to merge in Colau's political project *Catalunya en Comú* and then opted for supporting the unconstitutional pro-independency referendum organised by the *Generalitat*, in both cases against the official Podemos' positions. Similar tensions occurred in Galicia, where Podemos' regional branch resisted for a long time against Iglesias' decision to participate in the *confluencia* with other regionalist parties for the 2016 Galician elections: at the end, the pressures from the centre prevailed, although the regional branch succeeded in avoiding a definitive merge (ES2). The resistances of the Catalan and Galician Podemos' branches are also telling of the strong Podemos' partisan identity of the militants, who continue to identify political parties such as ICV, IU or AGE (*Alternativa Gallega de Izquierda*) as 'old parties' at odds with the participative and movementist ideologies inspiring Podemos.

Things went different in Madrid, when Podemos since the beginning appeared as a major player. Podemos reached an agreement with *Ganemos Madrid* (the municipalist platform, clearly inspired to *Guanyem*) to form the 'instrumental party' *Ahora Madrid*, open to the participation of other forces (such as IU and the ecologist party Equo). As Alegre reported, '*Podemos was an electorally strong brand, but at that time we lacked the historical Madrid cadres and social activists in social centres spaces or in the lively neighbourhood associations that opted for joining Ganemos, which, in turn, was electorally completely irrelevant'*. The weight of Podemos within *Ahora Madrid* is much higher than in BeC, as it is reflected in the positions occupied by Podemos' important figures within the *Junta* (such as Rita Maestre, an important member of the *Consejo Ciudadano Estatal*, appointed as *Junta'*s speaker) governing Madrid.

6.5.3 Podemos after the 2015 General Elections: the Renewal of the Spanish Left?

The candidate selection process for the 2015 general elections (known as 20-D), was marked by the internal dissent of the *anticapitalista* fraction. The internal candidates had to compete in a single national district, through the *listas planchas* system, thus assigning a very strict control from above over the final composition of the lists. Podemos opted for running alone in 16 out of 19 *comunidades autónomas* and for joining the *confluencias* in Catalonia, *País Valenciá* and Galicia.

The elaboration of the party manifesto was innovative and ameliorated the participative process already followed in view of the 2014 European Elections. This time, the party manifesto was well integrated, and it discursively focused on the recuperation of a 'real democracy' (*democracia social, económica, social, política, ciudadana, internacional*). A detailed analysis of the manifesto would be quite of the

topic. Nonetheless, it must be stressed the focus on a stronger role of the State in terms of public investments and intervention in the economy, the provision of additional and effective mechanisms for the participation of the citizenship in the law-making process at all the territorial levels, and a deep attention to social and labour rights[132].

In contrast to the candidate selection process, the elaboration of the party manifesto represented a genuine experiment of *participative and mobilising* drafting. More than eighty civil society organizations (including different union branches, also belonging to the 'mainstream' unions) and approximately fifty national (including several Podemos representatives) and international experts were involved, under the coordination of twenty-three *coordinadores de área* (selected from the *Consejo Ciudadano Estatal*). The manifesto included 23 proposals from *Plaza Podemos* and suggestions advanced by the *Círculos*. Almost all the 394 programmatic points were submitted to the on-line voting of the members, who later approved the entire document. The experts also provided a detailed account of the budget modifications necessary to implement the manifesto. Even so, some points coming 'from below' – including the provision of a *renta básica garantizada* (universal basic income) – were modified towards more 'moderate' positions, despite their huge support from the grassroots, for 'strategic' reasons (ES12; ES20).

The electoral results were extremely successful. Podemos – including the *confluencias* – reached 20,7% of the valid votes and elected 69 MPs (27 of them through the *confluencias*). It obtained particularly good results in Asturias, in the Madrid Community and in Euskadi. The *confluencias* proved to be a successful experiment, as all of them (*En Comú Podem, Compromís-Podemos* and *En Marea*) surpassed the 24% of the votes in their respective *Comunidades Autónomas*. By contrast, the party was less successful in the rural areas (the traditionally conservative Castilla-La Mancha and

[132] Few or any provisions were devoted to the working-class representation system (apart from some generic calls for the revival of the tripartite negotiations and a request for a stronger transparency of the balance sheets of all the organizations receiving public subsidies, including the unions).

Castilla y León and PSOE's strongholds Andalusia and Extremadura). In sum, the party electorate broadly confirmed its 'urban bias' and its strength in leftist (Asturias) or quite well-to-do regions (Euskadi, Catalonia), and where party presence is stronger (Madrid).

These great results notwithstanding, Podemos did not reach a sufficient number of seats to form a governmental coalition with other left-of-centre forces (such as the PSOE and IU, which barely reached 3% of the votes). Spain entered into a long phase of political stalemate, as no viable coalition proved to be possible: the pact signed by the leaders of the PSOE and of *Ciudadanos* (a centre-right party calling for a 'regeneration' of Spanish politics against the 'old parties' and adopting a 'newish' political style) explicitly excluded Podemos from the only possible 'PP-free' coalition. Iglesias reacted by adopting a harsh confrontational strategy against the PSOE, thus making even more difficult a political solution.

At the end, new general elections were scheduled for June 2016. Podemos pursued a different strategy for achieving the *sorpasso* ('overtaking') over the PSOE. The party opted for running together with IU in the electoral coalition *Unidos Podemos* ('United We Can'), a decision that was internally contested and paved the way for a long phase of internal tensions, as I will describe below. According to some internal critics, Iglesias' attacks against the PSOE damaged Podemos, as the party was identified as the 'culprit' of the political stalemate. *Unidos Podemos* and the *confluencias* obtained 71 seats and 21% of the valid votes (less than the percentage separately reached by Podemos and IU in 20-D), failing to 'overtake' the PSOE, while the PP increased its vote sharing. Rajoy was confirmed as PM, thanks to the support of Ciudadanos and the abstention of the PSOE.

The electoral defeat fuelled the tensions within the party in view of the second *Asamblea Ciudadana*, the party congress, held again in Vistalegre in February 2017. Strategic disagreements emerged between Iglesias and Errejón. The latter criticised the

'identitarian turn to the Left'[133] imposed by Iglesias and his team, which were considered too influenced by grassroots militancy. Instead, Errejón proposed a different strategy, the *transversalidad*, aiming at downplaying the leftist rhetoric, at breaking the alliance with IU and at 'seducing' the electorate of the PSOE through a less confrontational stance. The third faction, the *anticapitalistas*, backed the 'leftist turn', although they remained sceptical over the vertical organization of the party and supported a more 'assembleary' functioning. Since 2016, a long phase of internal struggles began, solved by *Vistalegre II* (the second *Asamblea Ciudadana*). At the end, Iglesias was re-elected as party secretary and his slate defeated the *errejonistas* in the elections for the *Consejo Ciudadano Estatal*. 'Laclau's populism' evolved into a party increasingly closer to the 'new Left', albeit renewed and open to the influence of the movements.

6.5.4 Podemos as a participative-mobilising populist movement party

In sum, Podemos was conceived and developed as a centralised electoral committee, in which all the territorial structures were expected to contribute to propaganda activities in order to achieve successful electoral results. The construction of a strong and well-rooted organization was subordinated to the exigencies of coordination of a long electoral cycle. Concretely, this meant that the subnational structures had to be firmly controlled by the centre, and that the grassroots were expected to 'work for the party' without having no formal voice in the party internal affairs. This would have provoked, in the medium term, a certain disillusion amongst the most committed militants with a more intellectual profile, and harsh critiques from the leftist components of Podemos (and, particularly, from *Izquierda Anticapitalista*), who had in mind an

[133] For a recent discussion, see Franzé (2017).

organizational model closer to the 'old mass parties', albeit less bureaucratised and more based on deliberative democracy at the grassroots level (ES20).

Instead, Podemos became a '*participative-mobilising populist movement party*'. It is *populist* because of its antagonistic discourse, of its explicit aim to occupy the nation-state institutions (considered a *conditio sine qua non* to implement concrete changes), of its reliance on a charismatic figure aggregating the discontent and acting as the charismatic face of a composite movement, while retaining a firm control over the periphery in order to defend a common, clear strategy. It is a *movement party* because of the sociological composition of *both its leadership and its membership*. According to data from the 2015 CIS Post-Electoral Survey, 83% of Podemos' members are also affiliated to some social organizations, in contrast to 69% of PSOE's members, while 64% of Podemos' members reported to have attended authorised demonstrations 'in several occasions', in contrast to 54% of IU's members, 45% of PSOE's members and 14% of PP's members. The affiliates to Podemos represent the 40% of the under 35 affiliates to the five major Spanish parties (Podemos, PP, PSOE, IU and *Ciudadanos*) and the 44% of the adult (35-54 years old) affiliates, and the 56% of the affiliates with university education. In addition, the 46% of the unemployed workers affiliated to one of the five major parties, as well as the 47% of the skilled white collars and the 80% of the workers in liberal professions reported to be a Podemos' member, thus making clear the attraction exerted by Podemos's populist project towards those social sectors overrepresented in the long Spanish anti-austerity protest cycle.

The overlapping membership between social movements and Podemos is even clearer at the elite level. 13 members of the first *Consejo Ciudadano Estatal* came from the 15-M, 7 from *Juventud Sin Futuro*, 6 from student social movements against the Plan Bolonia and 3 from the PAHs (Martín, 2015). Other leading figures reported their affiliation to radical trade unions, such as the SAT. My interviews at the regional level are telling in this respect: the party-in-the-office at the subnational levels are generally filled by 'traditional' movements' militants well inserted in militant networks *before*

Podemos' birth ('*the* Consejo Ciudadano Autonómico *is clearly carried on by committed militants*': ES13, ES14; '*The on-line forms of participation are important, but we should privilege the face-to-face participation, because the latter gave you more responsibilities*': ES2; ES7). While the party-in-the-office at the regional level generally consists of young citizens (less than 40 years old) coming from academic or social movements' backgrounds, the participants in the *Círculos* are generally older, with a long militant record, quite differently from the members involved in on-line forms of participation (or not actively participating at all: ES11, ES15, ES19, ES21).

According to a Podemos' member of the Valencian Parliament, *'there are two phases, before the European Elections and after Vistalegre's Assembly, which opted for the* 'máquina de guerra electoral', *and this was conditioning* [in the sense that it limited the 'bottom-up' features of the party]. […] *After the first impulse from the Complutense, the first nucleus was the most militant and* movimientista, *15-M's militants, activists from the PAHs, from the* Marcha por la Dignidad. *Then, it is true, there is a group that became a 'transmission belt' between the militants and the centre, usually it was* Izquierda Anticapitalista, *but here in* País Valenciá *this role was played by the CEPS*' (ES1). In addition, *'most of the regional leaders come from the CEPS, while at the local level, some leaders were active in the PAHs'.*

According to a Podemos' member of the Galician Parliament,

> *'in Galicia the movements predated the 15-M, there had been the* Prestige *affaire. More than the 90% of the Podemos' militants* [in the Círculos and in the 'organic' charges] *have always been social activists. […] the movements previously had not any kind of institutional access, Podemos was necessary in this sense. […] We organize ourselves through working groups focused on specific issues, […] keeping the relationship with the social movement platforms: […] PAHs, citizens' forums, feminist movements, organizations for the* memoria histórica, mareas

> blancas, mareas verdes… *we are in all of these movements'* (ES2).

According to the same militant, '*this became a problem when we had to negotiate for joining the* confluencia*, as we are social activists, we are not old politicians'*. In the case of Extremadura, a poor and rural region traditionally dominated by the PSOE,

> '*I was invited by some social movements' activists,* […] *all the militants joining* Claro que Podemos *slate agreed on the* máquina de guerra electoral*, we believed in that strategy, we trusted our Madrid direction, although the historical phase is quite different now, we have to build our territorial organization* […] *Extremadura's Secretary comes from an academic environment, he studied at the Complutense, this surely had some influence.* […] *We attracted many companions from the movements, although some of them had come from other parties, some of them did not have any previous social or political affiliation*' (ES4).

According to a member of the Euskadi *Consejo Ciudadano Autonómico*,

> '*I was not a social activist, but I have always been interested in politics. Then, I read* Mover Ficha *and I immediately decided to join Podemos. The possibility of participating in a* círculo sectorial *attracted me, I was motivated to work in cultural issues. From Bilbao, they told me 'we have not a cultural* círculo*, but you can create it!'. I began participating in crowded meeting, the comrades reported me that before Podemos they were very few and now a lot of people were*

> *participating.* […] *Podemos was successful in Euskadi because a leftist institutional space for those activists unidentified with the* abertzale [Euskadi leftist nationalism] *movement was inexistent. Podemos filled that gap*' (ES7).

However, '*in Euskadi the movements are very jealous of their autonomy. […] The nucleus of Podemos Euskadi is made by activists in the 15-M, which was not particularly strong here. […] I knew most of the Podemos Euskadi's leaders when we militated in the 15-M'* (ES22).

In the case of Podemos Asturias, which since the beginning achieved great electoral results,

> '*there are some idiosyncrasies here. There were many antimilitarist and anti-dismissals protests here, or against the Plan Bolonia* […] *Personally, I belonged to the syndicalist movement. We did not identify as Fordist workers, but we had to do something for stopping the emigration due to the deindustrialization of the region.* […] *I belonged to the CSI* [Corriente Sindical de Izquierda*, created by a schism within* CC.OO]. *When the 15-M came, we wanted to abandon our minority condition, we found a mobilising climate that we have never experienced before. We have always worked for the Revolution, and suddenly the Revolution came, and we were demonstrating together with people that had never mobilised before.* […] *thus we opted for creating a social centre,* La Madreña*, which became a social laboratory, and then we began struggling for the rights of the citizens that lost all their savings in the banking collapses. I suddenly found myself shouting through a megaphone, rounded by a lot of old ladies.* […] *We understood that we had to take advantage from that situation electorally, but we lacked the instrument. Then we contacted Asturian students living in Madrid and participating in JSF, and we realised what was happening there. We invited Pablo and Íñigo for some conferences, but, actually, we were not so much vinculated to them. Nevertheless, we decided to join in a project that we did not know.* […] *We could achieve those results*

> *because we were greatly rooted in the territory, while IU's Asturian branch was completely identified with the old regime*'.

Thus, Podemos effectively provided the movements with an institutional access to the polity domain that was previously unthinkable. This was also evident in the same elaboration of the electoral manifesto, in which working groups focused on different policy areas provided to collect information and opinions from the relevant movements.

However, another, important 'source of legitimacy' for Podemos' populist political project came from the provision of on-line forms of political participation for the broad membership individually affiliated through the web. The on-line forms of voting guaranteed to the candidates and to the party-in-the-central-office an autonomous source of legitimacy, in detriment of the territorial structures, whose role was confined to the organization of propaganda activities and to the collection of grievances and proposals at the local level. At the same time, on-line forms of participation have structural limits preventing a real challenge to the vertical internal functioning of the party. For instance, the law proposals from *Plaza Podemos* face high thresholds (it is necessary to achieve the 10% of the votes of the members in order to make the discussion of the proposals compulsory for Podemos MPs) that practically impeded any relevance of these initiatives (ES21). As I showed above, the candidate selection process and the internal elections through the creation of *listas planchas* and the endorsements from 'Madrid' channelled these votes towards predetermined directions.

Nevertheless, the party elite did proceed to some attempts to 'reinvigorate' the *círculos* in a second phase – particularly after the 2015 and 2016 general elections – when Podemos gradually abandoned the strategy of the *máquina de guerra electoral* and recognised the necessity of establishing firmer and deeper roots in the territory. The new phase aimed to build a 'national and popular movement' (*movimiento nacional y popular*), consisting in rooted *círculos* organising cultural and social activities at the neighbourhood level in order to demonstrate the Podemos' 'usefulness', even when in

opposition, for implementing immediate changes and for ameliorating the living conditions of the citizens. This strategy implied a certain empowerment of the *círculos*, also through the party program *Impulsa*, which assigned funds for social projects to the *círculos* through an internal competition. However, *Impulsa* did not address the lack of influence of the 'off-line militants' on the party's decisions.

Even the consultation of the members for strategic decisions sometimes assumed grotesque forms. For instance, in April 2016, when the party-in-parliament had to choose between entering into a tripartite governmental coalition with the PSOE and Ciudadanos and pushing for an unrealistic leftist government, the militants were literally asked: '*Do you want a government based on the Sánchez-Rivera* [the leaders of the PSOE and Ciudadanos] *pact*? *Alternatively: Do you agree with the proposal for a government of change by Podemos-En Comú Podem-En Marea* [the Catalan and Galician *confluencias*]?'. In sum, the on-line forms of *participation*, often cited by Podemos' public figures in order to mark the 'diversity' of the party from the *casta*, clearly responded more to the goal of *popular mobilization* than to an effective provision of democratic instruments for controlling the party 'from below'. Even so, they are neither completely ineffective nor negligible instruments for strengthening the 'sense of belonging' of the bases – and, particularly, of the most committed militants and members – to the project.

6.5.5 The relationship between Podemos and the unions: from antagonism to cooperation

The big unions were perceived (and, in fact, they perceived themselves: ES3, ES5; ES16), at least since the eruption of the 15-M, as part of the *1978 regime*. *Indignados'* discourse – abundantly exploited by Podemos - fully included UGT and

CC.OO.'s *elites* in the *Casta* that would dominate Spain. Several interviewees draw the parallel between the *bipartidismo* (negatively resumed as 'PPSOE') and the *bisindicalismo*. Apart from remembering the corruption scandals that affected several unions' leaders, which further contributed to their delegitimization (ES1), both UGT and CC.OO are accused of: '*having signed indecent pacts with the employers and the government'* (ES22); receiving public subsidies that would harm their autonomy (ES2; ES7; ES9) or being fully politically controlled by the PSOE (ES4 and ES10); having abandoned their broader, combative role and reduced themselves to *'organise the holidays of the members*' (ES19); having transformed themselves in *'union officials wearing a suit and tie'* (ES10), in contrast to other more radical (and small) unions such as the Andalusia SAT, the Basque ESK or the Asturia CSI, characterised by more contentious repertoires; having been involved in patronage practices in the public sector (ES6), or having delayed their opposition to the last Socialist government (ES22; see also Pérez, 2014).

None of these accusations refers to the 'over-protection' of the insiders. Instead, they represent typical leftist critiques against the '*institutionalization*' of the big unions (ES8). The interviewees often do point on the lack of combativeness of the main unions in the struggle against job precariousness. A militant of the Basque radical union ESK and Podemos' representative at the regional level (ES22) has stressed that '*ESK's militants struggle for an idea and for the workers and not for an organization: […] we struggled side by side with Telefónica's precarious workers even if they were not unionised* [as they were, formally, self-employed workers] *without receiving anything* ['sin cobrar un duro']*'*. A leader of a Podemos' Catalan *círculo* argues that *'unionism is something for adult workers, with open-ended contracts in the public sector or in big firms, where they can afford to be unionised. This* sindicalismo de servicios *will disappear in 15 years'* (ES11). An Asturian Podemos' leader has stated that '*Izquierda Unida's typical voter is the unionised and quite well-to-do civil servant*' (ES8), who feels comfortable with CC.OO.'s moderate style. A Podemos prominent figure (ES21)

admits that, due to the changes brought by post-industrialism and labour market dualism, *'the Spanish union system of representation is outdated*'. Finally, Gutiérrez reported that

> '*many people from CC.OO. were arguing for organizing self-employed workers, the* falsos autónomos. *We were able to add this in the statute. Well, the only thing the leaders did was to establish an "alliance" with an already existing organization of self-employed workers. They did not do anything'.*

However, the interviewees are often attentive to distinguish between unions' elites ('*las cúpulas'*) and the *delegados* at the lower levels, by arguing that many of the critiques refer to the formers. They stress the presence of many union officials from both radical and 'mainstream' unions within Podemos' rank-and-files. Several interviewees report that the best electoral results were achieved in those working-class areas with a strong union tradition (ES13; ES14; ES17; ES18; ES23). According to Estrada,

> *'we* [CC.OO.] *have never had so many our affiliates in the Parliament as today [thanks to Podemos]. However, while in the past the unions gave to some party the list of union leaders to be included into the electoral lists, now their presence is not due to organic agreements. […] There are many militants in Podemos from radical unions, but when Podemos needs an opinion over labour issues, our voice is much more authoritative'.*

The relationship between Podemos and the big unions (and particularly CC.OO.) has gradually improved (ES16). At the regional level, where Podemos' representatives seem more radical and have an activist profile, the critiques towards the *bisindicalismo*

are stronger (e.g., ES22). Both CC.OO. and UGT are considered '*partisan instruments*' (ES4) or '*highly delegitimised institution. Thus, we prefer to talk about 'social unionism'* [sindicalismo social], *such as the PAHs*' (ES1). Nevertheless, at the central level, the opinions get softer. According to Rodrigo Amírola, '*the antiunionist discourse is extremely dangerous, because the union play an important social role*'[134]. In Sergio Arroyo[135]'s opinion, '*we do not go with the unions, as the PSOE does, we go with the workers, we are goal-oriented. However, the unions should have more power. […] we do not want to substitute the unions*'[136].

A union official from CC.OO. has compared the different stances assumed by Podemos and by *Ahora Madrid* towards the unions, and he has stressed that

> *'with Podemos we have a good relationship, also because there are many our affiliates in Podemos, it is getting better. They recognise our role, they know what a union is and does, it is not necessary that we explain it to them. […] They do not put into question our role from the Parliament, like Ciudadanos. […] In turn, those from Ganemos are different, it is not the same thing to protest and to govern. […] they think that we should not go out of the firms, that we should not express our opinion on political issues'* (ES16).

A UGT's union official has offered a different portrait. He has admitted that '*the relationship is bad, mainly because of their attacks. […] Sometimes they proved to be*

[134] This is quite at odds with the opinion of a regional councillor in Asturias: '*we are legitimated to attack the unions, because all the people know our militancy and our commitment to the social cause'.*
[135] Member of Podemos' Secretariat for Participation.
[136] In fact, it has been created a new union, *Somos* ('We are'), which self-defines close to Podemos. Nevertheless, all the interviewees – either members of Podemos or unions' leaders - that referred to this (marginal) experiment have recognised that it does not stems from an 'official' partisan decision but represents an autonomous attempt by some Podemos' activists. Nor it seems that the party is investing any resource in this project.

populist in the worst sense of the term. […] They have tended to overpromise here in Barcelona, we advised them that most of their electoral manifesto was impossible to implement' (ES5). In turn, Gassiot (CGT) has argued that

> '*I cannot see real differences between Colau's administration and the previous ones […] we supported the strike of subway's workers, who voted in a referendum against the agreement signed by the UGT, CC.OO., and the municipality. The mayor answered that she would have discussed with the big unions, because they are the most representative. They talked a lot about going beyond the formal representation and fostering a real, popular participation. Where is the difference?'*

However, the own Gassiot has recognised that '*Podemos' elite is moving prudently. They are assuming an in-between position, between the CGT, to which they feel ideologically closer, and CC.OO., which is a major, institutional actor*'. It seems that Podemos is gradually 'institutionalizing' itself, while, at the same time, many Podemos' interviewees argue that the relationship between the party and the big unions is less tense because their irruption forced the latters to assume a more 'combative' stance ('*por fin se pusieron las pilas*'). Several interviewees (ES3, ES20) has noticed that even the UGT is changing, after the victory of the leftist candidate in the 2016 elections for the General Secretariat.

The union leaders that I interviewed admit some 'mistakes', such as the corruption scandals and the excessive dependency on public subsidies, while arguing that *'during the Nineties, that was how things were working, every association had the possibility to accede to public resources* (ES5). However, they reject the accusation of having been excessively accommodating towards 'market-friendly' reforms ('*we have organised general strikes against all the governments*', ES5), and they always ground

their legitimacy on their electoral results ('*if the workers vote for us, there must be a reason*': ES5; ES16).

In terms of universalist social policies, *Podemos* and the big unions do not appear particularly distant. In fact, they converge in the proposal of a minimum *household* income, although Podemos pushes for higher benefits than those proposed by UGT and CC.OO. (ES5; ES16). According to Estrada, '*our position is less ideologised than that of the Italian unions*. […] *we are aware of the existing emergency motivating such a measure*'. There are some different opinions, though. Gutiérrez argues that '*the acceptation of the idea of a basic income was a very difficult process within CC.OO. […] it was difficult to abandon the* neoliberal idea that if you receive something you must deserve it' (emphasis is mine; in the sense that contributory mechanisms are considered a 'neoliberal idea', also ES10). According to Julen Bollain, a Basque Podemos' politician and one of the most prominent scholars on citizen's income issues, *'the big unions are uncomfortable with the citizen's income, because the workers would have too much power. […] when a talk is organized about this issue, the big unions refuse to intervene […] the only union supporting the citizen's income is ESK, which is the only that does not have hundreds of union officials working for them*'.

Nevertheless, Bollain also admits that also Podemos has kept an ambiguous stance over the proposals of a basic income: '*although this was the most voted proposals by Podemos' militants* [during the collective draft of the party manifesto for the 2015 elections], *the party advanced it in a reduced form*'. According to Bollain and Amírola, the citizen's income is a social policy that is very easy to 'ridicule'. Thus, it is necessary a previous 'popular pedagogy' before launching it: '*in the manifesto for the 2014 European elections, we included it, because it was costless. Now, we are in the institutions, we need to be responsible and attentive to not overpromise*[137]*'* (ES20); '*in*

[137] In the program for the 2015 general elections, Podemos advanced a proposal for a 'guaranteed income' based on the net income of the *household*, according to the number of its components (from a minimum of 600 euros to a maximum of 1200).

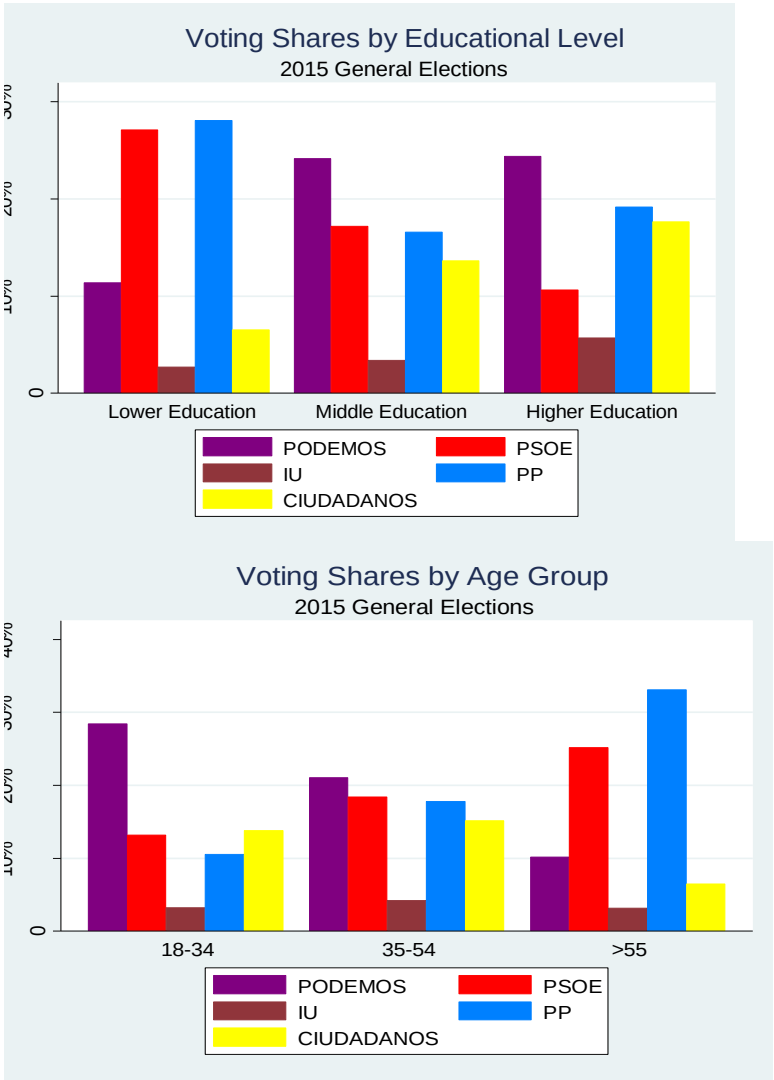
the Basque Country, the people are already getting used with this idea, thus the debate is more advanced' (ES12).

6.6 The Electorate of Podemos. Still the 'Party of the *Indignados*'.

In this section, I will briefly analyse the sociological composition of the Podemos' electorate, using data from the CIS Post-Electoral Surveys referring to the 2015 general elections. The main goal is to understand the general 'profile' of Podemos' voters, according to their sociological characteristics, their ideology and their positioning in the *insider-outsider divide*. In contrast to Fernández-Albertos' analysis (2015), which preconized a gradual transformation of Podemos from the *Indignados'* party to the 'party of the excluded people', the data presented here suggest a very different interpretation.

I opt for relying exclusively on post-electoral surveys, instead of opinion polls (as Fernández-Albertos [2015] and Criado and Pinta [2015] did), under the assumption that the act of voting is much more 'decisive' than the mere 'voting intention' reported when no elections are scheduled. As my analysis using data from the CIS 2015 post-electoral survey shows, the depiction of Podemos as a 'party of the excluded people' seems quite exaggerated. Actually, Podemos' characteristics of a *movement-party* emerged even among its voters, predominantly young, urban and well educated (see Figure 6.1). Podemos is *not* a 'party of the excluded', nor a 'party of the outsiders'. Its electorate is not particularly well-to-do, though: instead, it does look for *social protection* and call for a *stronger welfare state*, although the 'losers' of the economic crisis are not particularly overrepresented.

Figure 6.1 Voting Shares by Educational Level and Age group (CIS 2015).



Source: Author's Elaboration using data from 2015 CIS Post-Electoral Survey.

At the beginning, when Podemos reached 8% in the European Elections, the skewness of its electorate towards the young and well educated voters could be easily explained by its ability in the use of social media and by its poor presence in the mass media. Since its 'boom' in the opinion polls, a certain 'normalization' of its electorate

could be expected, but this clearly did not occur. Podemos continued to attract voters from the same age and educational categories.

Errejón's *transversalidad* notwithstanding, Podemos overwhelmingly 'stole' voters from the PSOE and IU: 22% of those voters reporting to have voted the PSOE in 2011, and 59% amongst former IU's voters, switched to Podemos in the 20-D. Podemos also convinced 17% of those who opted for abstention in the previous general election, a percentage much higher than all the other parties (almost 60% chose to abstain again). By contrast, a meagre 3% of PP's voters in 2011 switched to Podemos four years later. The average positioning in the left-right axis (measured in a 1-10 scale) by Podemos' voters was 3.09, only slightly to the right of IU's voters (2.88) and quite to the left of the electorates of the PSOE (3.71), Ciudadanos (5.50) and the PP (6.98). Therefore, the *transversalidad*'s strategy was clearly unsuccessful, if understood in *political* terms.

What about the *transversalidad* in *social terms*? The discourse of Podemos often refers to the 99%, to the *mayoría social* that must be politically articulated in order to 'build a people' (*construir pueblo*). Has Podemos been successful in aggregating an interclassist electorate around its political project? In order to answer this question, I present a brief analysis by grouping the respondents by their occupational category, taking advantage of the coding available in the CIS questionnaire following the ISCO-08 categories. I then broadly adopted the categorization proposed by Hausermann and Schwander (2010), with some minor modifications in order to avoid losing too much information. At the end, I rely on the following occupational categories:

- Unemployed Workers;
- Retired Workers;
- Students;
- Directors (managers and owner of middle and big enterprises: ISCO 08 111-159);

- Liberal Professions (doctors, professors, creative jobs…: ISCO 08 211-239; 282-294);
- Technicians (engineers, lawyers and judges, highly skilled white collars…: ISCO 08 241-281; 311-399);
- Mixed Service Functionaries (MSF) (skilled white collars: ISCO 08 411-498);
- Lower Service Functionaries (LSF) (white collars occupied in routine jobs, workers in tourist and restoration sectors, salaried shop vendors, salaried workers in primary sectors, workers in caregiving industries…: ISCO 08 501-699);
- Petty Bourgeoisie (self-employed workers in LSF jobs);
- Blue Collars (ISCO 08 701-899);
- Unskilled Workers (workers in elementary occupations; ISCO 08 901-949) and Salaried Farmers (ISCO 08 950-990) (grouped in a single category due to the small number of observations);
- Homemakers.

The dependent variable consists in the voting choice of the respondents. I focused on the five most voted parties (Podemos, PP, PSOE, IU and Ciudadanos) and on those electors who opted for abstention. As the main competitor of Podemos, in spatial terms, is the PSOE, I opted for running multinomial logit models, by using as reference category the probability of voting for the Socialists. I also added other variables in the model, in order to obtain some additional information about Podemos' electorate. Some of them are the usual sociological categories (age, gender, and education through a 1-3 scale [1='Primary Education'; 3='University Education'). I also selected the size of the

municipality of residence (1='less than 10,000 inhabitants'; 3='more than 100,000 inhabitants'), and ideology (measured as the self-placement in a 1-10 scale, 1='Left').

To identify the outsiders of the Spanish welfare regime, apart from the 'unemployed worker category', I inserted a dummy variable for fixed-term contract workers. In addition, to capture the need for social protection, I included a dummy variable identifying the workers fearing of losing their jobs ('very likely' or 'quite likely' answers) in the next 12 months. Finally, I included a variable measuring the self-perception of personal economic condition (1-5 scale: 1='Very good', 5='Very bad').

I also included some variables referring to political participation and political interest. Three dummy variables identify: the eventual participation to demonstration or strikes; the respondents 'very' or 'quite' interested in politics; those respondents affiliated to unions. Finally, I coded the respondents that opted for abstention in the previous general elections and the respondents that reached for the first time the eligibility age to vote in 2015[138].

I opted for running two models, who differ for the job categories included: in the first model, I relied on the categorization described above; in the second model, I simply inserted a few dummy variables such as 'unemployed workers', 'homemakers', 'fixed-term workers' and 'self-employed workers', in order to make evident the impact of 'outsiderness' on the voting choices.

[138] All the voters for other parties (mainly regionalist nationalist parties) have been dropped from the sample. I proceeded to run additional models including voters for other parties and the results are substantially identical. Nevertheless, the predictive capacity of these models was slightly lower, as an independent variable measuring regionalist-nationalist feelings had to be added. Voting for Podemos seems positively correlated with regional-nationalist feelings. However, this relationship varies according to the regions: in the 'historical' *comunidades autónomas*, regional nationalism is *negatively* correlated with voting for Podemos, while the opposite is true in those *comunidades autónomas* in which no strong nationalist parties are present. For the sake of semplicity, I opted for the solution described here.

Table 6.2 Determinants of Voting Choice, 2015 General Elections (Multinomial Logit Models. Reference Category: Voting for the PSOE).

	MODEL 1										MODEL 2									
	PP		IU		PODEMOS		CIUDADANOS		ABSTENTION		PP		IU		PODEMOS		CIUDADANOS		ABSTENTIO	
Unemployed	-0.24		-0.12		-0.02		**-0.64**	**	-0.35		-0.19		-0.08		**-0.35**	**	**-0.48**	**	-0.32	
Retired	0.03		-0.05		0.37		**-0.55**	*	0.11		**0.55**	**	-0.17		-0.02		0.21		0.20	
Student	-0.29		-0.06		0.37		-0.51		-0.09		-0.07		0.50		-0.41		-0.39		**-0.62**	*
Director	-0.39		-1.67		0.12		-0.23		-0.40											
Liberal Profession	-0.02		0.17		0.41		-0.11		**0.88**	**										
Technician	0.46		-0.12		**0.53**	**	0.23		0.42											
MSF	**1.71**	**	0.79		**1.34**	**	**1.62**	***	**1.26**	*										
Petty Bourgeoisie	0.41		0.19		0.20		0.03		-0.39											
Blue Collar	-0.42		-0.57		0.31		-0.22		-0.37											
Salaried Farmer-Unskilled Worker	-0.31		0.13		0.36		-0.33		-0.62											
Homemaker	-0.06		0.47		-0.08		**-0.63**	*	-0.59											
Fixed-Term	-0.13		-0.14		**-0.56**	***	**-0.42**	*	-0.07		-0.03		-0.12		**-0.51**	***	-0.33		-0.01	
Fearing Unemployment	0.06		0.17		**0.45**	**	0.16		0.49		-0.07		0.08		0.30		0.11		0.36	
Female	**-0.43**	***	**-0.38**	**	**-0.41**	***	**-0.28**	**	-0.22		**-0.39**	***	**-0.33**	*	**-0.42**	***	**-0.25**	*	-0.17	
Educational Level	**0.49**	***	**0.61**	***	**0.34**	***	**0.65**	***	0.16		**0.56**	***	**0.63**	***	**0.38**	***	**0.71**	***	**0.35**	***
Age	0.00		-0.01		**-0.04**	***	**-0.03**	***	-0.01		0.01		**-0.01**	*	**-0.03**	***	**-0.03**	***	-0.01	
Size of Municipality	0.08		**0.27**	**	**0.36**	***	**0.36**	***	0.16		0.09		**0.28**	**	**0.37**	***	**0.35**	***	**0.18**	*
Ideology	**1.87**	***	**-0.41**	***	**-0.31**	***	**1.18**	***	**0.73**	***	**1.86**	***	**-0.41**	***	**-0.32**	***	**1.17**	***	**0.72**	***
Interested in Politics	0.17		0.10		**0.67**	***	**0.32**	**	**-1.15**	***	0.16		0.08		**0.69**	***	**0.31**	**	**-1.14**	***
Participation to Strikes/Demonstrations	**-0.32**	**	**0.45**	**	**0.38**	***	0.05		-0.13		**-0.31**	**	**0.44**	**	**0.38**	***	0.07		-0.11	
Union Member	**-0.63**	**	0.14		0.08		**-0.52**	**	-0.37		**-0.62**	**	0.12		0.05		**-0.51**	**	-0.39	
Abstained in 2011	0.33		**0.71**	*	**1.04**	***	**1.14**	***	**2.87**	***	0.33		**0.66**	*	**1.03**	***	**1.12**	***	**2.83**	***
First Time to Vote	-0.02		-1.04		-0.16		-0.07		**1.21**	**	-0.13		-1.06		-0.10		-0.48		**1.20**	***
Own Economic	0.03		0.08		**0.20**	***	0.00		**0.39**	***	0.00		0.09		**0.19**	***	-0.02		**0.37**	***
Constant	**-10.64**	***	**-1.78**	**	0.08		**-6.38**	***	**-4.94**	***	**-10.84**	***	**-1.90**	***	0.24	0.55	**-6.28**	***	**-5.45**	***
N	4161										4193									
R2	0.34										0.34									

Source: Author's elaboration, using data from CIS 2015 Post-Electoral Survey. Models robust to heteroskedasticity. LSF is the reference category for the independent variables concerning the job sector. p<0.10=*; p<0.05=**; p<0.01=***.

The results offer several and clear insights over the composition of Podemos' electorate, in comparison to the other parties and specifically to the other main Spanish parties. As both the models confirm, Podemos has an urban, more educated than average and younger electorate, and, in comparison to the PSOE – but not to the other parties – it is predominantly male. Similarly to IU, Podemos' voters place themselves quite to the left and are more likely than the average to take part of extra-institutional forms of political participation. The electorate of Podemos share some interesting characteristics with the electorate of Ciudadanos, the other *anticasta* party emerged during the last years: particularly, both parties attract voters highly interested in politics (the effect is higher for Podemos, though), young and well educated people, while they are poorly successful in attracting the *outsiders*. In this sense, their electorates highly differ from those voters having opted for the abstention, although both Podemos and Ciudadanos were – by far – the most successful parties in mobilising the voters who abstained in the previous elections.

Podemos did not obtain particularly good results amongst the outsiders, but this did not imply that economic discontent has no effects. In fact, those workers fearing of falling outside the 'labour market fortress' proved to be more likely than average to vote for Iglesias' party. Similarly, the self-perception of being economically in trouble is positively related with voting for Podemos. Thus, it clearly emerged the ability by Podemos of representing those social sectors looking for social protection, although the voters of Podemos (and Ciudadanos) belong, on average, to upper strata than the other parties, if measured according to the total family income decile (see Table 6.3).

Table 6.3 Average Total Family Income Decile by Party Voted, 2015 General Elections.

	Average Total Family Income (Decile)	Std.Err.	N	Statistically Significant if Compared with Podemos
PP	4,48	2,64	801	***
PSOE	4,16	2,65	834	***
IU	5,04	2,77	142	
PODEMOS	5,27	2,88	753	n.a.
CIUDADANOS	5,85	2,77	428	***
Abstention	3,94	2,55	464	***

Source: Author's Elaboration using data from CIS 2015 Post-Electoral Survey. p<0.001=***

In sum, Podemos has been electorally more successful with the impoverished middle-classes fearing a further loss of their social status than with the outsiders and the poorest strata. Said otherwise, Podemos remained the 'party of the *Indignados*' (as the effects of extra-institutional political participation, age and political interest show), while it did not fully achieve to represent the 'excluded people'. The indignation against a closed political system, the austerity measures affecting the spending capacity of the State and the poor economic management of the crisis[139] was successfully channelized by Podemos, while its proposals of higher taxation (of the richest strata) in order to strengthen the Spanish welfare regime and to reinvigorate the economy through public investments were not fully receipted by the popular strata, who are particularly disillusioned, detached from politics and reclaiming an immediate cut in the level of taxation.

[139] In other models not shown here, an important predictor of the vote for Podemos was – unsurprinsingly – the negative evaluation of the state of the Spanish economy.

The latter hypothesis is confirmed by the model reported in Table 6.4, an OLS regression in which the dependent variable consists in a 1-10 scale: 1 indicates the preference for higher taxation in return of higher public spending, and 10 represents the preference for lower taxation even if it implies a very low level in public spending. The electorates of Podemos and IU clearly prefer higher levels of taxation in exchange of better public services, similarly to students and workers in the liberal professions. With the exception of the MSF category, all the regressors positively correlated with the vote for Podemos are also positively correlated with preferences for a 'stronger State'. Tellingly, this does not hold for the respondents perceiving themselves in economic troubles, as they tend to prefer an immediate return (lower taxation)[140].

[140] These results are fully in line with Fernández-Albertos and Manzano's (2015) analysis over welfare regime preferences in dualised societies.

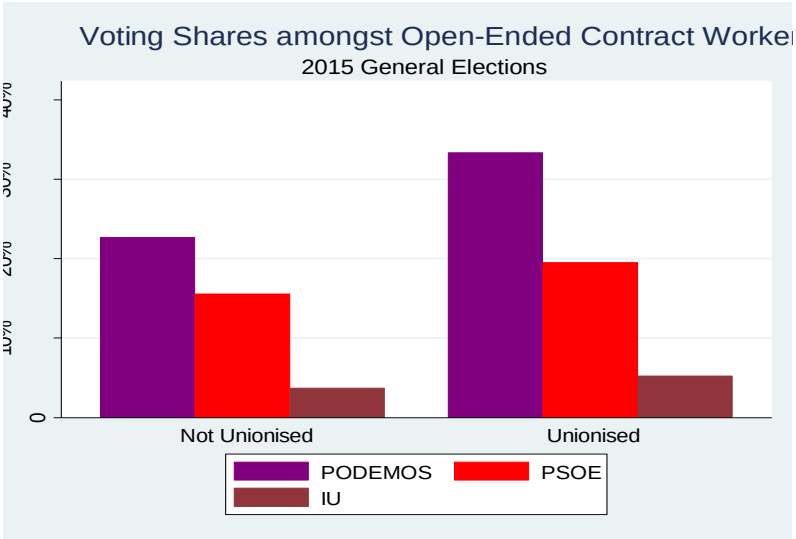
Table 6.4 Determinants of Preferences over Levels of Taxation and Public Spending, 2015 General Elections.

Podemos	-0.40	***
PP	-0.01	
PSOE	0.05	
IU	-0.47	**
Ciudadanos	-0.09	
Unemployed	-0.16	
Retired	0.04	
Student	-0.56	**
Director	-0.31	
Liberal Profession	-0.38	**
Technician	-0.18	
MSF	0.55	*
Petty Bourgeoisie	0.07	
Blue Collar	-0.25	
Salaried Farmer-Unskilled Worker	-0.13	
Homemaker	-0.08	
Fixed-Term	0.22	
Fearing Unemployment	-0.21	
Female	0.02	
Educational Level	-0.39	***
Age	0	
Size of Municipality	-0.14	***
Ideology	0.17	***
Interested in Politics	-0.52	***
Participation to Strikes/Demonstrations	-0.2	**
Union Member	-0.3	**
Abstained in 2011	-0.05	
First Time to Vote	0.14	
Own Economic Condition	0.13	**
Constant	4.3	***
N	4490	
R2	0.13	

Source: Author's elaboration using data from CIS 2015 Post-Electoral Survey. *=p<0.10; **=p<0.05; ***=p<0.01.

Unsurprisingly, union affiliation is positively correlated with preferences for higher public spending. Although union affiliation does not seem a strong predictor of the vote for Podemos (see Table 6.2), Iglesias' party was particularly successful amongst union members (see Figure 6.2), the harsh critiques against the *casta sindical* notwithstanding (or, perhaps, *thanks to* those critiques).

Figure 6.2 Voting Shares amongst Union Members, 2015 General Elections.



Source: Author's Elaboration using data from 2015 Post-Electoral Survey. Voters for other parties or non-voters not shown.

6.7 Conclusions

The rise of Podemos is inextricably linked to the cycle of protests observed in Spain during the 2011-2013 period. Podemos' project took advantage of the political climate generated by the 15-M, and it attracted a vast, committed militancy that composed most of the partisan cadres throughout all the geographical levels. Podemos is, amongst the parties analysed in this research, the one that most closely resembles to a 'movement party', a '*coalition of political activists who emanates from social movements and tries to apply the organizational and strategic practices of social movements in the arena of party competition*' (Kitschelt, 2006: 280). Nevertheless, the second part of Kitschelt's definition does not fully apply to Podemos' organization. The party has been since the beginning tightly controlled by the founders – and, currently, by Iglesias' inner circle – and clearly privileged the electoral results over 'horizontalism' and bottom-up practices.

Surely, Podemos is not a *movement-based populism*, as the Bolivian MAS-IPSP is. On the one side, the social movements generated the *milieu* from which Podemos emerged, but they did not play any role in the formal party organization. On the other side, differently from the Bolivian movements, the Spanish ones did not enjoy any 'territorial control', and they focused on *universalist* demands (or *sectorial* ones framed as *universalist*). The Spanish cycle of protests was mainly led by *social activists*, and not by *social actors* aiming at taking the power, as the Bolivian peasant movement were.

However, Podemos' leadership – and Iglesias, in particular - often stresses the necessity of playing both 'in the institutions and in the streets' in order to achieve social change, with no pretensions by the party to 'lead' the movements: Podemos intends to 'accompany' them, thus respecting their 'autonomy'. This strategy slightly contrasts with the opinion of Errejón, who starts from the centrality of the *party*. He recognises the necessity of building a 'national-popular' movement around it, but he also stresses

that, in a scenario of social demobilization, the role of Podemos consists in delivering *concrete and immediate* (albeit partial) returns to the 'People', from the government (in the *municipios del cambio*) and from the party (by promoting cultural and social initiatives). It could be said that Iglesias' strategy is to fuel political polarization through social protests (which are evidently in decline), while Errejón's strategy is closer (even in the symbolisms and in the lexicon adopted) to a 'Kirchnerist' path to achieve political hegemony.

Both strategies still 'competing' within Podemos claim to be different from the 'traditional Left'. The *errejonists* plainly discard any reference to Leftist identity. Iglesias' faction recognises the centrality of *democratic* demands as a prerequisite for a *social* change, while refusing any 'vanguardism' and calling for the primacy of 'the movements'. Nevertheless, nor the voters, nor the militants truly abandoned the Left-Right axis as *the central dimension* of the political sphere, and they (rightly) identified Podemos as a Left-Wing party, well before its alliance with IU. In a country where the main left-of-centre party had kept a quite strong working-class identity, and where the main Radical Left party was completely unable to establish solid linkages to the organised civil society, Podemos' project found a fertile terrain. Podemos gave voice to two broad sectors: the well-educated, progressive middle classes, disillusioned with Zapatero and with the unions' tactical moves and fearing a further loss of status, stability and social protection; and the younger cohorts, who are paying the costs of the economic crisis and feel justifiably worry about their future. Both social groups were also, not coincidentally, the 'core-constituencies' of the *Indignados*.

This does not imply that Podemos' project was completely unsuccessful in attracting the *outsiders*, though. Podemos remains the most voted party among unemployed workers (highly overrepresented amongst the youth), while dissatisfaction for her own economic condition represents a strong predictor of the vote for Podemos. The *outsiders* are clearly not the Podemos' 'core-constituencies', though. At the same time, Podemos' call for strengthening popular organization to achieve social change, and

its closeness to labour-related struggles, had favoured an evident *rapprochement* with the unions, which in turn began assuming a more radical stance – also fuelled by the presence of the PP in the government.

More recently, the mediating stance assumed by the party over the illegal pro-independency referendum in Catalonia (if compared with the 'hawkish' position of the other three main national parties), and the 'leftist turn' chose by the PSOE under Pedro Sánchez's leadership, seems to have even strengthened the perception of Podemos as a party of 'enlightened', albeit insecure, middle-classes. In sum, Podemos currently remains a left-wing populist party; the road to be a *popular* party is still quite long and steep, however. In the absence of a revival of social effervescence, and in view of a 'normalization' of the Spanish economic conjuncture, the risk of transforming itself into a 'restyled IU' seems high.

Chapter 7. The Italian Five Star MoVement: A Leader-Initiated Populism against all the Existing Structures of Socio-Political Intermediation

7.1 Introduction

During the so-called First Republic (1946-1992), the Italian party system remained extremely stable and characterised by a polarised pluralism around two mass-parties (the PCI [Italian Communist Party] and the DC [Christian Democracy]) rooted in the society through a broad membership and impressive networks of 'collateral' social associations linked to each party, including unions with the highest union density in Southern Europe. The legacies of these 'political subcultures' remained quite evident until 2008, when the Italian electoral map still overlapped with the division between 'Red' and 'White' zones, the latter substituted by 'Blue' and 'Green' areas (referring to the colours of Berlusconi's party [*Forza Italia*, later *Popolo delle Libertà*] and of the right-wing ethno-populist Northern League]. Italy has also hosted, during the 2000s, the strongest Global Justice Movement (GJM) in Western Europe, with solid links to the partisan Radical Left, while the major leftist union (the CGIL) practically led the opposition camp under Berlusconi's governments. Since the beginning of the Great Recession, new social mobilizations arouse, again with the decisive participation of union and leftist parties.

From these premises, the emergence of the Five Stars MoVement (*MoVimento Cinque Stelle*, M5S] a 'post-ideological' party, explicitly self-declaring 'beyond the Left and the Right' in a country traditionally characterised by a strong left-right polarization, can seem a paradox. Instead, I argue that its rapid rise (began at the local level, continued in 2013 [when the MoVement obtained 25% of the valid votes in

parliamentary elections] and consolidated during the following years) has been *a consequence* of the strategic choices by the Italian centre-left and radical Left. The Italian Left, fragmented at the social and partisan levels, was unable to represent a credible alternative to neoliberalism and austerity and to appeal to those social constituencies particularly affected by the long Italian economic decline and by austerity measures implemented since 2011.

M5S' populist project, which had its origins in the blog of a popular comedian (Beppe Grillo) focusing on environmental and anti-corruption campaigns, was initially attractive to discontent leftist voters and militants. It soon proved to be 'in tune' with different *local* movements, and able to appeal to social categories falling outside the 'core-constituencies' of the *insider's hub* composed by leftist parties and unions. It was thus able to be electorally successful through *ideological-programmatic and organizational* resources that proved to be well fit to the fragmented landscape of the Italian mobilizations, and of the own Italian society. Its political articulation was centred around the identification of a common (if broad) enemy: the *entire Italian political class,* together with those *structures of social and political intermediation* alleged to back factional (partisan) interests, including the peak union confederations.

This chapter begins with a description of an analysis of the relevant 'critical antecedents' (Section 7.2) forming the 'starting condition' of the existing Italian left-of-centre parties when the Great Recession erupted. Section 7.2 focuses: on the organisational connections and the overlapping core-constituencies (Section 7.2.1) between the Italian Left (and particularly the PDS-DS-PD) and the unions (particularly the CGIL), in the context of the Italian dualised society; on the advanced 'cartelization' and ideological moderation of the political Left; and on the inconstant environmental linkages between the Italian social movements and the Radical Left during the 2000s (Section 7.2.2). Section 7.3 briefly summarises the effects of the Great Recession and of the austerity reforms on the already stagnant Italian economy, by pointing on the central

role played in the crisis' management by the 'technocratic' government enjoying the support of a *Grossekoalition*.

Section 7.4 analyses the characteristics of the Italian cycle of anti-austerity mobilizations. The sub-section 7.4.1 stresses the 'fragmentation' characterising the mobilizations, due to ideological and partisan divisions that made difficult both the consolidation of alliances and the attractiveness of the protests beyond the organised working-class and highly politicised social activists. Sub-section 7.4.2, instead, focuses on very different mobilizations (such as the *No TAV* movement and the Italian Forum of the Water Movements), not directly linked to austerity but able to establish strong territorial roots and to develop inclusive frames calling for the restoration of *popular sovereignty*, with an anti-representational inspiration. These movements – capable of attracting widespread militancy and support at the local and national levels – showed striking similarities with the M5S' 'core-values'.

Section 7.5 represents the bulk of Chapter 7 and focuses on the (post)ideology of the MoVement and on its organisational evolution. It highlights its *centralising and decentralising* organizational feature. Power centralization guarantees a strong control from the 'centre' (firstly, Grillo and Casaleggio, and, secondarily, the 'party in the public office') over the strategic decisions of the party, including its main programmatic appeals. Its decentralising features facilitated the development of organisational linkages with different local movements and the party's ability to 'transmit' local demands to the centre. The section also focuses on the very difficult relationships between the party and the unions, practically excluded from the *internal process of interest aggregation* developed by the M5S.

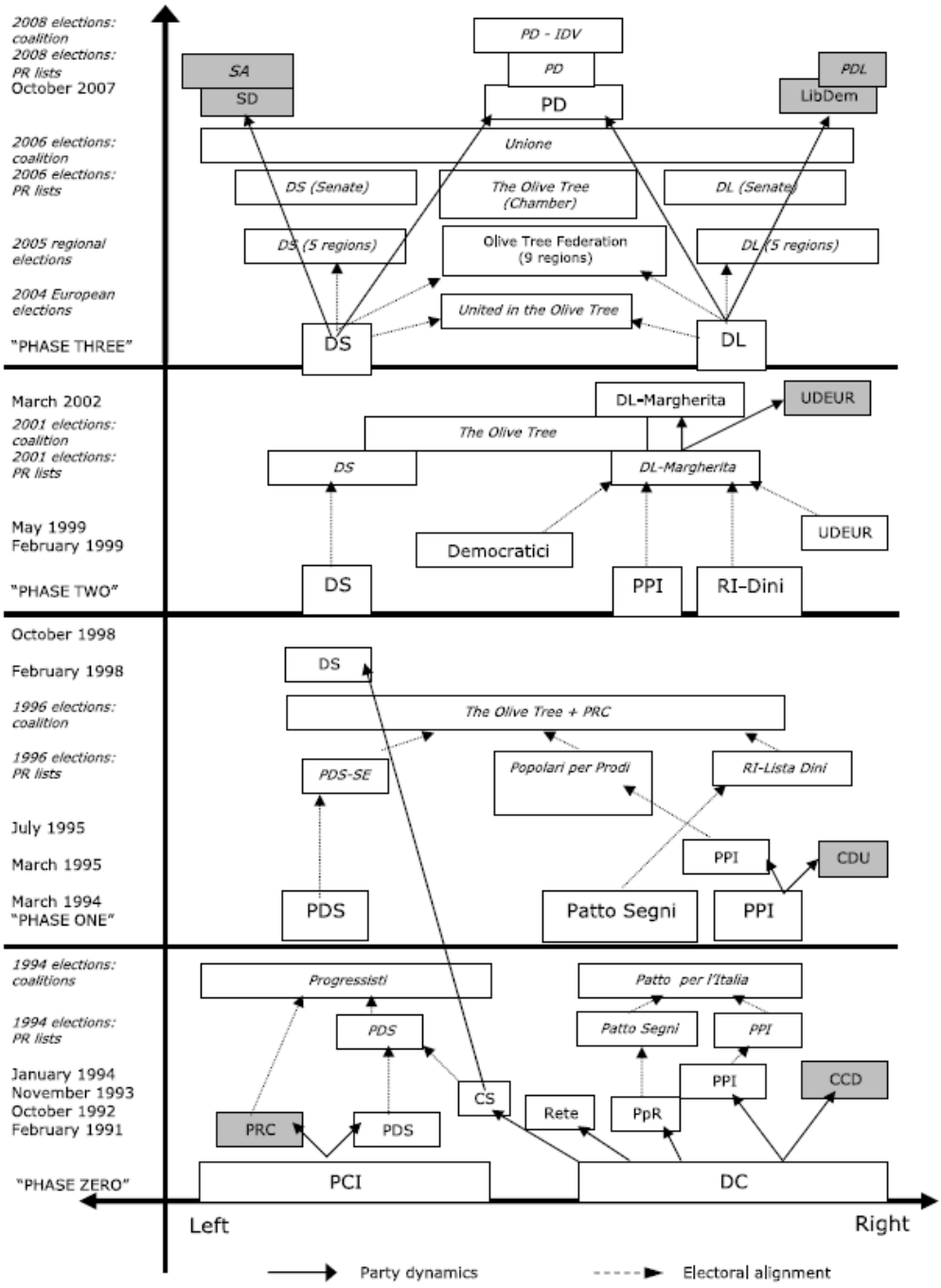
Section 7.6 offers a quantitative analysis of the sociological characteristics of the electorate of the M5S in 2013, by relying on post-electoral survey data. The analysis highlights the ability of the M5S of successfully appealing to the vast *outsider* sectors, either traditionally inclined to the right (such as the self-employed workers) or 'falling outside' the structures of political intermediation provided by the leftist *insider's hub*

(such as unemployed and fixed-term workers). Some final commentaries conclude the chapter.

