"PART OF THE ELITE"? ANTI-AUSTERITY POPULISM AND TRADE UNIONISM IN ITALY AND SPAIN

¿«Parte de la élite»? Populismo anti-austeridad y sindicalismo en Italia y España

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Abstract

A broad literature has analyzed the effects of Mediterranean welfare regimes on the political-electoral sphere and on the policy making process. Part of the literature on the *insider-outsider divide* has identified in the *insiders* the real core-constituency of the social democratic parties. The union movement, politically linked to the main left-of-center parties, would similarly show poor ability of representing the interests of the outsiders. Since the beginning of the Great Recession, new parties advancing a populist discourse have been able to attract vast segments of the leftist electorate. This article focuses on Podemos and the Five Star Movement and explores, mainly through in-depth interviews with political and union leaders, to which extent the critiques advanced by these parties towards the union organizations are motivated by the normative implications of the insider-outsider literature. The analysis shows that the critiques are more related with the ancillary role played by the unions towards their political referents than with their supposed "over-protection" of the insiders. However, it emerges that the stances assumed by the two parties towards unionism diverge, due to different ideological and "meta-political" roots: while Podemos can potentially develop a relationship of *cooperation* with trade unionism, the Five Star Movement positions itself as a *competitor*.

Keywords

Populism; welfare regime; union politics.

Resumen

Una amplia literatura ha analizado los efectos de los regímenes de bienestar mediterráneos sobre la esfera político-electoral y el proceso de *policy-making*. Una parte de la literatura, enfocándose en la división entre *insiders* y *outsiders* del mercado laboral, ha identificado en los *insiders* la *core-constituency* de los partidos socialdemócratas. Tampoco el movimiento sindical, políticamente ligado a los principales partidos de centro izquierda, parece haber sabido representar satisfactoriamente los intereses de los *outsiders*. Desde el comienzo de la gran recesión, en Europa del Sur nuevos partidos populistas han sabido capturar amplios sectores del electorado de izquierda. Este artículo se enfoca en Podemos y el Movimiento Cinco Estrellas italiano, y analiza, principalmente a través de entrevistas en profundidad con representantes partidarios y sindicales, en qué medida las críticas avanzadas por estos partidos hacia el movimiento sindical *mainstream* se refieren, directa o indirectamente, a las consecuencias normativas de los argumentos esgrimidos por la literatura sobre dualización del Estado de bienestar. El análisis demuestra que dichas críticas apuntan más a los lazos entre sindicatos y partidos «viejos» que a una supuesta «sobreprotección» de los *insiders*. Sin embargo, las posturas de estos partidos hacia los sindicatos difieren, debido a sus diferentes raíces ideológicas y «metapolíticas». Por ende, hay bases para predecir una posible cooperación entre Podemos y los grandes sindicatos españoles, mientras que el Movimiento Cinco Estrellas se presenta abiertamente como un competidor de las organizaciones sindicales.

Palabras clave

Populismo; Estado de bienestar; política sindical.

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND CASE SELECTION

The relationship between labour organizations and (left-of-centre) political parties has been extensively explored, either specifically (Hyman, 2001; Upchurch *et al.*, 2009; Bernaciak *et al.*, 2014; Allern and Bale, 2017) or as part of the broader literature on the relationship between political parties and interest groups (Thomas, 2001; Lawson and Poguntke, 2004; Tsakatika and Lisi, 2013). As Allern and Bale (2017: 1) put it, "examples of close party–interest group relationships abound, but perhaps the best known—because it was supposedly the most intimate—is the relationship between left-of-center parties and trade unions". Such "intimate" relationship took different forms, and the tightness of such relationship also varied, across regions and across times. Most of this literature focused, on the party side, on Social-Democratic and Communist parties that dominated (and often still dominate) the political Left in Western Europe.

The Great Recession triggered major changes in both Spanish and Italian party systems, though. New, albeit different, challengers arouse, championing anti-austerity and anti-establishment discourses and pretending to represent the "People" against political and economic, national and supranational elites: the Spanish Podemos and the Italian Five Star Movement (M5S). In contrast to what occurred in most of EU countries, such Southern European challengers, albeit generally categorised as "populist", cannot be associated to the populist radical right, which remained, at least during the peak of economic crisis and

anti-austerity protests, electorally much weaker than its "left-wing" (Podemos) or "polyvalent" (M5S) counterparts (Alonso and Rovira, 2015; Roberts, 2017; Sola and Rendueles, 2017; Pirro, 2018). Both Podemos and the M5S, albeit not as successful as Syriza in Greece to provoke the "pasokization" of the "mainstream" centre-left, were nonetheless able to erode the electorate of the PSOE and the PD (Democratic Party) and to end with long-lasting party system bipolar dynamics. While the relationship between "historic" centre-left and the main union organizations has been extensively scrutinized, the relationship between the latter and such "new challengers" of the traditional left is, to say the least, an under-researched topic.

This article aims to start filling this gap, by exploring the (uneasy) relationships between these newly born Southern European "anti-austerity" populist parties (the Spanish Podemos and the Italian Five Star Movement [M5S]) and the main union organizations. The article does so by assessing different possible—and not necessarily mutually exclusive—motivations behind the harsh critiques that such parties addressed to "mainstream" unions. In particular, the article assesses if these parties did politicise the *insider-outsider divide* (Rueda, 2007; Hausermann and Schwander, 2010) typical of Mediterranean welfare regimes (Ferrera, 1996), through a discourse attacking the unions' over-protection of labour market *insiders*, in detriment of the interests of the *outsiders*. Alternatively, anti-austerity populist parties could have emphasized unions' supposed loss of autonomy and combativeness provoked by their long-lasting linkages to historical left-of-centre parties that backed "market-friendly" labour reforms, in detriment of the interests of *both* labour market insiders and outsiders. Other possible critiques, related to unions' loss of autonomy but also with anti-establishment discourses that typically characterize anti-austerity populist parties, could refer to unions" excessive financial dependence on public resources, and the formation of a sort of "union oligopoly" affecting the quality of democracy of the labour representational system.

Each of these sets of arguments lies on different ideological and normative tenets and implies different political and policy positions that such "inclusionary" populist parties could hold in labour market and welfare issues. If such new populist parties intended to politicize the *insider-outsider* divide in highly dualized societies and to look at labour market *outsiders* (defined as unemployed and precarious workers) as their potential *classes gardées*, then we should expect them to push for a "recalibration" (Picot and Tassinari, 2014) of the Southern welfare regime towards less segmented directions, *also by targeting the supposed insiders' over-protection*. If critiques linked to the "demobilising" function of the unions prevailed, these parties would merely advance *leftist* attacks against forms of "competitive corporatism" (Rhodes, 2000)

detrimental to the interests of the working-class. In this case, the unions could be forced by such populist parties to assume more radical stances to avoid further loss of legitimacy. Finally, if "anti-caste" arguments prevailed, such populist challengers could deny any legitimacy to the political role of the unions, thus presenting themselves as the "true" political representative of the working-class and/or pushing for alternative forms of labour organizations bypassing the existing union system.

This is the reason for investigating the political and meta-political discourses (we could also define them as "party cultures") of newly born Southern European "inclusionary" populist parties. The article consequently relies on 41 in-depth interviews with Podemos' and Five Star Movement's representatives at the regional and national levels, and with high officials of different peak union confederations. The representatives of the parties come from different regions (seven *Comunidades Autónomas* and eleven *Regioni*) and mostly belong to either Legislative Commissions (at the national and regional levels) on labour and welfare issues or hold important charges within the party. The party manifestos elaborated by the parties under investigation in view of Italian 2013 and 2018 and Spanish 2015 national elections were also consulted. The research also relies on survey data (from the Italian Elections Studies—ITANES—and from the *Centro de Investigación Sociológica*—CIS—) to assess how both "insider" and "outsider" *voters* and unionised workers responded to the first appearance of such anti-austerity populist parties in the electoral arenas.

Podemos and the M5S offer a good possibility for a comparative research over these topics. They have been widely categorised as "inclusionary" populist parties (Della Porta *et al.* 2017; Sola and Rendueles, 2017; Caiani and Graziano, 2019), which emerged in the aftermath of the Great Recession, and were able to attract vast segments of the leftist electorates (although M5S' constituency—as well as its programmatic platform—is much more mixed, in terms of ideology, than Podemos' (Sola and Rendueles, 2017; Tronconi, 2015). Both have immediately achieved significant electoral results (the M5S achieved 26% of the votes in the 2013 legislative elections and 32% in the 2018 legislative elections, while Podemos in the 2015 and 2016 elections rounded 20%). Both parties were leading the opposition to the national governments when the fieldwork was carried on (from September 2016 to November 2017).

The exact definition of the concept of populism is highly disputed (for a review, see Padoan, 2017). However, the parties present all the central features of the most accepted definitions of "populism" (Della Porta *et al.*, 2017; Boscán *et al.*, 2019). They rely on an antagonistic and polarizing political discourse, attacking the *political caste* and the *economic elites* that brought "The

people" to the social disaster. Both parties refuse (or initially refused, in the case of Podemos) to position themselves in the left-right axis, which they consider functional to the reproduction of the old system and of its political referents, accused of being involved in consociational and corrupted practices.

Apart from the electoral success of newly-born inclusionary populist parties, Italy and Spain also share several commonalities in terms of their union system, thus making them well-suit for comparative researches over these topics. In both cases, organized labour is historically fragmented, even at the peak level. The major peak unions were once characterised by tight links with specific parties (the *Unión General del Trabajo* [UGT] and the *Unione Italiano del Lavoro* [UIL] with the Socialists, *Comisiones Obreras* [CC. OO] and the *Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro* [CGIL] with the Communists, the *Confederazione Italiana Sociale del Lavoro* [CISL] with the Christian-Democrats). However, ideological barriers became blurred, and inter-organizational contrasts are often due to organizational resilience. Said this, the CGIL is still clearly more leftist than CISL and UIL, while the UGT is still quite close to the PSOE. Union density in Italy (33 %) is much higher than in Spain (17 %); however, more than half of the Italian union members are pensioners, while the true source of legitimacy of the Spanish unions does not come from individual affiliations, but from workplace elections (whose turnout is roughly 70 %) of the *comités de empresa*. CGIL (the Italian biggest union), CISL and UIL roughly account for 80 % of the total union membership, and the UGT and CC. OO. share a similar % (each of them around 35 %) of *delegados en los comités de empresa*. Therefore, in both countries, the main unions achieved a dominant position, in detriment of sectorial or radical grassroots unions, such as the Italian *Unione Sindacale di Base* (USB) or the Spanish *Confederación General del Trabajo* (CGT).

The article is organised as follows. The second section discusses the main distinctive features of Mediterranean welfare regimes and labour markets, as well as the forms historically assumed by party-union relationships in Southern Europe. The third section advances some hypotheses over the arguments that Podemos and the M5S are expected to brand to criticize "mainstream" labour organizations, as well as over their ability to be electorally successful amongst unionized workers and labour market outsiders. Such hypotheses, which will be tested in the fourth, fifth and sixth sections, are developed on the basis of the quite different ideological roots of Podemos and the M5S. Section 4 and 5 relies on qualitative data from in-depth interviews with party and union officials; at the end of each section, to provide an additional test for the eventual politicization of the insider-outsider divide by Podemos and the M5S, we briefly focus on some concrete policy proposals that both parties forcefully advanced to strengthen social protection for labour market

outsiders. Section 6 looks at post-electoral survey data to explore the sociological composition of the electorates of Podemos and the M5S at the time of their first participation to national elections, to assess the extent to which they were able to attract unionized workers and labour market outsiders. Some concluding remarks close the article.

II. PARTY-UNION RELATIONSHIPS AND THE EMERGENCE OF INCLUSIONARY POPULISMS IN SOUTHERN EUROPE

The concept of "party-union relationship" is a complex and multidimensional one, because such relationship can assume different forms. Variations of the kind and tightness of party-union relationships across time and countries have been also analyzed (Thomas, 2001; Allern and Bale, 2017). As for the *kind* of relationship, different authors have stressed, among others: membership and leadership overlapping (Duverger, 1972; Thomas, 2001; Tsakatika and Lisi, 2013); ideological affinity (Gillespie, 1990; Thomas, 2001); mutual strategic relationship—competition, cooperation, cooptation… (Verge, 2012; Otjes and Rasmussen, 2015)—; power balance between parties and unions ("party" or "union" control of the other actor: Kitschelt, 1996; Morlino, 1998). As for the *tightness* of such relationships, scholars generally agree on both the *decline* and the *survival* of important (left-of-center) party-union linkages during the last three decades, as well as on the relevance of historical legacies to have a comprehensive understanding of the present situation.

For instance, in Nordic countries, or in the archetypical case of the British Labour Party, the consolidation of "externally legitimated" (Panebianco, 1988) social-democratic parties (i.e., parties that were born as "electoral arms" of the unions) made such links particularly tight. In other countries such as the US, "mainstream" left-of-center parties and unions, as well as other interest groups, remained much more autonomous and pluralistic relationships became the norm. In Mediterranean Europe, it is difficult to identify a single pattern. In Italy, France and Portugal, ideological fragmentation at both partisan and union levels provoked, for a long time, the prevalence of forms of partisan control over (fragmented) peak unions, although in Italy and France, but not in Portugal, we observed, since the early nineties, a more balanced and pluralistic relationship (Morlino, 1998; Parsons, 2017; Mattina and Carreri, 2017). In Spain, where the "mass-party" phase was entirely skipped for historical reasons (Van Biezen, 2003), and where ideological fragmentation within the Left was equally evident (Watson, 2015), party-unions relationships remained tight, although both kinds of players increasingly defended their autonomy (Gillespie, 1990; Hamann, 2001). Greece is the only

Mediterranean country where ideological divisions and strong partisan control coexisted with the presence of a single peak union confederation (Kretsos and Vogiatzoglou, 2015).

More generally, even in countries characterized by strong party-union linkages, well-known structural changes (such as the end of the Fordist era, the decline of union density, and the dominance of free market economy and ideology) put in peril the basis for the "double bargain" between parties and unions: the "economic bargain" that "concerns issues of employment and wage restraints", and a "political bargain" that "links voting behavior and protective legislation" (Howell, 1992). Nevertheless, the links between the main left-of-center parties and the unions were far from disappearing in advanced economies (Allern and Bale, 2017), and Italy and Spain were not exceptions (Constantelos, 2001; Hamann, 2001; Mattina and Carreri, 2017). In Italy and Spain, despite their demise of Keynesian Social Democracy, left-of-center "mainstream" parties (namely, the PSOE and the PD) remained inescapable allies for the unions to assure to the latter their participation in policy-making process through "social dialogue" or "concertation" (Molina and Rhodes, 2008). The unions kept defending such policy-making practices as a source of "institutional power" (Pérez *et al.*, 2016; Mattina and Carreri, 2017; Rigby and García Calavia, 2018), although such negotiations were often conducive (and even more so since the beginning of the Great Recession: Gago, 2014; Pérez *et al.*, 2016) to "least-worst" outcomes, due to harder political (i.e., the reduced room of manoeuvre due to supranational constraints) and economic conditions (Bernaciak *et al.*, 2014). On the other side, despite the decline in union density due to changes in the productive system and to the increase of job precariousness, left-of-center "mainstream" parties did not break with the unions, which still fulfilled the functions of mobilizing "core-voters" (Allern and Bale, 2017) and of legitimating reforms pointing at labor market flexibility, in exchange of enduring protections of labor market *insiders* (Rueda, 2007; Bernaciak *et al.*, 2014; Baccaro, 2009).