7.2 Critical Antecedents: From the PCI to the PD and the Radical Left diaspora. The Long Decline of the Italian Left

In contrast to Spain, the recent history of the Italian Left is a history plenty of scissions, merges and fragmentation (see Figure 7.1). In contrast to the 'First Republic', characterised by an 'imperfect bipartitism' (Galli, 1966), the transformations triggered by the *Clean Hands* corruption scandals in the early Nineties, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the change of the electoral law led to a party system characterised by the existence of two main coalitions, highly internally fragmented. A closer analysis of the political events referring to the partisan Left and of the evolution of the party-unions relationship during the last years preceding the Great Recession can explain the very different Italian antecedent conditions, at the social and political level, in comparison with the other Southern European countries treated in this dissertation.

Figure 7.1 Evolution of the Italian Partisan Left (1991-2008).



Source: Bordandini et al. (2008: 305).

7.2.1 Party-Union Entrenchment: a CGIL-PD's insider bloc?

The PCI suffered from a major split in 1992, during its complete transformation into a social-democratic party (PDS, 'Democratic Party of the Left', then DS, 'Leftist Democrats'), when its radical faction formed the PRC ('Communist Refoundation Party'). The latter party initially supported, and then decisively contributed to depose, the first Prodi's government (1996-1998). The PRC opted for running alone in the 2001 general elections (won by Berlusconi's centre-right coalition), when it barely surpassed the 5% of the votes. In 2006, the PRC finally chose to join the vast and heterogeneous centre-left coalition, again led by Prodi, who narrowly won the 2006 general elections and was forced to resign just two years due to irreconcilable internal tensions.

The PDS, in turn, pursued a long centripetal path finally ending with its merger (2007) with Christian-Democrat progressive factions. The PD ('Democratic Party') refused to ally with the Radical Left in view of the early 2008 general elections, again won by Berlusconi's coalition (Bordandini et al., 2008). The 'autonomous' strategy pursued by the PD, and the poor electoral results of the Radical Left coalition (*Sinistra Arcobaleno*, 'Rainbow Left'), provoked the exclusion of the latter from the Parliament for the first time in the Italian Republic's history.

The long and complex trajectory of the main Italian left-of-centre party (PCI-PDS-DS and then PD) implies its *organizational and ideological* transformation from a mass-based party linked to a plethora of ancillary organizations to a cartel party fully committed to budgetary moderation. The Italian centre-left embraced Europeanism and fiscal responsibility also to differentiate itself from 'irresponsible' Berlusconi's right-wing coalition. In labour market policy issues, the Italian centre-left generally adopted a pro-market framework, although it supported – when in government – forms of social

dialogue guaranteeing the survival of a 'competitive corporatism' (Rhodes, 2000; Baccaro, 2014).

Describing the Italian centre-left as 'neoliberal' could be considered polemic. However, the policy agenda of the Italian centre-left since the mid-Nineties included: the respect of fiscal discipline (under the requirements imposed by the Maastricht Treaty) and the privatization of state-owned enterprises; new pension reforms pointing at stopping PAYG systems and at introducing contributory mechanisms and integrative private pensions; and the promotion of 'labour market mobility' through the introduction of atypical forms of contracts and possibly through the relaxation of employment protection (Baccaro, 2014).

However, as several authors have shown (e.g., Molina and Rhodes, 2008; Baccaro, 2014; Pérez, 2014), the evolution of the welfare state and of the labour market has been different in Italy in comparison with Spain. In Italy, policy change was more difficult because of the existence of numerous veto powers. In particular, the heterogeneity of the centre-left governmental coalitions gave to the unions – whose union density, albeit declining (see Figure 7.2), remained quite high for Southern European standards – a bigger capacity to oppose drastic changes (Colombo and Regini, 2011). The unions took advantage of the crisis of the 'First Republic' to obtain, in 1993, a new legal framework regulating workplace elections and assuring the dominancy of CGIL, CISL and UIL, the three main peak unions[141] (Colombo and Regini, 2011).

[141] The historic CGIL, close to the PCI, since the early 1950s lost its monopolist position, as it suffered two scissions from its Catholic and Social-Democrat factions, which formed respectively the CISL and the UIL.

Figure 7.2 Union Density in Italy (Total Union Density and Membership Share of the Three Main Peak Unions).

Source: Author's Elaboration based on ICTWSS 2016 data.

The policy-making process during the First Republic was notoriously characterised by opaque political exchanges between the dominant party (the Christian-Democrats), its political allies, the political opposition and a plethora of particularistic

sectorial groups (Fargion, 2004). This was conducive, in welfare regime issues, to an extreme legal fragmentation and to *ad hoc*, clientelistic provisions, while universalist social spending (social and unemployment assistance and active labour market policies) remained highly underdeveloped (Ferrera, 1996; 2000). The pension system was both expensive and unequal, while tax evasion – particularly amongst self-employed workers – remained widespread (Lynch, 2006).

Fiscal and external pressures pushed for reforming the inefficient and particularistic Italian welfare regime. Nevertheless, the unions were able to limit, or delay, the ambitious reforming agenda of the Italian governments during the Nineties. A pension system reform excluded the oldest workers from the new (and penalising) contributory mechanism. In a similar vein, the *Pacchetto Treu*, following the guidelines of the *Patto per il Lavoro* (1996) signed by Prodi's government and the unions, left untouched the comparatively high permanent employment protection for the *insiders*, while extending the possibility of hiring through temporary and 'atypical' contracts. These measures provoked an increasing dualization of the Italian labour market (in the short term) and of the pension[142] system (in the medium-long run). The unions began being targeted as 'conservative' forces even by leading figures of the PDS (mainly, the Prime Minister [1998-2000] Massimo D'Alema), but they still found important allies in the PRC, which successfully vetoed some proposals affecting the *insiders* on pension issues (Ferrera, 2000; Fargion, 2004).

However, such critiques were (partially) excessive. The unions actively contributed to design important reforms for making the Italian welfare regime more egalitarian and less skewed towards 'over-protected' sectors, under the basic principle of budgetary equilibrium. The *Commissione Onofri*, which represented a 'high and excellent phase of dialogue' between the government and the union (IT1), offered several guidelines, which were partially adopted by the Italian centre-left governments

[142] It must be noticed that, already in 1998, half of the union members consisted in pensioners (Fargion, 2004: 409).

(1996-2001)[143]. However, a major reform of the unemployed insurance schemes (*ammortizzatori sociali*, 'social shock absorbers') was abandoned, mainly due to union resistances.

During Berlusconi's governments (2001-06; 2008-11), the unions broke their 'unity of action': the CISL and the UIL opted for signing the 'Pact for Italy', a tripartite agreement that opened the way for the *Legge Biagi*, which further extended the possibility of hiring through 'atypical' contracts (and introduced additional forms of temporary contracts). The CGIL fiercely opposed this and other measures, such as the abolition of the article 18 of the Workers' Statute (which prevented the dismissals of permanent workers without a 'legitimate cause' in enterprises with more than 15 workers).

According to 2008 ITANES data, the average trust on union was particularly low, very similar to the trust on political parties (2.06 and 1.94 respectively, expressed in a 1-4 scale). Both unemployed and precarious workers expressed an above-than-average confidence towards unions (2.17 and 2.29 respectively, albeit only the latter significantly higher than the average). Actually, the Italian unions, apart from keeping a critical (or overtly antagonistic, in CGIL's case) position against the introduction of 'atypical' contracts, did try to respond to the changing legal framework on labour issues. All the three main confederations, since the late nineties, created internal branches entirely dedicated to the representation of the *outsiders*, the most important of them being the NIDIL ('New Identities of Work'), affiliated to the CGIL.

According to Benassi and Vlandas (2015), the Italian unions proved to be quite efficacious in advancing the interests of temporary workers, thanks to their confederal structures (favouring an encompassing bargaining across sectorial levels and thus a tendency towards wage compression) and to their commitment to strategic unity, at least

[143] Among such guidelines, we can find: the decentralization of the public employment recruitment agencies; the strengthening of the family allowances system; the introduction of new indicators for means-tested benefits in order to avoid tax frauds; and the introduction of a pilot project for introducing a minimum income scheme (immediately interrupted by Berlusconi's governments in 2001-2006 period: see Sacchi and Bastagli, 2004).

in issues referring to temporary workers (see also Choi and Mattoni, 2010). For instance, the unions were able to negotiate important bipartite agreements assuring some forms of indemnities and training programs for temporary workers (Durazzi, 2017).

Nevertheless, most of these agreements only apply to a specific category of outsiders: the workers hired through private recruitment agencies (*lavoratori interinali*). Most of temporary workers lack union affiliation (union density is around 10%, well below the total union density rate), and the union branches for temporary workers are generally underfunded by the peak confederations (Choi and Mattoni, 2010). The ineffectiveness of the main unions in defending the outsiders' interests in a satisfactory way has triggered the diffusion of radical grassroots unions (such as the CO.BAS and the USB) and even of sporadic – albeit emblematic – experiments of self-organization at the workplaces (Choi and Mattoni, 2010)[144]. In addition, unions' 'workerist' ideology (Lynch, 2006) made them unease with the introduction of 'social shock absorbers' unrelated with the previous job condition (IT1; IT2; Durazzi, 2017). The very priority assigned to the defence of the 'article 18' is quite telling of the 'pro-insider' bias of the main union confederations.

The oppositional period under the second and the third Berlusconi's governments (2001-06) contributed to a further rapprochement between the CGIL and the Italian centre-left (Mattina and Carrieri, 2017). However, when in government, the relationships between the Italian centre-left (and particularly the DS) and the unions (and particularly the CGIL) were ambivalent. On the one side, the CGIL acquired a stronger voice in the policy-making process. On the other side, the DS often showed little openness towards the unions' demands, as the respect of fiscal discipline was at the top of the governmental priorities (IT1). Yet, the DS continued to valorize 'social

[144] Some national campaigns and demonstrations (such as the *EuroMayDay* organised in Milan every year on the International Labour Day) were organised, although their promoters were social movement activists and *not* 'organised outsiders' (Mattoni and Vogiatzoglou, 2014). Tellingly, their attendance decreased precisely when the Great Recession erupted, thus showing their poor rootedness among the constituencies they pretended to represent.

dialogue' as a source of legitimacy for the policy-making process (Mattina and Carrieri, 2017), and to defend permanent employment protection.

Such a close – albeit ambivalent – party-union relationship did not remain without consequences *in terms of the left-of-centre core-constituencies*, which became substantially different from the traditional sectors that voted for the Communists in the past. Different studies (e.g., Corbetta and Ceccarini, 2011; Garzia and Viotti, 2011) stressed the declining predictive capacity of socio-structural factors (such as gender and social class) for the voting choices in Italy since the Eighties, quite in line with well-known phenomena of 'dealignment' in advanced democracies (e.g., Dalton et al., 2004). Other scholars (Ballarino et al., 2009; Maraffi et al., 2011), in turn, have convincingly argued that the relationship between social class and voting preferences had become to *change*, more than to disappear, since the mid-Nineties: while the working-class was progressively moving to the right[145], and the petty bourgeoisie kept its traditional conservatism, the middle classes were rapidly assuming a left-of-centre profile.

For sure, wide macro-phenomena, such as the stronger centrality assumed by post-materialist values, contribute to explain the 'move to the left' of the new middle classes in the tertiary sector (e.g., Oesch, 2012; Hausermann and Kriesi, 2015). However, a closer inspection of the patterns of vote change reveal the relevance assumed by the insider-outsider divide, making of the middle-class with an open-ended contract and of the pensioners the core constituencies of the DS. In 2008, the centre-left coalition confirmed to be the preferred option by the 'guaranteed (or retired) workers', particularly in the public sector, where the PD-led coalition obtained 15 percentage points more than its rival (Pessato, 2008; Feltrin, 2010). At the same time, the right-wing coalition assumed a more 'popular' profile, and retained its traditional strongholds: i.e., the petty bourgeoisie and the self-employed workers (see Table 7.1), who amount to the

[145] The difficult relationship between the Italian centre-left and the working-class was already evident in 2001, when 54% of blue collar workers voted for the right-wing coalition (Maraffi et al., 2011). In 2008, many blue-collar workers switched again their vote to the right-wing coalition and were decisive for Berlusconi's victory (Tuorto, 2008).

24% of the Italian workers and generally opposed the fiscal policies implemented by the Italian left-of-centre governments (Ranci, 2012).

Table 7.1 Voting Share of the Main Italian Parties by Job Category. 2008 General Elections.

Party	Unemployed	Retired	Student	Homemaker	CapAccumulator	Teacher	WhiteCollar	BlueCollar	SelfEmployed	Precarious	Total
Abstention	22	16	19	15	17	8	13	19	13	23	16
RainbowLeft	4	3	9	2	3	6	5	8	4	16	5
PD	27	38	31	25	28	42	37	34	25	30	33
IDV	5	3	7	2	6	9	3	2	0	5	3
PDL	36	28	19	42	36	26	24	24	33	18	29
LN	0	7	5	8	8	2	9	9	14	7	7
UDC	3	3	4	4	1	3	3	1	5	0	3
Other	2	1	5	3	1	5	5	3	6	2	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: ITANES 2008 Post-Electoral Survey (Author's Elaboration). Centre-Left coalition in orange, Centre-Right coalition in grey. RainbowLeft=Radical Left coalition. PDL=Freedom's People (Berlusconi's party). LN=Northern League. UDC=Centrist Union (Centre-Right Christian-Democrats).

In line with several empirical findings (Marx, 2014; Jansen, 2016), temporary and/or 'atypical' workers were still in 2008 the residual 'stronghold' of the New Left, while unemployed workers overwhelmingly casted their votes for the Right. However, unemployed and precarious workers (the *outsiders*), together with the students, were also the categories more likely to abstain, thus suggesting a growing political disillusionment amongst the most penalised sectors.

Thus, when the Great Recession began, the core-constituencies of the PD were concentrated in the insider sectors, particularly within the public employees, where the union density was considerably higher (50% in comparison with 29% among workers in the private sectors, according to ICTWSS data). Its neoliberal turn notwithstanding, the PD clearly remained the party of reference of the unionised workers, particularly of CGIL's affiliates (Feltrin, 2010): in 2008, 78% of the workers affiliated to the CGIL voted for left-of-centre parties (63% for the PD).

Despite the decline in union membership, thus, the unions remained an important structure of socialization amongst the leftist voters. Organizational linkages between the PD and the CGIL (and, partially, the CISL) were (and still are) clearly visible in the presence of union officials amongst PD's MPs; tellingly, the last two former CGIL's General Secretaries became important PD's figures. The overlapping sociological composition of the PD's electorate and of the union memberships facilitated the convergence of these social and political actors towards the defence of the insiders from further attacks against their labour rights, with poor capacity of attractiveness towards the *outsiders*.

7.2.2 The Linkages of the Italian Left: the Cartelization of the PDS-DS-PD and the Radical Left's 'Betrayal' of the Movements

In 1989, Italy had the highest party membership in Western Europe in absolute terms (4 million of party members); the PCI alone boasted 1,500,000 members enrolled in over 8,000 local sections (Ignazi, 2012: 60). The situation partially normalized during the Nineties, though. The Italian political parties entered into a process of cartelization, self-evident in: the rapid increase in public party funding; the dominancy of the party in the public office over the public in the central office and the party on the ground; and the quantitative reduction of the membership.

When the PCI transformed into the PDS, the party immediately loss more than half a million members. In 2007, PD's declared membership was roughly 800,000, well below the sum of DS and *Margherita*; in 2012, it fell below 500,000 (Seddone and Venturino, 2015). PRC's membership, in contrast, reached to its maximum in 1997 (135,000), decreased to 95,000 in 1999 (because of a scission) and remained quite stable

until 2008[146], when the electoral defeat led to an irreversible crisis. Meanwhile, 45,000 militants joined SEL ('Left, Ecology and Freedom'), a new leftist, post-materialist party led by the popular Apulia's governor Nichi Vendola (Bordandini, 2013)[147].

PDS-DS's and PRC's candidate selection remained reserved to party elites (Mulè, 2005; 2011). The PD did opt for the institutionalization of primaries opened to 'sympathizers' (i.e., non-members) for the selection of the candidates to regional governorships and mayorships, and for the election of the general secretary. This reduced party factionalism (Bordandini, 2008) but also led to plebiscitary outcomes, limiting the power of middle-level cadres (Ignazi, 2012).

The PD privileged *electoral* linkages over *organisational* ones (with the partial exception of party-union linkages). *Programmatic* linkages resulted scarcely attractive for social sectors different from the salaried middle class and the pensioners (see section 7.2.1). Although the effectiveness of *clientelistic* linkages is notoriously hard to quantify, Ignazi (2008) argued that most of the old clientelistic networks were soon exploited by Berlusconi's party, particularly in the Southern regions, through the alliance with small Christian-Democrat parties mostly composed by local notables; party patronage, once widespread, became reduced to discretionary nominations of apical positions in the state agencies (Di Mascio, 2011). In the 'Red Zone' (Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, Marche and Umbria), the traditional PCI's strongholds, the PD electorally exploited an enduring *party identification*, which probably represented, at least until 2008, the most effective electoral linkage of the PDS-DS-PD. Still in 2006 and 2008, a good predictor of the individual vote for the left-of-centre parties (particularly for the older cohorts) was the electoral strength of the PCI at the provincial level in 1946 (Maraffi et al., 2011; Diamanti, 2013).

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[146] http://rifondazione.it/home/images/2015/tesseramento/150504grafico_iscritti.pdf

[147] SEL for a few years became the main referent of the political space at the left of the PD. However, its decision to ally with the PD, in view of the 2013 general elections, strongly limited its potential as a credible anti-neoliberal pole.

The loss of social rootedness and ideological moderation severely undermined PDS-DS' legitimacy amongst its own electorate. This became evident during the 2000s. The struggle over 'Article 18' and anti-corruption themes soon assumed a symbolic relevance and was backed by all the leftist and left-of-centre political forces in Italy. However, during the Berlusconi's second and third governments (2001-06), the main oppositional initiatives did not come from the parliamentary Left (Campus, 2009; Ceri, 2009). Instead, it was possible to identify, at least, three main social actors animating the 'resistance' against Berlusconi: the GJM, the CGIL and the *Girotondi*.

The CGIL assumed a prominent position in the opposition against the abolition of the Article 18 and the *Legge Biagi*, in stark contrast to CISL and UIL. In March 2002, the CGIL convoked a major demonstration in Rome, when three million citizens defended the emblematic Article 18 from governmental attacks. *Girotondi* was the nickname of an informal alliance between movements denouncing Berlusconi's media concentration and corruption scandals. Considered by some scholars as a form of 'reactive' populism (Tarchi, 2003; Verbeek and Zaslove, 2016) because of its moral pretension of dividing the Italian society between an ethically good civil society and a corrupted government, the *Girotondi* were essentially a middle-class social movement, whose main public figure belonged to artistic and cultural elites (Ceri, 2009). The *Girotondi* also harshly criticised the institutional Left (and particularly the DS) for its timid opposition against the government.

Although its scope and goals were much broader, the Italian 'branch' of the Global Justice Movement (GJM) targeted Berlusconi's government as a paradigmatic enemy, due to the positioning assumed during Bush' *war on terror,* to the violent repression suffered by the GJM during the G8 held in Genoa (July 2001), and to its neoliberal and conservative political stances (Ceri, 2009). The diffusion of the GJM in Italy was probably the highest in Europe (Della Porta, 2009): up to 170 local social forums were registered in Italy (Ceri, 2009). 'Institutional' and grassroots trade unions, political parties, a plethora of civil society organizations and groups, often with Marxist

or Catholic inspirations, coalesced into the GJM. The CGIL (and, in particular, its metalworkers branch, the radical FIOM) and the PRC were the most important (in terms of institutional and organizational resources) participants and allies of the movement (Andretta and Reiter, 2009). Young people with high or very high educational levels and occupied in non-manual works in the public and NGO sectors were strongly overrepresented within the GJM (Andretta and Sommier, 2009). These sociological bases clearly inserted the GJM into the 'new social movements' mainly composed by progressive 'new middle classes' (Della Porta and Diani, 1999).

Andretta and Reiter (2009: 170) considered the PRC *'the European political party most closely connected with the GJM, especially through its youth organization* Giovani Comunisti *(GC)'*. According to Genoa Social Forum's speaker, Vittorio Agnoletto, the PRC participated without any pretension to 'control or lead' the movement (IT2), although in many local social forums the dominancy of the PRC's militants was quite evident (Ignazi, 2008; Ceri, 2009). Under the leadership of Fausto Bertinotti, the PRC effectively was the '*only Italian political subject with the capacity of having a relationship with the GJM*' (IT2). However, the PRC did not completely dilute its Communist ideology into a new, 'movementist' identity (due to the resistances of the 'old guard': IT2; Ignazi, 2008).

At the end, the PRC opted for re-joining the Italian left-of-centre coalition (the *Unione*) led by Prodi, in view of the 2006 general elections, in order to defeat 'Berlusconism', thus attracting many critiques from the movements (Andretta and Reiter, 2009), whose mobilising power was in decline. The PRC practically contradicted its anti-neoliberal rhetoric and consistently backed the economic policies proposed by the government (Conti and De Giorgi, 2011). The extremely litigious ruling coalition broke apart after just two years, torn by internal conflicts within the newly formed PD (Bordandini et al., 2008) and between the centrist and the radical parties of the coalition.

A posteriori, PRC's decision of joining the *Unione* proved to be a disastrous strategy, which prevented the Italian Radical Left from representing a credible political

alternative in the aftermath of the Great Recession. PRC's 'institutional' turn made also evident that the strength of the GJM, at least partially, depended on the organizational and numerical resources of 'traditional' actors such as the PRC itself and the CGIL (Andretta and Piazza, 2010). The importance of 'institutional allies' for the Italian movements became even more evident during the Great Recession (see Section 7.4).

It seems reasonable to consider the Great Recession as a sort of 'lost opportunity' for the Italian Radical Left, given its comparatively high strength reached during the 2001-2006 period. In the 2006 general elections, the PRC obtained 2.3 million of votes, plus 1.6 million obtained by the Greens and the PdCI (a small, 'orthodox' Communist party). PRC's electorate was overrepresented among the insider middle-class (and particularly the 'socio-cultural specialists'), but also among the precariat, whose size was rapidly rising (Ballarino et al., 2009; see also Table 7.1). Even more importantly, the strong organizational linkages between the Radical Left and the movements helped to attract the youth: in 2006, the three radical left parties attracted the 19% of the under-20 voters and the 13% of the voters in the 20-30 age interval (Corbetta and Ceccarini, 2011: 94). In sum, the Italian Radical Left could have been a credible and well-rooted anti-neoliberal pole, if it *had not been discredited by the governmental experience* and by its substantial 'betrayal' of the movements. It enjoyed strong organizational linkages to the movements and to the leftist unions, a relevant electoral base and a solid and committed militancy. The acceptance of the call to 'anti-Berlusconism' proved to be a fatal strategic mistake for the Italian Left. As I will detail in section 7.4, 'anti-Berlusconism' contributed again to the fragmentation of the Italian Left during the peak of the neoliberal crisis.

7.3 The Critical Juncture in Italy. From Berlusconi to the 'Salvific Technocrats'

Italy was already facing, at least since the early 2000s, a long phase of lower growth in comparison with the rest of Western Europe. The burden represented by its high public debt in the Euro system prevented the governments from implementing counter-cyclical policies as Zapatero initially did in Spain when the crisis erupted. Nor this was the ideological orientation of Berlusconi's government, which immediately approved several reforms (Pérez, 2014: 33-34) aiming at further reducing public spending in the areas of education, university research and pensions[148].

All of these measures, adopted under the pressure of the EU institutions, proved to be insufficient and even counterproductive for reducing the deficit/GDP and the debt/GDP ratios, due to the cumulative GDP's contraction of 6,9% from 2007 to 2012 (Pérez, 2014: 16). Berlusconi's government was also weakened by scandals involving the PM and its major ally (the right-wing populist Northern League), while a letter sent by the ECB in August 2011 spelled out the social model reforms (including labour market reforms reducing permanent employment protection) that were required to continue the bond buying of Italian debt (Pérez, 2014: 54). In the middle of social and political protests, Berlusconi resigned: Mario Monti was appointed as the new PM, leading a 'technocratic' government supported by the PD, the PDL (Berlusconi's party) and other minor centrist parties.

Monti's government enjoyed an initial vast consensus amongst the public opinion, thus facilitating its legislative activity in compliance to the *diktats* from EU institutions. The new executive soon imposed VAT increases, spending cuts and major

[148] A pension reform moved the retirement age from 61 to 65, postponed the retirement benefits by 12 months after reaching the pensionable age and introduced automatic adjustments to life expectancy (Andretta, 2017: 207). The Gelmini Law cut funds for public universities and abolished the tenure for researchers (Zamponi, 2012).

reforms of labour market, pension and unemployed insurance systems. The *'Save Italy Decree'* further rise the pensionable age and cut pension benefits (Andretta, 2017: 207). The *Fornero Law* reduced permanent employment protection by introducing some restrictions to the workers' rights to sue companies for job reinstatement, while also limiting the possibility of hiring workers on a temporary basis (Pérez, 2014: 38). The government finally declared that '*no actor had any veto power over the reform*', thus bypassing the opposition from the CGIL, which was at least able to avoid deeper changes in the Workers' Statute thanks to the pressure exerted on PD's congressional bench (Pérez, 2014; Picot and Tassinari, 2014).

Fornero's reforms explicitly aimed to reduce the gap between the protection enjoyed by the insiders and the outsiders, and to limit the resort to discretionary interventions allowed by pre-existing legal provisions (Lynch, 2006; Sacchi, 2014). Nevertheless, the consequences of the new legal framework in a context of economic recession were negative: '*Evidence suggests […] that the reform did not succeed in reducing the prevalence of precarious forms of work on the Italian labour market. Some argued that easier dismissals have actually resulted in people losing their jobs, without making access to the job market any easier for others*' (Nastasi and Palmisano, 2015: 11). Unemployment and youth unemployment rate nearly doubled during the 2008-2013 period (from 6.8 to 12.3 percent and from 21 to an astonishing 40 percent respectively), while the youth temporary employment rate moved from 43 to 52 percent (OECD data). In addition, the policy-making process became even more sensitive to the 'suggestions' from supranational institutions, in detriment of parliamentary prerogatives and of 'social dialogue'. '*Ce lo chiede l'Europa*' ('Europe asks us to act by this way') became the common refrain – soon ridiculed by antagonist forces, including the Five Star Movement - to justify austerity measures.

7.4 The Fragmented Italian Protest Cycle

7.4.1 Too Much Dependent on (Litigious) Institutional Actors: the Italian Leftist Anti-Austerity Movements

All the different accounts of the Italian anti-austerity protest cycle that I consulted (Zamponi, 2012; Mosca, 2013; Della Porta and Andretta, 2013; Della Porta et al., 2015; Andretta, 2017) agreed on its 'scattered' aspect (Zamponi and Bosi, 2016). Such fragmentation became even more serious since the end of Berlusconi's government, which acted as a 'political aggregator' of the protests. The appointment of Mario Monti provoked an evident change in the 'political opportunity structure', because his technocratic government enjoyed a much broader consensus amongst the public opinion and the mass media than Berlusconi's executive, as well as the support of both the PD and the unions, with the (partial) exception of the CGIL.

In Spain and Greece, the presence of a left-of-centre executive did not hinder the rise and expansion of strong anti-austerity protests. In Italy, like in Greece, there were at least two radical Left parties potentially available to play a nodal role similarly to the Greek Syriza (see Chapter 8): the FDS (a 'federal party' composed by the PRC and other minor leftist groups) and SEL. However, no party was able to become the 'broker' and the 'institutional representative' of the protesters (like Syriza), and no electoral project stemmed from the *milieu* of the movements (like Podemos). This happened because, in Italy, many anti-neoliberal movements were torn by inter-party divisions, while alternative, encompassing movements failed to emerge and/or experienced a process of radicalization that prevented them from attracting broader constituencies.

This was the case of the *Onda Anomala* ('Anomalous Wave'), an important university student movement reacting against the Gelmini Law. The *Onda* did assume an

inclusive and 'non-political' identity and elaborated frames (such as *noi la crisi non la paghiamo*, 'we won't pay the crisis') that tried to link education issues to the broader theme of the economic crisis (Caruso, 2010). The *Onda* originated from an initiative led by the partisan Left (particularly the PRC and 'Critic Left', a small anticapitalist party) and was actively backed and sustained by both grassroots unions and – mainly – the CGIL, which contributed to include public education workers in the struggle. Several other organised groups (mainly from the social centres' *milieu*) joined the movement. On the one side, this allowed for the expansion of the movement and for building alliances with actors involved in other struggles (Zamponi, 2012), such as the FIOM and other local movements (like the *No TAV* – see below). On the other side, the perennial tensions between different organizations, representing different categories (for instance, the precarious university researchers, the students and the public education workers) affected the unity of the movement (Caruso et al., 2010).

Ideological tensions soon erupted, as the *Onda* – despite the attempts of building an inclusive identity – was composed by *well-established* organizations, enjoying strong partisan links (even with the PD, such as the students' union UDU) and unwilling to downplay *their own identities and goals*. This soon led to a certain radicalization of some groups and to sectarianism, which in turn could have discouraged its expansion (IT13; IT17).

The evolution of the *Onda* (which, already in 2009, appeared in decline) anticipated many of the limitations displayed by anti-austerity mobilizations during the 2010-2012 period. Anti-austerity mobilizations continued to rely on the mobilising resources of partisan (such as the FDS and SEL) and institutional (such as the FIOM and the CGIL) actors and radical groups, in perennial and reciprocal competition. The fall of Berlusconi's government deepened their fragmentation, while pushing some actors (particularly the CGIL, but also SEL: see Lello and Pazzaglia, 2013) to limit their contentious activity and to look for a dialogue with the PD.

Such fragmented scenario became evident during the preparation of the transnational day of protests scheduled for 15th October 2011. In the weeks preceding the event, several divisions between leftist actors and groups supporting and organising the protests erupted; there were tensions between 'radical' and 'institutional' actors, and between the organizations coming from the GJM and those coming from the *Onda* (Della Porta and Zamponi, 2013). As Zamponi (2012) argued, the identities of each actor involved were too much crystallised to be 'downplayed' for the sake of a new, inclusive collective identity such as the Spanish *Indignados*. Most groups did not bet on the construction of a 'new movement', as they expected to exert their 'hegemony' over the others. Each group tended to consider 'its core-issue' as the most relevant (Andretta, 2017). On 15th October 2011, the demonstration ended with the (predictable) use of violence by the most radical groups, thus definitively delegitimising the adoption of the *Indignado* identity for the construction of a unitary anti-austerity movement.

The unions, and particularly the CGIL and the FIOM, actively sustained the protests during the 2010-2012 period. According to Andretta's (2017) Protest Event Analysis, the unions convoked or joined 45 percent of the 1140 protest events considered. Most of these protests included 'anti-austerity claims', and the Italian protests were overwhelmingly framed in terms of an attack to *democracy* brought by unaccountable supranational institutions. However, despite such *universalist* demands and frames (quite similar to Spanish and Greek ones), the Italian protest cycle failed to unify due to internal rivalries. The involvement of both the CGIL and the FIOM in the protests *decreased* (while the participation by grassroots unions *increased*) since Berlusconi's fall, arguably for political reasons, although most of the austerity reforms were implemented by Monti's government.

The importance, for mobilising purposes, of the organizational resources brought by the FIOM and the CGIL, is also evident in the social bases of the protests, mostly joined by *insider workers* and (secondarily) students, while the presence of 'unaffiliated citizens', unemployed and precarious workers was very reduced (Della

Porta et al., 2015: 68; Andretta, 2017: 211). Thus, the mobilizations partially failed to remove the social and psychological obstacles preventing the outsiders from extra-institutional participation, and remained largely confined to organised workers and politicised sectors (see also Quaranta, 2014).

7.4.2 The Defence of the 'Common Goods': the Affinities between Territorial Movements and the M5S

Apart from the cycle of protests explicitly targeting austerity measures, other kinds of protests and initiatives, often predating the Great Recession, focused on *local, territorial* demands. In some cases, the movements reacted against the construction of some major infrastructures (the so-called 'Lulu' – 'locally unwanted land use' – conflicts: see Piazza, 2011), such as the *No TAV* in Val di Susa, Piedmont, against a high-speed railway connecting Turin to Lyon[149]. Many other local committees flourished to prevent the installation of landfills and/or incinerators. Another major mobilization was led by the *Forum Italiano dei Movimenti per l'Acqua* (Italian Forum of the Water Movements), struggling against the privatization of the water services (Carrozza and Fantini, 2016).

The increasing number of local committees in Italy was already noticed since the mid-nineties, and this rise was explicitly linked to the growing inability of the political parties to control the input side of the democratic process (Toth, 2003). Such committees generally focused on concrete issues (hospital closings, public infrastructures, security-related issues, environmental concerns) and targeted public institutions at national, regional and local levels. Several studies (Toth, 2003; Caruso, 2010) pointed at the

[149] Other instances of 'Lulu' movements are: the *No Dal Molin* in Vicenza, Veneto, against the enlargement of a US military base; the *No MUOS*, in Caltanissetta, Sicily, against the installation of satellite infrastructures in the local US military base; the *No Triv* movement, against the installation of drills near the Italian coasts; or the *No TAP*, against the project of a trans-Adriatic pipeline.

‘passive’ role played by the political parties within these movements: even when they did not form the target of the mobilizations, they were forced to assume a position in the specific issue when the committees were able to reach a considerable visibility. Said otherwise, the committees often were more likely to influence the strategies of the parties than to be influenced.

Most ‘local committees’ could be considered as simple interest groups filling the representational vacuum left by the old Italian mass parties. However, the frames adopted by some of them, and their success in terms of visibility and organizational strength, discourage their categorization as ‘local interest groups’ or ‘nimby committees’ (Della Porta, 2003). It is useful here to focus on two of those experiences, not only due to the resonance they achieved, but also for the emblematic role played by the Five Star Movement in such campaigns: the *No TAV* movement and the *Forum dei Movimenti per l’Acqua*.

Caruso (2010) offered an excellent analysis of the discourse and the practices of the *No TAV* movement. The movement was able to attract many local citizens who had never participated before in extra-institutional activities, and became a *locus* of socialization for the inhabitants of the valley, instead of a coalition between different movements and organizations. Its participative and deliberative practices explicitly served the purpose of unveiling the pitfalls of representative democracy, which was criticised for producing an opaque decision-making process damaging the local communities and prone to serve obscure and powerful interests (Caruso, 2010: 23; 45).

The conflict was not simply between a ‘local community’ and the ‘State’: instead, it was between a legitimate ‘sovereign subject’ against a system of powerful actors that illegitimately took the control of the public institutions. The movement advanced, according to Caruso, an ‘anti-economic’ and ‘anti-political’ discourse, which in many aspects anticipated central features of the M5S ‘post-ideology’. There was a critique against an economic system that limited the ‘sovereignty’ of the local communities (Caruso, 2010: 102): an economic system that was not *embedded* anymore

with the concrete necessities and existences of the ordinary citizens. The activists portrayed themselves as ‘true workers’ or ‘small producers’, in contrast to ‘politicians, public officials, and big entrepreneurs’ exploiting their efforts (Caruso, 2010: 135). The struggle over the TAV was thus intended as the consequence of a cleavage between the irreconcilable interests of two parts of the society, between the ‘Small’ and the ‘Big’, in which the public institutions had been occupied by the latter.

There was, at the same time, a strong critique of the ‘political class’ and, more generally, of the way ‘politics’ concretely worked. The *No TAV* movement perceived the *entire* political class as a ‘servant’ of economic lobbies. Politics was perceived as a sphere dominated by opportunist figures looking for some ‘privileges’; politicians were uniformly seen as devoted to the defence of ‘particularistic’ interests, in a way that overturned the accusations of privileging the ‘local interests’ of the citizens in detriment of the ‘general interest’ served by the infrastructural project. Political parties were thought as something inherently ‘divisive’, while the *Movement* was seen as the genuine expression of the unity of the community, beyond the divisions brought by ‘ideologies’. Although the *No TAV* movement was initiated and supported (but surely not ‘led’) by radical leftist parties, numerous activists reported to have been Northern League’s voters and even militants in the early nineties, when that party self-declared ‘neither leftist, neither rightist’ and simply devoted to representing the ‘community’ against ‘Rome’.

Distrust on ‘politics’ was complemented by the strong accent put by *No TAV*’s activists over the importance of *participation*, on equal basis. There was a general critique against ‘indifferent people’, who preferred to 'stay at home watching TV instead of dedicating their time to the Movement'. At the same time, the activists refused any idea of ‘leadership’. In May 2012 the movement opted for running in local elections to gain a direct control of the municipalities touched by the railway project. Angelo Patrizio won the mayorship in Avigliana (the biggest town in *Bassa Val di Susa*), leading a ‘No TAV’ list supported by the Radical Left and the M5S – a fact representing

a unique departure from M5S' strategy, which always refuses any kind of electoral alliance (Santoro, 2013; see below)[150].

Another movement that achieved a strong visibility in the public sphere was the Italian Water Movement. Its biggest victory was the abrogation of two national laws facilitating water privatizations through two national referenda (held in June 2011), which quite surprisingly reached the 50% voting threshold required. The referendum campaign was promoted by the *Forum dei Movimenti per l'Acqua* ('Forum', from here), and actively supported by the radical Left and by the M5S. The genesis of the Forum well inserts into the GJM, as it took inspiration from water movements from the Global South (like the Bolivian *Coordinadora*); however, the Forum took an organizational form quite distinct from the GJM. As an activist of the Italian water movement reported:

> '*The Forum is a space for sharing, discussing and coordinating a network of local territories. […] Everybody can speak in the name of the Forum if he/she is to represent a local territory. A specificity of our regional water committee in Puglia is that membership is based on geography and not on previous political belongings. We wanted to avoid previous experiences of mobilisation such as the Social Forum, where people participate in the name of their previous identities: communists, ecologists, Catholics, trade unions… Here, people represent their territory of origin'* (quoted in Carrozza and Fantini, 2016).

According to Carrozza and Fantini (2016: 99), the Italian water movement strongly referred to the rhetoric of 'commoning', '*the process involved in 'making common' cultural and natural resources'*. The polysemy of the concept of 'commons' allowed, according to the authors, for loading it with at least three different understandings, emphasising alternatively 'universality' ('water as a commons of

[150] In 2012, the *No TAV* movement clearly exceeded the local sphere, as it had tied contacts with other movements and organizations (including the CGIL) at the regional, national and even transnational levels (Mosca, 2013).

humankind'), 'locality' ('commons of the local territory') and 'participation' (citizens' *participation* in the management of water services: see Carrozza and Fantini, 2016: 104). Social movements and radical left groups have often stressed the first understanding; instead, the numerous local 'branches' (the *MeetUp*s: see the next section) of the M5S that actively joined the campaign stayed in between the second and the third conceptualizations. As I will detail in the next section, the M5S put since its origins a strong emphasis over both the 'primacy' of the local administrative level and the public water issue. The debut of electoral lists 'certified' by Beppe Grillo occurred at the local level, as the municipalities *'decide over our daily lives. They can either poison us through an incinerator or launch a recycling campaign. Building ports for speculative purposes or gardens for our children. Privatising water or keeping under their control. From the municipalities we must restart doing politics through our lists'*[151]. 'Water' represents one of the *five stars* of the M5S, together with 'Environment', 'Development', 'Connectivity' and 'Transport'.

Obviously, this is not to say that the M5S is the 'party of the territorial movements', or that the M5S is a 'movement-based' populist project. As I detail in the next section, the M5S developed in an autonomous way, centred on Beppe Grillo's blog and figure. Grillo and M5S' local activists supported several territorial movements, including the *No TAV* and the Forum, and surely Grillo contributed through his blog to strengthen their visibility. However, no formal organizational linkages were developed, apart from a certain overlapping membership between the M5S' local activists and several committees, usually involved in environmentalist struggles.

Nevertheless, stressing the affinities, in terms of political (and meta-political) discourses, between some important territorial movements and the M5S, helps to understand the *adaptive capacity* of the Grillo's political project in the public sphere, where such discourses had become increasingly diffused. In particular: a) the divide between the 'communities' and the 'political class'; b) the goal to restore the *sovereignty*

[151] http://www.beppegrillo.it/listeciviche/

of the people against economic interests defended by 'politicians'); c) the call for the *direct participation of 'ordinary citizens'* in 'sovereign assemblies', unmediated by some pre-existing social organizations; and d) the identification in new *participative and deliberative* practices a way to overcome the limits of representative democracy, represented important overlaps between the discourses of both the territorial movements analysed above and the M5S' project.

In 2007, Grillo edited a book resuming twelve campaigns launched by his blog: against TAV, incinerators, water privatisation, job precariousness, corruption, amnesty bills, the presence of Italian troops in Iraq, the opaque relationship between politics and finance…. A campaign was called 'Citizens' Primaries', calling blogs' readers and policy experts to advance suggestions to be included in the manifestos of Italian parties. In Grillo's words (2007b):

> '*Citizens' Primaries have been a first example of direct democracy. Over two billion people have participated, read, debated, and commented on the blog. What did Prodi do, apart from accepting to meet with me? Nothing. Nor he could have acted differently. Prodi, as the rest of the Parliament, is the expression of* delegative politics, *of a politics consisting in compromises, grey zones, mediation. The Web is* direct participation, *is the light that purifies, is the willingness and the conscience of the citizens, and is the true public life. The Web is too much for this political class, which will be destroyed by it*' (my emphasis).

Participation, popular sovereignty and fight to corruption were thus effective frames for making different fragmented and particularistic demands more 'universal', and thus more 'palatable' in the political sphere. They served to establish *programmatic (albeit highly diversified and 'targeted') linkages* with many local movements.

7.5 'Opening the Institutions Like a Can of Tuna'[152]: the Unmediated, Unstructured and Participative Populism of the Five Star Movement

A vast amount of both journalistic accounts and scientific literature over the M5S is already available. Some books (e.g., Biorcio and Natale, 2013; Corbetta and Gualmini, 2013; Tronconi, 2015; Corbetta, 2017) provide comprehensive analyses of the party, sometimes in comparative perspective (Della Porta et al., 2017). Other works offer different (albeit converging) interpretations of the reasons of M5S' success and of its future challenges (Biorcio, 2014; Natale, 2014; Bordignon and Ceccarini, 2015), or pay attention to specific features, such as the M5S' understanding of the concept of 'democracy' (Floridia and Vignati, 2013); its organizational evolution (Ceri and Veltri, 2017); its policy proposals (Conti and Memoli, 2015); its relationship with the movements (Mosca, 2014); its candidate selection process (Lanzone, 2013), and the sociological and ideological characteristics of its grassroots (Lanzone, 2012; Biorcio, 2016).

My interviews added fresh data about the relationship between the party in the public office (which, according to M5S' rules, is *the only level entitled to speak in behalf of the party*) and both the party on the ground (the activists at the local level) and the 'party in the central office'. The latter, in fact, is restricted to Beppe Grillo and Gianroberto (later, Davide) Casaleggio, and the different 'staffs', controlled by the web marketing firm *Casaleggio Associati* and formally devoted to communication consultancy. The interviews also contributed to a better understanding of under-researched aspects, such as: the core political (and meta-political) values internalised by the public figures of the M5S; the evolution of the party organization; the relationship with interest groups, social movements and trade unions; the political position in labour

[152] This quotation refers to a popular slogan launched by Beppe Grillo during the *Tsunami Tour*, the electoral campaign of the M5S in view of the 2013 general elections. The slogan nicely captures the 'regenerative', palingenetic *flatus* inspiring the political discourse of the Five Star Movement.

market issues. The interviews also contributed to my own understanding of M5S' linkage strategy, which, to my knowledge, had not been conceptualized yet.

7.5.1. From beppegrillo.it to the M5S, from the web to the institutions: a brief resume (2005-2013)

If populism is, according to Laclau's approach, a political logic consisting in unifying different, unsatisfied demands around an empty signifier, then the blog of Beppe Grillo represented, since its inception, a platform for expressing such demands. The title of his first post (16th January 2005) was 'The Wailing Wall': a sort of '*virtual* cahier de doléances' (Ceri and Veltri, 2017: 25), in which the visitors commented about several, even disparate public events, facts and problems. Grillo was (and still is) a well-known comedian. In his posts and his theatre performances, Grillo focused on environmental and corruption issues, in a highly provocative style. The blog, designed and managed by a web marketing private firm (the *Casaleggio Associati*, owned by Gianroberto Casaleggio), soon achieved national and international popularity[153].

In July 2005, Grillo began 'calling to the army' his followers. He invited them to organise at the local level through the private software *MeetUp*, to 'discuss and launch territorial initiatives', taking inspiration from the ideas and the proposals expressed through the blog. During the first six months since Grillo's post, 36 *MeetUp* (local branches) were already born, each of them created by an 'organiser' (a sort of referent and moderator). The software *MeetUp* was intended to be a 'facilitator' for organising face-to-face reunions and debates and for sharing documents and information over the

[153] In 2005, *beppegrillo.it* was awarded by the financial newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore* as the best Italian blog; in 2008, the *Observer* ranked it as the ninth most influential blog in the world, and the *Time* included it among the twenty-five most important blogs. In 2009, *Forbes* considered the blog as the seventh most important in the world (Corbetta and Gualmini, 2013; Ceri and Veltri, 2017).

‘core-issues’ of the blog. The number of the citizens registered in each *MeetUp* was varying: ‘permanent activists’ rarely were more than ten, though; many citizens opted for registering in different *MeetUps*, whose ‘life expectancy’ was quite short[154].

The *MeetUps* got involved in the organization of the two *V-Days*[155] convoked by Beppe Grillo on 8th September 2007 and on 25th April 2008[156]. The first V-Day was devoted to the collection of signatures for a Popular Initiative Law preventing condemned politicians from having a parliamentary seat, for fixing a maximum of two legislative mandates, and for reintroducing the voting preferences for individual candidates in the Italian electoral law (with the aim of fighting against the *partitocrazia*). The V-Day consisted in massive demonstrations in 179 Italian squares, in which the activists collected over 350,000 signatures, while Grillo held a crowded (more than 50,000 attendants) public speech in Bologna. The *V2-Day* called again for collecting signatures to convoke three referenda abrogating the *Ordine dei Giornalisti* (a sort of journalist corporative association), the public funding of the Italian press and the *Legge Gasparri* (which was alleged to favour Berlusconi’s own interests). The V2-Day well inserted into Grillo’s rhetoric over the ‘salvific’, libertarian role played by Internet against the dominancy of the ‘old media’ linked to ‘big corporations’ and to ‘mainstream parties’. Most of the Italian parties and commentators criticised Grillo’s ‘anti-political’ messages and initiatives, with some exception, such as Antonio Di Pietro, the leader of the anti-corruption party IDV.

The *MeetUps* soon began organising several minor local initiatives over environmental (*Munnezza Day* – ‘Garbage Day’) and ‘anti-caste’ (*Zero Privilegi*) issues. They joined or backed several environmental movements (*No TAV*, *Forum dei Movimenti per l’Acqua, Rifiuti Zero,* the ‘Happy De-Growth Movement, local movements against incinerators and landfills), as demonstrated by the biographies of several *MeetUppers* who later became M5S' MPs. In sum, while Beppe Grillo pushed

[154] Only sixty of the first 280 *MeetUps* are still active in 2017 (Ceri and Veltri, 2017).
[155] *V* stands for *Vaffanculo* (literally, *Fuck Off*).
[156] These dates are highly significant in Italy, as they correspond to the declaration of war against Germany (1943) and to the Italian Liberation from Nazi-Fascism (1945).

for anti-corruption and anti-caste themes, his incipient grassroots movement animated environmental campaigns, mostly at the municipal level. Still in 2015, a letter sent by two prominent M5S' public figures (Roberto Fico and Alessandro Di Battista) to the *MeetUps* invited them to focus on the local level and on the concrete needs and demands of their communities.

After the undeniable success of the *V-Day*, Grillo invited the *MeetUps* to form electoral lists at the municipal level: only those lists respecting a few requirements[157] enjoyed a 'certification' from Beppe Grillo (*Liste CiViche Certificate*, LCCs). Each LCC had to publish the CV of the candidates and its electoral program, which had to be autonomously drafted but still consonant with the 'spirit' of Grillo's campaigns and with the 2006 'Citizens' Primaries'. The lists were prevented from signing electoral alliances. The results were promising: two lists elected one municipal councillor in Rome and one in Treviso, and reached the best result in the small Tuscany town of Campi Bisenzio (6,7% with the list 'No Incinerator': Corbetta and Gualmini, 2013: 50).

2009 was a key year for Grillo's project. He first 'systematised' the galaxy of LCCs through the provision of a common programmatic base (the *Carta di Firenze*) and then founded his national political 'non-party': the M5S. In January, Grillo proposed to 'collectively' draft a manifesto serving as a basis for the LCCs. Different posts in the blog delineated the 'Five Stars' of the manifesto: 'Water', 'Development', 'Energy', 'Transport' and 'Connectivity'. Grillo opened a specific section in his blog for receiving the proposals from his followers, and then convoked the *MeetUps* in Florence (March 2009) to present the *Carta di Firenze*. The most voted proposals were ignored, though: the *Carta di Firenze* was a single-page manifesto drafted exclusively by Grillo and his staff, with twelve, highly vague points. Almost all the points refer to different environmental goals and to the strengthening of Internet urban connectivity. No programmatic points referred to labour issues, except for the twelfth point (literally:

[157] The candidates had to not be members of any political party or movement, to be free of any legal charge or ongoing investigations, to have not spent more than an electoral mandate and to be resident in the municipality in which the list would campaign.

‘Favouring local productions’ – thus unveiling a favourable attitude towards ‘small producers’), as the manifesto was designed for municipal elections. The *Carta di Firenze* seemed quite inspired by post-materialist, environmentalist values, with no reference to either participative democracy or ‘populist’ stances.

After the draft of the *Carta di Firenze*, Grillo concentrated on ‘political-electoral’ goals. At the European Elections, Grillo called for supporting two candidates of the IDV, Alfano (an anti-mafia activist) and De Magistris (who later became Naples’ mayor as independent): both of them resulted elected with impressive electoral support, while the IDV reached its best electoral result ever (8%). In municipal elections, the LCCs achieved promising results (3%-5%) in major cities in the ‘Red Zone’, while obtaining negligible results in the South. Most importantly, Beppe Grillo provocatively attempted to run in the primary elections for the secretariat of the PD. Quite expectedly, the national direction of the PD stopped his candidacy, although some minor figures of the party showed a timid support for the initiative. Grillo denounced the ‘inconsistency’ of the ‘democratic’ rhetoric of the PD, thus ‘demonstrating’ to his followers the necessity of building a new, autonomous project to reach the power.

In September 2009, the comedian-blogger launched the ‘Citizens’ Primaries 2.0’, through seven posts in his blog (about ‘Energy’, ‘State and Citizens’, ‘Information’, ‘Economy’, ‘Transports’, ‘Health’ and ‘Education’) in which the followers were invited to comment and suggest amendments and proposals for a national manifesto. The birth of the national party (initially called ‘Five Star National Liberation Movement’) was officially proclaimed on 4th October 2009 in Milan; the manifesto practically coincided with the proposals drafted by Grillo in his seven posts, without any relevant modification. Ceri and Veltri (2017: 78-79) rightly stressed that the party manifesto emphasized the ‘anti-caste’ features of Grillo’s discourses. During his inaugural speech, Grillo portrayed the newly born M5S as the ‘true State’, in contraposition to the ‘anti-State’: the politicians, the banks, the big interest groups – such as *Confindustria* – the big press. ‘*The true State is us. The anti-State promulgates bills for criminals, these bills*

are signed by other criminals sitting in the Parliament. […] We are a virus, which is propagating. They do not understand what the Web is. […]'. During the rally, Grillo presented to the activists Gianroberto Casaleggio, who had never appeared in public yet: as Grillo said, '*Casaleggio is not "behind me": he has always been on my side*', thus admitting the *political* role played by the web strategist.

A month later the official creation of the M5S, Grillo published the *Non-Statute* of the M5S. Its name stressed the radical difference with the statutes of the 'old parties'. Again, and despite the rhetoric of the 'direct democracy', the *Non-Statute* was not submitted to any vote in the blog (actually, no kind of affiliation [or 'on-line registration'] to the party was required at that time), nor it was discussed previously. The *Non-Statute* consisted of just seven articles, the most relevant being the articles 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Article 1 states that '*The Five Star MoVement is a "non-Association". It is a platform, a tool for consulting and discussing, which originates and has its epicentre in the website www.movimento5stelle.it. The "headquarter" of the MoVement coincides with the website www.movimento5stelle.it. […]'*.

Article 4 specifies: *'The M5S aims to continue with the experiences of the blog beppegrillo.it, of the "*MeetUps*", […] and of the LCCs. It will constitute, starting from the website www.movimento5stelle.it, the tool for discussing and individuating the candidates for promoting social, cultural and political campaigns promoted by Beppe Grillo through his blog, and the ideas and proposals shared in the website www.movimento5stelle.it in view of municipal, regional or general elections. The M5S will organize and structure itself through the Web, which has a central role in the phases of registration to the MoVement, debate, deliberation, decision and election'*. Thus, the M5S was born as a new movement, entirely based on the Web, and had neither formal nor organizational links with the *MeetUps*. Article 4 adds that '*The MoVement is not a political party, nor it will become a political party in the future. It intends to witness the possibility of building and efficient and efficacious opinion exchange and democratic debate* outside any kind of associational and partisan linkages, *and without*

any mediation by directive or representative structures, thus recognising to all the Web's users the governing role usually attributed to the few' (my emphasis). Thus, the M5S has the goal to 'go beyond' the existing intermediate corps, both partisan and societal, and assigns to the 'Web' (*'La Rete*') the task of expressing a sort of *volonté genérale*, arguably through deliberative practices (which were never implemented, though). The affiliation to the 'non-party' occurs through a simple registration to the website (Article 5), with no compulsory fee, although the website includes a section for crowd-funding (Article 6).

In Article 7, a few basic provisions for the candidate selection process are included. The website www.movimento5stelle.it '*will be the locus where the candidacies and their selection will occur, and the selected citizens will be authorised to use the name and the brand 'Five Star Movement' during their participation in the elections. The candidates […] must be free of charge and not under any investigation […]*'. Thus, the M5S, apart from its peculiar attention to democratic candidate selection, was born as a 'franchise party', although the owner of its name and brand (initially, Beppe Grillo, and since 2013, the 'M5S Association', composed by three founding members - Grillo, his nephew, and his accountant – and by an ordinary member – Gianroberto Casaleggio) was left unspecified.

In 2010, the M5S ran for the first time in regional elections. Grillo opted for competing in only five regions, where the M5S had stronger roots. Grillo directly appointed the candidate for governorship in Emilia-Romagna (Favia), Campania (Fico) and Veneto (Borrelli), while in Piedmont (Bono) and Lombardy (Crimi) the candidates were elected by the delegates of the *MeetUps*. All these candidates later became major figures within the M5S, except for Favia (see below). The results again were promising: two regional councillors were elected in Emilia-Romagna, and two in Piedmont. Davide Bono reached 30% of the votes in some municipalities in Val di Susa, thus confirming the supported enjoyed by the M5S amongst the *No TAV* militants and, more generally, the electoral potential of the M5S in areas shaped by local struggles.

In 2010 and 2011, the M5S consolidated its electoral position in Central and Northern Italy. Several factors have been considered to explain the early irregular presence of the MoVement across Italy, such as the 'higher social capital' in the Northern regions (and thus a supposedly higher propensity to vote a new, environmentalist movement) and the scandals affecting the Northern League (a potential competitor, because of its [ethno]-populist rhetoric: see Pinto and Vignati, 2012). In May 2011, the M5S reached more than 9% of the valid votes in three important municipalities in Emilia-Romagna (Bologna, Rimini and Ravenna). Since 2010, the M5S also definitively broke with the IDV, probably its closer political competitor (IT20; Ceri and Veltri, 2017).

In 2012, the M5S experienced its electoral boom. In May, the M5S won its first local elections, and elected four mayors, one of them in the provincial capital of Parma. The victory of Parma was favoured both by the corruption scandals affecting the city during the 2000s and by a popular campaign against a new incinerator. Thanks to Parma's bandwagon effect and to a successful electoral campaign personally led by Grillo (who attracted the media attention by opening the campaign with a 33 kilometres swim from Calabria to Sicily), the M5S became the most voted party in the Sicilian regional elections (15%) while its candidate for the governorship (Cancelleri) ranked third, preceded by the leaders of centre-left and centre-right coalitions. In Sicily, according to electoral analyses, the M5S was particularly attractive for left-of-centre voters, thanks to the internal divisions of the PD, while the rightist voters opted for abstaining, thus increasing the relative percentage of Grillo's party (Colloca and Vignati, 2012). The M5S thus became a truly national force and able to expand itself, even organizationally[158], in the South, just a few months before the 2013 general elections.

[158] Until May 2012, 60% of the *MeetUps* were constituted in Northern Italy and in the 'Red Zone'. Since Parma's victory, and particularly since the beginning of the electoral campaign in Sicily, the MoVement clearly expanded in the South and its presence became more balanced. In December 2012, 33% of the *MeetUps* were in Southern Italy, 32% in Northern Italy, 20% in the Red Zone, 15% in Central Italy (Mosca, 2014).

However, during 2012 the M5S was shaped by the first, serious internal tensions. The most important of them involved Giovanni Favia (the candidate for Emilia-Romagna's governorship in 2010) and Valentino Tavolazzi, a LCC's municipal councillor in Ferrara. Tavolazzi and Favia organised a regional meeting of M5S' public representatives and activists, to discuss the organizational evolution of the MoVement. The activists stressed the necessity of developing stronger forms of internal democracy and of establishing some forms of coordination between the *MeetUps*. Grillo accused the organizers of 'aiming at building a political party' and of having 'misunderstood what the MoVement is'. Grillo immediately blocked any attempt of building any kind of *formal* territorial partisan structure; he confirmed the *web-centred* (and, thus, individualistic and *atomised*) formal structure of the MoVement, and expelled Tavolazzi from the M5S. Favia, was expelled some months later, after an off-the-record commentary denouncing the 'complete dominancy' enjoyed by Casaleggio over the strategy and the organization of the M5S.

General elections were held in February 2013. Italy at that time had a PR electoral system with closed lists. The M5S, coherently with its campaign for reintroducing the voting preferences for individual candidates, chose to fill its list through on-line internal elections (the so-called *Parlamentarie*, held from 3rd to 6th December 2012). The electorate of the *Parlamentarie*[159] was restricted to those citizens registered in the national web platform of the M5S before 30th September 2012 and having completed their registrations by sending a copy of their ID before 2nd November 2012[160].

The candidates had to fulfil a few requisites. Apart from the requisites included in the 'Non-Statute', the candidates had to have already been candidates (and not elected) within a LCCs or in a M5S' list for a previous municipal or regional election.

[159] Data based on Lanzone (2013).
[160] According to the data communicated by Grillo (although the *Casaleggio Associati* did not allow any form of external control of the voting process), 31,612 citizens were entitled to vote, and 20,252 expressed at least one of the three preferences at their disposal. The candidates were 1,486: 822 of them were finally included in the lists (ranked according to the preferences obtained).

Such requisite assured that the candidate selection process would not award some 'opportunistic' figures 'jumping' on the wagon of a newly born political party increasingly well ranked by the polls. However, this rule also prevented M5S' politicians *in charge* (and, thus, with higher public visibility) from running for a parliamentary seat. The concrete consequence of the candidate selection process – and of the great electoral success of the M5S – was the election of 163 little known MPs (109 in the Lower Chamber, 54 in the Senate).

No gender quotas were applied: however, 66% of the candidates at the top of the lists at the district level (*capilista*) were women[161]. While 43% of the candidates to the *Parlamentarie* were registered in at least a *MeetUp*, 55% of the candidates in the final lists, 71% of the *capilista*[162] and 70% of the M5S' MPs were *MeetUppers*: thus, as expected, the active participation at the local level strengthened the visibility of the candidates and contributed to their victories in the internal selection process. Very few votes in the *Parlamentarie* were needed to be included in the electoral lists: the most voted candidate obtained 602 preferences, while in a few cases less than 10 preferences were sufficient to be included in the slates.

The party manifesto for 2013 general elections reproduced the 'Citizens' Primaries 2.0'. The electoral campaign was centred on the own Grillo's figure, his goal to end with 'the parties' (dubbed as 'zombies' or 'cadavers'), and the promise to refuse any stable alliances[163] and to assume a 'pragmatic', post-ideological stance in the Parliament, by 'supporting the good ideas and opposing the bad ones', free of 'ideological prejudices', while strictly following the M5S' manifesto.

Grillo strengthened his social, redistributive message, but also presented the M5S as the 'true defender' of the 'local producers' against the 'big powers' (*poteri forti*). In a

[161] Only 13% of the candidates in the *Parlamentarie* were women.
[162] Candidates in the first position of the slate in an electoral district.
[163] This attitudes contrasted with the campaign of the centre-left coalition, composed by the PD and SEL (while the IDV, highly weakened by corruption scandals, fell into political irrelevance): Bersani (PD's leader) opened to a post-electoral alliance with PM Monti's party *Scelta Civica* ('Civic Choice'), thus confirming his commitment to the adoption of EU-suggested reforms.

crucial post[164], twenty days before the election day, Grillo wrote a 'Letter to the Italians': '*I do not ask your vote, I am not interested in your vote if you do not participate in the res publica [...]. If you vote for the M5S to delegate somebody who decides in your behalf, then do not vote for us. […] The State must protect the citizens, or it is not a State. Thus, it is necessary to implement a basic income. I am the State, you are the State, we are the State. Let's re-take possession of Italy!*'. Then, Grillo presented *20 programmatic points to drive Italy out of the dark*. Some of these points – such as the call for a referendum over the Euro and anti-taxes proposals, both considered 'rightist' demands in Italy - were not included in the official manifesto (nor they were discussed before). At the top of the priorities, Grillo put the proposal for a 'basic income' (*reddito di cittadinanza*) – a sort of universal unemployed assistance scheme, which soon became '*the first point of M5S' manifesto*'. However, most of the proposals included in the '20 points' referred either to 'anti-caste' bills (anti-corruption laws, abrogation of party and newspaper public funding, partial privatization and 'political autonomy' of the public broadcasting system…) or to the strengthening of direct democratic and participatory tools. No mentions were made to the reversal (included in the official manifesto) of 'flexibilising' labour market reforms; instead, the second point focused on 'reforms to favour small and medium enterprises'.

7.5.2 The Evolution of the M5S' Internal Organization: From a Grassroots Movement to a 'Participative Parliamentary Party'

The impressive electoral achievements in the 2013 general elections (more than 8 million votes, corresponding to 26% of the votes) decisively contributed to M5S' 'institutionalization' and internal transformation. Until 2013, the M5S still consisted in

[164] http://www.beppegrillo.it/2013/02/lettera_agli_italiani.html#commenti

little more than: a network of informal local sections (the *MeetUps*); a reduced number of public representatives at the local and regional level, and four mayors; a website with roughly 30,000 affiliated members; and a dual and cohesive leadership, formed by a provocative former comedian (Beppe Grillo) and a web specialist (Gianroberto Casaleggio) offering communicative and political consultancy to Grillo, through his private firm (*Casaleggio Associati*). The access to the highest national institutions imposed some changes to the organizational structure of the M5S, in order to assure the efficiency and cohesiveness of the parliamentary activities. Most commentators were sceptical about the future of the M5S: once in Parliament, the supposed necessity of 'choosing' between the 'Left' and the 'Right' would have provoked irreconcilable tensions within the parliamentary group, also due to the lack of experience of M5S' MPs.

In fact, at the end of 2015, 37 MPs and two mayors had already abandoned the MoVement or they were expelled for different reasons. The first MP to be expelled by Grillo (through a post in his blog) was Marino Mastrangeli, because of his participation in a TV talk show (which was explicitly and strictly forbidden by Grillo). Many others followed. Almost all of them complained over the dominancy by Grillo and Casaleggio over party's decisions. In some cases (the MPs Orellana and Pepe) the expulsions were formally initiated by the *MeetUps* of the respective electoral districts, accordingly to a (never formalised) 'recall' procedure, and then ratified by the 'Web' through the vote of the activists. In both cases, Grillo formally invited the 'Web' to expel the 'rebels'.

However, the M5S had successfully 'survived' to the challenges brought by its participation to the institutions. Its membership has consistently grown, reaching over 130,000 'certified' members. Many other *MeetUps* were created: although it is impossible to verify their real number, the *MeetUps* are currently present (on-line, at least) in more than 1,700 municipalities, in Italy and abroad. 45 municipalities have a M5S' mayors, including major cities such as Livorno, Turin and Rome: more than 5 million Italians are governed by the M5S at the local level. The M5S elected 17

European MPs in the 2014 European elections. The ‘non-party’ is present in nearly all the Regional Councils[165].

I argue that the M5S was successful in both expanding and consolidating thanks to its *participative-mobilising populist* organizational characteristics. Its internal organization has unique traits, which, together with its peculiar ‘meta-political’ inspiration, produced a quite coherent system. The M5S’ organization has both centralising and decentralising characteristics: the former guarantee its cohesiveness and coherence, the latter favour off-line activists’ participation and a high adaptive capacity towards the socio-political environment. M5S’ centralisation is functional to the consolidation of charismatic and programmatic linkages; its decentralisation helps to establish organizational linkages to a plethora of local movements, whose demands are 're-tweeted' by Grillo’s blog and the party representatives.

The ‘meta-political’ founding values of the M5S allowed to justify and even legitimise its strong top-down features. In particular, the principles of *direct and participative democracy*, the critiques against representative democracy and any form of *delegation*, and some corollaries deriving from these general principles, served – paradoxically (or maybe not) – to strengthen the control of the MoVement from above by Grillo and Casaleggio and to legitimise its peculiar organization. The refusal of any form of delegation and personalization justifies the absence of intermediate territorial structures, to avoid the ‘bureaucratization’ of the MoVement through the creation of ‘party professionals’ with some ‘special right or responsibility’. *‘Uno Vale Uno*’ (‘One counts as One’) is a well-known motto of the M5s: the collective intelligence of the Web (i.e., of the *activated citizens*, not the ‘uninterested’ or ‘lazy’ ones) would substitute the necessity of having a ‘permanent minority’ speaking in behalf of the majority.

[165] In the very recent 2018 general elections, the M5S became the most voted Italian party and, after long negotiations, it formed with the right-wing populist League a coalition government, whose PM is Giuseppe Conte, a ‘technocrat’ close to the M5S.

The refusal of the principle of delegation motivates the centrality assumed in M5S' discourse by the *party manifesto*, to which M5S' representatives must fully adhere. The party manifesto receives its 'sacredness' from its (supposedly) collective elaboration: '*it is our Bible*' (IT6; IT11), '*we are fully bounded by the manifesto, because it is the reason for which the citizens voted for us*' (IT5), '*our guiding light* [when in the public office] *is the manifesto, point 1, point 10, point 3… we act according to it*' (IT12). Such centrality is consonant with the pretension of M5S' representatives to act as mere 'speakers' of the citizens, and is functional to limit internal divisions and to sustain M5S' claim of being 'pragmatic', 'not blinded by some vague ideology': '*somebody argues that we have leftist principles, but with the pragmatism typical of the Right… […] the M5S took over the common sense, the pragmatism, I mean, if there is something needed by the community, we fight for it. There are no established ideologies, the only principles are environmentalism and direct democracy, but there are not any other limits, and then all the people can participate, because we want to* do things' (IT5).

The discursive and rhetoric centrality of the manifesto justifies the role assumed by Grillo (and formalised in the 'Ethical Code' subscribed by all the MPs and, since December 2017, also in the new M5S' statute) as the *guarantor* of the M5S and of the behaviour of its representatives in the institutions. Furthermore, it furnishes an argument for assigning *exclusively to the party in the public office* the right of speaking in behalf of the MoVement and of legally representing it in the public sphere, in detriment of the *MeetUps*. Of course, the reality is quite distinct from the rhetoric: neither M5S' manifestos – especially at the national level – are drafted in a 'democratic' way, nor the party in the public office is 'accountable' to the bases in any meaningful way (while it is strongly controlled from above).

Formally, the M5S, since its birth (4th October 2009), coincides with its membership, i.e. with the citizens registered in the website. The 'Assembly of the Registered Citizens' (*Assemblea degli Iscritti*) is one of the four party organs explicitly mentioned in the M5S' Rules approved in 2016 through an on-line vote. The other

organs are the ‘political chief’ (*capo politico*: *de facto* Beppe Grillo until September 2017, when Luigi Di Maio was elected by the Assembly and Grillo’s role of *guarantor* was formalised), the ‘*probiviri*’ and the ‘Appeal Committee’ (with precise competences over disciplinary issues, and without any political tasks). According to M5S’ Rules (and to M5S’ *rhetoric*), the regular members would represent both the ‘party in the central office’ (see Article 4 of the Non-Statute) and the ‘party on the ground’ (more precisely, ‘*on the Web*’). The ‘party in the public office’ should simply act as ‘speakers’ of members’ *volonté*, expressed through the party manifesto and through on-line consultations discretionarily convoked by the *capo politico*. No intermediate partisan structures were conceived: instead, they are strictly *forbidden*, as they would transform the M5S into a ‘party’, thus ‘betraying’ the mission of the MoVement: the substitution of representative democracy with a form of participative *and* direct (albeit *not deliberative*) democracy (Floridia and Vignati, 2013).

However, the reality is much more complex. On the one side, the ‘party in the central office’ is practically composed, as explained above, by Grillo – who ultimately is the *legal owner of the party brand* – and by the *Casaleggio Associati*, which is the *website manager* and has the complete monopoly over the appointment of the staff assisting M5S’ MPs on communication issues (interpreted in a highly extensive manner, as I explain below). Since April 2016, *Associazione Rousseau* – headed by Casaleggio’s son Davide – assumed the task of managing both the website of the party (*Il Blog delle Stelle*) and of M5S’ private ‘software’, *Rousseau* (see below). Although the *Associazione Rousseau* is not formally linked to the party, in its organogram we can find almost all the M5S’ most visible and popular party figures, directly appointed by Davide Casaleggio.

On the other side, the *visible* ‘party on the ground’ consists in the *MeetUps*, which still fulfil all the concrete organizational tasks at the local level, such as propaganda initiatives and the collection of information for M5S’ elected representatives *('They are our Gazettes'*: IT7). While the *MeetUps* lack any formal right, at least until

2015 they played a central role, at the local level, in the candidate selection process and in the programmatic decisions.

I argue that the access to parliamentary institutions, and the consolidation of party's presence at the subnational levels, marked a strong change in the organization of the M5S. Until 2013, the key 'organs' of the M5S were 'Grillo and Casaleggio' and the *MeetUps*. Since 2013, the M5S quite soon became identified with the 'party in the public office', which still remained (particularly the congressional bench and local administrators) under the strict control of Grillo and Casaleggio.

From 2005 to 2013: a Grassroots MoVement controlled from above. According to Marco Canestrari (who worked in the *Casaleggio Associati* until 2015), the influence of Gianroberto Casaleggio over *all* the decisions taken by Beppe Grillo – including the very opening of his famous blog - cannot be overstated (in this sense, see also IT10; IT11; IT16; IT17; IT21). Casaleggio had a primary role in the elaboration of the editorial line of the blog (IT16; IT20). He identified those issues and demands excluded from 'mainstream' debate, such as job precariousness, corruption, political collusion with financial powers, the 'privileges' enjoyed by the *Casta*, local environmentalist struggles, even the sexual scandals damaging the Catholic Church. In several occasions, Casaleggio worked as Grillo's ghost-writer (IT20).

In Canestrari's opinion, the selection of the issues treated in the blog was a function of the political hue of the government in charge, more than the product of a well-defined and coherent ideological inspiration. Under Berlusconi's government, anti-corruption and 'leftist' issues prevailed. Under Prodi's government, some topics 'winked' to right-wing citizens (such as the first positions against 'out-of-control immigration', in 2007[166]), while other campaigns pointed at the collusions between 'Left' and 'Right' and consisted in 'critiques from the Left' to the governments. During

[166] http://www.ilblogdellestelle.it/2007/11/bonino_frattini_e_i_boccaporti_aperti/index.html [access: 21st March 2018]

Monti's government, the blog clearly assumed an anti-austerity position, criticising both tax increases and the absence of social measures, and attacking the 'old parties', the main culprits of the high public debt burden (while refusing to 'renounce to their privileges'). Grillo also vehemently attacked the '*coup d'état*' imposed by the EU, by depicting Monti as '*a PM elected by the 'spread', not by the Italians: […] nobody regrets Berlusconi, but all of us should regret democracy'*[167].

The call to Grillo's followers for registering in the *MeetUp* platform and creating local groups was, again, an idea by Casaleggio, who aimed to form a grassroots movement, a sort of network of 'civic lobbies' *without directly entering in the political-electoral sphere* (IT20). Casaleggio changed his opinion to avoid losing the control of the *MeetUps*, which were increasingly discussing over the possibility of participating in local elections (IT20). Top-down control over the LCCs was neither complete nor particularly invasive, though. The selection of the leader of each LCC and the manifestos were not submitted to any in-depth screening by the *Casaleggio Associati*. At that time, Casaleggio had in mind a sort of 'federation of local electoral lists' (IT20).

Things began changing in 2009, particularly after the 2009 European elections, when the blog explicitly endorsed two IDV's candidates who obtained an important electoral success. Until M5S' foundation, the IDV was the only political party to which the *Casaleggio Associati* was offering its communicative consultancy. Several IDV's officials worried about the strong results achieved by 'Grillo's candidates' within the party slate, and forced Di Pietro to interrupt the collaboration (IT20). At the same time, Casaleggio realised the electoral potential of a 'Grillo's party'.

The *Non-Statute* excluded the *MeetUps* (and the *MeetUppers*) from having any 'special right' within the organization. However, the implementation of the web platform for the members occurred only in 2012, while *Rousseau* began working only in 2016. For a long time, thus, the *MeetUps* kept influencing candidate selection and party

[167] http://www.beppegrillo.it/il-colpo-di-spread/ [access: 21st March 2018]

manifestos at the local *and even regional* levels[168]. The high autonomy enjoyed by the *MeetUps*, the little (if any) barriers to entry, and their internal horizontal organization, favoured their diffusion throughout the territory.

According to several interviewees, the decision of running in electoral contests at the local or regional level, and the local victories in Parma and Sicily, boosted the participation in the *MeetUps*. *MeetUps*' engagement in local environmental initiatives made them attractive to many activists of the committees (IT7; IT14). Several M5S' activists reported that 'local committees and associations' were a sort of 'Sixth Star' of the MoVement (Biorcio, 2016: 115). In addition, the involvement in national and/or regional initiatives (such as the campaign *Zero Privilegi* campaign in Apulia: IT7) or electoral campaigns (IT3; IT7; IT18) contributed to foster collaboration between different *MeetUps*.

MeetUps' autonomy in the process of drafting the electoral manifestos (e.g., IT3; IT6; IT8), pushed M5S' activists to dialogue, 'free from prejudices', with different interest groups, with the two-fold goal of 'capturing' various particularistic demands and networking with the committees. For instance, Giancarlo Cancelleri (M5S' candidate for the Sicilian governorship both in 2012 and in 2017) reported that

> '*in 2012 we drafted a participative manifesto, through an obsolete platform […] the most voted proposals were included. Then we consulted local committees and associations. Our programmatic chart was not closed, we met with a lot of committees, we were much more interested in their opinions than the opposite, as we were a new force… we met with LGBT groups, Legambiente, WWF, Italia Nostra, LIPU, No MUOS, squatters' movements, movements against banks' evictions […]*

[168] For instance, the nomination of the candidates for the Lombardy and Piedmont regional elections in 2010 and for the Sicilian regional elections in 2012 was voted by *MeetUps*' delegates (Ceri and Veltri, 2017; IT3). In the case of the Lazio regional elections in 2013, roughly 1,000 activists, through a web platform entirely created and managed by the local *MeetUps*, elected their candidate and draft the manifesto.

> *actually we did not proceed to a synthesis, we simply expanded our program to include new demands*' (IT3).

None of these considerations implies that Grillo and Casaleggio renounced to their control over the *MeetUps*. The expulsions of Tavolazzi and Favia demonstrated it, as well as Grillo's endorsement of Davide Bono for the Piedmont governorship against Maurizio Pallante, the popular leader of the movement for a 'Happy De-Growth' (Ceri and Veltri, 2017). Arguably, Grillo and Casaleggio were uncomfortable with candidates having 'autonomous visibility' and political capital (IT20). It has also been widely noticed by the literature (Santoro, 2013; Tronconi, 2015; Ceri and Veltri, 2017) the 'unidirectional' management of the blog by Grillo and Casaleggio. Grillo has never interacted with the commentators. Grillo and Casaleggio did never discuss the issues to be treated and the campaigns to be launched, thus retaining the control of agenda setting power.

The party manifesto for the 2013 general elections, according to M5S' rhetoric, was a 'manifesto drafted by the Citizens'. However, it was an exact reproduction of the *Citizens Primaries 2.0*, autonomously drafted[169] by Grillo and Casaleggio. Very few on-line suggestions were receipted. Like *Rousseau* (see the next section), these initiatives have clearly more a *participative-mobilising* than a *deliberative* goal: Grillo mobilised his followers to 'participate', thus contributing to strengthen a sense of community amongst them.

To conclude: as the 'Letter to the Italians' (again, an unilateral decision from the leaders) demonstrated, Grillo and Casaleggio identified in anti-caste themes, redistributive social reforms, anti-austerity and anti-tax claims the *programmatic linkages* to appeal to an inter-classist public, together with various endorsements to local struggles deserving better resonance in the public sphere. Although the selection of the issues was not based on 'scientific' marketing research (IT20), it was highly successful,

[169] The same holds for the *Carta di Firenze,* or for the 'Non-Statute'.

as the M5S effectively 'owned' valence issues relatively forgotten by the other parties (such as anti-caste and anti-corruption themes: see Conti and Memoli, 2015). Stronger deliberative and horizontal features were present in the *MeetUps* galaxy, and contributed to the expansion of the off-line membership, a crucial resource for electoral campaigning and for providing deeper roots to the Movement. However, since the beginning, in the M5S' web-democracy, 'One counts as one', but someone has counted much more than the rest.

The M5S in the Parliament: the dominancy of the 'party in the central office' and of the 'party in the public office'. The adaptive process of the M5S to the new parliamentary phase was not without problems, but still highly successful. On the one hand, Grillo and Casaleggio – assisted by a 'party elite' selected through co-optation – tightened its control over the party in the public office at all the institutional levels and institutionalised a form of *participative, direct and plebiscitary* internal democracy (through the platform *Rousseau*) to reinforce the legitimacy of top-down decisions. On the other hand, both the party in the public office and the 'off-line party on the ground' kept a certain degree of autonomy, thus favouring the territorial expansion of the party and its capacity of 'being in tune' with the most disparate demands at the local and national levels.

The massive access to parliamentary institutions obviously put M5S' MPs under the focus of the mass media. Their lack of political experience and their ideological heterogeneity immediately provoked severe tensions. It seemed clear that such a heterogeneous parliamentary group had to be strictly controlled by the 'party in the central office' (Grillo and Casaleggio) to avoid its immediate fragmentation. Since the beginning, Grillo and Casaleggio took the decision of centralising the communication strategy through two different staffs (for Deputies and Senators) hired by the *Casaleggio Associati*.

According to the critics (former M5S' MPs who resigned or were expelled), the power of the *staffs* is pervasive:

> '*The M5S is a 'firm party', where communication substituted politics: the staff decides over the issues and the policy proposals; M5S' whips in the commissions must pass through the staff for communicating the party's decisions to the media'* (IT17). '*We enjoyed some autonomy, but only when a topic was not particularly relevant […]; when a topic became viral, they forbid any autonomous elaboration from the parliamentary group; […] the staff repeated to me, "Marco, please, do not talk about the euro currency, we abandoned that topic…*"' (IT16). '*One of the central task of the staff is to collect information over the MPs during the reunions and to identify the "loyal" and the "unreliable*" *ones*' (IT20).

Even M5S' MPs, albeit stressing their autonomy *vis à vis* the 'party in the central office', recognised the centrality of the staffs:

> '*We agreed with Grillo on a simple thing: he is not our political secretary, there is no political secretary, the parliamentary group is the political secretary. However, Grillo decided to give his contribute through the communication staffs. Actually, the communication strategy of the parliamentary groups is under his direct supervision*' (IT9); '*we meet with the communication staffs once a week, […] sometimes they propose a specific topic, or choose who has to appear in TV over a specific issue […] but we have the last word'* (IT11).

In most cases, M5S' MPs agree with the necessity of delegating important responsibilities to the staffs ('*I think it is right that the speakers selected by the staffs, according to their communicative skills, had become more visible in the media*': IT11). However, there is also some complaints: '*the personalization of the MoVement collides*

with our leaderless spirit. […] I regret when we did not appear on TV. […] I would prefer a M5S less linked to the communication staffs, […] the M5S is a TV-modified movement' (IT10). In fact, a few MPs achieved quite soon a stronger visibility to the mass public, despite the 'One counts as One' rhetoric and the practice of internal charge rotation. Thus, it is necessary to disclose *who* was selected for appearing in the mass media, but also *why* and *by whom*.

The answers are quite straightforward. The communication staffs selected a pool of 15-20 MPs (IT14; IT17; IT20) to be 'trained' for communicative purposes immediately after their elections. Critics argued that the main criterion for this first selection was the 'loyalty to the leaders' (IT16; IT17; IT20). Some of the 'visible faces' of the M5S soon began occupying all the main charges related with the parliamentary activity. Roberto Fico (a long-term local activist) was elected as President of an important Parliamentary Commission, while Luigi Di Maio became the Deputy President of the Lower Chamber (two institutional charges, not subjected to the 'rotation rule'). Di Maio and Fico soon became the most popular representatives, together with Alessandro Di Battista (who had published a book with *Casaleggio Associati* in 2008, and is considered very close to Di Maio). Crimi and Lombardi (a well-known activist from the Roman *MeetUps*) were elected as the first whips of the parliamentary group, thus enjoying high visibility when the curiosity of the mass media towards the 'newcomers' was particularly strong. None of these appointments was submitted to the ratification of the 'Web'. Interestingly, those MPs closer to the *MeetUp*'s 'spirit' (and thus more sensible to the 'founding values' of direct and participative democracy) would have seen their centrality somewhat reduced during the second half of the legislature.

Another way to 'formalise' the prominent position of specific figures within the party in the public office was through their appointment by Grillo and Casaleggio for specific 'posts of responsibility' within the party, as reflected by the organogram of *Associazione Rousseau,* or by the creation of informal *intermediate* structures in order to 'coordinate' the activities of the M5S' representatives governing at the municipal levels.

The ‘Five Star Municipalities’ (*Comuni a 5 Stelle*), as expectedly, attracted the massive attention of the media, and the necessity to ‘protect’ them soon emerged, to avoid electoral backlashes due to eventual pitfalls deriving from negative governmental experiences at the local level[170]. However, Grillo and Casaleggio hesitated to break the ‘golden rule’ forbidding the appointment (or the election) of internal, ‘bureaucratic’ tasks. According to Canestrari, the setback in the 2014 European Elections[171] produced severe tensions between the party in the public office and the leaders, who were accused of imposing a too much harsh and isolationist political strategy. In November 2014, Grillo appointed a 'Directory' composed by five MPs (Fico, Di Maio, Di Battista, Sibilia and Ruocco) in order to ‘*meet regularly with me to share and take the most urgent decisions*’: the decision was merely ratified by the ‘Web’[172]. Other internal structures, directly appointed by Grillo without any on-line consultation, were created to ‘advise’ M5S’ administration in Rome or to act as referents of all the local and regional public representatives of the party.

To depict the M5S as a sort of ‘Big Brother’, as its critics often do, would be exaggerate, though. On the one side, the autonomy of the party in the public office in the policy elaboration is still relevant. The communication staffs have not the sufficient resources and competences to strictly control the entire legislative or administrative activity, nor probably Grillo and Casaleggio have the pretension to do so: at least, this is the clear perception of the M5S’ MPs, regional councillors and mayors interviewed. The parliamentary sub-groups in the different permanent commissions coordinated and developed the draft of the manifesto for 2018 general elections, thanks to the skills and expertise accumulated during their first parliamentary experience (IT9; IT10). The

[170] For instance, strong tensions derived from the decision taken by Pizzarotti (Parma’s mayor) of *not* stopping the construction of an incinerator, despite his electoral promises (and Casaleggio’s protests). Pizzarotti was later forced to abandon the MoVement. For several months, the difficulties faced by Rome’s mayor Raggi to form her governmental team in Rome (due to resignations or to legal charges for newly appointed officials) attracted widespread media coverage.

[171] In those elections, the MoVement, which still reached 21% of the votes, suffered the competition of the PD, which was temporarily reinvigorated by the new leadership by Renzi, with a young, centrist and dynamic profile.

[172] Grillo suppressed the Directory in November 2016, without any consultation with the bases.

regional councillors stressed their autonomy from the 'centre' in almost any activity, while closely collaborating with the MPs of their regions (IT3; IT6; IT8). Even at the European level, despite Grillo's decision to join the Eurosceptic and right-wing parliamentary group EFDD, M5S' bench kept an autonomous profile (Carlotti, 2017): according to roll-call analyses, the policy positioning of the M5S in Brussels is much closer to Radical Leftist or Green parties than to its own parliamentary group (Ivaldi et al., 2016). Marco Zanni (a former M5S' European MP), described his former fellows as 'quite skewed to the Left' and able to resist to several 'suggestions' coming from the 'staff'.

Even the Directory limited itself to 'intervene' in 'complex situations' (i.e., when internal tensions or judicial charges put in peril the continuity of the local government: IT11). According to a municipal councillor in Pomezia (governed since 2013 by the M5S),

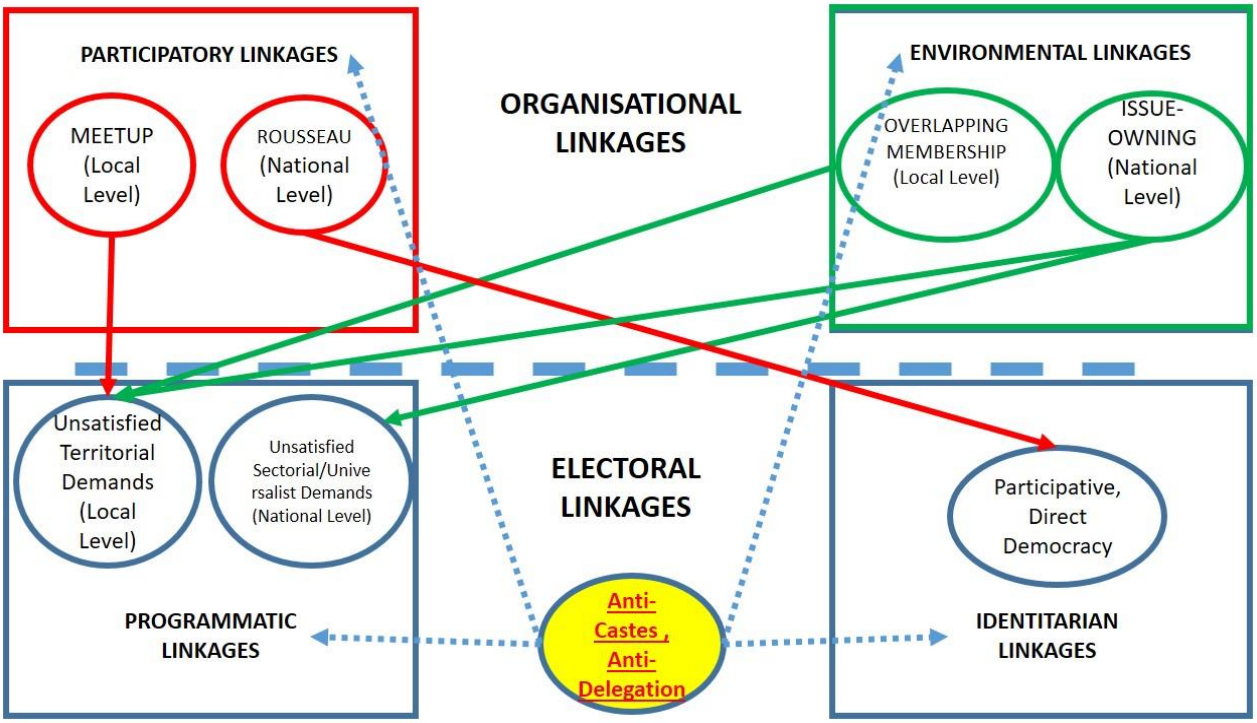
> '*the creation of the Directory did not have any perceived effects on our experience. I agreed on its creation, because we needed coordination, I personally did not agree on the way it was created, I would have preferred to vote […] Sometimes we observed that there was a lack of coordination between the parliamentary and the local levels. For instance, a MP said that the* Comuni a 5 Stelle *had abolished a specific municipal tax, well, that was not true, we had to maintain it for budgetary reasons, you cannot make our work more difficult*' (IT4).

<u>The Organizational and Electoral Linkages of the M5S. A Refusal of any Structure of Societal Intermediations.</u> As I summarised in Chapter 1, the concept of 'linkage' can refer either to: a) *organisational linkages,* consisting in the degree of influence enjoyed by the membership (*participatory linkages*) and social organizations (*environmental linkages*) over the party's decisions; b) *electoral linkages*, consisting in the way the party appeals to its electorate (*programmatic, identitarian* or *clientelistic*

linkages). *Organisational linkages* directly or indirectly contribute to strengthen *electoral linkages*, which obviously represent a central goal of a political-electoral project. In Figure 7.3, I put graphically the relationship between different M5S' organisational and electoral linkages, all of them coherently deriving from the 'core-values' of the political culture of the party: the refusal of any form of political structure of intermediation, which is inherently considered as prone to be 'captured' by political or societal 'castes'.

In the previous sub-sections, I stressed how effective *participatory linkages* are, in fact, limited to the local level, through the *MeetUps* galaxy, which also provides a kind of *organisational linkages*, albeit exclusively through a certain overlapping membership with local committees or (typically environmentalist) interest groups. Both linkages are functional to the strengthening of both *identitarian* and *programmatic* linkages (see Figure 7.3). They facilitate the 'interception' of 'sensitive' issues by the party on the ground, and their insertion in the local manifestos in view of the elections, often with high electoral dividends. In addition, the drafting of local manifestos represents a deliberative enterprise strengthening the collective identity of the activists and marking a supposed 'alterity' in comparison to the 'old parties'.

Figure 7.3 The Influences of M5S' Organizational Linkages' on its Electoral Linkages.



Source: Author's Elaboration.

M5S' ability of 'intercepting' local or particularistic demands and of 'retweeting' them still represents one of its major assets. This strategy of 'issue owning' can be implemented either by Grillo's blog or by the party in the public office, at the local and national levels. M5S' activists stress the importance of entering in the subnational institutions, as this assures higher visibility for 'retweeting' local demands (e.g., IT22). Nevertheless, both at the national and subnational levels, the M5S skilfully avoids being attacked for its defence of 'particularistic' interests: its campaigns are *always* declined as

a form of protection of the 'Small' against the 'Big'. The M5S aims to extract the '*general interests sometimes hidden in a particular demand*' (IT8), and pretends to be '*ab-solutus*' (IT13): free from any kind of influence of 'particularistic' interest groups. The activists do not just see themselves as representative of the 'civil society': '*we are the civil society*' (IT3). Although they at the beginning were '*extremely suspicious towards any kind of lobbyism*' (IT8), and still '*escape from any citizens' committee smelling like a political party*' (IT7), they portray themselves as '*great listeners of the demands coming from the civil society*' (IT7; in this sense also IT14, IT5, IT12, IT13).

Therefore, the M5S pretends to be the *only legitimated structure of political aggregation and intermediation*, while dismissing every other structure as 'ideological' or 'partisan'. According to an interviewee, '*when one begins her activism with the M5S, she experiences a moment of liberation from those schemes, those mental conjectures imposing that you can speak with some organizations but not with others…*' (IT5), although M5S' activists admit to feel 'more comfortable' when dialoguing with environmentalist local committees (IT14) representing unsatisfied 'micro-constituencies' interested in the resolution of concrete problems. The relationship between local movements or committees and the M5S are not always as smooth as M5S' activists claim they are, though. According to a *No MUOS'* activist, '*M5S' MPs have branded our campaign in a quite instrumental way. They made our campaign more visible, but they often advanced unrealistic proposals that made the solution more difficult. […] Even Grillo, when he came to Sicily for the electoral campaign, mentioned the problem in a highly vague way. […] M5S' Ragusa mayor, apart from positioning a banner saying "Ragusa No MUOS' city", did not do anything*' (IT15). Therefore, the 'issue owning' strategy, particularly at the national level, seems often operating more through the communicative impact of the blog and of provocative declarations by the party representatives than through an effective collaboration with the movements.

The 'issue owning' strategy is not only pursued for *local, territorial* demands, but also for *sectorial or even universalist* issues lacking a political supporter. The main 'detectors' of such latent demands are Grillo and Casaleggio and the party in the public

office. The role of the activists is practically reduced to the formulation of 'atomised' proposals through the on-line platform *Rousseau* and to the final *imprimatur* of the manifestos' drafts and of crucial political decisions.

As several analyses have shown (Mosca and Vaccari, 2017; Ceri and Veltri, 2017), *Rousseau* is far from offering a meaningful tool for creating an innovative process of internal, deliberative democracy[173]. On-line participation is declining, and even the members of the *Associazione Rousseau* have expressed poor satisfaction about the actual outcomes of the platform[174]. On-line voting turnouts in internal consultations (discretionarily convoked by Grillo) over some partisan strategic decisions, or to draft the party manifesto, are also declining, and rarely surpassed 40% of the activists with voting rights[175]. These procedures still serve to give a discursive legitimacy to the decisions taken by the party: the functioning of *Rousseau* is more useful to unveil the strong top-down features of the M5S than to understand how the interest aggregation system of the M5S really works.

Instead, the party in the central office – and, secondarily, the party in the public office – are central in the process of elaboration of programmatic linkages able to attract different social sectors and to 'detect' latent demands. An analysis of M5S' proposals for labour market and welfare regime reforms is highly useful, here, because it clarifies how the 'meta-political' values of the M5S concretely adapts into a policy area in which well-established organised sectors coexist with unorganised and weak constituencies.

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[173] The 'registered activists' can suggest amendments to the bills proposed by regional, national and European representatives. Nevertheless, such 'amendments' simply consist in commentaries, often off-topic, vague or inconsistent. The proposer of the bill can discretionarily accept (or not) the 'amendments'. The activists can also directly propose bills to be backed by the parliamentary bench. Again, the proposed bills are often unclear, contradictory, or unconstitutional. Up to now, less than ten bills coming from *Rousseau* (and adequately amended by the MPs) have been presented in the Parliament.

[174] This derives from my own observation to the workshops organised by the *Associazione Rousseau* during the M5S' meeting held in Rimini (September 2017).

[175] The consultations are often convoked with little anticipation, and opened for very short periods, while proponents discretionarily elaborate the questions. Such questions are often accompanied by posts and videos that clearly suggest the option backed by Grillo and Casaleggio or by M5S' MPs – which played a major role in the drafting of 2018 party manifesto (IT9; IT10; IT11). The obvious consequence is that these consultations are often approved with very high percentages, thus confirming their *plebiscitary* features. *Only twice* (out of 23 consultations during the 2013-2016 period) the 'Web' discarded the 'suggested' alternative.

The analysis also suggests some insights to understand why the M5S was particularly able, in 2013 general elections, to disproportionately attract the *outsiders* within its electorate (see section 7.6), in stark contrast with the core-constituencies of the Italian centre-left.

Several considerations about the supposed over-protection of the insiders (typically, civil servants and retired workers) were common in the early Grillo and Casaleggio's public statements. For instance, in 2012, they claimed that '*many people fear the change. If you are a retired people or a civil servant, you hope that the parties will guarantee you, your standard of living'* (Grillo et al., 2012: 161). After 2013 elections, Grillo argued that:

> *'There are two social blocs in Italy. The first one consists of millions of young people without future, with a precarious work or unemployed […] excluded people, […] those depending from an insufficient pension, or small entrepreneurs living in a tax regime* [regime di polizia fiscale]. *The second bloc is made by who want to defend the* status quo, *by those who were not damaged by the crisis, by most of the civil servants, by those earning a pension higher than 5,000 euros per month, by tax-evaders, by those people living thanks to* politics, *through the public companies. The first bloc wants to change; the second one prefers continuity*' ('Italians never vote by chance', my translation[176]).

Nevertheless, M5S' politicians do not analyse election results through the lens of the insider-outsider divide. Similarly to their *Podemos'* colleagues (e.g., ES1, ES2, ES21), M5S' politicians do not explain their poor results among the retired workers (see section 7.6) by mentioning the divide between 'protected' and 'unprotected people'. Instead, they point at the pro-*status quo* bias of the mass media:

[176] http://www.beppegrillo.it/2013/02/gli_italiani_non_votano_mai_a_caso.html

> '*I understand your question* [the insider-outsider divide as an explanation of the vote for the M5S], *perhaps it contains a grain of truth, but the problem is that […] we are poorly heard by those people that reached the pension eligibility age before the Internet era*' (IT9);
>
> '*Until a few years ago this analysis was probably right. However, retired workers have become aware that the state cut their pensions, thus they have joined the struggle for a more equitable pension. For sure, there is a tendency towards voting the old parties, for emotive reasons that do not have any rational explanation any more'* (IT10).

As in the case of *Podemos*, many complaints towards the three main union confederations (the *Triplice*: IT10) concern their supposed ancillary role towards their partisan referents. Both parties criticize the links between the unions and the 'old Left', which supposedly lead to consociational practices. Nevertheless, in the case of the M5S, it is usual to hear complaints about unions' 'politicization' (IT5; IT4; IT6), which means both 'partisanization' *and ideologization*. While *Podemos'* exponents push for a *classist and ideological* union movement, M5S' ones tend to consider the unions as mere interest groups whose almost unique role should be the 'defence of the workers' interests', 'actualised' according to the postindustrial scenario:

> *'The relationship between us and the unions is difficult, because the unions play politics instead of acting as a union should do. Those unions talking as Renzi, saying that they are against the* reddito di cittadinanza [*basic income*] *because they prefer to work… this means that they did not understand anything. […] They should defend the job, not the job place, they should not defend lazy workers…[…] with the CGIL the relationship is very mediocre, with the CISL is somewhat better, because they are Christian-Democrats and they get along with everybody…[…] we have some relationship with the independent unions, such as COBAS, but they are very small, and they further split […] thus they allow the big unions to dominate, those big unions representing a few pensioners and little more'* (IT8)

> *'The unions do not talk too much about the* reddito di cittadinanza*, at least when we are present, but they clearly fear it, because it would make redundant their presence in the society… Moreover, this would not be true, because union officials must not take care only of unemployed people, but of the workers, too. The unions see the* reddito di cittadinanza *as a competitor, […] are these people doing their work, or are they defending their privileges?*' (IT5)

When asked about labour-related issues, the interviewees often claim that, when involved in the elaboration of their proposals or in local crises in the workplaces, the relationship with the unions has been 'satisfactory' (IT6; IT22): '*we are the only interlocutors of the unions, even if they would prefer to speak with other forces*' (IT7). Other interviewees admit that they often recur to the expertise of officials from different unions for drafting proposals and increasing their knowledge over labour-related issues (IT8; IT9; IT10). Claudio Treves[177] (NIDIL-CGIL) admits that '*at the local level, some examples of dialogue between us and the M5S do exist…[…, although when] the CGIL illustrated our Universal Chart of the Workers' Rights, from the M5S we received many questions but there was not any dialogue'*.

M5S' representatives are highly suspicious of the peak union confederations and tend to prefer 'smaller' unions (such as the sectorial ones, or radical grassroots unions), considered truly committed to the 'interests of the workers', more 'independent' (IT5) and enjoying less 'privileges, with much lower benefits' (IT18) than *Triplice*'s officials. Grassroots unions are sometimes considered '*the M5S of the labour movement*' (IT18), although other interviewees report that '*sometimes they get involved in consociational practices, too*' (IT5) or that *'when I invited, for the first time, the USB* [a federation of independent, radical unions] *to speak at the Regional Council, they misused the occasion and began shouting and breaking microphones…*'[178].

In contrast, CGIL, CISL and UIL are *always* depicted as bureaucratic, unrepresentative organizations that '*instigate the workers for political reasons*' and

[177] Leader of the NIDIL (CGIL's branch for precarious workers).
[178] Again, M5S' negative attitude towards the unions' radicalization and ideologization emerges.

'*operate under the orders of some political party*' (IT5; see also Biorcio, 2016). Such preference for 'smaller' unions matches with a sort of mythologizing of the SMEs, in contraposition with the 'big capital', the multinationals, the banks, or even *Confindustria*. As Caruso (2016) argues, the M5S has a vision of the society that is not based on the conflict between capital and labour, but on the idealization of a community formed by small entrepreneurs and workers. This autonomous community must be protected and stimulated by the state, whose role is to find a solution for its problems according to the 'general interest' and to the natural convergence of sectorial interests, and to push for a new, ecologically sustainable economy.

M5S' proposals about labour issues for the 2018 general elections have been the outcome of a long process of elaboration involving M5S' MPs in the Labour Commissions, the contributions of a pool of area experts selected in a randomized way (the *Lavoro 2025* Project) and on-line suggestions of the activists. The proposals reflected the 'suspicious' stance of the M5S towards the *Triplice*. The M5S advocated for a shop-floor unionism formed by 'non-career unionists', thus limiting (or eliminating) the 'bureaucratic' structures of political representation of the working-class through the implementation of 'participatory tools'.

As reported by Tiziana Ciprini[179], some party proposals were not submitted to the activists' opinions, as they were already defined by M5S' MPs. Among these issues, we can find the '*struggle against precarious contracts through higher taxation of employers using such contracts; the institution of a 'flex-security' model through the* reddito di cittadinanza*; my proposal for working time flexibility*' (IT10).

In turn, the activists expressed their opinion over 'undefined' issues. They agreed on the admission of all the union organizations to workplace elections, and not just of those having signed the sectorial agreement or representing 5% of the affiliates. The activists also agreed on '*stopping with the career politicians-union officials occupying seats in the BODs*'. Another proposal concerned the "election of workers' speakers entitled to discuss firms' strategies", following the German model. The activists also

[179] M5S' Member of Parliament in the Chamber of Deputies' Labour Commission.

backed the reduction of working time and the introduction of an 'intergenerational relay' to reduce youth unemployment rate, by favouring workers' early retirement[180].

M5S' proposals seem relying on a simple assumption: the best way for advancing the interests of the citizens (and of the workers) is to promote their *activation and direct participation*, which in turn would lead to an *acceptance of their responsibility*. The M5S call the citizens and the workers for developing an 'active', even *entrepreneurial* attitude. M5S' MPs actively supported the so-called *workers' buy-out*, i.e. the acquisition, by the workers, of dismissed factories, through cooperatives financed by the workers' severance payments. According to Ciprini,

> *'the* Triplice *does not appreciate these experiences, they scare the citizens, the dismissed workers, they told them that they are investing their savings in a risky operation. […] this occurs because this model, where the workers become* managers, *put in peril the model in which the existence of an intermediate structure between the workers and the employers is necessary. The unions oppose it because their role would be at risk*'.

Since 2009, the M5S included in its manifesto the proposal of a 'guaranteed unemployment benefit'. The proposal for a *reddito di cittadinanza* (which is, in fact, a non-contributory – albeit conditioned - unemployment benefit[181]) became the 'first point of M5S' manifesto' since 2012, following an autonomous decision by Grillo and Casaleggio. Although this proposal was not entirely new, the ability of the M5S to 'own' this issue – and the merit for having made it salient – is undeniable. The *reddito di cittadinanza* would serve as a universal social policy, and it would *substitute* the existing social schemes, such as the *pensioni minime*, the *assegni sociali* and the unemployment

[180] http://www.ilblogdellestelle.it/risultati_della_votazione_del_programmalavoro_del_movimento_5_stelle.html [access: 15th December 2017]

[181] Like the *renta garantizada* backed by Podemos, the amount of the benefit varies depending on the number of family members. As for the *renta garantizada*, the minimum amount is 600 euros.

insurance schemes. Thus, it represents a clear attempt of recalibrating the Italian welfare regime towards universalist directions[182].

In Italy, the unions are less favourable than in Spain to introduce a *reddito di cittadinanza*. According to Treves (my interview),

> '*the same proposal for a basic income, while underlining an issue that the CGIL must understand better, has not been analysed properly by the M5S…it is difficult to understand what the M5S actually thinks about it*, the relationship between the basic income and the unemployment insurance schemes, *the centrality of the* work, *which must precede the introduction of a basic income*'.

Here, the opinion of Vittorio Agnoletto, the speaker of the Italian Social Forum, is illuminating:

> *'The basic income…that issue was brought to the fore by the Global Justice Movement* [GJM], *but we found a strong opposition from the Left, even from the FIOM* [the CGIL's metal workers union, the most radical branch], *a big difficulty in understanding it, because they saw a contraposition between social rights and wages, a refusal to look at the basic income from the point of view of the welfare regime*[183]*. They relied on a*

[182] When asked about the basic income proposal, M5S' politicians underline that it is *not* a *welfarist* measure (IT3; IT4; IT5; IT6; IT7; IT8), as it includes several conditionalities (and particularly the obligation to accept the jobs proposed, or the enrolment in public social works). Instead, they consider it an *economic manoeuvre* that would foster the demand, benefit the SMEs (IT7) and dignify citizens' lives (IT5), or a social security cushion that would help the full transition towards *Industry 4.0* (IT8). Other interviewees stress that the introduction of a basic income must be accompanied by the strengthening of public employment agencies (IT4) and of active labour market policies, and particularly of a job training system more in line with the skills effectively scarce in the labour market (IT3; IT4).

[183] I have collected *divergent* opinions by M5S' interviewees about the unions' attitudes towards the *reddito di cittadinanza*. In some cases, they argue that '*the unions agree with our proposal because it includes a job conditionality*' (IT6; in this sense, also IT7). Nevertheless, Ciprini argues that *'the unions are not enthusiast with the* reddito di cittadinanza*, they consider it as a right to laze*', while other

> labourist *ideology. The M5S arrived without any ideological elaboration, and made of the basic income a strong suit* [cavallo di battaglia]. *[…] the GJM put into the scene other social sectors lacking union representation, such as the call-centre workers, the job-on-call workers… the unions are completely NOT able to dialogue with them. They try to create internal offices to dialogue* [such as the NIDIL][184], *but they never succeeded to do that*[185]. *Grillo understood that there is a sector lacking representation, nor the open-ended worker who becomes a PD voter, nor the organised one, affiliated to the CGIL. Therefore, there is a period in which the M5S positioned itself as the representative of those sectors opposed to the* systemic powers, *and, on the other hand, to the "over-protected workers", guaranteed by corrupted unions. Later, Grillo stopped to do these claims, because when you reach 30% of votes, you cannot afford to exclude some sectors*'.

7.6 The Electorate of the M5S. The Party of the Outsiders?

In this section, I will briefly analyse the sociological characteristics of M5S' electorate in the 2013 general elections (in which the party experienced its boom), by using data from ITANES (Italian National Elections Studies) Post-Electoral Survey and focusing on the eventual relevance of the insider-outsider divide as a valid predictor.

The existing electoral analyses over the M5S generally agree on the catch-all characteristics of the party (e.g., Biorcio and Natale, 2013; Corbetta and Gualmini, 2013; Diamanti, 2013). The M5S began attracting, in its early phase (from the constitution of the LCCs to 2012), mainly left-of-centre voters concentrated in the 'Red Zone', and rapidly expanded itself throughout all the regions, all the job sectors and all the

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interviewees state that '*they fear to become redundant*' (IT5) or that *'I cannot tell you any name of a prominent union leader having backed our proposal*' (IT9).

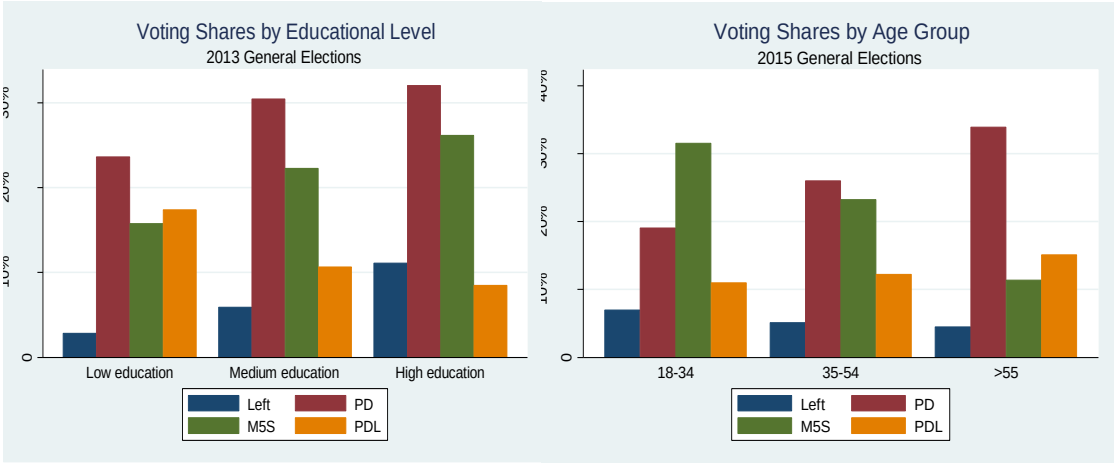
[184] For an overview of the organizational attempts by European unions to expand their membership towards the outsiders, see Gumbrell-McCormick (2011).

[185] In this sense, see also Choi and Mattoni (2010).

ideological spectrum, with the exclusion of the retired workers, much more likely to remain 'loyal' to the 'mainstream' parties (the PD and the PDL – the Berlusconi's party). Using data at the municipal level for 2014 European Elections, Riera and Russo (2015) showed that the support for the M5S increased in those municipalities with high levels of abstention and economic stagnation. To my knowledge, multivariate analyses of the M5S' electorate at the individual level for 2013 general elections have been not published yet. In this section, I will partially fill the gap, and pay particular attention to the M5S' ability of attracting the outsiders, a category that had showed little support to the Italian left-of-centre parties (see section 7.2).

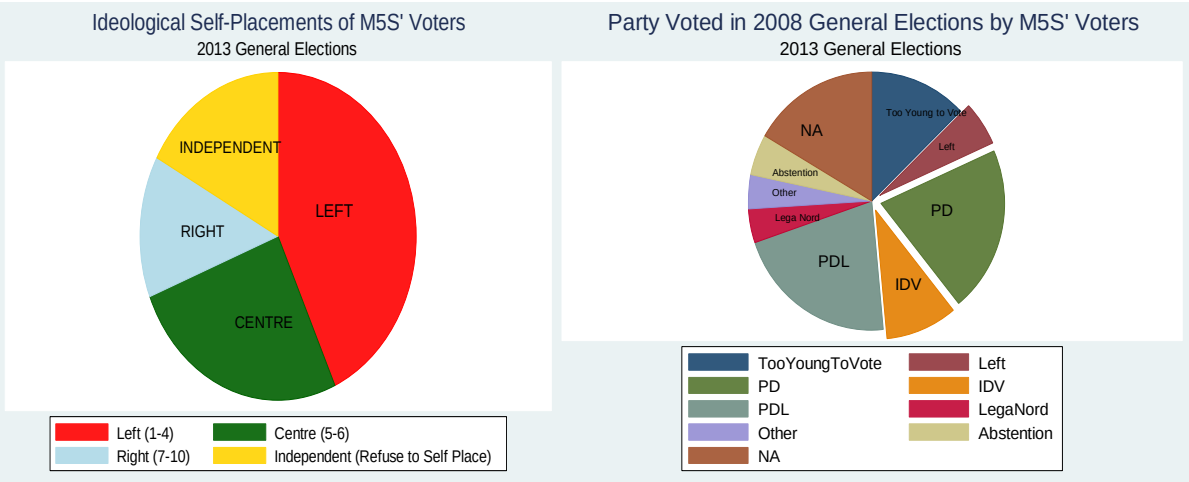
Even a brief overview stresses the differences between Podemos and M5S' electorates. Similarly to Podemos, the M5S is particularly strong among the youth, and its support is positively correlated with the educational level. However, the M5S does not reach higher support than the PD in any educational levels (Figure 7.4), differently from Podemos in comparison with the PSOE (see Section 7.6). Even more strikingly, the M5S is able to attract voters from the entire ideological spectrum and from different previous party preferences (Figure 7.5): less than 50% of M5S' voters had voted for left-of-centre parties in 2008, although 'former leftist' M5S' voters still outnumbered M5S' voters having expressed their preference for right-of-centre parties (PDL and Northern League) in 2008. The M5S has attracted 20% of the 'leftist' voters, 11% of the 'rightist' voters, 25% of the 'centrist' voters and 27% of the 'independent' voters in the sample. In sum, the electorate of the M5S is *slightly* skewed towards the centre-left, but it is more likely to refuse any ideological label, consistently with the party's rhetoric.