Such considerations led Rueda (2007) to argue that the core-constituency of Social Democratic parties in Southern Europe *and* the major beneficiaries of Mediterranean welfare regimes are *not* the working class *in its entirety*. Instead, it is represented by the *insiders*, who took advantage of strong permanent employment protection, contributory pension schemes and unemployment insurance systems, in partial detriment of the *outsiders*, composed by unemployed and fixed-term workers, often young people and women, who find high barriers to enter the "labour-market fortress" and to accede to (weak) social assistance schemes. According to this argument, the unions, as well as left-of-centre governments, shared strong responsibilities for welfare regime dualization, because both kinds of players devoted much more efforts in

defending the protection of the insiders than the interests of the outsiders, highly underrepresented amongst their membership and electorate. In fact, social assistance schemes and anti-poverty programs are notoriously underdeveloped in Southern Europe (Ferrera, 2005), and both Podemos and (particularly) the M5S made of the introduction and/or the extension of non-contributory programs for poverty relief one of their "flagships" in welfare issues. According to Lynch (2006), the "workerist ideology" of the Italian unions, and the fear of clientelistic misuses, have made the unions quite suspicious towards social assistance schemes. In Spain, although the introduction of safety-net social policies at the regional level convinced some authors to write about a "Nordic path" taken by the Spanish welfare regime (Moreno, 2008), other authors (Bentolila *et al.*, 2011) criticise this view, arguing that the Spanish labour market is still highly dual, with the highest temporary employment rate in Europe.

The Great Recession potentially offered the opportunity (Rueda, 2012) for a politicization of the insider-outsider divide, as the size of the latter category dramatically increased throughout the Southern European region. In 2013, according to OECD data, in all these countries, as well as in Ireland, unemployment rate was well above 10 % (12 % in Italy, 16 % in Portugal, over 25 % in Spain and Greece). Youth unemployment rate was higher than 35 % in every Southern European country (higher than 55 % in Spain and Greece), while lower than 27 % in the rest of OECD Western European countries. Against the tendency of the rest of Western economies, temporary employment rate *decreased* or remained stable in Southern Europe, mainly due to non-renewals of fixed-term contracts (Pérez, 2014), which is an easier way to dismiss in times of crisis, particularly in Southern Europe, where, on average, permanent employment protection was (and still is) higher than in the rest of advanced economies.

Such "over-protection", however, furnished the ideological motivation (Picot and Tassinari 2014) for implementing labour market reforms diminishing *also* permanent employment protection in the region, particularly since the beginning of the Great Recession (see Table 1). Vast popular mobilizations against austerity measures (coped with labour market reforms) emerged throughout Southern Europe during the peak of economic crisis. The main union organizations played an important role in the protests (Ancelovici, 2015); nevertheless, they were neither the only anti-austerity actor, nor the *major* one (Sánchez Mosquera, 2017). Sometimes they even became the *target* of the popular protests: their legitimacy as credible contentious actors declined, while new movements emerged, displaying much more mobilising capacity and sometimes attracting widespread and cross class support through typically "populist" frames (Della Porta, 2015; Pérez *et al.*, 2016).

Table 1. *OECD Regular Employment Protection Index in sixteen Western Countries (1992, 2008 and 2013 years)*

Permanent Employment Protection Index	**1992**	**2008**	**2013**
Portugal	4,58	4,42	3,18
Spain	3,55	2,36	2,05
Netherlands	3,02	2,88	2,82
Greece	2,80	2,80	2,12
Sweden	2,80	2,61	2,61
Italy	2,76	2,76	2,68
Austria	2,75	2,37	2,37
Germany	2,58	2,68	2,68
Finland	2,45	2,17	2,17
France	2,34	2,47	2,38
Norway	2,33	2,33	2,33
Denmark	2,18	2,13	2,20
Belgium	1,85	1,89	1,89
Ireland	1,44	1,27	1,40
United Kingdom	1,10	1,26	1,10
Luxembourg	NA	2,25	2,25
Northern Europe	2,44	2,31	2,33
Continental Europe	2,51	2,42	2,40
Anglo-Saxon Europe	1,27	1,27	1,25
Southern Europe	3,42	3,08	2,51

Source: OECD website (author's elaboration).

At the electoral level, we witnessed the emergence of new "inclusionary" (Mudde and Rovira, 2013) populist political parties such as Podemos in Spain and the Five Star Movement (M5S) in Italy. In Greece, Syriza dramatically increased its electoral support since 2012, and governed the country from January 2015 to the very recent 2019 elections. In Portugal, the two main far-left parties achieved important electoral results and are currently supporting the Socialist government. Apart from the Portuguese exception,

the traditional social-democratic parties are (or have been) in trouble. The Greek PASOK has almost disappeared, and the Spanish PSOE and (in particular) the Italian PD are far from being close to their maximum levels of electoral consensus. In contrast to well-established social-democratic parties, new challengers such as Podemos and the M5S did not enjoy any previous links to the unions: analysing the relationships between such parties and the labour movement is precisely the topic of this article, starting from some hypotheses that will be advanced in the next section.

III. HYPOTHESES

To understand how such populist challengers intend their relationship with the labour organizations, this research starts from some hypotheses that pay attention to the ideological roots of these parties. Both Podemos and the M5S made use, since their inception, of a discourse of "democratic regeneration", attacking the *caste* (understood both in political and economic terms) for having deprived "the People" of their sovereignty and for serving particularistic interests (Padoan, 2017). However, such concepts are "empty signifiers" (Laclau, 2005) that must be at a certain time be filled with more precise contents. For instance, labour market insiders can be either included, if not within the "castes", within "over-protected" sectors enjoying rent-seeking positions in detriment of the outsiders, or, alternatively, as part of "the People" penalised by labour market reforms under austerity. In both cases, "mainstream" unions can become the target of harsh critiques, albeit for quite different reasons.

The first section of this article anticipated three broad kinds of critiques that can be expected from "inclusionary" populist parties against "mainstream" unions. First, unions can be targeted for exclusively representing labour market insiders in detriment of the interests of the outsiders: in times of scarce resources, the divide between insiders and outsiders would be read as a zero-sum game which insofar penalised the latter. Such prognosis would lead to push for a recalibration of segmented welfare regimes to reduce dualization, by attacking insiders" "privileges", promoting "exit and entry flexibility" in the labour market and strengthening non-contributory assistance schemes and anti-poverty programs. Second, unions can be attacked for their lack of combativeness against *leftist* governments advancing market-friendly measures reducing permanent employment protection and favouring job precariousness, in exchange of unions' access to the polity domain through enduring party-union linkages and of some "moderation" in market-friendly reforms. Third, and partially related to the first and (particularly) the second

sets of potential critiques, populist parties can point at the "cartelization" (Katz and Mair, 1995) of "mainstream" unions, which became increasingly bureaucratised actors, both dependent from the access to public resources and enjoying a dominant position preventing new actors from challenging their dominancy. The latter set of critiques would be more related to democratic ossification than to the kinds of interests promoted (or disregarded) by the unions.