Figure 7.4 Voting Shares by Educational Level and Age group (ITANES 2013).



Source: Author's Elaboration.

Figure 7.5 Previous Party Preferences and Ideological Self-Placements of M5S' Voters (ITANES 2013).



Source: Author's Elaboration.

Table 7.2 Opinions over M5S' Ideological Positioning according to Party Voted and Individual Ideological Self-Placement (ITANES 2013).

Opinion over M5S' Ideological Positioning	Ideological Self-Placement								
	Left		Centre		Right		Independent		Total
	Other	M5S	Other	M5S	Other	M5S	Other	M5S	
Left	29	66	31	10	32	22	22	26	31
Centre	26	19	22	59	21	31	20	21	25
Right	16	3	8	10	14	19	4	3	11
Do Not Know	30	12	40	21	33	28	55	50	33

Source: Author's Elaboration.

The M5S then does seem a ‘catch-all’ or a ‘post-ideological’ party. However, the true source of strength of the M5S is its ability to be perceived as closer to the *respective ideological self-placement of its voters*. Said otherwise, M5S’ voters tend to estimate the M5S’ ideological positioning according to *their own personal preferences* (see Table 7.2). For instance, 66% of M5S’ ‘leftist’ voters consider the M5S a left-of-centre party (and only a 3% consider it a right-of-centre party), while 59% of the M5S’ ‘centrist’ voters consider it a centrist party. Few respondents consider the M5S a right-of-centre party: still, this percentage reaches its maximum amongst M5S’ ‘rightist’ voters, who are also less likely to consider it a left-of-centre party. Interestingly, ‘independent’ voters (i.e., refusing to self-place along the left-right axis) are more likely to refuse to give an opinion over the ideological positioning of the MoVement.

It has been often said that the M5S initially attracted left-of-centre voters, particularly in the ‘Red Zone’, and then it expanded throughout all Italy and the entire ideological spectrum. Data seem to partially confirm these analyses: the ‘hard core’ voters of the M5S, those having decided to vote for the party at least a week before the election day, are overrepresented among those self-placing at the Left (85%) or refusing any ideological label (77%), and underrepresented among ‘rightist’ voters (63%). However, in the ‘Red Zone’ the percentage of ‘hard core’ voters for the M5S is quite low (68%): still higher than in conservative North-Eastern Italy (48%), where the competition form the Northern League was stronger, but far below the well-to-do North-Western zone (91%), Central Italy (87%) and Southern Italy (77%), where the M5S had established deeper roots since the Sicilian electoral campaign. In general, the M5S seemed to have already developed a certain rootedness, as its percentage of ‘undecided voters’ (23%) was not significantly different from the entire sample.

What about the *social categories* supporting above than average the M5S? Was the M5S in 2013 really able to represent an interclass electorate, or were some categories particularly overrepresented? Which were the main characteristics and policy preferences predicting the decision of voting for the M5S? Similarly to the other

chapters devoted to the case studies, I present here a multivariate analysis, relying on the 2013 ITANES post-electoral survey dataset, through two different multinominal logistic regression models using the vote for the main left-of-centre party (the PD) the baseline category[186]. I first proceeded to categorise the job sector of the respondents, by relying on the information available in the ITANES questionnaire (which, unfortunately, did not follow the ISCO-08 categories, as the Spanish CIS did). Due to the quite low number of respondents (N=1508), I reduced the precision of the typology, in comparison with the analysis for the Spanish case in Chapter 7. For instance, I merged mixed-service and lower-service functionaries into a unique category ('White Collar'), which served as baseline category. I then built the following categorization:

- Unemployed Worker;
- Blue Collar Worker;
- White Collar Worker;
- Entrepreneur/Manager/Liberal Professional (doctors, lawyers....);
- Petty Bourgeoisie (shopkeepers, small entrepreneurs with less than five salaried workers, self-employed artisans…);
- Student;
- Retired Worker;
- Unpaid Domestic Worker.

[186] The different ideological composition of the electorates notwithstanding, M5S' voters in the ITANES sample reported a higher propensity to vote for the PD in the future than all the other parties. It seems then interesting to compare directly the characteristics of the M5S' electorate with those of the voters of the most important alternative party.

I then added in the models some usual sociological control variables such as gender, age group (18-34; 35-54 and older than 54), educational level (1='Primary Education'; 3='University Education'), as well as the size of the municipality of residence (1='less than 10,000 inhabitants'; 3='more than 100,000 inhabitants'). For the ideological self-placement of the respondents, I built a four-fold categorization: 'Left' (1-4 in a 1-10 scale), 'Centre' (5-6), 'Right' (7-10) and 'Independent' (which includes the respondents explicitly refusing to position themselves in the scale), while coding as missing the 'do not know/do not respond' values. I also included in both models a dummy variable for the eventual union membership, to capture the mobilising effects of the unions.

In the second model, I added to the regressors mentioned above a set of independent variables assessing the influences of some individual behaviours, attitudes and preferences typically considered as 'close' to the M5S' political culture on the propensity to vote for the MoVement. The 'anti-party' discourse of the M5S is operationalized through a dummy variable measuring the 'trust on political parties'[187]. The 'anti-representative' *flatus* of the MoVement, visible in its recurrent call for the restoration of the popular sovereignty through initiatives inspired by the principle of direct democracy, has been measured through a dummy variable linked to the following question: 'If Italians could decide over political questions without depending on politicians, Italy would work better'. Other two regressors measure Eurosceptic attitudes[188] and support for redistributive measures[189], both of them usually associated with the M5S' programmatic platform. The consistency between the call for an 'active participation' of the citizens and the effective composition of the electoral base of the party has been measured through a categorical variable dividing the respondents in three tertiles, according to their involvement in sixteen different forms of participation (such as signing petitions, participation in public debates, affiliation to unions or civic

[187] 1='Very high or high trust on political parties'.
[188] 1='Very high or high trust on the EU'.
[189] 'Government should reduce income differences between citizens' (0-3 scale).

associations…). A regressor measures the Internet activism of the respondents, through a 0-2 scale relying on six different possible activities (such as visiting website or Facebook profiles of party candidates, sharing photos or videos of some parties or candidates, participating in on-line forums and debates…). Finally, in the absence of a question asking for the individual or familiar income, I opted for relying on a subjective indicator of economic insecurity (‘Did you experience economic or job-related troubles during the last year?’), operationalized through a dummy variable.

Table 7.3 Determinants of Voting Choice, 2013 General Elections (Multinomial Logit Models. Reference Category: Voting for the PD).

	MODEL 1								MODEL 2							
	Left		M5S		PDL		Abstentio		Left		M5S		PDL		Abstention	
Unemployed	0.66		**0.92**	**	0.48		0.47		0.41		0.69		0.46		0.57	
Blue Collar	0.26		**0.70**	*	0.80		0.38		0.24		**0.81**	**	0.58		0.33	
Entrepreneur/Manager/LibProf	-0.15		0.62		0.36		-0.09		-0.13		0.72		0.49		0.00	
PettyBourgoise/Self-Employed Worker	-1.40		**1.09**	***	0.49		0.52		-1.44		**0.94**	**	0.25		0.44	
Student	0.19		**0.90**	*	-0.79		0.23		0.23		**1.26**	**	-0.47		0.48	
Retired	-0.58		-0.11		0.14		0.19		-0.54		0.19		0.28		0.34	
Homemaker	0.38		**1.75**	***	0.93		**1.37**	***	0.35		**1.40**	***	0.78		**1.11**	**
Size of Municipality	**0.39**	*	**0.23**	*	-0.12		0.18		0.35		0.15		-0.26		0.06	
Educational Level	0.48		0.03		-0.38		**-0.58**	***	0.35		0.13		-0.31		**-0.40**	*
Fixed-Term	0.53		**1.04**	***	-0.14		0.72		0.47		**0.82**	*	-0.07		0.69	
Age Group	-0.06		**-0.57**	***	-0.17		-0.31		-0.06		-0.33		-0.18		-0.29	
Centre	-0.35		**1.53**	***	**3.52**	***	**1.88**	***	-0.16		**1.67**	***	**3.46**	***	**1.79**	***
Right	**-12.89**	***	**2.89**	***	**7.73**	***	**4.24**	***	**-12.22**	***	**3.73**	***	**8.41**	***	**5.02**	***
Independent	0.51		**2.05**	***	**3.47**	***	**3.34**	***	0.62		**1.93**	***	**3.45**	***	**3.04**	***
Female	-0.17		0.05		0.03		-0.03		0.03		0.30		0.05		0.07	
Union Member	0.20		0.04		**-0.97**	*	**-1.82**	***	-0.08		0.10		**-1.08**	*	**-1.63**	**
Participation Scale									0.22		-0.23		-0.11		**-0.49**	***
Trust on Parties									0.14		**-1.14**	**	-0.03		**-0.73**	*
Trust on EU									-0.01		**-0.71**	***	-0.15		-0.29	
Citizens should directly decide									-0.14		**0.49**	**	-0.07		0.25	
Internet Use Scale									0.14		**0.44**	***	-0.11		-0.04	
Government should Redistribute Income									0.37	*	0.08		-0.10		-0.15	
Own Economic Problem									0.07		**0.81**	***	0.19		0.30	
Constant	**-3.15**	***	-1.03		**-3.45**	***	-0.70		-4.10	***	**-2.21**	**	**-2.78**	**	-0.21	
N	1405								1307							
R2	0.21								0.24							

Source: Author's Elaboration, using data from 2013 ITANES Post-Electoral Survey. The models include an additional, residual category of the dependent variable, not shown here. All models robust to heteroskedasticity. Sampling weights applied. White Collar is the reference category for the independent variables concerning the job sector. p<0.10=*; p<0.05=**; p<0.01=***.

Both models confirm that the M5S' voters are positioned quite to the right of PD's voters: an unsurprising finding, as 80% of the voters for the PD self-placed to the left of the political spectrum, while an additional 14% opted for the 'Centre' option. Most importantly, *particularly when the dependent variable is the vote for the M5S*, the coefficients of the regressors referring to the job category reach statistical significance. This implies that, *contra* the usual description of the electorate of the M5S as interclassist (Diamanti et al., 2013; Corbetta and Gualmini, 2013; Corbetta, 2017), the job condition played (at least in 2013) a quite relevant role in influencing the decision of voting for the MoVement. In particular, the 'petty bourgeoisie' (including self-employed workers), together with students, unpaid domestic workers, fixed-term workers and (to a slightly lesser extent) unemployed and blue-collar workers are clearly overrepresented amongst the electorate of the M5S. With the exception of the blue-collars, all of these categories share an *outsider* condition and surely do not form part of the typical core-constituencies of the Italian left-of-centre parties and unions (whose 'mobilising' role is only partially confirmed by the models, in the sense that union membership is negatively correlated with voting for the PDL or with abstention, but *not* with voting for the M5S).

Holding a fixed-term contract, in particular, seems a very strong predictor for M5S' vote: while a meagre 15% of the 'insider white collars' in the sample, voted for the M5S, 32% of the 'outsider white collars' did. Similarly, 19% of the 'insider blue collars', and 33% of the 'outsider' ones voted for the M5S. The comparison between M5S' and PD's electorates offers interesting findings when focusing on voters having a leftist ideological affiliation. 53% of the leftist voters voted for the PD and 20% of them for the M5S (an additional 11% opted for the Radical Left). Nevertheless, the differences in the voting shares of the two main parties almost disappeared amongst 'leftist unemployed workers' (PD: 39%; M5S: 33%; Radical Left: 14%) and amongst 'leftist fixed-term workers' (PD: 36%; M5S: 31%; Radical Left: 15%).

It thus seems that the M5S' electorate assumed quite *popular* traits, in the sense that its 'People' is either 'unprotected/unguaranteed' or not particularly well to do. This

is confirmed by the second model, in which additional variables are included. Actually, the voters of the M5S reported much more than average to have been in economic troubles during the twelve months preceding the elections[190]. In addition, they were much more Eurosceptic than average and showed the lowest trust on political parties (even less than those voters opting for abstaining), while they tended to agree with the direct democratic principle. The voters of the M5S also reported higher levels of 'Internactivism', while off-line participation was quite low and the variable measuring pro-statist attitudes did not reach statistical significance.

Thus, while the vote for all the other main parties is mostly completely explained by ideological preferences, the vote for the M5S seems highly affected by job and economic conditions and by policy preferences and 'anti-caste' attitudes. While the relevance of *organisational* connections (particularly with territorially-based movements) for explaining the strength in some geographical areas has been stressed in Section 7.4.2 and confirmed by other analyses (Mosca, 2014), the data presented in this section allow for confirming the centrality of the *programmatic linkages* for attracting specific social constituencies and voters holding preferences similar to the 'core-values' of the MoVement (see Figure 7.3).

Of course, these considerations hold for 2013, when the M5S suddenly became the Italian most voted party in the middle of a major social, economic and political crisis. Corbetta (2017) has forcefully argued that the electorate of the M5S is experiencing a sort of 'normalization' since 2013, as it stabilised its support and was able to expand itself amongst social sectors (such as the white collars employed in the public sectors, or the pensioners) previously sceptic towards Grillo's populist project. It must also be stressed that some reforms (such as the labour market reform called 'Jobs Act') of the government led by the centrist PD's leader Matteo Renzi have been harshly attacked by the unions (and particularly by the CGIL), while others (such as the *Buona*

[190] Unemployment condition lost its statistical significance in the second model. Multicollinearity must be taken into consideration, though: while 44% of the sample reported to have suffered from economic troubles during the previous twelve months, the percentage reached 88% amongst unemployed workers.

Scuola, a reform of the secondary school system) have provoked important mobilizations and critiques by constituencies traditionally close to the centre-left.

7.7 Conclusions

The salvific role played by the 'Web' in the M5S' discourse has inspired the conceptualization of the M5S as a form of '*Web Populism*' (Biorcio and Natale, 2013), and drove the attention of academic scholars towards the use (and the theorization) of the Internet by Grillo and Casaleggio and the own activists and voters of the M5S (e.g., Tronconi, 2015; Ceri and Veltri, 2017). Instead, I stressed here the *instrumental use*, by the M5S, of the 'Web rhetoric', to highlight its difference with 'old politics' and to flaunt its 'modernist' features. Concretely, the 'Web' is little more than an 'empty signifier' that allows for the emergence of those latent, dispersed or sectorial demands lacking both the attention they deserved in the mass media and the organizational power to have an influence in the polity domain. The 'Web' stands for the *Citizens*, and particularly the *atomised, powerless* citizens sensitive to Grillo's denounces and to programmatic appeals, through either specific policy proposals or a general critique against *the way politics works in Italy*. The MoVement's mission, then, is to 're-occupy' the State, illegitimately captured by specific, obscure and powerful interest groups.

In some sense, the M5S represents a sort of 'archetype' of the *participative-mobilising populism*, as it officially identifies – more than other experiences analysed here – the 'true solution' in the *direct occupation of the institutions and of the decision-making process by the Citizens*. The M5S' official discourse, at least in its early phase, highlighted more the *method to be used to generate policy production* than the actual content of the proposals. *Democracy* is equated with the *sovereignty of the Citizenry*, intended as the *natural* outcome of the preferences of *individual citizens* who would

propose individual bills or programmatic points, discuss and reach an agreement over them and then decide by majority rule. Both at the national (through the platform *Rousseau*) and at the local level (through the *MeetUps*), the activists of the M5S are 'educated' to *participate* in a project explicitly refusing any (formal) power stratification and based on a few central principles: direct democracy, environmentalism, defence of the 'commons', defence of the 'Small' (producers, salaried workers, unemployed and precarious workers) against the 'Big'.

However, the M5S has been also able to attract those voters more discontent and detached from politics[191]. Differently from *Podemos*, the electorate of the M5S has assumed a more popular profile and, at the same time, it seems more critic towards 'politics' (and not just the 'system') and less driven by strongly redistributive preferences. The numerous critiques against the 'neoliberal order' and the desire for a new phase, even at the European level, in order to end with austerity, are *never* accompanied by 'anti-capitalist' theoretical arguments or public declarations. Corruption, inefficiencies, pressures from the 'lobbies' (all of them product of the lack of a 'democratic' control over the State by the 'sovereign citizens') would prevent the Italian society from giving a solution to the problems of low economic growth, high taxation and high poverty rates. The 'post-ideology' of the M5S consists, actually, of an excellent communicative ability (managed and controlled from the party centre) of 'owning' most of the main *valence issues* in the current political debate, under the 'master frame' corresponding to the promise of *democratic regeneration and reappropriation*. The other side of such a 'master frame' is a strong *anti-caste(s)* rhetoric, attacking most of the political *and social* structures of intermediation (particularly those 'powerful', 'ideologised' or 'close to partisan or partial interests') and likely to be more appealing to 'unengaged' citizens.

[191] A mere 41% of M5S' voters in 2013 reported to be 'very' or 'quite' interested to politics, compared with 64% of Radical Left's voters, 53% of PD's voters and 30% of PDL's voters (ITANES 2013 Post-Electoral Survey data).

‘High’ and ‘Low’ appeals (to use Ostiguy's terms); the promise for a ‘new way to do politics’ together with crude, often generic and violent attacks towards the *Caste*; the defence of local communities against *poteri forti* and the importance assigned to a web-based, individual (even *atomised*) form of political participation; all of these aspects coexist in the M5S and show the high degree of ‘customization’ of its *electoral* linkages. Similarly, its centralising and decentralising organizational features favours a parallel ‘customization’ of its *organizational* linkages, and a higher adaptive capacity to the *fragmented and latent* demands nurtured by the Great Recession.

While the M5S offered a solution to *social* fragmentation, the Italian Left, on the one side, did not successfully appealed to sectors different from its core-constituencies; on the other side, it even *multiplied* the *political* fragmentation. The apparent paradox is that most of the divisions within the Italian Left were provoked by the attempts of ‘unifying the Left’, from the PD to the Radical Left, to contrast ‘Berlusconism’. Differently from the near totality of Western Europe, the Italian Radical Left eternally discussed over the opportunity of allying with the major left-of-centre party (its centripetal turn notwithstanding) in order to avoid being accused of ‘leaving Italy in the hands of Berlusconi’. Once this enemy was temporarily defeated, the divisions erupted, both at the partisan and at the societal levels. Under Prodi’s government (2006-2008), the PRC lost most of its political capital patiently built during the first half of the 2000s. Then, in 2011, when Monti was appointed as PM, the Left again divided. SEL pursued the alliance with the PD and lost any credibility as ‘antineoliberal actor’ within the Leftist *milieu*. The CGIL, probably the strongest ‘civil society’ actor and often the leading player in the public sphere when the Left stood in the opposition, tried to keep its linkages with the PD in order to limit the ‘technocratic *hybris*’ of the government. The Communist fractions further fell into the trap of ideological sectarianism. In sum, the Left offered to the growing M5S the monopoly of the *democratic, sovereignist and antagonistic discourse.*

According to the analysis by Comodo and Forni (2017), the M5S has strongly consolidated the loyalty of its voters, who are the least likely to abandon the party and the most satisfied with their current voting intention. This capacity of voting retention, together with the strong top-down organisational characteristics, concedes to the party's elites a high 'room of manoeuvre' in strategic and programmatic issues, and accentuated the plebiscitary features of the MoVement. At the same time, there are several hints (Passarelli et al., 2017) pointing at a growing dissatisfaction amongst the *MeetUppers*, and a gradual detachment between the bases and a party in the public office increasingly concentrated on institutional, day-to-day activities – a detachment that further increases the top-down control. The MoVement is *institutionalising*, and intends to be perceived as an 'acceptable' political player by the elites that it always attacked, while probably losing the genuine enthusiasm and vividness initially brought by its grassroots.

The M5S' triumph in the very recent general elections brought the party to assume governmental responsibilities, together with the right-wing populist League. The long negotiations for the formation of the new government confirmed the strong centrality assigned to the party manifesto in the M5S' rhetoric and made the 'verticalization' of the party even clearer. Arguably, if the MoVement faced electoral setbacks in the future, the problems implicit in a process of *institutionalization without stable participation* would come to the fore.

Chapter 8. Venezuela, Uruguay, Portugal and Greece

8.1 The Rise of Venezuelan *Chavismo*.

8.1.1 Critical Antecedents. The Long Crisis of the Punto Fijo Regime

Venezuela has been depicted for a long time as an 'exceptional' country within Latin America, because of its stable and institutionalised party system and its relatively peaceful social sphere, assured by the resources deriving from oil revenues (Ellner, 2008). Nevertheless, the long deterioration of Venezuelan economy, the rigidity of its consociational (and corrupted) political system and the adoption of important 'market-friendly' reforms opened the way to the rise of the populist project led – and even *embodied* – by the former coronel Hugo Chávez.

Venezuela never entered into a long-lasting democratic phase until 1958, when the dictatorship of Pérez Jiménez was overthrown (1948-1958). Pérez Jiménez's dictatorship was preceded by the so-called *trienio* (1945-1948), a period dominated by the figure of Rómulo Betancourt, the founder and unchallenged leader of AD (*Acción Democrática* – Democratic Action), a 'classic populist', nationalist, vaguely social-democrat (but fiercely anti-Communist) party. Betancourt pursued a vast program of labour and social reforms and built an organised base of support through the creation and the corporatist co-optation of industrial and rural unions (Collier and Collier, 1991; Dunning, 2008). The *Trienio* definitively transformed AD into a labour-based party, in which the main working-class peak union (the CTV – *Confederación de los Trabajadores Venezolanos*) played a central organizational role and enjoyed a very high influence within the party and on the policy-making process.

When Venezuela returned to democracy, there were four major parties: AD, COPEI (a Social-Christian and conservative party), URD (a small, left-of-centre party) and the Communists (PCV). Aware of the fragility of the democratic regime, AD, COPEI and URD signed the *Punto Fijo* pact (1958), which included the recognition of private property and the commitment to form a congressional coalition independently from the winner of the 1958 presidential elections (won by Betancourt). *Punto Fijo* was explicitly intended to exclude the PCV, which had been already weakened by the successful co-optation of the union movement by AD during the *Trienio* (Ellner, 2008).

Punto Fijo represented the starting point of a consociational party system. The strong state centralization and the availability of immense oil revenues strengthened the gate-keeping role of the parties and created the incentives for extensive clientelism, corruption and party patronage (Ramos Jiménez, 2002). Venezuela experienced a vast rural-urban migration, product of the aborted agrarian reform and of ISI economic policies damaging the agricultural sector (Cannon, 2009). Sustained economic growth allowed for the inclusion of many newcomers into the industrial sectors, while other kinds of indirect transfers (mainly subsidies on prices and rents) provided some cushions to urban dwellers.

The working-class and the national bourgeoisie were the main beneficiaries of the economic policies of the *Punto Fijo*'s regime. The working-class was incorporated into the political system through the union movement, and benefitted from relatively high salaries and a strong job protection. Wage bargaining was mainly managed by corporatist negotiations, while social actors enjoyed important access to the polity domain through their connections with the dominant parties (AD and COPEI). AD's Labour bureau included union leaders (Murillo, 2001: 48), and the Minister of Labour was traditionally expressed by the unions. The centrality of the union machinery in the internal party struggles was evident in the numerous AD's presidential candidacies (such as Leoni, Pérez and Lusinchi) that emerged thanks to the endorsement by the CTV.

AD was dominant within the CTV, although it did not completely control it. Union elections at all levels were often predetermined, as the political parties used to agree on presenting a single slate. This implied a strong control by the partisan notables (*cogollos*) over the selection of unions' leaders. The lack of competition was cemented by corporatist legal provisions reserving the right to negotiate only to the most representative union (Murillo, 2001). Unions enjoyed enormous influences within the firms, particularly in the public sector[192].

This kind of party-union relationship (easily extendible to other spheres, as the spoil system covered almost all the societal organizations at the time: see Crisp et al., 1996) provoked strong distortional effects. '*A party membership card was a ticket to employment, but after a change of party in government the same card could be a ticket to the unemployment line. The role of the state in regulating dismissals, participating in contract negotiations, and adjudicating disputes offered tremendous opportunity for illicit enrichment*' (Hellinger, 1996: 113). This can explain why, in 1980, AD's membership amounted to 2.3 billion of citizens over a total electorate of 8.5 billion people (Ramos Jiménez, 2002).

Such an immense *proporz* system, in which the ideological differences between the two main parties progressively disappeared, entered in crisis when oil revenues started diminishing and when the effects of currency overvaluation (due to fixed exchange rates) provoked the deterioration of the trade terms. Since the mid-Seventies, Venezuelan economy entered in a long recessive phase. In all the presidential elections from 1973 to 1988, the Venezuelans opted for rewarding the oppositional candidate, arguably looking for an alternative *within the political system* (Ramos Jiménez, 2002). The alternation between *adecos* and *copeyanos* presidents ended in 1989, when the *adeco* Carlos Andrés Pérez won the elections with a 'classic populist' agenda.

192 For instance, 80 percent of the hiring in PDVSA (the state-owned oil company) were decided by the unions, which received generous funding by the state and even by the firms (Hellinger, 1996; Ellner, 2007).

Inflation constantly surpassed 20 percent and annulled the wage increases obtained by the CTV during the first half of Lusinchi's presidency (1983-1988), while fiscal deficits put in peril the reimbursement of the foreign debt. Pérez immediately abandoned his campaign promises, appointed in his cabinet several non-AD technocrats and entrepreneurs, and inaugurated a new economic course called 'Great Turnaround'. This consisted in the '*liberation of exchange rates, interest rates, prices (on all but eighteen basic food items), and trade (reducing tariffs and eliminating nontariff barriers), and the implementation of a restrictive monetary policy, a tax reform, and a program of privatization. To reduce the fiscal deficit, the government cut expenditures, froze public employment, and curtailed subsidies for public services. These policies provoked increases of 50% in utility prices, 30% in transport fares, and 100% in the domestic price of oil*' (Murillo, 2001: 56-57). The 'Great Turnaround' immediately led to impressive popular riots, known as the *Caracazo* (27th February 1989). The army violently repressed the riots, animated by poorly organised popular sectors, provoking hundreds of victims (between 300 and 3,000, according to different estimations).

The *Caracazo* represented a real turning point of the relationship between the *pueblo* and the corrupt Venezuelan political system. The number of protests per year increased and assumed a more confrontational and often violent character (López Maya, 1999; 2005). Riots, land and building occupations, roadblockages and lootings became recurrent. Moreover, the rise of unemployment, the cuts in public spending and the rise of inflation pushed towards contentious activities not only the informal workers, but also the salaried workers in the private and public sectors. Even the CTV, which was notoriously less prone to mobilise under AD's governments (Murillo, 2001), increased its strike activity, as President Pérez followed a technocratic governmental style that soon alienated his congressional support.

The increase in social discontent soon displayed its effects on the political sphere. A series of administrative and political decentralizing reforms tried to remediate to the rigidity of the political system and to limit (for budgetary reasons) the incentives

for clientelism, precisely when programmatic and identitarian linkages were declining (Morgan, 2011). Until 1988, governors and mayors were appointed by the government, thus representing a crucial source of power for AD's and COPEI's *cogollos*. Political decentralization increased the power of local notables, weakened the immense power of the 'party in the central (national) office' and diminished the clientelistic resources available to the national government (Morgan, 2011). Administrative decentralization, together with the shrinking of the public sector (whose contribution to the total employment fell from 23% to 16% during the 1983-1998 period: Cannon, 2009: 36), also limited the possibility of recurring to patronage practices. The social effects produced by the neoliberal turn (such as the rise in unemployment and informality – which reached 13% and 48% in 1997 [CEPAL, 2002]) contributed to weaken the structural power of the CTV, whose union density fell from 25% to 15% during the Nineties (Hawkins, 2010). The dominant parties were not able to expand their linkages to the vast informal sectors: organisational constraints (namely, the influence of the unions over the parties, and particularly AD) and limited access to state resources jeopardised their adaptability to the new social environment.

Institutional reforms offered to new political parties the possibility of challenging the 'dominant bloc'. In 1989, the MAS (a leftist party active since the Seventies with some support from middle-class sectors) won three governorships, while LCR (*La Causa R*, 'The Radical Cause') won the governorship of the important state of Bolívar. LCR represented the most important new challenger to the 'parties of *Punto Fijo*'. It emerged from the so-called 'new unionism', consisting in new participatory practices in the workplaces implemented by leftist unionists since the Seventies in some large factories (such as the steel factory SIDOR) in reaction to the corrupted official unionism. In 1979, LCR began running in political elections and was able to conquer the state of Bolívar and, in 1992, the Caracas' municipality.

LCR was a loosely organised party, which refused any 'leftist' or 'socialist' label, instead stressing its participative and deliberative features. It selected its candidacies and

programs through deliberative local assemblies, although the party's upper levels were *de facto* reserved to union officials coming from 'new unionism'. Its commitment to local and participative democracy, its inclusive (and quite vague) ideology and even its concrete practices (such as the refusal to receive *costas contractuales* and other kinds of benefits reserved to union officials and politicians) represented interesting similarities with the Italian M5S.

However, apart from some minor exceptions, LCR was not able to establish reliable linkages to the community-based movements emerging from the popular sectors (see below), also due to its weak party structures outside its Bolívar's stronghold. Most importantly, LCR consistently refused to adopt a *populist* strategy, according to the definition provided in Chapter 3. Even after its entering into the electoral arena, LCR kept refusing 'electoralism' (Hellinger, 1996) and remained devoted to its founding ideology, which posited the preferential consolidation of an 'alternative power', autonomous from the State, by starting from the direct participation of the (formal) workers into the firms' management in order to improve working class conditions (see Morgan, 2011; Ellner, 2011). This marked a clear contrast with *Chavismo*, which always stressed the *occupation the State structures* as a *conditio sine qua non* to implement concrete changes (Ellner, 2011).

LCR's expansion was favoured by the socio-political climate generated by two failed *coup d'états* attempted in February and November 1992 and led by small, clandestine military movements committed to end with corruption and neoliberal reforms and to restore 'democracy and sovereignty' in Venezuela. The February coup was organised by the MBR-200 (*Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario – 200*[193]). The coup, and particularly the figure MBR-200's leader Hugo Chávez, attracted broad support (particularly amongst popular sectors), evidently and increasingly detached from the Venezuelan political class (Villarroel, 1997). According to Hawkins (2010), corruption, always endemic in Venezuela, began being perceived as a major (even the

193 '200' referred to the bicentenary of the birth of Simón Bolívar.

main) problem since the Nineties, and the figure of Chávez became soon considered as highly credible for addressing it.

Corruption scandals led to Pérez's impeachment and to a brief *interim* presidency. In 1994, for the first time, a candidate that did not belong either to AD or to COPEI won the elections. The winner (with 30% of the votes), was the conservative Rafael Caldera, who was far from being a political outsider, though, as he had been for decades a prominent figure within COPEI. LCR's leader Andrés Velázquez obtained 22% of the votes. Lacking a congressional majority, Caldera (who ran with an anti-neoliberal campaign) found the parliamentary support from his own personal party (*Convergencia*), from important *adecas* and *copeyanas* factions and from the MAS. When Caldera opted for a further 'policy switch' through his *Agenda Venezuela* (a new neoliberal program with IMF's support), AD and the CTV kept supporting the government.

Quite surprisingly, LCR assumed a quite cautious stance over the privatization agenda, and even got involved in some parliamentary pacts with AD (Ellner, 2008). Internal contrasts – favoured by LCR's organisational weakness and its lack of party discipline – provoked serious schisms, such as the foundation of the party 'Fatherland For All' (*Patria Para Todos* [PPT], led by Pablo Medina, a leftist figure), and further weakened LCR (Hellinger, 2003).

Table 8.1 ‘Starting Conditions’ of left-of-centre parties in Venezuela.

FOR EXISTING LEFT-OF-CENTER PARTIES		PARTY "COMPROMISED" WITH NEOLIBERALISM			
		NO		YES	
TIGHTNESS OF THE UNION-PARTY RELATIONSHIP	UNION TYPE				
MEDIUM TO HIGH	MAINSTREAM AND DIALOGUIST	**Leftist Party allied with Mainstream Union**. **RISK:** being perceived as an 'insider party'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking during the mobilizations.		**Labour-Based Mainstream Party**. **RISK:** 'encapsulation' around its core-constituency; loss of working-class trust; being targeted as representative of 'old politics'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** resilience of identitarian or clientelist linkages; size of its core-constituency; moving towards more Leftist positions.	AD, Leftist fractions of COPEI
	MAINSTREAM AND OPPOSITIONAL	**Oppositional Union-Party Hub**. **RISK**: 'workerist' ideology and inability of expanding towards outsiders. **OPPORTUNITIES:** union movement is a credible anti-austerity actor, well-positioned for dialoguing with the movements.		Unlikely empirical combination.	
	MINORITARIAN AND OPPOSITIONAL	**Leftist party with solid links with a radicalized fraction of the labor movement**. **RISKS:** 'workerist' ideology; sectarianism; inability of expanding towards outsiders. **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking with social mobilizations; not associable with conciliatory unions.	La Causa R	Unlikely empirical combination.	
WEAK		**Post-Materialist Leftist Party**. **RISK**: poor credibility in labour issues . **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking with mobilizations; not associable with 'conciliatory' unions.	Partido Comunista de Venezuela	**Center-Left party with a Plural Constituency**. **RISK:** competition both from the Left and from the Right; being targeted as representative of 'old politics'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** moving towards more Leftist positions.	Movimiento al Socialismo

Source: Author’s Elaboration.

8.1.2 Critical Juncture and Social Mobilizations: Fragmented Groups in Competition for Scarce Resources

In sum, by 1998, all the political parties and the CTV seemed highly discredited and identified with neoliberal reforms and widespread corruption. Meanwhile, the economic condition kept deteriorating. Between 1990 and 1997, per capita income fell from US$ 5,192 to US$ 2,858, and poverty rate reached 48% in 1997 (Cannon, 2009: 35). The effects of inflation and of inadequate wage increases were so devastating that no socioeconomic sector (not even the *insiders* of the Venezuelan economy, once enjoying strong labour and social rights) avoided the deterioration of living conditions[194].

In comparison with the rest of the case studies selected in this research, the 'critical juncture' was much longer in Venezuela. External pressures and budgetary constraints forced Pérez and Caldera to follow economic 'orthodoxy'. Nevertheless, Venezuelan working and lower classes were never convinced about the necessity of structural reforms (Weyland, 2004; Corrales and Penfold-Becerra, 2011). Several scholars (e.g., Karl, 1997; Coronil, 1997; Cannon, 2009) pointed at the 'rentier' mentality developed by Venezuelans, as a by-product of their socioeconomic model based on oil revenues. It is not necessary to rely on deterministic, 'culturalist' explanations to argue that there was a big potential for alternative political projects pointing at the widespread corruption (in turn a consequence of a close political system) as the 'true' problem of Venezuela, and thus at denouncing the implementation of austerity measures as erroneous (Coppedge, 2005). Anti-party feelings were mounting, for quite different reasons, though. Both middle-upper classes and the popular sectors

194 According to CEPAL (2002), during the 1990-1997 period, the average income, expressed in multiples of the national poverty line, fell from 4 to 2.9 for public sector workers and from 3.6 to 2.5 for salaried workers in private sectors. The worsening of living condition suffered from self-employed workers and salaried workers in small enterprises, typically occupied in the informal sectors, was even deeper.

increasingly realised that the costs of corruption were far higher than its supposed 'benefits': yet, the upper strata criticised the parties for their excessive control over economy and society, while the popular sectors saw their living conditions worsening due to the demise of the old 'statist socioeconomic matrix'.

Different expectations emerging from an unequal and fragmented society provoked the explosion of particularistic demands, instead of the birth of a broad and somewhat coherent and unified movement asking for the end of austerity and for the demise of the old political class. Venezuela entered, since the Nineties, in a contentious phase marked by the emergence of sectorial or local movements. Political and administrative decentralization nurtured the diffusion of community-based movements, concerned with local problems – obviously deeper in the popular *barrios* - such as health and educational access and housing and land issues.

For a long time, Venezuelan political parties, particularly in the poorest areas, stimulated the creation of *asociaciones de vecinos*, which served as a further organisational linkage to channelize through the parties the demands coming from the neighbourhoods and to recruit party members; in upper-class districts, the *asociaciones* were more autonomous from political parties (García-Guadilla, 2007). In some cases, new parties (specifically La Causa R, under Istúriz's administration of Caracas) were able to establish linkages with popular *asociaciones*, thanks to conciliatory strategies towards disruptive forms of protests (typically, land occupations). Nevertheless, it has also been reported the resilient ability by the *adecos* of fuelling popular protests through the *asociaciones* for political reasons (López Maya, 1999). At the same time, the *asociaciones de vecinos* in wealthier districts were more focused on self-defence and on 'universalist' demands against extensive corruption, usually framed through an anti-party rhetoric (Levine, 2002). In sum, during the 1990s (and well beyond), the *popular* (the *pueblo*) and *civil society* (the *sociedad civil*) associations, albeit united by their recurrent attacks against the *partidocracia*, belonged to two worlds apart (García-Guadilla, 2007). *Popular associations* claimed for the concrete fulfilment of basic needs

in their neighbourhoods, while *civil society organisations* struggled for the protection of private poverty and for an improvement of civil and political rights, following a liberal-democratic inspiration.

Social fragmentation within the popular class, due to different job status conditions, nurtured the creation of unstable and short-lived associations representing specific sectors, such as pensioners and street vendors (*buhoneros*). All these sectors, together with popular *asociaciones*, soon proved to be quite sympathetic to Chávez's figure, and, conversely, showed strong discontent towards the ruling *adecos*. Their repertoires of protest steadily radicalised during the Nineties: their emergence clearly responded to the necessity of organising popular neighbours to compete more effectively for scarce (public) resources, while maintaining an instrumental relationship with political parties (López Maya, 2005). In sum, alliance building was impeded by the high fragmentation of the sectorial and territorial demands and by organizational weaknesses.

8.1.3 The Rise of Chavismo: Ideology, Party Organization and Social Bases of a Leader-Initiated Populist Project

Chávez had become a popular figure in Venezuela since his failed coup. He led a very small clandestine (albeit tolerated) group, the MBR-200, whose membership increased after the *Caracazo*, as several middle and low rank officials joined it in reaction to the disproportionate repression ordered by the government. From the cult of Simón Bolívar and other popular anti-colonial nineteen-century figures, the MBR-200 derived its central principles: nationalism, anti-imperialism, struggle against corruption, restoration of 'popular sovereignty' and of a 'true', 'Radical' democracy against 'rancid' and 'squalid' Venezuelan oligarchies. A central programmatic point soon elaborated by

Chávez and his fellows during their period in detention (1992-1994) was the call for a Constituent Assembly, which would have led to the final demise of *puntofijismo*.

Chávez took contacts with some LCR's and MAS' partisan cadres in view of the coup, although they at the end retired their support, thus deepening the isolation of the MBR-200. The rupture between Chávez and LCR became more severe in the following years, when LCR included several Chávez's fellows within its slates to capture some of the popular support soon attracted by the 'February coup'. In turn, Chávez entered in contact with several leftist[195] intellectuals and politicians from minor parties.

The MBR-200 began considerably growing since Chávez's release (1994). The structure of the MBR-200 was quite hierarchical: a 'Directorate', led by Chávez, elaborated the political goals, centred on the call for a National Constituent Assembly and on the building of both a 'Constituent Power' to be developed at the municipal level, in order to trigger popular participation, *and* a change of the Venezuelan productive model, to strengthen 'popular economy'. To achieve these goals, the MBR-200 worked for strengthening the territorial diffusion, at the local level, of the *Bolivarian Circles*, small units composed less than ten members dedicating to propaganda activities. Other intermediate, coordinating structures were appointed from above. Despite a certain organisational consolidation, the MBR-200 lacked a true presence throughout Venezuela. At that time (1992-1996), the 'insurgent' tactic had not been discarded yet, and the MBR-200 officially supported abstentionism. In 1996, a public manifesto (*Todos con el Comandante Chávez*) stimulated a lively debate within Caracas' middle classes and attracted new cadres to the movement. Chávez, aware of his public popularity, convinced his comrades to pursue the electoral strategy and to create an 'electoral arm' (Izarra, 2004).

In MBR-200's congress held in Valencia (April 1997), Chávez and his inner circle, together with other leftist figures, founded the MVR (*Movimiento Quinta*

195 The contacts were not limited to leftist figures, though. For instance, an important political advisor of Chávez was, at that time, Norberto Ceresole, an Argentine theorist considered very close to right-wing extremism and to the military movement known as *'carapintadas'* (Ramonet, 2009).

República, 'Fifth Republic Movement'). Chávez assumed the charge of 'National Director' of the party. In the first article of its statute, the MVR was defined as a '*broad political movement, open and unitary, which defends the interest of the* pueblo *and of the Venezuelan nation*'. The Statute fully recognised the legitimacy of the 'democratic method'. In addition, the 'Political Action Strategy' of the MVR specified that:

> the '"Project Fifth Republic" *aims to create* constituent patriotic circles *helping to a pragmatic, political goal: to edify a* real constituent power *in the streets, a power* […] *defending the patriotic and democratic measures established by the Fifth.* […] *The detachment of the political leaders from the* pueblo *jeopardises the survival of the so-called* democratic system. *It is the time to give the* pueblo *back its sovereignty:* […] *we need to design a truly, genuinely participative democracy, to give a central* (protagónico) *role to the citizenry* (Pereira, 2001: 10).

Thus, Chávez's *populist* strategy consisted in the progressive construction and articulation of a 'new power' in the streets, alternative not to the *State* (which had to be *reconstituted* and occupied by the 'sovereign People'), but to the *puntofijismo*, which had illegitimately occupied it. To be sure, the claim for a 'participative democracy' did not extend to the party organization, which assumed a quasi-military aspect (visible even in the names of the organs) centred on its leadership. To form the MVR, the MBR-200 nominated a 'Bolivarian Superior Council', formed by the National Direction of the MBR-200 and by some delegates from the regional levels (which were directly appointed from the National Direction, though). The 'Bolivarian Superior Council' deliberated the creation of the MVR, through the appointment of a 'National Strategic Direction' (*Dirección Estratégica Nacional*, DEN): 60% of DEN's members came from MBR-200's ranks, 40% from outside. Amongst DEN's members, Chávez appointed 15 figures forming the executive organ of the MVR, the 'Tactic National Command' (*Comando Táctico Nacional*, CTN).

The CTN appointed all the seven DEZs (*Direcciones Estratégicas de Zona*), a sort of mesoterritorial partisan structures with the task of promoting the creation and territorial expansion of the basic units of the party, the 'Patriotic Circles' (*Círculos Patrióticos*, CP). The CPs were similar to the Círculos Bolivarianos of the MBR-200 and represented the '*expression of the structures of primary political participation of the* pueblo', based on '*the Bolivarian conception of political participation as a fundamental form of expression of the sovereignty*' (Izarra, 2004: 34). The CPs were intended to elect some coordinating organs at the local level, but at the end the CTN did not implement the relevant statute provision and retained the full control of all the mesoterritorial structures (Izarra, 2004).

The government scheduled the parliamentary elections for November 1998, one month before the presidential ones. This was a strategy for taking advantage of the stronger rootedness of traditional parties, hoping for a bandwagon effect on presidential elections. The strategy proved to be counterproductive: AD only obtained 24% of the votes and elected 62 deputies, and COPEI 12% (28 deputies), while the MVR reached a very promising 20% (46 deputies). Good results were also obtained by the MAS (17 deputies) and by the PPT (7 deputies, one more than LCR). The parliamentary elections made clear that the old parties had no chance to elect their own candidates to the presidency. AD and COPEI then retired their support for their official candidates and endorsed a third, right-wing candidate (Salas Roemer). Chávez was supported by the *Polo Patriótico*, an electoral alliance composed by the MVR and several left-of-centre parties (MAS, PPT, MEP, PCV), and won with the 56% of the valid votes.

Chávez aggregated an inter-classist electoral base. Although Salas Roemer won amongst the upper classes, Chávez was able to include in his electorate vast segments belonging to *all* the social sectors (Pereira, 2001; Handlin, 2013), and *particularly* to the middle classes (Wilpert, 2007: 19). Morgan (2011) and Handlin (2013) found that class was *not* a predictor for *chavista* voting in 1998, although other studies found a (slightly) more than average support amongst the popular sectors (see Cannon, 2009: 42). The data

that I analysed from 1998 *Latinobarómetro* survey confirmed that neither occupational category nor class (measured through years of schooling) were associated to the vote for the MVR or the other parties belonging to the *Polo Patriótico*. For instance, 46% of the respondents in the *Latinobarómetro*'s sample with some primary or secondary education completed reported their voting intention for a *Polo Patriótico*'s party. This percentage even *increased* (up to 52%) amongst those with some university education. As Morgan (2011) demonstrated, a valid predictor for *chavista*'s voting, if compared with the traditional parties (AD and COPEI), was its lack of affiliation to the CTV.

Nor *chavista* electorate was particularly skewed to the Left. According to 1998 *Latinobarómetro* data, the average self-positioning of MVR's voters in the left-right axis was 5.56 (1-10 scale), quite to the left of Salas Roemer's voters (7.07) but still to the right of PPT's voters (4.25). 57% of the respondents self-placing at the left (less than 5 in a 1-10 scale) of the political spectrum declared to be MVR's voters, compared with 45% of 'centrist' voters and 32% of 'rightist' voters (more than 6 in the 1-10 scale). Such an ideological heterogeneity was confirmed by other studies, such as Pereira's analysis (2001), which found that, in 2000, *Chavistas* placed themselves, on average (6.45 in a 1-10 scale), at the *right* of the political spectrum.

It was only after the beginning of his governmental period that Chávez disproportionately increased his popularity amongst the poorest sectors and, conversely, middle and upper[196] classes began retired their support. At the beginning (2009-2011), Chávez's government pursued quite 'orthodox' fiscal and macroeconomic policies, although he resisted to pressures for advancing with the privatizations of the social security system and PDVSA (Ellner, 2008: 110-112). Chávez even repeatedly mentioned Tony Blair's *Third Way* as the socioeconomic ideology better suited to address Venezuelan problems: the State was intended to regulate, stimulate and promote the economic process, while the market had to '*fulfil the laws of supply and demand*' (see Cannon, 2009: 80). The new 'Bolivarian' Constitution (see below) described the

[196] Even important sectors within FEDECAMARAS supported and financed 1998 Chávez's campaign (Pereira, 2001).

socioeconomic system of Venezuela as based on 'social justice, democratisation, efficiency, free competition, protection of the environment, productivity and solidarity' (Article 299), while confirming budgetary moderation and Central Bank's autonomy (Cannon, 2009: 105). In 2001, the drop on oil prices forced Chávez to impose drastic budgetary cuts, a measure that dramatically affected its popularity, which dropped from 60-70% to 30-40% (Wilpert, 2007: 23-24).

A much 'regenerative' effort was put on *political* reforms. During 1999 and 2000, most of the energies were devoted to the full renovation of the political class. Chávez firstly called for a National Constituent Assembly, in which the parties belonging to the *Polo Patriótico* obtained 125 out of 131 seats. An overwhelming majority (86%) of the voters then ratified the new Constitution. In July 2000,'mega-elections' were held: all elective officials (the President, the new Parliament, the governorships and the mayors of all the Venezuelan municipalities) were elected under the new Constitution. Chávez again won the presidential race with 60% of the votes, against the oppositional candidate Arias Cárdenas (a former Chávez's army fellow, backed by LCR), while Chávez's supporters won 104 out of 165 National Assembly seats, 17 out of 23 state governorships and roughly half of the municipal mayorships (Wilpert, 2007: 22). The slightly deceptive results at the local level evidenced the poor rootedness of MVR's partisan structure (Pereira, 2001).

The Constitution approved in 1999 included several references to 'Bolivarianism' and the principle of 'participatory democracy'. The drafting process has been described as a 'highly participatory enterprise', as more than half of the articles relied on suggestions coming from Venezuelan 'civil society organizations' (particularly those concerned with human right issues, or with a focus on social rights and gender equality: see García-Guadilla, 2007). Even most important, for the purposes of this research, were the constitutional articles promoting the 'democratisation' of the country, through the inclusion of different participatory tools. Several constitutional provisions interestingly anticipated some of the 'historic' demands of the Italian M5S, like the prohibition of

public party funding (Article 67), the call for a 'democratisation' of the unions (Article 95), the provision of different types of popular referenda (Articles 71-74: see Wilpert, 2007: 34-35). Together with the extension of the presidential term (from five to six years) and the possibility of re-election, these provisions had been (justifiably) criticised for conducing Venezuela towards a 'plebiscitarian' democracy[197].

Like the M5S, which experienced some tensions between 'pragmatic' and 'orthodox' MPs (the latter group being closer to the *MeetUps*), the *Chavista* movement saw the emergence of (at least) two broad factions (e.g., Ellner, 2008), although in *chavismo* such a factionalism took much clearer forms. While *Chavistas* 'soft-liners' defended a gradual transformation of the economic system into a mixed model, the 'hard-liners' pushed for a transformative project towards 'socialist' directions and for a faster 'democratisation' of the Venezuelan economy through the development of an alternative productive system based on a vast network of cooperatives (see, among others, Lucena, 2008; Ellner, 2011), on the reversion of the privatization process and in a strong interventionist role of the state in the economy. While 'soft liners', who typically were partisan cadres of the political parties forming the *Polo Patriótico* (including the MVR), conceived the building and the consolidation of a 'popular, constituent power' as a resource to complement – but surely not substitute – representative democracy, the 'hard liners' advanced a much more radical understanding of the Bolivarian Revolution, by inspiring to the principle of 'participatory and protagonistic' (*protagónica*) democracy. In the 'Elucidation of Reasons' attached to the Constitution, the Constituents specified that participatory democracy

197 Chávez's supporters, in turn, stressed the eventual empowerment of the citizens through new participatory tools and other unusual provisions, such as the creation of *five* instead of three branches of government. The Bolivarian Constitution added the *electoral* and the *citizen* powers, consisting in a National Electoral Court – in the case of the *electoral* power – and in the attorney general, the defender of the people and the comptroller general – in the case of the *citizen* power, all of them appointed by the National Assembly. All these officials should remain autonomous from political parties. Due to the extreme Venezuelan political polarization, this autonomy was never close to be reached: even the 'electoral' and 'citizen' powers – together with the judicial one – became soon easily identifiable with *chavismo* (Ellner, 2007; López Maya and Panzarelli, 2011).

> '*responds to a felt aspiration of organized civil society that strives to change the political culture, which so many decades of state paternalism and the dominance of party heads generated […] participation is not limited to electoral processes, since the need for the intervention of the people is recognized in the processes of formation, formulation, and execution of public policy*. [… this] *implies a modification of the orientation of state-society relations'* (Wilpert, 2007: 54-55).

Apart from the provision of direct democratic tools, the Constituents created the Local Public Planning Councils (CLPP – *Consejos Locales de Planificación Pública*; see Article 182 of the Constitution), inspired by the well-known local budgeting process firstly implemented in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Article 182 remained unapplied until June 2002, when the National Assembly finally regulated the functioning of the CLPPs, by specifying their composition[198] and their goals[199].

In general, the first governmental period saw the imposition of the 'soft liners' within the party. Nevertheless, the most radical factions were reinvigorated by Chávez himself, who, in April 2001, in the middle of a difficult moment due to a complicate economic conjuncture, called for the re-constitution of the Bolivarian Circles, thus 'reviving' the old MBR-200's structure (Ellner, 2008: 181) to favour the diffusion of the 'Bolivarian' ideology and to organise and mobilise the grassroots *chavistas*. Popular mobilization was crucial for the very survival of Venezuelan (*Chavista*) democracy in April 2002, when a *coup d'état* promoted by some sectors of the army, of FEDECAMARAS and of the CTV put for forty-eight hours the leader of FEDECAMARAS Pedro Carmona at the Presidency, while Chávez was temporarily arrested. The impressive popular mobilisation, mainly coming from the poorest areas in

198 Each CLLP was formed by the mayor, the municipal council, the presidents of the district councils, representatives of neighbourhood groups and of other civil society organizations from sectors such as healthcare, education, culture, ecology, formal and informal businesses, land committees… (Wilpert 2007: 57).

199 CLPP's goals included: '*to gather and evaluate proposals for community projects, to work on the municipal development plan, to develop a map of the community's needs, to elaborate the municipality's investment budgets*, […] *among others'* (Wilpert, 2007: 57-58).

Caracas and in other major cities and organised by the Circles, decisively contributed to the defeat of the *golpistas*.

The 'hard-liners' also inspired the constitution (Article 70) of *citizen assemblies*, at the sub-municipal level, with the power of deliberating binding resolutions that the mayors were obliged to follow (Article 70 of the Constitution; see Wilpert, 2007). Although Article 70 remained unapplied for a long time, it served as a constitutional basis for the creation, in 2006, of the *Consejos Comunales*, local-level committees directly responsive to the Presidency. The *Consejos Comunales* had the task of organising the neighbourhoods to concretely implement the vast social policy programs, famously known as *Misiones*, launched in 2003 and mainly financed by oil revenues. The *Misiones*, first, and the *Consejos Comunales*, later, allowed for the extension and the consolidation of the popular support for the *chavista* project, as well as for the own *organisation* of *chavista* core-constituencies, increasingly identifiable with the *poorest social sectors involved in the informal economy* (see, among others: Valencia Ramírez, 2005; Wilpert, 2007; Otálvaro, 2009; Ellner, 2011).

Since his first electoral campaign, Chávez launched strong attacks against the union leadership, targeted as part of the 'oligarchy' dominating Venezuela. When in government, the contrasts between the ruling coalition and the CTV became even harsher, as Chávez ended with unions' public funding. In December 2000, Chávez convoked a referendum asking to the Venezuelans if they agreed on the 'renovation' of the union leadership through free elections *under supervision of the National Electoral Court*. The referendum, which was harshly contrasted by the CTV, was approved by 62% of the voters, although the participation rate reached a mere 23%. In October 2001, AD's slate obtained a large victory (65%) in the CTV elections, while the FBT (*Fuerza Bolivariana de los Trabajadores*, aligned with the government), led by the 'critical *chavista*' Aristóbulo Istúriz, reached a mere 19%.

The divisions between 'hard-liners' and 'soft-liners' were present also within the FBT (Ellner, 2007; Lucena, 2011). 'Hard-liners' invoked the creation of a new union

central, supposedly autonomous from the MVR, which was continuously attacked for its bureaucratic features and its 'bottom-up' functioning. 'Soft-liners' aimed at a CGT leadership's renewal, while backing wage restraints and a lesser involvement of the unions in firms' management. They even imposed a new PDVSA's general director, Ciavaldini, who, in the name of 'efficiency' and of a 'modern system of industrial relations', implemented several reforms quite detrimental to the workers' interests.

A third faction within the anti-*adecos* union front was formed by the 'independents', somewhat closer to LCR's early 'new unionism', and, at the same time, much more confrontational than both the hard-liners and soft liners' positions. This 'third' positioning led the 'independents' to increase strike activity against the wisdom of both 'hard' and 'soft liners' (and with the support of the *adeco* CTV) during the 1999-2001 period. When the CTV allied with FEDECAMARAS against *chavismo*, the 'independents' decided to support the creation of an alternative peak union (UNT, *Unión Nacional de los Trabajadores*). Then, they competed *within the UNT* against the 'hard liners' to defend the autonomy of the new peak union confederation, which soon became a mere transmission belt of the *chavista* government.

In sum, the relationship between *chavismo* and the organised working class had been always marked by severe tensions. During the early *chavista* phase, Chávez decidedly limited the power of the CTV, for political reasons: he immediately suspended tripartite negotiations with the CTV and FEDECAMARAS and began convoking broader roundtables including representatives of non-governmental organizations and of the informal sectors, in order to improve the 'representativeness' of the interest aggregation system. Such forms of incorporation, together with charismatic appeals and with the fostering of popular organisation at the local level, rapidly contributed to a 'constituency switch': from an inter-classist electorate to a strong reliance on the popular sectors. The ideological radicalization towards the 'Socialism of the twenty-first century' began in late 2001, with the promulgation of forty-nine decrees establishing a stronger

intervention of the state over the economy, and further reinforced the 'hard line' within *Chavismo*.

The 'democratisation' (i.e., socialization) of the economy further deepened during the following years, through the financing of thousands of (often inefficient) popular cooperatives that further weakened the structural power of the CTV (as the cooperatives were not subjected to the legislation over salaried workers). Meanwhile, the cooperative system and the *Misiones* enormously strengthened the organisational resources of the broad *Chavista* movement. While the 'soft liners' kept a strong presence and influence within *chavismo* thanks to their control of the partisan structures, the 'hard liners' dominated at the grassroots level and furnished the ideological sustainment to Chávez's *populist project*, whose 'vertebral column', the *Consejos Comunales*, had a strong presence at the community level (Handlin and Collier, 2011), got involved into a sort of 'participatory clientelism' (Goldfrank, 2011) and were directly tied to Chávez.

8.1.4 Conclusion

Like the Italian M5S, Venezuelan *chavismo* advanced a political discourse attacking the 'partyarchy' and the structures of interest intermediation particularly compromised with the 'old regime' (i.e., the unions), and promoting the *direct participation of the citizens* at the local level in order to challenge the 'old system', while displaying an internal organization in which a *strong control from the centre coexisted with porous and informal basic units at the local level*. Both the M5S and *Chavismo* relied, at least on their early phase, on a vague ideological discourse emphasizing anti-corruption and democratic themes, and they were extremely successful in attracting voters from the entire political spectrum and from different social sectors,

with a certain *over-representation of the outsiders*. *In this sense*, the political processes leading to the emergences of the M5S and *Chavismo* shared striking similarities.

Said this, their evolutions followed two completely diverging paths. The M5S assume a moderate, even 'managerial' rhetoric. In contrast, the Venezuelan *chavismo*, which *since the beginning* stressed the necessity of creating a *constituent power in the streets* to balance the resources of the 'oligarchy', quite soon opted for *re-designing* public institutions and for pursuing *much more radical socioeconomic goals*. In *chavismo*, differently from the M5S, the early decision to run for the presidency (and the immediate victory) imposed the necessity of relying on mesoterritorial partisan structures, which, together with some components of Chávez's inner circle, kept some autonomous space. 'Soft' and 'hard liners' were forced to coexist and to continuously struggle for influencing the internal organisation, while Chávez tactically 'balanced' the two broad tendencies.

Both projects kept insisting on a participative rhetoric. Yet, the M5S intended to promote the participation of the *citizen* at the *individual level* (and it gradually limit *MeetUps*' influence), while the *chavismo* fuelled the collective participation of the *pueblo* at the community level. M5S' *mobilising* features have been gradually silenced, while *mobilization* is a *constitutive part of the* chavista *project*, as the leadership constantly needs to rely on his *pueblo* to pursue the goals of the Bolivarian Revolution and to counterbalance the 'oligarchy'. Again, these (and many other) evident differences should not prevent from noticing the similarity between the political processes and events that conduced to the emergence of a 'leader-initiated' populism in Italy and Venezuela.

8.2 The Long and Winning Trajectory of the Uruguayan *Frente Amplio*

8.2.1 Critical Antecedents. Segmented Linkage Strategy and Consistent but Loyal Opposition to Neoliberalism: the rise of a Social-Democratic Alternative

In 2004, the *Frente Amplio* (FA, 'Broad Front') interrupted the dominancy of the Uruguayan traditional parties, the *Partido Nacional* (PN, also known as *Blancos*) and the *Partido Colorado* (PC). The 2004 elections inaugurated a still uninterrupted cycle of leftist victories: Tabaré Vázquez won the presidential race in 2004 and 2014, José Mujica won it in 2009. Uruguayan main parties remained the same: the FA, the PN and the PC have obtained more than 90% of the valid votes in congressional and presidential elections since 1971. However, the power relationship between these parties substantially (albeit gradually) changed: the FA obtained 18% of the valid votes in 1971, 21% in 1984 and in 1989; 30% in 1994; 44% in 1999 (resulting the most voted party but losing the presidential race in the second round) and 50% in 2004.

Yet, Uruguay did suffer from an acute economic crisis, with strong social consequences, comparable with the Argentine one. The two crises were strongly intertwined (Becker, 2010; Panizza, 2014). During the Nineties, Uruguayan governments introduced several market-friendly reforms aiming at transforming the old 'statist socioeconomic matrix'. Such reforms soon produced negative consequences for the *outsiders* of the highly segmented Uruguayan welfare regime. The 'insider' workers, in turn, were much better suited to take advantage of the economic expansion of the Nineties, although their number decreased because of the shrinking of the public sector and of overall employment rate. Insiders were (and are) organised through the peak union confederation (PIT-CNT, '*Plenario Intersindical de los Trabajadores' – 'Convención Nacional de los Trabajadores*'), whose ties with the FA, often described

with the term *hermandad* ('brotherhood'), remounts to the very foundation of the party (1971).

In contrast to other 'union-party hubs' analysed in this dissertation, the FA and the PIT-CNT kept a coherent and oppositional stance along all the 'neoliberal era', and were able, also by recurring to extra-parliamentary, democratic means, to effectively contrast the pace of the market-friendly reform. In addition, the FA developed new forms of linkages towards sectors different from its traditional core-constituencies (unionised workers and urban middle-upper classes), also by exploiting the institutional resources deriving from its first victories at the sub-national level (and, particularly, from the administration of Montevideo, whose population amounts to half of the entire country). Meanwhile, the very market-friendly reforms implemented by the 'traditional parties' affected the latters' ability of maintaining the programmatic and clientelistic linkages that allowed them for dominating the Uruguayan party system for more than a century. When the crisis came, the FA was already on the rise: the 'union-party hub' then followed a 'demobilising' strategy preventing social unrests and channelling the popular discontent towards the already available alternative within the party system.

The division between the *blancos* and the *colorados* remounts to the civil wars that lasted until the early nineteenth century. At the beginning, the two parties roughly represented the interests of the rural landowners against the interests of the urban industrial class. Since the governments of the *colorado* José Batlle y Ordóñez (1903-1907 and 1911-1915), Uruguay pursued a model of development based on a quite protectionist and interventionist state, on the defence of private property and on the strengthening of labour rights through the incorporation of the organised working-class in the political system (Collier and Collier, 1991). At the political level, both *blanco* and *colorado* parties consolidated a system based on party patronage and consensual distribution of resources. Such consociational system reinforced the loyalty of both parties towards the 'statist socioeconomic matrix' that marked the Uruguayan history

throughout the twentieth century and forged a peculiar statist political culture amongst Uruguayan citizens (e.g., Lanzaro, 2004; Castiglioni, 2005).

The traditional parties gradually diluted their ideological differences and became catch-all parties, with strong level of internal factionalisms. Yet, the factionalism did not produce partisan fragmentation, thanks to the joint effects of two mechanisms: the reproduction of the identitarian cleavage between *blancos* and *colorados* and the effects of an idiosyncratic electoral system (the 'double simultaneous vote', DSV).

The DSV, which was abolished in 1996, imposed to the voters to opt for a specific slate (*sublema*) within the party (*lema*), thus provoking an extreme differentiation, *within* both the *blancos* and the *colorados*, of ideological supply. For instance, amongst the *colorados*, a *batllista*, social-democratic tendency coexisted with economically liberal and culturally conservative factions; amongst the *blancos*, a progressive faction (the *wilsonistas*, from its leader Wilson Ferreira Aldunate) competed with the *herreristas*, sharing economically liberal tendencies. The coexistence of catch-all features, strong identitarian and clientelistic linkages and institutional arrangements allowed for the consolidation of a duopolistic party system lasting until 1971.

Differently from other Latin American 'traditional', 'elite-led' party systems (Collier and Collier, 1991; Roberts, 2014), the Uruguayan system developed strong corporatist features. The *batllista* ISI model and the consolidation of tripartite bargaining practices stimulated the consolidation of a strong union movement. Differently from Venezuela, Uruguayan unionism remained autonomous from the political parties and, at least until the mid-Sixties, quite fragmented. The consolidation and institutionalization of corporatist bargaining practices stimulated the expansion of the membership and the acquisition of a more pragmatic, 'bread and butter' stance by the unions. At the same time, the union movement became the only space in which leftist leaders had the possibility of proselytising, due to the unchallenging dominancy of the electoral sphere by the *blancos* and the *colorados*. Lanzaro (2004) stressed a certain 'dualism' in the working class' strategy: the workers rewarded the Left (itself internally differentiated) in

union elections, while keeping their loyalty to the traditional parties in the electoral realm.

This did not imply that the Uruguayan union movement limited itself to act as a corporatist, 'economic' actor. During the Sixties, Uruguay experienced a long phase of social conflict, visible in the increase in strikes, in political polarization and radicalization and even in the creation of far-left guerrilla groups, such as the MLN-*Tupamaros*. The *colorado* faction led by President Pacheco began working for an authoritarian solution of the political and economic impasse. Meanwhile, the PS (*Partido Socialista*) and the PCU (*Partido Comunista de Uruguay*), together with Christian Democrat groups and *blancos* and *colorados* dissidents, overcame their ideological differences and created an electoral coalition, the *Frente Amplio,* backing the army officer Líber Seregni in view of the 1971 general elections. At the union level, most of the pre-existing sectorial and confederal unions created the CNT (*Convención Nacional de los Trabajadores*) in 1965. The founding manifesto of the CNT, which included advanced, *political* demands, served as the common programmatic platform for the incipient FA.

In 1971, the FA made its electoral debut and achieved the 18% of the valid votes, unevenly distributed throughout the country: the party reached 30% of the votes in Montevideo, but it remained below 15% in all the remaining eighteen departments. For the first time, a third party scratched the hegemony of the 'old parties'. However, in June 1973, a *golpe* led by the military, with the collaboration of *colorados* right-wing factions, imposed a dictatorship that would have lasted until 1984. The subsequent restrictions on civil and political rights and the harsh repression (which made of Uruguay the country with the highest percentage of political prisoners *per capita* in the world) particularly hit the *frenteamplistas* and the *tupamaros*, while PN's leader Ferreira was sent to exile.

In 1980 the junta was surprisingly defeated in a constitutional plebiscite and forced to negotiate democratic transition. The FA obtained to be included in the

negotiations together with *colorados* and *blancos*, also thanks to an impressive cycle of protests and strikes in which the unions displayed an impressive mobilising capacity. As the CNT was disbanded, the unions created the PIT (*Plenario Intersindical de los Trabajadores*), which tied alliances with other social movements (such as the FUCVAM [representing popular cooperatives involved in housing issues], the SERPAJ [the main organization concerned with human right issues] and the student movements: see Uggla, 2000). The PIT renamed itself PIT-CNT in 1985 to recall its historical roots, and represented the working-class in the CONAPRO, a corporatist roundtable created during the transition to negotiate the guidelines of the socioeconomic policies to be implemented after the full return to democracy (Uggla, 2000).

1984 general elections substantially confirmed the power relationships existing before the dictatorship between the three major parties. The new President was the social-democrat *colorado* Sanguinetti, while the FA reached the 21% of the votes. Within the FA, the dissident *colorado* slate MGP was the most voted faction, well above the Communists and the Socialists. Sanguinetti soon inaugurated a cycle of pro-market reforms (substantially protracted by the following *blanco* and *colorado* administrations) to liberalise the Uruguayan economy and refused to follow the guidelines agreed within the CONAPRO.

Without deeply analysing the economic reforms (which were much more moderate – also thanks to the organised opposition by the FA and the unions - than in the rest of Latin American former ISI countries: see Castiglioni, 2005), it is relevant here to focus on its outcomes (see De Armas, 2006; Becker, 2010). Apparently, the model made possible a long expansionary phase: poverty rate fell from 46% in 1985 to 15% in 1994, and almost disappeared amongst the elderly citizens. During the 1990-1999 period, average incomes, expressed in multiples of the national poverty line, increased from 4 to 6.7 for public sector workers and from 3.6 to 4.9 for salaried workers in the private sectors. However, the same ratio *decreased* for weak job categories such as self-employed non-professional workers (from 5.1 to 3.6), often occupied in the informal

sector (see CEPAL, 2002). Several contradictions became evident since the late-Nineties. Currency peg provoked an overvaluation of the peso, which in turn affected the export-oriented industrial sector (particularly after the devaluation of the Brazilian real after 1997), while favouring the attraction of foreign capitals in the financial sectors (in detriment of industrial investments). Inflation rates were reduced also through wage moderation, after the governmental suspension, in 1992, of the *Consejos Nacionales de Salarios*, a sort of tripartite bargaining roundtables at the sectorial level. Bipartite negotiations at the sectorial level became the norm, favouring salary fragmentation and a drastic decrease of collective bargaining coverage (which fell below 30% in the late Nineties: see Uggla, 2000). The easier credit access favoured middle and upper-middle classes, while deindustrialization, public sector shrinking and rise of unemployment led to the expansion of informal jobs.

In Montevideo, the percentage of workers occupied in the industry fell from 24% in 1991 to 15.9% in 1999, and occupational rate in the public sector decreased from 20% to 16% in the same period, in both cases following longer trends (Filgueira et al., 2005a: 20). Unemployment increased from 8.9% in 1990 to 13.5% in 2000 (CEPAL, 2002). These changes provoked a severe deterioration of the living conditions of the popular sectors, also due to the segmented characteristics of the Uruguayan welfare regime. Despite some late corrections towards universalist directions (Pribble, 2013), the public social spending in Uruguay became even more skewed than before towards social insurance schemes and, particularly, old-age pensions, with highly regressive effects (Filgueira et al., 2005b)[200]. Two crucial, political-institutional factors contributed to position some 'over-protected' sectors, like pensioners and salaried workers, amongst the 'winners' of the pre-crisis model: the institutional point of access provided by the 'union-party hub' and the possibility of recurring to direct democratic tools, provided by

200 In 2000, Uruguay had the second highest public social spending in Latin America calculated as a percentage of the GDP (20%), only after Cuba: yet, public spending on education, health and social assistance was quite below the levels guaranteed by Latin American countries with comparable GDPs *per capita*, such as Argentina and Chile. In contrast, public old-age pension spending increased from 10% to 15% of the GDP during the early Nineties, after the 1989 referendum (backed by the unions) that indexed old-age pensions to inflation and put additional pressure on the Uruguayan state budget (De Armas, 2006).

the Constitution and exploited by the unions, in order to limit the extent of the governmental attempts of implementing more radical market-friendly reforms (Moreira, 2004).

Both the PIT-CNT and the FA passed through different internal political phases, which brought some consequences on party-union relations. The PIT-CNT experienced a long tension between its 'moderate' (led by the Communists) and 'radical' factions. The Communists played a leading role within the PIT-CNT until 1992, when the PCU, torn by internal crises, began facing a long decline. The PCU (and Communist workers' delegates) had a quite traditional, Leninist understanding of the role of the union, which was expected to be little more than a transmission belt. Tactically, the PCU argued for exploiting the institutional resources obtained by the unions during the struggles against dictatorship and the early transitional phase to deliver concrete results to the members. The Communist reasoning was based on the necessity of a disciplined unionism, to defend corporatist institutions, considered as a crucial power resource for the working class (Uggla, 2000). Such a stance was criticised by other fractions, fearing that it would provoke the de-mobilization of the working class. The internal crisis of the PCU and the anti-unionist position assumed by Uruguayan governments pushed the PIT-CNT towards more confrontational, 'militant' strategies.

The PIT-CNT found a consistent institutional ally in the FA, which did not reduce itself to a mere 'labour-based party', though. Instead, the party experienced a multifaceted evolution during the Nineties: the FA broadened its base in both *ideological and sociological* terms; it was able to successfully balance its *moderate* and *oppositional* tendencies; and it experienced some gradual internal (and, partially, organizational changes) that allowed facilitated its growing appeal.

The (still moderate) market-friendly reforms produced some crucial transformations of the Uruguayan society. Filgueira et al. (2005a) stylised it as divided into three broad categories: the 'private Uruguay', the 'corporatist Uruguay' and the 'excluded Uruguay'. 'Private Uruguay' was composed by the 'winners' of the neoliberal

model: middle and upper classes, generally occupied in the tertiary sectors, which were able to rely on their own private resources to face the social risks deriving from a 'deregulated' socioeconomic model. 'Corporatist Uruguay' consisted in the beneficiaries of the old ISI model: they had strong, nested interests in defending what had survived from the previous 'state-centric matrix'. 'Corporatist Uruguay' enjoyed strong organizational resources to defend their rights: its size was dramatically shrinking, though, due to both structural and 'biological' reasons. Finally, the 'excluded Uruguay' consisted in the *outsiders* (informal and unemployed workers), who faced both a rigid labour market and the insufficiency of public social protection.

Since the party's own foundation, the FA's core-constituencies typically belonged to the 'Corporatist' group: middle classes concentrated in the broad public sector (that occupied more than 30% of Uruguayans during the Sixties: Filgueira et al., 2005a), and blue-collar workers in inward oriented industries, together with leftist intellectuals and students. Public sector and blue-collar workers were overrepresented in the unions, which acted as preferential *loci* of political socialization and contributed to the creation of a *frenteamplista* subculture, reinforced by the 'epic' struggle against the military regime. In 1971, the FA were overrepresented amongst the youth: it has been calculated (Buquet and De Armas, 2004) that 52% of the party's electoral increase during the 1971-1999 period can be explained simply by the 'biological substitution' of the older cohorts, more attached to the traditional political identities. Nevertheless, this is insufficient to explain *Frente Amplio*'s growth, because the structural tendencies brought by open economy gradually reduced the size of FA's core-constituencies (Luna, 2014). The FA, then, needed to expand its sociological base.

To achieve this goal, the FA followed a complex, and not necessarily planned, strategy consisting in *segmented linkages* towards different political and sociological constituencies (Luna, 2014). In terms of *programmatic linkages*, the FA exploited the pro-market positioning of both the traditional parties for occupying a much broader space than the radical left pole. Both the *blancos* and the *colorados* had gradually

increased their 'internal coherence': factionalism decreased and the pro-market *sublemas* (PN's *herreristas* and PC's *foristas*) took the control of the parties. This gave to the FA the possibility of both downplaying its 'maximalist' discourse and programmatic proposals (Lorenzoni and Pérez, 2009) and, at the same time, presenting itself as the true defender of the *batllista* historical legacy, deeply rooted in Uruguayan society (Castiglioni, 2005; Luna, 2014), as the results of different referenda (such as 1989 and 1994 referenda over pensions, or the 1992 and 2003 referenda over privatizations: see Moreira, 2004; Yaffé, 2013) overturning some 'pro-market' governmental reforms testified. Such campaigns also displayed the high capacity by both the FA and the PIT-CNT of mobilising the electorate and of acting as powerful veto players in the policy-making process.

FA's ideological moderation (Altman, 2002) was accompanied (and favoured) by a growing internal fractionalization (Piñeiro and Yaffé, 2004). New party factions emerged. The *Vertiente Artiguista* (VA) included radical and Christian-Democrat groups, and was centred on the figure of Mariano Arana. Danilo Astori, a popular FA's MP closely tied to Seregni, led *Asamblea Uruguay* (AU), much more liberal in economic terms, although it incorporated several Communist cadres. In the first half of the Nineties, AU represented the most numerous fraction within the FA, although it suffered from Tabaré Vázquez's competition (see below). The *Movimiento de Participación Popular* (MPP) was the political evolution of the *tupamaros* and was dominated by the figure of José Mujica, a charismatic leader known for his popular, austere and provocative style. Its *basis-demokratie* rhetoric, its vague radical ideology, its focus on 'pragmatic' issues and territorial activities and the undeniable Mujica's charisma made of the MPP the most 'populist' FA's fraction and contributed to the expansion of its membership, particularly in the Uruguayan *Interior* and in the popular urban neighbourhoods (Yaffé, 2013; Luna, 2014). Instead of producing centrifugal tensions within the FA, such fractionalization contributed to broaden the programmatic appeals of the party. Meanwhile, the consolidation of the *frenteamplista* identity, clearly alternative

to the ‘old ones’, helped to cement the party unity beyond the single fractions, as the high electoral volatility *within* the FA witnessed (Piñeiro and Yaffé, 2004).

Another crucial factor contributing to ideological moderation *and* partisan unity, as well as to broaden its sociological bases, was the victory of the 1990 municipal elections in Montevideo. The new mayor Tabaré Vázquez – until then a quite secondary figure within the party – rapidly acquired a strong popularity, thanks to his prudent administration (which provoked some tensions between the municipal government and public sector unions [Luna, 2007]), which was maintained by his successor Arana (1994-2005). Vázquez has been the presidential candidate of the *Frente* for all the elections since 1995 until his 2005 victory, and pursued a clever strategy of ‘moderate but tough opposition’ at the national level. He firstly drove the party towards moderate ideological positions (defeating Seregni’s and Astori’s faction) and, in a later phase (1995-2000), he consistently confronted the traditional parties in the parliamentary arena (for instance during the negotiation for the 1996 constitutional reform), thus obtaining the support of ‘radical’ fractions like the MPP.

Together with the emergence of Vázquez’s leadership, the most important legacy of FA’s governmental experiences in Montevideo was the broadening of the party electorate *in sociological terms*. FA’s administrations introduced some experiences of participatory budget and, most importantly, implemented a decentralising re-organization of the local institutions by creating the *Centros Comunales de Zona* (CCZs), a sort of sub-municipal districts, to facilitate the collection of popular demands – particularly in lower class areas – and a more efficient implementation of social policies (Luna, 2014). This, in turn, consolidated FA’s primacy in terms of party militancy, in a context of increasing weakness of the old *blanco*’s and *colorado*’s clientelistic networks. The control of discretionary resources from the municipality, and the alliance strategy pursued by the MPP with territorially-based grassroots movements, allowed the FA for expanding its electoral appeal well beyond its original middle-class core-constituencies (Rivadulla, 2013). Interestingly, once achieved the ‘control’ of

popular neighbourhoods and disarticulated the former clientelistic networks, the FA quite rapidly acquired a more ‘technocratic’ governmental style, while showing a certain capacity of ‘appeasing’ the movements when it was politically convenient (Rivadulla, 2013), as during the 2002 crisis (see below).

Meanwhile, the FA began expanding in the rest of the country (Cardarello and Guerrini, 2004; Luna, 2014). In a first phase, it strengthened its electoral appeals in middle-class urban contexts or in industrial areas. Later, the party challenged the traditional parties even in popular neighbourhoods, thanks to the diminution of clientelistic resources available to the old parties, and to the strengthening of FA’s ‘particularistic’ linkages. Such linkages were not based on public resources (as the party did not control any municipality, except for Montevideo, until 2004), but on the dissemination of informal partisan offices offering different, concrete services to the citizens.

On its side, the PIT-CNT consistently refused a mere ‘corporatist’ understanding of its public role. Surely, the unions were much more successful in defending comparatively stronger constituencies than in representing the demands of the worst-off sectors. However, the PIT-CNT kept pretending to represent the entire working-class, also thanks to the credibility accumulated during the struggle for the return to democracy and to the referenda campaigns ‘reviving’ its mobilising power.

Table 8.2 ‘Starting Conditions’ of FA in Uruguay.

FOR EXISTING LEFT-OF-CENTER PARTIES		PARTY "COMPROMISED" WITH NEOLIBERALISM			
		NO		YES	
TIGHTNESS OF THE UNION-PARTY RELATIONSHIP	UNION TYPE				
MEDIUM TO HIGH	MAINSTREAM AND DIALOGUIST	**Leftist Party allied with Mainstream Union**. **RISK:** being perceived as an 'insider party'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking during the mobilizations.		**Labour-Based Mainstream Party**. **RISK:** 'encapsulation' around its core-constituency; loss of working-class trust; being targeted as representative of 'old politics'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** resilience of identitarian or clientelist linkages; size of its core-constituency; moving towards more Leftist positions.	
	MAINSTREAM AND OPPOSITIONAL	**Oppositional Union-Party Hub**. **RISK**: 'workerist' ideology and inability of expanding towards outsiders. **OPPORTUNITIES:** union movement is a credible anti-austerity actor, well-positioned for dialoguing with the movements.	**Frente Amplio**	Unlikely empirical combination.	
	MINORITARIAN AND OPPOSITIONAL	**Leftist party with solid links with a radicalized fraction of the labor movement**. **RISKS:** 'workerist' ideology; sectarianism; inability of expanding towards outsiders. **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking with social mobilizations; not associable with conciliatory unions.		Unlikely empirical combination.	
WEAK		**Post-Materialist Leftist Party**. **RISK**: poor credibility in labour issues . **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking with mobilizations; not associable with 'conciliatory' unions.		**Center-Left party with a Plural Constituency**. **RISK:** competition both from the Left and from the Right; being targeted as representative of 'old politics'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** moving towards more Leftist positions.	

Source: Author’s Elaboration.

In organizational terms, the FA experienced a shift of power towards its leadership and the party in the public office. Vázquez took advantage of his own popularity to increase its autonomy from the partisan structures. The party in the public office increased its autonomy *vis à vis* the party in the central office, as the former expanded itself both in the Parliament and in Montevideo's government (Lanzaro, 2004). However, the FA did not transform into an 'electoral-professional party'. The party on the ground was sufficiently strong, while the main partisan organs (the *Mesa Política* and the *Plenario*) defended their central role in intra-party political negotiations, and in programmatic elaboration and candidate selection processes[201].

8.2.2 The Critical Juncture: a Union-Party Hub Channelling Popular Discontent

Starting from these promising conditions, the FA and the PIT-CNT were able to channel and 'control' the popular discontent arising since the explosion of the crisis. The devaluation of the Brazilian *Real* provoked the deterioration of the commercial balance, while Batlle's government tried to defend the peso for political considerations. Deindustrialization, unemployment and subemployment[202] further increased. After the Argentine collapse (December 2001), the Uruguayan financial sector began being perceived as 'insecure', and several commercial banks fell practically into bankruptcy (also due to speculative practices: see Becker, 2010; Panizza, 2014). In June 2002, the peso was allowed to float, and its exchange rate rapidly fell from 14 to 35 pesos per dollar, thus provoking an enormous increase (from 54% to 92%) of the public debt/GDP ratio. The government, to receive IMF's support for a debt renegotiation, adopted pro-

201 The candidate selection process included, at least until 1998 – when compulsory national primaries were introduced - the nomination of the presidential candidate: see Yaffé, 2013.
202 The percentage of Uruguayan economically active population unemployed or precarious increased from 20.5% in 1990 to 36.1% in 1999 and to 55.6% in 2002 (Pereira et al., 2005: 153).

cyclical policies that further depressed the economy. The defence of Uruguayan 'credibility' in repaying the public debt was achieved through restrictive fiscal policies that aggravated the living conditions of the Uruguayans (Moreira, 2004; Panizza, 2014). Poverty rate was still as high as 34% in 2004 (Becker, 2010). Several thousands of Uruguayans were forced to emigrate.

The FA and the PIT-CNT chose to assume a *loyal*, albeit critical, political stance towards the government. The PIT-CNT led, during the first half of 2002 (i.e., during the apex of the crisis), a broad alliance (*Concertación Nacional para el Crecimiento*, CONACRE: National Coordination for the Growth) with representatives of other sectors (small producers and rural unions), calling for anti-cyclical measures (de-dollarization of the economy, increase in public investments, decrease of the VAT and of interest rates). Therefore, the PIT-CNT, consistently with his traditional 'classist' and 'social' role, did not limit itself to the protection of its core-constituencies and articulated a broad social coalition behind itself. The unions even collected signatures for convoking a referendum against a bill attacking the public monopoly in the telecommunication sector and forced the government to retreat it (see Moreira, 2004). However, the PIT-CNT also avoided to assume 'maximalist' positions and to incite potentially out-of-control social protests. According to the opinions of radical left social movements and political groups, such as the FUCVAM and the *Corriente de Izquierda* (a tiny, radical faction within the FA), PIT-CNT's leaders acted as 'social firemen', channelling the mounting discontent towards institutional avenues[203].

The CONACRE received the full support of the FA. However, Vázquez kept also open the dialogue with the government, supporting it during the negotiations with international creditors (Panizza, 2014). Vázquez had no interest, in view of 2004 general elections, in fuelling social disorders that could have opened a political opportunity for alternative radical electoral projects. At the same time, he retained the support of the 'radical' faction through maintaining a clearly oppositional stance against most measures

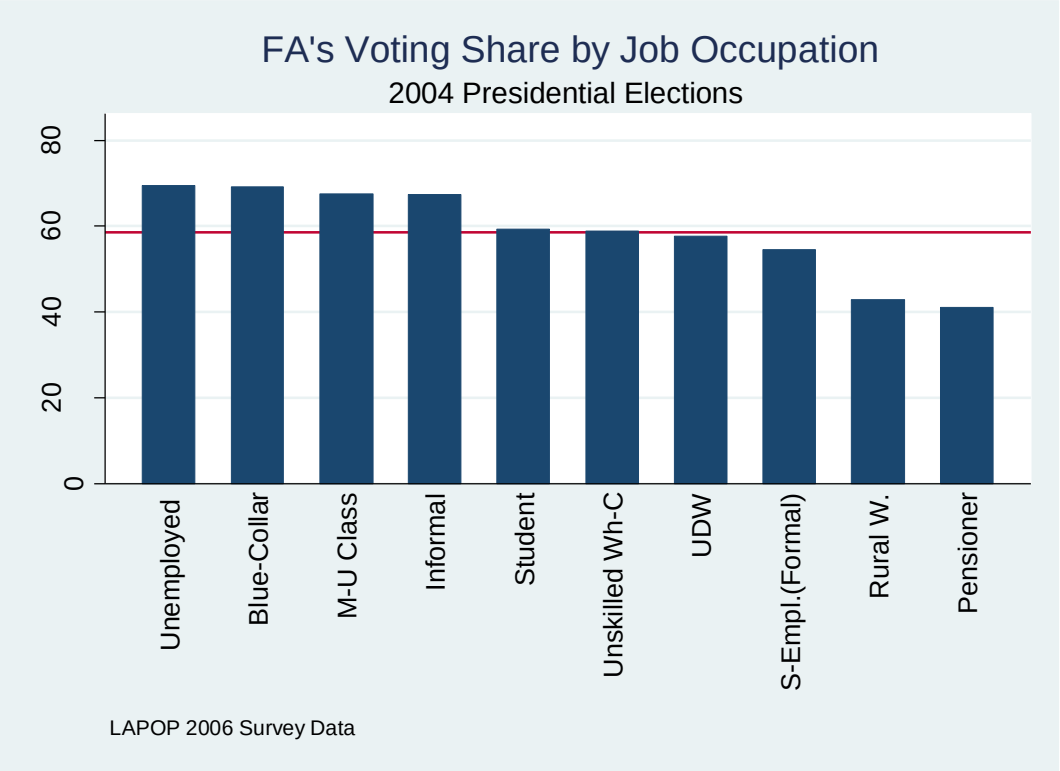
203 http://noticiasuruguayas.blogspot.it/2012/08/a-los-diez-anos-de-la-crisis-del-2002.html

took by the government (such as bank rescues and pro-cyclical fiscal policies), against the soft-line adopted by Astori's moderate faction. Vázquez further reinforced his control over the party structures, which consistently supported and legitimated his decisions (Yaffé, 2013). At the end, Vázquez's position resulted even stronger than before the crisis, and allowed him to comfortably win the 2004 presidential race.

8.2.3 Epilogue. FA's Victory and the Hegemony of an Inclusive Social-Democracy

As Figure 8.1 shows, the FA aggregated a cross-class coalition in 2004 presidential elections. The most over-represented social sectors amongst FA's electorate were precisely the traditional core-constituencies of the party (blue collars and middle-upper class [skilled white collars and managers]) *and* the *outsiders* (unemployed and informal sector workers). These data certified the success of FA's 'segmented' linkage portfolio (Luna, 2014). Interestingly, the FA scored quite below than average amongst the pensioners, although this category is much more unionised than average: probably, *blanco* and *colorado* identities proved to be more resilient amongst elderly people.

Figure 8.1 FA's Voting Share by Job Category.



Source: Author's Elaboration Using 2006 LAPOP Survey Data. Legend: M-U Class=Middle-Upper Class (Managers and Skilled White Collar Workers); Informal=Informal Workers (operationalized as 'workers without public or private health insurance'); Unskilled Wh-C=Unskilled White Collars; UDW=Unpaid Domestic Worker; S-Empl. (Formal)=Self-Employed Worker in the Formal Sector; Rural W.=Rural Workers. Categories built through OCUP1, OCUP1A, OCUP1C and OCUP4 variables in the original dataset.

In Table 8.3, I show the results of a simple logit model, based on 2006 LAPOP Survey Data, in which the dependent variable captures the vote casted for Vázquez in

2004 presidential elections[204]. The result shows that, once controlled for ideology (and hypothesizing that the *frenteamplistas* insiders have developed a strong leftist identity), the outsiders were *even more likely* to cast their votes for Vázquez in 2004.

204 The independent variables are: job sector (categorised as in Figure 8.1); residence in Montevideo or in the *Interior*; age group (18-34; 35-54; older than 54); leftist ideology (dummy variable: yes=self-placement 1-4 in a 1-10 left-right scale); union membership; educational level (primary, secondary or university education attended).

Table 8.3 Determinants of Voting for Tabaré Vázquez, 2004 Presidential Elections (Logit Model).

	Coefficient	SE	
M-U Class	0.24	0.33	
Self-Employed (Formal)	0.24	0.41	
Rural Worker	0.07	0.42	
Blue-Collar	0.56	0.34	
Informal Worker	0.77	0.28	**
Unskilled White Collar	0.30	0.35	
Student	-0.51	0.59	
Unpaid Domestic Worker	0.44	0.27	
Unemployed	0.61	0.36	*
Montevidean	0.36	0.16	**
Age (Tertiles)	-0.30	0.12	**
Left Ideology	2.93	0.29	***
Union Member	1.29	0.33	***
Educational Level (1-3)	0.02	0.12	
Constant	-0.14	0.43	
N	961		
Log-Likelihood	-512.09		
Pseudo R2	0.21		

Source: Author's elaboration using data from 2006 LAPOP Survey. Model robust to heteroskedasticity. Pensioner is the reference category for job sector. p<0.10=*; p<0.05=**; p<0.01=***.

Several authors (Alegre and Luna, 2005; Luna, 2007) feared that the expansion of the social coalition would have provoked strong redistributive conflicts within it, and particularly between the *insiders* and the *outsiders* of the Uruguayan segmented welfare regime. The position of predominant party achieved by the *Frente Amplio* and the social

policies that it implemented suggest that such redistributive conflicts, albeit existing, can be keep under control through an equilibrated strategy. The first Vázquez's government pursued a prudential macroeconomic policy, also thanks to the good economic conjuncture linked to the increase in agricultural prices. The government also partially corrected the skewness of the public social spending towards old-age pensions and social insurance schemes through pro-poor programs, such as the PANES (administrated by a new Ministry – Ministry of Social Development, MIDES – and consisting in conditional cash transfers to the poorest decile), and through increases in health and educational spending (although most of the spending referred to wage increases for public sector workers). Pribble (2013) has suggested that Uruguay was building the most 'universalist' welfare regime in Latin America, although most of the reduction of social inequalities was achieved thanks to economic growth, while poverty rate had merely returned to pre-crisis levels (Lanzaro, 2011). Meanwhile, FA's traditional core-constituencies (despite a contested tax reform targeting middle classes) were favoured by wage increases, both in the public and private sectors: in the 2005-2010 period, average real wages increased by 25% (Lanzaro, 2011: 369). Economic growth and institutional arrangements (such as the reintroduction of the *Consejos Nacionales de Salarios* and stronger controls against irregular and informal work) allowed the unions for increasing their membership (until recuperating the union density levels of the early Nineties: roughly 30% of the economically active population) and for improving their bargaining power.

In sum, the first *Frente Amplio*'s government successfully pursued a strategy that benefitted both the *insiders* and the *outsiders*, whose size decreased thanks to job formalization and unemployment reduction. In Uruguay, the 'Social-Democratic' alternative proved quite successful and guaranteed the resilience of the traditional political stability. The rise of populist project is not a necessary fate, particularly when the 'existing Left' provides viable alternatives and keeps strong linkages with different social sectors.

8.3 Divided We Grow. The Electoral Strengthening of the Portuguese Left

On 26th November 2015, the general secretary of the PS (*Partido Socialista*), Antonio Costa, was appointed as the new PM of Portugal. For the first time in Portugal history, a Socialist government is supported by the Radical Left (the PCP [*Partido Comunista Português*] and the BE [*Bloco de Esquerda*, 'Leftist Bloc']), guaranteeing parliamentary support. Both the PCP and the BE were, until then, considered outside the 'governmental arc' (Lisi, 2016) within the Portuguese Party system (which includes also the centre-right PSD and the right-wing CDS-PP). The pact between the historically anti-Communist, moderate and Europeanist PS and the orthodox, Eurosceptic PCP (and the Portuguese 'new Left' represented by the *Bloco*) has been nicknamed *Geringonça* ('Contraption'), to stress its (supposedly) poor feasibility. However, the *Geringonça* seems to work (also thanks to an evident economic recovery), as the recent municipal elections, which awarded (in particular) the PS, showed. How did Portuguese politics arrive to the *Geringonça*? And why we did not witness the rise of any alternative actor in Portugal, despite the dramatic effects of the Great Recession?

8.3.1 Critical Antecedents. Peripheral in the Party System, Dominant in Workplaces and in the Movements: the Portuguese Radical Left before the Great Recession

The rupture between Portuguese Socialists and Communists remounts to the idiosyncratic Portuguese democratic transition (Costa Lobo, 2016), inaugurated by the Carnation Revolution (25th April 1974). Leftist fractions of the army took control of the government, with the support of the PCP: however, the first democratic elections, held

on 25th April 1975 to form the Constituent Assembly, gave a clear victory to the PS (38%), far above the PSD (27%) and the PCP (13%). Such a 'leftist' political climate conduced to the promulgation of a Constitution full of references to the socialist ideology and to the creation of an army-controlled Revolutionary Council to exert a clear tutelage over the future governments (Bacalhau and Bruneau, 1999; Costa Lobo, 2016).

The junta retained the control of power for an additional year, and advanced with a vast program of nationalizations and land redistribution, while conceding the independence to Portuguese colonies (e.g. Lisi, 2007; Lewis Beck and Costa Lobo, 2011). The first parliamentary elections (25th April 1976) roughly replicated the results of the elections for the Constituent Assembly. The PS governed until 1979, when, in the middle of an acute economic crisis, leading to the two consecutive IMF's interventions (Silva Lopes, 1982), the PSD obtained the government and kept it almost uninterruptedly until 1995. During the Eighties, the moderate political majority gradually reformed the Constitution in a more liberal way (Bacalhau and Bruneau, 1999; Costa Lobo, 2016), while completing Portugal's adhesion to the EU.

However, the brief revolutionary period (1974-1976) had long-lasting effects on the Portuguese party system (Lewis-Beck and Costa Lobo, 2011; Costa Lobo, 2016), on the organizational characteristics of the parties (and particularly the PCP: Morlino, 1998; Lisi, 2007) and on the sociological characteristics of their electorates (Morlino, 1998; Fishman, 2005; Fernandes, 2012), and even on welfare state building and on broader state-civil relations (Capucha et al., 2005; Fishman, 2005; Castles, 2006; García and Karakatsanis, 2006; Thomadakis, 2006; Fernandes, 2012).

In contrast to Spanish (and Uruguayan) transitions to democracy, in Portugal there was not any 'pacted' process. The PCP took advantage of the political climate generated by the Revolution and strengthened its presence in the Portuguese society with the goal of increasing its influence over the revolutionary process. The PCP dramatically increased its membership (from 2,000 members in the early 1970s to more than 200,000

members in the late Seventies), although they were much better implanted in the South (and particularly in Alentejo region), where landless peasantry massively affiliated to rural unions with strong links with the party (Fishman, 2005). In the populous Northern region, PCP's expansion was limited by structural conditions (the prevalence of small landowners loyal to the PSD) leading to strong anti-Communist feelings.

The Communists took control of the CGTP, the peak trade union that emerged from the *Intersindical*, an informal network of trade union leaders that was created during the last years of Salazarist dictatorship (Fishman, 2005). In the late-Seventies, more than half of the economically active population was affiliated to some union (Fernandes, 2012), thus favouring Communist consolidation in Lisbon and Setúbal industrial neighbourhoods. As several authors noticed (Fishman, 2005; Lisi, 2007), electoral and organizational strengths of the PCP (which Morlino [1998] defined 'the only Portuguese mass-party') were strictly correlated.

The PS and the PSD aggregated much more cross-class constituencies, albeit geographically differentiated (as the PSD was stronger in the North and the PS in Lisbon and in the South). Both parties were quite poorly structured and rooted, with high levels of factionalism coexisting with a strong leadership. Both parties tried to confront PCP's hegemony over the organised the working-class through the creation, in 1977, of an alternative peak union confederation (the UGT), with some presence in white collar sectors but clearly less representative than the CGTP[205].

Clientelist and patronage practices became much less extended than in Greece or Italy (Di Mascio, 2011; Afonso et al., 2015), also thanks to the reforms implemented during the Eighties and aiming at professionalising civil service (Thomadakis, 2006). The PS and the PSD mainly relied on programmatic appeals and emerged as the defenders of liberal democracy, against the maximalist position of the PCP. Such a confrontation constrained, in the medium-term, the PCP into the periphery of the party

205 At the end of the Seventies, the CGTP had over 1,500,000 members, nearly doubling UGT's affiliates (Fernandes, 2012).

system. Poor economic growth favoured a gradual improvement of PCP's electoral results in 1979 and in 1983 legislative elections, when it nearly reach the 20% of the valid votes. However, since 1985, the PCP began its gradual but steady decline. Since 1991 onwards, the Communist Party never reached double-digit percentages and remained around 8% of the votes until nowadays. Its electoral decline, according to Morlino (1998), was somewhat limited thanks to its organizational strength, which reproduced a strong political subculture.

The legacy of the revolutionary phase was visible also in the pro-statist preference of Portuguese voters[206] and the state-centred welfare regime and economy. Portuguese welfare regime was extremely rudimentary under Salazarism, leaving without any social protection (including health security) between 30 and 40 percent of the population (Capucha et al., 2005). Revolutionary governments set important wage increases, the introduction of minimum wage and pension and of universal family allowances, and set the conditions for the creation of the National Health Service (Guillén et al., 2003). Social spending increased (from 2.8% of the GDP in 1960 to 7.5% in 1975), and the welfare regime began relying on tax-financed spending instead of on purely contributory mechanisms (Capucha et al., 2005), thus assuming a more progressive character than the rest of Southern Europe.

Total social spending continued to increase (from 11.6% of the GDP in 1980 to 16.3% in 1990 and to 23.9% in 2001, quite close to the EU average) even under Social-Democratic governments (1987-1995) also thanks to the generous contributions received from the EU (Guillén et al., 2003). Socialists' governments led by Guterres (1995-2002) launched their flagship social program, the introduction of a Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI). Despite the low amount of the benefits provided, the program was designed for reaching a very high coverage. The social spending devoted to the GMI

206 According to European Social Survey data (2006), 41% of Portuguese respondents 'strongly agreed' with the statement 'Government should reduce income differences' (Western European average: 24%; only French respondents displayed a higher strong agreement [44%]). In 2012 wave, the percentage was 48%, by far the highest percentage in Western Europe.

reached 1.14% of the social spending in 1999, and 1.48% in 2012 (Capucha et al., 2005: 189; Marchal et al., 2016).

Portugal labour market stood out for its extremely high insider protection (the highest of OECD countries, according to OECD Permanent Employment Protection Index), for its high employment rate (and particularly for a high participation of the women in the labour market) and low unemployment levels, but also for the lowest wage levels in Western Europe (Fishman, 2005; Sapelli, 2011). The expansion of the public sector[207] during the early democratic era favoured the access of the women in the labour market: in 1973, female employment rate was a mere 26% (33% in the EU); in 1979, it reached 39% (25% in the EU), despite the difficult economic conjuncture (Fishman, 2005).

Since the mid-Eighties, Portugal experienced a sustained economic growth, which lasted until the early 2000s. This contributed to a general demobilisation of the Portuguese society, quite visible in the low associational membership[208] and in the decrease in union density (Figure 8.2) and conflicts (Accornero and Ramos Pinto, 2015). Only one general strike was convoked by *both* peak unions during the pre-crisis democratic era (in 1988)[209]. However, the CGTP clearly remained the most representative peak union confederation until nowadays (Figure 8.2) and kept a quite confrontational strategy[210].

Despite the 'universalist' features of its welfare regime, the low unemployment levels and the high employment rates, Portugal labour market did suffer from several dualising tendencies, quite evident in the temporary employment rate (Figure 8.3),

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207 The total number of public employees increased from 372,000 in 1979 to 737,000 in 2005, when state retrenchment measures implemented by centre-right governments began displaying their effects (Stoleroff, 2013).

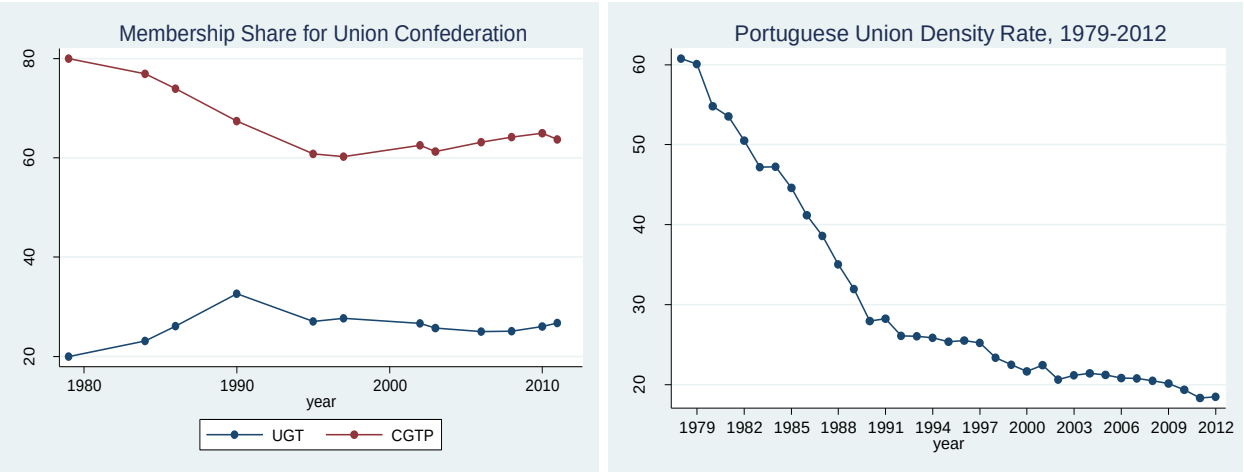
208 According to 2008 European Values Survey data, 82 percent of Portuguese respondents did not mention any affiliation to civic associations. The percentage falls to 75% for Spanish and Greek respondents and to 62% for Italian ones (Western European average: 47%).

209 Other four general strikes were convoked by the CGTP before 2007.

210 CGTP's refusal to participate into the Permanent Council for Social Coordination, a tripartite body for the coordination of economic policies created in 1984, exemplified such radical positioning (Morlino, 1998).

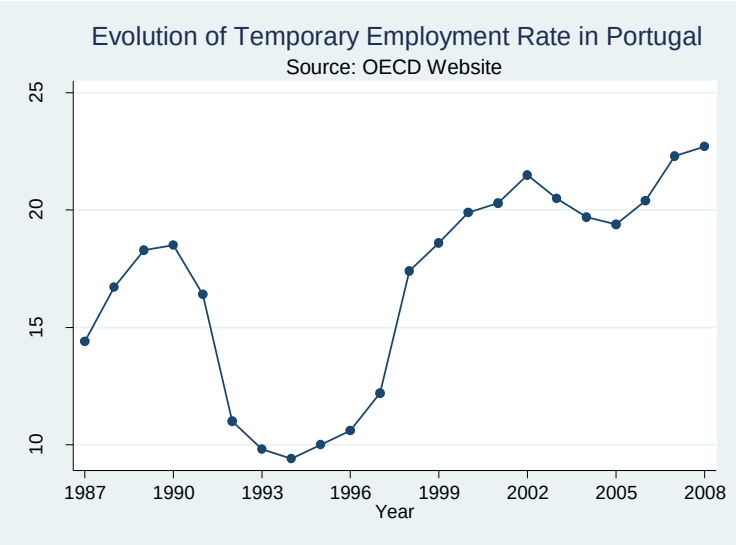
which in 2008 was the second highest in the EU, just below Spain. A reform of the Labour Code favouring the diffusion of fixed-term contracts, implemented by the conservative government and harshly opposed by the CGTP, contributed to deepen labour market dualisation (González and Figueiredo, 2015).

Figure 8.2 Union Density in Portugal (Total Union Density and Membership Share of the Main Peak Unions).



Source: Author's Elaboration, based on 2016 ICTWSS data.

Figure 8.3 Evolution of the Temporary Employment Rate in Portugal (1987-2008).



Source: Author's Elaboration, based on data from OECD website.

Differently from most of Western European countries, in Portugal precarious workers are more likely to belong to highly educated social sectors, also due to an economy based on low-skilled jobs. According to 2008 European Social Survey data, Portuguese temporary employment rate among workers with some university education was the second in Western Europe (20%). Lisi (2009) and Accornero and Ramos Pinto (2015) had argued that these structural conditions made much more difficult the consolidation of post-materialist values in Portuguese society and the mobilisation of younger, well-educated sectors (the most 'biographically available' and prone to protest). This, in turn, contributed to explain the relative 'social peace' experienced in Portugal

even after the end of the positive economic conjuncture of the Nineties and the beginning of a long phase of stagnation[211].

However, despite these structural limitations, a left-libertarian party did emerge in Portugal. In 1999, two micro-parties, the Maoist UDP (Popular Democratic Union) and the Trotskyist PSR (Revolutionary Socialist Party), together with *Política XXI* (a political movement founded by Communist dissidents), merged to form a new political 'movement', the *Bloco de Esquerda* ('Leftist Bloc', BE[212]. The main political 'mission' of the *Bloco* was to renew the Portuguese Left, by advancing a radical discourse mobilising those voters increasingly dissatisfied with both the centrist turn of the PS and the 'immobility' of the PCP. At the beginning, the BE adopted a quite pluralist organizational form[213], with low barriers to entry – no filters were adopted for 'screening' the new affiliates – and a collective leadership to assure the representation of the different founding organizations. It was introduced a rotation rule for parliamentary charges, and the creation of internal fractions was explicitly admitted – thus marking a clear difference from PCP's democratic centralism. Nevertheless, BE's periphery was left without the power of nominating local candidates or of meaningfully influencing policy and strategic decisions. Since 2005 the BE had a national coordinator (a sort of general secretary leading a small political committee): until 2012, this charge was occupied by Francisco Louça, a university professor who was for a long time the *Bloco*'s most visible figure.

In terms of policy positions, the BE was as leftist as the PCP in economic terms, although less sceptic than the Communists over the EU integration process (Costa Lobo and Magalhães, 2011) and more focused on post-materialist issues, such as

211 In 2008, according to European Social Survey data, a mere 3.7% of Portuguese respondents reported to have joined a lawful demonstration in the previous twelve months. Only in 2012, in the middle of the crisis, Portugal got close to the EU average (8.5%). Nevertheless, if we considered only citizens with tertiary education, in Portugal we had the third highest percentage of protesters in 2008 (17%, 7 points above the Western European average), and the fourth highest percentage in 2012 (15%, four points above the Western European average).
212 In 2000, another far-leftist micro-party (*Ruptura-FER*) joined the *Bloco*. It abandoned the party in 2012 due to BE's 'moderate' position.
213 For a broad discussion of the internal organization of the BE, see Lisi (2009; 2013).

environmentalist and pro-abortion campaigns. Since the return of the PS to the government (2005), the *Bloco* moderated its strategy to influence on the policy-making process (Lisi, 2009). In terms of voting results, the BE reached its pre-crisis apex in 2005, when it achieved the 6.4% of the national valid votes and obtained six seats in the Parliament. Although the electorates of the PCP and the BE highly overlapped in ideological terms, the two parties appealed to quite different constituencies: the BE was much more successful than the PCP amongst well-educated voters and unemployed workers, while the PCP remained stronger amongst popular sectors and retired workers (Lisi, 2009). Differently from the PCP, the *Bloco* had poor or null organisational linkages with the unions and a very small membership: despite the long decrease in membership suffered by the PCP (131,000 members in 2001, and 59,000 in 2009), in 2007 BE's members were 7,000 (Lisi, 2009; 2013).

However, the BE did develop a strong discourse against job precariousness, and seemed more successful than the PCP to establish solid connections (through membership overlap) with incipient social movements representing the young precariat, such as the FERVE (*Fartas/os d'Estes Recibos Verdes*, 'Fed Up with False Green Receipts'[214]) and the PI (*Precários Inflexíveis*, 'The Inflexible Precarious') (Baumgarten, 2013). The strong organisational links of the PCP and the BE with unions and social movements explained the Radical Left's control over the (weak) Portuguese GJM during the first decade of the new century (Lisi, 2013; Accornero and Ramos Pinto, 2015).

The Great Recession hit Portugal after several years of low economic growth and worrying unemployment rates (9 percent in 2009). In 2006, 42% of Portuguese citizens reported to live 'difficultly' or 'very difficultly' with the income at their disposal, while, in the rest of Western European countries, this percentage nowhere was above 20% (ESS 2006 data). The Left was clearly divided between the moderate, centrist PS (which was

214 The 'Green Receipts' are the receipts given to occasional, formally independent workers, whose number dramatically increased during Sócrates' governments (2005-2011).

positioned with a score of 5.5 in a 1-10 left-right scale by the electorate: Freire, 2010), and two radical Left parties with quite different electorates and core-constituencies (see Table 8.4).

Portuguese citizens displayed the lowest trust on political parties in Western Europe (2.55 in a 1-10 scale, far below Spanish [3.46] and Western European levels [3.99]: ESS 2006 data). Nevertheless, negative feelings did not particularly extend to the unions. In 2008, according to ESS data, 38% of Portuguese respondents (and 43% of Portuguese *unemployed* respondents) had ‘high’ or 'quite high' confidence in trade unions, in line with Western European average and well above the rest of Southern Europe (33% in Spain; 29% in Italy; 22% in Greece: see also Frangi et al., 2017). Social demobilisation (and even apathy) and distrust on political parties thus coexisted with a substantial support towards the unions and with quite strong pro-redistribution feelings.

Table 8.4 ‘Starting Conditions’ of left-of-centre parties in Portugal.

FOR EXISTING LEFT-OF-CENTER PARTIES		PARTY "COMPROMISED" WITH NEOLIBERALISM			
		NO		YES	
TIGHTNESS OF THE UNION-PARTY RELATIONSHIP	UNION TYPE				
MEDIUM TO HIGH	MAINSTREAM AND DIALOGUIST	**Leftist Party allied with Mainstream Union**. **RISK:** being perceived as an 'insider party'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking during the mobilizations.		**Labour-Based Mainstream Party**. **RISK:** 'encapsulation' around its core-constituency; loss of working-class trust; being targeted as representative of 'old politics'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** resilience of identitarian or clientelist linkages; size of its core-constituency; moving towards more Leftist positions.	
	MAINSTREAM AND OPPOSITIONAL	**Oppositional Union-Party Hub**. **RISK**: 'workerist' ideology and inability of expanding towards outsiders. **OPPORTUNITIES:** union movement is a credible anti-austerity actor, well-positioned for dialoguing with the movements.	**Portuguese Communist Party**	Unlikely empirical combination.	
	MINORITARIAN AND OPPOSITIONAL	**Leftist party with solid links with a radicalized fraction of the labor movement**. **RISKS:** 'workerist' ideology; sectarianism; inability of expanding towards outsiders. **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking with social mobilizations; not associable with conciliatory unions.		Unlikely empirical combination.	
WEAK		**Post-Materialist Leftist Party**. **RISK**: poor credibility in labour issues . **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking with mobilizations; not associable with 'conciliatory' unions.	**Bloco de Esquerda**	**Center-Left party with a Plural Constituency**. **RISK:** competition both from the Left and from the Right; being targeted as representative of 'old politics'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** moving towards more Leftist positions.	**Portuguese Socialist Party**

Source: Author’s Elaboration.

8.3.2 Critical Juncture and Social Mobilizations: the 'division of labour' between Unions (close to the Communists) and Movements (close to the Bloco)

In 2009, Portuguese GDP diminished by 3%. After a partial recovery in 2010 (+1.9%), the GDP again diminished for three consecutive years (-1.8% in 2011, -4.0% in 2012 and -1.1% in 2013: OECD data), while unemployment reached unprecedented levels (from 7.7 percent in 2008 to 17.7 percent in the first 2013 trimester: González and Figueiredo, 2015). The campaign for 2009 legislative elections was marked by the early symptoms of the crisis. They were preceded, in June, by the European elections, characterised by a very low turnout (37%), by the victory of the PSD and by the rise of the BE (10.7%) and the PCP (10.6). The BE, in particular, seemed to benefit from a partial remobilization of the Portuguese society observed in 2008, thanks to widespread protests in the educational sector, one of the traditional stronghold of the party (even in terms of sociological composition of the party elite: Lisi, 2013). Nevertheless, a poor campaign by the PSD and the refusal, by the Radical Left, of eventually supporting a Socialist government (against the preferences of many leftist voters), changed the inertia in view of September legislative elections (Freire, 2010). The Socialists won 37% of the votes and 42% of the seats, while the electoral results of the BE (9.8%) and the PCP (7.7%) were quite disappointing. The outcome was the appointment of a minority government led by Sócrates.

The economic scenario got worse, while the pressures from EU institutions forced the Socialists to abandon anti-cyclical responses to the crisis (González and Figueiredo, 2015; Marchal et al., 2016). To meet the budgetary requirements imposed by the EU, the government implemented three different austerity packages in 2010, the first two with the support of the PSD, the third one unilaterally and without the consultation of the social partners (Fernandes, 2017). This convinced both the CGTP and the ‘dialoguist’ UGT to convoke a general strike in November. The third austerity package

included cuts on public sector spending and wages and on pensions, and a further raise of the VAT (Gago, 2013). Such measures followed previous cuts on public sector wages, tax increases, cuts on social protection schemes (including a reduction in the coverage of unemployment assistance) and the privatization of public transport, among other things (Fernandes, 2017). A fourth package in March 2011 was rejected by the Parliament, while massive demonstrations (the most attended of them was convoked by the CGTP) convinced Sócrates to resign (Fernandes, 2017: 171). In April, the government officially asked for IMF's international assistance. The PS, the PSD and the CDS signed with the Troika a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which included draconian measures (with a particular focus on labour market reforms 'in order to reduce segmentation': see Távora and González, 2014) as a precondition for the 78 billion loan delivered in order to 'save the country'. The orthodox reforms undertaken by the new centre-right government provoked a further contraction of the economy and clearly did not solve the problem of public debt, as the debt/GDP ratio increased from 72% in 2008 to 126% in 2012.