We hypothesize that Podemos' cadres and militants do not adopt the "recalibration" argument; instead, we expect that they criticize the unions for their "conciliatory" stances towards left-of-centre governments, both before and during the Great Recession—the so-called "boxing and dancing" strategy (Pérez *et al.*, 2016; Sánchez Mosquera, 2017)—. Podemos can be easily categorised as a "left-wing populist party" (Sola and Rendueles, 2017; Della Porta *et al.*, 2017), within the broad family of the European Radical Left (see March, 2017). Party ideology is clearly inspired by Laclau's progressive populist theory (Laclau, 2005; Errejón and Mouffe, 2015). Podemos' rise cannot be understood without considering the protest-cycle begun with the *Indignados* (or *15-M*) movement and sustained by several social movements, such as the *Mareas* ("Tides"), against the cuts in social spending, and the *PAHs* ("Platform of the Victims of Bank Evictions")[1]. Podemos did not pretend to be "the party of the *Indignados* or of the social movements": however, its explicit goal was to "assault the institutions" and to relaunch the main claims emerged by the Spanish anti-austerity protest-cycle. The own Podemos' militants and cadres often come from (left oriented) social movement activism, even predating the 15-M (the interviewees collected largely confirm this claim). We thus expect, from Podemos, "typically leftist" critiques towards the unions, targeted for their "betrayal" of the popular sectors for the sake of maintaining good relationship with their party referents. In sum, we expect that, while pointing at the lack of socio-political representation suffered by precarious and unemployed workers, Podemos' interviewees do not agree with the normative tenets of the literature on labour market dualization and with the necessity of implementing "flex-security" models. The first and the third sets of anti-union critiques thus should prevail.

In contrast to Podemos, M5S' rise was *parallel* to the "scattered" (Zamponi and Fernández, 2016) anti-austerity movement in Italy, in which the unions (particularly the CGIL and the radical unions) played an important role, at least until 2011, when Berlusconi's government resigned and unions' contentiousness *decreased* both in number and intensity (Andretta, 2017).

[1] For an account of the Spanish anti-austerity protest cycle, see Portos (2016).

M5S' origins must be traced in the political blog of Beppe Grillo, a well-known comedian who inspired the creation, in 2005, of autonomous local groups through the *Meet Up* on-line platform. The *Meet Ups* initially were internet-based local forums of discussion among the followers of Grillo's blog, mainly concerning environmental and anti-corruption issues. The *Meet Ups* gradually switched to the electoral arena, at the municipal level. Then, in 2009, Grillo—together with the web-marketing entrepreneur Gianroberto Casaleggio—created a national party, the Five Star Movement (M5S), drawing its name from the five "guiding lights" of the Movement: *public water, environment, Internet connectivity, development and transport*.

The M5S has a very loose organization. At the local level, we find the *Meet Ups*, whose members do not have any formal role within the party: party representatives in public institutions are the only entitled to speak in behalf of the M5S, which lacks any formal middle-level structure. The process of candidate selection is nearly entirely organized through on-line voting: in M5S' ideology, the "Web" should act as a perfect interest aggregation system, through supposedly horizontal deliberative processes among on-line activists. Such organizational arrangements and practices have *de facto* led to plebiscitarian results (Anselmi and De Nardis, 2018). Although the M5S for a long time self-declares *leaderless* and led by "the own members" through on-line voting, Beppe Grillo—who is the legal owner of the party's name and brand—recently reaffirmed his role of *guarantor* of the Movement, while the current *political leader* of the party is Luigi Di Maio, elected by the members in September 2017.

Such "genetic model", as well as the salvific role that "the Web" plays in party ideology, convinced some scholars to label the M5S as a "web-populist" party (Anselmi and De Nardis, 2018). As such, the M5S traditionally advanced strong critiques against representative democracy, instead calling for the implementation of direct democratic tools to avoid any forms of intermediation between the "will of the People" and state institutions. M5S' discourse lends itself to appeal to "unheard People", to constituencies lacking organizations to represent their interests within the polity domain. Consequently, it seems reasonable to expect that M5S' interviewees are more likely to politicize the "divide" between labour market insiders and outsiders by claiming to represent the latter, even pointing at the "over-protection" of the former (our "second sets" of potential critiques that we recalled above).

In sum, from Podemos and the M5S we expect different stances, which we could label "leftist" and "outsiderist", respectively, over welfare and labour market issues. We also expect from *both* parties, because of their anti-establishment and typically populist discourse, harsh attacks against the unions for their enduring links with their "mainstream" competitors and for their

"cartelization", which supposedly prevents other social actors from breaking unions' oligopoly. As for the party electorates that such populist newcomers were able to attract in their first national elections, we consequently expect an over-representation of the *outsiders* amongst M5S' voters, while we hypothesize that Podemos remained much more skewed towards ideologized leftist voters, who are also more likely to be unionised.

IV. PODEMOS AND THE UNIONS

1. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PODEMOS AND THE UNION MOVEMENT: FROM SUSPICION TO COLLABORATION

According to Portos (2016), the relationships between Spanish anti-austerity movements and the unions were quite difficult, particularly at the beginning of the protest-cycle, although the unions contributed to its sustainability over time, as recognized by some interviewees (ES3; ES19). However, several Podemos' interviewees emphasize the poor mobilising capacity by the unions (ES9; ES18), while union leaders 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 listened to them and ignored us" (ES5). According to Ermengol Gassiot (CGT Catalunya's General Secretary), "many radical unions tried to 'own' the movement. Not so much the UGT and CC. OO., because they were clearly extraneous to the 15-M".

According to Eduardo Gutiérrez, a Podemos' cadre with a long experience as consultant for CC. OO., "at the beginning, the analyses made by CC. OO.'s leadership were definitely bad…they argued that the Indignados were an anti-unionist movement: some insane people who had suffered from delirium for nine weeks […]". The 15-M was evidently a movement that did not erupt from the workplaces. In Gassiot's opinion, "the 15-M was a citizens" movement, centred on demands for political participation. […]. To me, Podemos is the expression of those movements that opted for the institutional strategy, and Podemos' elite does not come from the workplaces. Once they entered the institutions, they understood that it was necessary to say something about the unions". Bruno Estrada (Podemos' consultant in economic issues and CC. OO's Deputy General Secretary) explains that

> at the beginning, 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 meetings, we decided to join in demonstrations that we did not convoke.

In fact, several interviewees recognise the contribution of CC. OO. to the following *Mareas* (ES9, ES20), while a member of UGT's Catalonian Secretariat (ES5) 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: "Many demonstrators even prohibited us to bring our banners and flags. We organised the event and we had to renounce to bring our flags! That was irrational" (ES16).

The big unions were perceived (and, in fact, they perceived themselves: ES3, ES5; ES16) as part of the *1978 regime*, of those elites that led the transition to democracy and that "do not represent us", as the famous 15-M's slogan said. *Indignados'* discourse—abundantly used by Podemos—fully included UGT and CC. OO.'s *elites* in the *Casta* that allegedly dominates Spain. Several interviewees draw the parallel between the *bipartidismo* (the "PPSOE") and the *bisindicalismo*. Both UGT and CC.OO are accused of "having signed indecent pacts with the employers and the government" (ES22); receiving public subsidies that supposedly 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 a "syndicalism of service" (*sindicalismo de servicios*), mostly involved in activities such as "organising the holidays of the affiliated workers" (ES19). Other interviewees stressed the differences between the "big unions" and small radical unions that are characterised by more contentious repertoires. Unions are also accused of having been involved in patronage practices in the public sector (ES6) or of their "mild" opposition against austerity measures implemented by the last Zapatero's 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 do often stress 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) argues 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, without receiving anything ['sin cobrar un duro']". The leader of Podemos' Circle in L"Hospitalet de Llobregat 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 syndicalism will disappear in 15 years" (ES11). A Podemos' cadre from Asturias states 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 reports that "many people from CC. OO. pushed 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 sign an 'alliance' with an already existing organization of self-employed workers. Nothing more than that".