The BE and the PCP strongly opposed the MoU and even refused to meet with Troika's emissaries. Such a harsh stance did not pay electorally: the PCP basically replicated the electoral results of 2009, while the BE experienced a worrying setback, as it lose half of the votes obtained in 2009. As Magalhães (2012) argued, despite its anti-austerity stance, the position of the BE in view of 2011 elections was 'less comfortable than PCP's one'. On the one side, the *Bloco* was associated to post-materialistic issues, which became less relevant during harsh economic times. Moreover, Sócrates' governments successfully competed with the BE in the salient abortion issue (Lisi, 2009). On the other side, the BE pursued a quite inconsistent electoral campaign (Magalhães, 2012), criticising the Socialists for their economic policies but supporting their candidate for the Presidency in January 2011. At the end, the three Portuguese left-of-centre parties fell from 54.2% of the votes in 2009 to 41.1% in 2011, and only the PCP (having a much more anchored electorate) did not suffer any loss.

The Left, and particularly the *Bloco*, was thus not able to take advantage of the first, important social mobilizations against austerity. On 12th March 2011, there was the most numerous public demonstration in Portugal since the revolutionary period. Nearly 500,000 citizens attended to the demonstrations, in several Portuguese cities, convoked through Facebook by a group of activists named *Geração à Rasca* ('Thrashy Generation'). The demonstrations predated the Spanish *Indignados* mobilization and put in the centre of the political debate the problem of job precariousness suffered by younger generations and the distrust on political parties (Accornero and Ramos Pinto, 2015). The demonstration of the *Geração à Rasca* was a 'turning point' for the beginning of a long protest cycle that lasted at least until mid-2013. Nevertheless, in comparison with the Spanish cycle, in Portugal the ability by Leftist institutional actors (the PCP, the BE and the CGTP) to lead the protests was much higher.

The attempts of 'importing' foreign protest repertoires by new social movements soon proved to be unsuccessful, as the occupation of Rossio Square in Lisbon demonstrated (Accornero and Ramos Pinto, 2015). Different movements (*Geração à Rasca*, anti-austerity groups like *Portugal Uncut* or *ATTAC, Indignados-inspired* like *Democracia Verdadeira Jà)* tried to drive the protests towards anti-partisan and assemblearian directions. The result of such a collaboration was the platform 15O, which was created to organise a major demonstration on 15th October 2011, which attract a vast (albeit less than expected) following (Accornero and Ramos Pinto, 2015).

Nevertheless, different authors (Baumgarten, 2013; 2017; Accornero and Ramos Pinto, 2015; Carmo Duarte and Baumgarten, 2015; Costa and Estanque, 2016) stressed the central role played by the political parties and, particularly, by the unions, in sustaining the protests and in offering them a political channel. The CGTP convoked five general strikes in the 2010-2013 period. Three of them were also supported by the UGT (Costa and Estanque, 2016). The remaining two ones were convoked only by the CGTP, in reaction against social pacts signed by the UGT, which initially pursued a moderate strategy to defend social concertation (Campos Lima and Artiles, 2011). Nevertheless,

the strategy of the UGT gradually became more confrontational, particularly since 2013, also thanks to the behaviour of some sectorial unions (particularly those representing the public sector: see Stoleroff, 2013), which in some cases joined the strikes convoked by the CGTP (Accornero and Ramos Pinto, 2015; Fernandes, 2017).

Strikes and protests grew in number since 2010, after a decade of deep demobilisation. Work-related grievances (unemployment, precariousness, wage freezes) clearly composed most of the claims, although also corruption and 'political privileges' were frequently mentioned by the protesters as widespread motivations for taking the streets (Costa and Estanque, 2016). According to the protest event analysis carried on by Accornero and Ramos Pinto (2015), two thirds of the protests arose from union organisations in the 2010-2013 period, while a mere 19 percent was led by new social movements such as *Geração à Rasca* or *Que se Lixe a Troika* (QLT, 'Fuck the Troika'), another 'anti-political' organisation with evident connections with the PCP, the *Bloco* and the CGTP. Most of the protests took the form of public demonstrations and marches (46 percent of the events). Frames, slogans and symbols were overwhelmingly drawn from the revolutionary period (Baumgarten, 2017), both a cause and a consequence of the ability by the 'old Left' of influencing and establishing strong ties with the demonstrators. The institutional Left (the two Radical Left parties, the CGTP and even some PS' sectors) participated into different initiatives (Accornero and Ramos Pinto, 2015; Lisi, 2016), like the 'Citizen Audit on Sovereign Debt' (*Auditoria Cidadã à Dívida Pública*) and the *Congresso Democratico das Alternativas*. At the same time, the traditional actors (and particularly the CGTP) distanced themselves from more radical platforms, such as the 15O, and tied their links to those movements, like the *Precários Inflexíveis*, having developed stronger structures and were close to the institutional Left. While it is true that the most attended marches and demonstrations were convoked by new, non-institutional movements, it was equally clear that the movements by themselves lacked the organisational autonomy and strength to sustain the Portuguese cycle of protest (Accornero and Ramos Pinto, 2015).

The unions and the movements established a *de facto* 'division of labour' that successfully led and channelled the popular discontent. According to survey data collected by CIES-ISCTE project in 2012 (my elaboration), 34% of the respondents identified in the 'protest social movements' the actor best representing the citizens, while an additional 30% opted for the unions, and a mere 6% for the political parties. PCP's voters were the most likely to opt for the unions (58%) and the least likely to opt for the social movements (16%): in fact, at least until 2012, the PCP assumed a suspicious stance towards 'anti-political' movements (Accornero and Ramos Pinto, 2015). Conversely, BE's voters were, by far, most likely to feel themselves better represented by the movements (58%). 20% of the respondents with primary education, but 52% of the respondents with some university education, mainly trusted on social movements, while the unions were particularly appreciated by respondents with primary and secondary education (29% and 33% of the total, respectively). The appreciation of both the unions and (in particular) the social movements was inversely correlated with age: amongst people younger than thirty-five, 47 percent of the respondents felt best represented by the movements, and 33 percent by the unions. These percentages fell to 24 and 27 amongst people older than fifty-four.

The CGTP, particularly during 2012 and 2013, displayed a strong mobilising capacity against social security and labour market reforms imposed by the pro-austerity Portuguese government[215]. The consequences, in terms of legitimacy, were impressive: 60% of the respondents to CIES-ISCTE survey expressed 'some' or 'strong' confidence in the unions, a percentage reached only by institutions such as the Church (61%), the army (69%) and the police (73%), and well above the EU (43%), the employers' associations (42%), the presidency (32%), the financial system (25%), the political parties (17%) and the government (15%).

215 Two consecutive reforms in 2011 and 2012 cut severance payments and facilitated dismissals. In addition, a reform of the Labour Code further weakened the collective bargaining power of the unions. In 2013, the CGTP found the support of the PS in its struggle against a bill that would have raised the employees' contributions to social security from 11% to 18% of the gross income (while lowering from 23% to 18% the employers' contribution: see Távora and González, 2014).

8.3.3 Epilogue. A timid Turn to the Left: the Portuguese Geringonça

The 'rebirth' of Portuguese civil society did not translate immediately into political change. Several accurate accounts of the political events preceding the 2015 legislative elections (Lisi, 2016; De Giorgi and Pereira, 2016) showed that this 'lag' was mainly due to political reasons, and particularly to the difficult internal evolutions of the PS and of the BE. The PS found itself highly delegitimised by the disastrous last Sócrates' term. Since 2012, the Socialists began assuming a more confrontational stance against the ultra-neoliberal government led by the centre-right coalition. Despite the poor popularity enjoyed by the government, the Socialists, led by José Seguro (a quite centrist figure within the party), failed to significantly recuperate their appeal in the 2014 European elections, when they reached a mere 31 percent of the votes, in a context of high electoral disillusionment (the voter turnout was 33%). While the Communists mobilised their core voters and reached a satisfactory 13 percent (their highest percentage since 1989), the BE obtained a depressing result (4.5 percent).

Multiple reasons explained such a defeat. Louça's resignation after the 2011 electoral setback opened a phase of internal struggles. Several schisms were provoked by internal disagreements over the alliance strategy (Lisi, 2016: 11). In 2012, one of the four factions (*Ruptura-FER*, the most radical one) decided to form its own party. In view of the 2014 European elections, another schism came from the right: some intellectuals founded the *Fórum Manifesto*, which later became a political party (*Tiempo de Avançar*, 'Time to Move Forward') and allied with another micro-party, *Livre* ('Free'). Although the latter coalition reached a tiny 2.2 percent in the European elections, it still contributed to the *Bloco*'s defeat.

In contrast, during the year preceding the 2015 legislative elections, both the PS and the BE solved some of their internal tensions. In September 2014, for the first time, the PS held primary elections to select the new General Secretary: the Lisbon's mayor António Costa, belonging to the leftist faction, defeated Seguro with the 68 percent of the votes. Costa's victory, and the own enthusiasm generated by the primaries, helped to improve PS' image, and set the conditions for an eventual post-electoral alliance with the Radical Left[216]. However, two months later, the arrest of Sócrates (on suspicion of corruption, tax fraud and money laundering) again weakened the image of the PS.

The *Bloco* finally found a solution to its internal tensions. The internal convention held in November 2014 was 'the most conflicted party meeting ever' (Lisi, 2016: 11), and focused on strategic issues such as the electoral alliances and the eventual participation to the government. The elections for the *Mesa Nacional* produced a stalemate between two factions, solved by the creation of a six-members 'permanent commission', with executive powers, and led by a speaker, Catarina Martins, who soon became the recognised partisan leader.

In view of the 2015 general elections, the BE advanced some ambiguous speculations about their participation in a Left-Left government, a possibility strongly backed by BE's (and PCP's) voters (Lisi, 2016). The centre-right coalition obtained the relative majority (39% of the votes and 44% of the seats), while the PS reached an unsatisfactory 32%. The Communists basically defended their electoral base (8.3%), while the BE was the real winner of the elections (10.2%). Costa refused to ally with the PSD and, despite strong resistances within his party, immediately opened the negotiations with the PCP and the BE to form a coalition government. Finally, the three parties agreed on a common political platform, aiming at increasing workers', public employees' and pensioners' incomes', stopping privatizations and increasing welfare

216 According to the 2015 ICS Post-Electoral Survey (my calculation), the PS was perceived by the voters quite to the left (3.89, expressed in a 0-10 scale), 4.10 points to the left than the PSD. Meanwhile, both the BE (1.44) and the PCP (1.34) had moved further to the left. See also Lisi (2016).

spending (Lisi, 2016: 13). At the end, the BE and the PCP refused to join the government and just assured their external support.

There are strong similarities between the Uruguayan and Portuguese political evolutions, at the levels of both the independent and dependent variables considered in this research. In both countries, the unions remained the 'guardians' of strong statist traditions rooted in *batllismo* and in the Portuguese revolutionary period following the Carnation Revolution. Their coherent opposition against pro-market reforms gave them the necessary legitimacy for defending their role as articulators of the popular discontent.

In both countries, the political Left attracted different sectors through multiple programmatic and organisational linkages. Table 8.8 provides the results of three logistic models (using data from 2015 ICS Post-Electoral Survey), in which the dependent variables are, respectively, the vote for the PS, the BE and the PCP in the 2015 legislative elections. Amongst the regressors, we find: occupational category[217]; a dummy for fixed-term workers; ideology (in a 0-10 scale; 10=Extreme Right); gender; union membership; educational level (1-3: 1=primary education; 3=some university education); age group (1-3; 1=younger than 35; 3=older than 54); a dummy for public sector workers; and the macro-region of residence.

217 I grouped the respondents into six different categories: unemployed workers; retired workers; high-skilled white collars, managers and entrepreneurs; low-skilled white collars (the baseline category); blue-collar workers; unskilled and rural workers. I dropped students and unpaid domestic workers from the sample because of the low number of observations.

Table 8.5 Party voted in 2015 legislative elections according to educational level and age group.

Party	Education			Age Group			Total
	Primary	Secondary	University	18-34	35-54	>55	
PS	42	35	19	29	27	44	36
BE	6	14	12	14	16	6	11
PCP	13	11	6	9	11	13	12
PSD	37	36	57	41	42	37	39

Table 8.6 Party voted in 2015 legislative elections according to job category.

Party	Job Category							Total	Fixed-Term Workers
	Unemployed	Retired	Student	Entrepreneurs, Managers, Skilled White Collars	Low-Skilled White Collars	BlueCollar Workers	Unskilled and Rural Workers		
PS	33	48	35	17	31	29	26	36	29
BE	18	5	24	12	13	19	6	11	23
PCP	15	12	18	5	11	11	27	12	10
PSD	29	34	24	62	39	39	41	38	32

Table 8.7 Party voted in 2015 legislative elections according to number of family assets (House, Land, Savings, Stocks).

Party	Number of Assets (Land, House, Stocks, Savings)				Total
	0	1	2	>=3	
PS	46	40	32	24	36
BE	10	14	6	7	10
PCP	19	13	7	9	12
PSD	22	32	51	59	40

Source: Author's elaboration based on 2015 ICS Post-Electoral Survey.

Table 8.8 Determinants of Voting Choice, 2015 Portuguese Legislative Elections (Logit Models).

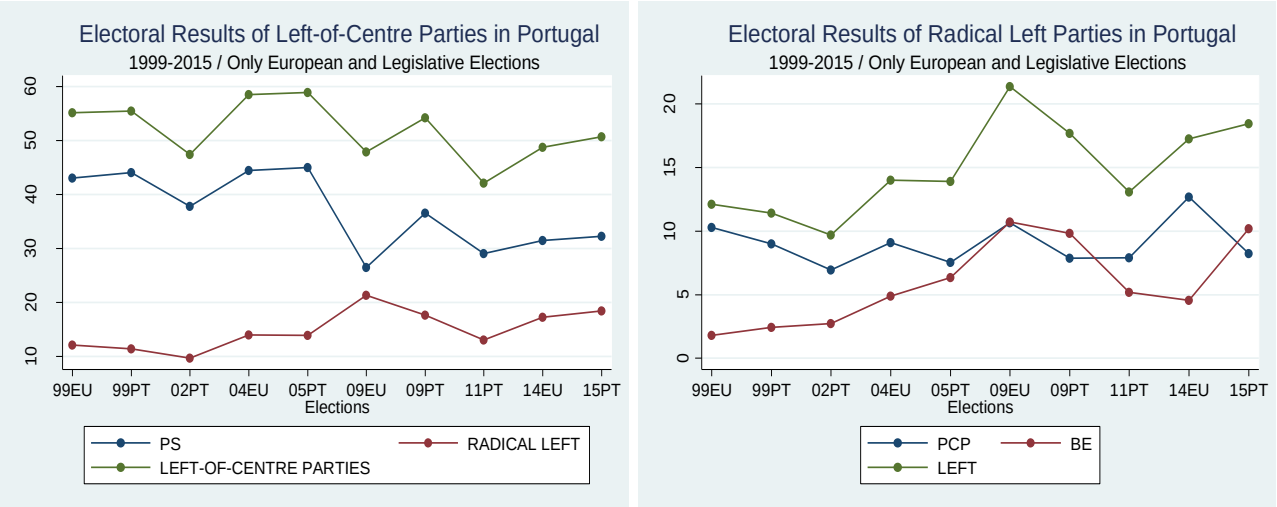
	Dependent Variable: Vote for…		
	PS	PCP	BE
Unemployed	0.01	0.94*	0.31
Retired	0.65**	0.31	-0.31
High-Skilled White Collars, Managers, Entrepreneurs	-0.90**	-0.37	-0.37
Blue Collars	-0.08	-0.12	0.76
Unskilled and Rural Workers	-0.40	1.68*	-0.68
Fixed Term	0.33	-0.76	1.41**
Ideology (0-10)	-0.18**	-0.54**	-0.43**
Female	0.02	0.25	-0.09
Union Member	-0.91**	1.58**	0.08
Educational Level (1-3)	-0.31*	-0.40	0.47
Age Group	-0.05	-0.37	-0.01
Public Sector	0.80**	-0.85	-0.13
North	0.70**	-0.19	0.39
Lisbon	0.50*	1.18**	-0.18
Alentejo	1.31**	1.20**	-0.29
Algarve	0.65	0.23	0.18
Constant	-0.20	0.02	-1.70
N	900	900	900
Log-Likelihood	-443.35	-178.48	-210.78
R2	0.12	0.32	0.19

Source: Author's elaboration, using data from ICS 2015 Post-Electoral Survey. *=p<0.10; **=p<0.05. Models robust to heteroskedasticity. Low-Skilled White Collars is the reference category for independent variables concerning the job sector.

As the different tables show, PS' electorate was concentrated amongst the pensioners and partially amongst unemployed workers. Interestingly, the PS further lose ground amongst unionised workers, who, unsurprisingly, were overrepresented in the Communist electorate, which corresponded to its common stylization: poorer than average, and concentrated amongst unemployed, low-skilled and rural workers in the South and in the Lisbon region. The BE attracted well-educated, young people and precarious workers more than average.

Differently from the Uruguayan Left, the Portuguese one is divided into three political parties and torn by strong rivalries. Another crucial difference must be noticed: while the FA reached the power in the post-crisis period after a long, gradual and uninterrupted electoral growth, the *Geringonça* could seem more the product of post-electoral alliances than the outcome of a Portuguese 'turn to the Left' (see Figure 8.4). Nevertheless, it must be also recalled that the PS under Costa is not the same as the PS under Guterres or Sócrates. The own decision to form a parliamentary coalition with the BE and the PCP, which were considered as 'political pariahs' until a few years ago, proves the polarising effects provoked by austerity and the clear (albeit not necessarily unmodifiable) PS' "leftist turn".

Figure 8.4 Electoral Evolution of the Portuguese Left since the First Electoral Participation of the Bloco de Esquerda (1999-2015).



Source: Author's elaboration.

It is difficult to assess if the BE could have become a sort of 'Portuguese Syriza', if it had pursued a 'populist' strategy based on a strong leadership and a coherent antagonistic stance. I argue that the internal divisions simply delayed its electoral improvement: however, BE's electoral potential was limited by, at least, four factors: the lower degree of 'contentiousness' of Portuguese society, if compared with the rest of Southern Europe; the partial 'turn to the Left' of the PS, quite visible since 2012 (in contrast to the strategy followed by the Greek PASOK: see below); the strong influence of the CGTP (much closer to the PCP than to the *Bloco*) on the Portuguese protest cycle; and the strong PCP's social anchoring. The *Bloco* thus kept representing an electorate quite similar to Podemos' one, but in a country with a quite different social composition and with a well-established competitor. Nevertheless, the 'division of labour' between unions and movements (in the streets) and between the BE and the PCP (in the institutions) favoured a further consolidation of the Portuguese Radical Left and a partial

abandon of the long-lasting centrist strategy by the PS, thus setting the conditions for the *geringonça*.

8.4 From the Streets to the Government: Greek Syriza's Populist Transformation

8.4.1 Critical Antecedents. Clientelism and Unions' Control by a Former Populist Party

Like in Spain, the first governments of the democratic era in Greece were led by a conservative party, ND ('New Democracy'). Again, like in Spain, the Greek Socialists (PASOK: 'Panhellenic Socialist Movement') became the pivotal party during the Eighties. Papandreou governed until 1989, when corruption scandals conduced to the loss of PASOK's relative majority. Nevertheless, the impact of Papandreou's governments had long-lasting effects on both the social and political sphere, and particularly on the characteristics of the Greek welfare state, the relationships between the unions and the parties, the kind of prevalent linkages between parties and voters and the conformation of the party system.

Social security transfers as a percentage of the GDP more than doubled (from 6% to 16%) in the 1981-1987 period (Castles, 2006: 53). Socialist executives also contributed to a strong expansion of the public sector (Tzannatos and Monogios, 2013[218]). Papandreou's PASOK shared very interesting features with the Argentine Peronists. The leader Papandreou won the 1981 elections through a clearly populist and nationalist discourse, claiming for 'national indipendence' and for the restoration of 'popular sovereignty', with strong anti-EU and anti-NATO accents (Pappas and Aslanidis, 2015). The PASOK did not build a strong membership base: partisan 'clubs' were quite diffused throughout the country, but their mobilization was mostly restricted to electoral times (Morlino, 1998: 177). The consolidation of partisan middle-structures

218 Public sector workers increased from 264,000 in 1970 to 824,000 in 2009, when austerity measures dramatically inverted such a long-term tendency.

occurred through the co-optation of political brokers from centrist parties (Pappas, 2009). The party in the central office almost perfectly overlapped with the party in the public offices, while the access to position of higher responsibility depended on the loyalty to Papandreou. At the same time, the control of the main political parties (both PASOK and ND) towards civil society became extremely strong, through the creation of ancillary organizations and the competition for 'occupying' sectorial and working-class interests' organizations (Morlino, 1988: 202-203). This led to the consolidation of a strong and stable two-party system that lasted until the Great Recession (Pappas and Aslanidis, 2015). Party identification was the highest in Southern Europe (Morlino, 1998: 119).

Particularistic party-voters linkages were not limited to clientelistic and patronage practices: the expansion in social security protection occurred in a way that multiplied Greek welfare regime’s fragmentation (Ferrera, 2004). The latter was highly skewed towards contributory schemes, often very generous in terms of benefits, and was built around multiple micro-constituencies targeted through particularistic programs: for example, there were more than 200 different sectorial pension funds and more than 20 different (and quite discretionary) social schemes covering citizens with disability (Matsaganis, 2004). Such a welfare state, lacking any form of safety-net policies, excluded from any public protection first-seeking and long-term unemployed workers and precarious workers with intermittent careers.

According to Matsaganis (2004), four factors prevented a comprehensive reform of the Greek welfare regime: the role of the family, the nature of unemployment, the rural dimension of poverty, and immigration. The strong familization of the Greek society was both a cause and a consequence of the very low female employment rate, of the high youth unemployment rate and the strong job protection and stability of the male breadwinner. All of this created a self-reinforcing mechanism of social stability that was

only partially challenged by the expansion of job precariousness[219], at least until precarious workers had the possibility of recurring to familistic support. Universalist social schemes were also difficult to back at the political level due to the existence of numerous informal workers (many of them belonging to vulnerable groups such as women and migrants), who would have become recipient of cash-transfer programs because of the absence of reliable work controls. In addition, poverty was mainly concentrated in rural areas, where kinship networks are stronger and where some (insufficient and often politically driven) forms of public support did exist, thus contributing to reinforce patron-client dynamics.

The main organizational linkages exploited by both the ND and (particularly) the PASOK consisted in a close control of the union movement. The two Greek peak unions, GSEE and ADEDY, quite similarly to the Venezuelan CTV, enjoy representational monopoly[220] and (in the case of GSEE) the exclusive right to sign collective agreements. In both peak confederations, different internal factions, closely tied to some specific party (such as PASKE, controlled by PASOK; DAKE, close to ND; and Syriza-controlled *Aftonomi Paremvasi*: see Reuben-Shemia, 2017), compete for the representational bodies at the sectorial and peak levels.

Due to the legal minimum number of signatures required to form a workplace union, more than 90% of the Greek salaried workers have not any form of union representation at the firm level. The clause of extension of collective agreements to non-member workers also reduced the incentives for union affiliation. At the same time, the strong institutional and organizational resources (such a generous public funding[221]), reduced the unions' incentives for *expanding* their membership among precarious

219 Despite two labour reforms (in 2001 and 2003) aiming to promote temporary employment, fixed-term contracts are not as widespread as in the rest of Southern Europe (Maroukis, 2016), although their number relevantly increased (Mattoni and Vogiatzoglou, 2014).

220 ADEDY represents the civil servants, while the GSEE, the most important one, represents the workers in the private and state-owned enterprises. Both unions are highly fragmented along sectorial and political lines. There are more than 50 federations within ADEDY and more than 70 within GSEE.

221 Before austerity reforms, around 88% of GSEE funds came from public funding, and a mere 1.4% from member dues (Reuben-Shemia, 2017: 13).

workers and salaried workers in small enterprises (Kousis and Karakioulafi: 2013; Reuben-Shemia, 2017). As a consequence, union density in Greece faced an important decline: from 39% in 1982 to 25% in 2002 and to 21% in 2012 (Panayiotakis, 2015): union density in the public sector is higher than 60%, in comparison with 18% in the private one (Vogiatzoglou, 2015).

According to Kousis and Karakioulafi (2013), GSEE and ADEDY did nothing to contradict the 'common wisdom' denouncing their encapsulation in the defence of 'better-protected workers' (GR1). The unions were overwhelmingly perceived as bureaucratic actors, concentrated on the defence of their institutional resources (Trantidis, 2016), and dominated by political cliques linked with mainstream parties and particularly with the PASOK, which extensively used its faction to oil its 'political machine' (Kousis and Karakioulafi, 2013). Most importantly, the unions were widely attacked for their lack of autonomy *vis à vis* the parties. Both GSEE and ADEDY were born as quasi-official organs for state corporatist practices (Morlino, 1998; García and Karakatsanis, 2006). During the Eighties, two reforms aimed to guarantee more autonomy to the peak unions, without positive results, though (Morlino, 1988: 239; Kousis and Karakioulafi, 2013). The strong partisan influences concretely led to the lack of a true representation of the workers' interests and to the centrality of state and judiciary regulation over labour market issues (Morlino, 1988: 239).

Greek unions did resort to quite confrontational repertoires: they convoked 40 percent of the general strikes in Western Europe during the 1980-2006 period (Kousis and Karakioulafi, 2013). Nevertheless, such strikes were a sort of 'political liturgy' within the process of party-unions exchange that neglected precarious workers' interests and focused on resources-rich constituencies. '*Although trade unions challenged sometimes significant efforts of marketization in the pre-crisis period through strike action (e.g proposing social security reforms in 2003), they remained among the main stakeholders of the mainstream political and institutional order in Greece, reflecting the public discourse and perception of trade unions as "political dinosaurs"*' (Kretsos and

Vogiatzoglou, 2015: 6). Not coincidentally, Greek citizens showed the lowest levels of trust in unions in Western Europe: a mere 21% declared to trust 'a lot' or 'quite a lot' in unions (ESS 2008).

The Greek two-party system left little space for alternative parties. However, the Greek Communist Party (KKE) always managed to achieve parliamentary representation during the democratic period. During the Eighties, the KKE consistently obtained around 10 percent of the votes, while reaching quite impressive membership's levels (100,000 affiliates in the early Eighties, by far the broadest membership base in Greece: Morlino, 1998). The KKE remained an orthodox, pro-Soviet party. In 1968, it suffered the scission of its Eurocommunist faction, which founded the (electorally irrelevant) KKE 'of the Interior' (KKE-es). However, the two parties formed an electoral coalition *(Synaspismós*), in view of 1989 early elections following Papandreou's resign due to corruption scandals. *Synaspismós* obtained quite good, but declining, electoral results (13, 11 and 10 percent, respectively) in the three different legislative elections held in the Greek chaotic political phase in 1989-1990, when *Synaspismós* opted for joining two different governments, led by ND's politician Tzannetakis and the technocrat Zolotas. Tzannetakis' “unnatural coalition” had the primary goal of fighting corruption, with very poor results, though. The declining electoral results and the singular strategies followed by *Synaspismós*' leaders led to the breakdown of the coalition. Half of KKE’s Central Committee abandoned the party and, together with the KKE-es and other ten micro-groups, created a party called, again, *Synaspismós* (SYN: see Panayiotakis, 2015; Della Porta et al., 2017). The Greek Radical Left, until the Great Recession, resembled, with some minor variations, the Portuguese one: a Communist party with more militants and voters and strong links to the union movement, and a Radical Leftist party internally heterogeneous and somewhat closer to social movements’ *milieu*.

The KKE had its electoral stronghold in the urban industrial sectors. KKE’s membership fell to 40,000 in the early Nineties, but it has consistently grown, according to different estimations (despite the lack of official data: see Tsakatika and Eleftheriou,

2013: 7). The KKE soon returned to its ideological Marxist orthodoxy, with some nationalistic appeals (Panayiotakis, 2015), while consolidating its presence in the organised working-class through the highly militant PAME, a sort of coordinating body of all the sectorial and local unions led by Communist delegates.

SYN started from a much smaller base – mostly inherited by the old KKE-es – and attracted very different social sectors. SYN had some rooted amongst urban middle-class sectors and university students, but it remained almost irrelevant for 15 years (Panayiotakis, 2015). While its presence within the organised working-class was negligible, SYN was able to consolidate its presence within the Greek Global Justice Movement in the first decade of the new century, mainly thanks to the militant attitude of the party's youth organization and to its internal ideological pluralism and 'movementist' partisan culture, in stark contrast with the KKE, which always refused to take part to the GJM (Tsakatika and Eleftheriou, 2013).

The experience accumulated within the GJM convinced SYN's leader Alavanos to push for expanding the coalition to other, smaller radical left forces and to form Syriza in 2004 (Panayiotakis, 2015). Syriza (*Synaspismós Rizospastikís Aristerás*, 'Coalition of the Radical Left') was formally a party coalition, clearly dominated by SYN, both at the rank-and-file and cadre levels. It embraced quite different groups, ranging from Marxist to social-democratic and environmentalist organizations. Syriza had 10,000-15,000 members during the first decade of the new century (Tsakatika and Eleftheriou, 2013; Della Porta et al., 2017) and largely inherited SYN's Youth as its own, quite combative, youth branch. The party obtained quite modest results in 2004, 2007 and 2009 legislative elections (3-5%) and for some years suffered from poor legitimacy within the composited *milieu* of the Greek Radical Left (with strong presence of communist and anarchist groups), due to its ideological 'moderation' and its bureaucratic functioning. The influence of the GJM favoured the acquisition of a 'younger' profile by Syriza, more attentive to both post-materialistic issues and to the defence of the rights of (predominantly young) precarious workers, the so-called '700 euro generation'

(Panayiotakis, 2015). Alevanos endorsed SYN Youth's secretary Alexis Tsipras as the new party leader in 2008, to strengthen the ‘youngish’ strategy.

In terms of internal organization, Syriza was (and is) organised as a 'small mass party' organization. The local branches elect both regional leaderships and national delegates forming an over-sized General Congress (more than 3,000 members), which elects separately the general secretary and a Central Political Committee (200 members), which in turn elects a small Political Secretariat (around ten members). Syriza’s rhetoric claims for the respect of participative, bottom-up procedures and for internal pluralism. However, the reality is quite different. On the one side, the local branches, while enjoying high autonomy in terms of candidate selection (except for the most important urban areas), have virtually no influence over the strategic party decisions or the draft of policy platforms, fully controlled by 'area experts' responding to the Political Secretariat and the party's leader. On the other side, ‘internal pluralism’ practically reproduces sectarian attitudes and factionalisms (see Tsakatika and Eleftheriou, 2013; Della Porta et al., 2017).

Despite such limits, Syriza was able to acquire a certain 'combative' reputation during the years that immediately preceded the Great Recession. Syriza strengthened some ties with different workplace grassroots unions focusing on the defence of precarious workers (Mattoni and Vogiatzoglou, 2014; Panayiotakis, 2015). Crucially, Syriza – differently from the KKE - opted for supporting the wide – and quite violent – mobilizations erupted after the killing of 15-years-old anarchist Alexis Grigoropoulos by a policeman. Such political support attracted harsh critiques from the entire party spectrum and triggered a vast media campaign depicting Syriza's militants as ‘extremists’. Nevertheless, it helped Syriza to assume a stronger credibility within the broad antagonist movements' *milieu* since 2010, when austerity measures put the movements at the centre of the social and political scenes and convinced an impressive number of Greek citizens to join the protests throughout the country.

Table 8.9 ‘Starting Conditions’ of left-of-centre parties in Greece.

FOR EXISTING LEFT-OF-CENTER PARTIES		PARTY "COMPROMISED" WITH NEOLIBERALISM			
		NO		YES	
TIGHTNESS OF THE UNION-PARTY RELATIONSHIP	UNION TYPE				
MEDIUM TO HIGH	MAINSTREAM AND DIALOGUIST	**Leftist Party allied with Mainstream Union**. **RISK:** being perceived as an 'insider party'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking during the mobilizations.		**Labour-Based Mainstream Party**. **RISK:** 'encapsulation' around its core-constituency; loss of working-class trust; being targeted as representative of 'old politics'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** resilience of identitarian or clientelist linkages; size of its core-constituency; moving towards more Leftist positions.	PASOK (Greek Socialists)
	MAINSTREAM AND OPPOSITIONAL	**Oppositional Union-Party Hub**. **RISK**: 'workerist' ideology and inability of expanding towards outsiders. **OPPORTUNITIES:** union movement is a credible anti-austerity actor, well-positioned for dialoguing with the movements.		Unlikely empirical combination.	
	MINORITARIAN AND OPPOSITIONAL	**Leftist party with solid links with a radicalized fraction of the labor movement**. **RISKS:** 'workerist' ideology; sectarianism; inability of expanding towards outsiders. **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking with social mobilizations; not associable with conciliatory unions.	KKE (Greek Communists)	Unlikely empirical combination.	
WEAK		**Post-Materialist Leftist Party**. **RISK**: poor credibility in labour issues . **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking with mobilizations; not associable with 'conciliatory' unions.	**Syriza**	**Center-Left party with a Plural Constituency**. **RISK:** competition both from the Left and from the Right; being targeted as representative of 'old politics'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** moving towards more Leftist positions.	Minor Greek Left-of-centre parties

Source: Author’s Elaboration.

8.4.2 Critical Juncture and Social Mobilizations: Between momentary 'Unity of Action' and everlasting Ideological Fractures

The Great Recession hit Greece after a decade of sustained economic growth. Greek bipartidism seemed extremely stable. In 2004, ND won the legislative elections and put a final point to the long Simitis' era, marked by the adhesion to the Eurozone and by a vast program of (total or partial) privatizations contradicting the old, nationalist PASOK's rhetoric (Pagoulatos, 2005). From 2004 to 2009, the PM was ND's leader Karamanlis, who was convinced by the first bad economic signals to convoke early elections in October 2009 to have a stronger popular mandate to fight the crisis. The PASOK ran with an expansionist and redistributive agenda and clearly won with 43% of the votes (10 points more than ND), but, in a few weeks, the new Greek government became aware of the very critical situation of the Greek economy and of the public budget, whose real deficit had been 'cooked' by 'creative accounting' practices (Pappas and Aslanidis, 2015: 187). Credit rating agencies' downgrading of the Greek public bonds inaugurated the most dramatic economic phase in Greek recent history and prepared the terrain for the Troika intervention, which conceded, in May 2010, a 110 billion loan (accompanied by a Memorandum of Understanding) to 'save the country'.

The measures imposed by the Troika included the privatization of state-owned enterprises and of public buildings, public sector reduction, the increase in pension eligibility age, extensive (30-40%) cuts on pensions and on public sectors' salaries, and the deep 'flexibilization' of labour relations (Vogiatzoglou, 2017a). Such measures proved to be clearly counterproductive, as the public debt/GDP ratio increased from 107% in 2007 to 157% in 2012, while the Greek economy and society experienced an unprecedented crisis: the GDP fall by 25% in the 2008-2013 period, while unemployment rate reached 25% in 2012. Net minimum salary incomes dropped from 710 euro per month in 2009 to 586 euro in 2014 (511 for young workers: see

Panayiotakis, 2015). Meanwhile, in the absence of economic recovery and of safety-net measures, 36 percent of the population fell below the poverty line. Papandreou resigned in 2011, and in November, a few days before Monti's appointment in Italy, a 'caretaker' government, supported by ND, PASOK and LAOS (a small far-right party) and led by the banker Papademos, negotiated a new loan from the Troika (130 billion euros), accompanied by a new (and even harsher) MoU. Levels of distrust on government and parliament reached impressive levels (91% and 86%, respectively): in 2012, a mere 14 percent of the Greeks felt 'satisfied' with the functioning of democracy in their country (see Pappas and Aslanidis, 2015; Vogiatzoglou, 2017a).

In the Greek context, traditionally marked by high levels of contention, a lively far-left subculture, and a recurrent use of radical (often violent) repertoires of protest, the eruption of a long and sustained cycle of social mobilizations had to be expected. The true novelty was the *massive* character of the protests: according to Vogiatzoglou (2017a), not less than the 20 percent of the adult population directly participated in some forms of collective protests. Della Porta et al. (2017) report that 52 percent of the Greeks 'participated' or 'probably would participate' in collective forms of mobilization.

Vogiatzoglou (2017a) identified four different phases of anti-austerity mobilizations. The first phase, lasting from May 2010 (when the first MoU was signed) to May 2011, was dominated by 'traditional' actors (trade unions and political parties and groups). The second phase (May-September 2011) was briefer but very intense: it was characterised by the occupation of public squares by enraged citizens, many of them being 'first-time protesters', unaffiliated to any political group (and often displaying clear anti-partisan attitudes). The third phase saw the emergence of 'diffused social contention', at the local and national levels, around very different issues. The fourth one began in 2012 and ended on January 2015, when Syriza won the national elections, and saw an evident decrease in protest participation, while many movements focused on organising forms of social solidarity to provide basic services to the citizens.

The first phase was characterised by quite traditional repertoires of protest, consisting in strikes and street demonstration and marches. In the first three years since the beginning of the crisis (2009), not less than 42 general strikes were convoked (Panayiotakis, 2015), an impressive number even for the Greek standards. While strikes were more likely to be joined by hyper-politicised individuals and groups, the demonstrations (typically targeting pro-austerity bills) attracted broader sectors (Rudig and Karyotis, 2013; Simiti, 2014). However, the protests were quite ineffective in terms of policy reversal. There was also a sort of de-radicalization of the protest, at least in terms of repertoires, due to the shock provoked by the death of three bank clerks during the protests against the first MoU (5th May 2010). However, violent episodes continued to occur (such as physical attacks against the speaker of the Parliament and the secretary of the GSEE). The mobilizations were quite fragmented, and three different blocks were clearly distinguishable: GSEE-ADEDY, the 'alternative Left bloc', formed by Syriza and the extra-parliamentary Left, and the Communist Party, which continued its isolationist strategy (Simiti, 2014).

On 25th May 2011, 50,000 Greek citizens peacefully occupied Syntagma Square in Athens (while other *acampadas* occurred in Thessaloniki and other 36 cities), following the convocation diffused through the social networks trying to 'import' *Indignados* protests in Greece. This phase of the protests reached its peak on 28-29th June 2011, when practically all the Greek leftist social movements and organizations met in Syntagma Square, just in front of the Greek Parliament, to force the latter to withdraw a new package of austerity measures, in the middle of vast riots and clashes against the police (Vogiatzoglou, 2017a). Although several MPs belonging to the governing coalition opted for not approving the bill, the measures passed and the 'square movement' began its decline.

Nevertheless, that phase had enduring consequence for both the social and political scenario. It saw the emergence of a massive popular movement known as *aganaktismenoi (Indignados*, in Greek). It was composed by protestors with quite

heterogeneous sociological and ideological profiles[222], advancing original demands and interpreting the socio-political reality through new frames. Despite some similarities with the Spanish *Indignados*, in terms of repertoires, sociological profile of the protesters and anti-party frames, the *aganaktismenoi* movement was much less unified, and the 'infiltrations' by 'old militants' were much higher. As several sources reported (Tsaliki, 2012; Simiti, 2014; Vogiatzoglou, 2017a), the spatial division of Syntagma Square (formed by two different squares, connected by a flight of stairs) favoured a clear demarcation between the 'lower' and the 'upper' levels. As in Spain, the occupants engaged in direct democratic and participatory practices during the popular assemblies in the 'lower level', while in the 'upper level' the protests assumed more anti-political and nationalist tones, with a recurrent use of symbols remounting to the Independence War. In the 'lower' square, leftist components were dominating, with some appeals to international solidarity, although most critiques targeted the national ruling class.

Syriza's and Antarsya's (a coalition of extra-parliamentary radical left groups) militants played a central role in the ‘square movements’, although explicit or visible references to party affiliations were not welcomed amongst the protestors, not even in the 'lower' square. The KKE, like the 2008 riots, considered the *aganaktismenoi* as a 'reformist' movement at odds with a working-class-centred discourse; in contrast, Syriza encouraged its militants to join the different protests throughout the country, albeit in a 'discrete' way and aiming to 'learn from the movements instead of trying to lead and hegemonize them' (Della Porta et al., 2017). The 'covert' presence of Syriza's militants and mid-ranking officials in Syntagma Square, participating in the general assemblies and in the working groups, has been quite documented (see Vogiatzoglou, 2017a).

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222 *'According to a poll conducted during collective protest in Syntagma Square in June 2011, 23.8% of protestors were private employees, 14.6% were pensioners, 13.7% were public servants, 13.7% were unemployed, 13.2% were self-employed and 12.9% were university students […] most participants held bachelor's degrees (60%), while a small minority had a post-graduate degree (8%). The majority of protestors were aged 25-44 (25.3%) and 35-49 (27.4%) […] As for to the political profile of protestors, 43% of left-aligned and 36% of right-aligned citizens participated in the Square Movement across Greece. In addition, 38% of those who described themselves as having ‘no ideology’ engaged in collective mobilizations'* (Simiti, 2014: 16-17).

GSEE and ADEDY supported the *aganaktismenoi*, but they were neither part of, nor well received by the demonstrators. The most important and attended demonstrations occurred concomitantly with the general strikes convoked by the mainstream unions. However, the strikes 'gave the pretext' for organising parallel demonstrations and marches that were much more attended (GR1; Kousis and Karakioulafi, 2013). Despite their strike activity, the unions continued to be perceived as bureaucratic actors, associated to the 'pro-MoU' political parties[223]: according to a survey, 95% of the respondents argued that the unions did 'little' or 'very little' to prevent or reverse the approval of austerity measures (Vogiatzoglou, 2017a: 120).

The third phase of the long Greek protest cycle saw both the radicalization and the fragmentation of the mobilizations (Simiti, 2014; Vogiatzoglou, 2017a). Strikes and contentious activities continued to be intensive, although they assumed a more local or sectorial character[224]. The approval of austerity measures in June provoked a rapid disillusion amongst the less committed protesters, while the broad social and political coalition, once cemented by the immediate goal of blocking the austerity package, broke apart. Ideological divisions soon came to the fore: in October 2011, a major and highly attended general strike ended with violent clashes *within* the contentious camp. On 12th February 2012, despite vast popular demonstrations, the second MoU was approved.

Since then, Greek mobilizations fully focused on the local level, where many solidarity activities were mounted, such as *"social hospitals, pharmacies, grocery stores, soup kitchens and electricians' crews (which illegally reconnect the electricity to those who could not afford to pay their bills)"* (Vogiatzoglou, 2017a: 113). Meanwhile, Syriza – which even created an umbrella organization *(Solidarity 4 All*) to support and

223 GSEE-ADEDY remained one of the few 'bastions' of the once pervasive control of the 'civil society' by the PASOK, as union elections showed in 2013 (Kousis and Karakioulafi, 2013; Kanellopoulos and Kostopoulos, 2013; Vogiatzoglou, 2017a: 119).

224 Amongst the most resonant ones, we can mention the *I'm not paying* movement, a form of civil disobedience against high toll-road and city transport rate increases; local protests over environmental issues in Keratea and Chalkidiki; the protests against the dismissals of 600 female cleaning workers (most of them immigrants) from the Ministry of Finance; the protests against the closing of the Greek public television; and the stoic (and unsuccessful) nine-month steelworkers' strike at Chalivourgia Ellados. Syriza's militants and leadership actively supported all these struggles.

organize the distribution of basic goods and services throughout the country (GR1) - became the *institutional* political project to which many citizens put their hopes for a change.

8.4.3 The Rise of Syriza. A Populist Political Broker

Syriza's electoral rise has been impressive. In 2009, the party obtained 4.6% of the votes, three points less than the KKE, and one-tenth of PASOK's votes. In May 2012 elections, Syriza jumped to 16.8 percent, thus becoming the second Greek party, two points below ND and three points above the declining PASOK. Because of the impossibility to form a government, the elections were immediately repeated: in June, Syriza reached 26.9%, again slightly below ND. In 2014, Syriza's candidate Rena Dourou won Attica's governorship (the most populated Greek region), and a month later, in June, for the first time Syriza was the Greek most voted party (26%) in a nationwide election (for the European Parliament). Finally, in January 2015, Syriza won the legislative elections with 36 percent of the votes, and formed an 'anti-memorandum government' with the small right-wing party ANEL. Syriza substantially replicated its voting share in the new early elections held in September 2015. The scission of the leftist faction of the party following PM Tsipras' decision to sign a third memorandum, despite the well-known victory of the *Oxi* ('No') option in a referendum convoked by the government, did not affect Syriza's popularity. Currently, Tsipras still leads a Syriza-ANEL government.

Syriza has been able to exploit electorally the crisis and the anti-austerity protests by different means, all of them fully captured by the argument of this dissertation. The party had both ideological and organizational resources that, sometimes unintentionally, favoured a very good adaptation to the new, contentious scenario. Before the crisis,

Syriza had already strengthened its environmental linkages with the lively and fragmented 'ecology of the radical Left' (GR1; Katsambekis, 2016). *Syriziaioi'*s reputation of being 'extremist', while probably affecting Syriza's electoral results in 2009 (when the memory of the anti-police riots in 2008 was still vivid), had the reverse effect since 2010, when the broad public opinion identified 'Syriza' with the social and political opposition against the MoU[225].

The patient work of 'spontaneous infiltration' within the movements' *milieu* by party militants helped Syriza to play as a political broker of the protests. As Kanellopoulos and Kostopoulos (2013) showed, since the eruption of anti-austerity mobilizations, Syriza had, by far, the strongest and widest network of relationships within the composite anti-austerity *milieu*, spamming from mainstream trade unions to grassroots unions focused on the defence of precarious workers' rights[226], from environmental groups or quite spontaneous and 'apolitical' mobilizations – like the *I'm not paying movement*, or the *aganaktismenoi*– to the extra-parliamentary Left. At the political level, Syriza also attracted some dissident from the PASOK, as well as many cadres from PASKE (the Socialist trade union faction).

Environmental linkages were not only favoured by overlapping membership, but also by Syriza's internal ideological pluralism, which turned to be a resource for increasing the appeal of the party and its ability of brokering (Katsambekis, 2016: 395). Ideological pluralism brought also some negative effects, however, such as a certain tendency (surely predating the post-crisis period) towards internal factionalism and sectarianism. This was often visible even at the local level, where ideological (and quite out-of-date) debates sometimes prevailed over more pragmatic activities, thus limiting

225 According to 2012 ELNES survey data (my elaboration), 68% of the respondents argued that the PASOK should have not accept Troika's bailout. Syriza's voters were majoritarian (32%) amongst anti-bailout, slightly above ND (29%), which opportunistically opposed the first MoU (Pappas and Aslanidis, 2015). Syriza's voters were the 61% of the anti-bailout respondents who self-identified with the political Left. According to 2014 ELNES survey data referring to the European Elections, Syriza was voted by 63% of the respondents indicating, as one of their main criteria for the selection of the vote choice, 'the overthrow of the government, against the memorandum'.

226 During the 2004-2008 period, Syriza had clearly 'owned' the issue of job precariousness, which became a major theme in the public sphere since the beginning of the crisis (Katsambekis, 2016).

the potential expansion of party membership: despite its electoral boom, Syriza's membership increased from around 10,000 to 30,000 members, an important but still limited expansion, insufficient to reach the KKE in terms of militancy (Della Porta et al., 2017)[227].

Nevertheless, the party experienced a parallel process of power centralization, around the figure of Alexis Tsipras, who thanks to his personal skills and to some 'plebiscitarian' organizational characteristics (such as the direct leader's election by the Congress and not by the Central Committee), strengthened his position and his political autonomy (Della Porta et al., 2017). Such process of power centralization became even clearer since 2012, when Syriza finally became a unified party instead of a coalition centred on *Synaspismós*. Organizational centralization, the over-exposure of Tsipras in the media, and the excellent electoral results achieved by the party transformed Syriza from a fringe and plural electoral cartel to a major player in the Greek political arena with an unchallenged leadership. When in government, the necessity of making its internal decision-making process smooth and of filling public posts by selecting from a small and inexperienced party elite, further deepened power centralization and limited the role of the party *vis à vis* the government (GR1).

Like Argentine Kirchnerism, thus, the organizational characteristics of the Syriza populist project was centred on a clear demarcation between the 'party' and the 'movements', but also on the connections between the two spheres through environmental linkages. Syriza remained a quite old-fashioned party, with a small and hyper-ideologized membership. The draft of programmatic manifestos (like the 'Thessaloniki Manifesto', a quite moderate social-democratic platform drafted by 'party specialists' in view of the January 2015 elections: Katsambekis, 2016) and candidates selection remained strictly controlled by the formal organs (and by Tsipras' inner circle). However, as a militant argued, *'Syriza grew by constructing around it a series of*

227 Syriza's organizational weakness has been identified as one of the major causes for its relatively poor electoral record in sub-national elections: in 2014, the party obtained 15% of the votes in municipal elections, 18% in regional elections, and 27% in European elections (Tsirbas, 2014).

networks with other political groups, individual activists, grassroots initiatives, movement-like things... This created a Syriza beyond Syriza, a broader Syriza, a socially-oriented Syriza, something much bigger than the actual local branches of its members... and this network had a much bigger impact on the development of the party than the actual work of its organised members' (quoted from Della Porta et al., 2017: 77).

Apart from such organizational features, the centrality of the development of a *populist discourse and strategy* was crucial for Syriza's electoral growth. Until the eruption of the crisis, Syriza's appeals to the 'youth' or to the 'precariat' failed to reach a broader public. Since the beginning of the protests, Syriza highlighted the contrast between the 'People', to be intended in socio-economic (the 'underdogs', the 'non-privileged') *and* political (the 'unheard' People, deprived of their sovereignty) terms, and the 'establishment', which prevented the former from having a voice in the polity domain (Stavrakakis, 2015). *Syriziaioi* got involved in different struggles that, because of their anti-establishment, even 'apolitical' frames, were quite different from the traditional campaigns and issues that were traditionally branded by the 'ecology of the Greek Left' (GR1).

'It is no coincidence that until 2011, Syriza had never mentioned the possibility of exercising power, which means they intentionally did not pursue a hegemonic project' (Katsambekis, 2016: 395). Things began changing in view of 2012 elections, when Tsipras adamantly declared that his party was ready to 'assume the responsibility' of governing the country. Such statements seemed quite ironic at the time, when Syriza was considered a radical leftist party condemned to a peripheral position in the party system (Douzinas, 2017). This, far from being a mere rhetorical device for convincing the broader electorate that the vote for Syriza was not a 'wasted' vote, reflected another crucial feature of the definition of populism that I provide. Once, Syriza was a mere representative of 'oppressed minorities'. Since the beginning of the popular mobilizations, Syriza was able to *be identified with the protesters*, whose sociological

composition was more transversal than the sectors traditionally mobilised by the 'ecology of the Left'. In a second phase, Syriza presented itself (and was recognised) as the true *representative* of the protesters.

As different sources highlighted (Rudig and Karyotis, 2017; Vogiatzoglou, 2017a; GR1), since 2012, the Greek anti-austerity protest cycle appeared in decline. Many citizens realized that a purely contentious strategy was insufficient, and understood the necessity of pursuing an institutional path by awarding the only party that had gained credibility as the representative of the protestors. Syriza continued to pursue a two-fold strategy. On the one side, the partisan leaders and cadres concentrated their efforts into the electoral sphere, eventually neglecting the task of strengthening the party for the sake of efficient internal decision-making process and electoral campaign coordinating tasks (GR1). On the other side, the party continued to support local struggles and initiatives for limiting the harshest effects of poverty, also thanks to party programs like *Solidarity 4 All* (GR1).

In terms of sociological characteristics, Syriza's electorate experienced a certain ‘normalization’ over the years. Table 8.9 shows the vote for Syriza in June 2012 and June 2014 elections, according to different sociological variables (job sector, age and educational level), by using data from ELNES (Hellenic National Elections Studies, 2012 and 2014 waves). I calculated the ratio between the voting share for each category and the voting share in the entire samples. Nearly all the ratios tend to get close to 1 in 2014, except for blue-collar workers (whose presence in the two samples is very limited: n=31 in 2014) and retired workers (which were over-represented in the electorates of centre-left parties like PASOK and the Europeanist *To Potami*). Syriza reduced its over-representation amongst ‘post-materialist’ constituencies like students and professionals, and amongst unemployed workers (who still remained Syriza’s stronghold).

Table 8.10 presents the results of a basic multivariate analysis over the determinants of the vote for Syriza in June 2012 and June 2014 elections. I present three models: Model 1 only includes the categories identifying job, educational level, age

group and geographic area of residence. Model 2 also includes a dummy variable for leftist ideology, and two variables measuring the interest in politics and the satisfaction with individual economic condition. Model 3 includes the same variables of Model 2, plus the eventual opposition to Troika's MoU[228]. While unemployment was a major determinant of the vote for Syriza in 2012, it lost statistical significance in 2014, and it even became a negative predictor when controlling for the opposition to MoU (which, according to logit regressions not shown here, was strongly positively associated with unemployment condition, though). Syriza's electorate partially became less overrepresented in urban areas. As Model 2 shows, the perception of a bad economic condition became positively associated with Syriza's voting, thus confirming the 'proletarization' of Syriza's electorate. Quite interestingly, Syriza was quite under-represented (23% in the sample) among those respondents identifying the willingness 'to express dissatisfaction with the whole political system' as a main reason for their voting choice. While such voters disproportionately casted their votes to far-right parties, such finding confirms Syriza's institutionalization and credibility as viable alternative for governing the country.

Syriza's governments has remained far from fulfilling the promises for a reversal of austerity measures and for a real 'restoration of Greek popular sovereignty'. To be fair, supranational and economic pressures were and are extremely high, and Greece has not the same productive potentialities as Argentina had in 2002. Tsipras' substantial moderation produced the scission of the most radical, Eurosceptic and 'movementist' Syriza's factions, which formed LAE ('Popular Unity'), a party that failed to reach the 3% threshold in September 2015 elections. In a phase of evident and physiological social de-mobilization, Syriza's project was able to retain the hegemony within the Greek Left, although the prospects for the next general elections are quite negative. Time

[228] The 2012 questionnaire included an explicit question over the MoU signed by PASOK's government (68% of the respondents opposed the MoU). The 2014 questionnaire included a quite different question asking for identifying the 'main reasons' for voting a specific party: one of the option was '*I voted for the overthrow of the government and against the Memorandum*' (23% of the respondents selected this option).

will tell if Greek ‘perennial austerity’ will trigger other protest cycles with unpredictable effects on the party system.

Table 8.10 Voting Shares (%) for Syriza according to different sociological variables (June 2012 and June 2014 elections).

Sociological Variables	2012 Elections	2014 Elections	Ratio 2012	Ratio 2014
JOB SECTOR				
Manager/Entrepreneur	21	26	0.81	0.79
Unemployed	35	37	1.35	1.12
White Collar	20	33	0.77	1.00
Blue Collar	22	45	0.85	1.36
Student	38	33	1.46	1.00
Retired	22	19	0.85	0.58
Professional	33	35	1.27	1.06
AGE GROUP				
18-34	37	34	1.42	1.03
35-54	28	36	1.08	1.09
>54	17	21	0.65	0.64
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL				
Primary Education	17	33	0.65	1.00
Secundary Education	33	34	1.27	1.03
Tertiary Education	30	32	1.15	0.97
Total	26	33	1.00	1.00

Source: Author's Elaboration using survey data from ELNES (2012 and 2014 post-electoral questionnaires). Petty bourgeoisie, unskilled workers and unpaid domestic workers were dropped from the sample due to very low number of observations. Ratio=(Syriza's voting share in a specific category) / (Syriza's total voting share).

Table 8.11 Determinants of Voting for Syriza, June 2012 Legislative Elections and June 2014 European Elections (Logit Models).

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014
Left Ideology (<4 in a 0-10 scale)			2.14**	2.17**	1.99**	1.78**
Director/Manager	-0.40	-0.36	-0.12	-0.32	0.11	-0.06
Unemployed	1.53**	0.16	1.30**	-0.50	1.31**	-0.76**
Blue Collar	-0.42	-0.29	-0.6	-0.09	-0.51	0.11
Student	0.47	0.06	0.37	-0.26	0.87	-0.54
Retired	0.72	-1.01	0.38	-1.58**	0.22	-1.36*
Professional	0.50	0.14	0.49	0.31	0.37	0.11
Part-Time Job	0.31	0.01	0.56	-0.41	0.56	-0.61*
Public Sector	0.36	-0.03	0.31	-0.32	0.48	0.37
Age Group	0.02	-0.18	0.17	-0.10	0.20	-0.08
Educational Level (1-3)	-0.15	0.06	-0.25	0.12	-0.21	0.25
Rural Area	-1.75**	0.37	-1.37**	0.42	-1.32**	0.54
Small Town	0.26	0.60	0.37	0.19	0.64	0.19
Big City	-0.15	0.77**	0.33	0.55**	0.57	0.63**
Bad Economic Condition (1-5)			0.13	0.26**	-0.22	0.08
Interest in Politics (1-4)			0.26	-0.13	0.29*	-0.21
Anti-Memorandum					1.92**	1.90**
Costant	-0.86	-1.17	-3.32**	-2.34**	-5.74**	-2.18**
Log-Likelihood	-296.62	-452.53	-240.42	-376.17	-221.24	-337.96
N	598	847	579	845	572	845
R2	0.12	0.05	0.27	0.21	0.33	0.29

Source: Source: Author's Elaboration using survey data from ELNES (2012 and 2014 post-electoral questionnaires). Petty bourgeoisie, unskilled workers and unpaid domestic workers were dropped from the sample due to very low number of observations. Reference Categories: White Collar; Living in Urban Periphery. Results robust to heteroskedasticity.