At the same time, the interviewees clearly distinguish between unions' elites (*las cúpulas*) and the *delegados* at the lower levels, who are more positively evaluated. They stress the presence of many union officials from both radical and "mainstream" unions within Podemos' militancy. 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 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.

At the regional level, where Podemos' representatives seem to hold more radical views, the critiques towards the *bisindicalismo* are stronger (ES8; ES22). Both CC. OO. and UGT are considered as "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: "Antiunionist discourses are extremely dangerous, because the union play an important social role" (ES20); "we do not look for organic relationships with the unions, as the PSOE does […]. However, the unions should have more power. […] we do not want to substitute the unions" (ES21)[2].

[2] 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 clarify that it did not stem from an 'official' partisan decision. Instead, it was an autonomous enterprise by some Podemos' activists.

A union leader from CC. OO. has compared the different stances towards the unions by representatives from Podemos and from Ganemos Madrid (a local platform, mainly composed by social movements' activists [ES15], supporting the mayor Manuela Carmena):

> 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, and that we should not express our opinion on political issues (ES16).

Instead, a UGT's union leader admits that "the relationship is bad, mainly because of their attacks. […] Sometimes they proved to be populist in the worst sense of the term […]" (ES5). Gassiot (CGT) argues 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 latter to assume a more "combative" stance (*por fin se pusieron las pilas*). Several interviewees (ES3, ES20) has noticed that even the UGT is moving to the left (and thus it deserves a better consideration), after the victory of the leftist candidate in the 2016 elections for the General Secretariat.

2. THE DEBATE OVER PRO-OUTSIDER SOCIAL POLICIES

Both Podemos and the peak union confederations agree on the proposal of a minimum *household* income. According to Estrada (CC.OO), "our position is less ideologized than the position of the Italian unions. […] We are aware of the social emergency motivating such a measure". However, 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". According to Julen Bollain, a Basque Podemos' representative and a prominent scholar on the topic, "the big unions are suspicious towards the basic income, because the workers would have too much power. […] When a public talk is organized about the *renta básica*, the big unions refuse to intervene".

Nevertheless, Bollain also admits that even Podemos' position is ambiguous: "Although the renta básica was the most voted proposals by Podemos' militants [during the collective draft of the party manifesto for the 2015 elections], the party presented it in a reduced form", because it 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 that measure, because it was costless. Now, we are in the institutions, we need to be responsible and attentive to not overpromise" (ES20); "in the Basque Country, the people are already getting used with this idea, thus the debate is more advanced" (ES12).

V. THE M5S AND THE UNIONS

1. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE M5S AND THE UNION MOVEMENT: THE STRUGGLE AGAINST INTERMEDIATION

Several considerations about the supposed over-protection of some *insider* sectors were common in 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). Some days 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 [and also by] excluded people, […] those earning insufficient pensions, or small entrepreneurs exploited by a "tax regime". The second bloc is made by people defending the status quo, people who were not affected by the crisis, most of the civil servants, people earning pensions higher than 5,000 euros per month, tax-evaders, people living thanks to politics, thanks to public companies. The first bloc wants to change; the second one prefers continuity ("Italians never vote by chance", my translation[3]).

M5S' representatives add many nuances to such analysis, though. Like Podemos' (ES1, ES2, ES21), M5S' interviewees do not explain their poor electoral results among pensioners by mentioning the divide between "protected" and "unprotected people". Instead, they point at the pro-*status quo*

[3] http://www.beppegrillo.it/2013/02/gli_italiani_non_votano_mai_a_caso.html.

bias of the mass media: "We are poorly heard by those people that reached the pension eligibility age before the Internet era" (IT9; in a similar vein, IT10). Nor they forcefully argue (with some exceptions, though: see IT8, below) that there are some "over-protected sectors" affecting the chances of the outsiders to enter the "labour-market fortress". As in the case of Podemos, most critiques against the three main union confederations (the *Triplice*: IT10) concern their supposed ancillary role towards some partisan referents, thus affecting unions' combativeness against "neoliberal" market reforms: "I did not see any real unions" resistance when Monti's and Renzi's governments facilitated workers" dismissals" (IT5).

More precisely, M5S' interviewees tend to complain about unions' "politicization" (IT5; IT4; IT6), which means both "partisanization" *and ideologization*. While Podemos' militants push for a *classist and ideological* union movement, M5S' activists 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 post-industrial 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 that talk like Renzi and say that they are against the reddito di cittadinanza [a conditional cash transfer for poverty relief] because they prefer to work… 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 some independent unions, 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 them useless. […] Moreover, this would not be true, because the unions 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)

M5S' interviewees still recognize that there have been some "fruitful" party-union collaborations to solve local crises in the workplaces (IT6): "we are the only interlocutors of the unions, even if they would prefer to speak with other actors" (IT7). M5S' representatives often recur to unions' consultancy to draft legislative bills (IT9; IT10), without preferring any particular

union (IT8; IT9). The leader of the NIDIL (CGIL's branch for precarious workers) Claudio Treves reports that "at the local level, some examples of dialogue between us and the M5S do exist, although when, for instance, the CGIL illustrated our Universal Chart of the Workers' Rights, from the M5S we received many questions but there was not any further dialogue".

As anticipated above, it is the own M5S' political culture that poses serious challenges for a normalization of party-union relationships. A central role within M5S' "post-ideology" is played by the Web, which would act as a "collective intelligence" leading to the best elaboration of the party program, to which M5S' representatives must fully adhere (IT5; IT6; IT11; IT12). The M5S pretends to be "*ab-solutus*" (IT13): free from any kind of influence of "particularistic" interest groups. M5S' 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 do consider themselves as "great listeners of the demands coming from the civil society" (IT7; in this sense also IT14, IT5, IT12, IT13). 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). The M5S, in sum, pretends to be the only legitimated structure of political aggregation and intermediation, while dismissing every other structure as "ideological" or "partisan" (and, sometimes, "particularistic").

M5S' representatives often show a clear preference towards "smaller" unions (either grassroots or sectorial ones), which are thought to be truly committed to the "interests of the workers", more "independent" (IT5) and enjoying less "*privileges*" (IT18) than the *Triplice.* Grassroots unions are sometimes considered "*the M5S of the labour movement*" (IT18), although they are criticised for their radicalism in terms of ideology and repertoires of protest (IT8). In contrast, CGIL, CISL and UIL are *invariably* depicted as bureaucratic organizations that "instigate the workers for political reasons" and "obey to some political parties" (IT5; see also Biorcio, 2016). This preference for "smaller" unions matches with a sort of mythologizing of the small producers, in contraposition with the "big capital". As Caruso (2016) argues, the M5S rejects the conflict between capital and labour: instead, there is the idealization of a community formed by small entrepreneurs and workers. This community must be protected and stimulated by the state, following the "general interest" and pushing for a new, ecologically sustainable economy.