Chapter 9. Conclusions.

9.1 Assessing the Causal Argument

The Consequences of different Antecedent Configurations: Party-Unions Alignments Compared. In Uruguay and Portugal (the countries where *labour-based Left* was the most successful political actor in the aftermath of the critical juncture), the 'union-party hubs' (FA/PIT-CNT and PCP/CGTP) maintained a consistent oppositional stance during the pre-crisis era. While the unions kept primarily representing the insider sectors, both the Uruguayan and the Portuguese Left pursued quite successful linkage strategies to expand their appeal amongst the outsiders.

In Uruguay, the strategy of linkages' segmentation pursued by the *Frente Amplio* during the nineties allowed the party to gradually expand its social bases well beyond the highly unionised *insider bloc* (the 'Corporatist Uruguay' described by Alegre and Luna, 2005). FA's factionalism was functional to a sort of 'customization' of the programmatic linkages towards different constituencies. The party also exploited the governmental experience in the city of Montevideo, which contributed to create organizational linkages with community-based social movements rooted in poorer areas and to enhance the credibility of the *Frente Amplio* as a reliable actor for the task of governing the country.

The PCP opted for organizational continuity: it resisted as the only Portuguese mass party and preserved its societal roots, also thanks to the Communist control of the union movement. Such continuity allowed for a strong encapsulation of its electorate, although it also made much more difficult the creation and consolidation of strong linkages with new social movements, which in turn found in the pluralist BE an available ally. The BE added to its 'post-materialist' platform a strong attention to job

precariousness. Thus, despite political divisions, the Portuguese Left positioned itself as a coherent and consistent defender of the labour rights of both the insiders and the outsiders. The dialogue inaugurated between the CGTP (almost controlled by the PCP) and social movements closer to the *Bloco* contributed to assure the traditional hegemony of Portuguese institutional actors over civil society even during the contentious cycle following the implementation of austerity reforms.

In the rest of the countries studied in this dissertation, with the partial exception of Bolivia, the main trade unions kept, or were forced to keep, some linkages with their traditional partisan referents, despite their 'centripetal' ideological turn. This was particularly true in Venezuela, Argentina, Spain and Greece, where the peak union confederations kept their loyalty towards the main left-of-centre or labour-based parties (AD, the PJ, the PSOE and the PASOK, respectively). In Greece, the linkages between the PASOK and the main unions were never questioned and remained extremely tight: unions acted as almost pure economic actors, while also prone to opaque and highly criticised patronage practices, with very poor autonomy from the partisan sphere.

In Spain, both the UGT and the CC.OO gradually transformed themselves into 'civil society unions' fully committed to neo-corporatist forms of 'social dialogue', which became a primary unions' goal, as it guaranteed a stable access to the polity domain. PSOE-unions links became functional to protect the Spanish neo-corporatist system from the PP's attacks. Such rapprochement also suggested a benevolent stance towards the PSOE even when the latter imposed harsh austerity measures to the citizens, under budgetary and supranational pressures. This exposed the Spanish unions to widespread critiques.

A certain initial unions' resistance against the 'neoliberal turn' of the main labour-based parties was observed both in Venezuela and in Argentina. However, while in Venezuela the CTV, after the fall of Carlos Andrés Pérez, substantially kept its ties with AD, in Argentina the union system experienced quite important changes during the Menemist era. Although most sectorial unions confirmed their loyalty to the Peronists in

power, a consistent part of Argentina trade unionism opted for opposing Menemism, either from the inside (like the MTA) or the outside (like the CTA) of the CGT. The birth of unions contesting the 'neoliberal-corporatist' arrangements of CGT's leadership and, in the case of the CTA, explicitly aiming to organise precarious and unemployed workers, offered to such a renewed trade unionism some possibility of 'repositioning' itself as a credible alternative actor in the aftermath of the collapse of the 'old regime'.

In Bolivia and Italy, the main leftist peak union confederations (the COB and the CGIL) defended their character of 'classist' unions. However, neither the COB nor the CGIL were able to reinvent themselves as representatives of broader sectors than their traditional insider constituencies. The COB remained under the ideological and strategic control of a weakened 'proletarian vanguard'. Miners' and industrial unions refused to share COB's direction with strong social movements representing much broader outsider constituencies. Its own weakness left the COB at the mercy of political parties looking for the control of the organization, which substantially represented some 'working class aristocracies'.

The CGIL played a leading role within the Italian Left contesting 'Berlusconism', and, together with the PRC, strengthened its ties with anti-neoliberal social movements during the pre-crisis era. While the promising PRC's project failed due to fatal strategic errors (see below), the CGIL never did seriously abandon its main political strategy: to provide a loyal leftist social base to the moderate Italian centre-left coalition, in exchange for some forms of 'social dialogue', considered as the most effective tool to protect the insiders from 'flexibilising' labour market reforms.

With the partial exception of Uruguayan *Frente Amplio*, centre-left and labour-based parties pursued a strategy of (at best) ideological moderation during the pre-crisis era. In Bolivia, during the nineties, the parliamentary Left had come to be non-existent. In Portugal, we had the only left-of-centre party without any linkages with the main union organization. The Portuguese Socialists lacked an extended partisan base, but still

retained an inter-classist electorate, by taking advantage of post-materialist appeals, the implementation of universalist social policies and the resilience of identitarian legacies remounting to the phase of democratic transition. However, they paid a high electoral toll for their management of the crisis.

The Argentine PJ and, to a slightly lesser extent, the Venezuelan AD (both of them ideologically heterogeneous) assumed quite a right-of-centre position during the nineties. Both parties found themselves in a risky position because of the deterioration of the economic situation and the implementation of austerity reforms limiting their access to state resources. Nevertheless, some important differences help to explain the different fates of the two parties. The PJ was not governing the country at the time of the economic crash. This was not enough to exempt the Peronists from discredit; however, it gave them, at least, a 'second opportunity', in the absence of a credible anti-neoliberal competitor. Most importantly, the PJ, in contrast to AD, was able to consolidate a broader 'linkage portfolio', particularly with the vast outsider constituencies through a mix of identitarian and clientelistic-particularistic linkages and its massive social presence. The organizational transformation of the PJ from a labour-based party to a clientelistic machine (Levitsky, 2003) facilitated its adaptation to the new socio-political phase. AD, in contrast, continued to mainly rely on organizational linkages with the union movement, whose representativeness was dramatically shrinking.

The Greek 'party-union hub' shared several similarities with the Venezuelan one. The PASOK was a left-of-centre party, with a 'classic populist' past, and with a majoritarian presence within a peak union confederation which was a sort of 'battlefield' between partisan slates. It actively participated in austerity governments and was the main victim of the following socio-political realignments. The PASOK lost most of its popular bases (while its electorate assumed a quite well-to-do profile), only retained the control of a delegitimised union movement, and nearly fell into political irrelevance.

Spanish and Italian main left-of-centre parties also shared some commonalities. The PSOE and the PD experienced a long trajectory of ideological moderation and

cartelization. Both parties had an interclassist base, with strong cross-regional differences in terms of electoral support. Clientelist linkages did exist, but they were not as central as identitarian and programmatic ones. Organisational linkages convinced the unions in Spain and Italy to renounce a strong confrontational strategy when the PSOE (2010-2011) and the PD (2011-2013) led or supported governments imposing austerity measures. Such involvements highly diminished the electoral support for both parties. In Italy, the *party-union insiders' bloc* generally kept its loyalty to the party in the key 2013 elections: this further accentuated the middle-class profile of PD's electorate. In Spain, PSOE's 'core voters' were much more concentrated within the popular sectors: thus, the electoral losses were particularly extended amongst those emerging middle-classes that had supported Zapatero. To summarize, in Spain and Italy, 'floating voters' potentially interested in alternative political projects belonged to quite different sociological segments.

In Uruguay and Portugal, no potentially alternative partisan actors were present, as both the FA and the Portuguese Radical Left already offered a broad set of political options and enjoyed high legitimacy (and a certain degree of political hegemony) within the 'antineoliberal civil society'. However, in the rest of the countries analysed, there were several possible '*Syrizas*', i.e., political organizations, pre-dating the critical juncture, with a strong potential for electoral growth, but, however (in contrast to Syriza) unable to exploit their favourable position, for different reasons.

In Bolivia, the 'neoliberal convergence' of the three historical parties opened political spaces for alternative political projects during the nineties. In fact, several new parties successfully broke the Bolivian partisan oligopoly. These parties pretended to represent precisely sectors suffering from social and political exclusion. The MRTKL emerged from the Katarist *milieu.* Its alliance with the MNR led by Sánchez de Losada was widely considered as a 'betrayal' of the struggles of the indigenous peasants from the Highlands, and was one of the proximate causes for the creation of the MAS-IPSP.

MRTKL's project became a sort of 'neoliberal indianism', aiming at preserving the traditional forms of sociocultural (re)production of the traditional Bolivian communities, without addressing the causes of social inequality. In that liberal line, the MRTKL framed the Bolivian 'indigenous question' as a matter of 'protection of ethnic minority': a frame that obviously did not resonate amongst Aymara and Quechua peasants, who represented the vast *majority* of Bolivian population. Two other parties, CONDEPA and the UCS, with no ties to the Bolivian indigenous or peasant social movements, were much more electorally successful than the MRTKL. Both parties were electoral machines created by political mavericks, who quite successfully made use of an anti-establishment discourse and appealed to the ethnic identity of the Bolivian poors in both urban and rural areas. Such parties clearly did not politicize the socioeconomic side of the ethnic cleavage, however. They soon got involved in the same clientelistic and patronage practices of the 'old parties', and did not survive the death of their founders[229] and to their participation in the 'megacoalition' supporting Bánzer's government. In turn, the MIP, a radical Aymara ethno-nationalist party with strong roots within the peasant movements, failed to aggregate broader constituencies and at the end was displaced by the rise of the MAS-IPSP.

In Argentina, the FREPASO, for a while, was attractive for a relevant part of the composite *milieu* formed by alternative trade unionism (such as the CTA) and by community-based social movements, which some years later animated the bulk of the *piquetero* movement in the *Conurbano*. At the same time, it was able to appeal to progressive middle classes discontent with the mounting corruption of PJ's governments. It had thus the potential for patiently building a cross-class coalition of leftist Peronist and anti-Peronist sectors through different programmatic and organizational linkages. Nevertheless, the FREPASO had trouble to expand beyond urban middle-class constituencies. The development of an anti-corruption, ‘clean’ discourse, and the renunciation to truly challenge the neoliberal model implemented by Menem and Cavallo, were both a cause and a consequence of FREPASO's inability of expanding its

[229] Max Fernández (UCS) died in 1995, Carlos Palenque (CONDEPA) in 1997.

electorate amongst the Argentine outsiders, most of whom remained loyal to the well-oiled *justicialista* political machine. The alliance with the UCR – which was at the time led by its right-of-centre, neoliberal faction – was the obvious outcome of such a political trajectory. Such alliance proved to be a fatal mistake for the FREPASO, which, while bringing it to the power, led it to participate, as a minor partner, in a highly unpopular government that led the country to a dramatic social, economic and political crash.

In Venezuela, in a way not too unlike Argentina, La Causa R was the most promising party for building a credible alternative political project. It emerged from the Venezuelan 'new unionism', at odds with the CTV, which was increasingly delegitimized, even amongst Veneuelan insiders, because of corruption, cronyism, lack of autonomy from the party system and increasing inability to protect the living conditions of the salaried sectors. The *nuevo sindicalismo* (and its political arm, LCR) was mainly animated by a democratic regenerative mission, which clearly contrasted with the ossified and opaque functioning of Venezuelan politics. LCR was potentially attractive to very broad and heterogeneous constituencies, from the working-class, to the informal sectors, to the progressive middle-classes, and for a while the party seemed to be able to successfully challenge *puntofijismo*. Most of Venezuelan citizens sympathetic with the unsuccessful Chávez's coup casted their vote in 1993 for LCR's presidential candidate, who reached an impressive 22% of the votes.

However, LCR clearly missed the opportunity of leading the opposition to *puntofijismo* and, in a few years, disappeared from the political scene. On the one hand, LCR moderated its anti-*puntofijismo* position and failed to propose a truly alternative socioeconomic model. On the other hand, and probably even most importantly, LCR 'was not populist enough'. In ideological terms, LCR never considered the 'occupation of public institutions' as the most important step to pursue social changes. Instead, LCR theorized about the strengthening of 'counter-power' social experiences, autonomous from the clientelist networks of the old political parties, as the primary way to 'change

things'. The party remained coherent with its critique of 'electoralism', and thus failed to strengthen its own credibility as a potential governing actor able to *deliver* or *assure* an immediate improvement in the living conditions of the citizens. Its focus on the necessity of strengthening an *autonomous civil society* was much more likely to resonate, in the medium term, only amongst highly organised constituencies (such as workers in big industrial plants, from which the *Nuevo Sindicalismo* had its roots) or amongst the urban middle-classes. In organizational terms, LCR remained very short of a process of power centralization, which soon led to several schisms. LCR's left-wing faction (*Patria para Todos*) finally joined the *Chavista* coalition.

In Southern Europe, different parties belonging to the Radical Left party family missed the opportunity to exploit the window of opportunity opened by the 'critical juncture'. This was the case of the Greek KKE, the Spanish IU and the Italian PRC and SEL. The Greek Communist Party defended its ideological orthodoxy with even more zeal than its Portuguese counterpart. In contrast to the PCP, the KKE was controlling only a small fraction of the union movement, while the Greek social movements' *milieu* was quite at odds with KKE's isolationist and sectarian practices. The KKE thus remained confined to its highly militant and identified electorate, and even suffered from the competition from Syriza, when the latter displayed concrete possibilities of conquering the government.

Izquierda Unida in Spain had become a party with quite a reduced militancy, highly criticised for its bureaucratic tendencies and for its tactical manoeuvrings. Its mobilising power was almost non-existent: the eruption of a cycle of protests could only come from outside the party's perimeter.

In Italy, too, the Radical Left was manifestly in decline when the Great Recession occurred, despite the promising avenue taken by the PRC (the main Italian leftist party) during the previous decade. The PRC, at least until 2008, had a solid membership, strong linkages with the most important GJM in Western Europe and with both the CGIL and alternative grassroots unions. It began a transition towards an

identitarian (if not ideological) renewal that seemed quite successful in attracting young voters. Its decision of joining the Italian centre-left coalition in 2006 proved to be a fatal mistake. Many movements considered the participation of the PRC in the (short-lived) Prodi's government as a betrayal of the identity and the programmatic platform promoted during the previous years. In 2008, the PRC, despite an electoral alliance with other forces from the Radical Left, even failed to pass the threshold to enter in the Parliament. In 2009, the party suffered from a schism of its right-wing faction (SEL), which was most determined to downplay the Communist legacy and was centred around the charismatic figure of Nichi Vendola. SEL was intended to be the 'party of the movements', which were in advanced decline, however. Vendola's party started with a very reduced partisan base, and its main focus on post-materialist issues proved soon to be completely disaligned with economic priorities. The decision of joining the PD in view of the 2013 general elections revealed its lack of alternative socioeconomic projects.

Table 9.1‘Starting Conditions’ of Left-of-centre Parties in the Eight Selected Countries.

FOR EXISTING LEFT-OF-CENTER PARTIES		PARTY "COMPROMISED" WITH NEOLIBERALISM			
		NO		YES	
TIGHTNESS OF THE UNION-PARTY RELATIONSHIP	UNION TYPE				
MEDIUM TO HIGH	MAINSTREAM AND DIALOGUIST	**Leftist Party allied with Mainstream Union**. **RISK:** being perceived as an 'insider party'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking during the mobilizations.	Izquierda Unida (Spain)	**Labour-Based Mainstream Party**. **RISK:** 'encapsulation' around its core-constituency; loss of working-class trust; being targeted as representative of 'old politics'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** resilience of identitarian or clientelist linkages; size of its core-constituency; moving towards more Leftist positions.	**PJ (Argentina),** AD (Venezuela), PD (Italy), PSOE (Spain), PASOK (Greece)
	MAINSTREAM AND OPPOSITIONAL	**Oppositional Union-Party Hub**. **RISK**: 'workerist' ideology and inability of expanding towards outsiders. **OPPORTUNITIES:** union movement is a credible anti-austerity actor, well-positioned for dialoguing with the movements.	**PCP (Portugal), Frente Amplio (Uruguay)**	Unlikely empirical combination.	
	MINORITARIAN AND OPPOSITIONAL	**Leftist party with solid links with a radicalized fraction of the labor movement**. **RISKS:** 'workerist' ideology; sectarianism; inability of expanding towards outsiders. **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking with social mobilizations; not associable with conciliatory unions.	LCR (Venezuela), Bolivian Radical Left, KKE (Greece), PRC (Italy)	Unlikely empirical combination.	FREPASO (Argentina) ?
WEAK		**Post-Materialist Leftist Party**. **RISK**: poor credibility in labour issues . **OPPORTUNITIES:** networking with mobilizations; not associable with 'conciliatory' unions.	PCV (Venezuela), **Syriza (Greece), Bloco de Esquerda (Portugal),** SEL (Italy)	**Center-Left party with a Plural Constituency**. **RISK:** competition both from the Left and from the Right; being targeted as representative of 'old politics'. **OPPORTUNITIES:** moving towards more Leftist positions.	MAS (Venezuela), Minor Indigenist Parties (Bolivia), MIR (Bolivia), **PS (Portugal),** Minor Greek Left-of-centre parties

Source: Author’s elaboration.

The Critical Juncture: Different Consequences of Social Mobilizations against Austerity Reforms. The different patterns of social mobilizations against austerity reforms and against the management of the crisis shaped in very different way the socio-political arena. The crisis facilitated the insertion of different, unsatisfied demands into a broader frame, in which 'austerity', or 'neoliberalism', became the common enemy and the ultimate cause of social and economic deprivation. Yet, there was a huge variation in the kinds of demands that were advanced and in the ability of different movements to generate and consolidate broader alliances to make their claims more effective and their demands better 'heard' in the public sphere. Such variation imposed quite different ideological and organizational challenges to those parties or political entrepreneurs willing to exploit the political window of opportunity by claiming to represent the institutional ally of an enraged People.

In Uruguay and Portugal, the *Labour-Based Left* exerted a clear hegemony, and in a certain sense, particularly in Uruguay, even a *control*, over the 'anti-neoliberal contentious camp', thanks to the promising starting conditions summarized in the previous section and described extensively in Chapter 8. In both countries, *strong unions, well linked to anti-neoliberal political parties, played a leading role in the protests*, and, in the case of Uruguay, the unions even acted as a moderating force to avoid an escalation of popular disorder that would have possibly compromised party system stability, in a phase in which the *Frente Amplio* was widely considered as the *only* alternative to the status quo. The FA had no interest in fuelling a potentially out-of-control cycle of protests, while the only actor that had the necessary strength for sustaining the mobilizations was the PIT-CNT, fully aligned with the party. While all the fractions of the FA chose a strategy of 'loyal opposition' against Battle's government, the fraction led by Mujica (the MPP) exploited its linkages with community-based movements to assure that potential antagonistic movements did not radicalize the protests.

Portuguese protests were 'channelled' through a 'triumvirate' of institutional actors: the CGTP, the PCP and the BE. The CGTP enjoyed strong legitimacy among the Portuguese citizenry and acted as a 'classist' union aiming at representing both the working-class and the increasing number of outsiders, whose demands (mainly expressed through movements like *Precários Inflexíveis*) were central in the programmatic platform of the *Bloco*. The PCP displayed a slightly more suspicious attitude towards the mobilization, mainly due to the stickiness of its ideological and organizational orthodoxy. However, it contributed to the mobilizations through its highly committed militancy and led the most Eurosceptic 'anti-neoliberal camp'. The BE was probably the institutional actor that better inserted itself into Portuguese 'street politics' against austerity. Its perennial internal divisions did affect the party at the electoral level, at least in 2011 and 2014 elections, but such a pluralism proved to be a useful tool to strengthen environmental linkages during contentious times, and thus to acquire a broad recognition as an alternative player in the political arena. Such a broad alliance network was also functional to push the 'moderate Left' bloc (consisting in the Socialist Party and in the second biggest peak union, the UGT) further to the Left. Several Socialist figures got involved in antagonistic movements and platforms, and the PS gradually assumed a less 'responsible' and more confrontational position against Passos Coelho's right-of-centre government. In turn, the UGT followed in several occasions the CGTP's oppositional strategy. The relative 'radicalization' of the PS-UGT bloc prepared the terrain for the leftist post-electoral alliance partially reverting austerity measures.

In the rest of the cases, the pattern of mobilization was not a *union-led* one. In Bolivia and Spain we observed a *unified* cycle of mobilizations. In other countries, the mobilizations appeared quite fragmented along either sectorial or ideological lines, while particularistic demands tended to prevail.

In Bolivia, rural and urban community-based movements, enjoying very high popular legitimacy, played a decisive role in the protests. While the decisive

mobilizations of the long Bolivian cycle of contention occurred in urban areas, the real backbone of the 'anti-neoliberal alliance network' was the very well organised peasant union movement. The *cocaleros* displayed the highest organizational cohesiveness and mobilising power of all the cases studied, and gradually achieved a leading position within the MAS-IPSP, whose electoral rise in 2002 demonstrated the full potential for a *movement-based populist project* in Bolivia.

The main Bolivian protest events stemmed from local or sectorial demands, but they soon overflew their particularistic dimensions. The 'masterframe' of the protests was centred on the concept of 'sovereignty', i.e. the restoration of the 'popular control' over natural resources, over the forms of (re)production of the Bolivian communities and neighbourhoods, and, particularly since the creation of the *Pacto de Unidad* between the *trillizas* and the indigenous organizations, over the own Bolivian state, through the claim for the convocation of a new Constituent Assembly. Since its own foundation, the MAS-IPSP made clear that its main goal was to 'occupy the colonial state' by electoral means, without delegating the representation of the Bolivian peasants to political parties. The slogan *votar para nosotros mismos* was quite illuminating, in this sense. However, the concept of 'sovereignty' assumed quite different meanings for the different actors involved in the struggles. It varied from the 'citizens' control' of the Cochabamba water public company and the respect of customary laws, to the statist vision underlying the Gas War; from the state recognition of property rights and the extension of cultivable lands, to the protection of indigenous forms of social reproduction. Such different understandings did not affect the unity of the popular organizations supporting the *proceso de cambio,* at least until the ‘final’ defeat of the economic and political opposition. Nevertheless, all these contradictions clearly emerged during the second Morales' term.

Some differences between the anti-neoliberal Bolivian and Spanish social movements and mobilizations are straightforward, in terms of sociological bases, organizational forms, repertoires of protests, and demands, just to mention the most

evident aspects. Nevertheless, the cycle of protests in Spain was similarly characterised by an impressive network of alliances between different social movements, particularly since the eruption of the *Indignados* movement in 2011. In Spain such 'unification' was not reached through the mutual support of well-consolidated social movements with a long contentious trajectory. The 15-M, in this sense, served as a 'founding moment' that prevented the Spanish mobilizations from taking a 'fragmented' path such as in Greece and (particularly) in Italy.

The success achieved by the *Indignados* movement facilitated the consolidation of new socio-political identities. The adoption of broad, *universalist* goals and frames, centred on the restoration of a truly accountable *democracy* to give *sovereignty* back to 'The people' (*la gente*), was crucial to prevent the emergence of ideological divisions. Even the following mobilizations, such as the different *Mareas*, as well as the *PAHs*, fit into 15-M's 'spirit', by including their 'single-issue' campaigns into a broader struggle against the *Castas* governing Spain.

The Spanish pattern of mobilization opened a political space for the emergence of a *populist* project able to translate the demands advanced by the protesters into the institutions. It created new frames ready to be exploited for political purposes, and motivated a vast number of committed militants sharing a common '*Indignado* identity' and potentially attracted by an innovative electoral project. However, in contrast to the Bolivian case, such a political project could not directly emerge from the social movements' *milieu*, for different reasons.

First, it is crucial to underscore here the absence of social rootedness of the Spanish movements, if compared with the actors leading the contentious cycle in Bolivia. Such absence was a consequence of different factors, such as the inability by the assemblies at the territorial level to 'institutionalize' the *Indignados* movement, and thus to create a potential new 'organizational base', and the focus on (mainly) *universalist* demands, at a very general level, a feature that generated little incentives to

sustain the protests over time[230], in stark contrast to the *territorial* and *sectorial* demands (later aggregated through *universalist* frames) advanced by the Bolivian movements, which were composed by very different social sectors than the impoverished Spanish middle-classes.

Second, the very horizontal, assemblearian forms popularized by the protests, and the extreme distrust of the political and institutional sphere, impeded the development of a *movement-based populist project*. The devotion to the 'leaderless' principle and the lack of organizational structures allowed for an enormous expansion and strengthening of the movements, but it also impeded (as in Argentina with the *asambleista* movement of 2002) their autonomous transformation into a political-electoral project, which was in fact never seriously debated. The Spanish protests put pressure on the *Casta*; framed in a different, innovative manner the social, economic and political crisis; motivated new citizens to political participation; and consolidated mutual trust between militants amongst different organizations and campaigns. However, the *populist instrument* to shape the political arena still had to come.

In Argentina, Venezuela, Italy and Greece, anti-austerity mobilizations remained highly *fragmented* along ideological, geographical or sectorial lines. Ideological divisions between different actors were deep in Argentina, Italy and Greece. In all four countries, important local struggles, led by movements claiming to represent geographically-defined constituencies, erupted. In addition, in the Latin American cases of Argentina and Venezuela, a certain 'competition' between different movements struggling for scarce state resources emerged. The structural social heterogeneity typical of dualised societies was mirrored in the galaxy of social actors representing different segments of the society and advancing demands that often proved to be quite contrasting. From such a fragmented scenario, the emergence of a kind of *movement-based populist project* was not possible, and the few attempts in this direction (such as

[230] In this sense, the different fates of the *Indignados'* territorial assemblies, on the one side, and the *Mareas* and the *PAHs*, on the other side, are revealing of the necessity of identifying *concrete and immediate* goals in order to attract other militants than the most committed and politicized ones.

the brief experience of the *Bloque Nacional Piquetero* in Argentina) immediately foundered. In the absence of a 'critical movement' like the Spanish *Indignados*, the previous political identities and the specific and often diverging demands were not 'sublimated' into encompassing new identities and frames, and did not find a common ground preparing the terrain for a *movement populist party* like Podemos.

In a country like Venezuela, where the dominance of the parties over society was reproduced through an extensive clientelistic system, the protests were led by three different sets of actors, none of them ideologically defined: community-based movements and sectorial interest groups; 'civil society' groups; and the unions. The unions were completely discredited. Community-based movements and sectorial interest groups continued to act in the usual way: while assuming a more confrontational repertoire, they kept looking for particularistic answers to their urgent and desperate needs, using instrumentally inter-party competition to capture some resources. Albeit starting from extremely different power conditions, and representing very different social sectors (specifically, the vast *outsiders* of Venezuelan economy), they nonetheless practiced the same broad strategy of the unions: to exploit 'institutional power' to achieve their immediate goals. Universalist demands, in turn, were well present amongst the Venezuelan civil society, concentrated in middle-class neighbourhoods, where corruption and cronyism were no longer tolerated. Anti-party sentiments merged with the desire to make of Venezuela a 'normal' country, where rule-of-law and transparency would be restored. *La Causa R* was for a while able to establish some links with the three different broad social categories of the protesters: the *insiders* (through the 'new unionism' movement), the *outsiders* (through conciliatory practices when in government at the local level, through its ambiguous support of the Chávez's coup, and through efforts to organize popular sectors autonomously from the *cogollos'* clientelistic system) and the middle-class (through its programmatic appeals for a 'radical' and transparent democracy). However, in the short-term, the insiders remained 'tied' to the *adeco* system, while the *outsiders* did not find in LCR any reliable solution to their grievances: i.e., neither particularistic solutions, nor *programmatic* ones (due to LCR's 'pro-system' turn

at the end of Caldera's administration). The rising project was the Chávez's one, which explicitly identified *puntofijismo* as the 'enemy', and took advantage of *charismatic* linkages with the popular sectors, and of *programmatic* linkages with the broad Venezuelan society: the promises of ending corruption and of convoking a Constituent Assembly to restore a 'true democracy'. By doing so, the rising *bolivarianismo* was able to articulate particularistic demands into an ideologically ambiguous project calling for 'popular participation' into a regenerated, *sovereign* Venezuelan state.

In the Argentine case, ideological divisions added further complexity within a contentious camp already divided along geographical and sectorial lines. The Argentine protest cycle began with local protests led by unemployed workers looking for immediate responses to their grievances. They found an important ally in the CTA, which contributed to sustain the protests, to give them a broader political interpretation, and to upscale them to the national level. When the *piquetero* movement became a widespread phenomenon in the *conurbano*, the divisions between different *piqueteros* groups soon emerged. Some *piqueteros* did not disdain to establish instrumental linkages with the Peronist *punteros* and mayors, while the most radical groups pursued a much more confrontational strategy with 'old politics'. The union camp, in turn, was divided into (at least) three main tendencies: the 'official' one, completely discredited; the Moyano's faction, struggling for the leadership of the CGT and adopting a radical repertoire, while keeping a clear distance from the *outsiders'* movements; and the CTA, which aimed to build bridges across the insider-outsider divide, while initially keeping an 'autonomist', 'counter-power' ideology, after the complete failure of FREPASO's experience.

The final collapse of Argentine economy added further complexity to the socio-political scenario, by pushing new sectors (the impoverished urban middle-classes) into the 'contentious camp'. Given such a social and ideological fragmentation, initiatives aiming to build cross-class coalitions through universalist frames (such as the FRENAPO) failed. The socio-political arena remained extremely overheated until the

rise of Néstor Kirchner, who exploited the Peronist machine and institutional resources to reconstitute an effective portfolio of *charismatic-identitarian*, *programmatic* and *particularistic linkages* to stabilise the country, while dividing the contentious camp through a mix of co-optation and exclusion from the dominant political coalition.

Kirchnerism did from the institutions what Syriza did within the streets: adapting to a fragmented pattern of mobilization through a complex linkages' portfolio. Protests in Greece mushroomed thanks to a galaxy of ideologically heterogeneous movements and parties that traditionally embraced quite confrontational repertoires. The extremely harsh economic reforms imposed by the Troika and implemented by mainstream Greek parties nurtured the explosion of popular protests, often triggered by some specific constituencies directly affected by austerity measures and immediately backed by a vast number of social and political actors. The birth of the *Aganaktismenoi* movement (the Greek 'counterpart' of the Spanish *Indignados*) contributed to consolidate new, inclusive frames centred on the concepts of 'democracy' and 'sovereignty', which in turn partially 'de-ideologised' the protests and attracted a significant part of the Greek population.

However, the *Aganaktismenoi* movement did not lead to the creation of a 'unified contentious camp' such as in the Spanish equivalent. The very *Aganaktismenoi* movement was internally divided and prone to be prey to political co-optation. Joint contentious activities lasted as long as the goal was to prevent the government from signing a new *Memorandum of Understanding.* Once that battle was lost, ideological divisions fully re-emerged, and anti-neoliberal protests returned to be fragmented and sectorial. Many movements got involved in 'resisting' activities at the neighbourhood level through the creation of self-help networks without any immediate political goals. Hope for political changes had already laid at the door of Syriza's project, the only one that assumed a populist rhetoric and owned the necessary ideological (i.e., pluralism) and organizational (i.e., the ability of brokering, thanks to high overlapping membership) resources to play a nodal role in the protests, and to relaunch them at the institutional level.

Spanish events were marked by the unifying *Indignados*' experience. In Venezuela, Argentina and Greece, major protest events served as critical points (the *Caracazo*, the *Argentinazo*, or the occupation of Syntagma square), although they did not leave any 'unified camp' as a short-term legacy. Italy even lacked such a 'critical contentious moment'. Italian anti-austerity movements were torn by divisions between the radical and the institutional Left (the latter consisting of the CGIL and the movements linked to the political centre-left), and *within* the Radical Left: leftist parties (PRC, SEL and other smaller extra-parliamentarian groups), extra-parliamentary organizations, grassroots unions, the FIOM (CGIL's metalworkers branch), to mention the most important ones. The attempts of 'importing' a new *Indignado* identity clearly failed, because the different groups were not disposed to downplay their pre-existing organizations and identities, and because moderate and radical groups struggled to 'hegemonize' the protests. Italy did experience a rise in contentious activities, but the perimeter of activism did not expand to include disengaged citizens. Italian anti-austerity protests never really assumed a massive character, but they remained quite extended when Berlusconi was in office. With the fall of Berlusconi's government, the (still litigious) 'unity of action' between the radical and the institutional left broke apart, as the latter clearly chose to limit their participation in the protests to fortify the position of the PD, which was supporting Monti's technocratic government. Such strategy implied the political isolation of the most radical groups, both in the streets and amongst broad segments of the leftist public opinion: Berlusconi had been targeted as *the* culprit of the Italian crisis for too long to have a chance of identifying Monti's government (supported by the PD) as the new enemy.

Yet, most of austerity measures were implemented by Monti, and popular discontent was still mounting; but it was not channelled through the social and political Left. Instead, Italian voters rewarded the M5S in the 2013 general elections. The M5S was able to channel such discontent thanks to charismatic, programmatic and organizational linkages: programmatic and organizational linkages were particularly relevant for adapting to an environment characterised by fragmented mobilizations.

Grillo's project 'retweeted' latent or 'unheard' grievances (including job precariousness and feelings of political exclusion) through the blog. However, some organizational linkages were created, through both a strategy of 'issue-owning' and a certain overlapping membership, with a plethora of local movements struggling for disparate goals.

Those movements advanced demands that were often framed through the call for a restoration of 'popular sovereignty', through the *direct participation of the citizens in the decision making-process*, and against powerful political and economic elites supposedly imposing their decisions over the citizens. Such a frame was consistently used by the M5S in different contexts, from the referendum against the privatization of water public companies and the struggles against major infrastructures (TAV, Dal Molin, MUOS...), to the imposition of austerity reforms by EU institutions and technocrats. The M5S merged powerful claims for participative and unmediated democracy to challenge all the existing structures of socio-political intermediation. Such rhetoric, jointly with the attacks against the 'privileges' of politicians, trade unionists and other social sectors supposedly exploiting the 'protection' offered by ‘politicians’, contributed to a deep socio-political polarization between, on the one side, the *insiders' bloc*, represented by the PD and the unions (particularly the CGIL), and, on the other side, the *outsiders* and other dispersed constituencies successfully targeted by the M5S.

The Outcome: Varieties of Anti-Neoliberal Populism Compared. Both the 'critical antecedents' and the characteristics of anti-austerity mobilizations contributed to explain the variation between the 'most successful political project' that emerged in the aftermath of the 'critical juncture'. The variation at the level of the critical juncture created different socio-political scenarios to which pre-existing or new political projects had to adapt, that is, from different scenarios, different kinds of projects emerged.

The focus here is on the *populist* outcomes, since the factors leading to the resilience of the *Labour Based Left* have been already described in the previous sub-

sections. Only a comment on the Portuguese case is required. First, the confrontational strategy pursued by the PS after 2012 allowed the Socialists to recuperate some credibility by distinguishing themselves from the Portuguese right-wing coalition (probably the most strenuous defender of austerity reforms in all of Southern Europe) and for setting the conditions for a post-electoral alliance with the Radical Left. Second, the divisions within the *Bloco* somewhat delayed the electoral rise of that party, which was penalized in the polls both in 2012 and in 2014. However, one is hardpressed to argue that the *Bloco* missed an opportunity to achieve electoral results comparable to those reached by the M5S, Podemos or Syriza. BE's rise was limited by both the solidity of the PCP's electorate and the PS' 'turn to the Left'. At the same time, an anti-establishment, *populist* strategy was almost impossible to pursue due to the very ideological characteristics of *Bloco'*s leaders and voters and to the 'control' exerted by institutional actors over the Portuguese cycle of protests. However, the *late* rise of the *Bloco* demonstrated that conjunctural, agential factors that were related to inability of overcoming organizational weaknesses, played a crucial role in delaying the impact of the cycle of protests on the political-electoral sphere.

In terms of sociological constituencies, both in Uruguay and Portugal one observes a sort of 'division of labour' between the different *frenteamplistas* fractions, or the three left-of-centre Portuguese parties forming the *geringonça*. The forces firmly linked to the unions tended to represent the insiders, while the forces with stronger links with social movements (such as the MPP in Uruguay, or the BE in Portugal) were more likely to attract outsider sectors. However, in both countries, characterised by a long-lasting statist culture, the political competition continued to be centred on the left-right axis, and both the Uruguayan and Portuguese Lefts appealed to a quite inter-classist electorate. The solid social rootedness of the Lefts (particularly in the case of the FA and of the PCP) made the reproduction of old political subcultures quite effective. The effectiveness of the structures of socio-political intermediation assured the survival of the previous system and contributed to the electoral strengthening of the Left.

In Argentina and Greece, the outcome was the rise of *party-rooted populisms*, that is, pre-existing parties that exploited ideological and organizational resources to adapt to the environment through a populist strategy. Both *Kirchnerism* and Syriza explicitly understood the occupation of public institutions (the State) as a necessary tool to restore 'sovereignty'; they widely used an antagonist discourse targeting 'neoliberalism', foreign powers and economic elites as the enemies to defeat. Both political projects gave full legitimacy, and even fuelled, new forms of popular mobilizations, while ‘controlling’ them when in power and, in the case of Syriza, during the last phase preceding the electoral triumph. The partisan structures were just a part of a broader 'antineoliberal camp', consisting of a plethora of social movements and sectorial groups pushing for a political change. The cohesiveness of such 'contentious camp’ was guaranteed by a strong centralization of power in the hands of a charismatic figure assuring the efficiency and the coherence of the internal decision-making process. However, the old partisan structures retained a strong influence over the process of candidate selection.

In both cases, the old partisan structures were able to keep such a central role thanks to their *adaptiveness* to a socio-political environment shaped by extensive and fragmented mobilizations. Néstor Kirchner mostly relied on PJ's networks, controlled by local *caudillos*, to consolidate his political position *vis à vis* internal and external rivals. Most of the cadres of the *Frente para la Victoria*, at least at the beginning, belonged to the PJ, while PJ's and *Kirchnerist* voters highly overlapped. The PJ was able to continue to play a major role in Argentine politics thanks to its capacity in reproducing different linkages with the Argentine popular classes. PJ's mayors had the necessary 'expertise' and resources to negotiate *ad hoc* arrangements with *piqueteros* and to distribute resources both to *piqueteros* and to their well-oiled *redes punteriles*. Such a pragmatic attitude contributed both to reinforce the Peronist/Anti-Peronist cleavage (as the latter side firmly refused to establish any form of dialogue with the protesters) and to deepen

the divisions *within* the *piquetero* movement (split between 'pragmatic' and 'revolutionary' groups), thus making even more difficult the construction of a third, antagonist and anti-neoliberal pole.

When Néstor Kirchner became president, he had strong incentives to build his own bases of support in order to 'emancipate' himself from Duhalde's control. Thus, Kirchner took advantage of his institutional position as President and relaunched the traditional Peronist goals ('social justice', 'political sovereignty' and 'economic indipendence') through a polarising discourse attacking both economic national and international elites and the old political class, including several PJ's *caudillos*. By doing so, he seemed to aim to build a *leftist*, instead of *Peronist*, political coalition, with interesting consequences in terms of his social bases of support: his human right discourse and his anti-corruption declarations, together with economic growth, attracted progressive middle-classes, while the inclusion in his cabinet of important *piqueteros* leaders, as well as his dialogue with the CTA, assured him '*governabilidad*' and strengthened his appeal within public sector workers and popular sectors.

Kirchner’s growing popularity convinced many PJ's *caudillos* o the opportunity of 'switching' their loyalty, thus leaving Duhalde isolated. Meanwhile, Néstor Kirchner also pursued a clever strategy in the complex and fragmented union system: while initially outlining the possibility of a full recognition of the CTA, he pushed for the renewal of the CGT by fully supporting Moyano's faction and, later, by backing CGT's political and economic demands, thus relaunching old corporatist practices that had been abandoned.

Through his socio-economic policies, Kirchner made clear that the 'incorporation' of the *outsider* sectors had to occur through the formalization of the economy and job creation, while assigning to the *planes* system a crucial, political goal: assuring him *governabilidad* through the cooptation of the 'pragmatic' *piqueteros*, whose loyalty and mobilising power proved to be a crucial resource during the long Kirchnerist era. Under Cristina's governments, and particularly since the beginning of her second term, the

broad (social and political) coalition patiently built by Néstor Kirchner fell prey of inter-organizational struggles typical of participative-mobilising populisms, mainly because of Cristina's intention of by-passing the PJ's and CGT's apparatus.

Syriza, in turn, was the 'electoral arm' of a vast alliance network that has been nicely captured by the expression 'a Syriza beyond Syriza' (Della Porta et al., 2017). The antagonistic strategy followed by Syriza since the beginning of Tsipras' leadership was clear: to participate in every kind of struggle, to exacerbate the 'youngish' political culture of the party and to downplay the ideological sectarian divisions typical of the Greek Radical Left. This way, Syriza's grassroots played a nodal role within the Greek anti-austerity mobilizations, and the party was increasingly identified by Greek citizens as *the only* real alternative to the old regime. The success of Syriza's strategy allowed the old party structure to continue to control the project without any relevant change in the party's internal decision-making process, apart from an evident power centralization in the hands of the leadership.

In contrast to the Kirchnerist linkage strategy, Syriza did not rely on clientelistic networks, which were obviously not at the disposal of the party, nor on linkages with the unions, which remained substantially controlled by the PASOK. Overlapping membership with the movements, and a polarising discourse, made of Syriza the pivotal anti-neoliberal player 'from the streets', instead of 'from the institutions', like Kirchnerism. From the beginning of the anti-austerity protest cycle, Syriza's electorate 'normalized' itself, including vast segments of the Greek outsiders and of the impoverished middle-class, thus going beyond its original core-constituencies (the urban youth). In this sense, Syriza was successful in building a kind of *izquierda nacional y popular* like Argentine Kirchnerism (and like Greek PASOK during the Eighties). However, the disappointing governmental record and its substantial moderation put Syriza into a difficult position, as it lost a relevant part of its most skilled cadres and its popularity within Greek social activists.

In Bolivia and in Spain, the most successful political project that emerged belonged to the category of *movement (based) populist parties*. The presence of a broad and *unified* cycle of anti-austerity mobilizations left, as a legacy, highly resonant political *frames* to interpret the crisis, and a numerous and committed militancy potentially ready to engage in electoral politics.

The organizational differences between the MAS-IPSP and Podemos are striking: in the former, but not the latter, a reduced number of organizations founded an 'electoral instrument' without autonomous structures. However, the influence of social movements on Podemos is nonetheless much higher than in other kinds of anti-neoliberal populist parties, such as the M5S or Syriza. Such influence is visible in the elaboration of programmatic platforms, and, importantly, the very overlapping membership. Both in the MAS-IPSP and in Podemos, the process of candidates and elite selection clearly evoke the bottom-up organizational practices of the Bolivian 'founding organizations' and of the Spanish *Indignados.* However, in both cases, such procedures act more to provide stronger legitimacy to the party's elites than to assure a truly democratic control from the bases. In reality, both the MAS-IPSP and Podemos look like very centralized parties. The hiatus between, on the one hand, their formal rules (and their rhetoric), and, on the other hand, their concrete, quite top-down functioning, is remarkable. At the same time, the *participative* features of both parties cannot be simply dismissed as mere rhetorical ornaments, as they have very concrete effects (particularly in the candidate selection process), represent an indispensable source of legitimacy for the elites, and are a core component of the collective identity of the party.

In the *movement-based* MAS-IPSP, the *participative-mobilising* component is intrinsic to the 'genetic organizational model' of the party. The same peasant social movements that led the Bolivian cycle of contention and provided the organizational resources to 'unify' it throughout the country, decided to create their own electoral instrument. Differently from sectorial unions, single-issue movements or local movements mobilising around specific demands, the Bolivian *trillizas* and the *sindicatos*

cocaleros fulfil extensive social functions and enjoy a long tradition and an enormous social legitimacy among its members. The MAS-IPSP is conceived as little more than a brand, an empty shell to be filled by such social movements, which 'organically' nominate their representatives. Such representatives are supposed to follow different loyalties: to their specific organization, to their territorial constituency, but also to the *masista* government and to its leader Evo Morales. Such different loyalties are obviously likely to enter in collision. In general, a *masista* representative considers the *territorial* representation as its main task, while the *functional* representation is carried on by *sindicatos'* leaders exploiting their institutional resources to have a stronger bargaining power *vis à vis* the government and the other 'organic' movements.

In this way, the influence of social movements' leaders tends to be much greater than the effective influence of the 'party in the public office'. However, the governmental wing (i.e., Morales and his inner circle) retain most of the control of strategic decisions, with a great room of manoeuvre *vis à vis* the 'founding organizations'. In theory, the government should simply 'rule by obeying' (*mandar obedeciendo*). Practically, the government (and, often, the very Morales) acts as a mediator, a 'decider of last resort' over the multiple inter-organizational struggles coming from the middle and high-level elites of the movements. The *masista* 'populist corporatism', so to speak, guarantees to the movements a strong voice in the polity domain, but also leads to a certain loss of autonomy. In turn, such interest aggregation system assures to the government a solid base of support, which proved to be essential not only during the electoral rise of the MAS-IPSP (1997-2005), but also for the very survival of the government during the chaotic phase marked by the process leading to the new Constitution (2006-2010).

Particularly since the 2005 victory, the emergence of a partisan elite increasingly detached from the 'founding organizations' has become clear. Its creation was initially motivated by the necessity to expand the electorate amongst urban middle-class areas. Quite soon, such intellectual figures increased their influence on strategic economic and political decisions, and inaugurated a somewhat 'technocratic' and developmentalist style

of government, albeit attentive to the demands of the different social movements and organizations supporting the *proceso de cambio*.

In the complex and lively Bolivian society, where organizational density is extremely high by Latin American standards and where almost every interest group, either at the local or sectorial level, is represented by some association, the *proceso de cambio* has included some social sectors more than others. The 'winners' of the *proceso* are, first, the social sectors represented by the *trillizas* (the small and medium peasantry), which gradually limited themselves to act as corporatist groups and as privileged intermediaries between the state and the communities, while leaving the strategic decisions to Morales' inner circle. The latter is committed to a statist-'developmentalist' (*desarrollista*) ideology, quite at odds with the early indigenous rhetoric, but very much in line with the *populist* goal of 'occupying the State', considered as the *conditio sine qua non* to pursue social change. In addition, several sectorial groups surround the 'core organizations' of the MAS-IPSP, and display an even more instrumental relationship to the party. Most of these groups represent informal sectors, and, as the small peasantry, can be included in the *outsider* category: here clearly emerges the *incorporating* function of the *proceso de cambio* towards social segments previously excluded from the institutional polity domain. The mix of organizational, particularistic, identitarian-charismatic and programmatic (e.g., the universal social policies introduced by the *masistas* governments) created a vast social coalition backing the *proceso de cambio*, despite its contradictions and its internal tensions.

Among the 'losers' of the *proceso*, some sectors (such as the 'traditional' working-class) opted for a critical support, while numerous social segments in urban areas, not necessarily particularly well-to-do, began feeling uncomfortable with some opaque partisan practices, and began switching their vote to the highly fragmented and ineffective Bolivian opposition. Meanwhile, the indigenous movements, weakened by divisions and attempts of co-optation from above, lost any influence on the party's agenda.

Evident in both the *movement(based) populist projects* is the correspondence between, on the one hand, the social sectors overrepresented in the anti-neoliberal *mobilizations*, and, on the other hand, the 'core-constituencies' of the 'most successful *political projects*'. In the case of Podemos, its electorate is definitely much less 'plebeian' than in the case of the MAS-IPSP and of the *leader-initiated populisms*. Instead, Podemos' voters are overrepresented among the same categories that disproportionately took part in the *Indignados* movement and the *Mareas*: urban, well-educated and leftist middle-class salaried workers, (young) precarious workers and students. The insider-outsider divide is not the best predictor of the vote for Podemos, nor is it valid predictor for participation in the Spanish anti-austerity protests. The influence of the previous anti-austerity mobilizations on Podemos are not restricted to its core-constituencies. It is even more evident in Podemos' political discourses and frames, its policy proposals, the characteristics of its militants and cadres, and some participative, bottom-up organizational features.

However, the centralising, top-down organizational features outnumber such innovative, bottom-up provisions. The substantial freedom left to the local *círculos* to organize their activities, similarly to the M5S' *MeetUps*, corresponds to their lack of formal power. Like the M5S, the 'Citizens' that are affiliated to the party web platform are supposed to be the true 'sovereign' organ of the party, but, in fact, their role is often confined to the ratification of decision taken from above.

The party's founders led the genetic phase of the party, and later exerted a clear control of the subsequent process of territorial consolidation. However, in contrast to the M5S, Podemos did not go through a long phase of patient territorial diffusion led by de-ideologised activists inspired by a charismatic leader. Instead, Iglesias and his inner circle faced the task of building a new party from the ground up, in a socio-political context decisively shaped by the long and 'inspiring' Spanish protest cycle. The appeal of '*creating a party*' resonated among committed and enthusiast activists, who exploited the networks fortified by the previous mobilizations to give firmer roots to the new

political project. Such evolution led to the creation of a political party with quite traditional middle-level structures and prone to the reproduction of mass-party dynamics leading to endless debates and sectarianism (quite evident in other parties like the *Bloco de Esquerda* or Syriza), although the use of 'web-democracy' effectively reduced the power of the 'off-line militants'.

The leftist-militant profile assumed by Podemos since the beginning also favoured a gradual rapprochement with the mainstream Spanish unions, and particularly with CC.OO. The 'institutionalization' of Podemos, on the one hand, and the acquisition of a more confrontational strategy by the unions, on the other hand, produced a smoother relationship, also facilitated by similar policy proposals on labour and social issues.

Finally, in Italy and Venezuela the party system was definitively shaped by the emergence of *leader-initiated antineoliberal populisms*. Despite the enormous differences between the M5S and *Chavismo*, the political processes leading to their respective emergence shared striking similarities. In a social situation marked by fragmented mobilizations (along sectorial, territorial or ideological lines), and in the absence of an existing political party able to fulfil a brokerage function, the window of opportunity for populist projects led by political 'mavericks' was open. Such political projects were tightly controlled from above, while adopting a participative rhetoric and a decentralised organization to attract new activists and expand their territorial structure. Although the local circles did not dispose of any reliable form of control on the top of the party pyramid, they still provided a response to the demands of political participation at the local level, and facilitated the *linkages* between the party and a multitude of 'micro-constituencies', organized or not, looking for immediate responses to their grievances. Both projects adopted a confrontational strategy against the 'old regime', and, while maintaining a certain ideological vagueness (at least initially, in the case of Venezuela), successfully 'owned' valence issues such as the struggle against corruption

and the promise of restoring a 'true', 'participative' democracy to give 'sovereignty' back to the 'Citizens' or to 'The people'.

In both the Italian and Venezuelan cases, the insider-outsider divide was extremely relevant for understanding which social sectors were attracted by the *leader-initiated populisms*. Such populist projects clearly positioned themselves as antagonist to the 'old regime', and *particularly* to the 'union-party hubs' that quite faithfully represented a social *insider bloc*. The M5S and *Chavismo* soon became the 'incorporating actors' of Italian and Venezuelan outsiders, through charismatic, programmatic, and (in the case of *Chavismo*) organizational linkages. Such politicization of the insider-outsider divide set the bases for a strong antagonism between the *leader-initiated populisms* and the unions, accused of blocking the development of a 'true democracy' with regard to the representation system of the working class and of being little more than a transmission belt of (labour-based and left-of-centre) parties. However, a certain rhetoric against the 'privileges' enjoyed by some 'over-protected' *insiders* was detectable in both M5S and *Chavismo*. In sum, while *Labour-based Lefts'* and *party-rooted populisms'* constituencies had a mixed composition *across* the insider-outsider divide, and *movement(based) populisms* quite faithfully reflected the social composition of the participants in the movements, in the case of *leader-initiated populisms* the core-constituencies were quite clearly the *outsiders*.

9.2 Comparing the Argument with the Available Literature. Similarities and Differences.

This brief section focuses on how the argument of this dissertation, and particularly as empirically outlined here in the Conclusion, relates to the relevant literature that I discussed in Section 1.2 (see Table 1.1), stressing out the differences

with the existing explanations and the analytical improvements that it hopefully brings to the academic debate.

This dissertation has paid much attention to causal factors which the works I mentioned in Section 1.2 had already highlighted, such as: the (ineffectiveness of the) linkages between parties and (segmented) societies (Silva, 2009; Morgan, 2011); the 'neoliberal turn' of left-of-centre or labour-based parties (Morgan, 2011; Roberts, 2014; Della Porta et al., 2017); the structural roots of anti-austerity movements, to be found in the social and political exclusion of broad social sectors and in the demise of old (and still partial and fragmented) forms of state protection from market risks (Silva, 2009; Roberts, 2014; Della Porta, 2015); the relationships between anti-austerity movements and parties, and the influences of the formers on the organizational and ideological discourses of new parties that emerged in the aftermath of the crisis (Della Porta et al., 2017; partially also Silva, 2009).

Drawing on these insights, the argument proposed here offers a comprehensive explanation of the changes *within* the electoral Lefts. The argument certainly –at the very least-- qualify some claims, and furthermore fill some gaps left by the works mentioned above. The main 'gap' that the dissertation intends to fill is the (analytical and empirical) presentation of a *causal* (or *explanatory*) *typology* (Bennett and Elman, 2006; Collier et al., 2012) that accounts for the variation *within* the *antineoliberal populist category*.

Both Morgan (2011) and Roberts (2014) did not provide such a typology, as the *explanandum* of their works was, instead, party system stability - or its reverse. Morgan simply alerted of the 'perils' (i.e., the rise of some 'populist mavericks') brought by a party system collapse, for the stability and the quality of representative democracy; Roberts insightfully stressed the effects (on party system stability) of the 'de-alignment' provoked by the 'neoliberal turn' of old labour-based or left-of-centre parties implementing market-friendly reforms. The argument here proposed is fully compatible with (and, actually, draws upon) many of the insights provided by Morgan and Roberts.

One *major* difference with Roberts' analysis is the identification of the neoliberal *crisis* and the *socio-popular reaction to the austerity measures adopted to cope with it* (instead of the *implementation of market-friendly reforms*) as the 'critical juncture' to explain the subsequent changes, including as well within the electoral Lefts. The 'implementation of market-friendly reforms' by labour-based or left-of-centre parties is, in turn, one of the main 'critical antecedents' that the argument of this dissertation takes into account. It can be said that Roberts' analysis - which, in any case, did *not* have the goal of analysing the specific post-crisis changes, as this dissertation has - is essential to distinguish the path that I label *labour-based Left* from the different *populist* outcomes that I identified, while the argument proposed here also provides a causal typology *stressing the differences amongst the 'populist paths'*.

To explain such different outcomes, the argument adds to the very structural Roberts' model some *agential* factors, such as the ability for alliance-building displayed by anti-neoliberal social movements, and the ideological and organizational features of the existing left-of-centre or labour-based parties: these features help to understand the degree of 'adaptability' of these parties to new, contentious socio-political scenarios. In this sense, the argument shares several similarities with Silva's (2009) and Della Porta et al.'s (2017) accounts of anti-austerity movements and parties in Latin America and Southern Europe. Nevertheless, here, important differences also deserve to be stressed.

Silva's work, and the very recent book edited by him and Rossi (2018), tend to conflate the incorporation of social *actors* and the (social and political) inclusion of social *sectors*. In a hyper-organised society such as the Bolivian one, where the *outsiders* were largely enrolled in social organizations enjoying quite high legitimacy and representativeness, such conflation is empirically grounded. Even in Venezuela, during the *late* Chavismo, we observed the consolidation of strong popular organizations representing the *outsiders*, although in a much more top-down (and much less autonomous, particularly in terms of resources) way (see Chapter 8 and Section 9.4). Nevertheless, the same cannot be said for the rest of the countries here analysed, not

even in Argentina, where the *political* incorporation during the early Kirchnerist phase (through the so-called "*Piquetero*'s cabinet") targeted social *actors* which enjoyed strong rootedness and a certain degree of territorial control, but clearly fell much short of acting as "encompassing unemployed workers' unions". The incorporation of the outsider *sectors* occurred, in Argentina, much more through universalist social policies (and through a gradual formalization of the economy) than through organizational incorporation, which was, instead, much more pronounced in the 'first incorporation' of the working-class (Collier and Collier, 1991). In Southern Europe, Podemos and (even more so) the M5S surely pursued a *programmatic* incorporation of the *outsiders* social sectors, although Podemos did provide a kind of 'special access' to the polity domain for social movements advancing some demands that were typical of the outsider sectors.