M5S' proposals on labour issues for the 2018 general elections reflect the criticisms against the *Triplice*. The M5S advocates for a shop-floor unionism

formed by "non-career unionists", thus limiting (or eliminating) the "bureaucratic" structures of socio-political representation of the working-class through the implementation of "participatory tools". At the centre of the party proposals there were the "struggle against atypical contracts through higher taxation of the employers using such contracts; the institution of a 'flex-security' model through the reddito di cittadinanza; my own proposal for working time flexibility" (IT10). The manifesto also mentioned: the admission of all the union organizations to the workplace elections (and not just the "most representative" ones, as it currently occurs); the necessity of "ending with career-officials occupying seats in the BODs" to reduce "union officials" privileges"; the "election of workers" speakers to discuss company strategies". The M5S also backed the reduction of working time to less than 40 hours per week, and the introduction of an "intergenerational relay" to reduce youth unemployment rate, by favouring the early retirement of the workers close to pension eligibility age[4].

Some of these proposals reflect M5S' strong rejection of delegative democracy: the best way for advancing the interests of the citizens (and of the workers) should be the promotion of 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, as the arguments for supporting the so-called *workers' buy-out* (i.e. the acquisition, by the workers, of dismissed factories, through cooperatives financed by the workers" severance payments) testify:

> The Triplice does not appreciate these experiences, they scare the citizens, the workers, they told them that they were investing their savings in a risky operation. […] this occurs because such a model, in which the workers become managers, puts in peril any structure of intermediation between the workers and the employers. The unions oppose it because their role would be at risk (IT10).

2. THE DEBATE OVER PRO-OUTSIDER SOCIAL POLICIES

Since 2009, the M5S included in its manifesto the proposal of a *reddito di cittadinanza* (a non-contributory—albeit conditioned—cash transfer for families below the poverty line), which became the "first point of M5S' manifesto" in 2013: a version of it was approved by the M5S-League's current government in 2018. Although this proposal was not entirely new, the ability of the M5S to "own" this issue—and its merit for having made it salient—is

[4] http://bit.ly/2NBUSRG.

undeniable. The *reddito di cittadinanza* is thought to *substitute* the existing social assistance schemes, such as the *pensioni minime*, the *assegni sociali* and the unemployment insurance schemes. Thus, it represents a clear attempt of "recalibrating" the Italian welfare regime towards less segmented directions.

Italian unions were quite skeptical about M5S' proposals. According to Treves (my interview), "the very proposal for a reddito di cittadinanza, […] 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".

Here, the opinion of Vittorio Agnoletto, the well-known former speaker of the Italian Social Forum, is illuminating:

> That issue was advanced by the Global Justice Movement [GJM], but we found a strong opposition from the Left, from the CGIL, 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. They relied on a workerist ideology. The M5S came without any ideological elaboration and the reddito di cittadinanza became its flagship. […] 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 tried to create some agencies to represent those sectors [such as the NIDIL][5], but they did never succeed to do that, not even now[6]. […] There was a period when the M5S positioned itself as the representative of those sectors, opposed to "systemic powers" and to "over-protected workers", who are PD voters guaranteed by corrupted unions. Later, Grillo stopped doing these claims, because when you reach 30 % of votes, you cannot afford to exclude some sectors.

When asked about the *reddito di cittadinanza*, M5S' politicians underline that it is *not* a "*welfarist*" measure (IT3; IT4; IT5; IT6; IT7; IT8), because it includes several conditionalities (such as the obligation to accept the jobs proposed, or the enrolment in public social works). Instead, they consider it an *economic manoeuvre* that would foster internal demand, thus benefitting the SMEs (IT7) and dignifying citizens' lives (IT5), or a social security cushion that supposedly help the full transition towards the *Industry 4.0* (IT8). Other interviewees stress that the implementation of the *reddito di cittadinanza* should be accompanied by the strengthening of public employment

[5] For an overview of the organizational attempts by European unions to expand their membership towards the outsiders, see Gumbrell-McCormick (2011).

[6] In this sense, see also Choi and Mattoni (2010).

agencies (IT4)—a goal shared with the unions (IT1)—and of active labour market policies to develop those skills effectively scarce in the labour market (IT3; IT4).

The opinions of M5S' interviewees diverge 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, other interviewees argue: "The unions are not enthusiast with the *reddito di cittadinanza*, they consider it as a right to laze" (IT10); "they fear to become redundant" (IT5); "I cannot tell you any name of a prominent union leader having backed our proposal" (IT9).

VI. THE COMPOSITION OF PODEMOS' AND M5S' ELECTORATES ACCORDING TO THE INSIDER-OUTSIDER DIVIDE

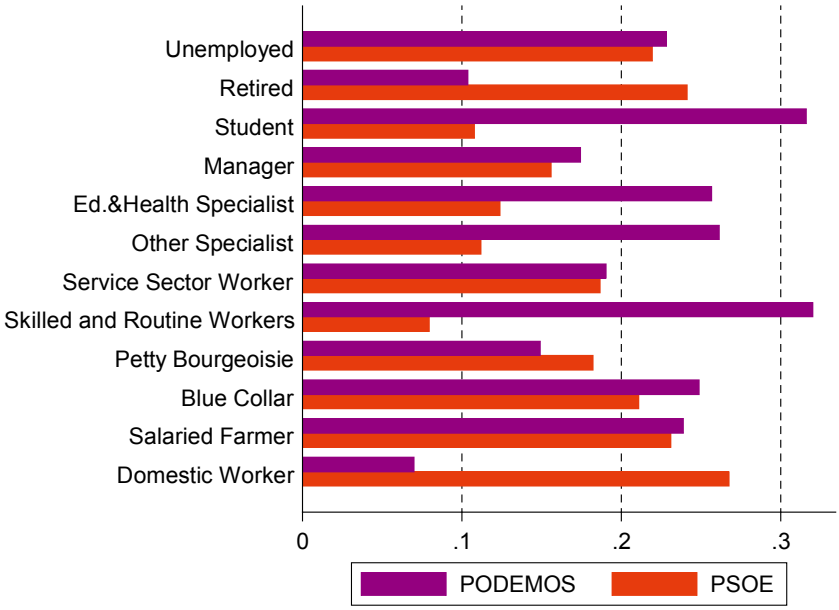
1. PODEMOS' ELECTORATE AND THE INSIDER-OUTSIDER DIVIDE

Fernández-Albertos (2015), using data from several 2014-15 CIS Barometers, found that Podemos was increasingly attracting the "losers" of the economic crisis. Instead, our analysis, relying on data from the 2015 CIS post-electoral survey, do not find any particular skewness of Podemos' electorate towards neither *popular* nor *outsider* sectors.

Podemos' electorate in 2015 was younger and with higher education than average. Podemos and the PSOE shared approximately the same voting % in the sample (19 % versus 20 %), but the composition of their electorate was quite different, as Figure 1 shows. Unemployed workers (forming 19 % of the sample) were not particularly overrepresented amongst the electorates of Podemos or of the PSOE. Instead, salaried white collars with middle to higher education disproportionately voted for Podemos, while retired and unpaid domestic workers overwhelmingly opted for the PSOE. This is fully in line with the analysis by Boscán *et al.* (2019), who found that Spanish skilled salary workers displayed higher than average levels of "populist attitudes".

Nor Podemos has been particularly able to attract "leftist outsiders", i.e. unemployed and fixed-term workers having voted for leftist parties in the 2011 elections. 36 % of unemployed workers that voted for a leftist party in 2011 switched their vote to Podemos in 2015, quite a reduced % if compared with 45 % of "leftist" skilled and routine workers and with 51 % of "leftist Other Specialists" (engineers, technical officers, architects, lawyers…). On the other hand, Podemos was, by far, the most voted party by unionised workers: 37 % of them casted their vote for Podemos, 13 points above the PSOE and 29 points above IU. However, this does not imply that Podemos'

Figure 1. *Voting % of Podemos and PSOE according to Job Status*



Source: CIS Survey 3126 (author's elaboration).

voters display higher trust towards unions. According to the CIS 2015 April Barometer[7], the average trust in unions (expressed in a 1-10 scale) scored 2.72 amongst Podemos' voters, slightly above the total average, but below the average score assigned by PSOE's and IU's voters (2.89 and 3.35).

Podemos was overrepresented among those workers having experienced wage freezing (25 %), among those voters living in households where at least one member lost her job (24 %) and among workers with open-ended contracts fearing to lose their jobs in the next twelve months (32 %). As Table 2 shows, Podemos' voters in 2015, on average, lived in wealthier families but tended to underestimate their position in the social ladder. These data confirm Sola and Rendueles' hypothesis (2017) that the vote for Podemos was moved either by a crisis of expectations or by a demand for social protection. Particularly the first factor could well be associated with the strong electoral gains of Podemos amongst the youth, although other causes—related with Podemos' political style and the sociological profile of its public figures—should be considered.

7 This is the last CIS survey including a question capturing trust towards unions.

Table 2. *Vote for the five Spanish national parties according to household income and self-placement in the social scale*

Party	Self-Placement in the Social Ladder (1-10)	Average Household Income Decile	Delta
Ciudadanos	5,22	5,85	-0,63
Podemos	4,67	5,27	-0,60
IU	4,80	5,04	-0,24
PP	5,05	4,48	0,57
PSOE	4,61	4,16	0,45
Abst.	4,47	3,94	0,53

Source: CIS Survey 3126 (author's elaboration).

2. M5S' ELECTORATE AND THE INSIDER-OUTSIDER DIVIDE

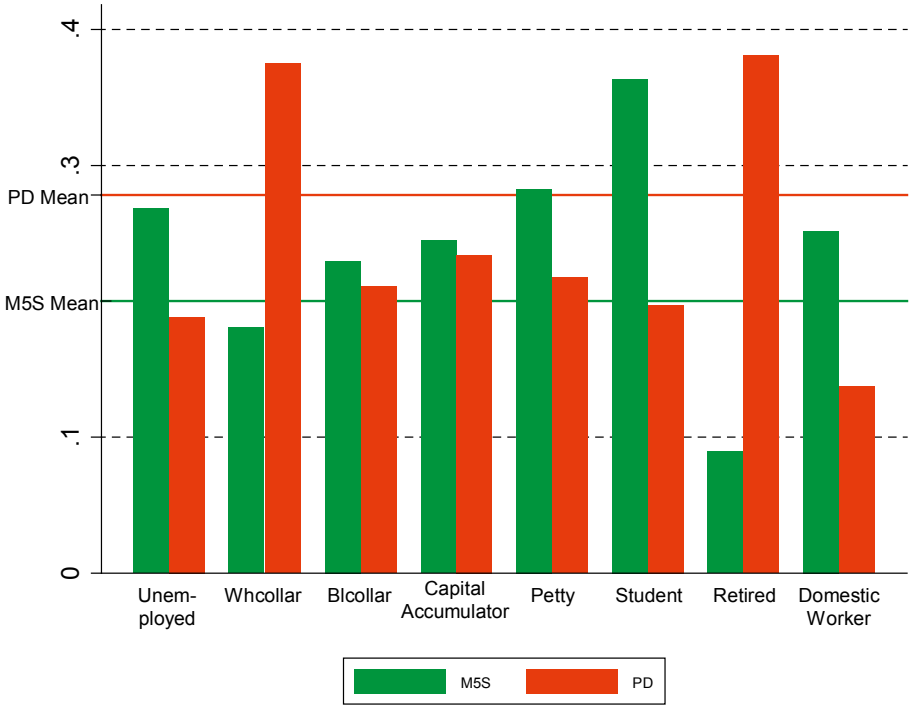
Using data from the ITANES Post-2013 Elections Survey, we can look at the sociological characteristics of M5S' electorate in 2013. Like Podemos, the M5S was the most voted party by young people (18-34 age): 32 % of young voters (compared with 20 % of the entire sample) voted for the M5S, well above the PD (which was chosen by 19 % of young voter and 28 % of the entire sample). M5S' electorate was (and remained) much more ideologically heterogeneous than Podemos' one: 43 % of M5S' voters self-placed on the left (1-4), 26 % on the centre (5-6), 14 % on the right (7-10) and 17 % refused to locate themselves in the left-right axis.

The contrast between M5S' and PD's constituencies in 2013 was even clearer than between Podemos' and PSOE's in 2015, although it was due to quite different reasons, as Figure 2 shows.

Unemployed workers, students, the petty bourgeoisie and unpaid domestic workers were clearly overrepresented in the electorate of the M5S, while the opposite was true for the PD. The PD and the M5S obtained very different results amongst salaried white collars and retired workers. It does seem that the insider-outsider divide had some efficacy for portraying the sociological composition of the two biggest Italian parties in 2013. The M5S obtained impressive electoral results among workers with fixed-term contracts: while only 15 % of the salaried *insider* white collars voted for the M5S, 32 % of salaried *outsider* white collars casted their vote for the M5S. Analogously, 19 % of the salaried *insider* and 33 % of the salaried *outsider* blue collars voted for the M5S in the 2013 elections. An impressive 44 % of self-employed workers

voted for the M5S. The M5S scored well also amongst those voters living in households where at least one member lost her job (31 %) and amongst those workers fearing to lose their job (26 %). In contrast, the M5S was not particularly appealing amongst unionised workers (19 %), who overwhelmingly voted for left-of-centre parties like the PD (44 %) and small parties of the Radical Left (10 %).

Figure 2. *Voting % of M5S and PD according to Job Status*[8]



Source: ITANES Post-2013 Elections Survey (author's elaboration)

[8] The categories are slightly different from those used in the analysis of Podemos' electorate. The reasons lie in the different structures of the questionnaires and in our choice of limiting the number of categories, due to the smaller sample size of ITANES survey (N=1,175). Cadres, entrepreneurs, small entrepreneurs, managers and liberal professions compose Capital Accumulator's category, following Hausermann and Schwander (2010). The petty bourgeoisie category consists of owners of small commercial enterprise and self-employed workers in other sectors than liberal professions.

VII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

As expected, the normative and policy implications of the *insider-outsider divide* literature do not inspire the political action of Podemos in welfare and labour issues. Its leaders and militants never mention the comparatively higher levels of permanent employment protection as an obstacle for job creation, instead backing (as in its 2015 manifesto) several forms of public intervention to boost the economy in strategic sectors to create "new jobs of higher quality". In this sense, there is a clear convergence with the opinions collected from union officials (from both Italy and Spain), who dismiss the literature over the *insider-outsider divide* as an ideological justification for "relaxing" permanent employment protection.

Podemos' critiques against "mainstream" unions precisely point at their supposed bureaucratization, "institutionalization", and lack of combativeness (particularly *vis à vis* left-of-centre governments) against the tendency of making the labour market more flexible. There are some complaints about *bisindicalismo*, i.e. the dominancy of UGT and CC. OO in the union system in detriment of other, more combative unions: nevertheless, Podemos' representatives tend to *recognize* the *status quo* and to adapt their concrete political action to it, instead of *fighting* it. In a few years, Podemos gradually changed its discourse to establish a relationship of *cooperation*, instead of *competition*, with the main Spanish labour organizations, and particularly with CC. OO. However, no *formal* party-union links have been established: Podemos, as a party, relies on organizational linkages (Tsakatika and Lisi, 2013) with other kinds of social actors (mainly social *movements*), quite in line with the party "genetic model" (Panebianco, 1988). At the same time, section 6.1 shows that a certain overlapping between unions' membership and Podemos' electorate exists, while our qualitative data suggests that even *ideological affinity* is strengthening, thanks to the perception, by Podemos' cadres, of a certain "radicalization" (or, at least, greater autonomy *vis à vis* the Socialists) of the big Spanish unions. It will be interesting to observe how the relationships between Podemos and "mainstream" unionism will evolve in the near future, depending on if Podemos will be part (or not) of a coalitional government with the PSOE. It seems reasonable to predict that *cooperation* will prevail if Podemos will govern with the Socialists, also to look for social support for progressive reforms. Cooperation could become more difficult under an all-Socialist cabinet: it would depend both on the kind of unions-government relationship and on the possible Podemos' radicalization (in the sense of a revival of a strong *anti-casta* rhetoric) due to political isolation.