Put differently, the relationships between most of the populist experiences and the movements representing *outsiders'* demands is better understood by relying on the concept of (particularistic) *linkages* than on the concept of incorporation, with an important 'ideologization' of such relationships. In a similar vein, the argument proposed in this dissertation clearly departs from the description of all these political experiences as 'movement parties' (Della Porta et al., 2017). In the case of Podemos (where the overwhelming majority of partisan cadres came from the movements' *milieu*) or, to a certain extent, of the MAS-IPSP (itself conceived as an 'instrument' of the social movements, which were, more precisely, social *organizations* carrying out functions of *territorial and sectorial representation*), such a label may be justified and may offer analytical mileage to understand the concrete internal functioning of those parties. In the case of Syriza, a certain overlapping membership explained the party's ability of 'brokering' the composite Greek movements' *milieu*, although the internal organization of the party remained largely autonomous from its own 'environment'. In contrast, other political projects, such as the M5S or (particularly) Kirchnerism, *cannot* be conceived 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*' (Kitschelt, 2006: 280). One may argue that the M5S' peripheral

organization and political culture derives from the *MeetUps'* experience; however, the *MeetUps* very early on evolved into an electoral project which was always very tightly controlled from above. The relationships between the M5S (and Kirchnerism) and other social movements and organizations had always been based on *ad hoc* arrangements (on the basis of programmatic or particularistic exchanges) and was akin to that of the relationships between 'institutional' and 'civil society' actors. In fact, the M5S flaunts its 'movementist' and 'non-partisan' character merely to stress the (supposed) absence of middle and high-level elites that leads to 'bureaucratization' and the creation of 'political *castes*'.

In all the parties this dissertation has analysed, the coexistence of 'verticalism' and 'peripheral autonomy', and the segmented *linkage* strategy towards social *sectors* and *actors* in highly heterogeneous society, relying as well on polarizing and antagonistic political discourses (with a frame of national sovereignty), are thus much better understood by recurring to the concept of *populism*, as defined in Chapter 3.

9.3 The External Validity of the Argument. Some Considerations.

This dissertation has carefully focused on a set of countries in which quite specific scope conditions held, namely: the existence of a dualised welfare regime and of a union movement playing a central role as a civil society actor and mainly representing the insider sectors; and the occurrence of a socioeconomic crisis due to the shortcomings of the neoliberal model after an era of neoliberal hegemony. The case selection excluded some plausible cases that, despite some interesting similarities with the cases that were selected, did not match as well with those scope conditions. However, the analysis of other configurations or scenarios, both in Latin American and Southern European countries that led (or not) to the rise of instances of anti-neoliberal populist projects shaping the political Left, can suggest additional empirical confirmations of the main arguments of this dissertation. The focus will be on Brazil, Ecuador and France.

Brazil: (reformist) Labour-Based Left. The rise of the Brazilian PT ("Workers' Party") shares interesting parallels with the trajectory of the Uruguayan *Frente Amplio*.

The PT was founded in 1980 and stemmed from the 'Brazilian new unionism' that opposed the corporatist, official syndicalism, which was a legacy of the Brazilian State-led working-class incorporation (Collier and Collier, 1991). According to Keck (1992: 245), '*the party grew up with less of an ideology than an ethical proposal, within which a number of alternative visions of the good society competed, using different languages*', although it always defined itself as 'socialist' (Keck, 1992: 246).

The PT was, like the FA, highly fractionalised, and had for at least twenty years its stronghold in the state of Sao Paulo, where alternative unionism was born; like the FA, initially the PT had its core-constituencies in the organised working-class and the urban middle-classes (Zucco, 2008). However, the PT was also joined by leftist intellectuals and a plethora of Marxist, environmentalist or Catholic groups, as well as by *outsiderist* movements like the MST[231] (Samuels, 2004; Handlin, 2017). It aggregated and further mobilised several movements and civil society organizations during the Constituent Process at the end of the Eighties; it in fact probably became the *only* Brazilian structured party, as well as the political hegemon of the entire left-of-centre spectrum. PT's leader Lula ranked second in the Presidential elections of 1989, 1994 and 1998 with 17%, 27% and 32% of the votes in the first round[232]: thus, like the FA, Lula (and the PT) displayed a long-term ascending tendency, which finally allowed Lula (backed by a coalition of left-of-centre and centrist parties) to become the Brazilian president in 2002, with 53% of the votes in the second round.

Like the FA, the PT developed an impressive militancy (800,000 members in 2004) and highly institutionalised and bottom-up procedures for the elections of partisan offices, by guaranteeing the representation of different tendencies through proportional electoral systems (Samuels, 2004). Brazilian union density remained at comparatively high levels throughout the nineties (20% of the economically active population, slightly below the Bolivian, Uruguayan and Argentine levels); the main Brazilian trade union

[231] Landless' Workers Movement.
[232] The party, in the fragmented Brazilian political context, gradually but constantly increased its votes in legislative elections: 7% in 1986; 10% in 1990; 13% in 1994; 18% in 1998 and 2002.

(the CUT[233]), emerging from the 'new unionism', always kept a strong relationship with the party, even tighter than the PIT-CNT/FA *brotherhood*.

Both parties moderated their ideological stances during the nineties, also because their first governmental experiences at the subnational levels (where advanced experiments of participatory democracy were introduced: see Goldfrank, 2011) contributed to the acquisition of a more 'responsible' behaviour. In Brazil, the CUT also gradually assumed a less 'classist' and more 'corporatist' and dialoguist stance (Samuels, 2004). Lula's electoral campaigns in 1998 and, even more clearly in 2002, were substantially devoted to reassure Brazilians over the PT's commitment to market economy and macroeconomic stability (Campello, 2011; Handlin, 2017), in a much more pronounced way than the FA.

Such a greater moderation was due, among other things, to the very different evolution of Brazilian and Uruguayan economies since the transition to democracy. In Brazil, hyperinflation remained a major concern both during Sarney's (1985-1990) and Collor's (1990-1993) presidencies. Collor implemented a set of draconian neoliberal reforms (extensive privatizations, dismissals of public workers and cuts to state budgets, which were motivated through an anti-corruption rhetoric) which merely deepened economic depression and monetary instability (Kingston and Ponce, 2010). Following the impeachment of Collor (due, quite ironically, to big corruption scandals), the new *interim* president Franco appointed, in 1993, Fernando Henrique Cardoso as the new Ministry of Finance. Cardoso successfully implemented a quite orthodox plan (*Plan Real*) to cope with hyperinflation, quite similar (albeit more flexible) to the Argentine *Convertibilidad.*

The success of the *Plan Real*, and the subsequent Cardoso's decision to take advantage of his popularity to run for 1994 presidential elections, dramatically changed the political scenario: while in 1993 Lula was still leading the polls, in 1994 Cardoso won the presidential race in the first round by nearly doubling the votes obtained by

[233] United Workers' Central.

PT's candidate (Handlin, 2017). Lula's disappointing result weakened PT's radical factions (which had become majoritarian since 1993 and imposed a maximalist campaign betting on *Plan Real*'s failure: Samuels, 2004; Handlin, 2017) and inaugurated the gradual centripetal move of the PT, which lasted at least until the end of first Lula's governmental term (Hunter, 2011).

The argument of this dissertation thus fits much better for the 1985-1993 period (from the return to democracy to the peak of the economic and political crises following Collor's failure) than for the following and decisive rise of the PT. The party-union hub formed by the PT and the CUT first positioned itself as the unchallenged Brazilian leftist actor, thanks to its leading and brokering role (favoured by its 'genetic' ideological and organizational features) in the extensive, antiauthoritarian and anti-corruption protests during the chaotic early democratic phase, and then prevented the rise of other 'populist' mavericks, and seemed to have the possibility of reaching power in view of 1994 presidential elections. Nevertheless, Cardoso's successful measures, on the one hand, and the very poor rootedness of the PT outside its Southern and South-eastern strongholds (differently from FA's expansion outside Montevidean middle-class neighbourhoods during the late nineties), on the other (Zucco, 2008), limited the chances of victory for an 'anti-neoliberal Labour-based Left' such as the PT.

Since 1994, the PT began a gradual but constant centripetal move, symbolised by the 'Letter to the Brazilians' sent by Lula some months before the 2002 presidential elections to reassure the electorate (and the markets) over the genuinely 'pro-market' PT's political positioning (Kingston and Ponce, 2010; Handlin, 2017). Neoliberalism had become 'the only game in town'. Lula's voters, in 2002, still disproportionately came from Southern regions. It was only thanks to the gradual 'capture' of the Brazilian state resources and, most importantly, to the immense popularity of his social policies (and particularly the well-known *Bolsa Família*), that Lula (but *not* the PT) built a new, loyal constituency amongst the poorest sectors in the underdeveloped North-eastern

Brazil, even in partial detriment of its former 'core voters' (Hunter and Power, 2007; Zucco, 2008).

The argument of this dissertation thus can offer a comprehensive account of the early, 'anti-neoliberal' (and electorally successful) phase of the Brazilian *union-party hub*; and of the PT's ability to defend its hegemonic position when in government, thanks to its programmatic inclusion of the *outsiders*. Nevertheless, the PT's 'moderating' phase (from the mid-nineties on) is clearly out of the scope of this dissertation, due to the absence of a real 'neoliberal crisis' and to the substantial success of Cardoso's reforms (in this sense, see Handlin, 2017).

Ecuador: Leader-Initiated Populism. While in Brazil we observed the rise of a *Labour-Based Left*, in Ecuador, despite several 'critical antecedents' quite comparable to the Bolivian case, the outcome was *not* a *movement-based populism*. Instead, we witnessed in Ecuador the rise of a *leader-initiated populism* which can barely be considered a form of *participative-mobilising populism* and presents mostly characteristics of the *electoral-delegative* populist subtype. I suggest that the argument of this dissertation can fully account for such a different outcome.

As Ecuador experienced a late and relatively brief ISI phase during the Sixties and the Seventies under different military governments, it set the conditions for, first, the consolidation of a mostly firm-based union movement and, later, the unification of different peak unions into the FUT[234], in order to have a stronger voice *vis à vis* the juntas and to lead the struggle for a democratic transition (Paz y Miño, 2016; Trujillo and Spronk, 2018). However, the Ecuadorean union movement did never achieve an organizational and institutional strength comparable to that of the Bolivian COB, nor it represented extended job sectors, in a social context marked by an extremely underdeveloped welfare regime[235]. During the nineties, privatizations and trade opening

[234] Workers' Unitarian Front.

[235] In 1980, health insurance's coverage in Ecuador stood at a mere 7.9% of the population, like Dominican Republic and Honduras. In Bolivia, the same rate was 25% (well above richer countries like

damaged those sectors where union density was higher, while new legal arrangements favoured firm-level bargaining and further weakened the FUT, which was soon reduced to act as a corporatist actor desperately looking for some connection with *pro-status quo* political parties (Silva, 2018).

The evolution of the FUT closely resembled that of the COB. Even the Ecuadorean party system during the neoliberal era shared several commonalities with Bolivia's: it was a centripetal party system composed by four *trasformistas* 'big parties' involved in opaque pacts, each of them tied to regionally-based constituencies mainly through clientelistic linkages (Conaghan, 2018). Ecuadorean leftist parties such as the FADI and the PSE, both linked to the FUT, fell into irrelevance as early as the eighties, after its decision of supporting governments with very poor social and economic performances (Maugé, 2010; Handlin, 2017).

Another important parallel with the Bolivian 'critical antecedents' was the rise of a strong and well-organised indigenous movement in the Ecuadorean Highlands and in the Amazon, which was mainly represented by the CONAIE (e.g., Yashar, 2005; Van Cott, 2005). The CONAIE had a broad anti-neoliberal agenda including cultural, social, economic and political demands, symbolised by the campaign for the call of a new Constituent Assembly transforming Ecuador into a 'plurinational State' (Silva, 2018). The Ecuadorean indigenous movement also built its own political instrument, Pachakutik, which supported in 1996 the presidential candidature of Freddy Ehlers, a social activist who reached 20% of the votes.

Pachakutik consistently reached double-digit percentages in national elections, despite its null presence in the Coastal region. However, in the late nineties, the CONAIE was able to establish strong links with other important social movements and parties representing very different constituencies from that of the indigenous population. The CMS (*Coordinadora de Movimientos Sociales*), for example, was an alliance of

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Paraguay, Peru, Mexico and Colombia); in Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, the same rate was higher than 65% (Mesa-Lago, 1986).

anti-neoliberal social movements, *sindicatos urbanos* representing informal sectors and rural pensioners, some formal workers' trade unions and Christian base communities, among others (Silva, 2018). The CMS and the CONAIE clearly substituted the FUT as the main articulator of the Ecuadorean anti-neoliberal opposition, which was also joined by the MDP, a social-democratic party stemming from the quite well-organized teachers' unions. In sum, in the late nineties, a promising socio-political bloc articulating both insider and outsider sectors throughout the entire country was formed.

Nevertheless, such a bloc did not exploit the window of opportunity opened by the long negative economic conjuncture and the recurrent political crises that torn Ecuador from the early nineties to the election of Rafael Correa to the presidency (2006). The failures of Pachakutik and its allies can be explained by strategic mistakes that prevented them from pursuing a *populist strategy*, while jeopardising the unity of anti-neoliberal socio-mobilizations. First of all, Pachakutik was animated, as some minor fractions within the Bolivian ASP (see Chapter 4), by an 'anti-statist' ideology identifying in the construction of an 'indigenous counter-power' the best strategy to promote the interests of the indigenous peoples, although it did develop a programmatic platform demanding strong state interventions to promote agricultural productivity (Carrillo, 2010). In addition, the participation in the aborted coup against President Jamil Mahuad (2000), in the middle of a major banking crisis, put in doubt the *democratic credentials* of Pachakutik and provoked internal schisms within the party. Two years later, Pachakutik supported the presidential campaign of Gutiérrez, the army officer who led the coup against Mahuad. Gutiérrez won the elections and, despite his electoral promises, was unable or unwilling to change the socioeconomic model and pulled yet a new 'bait and switch' policy in Latin America (Silva, 2009; Campello, 2011). Moreover, Pachakutik remained tightly linked to the CONAIE, which began, in contrast to the Bolivian case, to privilege its own particularistic demands over the articulation of broader, more encompassing demands potentially leading to a *unified* socio-political front. By doing so, it alienated the support of the CMS and of the Ecuadorean Left, which fell into political isolation (Trujillo and Spronk, 2018; Silva, 2018).

In sum, due to the own mistakes of the anti-neoliberal opposition coalesced around Pachakutik, the Ecuadorean case was characterised, from the mid-2000s on, by *fragmented* protests and by the absence of credible political actors playing a brokerage role. According to the model that this dissertation proposes, such conditions opened the window to the rise of *leader-initiated populisms*, quite autonomous from the movements but still able to dialogue with them and, crucially, to consolidate programmatic and charismatic linkages with unorganised constituencies. This perfectly describes Rafael Correa's project.

The 'rebellion of the *forajidos*' against Gutiérrez (a sort of civilian coup led by enraged middle-classes) made evident the diffused distrust of political parties, the exasperation for recurrent corruption scandals, and kept open the window of opportunity for the emergence of an anti-neoliberal outsider. Neither the Ecuadorean leftist parties and movements, nor Pachakutik played any role in the *Forajidos'* coup. Meanwhile, Correa soon acquired high popularity thanks to his incendiary critiques against the neoliberal model and became a viable candidate for the 2006 presidential race (Conaghan, 2018).

Correa built his own electoral organization, *Alianza PAIS* ('Proud and Sovereign Fatherland'), with a few academic and political activists from the Left. In this sense, here, the creation of PAIS resembled Podemos'. Like Podemos, PAIS was a project that explicitly and willingly refused to 'federate' the fragmented (and quite discredited) social and political leftist *milieu*, while immediately looking for the 'assault to power' by successfully betting on the following presidential elections (Larrea, 2010). However, PAIS was able to develop its own organizational structures, through the creation of 200,000 very small 'familial' or 'territorial committees' (whose number continued to increase) for propaganda activities throughout the country, often relying on human rights, environmentalist or leftist activism (Larrea, 2010). PAIS also anticipated Podemos and the M5S for its extensive use of mass media and communicational

innovations for electoral campaigning, centred on the charismatic, ‘anti-party’ Correa’s figure (Conaghan, 2018).

PAIS did not run for the legislative elections in 2006, which were concomitant with the presidential elections won by Correa in the second round, when he received the late endorsement of the Ecuadorean Left. Correa then crafted a heterogeneous parliamentary coalition and convoked a Constituent Assembly, whose final draft was overwhelmingly approved by a popular referendum. He was then reelected in 2009, while PAIS obtained 59 out of 124 parliamentary seats. More in general, in the 2006-2011 period, Ecuador experienced a long electoral cycle (including constitutional and legislative referenda) marked by Correa’s political hegemony and high popularity, thanks to his impressive achievements in social and economic realms (Handlin, 2017; Silva, 2018).

Correa’s political project, despite its rhetoric, was much less ‘participative’ than the rest of the antineoliberal political projects that this dissertation has analysed. PAIS was an electoral machine fully controlled from above, both in terms of candidate selection and programmatic contents. Only in a secondary moment was the candidate selection process ‘decentralised’, even though the national organs (whose membership depended on own Correa’s decisions: Silva, 2018) kept the possibility of vetoing the candidacies (Conaghan, 2018). Correa included representatives from other leftist parties and from the movements in his coalition, although his widely noticed ‘technocratic’ style (e.g., De La Torre, 2013; Becker, 2013) and his personalist manners forced numerous main figure to abandon the government.

However, apart from such features attributable to personal traits, the tensions between Correism and leftist movements, parties and unions were motivated by the very *populist* foundations of the former. Correa’s antiparty rhetoric merged with the discursive centrality of the concept of ‘sovereignty’ (intended in both political and economic terms, in the sense of the recuperation of a stronger statist intervention in the social, extractive and banking issues) *and* with strong attacks against ‘corporatist’ forces

that put their own ‘particularistic’ demands above the general interest of the People (Larrea, 2010; Silva, 2018). As with the also *leader-initiated populism* of the Italian M5S, this model led to vehement attacks against any autonomous structure of socio-political intermediation (including not only the economic elites, but also unions and environmentalist movements) that tried to oppose the governmental (technocratic) decisions. Also like Chávez, in that same category, Correa pursued a clear anti-unionist strategy consisting in fuelling the creation of *oficialistas* unions to further fragment the Ecuadorean union movement and to constrain the FUT into an even more peripheral position (Silva, 2018).

As the other *leader-initiated populisms*, Correism had its social bases in urban and rural poor sectors (Handlin, 2017). Correa’s political project did proceed to a massive incorporation of such sectors, although such incorporation did not occur, as in Chavism, by fostering their organization and enrolment into the movement. Instead, it was mainly a *programmatic incorporation* (Castillo and Barrenechea, 2016), through extensive social policies consisting in the strengthening of public education and the health system or in cash transfers and subsidies on basic services *at the individual level* (Silva, 2018). His project also favoured improvement in the Ecuadorean state capacity thanks to the positive economic conjuncture, to the governmental economic policies themselves, and to efficient policy designs. Some kind of *organizational linkages* did exist at the municipal level, thanks to the creation of public programs meeting the demands of local movements over very concrete needs. In addition, a certain co-optation of previous *clientelistic linkages* occur in the Coastal region, where particularistic and often corrupted practices assured for a long time the political hegemony of right-wing parties (Conaghan, 2018).

France: a Hybrid between Leader-initiated and Movement Populisms. In the 2017 French presidential elections, the candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon, leader and of founder of a new ‘movement’ called *La France Insoumise* (LFI) and generally understood as a clear case of left populism, almost reached 20% of the votes and missed

by only a few percentage points access to the second round. LFI became the most important leftist French political party, while the *Parti Socialiste* was in complete disarray. The PS' candidate reached a mere 6%; while the centrist Emmanuel Macron, a former Socialist who founded a new personalist party, won by a landslide in the second round against the right-wing populist Marine Le Pen. Even in France, thus, Eurosceptic populism became a major political phenomenon, almost equally distributed between the two opposite poles of the party system (Gougou and Persico, 2017).

France certainly did not experience an economic crisis comparable to Southern European countries, nor the country had to implement strict austerity and market-friendly measures following *Troika*'s diktats. However, France has experienced stagnation, a slight rise in unemployment and a long-term increase in the size of precarious sectors. The presidency of the Socialist François Hollande further limited labour rights through the approval of a new labour reform, the so-called *Loi El Khomri*, allowing easier dismissals and lowering severance payments. The discussion and approval of such a reform, together with the public centrality acquired by job precariousness, fuelled an intense cycle of protests during the 2016 spring, initially animated by trade unions and social movements and then re-launched by a vast initiative convoked by a small movement (*Collectif de Convergence des Luttes*) composed of social and political activists, some of them linked to the *Parti de Gauche* (PdG, 'Party of the Left', founded in 2008 by the very Mélenchon).

Such an initiative (*Nuit Debout*, 'Stand-Up Night') shared many similarities, in terms of repertoires, (horizontal) organization and Internet-based diffusion, with the American *Occupy Wall Street* and the Spanish *Indignados*. The *Nuit Debout* movement flaunted its autonomy from any political parties and unions, and had a quite high impact (although not comparable to that of the *Indignados*), a vast diffusion throughout the country, and a quite short duration, as it was already declining in May 2016. Nevertheless, it 'set the political terrain' for the new political project led by Mélenchon, contributing to put at the centre of the political agenda the highly-contested *Loi El*

Khomri and other local labour and environmentalist struggles that were 're-tweeted' by the protesters.

Mélenchon had already ran for the presidency in 2012 as the candidate of the *Front de Gauche*, a radical left coalition including the PdG and the Communist PCF. However, the FdG did not survive this electoral adventure. In view of 2017 presidential elections, Mélenchon, who had kept a strong oppositional stance to Hollande's presidency, opted for launching a personalist movement, instead of aggregating the fragmented segments of the partisan Left through a new 'leftist federation'. LFI, nonetheless, attracted a broad militancy from the pre-existing leftist parties, and much beyond the partisan *milieu*: while the once powerful PCF had roughly 70,000 affiliates, and the PdG a tiny membership of 7,000 militants[236], *La France Insoumise* attracted 430,000 'supporters' through 'lighter', on-line forms of inscriptions to LFI's web-platform.

Himself a sympathiser of *Chavismo*, Mélenchon made broad use of a nationalist, 'sovereigntist' rhetoric, calling for the foundation of a 'Sixth Republic' through the convocation of a Constituent Assembly (whose representatives had to be, at least partially, drawn from the citizenry) and disclosing the possibility of exiting from the Eurozone (Schön-Quinlivan, 2017). LFI's programmatic platform ('The Future in Common'[237]) had been drafted by thirty experts (appointed by Mélenchon), who collected and systematized over 3,000 on-line proposals from the activists. The web-activists also had the possibility of selecting ten 'emblematic' proposals to be prioritised, and they were also asked to express the official LFI's position in view of the second round of the presidential race, by selecting either the endorsement to Macron or the abstention (which resulted the most voted option); more than half of the supporters (238,000 voters) casted their on-line vote.

[236] http://www.leparisien.fr/politique/militantisme-les-partis-sont-a-l-agonie-23-04-2016-5739365.php.
[237] https://avenirencommun.fr/.

Mélenchon's political project developed a peculiar organization that can be fully categorised within the *participative-mobilising populist* category and that resembled Panebianco's *charismatic party* because of the 'porousness' of its structures and because of its top-down decision-making. LFI has been described as an 'action-oriented' movement during its first national convention[238]: a characteristic that is reflected in the creation of the 'spaces of struggles', a sort of small partisan cell fully devoted to the support of local or sectorial struggles that were compatible with the political principles of the LFI. However, both the 'off-line' and the 'on-line' militants had no voice in the candidate selection process, nor an *effective* voice in the draft of the party manifestos, since Mélenchon's inner circle kept a decisive gate-keeping role. In addition, the final document approved in the first national convention explicitly prevented the local groups from creating 'permanent intermediate structures', thus replicating the 'disintermediating' features of the Italian M5S.

In sum, LFI seems a hybrid between the *leader-initiated* and the *movement populism*: despite the 'militant', 'leftist' profile of its membership, it seems much more skewed towards the former anti-neoliberal populist subtype. As it has been argued, '*France Insoumise's structure does not correspond to the classical party form. Rather, it consists of a set of different poles, each with their own specific functions: the parliamentary group (led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon and consisting of seventeen MPs), the espace des luttes, the operational team* [a sort of electoral campaign committee], *the political space* [which represents the pre-existing political parties that opted for supporting LFI, namely: the PdG and some groups of Socialist and Communist dissidents], *and the programmatic space*'[239]. It must be noticed that neither of these 'poles' have been elected; and even the 'political space' has no political rights within the project. It could be argued that the absence of a long and sustained cycle of protests limited the bottom-up features of the project, which, however, did internalize some

[238] https://www.jacobinmag.com/2018/02/france-insoumise-jean-luc-melenchon-macron.
[239] https://www.jacobinmag.com/2018/02/france-insoumise-jean-luc-melenchon-macron.

participative features, also drawing from the experience of Podemos, which has become the most important LFI's ally at the European level.

Even in terms of electoral bases, Mélenchon's project shared many similarities with other leader-initiated populisms. According to post-electoral surveys[240], Mélenchon was the most voted candidate amongst unemployed workers (31%) and voters younger than 25 (30%). His electorate was also overrepresented amongst voters earning less than 1,250 euros per month (25%, quite below Le Pen [32%] but far above Macron [14%]) and amongst blue-collar workers (24%, far below Le Pen [37%]). In contrast, Mélenchon poorly attracted pensioners, liberal professionals and high-skilled white-collars. In the following legislative elections, of June 2017, LFI performed worst than in the presidential elections: again, its electorate was concentrated amongst unemployed and *public* sector workers and amongst the youth[241].

In sum, *deprived insiders* were more likely to vote for Marine Le Pen's right-wing populist project, fully in line with the analysis in Chapter 3. In turn, the *outsiders*, but also some sectors where union density is higher, tended to vote for Mélenchon, whose relationships with the fragmented and weakened French union movement were and are quite ambivalent: on the one side, the CGT (still linked to the PCF) shares several political goals with LFI; on the other side, a certain 'competition' for leading French 'street politics' is also evident, opposing Mélenchon's project to the 'old Left' (PCF-CGT) bloc[242]. The decline of the French 'old Left' goes back to the Eighties, and is nicely summarized by Meny (2017), who stressed the *weakening of the organizational linkages* typical of the once well-rooted Communist party:

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[240] http://www.rtl.fr/actu/politique/presidentielle-2017-ouvriers-jeunes-ruraux-qui-a-vote-quoi-7788279034.

[241] https://www.francetvinfo.fr/elections/legislatives/legislatives-jeunes-seniors-ouvriers-chomeurs-riches-qui-a-vote-quoi-au-premier-tour_2231705.html.

[242] See, among others, http://www.lemonde.fr/election-presidentielle-2017/article/2017/03/16/melenchon-et-la-cgt-l-heure-du-desamour_5095426_4854003.html.

> '*The first ingredient* [of LFI's project] *is the capacity to attract and aggregate a latent social protest that does not have a home among existing political groups, including the National Front. For a long time up to and including when it was in power, the French Communist party was a model of the combination of an internationalist, radical, leftist ideology and of a capacity to catch every possible protest vote or discontented voter. […] The role of the PCF was crucial in rooting the working class and the disadvantaged groups within the framework of a disciplined opposition party up to the 1980s when part of its electorate was attracted by the socialist party and the rest was open to new options: abstention, radical protest, and even a vote for the National Front when no better option was available*' (Meny, 2017: 11).

9.4 Some Normative Reflections and Assessments: Populisms, their Incorporating Function and Their Impact on the Quality of Democracy

In different Latin American countries as well as in Greece, antineoliberal populist projects have assumed governmental responsibilities. In Latin America, their governmental experience has been extremely long-lasting. In Ecuador, Bolivia and Venezuela, populist presidents have promulgated new Constitutions and strengthened their power by either expanding their prerogatives or allowing for their re-election.

Many scholars have alerted over the 'illiberal' directions taken by such Latin American regimes (see Chapter 3), and over a substantial erosion of the quality of democracy due to the weakening of institutional check-and-balances and to the power asymmetries generated by their unchallenged control over public and media resources. The weakening of the institutions devoted to 'horizontal accountability' allegedly affected the quality of policy design, leading to discretionary implementations for clientelistic purposes and to budgetary distresses jeopardising the sustainability of redistributive social and economic reforms over time (Pribble, 2013). Populisms are also

often criticised for their antagonistic discourses and practices, conducing to social and political extreme polarization and to the disrespect of the civil and political rights of their opponents. Critics are also concerned with the lack of internal democratic procedures *within* the populist organizations, and highlight the top-down, plebiscitarian features leading to a lack of accountability and thus to a substantial abdication of their *representative* role in relation to their militancy and electorate.

The tendency of rewriting Constitution by recent Latin American populist projects is undeniable, although an additional factor should be considered: such populist projects enjoyed for a long time a popular support – as reflected in the ballot boxes – that was much higher than any other democratic government in those countries. It could be easily argued that such populist projects engaged in constitutional changes not only because of their 'regenerative mission', but simply because they had the possibility to do so, in contrast to previous, weaker governments. However, neither the convocation of a Constituent Assembly nor the promulgation of a new Constitution can be considered *per se* illiberal practices[243].

For sure, in presidential systems, the extension of the presidential term and/or the possibility of - at times indefinite - re-election are likely to assign a disproportionate advantage to the incumbent; this, jointly with the politicization of supposedly impartial institutions, are also likely to *de facto* limit the eventual 'participative' features that were introduced. Such power centralization can effectively lead to plebiscitarian directions. Again, such dangers seem to be related with the enormous popular support that, at least initially, populist projects attracted.

While these dangers are real and worrisome, it is also necessary to think about the factors leading to the emergence of populist projects and that *explain their broad popular support*, particularly amongst the poorest sectors, which are, in turn, concentrated in the *outsider* category. Antineoliberal populisms emerged when the old

[243] Moreover, constitutional changes aiming to reinforce the *status quo* are not a prerogative of antineoliberal populists: for instance, in the middle of the crisis, both the Italian and the Spanish parliaments included the provision of budgetary equilibrium into the national constitutions.

(leftist) structures of political intermediation failed to channel and articulate the demands of weak and deprived social sectors, in countries where neoliberalism had become 'the only game in town' and even the labour protection enjoyed by the insiders were put in peril, while the outsiders were left without any meaningful safety-net. Monetary and fiscal orthodoxies were *de facto* or *de jure* locked in the institutions, thus reducing the room of manoeuvre for political responses to the crisis. Often, political parties had lost most of their social linkages. Trade unions were often constrained into a subordinate, defensive position, depending on weakening institutional resources to obtain some limited gains (or reduce the losses).

Thus, a window of opportunity was opened for political projects promising a *re-politicisation* of the public debate, an expansion of the 'horizon of the possibilities', and a stronger protection of the most vulnerable sectors, eventually through their *incorporation* into public institutions accessible to new forms of popular participation. However, while the 'recuperation' of the state institutions and the re-politicisation in reaction to advanced forms of post-democracy were common features of the anti-neoliberal populist projects analysed here, we do observe different forms of incorporation and different organizational arrangements to provide 'The people' with new forms of political participation. It is thus necessary to 'unpack' the antineoliberal populist category, which was precisely one of the goals of this dissertation, to evaluate its impacts on democratic regimes.

Movement (based) populisms and *party-rooted populisms*, with some caveats, played in my view a *positive* role to increase the legitimacy of highly discredited institutions of representative democracy. Podemos (*movement populism*) fulfilled the function of representing the demands of transparency, social equality and political participation that emerged during the long Spanish protest cycle. In addition, Podemos put at the centre of the political debate the needs of the vast outsider sectors, and was even more effective in attracting impoverished and disillusioned middle-class sectors advancing both 'materialist' and 'post-materialist' (such as environmentalist, feminist,

participative) demands. Although Podemos downplayed the old class-based rhetoric, and despite its quite top-down internal organization (but still much more open to internal debates than other antineoliberal populisms), it soon became the most important political representative, at least at the national level, of the socio-political leftist space, and therefore strongly limited its early anti-unionist critiques. Podemos' commitment to political pluralism is undoubtable. The party contributed to align the Spanish party system to the socio-political environment shaped by the crisis and by anti-austerity mobilizations.

Podemos has not assumed governmental responsibilities yet, at least at the national level. The other populist projects analysed here, except for the M5S, achieved power and often inaugurated new political 'eras'. The winning trajectory of the MAS-IPSP (*movement-based populism*) demonstrated to what extent the most legitimated forms of socio-political articulation were situated *outside* the public institutions and political parties, and to what extent the old system had become unresponsive to the demands of social inclusion and political incorporation of the majority of the Bolivian population. MAS-IPSP's project fully reflected the ambitions of the excluded sectors to 'recuperate' the State and to restore *popular sovereignty*, through new forms of *collective* political participation through social structure of interest aggregation enjoying very high popular legitimacy.

'Grey zones' clearly exist in *masista* Bolivia. The MAS-IPSP has lost much of its 'bottom-up', founding characteristics: a statist-technocratic elite retains much of the political power, while the *trillizas* have become less autonomous and fulfil a corporatist function, in which leader-level bargaining plays a central role (sometimes opaque). The 'communitarian-productive' model has turned to be an extractivist one, which alienated important fractions of the indigenous movement, but was functional to facilitate economic redistribution *via* social policies and infrastructures, which provided a form of *programmatic* incorporation of the poorest sectors without putting in peril the macroeconomic stability of the country (thanks to the 'technocratic', prudential

management of the government). However, the ‘protection’ of some powerful actors representing informal sectors made the formalization of the Bolivian economy even more difficult, while other constituencies fell outside the *masista* coalition and complained about increasing corruption and a ‘politicization’ of the institutions devoted to check-and-balances.

Nevertheless, truly ‘authoritarian’ tendencies actually stemmed from the Bolivian *opposition* (at least during the first Morales’ term). The empowerment of the hyper-organised *and* hyper-fragmented Bolivian ‘subaltern’ classes has been undeniable, since they finally found in the *masista* space an effective *locus* for political bargaining. Despite prebendal tendencies, Bolivian democracy looks like much more representative socially and inclusive than twenty years ago.

While Podemos and (particularly) the MAS-IPSP were the political emanation of the movements, Kirchnerism and Syriza (*party-rooted populisms*) both *legitimated* and, to a certain extent, *moderated* and even *controlled* the movements. Argentine and Greek democratic institutions and party systems were experiencing a deep crisis of legitimacy, which was further fuelled by well-rooted, albeit fragmented, antagonist movements. In an out-of-control social, political and economic situation, with discredited ‘party-union hubs’ and political classes, Kirchner and Syriza adopted a fully populist discourse and channelled the popular rage towards institutional avenues through particularistic resources and/or the political incorporation of the mobilised actors (in the case of Kirchnerism) or through partisan representation (in the case of Syriza). Kirchnerism gave political legitimacy to (some) popular movements, which provided the government a loyal militancy, and gave the unions a protagonist role back, thus recuperating some aspects of the old ‘statist socioeconomic matrix’ remounting to the ISI phase. Syriza supported (and played a brokerage role in) anti-austerity mobilizations, and thus was able to become the *only* credible alternative to the status-quo, once the ‘contentious strategy’ proved to be insufficient.

Syriza's government was unable to follow an alternative socioeconomic route, also due to extremely difficult material conditions. In fact, Syriza, after having contributed to fuel popular protests, acted as a 'social fireman'. In contrast, Kirchnerism was successful in 'normalising' Argentina precisely *thanks to its quite radical discourse and practices*, from the government. In the Argentine case – and this can be extended to the rest of the countries analysed here – there is a certain inconsistency in the accusations over the 'polarization' provoked by the antineoliberal populist projects, since such critiques tend to overlook the *extreme social incandescence* provoked by the shortcomings of the neoliberal model and by the social and political exclusion of broad popular sectors. Said otherwise, *social* polarization predated *political* polarization. The populisms took electoral advantage of this reality and 'extended' it to the political-electoral sphere. Failing to recognize this and attributing all the responsibility to some 'populist entrepreneurs' or 'mavericks' means to deny social conflict.

In a similar way, it can be argued that the 'particularistic' Kirchnerist practices, *to a certain extent*, were unescapable, at least in its early governmental phase, since they constituted an easier strategy to appease already mobilised actors. It must be also stressed that the *main* Kirchnerist strategy for incorporating outsider social *sectors* occurred through a certain formalization of the economy, an empowerment of the unions, and, later, through the provision of some (highly popular) universalist social programs. From a normative point of view, it seems more criticisable the recurrent use of public resources for retaining (and, often, *creating*) social bases of support (like the *Evita* or *La Cámpora*) through particularistic instruments.

Leader-initiated populisms pose deeper normative concerns over their effects on the quality of democratic representation and the kind of incorporation they promoted. The strong top-down organizational features, the lack of strongly organised bases and the ideological 'vagueness' allowed for a very broad autonomy of the leadership, and thus led to a certain 'unpredictability' over the strategic and political decisions and to a plebiscitarian direction. In addition, the vehement attacks against the existing structures

of socio-political intermediation, allegedly uncapable or unwilling to give voice to unorganised and 'unheard' constituencies (while acting as 'transmission belts' of the political opposition), led leader-initiated populisms to anti-unionist practices and to present themselves as the only legitimated channel for interest aggregation. In the case of the M5S, the substantial negation of the political role of trade unionism, and the recurrent claims for a 'disintermediation' of employers-employees' relations, could equally provoke detrimental consequences for the organised working-class.

The kind of incorporation of the *outsiders* is also critical to assess the consequences of the rise of antineoliberal leader-initiated populisms for democratic regimes. In the case of the M5S (and of Correism), such incorporation is mainly intended in *programmatic* and *individualistic* terms, through universalist social policies and proposals for reducing job precariousness. In this sense, the *participative* (more than *mobilising*) features of the M5S mainly refer, at least discursively, to the (supposedly) *collective* elaboration of programmatic manifestos and to the candidate selection process. In the case of *Chavismo*, the incorporation of the outsiders mainly occurred through their *mobilization*, which was pursued through their enrolment (which was triggered by both genuine popular support to the government and by copious public resources) in local-level *círculos*. This scenario contributed to set the conditions for an extended 'participatory clientelism' (Goldfrank, 2011) that, on the one hand, cemented the support for strongly redistributive social policies and favoured the political incorporation of previously excluded sectors; and on the other hand, produced a flourishing of rent-seeking positions and selective benefits that fuelled concerns for Venezuelan democracy. Furthermore, such policy programs bypassed the weak Venezuelan state bureaucracy and were put under the direct and discretionary supervision of the President. In sum, antineoliberal populisms can become particularly detrimental for democratic institutions when they directly create and stimulate social movements *dependent* on the assignment of discretionary resources, instead of either acting as the political articulator of *pre-existing* (or in any case quite *autonomous*)

movements or promoting the individual (or even collective) incorporation of socially and politically excluded sectors through universalist and non-arbitrary programs.

9.5 Questions for Future Research

Because of its broad scope, in both geographical and chronological terms, the argument of this dissertation generates a vast number of hypotheses and hypothesized mechanisms that can be tested with more precision within specific contexts. This brief concluding section suggests some of the possible research agendas that can be followed to test, expand, improve or falsify the argument advanced in this dissertation, as well as some broader questions to address.

The argument puts a lot of emphasis on, and devotes much attention to, the ability of antineoliberal populisms (particularly the *party-rooted* and *leader-initiated populisms*) to dialogue with, and eventually include or co-opt, social movements advancing local or sectorial demands, and to articulate such demands through programmatic or particularistic linkages. The analysis of the consequences of the participation in such kinds of protest, and of the very existence of local struggles on voting choices could provide some interesting findings[244]. In a similar vein, it is important to better understand the mechanisms that contribute to expand the resonance of local or sectorial struggles beyond the constituencies that are directly concerned with the issues at stake. Moreover, political parties, depending on their ideological underpinnings, their oppositional or governmental position (both at the local and at the governmental level), their organizational structures (for instance, their degree of

[244] Local, *territorially-based* protests more often served as the first 'incubators' for the organization of social discontent than movements centered on issues such as unemployment or job precariousness - although in some cases (notably in Argentina and Bolivia) these two different sources of grievances 'merged' to fuel widespread social contention.

decentralization), and on electoral rules[245] are likely to position themselves and dialogue with the movements in quite different ways. Such analysis can offer interesting insights on the 'adaptability' of parties to contentious scenarios, and even on the incentives that motivate local politicians to support (or not) particularistic struggles.

This dissertation showed how leader-initiated populisms were more successful than other kinds of antineoliberal project in attracting typically poorly organised constituencies (such as the outsiders) in their electorate. At the same time, the electorates of movement-based populisms tended to reflect the sociological composition of the activists of the social movements that founded (or, at least, furnished most of the cadres and the militants to) the political-electoral project. Attention to particularistic linkages (as the previous paragraph suggests) or to *descriptive representation* could eventually correct the 'ideological-programmatic' bias often implicit in the analyses of voting choices. In a similar vein, further research could pay more attention to the mechanisms leading leader-centred political projects to be so successful in attracting support from popular sectors, and to the (eventual) relative importance of different forms of decentralising party organizations to stimulate (or not) the political participation of underprivileged sectors.

This dissertation also has extensively discussed the consequences of the relationships between trade unions and labour-based or left-of-centre parties during neoliberalism in the pre-crisis era. The subsequent evolution of the electoral Lefts in the countries analysed demonstrated to which extent the lack of political autonomy of the

[245] This dissertation, apart from very specific mentions, has purposely overlooked the impact of institutional barriers (such as electoral systems, requirements for party registration…) on the rise (or not) of new electoral projects. These factors are surely not irrelevant. It is sufficient to consider, among other things: the decision of Podemos to run for the first time in European elections ('second-order' elections with a proportional system with big district magnitudes); the role played by the Bolivian *Ley de Participación Popular* for 'opening' municipal institutions to well-rooted local movements, and the difficulties faced by the MAS-IPSP for registering itself as a party according to the Bolivian Law; the *ley de lemas* to guarantee both *unity* and *differentiation* to the three main Uruguayan parties; the electoral debut of the M5S in selected local and regional elections. However, in country such as Portugal or Greece, despite quite low barriers to entry, we did not observe the rise of new political parties. In none of the countries selected the legislative chambers were elected through first-past-the-post systems. Nevertheless, the relationship between institutional barriers and the rise of antineoliberal populist projects deserves further research.

unions affected the popular legitimacy of the unions themselves and contributed to explain the harsh relationships between them and the new antineoliberal populist projects. This opens interesting analytical and normative questions over the role of the unions in dualized societies. On the one hand, the incentives for affirming links with political parties are not negligible, because of the role of the state in labour market regulation and the lack of encompassing structures for interest aggregation. The decline of unions' influence on the polity domain was evident not only in underdeveloped countries such as Bolivia and Ecuador (where structural and political factors led once powerful unions to political irrelevance), but even in most of the other countries analysed, including industrialized ones, where the unions were often put into a defensive position, i.e. an 'unwilling' defence of their linkages with 'centripetal' labour-based and left-of-centre parties. Academic research should shed light on the consequences of the different strategies available to the unions under neoliberalism, in terms of concrete policy outcomes and of defence of their bargaining power (in both the short and long terms).

From a normative, 'advocatory' point of view, the recuperation, by the unions, of a 'classist' understanding of their role, instead of a mere 'economic' role, seems an urgent task, which is made even more difficult by the structural social heterogeneity (which antineoliberal populisms often proved to be well suited to) amongst the middle and lower classes in both Latin America and Southern Europe. The inclusion of the outsiders' interests cannot be reduced to the delivering of specific services, such as labour market intermediation and support for bureaucratic incumbencies. The unions should pursue more ambitious goals: they should provide *programmatic* response to welfare state and labour market fragmentations, and, crucially, they should stimulate more vigorously *organizational* responses to provide a true incorporation of the outsider sectors into the polity domain. This, in turn, could facilitate the elaboration of programmatic proposals, even beyond the sphere of labour market regulations and welfare state provisions: for instance, in Southern Europe, expansive and redistributive socioeconomic policies are likely to be supported by constituencies that are much

broader than the salaried sectors. Achieving a broader and stronger representativeness could allow the unions to recuperate greater bargaining power *vis à vis* the parties and to improve their popularity and legitimacy well beyond those 'privileged' (according to neoliberal discourse) sectors. The alternative, as this dissertation showed, is to be targeted as 'part of the *Casta*' by new social and political actors and/or to set the conditions for the emergence of populist projects that politicized the *insider-outsider* in a way that potentially jeopardized the bargaining power of the organized working-class.

Further research is also needed to test the very relevance of the *insider-outsider divide* as a central dimension to explain party systems' realignments and the emergence of antineoliberal projects. On the one hand, we need better survey data to estimate the effects at the individual level of labour market status, job precariousness, access to public subsidies or safety-net programs, access to (and quality of) education, health and caregiver systems, on voting choices and on policy preferences. Social heterogeneity in post-industrial societies imposes the construction of bigger datasets to be used for comparative purposes.

On the other hand, we saw that most anti-neoliberal and anti-austerity social mobilizations were motivated by demands for *political*, and not just *social* exclusion, often considered a consequence of the latter. Claims for political participation, and to restore national and popular 'sovereignty' – allegedly 'stolen' by political and economic elites unaccountable to the *demos/plebs* – were everywhere central in anti-austerity mobilizations, particularly where the old structures of sociopolitical intermediations (because of the weakening of existing links with the broader society) played a quite limited role in the protests. The deprivation and lack of protection suffered by many social sectors belonging to the 'insider camp', and the party (and union) process of 'cartelization', are phenomena that are not circumscribed to the set of countries analyzed in this research[246]. Thus, the applicability of the framework should be tested in different

[246] In countries as diverse as Iceland as Ireland, the implementation of austerity measures fueled different cycles of protests (Vogiatzoglou, 2017b; O'Connor, 2017), and the framework that this dissertation proposed could suggest a novel analysis of the Irish and Icelandic recent political evolutions.

contexts other than those analyzed by this dissertation, by partially relaxing one of the 'scope condition' (the existence of a dualized welfare regime) and, instead, focusing exclusively on the eventual delegitimization of the 'party-union hubs' as credible alternatives to neoliberalism.

Partially related to the latter point, it seems likely that other dimensions may be relevant as well to explain the rise of new antineoliberal party challengers. In this sense, it should be noticed that 'populist' actors as diverse as Jeremy Corbyn in the United Kingdom or Bernie Sanders in the United States, together with Podemos, Syriza and the M5S, have disproportionately attracted electoral support from the youth (while, in Latin America, age effects seemed much less relevant)[247]. Such a finding is intriguing and suggests different explanations, not necessarily incompatible with the argument presented in those pages, that deserve further research. The Great Recession provoked strong rises in unemployment rates, a more difficult access to the job market and the non-renewals of fixed-term contracts, all of which disproportionately affected young and female workers. In Anglo-Saxon countries, youth discontent against high university fees has mounted. Young citizens are well entitled to protest for the lack of opportunities and ascending social mobility, in a widespread crisis of expectations. In addition, young, urban, highly educated middle-classes are particularly likely to look for political projects calling for political engagement. Thus, 'grievances' and 'resources' merged to stimulate socio-political mobilization.

At the same time, anti-austerity activists have massively used new social media to coordinate, sustain and expand the protests. Gerbaudo (2018) has noticed several 'elective affinities' between social media and populism, visible in 'anti-establishment' messages or in the creation of 'filter bubbles' favoring both homogenization and radicalization ('crowd-building' processes). Podemos and (particularly) the M5S, while

[247] In Latin America, the current political momentum seems quite unlikely to offer strong political opportunities for 'antineoliberal projects', since the Left, after many years in power, appears in retreat. Nevertheless, the rise of new leftist political projects in Chile, Peru and Costa Rica, sometimes with strong roots in student-based social movements, could represent the electoral consequence of the rise of new middle-classes holding progressive values and preferences.

recognizing the relevance of traditional forms of political participation, have purposely privileged ‘on-line’ procedures, supposedly in order to lower the barriers for political participation (and, arguably, to silence the voice of ‘noisy minority’ within the party, avoid sectarianism and push for plebiscitarian forms of party organization). In sum, both ‘structural’ and ‘communicational’ factors seem to explain such over-representation of the youth in anti-austerity social movements and political projects. To clearly separate such causal claims, and to advance other possible mechanisms, more research, as usual, is needed.

To conclude: this dissertation follows the old (and somewhat old-fashioned) tradition of the comparative-historical analysis, which is notoriously well-suited to portray ‘broad pictures’ and to answer ‘big questions’. Political science has rightly banned any pretension to produce ‘lawlike and ahistorical statements’. The necessity of limiting the conditions of applicability of our theories and of qualifying the plausibility of our findings is very commendable, and so is the search for explaining micro-level mechanisms and for addressing more specific questions. On the other hand, our discipline should not abdicate to the mission of offering some broad and justifiable interpretations of our current and complex reality to the broader public. The emergence of (both left and right) populisms, and the search for new alternative forms of political participation and political accountability, surely are major topics of interest that deserve to be scrutinized by political scientists in broad comparative perspective. This dissertation aims to be an attempt in that direction.

List of Quoted Interviews

Bolivia

BO1 Almaraz, Alejandro. Former Vice-Minister of Land and Rural Development.

BO2 Barcaya, Cándido. Member of the CSUTCB's National Direction.

BO3 Bascopé, Pedro. Member of the FSTMB's National Direction.

BO4 Begamonte, Feliciano. National Secretary of the CSUTCB (peasants).

BO5 Canelas, Manuel. MP of the MAS-IPSP.

BO6 Córdova, Eduardo. Researcher at the University of San Simón.

BO7 De La Cruz Villca, Juan. Former member of the CSUTCB's National Direction and founder of the ASP.

BO8 Anonymous interviewee. Former MP (of the MIR) and Director of local NGO.

BO9 Garcés, Fernando. Former consultant of the Unity Pact in the Constituent Assembly.

BO10 García Yapur, Fernando. Researcher at the CIS (*Centro de Investigación Sociológica*, dependent from the Vicepresidency of the Bolivian Plurinational State).

BO11 González, Hugo. Press Secretary of the FSTPB (oilworkers' union).

BO12 Gutiérrez, Orlando. National Secretary of the FSTMB (mineworkers).

BO13 Limache, Walter. Director of NINA Program (NGO working in indigenous leadership's formation).

BO14 Loayza, Román. Former peasant union leader in Cochabamba and former member of the National Direction of the MAS-IPSP.

BO15 Loza, Leonardo. National Secretary of the CSCIOB (colonizers' federation).

BO16 "Luisa", street vendor union leader in El Alto.

BO17 Mamani, Martiriano. MP of the MAS-IPSP (from San Julián, department of Santa Cruz).

BO18 Marca Limachi, Juan. Member of the Direction of the COR (*Central Obrera Regional*) – El Alto.

BO19 Mayorga, Fernando. Professor at the University of San Simón.

BO20 Paz, Sarela. Professor at the University of San Simón.

BO21 Pinto, Juan Carlos. Functionary at the Vicepresidency of the Bolivian Plurinational State.

BO22 Quelca, Adrián. Consultant of the COB.

BO23 Quispe, Juana. President of the MAS-IPSP Parliamentary Group.

BO24 Salazar, Fernando. Researcher at the University of San Simón.

BO25 Anonymous interviewww. Researcher at NGO working on rural issues.

BO26 Suárez, Shirley. MP of the MAS-IPSP (from Santa Cruz).

BO27 Villa, Juan. Member of the Direction of the FEJUVE (*Federación de las Juntas Vecinales – El Alto*)

BO28 Villa Gómez, Fredy. Researcher at CIPCA (NGO working on rural issues).

BO29 Zegada, Marité. Professor at University of San Simón.

BO30 Zuazo, Moira. Researcher at Friedrich Ebert Foundation – La Paz.

BO31 Montero, Hernán. FENCOMIN's Secretary of Organization.

BO32 Gandarillas, Marco. Director of CEDIB (*Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia*).

Argentina

AR1 Abal Medina, Juan Manuel. PJ's Senator representing the Province of Buenos Aires.

AR2 Anonymous interviewee. *FpV*'s Member of a Municipal Council in the Federal Capital.

AR3 Cafiero, Santiago. Leader of the PJ – San Isidro (Province of Buenos Aires).

AR4 Cabrera, Héctor. Member of the CTA's Secretariat (*Segretario Gremial*).

AR5 Anonymous interviewee. CTEP's activist.

AR6 Delamata, Gabriela. Professor at Universidad Nacional de San Martín.

AR7 Esteche, Fernando. Leader of *Movimiento Popular Revolucionario – Quebracho.*

AR8 Etchemendy, Sebastián. Professor at Universidad Torcuato Di Tella and Former Advisor of the Minister of Labour Carlos Tomada.

AR9 Gambina, Julio. Member of the CTA-A's Secretariat.

AR10 Lista, Nicolás. Militant of *Movimiento Popular Revolucionario – Quebracho* and Former Leader of the CTD-Aníbal Verón.

AR11 Anonymous interviewee. Leader of an oil workers local union in Santa Cruz' province.

AR12 Menéndez, Daniel. Member of the National Direction of *Libres del Sur – Barrios de Pie.*

AR13 Sánchez, Carlos. Member of the FTV's Secretariat.

AR14 Schuster, Federico. Professor at Universidad de Buenos Aires.

AR15 Anonymous interviewee. *FpV*'s Member of a Municipal Council in the Federal Capital.

Spain

ES1 Estany, Antonio. Podemos Valencia

ES2 Hermida Pérez, Begoña. Podemos Galicia

ES3 Estrada, Bruno. Consultant for Podemos and Deputy General Secretary of CC.OO.

ES4 Hierro, Daniel. Podemos Extremadura

ES5 Papiol, David. UGT Catalunya's Secretary for Participation

ES6 Gutiérrez, Eduardo. Member of Podemos' National Citizens' Council

ES7 Pamparacuatro, Elsa. Podemos Euskadi

ES8 León, Emilio. Podemos Asturias

ES9 Gassiot, Ermengol. CGT Catalunya's General Secretary

ES10 Mayoral, Guillermo. Podemos Andalusia

ES11 Martínez, Juanjo. Podemos L'Hospitalet de Llobregat

ES12 Bollain, Julen. Podemos Euskadi

ES13 Haba, Laura. Podem Catalunya

ES14 Daglio, Pablo. Podem Catalunya

ES15 Alegre, Luís. Podemos' founder.

ES16 Rodríguez, Manolo. Member of the CCOO Madrid Secretariat

ES17 Berlana, María Jesús. Barcelona en Comú's activist

ES18 Campo, Eva. Barcelona en Comú's Councillor at the District Level

ES19 Anonymous interviewee, Podem Barcelona's activist

ES20 Amírola, Rodrigo. Former member of Podemos' Political Secretariat

ES21 Arroyo, Sergio. Member of Podemos' Secretariat for Participation

ES22 Anonymous interviewee, Podemos Euskadi and ESK union's activist

ES23 Maté, Fernando. Podemos activist in Vallecas, Madrid

Italy

IT1 Treves, Claudio. NIDIL-CGIL's General Secretary

IT2 Agnoletto, Vittorio. Speaker of the Genoa Social Forum

IT3 Cancelleri, Giancarlo. Former M5S' candidate for the Sicilian Governorship

IT4 Macchi, Paola. M5S' Regional Councillor in Lombardy

IT5 Salvatore, Alice. M5S' Regional Councillor in Liguria

IT6 Bozzetti, Gianluca. M5S' Regional Councillor in Puglia

IT7 Laricchia, Antonella. M5S' Regional Councillor in Puglia

IT8 Violi, Dario. M5S' Regional Councillor in Puglia

IT9 Cappelletti, Enrico. M5S' MP

IT10 Ciprini, Tiziana. M5S' MP in the Labour Commission

IT11 Cozzolino, Emanuele. M5S' MP

IT12 Velli, Adriano. M5S' Municipal Councillor in Pomezia (Rome)

IT13 Maniero, Alvise. M5S' Mayor of Mira (Venice)

IT14 Fico, Roberto. M5S' former member of the *Directorate*

IT15 Anonymous interviewee, activist in the *No Muos* social movement

IT16 Zanni, Marco. Former M5S' MEP

IT17 Zaccagnini, Adriano. Former M5S' MP

IT18 Corrado, Valentina. M5S' Regional Councillor in Lazio

IT19 Fois, Valentina. CGIL's union official in Sardinia

IT20 Canestrari, Marco. Former Web Specialist at *Casaleggio Associati*

IT21 Bono, Davide. M5S' Regional Councillor in Piedmont

IT22 Sergo, Cristian. M5S' Regional Councillor in Friuli Venezia-Giulia

Greece

GR1 Karitzis, Andreas. Former Member of Syriza's Central Committee.

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