Despite some complaints about "lazy" or "dishonest" workers "protected" by the unions, M5S' interviewees identify in the union officials, and

not in the "insiders", those enjoying unfair "privileges". In this sense, our expectations have been partially disconfirmed: the M5S does not assume the normative and policy implications of the *insider-outsider divide* literature for elaborating its programmatic proposals. In fact, Podemos and the M5S have recently dedicated many efforts to raise (in the case of Podemos) or to introduce the provision of a minimum wage (in the case of M5S), as well as to introduce stricter requirements for hiring through fixed-term contracts. Both parties thus explicitly contest the positive relationship between the diffusion of open-ended contracts and labour market "flexibility": a relationship that lies at the core of most literature over the *insider-outsider divide*.

However, would this imply that the M5S adopts, like Podemos, a *leftist* stance in labour market and welfare issues? Not really. The M5S, like Podemos, criticizes "mainstream" unions for mobilising intermittently, following the "political inputs" from specific parties (the PD in particular). However, M5S' public figures advance additional complaints, questioning the "privileges" enjoyed by union delegates, often equated with "politicians". Analogously to their proposals for the political sphere, the M5S pushes for the *direct, unmediated participation* of the workers in the representational bodies at the workplace levels, and even in the management of the firms: two measures that would make the *delegati sindacali* truly accountable to the workers. This makes the M5S in *competition* (instead of *cooperation*) with unionism: the M5S poses serious, deeper challenges to the system of working-class representation, which is constantly *delegitimised* as a form of (intrinsically dangerous) intermediation.

In M5S' discourse, every organization or association playing a political role is potentially criticised for "invading" a space that is not proper of them: accusations of responding to some "partisan" interests are always there. Instead, M5S' representatives conceive their role as "listeners" of different demands which must be articulated in a (supposedly) "post-ideological" way through "the Web". M5S' pretension, so typical of "techno-populist parties" (De Blasio and Sorice, 2018), to be the *only legitimated structure of political aggregation and intermediation* obviously generates tensions with organized interests, including the unions. Podemos' militants and leaders come from a leftist *milieu*, with well-established fundamental values, while M5S' activists are relatively "free" from previous ideological loyalties. However, there is something deeper, at the "meta-political" level, which is helpful to understand the different stances of Podemos and the M5S towards unionism.

Podemos recognizes and emphasizes the crucial role that *collective mobilization and organization* can play for sustaining progressive changes. The M5S, instead, pushes for citizens' *activation*, which requires much less "investment" and is understood as an *individual* enterprise. In the "Web", "one counts as one": "organization" is invariably evaluated negatively. It is not understood as a

useful instrument that unorganised constituencies could adopt to defend their interests; instead, it is equated with "representation" and, thus, with lesser accountability towards the bases. Furthermore, "organization" produces, according to quite a liberal reasoning, potential "distortions": "When we dialogue with unions, or other interest groups, we are always attentive to extract the general interests from very particularistic demands" (IT8).

The M5S has been up to now much more successful than Podemos in attracting *popular* sectors, disproportionately composed by *outsiders*. Throughout the years, the M5S seems to have been also able to appeal to many discontent *insiders* (Corbetta, 2017), which arguably suggested the party to do not insist with Grillo's "anti-insider" claims. However, the M5S, from the government, has not stopped its violent attacks against the unions, and particularly against the CGIL, which is the most important, in terms of membership, (left-wing) Italian social organization, as well as highly sceptical over the introduction of a minimum wage because of its supposed "race to the bottom" effects in collective bargaining. In sum, the M5S, from the government, is *pursuing* (instead of just *theorising*) an overt *competition* against the CGIL by presenting itself as the "true representative" of the working-class and by attacking unions for their enduring partisan links, which still assure the electoral mobilization of PD's "core voters".

Italian and Spanish unionism has been often criticised for having missed many opportunities to achieve higher autonomy from its party referents, by excessively relying on "institutional power" instead of increasing their representativeness amongst both labour market insiders and outsiders (Rigby and García Calavia, 2018). While Podemos pushes for unions' autonomy—and found a certain approval amongst unionised workers—, the M5S opted for exploiting and trying to deepen their crisis of legitimacy: surely a drastic—and problematic—corrective to "competitive corporatism".

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Appendix

Quoted Interviews

Spain

1. Antonio Estany, Podemos Valencia
2. Begoña Hermida Pérez, Podemos Galicia
3. Bruno Estrada, Consultant for Podemos and Deputy General Secretary of CC. OO.
4. Daniel Hierro, Podemos Extremadura
5. David Papiol, UGT Catalunya's Secretary for Participation
6. Eduardo Gutiérrez, Member of Podemos' National Citizens" Council
7. Elsa Pamparacuatro, Podemos Euskadi
8. Emilio León, Podemos Asturias
9. Ermengol Gassiot, CGT Catalunya's General Secretary
10. Guillermo Mayoral, Podemos Andalusia
11. Juanjo Martínez, Podemos L"Hospitalet de Llobregat
12. Julen Bollain, Podemos Euskadi
13. Laura Haba, Podem Catalunya
14. Pablo Daglio, Podem Catalunya
15. Luís Alegre, Podemos' founder
16. Manolo Rodríguez, Member of the CCOO Madrid Secretariat
17. María Jesús Berlana, Barcelona en Comú's activist
18. Eva Campo, Barcelona en Comú's Councillor at the District Level
19. Anonymous interviewee, Podem Barcelona's activist
20. Rodrigo Amírola, former member of Podemos' Political Secretariat
21. Sergio Arroyo, member of Podemos' Secretariat for Participation
22. Anonymous interviewee, Podemos Euskadi and ESK union's activist
23. Fernando Maté, Podemos activist in Vallecas

Italy

1. Claudio Treves, NIDIL-CGIL's General Secretary
2. Vittorio Agnoletto, Speaker of the Genoa Social Forum
3. Giancarlo Cancelleri, former M5S' candidate for the Sicilian Governorship
4. Paola Macchi, M5S' Regional Councillor in Lombardy
5. Alice Salvatore, M5S' Regional Councillor in Liguria
6. Gianluca Bozzetti, M5S' Regional Councillor in Puglia
7. Antonella Laricchia, M5S' Regional Councillor in Puglia
8. Dario Violi, M5S' Regional Councillor in Puglia
9. Enrico Cappelletti, M5S' MP
10. Tiziana Ciprini, M5S' MP in the Labour Commission
11. Emanuele Cozzolino, M5S' MP
12. Adriano Velli, M5S' Municipal Councillor in Pomezia (Rome)
13. Alvise Maniero, M5S' Mayor of Mira (Venice)
14. Roberto Fico, M5S' former member of the *Directorate*
15. Anonymous interviewee, activist in the *No Muos* social movement
16. Marco Zanni, former M5S' MEP
17. Adriano Zaccagnini, former M5S' MP
18. Valentina Corrado, M5S' Regional Councillor in Lazio